

abandoned the sea. None, however, presenting itself, I persevered, and finally overcame the difficulty.

Having in this, and other voyages to the East and West Indies and to Europe, acquired the experience and nautical skill deemed sufficient to qualify me for taking the command of a ship, I was invited, in the autumn of 1795, by the eldest son of Mr. Derby, to take charge of his barque *Enterprise*, and proceed on a voyage to the Isle of Bourbon. The confidence, thus evinced, in intrusting the management of a valuable vessel and cargo to so young and inexperienced a man, for I had then only attained my majority, was very gratifying to my ambition, and was duly appreciated.

In those almost primitive days of our commerce, a coppered vessel was scarcely known in the United States; and on the long East India voyages, the barnacles and grass, which accumulated on the wooden sheathing, retarded the ship's sailing so much, that a third more time, at least, was required for the passages, than is needed since the practice of sheathing with copper has been adopted. A year, therefore, was generally consumed in a voyage to the Isle of France or Bourbon; and mine was accomplished within that term. The success attending it was very satisfactory to my employer, of which he gave evidence in dispatching me again, in the same vessel, on a voyage to Europe, and thence to Mocha, for a cargo of coffee.

While at Havre de Grace, in the summer of 1797, engaged in making preparations for pursuing the voyage, I had the mortification to learn, by letters from my employer, that some derangement had occurred in his affairs, which made it necessary to abandon the Mocha enterprise, and to place in his hands, with the least possible delay, the funds destined for that object. Among the numerous commercial adventures in which our merchants at that time had been engaged to the eastward of the Cape of Good Hope, no voyage had been undertaken to Mocha. To be the first, therefore, in an untried adventure was highly gratifying to my ambition; and my disappointment was proportionally great when compelled to relinquish it. To have detained the vessel in France, while waiting the slow progress of the sale of the cargo, would have been injudicious; and she was therefore dispatched for home, under charge of the mate, William Webb, of Salem.

Being thus relieved from the necessity of an immediate return to the United States, I flattered myself that, even with the very contracted means which I possessed, I might still engage, with a little assistance, and on a very humble scale, in some enterprise to the Isle of France and India. When, therefore, I had accomplished the business with which I had been charged, by remitting to the owner in Salem his property with me, I began earnestly to put to the test the practicability of the object of

which I was so desirous. A coincidence of favourable and very encouraging circumstances aided my views. A friend of mine had become proprietor of a little cutter of thirty-eight tons burden, which had been a packet between Dover and Calais. This vessel had been taken for a debt; and the owner, not knowing what to do with her, offered her to me for a reasonable price, and to pay when I had the ability. This credit would enable me to put all my capital in the cargo, excepting what was required for coppering and fitting the cutter for the contemplated voyage, about five hundred dollars; leaving me fifteen hundred to be invested in the cargo. On making known to others of my friends the plan of my voyage, two of them engaged to embark to the amount of a thousand dollars each, on condition of sharing equally the profits at the end of the voyage. Having become proprietor of the cutter, which, with all additional expenses, cost, ready for sea, about one thousand dollars, an investment of articles, best suited to the market of the Isle of France, was purchased to the amount of three thousand five hundred dollars; making vessel and cargo amount to four thousand five hundred. It is not probable that the annals of commerce can furnish another example of an Indian and cargo being fitted and expedited on so humble a scale.

I had now the high gratification of uncontrolled action. An innate love of independence, an impatience of restraint, an aversion to responsibility, and a desire to have no other limits to my wanderings than the globe itself, reconciled me to the endurance of fatigues and privations, which I knew to be the unavoidable consequence of navigating in so frail a bark, rather than to possess the comparative ease and comfort, coupled with the restraint and responsibility, which the command of a fine ship belonging to another would present.

As there are, doubtless, many persons, not excepting those even who are familiar with commercial and maritime affairs, who will view this enterprise as very hazardous from sea risk, and as offering but a very small prospect of emolument, it is proper, so far as I am able, to do away such impressions by briefly stating the object I had in view. On my late voyage to the Isle of Bourbon, I had perceived a great deficiency in the number of vessels requisite for the advantageous conveyance of passengers and freight to and from the Isles of France and Bourbon. If my cutter had been built expressly for the purpose, she could not have been more suitable. With a large and beautifully finished cabin, where passengers would be more comfortably accommodated than in many vessels of greater dimensions; with but small freight-room, and requiring therefore but little time to load, and of greater speed in sailing than the generality of merchant vessels, I had no doubt of being able to sell her there for more than double the cost: or I might find it to be more