

# Chapter VII

1800 - 1801

*Nelson separates himself from his Wife—Northern Confederacy—He goes to the Baltic, under Sir Hyde Parker—Battle of Copenhagen, and subsequent Negotiation—Nelson is made a Viscount.*

Nelson was welcomed in England with every mark of popular honour. At Yarmouth, where he landed, every ship in the harbour hoisted her colours. The mayor and corporation waited upon him with the freedom of the town, and accompanied him in procession to church, with all the naval officers on shore, and the principal inhabitants. Bonfires and illuminations concluded the day; and on the morrow, the volunteer cavalry drew up, and saluted him as he departed, and followed the carriage to the borders of the county. At Ipswich, the people came out to meet him, drew him a mile into the town, and three miles out. When he was in the *Agamemnon*, he wished to represent this place in parliament, and some of his friends had consulted the leading men of the corporation—the result was not successful; and Nelson, observing that he would endeavour to find out a preferable path into parliament, said there might come a time when the people of Ipswich would think it an honour to have had him for their representative. In London, he was feasted by the City, drawn by the populace from Ludgate-hill to Guildhall, and received the thanks of the common-council for his great victory, and a golden-hilted sword studded with diamonds. Nelson had every earthly blessing except domestic happiness; he had forfeited that for ever. Before he had been three months in England he separated from Lady Nelson. Some of his last words to her were—"I call God to witness, there is nothing in you, or your conduct, that I wish otherwise." This was the consequence of his infatuated attachment to Lady Hamilton. It had before caused a quarrel with his son-in-law, and occasioned remonstrances from his truest friends, which produced no other effect than that of making him displeased with them, and more dissatisfied with himself.

The Addington administration was just at this time formed; and Nelson, who had solicited employment, and been made vice-admiral of the blue, was sent to the Baltic, as second in command, under Sir Hyde Parker, by Earl St. Vincent, the new First Lord of the Admiralty. The three Northern courts had formed a confederacy for making England resign her naval rights. Of these courts, Russia was guided by the passions of its emperor, Paul, a man not without fits of generosity, and some natural goodness, but subject to the wildest humours of caprice, and erased by the possession of greater power than can ever be safely, or perhaps innocently, possessed by weak humanity. Denmark was French at heart: ready to co-operate in all the views of France, to recognise all her usurpations, and obey all her injunctions. Sweden, under a king whose principles were right, and whose feelings were generous, but who had a taint of hereditary insanity, acted in acquiescence with the dictates of two powers whom it feared to offend. The Danish navy, at this time, consisted of 23 ships of the line, with about 31 frigates and smaller vessels, exclusive of guard-ships. The Swedes had 18 ships of the line, 14 frigates and sloops, seventy-four galleys and smaller vessels, besides gun-boats; and this force was in a far better state of equipment than the Danish. The Russians had 82 sail of the line and 40 frigates. Of these there were 47 sail of the line at Cronstadt, Revel, Petersburg, and Archangel; but the Russian fleet was ill-manned, ill-officered, and ill-equipped. Such a combination under the influence of France would soon have become formidable; and never did the British Cabinet display more decision than in instantly preparing to crush it. They erred, however, in permitting any petty consideration to prevent them from appointing Nelson to the command. The public properly murmured at seeing it intrusted to another;

and he himself said to Earl St. Vincent that, circumstanced as he was, this expedition would probably be the last service that he should ever perform. The earl, in reply, besought him, for God's sake, not to suffer himself to be carried away by any sudden impulse.

The season happened to be unusually favourable; so mild a winter had not been known in the Baltic for many years. When Nelson joined the fleet at Yarmouth, he found the admiral "a little nervous about dark nights and fields of ice." "But we must brace up," said he; "these are not times for nervous systems. I hope we shall give our northern enemies that hailstorm of bullets which gives our dear country the dominion of the sea. We have it, and all the devils in the north cannot take it from us, if our wooden walls have fair play." Before the fleet left Yarmouth, it was sufficiently known that its destination was against Denmark. Some Danes, who belonged to the *Amazon* frigate, went to Captain Riou, and telling him what they had heard, begged that he would get them exchanged into a ship bound on some other destination. "They had no wish," they said, "to quit the British service; but they entreated that they might not be forced to fight against their own country." There was not in our whole navy a man who had a higher and more chivalrous sense of duty than Riou. Tears came into his eyes while the men were speaking. Without making any reply, he instantly ordered his boat, and did not return to the *Amazon* till he could tell them that their wish was effected. The fleet sailed on the 12th of March. Mr. Vansittart sailed in it; the British Cabinet still hoping to attain its end by negotiation. It was well for England that Sir Hyde Parker placed a fuller confidence in Nelson than the government seems to have done at this most important crisis. Her enemies might well have been astonished at learning that any other man should for a moment have been thought of for the command. But so little deference was paid, even at this time, to his intuitive and all-commanding genius, that when the fleet had reached its first rendezvous, at the entrance of the Cattegat, he had received no official communication whatever of the intended operations. His own mind had been made up upon them with its accustomed decision. "All I have gathered of our first plans," said he, "I disapprove most exceedingly. Honour may arise from them; good cannot. I hear we are likely to anchor outside of Cronenburgh Castle, instead of Copenhagen, which would give weight to our negotiation. A Danish minister would think twice before he would put his name to war with England, when the next moment he would probably see his master's fleet in flames, and his capital in ruins. The Dane should see our flag every moment he lifted up his head."

Mr Vansittart left the fleet at the Scaw, and preceded it in a frigate with a flag of truce. Precious time was lost by this delay, which was to be purchased by the dearest blood of Britain and Denmark: according to the Danes themselves, the intelligence that a British fleet was seen off the Sound produced a much more general alarm in Copenhagen than its actual arrival in the Roads; for the means of defence were at that time in such a state that they could hardly hope to resist, still less to repel an enemy. On the 21st Nelson had a long conference with Sir Hyde; and the next day addressed a letter to him, worthy of himself and of the occasion. Mr. Vansittart's report had then been received. It represented the Danish government as in the highest degree hostile, and their state of preparation as exceeding what our cabinet had supposed possible; for Denmark had profited with all activity of the leisure which had so impolitically been given her. "The more I have reflected," said Nelson to his commander, "the more I am confirmed in opinion, that not a moment should be lost in attacking the enemy. They will every day and every hour be stronger; we shall never be so good a match for them as at this moment. The only consideration is, how to get at them with the least risk to our ships. Here you are, with almost the safety, certainly with the honour of England, more entrusted to you than ever yet fell to the lot of any British officer. On your decision depends whether our country shall be degraded in the eyes of Europe, or whether she shall rear her head higher than ever. Again, I do repeat, never did our country depend so much upon the success of any fleet as on this. How best to honour her and abate

the pride of her enemies, must be the subject of your deepest consideration."

