

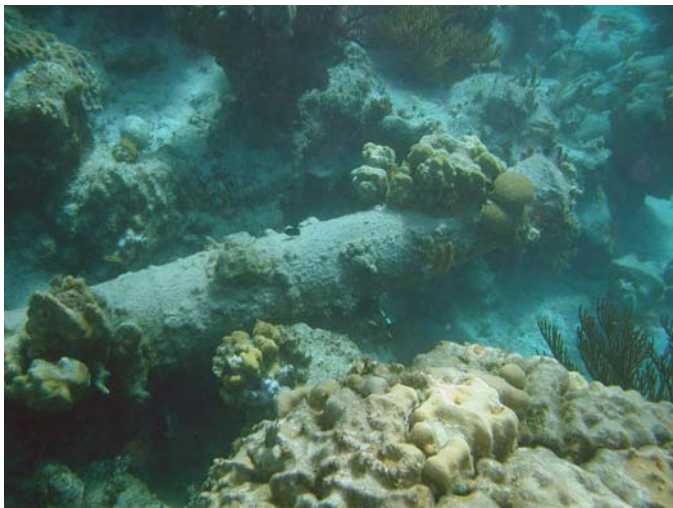
The British 32-gun frigate *Southampton* (Captain Sir James Lucas Yeo) and the captured ship in tow, *The American 14-gun brig Vixen*

**Lippold Haken's pictures of the War of 1812 Shipwreck
near Conception Island, Bahamas**

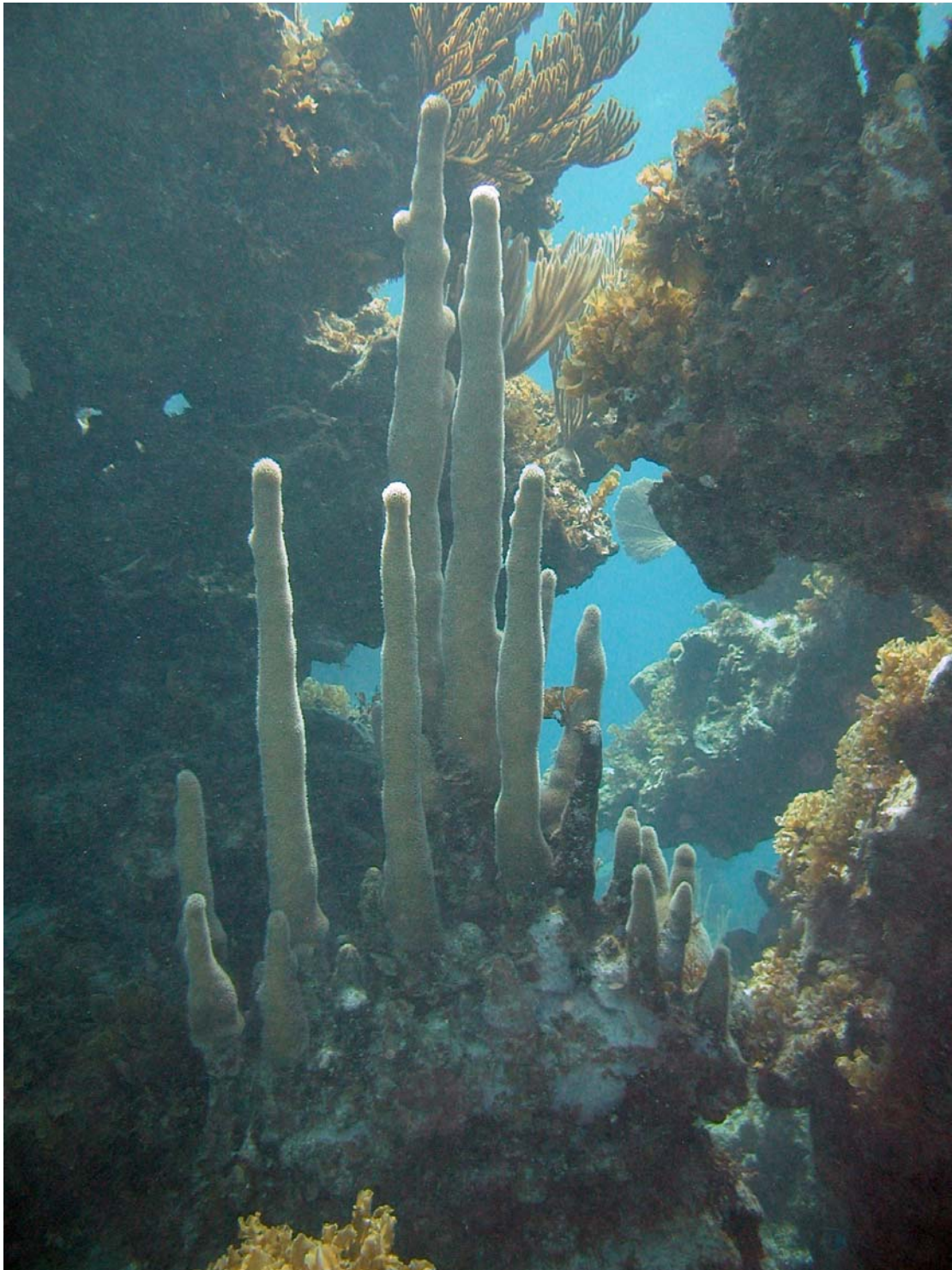
I was on a summer 2004 R/V Sea Dragon dive trip that included Conception Island, Bahamas. We spent a few days diving on the Southampton reef line. I thoroughly love the variety and beauty of that reef (please see my slide show at <http://www.cerlsoundgroup.org/Bahamas/>), and could not get enough of it. After many hours of enjoyable diving I was snorkeling and discovered a large number of cannons nestled among beautiful corals. Here are three picture of one of the cannons I saw:



More cannons (and remains of armor plating in some of the pictures):



It was a beautiful scene, so I tried to remember my path as I snorkeled the quarter mile back to the Sea Dragon. When I described what I had seen, Captain Dan was excited – he had been looking for the wreck of the famed 1812 British frigate Southampton and its ship-in-tow, the American brig Vixen for years. I am not certain he believed what I described (Capt. Dan has heard a lot of fish stories!), but he wanted to check it out. I was happy able to find the wreck again – it is not easy, because the reef is extensive with deep chasms in shallow coral extending above the water. Here is a picture from the snorkel back to the wreck:



As you can guess from the picture above, it is difficult to keep your bearings when you are snorkeling through passageways and coral tunnels. When we found the wreck, the Captain could positively identify the Southampton not only from the many cannons and armor plating, but also from the distinctive shape of the two huge anchors. We took pictures of each other; I am the guy in the blue button-down shirt (my wife no longer lets me wear that shirt when I teach at the University); Capt. Dan Doyle is wearing a T-Shirt:



One of two Southampton anchors:



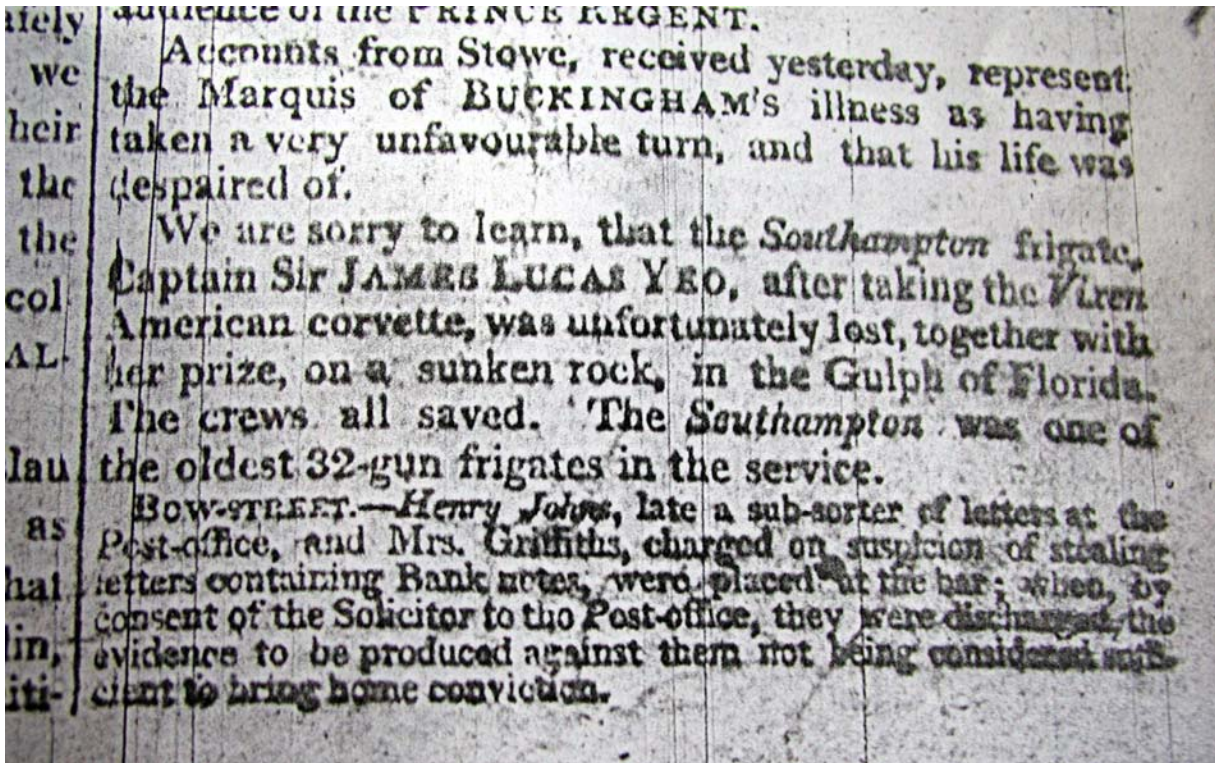
If you would like to use any of the text or pictures from this web site for any purpose, you may do as long as you give credit to Lippold Haken. Please contact Lippold L-Haken@uiuc.edu for full-resolution images, or for my opinion on the R/V Sea Dragon and Captains Dan and Sue, or any other questions you may have.

