

mind with abundance of threats. Macdonough then told him with firmness, that he was not accountable to him, but to captain Smith; for his conduct. The Englishman threw out some threats that he would take the man by force, and said he would haul the frigate alongside the Siren for that purpose. To this Macdonough replied, "he supposed his ship could sink the Siren, but as long as she could swim he should keep the man." The English captain said to Macdonough, "you are a very young, and a very indiscreet young man: suppose I had been in the boat, what would you have done?" "I would have taken the man, or lost my life." "What—sir, would you attempt to stop me if I were now to attempt to impress men from that brig?" "I would, and to convince yourself I would, you have only to make the attempt. On this the Englishman returned, and shortly afterwards was seen in his boat, bearing her in a direction for the American merchant brig. Macdonough ordered his boat manned and armed, got into her himself, and was in readiness for pursuit. The Englishman took a circuit round the American brig, and returned again to the frigate. When captain Smith came on board, he justified the conduct of Macdonough, and declared his intention to protect the American seamen.

During the continuance of the Tripolitan war, our ships occasionally visited the city of Syracuse, once so famous, but now mouldering away, under that wretched system of government which has blasted and withered one of the fairest portions of this earth. Of Sicily, once the resort of the gods—the cradle of fertility—the seat of arts and luxury—the country of Archimedes and Theocritus—the granary of Rome, and the most famous island of the most famous sea of the world—who is ignorant? It is associated with the earliest recollections of the scholar; its very name conjures up a thousand ideas of beauty, grandeur, and fertility; but the admirer of antiquity, in visiting the countries most famous in days of yore, and the cities most celebrated for their grandeur and exploits, is doomed to have his enthusiasm checked or destroyed by the miserable contrast of their present state, with the descriptions of the ancient poets and historians. The history of the world is but the history of man; and as in the one case the young succeed to the old, so in the other, new cities, and new empires, spring into existence, to take the lead upon the theatre of life, while those that preceded them, sink into insignificance, and are only preserved from oblivion by the writers, whose fame has long survived every vestige of the splendors they celebrated.

The climate of Sicily has been the theme of praise in every age, and the hardy northern man, who is exposed to the inclemencies of winter, three-fourths of the year, and whose toils are repaid by a scanty subsistence, might perhaps complain of the unequal distribution of Providence, while reading of the genial airs, the flowery meads, the ruddy skies, and delicious vales of Sicily, where the earth yields an hundred fold. But when he finds in the history of all nations, that such a climate and such a soil is ever the concomitant, or rather the parent of idleness, luxury, and its inevitable product, slavery;—when he reads how nations thus happily situated, sooner or later are ever the prey of tyranny—he becomes reconciled to frosts and snows, and wintry blasts, and barren hills, and is grateful for being born beyond the reach of a luxurious indulgence, to be followed by such degradations as have prostrated the manly genius, not only of Sicily, but of all Italy. Riches may enslave a country, but will never make it free; for it is only the poor and the hardy that can sustain the labors and privations, by which the struggle for freedom must be maintained.

With the exception of Rome, the city of Syracuse was the most celebrated in all Italy, and its islands. In its most flourishing state it extended twenty-two miles in circumference, and maintained an army of one hundred thousand foot, ten thousand horse, with a navy of four hundred ships. It was said of the inhabitants of Syracuse, that they were the best of men when virtuous—the most wicked when depraved by vicious pursuits. Unhappily they verify

* *Diodorus Siculus*, says, the hounds lost the scent of their game in hunting, owing to a profusion of odoriferous plants that perfumed the air in Sicily.

the truth of the latter position at this time. Our officers all agree that no community can be in a worse moral state than the people of this city. The nobility are impoverished and corrupt—monopolizers of almost every employment—one nobleman has the monopoly of baking bread for a city, and no one is permitted to bake but himself; another has the rare privilege of supplying Messina, or some other place, with fish, and it is not many years since this last city was obliged to live upon tinned fish for several days, because the prince who had the monopoly of that article, and who, if we remember right, claimed a descent from the Cyclops, who once possessed Sicily, chose to enrich himself at the expense of the wretched populace. In short, every thing is a monopoly in Sicily; and the peasant who has a surplus of grain to sell, cannot dispose of it until a price is fixed by a certain chamber at Palermo. Certainly it is worth while to shed little blood for the restoration of such a system of government!

Robberies and assassinations are the nightly amusements of Syracusans, and our officers in their evening rambles, were frequently assailed by soldiers, or fellows armed with knives or daggers. Their favorite mode of fighting is to blow out the candles, and in that situation their knives and daggers are the most dangerous of all weapons. On some occasion, which occurred in Syracuse, Macdonough was attacked by three of these desperadoes; with his back against a door, he had the good fortune to wound two, and the other took to his heels. He was followed by the lieutenant, who pushed him so hard that he climbed up to the roof of the barracks, whither Macdonough followed him still, and finding no other means of escape, he jumped off, with the loss of his life.

