

The Life of the Right Honourable Horatio Lord Viscount Nelson (Complete)

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The Life of the Right Honourable Horatio Lord Viscount Nelson (Complete) James Harrison
ADVERTISEMENT. Never, perhaps, was a greater panegyric pronounced on any human being, than that which is comprised in the motto to this biographical account of Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson, delivered from the lips of the Sovereign who had experienced his worth; and who, with a noble gratitude, deigned thus publicly to acknowledge, and record, the transcendent heroism of his Lordship's meritorious services: heroism and services, the recollection of which, His Majesty generously anticipates, must not only exist for ever in the memory of the people; but, by continually stimulating future heroes, prove a perpetual source of strength, security, and glory, even to the country itself. A reflection worthy of a King! Inciting to heroism, by the consideration of a more enlarged motive than seems to have been heretofore sufficiently regarded; and thus entitling himself to participate the very praise he is so liberally bestowing. The expressive voice of gratitude is thus, sometimes, surprised by a similar unexpected but grateful echo; and the rays of royalty, beaming with their fullest lustre on a brilliant object, are in part reflected back to their source. The general history of the world, to almost every part of which the influence of Lord Nelson's services may be considered as having in some measure extended, must most assuredly preserve the remembrance of one of its chiefest heroes; and the future historian of our own country, in particular, will not fail exultingly to dwell on each of his Lordship's great and glorious victories, with all the animated and enegertic glow of conscious dignity and truth. Still, however, we are desirous to know more of so exalted a character than any general history can with propriety supply. We wish to see him not only as a hero, but as the hero of a respectable historian; and are anxious, with a laudable zeal, for such minuteness of detail, in the developement of every circumstance, not only relative to his public and professional character, but even to his private and domestic transactions, as is to be alone expected from what may be denominated the more humble labours of the biographer: who, nevertheless, must not be permitted to boast much of extraordinary humility, if he pretends to combine, in a single picture, any tolerable portion of that sublime grandeur, and that delicate simplicity, which constitute the Iliad and the Odyssey of literature. To produce a work not altogether unworthy the hero whose life it records, is the utmost that his present biographer can reasonably hope to accomplish. Even this, he freely confesses, he must have despaired of ever effecting, had he not been indulgently honoured by the kindest communications from some whose near affinity to the immortal Nelson, is evidently more than nominal; who not only have the same blood flowing in their veins, but whose hearts possess a large portion of the same unbounded goodness, generosity, and honour: as well as from other dear and intimate friends, professional and private, who were united to his Lordship by the closest ties of a tender reciprocal amity. Encouraged by such generous aids, the author may be allowed to boast that he has, at least, a considerable store of novelties to offer: it will be for the public to judge, on perusing the work, how far he has succeeded in making a suitable arrangement of the excellent information acknowledged to have been thus bountifully and benignantly afforded

him. Particular acknowledgments will be seen in the preface, to such of the family and friends of Lord Nelson as may have generously assisted the researches of the author; the number of whom are likely, from obvious circumstances, to be considerably augmented during the progress of the work. It may seem scarcely necessary to add, that the preface, though always placed, as the very name imports, at the beginning of a book, is usually the last part printed. * * * * **PREFACE.** There are few works, the authors of which can possibly be permitted to recommend them as worthy of universal regard, without the imputation of intolerable vanity; an imputation little likely to be diminished by the consideration, that other writers, over whom a decided preference is claimed, may have previously occupied the same subject. A Life of Lord Nelson, however, replete with original anecdotes, many of them from the mouths of his lordship's nearest and dearest relatives and friends, with whom the author has, for many months, been honoured with an almost constant communication; and abounding in a profusion of interesting letters, and extracts of letters, written by the hero himself, which have generously flowed in, from all quarters, to aid the biographer; he may surely, without the charge of presumption, these facts being self-evident on the slightest inspection, be allowed to assert, must necessarily be entitled to very general notice and esteem. So numerous, indeed, have been the invaluable documents kindly tendered to the author's acceptance, that he has not only been under the necessity of greatly enlarging his original design; but may, probably, at a future and no very distant period, feel encouraged to present those who have so indulgently expressed their approbation of his present labours, with a sort of supplementary work, not necessarily attached, but still more minutely illustrative of many circumstances which relate to the life and character of this greatest and best of heroes and of men. It is not without painful sensations, that the author feels compelled to notice the many dishonourable insinuations which have been promulged by bold speculators on public credulity: some of whom, by prematurely publishing, have already sufficiently evinced their want of genuine information; and others, after the most illiberal reflections on all contemporaries, have found it expedient entirely to abandon their own boasted performances, or to wait the completion of the very work which they have thus meanly and insidiously laboured to depreciate, before they could possibly advance. This biographical memoir, like the character of the immortal man whom it proudly aspires to commemorate, rests on no false claim. It offers not any meretricious attraction to the eye; it submits itself, wholly, to the understanding, and to the heart. Should it fail considerably to gratify the one, and powerfully to interest the other, it will be in vain for the author to urge, however true, that he has exerted himself, with a due sense of the dignity of his subject, and of the difficulty of the task, to produce a work which, though it can never sufficiently honour the incomparable hero, should as little as possible disgrace the kind contributory aids, and the generous patronage, which he has had the distinguished favour to receive from so many estimable and illustrious personages. To add a list of names, might seem ostentatious; but, certainly, such a list would contain almost every great and virtuous character allied to his late lordship, in the bonds of affinity as well as of friendship. With most of these, it will ever constitute the chief pride and happiness of the author's life, that he is also permitted to boast a considerable degree of intimate friendship; and, in the delightful retreat of Merton Place, surrounded by all who were most dear to the heart of the hero, in consanguinity as well as amity, have many of those valuable anecdotes been obtained, with which the work is so abundantly enriched. Prompted to this undertaking, by a strong sense of conviction, that our chief hero, when his character was clearly understood, would be found as eminently good as great, the biographer has fearlessly endeavoured freely to investigate transactions of the utmost delicacy in private life; and he is fully prepared to assert, and as far as possible to prove, that there seldom has existed any human being adorned by the practice of so many positive virtues, so little sullied by any actual vice, as that immortal man, the chief particulars of whose history will be found, the author may, at least, be permitted to maintain, most faithfully recorded in the work now confided, with all its imperfections, to the just judgment of the world; a tribunal which seldom fails doing compleat justice, either sooner or later, to all the merits both of heroes and of authors, of men as well as of books. **THE LIFE OF LORD NELSON, DUKE OF BRONTE, &c.** When we survey, with rapture, the state of an exalted hero, arrived at all the honours which it is possible for a human being to receive from the gratitude, the veneration, and