After we returned to the Sea Dragon for dinner, Captain Dan showed various documents he had collected about the Southampton and the Vixen. He has a copy of court hearings in Britain (1813), in which Captain Yeo and his crew were interrogated to determine if they were at fault in the fair-weather loss of both the Southampton and the Vixen. The hearings are interesting to read; the writing is very refined and proper, even when relating the obscenities one of the crewmen directed at Captain Yeo. This is a picture Ellen reading from the court hearings:



Lieutenant Thomas Trust of His Majesty's
late Ship, Southampton, called in, and
sworn.
The Court asked.
Q Was you Officer of the first Watch when the
Southampton got on shore?
A I was.
Q What Orders did you receive for your Guidance
that Night, and from whom?
A I received Orders from the Captain previous to
his going to bed at 12 past 6 O'clock to steer
S and by E, not to go less than four knots, and
if the Wind abated, I was to make more sail.
Q, What sail did you carry?
A Topsails double reefed, and foresail, we set the
Main Staysail when the Wind abated.

And this is a picture of an 1812 London newspaper article relating the loss of the Southampton, right before an article about a petty mail theft:



Captain Dan has a US War Department document that contains a Vixen crewman's letter to a friend about his experiences. The attitudes and prejudices of the time are interesting to read; my photographs of the document begin on the next page below:

A Narrative of the capture of the United States' Brig Vixen of 14 guns, by the British Frigate Southampton; and of the subsequent Loss of Both Vessels, on a reef of rocks, off Conception Island; with some account of the sufferings of the crew; their manner of deliverance, and final deposit in the Prison-Ships at Port-Royal, Jamaica. By one of the Vixen's Crew, in a letter to a friend.

Two final pictures: a picture of me on a later return trip, and one of my dive buddy Jim (center) and Rip and Ellen looking at microscopic life collected near the reef:



NARRATIVE
OF THE CAPTURE OF THE
UNITED STATES' BRIG VIXEN,
OF 14 GUNS,
BY THE
British Frigate Southampton ;
AND OF THE SUBSEQUENT
LOSS OF BOTH VESSELS,
ON A REEF OF ROCKS, OFF CONCEPTION ISLAND.
WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE SUFFERINGS OF THE CREW ;
THEIR MANNER OF DELIVERANCE ; AND
FINAL DEPOSIT IN THE
PRISON-SHIPS AT PORT-ROYAL, JAMAICA.

THE WHOLE INTERSPERSED WITH
Various Remarks, relative to the Treatment shown to, and
Conduct observed by, the Prisoners.

BY ONE OF THE VIXEN'S CREW,
IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

NEW-YORK :
PRINTED AND SOLD AT THE OFFICE OF "THE WAR,"
No. 60 VESEY-STREET.

NARRATIVE, &c.

DEAR TOM,

When I last wrote you, I promised to dilate upon every thing I esteemed worthy of notice ; since which the vicissitudes of fortune have accompanied me in such a signal manner, that I cannot forbear giving you a sketch ; hoping at the same time, you will make every allowance for the many inaccuracies it may abound with, when you consider the time and circumstances under which I write.

On the 22d of October, 1812, at 9 A. M. the U. S. brig Vixen, George W. Reed, esq. commander, with a crew of 110 men, crossed St. Mary's bar, bound on a cruise of 30 days. All hands were in high health and spirits, and the hope of soon returning with some fruit of the consequences of war, tended to animate them more. The next morning we discovered a sail on our weather bow ; made sail and endeavored to come up with her, but she was soon out of sight. Ten days after another sail was descried on our lee quarter—set every inch of canvass, and gave sheet after her, but our exertions were ineffectual, as we did not gain much upon her. Whilst chasing this sail, another was perceived to be bearing down upon us, and gave every indication of her being a man-of-war brig ; we immediately hove to and awaited her nearer approach. As there was not the least doubt now but that she was calculated for offensive and defensive operations, capt. Reed summoned lieuts. Drayton and Davis, and required their opinion as to the propriety of engaging her ; which, being similar to his, every arrangement was made for the doubtful conflict. The ship's company being at their quarters, capt. Reed addressed

them in the following laconic, though in an emphatic manner: "Now, my lads, there she is—I expect every man to do his duty—Don't fire a gun until you are within pistol-shot—Take good aim, and show her fair play"—which was answered by three hearty cheers, not such as those which an electioneering mob have at command, but such as have confidence in their front, and execution in their means. But the appearance of the animation of our crew will not excite surprise, when it is known that the uniform good treatment they experienced from their officers rather stimulated them to display their exertions; and thus a mutual confidence took place, which, had their conduct been the reverse, would not have been productive of such eagerness.

But to return from this digression: As we were lying quietly to, we could distinguish her "dogs of war" peeping through their kennels; and when within about gunshot and a half, she gave us a specimen of round and grape, which was intended for our bows; we returned the compliment by planting a double-shotted 18 pounder nearly in her wake; she then gave us another gun, which fell short; run up signals, but not understanding them, gave her an assortment of grape. She then lowered her signals, and run up Spanish colors—hailed her and ordered her to send her boat on board; they exhibiting some difficulty in lowering the boat down, we dispatched ours with an officer to overhaul her; she proved to be a Spanish brig of 14 guns, from Havanna bound to Cadiz. Run up the boat, and shaped our original course. Thus was a day of anxiety passed over, which at first threatened serious consequences; and the visages of the crew were strongly depicted with aggravation.

Not wishing to be tedious in my narrative, I think it sufficient to say, that after being out thirty days, and chasing and boarding every thing we could possibly come up with, the "time and tide of our affairs" were suddenly changed, on the 22d Nov. 1812. At day-light in the morning, going before the wind, with steering sails set on both sides, and within 2 days' sail of St. Marys, the man at the mast-head reported a sail on our starboard beam. Her distance from us but barely permitting us to discern her sails, our apprehensions were not in the least disturbed as related to our safety; we therefore stood for her, but by 6 o'clock could make her out to be a frigate; tacked ship, in steering sails, and hauled upon a wind. By this time their look-outs discovered us, and the heavy press of sail which they immediately set, de-

monstrated that "heels" was the word. At 10, finding the chase gained on us, commenced starting water out of the fore and main holds to lighten the brig. At 11 a dead calm; out sweeps, and continued rowing without intermission until 12. We had now gained some advantage over the chase, but a breeze springing up, we quickly lost it. In sweeps, and, to lighten the brig still more, hove every heavy article in and under the boats, overboard, and stationed hands by the anchors to cut away when ordered. At half past 12 P. M. discharged all the shot from the racks, and at 1 cut away both anchors. At 2 P. M. the chase still gaining on us, hove two elegant brass 9 pounders after the anchors. Finding that, in despite of our exertions, the Vixen would not sail an inch faster than her old gait, we now had the melancholy satisfaction of knowing our capture to be certain; but we were determined to use every exertion to avoid it. Capt. Reed commenced manœuvring with the sails, which had only the effect of putting our capture off an hour or two. At 3 P. M. her teeth were visible; and at half past 3, coming up with us hand-over-hand, she gave us a shot, which fell short; three quarters past 3 another was sent, which went between our foremast and mainmast; answered them by running up our colors and firing a gun to windward. The chase having English colors up, and as it would have been madness to attempt to engage her, we fired another gun to leeward, hauled our colors down, hove to, and awaited her coming up. At 4 P. M. she ranged alongside, with "Constellation" painted on her stern; a boat was immediately lowered down, and a posse of seamen and marines, with the first lieutenant of the ship, and of marines, came on board; the former of which, upon being introduced to captain Reed, informed him the Vixen was a prize to his Britannic majesty's frigate Southampton, of 32 guns, sir James Lucas Yeo commander. Captain Reed then went on board, and, upon presenting his sword to sir James, it was returned with a high commendation upon the skill he displayed in endeavoring to save his vessel; the other officers individually received theirs also. We, however, were treated in a manner which our stations could not otherwise expect. Every man was allowed to take his bag; but from the number of prisoners, the bedding could not be received on board the frigate, as there was not room enough for us to enjoy the comforts of a well slung hammock. Upon our arrival on board, each man was taken down, and we were es-

corted to the fore and main holds by a "body guard of marines." Excepting the confinement, which their own safety would dictate, and which the rules of war prescribe, we suffered no inconvenience. Twice a day we were permitted to be on deck, to enjoy the fresh air; tho' as only one half were allowed to be up at once, we inferred that they were fearful of us. Our time slipped insensibly away when below, either in listening to a "*long yarn*" by some tough hand, or to the melody of our Fifer;* who, for aught I know, may be a descendant of Orpheus, though the breed was probably changed in Æsop's time, as all the representations I have seen of that character, bear a strong resemblance to him.

