

CHAPTER III.

ARRIVAL AT RIO DE JANEIRO—THE EAST INDIA SQUADRON—ANECDOTES OF THE WAR OF 1812—THE BRAZIL STATION—SLAVERS—THE HARBOR OF RIO JANEIRO—MARRIAGE OF THE EMPEROR DOM PEDRO—SALUTES—PROMOTIONS IN THE SQUADRON—MONTE VIDEO—THE BISHOP OF HONOLULU—VISIT TO BUENOS AYRES—ROSAS, THE DICTATOR—LA SENORITA MANUELITA—A DAY AT ROSAS' QUINTA—RETURN TO RIO—ARRIVAL OF THE FRIGATE RABITAN—SANDY THOMPSON'S WILL—RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES.

WE arrived off Rio de Janeiro some time in July, 1843, and were three days getting in the harbor; indeed, we had like to have never gotten into port, like the flying Dutchman, for our captain would stand *in* all day with the sea breeze, and stand *out* all night with the land breeze; then in the morning we would find ourselves becalmed like "Barney's brig with both main tacks aboard;" we began at last to think we should never get in until *the days were longer than the nights*. However, on the third day towards sunset we succeeded in anchoring on the "rolling ground" just outside the harbor, and the most dangerous anchorage we could have selected. The next afternoon we went in with the sea breeze, and made a beautiful "come to" by running in with royals and stun'sails set both sides, taking in everything together, and making a flying moor. It was not an uncommon sight to see a ship do this at that time.

We found in Rio the squadron intended for the East Indies, consisting of the frigate *Brandywine* and the sloop of war *St. Louis*, commanded by my father; and I remember no happier moment of my life than the visit to the *Brandywine* the night of our arrival.

Upon his return from this cruise my father told me an interesting episode in his naval career. Immediately after the

declaration of war against Great Britain in 1812, he sailed as junior lieutenant of the U. S. brig *Nautilus*, commanded by Captain Crane—the day after sailing from New York they found themselves enveloped in a thick fog, and upon its lifting discovered that they were close under the guns of the *Africa*, 74, the flag ship of the British squadron. Of course the brig was captured, and they were on board the *Africa* during the celebrated chase of the U. S. frigate *Constitution* by the English squadron. My father told me that the officers of the *Africa* were very desirous that Captain Dacres, who was considered a very dashing officer, should get alongside her with the *Guerriere*. The *Guerriere* did get alongside her on the 19th of August of the same year, and the result is well known. But to my story: On the way to Halifax one of the *Africa's* lieutenants observing my father to be very low-spirited inquired what the matter was; he replied that he felt badly at being taken prisoner, and moreover had no money. The Englishman told him that his father lived in Halifax and would cash any drafts he chose to draw upon his father in Virginia. This gentleman's family were exceedingly kind and hospitable to the officers of the *Nautilus* during their short stay in Halifax, and especially so to my father.

When the *Brandywine* arrived at Bombay on the cruise I have just alluded to, the British commodore, who commanded the squadron there, came on board to pay the customary visit of civility, and my father recognized him as his old friend of the *Africa*; they had not met since parting in Halifax in 1812, and were now both in command of their first squadrons.

The *Brandywine* and her consort, the *St. Louis*, sailed for the Cape of Good Hope shortly after our arrival. Some fifteen days afterwards we were surprised at seeing the *St. Louis* coming back alone, and my heart sank as we made out her "number." I could only think that the *Brandywine* had gone down with all hands. A boat soon came from her with the information that she had sprung a leak and returned for repairs. She sailed again in about ten days, and got safely to

China, where her captain left her and was succeeded by a better man.

The brig *Perry* came out from Norfolk, where she was built, about this time, bound to the East Indies; and so many of her officers left her that she was almost officered from our ship. Our acting commander, Edward C. Tilton, went as her captain; our junior lieutenant, Horace N. Harrison, as her first lieutenant; our sailing master, John C. Howell, as her junior lieutenant, and our captain's clerk, James M. Tilton, went as her purser.

These new brigs were not looked upon with favor in the navy, being thought unsafe. The *Perry*, however, made the cruise around the world and two cruises on the coast of Africa. She was finally lost off our coast during the civil war. I think she capsized and went down with all hands.

Commodore Charles Morgan left us here, and was succeeded by Commodore Daniel Turner: an officer who had distinguished himself in the command of the schooner *Caledonia* at the battle of lake Erie. He was an irascible old fellow, and suffered with the gout; but I soon found that his bark was worse than his bite. I was his aid and stood in dread of him at first, though I afterwards learned to love him for his great kindness to me. Being an "Aid" during my entire service as a midshipman I was much thrown with the officers who had served in the war of 1812; and I heard many incidents relating to it, told by men who had been in the actions described.