the love, of his fellow-mortals; seen, as he then is, like a luminary of the first magnitude in the full blaze of meridian glory, we are generally too dazzled by the lustre we behold, to penetrate, or even to reflect on, the circuitous, the tedious, or the perplexed path, through which he may have been constrained to pass, in pursuit of the splendid destiny at length happily attained. In this sublime situation, we have lately beheld a British naval hero, who has scarcely ever been equalled, and certainly never surpassed. As a nation, we have been charmed with his brilliant refulgence; we have been cheered by his vivifying influence; and we lament the short duration of his splendor with a grief so general, that it appears to be without parallel in the history of any age or country. To trace the progress of this heroic and inestimable character, through the various vicissitudes of his eventful life, from its commencement to its close, with all the accuracy and minuteness which circumstances will admit; contemplating and comparing the several causes and effects which may have retarded or accelerated the progress of his public career, which may have blessed or embittered his private comforts; is the arduous task of the present biographer: who holds, with a trembling hand, the pen that would presumptuously aspire to record, with suitable dignity, the history of one of the very greatest and most successful naval heroes that has ever yet astonished and adorned the world. Lord Nelson, Duke of Bronte—for he always, very properly, signed with both these titles, from the moment of obtaining them—was the offspring of parents on each side highly respectable. The family of the Nelsons had been long resident in the county of Norfolk: they possessed, for many years, and their posterity still possess, a small patrimony at Hilborough, with the patronage of that rectory. The Sucklings, likewise a Norfolk family, of lofty alliances, have been resident at Wooton nearly three centuries. On the 11th of May, in the year 1749, the Reverend Edmund Nelson, son of the then venerable Rector of Hilborough, and himself Rector of Burnham-Thorpe, was married to Catharine daughter of Dr. Maurice Suckling, Rector of Basham in Suffolk, as well as of Wooton in Norfolk, and a Prebendary of Westminster. By this union the Nelson family gained the honour of being related to the noble families of Walpole, Cholmondeley, and Townshend: Miss Suckling being the grand-daughter of Sir Charles Turner, Bart. of Warham, in the county of Norfolk, by Mary, daughter of Robert Walpole, Esq. of Houghton, and sister to Sir Robert Walpole, of Wolterton, whose next sister, Dorothy, was married to Charles, second Viscount Townshend. The honour, however, so conferred, has since been abundantly recompensed to all these illustrious families, by a single Nelson, the offspring of this very union; to whom, in their turn, they may now proudly boast their alliance, without any degradation of dignity. Of these virtuous and most respectable parents, was Horatio Lord Viscount Nelson born, at the parsonage house of the rectory of Burnham-Thorpe, on Michaelmas-day 1758: a place which will be ever renowned for having given him birth; and a day of annual festivity, which every Briton has now an additional motive to commemorate. He was their fifth son, and their sixth child: his eldest sister, Mrs. Bolton, the amiable lady of Thomas Bolton, Esq. by whom she has a son and four daughters, being about three years older than her renowned brother. There had been a former son christened Horatio, who only survived about twelve months; and another, named Edmund, after the father, who also died in early infancy: both of whom are entombed in Hilborough church. The name of Horatio, or Horace, which is thus once more destined to live for ever honoured, was doubtless adopted, and persisted in by Mr. and Mrs. Nelson, as a compliment to the memory of their noble relative, the first Lord Walpole; brother of the highly celebrated Sir Robert Walpole, afterwards first Earl of Orford. It was then little imagined, even by the boundless partiality of parental affection, looking forward to sanguine hopes of a powerful family patronage, that this infant could ever possibly live to eclipse all the glory of his most brilliant ancestors! The name of Maurice, after Dr. Maurice Suckling the grandfather, and his son Captain Maurice Suckling, had been previously given to another son, born May 24, 1753: who held a situation in the Navy Office, and died so recently as the year 1801, three days after receiving news of the battle of Copenhagen; leaving a widow, but no issue. Had this last gentleman survived his illustrious brother, he would, of course, have succeeded to his lordship's titles; which now devolve, augmented by an earldom, on the Reverend William Nelson, Rector of Hilborough; the sole remaining brother of this numerous family, most of whom died in their minority. The Earl, who was born April 20, 1757, married, in November 1786, Sarah daughter of the Reverend Henry Yonge, of Great Torrington in the county

of Devon—cousin to the Right Reverend Philip Yonge, late Bishop of Norwich—by whom he has issue, Charlotte-Mary, born September 20, 1787; and Horatio, born October 26, 1788, successor-apparent to the honours of his immortal uncle. Of the whole eight sons, offspring of Lord Nelson's parents, it seems remarkable that only the present Earl ever had any issue; while, of their three daughters, one died in her infancy, and the two who reached maturity, Mrs. Bolton and Mrs. Matcham, have both several children: Mrs. Bolton, as already noticed, having five now living; and Mrs. Matcham, her amiable younger sister, the lady of George Matcham, Esq. being the mother of no less than three sons and five daughters. We usually expect, that the life of a great character should commence with some early indication of his future excellence. This, being an apparent principle in nature, is probably just. That divine genius, of whatever description, which "nascetur, non fit;" is born with a man, and not possible to be made or acquired; must, necessarily, exist at his birth, whatever may be the period when, or the circumstance by which, the dormant spark is first awakened into action. Parents, it is true, are in general great observers of infantine occurrences; and very apt to be presageful of wonderful results expected from trivial causes. Few parents, however, are so blessed, as to have children who possess genius: of those who are, some silently treasure up their hopes, which may be buried with them in an untimely grave; some are too incessantly busied in the cares of providing for a numerous offspring, to be capable of indulging minute attentions to any particular infant; and some are altogether unconscious, or regardless, of the presence of genius, amidst the clearest manifestations of its existence. To most other persons, but the parents, if we except a good old grandmother, or an artful or affectionate nurse, the actions and the sayings of a child seldom afford much interest; and the relation of them often gives rise to no inconsiderable degree of animosity. The parents of other children, and even the other children of the same parents, not unfrequently hear such praises with distaste and aversion; and, if they do not soon entirely forget them, it is, perhaps, only because their unextinguishable envy condemns them to preserve the remembrance of the circumstance by which it was originally excited. These, among various other causes, prevent our always becoming acquainted with the early occurrences which distinguish genius, even where they soonest appear: but, genius is not always apparent in early infancy; and, where it is, every hero does not, like Hercules, find a serpent successfully to encounter in his cradle. Of Lord Nelson's infancy, from whatever causes, scarcely any anecdote is now preserved. That which may, probably, be considered as the first, has often been related; but never, heretofore, in a manner sufficiently accurate and circumstantial. At the very early age of not more than five or six years, little Horatio, being on a visit to his grandmother, at Hilborough, who was remarkably fond of all her son's children, and herself a most exemplary character, had strolled out, with a boy some years older than himself, to ramble over the country in search of birds-nests. Dinner-time, however, arriving, and her grandson not having returned, the old lady became so excessively alarmed, that messengers, both on horseback and on foot, were immediately dispatched, to discover the wanderer. The progress of the young adventurers had, it seems, been impeded by a brook, or piece of water, over which Horatio could not pass; and, his companion having gone off and left him, he was found ruminating, very composedly, on the opposite bank. It is not ascertained, whether his companion had got across the water, or gone back again by the way they had approached it: whether the young hero was meditating how it might be passed; or too weary, or unwilling, to retread all his former steps. Who shall pretend to say, that this child, thus sitting, in a state of abstraction, by the side of an impassable piece of water, might not first feel that ardent thirst of nautical knowledge excited, the gratification of which has since led to such glorious consequences! Be this as it may—for even himself, if living, might not now be conscious of the fact—it is perfectly well remembered that, on his being brought into the presence of his grandmother, the old lady concluded her lecture respecting the propriety of children's rambling abroad without the permission of their friends, by saying—"I wonder, that fear did not drive you home."—"Fear, grandmama," innocently replied the child, "I never saw FEAR; what is it?" Perhaps, the frequent repetition of this anecdote, and the admiration which the sweet simplicity of the child's wonderful answer must naturally create in the bosom of every virtuous friend, had no small share in fixing his heroic character. He had never seen fear, he knew not what it was. What a reflection for an incipient hero, when he became capable of

