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 Edited by James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur  
 Excerpt  
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MEMOIR OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES  
 OF THE LATE  
**CAPTAIN HENRY INMAN,**  
 OF THE ROYAL NAVY.

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“ Far may we search, before we  
 A heart so manly and so kind  
 But, not around his honour'd urn,  
 Shall friends alone, and kindred mourn,  
 The thousand eyes his care had dried  
 Pour at his name a bitter tide.”—*Scott's Marmion*

**I**N the progress of our labours, we have frequently had occasion to remark, that England is more particularly indebted to the clergy, than to any other class or description of men, for her heroes both by sea and land. Daily observation confirms the truth of this position, to whatsoever cause it may be attributed.

Captain Inman, the subject of the present memoir, was born at Burrington, a small village in Somersetshire, near Bristol, of which his father, the Rev. George Inman, was vicar; and, having enjoyed the advantages of paternal tuition, he commenced his naval career in the *Barfleur*, Captain Sir Samuel (now Lord) Hood,\* in the year 1776. Highly to the credit of the character and conduct of Captain Inman, it deserves to be mentioned, that Lord Hood continued his patronage and friendship towards him, to the last hour of his life.

In 1778, Mr. Inman was removed to the *Lark* frigate, Captain Smith, then destined for the American station, and was in her, when D'Estaing's squadron appeared off Rhode Island.† D'Estaing, with part of his force, having entered Newport harbour, the few

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\* An ample memoir of the life and professional services of Lord Hood (also the son of a clergyman) will be found in the II<sup>d</sup> Volume of the *NAVAL CHRONICLE*, page 1, *et seq.* and a portrait of his Lordship appears in Vol. XI. page 400.

† *Vide* *NAVAL CHRONICLE*, Vol. XX. page 82.

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ships under the command of Captain Brisbane,\* of which the Lark was one, made every exertion to receive him properly; but, in the end, to prevent her from falling into the hands of the enemy, the Lark was run on shore, and burnt, so expeditiously, that nothing was saved out of her, by any of the officers or men.† The crew of the Lark, with detachments from the other ships, were afterwards stationed at the batteries; and so resolute and determined was their conduct, in defending the position, that the French commander thought it prudent to abandon his object, and to stand out to sea.

In consequence of the destruction of his ship, Mr. Inman was then ordered on board the Pearl frigate, Captain J. Linsee, under orders for the West Indies, whence, in a short time, she was despatched to England. Promoted to the rank of lieutenant, he was next appointed to the Camel, in which he again sailed to the West Indies; where, soon afterwards, he was removed into the Santa Monica. Lieutenant Inman was in that ship, when she unfortunately struck on an unknown rock, off Tortola, and again lost all his property.

After the action of the 12th of April, 1782,‡ he joined the fleet under Sir George Rodney, and was sent, first on board the Ville de Paris, and subsequently into l'Hector, of 74 guns, Captain Bouchier. In the latter ship, he was destined to experience all the horrors to which a seaman can well be exposed; as well as to prove his nautical skill, his undaunted courage, and his unwearied perseverance; for, in the tremendous gale of September, 1782, from which every ship of the fleet then returning to England, experienced some disaster, and which hurried many a brave fellow to a watery grave, the unfortunate Hector was a distinguished sufferer.

The Hector, it is proper to mention, was an old ship; and, from the battered and mutilated state to which she had been re-

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\* Father to the present Captain Sir Charles Brisbane, whose memoir and portrait were given in the XXth Volume of the NAVAL CHRONICLE, page 81.

† The Orpheus, Juno, and Cerberus, experienced a similar fate; and the Flora and Falcon were sunk.

‡ *Vide* NAVAL CHRONICLE, Vol. I. page 388; in our biographical memoir of Admiral Lord Rodney.

