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Author:

Commander C. H. Stockton, U.S.N.

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Commerce Destroying 2

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Commerce Destroying

The Destruction of the Commerce of an enemy by means of maritime warfare is a customary, important and at times an effective method of causing such distress and prostration as to be a powerful influence upon the prosecution of the war and to lead to what may be considered as the proper end of war - a successful peace -

We will first examine the questions of its legality and propriety - By the **COMMERCE DESTROYING** action by the usages and customs of nations or **Lecture No. 1.** its accord with what is known as International Law -

Read June 18th. 1894

In the history of Maritime and other warfare I have been able to find only two exceptions to the prevailing usage of ~~seizing~~ and ~~confiscating~~ the private property of an enemy upon the sea, one exception was the agreement of the Prussian and Italian governments upon one hand ^{and} the ~~Austrian~~ ^{Austrian} government upon the other in 1866.

In this agreement it was stipulated that Enemy merchandise and Enemy merchant Ships should both be exempt from capture upon the high seas.

The other exception was that made by the North German government at the outbreak of the France - German war in 1870.

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war - If This government issued a declaration that all French Merchant Shipping should be exempt from capture. This decree though made at first without regard to reciprocity was afterwards revoked when it was ascertained that France refused to waive her right to capture Prussian Merchant Vessels.

When the United States was requested by the Powers that formulated and signed the Declaration of Paris in 1856 to accept the propositions contained therein, we declined to accede to the first proposition (~~privateering~~) for the abolition of privateering unless it were further agreed that all private property upon the sea, except contraband of war, should be exempt from capture during hostilities.

This proposition for the establishment of a new maritime principle, and the two exceptions in practice, just mentioned, one only temporary, will afford I think sufficient evidence of the exceptional nature of any variance from the established usage of nations ^{in regard to} capturing private property of an enemy when under an enemy's flag. ^{act} (Statement of U.S. in regard to Decl. of Paris at early part of the Civil War.)

Conceding then that the right to capture private property of an enemy at sea when under his own flag, exists, the next point to examine is as to its propriety - It ~~will~~ not be denied, of course that a belligerent is not manifestly right and proper in the action he ~~has~~ takes to injure the enemy in the persons of his subjects or citizens to the extent of deprivation of life - This is

war - If then for the purposes of ~~of~~ the prosecution of the war such injury is a proper one to be inflicted upon the person, it is manifestly proper that a less injury - one upon property - either public or private - can be inflicted upon the enemy if it tends towards successful results. War is practically the infliction of material injury to such a degree as to cause submission and it is evident that injury to person and property is the most effectual way of causing that submission.

"On land" (it has been said by a writer upon international law) "the injury is effected by invading the enemy's country, by capturing towns and cities and occupying provinces by seizing and destroying property whether public or private, by cutting off or appropriating the taxes, and by thus depriving the Government of the enemy of the resources, whether of men, of material, or of money, on which it must rely for resistance, and so bringing it to that point of exhaustion when it will have no resources but submission. The destruction of men in battle is but

a means to this end: for the object of war is not to depopulate a nation but to reduce the Government to submission, and no victories in the field, no feats of arms, are of any avail whatever except in so far as they tend to bring about this result".

During the Franco-German war according to an official statement made in the French Assembly in 1872 the Germans extorted a sum by requisition, over and above the direct and indirect taxes of more than \$65,000,000. while property was seized

without requisition to the amount of \$52,000,000 in round numbers or a total sum of \$117,000,000.

It is further estimated that \$80,000,000 of private property was seized irregularly making a confiscation and loss of private property of nearly \$200,000,000. In addition to this was the war indemnity of 5 milliards of francs or one billion of dollars.

As to our own Civil war, cotton, though private property, was classed by the federal Authorities as Military Stores and was equally subject to capture as it constituted one of the main resources of the South for the prosecution of the war.

The seizure of private property for personal use on shore is of course another matter, and in violation of the recognized principles of warfare; but this is not similar to what is known as Commerce-Destroying which is carried on sea always under certain laws which govern the national vessels engaged, as well as vessels acting as privateers, or under letters of marque, and their captures.

It is probable that the brig Andree Boria, under the command of Captain Biddle made the first important commerce destroying cruise of the war as May to September 1776, off Newfoundland and the North-east coast of the United States. Nine vessels are recorded as being captured, two of them being transports, the rest vessels with cargoes; Captain Biddle returned from this cruise with only five of his original crew the rest being in the prizes. The history of Commerce Destroying under steam alone, is yet to be made. In this examination I will cover the period of

time coincident with the history of our own country but not confining the examination entirely to our own wars or to our own waters.

We commence then with the war for our Independence. The congress of the United Colonies which was then both the Executive and Legislative authority, from caution and also from a preference for pursuing a system of general warfare, rather than a policy that might be considered as aiming at a redress for grievances, failed at first to commission any privateers or national vessels for cruising against the enemy's commerce; and consequently the favorable opportunity for commerce destroying which is always presented during the first few months of a war was lost.

In the autumn of 1775 however, Washington, then before Boston, and ^{Government of the} ~~also~~ the Colony of Massachusetts, fitted out some small vessels to intercept British supply vessels with military stores, bound from England, for Canadian ports and for Boston with fairly successful results. French being then ~~only~~ secretly our

friends. It is probable that the brig Andsea Doria, under the command of Captain Biddle made the first important commerce destroying cruise of the war ^{from} ~~in~~ May to September 1776. off Newfoundland and the North-east coast of the United States, Nine vessels are recorded as being captured, two of them being transports, the rest vessels with cargoes; Captain Biddle returned from this cruise with only five of his original crew the rest being in the prizes.