You must naturally suppose, dear Tom, that that habitual inquisitiveness, which is inherent in Virginians, had its full play when I understood who had taken us. I had read in the American newspapers a challenge, said to have been written by sir James, to capt. Porter, of the Essex. The impression I had imbibed was not favorable to his character; and, to speak plainly, I had put him down as a segment of the Bobadil species, or as a descendant of Bacchus, who, when in his cups, aped his prototype in true character. You may be assured I felt a pleasure upon enquiring of our officers the treatment they had received, when I understood that it had been marked by the quintessence of politeness and attention—my faith wavered as to the heresy of sir James; and when I considered that the Vixen's were upon short allowance when they were captured, and that the Southampton's were equally as bad off, I could not say that that man was bad who allowed us a ratio nearly equal with those whom he had immediately to provide for. My prepossession relative to him were rather augmented than diminished, and I conceived that I had become a complete dissenter, when I said that sir James was not the author of said challenge. The officers, who dined with him daily, assured me he pledged his honor he never wrote it, and from his bare deportment only, its truth was verified. The printer, no doubt, had sufficient authority for its publication, but the writer can lay no claim to the character of an "*arch wag*," or even to that of a friend to his country; because, had we fallen into the hands of a narrow-minded man, and one whose character had been bandied about as his had been done, it is most probable

* Frederick Bagley, of New-York.

that we should have had to pay for the impudence of a witting.

Nothing material transpired until the 27th November, when we were doomed to experience another change of fortune. During this day the weather was fine, and but a small sea running; the Vixen was in company, and every expectation had been indulged of being in Jamaica in four or five days. At about half past 11 P. M. the look-outs forward sung out "Land, ho!" The ship was immediately put about, and answering stays, no danger was apprehended. For half an hour longer she jogged on cheerly; when, exactly at 12 o'clock, the Southampton struck. A signal gun was immediately fired. The Vixen, in coming to our relief, also struck at a small distance from us, on our starboard bow, and a rock penetrating through her bow, she filled in a short time. All hands were called, and when it was ascertained that the Southampton was completely wedged in between the rocks, and that she had sprung a leak, the prisoners were permitted to come on deck; they immediately manned the pumps, whilst some, intermingling with the crew, lent a hand in observing the orders of sir James. The topgallant yards and masts were sent down, and the topmasts struck. The boats were hoisted out, and an officer was sent to explore a safe passage through the rocks. Provisions and spirits were got up out of the after hold, while the pumps were worked without intermission. At about 1 P. M. the lieutenant and crew who had charge of the Vixen, with the American officers' servants, who remained to take care of their trunks, arrived on board—Reported that the Vixen had bilged, and that their lives were the only possible things that could be saved. Day-light was anxiously waited for; for, though from the fineness of the weather and the easy position in which the Southampton laid, no immediate fear was indulged as to her going to pieces, yet we did not know but that day-light would expose us to horrors far worse than our uncertain situation then presented. A raft was constructed, on which it was intended, should it become necessary, to deposit such provisions as might be saved. A passage having been discovered through the rocks, and day light presenting an island about ten miles to the westward of us, the cry of "Away, there, you Vixens, away!" denoted that the prisoners were to embark in the first boats. I went in the third boat, in which there were 45 men; no clothing was permitted to be carried ashore, because as every ounce counted, the consideration of clothing would retard the

endeavors to save all hands. If there was any difficulty in clearing the rocks around the ship, there was still more in effecting a landing. A ledge extending all along the shore; the surf beating with violence against it; and the passages but barely admitting the boats, rendered it hazardous to accomplish our object—and even when the end had been nearly gained by jumping overboard up to the middle, we were certain of being overwhelmed in the briny element by each roll of the sea. All hands, however, (with the exception of sir James, the sailing-master, and a few seamen, who resolved to stay by the Southampton that night) landed in safety, together with a small quantity of bread, which was damaged by the spray of the sea, and a few barrels of water. A fire being kindled, we dispersed ourselves about the island in order to discover water, (which was the object of our greatest solicitude) and to examine its productions.

The island we now knew to be Conception, or, as it is most generally called, Little Island. After a search of some hours, the party returned, who reported that they could discover no water; and that the productions were only Concks, Wilkes, Periwinkles, Land Crabs, &c. A reward was then offered to the first person who should discover water, and the next morning another party resolved to go out and search; when, after exploring nearly the whole island, a small pond was discovered a short distance from our encampment. Its quality had not the most pleasant taste; it appeared to be impregnated with salt, and from the effect which it had upon our bowels, one would have supposed that some industrious apothecary had resided in its neighborhood—we were, however, not only thankful, but grateful; and could you but see with what greedy avidity it was sought for and drank, you would be convinced that more pleasure was experienced at each draught, than the voluptuary enjoys in his Bacchanalian revels, or the laborer in sipping the limpid stream.

Sir James, and those who remained on board the Southampton, now came on shore; and having found a better landing place, and a situation better adapted for an encampment, we removed there, and transported such provisions, &c. as had been saved. The boats were employed in going off and on to save every necessary article. A number of sails having been brought off, tents were erected, whilst those who were not fortunate enough to obtain any, constructed wigwams; the whole of which presented a most picturesque appearance.

Nearly all the provisions having been saved, hopes were entertained of an allowance equal to that which we had on board the Southampton; but, from the quantity damaged, and rendered nearly unfit for use, the prospect looked gloomy—and when in its distribution it was found that one pound and a half of pork, and a half of bread, either wet with salt water or crusted over with sand, was to support twelve men per day, it must be allowed that the coloring was considerably heightened. Necessity being the mother of invention, we applied to the old dame, who received us courteously. By her directions, each mess divided itself into three divisions—1st, fishing; 2d, concking; 3d, wooding and watering. The fishing party having but few materials, success did not crown their efforts proportionate to the zeal manifested; for, although fish were in the greatest plenty, yet hooks made of needles and pins, presented no very tempting appearance. The concking party, (of which I had the honor of being a member) were more fortunate. It might be truly said that we were on a land of concks; and if the children of Israel had reason to be thankful for the manna sent down from heaven, we had an equal cause to express our gratitude for this seasonable relief. But in procuring them, the laborer was "worthy of his hire." A walk of between two and three miles on a sandy beach, and when arrived at the place of deposit, another walk up to the middle, and occasionally swimming, to get into shallow water, together with an exposure to the scorching rays of the sun, which might be very gratifying to a Salamander, were a part of the difficulties we had to encounter. The heavy loads, however, which were procured, and an appetite that required no stimulus, compensated us for our exertions. Seated on the borders of a creek, four or five miles from the place of encampment, cracking concks, was no time to indulge levituous thoughts; but in despite of our unfortunate situation, I could not help remarking, that in each handsome conck destroyed, we were knocking in the head the pride of some good old-fashioned housewife's mantelpiece. There being about 300 men on the island, and allowing the low calculation of three concks per day each, it follows, that during the ten days we remained there, 10,800 were destroyed. The wooding and watering party had no trouble; as those articles were easily procured, such as they were.

The third morning after our landing, sir James dispatched two boats to procure relief; one to Cat-Island;

with orders, after representing our situation, to proceed to Nassau—the other to Exuma.

The next day all hands were mustered before sir James' tent, when he addressed them. I was then out upon a concking expedition, and regret that I was not present. However, the following is a pretty correct substance of the speech he delivered: He began by observing that the water which had been discovered was most probably rain water, and it behoved us to be as careful of it as possible; as, in the event of its drying up, the miseries to which we should be subjected could be easily imagined. We all had lives to preserve, and, for his part, he should be careful of his own. To prevent, therefore, any other calamity from befalling us, he should place sentinels over the pond, with orders not to permit any water to be taken away in vessels larger than tin pots. The propriety of this measure would be apparent to them on reflection, and nothing but the duty he owed to himself and the two ships' companies, could have induced him to adopt such a measure.

He then animadverted upon the conduct of some of his men, who had not behaved in a manner very proper; for, instead of rendering that assistance which their own situation demanded, they distinguished themselves by intoxication; and one particularly, by adding to his offence the crime of abuse. They might rest assured that punishment awaited them; and as for the abusive fellow, he should most certainly make an example of him.

The Vixens were then addressed, and thanked for the assistance they rendered. He observed that their conduct was such as to excite his admiration, and he cheerfully bore testimony that they had behaved themselves as men and seamen. He further said, that what influence he had with the admiral on the Jamaica station should be used to ameliorate their condition, and that it should be further exercised to procure a cartel for their immediate transportation to their own country. They were then dismissed.

On the fifth day, one of our seamen, *Thomas Dunnavon*, of Ireland, gave himself up as a deserter from the British service. He stated that he belonged to the *Garland* frigate, and deserted about eighteen months previous to our capture, and shipped for the *Vixen* in Charleston. He threw himself on the clemency of sir James, and indulged the hope that he would intercede for his pardon; which was promised him. I mention this circumstance, that no improper handle may be made of it.

Captain Reed framed a petition this day to the senate and house of representatives of the United States, and which I copied, for the purpose of transmitting to the seat of government ; but whether it was sent or not, I cannot determine. It was very brief, and came to the point at once—stated our capture by the Southampton—the subsequent shipwreck of both vessels—the miseries the crew endured—the length of time the greater part had been in the service of their country—the impossibility of settling their accounts, occasioned by the loss of the purser's books—and a commendation upon their conduct, both previous to and after his taking the command—and ended by praying that the wisdom of both houses would be directed towards devising some method for their relief.

