

## NAVAL HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

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### LIGHT SQUADRONS AND SINGLE SHIPS.

ON the 1st of January, 1809, at daylight, the British brig-sloop *Onyx*, of eight 18-pounder carronades and two sixes, with 75 men and boys, Captain Charles Gill, cruising in latitude  $53^{\circ} 30'$  north, longitude  $3^{\circ}$  east, discovered on her lee bow a sail standing to the southward. As soon as the *Onyx* had made the private signal, the stranger, which was the Dutch brig-sloop *Manly*, of 12 English 18-pounder carronades and four brass sixes (two of them stern-chasers), with 94 men and boys, Captain-lieutenant W. Heneyman, of the Dutch navy, hoisted her colours and hove to, as if prepared for battle. The British brig kept her wind until 8 A.M.; then, being perfectly ready, bore down and brought the Dutch brig to close action. The *Manly* made several attempts to rake the *Onyx*, but the superior manœuvring of the latter frustrated every attempt. At 10 h. 30 m. A.M., being much cut up in sails and rigging, and having most of her guns disabled by the close and well-directed fire of her antagonist, the *Manly* hauled down her colours, with the loss of five men killed and six wounded; while that on the part of the *Onyx* amounted to only three men wounded: a difference in execution very creditable to the latter's young ship's company, especially considering the difficulty of pointing the guns, in the turbulent state of the sea.

The slight superiority of force was on the side to render the parties about equally matched; and the officers and crew of the *Onyx* were entitled to great credit for the bravery, as well as skill, they displayed. It gives us pleasure to be able to add, that Captain Gill was immediately made a post captain, and that Lieutenant Edward William Garrett, first of the *Onyx*, be-

came also promoted to the rank of commander. Having, previously to her capture by the Dutch in the river Ems, been the British gun-brig of the same name, the *Manly* was permitted to resume her station among her old class-mates in the British navy.

On the 2nd of January, at 11 A.M., being off the Welbank near the Texel, standing to the southward, the British 12-pounder 32-gun frigate *Aimable*, Captain Lord George Stuart, discovered a strange sail upon her weather-quarter, standing to the northward and eastward. Suspecting her to be an enemy, the *Aimable* wore round and made all sail; and, at 4 P.M. on the 3rd, after a chase of 24 hours, came alongside of the French ship-corvette *Iris*, of 22 carronades, 24-pounders, and two long 12 or 8 pounders, with a complement of 140 men, commanded by Captain Joseph-Jean Macquet. After a running fight of a few minutes, the *Iris* hauled down her colours.

To the credit of the French crew in the use of their guns, the *Aimable* had her mainmast shot in the head, mainyard shot away in the slings, mizenmast head, mizentopmast, and trysailmast shot away, and her rigging and sails greatly cut up. With all this damage, however, damage which very nearly caused the escape of the French ship, the *Aimable* had only one seaman and one marine slightly wounded. The loss on board the *Iris* amounted to two killed and eight wounded.

The *Iris* had sailed from Dunkerque on the 29th of December, with 640 casks of flour on board, bound to Martinique. She was a ship of 587 tons, launched at Dunkerque, October 12, 1806, and became added to the British navy by the name (an *Iris* being already in the service) of *Rainbow*. Her English armament was 20 carronades, 32-pounders, on the main deck and six carronades, 18-pounders, and two long sixes on the quarter-deck and forecastle, total 28 guns: with a net complement of 173 men and boys.

On the 5th of January, at noon, latitude 39° 24' north, and longitude 11° 41' west, the British 38-gun frigate *Loire*, Captain Alexander Wilmot Schomberg, fell in with the French ship-corvette *Hébé*, of 18 carronades, 24-pounders, and two long twelves, with a crew of 160 men, commanded by Lieutenant Guillaume Botherel-Labretonniere, in the act of taking a ship and brig. On the *Loire's* approach, the *Hébé* bore up and made all sail, deserting her two prizes, and leaving the brig destitute of men. The *Loire* went immediately in chase, and at 8 P.M. got alongside of the French ship and brought her to close action. The

Hébé defended herself for about 20 minutes, and then hauled down her colours. Neither ship appears to have had a man hurt.

The Hébé was from Bordeaux bound to Santo-Domingo, with 600 barrels of flour. She measured 601 tons, and was afterwards added to the British navy by the name (a Hebe being already in the service) of Ganymede. The armament established upon her was 22 carronades, 32-pounders, on the main deck, and 10 carronades, 18-pounders, and two sixes, on the quarter-deck and fore-castle, total 34 guns ; with a net complement of 173 men and boys.

