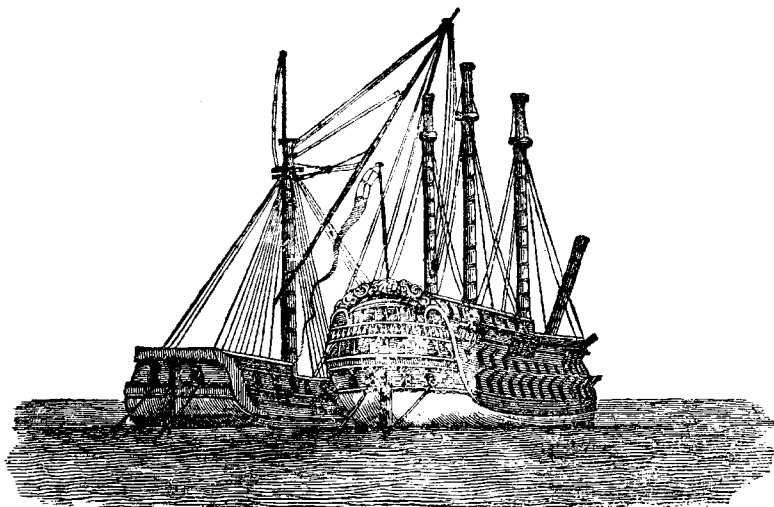


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The lower Masts of the largest Ships are composed of several pieces united into one body, and joined together, with the shaft, or principal piece, into which the rest are fixed, with their sides or faces close to each other. The whole is secured by several strong hoops of iron, driven on the outside of the mast, where they remain at proper distances.

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR OF
REAR-ADMIRAL JOHN WILLETT PAYNE *.

HORATIO ! thou art e'en as just a Man,
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal—
Whose blood, and judgment are so well commingled,
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger
To sound what Stop she please.—

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.

THE task of the Biographer becomes particularly difficult, when he attempts to delineate the actions, and the mind, of unassuming merit; when he is occupied in rendering more public the existence of virtues, whose delicacy almost eludes his grasp; when Benevolence, that “seeketh not her own,” eagerly conceals the source whence unexpected blessings arise; when a wish to do good, overcomes the vanity that seeks for human praise; when, in a word, every thing that is great and noble, forms a character for men to emulate, and to revere:—we must however attempt the

* Rear-Admiral of the Blue; Auditor of the Dutchy of Cornwall; Vice-Admiral of the Coasts, of Devonshire, and Cornwall; Treasurer of Greenwich Hospital, and one of the Twenty-Four Directors.

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outline, and leave it to some future writer to give that distinct colouring to the portrait, which may then be added.

Mr. John Willett Payne, the youngest son of the Honourable Mr. Payne * Lieutenant-Governor of the Island of St. Christopher's, was born in that island; and received the early part of his education, as already mentioned in our Memoir † of the Right Honourable Lord Hugh Seymour, at Dr. Brackyn's academy at Greenwich. He continued a short time under the tuition of this gentleman; and having made a greater progress than was expected for a genius so rapid, and volatile, was removed to the Royal Academy at Portsmouth; and there applied with unremitting assiduity to acquire a thorough knowledge of the first elements of science, connected with the profession he had embraced. There was at this time a peculiar archness of character in the young seaman, that gave an original cast to every action; but it proceeded from the opening emanations of a youthful mind; or, as Gray terms it,

“ Wild wit, invention ever new.”

Though he eagerly entered on such enterprises as the daring spirit of his marine compeers projected, when

—“ bold adventurers disdain
The limits of their little reign,
And unknown regions dare descry”—

he was generally the one to suffer, as an abhorrence of falsehood made him readily confess his own intentions, though no punishment could induce him to criminate his associates: yet even at this giddy season of life, whenever he could secure some moments to himself, the pages of Shake-

* Governor Payne, who was a great favourite of the late Lord Rodney, first married Miss Carlisle, an heiress, whence the valuable estate called *Carlises*, in the island of Antigua, came to the family. This estate never tradéd in slaves, but invariably has brought up a sufficient number of blacks, who, being born and bred on the estate, consider it as their country. Governor Payne married a second wife, Miss Galloway, of a very old and respectable Irish family, by whom he had J. W. Payne, Esq.; and we believe two other sons, Sir Ralph Payne, K. B. who in 1795 was created an Irish peer (Lord Lavington), is the eldest son, by the former marriage.