I heard a commodore say that in the action between the *Chesapeake* and *Shannon*, off Boston, June 1st, 1813, the latter had suffered so much from the *Chesapeake's* fire that she must have surrendered had she not run the *Chesapeake* on board. In proof of which he cited the fact that Captain Broke of the *Shannon* "headed his boarders," and that the regulations of the British navy at the time forbade a captain doing so, *unless his ship was in a critical condition!*

Captain Broke of the *Shannon*, it will be remembered, was

severely wounded in boarding the *Chesapeake* by a blow over the head with a cutlass in the hands of the *chaplain*, who was on deck and conspicuous for his gallantry. This gentleman was a Mr. Livermore of Kentucky. He was a friend of Captain Lawrence and being in Boston at the time he applied to him to go out and take a hand in the fight. The captain consented, and appointed him his chaplain as he had the power to do. Captain Marryatt in his novel of *Midshipman Easy* may have had him in mind when he sketched the character of Chaplain Hawkins.

The squadron on the coast of Brazil at this time consisted of the *Columbus*, the frigate *Columbia*, the sloop-of-war *John Adams* and the schooner *Enterprise*. The *Columbia* soon went to the Mediterranean, and our old consort, the *Congress* took her place in the squadron. The station was considered a very healthy one at that time; small-pox in Rio being the only disease to be feared. Yellow fever was not known in Rio until some years later. I think it broke out about 1849; it was probably introduced by some of the vessels engaged in bringing slaves from the coast of Africa. The custom of these vessels was to land their slaves somewhere on the coast, and then come to Rio to refit and prepare for another voyage.

One of our midshipmen, however, (an oldster) told me that the slaves *were* brought into Rio; but that *they could not be seen* in consequence of their being painted *air color*, which of course rendered them *invisible!* He said that the slaves were landed, and taken to a pond outside the city; and, the *air-colored paint* being washed off, they became *visible*; but, as a friend of mine is in the habit of saying, "I don't know anything about *that!*"

The harbor of Rio de Janeiro is without doubt the most beautiful one in the world. Other sheets of water I have seen as fine, but the *surroundings* of this bay cannot be equalled. Seen from the sea, the high range of mountains back (or rather in front, as seen from the sea) of the city first come in view. Their outline presents the effigy of a man lying on his back,

and this is known as "Lord Hood's Nose"—one very remarkable peak is known as the "*corcovado*," (*humpback*, a favorite name with the old Spanish voyagers). Nearing the harbor, and just at the narrow entrance, a conspicuous hill called "The Sugar-Loaf," is seen.

The city, which is the largest and wealthiest in South America, lies at the foot of the mountains. The streets rise one above the other and as the houses are painted in bright colors the effect is very fine. At night the lights present an unusually brilliant appearance. I think the appearance of this harbor in the early morning with the first rays of the sun reflected from the mountain-sides is not to be surpassed. The place derives its name, signifying *river of January*, from the mistake of the first discoverer of the bay, who conceived it to be the mouth of a large river. It was founded by the Portuguese in 1565.

Rio has some handsome public buildings, a very fine aqueduct, and a well-kept botanical garden. The climate is warm and humid, and as in all tropical climates, there are but two seasons: the wet and the dry. The population consists of a mixture of all colors and nations. Of the natives I can only say, in the words of the old sea captain when required to describe the Chinese: "Manners they have none, and their customs are very beastly." They are hybrids, and will never improve; but I shall have more to say on this subject in another place.

The sea breeze which blows every afternoon tempers the heat and renders it more bearable; it dies out towards ten o'clock at night, and about two in the morning the land breeze springs up, and blows till about eight o'clock. In the intervals the heat is most oppressive. Vessels take advantage of these winds: leaving port with the land wind, and entering with the sea breeze some time in the afternoon. One of the great beauties of this bay is the large number of pretty coves, or smaller bays, communicating with it: such as "Boto Fogo," etc., and the picturesque villages on their shores. It was my

fortune to make many boat expeditions with the commodore, and we used to explore all these nooks.

One of them, near Praya Grande, possessed a melancholy interest from the fact that on its shores and near the ruins of an old convent, the first lieutenant of the United States frigate *Hudson* killed the surgeon of the ship in a duel. They fought with ship's pistols, and the surgeon fell dead at the first fire. I have always heard he forced the duel upon the lieutenant.

