

some preface in his own mind; that by his activity and exertions he might rise considerably above his present situation. Accordingly, he went to a rendezvous at Wapping, and entered with an officer of the Eagle man of war, a ship of 60 guns, at that time commanded by Captain Hammer. To this ship Captain (now Sir Hugh) Palliser was appointed, in the month of October, 1755; and when he took the command, found in her James Cook, whom he soon distinguished to be an able, active, and diligent seaman. All the officers spoke highly in his favour, and the captain was so well pleased with his behaviour, that he gave him every encouragement which lay in his power.

In the course of some time, Captain Palliser received a letter from Mr. Osbaldeston, then member of parliament for Scarborough, acquainting him that several neighbours of his had solicited him to write in favour of one Cook, on board the captain's ship. They had heard that Captain Palliser had taken notice of him, and they requested if he thought Cook deserving of it, that he would point out in what manner Mr. Osbaldeston might best contribute his assistance towards forwarding the young man's promotion. The captain, in his reply, did justice to Mr. Cook's merit; but, as he had been only a short time in the navy, informed Mr. Osbaldeston that he could not be promoted as a commission officer. A master's warrant, Captain Palliser added, might perhaps be procured for Mr. Cook, by which he would be raised to a station that he was well qualified to discharge with ability and credit.

Such a warrant he obtained on the 20th of May, 1759, for the Grampus sloop; but the proper master having unexpectedly returned to her, the appointment did not take place. Four days after he was made master of the Garland; when, upon enquiry, it was found that he could not join her, as the ship had already sailed. On the next day, the 15th of May, he was appointed to the Mercury. The quick and successive appointments, shew that his interest was strong, and that the intention to serve him was real and effectual.

The destination of the Mercury was to North America, where she joined the fleet under the command of Sir Charles Saunders, which, in conjunction with the land forces under General Wolfe, was engaged in the famous siege of Quebec. During that siege, a difficult and dangerous service was necessary to be performed. This was to take the soundings in the channel of the river St. Lawrence, between the island of Orleans and the North shore, di-

rectly in the front of the French fortified camp at Montmorency at Beauport, in order to enable the admiral to place ships against the enemy's batteries, and to cover our army on a general attack, which the heroic Wolfe intended to make on the camp. Captain Palliser, in consequence of his acquaintance with Captain Cook's sagacity and resolution, recommended him to the service; and he performed it in the most complete manner. In this business he was employed in the night time, for several nights together. At length he was discovered by the enemy, who collected a great number of Indians and canoes, in a wood, near the water side, which were launched in the night, for the purpose of surrounding him and cutting him off. On this occasion, he had a very narrow escape. He was obliged to run for it, and pushed on shore on the island of Orleans, near the guard of the English hospital. Some of the Indians entered at the stern of the boat, as Mr. Cook leaped out at the bow; and the boat, which was a barge belonging to one of the ships of war, was carried away in triumph. However, he furnished the admiral with as correct and complete a draught of the channel and soundings as could have been made after our countrymen were in possession of Quebec. Sir Hugh Palliser has good reason to believe, that before this time Mr. Cook had scarcely ever used a pencil, and that he knew nothing of drawing. But such was his capacity, that he speedily made himself master of every object to which he applied his attention.

Another important service was performed by Mr. Cook while the fleet continued in the river St. Lawrence. The navigation of that river is exceedingly difficult and hazardous. It was particularly so to the English, who were then in a great measure strangers to this part of North America, and who had no chart, on the correctness of which they might depend. It was therefore ordered by the admiral that Mr. Cook should be employed to survey those parts of the river, below Quebec, which navigators had experienced to be attended with peculiar difficulty and danger; and he executed the business with the same diligence and skill of which he had already afforded so happy a specimen. When he had finished the undertaking, his chart of the river St. Lawrence was published, with soundings and directions for sailing in that river. Of the accuracy and utility of this chart it is sufficient to say, that it hath never since been found necessary to publish any other. One of which has appeared in France is only a copy of our author's on a reduced scale.