comprehending the full force of his own artless expression! If he ever lived to see fear, it was only in the enemies of his country; if to know it, it was only by name. There seems good reason to suppose, that his invincible spirit was visible at an early age, as well as his generally mild and amiable disposition. He was a prodigious favourite with his indulgent mother: who was herself a woman of considerable firmness and fortitude, though of a delicate habit, as well as of great meekness and piety: and, in one of the little customary strifes of brothers, the present earl being his antagonist, when requested, by some friends, who were alarmed at the noise, to interfere in behalf of the youngest, is well recollected to have replied, with the utmost composure, and a very visible satisfaction depicted on her expressive countenance—"Let them alone, little Horace will beat him; let Horace alone!" The brother of Mrs. Nelson, Captain Maurice Suckling, married to a sister of the present Lord Walpole, was a naval commander of very considerable skill and bravery: he frequently visited his sister; and was, also, particularly fond of Horatio. He had, doubtless, heard the anecdote respecting fear; to which, in his own person, he felt himself as much a stranger as his little nephew: and, probably, was the first friend to hail and encourage the future hero. His sister, partial to the honourable profession of her brother, would naturally interpret every proof of her darling son's attachment to his uncle's person, his conversation, or even any of his professional habiliments, as well as each appearance of spirited resolution which he occasionally displayed, into an inclination, as well as fitness, for the service. She, like the Holy Mary, "kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart:" but, she lived not to behold the accomplishment of her cherished hopes! The principles of piety were carefully implanted in his infant mind, by the example, as well as precepts, of both parents; and, amidst all the tempestuous passions by which mankind is agitated during his progress through the various scenes of active life, these principles could never be eradicated from his bosom. The celebrated grammar-school at Norwich, called the High School, of which a Mr. Symonds was then master, and which was afterwards superintended by the learned Dr. Parr, has the honour of having given him the first rudiments of a respectable education. How long he continued at Norwich school is not now known, any more than the particular reason why he quitted it. From thence, however, he went to the grammar-school at North Walsham; and was placed under the tuition of the Reverend Mr. Jones, whose abilities are said to have then acquired much celebrity. It seems likely, that this removal might take place at the period of his mother's death, which happened on the 24th of December 1767; being about nine months after she was delivered of Mrs. Matcham, her eleventh and last child. The death of this excellent lady was a severe loss to her affectionate husband, and his infant family; who do not appear to have experienced any very substantial proofs of friendship from their illustrious relatives in general, after Mrs. Nelson's decease. It is, indeed, but too common for the affluent to neglect those of their humbler kindred who have a numerous offspring; as if marriage were a crime, and the fruits of virtuous love a reproach rather than a blessing. The Reverend Mr. Nelson, however, was never in necessitous circumstances; and, as he felt no solicitude for any self-indulgences not always within his reach, he was enabled to effect the respectable establishment of all his children, without that assistance, or those attentions, which he might naturally have expected, and which it would certainly have been pleasing to receive. The good grandmother, at Hilborough, however, did all in her power to promote the happiness and comfort of her son's children; and her kindness and affection supplied, as much as it can be supplied, the want of a mother. She was a fine old lady, and possessed uncommon wisdom, with extreme goodness of heart. Her faculties were so lasting, that she could see to read the smallest print, and execute the finest needlework, till the close of her prolonged life, which extended to ninety-three years. Captain Suckling, too, seems to have formed one exception, at least, to the almost general indifference on the part of their maternal relations. He continued his occasional visits; and engaged, the first moment possible, to take Horatio under his immediate protection. The child, in the mean time, was acquiring the advantages of a good education, at North Walsham grammar-school; and it seems evident, from subsequent circumstances, that he must have been making considerable progress in learning, under Mr. Jones's able tuition, when he was suddenly withdrawn, at the tender age of only twelve years, from that respectable seminary, to commence his professional career on the perilous ocean. About the autumn of 1770, when the aggressions of the Spaniards, who had violently taken possession of the