In the interval between the Tripolitan war and that which commenced in 1813, no occasion occurred to our naval officers for signalizing themselves, and we shall pass silently over this period of lieutenant Macdonough's life, because it furnishes no incident of sufficient importance to be interesting to the reader. The ordinary vicissitudes of life, are only of consequence to ourselves, and our immediate friends; and though we may run counter to the opinion of Dr. Johnson, we cannot help believing that the curiosity which is gratified by the important fact, that Milton wore lathets in his shoes, is more worthy a prying village gossip, than a great philosopher; because such a circumstance furnishes no elucidation either of character or manners. It is by the aid of such trifles that a jobbing writer will contrive to swell the life of a learned archdeacon, or of a man who derives his sole claim to notice, from freezing ice in summer (as if we had not quite enough of it in winter) into a bulk surpassing that of all Plutarch's Lives put together. As we have no perception of the value of such minute inquiries, we will proceed to a detail of that action in which the subject of this article became distinguished by the most important services to his country, in gaining a victory which occasioned the total failure of a plan of operations on the part of the enemy, which would otherwise have produced the most fatal consequences.

Soon after the declaration of war, in 1812, a small naval force was created on lake Champlain, for the three-fold object of affording protection to our frontier in that quarter; facilitating military operations; and preventing, as far as possible, the enemy from receiving those supplies, which were continually furnished by the corrupt and treasonable agency of some of our own citizens. It became necessary, in proportion as the operations of our armies were directed to this quarter, to augment this force, as well because it could materially co-operate in offensive designs, as because it had become indispensable, perhaps, from the augmentation of the naval force of the enemy, on lake Champlain. This contest of building was carried on from year to year, until 1814, when the relative force of the two nations stood as follows:

American guns.	British guns.
Saratoga 26	Frigate Confiance 39
Eagle, 30	Brig Linnet, 16
Ticonderoga, 17	Sloop Chubb, 11
Preble, 7	—Finch, 11
10 gals. carrying 16	13 gals. carrying 18
Total, 86	Total, 95

Thus stood affairs, when early in the month of September, in that year, Sir George Prevost began his march at the head of fourteen thousand men, with the intention of dislodging general Macomb from his works at Plattsburg, and then penetrating into the heart of the state of New-York. There is reason to suppose that this plan was connected with an attack on the city of N. York, by the force on our maritime frontier, had it succeeded in the affair of Baltimore. Certain it is that this apprehension had drawn the militia from the country above, and left it in a state very much exposed to the incursions of the enemy. The destruction of the American naval force on lake Champlain was

supposed by sir George Prevost to be essential to the success of his plan of operations; and captain Downie, who was at the head of the British squadron, was directed to attack the American naval force, which had been for some time under the command of Macdonough, then only a lieutenant, at the same time that sir George stormed the entrenchments at Plattsburg.

Aware of their intentions, and knowing of their approach, Macdonough decided to await the attack at anchor. At eight in the morning of the 11th of September, 1814, the look-out boat announced the approach of the enemy's squadron. At nine the action was general, and we cannot do better than describe it in captain Macdonough's own words.

"At nine," says the captain, "the enemy anchored in a line ahead, at about three hundred yards distant from my line; his ship opposed to the Saratoga; his brig to the Eagle, captan Robert Henley; his galleys, thirteen in number, to the schooner, sloop, and a division of our galleys—one of his sloops assisting their ship and brig; the other assisting their galleys. Our remaining galleys were with the Saratoga and Eagle.

"In this situation, the whole force on both sides became engaged, the Saratoga suffering much from the heavy fire of the Confiance. I could perceive at the same time, that our fire was very destructive to her. The Ticonderoga, lieutenant-commandant Cassin, gallantly sustained her full share of the action. At half past ten, the Eagle not being able to bring her guns to bear, cut her cable, and anchored in a more eligible position, between my ship and the Ticonderoga, where she very much annoyed the enemy; but unfortunately leaving me exposed to a galling fire from the enemy's brig.

"Our guns on the starboard side being nearly all dismounted, or unmanoeuvrable, a stern anchor was let go, the lower cable cut, and the ship whirled with a fresh broadside on the enemy's ship, which soon after surrendered. Our broadside was then sprung to bear on the brig, which struck about fifteen minutes afterwards. The sloop which was opposed to the Eagle, had struck some time before, and drifted down the line. The sloop that was with their galleys had also struck. Three of their galleys are said to be sunk, the others pulled off. Our galleys were about obeying with alacrity the signal to follow them, when all the vessels were reported to me to be in a sinking state. It then became necessary to annul the signal to the galleys, and order their men to the pumps. I could only look at the enemy's galleys going off in a shattered condition; for there was not a mast in either squadron that could stand to make sail on. The lower rigging being nearly all shot away, hung down as though it had just been placed over the mast heads.

"The Saratoga had fifty-nine round shot in her hull; the Confiance one hundred and five. The enemy's shot passed principally just over our heads, as there were not twenty whole hammocks in the nettings, at the close of the action, which lasted without intermission two hours and twenty minutes.

"The absence and sickness of lieutenant Raymond Perry left me without the assistance of that excellent officer. Much ought fairly to be attributed to him for his great care and attention in disciplining the ship's crew, as her first lieutenant. His place was filled by a gallant young officer, lieutenant Peter Gamble, who, I regret to inform you, was killed early in the action."

