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Letters Written During the War of 1812 by the British Naval Commander in American Waters (Admiral Sir David Milne)

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SIR DAVID MILNE

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LETTERS WRITTEN DURING THE WAR OF 1812 BY THE BRITISH NAVAL COMMANDER IN AMERICAN WATERS (ADMIRAL SIR DAVID MILNE)

By Major Edgar Erskine Hume, United States Army

The writer of these letters was one of the best known officers of his time. During his long naval career, beginning in 1799 and continuing over more than three score years, he was many times on duty in American waters, so that the comments contained in his communications to his most intimate friend, throw valuable light on American history of the period. His services here and elsewhere were brilliant and these letters, dating from 1811 to 1818, include some account of the War of 1812, the Peninsular Campaign, engagements with the vessels of Napoleon, etc.

The letters, some of which were published in part in the Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission to Parliament in 1902, were written to George Hume or Home of Wedderburn and Paxton.¹

Admiral Sir David Milne, son of David Milne of Edinburgh and Susan Verner of Musselburgh, was born in Edinburgh on May 25, 1763. He entered the Royal Navy in May, 1779, his first service being on board the **Canada** with Captain Hugh Dalrymple. Continuing on the same ship under Sir George Collier and Captain William Cornwallis², he was present at the second relief of Gibraltar, the capture of the Spanish frigate **Leocadia**, at the operation at St. Kitts in January

¹George Home of Wedderburn and Paxton was the second son of Alexander Home of Jardinfeld (son of Rev. Ninian Home of Billie) and his wife, Isabell, second daughter of Sir George Hume of Wedderburn, Baronet, forfeited as a Jacobite in 1715. One of her brothers having been disinherited and the other five having died without issue, and all of the issue of her elder sister having failed, the succession opened to her issue. George Home was a man of prominence, the friend of Sir Walter Scott, who succeeded him as Clerk of Session, and of Henry Mackenzie, the author of "The Man of Feeling," and other noted men of his day. He died unmarried in 1820. (Cf. *A Colonial Scottish Jacobite Family*, Va. Mag. of Hist. & Biogr. 1930, p. 1, et seq.)

²Admiral Sir William Cornwallis (1744-1819) was present at the reduction of Louisbourg in 1758. He served under Lord Howe on the North American station in 1777, during which time he engaged the French forces escorting the French troops under Rochambeau to America. He had an important share in the engagement with Admiral de Grasse at St. Kitts, January 26, 1782. In 1796 he was Commander-in-Chief in the West Indies. He was a younger brother of Lord Cornwallis of Yorktown fame.

1782, in the actions off Dominica on April 9 and 12, 1782, and in the disastrous hurricane of September 16-17, 1782. On arriving in England he was appointed to the **Elizabeth** of 74 guns, but she paid off at the peace and Milne having no prospect for further employment, entered the merchant service, apparently in the East India trade. In this he continued until the outbreak of the war with France in 1793 when he joined the **Boyne**, going out to the West Indies with the flag of Sir John Jervis. On January 13, 1794, Jervis promoted him to Lieutenant of the **Blanche** in which under the command of Captain Robert Faulknor he repeatedly distinguished himself, especially in the celebrated capture of the **Pique** on January 5, 1795. When after a very severe action the **Pique** struck, neither ship had a boat that could float and the prize was taken possession of by Milne and ten seamen swimming to her. For his gallantry he was promoted to be Commander of the **Inspector** sloop on April 26, 1795. On October 2, 1795 he was posted to the **Matilda** frigate in reward for his service, as Superintendent of Transports, an office he continued to hold while the **Matilda** cruised under the command of her first lieutenant.

