

the illustrious family to which he belonged, and he has been described as a man made to command and worthy to be loved.

After gathering at Brest, the fleet went to Rochelle, where head winds detained it until late in June. At last on the eleventh of that month (old style),¹ the squadron put to sea. Little did it dream that naught but misfortune awaited it.

At first rough water was met in the Bay of Biscay, resulting in the destruction of spars and sails. Then a region of calm was entered, and for days hardly a league's progress was made. The calm was followed by a thunder storm in which several ships were struck by lightning, ammunition blown up, and a number of men thereby killed or wounded.

To increase the distress, a most severe sickness broke out among the overcrowded crews and troops, and the men died by scores. The disease is supposed to have been scorbutic fever and dysentery of a most fatal character. As the deaths increased in number, the admiral became more and more anxious. Provisions also were nearly exhausted, and starvation seemed imminent.

It was not until the beginning of September that the fleet reached American waters. On the third of that month, when near the dreaded Isle of Sable, a terrific storm broke upon the ships. Thunder crashed from end to end of the heavens, and the waves ran to prodigious heights. Soon everything was confusion. Wind-drowned orders mingled with the noise of tearing sails and whistling cordage. One of the transports dashed into another vessel and foundered with every soul. When night came the terrors increased, the tempest raging with undiminished fury. Next morning, only five sail could be seen from the deck of the frigate "Prince d'Orange," and as far as the eye could reach the sea was covered with wreckage. A 26-gun ship lay a hulk without spars or rudder. Gradually, however, the storm abated, and the fleet closed in until thirty-one ships were once more in company.

The storm was succeeded by several days of heavy fog, in which the fleet lay off and on, and collisions were only prevented by the constant firing of guns and other signals. At length the admiral found he was accompanied by only two of his squadron. He could only hope that the others were safe. He was now close to the

¹ The dates in this article are old style. New style dates — eleven days later — will be found in French accounts.