Captain Macdonough concludes his letter by stating that the Saratoga was twice set on fire during the engagement by hot shot from the enemy's ship; and expressions of gratitude for the able support he received from every officer and man in the squadron.

The loss of the Americans in this hard-fought battle was fifty-two killed and fifty-eight wounded; that of the British eighty-four killed and one hundred and ten wounded. Among the killed on the American side was lieutenant Peter Gamble, a gallant young officer, one of the three gallant brothers who had devoted themselves to the service of their country. The other two brothers still survive, one a commandant in the navy, the other a captain of marines, and both ranking among the first officers of their grade in either service. He who fell on the memorable 11th of September is inseparably connected with an event which will never be forgotten in this nation, and will, we trust, bear with it the recollection as well of the living as of the dead who were instrumental in gaining one of the most important victories of the war. The American squadron carried two thousand and twenty-three pounds weight of metal, and eight hundred and twenty men; that of the British nineteen hundred and fifty weight of metal, and one thousand and fifty men. It was in this action that the far-famed

manœuvre of coming down head first upon the enemy was first tried against the Americans, and the result was, what we will venture to predict it always will be, when tried against a force any way equal in skill, numbers, and courage. The British vessels were cut to pieces before they were in a situation to bring their guns to bear against the Americans, and nothing carries a stronger conviction to our minds of the want of proper skill and self-possession in the officers and men of those fleets that have been taken or defeated by this manœuvre, than the fatal effects which resulted from the attempt in this instance.

The anxiety of the public had long drawn the attention of all that were capable of reasoning upon the probable effect of sir George Prevost's operations, or who felt an interest in the fate of this country. It was justly feared that the enemy, after succeeding against the fleet on Lake Champlain, and forcing the intrenchments of general Macomb at Plattsburg, would penetrate into the heart of the state of New-York, and perhaps establish a communication, by means of the Hudson, with the Atlantic fleet and forces, should these succeed against the city of New-York. But the news of this victory, and the consequent precipitate retreat of sir George, turned their gloomy anticipations into triumphant rejoicings. Every soul slept in peace that night, and many a prayer, we warrant, was breathed for Macdonough, and his gallant associates, who had thus saved the hopes of the peaceable farmer, and freed his innocent folds from probable plunder and devastation. Independently of the real magnitude of the effects produced by this victory, it derived a peculiar and picturesque character from the circumstances under which it was gained. It was fought in sight of two hostile armies, whose hopes of ultimate success depended upon its issue; and in the view of thousands of people, who watched in breathless anxiety the result of a struggle that was to decide whether they were to be driven from their homes in beggary, or remain in the peaceable enjoyment of their firesides. The shores of the lake adjacent, the projecting points of land, and the neighboring hills were animated with spectators, and the victory was greeted by the shoutings of multitudes. It is full brother to that of the gallant and amiable Perry; and equally young, gallant, and fortunate, the names of Perry and Macdonough will, we trust, be associated together to the latest times, as brothers in deservng, and brothers in success.

Amid the usual demonstrations on such occasions, the state of New-York, which had been most peculiarly benefited by Macdonough's victory, gave more solid testimonials of her gratitude. He received a grant of land from the Legislature of one thousand acres, we think, which is, in itself, an independency, and must be doubly dear to him and his posterity, because it lies on the bay where he achieved the action which merited this reward. The corporation of Albany, as well as that of the city of New-York also, made him each a grant of a valuable lot, so that, to use his own expressions, in one month, from a poor lieutenant, he became a rich man, by the liberality of his countrymen. No man, we fully believe, is more worthy of these gifts and distinctions, for no man will employ his fortune more usefully, or enjoy his distinctions with more manly modesty than himself. His steady mind remains the same it was before, and neither by his words, his looks, or his actions, can it be discovered that he ever varies from that self-balanced consciousness, which is ever the accompaniment of talent, and is never either palpably depressed or exalted by the opinions of others. Though a married man, he is still young; and though a soldier, strict in his department, and exemplary in his piety. He has a fine head, light hair, complexion, and eyes, and his person is tall and dignified. It is, indeed, a source of uncommon gratification to think how many of our distinguished officers are still so young, that we may look to them in many years to come, whenever the situation of this country shall call for their exertions. Few of them are past the middle age, and many of them, whose names are familiar to us, have just reached the period of manhood. They seem, like this country and every thing in it, bearing the stamp of vigorous youth, and promising yet more than they have ever yet performed.

Having annihilated the enemy's force on Champlain, captain Macdonough, now promoted, requested his recall from that command, as his health was somewhat affected by his long stay on the lake, which, at some seasons, is very unhealthy to strangers. Since then he has been in the command of the station at Portsmouth, New-Hampshire, where he now is. Should the passions of men, the interests of commerce, or the ambition of an enemy again force us into a war, he is one of those to whom we shall look for new exploits; and should the chance of battle again give him an opportunity for the exercise of skill and courage, we feel confident the