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THE VOYAGE OF THE JEANNETTE.

CHAPTER I.

THE COMMANDER OF THE EXPEDITION.

Parentage and Birth. — Early Influences and Surroundings. — School Life. — The Choice of a Profession. — In the Law Office of Hon. John Oakey. — Forces his Way into the Naval Academy. — A Midshipman who dispenses with Red Tape. — Death of his Parents. — Marriage under Difficulties. — Promotion. — On the Juniata. — Commanding the Little Juniata. — A Perilous Boat Journey. — His Recollection of his Experience. — The Arctic Fever. — Powers of Endurance. — Temperament. — Frolics. — His Dealings with Men. — Testimony of an Associate.

George Washington De Long was born in the city of New York, August 22, 1844, of a family of Huguenot descent. His parents, who moved to Brooklyn when he was four years old, had no other child, but they had adopted a niece of his mother's, who was his principal playmate. His childhood was one of great seclusion. His mother, especially, was almost morbidly solicitous for him, so that he was jealously guarded from outdoor influences, and restrained from the ordinary sports of boyhood. The world seemed to the anxious mother full of perils for her boy, and she was unwilling that he should meet them in the near pursuits of swimming, boating, and skating. Home was made bright and happy, and every innocent and safe

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pleasure granted him, not only out of parental love, but with the constant purpose to shield him from danger and accident. His father was of an easy temper, who interfered but little with his education, only exacting strict obedience.

It was not hard for the boy to give this obedience, for the commands of the mother were never direct but through the subtler influence of a strong maternal love, and the disposition of the boy was one of generosity and docility. He was a hard student, thorough in his application to books, and faithful to his school work. His spirit and energy, hemmed in upon the adventurous side, found exercise in an intellectual ardor, and he was a fiery little orator and writer. Nevertheless, and it may be because of the repression to which he was so constantly subjected, he was restless and filled with an uneasy desire for larger liberty.

When he was eleven or twelve years of age he fell in with some tales of naval exploits of the War of 1812, which recounted the heroism of young midshipmen, Porter and Farragut being especially named, and his ambition was kindled to make as great a reputation for himself in the same profession. Shortly after, in 1857, he was selected as a candidate, from the public school which he attended, for an appointment to the Naval Academy, but his parents refused their consent, to his bitter disappointment. They had other plans for him, and proposed to enter him at the Free Academy, now the College of the City of New York, when an accident occurred which led to a change in his life. On one of those straight marches home from school which parental law had made a part of the routine of his life, he was the mark for a party of his companions who shot their snow and ice balls at the exclusive little

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De Long. A blow on the ear caused an injury which required two or three months' detention in the house under the doctor's care, and in this enforced leisure the boy and his mother discussed his future career. She gave him the choice of being a doctor, a priest, or a lawyer, and of the three professions that of doctor seemed to open the largest promise of activity. At any rate, when the boy had recovered he proposed to find out something about the life before he prepared for it, and so engaged himself with his friend who had been treating him, and stayed with him several months.

A familiarity with the outside of a doctor's life and an attendance upon a few painful operations satisfied George De Long that he had no aptitude for this profession, and he found little difficulty in bringing his mother to his way of thinking, when he unfolded to her the incessant risks which a doctor ran of contracting a great variety of contagious diseases. The next profession was that of divinity, and his mother was urgent that he should study for orders; but without going through any preliminary experimenting with the life of a priest, the boy resorted to the argument which had already served him well, and drew such a picture of the privations and hardships of a priest's life, and the dangers to which he was exposed in his contact with the sick and the dying, that he succeeded in dimming for his mother the brighter spectacle of a possible cardinal, and in securing a reprieve for himself.

The arguments which he employed were the ingenuities by which he persuaded his mother; they were not the convictions which moved him. He had a resolute, courageous spirit, which impelled him to a life of free activity; but he had also the fine spirit of obedience and loyalty, which forbade him to break away

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from the restraints of home, and roughly rebel against the authority of love. Meanwhile he amused himself with books, the friends which his secluded life had given him, and spent day after day at the Mercantile Library, where he read voraciously, feasting especially upon books of adventure and travel. He attached himself to the librarian, helped him about his duties, and even filled the office for a few months during an interregnum. His restlessness was not satisfied, but was stimulated by his reading, and Captain Marryat and other seductive mariners again gave him an almost uncontrollable longing for the sea.