Certificates were also made out for each individual, testifying to their having been on board the Vixen at the time of capture, and in the Southampton when wrecked. To what use they were appropriated, I could never learn.

Here it may be necessary to account for the manner in which the purser's books were lost, and also of nearly the whole of the clothing of the officers and men of the Vixen. In cases of capture by an enemy, the commander of the captured repairs on board first, his crew next, and the officers last. By the time the whole of our crew had been transported to the Southampton, it was nearly dark ; it was resolved that our officers should repair on board, and leave their trunks to the care of the wardroom servants, reserving some future day to send for them. A fair wind, however, continuing, sir James would not lose a moment by lying to ; the consequence was, that when the Vixen bilged, the trunks were included in the general wreck. Hence, then, the purser's books were entirely lost ; they were valuable not only to him, but to the government ; for all our crew had been nearly two years in the brig, and the amount of advances and clothing was considerable. The practice adopted in the British navy, of sending the accounts of the men in every two months, I think, is worthy of imitation ; as, had this been the case with us, the trouble and difficulty which must now accrue, to effect a settlement, would not be known.

The reason why the Vixen's crew did not save ALL their clothing, may be accounted for from what befel me. When I carried my bag on board the Southampton, the weight of it was as much as I could stagger under. It was deposited in the main hold, where we were confined.

In our embarkation for Conception I have already mentioned that no clothing was permitted to be carried in the boats. This order, however, did not have much bearing upon me then, for I found that whilst I was engaged at the pumps, my bag had been completely GUTTED, or to speak in plain terms, it was empty, and the contents strewn about the gun-deck amongst heaps of clothes, which reminded one of a "rag-fair freak," or the "devil to pay" in a slop-shop. The result then was, that when the boats brought off the clothing, they came in promiscuous heaps, whilst some, upon examining their bags, found, in lieu of what they expected—*sugar*. This, I believe, may be set down as a general reason why all the clothing was not saved; but, had some showed more exertions to preserve their lives and what was most absolutely necessary for our subsistence, not one single article would have been lost.

Early on the sixth morning, a small sail was discovered standing in for the island. The concking and fishing parties now remained inactive, because the supposition was natural that she had been dispatched to our relief. But we paid for it in the sequel, and we had the satisfaction (at least our mess had) of enjoying the only real hungry day we experienced on the island. At about 8 o'clock A. M. she came to anchor off the east part of the island. The skipper landed immediately, and reported that he had 18 sheep, and a quantity of meal, &c. which were sent by capt. Hunter, of Cut-Island, who had been informed of our situation by the officer dispatched in the boat, and who had proceeded for Nassau. He enquired if we had discovered water—informed him of the pond. He stated that he had not been on the island for 18 years, and that when he left it there was a well of excellent water on a branch of it, to the southward and eastward. Sir James, Capt. Reed, and himself, immediately set out to discover it, which was accomplished with little difficulty. Time had filled it up, but by digging a few feet under the surface of the earth, the water gushed out copiously. An empty hogshead was sunk, and a sign-post erected, on which was cut in large letters, "The Southampton's Well, 27th November, 1812," and an English Jack run up. Four sheep were killed this day, and half a pound of mutton and half a pint of meal served out to each man; this, however, was not sufficient, and we had again to resort to our old friends, the concks.

From this time to the period of our embarkation, vessels daily arrived; but those which most particularly dis-

tinguished themselves, were the Wreckers. These gentlemen came like hungry wolves, seeking whom they might devour; and appeared that if fear had not prevented them, the play of the "Shipwreck" would have been nearly naturally performed; as, although they had not a *Harry Hawser* amongst them, yet *Sharks* were in abundance. If Mrs. Radcliffe or *Monk-ey* Lewis should hereafter want the contour of any villanous looking characters to describe, they need only to be placed in our situation, when they will be able to show "nature as she is." Perhaps I may wrong the gentlemen; and, if so, I sincerely beg their pardons, and will endeavor to expiate my offence by sounding their praise far and near. But they must clear up the following circumstance, which happened to my mess, before I can retract my very *high opinion* of them: By good luck, one of my messmates had a couple of dollars: and by an equal coincidence of fortune, one of the Wreckers had a quantity of sweet potatoes, which it was supposed he intended to devote to that use which Scripture mentions, "hungry, and I fed them;" but he, charitable soul, had an eye to the "main chance," and gave us thirty of them for the very moderate sum of all we were worth! There being twelve in the mess, two potatoes and a half came to each man; and, allowing the high calculation of two mouthfuls to each potato, it follows that three cents were paid for each mouthful—which I call *WAGGING* with a vengeance.

Other instances could be given of the liberality of their dispositions, but this, it is presumed, will be a sufficient outline to mark the nature of their character. They were, however, doomed to experience some of the variations of fortune, and if shame had no share in their system, I am certain that fear preponderated. When sir James Yeo was informed that they were selling, instead of rendering assistance gratis, he plainly told them, that if he knew any other articles to be disposed of, he would pay them with interest; and no better plan could be devised than by impressing them into the king's service. The shops were immediately shut, a general embargo was laid on, and they, Yankee like, (though the comparison ought to be spared) consumed their own produce.

The Caledonia cutter, Rolla privateer, and government brig Rhodian, having arrived for the purpose of conveying the Vixens and Southamptons to Jamaica, on the evening of the 8th Dec. we embarked for the Rhodian. Our

manner of movement from the encampment was not altogether *à la militaire*; but I have seen militia companies whose movements very much resembled ours, with this exception, that our ear-piercing fife marched at the head instead of the centre, warbling the tune of "The Girl I left behind me."

The Vixens were consigned to the safe-keeping of the Rhodian; the Southamptons (with the exception of the marines) were distributed in the cutter and privateer. The same routine of mustering us was observed; and the same manner of confining us below was followed. The starboard side of the birth deck was allowed for our accommodation, and when all hands of us were below, there was scarcely room enough to move. The birth deck of a man of war is calculated for the convenience of the crew; and from the number of men on board the Rhodian, they enjoyed comforts which every man of war of her size does not afford. If, then, there was only room enough for her own crew, consisting of about 86 men, how much must those advantages be diminished, when 96 of us, and about 25 of the Southampton's marines were immured below? We were not permitted to go on the larboard side, except when the master's mate and his crew were cleaning up the starboard. In order that no innovations should be made upon the sacred functions of the cook, his galley was barricaded with old steering-sail booms and top-gallant yards, through which those who messed forward had an opportunity of seeing chickens, geese, &c. cooked on Epicurean principles, and of displaying their judgment by expatiating upon the fatness of some, and the nice flavor of others. Added to which, the superabundance of turtle soup, and the savory steams exhaled, reminded us of the exquisite pains which a London alderman enjoys, when viewing a mess of calipee and calipash capsized.

The first night we were held in "durance vile," our sufferings were greater than imagination could conceive—the heat of the weather, the compressed state in which we were huddled, the oaths and imprecations vociferated, whilst some poor fellow was bellowing for mercy, and praying they would not quite tread him to death, was a picture which could be only surpassed by the Calcutta Black Hole, or the Jersey Prison Ship of New-York. To get on deck, excepting by rotation, was impossible; sentinels were placed at each hatchway, who were neither remarkable for civility nor attention; which probably arose either from the natural antipathy the red coats

have to blue jackets, or from the interruption they experienced whilst enjoying a nap. The want of clothing was now the least matter for consideration; in fact, clothes were scarcely of any use. To keep a shirt on ten minutes, without its being in a condition for the wash tub or scrubbing brush, was impossible; and had the colliers of New-Castle paid us a visit, they would have been apt to class us as hod-men or pit-men. My mess being "chock forward," and opposite the galley, our situation was far worse than any other. The heat of the galley we presume to be above 110 by the thermometer of our feelings; and in the morning we were literally *boiled*, at dinner *roasted*, and in the evening *baked*. Yet, situated thus badly, I was once *twenty-two hours* below without being on deck but once, and then only for about ten minutes; and a shipmate who belonged to the next mess to us, was actually *six and twenty hours* without either seeing the combings of the hatches, or snuffing one draught of fresh air. The Rhodians may thank their stars for the proximity of Conception to the islands adjacent; and for fear of British cruisers which we knew swarmed about them, or else it is more probable our situations would have been changed—opportunities were not wanting—the effecting of the object in contemplation could have been easily achieved, both from our own exertions and others which presented themselves. To quit, however, the subject of the birth deck of the Rhodian, and to which I shall never advert but with sensations of horror, it will be sufficient that I say—place me on the uninhabited and desolate Island of Conception; let me be tormented with Alexander Selkirk's reflections whilst on Juan Fernandez; feed me with concks, periwinkles, and land crabs—but save me from the birth deck of the Rhodian.

It is but an act of justice to state, that captain Boss of the Rhodian knew not the extent of our sufferings—the master at arms was also sergeant of marines, made his daily report, and framed it to his own liking, which was delivered to the officer of the watch, who transferred it to the commander. Our complaints, therefore, did not reach him, and we suppose that he concluded our situations to be tolerably comfortable. Our number, too, might be urged as an excuse for not permitting more than twenty to be on deck at once; but this cannot merit plausibility if we take for matter of fact all the assertions which have been made relative to the prowess of Englishmen; and if it is considered that a jib could not be stowed, a

topgallant-sail furlled, or a topsail reefed, without the men having cutlasses dangling by their sides, it must be acknowledged that motives, other than those with which I am acquainted, induced them to adopt this precautionary, though to us, cruel measure. It is further necessary to state, that so far as relates to eating and drinking, we had a sufficient quantity; but with spirits depressed by confinement, and bodies rendered weak by continual perspiration, it cannot be supposed that our appetites were ravenous. Captain Boss has the appearance of a gentleman; his manners denote him to be a seaman; and if credit be given to his crew, who in such instances are the best judges, humanity is his distinguishing characteristic. We therefore freely exculpate him from any premeditated design to add to the miseries of imprisonment, and are disposed to admit that the wilful negligence of his subordinate officers produced our sufferings.

