

# ANGLO-AMERICAN MAGAZINE.

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## HISTORY OF THE WAR BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, DURING THE YEARS 1812, 1813, AND 1814.

### CHAPTER XVII.

As may be supposed, the blockade of the Chesapeake, and the threatening position taken up by the fleet, off Hampton Roads, placed the Americans on the *qui vive*, especially as many tongued rumour had been busied in ascribing plans and intentions of every description to the British Admiral.

The flotilla had failed in their attack on the Junon, thereby demonstrating that gun boats alone could effect nothing: the Constellation could not venture from under the batteries, and as there was, consequently, really no force by which the British could be attacked by water, the Americans were compelled to endure the sight of a hostile squadron daily before their eyes, with the mortifying conviction forced on them, that, inasmuch as they had been fomenters of the war, so were they now the principal sufferers—So strict was the blockade that it was not only impossible for any vessel to escape the cruisers which guarded the passage between Cape Henry and Cape Charles, but it was an enterprise attended with great risk for any vessel to leave the James, Elizabeth, York, or in fact, any of the rivers which disembogue into the Chesapeake bay.

All that was, under these circumstances, left for the Americans was to prepare against attacks, and we accordingly find in "Sketches

of the war" that upwards of ten thousand militia were assembled round Norfolk and its vicinity, the points against which an attack was most likely to be directed. With the whole coast thus on the alert it was not to be expected that the preparations which were openly made towards the end of June by the British Squadron would escape observation. "Accordingly," as James has it "Craney Island being rather weakly manned, the commanding officer at Norfolk sent one hundred and fifty of the Constellation's seamen and marines, to a battery of eighteen pounders in the north west, and about four hundred and eighty Virginia Militia, exclusive of officers, to reinforce a detachment of artillery, stationed with two twenty four and four six pounders on the west side of the island. Captain Tarbell's fifteen gun boats were also moored in the best position for contributing to the defence of the post." It will thus be seen that very formidable preparations for the defence of this port were adopted, and the following despatch from Admiral Warren to Mr Croker announcing the failure of the attack on Craney Island will not wholly be unprepared for.

*From Admiral Warren to Mr. Croker.*

San Domingo, Hampton-roads,

Chesapeake, June 24, 1813.

SIR,—I request you will inform their lordships, that, from the information received of the enemy's fortifying Craney Island, and it being necessary to obtain possession of that place, to enable the light ships and vessels to proceed up the narrow channel towards