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duced, by the battle of the 12th of April, it was found necessary, before she sailed from Jamaica, to take out twenty-two of her guns. Her masts had also been replaced, by others of smaller dimensions; and her short complement of men amounted to only 300, most of whom were invalids from the fleet, with constitutions shattered by the attacks of a West Indian climate. In this miserable condition the Hector dropped so far astern, on the 22d of August, that she parted company with the fleet. To add to her distress, an event shortly afterwards occurred, which, at any other time, would have been a source of pleasure and exultation. On the evening of the 5th of September, she fell in with two French frigates, each mounting 40, or 44 guns, and having a complement of 300 men, independent of a great number of land officers and troops. The weak state of the Hector was soon perceived by the frigates, which instantly bore down, and, placing themselves one upon her beam, and the other upon her quarter, commenced a furious cannonade. A most gallant resistance was made; but the slackness of the Hector's fire, and the slowness of her movements, gave the enemy frequent opportunities of raking her. Confiding in their numbers, they attempted to board the Hector; but they were nobly repulsed, with great slaughter; and, after an action of six hours, they were compelled to seek safety in flight; indebted for their preservation, only to the crippled state of the Hector's masts.\*—Forty-six of the brave fellows belonging to the Hector were either killed or wounded. Early in the engagement, Captain Bouchier received so severe a wound in the arm, that he was under the necessity of going below; as was every officer, whose health had suffered him to appear upon deck, excepting the first lieutenant, Inman, on whom the command of the ship devolved. Captain (now Admiral) O'Brien Drury was a

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\* The frigates which engaged the Hector were l'Aigle and le Lion, which had been sent, in the first instance, to intercept our American convoys, and, afterwards, to proceed to America with some land forces. In consequence, however, of the warm reception which they experienced from the Hector, they were compelled to leave their station, and were fallen in with by some of our cruisers. L'Aigle was taken, and sent to New York; and le Lion was captured, as she was proceeding to the West Indies to be repaired. Thus the enemy were deprived of two frigates, through the severe drubbing which they experienced from the Hector.

passenger in the *Hector*; and the conduct of Lieutenant Inman appeared to him so gallant, so persevering, so perfectly that of a British seaman, that he conceived a friendship for him, which terminated only in the death of its object.

The damages which the *Hector* had sustained in the engagement were prodigious. Her previously crazy hull was almost torn to pieces; whilst her masts, sails, and rigging, were rendered useless by the shot. Her emaciated crew had performed prodigies of valour; but they had yet to encounter calamities more serious and more dreadful. A few days after the action, a tremendous storm arose, in which the *Hector* lost her rudder, and all her masts. The leaks increased to such an alarming extent, that the hold was filled with salt water, and a great quantity of the provisions and fresh water was totally spoiled. This trying situation imperiously demanded the exertions of every individual on board; but, to keep the pumps constantly going, was a task greatly beyond the ordinary powers of the sickly and deficient crew of the *Hector* to perform. Lieutenant Inman, for the safety of the whole, was under the necessity of resorting to pistols to enforce his commands, which, at this time, were more dreadful than death itself. Numbers of the crew were so exhausted, so completely worn out by incessant fatigue, that they dropped from their severe labours into the arms of death; while others, on being relieved, lay down amidst the torrent of water which was thrown up, till they were again aroused to their duty.—To beings in such a situation, life can have no charm. What, then, must be the feelings of the officer, who, witnessing the rapid approach of his ship and men to destruction, finds the stimulus, which dire necessity alone compelled him to resort to, fail of its desired effect! For a fortnight, intreaties, commands, and threats, were almost unavailingly made use of; for a fortnight, Lieutenant Inman never enjoyed one hour's repose: to the few, on board, who were not absolutely indifferent to life, hope was nearly extinct; some of the men preferring, even courting death, to a continuance of their hardships. The only remaining sail had been fothered, and drawn under the ship, in the forlorn hope of diminishing the influx of water, but without the slightest effect: the decks were sinking, and some of the beams of the orlop deck had actually fallen into the hold.

