

Mr. Stevens, who had fought in Rodney's action 12th April, 1782, fell mortally wounded by a musket shot; the Midshipman commanding on the fore-castle, Mr. Samwell, was also mortally wounded—followed by the remaining fore-castle party about 20 men; Captain Broke at 6h. 2m. p.m. stepped from the Shannon's gangway-rail just abaft the fore rigging on the muzzle of the Chesapeake's aftermost carronade and thence over the bulwark upon her quarter deck, where not an officer or man was to be seen—upon her gangways about 25 or 30 Americans made a slight resistance they were quickly driven towards the fore-castle where a few endeavored to get down the fore hatchway, but in their eagerness prevented each other. Several fled over the bows and while part plunged into the sea, another part reached the main deck through the bridle ports—the remainder laid down their arms and submitted. The first Lieutenant with the quarter deck boaters and a division of Marines followed by the second Lieutenant with the main deck boarders supported Capt. Broke. Just as the first Lieutenant stepped on the Chesapeake's taffrail he received a shot through the foot from her mizen top, on which he ordered the Lieutenant of marines on board the Shannon to point a 9 pounder at the enemy's top. In the meantime the second division of boarders and marines rushed forward and while one party kept down the men who were ascending the main hatchway the other returned the destructive fire still continued from the main and mizen tops. The main top was immediately stormed by Midshipman W. Smith and his top men, who either destroyed or drove on deck all the Americans stationed there; he had passed along the Shannon's fore yard which was breaced up to the Chesapeake's main yard which was nearly square and then into her top. The mizen top had also been cleared by Mr. Midshipman Cosnahan who from the starboard main yard arm had fired at the Americans as fast as his men could hand him loaded muskets. After clearing the fore-castle Capt. Broke ordered a sentry to be placed over the prisoners and sent most of his party aft where fighting was still going on; he was in the act of giving the orders when the sentry called out lustily to him, on turning round the Captain found himself opposed to three Americans who seeing they were superior to the British near them had armed themselves afresh. Capt. Broke parried the middle fellow's pike and wounded him in the face, but instantly received from the man on the pikeman's right a blow with the butt end of a musket which bared his skull and nearly stunned him; the third man cut him down with his broadsword, but at that instant was himself cut down by Wm. Mindham the captain of the 14th gun. One of the British seamen was killed and two or three badly wounded. Every one of the party engaged in this treachery was discovered and cut down, while Mindham was in

the act of tying a handkerchief around his Captain's head he suddenly exclaimed—"Look, Sir, there goes up the old ensign over the Yankee colors."

The act of changing the colors cost the gallant first Lieutenant and four or five fine fellows their lives. Lieut. Waite called for an English ensign, and hauling down the American flag, bent on, but owing to the halliards being tangled the English flag arose below instead of above it—a few seconds before this the Chesapeake's quarter gallery had given way and the ships were gradually separating, seeing the Stars and Stripes going up first the Shannon people reopened their fire and training their guns on the Chesapeake's mizen mast killed their own first Lieutenant and their comrades; before the flags had got half way to the mizen peak they were lowered and hoisted properly, on which the firing ceased.

From the discharge of the first gun till Captain Broke boarded, only eleven minutes elapsed, and in four minutes more the Chesapeake was completely his; the action lasted just 15 minutes. Five shot had passed through the Shannon, one only below the main deck, of the several round shot that struck her the greater part lodged in the side ranged in a line just above the copper. A bar shot entered a little below the water mark, leaving a foot or eighteen inches of one end sticking out. Until her shot holes were stopped the Shannon made a good deal of water upon the larboard tack; her fore and main masts were slightly injured by shot, and her bowsprit (previously sprung) and mizen mast badly wounded, no other spar was damaged; her shrouds on the starboard side were cut almost to pieces, but her standing and running rigging aloft was totally uninjured. Her loss out of a crew of 306 men and 24 boys was 26 killed, including her first Lieutenant, Purser, Captain's clerk, boatswain and a Midshipman—13 seamen, 4 marines, 3 supernumeraries and one boy—and 58 seamen, marines and supernumeraries including her Captain wounded. Total killed and wounded 84.

The Chesapeake was severely injured in the hull especially, and on the larboard quarter particularly, a shot passed through one of her transoms equal in thickness to a 64 gun ship's, and several shots entered the cabin windows; she had two main deck guns and one carronade entirely disabled, one 32 pounder carronade was also dismounted and several carriages and slides broken, her three lower masts, the main and mizen masts especially badly wounded; her lower rigging and stays were a good deal cut, but neither masts nor rigging were so damaged that they could not have been repaired if necessary without the ship going into port. Out of a crew of 381 men and five boys the Chesapeake lost 47 killed and 99 wounded, 14 of the latter mortally; the killed and mortally wounded included the fourth Lieutenant, master, one Lieutenant of marines, her first Lieutenant and commander, Capt. Lawrence, who died on board the Chesapeake of his wounds on the 4th June, while that vessel was on her way to Halifax. The whole number of surviving prisoners mustered then was 325, the difference is accounted for by those unfortunate deserters who preferred a death by drowning to one by the rope and went over the side when the Shannon people boarded.

This well fought action decided the question as far as national prowess was concerned,

and in its most important bearings, in the preceding actions; the result was due to the greater weight of American artillery and superior skill in its use; on this occasion the skill in seamanship and gunnery was on the British side, while the prowess in boarding was altogether their own. The comparative force of the vessels engaged was as follows.

Shannon—Broadside guns.....	25
Weight of Broadside, ..	538 lbs.
Crew, men only,	306
Tonnage,	1066
Chesapeake—Broadside guns.....	25
Weight of Broadside, ..	590 lbs.
Crew, men only,	376
Tonnage,	1135

The result demonstrated the fact that British seamen fairly had cannot be beaten by an equal number of men of any other nationality.

A NEW BREECH-LOADING RIFLE.

Another, and a very important improvement has recently been made in the breech-loading rifle by Mr. Newark of Coventry. It has successfully passed the tests of the Ordnance committee, and has been referred to a sub committee, for the purpose of being still further and more severely tested. The qualities which the new weapon has shown are precisely those which appear to adapt it for the hard wear and tear of military service. For the purpose of testing the rifle, the breach mechanism was covered over externally with fine sand, which having been removed as far as practicable by hand, a number of shots were fired without the sand having produced the slightest appreciable effect. The interior of the breech mechanism was then filled with fine sand, and the rifle struck with force, so as to get the sand into all the crevices of the action; when cleaned out by the hand as before everything acted perfectly. A third time fine sand was poured upon and in the action, and in this instance the sand was left in the chamber, so as to impede the ignition; but, upon firing the rifle, the sand had produced no effect, and the cartridge exploded as readily as before—in fact no miss fire occurred throughout the experiment. The rifle was subsequently fired with damaged cartridges which were placed in the chamber of the gun in such a manner as to develop the weak points of the system, but the gun withstood these tests in an equally satisfactory manner to those with the sand. After these experiments the rifle was taken to pieces by the armourer of the committee. The system adopted is that known as the block, which opens as in the Snider (to which in a certain extent it bears some resemblance), from left to right, and the ignition of the cartridge is effected by a direct action striker, working through the breech block, and operated on by a piston which effectually locks down the breech block in position during the discharge. This piston receives its motion from a lever arm or cam attached to the tumbler of the lock. A lever in the position of an ordinary lock serves to denote the slightest fouling of the lock arising from the discharge of the damaged cartridges or from the sand could be traced. Nothing could have been more satisfactory than the result of the testing, and should it pass through the tests which yet await it as satisfactorily it will have established a fair claim to be regarded as the rifle of the future.