

never heard that a case occurred in Norfolk or Portsmouth this summer. But if men had been put to work on the *Raritan* breaking out her holds, etc., it might have been different; for that the steamer *Ben Franklin* carried the yellow fever to those cities in 1855 is "as true as taxes," as Mr. Barkis says.

As soon as I obtained my leave of absence I started for Boston. I had had my head shaved, was as yellow as gold, and weighed about ninety pounds, and to crown all my tailor made my clothes too small. Smike himself did not present a more ridiculous appearance.

Upon my arrival at Boston I got into an hotel coach which had many other passengers in it; the driver said he would drive them to their several destinations in Boston and then take me to the Charlestown Navy Yard, which my father commanded. One young man would not get out at the Lowell depot, but said he would wait. The driver told him that if he went to Charlestown he would miss his train: still he persisted that he would wait; and I saw that he had made up his mind to see the last of me. I could not understand his behavior at the time, but I knew afterwards. He thought I was being taken to the penitentiary, which is located in Charlestown!

During the summer I remained "on leave" and my physician tried to "build me up," for in the autumn I was to go to Annapolis to prepare for that grand climacteric of a Middy's life, his examination for the grade of Passed Midshipman.

CHAPTER XI.

ORDERED TO ANNAPOLIS—THE NAVAL SCHOOL OF 1847—CAPTAIN GEORGE P. UPSHUR—DUELS—THE BATTLE GROUND OF BLADENSBURG—PROFESSOR WILLIAM CHAUVENET—SWAPPING YARNS—PAT MURPHY AND THE COON SKINS—CAPTAIN X'S DILEMMA—COMMODORE CHAUNCEY—A PRECISE MESSAGE—A SAILOR'S TESTIMONY—VAN NESS PHILIP'S VISIT TO TROY—THOMPSONIAN TREATMENT—MAD JACK PERCIVAL—PASS MY EXAMINATION—A BAD QUARTER OF AN HOUR ON BOARD THE "BAY STATE"—A FRIEND IN NEED—HARD WORK AT THE BOSTON NAVY YARD.

I REPORTED for duty at the Naval School, Annapolis, in September, 1847. The school had been established here in 1845 by the Hon. George Bancroft, then Secretary of the Navy. Previous to that time the school was held at the Naval Asylum, Philadelphia. The first class to graduate at Annapolis was that of the midshipmen of the date of 1840—the class graduated in July, 1846. The class of 1841 was very large, and when the time came for it to report at Annapolis we were in the midst of the Mexican war, so the Secretary of the Navy decided to divide it into two parts—all those appointed between January and July, 1841, joined the school in the fall of 1846 and graduated in 1847; and the other part, to which I belonged, went there in the fall of 1847 and passed in 1848. The class was the largest ever appointed in the navy, numbering 245 I believe, and owing to various causes there remained some forty who went to the school in 1848 and passed in 1849. It was not until the three divisions had passed that the "numbers" were assigned. At the time I joined the school it presented a far different appearance from what it does at the present time. The place had been known as Fort Severn and was transferred to the navy by the War Department March 15, 1845. The fort was built in 1808 and mounted a few 24

pounders *en barbette*, at which we were drilled. Near the water's edge six 32 pounder guns were mounted on a platform built to represent a section of a ship's deck, and we were also exercised at these guns. The walls enclosed but nine acres in all and the professors and midshipmen used the buildings left by the army. There was not a new building on the grounds. The large barrack-rooms were used as recitation rooms and quarters. Two small gun-houses were turned into quarters also. We called them "Brandywine Cottage," and the "Abbey;" the long barracks were called "Apollo Row" and "Rowdy Hall." The curriculum embraced gunnery, infantry tactics, steam, mathematics, navigation and nautical astronomy, natural philosophy, chemistry, English grammar and French—seamanship the midshipmen were supposed to be prepared in and there were no vessels attached to the school. Commander George P. Upshur was the superintendent; having just relieved Commander Franklin Buchanan, to whom is due the honor of having organized the school. Professor William Chauvenet taught mathematics, nautical astronomy and navigation; Professor H. H. Lockwood, gunnery, steam, infantry tactics and natural philosophy; Professor Arsène N. Girault, French; Dr. John A. Lockwood, chemistry; and Chaplain George Jones, English grammar. Captain Upshur was assisted in his executive duties by Lieutenant Sidney Smith Lee. The instruction in mathematics, nautical astronomy and navigation was very good, and that in natural philosophy, French, gunnery and steam was fair. The chemistry, English grammar and infantry tactics we paid but little attention to; the two last were taught only on Saturday and we made quite a farce of the recitations.