On the 22nd of January, at 7 A.M., the British 18-gun ship-sloop Hazard, Captain Hugh Cameron, cruising off Guadaloupe, discovered in the south-west a ship and schooner standing in for the land. The schooner presently steered a different course, seemingly to induce the Hazard to follow her ; but the British sloop, in a very gallant manner, bore up for the ship, which was the French 40-gun frigate Topaze, Captain Pierre-Nicolas Lahalle, from Brest since the early part of December, with 1,100 barrels of flour, bound to Cayenne ; but, having found that port blockaded by a “superior force,” she was now on her way to Guadaloupe. At 9 A.M. the British 12-pounder 32-gun frigate Cleopatra, Captain Samuel John Pechell, hove in sight, in the south-east, and about the same time the 38-gun frigate Jason, Captain William Maude, made her appearance to the southward. Thus hemmed in, the Topaze had no alternative but to haul close in-shore ; which she accordingly did, and at 11 A.M. came to an anchor, with springs, under a small battery a little to the southward of Pointe-Noire.

Owing to light and baffling winds, the chasing ships made very slow progress, until about 2 h. 30 m. P.M. ; when the regular sea breeze, or east-north-east wind, enabled the Cleopatra to begin working up towards the enemy. At about 4 h. 30 m. P.M. the Cleopatra got within 200 yards of the shore, and within half-musket shot of the Topaze. The latter immediately opened her fire ; and, as soon as she had anchored with springs upon her opponent’s starboard bow, the Cleopatra did the same. In a short time, having had her outside spring shot away, the Topaze swang in-shore, with her head towards the Cleopatra ; who thereupon raked the French frigate with destructive effect, and so well maintained her position, that the Topaze could not, at any time afterwards, get more than half her broadside to bear. At the expiration of 40 minutes from the commencement

of the firing, in which the battery on shore had, from the first, taken a part, the Jason and Hazard came up. While the Hazard cannonaded the battery, the Jason brought to on the starboard quarter of the Topaze, and opened a fire from her bow guns. Thus assailed, the French frigate had no chance of escape, and therefore, at 5 h. 20 m. P.M., hauled down her colours.

Neither the Jason nor the Hazard sustained any injury from the frigate or the battery; and the damages of the Cleopatra, on account of the secure position she had taken and the high firing of her antagonist, were chiefly confined to her rigging. The loss on board the Cleopatra, for the same reason, amounted to only two seamen killed and one wounded. The Topaze was tolerably struck in the hull, especially about the bows, and had, as acknowledged by her officers, 12 men killed and 14 wounded, out of a complement, including 100 soldiers, of about 430 men. One-third of these, when the frigates surrendered, took to the water; and several must have been drowned, or killed by the Jason's shot, in attempting to reach the shore. The Topaze, the same that, in July 1805, captured the *Blanche*,<sup>1</sup> was added to the British navy under the name of *Alemène*, a Topaze being already in the service.

On the 8th of February, at 2 P.M., the British 16-gun brig-sloop *Asp*, Captain Robert F. Preston, and 14-gun brig-sloop *Supérieure* (with only, it appears, four of her carronades, 18-pounders, on board), Captain William Ferrie, cruising to the southward of the Virgin islands, discovered and chased a ship standing to the northward, with the wind at east-north-east. At 3 P.M. the leading brig, the *Supérieure*, having got into the latter's wake, tacked and stood directly for her. The ship, then about seven miles ahead, was the French 40-gun frigate *Junon*, Captain Jean-Baptiste-Augustin Rousseau, from the *Saintes* four days, bound to France. At 11 h. 30 m. P.M., when distant full four miles to windward of her consort, and about two astern of the *Junon*, the *Supérieure* fired a shot at the latter to bring her to; but the frigate, very naturally, disregarded the summons and pursued her route to the northward. In the course of the night the *Asp* dropped completely out of sight, and at daylight on the 9th the *Supérieure* and *Junon* were left to themselves. At 8 A.M., just as the *Virgin-Gorda* bore from the *Supérieure* north-west by north distant five or six miles, the latter fired several shot at the frigate; who, at 10 A.M., hoisted French

<sup>1</sup> See vol. iv., p. 39.

colours, and fired two harmless broadsides at the brig, then about two miles off, on her lee-quarter. Even this did not check the ardour of Captain Ferrie. The *Supérieure* merely tacked to avoid a repetition of the salute, and then again pursued the French frigate; who, after bearing away to fire, hauled up again on the starboard tack, with the wind now at north-east by east. In the afternoon the 38-gun frigate, *Latona*, Captain Hugh Pigott, made her appearance to leeward, and joined in the chase.