Supposing him to force the passage of the Sound, Nelson thought some damage might be done among the masts and yards; though, perhaps, not one of them but would be serviceable again. "If the wind be fair," said he, "and you determined to attack the ships and Crown Islands, you must expect the natural issue of such a battle—ships crippled, and perhaps one or two lost for the wind which carries you in will most probably not bring out a crippled ship. This mode I call taking the bull by the horns. It, however, will not prevent the Revel ships, or the Swedes, from joining the Danes and to prevent this is, in my humble opinion, a measure absolutely necessary, and still to attack Copenhagen." For this he proposed two modes. One was to pass Cronenburg, taking the risk of danger; take the deepest and straightest channel along the middle grounds, and then coming down to Garbar, or King's Channel, attack the Danish line of floating batteries and ships as might be found convenient. This would prevent a junction, and might give an opportunity of bombarding Copenhagen. Or to take the passage of the Belt, which might be accomplished in four or five days; and then the attack by Draco might be made, and the junction of the Russians prevented. Supposing them through the Belt, he proposed that a detachment of the fleet should be sent to destroy the Russian squadron at Revel; and that the business at Copenhagen should be attempted with the remainder. "The measure," he said, "might be thought bold; but the boldest measures are the safest."

The pilots, as men who had nothing but safety to think of, were terrified by the formidable report of the batteries of Elsinore, and the tremendous preparations which our negotiators, who were now returned from their fruitless mission, had witnessed. They, therefore, persuaded Sir Hyde to prefer the passage of the Belt. "Let it be by the Sound, by the Belt, or anyhow," cried Nelson, "only lose not an hour!" On the 26th they sailed for the Belt. Such was the habitual reserve of Sir Hyde that his own captain, the captain of the fleet, did not know which course he had resolved to take till the fleet were getting under weigh. When Captain Domett was thus apprised of it, he felt it his duty to represent to the admiral his belief that if that course were persevered in, the ultimate object would be totally defeated: it was liable to long delays, and to accidents of ships grounding; in the whole fleet there were only one captain and one pilot who knew anything of this formidable passage (as it was then deemed), and their knowledge was very slight—their instructions did not authorise them to attempt it. Supposing them safe through the Belts, the heavy ships could not come over the *Grounds* to attack Copenhagen; and light vessels would have no effect on such a line of defence as had been prepared against them. Domett urged these reasons so forcibly that Sir Hyde's opinion was shaken, and he consented to bring the fleet to and send for Nelson on board. There can be little doubt but that the expedition would have failed if Captain Domett had not thus timeously and earnestly given his advice. Nelson entirely agreed with him; and it was finally determined to take the passage of the Sound, and the fleet returned to its former anchorage.

The next day was more idly expended in despatching a flag of truce to the governor of Cronenburg Castle, to ask whether he had received orders to fire at the British fleet; as the admiral must consider the first gun to be a declaration of war on the part of Denmark. A soldier-like and becoming answer was returned to this formality. The governor said that the British minister had not been sent away from Copenhagen, but had obtained a passport at his own demand. He himself, as a soldier, could not meddle with politics; but he was not at liberty to suffer a fleet, of which the intention was not yet known, to approach the guns of the castle which he had the honour to command: and he requested, "if the British admiral should think proper to make any proposals to the King of Denmark, that he might be apprised of it before the fleet approached nearer." During this intercourse, a Dane, who came on board the commander's ship, having occasion to express his business in writing, found the pen blunt;

and, holding it up, sarcastically said, "If your guns are not better pointed than your pens, you will make little impression on Copenhagen!"

On that day intelligence reached the admiral of the loss of one of his fleet, the *Invincible*, seventy-four, wrecked on a sand-bank, as she was coming out of Yarmouth: four hundred of her men perished in her. Nelson, who was now appointed to lead the van, shifted his flag to the *Elephant*, Captain Foley—a lighter ship than the *St. George*, and, therefore, fitter for the expected operations. The two following days were calm. Orders had been given to pass the Sound as soon as the wind would permit; and, on the afternoon of the 29th, the ships were cleared for action, with an alacrity characteristic of British seamen. At daybreak on the 30th it blew a topsail breeze from N.W. The signal was made, and the fleet moved on in order of battle; Nelson's division in the van, Sir Hyde's in the centre, and Admiral Graves' in the rear.

Great actions, whether military or naval, have generally given celebrity to the scenes from whence they are denominated; and thus petty villages, and capes and bays known only to the coasting trader, become associated with mighty deeds, and their names are made conspicuous in the history of the world. Here, however, the scene was every way worthy of the drama. The political importance of the Sound is such, that grand objects are not needed there to impress the imagination; yet is the channel full of grand and interesting objects, both of art and nature. This passage, which Denmark had so long considered as the key of the Baltic, is, in its narrowest part, about three miles wide; and here the city of Elsinore is situated; except Copenhagen, the most flourishing of the Danish towns. Every vessel which passes lowers her top-gallant sails and pays toll at Elsinore; a toll which is believed to have had its origin in the consent of the traders to that sea, Denmark taking upon itself the charge of constructing lighthouses, and erecting signals, to mark the shoals and rocks from the Cattegat to the Baltic; and they, on their part, agreeing that all ships should pass this way in order that all might pay their shares: none from that time using the passage of the Belt, because it was not fitting that they who enjoyed the benefit of the beacons in dark and stormy weather, should evade contributing to them in fair seasons and summer nights. Of late years about ten thousand vessels had annually paid this contribution in time of peace. Adjoining Elsinore, and at the edge of the peninsular promontory, upon the nearest point of land to the Swedish coast, stands Cronenburgh Castle, built after Tycho Brahe's design; a magnificent pile—at once a palace, and fortress, and state-prison, with its spires, and towers, and battlements, and batteries. On the left of the strait is the old Swedish city of Helsingburg, at the foot, and on the side of a hill. To the north of Helsingburg the shores are steep and rocky; they lower to the south; and the distant spires of Lanskrona, Lund, and Malmoe are seen in the flat country. The Danish shores consist partly of ridges of sand; but more frequently they are diversified with cornfields, meadows, slopes, and are covered with rich wood, and villages, and villas, and summer palaces belonging to the king and the nobility, and denoting the vicinity of a great capital. The isles of Huen, Statholm, and Amak, appear in the widening channel; and at the distance of twenty miles from Elsinore stands Copenhagen in full view; the best city of the north, and one of the finest capitals of Europe, visible, with its stately spires, far off. Amid these magnificent objects there are some which possess a peculiar interest for the recollections which they call forth. The isle of Huen, a lovely domain, about six miles in circumference, had been the munificent gift of Frederick the Second to Tycho Brahe. It has higher shores than the near coast of Zealand, or than the Swedish coast in that part. Here most of his discoveries were made; and here the ruins are to be seen of his observatory, and of the mansion where he was visited by princes; and where, with a princely spirit, he received and entertained all comers from all parts, and promoted science by his liberality as well as by his labours. Elsinore is a name familiar to English ears, being inseparably associated with *Hamlet*, and one of the noblest works of human genius. Cronenburgh had been the scene of deeper tragedy: here Queen Matilda was

