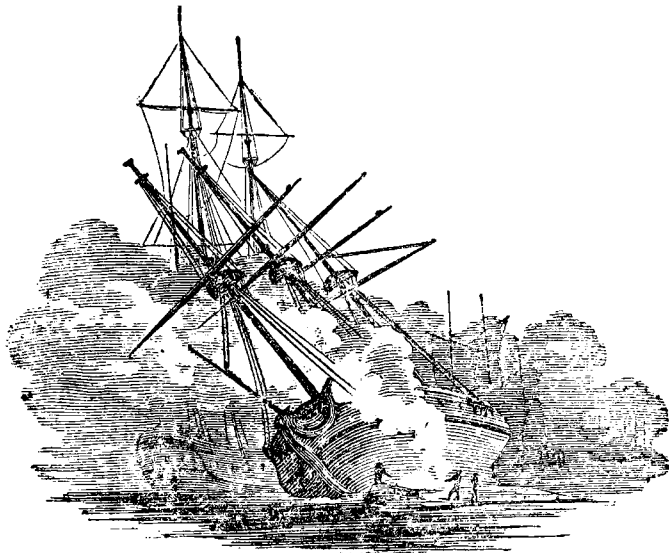


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To careen a vessel is to lay her completely on her side, for the purpose of re-caulking and paying her bottom, as well as repairing all the parts of a vessel under the water-line. In careening a ship fire must not be spared, and the fuel generally employed consists in bundles of reeds. Fire is necessary for perfectly closing the seams, and discovering the imperfect parts. To finish the work, the bottom is suffered to cool, and then tallowed.

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS OF
BENJAMIN CALDWELL, Esq.
 ADMIRAL OF THE BLUE SQUADRON.

Illustrious deeds the British annals grace,
 Which Time's rude barbarous hands shall ne'er efface;
 Illustrious deeds! that make an equal claim
 To future glory and immortal fame.

ANON.

TO the generous mind, ever grateful is the task of recording the exploits of valour, of illustrating the actions of great men, of holding up to posterity a fair portraiture of that glorious conduct which may become the object of future emulation. The biographer who takes for his subject a British Naval Officer, can scarcely fail of finding his labours the labours of pleasure; for, so uniformly noble are the characters of our brave nautical protectors, that, in the words of our immortal poet, with the honest spirit of the

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historic Muse, we may exultingly exclaim, "They are all honourable men!" Admiral Caldwell, a faint outline of whose professional life we are now about to delineate, is not an exception from the general rule.

This esteemed Officer is the descendant of a respectable and ancient family, originally from Scotland. Some of its younger branches, however, as we learn from Craufurd's History of Renfrew, were in the army, and, going to Ireland at the time of the troubles in that country, they settled near Drogheda.

Mr. Caldwell, being destined for the naval service, went to the Royal Academy at Portsmouth in 1754. Having finished his nautical studies there, where he remained two years and a half, he went to sea, in the spring of 1756, in his Majesty's ship *Isis*, commanded by Capt. Edward Wheeler. In the *Isis* he remained, we believe, till the month of March 1759, when he was removed to the *Namur*, the flag-ship of that illustrious and revered Officer, Admiral Boscawen. This was a year which reflected high honour on the naval prowess of Britain.

It will be recollected, by many of our readers, that, at the end of the year 1758, Admiral Boscawen received the thanks of the House of Commons for the diligence and activity which he displayed in the Louisbourg expedition. On the 2d of February following, he experienced a distinguishing mark of royal favour, in being made a member of the Privy Council; and, a few weeks afterwards, he was honoured with a new appointment to the command of a fleet of fourteen sail of the line and two frigates, destined for the Mediterranean. The period of which we are writing was somewhat similar to the present. France had long threatened the invasion of England; but her threats terminated as we doubt not the present ludicrous menaces of Buonaparte will terminate, *in fumo*. The exertions of our naval force accomplished this fortunate event; our "*wooden walls*" were then our firm defenders; the tars of Britain have not degenerated; and, conscious of our superiority, in every sense of the

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word, we now look forward, with a confident hope, to the success of our arms, to the preservation of our independence, to the destruction of Corsican tyranny, and the ultimate salvation of Europe.

Admiral Boscawen sailed from St Helens on the 14th of April, and proceeded towards Toulon, for the purpose of watching the motions of the French fleet then lying in that harbour. The chief object of his instructions was to prevent the junction of the Brest and Toulon fleets, and more particularly to disable the latter, then commanded by the French Admiral M. de la Clue. Failing, however, in his exertions to force the French to an engagement, and having materially suffered in some of his efforts, he repaired to Gibraltar to refit, when, taking advantage of his absence, de la Clue put to sea with the resolution of passing the Straits and proceeding to Brest*.