In January 1796 he was appointed at his own request, to the **Pique**, "the frigate he had so materially contributed to capture" (O'Byrne), and being stationed at Demerara, British Guyana for the protection of trade, the governor forwarded to him on July 16th, a memorial from the resident merchants, to the effect that the Admiral had promised them a convoy to St. Kitts by July 15th; that if their ships waited longer, they would miss the convoy to England; and that if they sailed without convoy they would forfeit their insurance. Under these circumstances, Milne consented to take them to St. Kitts; and arriving there too late for the convoy to England, on the further representation of the masters of the vessels, he took charge of them for the voyage home, anchoring at Spithead on October 10th. On the 11th he wrote to the Admiralty, explaining his reasons, and enclosing copies of the correspondence with the governor and merchants of Demerara (Captains' Letters, M. 1796). His conduct, under the exceptional circumstances, was approved, and the **Pique** was attached to the Channel fleet. She was thus involved in the mutinies at Spithead in 1797, and when these were suppressed, was actively employed on the coast of France. On June 29th, 1798, in company with the **Jason** and **Mermaid** frigates, she fell in, near the Penmarks, on the South coast of Brittany, with the French 40-gun frigate **Seine**, and brought her to action suffering severely before the **Jason** could come up. The three all got aground, and after an obstinate fight the **Seine** surrendered as the **Mermaid** also drew near. The **Jason** and **Seine** were afterwards floated off, but the **Pique**, being bilged, was abandoned and burnt. Milne, with her other officers and men, brought the **Seine** to England, and was appointed to command her, on her being brought into the British Navy (James, ii, 247; Troude, iii, 137).

In October 1799 he went on the west coast of Africa, whence, some months later, he convoyed the trade to the West Indies. In August 1800 he was cruising in the Mona passage, and on the morning of the 20th sighted the French frigate **Vengeance**, a ship of the same size and force as the **Seine**. The **Vengeance** was under orders to make the best of her way to France, and endeavored to avoid her enemy. It was thus close on midnight before Milne succeeded in bringing her to action. Twice the combatants separated to repair damages; twice the fight was renewed; and it was not till near eleven o'clock the next forenoon, August 21st, that the **Vengeance**—dismasted and sinking—hailed to say that she surrendered. It was one of the

very few frigate actions fought fairly to an end without any interruption from outside; and from the equality of the parties, is aptly pronounced by James to have been "as pretty a frigate match as any fought during the war" (James, iii, 23; Troude, iii, 215; Chevalier, iii, 25). But Milne received no reward. He continued to command the **Seine** in the West Indies and Gulf of Mexico till the peace, when he took her to England and paid her off, April 1802. He was reappointed to her in April 1803; but three months later, July 21, she was wrecked on a sandbank near the Texel, owing to the ignorance of the pilots, who were cashiered by sentence of the court martial, which honourably acquitted Milne. He was then for several years in charge of the Fourth district of Sea Fencibles. In 1811-12 he commanded the **Impetueux** off Cherbourg and on the Lisbon station, and from this vessel many of the following letters were written.

Later he was appointed to the **Dublin**, from which he was moved into the **Venerable**. This ship was reported to be one of the dullest sailers in the service, but by a readjustment of her stowage she became, under his command, one of the fastest. Milne afterwards commanded the **Bulwark** on the coast of North America returning to England as a passenger on board the **Loire** frigate in November, on the news of his promotion to flag-rank on June 4th, 1814. Letters dated from the above vessels are given below.

In May 1816 he was appointed Commander-in-chief on the North American station, with his flag in the **Leander**, but his sailing was delayed to permit him to go as second in command under Lord Exmouth in the expedition against Algiers.

For this purpose, he hoisted his flag in the **Impregnable** of 98 guns, and in her took a very prominent part in the action of August 27, 1816, in which the **Impregnable** received 233 shot in her hull, many of them between wind and water, and sustained a loss of men of fifty killed and 160 wounded. It was a curious coincidence that the ship which, after the **Impregnable**, suffered most severely was the **Leander**, commanded by Captain Chetham, Milne's old first lieutenant, in the **Seine**. The loss of the two together in killed was more than half of the total loss sustained by the British fleet. For his services on this occasion Milne was nominated a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath on September 10th, 1816, and was permitted to accept and wear the Orders of Wilhelm of the Netherlands and Saint Januarius of Naples. The City of London presented him with its freedom and a sword; and as a personal acknowledgment Lord Exmouth gave him a gold snuff-box.