Falkland Islands, so far alarmed the country, that a naval armament was prepared to chastise this indignity, Captain Suckling, having obtained the command of the *Raisonnable*, of sixty-four guns, one of the ships put into commission on the occasion, immediately ordered his nephew from school, and entered him as a midshipman. The youth, after being properly equipped for this situation, was sent to join the ship, then at Sheerness. It should seem, however, that his uncle could not at that time be on board, or any person whatever who knew of his coming: for he has been repeatedly heard to say, by one of his oldest and most esteemed friends, that he paced the deck, after his arrival from Greenwich, the whole remainder of the day, without being in the smallest degree noticed by any one; till, at length, the second day of his being on board, some person, as he expressed it, "kindly took compassion on him." It was then discovered, for the first time, that he was the captain's nephew, and appointed to serve on board as a midshipman. What a primary reception was this, for such a youth to experience! It did not, however, dispirit him; and he was, no doubt, now heartily greeted and encouraged, with the golden hopes always inspired, among young seamen, by the prospect of a Spanish war. Whatever might be the extent of these hopes, they were destined to be speedily dissipated. The Spaniards very readily made such concessions as administration thought it expedient, at that juncture, to accept, respecting this business; Mr. Harris, his majesty's minister at Madrid, who had been recalled on the 21st of December 1770, was ordered to return thither on the 18th of January 1771; and, of course, all the ships which had been just commissioned for that service, were directed to be immediately laid up in ordinary, and paid off. This, on the whole, seemed no very auspicious commencement for the young hero. His father was in the condition of the country; he had incurred the expences of fitting out, for services which this compromise rendered unnecessary. Peace, however, while it can be preserved with safety and honour, is always preferable to war; and initiation in an honourable profession, where so much depends on seniority, though it may not be immediately productive, is undoubtedly better than nothing. Horatio, though discouraged, was not disgusted: on the contrary, he felt delighted with the profession of a sailor. Under the eye of his respectable uncle, during the short time he had been on board, he became fully satisfied that, to form an accomplished seaman, would require no small degree of application, and no few years of experience. It was ever the opinion of the Reverend Mr. Nelson, founded on an early and acute observation of his son's character, that Horatio, in whatever station placed, would climb, if possible, to the very top of the tree: this sentiment seems to have swelled the bosom of the youth, at an age when few boys indulge any serious anticipatory reflection. With all that regarded nautical knowledge, he was studious to become thoroughly acquainted; and, being ardently desirous of making his first voyage, which was now impracticable in the navy, his uncle placed him under the care of Mr. John Rathbone, an excellent seaman, who then had the command of a West-Indiaman belonging to the respectable house of Hibbert, Purrier, and Horton. With this skilful and brave commander, who had formerly served under Captain Suckling, in the *Dreadnought*, he now joyfully proceeded on his first expedition, by sailing to the West Indies. The numerous and agreeable novelties continually presenting themselves to the view of the young adventurer, during this interesting voyage, could not fail to prove highly gratifying. He was beholding a new world, while he was gaining practical skill in a new profession: and, if the latter might be considered as a substitute for the school studies so lately quitted at North Walsham; the former amply compensated the loss of those hours of vacation amusements, the enjoyment of which he might now recollect without any regret. The enervating influence of the torrid climes had no ill effect on his constitution; which was radically good, though partaking of his mother's slightness and delicacy: and he had been too virtuously educated, hastily to indulge that rash and dangerous intemperance which proves so often fatal to inconsiderate Europeans, on their first visiting the West Indies. With a considerable store of local and professional information, he returned to England about the middle of the year 1772. It has been said that, at this period, his mind had acquired, without any apparent cause, an entire horror of the royal navy; that Captain Suckling, who beheld with anxiety the critical situation of his nephew, was soon convinced, by the sentiment he appeared to indulge in—"Aft, the most honour; but forward, the better man!"—his too credulous nephew had acquired a bias utterly foreign to his real character; and that it was many weeks before all the firmness of the captain, assisted by his

thorough knowledge of the human heart, could overcome these prejudices in his nephew, and reconcile him to the service on board a king's ship. Admitting the truth of this relation, it would be natural to suppose that Mr. Rathbone, who was probably a worthy but disappointed man, had inspired the youth with his own aversions to serving in the royal navy, without a due consideration being made for the differences of their respective interests. This gentleman, with the utmost purity of design, might wish to prepare the nephew of his friend for mortifications and disappointments to be expected in the profession he had just embraced; it was not his fault, if pictures, which he perhaps feelingly and faithfully portrayed from the life, excited too much abhorrence in the mind of his young pupil. The sentiment of "Aft, the most honour; but forward, the better man!" might come with no ill grace from the lips of Mr. Rathbone, but could never originate with a boy of thirteen. So far, the fact may be supported by some degree of probability, but it seems incapable of proof. In the family, no such circumstance appears to be remembered. It is well recollected—in some degree, to the contrary—that, on a slight intimation from his father, of a wish that he might entirely quit the sea-service, he resolutely declared, that if he were not again sent out, he would set off without any assistance. It may, however, be taken for granted, that he wished for more active employment in seamanship, than he could well expect to obtain, on board a man of war, in the capacity of a midshipman. The mode which his uncle is said to have adopted for what is called the recovery of the original bias of his nephew's mind, was to work on the ambition which, it is on all hands agreed, he in a supereminent degree possessed, to become a thorough seaman. Captain Suckling had recently been appointed to the command of the *Triumph*, then lying at Chatham; on board of which ship he placed his nephew, in July 1772, immediately after the youth's return from the West Indies, in his old situation on the quarter-deck: and, though he had, thus, the "aft" situation of "most honour," the uncle contrived that he should, at the same time, be permitted to enjoy all the advantages of the "forward," which might be supposed to form "the better man." This he judiciously effected, by permitting him to go in the cutter and decked long-boat attached to the commanding officer's ship at Chatham: an indulgence which afforded him the highest satisfaction; while it tended so largely to promote his practical knowledge of navigation, that he is said to have soon actually become an excellent pilot for such vessels as sail from Chatham to the Tower of London, and down the Swin Channel to the North Foreland. It was thus that this young seaman, by being continually engaged in the successful navigation of difficult passages, or dangerous coasts, habitually acquired that experimental reliance on his own skill, and that internal self-possession, which so essentially contribute to establish the dauntless intrepidity of a truly heroic mind. He felt a conviction of his growing powers, and panted for opportunities of bringing them to the proof. His present sphere of action, confined to a comparatively small spot, for the *Triumph* never once went out to sea while he remained on board, made him languish for some new situation, better suited to his enterprising spirit; and it was not long before an occurrence took place, which seemed to promise the gratification of his most sanguine wish. About the beginning of February 1773, the Earl of Sandwich, then First Lord of the Admiralty, in consequence of an application which had been made to him by the Royal Society, laid before the King a proposal for an expedition to try how far navigation might be practicable towards the North Pole; which his Majesty was pleased to direct should be immediately undertaken, with every encouragement that could countenance such an enterprise, and every assistance that could contribute to its success. The *Racehorse* and *Carcass* bombs, being selected as the strongest, and therefore the properest, vessels to be employed in this voyage, were taken into dock, and fitted in the most complete manner for the service. The command of the former was given to Captain Constantine John Phipps, afterwards Lord Mulgrave; and that of the latter, to Captain Skeffington Lutwidge, now Admiral of the *White*. The complement for each was fixed at ninety men; and the ordinary establishment departed from, by appointing an additional number of officers, the whole recommended by their respective captains, and entering effective men instead of the usual number of boys. Two masters of Greenlandmen were employed as pilots for each ship; the *Racehorse* was furnished with new chain-pumps on Captain Bentinck's improved plan; Dr. Irving's apparatus for distilling fresh water from the sea was adopted; Mr. Israel Lyons was engaged, by the Board of Longitude, to embark in this voyage, for the purpose of making astronomical observations; the board also sent two watch