The result of this business, comprising the celebrated action off Lagos, on the 17th of August, is so well related in *the Field of Mars*, that we shall take the liberty of quoting it from that work:—

When the French, says the Editor, had meditated their long intended project to invade England with a mighty armament, to be conducted by the means of flat bottomed boats, so as by favour of the night to evade the vigilance of our Admirals, and land 20,000 men in some part of Kent or Sussex, which lay nearest to the place of their departure; at that time Admiral Boscawen had blocked up Toulon; the Admirals Saunders and Holmes had entered the river St. Lawrence, and de la Clue was positively commanded to get out by all means, in order to relieve their affairs in North America: but on the French Court's receiving certain advices of the above situation of Saunders and Holmes, de la Clue received countermanding orders, directing him into the Channel this was a point of great hazard and danger to de la Clue; but the Court of Versailles had sent him his last sailing orders, from which he could not recede. Meantime Admiral Boscawen had left Toulon, and come to Gibraltar, in order to refit, while the formidable squadron of de la Clue left its fortified road

* *Vide* the Biographical Memoirs of Admiral Boscawen NAVAL CHRONICLE, Vol. VII p. 206.

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of Toulon, sailed down the Mediterranean, endeavoured to force passage through the Straits Mouth, and so get away safe to the northern seas; or, if impeded by Admiral Hawke, who lay off Brest, to attack him in the rear, while Conflans should come out of Brest, and getting him between two fires, attack him in front. But all this mighty parade ended literally in smoke, and was eluded by the vigilance of Admiral Boscawen, who narrowly watched his motions by detaching scouts to observe and give him notice of every approach. In consequence of these necessary precautions, he ordered the Lynx and Gibraltar, the only two frigates then ready; the former to cruise off Malaga, the other from Estapona to Ceuta Point, to look out and give timely notice.

On the 17th of August, 1759, about eight in the evening, the Gibraltar made the signal of the appearance of the enemy, viz. four teen sail on the Barbary shore, to the eastward of Ceuta; he then got under sail immediately, and was out of the Bay before ten, with four teen sail of the line; and the Shannon and Etna fire-ships. At daylight* he saw the Gibraltar, and soon after seven sail of large ships lying to; but on our not answering their signal, they made sail from us. About noon the Admiral came up with them, and at two o'clock on the 18th, some of the headmost ships began to engage; but he could not get up to the Ocean till near four. In about half an hour the Namur's mizen-mast and both top-sails were shot away; the enemy then made all the sail they could; the Admiral then left the Namur, and shifted his flag to the Newark: and soon after the Centaur, a French man of war, of 74 guns, struck. He pursued a night, and in the morning of the 19th saw only four sail, standing in for the land, two of the best sailers having altered their course in the night. The Admiral's fleet was not above a league from them, and not above five leagues from the shore. About nine, the Ocean, one of the enemy's largest ships, ran among the breakers, and the other three anchored; the Admiral then sent the Intrepid and America to destroy the Ocean; but Captain Pratten having anchored, could not get in, so Captain Kirke performed that service alone. On his first firing at the Ocean she struck, and Captain Kirke sent his officers on board. M. de la Clue, the French Admiral, having one leg broke and the other wounded, had been landed from the Ocean, which was his own ship, about half an hour before; but they found the Captain of her, M. le Comte de Carne, and several officers and men on board. Captain Kirke having taken them out, finding it impossible to bring

* At five, A. M. EDITOR N. C.

† Nearly an hour. EDITOR N. C.

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the ship off, set her on fire. Captain Bentley, of the Warspite, was ordered against the *Temeraire*, of 74 guns, and brought her off, with all her officers and men on board, with little damage. At the same time Vice-Admiral Broderick, with his division, burnt the *Redoubtable*, her officers and men having quitted her, as she was bulged; and brought the *Modeste*, of 64 guns, off very little damaged, on board of which there was found a list of the French squadron.

Thus was this boasted armada defeated and dispersed, some flying one way, some another, for shelter: the greatest part escaped to Cadiz, where they were blocked up by Admiral Broderick, while the *Souverain* and *Guerrier*, two more of their ships, took asylum at Lisbon. One great consequence happened from this victory off Lagos, that it prevented the scheme of France from taking place, of getting Admiral Hawke between two fires, destroying his fleet, and then proceeding to the invasion of England.

For the official dispatches, and some farther particulars relating to this action, we must refer our readers to the *Memoirs of Admiral Boscawen*, given in the seventh volume of our *Chronicle*; briefly observing that, on his return, he was rewarded by being appointed General of Marines.