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The sick died apace ; the small quantity of spirits, which, for some time, had kept the remainder of the crew from perishing, was exhausted ; and, for four days, they were reduced to the deplorable necessity of existing without either spirits or water. At this distressful period, a sail was providentially seen. Fully to estimate the value of such a discovery, is perhaps not possible, unless by those who have been in a situation precisely similar. Life, so late an object of indifference, is, all at once, desirable ; the idea of friends, of all that is dear, rushes upon the mind ; every link of nature is more firmly rivetted than before ; and the chain that unites us to the world is again complete. Such, at least, were the effects which the prospect of deliverance produced on the wretched sufferers of the *Hector*. The active impulse of hope invigorated their feeble frames ; and the pumps were once more manned, and worked with alacrity, till the approaching vessel came within hail.\* She proved to be the *Hawke* snow, a letter of marque, belonging to Dartmouth, commanded by Captain John Hill, from Lisbon, and bound to St. John's, Newfoundland. She is thus minutely mentioned, because the conduct of her commander deserves to be commemorated in letters of gold. The distressed situation of the *Hector* was no sooner known to this humane and generous man, than, without calculating on the risk to which he and his crew might be exposed, he applied himself to her relief. He remained by her all night ; and, in the morning, he took Captain Bourchier, and all that survived (about 200) on board. Lieutenant Inman saw every man out of the *Hector*, before he quitted her ; and, in ten minutes after, she went down ! An escape more providential, or more critical, cannot easily be conceived.

For the accommodation of the crew of the *Hector*, Captain Hill threw the greater part of his cargo overboard ; a proceeding which was rendered necessary by the smallness of his ship. The *Hawke*, however, was still so much crowded, that only a certain portion of her new inmates could be allowed upon deck at a time ; an arrangement with which they cheerfully acquiesced. The evil most dreaded was that of famine ; as the provisions necessary for the

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\* On the 3d of October.

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voyage, with a small crew, could but be sparingly issued to a greatly increased number. A suitable portion of meat, and only half a pint of water, became, consequently, the allowance of each man daily. At this proportion, the last cask of water was broached when land appeared; and, the wind proving favourable, the ship fortunately reached St. John's the same evening.\*

When the late distresses of their visitors became known, the hospitality of the inhabitants was universal; every hand, and every house, were open to them. The seamen, considering Lieutenant Inman as their preserver, chaired him through the streets of St. John's, amidst the loudest plaudits of the populace, for the steady perseverance and courage which he had displayed during their trials; virtues through which, by the aid of providence, he had happily succeeded in restoring them to their friends and families.

From his great, and almost super-human exertions in the Hector, Lieutenant Inman, soon after his arrival in England, was attacked by a fever; but he fortunately recovered, and, a peace immediately ensuing, he sought, at his father's, a temporary enjoyment of that liberty and relaxation, which an eight year's absence had rendered greatly desirable.

At the time of the Spanish armament, relating to the possession of Nootka Sound, in 1790, his services were again called for, and he was appointed to the Latona frigate, Captain (now Admiral) Bertie. He remained in the Latona about a twelvemonth, when he was removed to the command of the Pigmy cutter, of 14 guns, stationed at the Isle of Man. To a young officer of spirit, such an appointment is very desirable and satisfactory: desirable, as it affords opportunities for the display of gallantry, not always to be

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\* The following anecdote, though it may perhaps shock the delicacy of the over fastidious reader, will forcibly illustrate the feelings which may be induced by a scarcity of what may be regarded as one of the essentials to our existence.—At the time that the crew of the Hector were on half-pint allowance of water, per day, on board the Hawke, Lieutenant Inman, a black servant, and another, received their respective proportions together. By some accident, the black put one of his feet into the mess-bowl where the water was; when, to prevent loss, his stocking, which had not been off for three weeks before, was wrung into the bowl, the contents of which were immediately afterwards drank!