In the following year Milne went out to his command in North American waters, returning to England in the summer of 1819. In 1820 he was elected Member of Parliament for Berwick. He was made Vice-Admiral on May 27th, 1825, a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath on July 4th, 1840, and Admiral on November 23, 1841. From April 1842 to April 1845 he was commander-in-chief at Plymouth, with his flag in the **Caledonia**. On his way to Scotland after completing his service, he died on board the **Clarence**, packet-steamer from London to Granton, on May 5th, 1845.

He was twice married: first, in 1804, to Grace, daughter of Sir Alexander Purves, Bart.; and secondly, in 1819, to Agnes, daughter of George Stephen of the Island of Grenada. By the first marriage he had two sons, the younger of whom was afterwards Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Alexander Milne, Bart., G. C. B. The elder, David (1805-1890) married Jean Hume or Home, cousin (albeit twice removed) of the recipient of the Admiral's letters here given, and their descend-

ants, the distinguished family of Milne-Home, have ever since been in possession of Wedderburn Castle and the barony of that name in the county of Berwick, Scotland.

In the following collection of Admiral Milne's letters only those which deal with the United States or with American affairs are included. Other letters to the same correspondent and written during the same period are concerned chiefly with the Napoleonic wars, the Peninsular campaigns, etc.

Almost from his first visit to the western world, Milne was convinced that the West Indian colonies would ultimately throw off their allegiance to their mother lands and that probably the United States would be involved in a Mexican War and a Cuban revolt. This is brought out in many letters. The first letter was written while he was in command of the *Impetueux* off Cherbourg.

"H. M. Ship *Impetueux*, Spithead, 24th November, 1811:

My dear Sir, . . . I am now ordered under the command of the Admiral here and I understand will be employed at least for some time, in the blockade of Cherburg. The enemy [the French] have two line-of-battle ships there, two frigates and some small craft. We keep the same force off the port. I shall probably sail the end of this week. It is a very teasing and anxious service as the enemy can so easily slip out. However, at present, I am not the senior officer, as Captain Malcolm³ will be with us. This ship cannot go abroad at present being in want of considerable repair. She is however, a very fine ship, and being rated a 78, has an additional number of men. Government, I understand, is sending out commissioners to Vera Cruz, and a captain of the Navy goes out I believe to be attached to them. Should the affairs in the Peninsula be unfavourable, it will become highly necessary for us to pay attention to that quarter, and particularly to Cuba and Jamaica. The latter island is at present in a very bad way and, I believe, if they had an opportunity would not hesitate in throwing off their allegiance to the mother country. They are too near St. Domingo to be long quiet. A vessel has this moment arrived from thence. She brings the account of the death of Admiral Rowley,⁴ our Commander-in-Chief there. The very bad weather we have constantly had has retarded my refitting. We will now be ready on Wednesday. For seven days past we have had very fine weather, frosty with N. E. winds, which has sent all the outward bound away, some hundred sail for all parts. Some of them have been detained two months. This day we are to be honoured with a visit of the Duke of Clarence⁵, who is coming to Portsmouth for some days, and all the ships and garrison prepared to salute him at no small expense of powder; each ship, great and small, to fire 21 guns. . . .

Yours most faithfully, DAVID MILNE."

The man mentioned in the following letter as not to be hanged but sent to Botany Bay for life was referred to in an earlier letter dated November 11, 1811, in which Milne says. "For some time past I have been quite taken up with court-martials. What makes me mention this is—a man that was tried for striking his captain. You have, I believe, heard me mention I never punished a man the moment he com-

³Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Malcolm (1782-1851). He was later noted as the organizer of "the Indian Navy" formerly the Bombay Marine.

⁴Admiral Sir Josias Rowley, Bt. (1765-1842).

⁵Afterwards King William IV (1765-1837), third son of George III. He served as an officer of the Navy prior to his succession to the throne.

mitted the crime or after dinner. In the evening when mustered at the guns this man was found fault with for the screw of the gun not being quite clean, and was instantly ordered to the quarter deck to be flogged. He asked what he was to be punished for, and no answer was given but he was ordered to strip. This he refused to do, and his cloaths were immediately cut off his back with knives. When about to be tied up he made a run at the captain and struck him. This man is condemned to be hanged. His defense was he was seized with a momentary frenzy, and running to jump overboard he pushed his captain to get past him. This his witnesses in part proved. Had Captain Collier put this man in confinement till next morning, the above would not have happened. Indeed, I think there should be an order to that purpose."