Other vessels made successful cruises along our coast,

the brig Providence under John Paul Jones extending her cruise to the Maritime provinces on the north-east, and to Bermuda upon the South, making in a cruise of a little more than a month fifteen prizes, eight being sent in and the others destroyed.

During this year privateers, as well as regular national vessels began to appear in European waters, making virtual bases of operations of French ports, and selling their prizes in the offing.

~~sals~~ The year 1776 was mainly a year of privateers, these vessels having captured three hundred and forty two merchant vessels from Great Britain and inflicted a loss according to an English account of more than one million pounds.-(ann. reg-p.24&27)

Their operations were so lucrative that few sailors would enlist in the public service for more than a year and generally for only a single cruise.

In 1777 a light squadron under Captain Wickes sailed from Nantes in France, the French being then ~~only~~ secretly our friends, and going first into the Bay of Biscay, swept around Ireland, clearing the sea of every thing that was not of a force impossible to attack with success, capturing fourteen vessels in 5 days - The boldness and success of this cruise produced much sensation in England; the vessels finally taking refuge in a French port.

It is of this cruise that Silas Deane spoke in one of his letters to Robert Morris stating that it effectually alarmed England, prevented the great fair at Chester, occasioned insurance

^{and} to rise~~x~~ even deterred the English merchants from shipping goods in English bottoms, at any rate, so that in a few weeks, forty sail of French Ships were loading in the Thames on freight ;an instance never before known.

1 On the first of May 1777 Captain Gonyngnam sailed from Dunkirk ,in command of an English built Cutter bought in Dover and equipped and manned in Dunkirk, capturing a packet off the coast of Holland; sailing again in command of another Cutter called the "Revenge" he was even more successful, sending those prizes not destroyed to Spain and finally going there himself and refitting. The effect of his cruises was also most marked ,insurance rising as high at times as 25 pr,ct-and for a short time between Dover and Calais ten pr ct- ~~was~~ asked-

The Commerce of Great Britian during 1777/suffered a loss of 467 merchant vessels,some of which were of great value though the Government kept a force of about 70 men of war on the American coast . Many American privateers fell into English hands and at the end of this year a scarcity of seamen began to be felt by us in consequence of the numbers that were detained in prisons -

In 1778 John Paul Jones appeared in English waters in command of the Ranger-after refitting in Brest, ^{he} cruised in the Irish Channel, making prizes ,landing upon English territory and burning vessels in English ports-

It was during this year that the Alliance between France and the United States was finally consummated and as a result a ~~French~~ French Naval force ,public and private, entered into a course of

commerce destroying. Reason, and also a number of losses of both public and Great Britian found so much annoyance from American privateers that letters of marque were issued against American privateers and powers to issue letters of marque were also given to the Governors of the islands and colonies of the West Indies. ~~played a~~ In an English commercial history, it is stated, that during this year the rate of insurance between London and New York which in time of peace was two guineas, rose to 21 ^{guineas} per cent on condition of returning five guineas if the ship sailed without convoy and arrived. ~~necessary articles.~~

From Jamaica to London, so busy were our privateers in, the West Indies, even 30 guineas were charged ~~of the success and ability~~. In 1779 John Paul Jones with his small and badly organized squadron sailed from France and notwithstanding the indifferent conduct of his colleagues many prizes were taken off the English coast and much alarm created. If the Squadron had been upon a proper basis the Baltic convoy, of more than 40 vessels, would have been at their mercy ^{as a result} ~~of~~ ^{famous} of the engagement with the convoying British men of war, the Serapis and Countess of Scarborough, ~~had resulted in no greater success than history tells us -~~

~~ward bound~~ By this time the English had found the system of privateering so destructive that the Government determined to refuse to exchange any more seamen that came into their hands. This affected the National vessels as well as the privateers as the seafaring population of the United States was limited both as to

officers and men. This reason, and also a number of losses of both public and private armed ships that occurred in 1779 and the following year, reduced the general efficiency of the commerce destroying efforts. The English Authorities however increased their naval force so that no less than 85,000 men including marines were employed *aflant*.

As it had been the policy of Great Britain to keep her colonies as dependent as possible ~~on~~ on herself for manufactures the American colonies were much embarrassed in consequence, on account of the want of many necessary articles.

These wants were first relieved through the prizes ^{by} taken, our private and public cruisers and much of the success and ability to carry on the war came from these sources especially before the assistance of the French.

The principal results in 1780 of commerce destroying on the part of France and Spain then allies with us in the ^{war} was the capture of a convoy of 60 vessels for the East and West Indies off the Portuguese coast.

that the About the same time ~~as~~ news of this reached England the account was received of the loss of a large portion of the outward bound Quebec fleet which was intercepted off the banks of Newfoundland by some American privateers. Some of these ships were re-taken but fourteen valuable vessels were taken to port.

But commerce destroying is a sword that cuts both ways and the next year a large part of a French convoy sailing from

Brest was cut off by a smaller English Squadron under the command the aged Admiral Kempenfeldt of Royal George memory- Convoys seem to have been the order of the day and from ^{the} large forces demanded for their protection, or interception, fleet actions resulted at various times.