In the spring of 1848 Mr. Copeland, a distinguished engineer of New York, gave us some interesting lectures on steam; and about the same time Lieutenant Dahlgren (afterwards a rear admiral) drilled us a few times at the guns, and gave us some practical instruction in filling shells, driving fuses, etc. There were about one hundred men in the class, and as we had all

been to sea for six years I fear we gave our good superintendent much trouble.

There have been stricter disciplinarians than Captain Upshur at the naval school, but never a more honorable, high-toned gentleman than he; and I doubt if any young man was ever thrown in his company without being the better for it—for my own part I have never ceased to remember his gentle manner, his high honor, his pure character and unexceptionable life. If *example* counts for anything we had it before us in him, and if we did not profit by it it was our own loss. As a rule we studied hard—the class was so large that many were struggling for the first honor—for to be the "number one" of the 41's was almost equal to a patent of nobility in our estimation.

The Hon. John Y. Mason was the secretary of the navy at this time. In many points he resembled Captain Upshur—they were both Virginians. As might be expected of so large a number of young men assembled together we gave the citizens of the quiet old town something to talk of: the nocturnal revels of the "Owls" and the "Crickets;" the "Corn Hill Riot," etc., rather surprised these staid old gentlemen; but take it all in all there was not much disturbance created.

Two duels were fought during the session. The first one was fought *inside the walls of the school*; the parties left the supper-table in advance of their classmates, and going behind the ten-pin alley in a few minutes one of the principals had a ball in his hip, and the "affair" was over. When he was carried to his room Doctor Lockwood was sent for and it was intended to pass it off as the result of an accident. The doctor silently probed the wound, and then suddenly said: "*What distance?*" "*Ten paces*" replied two or three Middies without pausing to think. A short time after this another duel was fought at Bladensburg and one of the party was wounded in the hip as before. The secretary of the navy was very indignant at these affairs; the *impudence* of the parties in the first case in selecting the *grounds* of the school for fighting was what he

said he "could not get over." All the parties engaged—seconds as well as principals—were dismissed the service by President Polk. About three years after they were re-instated by President Taylor. Only two of the principals chose to return to the navy; they were the ones who had been wounded, and are at present commodores in the navy. The seconds are all dead. If these duels had both been fought at Bladensburg I think the Department would have overlooked them. I know Captain Upshur would have "winked" at them; for though no duelist he did when a passed midshipman resign to fight his first lieutenant; but the commodore would not accept his resignation. Bladensburg has been a duelling ground since the "Bladensburg races," as the battle fought in 1814 is facetiously called. A Washington poet celebrated this battle in the following lines:

THE BATTLE GROUND.

"And here two thousand fought, three hundred fell,
And fifteen thousand fled; of these remain
The three where Barney laid them,—they sleep well.
Of the fifteen, part live to run again,
And part have died of fever on the brain,
Potions and pills—fell agents—but the worst,
As Sewell in his pamphlet proves is thirst.

And General Winder, I believe, is dead,
And General (—) retired to learned ease,
Posting a ledger. He has exchanged the bed
Of fame for one of feathers, and the fees
Of war for those of trade: and, where the trees
Shook at his voice, all's still, as ere began
The fight; for, when it did, they cheered, and—ran.

All, save old Handspike and his crew—they stood
Drawn up, one coolly buttoning his breeches,
Another his cheek helping to a quid
Of purser's pigtail. No long windy speeches—
For valor, like a bishop, seldom preaches—
They stood like men prepared to do their duty,
And fell as they had done it—red and smutty.

Peace to them! men I still have found
Though sadly looked on by us land-bred people,
High-souled, warm-hearted—true, it must be owned,
They've no great predilection for a steeple,
And too much for a bottle. But the ground
Strongest in tares is so in wheat; the sod
May flower as here, whose very earth is blood."