machines for keeping the longitude by difference of time, one on Mr. Harrison's principles, the other by Mr. Arnold; and, in short, every possible arrangement was made effectually to decide the long-agitated question concerning the practicability of a north-east passage into the Pacific ocean. The report of this scientific voyage, from which so much nautical knowledge could not fail to be derived by a youth thirsting for professional information, most powerfully attracted the enterprising spirit of young Nelson; who resolved, if possible, to participate in its advantages, without any apprehensions from the perils to which he must necessarily be exposed in its pursuit. It may, indeed, be justly doubted, whether the hope of successfully encountering these very perils might not constitute one of its chief charms for his intrepid mind. Notwithstanding, therefore, the implied interdiction of the Admiralty, respecting the employment of boys on this hazardous voyage, he so powerfully pleaded with Captain Lutwidge to be appointed coxswain, and so fully satisfied him he was not unqualified for the task, that the worthy captain at length, kindly consented to receive him in this capacity; and, though the *Carcass*, when fitted, being found too deep in the water to proceed to sea with safety, was constrained to put part of her guns on shore, and reduce her complement to eighty men, the young coxswain felt himself already too firmly fixed in his captain's favour to dread being one of the dismissed number. On the 30th of May 1773, Captain Lutwidge, in the *Carcass*, joined Captain Phipps, in the *Racehorse*, at the Nore: but, being delayed, by the easterly winds, till the 4th of June, his majesty's birth-day, at six o'clock that morning, both ships weighed; and Captain Lutwidge, having received his orders from Captain Phipps, they immediately sailed on the expedition. The journal of this important voyage, during which so much was seen and suffered, Captain Phipps published soon after his return, in a respectable quarto volume, which contains a large fund of scientific and professional information. Our young hero had recently felt the enervating effects of a burning sun, in the torrid regions of the west; he had now speedily to encounter the benumbing influence of a frozen atmosphere, in the torpid confines of the north. On the 13th of June, in the evening, land was first seen by the *Carcass*: it was light enough to read on deck all night; and, the next day, some Shetland boats came on board with fish. After proceeding along the coast of Spitsbergen, and ranging between the land and the ice several days, at half past four, in the afternoon of the 7th of July, the ice setting very close, they ran between two pieces, and were suddenly stopped. The ice, indeed, now set so fast down, that they were soon fixed; and obliged to heave through, for two hours, with ice-anchors from each quarter, nor were they quite out of the ice till midnight. On the 25th, the *Carcass* being becalmed very near Moffen Island, Captain Lutwidge took the opportunity of obtaining its exact extent, which he communicated to Captain Phipps. The master had been on shore for the purpose of this survey; and with him, doubtless, our young adventurer. They found the island to be nearly of a round form, about two miles in diameter; with a lake or large pond of water in the middle, all frozen over, except thirty or forty yards round the edge of it, which was water, with loose pieces of broken ice, and so shallow, that they walked through it, and went over on the solid ice. The ground between the sea and the pond was from half a cable's length to a quarter of a mile broad, and the whole island appeared covered with gravel and small stones, without the smallest verdure or vegetation of any kind. They met with only one piece of drift wood, about three fathom long, with a root on it, and as thick as the *Carcass's* mizen mast; which had been thrown up over the high part of the land, and lay on the declivity towards the pond. They saw three bears; and a number of wild ducks, geese, and other sea fowls, with birds-nests all over the island. Off this island, the survey of which must have afforded a high treat to Horatio, one of the *Carcass's* boats were attacked by a herd of sea-horses, as they are corruptly called by the sailors, from the Russian name of morses, which were with difficulty driven away. These marine animals are the *Trichecus Rosmarus* of Linnaeus, and the Arctic Walrus of Pennant and most other naturalists. On another occasion, two officers, in a boat belonging to the *Racehorse*, having fired at and wounded one of these animals, it immediately dived, and brought up a number of others; which all joined in an attack on the boat, wresting an oar from one of the men, and were with difficulty prevented from staving or oversetting the boat: but a boat from the *Carcass*, guided by the intrepid young coxswain, soon arrived, and effectually dispersed them. This was on the 29th of July, near what they called the Low Island; of which Dr. Irving, who went on the party to visit it,

gives in substance the following account. On the shore were several large fir-trees lying sixteen or eighteen feet above the level of the sea: some of these trees were seventy feet long, and had been torn up by the roots; others cut down by the axe, and notched for twelve feet lengths. This timber was not in the least decayed, nor the strokes of the axe at all defaced. There were, likewise, some pipe-staves, and wood fashioned for use. The bench was formed of old timber, sand, and whale-bones. The island, which is flat, was found to be about seven miles long. It was formed chiefly of stones from eighteen to thirty inches over, many of them hexagons, and commodiously placed for walking on. The middle of the island was covered with moss, scurvy-grass, sorrel, and a few ranunculuses then in flower. Two reindeer were feeding on the moss: one of these they killed, and found the venison to be fat and of high flavour. They saw a light grey fox; and a spotted white and black animal, somewhat larger than the weasel, with short ears, and a long tail. The island abounds with small snipes, similar to the English jack-snipe. The ducks were hatching their eggs, and many wild geese feeding by the water-side. From this pleasing scene, however, they found themselves, the next day, very differently situated. On the 30th of July, in the afternoon, they were among what are called the Seven Islands, and in the ice, with no appearance of any opening for the ships. Between eleven and twelve at night, Mr. Crane, master of the Racehorse, was dispatched by Captain Phipps, in the four-oared boat, to try if he could get through, and find an opening for the ship which might afford a prospect of getting farther; with directions, if he could reach the shore, to go up one of the mountains, in order to discover the state of the ice to the eastward and northward. Captain Lutwidge, who had employed a boat, conducted by his young coxswain for the same purpose, joined Mr. Crane on shore, and they proceeded to ascend a high mountain, from whence the prospect extended ten or twelve leagues to the east and north-east, over one continued plain of smooth ice, bounded only by the horizon. They also saw land stretching to the south-east, laid down in the Dutch charts as islands: and now plainly discovered that the main body of ice, which the ships had traced from west to east, actually joined to these islands; and, from them, to what is called the north-east land. In returning to their ships, about seven in the morning, round which the ice had, in their absence, so completely got, that with their ice-anchors out they had moored alongside a field of it, they were frequently obliged to haul the boats, over ice which had closed since they went, to other openings. At nine o'clock, in the morning, the 31st, having a light breeze to the eastward, they cast off, and endeavoured to force through the ice; but, at noon, finding it too close to proceed, again moored to a field. In the afternoon they filled their casks with fresh water from the ice, which they found very pure and soft. The field of ice, to which both vessels were now moored, was found to be eight yards ten inches thick at one end, and seven yards eleven inches at the other. The ice closed fast, and was all round the ships; no opening to be any where seen, except a hole of about a mile and a half, where the ships lay fast to the ice, with ice-anchors. It being calm the greater part of the day, and the weather very fine, the ships companies amused themselves, almost the whole time, in playing on the ice. The pilots, however, finding themselves much farther than they had ever before penetrated, and reflecting on the advanced state of the season, seemed alarmed with apprehensions of being beset. On the 1st of August, the ice pressed in so fast, that there was now not the smallest opening. The two ships were within less than two lengths of each other, neither of them having room to turn. The ice, which had been all flat the day before, and almost level with the water's edge, was now in many places forced higher than the main-yard by the pieces squeezing together. Their latitude this day at noon, by the double altitude, was eighty degrees thirty-seven minutes. On the 2d, it was thick, foggy, wet weather, the wind blowing fresh to the westward; but, though the ice immediately about the ships seemed rather looser than the day before, it hourly set in again so fast, that there appeared no probability of getting the ships out, without a strong east or north-east wind. On the 3d, the weather being very fine, clear, and calm, they perceived that the ships had been driven far to the eastward. The ice, however, was much closer than before; and the passage by which they had come in from the westward quite closed up, with no open water any where in sight. At five in the morning, the pilots having expressed a wish to get, if possible, farther out, the ships companies were set to work, that they might cut away the ice, and warp through the small openings to the westward. They found the ice so very deep, that they were often obliged to saw through pieces