By the capture of the Dutch island of St. Eustatius in the West Indies, which happened shortly after war had been declared against Holland by Great Britain, much loss occurred to the Commerce of the United States as well as to that of France and Holland. This island had been the entrepôt in the West Indies for supplies of all kinds for the American States, military as well as commercial. These supplies came not only from Holland but from other Continental countries of Europe and even from England herself and vessels under convoy from England used to slip away in, approaching the West Indies and repair to St. Eustatius, selling their cargoes to merchants who trans-shipped them to the United States and receiving in return tobacco, rice, hemp and lumber brought from the United States under the heretofore neutral flag of Holland.

By the capture of this island over 150 vessels were taken and merchandise valued at above \$15,000,000.- A convoy bound to Holland of over 30 ships which had just sailed from the island was also taken by the British fleet.

During this year a number of French privateers from St. Malo, Dunkirk and neighboring ports preyed with more or less success upon English commerce -

In 1782 the protection and attack upon convoyed commerce affected the movements of the fleets engaged in cruising about the English Channel and in the Bay of Biscay. The allied fleet were engaged in the endeavor to intercept the English convoys; while it is noted in the records of the day as an event, bordering upon a naval success, when for instance the Jamaica fleet was brought safely into port. The injury to trade seems to have been about equal in amount upon both sides.

Cooper in his Naval History claims much for the commerce destroying carried ^{on} by our vessels and those of our allies in the war which closed finally in 1783.

That considerable damage was done, ^{that which} ~~what~~ I have already recounted shows; many supplies were secured, and great annoyance, mortification, and at times alarm ~~was~~ caused; but no vital results ensued. Maritime superiority upon our own coasts was not given by this method of warfare. This superiority which Washington insisted upon as an indispensable necessity, was only secured by the superior fleets of the French.

Before closing the account of ^{the} commerce destroying that went on during our Revolutionary war it is proper to refer to the Naval Campaign of the celebrated French Admiral Suffren in the East Indies during the year 1782, which may be called practically the last ~~year~~ of the war, ^{not}

Recognizing with a clearness, which places him alone and above all of his fellows in the French Navy, the great advantages

to follow from a command of the sea, to be obtained only by a defeat of the English Fleet, he hammered away at that object in successive and repeated engagements, until he secured a position in which he was able to do the most harm to his enemy in all the ways presented. For example by the prizes he took after defeating the enemy, he refitted his Squadron and supplied himself with provisions for a year, and his control of the seas about India, especially of the Bay of Bengal led to such an interference with the English trade that the premiums of insurance rose to the highest per-centage known being fifteen guineas per-cent for vessels trading between China and India—

Great Britian was not in those days ^{so} dependent upon her ocean ~~bo~~ commerce as at present, but it was a matter of very great importance ^{from} to her prosperity and well being. Let us see how much this was affected by the attempts at commerce destroying just recounted. The foreign trade was over twenty five millions of pounds in 1775 and fell to nineteen millions in 1782; this of course included the loss of trade to the United States and to the countries of the allies, suspended by the war. The ^{net} loss in shipping ^{from} from 1775 to 1782 was from 697,000 tons to 615,000 tons, but little more than 82,000 tons. This meant of course loss, with of hardship and distress in some cases, but it was far from being a destruction of commerce or ~~for~~ causing an exhaustion of resources. —

The next great maritime war commenced when France, then in the era of the Revolution, declared war against Great Britian

and Holland in 1793. This declaration was followed by one against Spain shortly afterwards.

The war against commerce afloat was actively carried on during the wars of the French Revolution, Consulate, and Empire on both sides. It is full of suggestive lessons, both as to methods and as to results. It forms however so much of the matter embraced within the valuable volumes recently published from the pen of the ^{late} President of the College that it will not be treated with the fulness that its importance would otherwise require.

The Commerce of France at the time of the outbreak of the first French war in 1793 was carried ^{on} by French Ships to an extent of less than one-third, and these vessels were rapidly withdrawn from the Ocean as the war and the Revolution progressed. The warfare against French commerce was simplified to that extent and had to proceed by other means than the capture of French vessels.

The other methods possible were by a blockade, more or less effective, by occupation of French commercial ports, and by the adoption of stringent limitations of the neutral trade which alone was left to France.

A thoroughly effective blockade was practically impossible from the weather and coast line conditions in those days of sailing vessels. The capture, or retention, of French ports soon became impracticable from the military conditions existing on land as the forced evacuation of Toulon soon showed. Hence the methods adopted were off shore cruising, or patrolling, virtually a loose outside blockade, and the last of the methods mentioned above; the

enforcement of the various decrees, or orders, in council, adopted or promulgated against the neutral trade with France and French possessions.

Of course the capture of contraband of war bound for French ports and territory under any flag was rigidly carried on. Great Britain claimed and enforced the rule that "Naval stores including timber and provisions were contraband of war; a precedent not likely to be forgotten by any maritime enemy of the British Empire in the future.

The commerce of Great Britain at that period offered to the French commerce destroyer, a greater, more important, and more widely distributed objective than his enemy found in his ^{French} own shipping and commerce. British trade and shipping in 1792 had more than doubled since the close of our war of the Revolution in 1783.

A succession of bad harvests requiring the importation of grain the sea borne trade at that time a peculiar importance.

~~At this time~~ ^{at this time} Both the East and West Indies were great sources of foreign trade, not only to England, but to all Europe.