confined, the victim of a foul and murderous court intrigue. Here, amid heart-breaking griefs, she found consolation in nursing her infant. Here she took her everlasting leave of that infant, when, by the interference of England, her own deliverance was obtained; and as the ship bore her away from a country where the venial indiscretions of youth and unsuspecting gaiety had been so cruelly punished, upon these towers she fixed her eyes, and stood upon the deck, obstinately gazing toward them till the last speck had disappeared.

The Sound being the only frequented entrance to the Baltic, the great Mediterranean of the North, few parts of the sea display so frequent a navigation. In the height of the season not fewer than a hundred vessels pass every four-and-twenty hours for many weeks in succession; but never had so busy or so splendid a scene been exhibited there as on this day, when the British fleet prepared to force that passage where, till now, all ships had veiled their topsails to the flag of Denmark. The whole force consisted of fifty-one sail of various descriptions, of which sixteen were of the line. The greater part of the bomb and gun vessels took their stations off Cronenburgh Castle, to cover the fleet; while others on the larboard were ready to engage the Swedish shore. The Danes, having improved every moment which ill-timed negotiation and baffling weather gave them, had lined their shores with batteries; and as soon as the *Monarch*, which was the leading ship, came abreast of them, a fire was opened from about a hundred pieces of cannon and mortars; our light vessels immediately, in return, opened their fire upon the castle. Here was all the pompous circumstance and exciting reality of war, without its effects; for this ostentatious display was but a bloodless prelude to the wide and sweeping destruction which was soon to follow. The enemy's shot fell near enough to splash the water on board our ships: not relying upon any forbearance of the Swedes, they meant to have kept the mid channel; but when they perceived that not a shot was fired from Helsinburg, and that no batteries were to be seen on the Swedish shore, they inclined to that side, so as completely to get out of reach of the Danish guns. The uninterrupted blaze which was kept up from them till the fleet had passed, served only to exhilarate our sailors, and afford them matter for jest, as the shot fell in showers a full cable's length short of its destined aim. A few rounds were returned from some of our leading ships, till they perceived its inutility: this, however, occasioned the only bloodshed of the day, some of our men being killed and wounded by the bursting of a gun. As soon as the main body had passed, the gun vessels followed, desisting from their bombardment, which had been as innocent as that of the enemy; and, about mid-day, the whole fleet anchored between the island of Huen and Copenhagen. Sir Hyde, with Nelson, Admiral Graves, some of the senior captains, and the commanding officers of the artillery and the troops, then proceeded in a lugger to reconnoitre the enemy's means of defence; a formidable line of ships, radeaus, pontoons, galleys, fire-ships and gun-boats, flanked and supported by extensive batteries, and occupying, from one extreme point to the other, an extent of nearly four miles.

A council of war was held In the afternoon. It was apparent that the Danes could not be attacked without great difficulty and risk; and some of the members of the council spoke of the number of the Swedes and the Russians whom they should afterwards have to engage, as a consideration which ought to be borne in mind. Nelson, who kept pacing the cabin, impatient as he ever was of anything which savoured of irresolution, repeatedly said, "The more numerous the better: I wish they were twice as many,—the easier the victory, depend on it." The plan upon which he had determined; if ever it should be his fortune to bring a Baltic fleet to action, was, to attack the head of their line and confuse their movements. "Close with a Frenchman," he used to say, "but out manoeuvre a Russian." He offered his services for the attack, requiring ten sail of the line and the whole of the smaller craft. Sir Hyde gave him two more line-of-battle ships than he asked, and left everything to his judgment.

The enemy's force was not the only, nor the greatest, obstacle with which the British fleet had to contend: there was another to be overcome before they could come in contact with it. The channel was little known and extremely intricate: all the buoys had been removed; and the Danes considered this difficulty as almost insuperable, thinking the channel impracticable for so large a fleet. Nelson himself saw the soundings made and the buoys laid down, boating it upon this exhausting service, day and night, till it was effected. When this was done he thanked God for having enabled him to get through this difficult part of his duty. "It had worn him down," he said, "and was infinitely more grievous to him than any resistance which he could experience from the enemy."

At the first council of war, opinions inclined to an attack from the eastward; but the next day, the wind being southerly, after a second examination of the Danish position, it was determined to attack from the south, approaching in the manner which Nelson had suggested in his first thoughts. On the morning of the 1st of April the whole fleet removed to an anchorage within two leagues of the town, and off the N.W. end of the Middle Ground; a shoal lying exactly before the town, at about three quarters of a mile distance, and extending along its whole sea-front. The King's Channel, where there is deep water, is between this shoal and the town; and here the Danes had arranged their line of defence, as near the shore as possible: nineteen ships and floating batteries, flanked, at the end nearest the town, by the Crown Batteries, which were two artificial islands, at the mouth of the harbour—most formidable works; the larger one having, by the Danish account, 66 guns; but, as Nelson believed, 88. The fleet having anchored, Nelson, with Riou, in the *Amazon*, made his last examination of the ground; and about one o'clock, returning to his own ship, threw out the signal to weigh. It was received with a shout throughout the whole division; they weighed with a light and favourable wind: the narrow channel between the island of Saltholm and the Middle Ground had been accurately buoyed; the small craft pointed out the course distinctly; Riou led the way: the whole division coasted along the outer edge of the shoal, doubled its further extremity, and anchored there off Draco Point, just as the darkness closed—the headmost of the enemy's line not being more than two miles distant. The signal to prepare for action had been made early in the evening; and as his own anchor dropt, Nelson called out, "I will fight them the moment I have a fair wind!" It had been agreed that Sir Hyde, with the remaining ships, should weigh on the following morning, at the same time as Nelson, to menace the Crown Batteries on his side, and the four ships of the line which lay at the entrance of the arsenal; and to cover our own disabled ships as they came out of action.