twelve feet thick; and, after toiling in this manner the whole day, with all their utmost efforts, had not been able to move the ship above three hundred yards to the westward, through the ice. They had, in the mean time, been driven, with the ice field itself to which they were fast, to the north-east and eastward, by the current; which had also forced the loose ice from the westward between the islands, where it became what the Greenlandmen call packed, or one piece thrown up above another to a considerable height, and as firm as the main body. On the 4th, it was quite calm, till the evening; when they were flattered with a light air to the eastward, which produced no favourable effect. On the 5th, the probability of getting the ships out appearing every hour less, and the season being already far advanced, some speedy resolution became necessary for the preservation of the people. As the situation of the ships prevented them from seeing the state of the ice to the westward, by which, their future proceedings must be in a great measure determined, Captain Phipps sent Mr. Walden, one of his midshipmen, with two pilots, to an island twelve miles off, since distinguished, in the charts, by the name of Walden's Island, to see where the open water lay. On the 6th, in the morning, Mr. Walden and the two pilots returned; with an account that the ice, though close all about the ships, was open to the westward, round the point by which they had got in. They also remarked that, on the island, they had the wind very fresh to the eastward, though it had been almost calm the whole time where the ships lay. This circumstance considerably lessened the hopes, hitherto entertained, of the immediate effect of an easterly wind in clearing the bay. Having now only one alternative; either patiently to wait the event of the weather on the ships, in hopes of getting them out, or to betake themselves to the boats. The ships had at this time driven into shoal water, having only fourteen fathom; and, should either the ships, or the ice to which they were fast, take the ground, they must be inevitably lost, and probably upset. The hopes of getting the ships out, however, were not hastily to be relinquished; nor, on the other hand, obstinately persisted in, till all other means of retreat were cut off. After a due consideration of the various difficulties which presented themselves in this perilous state, Captain Phipps thought it proper to send for the officers of both ships, and to inform them of his intention to prepare the boats for going away. They were, accordingly, hoisted out, and every precaution taken to make them secure and comfortable; which, however, would necessarily occupy some days. In the mean time, the water shoaling, and the ships driving fast towards the north-east rocks, a man was sent, with a lead and lines, from the Racehorse, to the northward, and another, from the Carcass, to the eastward, to sound, wherever they found cracks in the ice, that notice might be obtained before either the ships, or the ice to which they were fast, took the ground; as, in that case, they must, as before observed, instantly have been crushed or upset. On the 7th, in the morning, Captain Phipps set off in the launch, which hauled much easier than was expected. After getting it about two miles, he returned with the people for their dinner; and, finding the ice rather more open near the ships, he was encouraged to attempt moving them. The wind, though little, being easterly, they set the sails, and got both ships about a mile to the westward. They moved, indeed, very slowly; but were not, now, by a great deal, so far to the westward as where they were beset. In the mean time, all the sail was kept on them, that they might force through whenever the ice in the smallest degree slackened. Though the people behaved very well in hauling the launches, and seemed reconciled to the idea of quitting the ships, having the fullest confidence in their officers; yet, as the boats could not, with the greatest diligence, be got to the water-side in less than a week, it was judiciously resolved to carry on both attempts together: moving the boats constantly, but without omitting any opportunity of getting the ships through. On the 8th, Captain Phipps got his launch above three miles; but the weather being foggy, and the people having worked hard, he returned on board in the evening, and found the ships had moved something through the ice, while the ice itself had drifted still more to the westward. On the 9th, in a thick morning fog, they moved the ships a little through some very small openings; and, in the afternoon, on it's clearing up, were agreeably surprised to find the ships had driven much more to the westward than they could have expected. Thus encouraged, they laboured hard all day; but got very little to the westward, through the ice, in comparison to what the ice itself had drifted. Having passed the launches, a number of men were sent to get them on board. Though the people were much fatigued, the progress which the ships had made through the ice was a most

favourable event; and, notwithstanding the drift of the ice was an advantage which might be as suddenly lost as it had been unexpectedly gained, by a change in the current, they began again to indulge hopes that a brisk gale of easterly wind might soon effectually clear them. On the 10th, the wind springing up, in the morning, to north north-east, they set all the sail they could, and forced through a great deal of very heavy ice. The ships, it is true, often struck excessively hard; and the Racehorse, with one stroke, broke the shank of the best bower anchor; but, about noon, they had the unspeakable happiness to get through all the ice, and were safely out at sea. Accordingly, on the 11th, they came to an anchor in the harbour of Smeerenberg, where they were comfortably refreshed after their dreadful fatigues. The island where they lay is called Amsterdam Island, the westernmost point of which is Hacluyt's Headland. Here the Dutch once attempted to make an establishment, by leaving some people to winter, who all perished. The Dutch, however, still resort thither for the latter season of the whale-fishery; and it afforded a very excellent retreat to our adventurers, who remained there till the 20th. After this, they made a few feeble attempts, but they were without hope of being able to penetrate farther. The summer had proved uncommonly favourable for the purpose; and, having enjoyed the fullest opportunity of repeatedly ascertaining the situation of that wall of ice which extends for more than twenty degrees, between the latitudes of eighty and eighty-one, without the smallest appearance of any opening, they were sufficiently satisfied of the impracticability of effecting any passage to the Pacific Ocean, and agreed on immediately returning to England. In steering to the southward, they soon found the weather grow more mild; or, rather, as Captain Phipps expresses it, to their feelings, warm. On the 24th of August, they perceived Jupiter; and the sight of a star was now become almost as extraordinary a phenomenon to them, as the sun at midnight had appeared on their first getting within the Arctic circle. For some part of their voyage back, the weather was very fine; but, from the 7th of September, when they were off Shetland, till the 24th, when they made Orfordness, they had hard gales of wind, with little intermission. In one of these violent gales, accompanied by a heavy sea, they lost three of their boats, and were obliged to throw two guns overboard. Thus ended this famous voyage; happily, without the loss of a single person: and which was so far successful, at least, in accomplishing its object, that it seems to have satisfactorily negated the long-agitated question concerning the practicability of a north-east passage into the Pacific Ocean. Perhaps, however, the increasing civilization of nations who are nearer neighbours, may awaken the spirit of enterprise in some hardy bosom, and conduct a new adventurer farther over the vast plains of ice descried from the mountains on this occasion, by means of sledges, &c. as well as boats, both properly prepared and furnished, than it has ever yet been penetrated, or is ever likely to be penetrated, by ships and their customary boats alone. Not that any nearer approach to the pole, or even the discovery that it might be passed on solid ice, could ever facilitate, or render possible, the attainment of a way for navigating vessels through such insurmountable barriers of ice as nature has provided, at each pole, to sustain what may, perhaps, be denominated the two extremities of our globe. Still it would be desirable, not only as an object of curiosity, but of science. Those are much mistaken, who think there is nothing left for our posterity to discover. "Whatever might be the decree of general satisfaction obtained from this voyage; which was so liberally fitted out by his majesty's command, and so ably conducted by those skilful and intrepid commanders, Lord Mulgrave and Admiral Lutwidge: to such individuals as had undertaken it for the attainment of nautical knowledge, scientific experience, or even the gratification of laudable curiosity, it had afforded a very considerable degree of profit and delight, to compensate the difficulties and perils so successfully surmounted; and, to the youthful Nelson, whose aspiring mind was desirous of embracing the whole of these interesting objects, it proved a continued scene of pleasure. At the dreadful period when they were so long fast in the ice, he had earnestly solicited, and at length obtained, the command of a four-oared cutter, with twelve men, ingeniously constructed for the purpose of exploring channels, and breaking the ice: yet, while in this perilous situation, such was the irresistible force of the large bodies of floating ice, that several acres square were often seen lifted up between two much larger pieces, and becoming, as it were, one with them; and, afterwards, the piece, so formed, acting in the same manner on a second and third; which would probably have continued to be the effect, till the whole bay had been so filled with ice that the