The then rich trade of the West Indies was almost all in the hands of Great Britain and in amount was one fourth of the

15-
entire British commerce afloat.

The many islands included in the West Indies and the nature of the waters surrounding them has been ever favorable to commerce destroying and the field has been one used in every war since the discovery of America, in which commerce destroying played a part of any consequence.

Besides the advantages of attack upon British trade the difficulties of its protection caused by the geographical conditions of the West Indies, this portion of the world had another commercial phase which entered into the war. The French ports in the West Indies were resorted to by neutral vessels, principally American, for the purpose of obtaining their produce and carrying it to Europe and directly or indirectly to France. Such vessels taking advantage of the ^{trade the} Gulf Stream and the westerly winds of the North Atlantic could follow our coast, and touch en route for Europe at American ports without much disadvantage and thus the carrier assumed more than ever a neutral character.

The voyage back with European goods though with less advantage and directness could be made in the same way stopping at American ports en route. This trade, when direct from or to the West Indies was forbidden by the British. The existence and importance of the trade made it a matter of consequence for the English to seize the various French, and as the war progressed, Dutch and Spanish possessions in the West Indies, and thus destroy the commerce that emanated therefrom unless under their own flag. Hence the objective of more than one campaign and fleet action in

the West Indies during these times was commerce destroying-

During the period ending in 1800 about 3500 merchantmen had been captured by the French. But notwithstanding the activity upon the provision and West India convoy from America in 1794, the of the French Corsairs this was not a great number for seven years. The entries and departures of vessels from London alone, in led to the first great action of the war, the French were defeated, but the strategic object of the campaign-the ^{French} convoy- was saved

Lord Howe's action

After the unsuccessful actions, that followed the one first mentioned, ^{and it was it} had revealed the bad condition of the French Navy, the

During these years especially the latter one the whole ruling powers in France in 1795 determined upon a war of commerce destroying alone, carried on by means of single cruises, public and private, and small Squadrons. This policy, also adopted by

The ports of the Bay of Biscay sent out ^{was} privateers of Napoleon in 1799, was popular with the French and accompanied with larger size, seaworth and equipped for distant voyages. Their a relinquishment of an attempt to command the sea-

It was ineffective as means of commerce destruction, it substituted the war of the guerilla for the war of organized force, the war of diffusion for the war of concentration, and marked the

The third area for French commerce destroying was that same aspects of weakness and defeat that similar war does upon of the West Indies which has already referred to, Guadeloupe and the land- The greater includes the less, and even if partial or regional command of the sea had been striven for, and obtained,

The aim here was both against the trade to Europe and the local shipping and large and fast sailing schooners or brigs were done by an inferior force than by a plan which Capt. Mahan has used against the first while petty craft and row-boats lay in wait recently and aptly termed a policy and practice of evasion.

The approaches to the ports of the British Isles were near the French ports of the Atlantic and as a result the larger proportion of of French privateers were small vessels intending to Great Britain protected her shipping by assembling convoys, patrolling these commercial routes with single cruises and remain but a short time out of port and aiming at the shipping of by causing their vessels of war going to and returning from

17
Great Britian as it converged to, and diverged from, the home ports.

During the period ending in 1800 about 3500 merchantmen had been captured by the French. But, notwithstanding the activity upon the ^{part} of the French Corsairs this was not a great number for seven years. The entries and departures of vessels from London alone, in a year averaged between thirteen and fourteen thousand and the *total* of other ports of Great Britian summed up to nearly the same number.

During these years especially the latter one the whole French coast from St. Malo to the Texel became a nest of privateers in from row boats to vessels of twenty guns.

The ports of the Bay of Biscay sent out privateers of larger size, seaworthy and equipped for distant voyages. Their game was a larger one than those of the Channel ports and aimed at the rich cargo of the trader from East or West Indies and the Mediterranean.

The third area for French commerce destroying was that of the West Indies which has already ^{been} referred to, Guadaloupe and Martinique especially forming good bases for such operations.

The aim here was both against the trade to Europe and the local shipping and large and fast sailing schaaners or brigs were used against the first, while petty craft and row-boats lay in wait and plundered the other. It was no wonder that under such circumstances privateering in these waters ^{eventually} degenerated into piracy.

Great Britain protected her shipping by assembling convoys, patrolling their commercial routes with single cruisers, and by causing their vessels of war going to and returning from

foreign stations to follow commercial routes. The home waters were filled with cruisers of all kinds and privateers of all sizes. These vessels protected English shipping, recaptured vessels taken by the French, and seized French vessels when found.

In 1799 however the French Directory declared officially that the French flag had disappeared from the sea so far as the merchant marine was concerned, in addition by that time 743 privateers and 273 cruisers had been captured by the English and the balance of seamen held as prisoners was very greatly against the French.

The war against the neutral trade to and from France was not only carried on by restriction. ^{also} The activity of this warfare against French commerce was shown by the fact that at least one-third of the captures were neutral vessels, carrying the flags chiefly of the United States, Denmark and Sweden.

Until 1800 the two following courses were pursued by Great Britain against neutrals in the French trade.

1st By the detention of neutral vessels bound to French ports laden with flour or grain by British cruisers, the neutral being then sent to England where the cargo was purchased and freight paid by the British government.

