

cept by consulting the State papers and despatches of both parties, and reconciling, if possible, their discrepancies. This very affair of Wyoming is one instance, the Jane McCrea murder another, of the style in which the imaginations of the writers, if not a worse motive, has laboured to give the world a narrative of events characterized by the total absence of every fact connected with the original transaction. Later American writers are forced to confess this fault, and Lossing, in his "Field Book of the Revolution," repudiates both stories as mere fictions, giving ample authority in fact at Wyoming, Brant was not only not there, but it is a well understood fact that he was employed at 150 miles distance, and the whole affair was one of those irregular actions brought on by the demi-savages aided by real savages on both sides.

In revenge for this the mixed Indian and white settlements at Mendilla and Anaquaga upon the upper banks of the Susquehanna, containing a tory population, were in their turn ravaged and destroyed.

The French Ambassador had departed from London after the delivery of the rescript announcing the alliance between France and the revolted Colonies without the formality of taking leave, and the English Ambassador left Paris in a similar manner. This was to all intents and purposes a hostile demonstration. In the dockyards and arsenals of France all was bustle and preparation; troops were hurried down to the coast under pretence of an invasion, and everything tended to show that the struggle about to be undertaken was one of vast magnitude and momentous issues.

In Great Britain the people had been divided on the question of using coercion towards the Colonists, but the moment French intervention between the King and his subjects became a fact the nation was united as one man on the subject of punishing such perfidy and deceit. Unanimous as the people were on this subject the unprincipled leaders of the opposition and their immediate adherents not only deprecated the idea of reducing the revolted Colonies by force, but actually rejoiced at their victories.

Warlike preparations were pushed forward with vigor, the militia embodied, and before the French fleet could leave their ports twenty English ships of the line were in the channel. This fleet was commanded by Admiral Keppel, a brave and experienced officer, highly popular in the navy, but unfortunately politically attached to the opposition—for the ministry still attempted to conciliate that unprincipled faction by taking from amongst them those officers necessary to command the army and navy. Howe, Clinton, Burgoyne, and now Keppel, and in each and every case the choice was unfortunate.

In the Victory, of 100 guns, 27 years afterwards immortalized as Nelson's flag-ship at Trafalgar, he sailed from Portsmouth on the

12th of June, 1778, and during his cruise hostilities were commenced between Great Britain and France. While at sea off the Lizard, on the 17th of June, two French frigates were seen reconnoitering, and orders were given to chase and bring them under the stern of the Admiral's ship. One of them, the Licorne of 32 guns and 230 men, being unable to escape consented to sail with the fleet, but on the following morning she made sail as if designing to escape by going about in stays on a different tack, a shot was fired across her, when in an instant she poured her whole broadside into the British ship America and immediately struck her colors. What renders this so singular is the fact the Captain of the Licorne was then in amicable conversation with Lord Longford, the Captain of the America, who merely sent her under the stern of the Victory. The other frigate was the far-famed Belle-Poule, chased by the Arethusa, a fruitful subject of song and story. She was well in with the coast when hailed by the latter, and told to bear down to the fleet. On her refusal a shot was fired across her bows which was returned by a broadside from the French frigate, and a spirited action commenced at close quarters for two hours, when the Belle-Poule set her foresail and stood in for the coast, amongst rocks and shoals where she could not be followed, but she was towed out of danger next day by boats from shore. The Arethusa was badly cut up in sails and rigging, had eight men killed and thirty-six wounded. The Belle-Poule had forty-eight killed and fifty-seven wounded, besides being much shattered in the hull. A third vessel or schooner, mounting ten guns, called the Courier, was captured by the 12-gun cutter Alert at the same time. The reasons of the great loss on the French side arises from the fact that it was the custom to *overman* their ships and that in fighting the weight of their fire was directed at the spars and rigging while that on the English side was wholly trained on their hull, in which every shot told on life or limb. From the Licorne's papers Keppel discovered that the French fleet consisted of 32 sail of the line, and having captured the Pallas French frigate he sailed to Spithead for reinforcements.

On the 11th of July he again sailed in quest of the French, his fleet consisting of the Victory, 100 guns; Queen, Formidable, Duke, Sandwich, Prince George, and Ocean, of 90 guns each; Foudroyant, 80 guns; Courageous, Thunderer, Valliant, Terrible, Vengeance, Monarch, Hector, Centaur, Shrewsbury, Cumberland, Borwick, Elizabeth, Robust, Egmont, Ramillies, 84-guns each; Exeter, Stirling Castle, Bienfaisant, Vigilant, Worcester, America, Defiance, 64 guns each; six frigates, two fire ships and one cutter, carrying, exclusive of frigates, 2,268 guns. The French fleet under the command of the Comte d'Orvilliers, sailed from Brest on the 8th of July, it consisted of one ship of 110 guns, one of 92 guns, three of 80 guns, thir-

teen of 71 guns, twelve of 64 guns, one of 50 guns, and thirteen frigates, carrying, exclusive of frigates, 2,222 guns, and as the vessels were larger than those of the British fleet they were armed with heavier artillery and threw a weightier broadside, notwithstanding the disparity in the number of guns—the English fleet numbered 30 line-of-battle ships, the French 31.

On the 23rd of July both fleets came in sight, but the French being to the windward evaded all attempts to bring on an action. From this till the 29th the French bore away, followed by the English in order of battle, but Keppel finding that from their superior sailing the French ships were gradually slipping away, and that the order of battle compelling each vessel to regulate its rate of sailing by that of its consort in the line, and the wind shifting about four points Keppel gave the signal for a general chase, for, small as the shift of wind had been it left the question of avoiding or accepting battle no longer with the French. The British fleet consisted of three divisions, the windward or van, commanded by Sir R. Harland, Vice Admiral of the Red, the centre by the commander-in-chief Admiral Hon. A. Keppel (blue), and the lee or rear division by Vice Admiral Sir Hugh Palliser, of the Blue. The ships in this latter division did not chase with that alacrity of spirit so common to British seamen in the face of an enemy and Keppel was obliged to signal the Vice Admiral to chase to windward. At 9 a.m. the British being on the port tack close hauled and the French on the starboard tack, the latter attempted to form their line of battle, but instead of luffing up in the wind they wore, thus throwing them closer to the British fleet, and as the operation was unsuccessfully performed it threw them into confusion. At 10.45 a.m., being then upon the weather quarter of the enemy, the British fleet tacked, but the wind heading them they fell more to leeward. Soon afterwards a heavy squall came on and on its clearing the French fleet wore to leeward endeavoring to form on the port tack. Comte d'Orvilliers finding he could not cross the British van with his whole fleet determined to bear up, and passing along their line to the windward. At 11.40 a.m. the Victory opened fire upon the Bretagne, Ville de Paris, 92, and each ship of the French fleet as she passed to the windward. The British van suffered little loss, but the rear, under Sir Hugh Palliser sustained considerable loss owing to an accident on board the Formidable and the bad handling of the vessels. At 1.30 p.m. the French fleet having passed along the line Keppel made the signal to wear and follow the enemy, but many of the vessels having received shots between wind and water on the starboard side could not continue on the port tack, the Admiral was therefore compelled to wear on the starboard tack and edge away to cover his disabled ships. After