But to return to the naval school. To Professor William Chauvenet is due more credit for its establishment than to any other man. Appointed a professor in the navy in 1841 he went to sea in the *Mississippi*, and here very soon discovered the defects in the method of instructing the midshipmen as pursued at that day. He was soon after sent to the Naval Asylum in Philadelphia to take charge of the school there, and from that time he applied himself to the task of establishing a school more fitted to the wants of the navy. He saw from the beginning that such an institution must be a growth and not a creation. He remained in the navy until 1859 when he resigned to accept a professorship in Washington University, St. Louis. In 1862 he was chosen chancellor of the university. Up to the time of his resignation he was the life of the naval school. He was, next to Professor Peirce of Harvard, the best mathematician in the country, and as an instructor he stood second to none. He left the navy because his salary was too small for him to support and educate his family. A miserable economy on the part of the Government permitted him to leave without an effort to retain him. Professor Chauvenet died in 1870; but he lived long enough to see the naval school attain the growth he always predicted for it, and to achieve which he gave eighteen years of his life.

It was our custom to meet on Saturday nights and hold what Van Ness Philip called "reformed banquets." Coming from different stations we were in the habit on these occasions of "swapping yarns;" and although I never wrote them in my journal, as Brown did, yet many remain in my memory, and some few I will relate.

A mid who had served on board the *Pennsylvania*, lying off the Norfolk navy yard, said that one morning at sunrise an old darky who had come down through the Dismal Swamp canal in a canoe came close to the ship, and seeing a man standing in the gangway, inquired: "Is Master Pat Murphy on board dar?" "Yes," was the reply, "what do you want with him?" "Missis sent him a peck of sweets and a couple of coon skins," said the old man. Another story was of Captain Arthur X. It seems that his friends got him the command of a brig upon condition that he would take no liquor to sea with him in his cabin—he being somewhat addicted to it. After being at sea a week or two the captain felt an inordinate desire for a drink. In that day the ration of grog was served to the men on the upper deck in small vessels. At 12 o'clock the grog tub was brought up, and the captain, after passing it several times, walked up to the purser's steward and said: "What's this complaint I hear of the ship's whiskey?" "Give me a tot," he drank it with gusto, and remarked: "It's as good whiskey as ever I drank; let me hear no more complaints." It is needless to say there had been none.

Old Commodore Chauncey commanded the New York navy yard at the time when there was "no law for post captains." One Sunday in the chapel of the yard the chaplain read a notice which he said was by order of the bishop of the diocese: "By whose order did you say?" inquired the commodore, standing up: "By order of the bishop of the diocese," mildly replied the chaplain. "Well, the notice will not be obeyed," said old Chauncey: "I'll let you know that *I am the bishop of this diocese.*"

One of our classmates was very precise and it was told of him that being directed by the lieutenant of the watch to report to the captain that "there was a sail in sight," he did so in these terms: "Captain P. the officer of the deck desires me to inform you that there is visible on the extreme verge of the sensible horizon a small speck, which he conceives to be a sail."

Discussing sailors one day the opinion was expressed that a man-of-war's man would not tell the truth if his interests or desires lay the other way: and no amount of "swearing" would make him do it; in illustration of which a story was told concerning one Passed Midshipman C. He had been on shore from his ship in some port of the Mediterranean and upon his return to his boat, lying at the mole, was intoxicated. Here he happened to fall in with an English chaplain who was waiting for a boat to take him to his ship, and after some words C. knocked him overboard. A shore boat picked the unfortunate man up and took him to his vessel. C. was too drunk to know what he was about. The fact coming to the ears of the commodore he promptly brought C. to a court-martial, and, as the chaplain generously declined to appear as a witness, the judge advocate had to rely upon the boat's crew to make out his case. The first witness testified "that Mr. C. was down on the mole when he saw the chaplain approaching *in an intoxicated condition.* The chaplain walked up to Mr. C., and *in making a pass at him,* he fell overboard." This was the coxswain's testimony and the remainder of the boat's crew swore to the same effect. Of course C. was acquitted, and equally of course he made the *amende honorable* to the chaplain.

This C. was a very humorous fellow, though he would "crook his elbow." Being at the old Bowery theatre one night—in that happy condition when "another glass of claret would spoil him"—he went in front of the curtain and gave out the following announcement: "Gentlemen and ladies, tomorrow night will be performed the drama entitled, 'The babes and the woods;' Babes, Mr. Brown; Woods, Mr. C.; to be followed by the roaring farce called 'Moses and the bulrushes:' Moses, Mr. C.; Bulrushes by the troop."

Mr. C.'s sailors may or may not have given the testimony attributed to them; but I have often noticed their great objection to appearing before a court as a witness. They seem to have some extraordinary superstition in regard to their "com-

mitting themselves" as they call it. Old Junius B—— as a witness in a case of assault and battery once testified that he "saw the accused give the accuser several kicks, or," he cautiously added, "words to that effect."