(Provisions contraband)

2nd By the seizure of neutrals laden with French colonial produce or carrying provisions or supplies to a French colony. This was modified twice- once limiting the seizure to vessels bound from the colony to Europe and afterwards allowing the produce if

neutral property, go free to England or a neutral European country (seizure in the second case was upon the ground that a trade forbidden to neutrals by the Home Government in time of peace was illegal in time of war.)

The French after varying decrees finally settled down to a plan of conduct towards neutrals similar to what England chose to adopt. In 1796 the French West Indian officials cut off from communication with the Home Government issued special decrees against American vessels trading with British islands.

The French Home Government in the same year created a rule forbidding the admission of British goods upon the continent of Europe which was extended in 1798 to a decree making a lawful prize of any vessel upon the high seas carrying in whole or part English goods no matter who the owner. The ship and cargo were condemned.

The effect of this was disastrous to the French as it repelled neutrals, and prevented an outlet to French products, and crippled commerce from want of carriage. The general state of this and English commerce destroying is shown by that barometer of commerce safety- marine insurance. English ships at that time were insured at a premium of 5 per-ct, while neutrals bound to France paid from 25 to 30 per-ct. Neutrals were also seeking English convoy at this time.

As a result of this law of 1798 a virtual war upon the sea began between France and the United States which lasted

until 1800.

These hostilities were carried principally upon our own coast and in the West Indies; the protection of our trade being both by convoy and patrolling, a wiser system of protection than any we used in our Civil War.

During this period English trade which had suffered and declined in 1793 and again in 1797, revived under the Administrative measures intended to kill it and began to develop and England with command of the sea, with no French Shipping engaged in commerce, and with the neutrals driven from France more than held her own in the commerce of the world. The French war ended in 1801.

In 1803 the war broke out a second time and until the outbreak of our own war of 1812 the Naval methods of commerce destroying was so mixed with administrative methods, enforced by Naval and Military means that the results will have to be taken somewhat as a whole.

The decrees of Napoleon and the Orders in council of Great Britain followed in succession. It was to a great extent a war of the land against the sea, a denial of the markets of Continental Europe to vessels carrying the produce and manufactures of Great Britain, a restriction that would naturally affect the prosperity of Great Britain, as well as cause suffering and hardship upon the Continent. It was a policy of aggression forced upon the French as the only method left, after the command of the sea by the British, the extinction of the French merchant marine.

the practical destruction of the French colonial system and the the virtual failure of French commerce destroying afloat.

For a time the policy told upon Great Britain and told heavily, partly because the English by retaliation for a time stopped the trade of neutrals and thus closed the trade which by eluding the French blockade supplied British exports to the continent.

The strain of the Napoleonic decrees was too great to be endured, the privateers of all classes, the misery and sufferings of the poor made the people of the European States ready to rise against Napoleon when the opportunity came. This opportunity came first for Spain and afterwards by the action of the Czar for Russia, and eventually for the rest of Europe. The results of this struggle was felt the most in England during the year 1810, in 1812 the imports showed somewhat less than in 1800; but exports

had materially increased and the tonnage of the merchant shipping had increased from less than 170000 to more than 225000. The derangement incident to overtrading, speculation and currency inflation was evident through these years, but this is almost always inevitable under war conditions, but the derangements caused did not result from commerce destroying, blockade, or exhaustion of resources, and the spirit of the British people and government alike were bent upon compelling France and its embodiment, Napoleon, to submit and no reversion of the war policy was contemplated up to the time of the fall of Napoleon and the restoration of the Bourbons.

The war between the United States and Great Britain known to us generally as the war of 1812, was declared on the 18th of June 1812. In the preceding January when various legislative steps had been taken by our Congress looking towards war; a very important measure reported from the Naval Committee of the House providing for an appropriation for the purpose of building twelve line of battle ships and twenty frigates had met with an untimely defeat. Hence at the time of the Declaration of hostility the Naval force of the United States consisted of but sixteen sea-going vessels of all classes, few of them being in readiness for sea or even in a firstclass condition. The American merchant shipping at that time was comparatively large and principally engaged in trade in European waters supplying the great belligerents of the Napoleonic wars.

The protection that could be afforded this commerce by the small force of the regular Navy just mentioned against the great sea power of England was meagre. The privateers authorized and being commissioned were of little avail for protective purposes and it became necessary for American merchants to take some measures themselves. A dispatch boat was sent to Europe with news of the war and also directions for our merchant marine in the harbors of Sweden, Denmark, Prussia and Russia to remain in port until the war was over. This saved the greatest part of our shipping in Northern Europe and the losses to American shipping ~~occurred~~ ^{from} ~~of~~ vessels making home ports on account of the war or those

at or from distant points of the world unaware of the existence of war. The best authorities agree that after the first six months of the war, the unarmed American merchant marine had practically disappeared from the high seas but not before a loss ^{to} of vessels taken and destroyed numbering about five hundred.

The proportion of foreign tonnage in our foreign trade which was only 3.4 per. ct in 1811 rose to 48 per. ct in 1813; but many of the foreign ships were really owned in the United States, being transferred to the Swedish, Spanish and Portuguese flags.

The destruction must be kept in mind, our shipping and carrying trade had suffered very seriously, but our commerce long accustomed to embargoes, confiscations, and paper blockades, still continued, and sufficient supplies of foreign goods were still ^{being} ~~continued~~ received. So much for the American side of this question during the first year of the war.