On the 10th, at daylight, the *Supérieure* had the *Junon* on her starboard and weather-bow 12 miles off, and the *Latona* at about the same distance on her lee-quarter; all three vessels upon a wind, as before, steering about north by west. The brig soon shortened her distance from the *Junon*, but the *Latona* rather increased hers; and, from her great superiority of sailing over the latter, the *Junon* would no doubt have escaped, had not, at 10 h. 30 m. A.M., latitude  $19^{\circ} 50'$  north, longitude  $61^{\circ} 30'$  west, an enemy suddenly hove in sight upon her weather bow. This was the British 38-gun frigate *Horatio*, Captain George Scott, steering on the opposite or larboard tack south by east, and having astern of her, at the distance of about 15 miles, the 18-gun ship-sloop *Driver*, Captain Charles Claridge. At noon, having made out the *Horatio* to be an enemy's frigate, the *Junon* put right before the wind; but, in less than half an hour, perceiving the *Latona* standing across her path, hauled up again, and, having previously hoisted French colours, resumed her course to the northward, Captain Rousseau rightly considering that, if he could disable the weathermost frigate, he should, in all probability, be able to outsail the one that was to leeward.

At 36 minutes past noon the *Horatio* and *Junon* met on opposite tacks, and exchanged broadsides in passing. The *Horatio* then wore, with the intention of engaging her opponent to leeward; but the *Junon* wore almost at the same instant, and, having run a short distance to leeward, hauled up again on the starboard tack. In the meanwhile the *Horatio*, having come round more quickly, raked the *Junon* astern with her larboard broadside. The *Horatio* then ranged up alongside of her antagonist to windward; and the two frigates, running on upon the starboard tack, became closely and warmly engaged. At 0 h. 50 m. P.M. Lieutenant Manley Hall Dixon, first of the *Horatio*, was badly wounded by a musket-ball, which entered his left groin and passed through his thigh; and at 1 h. 10 m. P.M.

Captain Scott received a severe wound in the shoulder by a grape-shot. The command now devolved upon Lieutenant the Hon. George Douglas. At 1 h. 25 m. the *Horatio* had her main and mizentopmasts shot away, and at the same moment descried the *Latona*, at the distance of about eight miles upon her larboard and lee quarter, close hauled upon the starboard tack, standing towards her.

By 2 h. 12 m. P.M., besides the loss of her main and mizentopmasts, the *Horatio* had had her mainmast badly wounded, and foretopgallantmast shot away; also the foretopsail-tie and lifts, which brought the yard on the cap, and left her with only the foresail set. At this moment the *Junon*, having only her foretopsail-tie shot away, was enabled to range ahead out of gunshot. Now was the time for the *Driver* to have rendered assistance; but that sloop, although her signal to make more sail had been hoisted at 2 P.M., was still two miles distant on the *Horatio's* starboard-bow. The *Supérieure*, however, was near at hand, and raked the *Junon*, as the latter, with her three masts standing certainly, but with scarcely any rigging to support them, and with her sails all flying about and hull visibly shattered, put away nearly before the moderate breeze, which the previous heavy cannonade had then left blowing.

At 2 h. 24 m. P.M., Lieutenant Douglas hailed the *Supérieure*, and directed the brig to take the *Horatio* in tow, to enable her the more quickly to get again alongside of her antagonist. The *Supérieure* did as she had been ordered; but the *Horatio*, having set her foretopsail and hauled aft her main sheet, was presently going upwards of five knots with the wind on the quarter, and the brig cast her off. At 2 h. 40 m. P.M. the *Driver* fired her bow-chasers at the *Junon*, then nearly a mile distant from her. This sloop continuing to yaw about as if she was afraid to advance, the *Horatio*, at 2 h. 50 m. P.M. directed the *Supérieure* to make the *Driver's* signal to engage more closely.

Having, agreeably to his orders, hoisted this signal, and doubting, as it was not obeyed, whether it was rightly understood, Captain Ferrie resolved himself to show its practical meaning. Accordingly, at 3 h. 4 m. P.M., the *Supérieure* hauled across the French frigate's stern and gave her a broadside, in a very gallant style; but, having only two 18-pounders, not in so effectual a manner as the *Driver* might have done with her eight 24-pounders.