different pieces could have had no possible motion, had not the stream taken an unexpected turn, and providentially set the ice out of the bay. An anecdote is related, as a proof of that cool intrepidity which this young mariner possessed, even among scenes of such stupendous horror, which seems well worthy of being also exhibited as a fine picture of filial affection. During one of the clear nights common to these high northern latitudes, young Nelson, notwithstanding the extreme severity of the cold, was missing from the ship. Diligent search being immediately made after him in vain, he was given up for lost. As the rays of the rising sun, however, began to open the horizon, the adventurous youth was discovered, with astonishment, on the ice, at a considerable distance, anxiously pursuing a huge polar bear. He carried a musket in his hand; but the lock being injured, the piece would not go off: he was, therefore, endeavouring to weary the animal, that he might be able to effect his purpose with the butt-end. Captain Lutwidge, who had been extremely uneasy during his absence, reprimanded him, on his return, for quitting the ship without leave; and asked, in a severe tone, what motive could possibly induce him to commit so rash an action? All the manliness of the hero now subsiding into the simplicity of the child—"I wished, Sir," replied the ingenuous youth, "to get the skin for my father!" An answer which, doubtless, not only obtained him the pardon, but the praise, of Captain Lutwidge; and confirmed that ardent friendship which ever after subsisted between them. Captain Phipps, too, had seen enough of the young adventurer, during this voyage, to form a high opinion of his character; but he had, under his own more particular care, another youth of much promise, the present Rear-Admiral Philip D'Auvergne, Prince of Bouillon, who made several of the original drawings which were afterwards engraved and published in his celebrated Journal of the Voyage. Though this young gentleman, who had been placed under Captain Phipps's protection by his noble patron, Lord Howe, possessed the advantage of having received instructions in the arts and sciences to which Horatio was, at that time, almost a stranger, the latter had liberality enough not only to admire, but to applaud, the ingenuity which he witnessed in a youth four years older than himself. He was present when some of these sketches were taken, and viewed the process with delight and attention; particularly, that pleasing and accurate delineation of the celebrated iceberg in Amsterdam Island, opposite where the ships lay; which measured three hundred feet high, and out of which a cascade of water was then flowing. It may not be improper to mention, that these icebergs are large bodies of ice which fill the vallies between the lofty mountains; and present, towards the sea, an almost perpendicular face of a very lively light green colour. In these regions, it will readily be conceived, the numerous black mountains, white snow, and beautiful green of the ice, must form a very romantic and peculiar picture. Large pieces frequently break off from these icebergs on the Coast; and fall, with great noise, into the water: one such piece, which was observed to have floated out into the bay, grounded in fourteen fathom; yet was still fifty feet above the surface of the water, and preserved all the lustre of it's enchanting original colour. Thus, amidst the dreariest scenes, has nature bounteously provided that there shall still be something to delight the eye; amidst the most imminent dangers, something to animate the heart. The pleasures and the perils of this voyage, however, were now equally at an end; but it's beneficial effects, and it's agreeable recollections, were never to be eradicated or effaced. In October 1773, the Racehorse and Carcass were both paid off; and these friends and companions, fully sensible of each other's worth, separated with sentiments of a sincere mutual esteem. Captain Suckling, as usual, welcomed the young hero on his return; and had the satisfaction to learn, from Captain Lutwidge, as well as from Captain Phipps, that his nephew was in all respects worthy of every encouragement that could be bestowed on him. There wanted not, however, this stimulus, in the bosom of that worthy man, to excite his affectionate regards for the promising son of his deceased sister. With the honest and feeling heart of a true British naval commander, he ever acted as a parent to all her children. A squadron was, at this time, fitting out for the East Indies, under the command of Admiral Sir Edward Hughes. Horatio, delighted with the prospect of visiting regions so different from those which he had just quitted, and anxious to enjoy all the professional advantages derivable from so distant and interesting a voyage, earnestly solicited his esteemed uncle to obtain him a situation in one of the ships intended for this expedition. Captain Suckling, accordingly, procured him a birth under that gallant and able officer, Captain Farmer: who, since, in the year