Privateering on our part against British commerce began at once. For this purpose there already existed small fast vessels, brigs and schooners that had been engaged previously in a quick running trade to France and the West Indies, accustomed to avoid British cruisers. These ^{and} pilot boats made our first privateers and as a rule ^{were} ~~being~~ only suitable for cruising off our own coasts, those of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and in the West Indies. They were fitted out principally from New York and Baltimore and were manned from the crews of the dismantled merchantmen. After they had cleared the neighboring waters, especially

those of the West Indies, they were found to be unprofitable- too small to fight and too light to escape so in 1813 they were replaced by another type of vessels.

During the last days of 1812 the announcement by the British of the blockade of the Delaware and Chesapeake was made and in 1813 still another move was taken against the commerce of the United States. In May Admiral Warren commanding the British Naval force upon the North Atlantic Coast, issued from Bermuda a proclamation, declaring a strict and rigorous blockade of the ports of New York, Charleston, Port Royal, Savannah and the Mississippi river, practically blockading the whole coast but the New England ports which were the outlets of a region favorable, or considered so, to Great Britain and where the neutral carrying trade now alone found entrance. From the time of this blockade Mr. Henry Adams says in his History of the United States nothing entered or left the blockaded coast except swift privateers or occasionally fast sailing vessels which risked capture in the attempt. In December 1813 the blockade was extended to New London and the east end of Long Island Sound. The difficulty of stopping trade from New York by blockading one outlet only had been found out.

The pressure of the blockade-method of commerce destroying was felt at once, especially in the interference with the coasting trade which in the days before coast line railroads was so essential for the interchange of our own varied products.

Important as it is, now, with an importance beyond our every day

realization

Except when ^{it is} hampered by ice or some extensive interference;—in those days it meant very much ^{more} as we shall see.

Flour that sold at \$4.50 a barrel in Richmond, commanded \$11.87 in Boston. Rice which was \$3. a hundred in Savannah and Charleston sold at \$12.00 in Philadelphia. No rate of profit could cause cotton, rice or wheat to be brought by sea from Charleston or Norfolk to Boston. Sugar which was quoted at \$9 a hundred in New Orleans stood at \$40 in New York and Philadelphia in December.

The price of imported articles ^{also} rose to extravagant points.

At the close of the year 1813 exports except from Georgia which state sent out cotton through Florida, and from New England had ceased. The effect upon the revenue was immediate.

The Custom receipts at New York which averaged \$500,000 a month fell to \$50,000. Maryland where a net revenue of \$1,780,000 had been collected in 1812 turned in but \$182,000 in 1813. Every one felt the effect of this destruction of commerce, the farmer grew crops which he could not sell, while prices of his necessities were ten times higher.

It will be remembered that the American privateer of 1813 was stated to be of a different type of that of the first year of the war. It was a larger vessel, generally a brig or schooner, of two or three hundred tons burthen, armed with one long pivot gun, and six to eight lighter guns in broadside, carrying crews from 120 to 160 men. It was generally fast enough to es-

cape a frigate and strong enough to capture an armed merchantman or letter of marque. The privateer was never a comfortable or a

safe vessel. These vessels were able to cut out vessels from a convoy and also capture the fast running ships of the enemy, always the richer prizes of the war. They were built primarily for speed and ^{though} uncomfortable for their officers and crews they proved to be

most dangerous enemies for the English merchantmen. Fortunately

for ^{latter} ~~them~~ they were comparatively few in number. The schooner - privateer could be built in any northern sea port in six weeks or

two months and cost half the amount ^{then} expended for a sloop of war which represented at that time our Naval commerce-destroyer.

These latter, built chiefly to fight, had heavy frames and the desired speed ~~for them~~ could only be obtained by fineness of model and lofty spars. ^{Henry} ~~But as Adams says~~ ^{demands}

could "The privateer was built for no such object. The last purpose of a privateer was to fight at close range, and owners much preferred that their vessels, being built to make money, should not fight at all unless much money could be made. The private armed vessel was built rather to fly than to fight, and its value depended far more on its ability to escape than on its capacity to attack. If the privateer could sail close to the wind, and wear or tack in the twinkling of an eye; if she could spread an immense amount of canvas and run off as fast as a frigate before the wind; if she had sweeps to use in a ~~storm~~ calm, and one long-range gun pivoted amidships, with plenty of men in case boarding became necessary, - she was perfect. To obtain these results the

builders and sailors ran excessive risks. Too lightly built and too heavily sparred, the privateer was never a comfortable or a safe vessel. Beautiful beyond anything then known in Naval construction, such vessels roused boundless admiration, but defied imitators. British constructors could not build them, even when they had the models; British captains could not sail them; ~~and~~ and when British admirals, fascinated by their beauty and tempted by the marvellous qualities of their model, ordered such a prize to be taken into the service, the first act of the carpenters in the British navy-yards was to reduce to their standards the long masts, and to strengthen the hull and sides till the vessel should be safe in a battle or a gale. Perhaps an American navy-carpenter must have done the same; but though not a line in the model might be altered, she never sailed again as she sailed before. She could not bear conventional restraints."

(Adams. p. 318-vol VII.)

The sloops of war, few in number, took but 79 British prizes during 1814 to about 350 taken by the privateers which in all probability did not number more than one hundred. The British West Indies were kept in constant discomfort and almost starvation by these craft but the most humiliating damage was done in the home waters of England.

