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## HISTORY OF THE WAR BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, DURING THE YEARS, 1812, 1813, AND 1814.

### CHAPTER XIX.

WE give below, as promised in our last chapter, Capt. Porter's lengthy vindication of himself for the loss of the *Essex*, and we

think that a more extraordinary production for mingled cunning and blundering it would be difficult to find. Captain Porter appears to have been particularly struck with the display of motto flags, and the number of jacks at the mast heads, apparently quite forgetful that he acknowledges to have sported an equal number himself. An ensign and motto flag at the gaff, another motto flag, "free trade and equal rights," at the fore, an ensign in the mizen rigging, and

\* *Letter from Captain Porter to the Secretary of the Navy.*

ESSEX JUNIOR, July 3rd, 1814—at Sea.

SIR,—I have done myself the honour to address you repeatedly since I left the *Delaware*: but have scarcely a hope that one of my letters has reached you; therefore consider it necessary to give you a brief history of my proceedings since that period.

I sailed from the *Delaware* on the 27th of October, 1812, and repaired with all diligence (agreeably to instructions from Commodore Bainbridge) to Port Praya, Fernando de Noronha, and Cape Frio; and arrived at each place on the day appointed to meet him. On my passage from Port Praya to Fernando de Noronha, I captured his Britannic Majesty's packet *Nocton*; and after taking out about 71,000 pounds sterling in specie, sent her under command of Lieutenant Finch for America. I cruized off Rio de Janeiro, and about Cape Frio, until the 12th of January, 1813, hearing frequently of the Commodore, by vessels from Bahia. I here captured but one schooner, with hides and tallow—I sent her into Porto Rico. The *Montague*, the Admiral's ship, being in pursuit of me, my provisions now getting short, and finding it necessary to look out for a supply, to enable me to meet the Commodore by the 1st of April, off St. Helena, I proceeded to the

island of St. Catharines (the last place of rendezvous on the coast of Brazil) as the most likely to supply my wants, and at the same time afford me that secrecy necessary to enable me to elude the British ships of war on the coast, and expected there. I here could procure only wood, water and rum, and a few bags of flour; and hearing of the Commodore's action with the *Java*, the capture of the *Hornet* by the *Montague*, and a considerable augmentation of the British force on the coast, and of several being in pursuit of me, I found it necessary to get to sea as soon as possible. I now, agreeably to the Commodore's plan, stretched to the southward, securing the coast so far as Rio de la Plata. I heard that Buenos Ayres was in a state of starvation, and could not supply our wants; and that the government of Montevideo was very inimical to us. The Commodore's instructions now left it completely discretionary with me what course to pursue, and I determined on following that which had not only met his approbation, but the approbation of the then secretary of the navy. I accordingly shaped my course for the Pacific; and after suffering greatly from short allowance of provisions, and heavy gales off Cape Horn (for which my ship and men were badly provided) I arrived at Valparaiso on the 14th of March, 1813. I here took in as much jerked beef and other provisions, as my ship would conve-