"H. M. Ship *Impetueux*, Spithead, 1st December 1811.

My dear Sir, . . . I yesterday received orders to proceed to Cherbourg, and we are just now getting under way. I am to relieve another ship, the *Vengeur*, as she is ordered to Plymouth. You will be happy, I am sure, to find the man I mentioned to you was not hanged. Captain Collier⁶ wrote as strong as he could to the Admiralty, and the Prince Regent⁷ pardoned him on his being to Botany Bay⁸ for life. We have had a great deal of reviewing and sailing about with the Duke of Clarence, who is still here and remains till next Thursday, and then goes to Lord Keith's⁹ in this neighbourhood for ten days. I understand he expects to have the command in the Mediterranean, and Lord Keith the Admiralty. But I rather think the Duke is passing his time here until Mrs. Jordan¹⁰ leaves Bushy Park, as it is said she is leaving him on account of his having asked Miss Tilney Long in marriage.

Part of our army I have always thought ought to be embarked in men-of-war and troopships, that is men-of-war fitted as such. They might certainly be employed to great advantage in the Peninsula in landing in the rear of the enemy and cutting off his supplies; and I hope that Government are now thinking of doing this by having sent out the troopships empty. The *Agincourt* is just now in sight coming in. She is from Lisbon and has the official dispatches of General

⁶Vice-Admiral Sir George Collier (1738-1795). He was senior officer at Halifax and later in New York during the American Revolution. In 1779 he joined Sir Henry Clinton, the senior British Military officer, in a joint expedition to the Chesapeake. There was no serious opposition but 137 American vessels were captured or burned as well as stores to the value of more than a million pounds.

⁷Eldest son of George III. On that monarch's becoming mentally deranged this prince was made Regent by Parliament in 1811. He was subsequently George IV.

⁸Five miles south of Sidney, Australia. Established as a penal settlement in 1787 when the American Revolution made the New England convict establishments no longer available. The transportation of criminals to Australia was discontinued 1840. In popular fancy the name "Botany Bay" is used for any convict colony in Australia.

⁹Admiral George Keith Elphinstone, Viscount Keith (1746-1823). He was actively employed in cruising against American vessels near New York in 1776 and was present at the siege of Charleston in 1780. He served in American waters until the end of the Revolution and later had long service under Nelson against the French and Spaniards.

¹⁰Dorothea Jordan, one of the greatest actresses of her day. For more than twenty years she was the mistress of the Duke of Clarence (later William IV) to whom she bore ten children the eldest of whom was created Earl of Munster. She seems to have occupied the same place in the hearts of the people as did Nell Gwynn in the reign of Charles II.

Hill's affair¹¹. I shall write you when I get of Cherburg, and as Sir Harrie Popham¹² can give me franks will then send you the Telegraph.

The Prince Regent has been in a very dangerous state, his leg and thigh perfectly black, and the physicians had ordered him so much opium, he had no passage for some days. I was told stocks fell 2 per cent. on this account. Should anything happen him in the present state of the King, what a dreadful thing it would be for the country. . . . This ship has now got a good refitt, which she much wanted, but I have a good deal yet to do with the crew, who are not at all what I would wish them to be or what they ought to be. Indeed I think the discipline of the service has not improved since I last commanded a ship; and so much has been said in the Houses of Parliament and so much written about corporal punishment, it has done a great deal of mischief in the fleet; and this is, I suppose, what the authors wished. We have hitherto gone on pretty well, and I wish they would let us alone. . . .

DAVID MILNE."

In the following letter Captain Milne's comments on the state of the slave trade and the condition of these unfortunates in Africa and the West Indies also his remarks about the capture of vessels under neutral flags "but no doubt English property with slaves on board" are significant.

