

the *Constitution*, took two British ships, the *Cyane* and *Levant*, not far from Madeira. On March 23, off the island of Tristan da Cunha, the American sloop *Hornet* fought and captured the British brig *Penguin*, which was sunk after the action; and finally, on June 30, in the Straits of Sunda, the East India Company's cruiser *Nautilus* was fired upon and compelled to strike her colours to the American sloop *Peacock*, although the British commander informed his antagonist that peace had been ratified. But daring and skilful as were the American sailors, harrying British vessels from the English Channel to the Straits of Sunda, Valparaiso, and Tristan da Cunha, the American marine was far too weak to protect the shores of the United States, which, now that Great Britain was set free from the incubus of war with Napoleon, were exposed to organized invasion by forces adequate for the purpose.

The campaign of 1814-1815 on the American coast-line, including the battle of Bladensburg, the taking of Washington, and the British defeat at New Orleans, was of vital importance to Canada, as relieving the pressure which had been brought to bear upon her for two years past, and as hastening the end of the war by carrying it into the invaders' country. As in 1813, the shores and inlets of Chesapeake bay were visited and harried by British ships. In order to protect the settlements to some extent, a flotilla of gunboats was improvised by the Americans and placed under the command of a brave Irishman, Barney. Coming down from Baltimore towards the mouth of the bay these boats were, at the beginning of June, 1814, driven into the Patuxent river by the British warship *Dragon*, under the command of Captain Barrie, who subsequently, as has been told, was in charge of the successful expedition up the Penobscot. Barney's boats ran into St. Leonard's Creek, a tributary of the Patuxent, and were there blockaded by two frigates lying at the mouth of the creek, while Barrie in turn took his gunboats up the Patuxent, scouring the banks as far as Lower Marlborough, about twenty-eight miles from Washington. Eventually a combined attack

The war on the Atlantic coast of the United States.

Barney's flotilla in Chesapeake bay.