Favorable gales wafted us to Jamaica, where we arrived on the 14th of December. At about sun-set we commenced changing our birth to that of the Loyalist Prison Ship. This ship was originally a convict ship, and was employed in transferring the light fingered gentry to Botany Bay—whether she derived her name from the number of “most loyal subjects” who wished to enjoy the benefit of a salubrious climate; or whether those petition makers about the purlieus of Westminster, tired with the hackneyed phrases of “most loyal and most dutiful,” had determined to send the last remnant from their country, is not of much consequence; but this much may be said of her, that she resembles the representation of Noah’s ark capsized, and the dirt and filth with which her sides were plaistered, would lead one to conclude that a North-Carolina hog driver had just quitted her with his drove. Upon going aboard our ears were assailed with a din of noise which enabled us to judge of the confusion of tongues at the time of the intended erection of the Tower of Babel: We were welcomed, not by any court etiquette, but by the rough salutations of “More Yankees caught.” Questions were put to us which generally embraced three heads—“Who were we? Where were we bound? How were we taken?” Which being answered with equal modesty, in less than ten minutes, we had 360 new acquaintances, each of whom magnified or diminished the account given according to the several bearings and distances laid down by Tom Pepper*

As it was late when we arrived on board, we deferred overhauling this cargo of live lumber until the next morning; and, as we had some good old custom-house officers amongst us, we did not fear but that we should be able to detect any false papers, that would be presented. We contented ourselves, therefore, with turning in on our blankets, and the many heart-cheering stories which were related to us of centapedes twelve inches in length, rats about the size of a common cat; and snakes who regularly paid their nocturnal visits from the hold, did not very much tend to make our slumbers of the most pleasant kind. We, however, arose in the morning without having experienced any of the disasters, which it was so confidently predicted would befall us. Having appointed that necessary appendage to all regulated societies—a cook for each mess—we commenced our operations by reconnoitering the strange fleet, and having thrown out signals, which were duly answered, we effected a junction by forming the line, and resolved hereafter to co-operate together. The gun and birth decks were held sacred as being the places of deposit for the “swinish multitude,” whilst a small space on the spar deck, elegantly barricaded, was reserved for those of higher calling, such as lieutenants and prize-masters of privateers who were not entitled to the distinguishing honors of parole. Forward was erected a couple of brick tenements, which very much resembled family vaults, but were intended for culinary purposes; and just abaft them was a huge windlass, which might have answered for Goliath’s walking cane, but which was dignified by the appellation of “Fielding’s Court of Justice,” as it was here that the “limbs of the law” brought all matters to issue, whilst the “grave and reverend seigniors” pronounced judgment upon such characters as were convicted, not of stealing “my good name,” but a stray pair of trousers, &c.; and woe be unto the culprit who should be found guilty; he was immediately seized by two gentlemen of the tip-staff, denominated quarter-masters; tied, not to the ridge-ropes, but athwart the windlass—two grim looking geniuses, who are the idols of every man of war, yclept boatswain’s mates, brandishing in the air an elastic handsaw, denoted that the mysteries of freemasonry were now about to be developed; the different degrees being explained in a clear and *impressive* manner, the culprit was discharged with the satisfaction of being enabled to comprehend the ramifications of four and twenty lectures, while a recur-

rence to former practices was never known to happen, as the monotony of the handsaw was very grating to the feelings.

Midships was the grand scene of action—here those of a choleric disposition had an opportunity of restraining the impetuosity of their dispositions—old sores could be easily healed, and the disciples of the Mendozian school displayed their pugilistic skill. Umpires were appointed; bottle-holders for the accommodation of the disputants were stationed, and the fairness of each round was discussed and settled. The conqueror was generally greeted with three cheers, and the conquered, after giving his opponent a hearty shake of the hand, sojourned below to settle all animosities over a bottle of "Double Rectified Port Royal Particular."

The prisoners were divided into divisions, whose duties were alternately to wash decks, hoist in wood, water, and provisions. Should any be of a skulking disposition, or plagued with one of "Lazarus's fits," the most general method of restoring him to a proper sense of his duty was, by passing the end of a rope down and bending it on to his body—the rapidity with which he ascended, must have excited sensations somewhat similar to those which an æronaut experiences when wafted aloft in his air balloon.

Among the regulations for the government of the ship, it was thought necessary to command that no liquor should be brought on board. The wisdom of this measure, and the impossibility of eluding the vigilance of the sentinels, are so well known, that the most dunderheaded loblolly boy may enjoy a laugh at the admiral's expense whenever he can raise the chink; and I'll assure the old gentleman, that is, if he "came through the hawse-hole," that the conviviality which an exhilarating draught produces, would, were he present, induce him most heartily to "lend a hand to strap a block."

There being about sixty messes, each had a separate division apportioned out; the taste and genius of all became apparent upon the least observation: whilst some were seated around their table making cinet for, or else sewing hats, another were paying their devotions at the shrine of Bacchus, and yelling forth some ludicrous ditty; the next mess were listening to some pious book, whilst the succeeding were engaged at cards; and in that manner throughout the ship, exhibiting a diversity of dispositions rarely to be met with. Sky-larking during the day on the spar deck, or either fishing, or listening to

some retailer of "Galley News," and which most generally embraced the immediate sailing or arrival of a cartel, formed "food for the subsistence of the weary hours." Night, however, was reserved for the grand operations; at sunset we were all ordered below, and the hatches barred down and locked. Immediately the messes were illuminated; and now commenced a scene of hallooing, bellowing, quarrelling, fighting, drinking, singing, dancing, and card playing, which could be only equalled by the inmates of the infernal regions; yet, amidst this conclave of contending dispositions, the harmonious prevailed, and something like order would be established, after an hour had been exhausted in distributing useless wind. At 10, P. M. the PUBLIC ASSEMBLY was opened with a Grand Ball. The members did not possess the *tout ensemble* which distinguishes the polite gentleman from the coxcomb; the frivolous mechanic from the cringing quilldriver; they were all on a level, and from the heat of the weather the generality of them were divested of linen, while they kept time to the melody of our fifer, not with the "light fantastic toe," but with graceful shuffling, adopted after the manner of the Ethiopian vestrians when displaying the variations of "Old Virginia never tire;" or somewhat more similar to the music of a dozen black list men pumping thunder, or hammering rust off the belaying pins.* Following the example of polished society, they retired at a late hour; and tho' no interval was allowed for regaling themselves on a supper, &c. yet time was found to indulge libations at the shrine of Bacchus; and the ball generally concluded with the "master of ceremonies" and the amateurs huddled together in the middle of the ball room under the protecting influence of Morpheus.

The greatest curiosity we met with was his Royal Highness the Duke of York's 5th West-India Regiment, composed entirely of blacks. As the prisoners belonged to every section of the union, their regard for

* In some men of war, when the commander does not wish to inflict corporeal punishment upon an offender, he degrades him by putting him on the black list. *Pumping thunder* is one of the duties of the black list men: and consists in working a machine which throws the foul air out of the ship; the music produced is not unlike the melody of a pair of bagpipes out of order. *Hammering the rust off the belaying pins* is to be considered as merely introduced to support the simile; though cleaning them is as common as pumping thunder.

them preponderated as each State influenced: thus, a Kentuckian, Virginian, or South-Carolinian was continually pouring out anathemas against them, whilst those from the Northern States regarded them with a more favorable eye. Yet even these gentry operated as a stimulus to "drive dull care away;" their vernacular language, intermixed with the pure English so generally spoken in the West-Indies, formed food for amusement: and some of the prisoners possessing great imitative powers, scarcely suffered a day to pass without enjoying a *tete-a-tete*. They were, in general, civilly disposed; appeared to do their duty as so many machines operated upon by a mechanical impulse; and their only dread appeared to be, not having a sufficiency for *yam, yam*, as they call eating, or the operations of a drummer, beating the long roll to the tune of from 200 to 900 lashes. There are other curiosities attached to this regiment, but a respect for individuals in New-York induces me to be silent.

The provisions issued are by no means equal in quality or quantity with those allowed in the American Prison Ships. The following is the daily quantity:

*One pound and a half of Bread,
Half a pound salt Beef or Pork,
One gill peas or six ounces Rice,
Half an ounce of Salt.*

It was said by those who made provision for our sustenance, that exertions were made to procure the best kind; be this as it may, I believe I may say, without any fear of contradiction, that had it not been for the bum-boat women, the allowance would have made us rather meagre, as with them we exchanged part of our bread, &c. for cocoas and yams, by means of which fresh messes were formed. Complaints, however, were frequently made relative to the quality, and not unfrequently was disapprobation expressed in pretty plain terms that the allowance was not sufficient. How far this statement is correct, is known by a gentleman now in Baltimore, by the prisoners arrived in the *Cyrus*, and a further elucidation of this subject will be made by those in Port Royal as soon as they arrive.

