

intended to assume command. These accusations are *vital* in their importance, and should be well considered.

Immediately after the battle the conduct of Elliot with the "Niagara" become the general topic of conversation, and Elliot criticised. Perry, with all the kindness of his forgiving nature, was anxious to stop this censuring of Elliot, and cautioned the officers to silence on this subject. The strongest defense Elliot had was the language of Perry himself. In a letter to Elliot at Put-in-Bay, under date of September 19th, in answer to one from Elliot of the previous day, Perry said :

\* \* \* "I am indignant that any report should be in circulation prejudicial to your character, as respects the action of the 10th inst. It affords me pleasure that I have it in my power to assure you that the conduct of yourself, officers and crew, was such as to meet my warmest approbation. I consider the circumstances of your volunteering to bring up the smaller vessels into close action as contributing largely to our victory. I shall ever believe it a premeditated plan, of the enemy to disable our commanding vessel by bringing all their force to bear upon her; and I am satisfied had they not pursued this course the engagement would not have lasted thirty minutes. I have no doubt if the "Charlotte" had not made sail to engage the "Lawrence" the "Niagara" would have taken her in twenty minutes.

"Very respectfully, &c.,

"O. H. PERRY.

"Capt. J. D. Elliot, U. S. S. 'Niagara.'"

It was afterwards claimed by Perry that these letters were given *at the time* to soothe the wounded feelings of Elliot, but not to be used for publication, which use *was* made of them. And furthermore, the complimentary matter in the letters was afterwards *withdrawn*, and the conduct of Elliot threatened to