Again French ports, wherever possible were made the bases of operations. Privateers cruised upon the coast of Ireland and Scotland making captures, sinking coasters in Dublin Bay, landing

all sizes and efficiency the government upon the Irish and Scotch coasts and destroying vessels plying between Ireland and Cork. Regular men-of-war of our Navy and privateers cruised in company, and off the coasts of Scotland and Norway one brig- the Scourge- captured some forty vessels and inflicted losses to the value of \$2,000,000. But the British blockade of our coast, possible through their Naval superiority, gave a decided check to privateering. The prizes could not be gotten in for adjudication and sale with facility, and when re-captured the loss to British commerce was mitigated. The man-of-war upon the contrary, to whom prize money, the incentive, ~~which was~~ the soul of privateering was of less consequence, could sink, burn or destroy the enemys shipping without making the cruise a failure- The cruise of the Essex in the Pacific was of this nature-

But privateering became unprofitable, the recaptures, the increased vigilance of the enemy, the blockade, and the duties upon the prize goods brought into port either lessened or destroyed the remuneration expected. Congress was petitioned and came to the rescue, by various acts passed in August 1813- One reduced the duties on prize goods one-third, another granted a bounty of \$25 for every prisoner captured and delivered and a third act formed a privateer pension fund for men wounded or disabled in the line of duty which is supposed to exist to-day with the Secretary of the Navy as its trustee-

I again quote from Adams

"These complaints and palliations tended to show that the privateer cost the public more than the equivalent government vessel would have cost. If instead of five hundred privateers of

all sizes and efficiency, the government had kept twenty sloop-of-war constantly at sea destroying the enemy's commerce, the result would have been about the same as far as concerned injury to the enemy, while in another respect the government would have escaped one of its chief difficulties. Nothing injured the Navy so much as privateering. Seamen commonly preferred the harder but more profitable and shorter cruise in a privateer, where fighting was not expected or wished, to the strict discipline and murderous battles of government ships, where wages were low and prize-money scarce. Of all towns in the United States, Marblehead was probably the most devoted to the sea; but of nine hundred men from Marblehead who took part in the war, fifty seven served as soldiers one hundred and twenty entered the Navy, while seven hundred and twenty six went as privateersmen. Only after much delay and difficulty could the frigates obtain crews. "The Constitution" was ~~now~~ nearly lost by this cause at the beginning of the war; and ^{one of} the ^{reasons} ~~the~~ loss of the "Chesapeake" ^{is given as} ~~was supposed to be chiefly due to the desert~~ mination of the old crew to quit the government service for that of the privateers."

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(Adams p. 337 vol. VII.)

In the early part of the year 1814 the blockade by the British was extended by proclamation so as to include all of the New England ports and thus the entire Atlantic and Gulf Coasts of the United States was under blockade. A Naval station and rendezvous was established at Tangier Island and Sound opposite the mouth of the Potomac in Chesapeake Bay, at which an English Squad-

on found a rendezvous; another resort was made in the Delaware; Nantucket and the adjacent waters was also a Naval station where Nelson's Sir Thomas Hardy commanded in chief, and Cumberland Island upon the coast of Georgia was occupied as another station ~~also~~ with ^{additional} view to an attack upon Savannah; these stations were mainly ^{however} for the purpose of carrying on more rigorously the blockade and as each blockading force included a line of battle ship, the Americans had no force of sufficient strength to raise the blockade.

Threatened attempts with the torpedo of Fulton alone made the blockaders uneasy at anchor.

The effect of this blockade became far reaching as time went on and ^{as} it became both more extensive and more rigorous. The banks of the country excepting those of New England suspended specie payments. ^{News} Mr. Adams says "Until the blockade should be raised and domestic produce could find a foreign market, the course of exchange was fixed and specie payments could not be resumed". The source of revenue being destroyed, the Treasury was bankrupt and the interest on the national obligations could not be paid. As to the taxes necessary to carry on the war Jefferson wrote-"The taxes proposed cannot be paid. How can a people who cannot get fifty cents a bushel for their wheat, while they pay twelve dollars for their salt, pay five times the amount of taxes they ever paid before?"

Most of the vessels of our Navy at the beginning of 1814 were either blockaded in port or had been captured or destroyed,

the Essex having been taken in March. / Porter's mistake as a commerce destroyer having been his return upon his tracks to Valparaiso which in the days of slow ^{movements} ~~pursuit~~ would most probably bring him within reach of a strongforce in pursuit. Had he continued his course to the East Indies and so on around the world his depredations upon the enemy's commerce would have been much more injurious and his safety more secure. /

The two frigates that finally got to sea made a few prizes, the new sloops did much better, the Wasp under Blakeley being successful in her commerce-destroying, as she was brilliant in her actions, ~~all of~~ which made her loss with all on board ~~all~~ the more lamentable. Matters were so unfortunate with us however that after the 1st of November 1814 there were no vessels of the Navy at sea.

But privateering had again revived. The ~~ex~~-privateers abounded again in the West Indies, were found around the Canaries, upon the Atlantic, in the China seas and once again hovering about the home waters of the United Kingdom, making for a time almost a blockade of the British isles. For the first time in English history a rate of 13 per cent had been paid on risks to cross the Irish Channel. British vessels were not considered safe unless under a convoy and the boldness of privateers was shown by their attacks upon and captures of East Indiamen while no more brilliant and inspiring display of courage and skill ^{there is} ~~has been shown in modern Naval history~~ ^{of its kind} than the defence of the privateer General Armstrong in Fayal Harbor against the attack in overwhelming force

of a British Contingent of vessels bound to New Orleans, ^{or} the equally brave, but less known, repulse of the boat attack upon the privateer Prince of Neufchatel off Gay Head near by us. ~~But~~ ^{however} Privateers were captured in and out of port, as were vessels and cargoes at Alexandria and elsewhere, ^{on the whole} but the results of the year were gratifying to our pride even though we suffered ~~the most~~ on land. The treaty of Ghent ending the hostilities was signed on the 24th of December 1814 and was hailed with joy on both sides.