"His Majesty's Ship Impetueux, St. Helens, 5th February 1812:—

My dear Sir, When I wrote you on the 24th ult. I then expected from my representation to the Admiralty that the Ship would be ordered into dock; instead of that I am ordered to proceed to the latitude of Lisbon with the East India ships and then to go to Lisbon. My report to the Admiralty has had the good effect of making them think the ship is in good condition, for before, they, I believe, only thought her fit to lay at anchor. . . . We go the first fair wind . . . You would see by the papers that there are now certain accounts of the death of Mungo Park¹³. Captain Scobell, who is now here, has just returned from Africa and brought the accounts. Park was proceeding down the Niger with only one attendant in a canoe, and, as is customary, on passing the territory of one of the petty princes, he sent him a present; but the person he intrusted it to deliver run away with it, and the prince hearing of the canoe proceeding without his receiving the expected present sent after it; and Park, finding what had happened, leapt overboard and swam on shore to explain matters, but was murdered with his companion, by those, it was supposed, who had kept

¹¹When Wellington invested Ciudad Rodrigo, General Rowland Hill, Viscount Hill (1772-1842) was left at Alemtejo with two divisions and a brigade of cavalry, with orders to fall on the French at Merida. In Wellington's words "Hill did his work handsomely." Learning that the French general, Gerard, was at Arroyo dos-Molinos, Hill by forced marches in execrable weather got within three miles of the French without their knowledge. At daybreak on October 28, 1811, he formed up within 200 yards of their sentries, surprised the troops on parade, took General Brun, the Prince d'Artemberg and other officers of rank, and 1300 other prisoners, all the guns, camp equipage and stores, and put the rest of the force to rout.

¹²Rear Admiral Sir Home Riggs Popham (1762-1820), saw long service in the western hemisphere. One exploit was his participation in the capture of Montevideo and Buenos Ayres from the Spaniards in 1806, the inhabitants having long been complaining of their hardships under Spanish rule. He was the inventor of a code of signals adopted by the Admiralty in 1803. At the period of this letter he commanded H. M. S. *Venerable*.

¹³Mungo Park, the noted African explorer (1771-1806), was the first European of modern times to strike the Niger River which he first visited in 1796. His death occurred while on his second journey into Africa.

the present. Captain Scobell captured several vessels under neutral flags but no doubt English property with slaves on board, and agreeable to orders carried them to Sierri Leoni, from whence they are to be sent back to their own country; but this they have no wish for and say they will only be killed. All the petty states are at war and few prisoners are taken. I have been on the coast of Africa, and could never think otherwise than that the slaves in a well-managed estate in the West Indies were much happier than I saw them in Africa. The traffic is certainly very inhuman; but I should not be surprised if soon the Africans were to sell themselves voluntarily. I do not know whether Parliament would hinder this.

The Baltic ships are now nearly ready and it is expected will go very early this season. If Russia and Prussia do not now come forward, I am afraid they will lose the only opportunity they may ever have of saving themselves and Europe. The troops for Portugal are still here from contrary winds. The French frigates that are out, I think it will be impossible they can escape, as ships are sent out in every direction after them. I hope we shall fall in with them. Captain Maitland¹⁴, of the *Pique*, has charge of the convoy, and I am only to keep sight of them. . . . We are all looking for a promotion, and anxious to know who is to be the first lord. The Duke of Clarence and Lord Keith are mentioned, also Mr. Welsley Pole. I am very well satisfied with the present one, and wish he may remain in. Mr. Pole is an old shipmate of mine in the West Indies in 1782. He was then lieutenant, and left the service because he thought he did not get promoted quick enough. He is at present Secretary in Ireland. . . . DAVID MILNE."

The Admiral's remarks in this letter regarding the dependence of Europe on America for supplies are interesting in the light of events of a century later. The fall of Badajoz occurred three days prior to the date of this letter.

"H. M. Ship *Impetueux*, Lisbon, 9th April 1812.