The Danes, meantime, had not been idle: no sooner did the guns of Cronenburgh make it known to the whole city that all negotiation was at an end, that the British fleet was passing the Sound, and that the dispute between the two crowns must now be decided by arms, than a spirit displayed itself most honourable to the Danish character. All ranks offered themselves to the service of their country; the university furnished a corps of 1200 youth, the flower of Denmark—it was one of those emergencies in which little drilling or discipline is necessary to render courage available: they had nothing to learn but how to manage the guns, and day and night were employed in practising them. When the movements of Nelson's squadron were perceived, it was known when and where the attack was to be expected, and the line of defence was manned indiscriminately by soldiers, sailors, and citizens. Had not the whole attention of the Danes been directed to strengthen their own means of defence, they might most materially have annoyed the invading squadron, and perhaps frustrated the impending attack; for the British ships were crowded in an anchoring ground of little extent—it was calm, so that mortar-boats might have acted against them to the utmost advantage; and they were within range of shells from Amak Island. A few fell among them; but the enemy soon ceased to fire. It was learned afterwards, that, fortunately for the fleet, the bed of the mortar had given way; and the Danes either could not get it replaced, or, in the darkness, lost the direction.

This was an awful night for Copenhagen—far more so than for the British fleet, where the men were accustomed to battle and victory, and had none of those objects before their eyes which rendered death terrible. Nelson sat down to table with a large party of his officers: he was, as he was ever wont to be when on the eve of action, in high spirits, and drank to a leading wind, and to the success of the morrow. After supper they returned to their respective ships, except Riou, who remained to arrange the order of battle with Nelson and Foley, and to draw up instructions. Hardy, meantime, went in a small boat to examine the channel between them and the enemy; approaching so near that he sounded round their leading ship with a pole, lest the noise of throwing the lead should discover him. The incessant fatigue of body, as well as mind, which Nelson had undergone during the last three days, had so exhausted him that he was earnestly urged to go to his cot; and his old servant, Allen, using that kind of authority which long and affectionate services entitled and enabled him to assume on such occasions, insisted upon his complying. The cot was placed on the floor, and he continued to dictate from it. About eleven Hardy returned, and reported the practicability of the channel, and the depth of water up to the enemy's line. About one the orders were completed; and half-a-dozen clerks, in the foremost cabin, proceeded to transcribe them, Nelson frequently calling out to them from his cot to hasten their work, for the wind was becoming fair. Instead of attempting to get a few hours' sleep, he was constantly receiving reports on this important point. At daybreak it was announced as becoming perfectly fair. The clerks finished their work about six. Nelson, who was already up, breakfasted, and made signal for all captains. The land forces and five hundred seamen, under Captain Freemantle and the Hon. Colonel Stewart, were to storm the Crown Battery as soon as its fire should be silenced: and Riou—whom Nelson had never seen till this expedition, but whose worth he had instantly perceived, and appreciated as it deserved—had the *Blanche* and *Alcmene* frigates, the *Dart* and *Arrow* sloops, and the *Zephyr* and *Otter* fire-ships, given him, with a special command to act as circumstances might require—every other ship had its station appointed.

Between eight and nine, the pilots and masters were ordered on board the admirals' ships. The pilots were mostly men who had been mates in Baltic traders; and their hesitation about the bearing of the east end of the shoal, and the exact line of deep water, gave ominous warning of how little their knowledge was to be trusted. The signal for action had been made, the wind was fair—not a moment to be lost. Nelson urged them to be steady, to be resolute, and to decide; but they wanted the only ground for steadiness and decision in such cases; and Nelson had reason to regret that he had not trusted to Hardy's single report. This was one of the most painful moments of his life; and he always spoke of it with bitterness. "I experienced in the Sound," said he, "the misery of having the honour of our country entrusted to a set of pilots, who have no other thought than to keep the ships clear of danger, and their own silly heads clear of shot. Everybody knows what I must have suffered; and if any merit attaches itself to me, it was for combating the dangers of the shallows in defiance of them." At length Mr. Bryerly, the master of the *Bellona*, declared that he was prepared to lead the fleet; his judgment was acceded to by the rest; they returned to their ships; and at half-past nine the signal was made to weigh in succession.

Captain Murray, in the *Edgar*, led the way; the *Agamemnon* was next in order; but on the first attempt to leave her anchorage, she could not weather the edge of the shoal; and Nelson had the grief to see his old ship, in which he had performed so many years' gallant services, immovably aground at a moment when her help was so greatly required. Signal was then made for the *Polyphemus*; and this change in the order of sailing was executed with the utmost promptitude: yet so much delay had thus been unavoidably occasioned, that the *Edgar* was for some time unsupported, and the *Polyphemus*, whose place should have been at the end of the enemy's line, where their strength was the greatest, could get no further than the beginning, owing to the difficulty of the channel: there she occupied, indeed, an

efficient station, but one where her presence was less required. The *Isis* followed with better fortune, and took her own berth. The *Bellona*, Sir Thomas Boulden Thompson, kept too close on the starboard shoal, and grounded abreast of the outer ship of the enemy: this was the more vexatious, inasmuch as the wind was fair, the room ample, and three ships had led the way. The *Russell*, following the *Bellona*, grounded in like manner: both were within reach of shot; but their absence from their intended stations was severely felt. Each ship had been ordered to pass her leader on the starboard side, because the water was supposed to shoal on the larboard shore. Nelson, who came next after these two ships, thought they had kept too far on the starboard direction, and made signal for them to close with the enemy, not knowing that they were aground; but when he perceived that they did not obey the signal, he ordered the *Elephant's* helm to starboard, and went within these ships: thus quitting the appointed order of sailing, and guiding those which were to follow. The greater part of the fleet were probably, by this act of promptitude on his part, saved from going on shore. Each ship, as she arrived nearly opposite to her appointed station, let her anchor go by the stern, and presented her broadside to the Danes. The distance between each was about half a cable. The action was fought nearly at the distance of a cable's length from the enemy. This, which rendered its continuance so long, was owing to the ignorance and consequent indecision of the pilots. In pursuance of the same error which had led the *Bellona* and the *Russell* aground, they, when the lead was at a quarter less five, refused to approach nearer, in dread of shoaling their water on the larboard shore: a fear altogether erroneous, for the water deepened up to the very side of the enemy's line of battle.

At five minutes after ten the action began. The first half of our fleet was engaged in about half an hour; and by half-past eleven the battle became general. The plan of the attack had been complete: but seldom has any plan been more disconcerted by untoward accidents. Of twelve ships of the line, one was entirely useless, and two others in a situation where they could not render half the service which was required of them. Of the squadron of gun-brigs, only one could get into action; the rest were prevented, by baffling currents, from weathering the eastern end of the shoal; and only two of the bomb-vessels could reach their station on the Middle Ground, and open their mortars on the arsenal, firing over both fleets. Riou took the vacant station against the Crown Battery, with his frigates: attempting, with that unequal force, a service in which three sail of the line had been directed to assist.