The present emperor, Dom Pedro, was married while we were lying here in the fall of 1843. His wife was the sister of the king of Naples. She was brought over in the Brazilian frigate *Constitution*, escorted by a Neapolitan squadron consisting of a line-of-battle ship and two frigates.

There being a very large number of men-of-war of all nations in port at the time the firing of salutes exceeded anything I have ever heard. It was kept up for a week, and we all got so accustomed to it that one morning at sunrise a salute of twenty-one guns was fired from our lower gun-deck, and it did not wake up the midshipmen who were sleeping on the deck directly under. I can scarcely believe this now, though I know it to be true from my personal experience. It goes to show that we had good consciences; though I *have* known a man to say (but he was a *passed* midshipman), "that he would as lieve have a *bad memory* as a good conscience."

Much rivalry existed among the ships in port, and some very pretty work was done with masts, sails and yards. We used to furl sails "from a bowline" in twenty-eight seconds, I recollect.

All of our passed midshipmen were promoted to be sailing masters, or navigators, to supply vacancies in the squadron; and I noticed that after a vessel with a new master sailed great anxiety was felt in our mess until we heard she had arrived safely at her destined port. We wanted to know what kind of a *landfall* the new master had made! Perhaps if her captain had known of the doubts of our fellows, and *the reasons for it*, he would not have slept so soundly.

In October we sailed from Rio to Monte Video, the capital of the republic of Monte Video, situated on the left bank of the Rio de la Plata, not many miles from its mouth. Here we were forced to anchor well off shore owing to our great draught of water; and the boat service, of which I had more than my share, was attended with much danger from the *pamperos*, which winds spring up very suddenly and blow with great violence. I passed many hours in the barge with Commodore Turner beating off to our ship under reefed sails, and learned more about sailing boats than I had ever known before.

Monte Video at that time was a rather pretty city, built on a gentle ascent. The streets are wide and straight, and the houses of one story, with flat roofs. It takes its name from a neighboring mountain—the climate is moist and the cold is severe in the winter months, June, July and August. Gales are frequent in summer. The city is fortified, and when we were there was in a state of siege, and had been for I don't know how many years; indeed that was its normal condition. What the war was about, and who were the parties to it I never knew; being in that respect like Lieutenant Denny of the British navy, who had been seriously wounded in a fight with the Japanese at Simoda or Simoneseiki. He once described the fight to me, which was a bloody one, and upon my asking him the *cause* of the war, replied that one of the Damios had given the admiral a lot of *cheek*; this was all he knew or cared to know as to the cause.

Speaking of the distance ships have to anchor from this city reminds me of an accident which happened to the English Bishop of Honolulu, and which he related to me some time about 1870, when I was commanding a Pacific mail steamer between Panama and San Francisco. The bishop was a passenger with me to San Francisco, being on his return, with his family, to Honolulu. He joined me at Panama, having come out from England *via* Rio de Janeiro, Monte Video and the Straits of Magellan. He told me that while going ashore at

Monte Video, with his wife and children, in a small boat, they were run into by a Spanish schooner, and that he, in his fright caught hold of the schooner's bobstay (a rope leading from the stem to the end of the bowsprit). The boat was not upset, and got clear; and the schooner sailed away carrying off the bishop in his *upside-down* position! Those in the boat cried out to the captain of the schooner; but as he did not understand English, and as, moreover, the bishop could not be seen from the schooner's deck—being under the bowsprit, in fact—so that no one on board knew he was there, it was some time before the captain could be made to “heave-to,” so that the boat might rescue the bishop. He said he was just ready to let go his hold and tumble backwards into the water.

As the good man always wore his uniform—gaiters and three-cornered cocked hat included—I could not help thinking at the time the story was told me what a picture it would have been for Punch!

At the time we were at Montevideo the notorious Juan Manuel de Rosas was the Dictator of Buenos Ayres. He was descended from an old Spanish family, according to some: the others said he was a *gaucho*, born on the pampas; and was credited with many bloody acts before attaining the position he then held. It was, indeed, war to the knife between the two parties in the country, and our men-of-war lying off Buenos Ayres the year before had been crowded with women and children flying from Rosas' party.

News reaching us that an American merchant ship had been unjustly seized at Buenos Ayres, the commodore determined to visit the city; and as our ship could not go there, he went up in the schooner *Enterprise*, escorted by a large number of officers of which I was one.