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contained, on account of rank, in larger ships; satisfactory, a proving that zeal and abilities are not, at all times, unnoticed.

The *Pigmy* was not of the largest class of cutters, nor a very prime sailer: and though her commander was not fortunate in his captures—in consequence, perhaps, of the latter circumstance—a combination of events rendered the command, and the station on which she was employed, delightful. At this period, Lieutenant Inman formed a matrimonial alliance with Miss Dalby, the sister of Captain Dalby, of the royal navy. The civility and politeness which every officer on the Isle of Man station is sure to experience from the inhabitants, are almost proverbial. To Lieutenant Inman, the Athol family paid particular attention; an attention which every individual on the island seemed anxious to emulate. Perhaps this spot, so enchantingly delightful, both from the urbanity of its inhabitants, and the variety of its amusements, presented Lieutenant Inman with the happiest moments of his life. But, like all other human joys, they were destined to terminate. After remaining about two years at the Isle of Man,

“ The war, that for a space did fail,  
Now trebly thundering swell'd the gale;”

and the commander of the *Pigmy* was removed into the *Victory*, the flag-ship of the commander-in-chief, then proceeding for Toulon. Active operations soon afterwards took place there;\* and, as a reward for the indefatigable zeal which Lieutenant Inman displayed, Lord Hood appointed him to command *l'Aurore*, of 32 guns, one of the ships which he had assisted in bringing out of the harbour.† *l'Aurore* was immediately stationed against a battery, in the vicinity of Hieres, where she continued, for a long time, engaged in the most arduous duty. That the reader may form some idea of this duty, it will suffice to state, that she expended no fewer than 8000 balls during the first month, and 12,000 the second; the enemy rebuilding in the night, what the frigate had destroyed in the day. This, it is obvious, was no

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For the details of these operations, *vide* NAVAL CHRONICLE, Vol. II. pages 25, 102, 192, and 288.

† Captain Inman's post commission bore date October 9, 1794.

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common service ; but Captain Inman had the credit of performing it completely to the satisfaction of the commander-in-chief.

After the evacuation of Toulon, *l'Aurore* sailed for Corsica, and then to Malta, where she took in thirty volunteers, to recruit her crew ; which, from having nearly eighty men short of her complement, was very weak. Thus strengthened, *l'Aurore* rejoined Lord Hood off Corsica, where she was ordered to receive on board a number of prisoners ; some of whom were those who had been taken by the *Juno*,\* at Toulon, and others belonged to the army, their aggregate numerical amount greatly exceeding that of the crew. The prisoners were placed in the hold, and a certain number of them, as usual, admitted on deck at a time. This gave them an opportunity of observing the weakness of the ship, which suggested the idea of endeavouring to retake her. Fortunately, the scheme was disclosed soon after its formation ; some of the Maltese, faithful to their engagements, imparting it to the captain. The discovery was not made known, but measures were secretly taken, to crush the plan of the conspirators, the moment that its execution should be attempted. It had been ascertained, that, at a certain time, a French colonel, one of the conductors of the plot, was to come upon deck, to see whether every thing might be quiet, and favourable to their views. Orders were consequently given, for blowing his brains out, on his setting his foot on the first step of the ladder. Accordingly, on the appointed signal, the gunner, to whom this duty had been assigned, clapped a pistol to his head ; but it missed fire, and the colonel escaped with his life ; convinced, however, that the plot had been detected, and every preparation made to receive the conspirators. Of this they were farther assured in the morning, by the ring-leaders being put into irons, and their aiders and abettors confined in smaller bodies.

What rendered the intentions of the Frenchmen particularly nefarious, was, that the officers, who headed the conspiracy, had been treated, at the captain's table, more as brother officers and

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\* Sir Samuel Hood's interesting narrative of the escape of this ship, will be found in our memoir of that officer, *NAVAL CHRONICLE*, Vol. XVII, page 10.