† Vol. II. page 359.

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speare were perused with the discernment of a mature taste. Such was our young Midshipman, when, about the close of the year 1769, having remained three years at the academy, he received an Admiralty discharge for the *Quebec*, 32 guns, Lord Ducie *, to which Ship his Lordship had been appointed on quitting the *Feversham* of 44 guns. Mr. Payne sailed in the *Quebec* to the Leeward Islands ; and having experienced in this Ship the first toils, and pleasures of a naval life, to which he daily grew more and more attached, he was received on board the *Montague*, Rear-Admiral Robert Mann †, who had hoisted the red ensign, as Commander in Chief, on that station.—During the dreadful fire that broke out in the town of St. George, Antigua, on the night of the 27th of December, 1771, and before day-light nearly reduced the whole to ashes, the officers and men from the *Montague* rendered the most essential service : by their exertions, a few buildings in the carenage, near the court and custom-house, were preserved.

Mr. Payne left the Admiral's Ship, on being appointed acting Lieutenant in the *Falcon* sloop, 18 guns, Captain Cuthbert Bayne ; and sailed in her on the Carib expedition to the island of St. Vincent's, in 1772. The windward side of the Island is not inhabited by the original settlers, who were yellow, but by the descendants of a cargo of African slaves, belonging to an English vessel, wrecked on the coast : being hospitably received by the yellow Caribs, they overpowered them, and became their sovereigns. France endeavoured, but in vain, to reduce them to a state of subjection. St. Vincent's was long a neutral island ; at the peace of

* Francis Reynolds Morton, Lord Ducie, was born on the 28th of March, 1739 ; was advanced Commander on the 21st of November 1760. On the 12th of April, 1762, was advanced to Post rank, and appointed to the *Garland*. The Ducies were descended from a family in Normandy. His Lordship in 1785, on succeeding to the title, resigned his rank in the Service.

† Admiral R. Mann, had afterwards the command on the Mediterranean station, with his flag in the *Medway*, 60 guns. In April, 1779, he was made one of the Lords of the Admiralty ; but quitted the Board in September, 1780 ; he died in 1783.

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1763, the French agreed, that the right to it should be vested in the English : but, when a proclamation was issued, commanding all the inhabitants to come and swear allegiance to his Britannic Majesty, few obeyed; and even those few retracted, being influenced by the threats of the rest.

In consequence of the repeated memorials, petitions, and remonstrances of the planters to Government, who represented these inhabitants as faithless, cruel, and insolent, the above expedition was undertaken; and Colonel Dalrymple, with the pay and rank of a Major-General, was made Commander in Chief of the Forces. After the loss * of a considerable number of men, the Caribs were reduced to obedience; on the 17th of January 1773, a treaty of peace, and friendship, was concluded, by which his Majesty was acknowledged the rightful Sovereign of the island, and domain of St. Vincent's †.

Early in the year (1773) Mr. Payne, having completed his time, returned to Europe in the Sea-Horse, Sir T. Paisley, and soon afterwards went as acting Lieutenant on board the Rainbow, 44 guns, Commodore T. Collingwood, then under sailing orders for the Coast of Guinea: the usual circuit of the Coast being made, and the various settlements visited, Mr. Payne next sailed in the Rainbow for Jamaica; and touching at Antigua, the seat of government, went into English Harbour. Mr. Payne's elder brother ‡, Sir Ralph Payne, K. B. was at this time Governor of the Leeward Islands; a station to which he has lately been again appointed. About the commencement of the American

* On Wednesday the tenth of May, 1773, the order of the day was read for taking into further consideration the Expedition to St. Vincent's: it was again resumed on the 12th, and 15th; when sharp altercations took place between the Minister, and the promoters of the enquiry. Captain Ross, Colonel Barre, and Mr. T. Townshend, were among the principal speakers.

† St. Vincent's, in 1779, was taken by the French; but restored to Great Britain by the peace of 1783.