Nelson's agitation had been extreme when he saw himself, before the action began, deprived of a fourth part of his ships of the line; but no sooner was he in battle, where his squadron was received with the fire of more than a thousand guns, than, as if that artillery, like music, had driven away all care and painful thoughts, his countenance brightened; and, as a bystander describes him, his conversation became joyous, animated, elevated, and delightful. The Commander-in-Chief meantime, near enough to the scene of action to know the unfavourable accidents which had so materially weakened Nelson, and yet too distant to know the real state of the contending parties, suffered the most dreadful anxiety. To get to his assistance was impossible; both wind and current were against him. Fear for the event, in such circumstances, would naturally preponderate in the bravest mind; and at one o'clock, perceiving that, after three hours' endurance, the enemy's fire was unslackened, he began to despair of success. "I will make the signal of recall," said he to his captain, "for Nelson's sake. If he is in a condition to continue the action successfully, he will disregard it; if he is not, it will be an excuse for his retreat, and no blame can be imputed to him." Captain Domett urged him at least to delay the signal till he could communicate with Nelson; but in Sir Hyde's opinion the danger was too pressing for delay. "The fire," he said, "was too hot for Nelson to oppose; a retreat he thought must be made; he was aware of the consequences to his own personal reputation, but it would be cowardly in him to leave Nelson to bear the whole shame of the failure, if shame it should be deemed." Under, a mistaken judgment, therefore, but with this disinterested and generous feeling, he made the signal for



retreat.

Nelson was at this time, in all the excitement of action, pacing the quarter-deck. A shot through the mainmast knocked the splinters about; and he observed to one of his officers with a smile, "It is warm work, and this day may be the last to any of us at a moment:"—and then stopping short at the gangway, added, with emotion—"But mark you! I would not be elsewhere for thousands." About this time the signal-lieutenant called out that number Thirty-nine (the signal for discontinuing the action) was thrown out by the Commander-in-Chief. He continued to walk the deck, and appeared to take no notice of it. The signal officer met him at the next turn, and asked if he should repeat it. "No," he replied, "acknowledge it." Presently he called after him to know if the signal for close action was still hoisted; and being answered in the affirmative, said, "Mind you keep it so." He now paced the deck, moving the stump of his lost arm in a manner which always indicated great emotion. "Do you know," said he to Mr. Ferguson, "what is shown on board the Commander-in-Chief? Number Thirty-nine!" Mr. Ferguson asked what that meant. "Why, to leave off action!" Then shrugging up his shoulders, he repeated the words—"Leave off action? Now, damn me if I do! You know, Foley," turning to the captain, "I have only one eye,—I have a right to be blind sometimes:" and then putting the glass to his blind eye, in that mood of mind which sports with bitterness, he exclaimed, "I really do not see the signal!" Presently he exclaimed, "Damn the signal! Keep mine for closer battle flying! That's the way I answer signals! Nail mine to the mast!" Admiral Graves, who was so situated that he could not discern what was done on board the *Elephant*, disobeyed Sir Hyde's signal in like manner; whether by fortunate mistake, or by a like brave intention, has not been made known. The other ships of the line, looking only to Nelson, continued the action. The signal, however, saved Riou's little squadron, but did not save its heroic leader. This squadron, which was nearest the Commander-in-Chief, obeyed and hauled off. It had suffered severely in its most unequal contest. For a long time the *Amazon* had been firing, enveloped in smoke, when Riou desired his men to stand fast, and let the smoke clear off, that they might see what they were about. A fatal order—for the Danes then got clear sight of her from the batteries, and pointed their guns with such tremendous effect that nothing but the signal for retreat saved this frigate from destruction. "What will Nelson think of us?" was Riou's mournful exclamation when he unwillingly drew off. He had been wounded in the head by a splinter, and was sitting on a gun, encouraging his men, when, just as the *Amazon* showed her stern to the Trekroner battery, his clerk was killed by his side; and another shot swept away several marines who were hauling in the main-brace. "Come, then, my boys!" cried Riou; "let us die all together!" The words had scarcely been uttered before a raking shot cut him in two. Except it had been Nelson himself, the British navy could not have suffered a severer loss.

The action continued along the line with unabated vigour on our side, and with the most determined resolution on the part of the Danes. They fought to great advantage, because most of the vessels in their line of defence were without masts; the few which had any standing had their top-masts struck, and the hulls could not be seen at intervals. The *Isis* must have been destroyed by the superior weight of her enemy's fire, if Captain Inman, in the *Desirée* frigate, had not judiciously taken a situation which enabled him to rake the Dane, if the *Polyphemus* had not also relieved her. Both in the *Bellona* and the *Isis* many men were lost by the bursting of their guns. The former ship was about forty years old, and these guns were believed to be the same which she had first taken to sea: they were, probably, originally faulty, for the fragments were full of little air-holes. The *Bellona* lost 75 men; the *Isis*, 110; the *Monarch*, 210. She was, more than any other line-of-battle ship, exposed to the great battery; and supporting, at the same time, the united fire of the *Holstein* and the *Zealand*, her loss this day exceeded that of any single ship during the whole war. Amid the tremendous carnage in this vessel, some of the men displayed a singular instance of coolness: the pork and peas happened to be in the kettle; a shot

knocked its contents about; they picked up the pieces, and ate and fought at the same time.

The Prince-Royal had taken his station upon one of the batteries, from whence he beheld the action and issued his orders. Denmark had never been engaged in so arduous a contest, and never did the Danes more nobly display their national courage—a courage not more unhappily than impolitically exerted in subserviency to the interests of France. Captain Thura, of the *Indføedsretten*, fell early in the action; and all his officers, except one lieutenant and one marine officer, were either killed or wounded. In the confusion, the colours were either struck or shot away; but she was moored athwart one of the batteries in such a situation that the British made no attempt to board her; and a boat was despatched to the prince, to inform him of her situation. He turned to those about him, and said, "Gentlemen, Thura is killed; which of you will take the command?" Schroedersee, a captain who had lately resigned on account of extreme ill-health, answered in a feeble voice, "I will!" and hastened on board. The crew, perceiving a new commander coming alongside, hoisted their colours again, and fired a broadside. Schroedersee, when he came on deck, found himself surrounded by the dead and wounded, and called to those in the boat to get quickly on board: a ball struck him at that moment. A lieutenant, who had accompanied him, then took the command, and continued to fight the ship. A youth of seventeen, by name Villemoes, particularly distinguished himself on this memorable day. He had volunteered to take the command of a floating battery, which was a raft, consisting merely of a number of beams nailed together, with a flooring to support the guns: it was square, with a breast-work full of port-holes, and without masts—carrying twenty-four guns, and one hundred and twenty men. With this he got under the stern of the *Elephant*, below the reach of the stern-chasers; and under a heavy fire of small-arms from the marines, fought his raft, till the truce was announced, with such skill as well as courage, as to excite Nelson's warmest admiration.