Finding that the force of example was in the present instance thrown away, the *Horatio*, at 3 h. 10 m. P.M., repeated the

Driver's signal to engage more closely, with two guns shotted. This produced some effect, for in five minutes the sloop set her foresail and steered towards the Junon, who was now firing at the Latona, as the latter was advancing to engage her. At 3 h. 25 m. P.M. the Latona, having arrived within pistol-shot, opened her broadside; and shortly afterwards the Driver, becoming more bold from having so efficient a consort, hauled across the French frigate's stern and discharged her broadside, receiving in return from the Junon's chase-guns a fire that cut away her foretopsail-tie and wounded one seaman. In five minutes after this, being closely pressed by the Latona, the Junon hauled up on the starboard tack, and had scarcely come to the wind, when her previously wounded main and mizen-masts, unable to resist the lateral pressure against them, fell over the side. The French frigate instantly struck her colours. This was at 3 h. 40 m. P.M., and in two minutes more the Junon's foremast fell over her bows. When that took place the Horatio was not above a mile and a half distant, with her starboard foretopmast and lower studding-sails set, rapidly approaching.

The Horatio, out of a crew on board of about 270 men and boys, had one midshipman (George Gunter) and six seamen killed, her captain, first-lieutenant (Manley Hall Dixon), boatswain (Andrew Lock), and 14 seamen badly, and one lieutenant of marines (Richard Blakeney), one master's mate (Robert King), and seven seamen and marines slightly wounded; and the Latona, one midshipman (John Hoope) and five seamen slightly wounded; making, with the Driver's one wounded, the total loss on the British side amount to seven killed and 33 wounded. From the number of shot-holes low down in her hull, the Junon was in a very leaky state; and her loss was very severe, amounting, out of a very fine crew of 323 men and boys, to 130 in killed and wounded, including among the mortally wounded her gallant commander.

As the Horatio and Junon each mounted 46 guns of nearly the same caliber, had they met singly, a fairer match could not have been desired; and, notwithstanding the skilful and resolute manner in which the Junon was manœuvred and fought, the relative damage and loss sustained by the two ships leaves it scarcely doubtful which combatant would have ultimately gained the victory. That the Junon, when at 2 h. 12 m. P.M., she made off from the Horatio, was in an unmanageable and defenceless state, may be inferred from her running to leeward directly into the fire of another enemy's ship: whereas, could she have

hailed to the wind, her escape would have been certain, as the *Horatio* could set no after-sail to enable her to chase in that direction. Moreover, Lieutenant Jean-Léon Emeric, the French commanding officer, upon the removal of Captain Rousseau from the deck, declared that nearly all the injury done to the *Junon*, both in *matériel* and *personnel*, arose from the fire of the *Horatio*. When, also, the *Latona's* officer came on board to take possession, M. Emeric refused to deliver up his sword until the arrival of an officer from the *Horatio*—pointing to her; and Lieutenant John James Hough, third of that ship, presently afterwards came on board and received it. The case, in other respects, displays nothing very striking, unless it be the conduct of Captain Ferrie of the *Supérieure*, who, in his little vessel, so closely and perseveringly pursued the French frigate; and who, during the action between the *Junon* and the *Horatio*, did more with his four guns than the commander of another sloop that was present did with his 18, and those, too, of a heavier caliber.

The prize was nearly a new frigate, and of rather larger dimensions than the *Horatio*, who was herself one of the finest British-built frigates of the 18-pounder class. The *Junon* was carried to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and, as soon as repaired, was commissioned under the same name, as a cruising frigate in the British navy.

A contemporary, contrary to his usual practice, has been induced to give a somewhat detailed account of the action, which ended in the surrender of the *Junon*. Were it not for one circumstance, the source of his information might be gathered from the following paragraph: "This, we believe to be as accurate and impartial an account of the action as can be found. It differs a little from others, but we have merely placed Captain Pigott in his proper position, without taking away from the merits of Captain Scott and the *Horatio*."<sup>1</sup> We cannot suppose that any officer of the *Latona* would have made so gross a mistake respecting the "position" of that ship, as to say that she wore and "renewed the action on the larboard tack." We have now before us the log of every British ship that was present; and we may add, that those logs, coupled with private information of the highest authenticity, form the groundwork of our account of the *Latona's* proceedings. With respect to the *Horatio's* "throwing in stays under the stern of the Frenchman," it is sufficient to remind the reader, that the *Horatio*

<sup>1</sup> Brenton, vol. iv., p. 376.



engaged the *Junon* to windward. We leave it to Captain Brenton himself to reconcile the statement that the *Junon*, when she bore up, left “the *Horatio* a perfect wreck to windward,” with that disclaiming any intention of “taking away from the merits of Captain Scott and the *Horatio*.”