The officers of the guard generally exerted themselves to prevent any impositions by the women, and upon the whole, studied the interest of the prisoners; they were

vor was, by following the bent of your own inclinations, provided you did not encroach upon their duties.

The commanders of the men of war visited the prison-ships daily—their duties were to hear complaints, inspect provisions, and see that the decks were clean. Some who came on board merely took a turn round the quarter deck with the officer of the guard, and returned, leaving those who had any complaints to make, or questions to ask relative to their own interests, very much prejudiced against them: Others were of a more accommodating disposition, and would condescend to hear any thing within the rules of propriety; but the favorite was captain Haynes, of the *Sapphire*, sloop of war—this gentleman did not wait for any preface being made to a prisoner's complaint—his first enquiries were—"are there any complaints? Is the bread good? Do you get good weight," &c. If it was intimated that the quality was not good, he would examine it himself; and if his opinion coincided with ours, (which was almost always invariably the case) the admiral would certainly hear of it, and frequently a better supply would be the consequence. Not only this, but other instances could be cited of his attentive disposition; the result then was, that he obtained the respect and esteem of all hands, whilst he was jocularly styled "*Old Belly Timber*." Among such a number of prisoners it could not be expected that every man would behave himself—the visiting officer was sometimes insulted by beings in human shape, affianced in disposition to brutes; but the apologies made by those of a superior mould, generally restrained him from proceeding to extremities.

The hospital boat regularly came off every morning for the purpose of carrying the sick to the hospital. The cleanliness of this building, the regulations by which it is governed, the attention paid by the physicians to the objects of disease, are subjects which I record with pleasure; and if praise is due to any particular individual, it must be awarded to Doctor Macnamara, head physician.

On the 4th of January an event happened which knocked all the expectations of the prisoners aback relative to the sanguine expectations they had indulged of soon returning home: Captain REED, from his anxiety to procure every comfort for, and if possible the liberty of his crew, exposed himself to the parching rays of the sun by daily passing and re-passing from Spanish Town to Port Royal and Jamaica, to settle, as we supposed, preliminaries with the admiral. Whilst every hope rested on

his exertions, and anticipation had already wasted us on our course for Columbia's shores; whilst the privateersmen and merchantmen fondly fancied that his powers would be productive of benefit to themselves, the intelligence came on board of his DEATH!! It operated as an electric shock—consternation was visibly depicted in every countenance—the sorrow manifested, argued as a precursor that our captivity would be lengthened. On the 2d of January he was taken ill; on the 4th he died, and a few hours after consigned him to the pallisades.* Every honor was paid to his remains; and though his crew did not follow him to the "narrow house," yet, upon his examination before the Great Court of Enquiry, they will bear testimony that he tempered mercy with justice; that their interest was his; and that the short time he commanded them, their affections, esteem and respect, were all his own.

As it was augured, so it happened. Every vestige, every hope of liberty vanished with his departed spirit; and though the honor of Sir James Yeo was pledged for our immediate return, yet were we doomed to count the "listless hours." The words of "great men" pass by as the "idle wind"—in this instance, however, there was an exception. Sir James, during the few days he remained on the island, exerted his influence with the admiral agreeably to his pledge; and we are satisfied that on his return to England, he left us under the impression that a few weeks would bring forth the object of his desire. He will hereafter learn, that when he was in distress, his enemies lent a helping hand, and that they were rewarded by being immured months on board prison-ships.

No cartels arriving, and as some of the prisoners were rather ambitious of providing for themselves without undergoing the formalities of an exchange, need it be wondered at that no opportunity was permitted to pass by without cartels being formed of such facilities as presented themselves? Hence, then, may be accounted for, the escape of nineteen, who had liberty to go a fishing in the dock-yard boat; of five privateer officers, who, on the night of the 6th of January, took a boat from alongside and made their way safe; and of eight more, who cut a passage through the bows out of the lower hold, swam to the Coromandel Hospital Ship, seized her boat, dragged it across the pallisades, and safely arrived off the east end of the island. They were however, picked up by the

* The place of burial.

Sea-Horse frigate a few weeks after, just as they were about making for Cuba, and lodged again in confinement. But to show to what lengths they would go to obtain liberty, I think it worthy to record the following daring exploit, which took place on the 29th January, 1813—others might be adduced, but this claims particular notice. The boat of the Loyalist was lying alongside; a heavy sea was running, and a stiff sea-breeze setting in; five men resolved to shove off in the boat; the sentinels were surrounded by the prisoners in order to obscure their view, and it was thought that if they could get under cover of the Coromandel, lying at about fifty yards distance, they would get off clear, as the sentinels on board of her would suppose that they were going to Port Royal; whilst the Loyalist prisoners would divert the attention of the sentinels by active capers, &c. Every thing succeeded until they got within twenty yards of the Coromandel. The officer of the Loyalist's guard was then walking about the cabin; he perceived the boat, and from her rapidity, judged that all was not right. He immediately ascended the deck, and inquired whither she was bound. No satisfactory answer being given, he ordered the sentinels to fire; five muskets were immediately discharged; by this time they had cleared the Coromandel, though not without receiving several volleys from her guard. Life and death were now at issue; the shot from the Loyalist and Coromandel fell like hail-stones around the boat; their exertions appeared to increase as the danger augmented; the man at the helm now rose and waved his hat in the air; the cheers they received from the Loyalist exhilarated their spirits. The admiral's flag ship fired two signal guns; her boat was manned and dispatched in pursuit of them. A boat lying alongside the L'Amethyst prison-ship, with half a dozen of, and another from Fort Augusta filled with soldiers, well armed, followed the flag ship's example. A Spanish schooner, outward bound, must have a hand in it; a musket was discharged from her at a few paces distant. The boats with the soldiers kept up a continual fire, and thus were these desperate men at one time exposed to four galling fires. The beach between Forts Augustus and the Twelve Apostles was lined with soldiers, to prevent the prisoners, should they land, from making their escape into the mountains. The admiral's boat was now coming up hand-over-hand with them; the soldiers were within half musket shot. Thus situated, they had only the alternative of surrendering or being shot. They tacked about and de-

livered themselves up to the officer in the admiral's boat. They were carried on board his ship, sentenced to confinement, which was put into execution, with the addition of being loaded with irons. They were liberated two days after. Not a man was injured, and though the shot whistled music about their ears, yet even the boat was not struck. It was calculated that near two hundred muskets were discharged; and some idea may be formed of the great utility of black regiments, by this display of their knowledge of fire arms.

The only credit those "Trencks in disguise" received, was, that they must be Englishmen, because Americans were incapable of conceiving, much less hazarding, the issue of such an exploit. Such language was ungenerous. The only method to retaliate would be to refer those who uttered it to Hull, Jones, and Decatur, when they would be introduced to men, compared to whom, those I have just mentioned are mere pigmies in valor.

Prisoners arriving almost every week, and there being more than 400 on board the Loyalist, a division was very properly ordered; as we stowed so thick that danger was apprehended from sickness, &c. The L'Amethyst had been previously fitted up as a prison-ship, and on the 21st January a draft was made of the Vixens with others, amounting in all to 180 men. This ship formerly belonged to Christophe; her crew mutinizing, they went over to Petion, and committed various depredations on all flags. The Southampton, sir James Yeo, was ordered out, either to drive off or capture her; and, as she had no commission, the crew were liable to all the pains and penalties of piracy. The Southampton came up with her, and after a contest of a short duration, captured and brought her into Jamaica. The hammering she received, joined with her age, rendered her unfit for service—she was therefore run aground on the south side of the island, and fitted up for the purpose already mentioned. Her accommodations exceed those of the Loyalist, both for convenience and comfort. We were all satisfied (as far as satisfaction may be indulged on board a prison-ship) with our exchange. But there was one part of her accommodations which gave great offence—and as any thing offensive to men in our situation could be easily removed to make room for clearer prospects, need it to be wondered at that it vanished almost instantaneously? The part that I allude to, was the "Black Hole," which was erected for the purpose of confining those of refractory dispositions, hoping that solitary confinement would produce

beneficial effects. The L'Amethyst was buried in the water nearly up to her birth deck; her sides were scuttled, and at high water it was overflowed about 6 inches. The gun deck then was reserved for the sleeping and eating department. A couple of holes, large enough to admit the body of a man through, were forgotten to be stopped up; so no difficulty remained in exploring her subterraneous recesses. As we were about commencing house-keeping again, and as we were situated like the unfortunate tenant whose furniture had been distrained for house-rent by some rapacious landlord, our first object was to procure wood to make tables, &c. The spar and gun decks presented no timber; to eat on deck, after the manner of the Turks, was not what we had been accustomed to; the birth deck was therefore our only hope. Down we went; "darkness was visible;" a lighted candle being passed below, no vestige of the object we sought for could be discerned—at length the *Black Hole* was discovered; "down with the Bastile," was the word—to work all hands went, and in five minutes we had wood enough to rig tables for all the prison-ships in the West-Indies. The destruction of this remnant of modern tyranny, was accompanied with no dreadful consequences; the proceedings were reported to the agent; two men voluntarily acknowledged themselves as its demolishers, and they were punished by being put upon two-thirds of an allowance for ten days.

