

## CHAPTER L.

AGREEABLY to the policy of the Barbary powers, the Dey of Algiers no sooner found the republican cruisers excluded from the Mediterranean, by the English war, than he began to commit his depredations on the little American commerce that remained in or near that sea. During the late conflict, there was little leisure, and no great motive, to attend to this new enemy, but peace was no sooner made with England, than Congress, on the 2d of March, 1815, passed an Act authorizing hostilities against Algiers. This was at a moment when extensive preparations had been making to continue the more serious contest, and, as several thousand mariners were at once withdrawn from the lakes, the government was enabled to strike an early and important blow at its new enemy. Crews were thrown into the *Guerriere*, *Macedonian* and Congress frigates, the light squadrons mentioned in the last chapter furnished several efficient vessels for such service, and various sloops were already prepared to go to sea. A force consisting of the *Guerriere* 44, Capt. Lewis; the *Constellation* 38, Capt. Gordon; the *Macedonian* 38, Capt. Jones; the *Ontario* 18, Capt. Elliott; *Epervier* 18, Capt. Downes; *Firefly* 12, Lt. Com. Rodgers; *Spark* 12, Lt. Com. Gamble; *Flambeau* 12, Lt. Com. Nicolson; *Torch* 12, Lt. Com. Chauncey, and *Spitfire* 12, Lt. Com. Dallas, assembled in the port of New York in the course of the spring. May the 21st, this squadron sailed for the Mediterranean, under the orders of Commodore Decatur, whose pennant was flying in the *Guerriere*.

The *Torch*, *Spitfire* and *Firefly* separated in a gale, on the 26th of May, the *Firefly* being obliged to return in consequence of springing her masts. The *Ontario* also lost the squadron on the 31st. Commodore Decatur reached Tangiers on the 15th of June, and had some communications with the consul. From this gentleman he learned that the Algerine Admiral Hammida, had been off the port the previous day, in a frigate, and that he had sailed again on his way to Carthage, in company with a heavy brig. The squadron entered the Straits immediately, called the *Ontario*, *Spitfire* and *Torch* out of Gibraltar by signal, in passing, and shaped its course