He was still, however, an obedient son, and when his parents refused to yield to his wishes, he yielded to theirs, and entered the law office of the Hon. John Oakey, who became warmly attached to the boy and placed great confidence in him. It was shortly before the breaking out of the War for the Union, and upon Mr. Oakey's entering the service, George begged hard to accompany his friend, and urged him to use his influence in persuading the inflexible parents. Mr. Oakey did indeed urge them to let the boy go, telling them that a little rough experience would curb his restless and ambitious spirit, and make him more willing upon his return to remain at home the rest of his days, — a well-worn line of reasoning which often has an uncommon likeness to good sense.

It may readily be believed that the perils of army life would scarcely affect the imagination less than those belonging to a learned profession, and neither the boy nor Mr. Oakey could carry the day. This incessant friction, however, began to produce its result, and it is not unlikely that as George's ardor was increased by his sense of national danger, so his parents' will was

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weakened by the contagion of spirit in the community. A place in the army had been denied the boy, and he turned again with redoubled zeal to his first love, the navy. He went to his father and said: "I want to go to the Naval Academy. You say you will not assist me; but if I obtain an appointment myself, will you give me your consent and allow me to enter?" His father laughed at what he thought was his hopeless determination, and answered, "Very well, if you can accomplish such a feat, I will make no further objection," and his mother also gave her consent to what she imagined to be impracticable.

With this perfunctory sort of permission the boy went to work with a will. He wrote to Washington for the necessary information regarding candidates, and then applied to know if there were any vacancy to be filled by an appointment from the Third Congressional District, represented at the time by Hon. Benjamin Wood. The Department replied that there was no vacancy, that gentleman having made his appointment. George meanwhile had enlisted the aid of his friend Mr. Oakey, who went at his request to Mr. Wood and urged the boy's name, and of Father, now Vicar General, Quinn, who was Mrs. De Long's spiritual adviser. Father Quinn knew the boy well and was ready to help him. He also went to Mr. Wood and easily proved himself a powerful ally. It must be said, however, that there was no influence quite so effective as the boy's indomitable will. He learned suddenly that a cadet who had been appointed by Mr. Wood had been obliged to leave the Academy from some affection of the eyes. This was his opportunity, and he gave no one any rest till he received the appointment, when he went to Newport, where the Academy was then stationed, and passed his examination.

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Just at this juncture the officers at the Academy received a dispatch from Mr. Welles, Secretary of the Navy: "Do not accept Mr. Wood's appointee for the navy." Back to New York rushed De Long and demanded of Mr. Wood the reason for the dispatch. Mr. Wood showed him a letter from the Secretary, by which it appeared that the nomination of De Long had been delayed, and that the cadet whose place he was to fill had recovered his health and been reinstated. "So that ends the matter," said Mr. Wood; but it did not at all end it in De Long's mind. He burst into a vigorous invective against the Department. It was all wrong. Mr. Wood had been imposed upon. It was because he was a Democrat that this injustice had been done, and the Republican Secretary was depriving the Congressman of his rights. He ought not to stand such treatment an hour. Mr. Wood was amused and moved by the zeal of the young advocate, and finally said: —

"Do you sit down, Mr. De Long, and write what you want to the Secretary. I will sign the letter, and you can take it to Washington yourself if you like."

The letter was written and De Long set off at once to Washington. It was in the fall of 1861, when the trains were packed with soldiers, and the boy had to stand all the way from Philadelphia to Washington. He reached the city at six in the morning, and as soon as he could get something to eat, presented himself at the door of the Secretary's office, and was ready when the hour came for business. He entered and handed Mr. Wood's letter to the Secretary. Mr. De Long often enjoyed telling of that interview; how he watched the various expressions of Mr. Gideon Welles's face as he read the tempestuous letter, which the boy had written.

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When the Secretary finished, he pushed his spectacles up and looked at his visitor.

"And you are Mr. De Long, are you? Well, well, this is a very strange state of affairs. Mr. Wood seems very much excited; but he is laboring under a delusion. We have no intention of slighting him in any way. You can return to the Academy. I will give the necessary orders for your reception there, and please say to Mr. Wood that he shall not be deprived even of his imaginary right."

So it happened that there were three cadets from the Third Congressional District this time, and one of them, who had won his position by sheer persistence, was entirely satisfied with the state of affairs. He applied himself vigorously to the work of the Academy, and was graduated with distinction in 1865, just as the war came to a close.

