

effort to lead on his men, the latter could not be induced to follow. Captain Biddle had called away boarders to repel boarders, and his people now manifested a strong wish to go into the English vessel, but perceiving his great advantage at the guns, that intrepid officer, who had been so free to adopt this expedient, when it was his duty to lead in his own person, judiciously refused his permission.

The vessels lay in this position but a minute or two, the American raking, when the sea lifted the *Hornet* ahead, carrying away her mizen rigging, davits, and spanker-boom, the enemy swinging round and hanging on the larboard quarter. At this moment, Captain Biddle sent the master forward to set the foresail, with a view to part the vessels when an officer on board the English ship called out that she surrendered. The positions prevented any other firing than that of small arms; this was ordered to cease, and Captain Biddle sprang upon the taffrail to inquire if the enemy submitted. While putting this question, he was within thirty feet of the forecastle of the English vessel, and two marines on board her discharged their muskets at him. The ball of one just missed the chin and passing through the skin of the neck, inflicted a severe, but fortunately not a dangerous wound. This incident drew a discharge of muskets from the *Hornet*, which killed the two marines; the American ship drew ahead at that instant, and the enemy lost his bowsprit and foremast as the vessels separated.

The *Hornet* now wore round, with a fresh broadside to bear, and was about to throw in a raking fire, when twenty men appeared at the side and on the forecastle of the enemy, raising their hands for quarter, and eagerly calling out that they had struck. The excitement on board the American ship, however, was so great, in consequence of the manner in which their gallant captain had received his wound, that it was with the utmost difficulty Captain Biddle and his officers could prevent the people from pouring in another broadside.*

The prize was H. B. Majesty's brig the *Penguin* 18, mounting 19 carriage guns; viz., 16 thirty-two-pound carronades, two chase guns, and a shifting carronade on the topgallant forecastle. She was a vessel of the *Hornet*'s class, size, and metal, and is represented as having had a spare port forward, by means of which she could fight ten guns in broadside.† Her complement of men was 132, of whom 12 had been put on board her for the express purpose of engaging a very heavy American privateer called the *Young Wasp*, a fact that is known by a letter found in her, from the Admiral at the Cape of Good Hope, to which station the *Penguin* belonged. Captain Biddle stated the loss of his prize at 14 killed and 28 wounded. As respects the latter, there could be no mistake, though it was the

* Though this feeling was natural, the wound of Captain Biddle was probably the result of one of those accidental occurrences, which are inevitable in the confusion of a combat.

† On an accurate computation of the real (not nominal) metal of the two vessels, the *Hornet* would appear to have thrown, at a broadside, about nine pounds more shot than the *Penguin*, the latter not using her spare port. As respects the crews, the American ship had some ten or fifteen the most men at quarters. In tonnage the vessels were very nearly equal.

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