We reached Buenos Ayres in due time, and even so small a vessel as the *Enterprise* had to anchor some miles off the land—the water shoals so gradually that even row-boats cannot approach the shore nearer than half a mile. Carts come out to them when they ground, and all passengers and freight are landed in these carts. This is so to this day.

I do not remember much about Buenos Ayres at this time; it struck me as a large, straggling town, the streets filled with savage-looking *gauchos* on horseback, and carts with solid wooden wheels drawn by oxen. On all the walls placards were posted with the inscription, "death to the savage Unitarians," and I believe that even then scarcely a day passed that Rosas did not put some one to death. He had only to "tip the wink" to one of his followers and the thing was done. No eastern potentate ever had greater power over his subjects than Rosas had over the wretched inhabitants of this city at this time. Buenos Ayres will live in the memory of the English, for it was here that their army suffered two defeats at the hands of the inhabitants; in 1806 under General Beresford, and in 1807 under General Whitelock. Gen. W. lost one-third of his army of 8000 men, and was glad to conclude a truce.

Commodore Turner had an interview with Rosas, and the ship was immediately released and sent down the river to Monte Video to be restored to her owners.

We passed a week here very pleasantly, visiting the ladies, and riding over the pampas. One day we all spent at Rosas' *quinta* by special invitation; it was about four miles from the city and we went out there on horseback. We found there Rosas, his daughter Manuelita, and a large number of the ladies of the court. La Señorita Manuelita spoke English pretty well, and was said to be fascinating. She was a graceful girl, but not particularly pretty. Report said that the year before our visit she had been engaged to a U. S. lieutenant of marines; but happening to go down to receive him on one occasion with a number of *human ears strung on a string, in her hand*, the lieutenant fled the palace. I do not know the truth of this; it *may* have been prepared especially for the marines!

On the occasion I speak of we rode all over the *quinta* with Rosas and his body-guard—a bloody-looking set of villains—one could see the blood in their eyes.

The country was then in so unsettled a condition that some

of our officers actually feared treachery that day. They were armed and we were not. All the ladies were of the party, and they, and the guard of *gauchos* were continually leaping wide ditches and beckoning us to follow; the *padre*, who had his gown tucked up on his saddle, and who was the worst-looking villain of the lot, was conspicuous in this amusement.

We declined to follow these fellows, fine riders as we were: *being sailors!!* We excused ourselves on the plea that ours were livery horses and could not leap. I really believe that the commodore was on a horse for the first time in his life. Everybody knows what a *gaucho* is on horseback; and to see him on the pampas in his wild state lassoing cattle is a sight worth traveling for.

We attended a ball at the palace that night, and the next day returned to the *Enterprise*, and went in her back to our ship. Rosas finally fled the country in April 1852, and went to England where he died. His daughter married an Englishman and probably is still living.

In consequence of Monte Video being besieged we could obtain no fresh provisions in the city, and were forced to send the launch occasionally down to Maldonado, a village some fifty miles below us, at the mouth of the river. Here we obtained fresh beef and ostrich eggs; which latter I ate for the first time. We returned to Rio in February 1844, and remained there until the time came for us to sail for home.

The worst of the Brazil station is that there are so few ports to visit: Rio Janeiro, Monte Video, Buenos Ayres, Pernambuco and Bahia complete the list. The Cape of Good Hope was included in our command, but none of our ships went there while I was on the station.

In April 1844 the frigate *Raritan*, Captain Francis S. Gregory, arrived out to relieve us. Our gallant old commodore transferred his flag to her, and about the middle of the month our boatswain, with his eight mates standing in line with him on the main gun deck, piped that "call" which sends a thrill through every heart—old or young—"All hands

up anchor for home!" While on the "Coast of Brazil," as the station is called, I frequently heard old "stagers" repeat what was known as "Sandy Thompson's Will." I give here such of it as I can recall, not so much for the merit of the lines, as on account of the mournful interest attached to them. It was said that Midshipman Sandy Thompson of the navy wrote them while lying on the mess table in the steerage of his ship, and that he died a few minutes after.

SANDY THOMPSON'S WILL.

Dear Jack you know that on this river
Folks very rarely live forever;
This cursed climate and fresh water
Among our people make great slaughter.
Beside the Orinoco's flood,
And near a copse of tangled wood,
A reefer whom we all lament
And seven poor sailors home were sent.
May Heaven which all events controls,
Extend its mercies to our souls,
When at destruction's very portal:
For well you know we all are mortal!
So, now, my dear old messmate Jack,
Should sickness lay me on my back,
Or should it be the will of God
To lay me underneath the sod,
I pray some things that I may mention,
May claim from you some small attention.