On the 8th of February the British 18-pounder 32-gun frigate *Amphion*, Captain William Hoste, cruising off Long island in the Adriatic, was joined by the British 18-gun brig-sloop *Redwing*, Captain Edward Augustus Down, with information that an armed brig and a *trabacculo* were lying in a small creek in the island of Melida. The frigate and sloop immediately made sail in that direction, and found the two vessels advantageously moored for defending the entrance of the creek; with a body of soldiers, which they had brought from Zara and were carrying to Ancona, drawn up behind some houses and walls.

A long 12-pounder on the shore, and the brig, which mounted six 10-pounder carronades, opened upon the *Amphion* and *Redwing*, as the latter were taking their position. The instant, however, that the British vessels brought their broadsides to bear, the French troops, 400 in number, as afterwards ascertained, fled in all directions, leaving the two vessels to their fate. The boats of the *Amphion* and *Redwing*, under the orders of Lieutenant Charles George Rodney Phillott, now landed and brought off three guns, and destroyed two warehouses of wine and oil. Nor, such was the panic spread among them by the cannon of the ships, did the French soldiers offer the least opposition to the British seamen and marines employed on this service.

On the 14th of February, in the morning, the British 38-gun frigate *Belle-Poule*, Captain James Brisbane, having been driven by a hard southerly gale about 12 leagues to the northward of the island of Corfu, discovered a suspicious vessel far distant on the lee bow. All sail was immediately made in pursuit; but, light and partial winds coming on, the *Belle-Poule* chased without success the whole day. Captain Brisbane, however, saw that it was the intention of the stranger, which was the French frigate-built storeship *Var*, of 22 long 8-pounders and four 24-pounder carronades, with a crew of 200 men, commanded by Captain Paul-François Paulin, to enter the gulf of Velona. The *Belle-Poule*, accordingly, steered in that direction.

On the 15th, at daybreak, the *Var* was discovered, moored with cables to the walls of the fortress of Velona, mounting 14 long 18 and 24 pounders; and, upon an eminence above the

ship, and completely commanding the whole anchorage, was another strong fort. A breeze at length favouring her, the Belle-Poule, at 1 P.M., anchored in a position to take or destroy the Var, and at the same time to keep in check the formidable force prepared apparently to defend the French ship. The Belle-Poule immediately opened upon the latter an animated and well-directed fire; and, as the forts made no effort to protect her, the Var discharged a few random shot, which hurt no one, and then hauled down her colours. Before she could be taken possession of, her officers and the greater part of her crew escaped to the shore. The Var measured 777 tons, and was added to the British navy as a storeship under the name of Chichester.

At or about the commencement of the present year the British 18-pounder 32-gun frigate Proserpine, Captain Charles Otter, by the orders of Vice-admiral Thornborough, took her station off the road of Toulon, to watch the movements of the French fleet. The boldness of her approaches at length determined Vice-admiral Ganteaume to detach a force to chase her away. Accordingly, on the 27th of February, the two 40-gun frigates Pénélope, Captain Bernard Dubourdiou, and Pauline, Captain François-Gilles Montfort, weighed and sailed out to execute that service. They in a short time discovered the Proserpine, and the latter, as she was bound, retired before them; but, no sooner had the two frigates put about to return, than the Proserpine put about also, in chase of several small sail of coasting-vessels, running along-shore towards Marseille. Failing in cutting off the convoy, the Proserpine stood off for the night, and in a short time lay nearly becalmed.

The French admiral now formed an excellent plan for surrounding and capturing the British frigate. At 8 P.M. the Pénélope and Pauline got under way, and were quickly followed by the 40-gun frigate Pomone; also by the two fast-sailing 74-gun ships Ajax and Suffren, Captains Jean-Nicolas Petit and Auguste-François Louvel. The two first-named frigates worked to the westward, under the high land of Cape Sicie, upon short tacks, with variable winds. At about 1 A.M. on the 28th, the moon rose in the north-east; thereby casting the ships that were under the land in complete shade, and throwing a light upon objects in the offing. Thus favoured, the Pénélope and Pauline, at 2 A.M., discovered in the south-west by south the unsuspecting Proserpine, lying becalmed, with her head directed towards them. The two French frigates immediately