‡ In 1771, the King was pleased to appoint Sir Ralph Payne, K. B. his Majesty's Captain General, and Governor in Chief, over all the Leeward Caribbee Islands in America—Chancellor, Vice-Admiral, and Ordinary of the

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war, in 1774, Mr. Payne returned in the *Rainbow* to England.

Commodore Sir Peter Parker *, being appointed to a command on the American station, hoisted his broad pendant on board the *Bristol*, 50 guns, then newly launched, towards the close of the year (1775). In this Ship Mr. Payne sailed from Portsmouth, as acting Lieutenant, on the 26th of December. On the 12th of February (1776) Sir Peter left Cork with several transports under convoy, containing six regiments, and seven companies of the forty-sixth, under the command of Lord Cornwallis ; to co-operate with the Loyalists in North Carolina. After a long voyage of near three months, occasioned by the lateness of their departure from Great Britain, all the Fleet, except some few Ships, arrived off Cape Fear †, on the third of May.

The whole Squadron having joined by the 1st, or 2d of June, proceeded to Charlestown, and arrived there on the 4th ; General Clinton immediately took possession of Long Island, and encamped the troops upon it. Half a mile from Charlestown Harbour the Americans had constructed a strong fortification on Sullivan's Island ; which, commanding the harbour, General Clinton resolved to attempt the reduction of it. At half past ten o'clock in the morning, of the 28th of June, Sir Peter Parker, in the *Bristol*, made the signal for action to the *Experiment*, 50 guns ; the *Active*, *Solebay*, *Actæon*, and *Syren* frigates ; the *Sphynx* sloop ; the *Thunder*

* Son of Rear-Admiral Christopher Parker, was made Lieutenant of the *Russell*, by Admiral Matthews, in 1743, then Commander in Chief in the Mediterranean. Was advanced to post rank in 1747, and in May appointed to the command of the *Margate* ; and at the beginning of 1749 to the *Lancaster*, a third rate. He received the honour of knighthood, in 1774 ; and afterwards, in 1782, was created a Baronet. On the 28th of April, 1777, he was advanced Rear-Admiral of the Blue. This worthy officer is at present Admiral of the Fleet, to which he succeeded, on the different promotions which took place at the death of Earl Howe.

† An headland in North Carolina, which gives name to a considerable river (*Cape Fear River*) extending into two branches. Off the Cape there runs out a Spit of sand into the sea, for seven leagues due S. and at the end of it, after narrowing to a very small thread, it ends in a large circle of sand a full league in diameter.

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bomb, and the Friendship armed Ship of 24 guns : at a quarter past eleven all the Ships, having got springs on their cables, began a most tremendous fire on the Fort. Three of the Ships, the Actæon, Syren, and Sphynx, got aground ; the two last however hove off, but the first stuck fast, and was set on fire the succeeding morning, to prevent her falling into the hands of the enemy : the batteries on Long Island now opened, and the Ships continued an unremitting fire ; between two and three o'clock, that of the enemy slackened for a short time. A fresh supply of ammunition being procured, their fire was renewed, and did not cease until between nine and ten o'clock. In this action the Bristol, and Experiment suffered most ; the fire of the enemy being principally directed against them, they were left almost wrecks on the water. Mr. Payne during the whole displayed that cool intrepidity for which he is so much noted ; and considerably recommended himself to the Commodore amid scenes, that would have proved the resolution of even an older seaman. A friendship thus commenced between these two officers, which has since experienced no abatement.

Though the larger Ships had lightened, and those of less draught had advanced as near the Fort as they were able, the landing of the troops was found impracticable. Sir Peter, therefore, after displaying marks of great professional ability, about nine o'clock withdrew the Ships to their former moorings to refit. The army under convoy of the Solebay frigate sailed for New York ; and was followed, as soon as possible, by the other Ships.

On the 15th of May 1776, it had been resolved * “ to recommend to the various assemblies, and conventions, in the United States of America, where no form of government adequate to the exigences of affairs had yet been adopted, to establish such a Constitution as should be most conducive to the public welfare, and security.”—And, on the fourth of

* History of the Origin, Progress, and Termination of the American War, by C. Steedman, who served under Sir W. Howe, Sir H. Clinton, and the Marquis Cornwallis. Two volumes, 4to. 1794.

