

forces of their own countrymen, nor to English soldiers to be beaten by four-fold odds, although that was not often the case as far as the Canadian Militia were concerned.

It rests, therefore, with the historians of the United States to clear their irresponsible Executive and President of the charge of blood-guiltiness which assuredly rests on them: As to their motives, they could be neither patriotic or honorable, seeing they concluded peace when they found Napoleon's power had fallen, without securing satisfaction for a single outrage to avenge which the war had been ostensibly undertaken. A great deal has been written by these naval historians of the United States in praise of their proved naval supremacy in this war. The narrative, as laid before the readers of the VOLUNTEER REVIEW shows distinctly what grounds existed for such glorification.

The only foundation for any exultation exists in the fact that during the contest three British frigates, carrying on their main decks long 18-pounder guns, were captured in three separate actions by two American frigates, carrying on their main decks long 24-pounder guns. To the practical seaman no other illustration of cause and effect need be given, but as the landsmen are the more numerous readers it may be necessary to explain this matter a little more at length.

The vessels to whose fortune it fell to capture the British frigates were the Constitution and United States frigates. The main deck guns of the former were English battery or land service long 24-pounders, measuring 10 feet in length, and weighing 54 cwt.; the latter were English sea service long 24-pounders, measuring 9 feet 6 inches in length, and weighing 50 cwt. The President, which was captured by the British, had on her main deck guns of American manufacture, measuring 8 feet 6 inches in length and weighing 48½ cwt; the Chesapeake, captured by the British, mounted long 18-pounders on her main deck.

Now the disparity of force will be understood from the fact that a long 18-pounder weighs 42 cwt, and measures 9 feet in length. As a matter of course the larger gun requires the heaviest platform, and, as in sea service, that must be on a moving body, the vessel carrying 24-pounders must be larger than that carrying 18-pounders, and of course throw one-third heavier broadsides. Increased size compels increased scantling and greater strength, and a larger number of hands. It is not a matter of much wonder, therefore, if vessels armed heavily are more than a match for those of inferior calibre, and although discipline and science may do and have done a great deal in deciding naval victories, yet, all things being equal, the weaker party will be undoubtedly beaten. This is simply what has occurred and is a matter of exultation only in so far as the intelligence and ingenuity of the American naval constructors exceeded that of their opponents.

Now for the captures. The Guerriere surrendered to the Constitution on 19th of August, 1812, after a well fought action of two hours duration. The Guerriere mounted 30 long 18-pounder guns,—the Constitution mounted 30 long 24-pounders. On the 12th October, 1812, the Macedonian was captured by the United States, the former mounting on her main deck 28 long 18-pounders, the latter 30 long 24-pounders; the action lasted two hours and fifteen minutes. On the 24th December, 1812, the Constitution captured the Java after a desperate action of three hours and a half, the latter mounting 28 long 18-pounders, the force of the former is given above.

On the 1st June, 1815, the Chesapeake was captured by the Shannon, after an action of fifteen minutes duration; the former mounted 28 long 18-pounders, the latter 28 long 18-pounders. On the 15th January, 1815, the President surrendered after a hard fought action under sail of six hours duration, with the Endymion, the former mounted 30 long 24-pounders on her main deck, and the latter 26 long 24-pounders. The presence of a British squadron does not detract from the value of this action, it was a running fight in which they could not participate, being all to leeward, and one in which the President was sure to escape if her opponent had been either badly fought or badly handled. The fact is undoubted that she struck to the Endymion over four hours before the nearest and best sailer of the squadron arrived to take possession, and moreover that she had been rendered perfectly helpless by her fire.

The Constitution, from her great size (1,533 tons), and the height of her "between decks," was enabled to have higher ports and mount her guns on more elevated carriages than her opponents, and this peculiarity applies to all American frigates. Its value is obvious. Choosing her own distance she could pound her opponent to pieces in a sea-way where the latter's main deck guns were afloat, and the lowness of her ports effectually prevented anything approaching an effective return to their fire. Another advantage from increased size was additional thickness in the topsides of the American frigates, rendering them almost impervious to 18-pound shot at a distance and wholly so to carronades. This at once explains the reason of the great disparity between the loss in men on both sides.

A ship of war propelled by sail alone was a complicated machine to fight,—it was almost always absolutely necessary that she should have the weather-gauge, to obtain this manœuvres requiring the utmost practical knowledge of the effect produced by altering the position of the sails, and the attention requisite to counteract a corresponding manœuvre on the part of her opponent. The direction of the fighting portion of the crew claimed also the attention of the commanding officer, as the effective value of the

fire was governed by the circumstances under which it was delivered. At the same time the interior economy of the vessel had to be attended to. The most important part of the crew in action were the sail trimmers and riggers numbering fully one-half of the whole force. The crew necessary to move and fight an 18-pounder gun was 9 men, consequently for 14 guns in a broadside 126 men would be required. It is evident then that in the actions narrated the British vessels were short handed, while American frigates had supernumeraries.

No description would convey a fair idea of what a sea fight is like. On shore the soldier has space and generally cover in action, at sea there is nothing of the kind—shot and shell, rifle and grape shot, searched every corner of the vessel. Taking the main deck of a large frigate as being 146 feet in length along the gangways, and 15 guns of a side a space of 9½ feet from centre to centre of port is all that can be obtained for fighting purposes, it will be easily understood what havoc would be made by a well placed shot amongst the crew that fought the guns, but their danger was as nothing to that of the sail trimmers and riggers. The men fighting on the main deck were under cover, the others totally exposed, and as it was a necessary part of naval tactics to disable the opponent by any and every means, riflemen were employed to shoot them down. A thinly manned ship, therefore, fought with the chances against her, and the British frigates were in this condition.

The great European war, commencing in 1794 and ending in 1815, entailed such a fearful expenditure of money and resources on the part of Great Britain as to make it an object of her Executive Government to keep down expenses to the lowest possible point, hence, after the battle of Trafalgar in 1805 had delivered her from all fear of invasion or competition on the high seas, the encouragement given to her seamen was gradually withdrawn, the rate of wages lowered, and her vessels manned by the refuse of her surplus population. What has been already stated will shew that it is a first necessity of naval service that discipline should be carried to the highest possible perfection, that the officers should know the capability and characteristics of every man in the crew. It will be easily understood that at least one of the defeats incurred during this war was due to the want of discipline alone. The most efficient weapon on shipboard is artillery, but if that is not manned by trained men it is useless. Now for some years previous to the war of 1812-14 an order of the administration had deprived the British seaman of the means of acquiring a knowledge of gunnery by refusing powder and shot for the purposes of practice, and when it is known that from the mobility of the battery proficiency in naval gunnery can only be obtained by constant practice, it is evident that the principal cause of disaster