My dear Sir, I wrote you on the 30th ult. by the packet, and as the *Fantome* brig is ordered home with dispatches I take the opportunity of informing you of the fall of Badajos¹⁵. It was taken by storm on the night of the 6th. The action continued from one o'clock to seven in the morning. Of course the loss on both sides must be considerable; but as the dispatches goes home in the *Fantome* I will not trouble you with the different accounts we have here, which may not be correct. The telegraph announced last night to the Admiral (the latest accounts yet received) that the governor and 3,000 men including officers had march-

¹⁴Rear Admiral Sir Frederick Lewis Maitland (1777-1839). In 1813-4 he commanded the *Goliath* on the Halifax and West Indian Station and in Nov. 1814 was appointed to the *Boyne*, under orders for North America. He was in command of the *Bellerophon* on June 30, 1815 when the news of Waterloo reached him and a letter warned him that Napoleon would attempt to escape from Bordeaux to America. On July 10 negotiations with Maitland were opened on behalf of Napoleon who had reached Rochefort. Maitland was unable to agree to the proposal that the Emperor should be allowed to sail to the United States, but offered to carry him to England. Napoleon embarked on the 15th and on the 24th was landed at Torbay but was ordered to Plymouth to await the decision of the Government. He was removed to the *Northumberland* on August 4th. Maitland wrote an account of the surrender of Bonaparte which was published in 1815.

¹⁵The Spanish provincial capital, Badajos, near the Portuguese frontier, after withstanding the British attack under Marshal Beresford in May 1811, was finally stormed on April 6, 1812, by Lord Wellington and carried with terrible loss. It was then delivered up to a two days' pillage.

ed into Elvas on their way to this place. Philipson (I am not sure if I spell his name right) broke his parole in England and being found in arms against us I think will puzzle our Government how to act with regard to him. Generals Graham¹⁶ and Hill are now falling back on Badajos. Of Marmont we have here heard nothing; but the enemy have now but a small force at Seville, and they must now raise the siege of Cadiz. It is the general report of the Portugese merchants that the French are retiring from the Peninsula, and from every account we receive I should think it the case. It is pretty certain they have not received any reinforcement and it is even said that part of the Imperial Guards have gone to France. The North of Europe will now, I should think, become the theatre of war. Everything here is as perfectly quiet and secure as in London, indeed I believe more so; and provisions plenty, but principally from America, very little indeed from England; and if it was not for the supplies from America, the army here could not be maintained. A good deal of grain comes from Barbary, but it is very precarious and not to be depended on. I expect about ten days hence to be sent out to cruise, which I shall like much better than remaining here doing nothing; and as the Admiral's commands extends to the Western Islands and Madeira, will probably visit both of these places. The new island that was last year thrown up at the Western Islands and has again disappeared. The Admiral had ordered a flag-staff and English colors to be hoisted on it, and all is gone down together. It was called Sabrina Island from the ship who saw it rise out of the water. I have not been any distance from Lisbon, but have visited all ground on the south side. It is very strong, composed of small conical hills. They are now nearly all fortified with excellent field works, and capable of being defended a long time. They were only begun last year, when it was supposed the French might have come down the south side of the Tagus, and these heights completely command Lisbon and the shipping, as it is only about a mile across. The weather has now become very warm in the day, and I cannot think it a good climate for delicate people. The thermometer is now in the shade on board at 80° in the day and 50° in the night, and the air very damp. On shore the variation must be more. The vines are now getting quite green, and the barley in the ear, and the vegetables the finest I ever saw, particularly the lettuce. . . . I remain, my dear Sir, with much regard, yours very truly DAVID MILNE.

A brig arrived here a few days since from Sicily. Everything is now perfectly quiet, but there was no doubt of the Queen¹⁷ being in the conspiracy, which was to give up the island to the French and put to death the principal English officers.

Milne's explanation in this letter of the defeat of H. M. S. *Guerrière* by the U. S. S. *Constitution* on August 19, 1812, is interesting.

¹⁶General Thomas Graham, Lord Lynedoch (1748-1843). He was the first to advocate (1806) limited service as a preventive of desertion.