He received his first orders for sea duty in November of that year, when he was ordered to Boston to report to Admiral Stringham for duty on board the U. S. Steamer Canandaigua. Upon arrival at the navy yard he went at once to the vessel to inspect his quarters. He looked all over the ship, and finally entered the steerage where he was to spend the next two years. He inspected it very thoroughly and found that there were but two berths in it, while it was to be occupied by four midshipmen; two therefore, it was plain, would have to swing in hammocks. This was not at all according to his views of what was proper, and off he set to see the admiral about it, and have the matter righted. On his way across the yard, he met some officers who asked him where he was going. He told his errand, and they at once approved it in the most emphatic manner.

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"That's right!" they said. "The thing should be attended to. Just speak to the admiral positively about it, and you'll get what you want."

The young midshipman was shown into the office of Admiral Stringham, an erect gentleman with white hair, and sharp black eyes, who sat at his desk writing. His visitor advanced toward him, cap in hand, and said: —

"Admiral, I am Midshipman De Long of the U. S. Steamer Canandaigua. Sir, I have been inspecting my quarters on board, and I find only two bunks in the steerage for four midshipmen. I came, sir, to ask you to have two more berths put in before we start for sea."

The admiral looked up quickly and said: "So you are Midshipman De Long of the U. S. Steamer Canandaigua?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, Midshipman De Long of the U. S. Steamer Canandaigua, I advise you to return on board the U. S. Steamer Canandaigua, and consider yourself very happy that you have any bunks at all in the steerage."

The admiral was better than his word, however. His amusement was greater than his amazement, and he ordered the additional bunks to be made. Years afterward he met again the innocent and resolute midshipman and laughed heartily over their first encounter.

The cruise of the Canandaigua was along the western coast of Europe and Africa and in the Mediterranean, and was a little over three years in duration. Mr. De Long was promoted successively to be ensign and master, and, shortly after his return to New York, to be lieutenant. After a short leave of absence, he was ordered to the U. S. Steamer Lancaster, then at Norfolk,

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Va., but while she was preparing for sea he was placed on duty in Washington for practice in signals. Whilst on this duty he was telegraphed for to come to his mother's sick-bed. His father had died while the Canandaigua was absent on her cruise, and Mrs. De Long had been left alone. She had a passionate love for her son, and his long absence, in a life which was repugnant to her choice for him, was a grievous burden to her. She was brave and unselfish, and refused to embitter his life with her complaints; but her death, which occurred now, brought afresh to him a sense of the relations they had sustained to each other, and his naturally buoyant nature was greatly depressed when he rejoined the Lancaster, which had been ordered to the South Atlantic.

His depression was deepened by the fact that he was waiting for the expiration of a three years' delay, which had been agreed upon between him and the father of the lady to whom he had offered himself in marriage, and whom he had met at Havre, where she was living at the time of the Canandaigua's cruise in French waters. His eager, impetuous nature wore out two of the three years, when the delay became insufferable. He obtained leave of absence, and presented himself in Havre in February, 1871, where his persistence and resolution made good the third year of his waiting. The Franco-Prussian War was nearing its close. An armistice had been declared, but Havre was accessible only from the sea; communication with Paris was cut off by the Prussian army and the breaking up of bridges and railways. The harbor was occupied by a number of foreign men-of-war, sent for the protection of neutral interests, and among these was the U. S. Steamer Shenandoah.

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Such neutral interests as Mr. De Long enjoyed were especially in need of protection by a United States man-of-war; for after all difficulties had been removed, and the resolution taken at noon of March 1st to have the marriage performed in the evening of that day, since the bride's father was compelled to return to America, fresh difficulties sprang up. Marriage in France is a civil contract, and Mr. De Long saw the necessity of securing the presence and services of General Glasgow, the United States Consul. The consul, however, had gone into the country, and for several hours the anxious bridegroom was driving frantically about on a search for him. General Glasgow, when he was at last found, began to explain the formalities which were required; but Mr. De Long was too busy for any trivial matters, and was off on the more important errand of buying a wedding ring. The bride's family meanwhile had secured the services of the Rev. George Washington, a clergyman of the Church of England.

At eight o'clock a few guests assembled, and the clergyman and consul were present. Everything was in readiness when General Glasgow turned to the clergyman and said: —

"I suppose you have the proper authority to perform this ceremony. You know in France marriage is a civil contract."

"I have no authority whatever," he replied; "but I suppose that if you, as United States Consul, witness the ceremony, the marriage will be legal."

"On the contrary," said General Glasgow, "consuls have no power to marry or witness marriages on French soil; the United States Minister at Paris is the only person having such authority. This marriage cannot proceed; it will not be legal." Here was a sore

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