Midshipman Van Ness Philip used to tell a very good story on himself: He once carried his niece to Troy and entered her at Mrs. Willard's famous school. He was invited to attend a party at Mrs. Willard's the same evening and remained in town to accept it. Philip enjoyed a joke more than most men, and during the day he came across a *conundrum* which amused him much. It was: "What is the difference between Tom Thumb and Queen Elizabeth?" The answer was: "He is a wonder and she was a Tudor." He said that when he attended the party that night this abominable conundrum kept running in his thoughts and he was dying to ask it; but he did not know a soul in the room save Mrs. Willard. After awhile, however he seized an opportunity and propounded it to her. It seems the old lady was somewhat deaf, and after Philip had asked it she said: "What did you say, sir?" Philip repeated the conundrum in rather a loud voice, and as this drew the attention of all in the room he said he began to get pretty red in the face. "Ah!" said Mrs. W., "what is the difference between Queen Elizabeth—and *whom* did you say, sir?" "*Tom Thumb*," roared Philip in a stentorian voice and much to the astonishment of the company assembled. Of course Mrs. W. gave it up, and Philip had to repeat the answer several times in a loud voice and was then doubtful whether the old lady "took." He said he left the party as soon after as possible and determined never to ask a conundrum unless sure of his listener.

One of our fellows told a yarn concerning the "practice" of a merchant captain who treated his crew by the Thompsonian method, in which all the medicines were marked from number one to ten. On one occasion a man complained of being unwell and the captain judged he required the medicine marked

number six; but on looking in the medicine chest he found that he was out of number six, so he gave the man *two threes*.

Many of our stories were of the captains we had sailed with, and old Captain Percival, or mad Jack, as the sailors called him, came in for his share. Captain Jack *was* eccentric, but he always took a fatherly interest in his midshipmen. He wrote once to the father of one of them that his son had entered a profession "where he would either go down to his grave wept, honored and sung, or unwept, unhonored and unsung. A few days after, he got angry with the young man and at once sat down and wrote to his father: "Dear Sir—Your son is going down to his grave unwept, unhonored and unsung."

Captain Jack being upon a board for the examination of midshipmen announced the passing of one of them to his father (who was a commodore in the Navy) in the following delicate way:

"Dear X—Your son has passed. Do you recollect our taking the *Columbus* out of dock? *She just grazed*.—Yours truly,
PERCIVAL."

But this is a digression. "When to the sessions of sweet silent thought I summon up remembrance of things past," I get off the regular track as it were.

The Board of Examiners, consisting of Commodores Morgan, Wyman, Mayo, Dulany and Gwinn assembled in Annapolis in June, 1848, and in July I passed my examination and became a passed midshipman, *eligible* to promotion to all grades above it and entitled to wear a star on my collar to back the anchor already worn there. I could bring in a great many elegant quotations here in relation to stars, but I'll "pass." Upon passing my examination I received orders to the Boston navy yard and upon getting as far as New York on my way there found myself short of funds. There was nothing remarkable in this, because I generally got home in that condition. Upon going to Brooklyn and applying to a friend for a loan, he informed me that *he* was going to Boston

that afternoon and would meet me on the boat, pay all my expenses, &c. I gave myself no further trouble and at 5 o'clock went down to the Bay State, Captain Brown, of the Fall river line. Having some small change I bought the evening papers and a magazine or two and ensconced myself comfortably on the hurricane deck which was crowded with ladies and gentlemen on their way to Newport—it being the height of the season there. As the boat shoved off I happened to look up and words cannot express my dismay when I saw my friend standing on the wharf carpet bag in hand, *left!* My first feeling was that of anger that he should have *allowed* himself to be left under the circumstances, and I felt a diabolical desire for a rifle that I might put a bullet in his block of a head; but that soon gave way to despair and I felt in a moment that the ladies *all knew I had no money!* What to do was the question; the fare was five dollars, and I had but one.

Now the Bay State had been repaired in the dock of the Boston navy yard a short time before this and my father having extended some civilities to Captain Brown, he (the captain) had since been especially polite and hospitable to him and his family. I had heard of this, and though I had no personal acquaintance with the captain, I resolved to make myself known to him and explain my peculiar (or pecuniary) condition; so I went to the purser's office and asked to see the captain. "He is in the pilot house," said the purser; "won't I do?" (I'm *sure* the rascal suspected my impecunious state). "No," I answered, "I wish to see Captain Brown," and I went to the pilot house.