¹⁷This was Maria Carolina, daughter of the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria, and consort of Frederick II, the Bourbon King of Naples. When Napoleon made his brother-in-law Joachim Murat King of Naples, Frederick and Maria Carolina fled to Sicily where they obtained a subsidy from Great Britain and allowed British troops to land and occupy Messina and Agosta, so that they might operate against the French on the mainland. The Queen perpetually intrigued against Lord Bentinck the British minister and even negotiated with the French. Late in the year 1812 a liberal ministry under Princes Castelnovo and Belmonte came into power and the Queen was exiled in the following year.

Inveresk, 15th October 1812.—My dear Sir, I have from day to day delayed writing to you until I knew something of what my motions were to be, and which are just as uncertain as when I left Berwickshire. The Venerable is daily expected at Portsmouth and until she arrives I must just wait here . . . Mrs. Milne, I am sorry to say, has been very unwell for some time past. . . . I now think seriously of taking her to England for the winter months. . . . January to April I think the worst months here and I think the English climate will do her much good during that time. Public events crowd so fast upon us, we can hardly risk an opinion. I am afraid the Emperor Alexander will be induced to make a peace as I understand the French influence is very strong at St. Petersburg, and I always thought we ought to have had a more active man there than Lord Cathcart¹⁸. Our army in Spain have done wonders, but if the Spaniards do not become hearty in the cause, it is impossible we can stand the expense of men and money, and the difficulty of getting provisions, for it appears the Americans are determined to keep at war with us. What an unfortunate business the capture of the *Guerrion* frigate! It is a thing I could not have expected. Captain Dacres, in my opinion, appears to have acted with indecision from the beginning, first in having backed his main topsail, thereby not having the ship under command of the helm; next in veering ship, which at least gave an appearance of avoiding the action, and by the rolling of the ship the chance of losing his masts when the rigging was cut, which actually happened. However, there is no doubt the American was superior in men and weight of mettle, and I have always thought our large frigates have not a sufficient number of men. They can only put 9 men to each 18 pounder, which is too few. . . . The boys are quite well and coming on very well at school, particularly David, who is generally at the head of the class. . . DAVID MILNE.

In the following letter the Admiral's opinions of American policies and aims are again set forth.

Inveresk, 10th November 1812.

My dear Sir, . . . By to-day's papers I see Lord Wellington is obliged to leave Burgos. A battle must of course take place or he must again retire on Portugal. What has General Maitland¹⁹ to answer for from rendering the army intrusted to him useless? Our next news from Russia must be very important, for it is impossible Bonaparte can remain at Moscow during the winter. I never could alter my opinion respecting American politics; however much they may wish to get possession of Canada it is my opinion the Spanish provinces is their first object; and I still think we ought to have a considerable naval force with some troops in the Bay of Mexico, even if you were to embark them from the Islands, if you could not spare them anywhere else. . . . DAVID MILNE.

¹⁸General Sir William Schaw Cathcart, first Earl of Cathcart (1755-1843) distinguished himself at the storming of Forts Clinton and Montgomery in 1777 in the American Revolution, and again at Monmouth Court House. In 1779 he was appointed Quartermaster General of the British Forces in America. He later rendered brilliant service in the War against the French in 1795. He was Ambassador to the court of the Czar of Russia in 1812.

¹⁹General Frederick Maitland (1763-1848) was captain of a company of the 60th Royal Americans in 1789 in the West Indies. He commanded the Anglo-Sicilian Army in Spain in 1812 but, as Admiral Milne says, was not a successful commander, which did not prevent his subsequently being promoted to the rank of general.

Here we find evidence of the well-known British practice regarding the nationality of seamen. The remarks as to possible American retaliation on the prisoners of the *Guerrion* (*Guerrère*) are noteworthy.

Portsmouth, 21st January, 1813.