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July following, America was for ever severed from Great Britain, by a resolution that declared “the Inhabitants of the United Colonies were discharged, and absolved, from all allegiance and obedience, to the King of Great Britain.”—Such was the state of affairs in America when the much lamented Admiral Lord Howe arrived from England, as Commander in Chief of the Fleet employed on that station, with his Flag on board the *Eagle* *, 64 guns ; a Ship that was purposely equipped for him. His Lordship arrived at Sandy-Hook on the first of July, and thence proceeded to Staten Island. Lord Howe had been appointed to the command of the Fleet †, destined to co-operate with his brother General Howe. Mr. Payne was now removed from the Bristol, and received into the *Eagle*, as Aide-de-Camp to the Admiral.

Lord Howe being convinced that all pacific measures were of no avail, resolved to give a new character to the war. The Provincial forces, after the battle of Long Island, had retreated, and taken shelter in New York : here they employed themselves in erecting batteries to annoy the British shipping. Both armies were divided by the East River (the sound or channel between Long Island, and New York Island) ; the breadth of which at this part was about 1300 yards. After a long and severe cannonade, it was resolved to make a descent on the island, where New York is situated : accordingly five Ships of war moved higher up the river, while, on the 15th of September, several flat-bottomed boats were employed in landing the troops. Though the enemy

* The present Bishop of Meath, Dr. Thomas Lewis O’Beirne, was at this time chaplain of the *Eagle*. Dr. O’Beirne was promoted to the See of Meath in 1795. His Lordship would render a most acceptable service to the Navy, by publishing a complete life of his worthy patron.

† The Supplies for the NAVY granted this year (1776) amounted to three millions, two hundred and five thousand, five hundred and five pounds ; including the ordinary, at four hundred thousand pounds ; and the expences of building and repairing Ships, at four hundred and sixty-two thousand, five hundred pounds. In this account, however, neither the sum voted to Greenwich Hospital, nor the million granted at the close of the session for the discharge of the Navy Debt, were included.

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were in possession of very powerful intrenchments, they were driven from their advantageous situation by the furious cannonade of the five men of war : no attempt being made to defend New York, it was taken possession of by the English. However, on the morning of the 21st of September, a most horrid attempt was made to burn the city, by several persons purposely secreted in the deserted houses. The flames first broke out at some wooden Storehouses, at the southernmost, or windward part of New York : the wind was so strong it was almost impossible to face it, for smoke and flakes of fire. One third of the town was destroyed, before the progress of the fire was stopped. On the subsequent day the Admiral, with that respect for religion which was so visible in his character, attended by many of his officers, went to St. Paul's Church, New York ; and heard a sermon *, admirably suited to the awful occasion, preached by Mr. O'Beirne, his chaplain.

During the time that Mr. J. W. Payne acted as Aide-de-Camp to Lord Howe in the Eagle, he was continually detached from the Ship on a variety of important service,

* Mr. O'Beirne chose his text from Jeremiah, xii. 15. We shall add some extracts from the conclusion :—" To what a scene were you witnesses the night before last ; when just escaped from the Storm, and imagining yourselves arrived at a Port of rest—to awake at the midnight hour, and find your city in flames ! to see your all perishing before your eyes, and to know that your destroyers were secretly among you, spreading the ruin, and exulting in the success of the infernal scheme. — — — Ye saw the brave and generous servants of your King,—that King whom you have so often heard represented as a tyrant who sends forth his fleets and armies to enslave, ravage, destroy—flying to the assistance of their fellow subjects, in the midst of the flames, at the hazard of their lives, exerting every nerve to preserve your dwellings and possessions ; and tearing from the hands of the dark incendiaries the instruments they had prepared for your destruction. — — — Let us, therefore, conclude the service of this Day, when the freedom of your worship is restored to you, by uniting together, with one heart and one voice, to implore the divine favour and protection for our Sovereign Lord, King George ; that God would be pleased to give him length of days, and increase of happiness—to prosper all his undertakings for the good of his people, and to bless him with what his actions prove, and his words assert (*Speech from the Throne*) to be the favourite wish of his heart,—the restoration of harmony, and the re-establishment of order and happiness in every part of his dominions."