One of the waiters pointed out the captain. He was a stout man, with a white beaver on the side of his head, and as he stood talking with a number of gentlemen to save my life I could not introduce myself and break the subject to him; so I walked aft. The confounded negro rang his bell and requested the passengers to "call at the purser's office and settle" oftener than I had ever known him to do before. Not feeling able to remain on the hurricane deck where I felt that all hands knew

I was short of funds I went down on the main deck. I had no sooner gotten there than I saw the mate belaboring a shabby-genteel man, and upon my interfering and inquiring as to the cause of such harsh treatment the mate said: "Well, sir, this man has no money"—(just my case thought I)—"and he knows we cannot put him on shore until we get to Newport: We have many such stowaways," he continued. Well! to make a long story short, while I was deliberating whether to make another attempt to see Captain Brown, or jump overboard, I was accosted by a young man who seemed to know me well; he said he had been on board the *Ohio* with me in 1842. He informed me that he had just returned from a cruise in the *Albany*, where he had served as captain's clerk, and had just been paid off. These words sounded well, and as soon as he got through *his* story, I told *mine*. I will never forget the joy with which he pulled out a handful of bank-notes and thrust them upon me. He wanted me to take a hundred dollars, but I only took twenty which I put in my pocket and became "a man again."

I saw this gentleman the following day in Boston at the old United States hotel and returned the loan. I have never been able to recall his name, nor have I any recollection of his being with me on board the *Ohio*. I have never met him since. I have always believed that he was in some humble position on board the *Ohio* and that I had done him a service of some peculiar kind; for he could not have been kinder if he had been my own brother; and, as I have said, it seemed to be a real *joy* to him to be able to assist me. Even Macaulay's "schoolboy" can see the moral of this story.

I remained attached to the navy yard in Boston about two months and cannot say I rendered any material service to the Government in that time. In fact there seemed to be no scope for a young man of my transcendent ability. I was a *passed* midshipman, and *consequently* a "gnostic;" moreover I was a 41, and we 41's did not hold ourselves cheap, I assure you. It rather surprised me to see everything going on all right with-

out my assistance, but so it was. I was zealous enough, but for the life of me I never could find anything to do. One day the executive officer, Lieutenant Timothy Hunt, tired I suppose of seeing me "standing about" told me to see what Lieutenant Handy was doing, and to help him. I called upon Lieutenant H. and asked him what he was doing; he replied: "nothing;" "well," said I, "I've come to help you." This was all the duty I remember to have done at the yard.

CHAPTER XII.

ORDERED TO THE SLOOP-OF-WAR "YORKTOWN"—SAIL FROM BOSTON—ARRIVAL AT PORTO PRAYA—FIRST CRUISE ON THE COAST OF AFRICA—THE GAMBIA RIVER—MONROVIA—BATTLE BETWEEN THE LIBERIANS AND NATIVES—PRESIDENT ROBERTS—A CRUISE TO WINDWARD—CADIZ, FUNCHAL, TENERIFFE, PALMAS—PORTO PRAYA AGAIN—AN OLD CITY—RIDING OUT A GALE ON A LEE SHORE—RESCUE OF THE AMERICAN BRIG "COPPERTHWAITE."

In September of this year I was ordered to the frigate *Constitution*, fitting out at the Boston navy yard for the Mediterranean; but the ship was largely stocked with passed and other midshipmen and not wishing to pass another cruise on the fore-castle or quarter deck carrying messages and calling the "relief," I applied to have my orders changed to the *Yorktown*, a sloop-of-war fitting out for the coast of Africa. The Secretary of the Navy granted my request and remarked that he expected I was the only officer who had preferred a sloop-of-war on the coast of Africa to a fine frigate in the Mediterranean; but I was looking forward to promotion and a "watch," and I got it.

The *Yorktown* was a third-class sloop-of-war of 560 tons, and carried a battery of sixteen 32-pounders of 27 cwt. She was a staunch little craft and a good sea-boat. We went into commission in October, Captain John Marston. The other officers were: Lieutenants, Rootes, Spottswood, Frailey and Fleming; Sailing Master, Caldwell; Purser, Semple; Surgeon, Fox; Passed Assistant Surgeon, Potter; Passed Midshipmen, Coleman, Seawell, Selden and Parker; Midshipmen, Bruce, J. Parker, Fyffe and Means; Boatswain, Young; Gunner, Oliver; Sailmaker, Frankland, and Carpenter, Mager. Our junior lieutenant left us as soon as we got on the station,