The orders for the government of the prison-ships specified, among others, that "*no newspapers, or political pamphlets*" should be brought on board for the perusal of the prisoners. This order, like any other, was contravened whenever opportunities presented themselves; and the greater exertions were made, upon the least surmise of there being intelligence from the United States; and, as your humble servant had the honor to be general reader to all hands, you may be assured that sometimes I was plagued with those symptoms which an attorney's clerk exhibits when reading over a voluminous heap of musty deeds for the benefit of half a dozen litigious clients. Generally, however, it was a pleasure to read, because the satisfaction given on a "home-made" subject was manifested by the plaudits of the hearers; and the acute observations passed upon each paragraph, especially if their bearings went against the interest of the United States, was a source of much amusement. To remedy the dearth of intelligence, which our circumscribed means did not

permit us to convert into a regular series of every thing grand and marvellous, the inmates of the two prison-ships resolved to establish papers of their own, and publish them twice a week. Their titles were, "THE TICKLER" of the Loyalist, and THE "L'AMETHYST JOURNAL" The principles by which they were governed were inimical to politics. The first page most probably presented a dissertation on the advantages derived from eating bread perforated with holes by vermin, as the general health preserved denoted that the excrements of the bugs was a happy substitute for beef and pork, of which our safe-keepers were so profuse, that it might be literally said we "eat bread and pointed." The second page was devoted to that wonder-working department which is the terror of grown up children; which gives life to the coffee-house, and energy to the supporters of a "war of words;" which relieves from *ennui*, and supports the famished soul that has been on a short allowance a day or two; which sets father against son, and son against father; which is passed unheeded by those who content themselves with attending to their own business; and which, in short, occasions more pulsations in the generality of the systems of the "Walking Telegraphs" about the purlieus of a printing-office, than any one thing which I can just now mention, and which comes within that department denominated News. Rumor, with her ten thousand tongues, had full play; the gulls were fed; the editors disdained the use of that machine more properly belonging to the female sex and men milliners, and which is as necessary an appendage to some printing-offices as a cat-o'-nine tails is to a man of war, and sometimes as dreadful in its effects. I mean a *pair of scissors*. They were no "scissor editors;" they were original characters; and, as they had license to publish what they pleased, without any fear of being exposed to the critical acumen of snarling cynics, you may be assured that a diversity of "shreds and patches" was exhibited; and if the risibility of any rusty countenance could be excited, they conceived they had received payment in advance.

The third and fourth pages were the deposit of editorial remarks and advertisements. The current reports of the day, the solemn annunciations of the Kingston printers were simplified and exemplified by the standard of truth. For instance, when it was reported that the Constitution and Chesapeake frigates were taken by a 74, the possibility or probability of such an event being true,

was just as likely as if it were attempted to persuade us that two hard biscuits were not equal to a yam, or that we ourselves preferred chewing "soft tommy" to substantial food. But when it was announced that the flag of the Macedonian had crouched to the towering eagle; that even British prints admitted the fact, though to us it was presented in a mutilated state; yet, in imitation of the illumination at Norfolk, our lamps were replenished with a double allowance of oil, while each man sung as an exemplification:—

*"And Decatur soon taught them with peals of Yankee thunder,
"To the flag of Columbia it was their duty to knock under."*

The advertising department exhibited a variety which denoted that its patronage was extensive: shoemakers, taylor, and barbers; lawyers, dancing-masters, and fiddlers; sugar-makers, mathematicians, quack doctors, and rope-makers, attracted the attention of the public by describing their several wares; and if they did not meet a "brisk demand," it was not owing to any ignorance in the art of advertising.

Harmoniously the two papers jogged on together; but as if to show the impossibility of enjoying constant gratification by any amusement, however innocent, an interruption was soon experienced. The Tickler, though possessing all the talents, as it was edited by a lawyer and a doctor, died a death which the annals of printing has no where recorded; and, as it may be said the editors of the Journal, who were a legitimate branch of the Dundrehead family, accelerated its exit by displaying a few impudent qualities, I can most solemnly assure you that with Pope they could heartily exclaim—

*"Curs'd be the verse, howe'er it flow,
That tends to make one honest man my foe."*

From a paucity of matter, the editors of the Journal, in their dignified wisdom, thought proper to review the Tickler, and I very much question whether any Grub-street inmate ever exhibited such writings when passing a quarterly inspection before those brimstone characters, commonly called "Edinburgh Reviewers," as the editors of the Tickler did. The doctor—heaven save the mark! being one of the faculty, and consequently a "learned man," was supposed to be the fountain-head, whilst the lawyer was considered as his amanuensis. A surgical case was submitted for their consideration, which was deduced from a fact that happened a few weeks previous, and in which the doctor himself was concerned. A privateer engaged an English brig, and, after a well-contest-

ed action, took her. An unfortunate Englishman, among others, was wounded in the calf of his leg; to any man in his senses the wound exhibited no very dangerous appearances, and the remedy prescribed was only what madmen would resort to. However, it was solemnly decreed by deliberate consultation, that amputation was necessary. It may be necessary to state, that there were two doctors on board the privateer, and that previous to commencing operations, their pericraniums, and probably their courage, were elevated by repeated doses of stimulus. To work they went; off flew the poor Englishman's leg, and before the arteries could be secured, he bled to death. The question submitted, then, for the consideration of the editors of the *Tickler*, was, in such a case, provided the surgeons were not afflicted by an amaurosis, whether a granny's or an overhanded knot would be most proper to secure the arteries? You will say that such a subject ought to have been handled in a different manner—granted—but truth loses none of its virtue by being presented in a quizzical shape; and as the editors of the *Journal* were feelingly alive in the cause of humanity, they thought this was the best method to expose a charlatan, and to show, that while they despised him for assuming a character which has humanity for its basis, they exposed him to the ridicule of four hundred of his countrymen, some of whom, most probably, will hereafter avoid entering in any vessel where this hewer of limbs might chance to obtain a birth. It may then be said that the *Tickler* was literally *quizzed to death*—a death, which I will undertake to say, is altogether novel, and one which, in the catalogue of diseases attached to the systems of newspapers, has, hitherto, not been mentioned in the bills of mortality.

I conceive I should act a very unpardonable part, did I pass by unnoticed the treatment the British government have manifested towards those men coming under the head of "IMPRESSED AMERICANS;" and as I am personally acquainted, and have messed with some of them, my information is derived from an authentic source. Upon the commencement of hostilities by the United States against Great-Britain, the news spread far and near; by some the measure was considered as the harbinger of our country's ruin, (the political part of this is foreign to my purpose) but to the impressed American a day of jubilee arrived. No sooner had the news mounted the "accommodation ladder" of each man of war, and before the "galley" was put in possession of the fact.

than the busy hum of voices, hitherto restrained to low murmurs by the discipline invariably observed, signified an approbation seldom before indulged. Those who had work cut out for them, or those who were attending to the duties of their stations, immediately threw up all, and that name which fear alone had prevented them from claiming as an immunity, was now boldly proclaimed, and, as Americans, they said they could not fight against the flag. Flushed with expectations, elated with gratification to which they had been strangers for years, they strutted fore and aft the gangways deliberating in what manner to broach the subject to the commander. Deliberation, however, forms but a small part in the character of an American seamen; there is a certain impulse which guides him when he would wish to be deliberative, that propels him to act, either exciting an extreme, or exactly to hit the mark. You may smile at this, and say I am sermonizing, and exhibiting a trait in my disposition which I seldom use in our correspondence—smile on—but God save you and I from even deliberating whether our birthright depends upon the whim or caprice of some “perfumed walking candlestick.”* To the place of terror, known by the name of the quarter-deck, it is resolved to go—but with sensations far different from those when the mournful cry of “All hands, ahoy,” at eleven o’clock, denotes that punishment is to be witnessed. The customary respect being paid by doffing the hat, a dialogue ensues. It commences on the part of a weather-beaten tar, who stands spokesman for all hands. “We hear, sir, the United States have declared war against Great-Britain—we are Americans, we have relations, and some of us have families in America—we cannot fight against our flag, and will thank you for our discharge.” “You say you are Americans; what proof have you to substantiate your assertion?”—Here are our protections, sir, which we had when we were impressed”—“But you ought to consider that your wages and prize-money may be forfeited, and some of you have a considerable sum due”—Give us our discharge, sir, the money is no object.”—Will you return to your duty?”—“We owe none, sir, to the British flag, and therefore cannot”—“Master at Arms! confine those men below, and take care they are not too intimate with the ship’s company—

* This expression was applied to sir James Yeo by one of his men after receiving punishment.

Purser's steward, serve them out prisoners' allowance; put them six upon four"—and thus ends the dialogue. They now enjoy a jubilee indeed; think you that because they are below, with a sentinel well armed, their condition is deplorable? Far from it. The happy souls in Elysium, who have been safely ferried over the Styx by old Charon, enjoy not half their pleasure. Liberty of speech now knows no bounds; a retrospection of the halcyon days passed in their own country, and an anticipation of those held in reserve for them, afford gratifying prospects. Their old messmates, their old shipmates, give them credit for their noble behaviour; for the real British seaman is magnanimous in disposition. They are on prisoners' allowance—true—but could you see the heavy loads of beef and pork, the tin pots of grog passed them by the crew, you would say the day of feasting had commenced.