The last of all my earthly cares
Is the bad fix of my affairs;
What causes most of my regrets
Is for the payment of my debts;
But whether they be great or small.
We'll see by looking at them all:

First, to the purser, much I owe,
The true amount I do not know;
But thirty dollars with my pay,
Would not clear me to this day.
The unpaid mess-bill in New York;
The money due for beef and pork;

To fifty dollars these amount,
As near as I can now account.
Confusion take these cursed bills
This catering is the worst of ills.

* * * * *

My writing desk to Thomas give it;
Beg him from me that he'll receive it.
Present to Charles my shaving case
To help him scrape his dirty face.

* * * * *

My journals, books and all such trash,
That are not worth one cent in cash,
These with my side-arms you will send
To Carolina to my friends:
To Beaufort in South Carolina,
And there you will obtain the rhino,
As much as will enable you
To give to each his proper due.

And, now, dear Jack, for one request,
Much more to me than all the rest,
If ever to New York you go,
In summer's heat or winter's snow,
You'll straight repair to Second Street,
And there Miss S. you'll surely meet;
Tell her that I, her faithful swain,
To her faithful did remain;
And with my last and dying breath,
When struggling with that traitor Death,
I called upon her worshipped name,
In life or death I'd be the same.

* * * * *

When I am dead and body rotten,
And memory almost forgotten,
Then let the starboard messmates meet,
And every reefer take his seat
Let whiskey circulate around
And mirth, and wit, and joy abound.

* * * * *

And wheresoever you may wander
Remember your old friend,

ALEXANDER.

We made a good passage home, having fine weather. After we struck the N. E. trades we averaged ten miles an hour for seven consecutive days, and I have logged the ship fifty miles in a watch of four hours—not bad for an old line-of-battle ship! The first vessel we spoke on the coast gave us the news of the bursting of Commodore Stockton's gun, the *Peacemaker*, on the steamer *Princeton*, at Washington; by this accident several distinguished gentlemen lost their lives, Hon. Abel P. Upshur, who had been secretary of the navy in 1841, among others.

We arrived in New York late in May. We anchored inside of Sandy Hook, and I went up in the gig with our captain, Benjamin Cooper, to Brooklyn, where he lived. It being late when we arrived he told me not to return to the *Columbus*, but to go to the receiving ship *North Carolina* for the night. I did so; and as soon as I got down on her lower deck, I recognized the old smell of rum, tar, bean-soup and tobacco which I had noticed three years before. The next day the *Columbus* came up, and after lying a few days off the battery, went to the navy yard. The men were paid off and discharged, and the officers granted three months' leave of absence. So ended my first cruise.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FRIGATE "POTOMAC"—THE MILLERITE EXCITEMENT—SAIL FOR NORFOLK—LEAVE NORFOLK FOR THE WEST INDIES—THE LANDFALL OF COLUMBUS—GONAIVES—PORT-AU PRINCE—A SAN DOMINGO GAME-COCK—THE YELLOW FEVER—PORT ROYAL—HAVANA—TOMB OF COLUMBUS—PENSACOLA—VERA CRUZ—RUMORS OF WAR WITH MEXICO—RETURN TO PENSACOLA—SHARKS—A LEAK IN THE BOW—A COFFER DAM—THE U. S. SHIP "PRINCETON"—RETURN HOME.

I REMAINED on shore but a few months, and in September was ordered to the frigate *Potomac*, the flag-ship of Commodore David Conner, commanding the West India, or Home Squadron. The *Potomac* was a vessel of 1750 tons; she carried fifty-two guns and was consequently called a "44!" She carried thirty long 32-pounders on her main, and twenty-two 32-pounder carronades on her spar deck. These carronades were certainly the most ridiculous guns ever invented; they had neither range or penetration, and were never known to hit anything when fired. The *slides*, though, on which they were mounted were very convenient for *sitting down on*, and the midshipmen made good use of them in their long night watches. When I reported for duty the ship was lying off the navy yard. She had been some time in commission and had but lately returned from the West Indies. The appearance of a fine frigate, in full commission, was not usual in Philadelphia, and she was visited by persons from all parts of the State.

This was the time of what was known as the *Millerite* excitement. One Miller had prophesied that the world would burn up on a certain day in October; and strange to say had found many to believe him. The papers said that on the night appointed the fields in the neighborhood of Philadelphia were thronged with believers in their ascension robes, ready to go