Between one and two the fire of the Danes slackened; about two it ceased from the greater part of their line, and some of their lighter ships were adrift. It was, however, difficult to take possession of those which struck, because the batteries on Amak Island protected them; and because an irregular fire was kept up from the ships themselves as the boats approached. This arose from the nature of the action: the crews were continually reinforced from the shore; and fresh men coming on board, did not inquire whether the flag had been struck, or, perhaps, did not heed it; many or most of them never having been engaged in war before—knowing nothing, therefore, of its laws, and thinking only of defending their country to the last extremity. The *Danbrog* fired upon the *Elephant* boats in this manner, though her commodore had removed her pendant and deserted her, though she had struck, and though she was in flames. After she had been abandoned by the commodore, Braun fought her till he lost his right hand, and then Captain Lemming took the command. This unexpected renewal of her fire made the *Elephant* and *Glatton* renew theirs, till she was not only silenced, but nearly every man in the praams, ahead and astern of her, was killed. When the smoke of their guns died away, she was seen drifting in flames before the wind: those of her crew who remained alive, and able to exert themselves, throwing themselves out at her port-holes. Captain Bertie of the *Ardent* sent his launch to their assistance, and saved three-and-twenty of them.

Captain Rothe commanded the *Nyeborg* praam; and perceiving that she could not much longer be kept afloat, made for the inner road. As he passed the line, he found the *Aggershuus* praam in a more miserable condition than his own; her masts had all gone by the board, and she was on the point of sinking. Rothe made fast a cable to her stern, and towed her off; but he could get her no further than a shoal called Stubben, when she sunk, and soon after he had worked the *Nyeborg* up to the landing-place, that vessel also sunk to her gunwale. Never did any vessel come out of action in a more dreadful plight. The stump of her foremast was the only stick standing; her cabin had been stove in; every gun,

except a single one, was dismounted; and her deck was covered with shattered limbs and dead bodies.

By half-past two the action had ceased along that part of the line which was astern of the *Elephant*, but not with the ships ahead and the Crown Batteries. Nelson, seeing the manner in which his boats were fired upon when they went to take possession of the prizes, became angry, and said he must either send ashore to have this irregular proceeding stopped, or send a fire-ship and burn them. Half the shot from the *Trekroner*, and from the batteries at Amak, at this time, struck the surrendered ships, four of which had got close together; and the fire of the English, in return, was equally or even more destructive to these poor devoted Danes. Nelson, who was as humane as he was brave, was shocked at the massacre—for such he called it; and with a presence of mind peculiar to himself, and never more signally displayed than now, he retired into the stern gallery, and wrote thus to the Crown Prince:—"Vice-Admiral Lord Nelson has been commanded to spare Denmark when she no longer resists. The line of defence which covered her shores has struck to the British flag; but if the firing is continued on the part of Denmark, he must set on fire all the prizes that he has taken, without having the power of saving the men who have so nobly defended them. The brave Danes are the brothers, and should never be the enemies, of the English." A wafer was given him, but he ordered a candle to be brought from the cockpit, and sealed the letter with wax, affixing a larger seal than he ordinarily used. "This," said he, "is no time to appear hurried and informal." Captain Sir Frederick Thesiger, who acted as his aide-de-camp, carried this letter with a flag of truce. Meantime the fire of the ships ahead, and the approach of the *Ramillies* and *Defence* from Sir Hyde's division, which had now worked near enough to alarm the enemy, though not to injure them, silenced the remainder of the Danish line to the eastward of the *Trekroner*. That battery, however, continued its fire. This formidable work, owing to the want of the ships which had been destined to attack it, and the inadequate force of Riou's little squadron, was comparatively uninjured. Towards the close of the action it had been manned with nearly fifteen hundred men; and the intention of storming it, for which every preparation had been made, was abandoned as impracticable.

During Thesiger's absence, Nelson sent for Freemantle, from the *Ganges*, and consulted with him and Foley whether it was advisable to advance, with those ships which had sustained least damage, against the yet uninjured part of the Danish line. They were decidedly of opinion that the best thing which could be done was, while the wind continued fair, to remove the fleet out of the intricate channel from which it had to retreat. In somewhat more than half an hour after Thesiger had been despatched, the Danish adjutant-general, Lindholm came, bearing a flag of truce, upon which the *Trekroner* ceased to fire, and the action closed, after four hours' continuance. He brought an inquiry from the prince,—What was the object of Nelson's note? The British admiral wrote in reply:—"Lord Nelson's object in sending the flag of truce was humanity; he therefore consents that hostilities shall cease, and that the wounded Danes may be taken on shore. And Lord Nelson will take his prisoners out of the vessels, and burn or carry off his prizes as he shall think fit. Lord Nelson, with humble duty to his royal highness the prince, will consider this the greatest victory he has ever gained, if it may be the cause of a happy reconciliation and union between his own most gracious sovereign and his majesty the King of Denmark." Sir Frederick Thesiger was despatched a second time with the reply; and the Danish adjutant-general was referred to the commander-in-chief for a conference upon this overture. Lindholm assenting to this, proceeded to the *London*, which was riding at anchor full four miles off and Nelson, losing not one of the critical moments which he had thus gained, made signal for his leading ships to weigh in succession; they had the shoal to clear, they were much crippled, and their course was immediately under the guns of the *Trekroner*.

The *Monarch* led the way. This ship had received six-and-twenty shot between wind and water. She had not a shroud standing; there was a double-headed shot in the heart of her foremast, and the slightest wind would have sent every mast over her side. The imminent danger from which Nelson had extricated himself soon became apparent: the *Monarch* touched immediately upon a shoal, over which she was pushed by the *Ganges* taking her amidships; the *Glatton* went clear; but the other two, the *Defiance* and the *Elephant*, grounded about a mile from the Trekroner, and there remained fixed for many hours, in spite of all the exertions of their wearied crews. The *Desirée* frigate also, at the other end of the line, having gone toward the close of the action to assist the *Bellona*, became fast on the same shoal. Nelson left the *Elephant* soon after she took the ground, to follow Lindholm. The heat of the action was over, and that kind of feeling which the surrounding scene of havoc was so well fitted to produce, pressed heavily upon his exhausted spirits. The sky had suddenly become overcast; white flags were waving from the mast-heads of so many shattered ships; the slaughter had ceased, but the grief was to come; for the account of the dead was not yet made up, and no man could tell for what friends he might have to mourn. The very silence which follows the cessation of such a battle becomes a weight upon the heart at first, rather than a relief; and though the work of mutual destruction was at an end, the *Danbrog* was at this time drifting about in flames; presently she blew up; while our boats, which had put off in all directions to assist her, were endeavouring to pick up her devoted crew, few of whom could be saved. The fate of these men, after the gallantry which they had displayed, particularly affected Nelson; for there was nothing in this action of that indignation against the enemy, and that impression of retributive justice, which at the Nile had given a sterner temper to his mind, and a sense of austere delight in beholding the vengeance of which he was the appointed minister. The Danes were an honourable foe; they were of English mould as well as English blood; and now that the battle had ceased, he regarded them rather as brethren than as enemies. There was another reflection also which mingled with these melancholy thoughts, and predisposed him to receive them. He was not here master of his own movements, as at Egypt; he had won the day by disobeying his orders; and in so far as he had been successful, had convicted the commander-in-chief of an error in judgment. "Well," said he, as he left the *Elephant*, "I have fought contrary to orders, and I shall perhaps be hanged. Never mind: let them!"