This is a favorable picture; but there remains another to be presented. What is the condition of the poor American, who, by events uncontrollable, has lost his protection, and for not having which, a plausible plea is set up to justify his impressment. He likewise goes aft upon the commencement of hostilities, but meets a fate far different from those who have been so fortunate as to preserve their protections. He states himself to be an American, and intimates that he cannot fight against the flag. He is told that he has no protection; that he is a skulking fellow, and wishes to get clear of duty. The first lieutenant is called and directed to station him at one of the quarter-deck guns—he is then ordered forward. The officers are told to inspect his conduct with vigilance; and, in the event of coming to action, should the rascal show an unwillingness to fight, he will take upon himself the pleasure of blowing his brains out. This is no hyperbole. A boatswain's mate of the Southampton, who has since escaped from the Shark, admiral Stirling's flag-ship, experienced this treatment. In derision he was called the *Yankee Maty*; but on the day of punishment, when he was selected to administer "Moses's law," their funny faculties lost all their sprightliness. In every British man-of-war there are Americans thus situated; and who, upon wishing to give themselves up, meet with no more consolation than has been stated.

Those who have been discharged do not enjoy those realities which fanciful imagination had suffered to play sportive. In steering clear of Scylla they run foul of Charybdis—they only exchange one prison-ship for ano-

ther—but with this difference, that before they were prisoners by compulsion, now they are by choice. Instead of being allowed to go whither they please, they are clapped on board a prison-ship—months roll on, and no relief appears; still however, they enjoy pleasures to which they had been strangers for years. The British government boast of being magnanimous, and I have always been taught to believe it to be so. If it is a specimen of their magnanimity, of their generosity, of their justice, to deprive a man of the privileges of his birth-right when he has the necessary document that his country had devised for his protection; if, after doing this, they compel that man to serve them three, five, and ten years; if, during that time, he undergoes every privation, every hardship incident to a maritime life; if in perpetuating their fame, their boasted naval glory, he exerts himself and demonstrates that death has no terrors; if after having obtained the approbation of the commander—after receiving wounds, and his body scared with scars, he is doomed, in common with those who have been acting against them, to experience all their miseries and for no other offence than that of refusing to fight against his country: If, I say, this be a specimen of their magnanimity, it were better to trust to the good faith of the 'Turks, for they make no pretensions to the usages of civilized nations, and, therefore, no deception could be urged if treatment like this were shown. Yet, on board the *Loyalist* and *L'Amethyst* prison ships in Port Royal there are prisoners of this description—men who have been from three to ten years in the British service, and who have been immured in those vessels ever since the declaration of war against Great-Britain. But this is not all: an impressed man, as soon as he is taken on board a man-of-war, is stationed according to his capability; his name is entered on the muster book, and from that moment his pay commences; his privileges are the same with him who enters voluntarily, and in the division of prize-money his proportion equals those of the same station with himself. The discharged Americans on board the *Loyalist* and *L'Amethyst* have a considerable sum due them both for services and prize money. To a few, and a very few indeed, part of the money has been paid; the greater part, however, have never received a cent, neither do they expect ever to be paid, the promises so often made them to the contrary, notwithstanding. Thus it would appear, that they have added to their magnanimity by magnanimously defrauding those who have been fight-

ing their battles, of their hard-earned wages. O shame, where is thy blush! Even now, while I am writing this on my passage home, I have two messmates who have been discharged from British men of war—one has served five, the other six years—both have pay lists and prize tickets; yet any harping Jew, of the class belonging to the minorities of London, who are in the habit of purchasing pay lists, &c. from British men-of-war's men, might have obtained theirs months since for sixpence worth of tobacco.

About the commencement of February last a petition was sent to congress, by a safe conveyance, from the prisoners confined in Port Royal, praying that means might be devised for their liberation. The length of time elapsed since it was written, and the circumstance of no good effect arising from it, left room for dubious conjectures. They are very much dissatisfied, and those who have been detained eight and nine months, make no other calculation than that of staying there during the war. Two thirds of them are veteran seamen; consequently their inactive state must be a serious loss to our country.

The manner of exchanging prisoners is altogether novel in Port Royal. Those who are able to pay their passages, found no difficulty in returning home; of this class the number was few. Three ships,* the Rebecca Sims, of Philadelphia, the Philip, and William Penn, of Baltimore, with British licences, loaded with flour, bound, *as it is said*, for Lisbon and Cadiz, were taken by the Southampton and carried into Port Royal. Their cargoes were sold and the vessels detained for trial; in March their cases came on before the Vice-Admiralty Court of St. Jago de la Vega, when they were restored to their owners. Vice-Admiral Stirling, who has command on the Jamaica station, either not wishing to be pestered with the numerous notes daily written him by the prisoners, requesting permission to return home, or conceiving that the Macedonian, Java, and Peacock's crews, had swelled the catalogue of prisoners in the United States to rather too considerable a length, and wishing to diminish the number, allowed the agent liberty to let whom he pleased return in those ships, provided the masters would take them. The Philip would not receive one; (those who could pay their passage excepted) the Wil-

* I am indebted to Captains Wescott, of Baltimore, and Harrison, of New-York, for so much of this statement as relates to the refusal of passages.

liam Penn, being under the direction of the master of the Philip, observed the same course of conduct; and the Rebecca Sims merely took, with some small exception, the officers of the Vixen and a few of the crew. I do not know of any reasons that can be urged to palliate this conduct; the masters of those vessels certainly were not fearful that our government would not remunerate them—to what cause then can it be ascribed? It is left to them to solve the question; after which they may enjoy some satisfaction by knowing that their own townsmen, their own countrymen, are left to experience all the miseries of imprisonment, which is aggravated by this neglect, and then they may “to breakfast with what appetite they have.”

It is a generally received opinion, that he who rejoices at the misfortunes of another, shows a disposition which even brutes do not possess. Among the prisoners in Port Royal there are men whose dispositions are cast in nature's finest mould, who possess sensibility in common with the generality of mankind, though their rough polished contour would augur otherwise. I do not recollect, however, ever to have seen satisfaction so strongly exhibited, so pointedly expressed, as the circumstances of the William Penn's putting back with six feet water in her hold gave rise to. I know we are taught to render “good for evil,” but some how or other this was the case, and I am satisfied it was involuntary.

There was left an American in Jamaica who wished to alleviate the miseries of his countrymen, by endeavoring to free them from imprisonment. This gentleman is capt. *David Harrison*, of New-York. He came out in the schooner *Justin*, with passengers; some necessary business detaining him, his vessel in the interval was condemned as unseaworthy. He purchased the prize-brig *Cyrus*, and made application to the admiral for prisoners to return with him—how many he was allowed to receive, I know not; but from his going to the admiral's pen almost daily; from the circumstance of his being continually with the agent for prisoners of war; from the application and exertions he made for those whose parents or relatives he was acquainted with, I am induced to believe he will for ever receive the grateful thanks of many a man, who, had it not been for him, would have lingered out uncomfortable hours in Port Royal. What different treatment did this gentleman receive from the L'Amethyst prisoners, to that which was shown to those belonging to the Rebecca Sim's boat. Capt. Harrison was

greeted with cheers, a safe passage was wished him, and prosperity through life tendered him. But the Rebecca Sims—good Lord deliver us! You can form an idea of the commotions which were excited some years since in Covent Garden Theatre relative to the establishment of prices for admission. You may imagine the harmony of hundreds of cat-calls, cleavers, &c.; joined to which the stentorian lungs of fifty vendue criers; and add to all the melody of the small fry, who displayed their plaintive notes by hooting, moaning, and almost crying, and then you may judge how agreeably those who sat in the stern seats were entertained. Pandora's box contained many evils; but the old hag would have had to increase its dimensions before she could have stowed all that were fervently prayed might befall the Rebecca Sims.

Doctor Macnamara, of the Marine Hospital, Port Royal, who so worthily attends the duties of his station, exerted all his influence with the admiral to send the convalescent prisoners home in the *Cyrus*—he succeeded, and cleared the hospital of all the sick, nor did he forget to put up medicines applicable to each man's case.

The Masons of Jamaica obtained the release of their fraternity, previous to which they supplied them with clothing. Mr. Bessan, of Port Royal, was the ostensible source in relieving and getting them clear, and to this gentleman am I indebted for liberty, though no solicitations were used on my part. On Sunday, the 4th April, I happened accidentally to be in the cabin. The agent's clerk and Mr. Bessan came on board to make out passports for three masons. Whilst looking on, Mr. Bessan enquired if I was a mason—informed him I was not. One of the masons, who was a messmate, immediately spoke for me, and expressed a desire that I might return with him. Mr. Bessan told me to go to the clerk and have my looks and dimensions taken down. This was no sooner said than done—half a dozen leaps brought me from the cabin to the birth-deck. There was no necessity for piping up hammocks—in one minute everything was ready; and, as I carried all my dunnage on my back, my wardrobe was calculated for expeditious travelling.

The next morning we sailed in company with the Rebecca Sims, and were bound for New-York. Saw the *Vengeur*, 74, going in, just as we cleared the Island. The *Cyrus* brought out 50 passengers, one of whom died on the passage. Head winds obliged us to make for George-Town, and fate planted us on the bar; but after

55

thumping about four hours, we cleared it and arrived in safety. The next day eight of us obtained a passage to Charleston—the bar again brought us up, but got off without damage.

Thus, dear Tom, have I presented you with a sketch of what has befallen us since our departure from St. Marys. There are but few difficulties stated, few obstacles surmounted, few capers carried on, but I have borne a proportionate share in; and you must excuse the dictation, when I inform you that a prison-ship does not present those facilities for writing, which are to be found in your printing-office. I have endeavored to follow truth in the narrative; if I have deviated, I have not done so wilfully. I intended it for your amusement, and that of my friends; “but circumstances altering cases,” I am induced, by the liberality and generosity of a gentleman in Charleston, to present it in a public form.

Yours,