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that demanded considerable address, and a continued presence of mind, to accomplish;—there is hardly any class of light sailing vessels, which, during this period, he did not occasionally command, in keeping up the communication between the Admiral, and his brother Sir William Howe—in the execution of which he had either some extensive river to explore, some ford to sound, or the devious windings of some creek to examine, during the silence of the night; surrounded by an enemy rendered desperate from the calamities of intestine war. Lord Howe, who to the latest period of his life considered this officer among the first of that school which he had taken such pains to form, was soon sensible of his diligence, and abilities; and at an early age, appointed him second Lieutenant of the Brune frigate, 32 guns, Captain James Ferguson*.

The original character of this eccentric, but distinguished officer, was admirably calculated to create that cordial, and hearty attachment, which soon took place between himself and his new Lieutenant: and although we are sorry to

* James Ferguson, Esq. a native of Scotland, was by Lord Colville made acting Lieutenant in the Royal Navy on the 15th of November, 1756, which at length was confirmed. He obtained his Post rank in the year 1763, with the command of the Romney, 50 guns, to which Ship he was appointed on the sixth of June, with Lord Colville's flag on board, who had at this time the command in North America. In 1776 he was appointed to the Brune; and in the month of April, 1780, distinguished himself, when commanding the Venus, 36 guns, in the action between Sir G. Rodney, and the Count de Guichen. He was present at the capture of St. Eustatia, in the year 1781; was attached to Sir Samuel Hood's squadron, with the command of the Terrible, in the action with the French fleet, off the island of Martinico; and in the month of September 1782, sailed in the Egmont with Lord Howe's fleet to the relief of Gibraltar.—On the death of Captain Broderick Hartwell he was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Greenwich Hospital. After the paralytic stroke which came upon him in 1786, during a journey to Scotland, and which he always attributed to riding in a coach, he forced himself to London, and hastening to Carleton House, oppressed with irons to support his palsied limbs, he at length reached the apartment of his old lieutenant, then Captain J. W. Payne, exclaiming, *My dear JOCK! I cannot die in peace, unless I once more shake you by the hand. I am therefore come to say thus much, and to leave OLD FERGUSON'S blessing with you. God bless you, my dear Lad! I hope you will live to weather it out better than your old Commander.*—Captain Ferguson died on the 14th of February, 1786.

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contradict the authenticity of some ludicrous relations * respecting them, which have long circulated at the festive board, and cheered the gloom of many a cockpit; there were doubtless various incidents of a similar nature, which really happened, and are forgotten. We can now only moralize like Hamlet over the grave of this worthy character—"Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, a fellow of infinite jest; of most excellent fancy: where be your gibes now? your gambols; your songs; your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table in a roar?"

Lord Howe in his dispatches bore very honourable testimony † to the professional merit of Captain Ferguson, and his officers in the Brune: *In my report to their Lordships upon these several transactions, particular notice is due to the Ability testified in the direction and conduct, of many difficult and fatiguing Services which CAPTAIN FERGUSON of the Brune was charged with, preparatory to, and in the progress of the various movements of the army; from the time of the first descent on York Island to this period.*

On the 23d of March, 1777, the Brune, at the opening of the campaign after the severe winter of 1776-77, was detached as convoy to two transports of troops, sent under the command of Colonel Bird on the expedition to Peek's Hill.—Of the tract of land which the enemy possessed, the most mountainous, and of course the most advantageous, was a place that bore the appellation of the Manor of Courland ‡.

* We allude to the excellent story of the ball-room; and the French gentleman, whom Captain Ferguson thought he had accosted, and mistook for his Jock Payne—and also to the towing of the spars—all excellent in their way; but like many other good stories, must not be considered as facts. They circulated however on board the Eagle, and often produced an hearty laugh from the Admiral.—*How is it*, said Captain Ferguson one day to his officers, *that I never go on board the Admiral's Ship but there is always some d—d good story about Jock and me.*

† When Lord Howe appointed Mr. Payne to the Brune, he was heard to say—"I have placed you under an officer from whom you will derive the greatest advantage; in being formed for that complex service, both by sea, and land, which all Naval Officers ought to be well versed in, since it is a duty they are frequently called on to perform."

‡ Stedman's History of the American War, vol. i. page 277.