This was the language of a man who, while he is giving utterance to uneasy thought, clothes it half in jest, because he half repents that it has been disclosed. His services had been too eminent on that day, his judgment too conspicuous, his success too signal, for any commander, however jealous of his own authority, or envious of another's merits, to express anything but satisfaction and gratitude: which Sir Hyde heartily felt, and sincerely expressed. It was speedily agreed that there should be a suspension of hostilities for four-and-twenty hours; that all the prizes should be surrendered, and the wounded Danes carried on shore. There was a pressing necessity for this, for the Danes, either from too much confidence in the strength of their position and the difficulty of the channel, or supposing that the wounded might be carried on shore during the action, which was found totally impracticable, or perhaps from the confusion which the attack excited, had provided no surgeons; so that, when our men boarded the captured ships, they found many of the mangled and mutilated Danes bleeding to death for want of proper assistance—a scene, of all others, the most shocking to a brave man's feelings.

The boats of Sir Hyde's division were actively employed all night in bringing out the prizes, and in getting afloat the ships which were on shore. At daybreak, Nelson, who had slept in his own ship, the *St. George*, rowed to the *Elephant*; and his delight at finding her afloat seemed to give him new life. There he took a hasty breakfast, praising the men for their exertions, and then pushed off to the prizes, which had not yet been removed. The *Zealand*, seventy-four, the last which struck, had drifted on the shoal under the Trekroner; and relying, as it seems, upon the protection which that battery might have

afforded, refused to acknowledge herself captured; saying, that though it was true her flag was not to be seen, her pendant was still flying. Nelson ordered one of our brigs and three long-boats to approach her, and rowed up himself to one of the enemy's ships, to communicate with the commodore. This officer proved to be an old acquaintance, whom he had known in the West Indies; so he invited himself on board, and with that urbanity as well as decision which always characterised him, urged his claim to the *Zealand* so well that it was admitted. The men from the boats lashed a cable round her bowsprit, and the gun-vessel towed her away. It is affirmed, and probably with truth, that the Danes felt more pain at beholding this than at all their misfortunes on the preceding day; and one of the officers, Commodore Steen Rille, went to the Trekroner battery, and asked the commander why he had not sunk the *Zealand*, rather than suffer her thus to be carried off by the enemy?

This was, indeed, a mournful day for Copenhagen! It was Good Friday; but the general agitation, and the mourning which was in every house, made all distinction of days be forgotten. There were, at that hour, thousands in that city who felt, and more perhaps who needed, the consolations of Christianity, but few or none who could be calm enough to think of its observances. The English were actively employed in refitting their own ships, securing the prizes, and distributing the prisoners; the Danes, in carrying on shore and disposing of the wounded and the dead. It had been a murderous action. Our loss, in killed and wounded, was 953. Part of this slaughter might have been spared. The commanding officer of the troops on board one of our ships asked where his men should be stationed? He was told that they could be of no use! that they were not near enough for musketry, and were not wanted at the guns; they had, therefore, better go below. This, he said, was impossible; it would be a disgrace that could never be wiped away. They were, therefore, drawn up upon the gangway, to satisfy this cruel point of honour; and there, without the possibility of annoying the enemy, they were mowed down! The loss of the Danes, including prisoners, amounted to about six thousand. The negotiations, meantime, went on; and it was agreed that Nelson should have an interview with the prince the following day. Hardy and Freemantle landed with him. This was a thing as unexampled as the other circumstances of the battle. A strong guard was appointed to escort him to the palace, as much for the purpose of security as of honour. The populace, according to the British account, showed a mixture of admiration, curiosity, and displeasure, at beholding that man in the midst of them who had inflicted such wounds upon Denmark. But there were neither acclamations nor murmurs. "The people," says a Dane, "did not degrade themselves with the former, nor disgrace themselves with the latter: the admiral was received as one brave enemy ever ought to receive another—he was received with respect." The preliminaries of the negotiation were adjusted at this interview. During the repast which followed, Nelson, with all the sincerity of his character, bore willing testimony to the valour of his foes. He told the prince that he had been in a hundred and five engagements, but that this was the most tremendous of all. "The French," he said, "fought bravely; but they could not have stood for one hour the fight which the Danes had supported for four." He requested that Villemoes might be introduced to him; and, shaking hands with the youth, told the prince that he ought to be made an admiral. The prince replied: "If, my lord, I am to make all my brave officers admirals, I should have no captains or lieutenants in my service."

The sympathy of the Danes for their countrymen who had bled in their defence, was not weakened by distance of time or place in this instance. Things needful for the service, or the comfort of the wounded, were sent in profusion to the hospitals, till the superintendents gave public notice that they could receive no more. On the third day after the action, the dead were buried in the naval churchyard: the ceremony was made as public and as solemn as the occasion required; such a procession had never before been seen in that, or perhaps in any other city. A public monument was erected upon the spot where the slain were gathered together. A subscription was opened on the day of the funeral for the

relief of the sufferers, and collections in aid of it made throughout all the churches in the kingdom. This appeal to the feelings of the people was made with circumstances which gave it full effect. A monument was raised in the midst of the church, surmounted by the Danish colours: young maidens, dressed in white, stood round it, with either one who had been wounded in the battle, or the widow and orphans of some one who had fallen: a suitable oration was delivered from the pulpit, and patriotic hymns and songs were afterwards performed. Medals were distributed to all the officers, and to the men who had distinguished themselves. Poets and painters vied with each other in celebrating a battle which, disastrous as it was, had yet been honourable to their country: some, with pardonable sophistry, represented the advantage of the day as on their own side. One writer discovered a more curious, but less disputable ground of satisfaction, in the reflection that Nelson, as may be inferred from his name, was of Danish descent, and his actions therefore, the Dane argued, were attributable to Danish valour.