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friends, than as enemies and prisoners; necessity alone, from the short complement of the crew, being the cause of their being put below.\*

Soon after this affair, l'Aurore was dismasted, near Corsica, when she put up jury masts, and made for Gibraltar. The prisoners now became exceedingly noisy, turbulent, and vexatious; and, previously to the ship's arrival at Gibraltar, one of them, a carpenter, was induced to bore a hole in her bottom. Fortunately, she reached her port in safety; when, as a just punishment for the mischievous conduct of the Frenchmen, she was placed under the batteries, in a depth of water just sufficient to allow her to sink, without risking her eventual loss. The officers and crew of l'Aurore all went on shore, and the Frenchmen were told, that they must administer the remedy themselves, for their own works. This, at first, they flatly refused; nor, until the water came up to their middles, did they make any effort to save themselves. The prospect of death, however, aroused their energies, and they applied to the pumps with the utmost activity. To many, it will be satisfactory to know, that it cost them several days hard labour, before the leak was got under. When that had been accomplished, they were delivered to the garrison, as prisoners, with a statement of their refractory conduct.

Captain Inman was removed from l'Aurore to the St. Fiorenzo, and, almost immediately after, to the Romney, which was ordered to England with convoy. Being in want of repairs, she was paid off on her arrival, and her crew turned over to another ship. Captain Inman consequently returned, once more, to enjoy the sweets of domestic life; but his retirement was short, as, in 1796, he received an acting order for the Lion, of 64 guns. Having remained in her about six months, his next ship was l'Espion, an old eight-and-thirty gun French frigate, which was ordered to the mouth of the Clyde, as a guard-ship. While sailing down Chan-

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On the morning after the detection of the plot, the colonel, while at breakfast with Captain Inman, exclaimed—" *By Gar, Capitaine, I vas very near kill, last night!*"—" Yes!" retorted the captain, "I am only sorry he did not blow your brains out!"—The Frenchman shrugged up his shoulders, and was silent.

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nel, for his appointed station, with Mrs. Inman and his family on board, l'Espion encountered a most severe gale, which, with great difficulty, she weathered, so far as to be able to reach Sheerness. There she was declared unfit to proceed again to sea, without a thorough repair; which, as she could not then receive, she was put in ordinary.

Captain Inman remained some time unemployed.—The next ship we find him in is the *Belliqueux*, immediately after the mutiny at the *Nore*.\* That the *Belliqueux* was not one of the least conspicuous ships on that melancholy occasion, is sufficiently evident, from the fact of three of her men having been hung, and eighty punished, during the first two months. So precarious, indeed, did the officers conceive their situation to be, that Captain Inman, who, throughout this anxious time, evinced the most undaunted firmness, never lay down without a brace of pistols in his pocket, and another under his pillow. These trials, however, were surmounted; and Captain Inman's perseverance was rewarded, by the excellent behaviour of the ship's company during the remainder of his command, which, in the whole, did not exceed six months.

Captain Inglis, the actual commander of the *Belliqueux*, having recovered from a serious indisposition, and rejoined his ship, Captain Inman was immediately appointed to the *Ramillies*, then one of the blockading squadron, off Brest, under the late Admiral Lord Gardner.† On this service he was employed, throughout the winter of 1798, struggling with continued gales, which, for their violence, the oldest seaman had never seen exceeded. The excessively hard duty which they occasioned, frequently obliged all hands to be upon deck, during the whole twenty-four hours.

Having braved these hardships—the common lot of seamen—till the beginning of the year 1799, Captain Inman was removed into

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\* Some interesting particulars of this mutiny will be found in our memoir of the late Admiral Lord Duncan, *NAVAL CHRONICLE*, Vol. IV. page 98, *et seq.*

† A memoir and portrait of this respected officer will be found in the VIIIth Volume of the *NAVAL CHRONICLE*, page 177; and a memoir and portrait of his son, the present Admiral Lord Gardner, are given in the XXIst Volume, page 357.