On the 20th of November following Mr. Caldwell was also in the celebrated victory obtained by Sir Edward Hawke over the French Commander M. de Conflans. As yet, he was only a Midshipman; but, immediately on his arrival in England, he was made a Lieutenant on board of the *Achilles*, the Hon. Captain Barrington.

On the 24th of May 1762, Mr. Caldwell was appointed to the command of the *Martin* sloop, in which vessel he sailed, in the September of 1763, first to the coast of Africa, and thence to the West Indies. He remained in the *Martin* till 1765, when, on the 1st of April, in that year, he was promoted to the rank of Post Captain in the *Milford* frigate.

In the spring of 1768 Captain Caldwell was appointed to the *Rose*, a twenty gun ship, in which he remained, chiefly cruising in the Boston station, till the end of 1771. His next appointment was to the *Emerald* frigate, of thirty-two guns. This took place in the year 1775. The *Emerald*, immediately after she was commissioned, was ordered on the

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North America station, under Lord Howe, where she remained for the space of four years, till the winter of 1779. On this service Captain Caldwell had various opportunities of distinguishing himself; and his diligence, activity, and gallantry, were eminently conspicuous, particularly in blockading the Capes of Virginia, where he took the Virginia frigate, and numerous other small vessels.

On the 25th of December 1779, immediately on his return from America, Captain Caldwell was promoted to the *Hannibal*, a new ship of fifty guns. In the *Hannibal* he sailed to St. Helena, and on his return he brought home an East India convoy. This service occupied about a twelvemonth. Shortly after his arrival in England, in 1781, Captain Caldwell was farther advanced to the command of the *Agamemnon*, another new ship, of sixty-four guns.

From the month of August, to December in the same year, the *Agamemnon* was in the Channel Fleet, under Admiral Darby.

At the latter end of the year 1781 Rear-Admiral Kempenfelt was appointed to command a squadron of ships, and was ordered to sea, for the purpose of intercepting the French fleet which had sailed from Brest, with a convoy for the West Indies. The *Agamemnon*, having been equipped for service by Captain Caldwell, formed a part of Kempenfelt's squadron.

At day-break on the 12th of December, about thirty-five leagues to the westward of Ushant, the English Admiral descried the hostile fleet; and, though it was greatly his superior in force, he succeeded in cutting off about twenty sail of the convoy, which were in his possession by the evening*. The *Agamemnon*, and the *Prudente* frigate (then commanded

* The particulars of this memorable event have been already detailed in our *Memoirs of the gallant and lamented Admiral Kempenfelt*. *Vide* the *NAVAL CHRONICLE*, Vol. VII. p. 368. Some farther particulars are also given in our *Memoirs of Admiral Lord Radstock*, Vol. X. p. 274. By referring to a note affixed to the latter, the reader will perceive the very striking disparity of strength and weight of metal in the adverse fleets.

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by the Hon. Capt. Waldegrave, now Lord Radstock), were detached by the Rear-Admiral in quest of any straggling ships of the enemy which might have been separated from the main body. Unfortunately, however, a few days after, the *Prudente* sprung her fore-mast, and was under the necessity of returning to England. On the 25th of December, thirteen days after that on which the French fleet was first descried, the *Agamemnon* fell in with seven sail of transports, laden with troops and naval Stores, bound for Martinico. Five of these were captured by the *Agamemnon*, and, with the whole of the prizes taken on the 12th of the month, carried safely into port.

Soon after Captain Caldwell's return from the above cruise, he was ordered, with the *Agamemnon*, to the West Indies, to join Sir George Bridges Rodney, who had sailed for that station some days before.

Having safely reached her destination, the *Agamemnon* was with Admiral Rodney, in the West Indies, on the memorable 12th of April 1782*. Captain Caldwell, in supporting the honour of his country's flag with the true energy of a British sailor, shared the perennial glories of that illustrious day. The *Agamemnon*, however, suffered severely on the occasion. Fourteen of her seamen were killed, and twenty-two wounded; two of her Lieutenants, Inledon and Brice, were also wounded, the latter afterwards dying of his wounds.

On the news of this splendid and important victory reaching England, the thanks of both Houses of Parliament were unanimously voted to the Commander in Chief, the Captains, Officers, seamen, and marines of the fleet.

Captain Caldwell proceeded with the fleet to Jamaica, whither also the French prizes were taken. He then sailed to North America, with Admiral Pigot, with whom he also returned to the West Indies at the close of the year. During

* For an interesting account of this glorious action, we refer our readers to the *Memoirs of Admiral Rodney*, given in the *NAVAL CHRONICLE*, Vol. I, page 388.