The negotiation was continued during the five following days; and in that interval the prizes were disposed of, in a manner which was little approved by Nelson. Six line-of-battle ships and eight praams had been taken. Of these the *Holstein*, sixty-four, was the only one which was sent home. The *Zealand* was a finer ship; but the *Zealand* and all the others were burned, and their brass battering cannon sunk with the hulls in such shoal water, that, when the fleet returned from Revel, they found the Danes, with craft over the wrecks, employed in getting the guns up again. Nelson, though he forbore from any public expression of displeasure at seeing the proofs and trophies of his victory destroyed, did not forget to represent to the Admiralty the case of those who were thus deprived of their prize-money. "Whether," said he to Earl St. Vincent, "Sir Hyde Parker may mention the subject to you, I know not; for he is rich, and does not want it: nor is it, you will believe me, any desire to get a few hundred pounds that actuates me to address this letter to you; but justice to the brave officers and men who fought on that day. It is true our opponents were in hulks and floats, only adapted for the position they were in; but that made our battle so much the harder, and victory so much the more difficult to obtain. Believe me, I have weighed all circumstances; and, in my conscience, I think that the king should send a gracious message to the House of Commons for a gift to this fleet; for what must be the natural feelings of the officers and men belonging to it, to see their rich commander-in-chief burn all the fruits of their victory, which, if fitted up and sent to England (as many of them might have been by dismantling part of our fleet), would have sold for a good round sum."

On the 9th, Nelson landed again, to conclude the terms of the armistice. During its continuance the armed ships and vessels of Denmark were to remain in their actual situation, as to armament, equipment, and hostile position; and the treaty of armed neutrality, as far as related to the co-operation of Denmark, was suspended. The prisoners were to be sent on shore; an acknowledgment being given for them, and for the wounded also, that: they might be carried to Great Britain's credit in the account of war, in case hostilities should be renewed. The British fleet was allowed to provide itself with all things requisite for the health and comfort of its men. A difficulty arose respecting the duration of the armistice. The Danish commissioners fairly stated their fears of Russia; and Nelson, with that frankness which sound policy and the sense of power seem often to require as well as justify in diplomacy, told them his reason for demanding a long term was, that he might have time to act against the Russian fleet, and then return to Copenhagen. Neither party would yield upon this point; and one of the Danes hinted at the renewal of hostilities. "Renew hostilities!" cried Nelson to one of his friends—for he understood French enough to comprehend what was said, though not to answer it in the same language—"tell him we are ready at a moment! ready to bombard this very night!" The conference, however, proceeded amicably on both sides; and as the commissioners could not agree on this head, they broke up, leaving Nelson to settle it with the prince. A levee was held forthwith in one of the state-rooms, a scene well suited for such a consultation; for all these rooms had been stripped of

their furniture, in fear of a bombardment. To a bombardment also Nelson was looking at this time: fatigue and anxiety, and vexation at the dilatory measures of the commander-in-chief, combined to make him irritable; and as he was on his way to the prince's dining-room, he whispered to the officer on whose arm he was leaning, "Though I have only one eye, I can see that all this will burn well." After dinner he was closeted with the prince; and they agreed that the armistice should continue fourteen weeks; and that, at its termination, fourteen days' notice should be given before the recommencement of hostilities.

An official account of the battle was published by Olfert Fischer, the Danish commander-in-chief in which it was asserted that our force was greatly superior; nevertheless, that two of our ships of the line had struck; that the others were so weakened, and especially Lord Nelson's own ship, as to fire only single shots for an hour before the end of the action; and that this hero himself, in the middle and very heat of the conflict, sent a flag of truce on shore, to propose a cessation of hostilities. For the truth of this account the Dane appealed to the prince, and all those who, like him, had been eyewitnesses of the scene. Nelson was exceedingly indignant at such a statement, and addressed a letter in confutation of it to the Adjutant-General Lindholm; thinking this incumbent on him for the information of the prince, since His Royal Highness had been appealed to as a witness: "Otherwise," said he, "had Commodore Fischer confined himself to his own veracity, I should have treated his official letter with the contempt it deserved, and allowed the world to appreciate the merits of the two commanding officers." After pointing out and detecting some of the misstatements in the account, he proceeds: "As to his nonsense about victory, His Royal Highness will not much credit him. I sunk, burnt, captured, or drove into the harbour, the whole line of defence to the southward of the Crown Islands. He says he is told that two British ships struck. Why did he not take possession of them? I took possession of his as fast as they struck. The reason is clear, that he did not believe it: he must have known the falsity of the report. He states that the ship in which I had the honour to hoist my flag fired latterly only single guns. It is true; for steady and cool were my brave fellows, and did not wish to throw away a single shot. He seems to exult that I sent on shore a flag of truce. You know, and His Royal Highness knows, that the guns fired from the shore could only fire through the Danish ships which had surrendered; and that, if I fired at the shore, it could only be in the same manner. God forbid that I should destroy an unresisting Dane! When they become my prisoners, I become their protector."

This letter was written in terms of great asperity to the Danish commander. Lindholm replied in a manner every way honourable to himself. He vindicated the commodore in some points, and excused him in others; reminding Nelson that every commander-in-chief was liable to receive incorrect reports. With a natural desire to represent the action in the most favourable light to Denmark, he took into the comparative strength of the two parties the ships which were aground, and which could not get into action; and omitted the *Trekroner* and the batteries upon Amak Island. He disclaimed all idea of claiming as a victory, "what, to every intent and purpose," said he, "was a defeat—but not an inglorious one. As to your lordship's motive for sending a flag of truce, it never can be misconstrued and your subsequent conduct has sufficiently shown that humanity is always the companion of true valour. You have done more: you have shown yourself a friend to the re-establishment of peace and good harmony between this country and Great Britain. It is, therefore, with the sincerest esteem I shall always feel myself attached to your lordship." Thus handsomely winding up his reply, he soothed and contented Nelson; who drawing up a memorandum of the comparative force of the two parties for his own satisfaction, assured Lindholm that, if the commodore's statement had been in the same manly and honourable strain, he would have been the last man to have noticed any little inaccuracies which might get into a commander-in-chiefs public letter.

For the battle of Copenhagen Nelson was raised to the rank of viscount—an inadequate mark of reward for services so splendid, and of such paramount importance to the dearest interests of England. There was, however, some prudence in dealing out honours to him step by step: had he lived long enough, he would have fought his way up to a dukedom.

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Revision #4

Created 25 August 2019 14:40:47 by Textpedia

Updated 11 September 2019 10:15:59 by Textpedia