The Americans had been excluded from the fisheries on the banks during the war; the effect of the blockade has been told ^{concerning it} but I will quote from Mr. Jefferson again, writing from his Virginia plantation just before the end of the war, ~~he says~~ ^{by this trade}

He says - "By the total annihilation in value of the produce which was to give me sustenance and independence, I shall be like Tantalus - up to the shoulders in water, yet dying with thirst. We can make indeed enough to eat, drink, and clothe ourselves, but nothing for our salt, iron, groceries and taxes which must be paid in money. For what can we raise for the market? wheat? - we only give it to our horses, as we have been doing ever since harvest. Tobacco? - it is not worth the pipe it is smoked in."

In the year ending September 30th 1812 the exports of the United States amounted to over 38½ millions of dollars in the year ending September 30th 1814 this had fallen off to less than 7 millions of dollars. For the year 1812 the imports amounted in value to about 65 millions of dollars *falling off in 1814 to less than 11 millions*. The revenue almost entirely derived from custom house

duties disappeared and internal taxes had to be substituted^{ted} to supplement these duties and the proceeds of land sales. * The English exports on the contrary grew from 38 millions of pounds in 1812 to 53½ millions of pounds in 1814 while the imports rose from over 26 millions of pounds in 1812 to nearly 34 millions of pounds in 1814.

This showing, so disadvantageous to our efforts at commerce destroying is due partly^{also} as far as British commerce is concerned, to the end^{ing} of the Napoleonic wars which threw open suddenly to British trade the markets of Russia, Germany, and Italy, and with the proximity of those countries and the English command of the sea we could do little to intercept or destroy this trade

~~The number of vessels lost by the British~~

This gain compensated also for the loss of commerce which Great Britain experienced by the cessation of commercial relations with us during the war of 1812.

The number of vessels lost by the British is given in Niles's weekly Register in 1815 as 2500 during the period of the war which was two years and eight months. Of these 750 are given as having been recaptured.

The English claim that they captured during the war no less than 1400 vessels of all kinds. The Statistics of the day give a reduction of our tonnage- registered- from transfer, capture &c of 100000 tons-

But the loss that we felt was not in tonnage but in the suspension of our carrying trade and the paralysis of our commerce

by that most powerful of commerce destroying methods- a strict blockade- *a* method which can be used successfully only by the belligerent possessing the command of the sea.

~~proceed~~ The end of the war of 1812 was welcomed in England for several reasons. One was ^{that} a war with America is not universally popular in Great Britian, another and principal one was that the country was tired of wars, *for* nearly twenty two years Great Britian had been at war on shore and afloat, and there was little glory and much annoyance to be gained in the continuance of the war with us. If no other wars had preceded ours, the war with us would have been a light burden; with our small and inefficient army, very meagre naval force, disorganized financial condition and above all disunited condition, which threatened in a most serious manner *Towards the end the union of the States -* ~~a disruption of the Union.~~

The strength of Great Britian was after all shown in her supremacy at sea, practically uncontested by us. We felt *it* in the most effective way it could be felt - by a sea blockade. ~~Without doubt~~ *naval* ~~We~~ lowered the prestige and tone of Great Britian *and glorious* by our several successful actions afloat upon lake and sea, not by the amount of losses she experienced from us of either naval or mercantile vessels, but by the humiliation and mortification she felt which ~~she felt~~ which was due to the enterprise, skill and ~~and~~ courage shown ^{to be} ~~as~~ characteristics of American seamen. The British themselves admitted this to be shown in the careers of our frigates, sloops of war, and privateers. But like the English infantry, said *the* to be ^{the} best of its kind, they were too few in number and too small

in class.

They were not able to meet the 74's, to raise the blockade, to defend our coasts from depredations and occupation nor to protect our carrying trade and commerce upon the high seas. *

Then as now there were no Baller ships to meet Baller ships
 The next war of consequence in which the maritime power of Great Britian was engaged or in fact any maritime power of consequence was that between the allied forces of France, Great Britian and Turkey, afterwards joined by Sardinia, against Russia, commonly known as the Crimean war. Russia however had a naval force so inferior in number and strength to that of the allies that it did not appear upon the high seas and shortly after the beginning of the war was either destroyed at Sebastopol or blockaded in Cronstadt. The Russian merchant marine also disappeared but Russian commerce was kept up, even with the English, through German and other ports. But Russia had no opportunity to prey upon English commerce as a strict military and commercial blockade of Russian ports was ~~kept up~~ *enforced*. The rights of neutral ships received the greatest consideration and as Great Britian needed Russian produce, both from the north and south, she got it notwithstanding her own blockade. It has been mentioned as a sort of grievance that English merchants had to pay an additional amount of ~~£~~ 2,500,000 for Russian produce on account of the overland transport to Memel in Russia.

The next war to give an object lesson in commerce destroying was our own Civil War but as the lessons to be studied are

extensive I will reserve an examination of this war for the next
lecture.

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