

“Although their crews were exposed to full view and stood waist-high above the bulwarks, the Americans did no dodging; their shots were well directed, and they raked the Englishmen fore and aft, carrying away all the masts of the *Detroit*, and the mizzen-mast of the *Queen Charlotte*.

“A few minutes after three o’clock, in the afternoon, a white flag at the end of a boarding-pike was lifted above the bulwarks of the *Hunter*. At the sight of this the *Chippeway* and *Little Bell* crowded all sail and tried to escape, but in less than a quarter of an hour they were captured and brought back by the *Trippe* and the *Scorpion* under the commands of Lieutenant Thomas Holdup and Sailing-master Stephen Champlin.’

“The victory was complete. The flag of the *Lawrence* had indeed been struck to the enemy, but she had not been taken possession of. She was yet free, and with a feeble shout that floated out far over the waters, her exhausted crew flung out the flag of their country from her mast-head.

“This triumph was a remarkable one in American and British history. Never before had an American fleet or squadron encountered an enemy in regular line of battle, and never before, since England created a navy, and boasted that ‘Britannia rules the wave’ had a whole British fleet or squadron been captured [by an American fleet or squadron]. \* \* \* \*

“When Perry’s eye perceived at a glance that victory was secure, he wrote in pencil, on the back of an old letter, resting it upon his navy cap, that remarkable dispatch to General William Henry Harrison whose first clause has so often been quoted:

“‘U. S. brig *Niagara*, off the Western Sister, head of Lake Erie,

“‘Sept. 10th, 1813, 4 o’clock, P. M.

“‘Dear General: We have met the enemy and they are ours: Two Ships, two Brigs, one Schooner and one Sloop.

“‘Yours, with great respect and esteem,

“‘O. H. PERRY.’

“A few minutes afterward, when, as Bancroft says, ‘a religious awe seemed to come over him at his wonderful preservation in the midst of great and long-continued danger,’ he wrote to the secretary of the navy as follows:

“‘U. S. brig *Niagara*, off the Western Sister, Head of Lake Erie,

“‘Sept. 10th, 1813, 4 P. M.

“‘Sir: -It has pleased the Almighty to give to the arms of the United States a signal victory over their enemies on this lake. The British squadron, consisting of two ships, two brigs, one schooner, and one sloop, have this day surrendered to the force under my command, after a sharp conflict.

“‘I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obt. servant,

“‘O. H. PERRY.

“‘The hon. William Jones, secretary of the navy.’”