1779, so nobly but unfortunately perished in the flames of the Quebec of thirty-two guns, which had accidentally taken fire, during its engagement with La Surveillante of forty guns, off Ushant; which he refused to quit, though severely wounded, and was blown up with his ship, colours flying. With this excellent commander, in the Sea-Horse of twenty guns, did the adventurous and heroic youth sail to the East Indies. He was, at first, stationed to watch in the fore-top; but Captain Farmer, who early discovered how very superior his abilities were to his age and appearance, soon placed him on the quarter-deck, and treated him with the most indulgent kindness. It may readily be supposed that, under such an officer, in the progress of a voyage to the East Indies, and the subsequent visits of the Sea-Horse to almost every part of the East Indies from Bengal to Bussorah, a youth of his talents must necessarily gain a large accession of nautical knowledge. Though there happened not, on this occasion, to be any opportunity offer for evincing the heroism and bravery of his mind, sufficient instances presented themselves of his unusual proficiency in seamanship, and of his mild and amiable manners, to conciliate the esteem not only of all with whom he more immediately acted, either as superiors, equals, or inferiors, but to attract the notice, and fix the friendly regards, of the commander in chief. From Sir Edward Hughes, he received many pleasing proofs of friendly attention, which he never forgot. He had, indeed, considerable claims to indulgence from his humane and generous superiors. The climate proved too powerfully relaxing for his delicate frame; and, braced as it had recently been, by the frozen atmosphere of the north, the sultry airs of these torrid regions were now rapidly undermining his constitution. Alarmed for the danger of a youth thus distant from his friends, whose life was ever precious, even from his tenderest infancy, to all who had opportunities of once knowing the goodness of his heart, Captain Farmer and Sir Edward Hughes united in recommending his return to England, as the only chance that remained for restoring him to health. Captain James Pigot, now Admiral of the White, was at that time coming home with the Dolphin of twenty guns. To this gentleman's care, Horatio was particularly recommended by Sir Edward Hughes; and such were the tender and humane attentions of the worthy commander, that he may be considered as having been greatly instrumental in the preservation of a life which has since proved so substantially beneficial to the country. Such, indeed, were the salutary effects of Admiral Pigot's soothing kindness, and generous aids, added to the gradual change of air experienced on the passage to England, that his young charge arrived almost entirely restored to health, and again visited his beloved uncle. That worthy and gallant gentleman, who was now become Comptroller of the Navy, having succeeded Sir Hugh Palliser in April 1775, received him with his accustomed benignity. His tenderness was alarmed at the ravages which he beheld in his nephew's countenance; and he resolved that, if he could not instantly reinstate his vigour, he would at least endeavour to recruit his spirits by the choicest of all professional cordials, an immediate and merited promotion. On the 24th of September 1776, the Dolphin was paid off at Woolwich; and, on the 26th of the same month, three days before his nephew completed his eighteenth year, he received, through the comptroller's influence, an order from Sir James Douglas, then commanding in chief at Portsmouth, to act as lieutenant, in the Worcester of sixty-four guns, under Captain Mark Robinson. This meritorious officer, who afterwards distinguished himself in Admiral Keppel's memorable action of the 27th of July 1778; as well as in that of Admiral Greaves, off the Chesapeake, the 5th of September 1781, where he lost a leg; was then under sailing orders for Gibraltar, with a convoy. He had too much merit of his own, not soon to discover it in another; and was so well satisfied with his young officer, as to place the utmost confidence in his skill and prudence. Under this able commander, he remained at sea, with various convoys, till the 2d of April 1777; and Admiral Robinson—for this worthy man was, in consequence of his misfortune, placed on the list of superannuated rear-admirals—has often been heard to remark, that he felt equally easy, during the night, when it was young Nelson's turn to watch, as when the oldest officer on board had charge of the ship. These flattering testimonials to the merits of his nephew, which never failed to be obtained from every commander under whom he had yet served, could not but prove highly gratifying to an uncle in whose estimation he had always been held so dear: who had first nurtured him for the profession; and who, as soon as he could wield a sword, had presented him with an honourable and well-tryed one of his own, which he charged him never to relinquish but with life. The pleasure

thus received by his delighted uncle, was constantly communicated to the venerable and worthy pastor of Burnham-Thorpe: and the anxieties of the father, for the perils to which his son must necessarily be exposed, were calmed by that pious resignation to the will of Heaven, in every situation of duty, with which he had early endeavoured to fortify the hearts of all his offspring; and which taught himself to hope, that perseverance in good would always be likely to receive the highest degree of requisite protection and safety. Nor did he fail, to correspond with his son, at every convenient opportunity; and to inculcate, in writing, those pious and paternal precepts which had so often flowed from his venerable and revered lips. On the 8th of April 1777, within a single week of quitting the Worcester, this youth, who had not yet completed the nineteenth year of his age, passed his professional examination for a lieutenancy; and, on the day following, received his commission as second lieutenant of the Lowestoffe of thirty-two guns, commanded by Captain William Locker, since Lieutenant-Governor of Greenwich Hospital, in which situation he died on the 26th of December 1800. This ship, in consequence of the dispute with the American colonists, who had, on the 4th of July 1776, declared themselves free and independent states, under the name of the Thirteen United Provinces, and which terminated in their separation from the mother-country, was ordered to the West Indies; there to remain, as one of the squadron under the good and gallant Admiral Gayton: an old officer of such distinguished activity and success, that his cruizers captured, while he commanded on the Jamaica station, no less than two hundred and thirty-five American vessels. The worthy Comptroller of the Navy having thus secured rank, and a prospect of active employ, for his meritorious nephew, they parted with most affectionate adieus, and in the fullest hopes of again meeting. This, however, was not to happen: they never more beheld each other! His uncle was elected member of parliament for Portsmouth, in 1778: and died, in the month of July, that year; leaving a handsome legacy to his nephew, as well as to all the rest of his sister's children.

Never, perhaps, was a greater panegyric pronounced on any human being, than that which is comprised in the motto to this biographical account of Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson, delivered from the lips of the Sovereign who had experienced his worth; and who, with a noble gratitude, deigned thus publicly to acknowledge, and record, the transcendent heroism of his Lordship's meritorious services: heroism and services, the recollection of which, His Majesty generously anticipates, must not only exist for ever in the memory of the people; but, by continually stimulating future heroes, prove a perpetual source of strength, security, and glory, even to the country itself. A reflection worthy of a King! Inciting to heroism, by the consideration of a more enlarged motive than seems to have been heretofore sufficiently regarded; and thus entitling himself to participate the very praise he is so liberally bestowing. The expressive voice of gratitude is thus, sometimes, surprised by a similar unexpected but grateful echo; and the rays of royalty, beaming with their fullest lustre on a brilliant object, are in part reflected back to their source. The general history of the world, to almost every part of which the influence of Lord Nelson's services may be considered as having in some measure extended, must most assuredly preserve the remembrance of one of it's chiefest heroes; and the future historian of our own country, in particular, will not fail exultingly to dwell on each of his Lordship's great and glorious victories, with all the animated and enegertic glow of conscious dignity and truth. Still, however, we are desirous to know more of so exalted a character than any general history can with propriety supply. We wish to see him not only as a hero, but as the hero of a respectable historian; and are anxious, with a laudable zeal, for such minuteness of detail, in the developement of every circumstance, not only relative to his public and professional character, but even to his private and domestic transactions, as is to be alone expected from what

may be denominated the more humble labours of the biographer: who, nevertheless, must not be permitted to boast much of extraordinary humility, if he pretends to combine, in a single picture, any tolerable portion of that sublime grandeur, and that delicate simplicity, which constitute the Iliad and the Odyssey of literature. To produce a work not altogether unworthy the hero whose life it records, is the utmost that his present biographer can reasonably hope to accomplish. Even this, he freely confesses, he must have despaired of ever effecting, had he not been indulgently honoured by the kindest communications from some whose near affinity to the immortal Nelson, is evidently more than nominal; who not only have the same blood flowing in their veins, but whose hearts possess a large portion of the same unbounded goodness, generosity, and honour: as well as from other dear and intimate friends, professional and private, who were united to his Lordship by the closest ties of a tender reciprocal amity

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