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Charlotte, and the Somers, Poreupine, Tigris and Tripp, to encounter the Lady Prevost and Little Belt. Thus arranged, our fleet moved on to attack the enemy, distant at ten o'clock about four or five miles. The Commodore next produced the burgee, or fighting flag, hitherto concealed in the ship. It was inscribed with large white letters upon a blue ground, that could be read throughout the fleet, "DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP,"—the last words of the expiring Lawrence, and now to be hoisted at the mast-head of the flag-ship bearing his name. A spirited appeal was made to the crew assembled upon the quarter-deck, who returned three hearty cheers that were repeated along the whole line of our vessels, and up went the flag to the top of the fore-mast. The Commodore brought me a package of papers, having a piece of lead attached to them, and gave orders in the event of his falling, to throw the papers overboard; they were instructions from Government, and letters from Mrs. Perry.—The grog ration being served out, drums and fifes struck up the thrilling air, "all hands, all hands, all hands to quarters," calling all to their respective stations. The Commodore was on the quarter deck with two young officers, Thomas Breese and his own brother, Alexander Perry, whose duty it was to run with his orders to every part of the ship; for in the din and uproar of battle no officer can be heard ten feet off. The hatches were now closed excepting a small aperture ten inches square, through which powder-cartridges were to be passed up from the magazine by boys nimble of foot during the battle, and through which light was admitted into the surgeon's room, where the wounded were to be brought. The floor of this apartment was on a level with the surface of the water outside, and consequently the wounded were as much exposed to the enemy's cannon balls as if they were on deck. Six men were directed to bring the wounded below, and to assist the surgeon in moving them.

Every preparation being made, and every man at his post, a profound silence reigned for more than one hour,—the most trying part of the whole scene. It was like the stillness of the atmosphere that precedes the hurricane. The fleet moved on steadily till a quarter before meridian, when the awful suspense was relieved by a cannon-shot aimed at us from the flag-ship