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the short remainder of the war, nothing farther of importance occurred; and peace being concluded early in the ensuing year, Captain Caldwell returned with the *Agamemnon* to England in the month of May 1783.

Our Officer, we believe, had no farther command till 1787, when, in the armament of that year, he was appointed to the *Alcide*.

In 1790, at the time when a dispute took place between Great Britain and Spain, relative to Nootka Sound, Captain Caldwell was appointed to the *Berwick*, of 74 guns; but, the difference having been amicably settled, the armament was discontinued, and the *Berwick* was consequently put out of commission.

From this period it does not appear that Captain Caldwell was ever again in active service as a private Captain. On the 1st of February 1793, he was promoted to the rank of Rear-Admiral of the White; and being afterwards appointed to command in the Channel Fleet, as Junior Officer under Lord Howe, in the winter of 1793-4, he hoisted his flag on board of the *Cumberland*, of 74 guns.

On the 12th of April 1794, his services were farther rewarded by an advancement to the rank of Rear-Admiral of the Red. On this promotion, he hoisted his flag on board of the *Impregnable*, a ninety-eight gun ship.

It was on the 1st of June following that Lord Howe achieved that important victory over the French fleet which will be long remembered by Britons with heartfelt exultation.

It is here particularly worthy of remark, that Rear-Admiral Caldwell, a brave and meritorious Officer, whose unremitting services, whose persevering activity, zeal, and courage, had never, for a long series of years, been once sullied by the breath of calumny or suspicion, was, with three or four other Officers, omitted in the honourable mention made by Lord Howe, in his official dispatches, of those whom he thought entitled to his "particular thanks" for their exertions on this occasion.

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Nothing, as far as we have heard, has ever transpired tending in the slightest degree to cast an odium on the conduct of these neglected Officers: we shall not, however, presume to animadvert on the extraordinary omission.

The Impregnable, in this action of the 1st of June, experienced a loss of seven killed and twenty-four wounded.

On the subsequent 4th of July, he was made Vice-Admiral of the Blue Squadron. He continued to serve in the Channel fleet, under Lord Howe, in the Impregnable, till the month of September; when, having been directed to join Sir J. Jervis on the Leeward Island station, he shifted his flag into the Majestic, a seventy-four gun ship, and proceeded thither on the 13th of October following.

Vice-Admiral Caldwell arrived at Martinico on the 14th of November; and Sir John Jervis, his health being in an impaired state, shortly after returned to England, with Sir Charles Grey, leaving our Officer as his successor in the command.

Vice-Admiral Caldwell remained on this station till 1795, when he was relieved by Sir John Laforey. He returned to England, in the Blanche frigate.

On the 14th of February, 1799, our veteran Officer, as a reward for a long series of services rendered to his country, was promoted to the rank which he now holds,—that of Admiral of the Blue Squadron.

CORRESPONDENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NAVAL CHRONICLE.

SIR,

THOUGH the present unavoidable war and most honourable exertions of public and private spirit have hitherto, perhaps justly, drawn off the general attention from affairs of comparatively small importance, it may not be improper

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now (when our means of defence and increasing security seem to bid defiance to the invaders), to call back the attention of our sea-ports and Admiralty to the subject of the Life-Boat establishment. Great as are the approved merits, recent the parliamentary reward, and numerous the living rescued witnesses of this important invention, the sphere of its utility has hitherto been much confined, or its adoption postponed in several situations, where, during the late and present stormy weather, many valuable lives might have been saved from vessels lost; or the wrecks, perhaps, in some cases, prevented, by receiving such assistance as Life-Boats only can afford from a dangerous shore. It is not here, however, so much my object to dwell upon the known advantages and present application of the Life-Boat, as to suggest a more ample scope for the adoption and use of boats of this construction and principle in his Majesty's ships; at least in those of the higher rates and larger dimensions.

I wish on this head to make allowances for probable wants of extra room and arrangement, because the present form of Mr. Greathead's boats differs from those in use of the Navy, and I leave it to naval builders to adopt those models that are likely to retain all the advantages of the original invention, and give convenience of stowage and portage on board. I shall now briefly mention the reasons that occur to me for wishing to introduce such boats into general service. *First*, If a ship in a gale unfortunately take the ground, and cannot disengage herself, an immediate communication is requisite with her companions, if in a cruising squadron; or if alone, with the shore, though an enemy's: how seldom in such weather ordinary boats can live at sea, or in a surf, daily experience shews. The one proposed offers the means of saving her crew, not only from the waves, but very probably (with a consort in sight), from being locked up from the service of their country in a French prison. *Secondly*, The facility of conveying information from Flag or Commodore ships on topicks which signals cannot always