My dear Sir, I delayed writing you until I was in some measure settled and knew what I was to do, for Sir Harrie [Popham] has been trying so much to keep the *Venerable* that I could hardly consider myself secure of her until I had read my commission, which I did on Tuesday; and even that morning he asked me to delay it for a day or two. He went to London that evening. Lord Melville²⁰ having left it to myself either to take the *Venerable* or *Stirling Castle*, I preferred the ship I was appointed to; at the same time mentioned to his Lordship that if he was under any obligation to alter his arrangements I was perfectly ready to meet his wishes. But as he did not ask me to give up the *Venerable* I did not think there was any occasion for me to volunteer it. She is refitting, and I think it will be a fortnight before we are ready for sea. There is no particular news; troops occasionally embarking for Portugal. The West India convoy sails to-morrow morning. We have been this day trying a seaman for attempting to desert. His defence was that he is an American, and he produced a letter from his father dated in 1801 and a certificate from Commodore Rodgers²¹ of having served with him in 1803. However on looking on the paper they were wrote upon, we found the former paper to have been made in 1809 and the latter in 1807. So much for Americans in our service. They are, however, like to give us some trouble. 12 men of the *Guerrion* have been kept in America to answer for 6 of our countrymen who are found fighting against us, and who are sent to England to be tried, and I should suppose they will be hanged; and the Americans say if we hang them they will hang the 12 *Guerrion* men.

I am happy to find the iron cables are again to be tried. The inventor of them was with me in London and wishes much that I would try them in the *Venerable* and report upon them. I am not quite sure if I shall do so as considerable alterations must be made in the ship, and a great deal depends on the working the iron properly. I dined with Mr. Rennie, the engineer, and asked his opinion of them. He says they will not stand well except hammered by machinery and afterwards annealed, which the inventor has not done. If they should answer it would be of very great consequence to the Navy, as they take up so little room, and a very great saving in expense. . . . DAVID MILNE.

²⁰Robert Saunders Dundas, Second Viscount Melville (1771-1851), a friend of Pitt and one of the leading statesmen of his day. In 1812 he became First Lord of the Admiralty in the ministry of Lord Liverpool, an office which he held for no less than 15 years.

²¹Commodore John Rodgers (1773-1836) entered the American Navy in 1798 having been previously in the merchant service. He was the first Lieutenant in the Navy to be regularly promoted to Captain (1799). He was the senior United States Navy officer in the War of 1812. The Navy Department was a section of the United States War Department until 1798 when it was created a separate department. The Department was unorganized until 1815 when an act of Congress established a Board of Navy Commissioners under the Secretary. At this time President Madison offered Commodore Rodgers the appointment as Secretary of the Navy, which he declined and was then made head of the Board of Navy Commissioners which office he held until his death except for a period of two years, from 1825 to 1827, when he was Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean.

Here the Admiral laments his unsuccessful cruise on the Banks of Newfoundland where he missed Commodore Rodgers. His notions as to the mode of prevention of disease aboard ship are given.

"Fareham, Hants, 14th November, 1813:

My dear Sir, I had the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 11th of October on my arrival here last Sunday morning. I came to St. Helens after dark on Saturday, and as I found all the ships what were ready were ordered to sea, I went directly to the Admiral at Portsmouth and reported the Venerable quite ready for any service. I got to the cottage at midnight and found all hands fast asleep and some difficulty of getting admittance at that hour. I am happy to say I think Mrs. Milne a good deal stouter and better than when I left England, but her cough still troubles her a good deal. The boys are grown much and quite well.

We have had a very unsuccessful cruise and much bad weather on the Banks of Newfoundland, and neither saw nor heard of an enemy's cruiser of any description the whole time we were out. Indeed, I may say, our cruise was but a short one, for we did not get to our station till the 10th September, but I took care to be at the greatest limit, the 10th October. If I had not been attached to a convoy I am sure I would have had Commodore Rodgers, as he passed the Banks of Newfoundland just before we got there. The ship has been in quarantine until Friday last owing to the Horatio having spoke a ship from Malta and her boat being afterwards on board the Venerable. I, however, had got on shore, and as the Custom House officers could not find me out, I staid on shore. The Horatio is still in quarantine; and indeed she has been sickly the whole cruise, while we have never had any sick, or any man died since we left England, and on our arrival only 8 on the list, 3 of them old men, and the others not confined. This I attribute to keeping constant fires between decks and washing the sides of the ship below with whitewash frequently, and never washing the lower decks, which only causes damp, but have them always scrubbed with dry hot sand every day. The ship was surveyed yesterday, and it is supposed we will be ordered into harbour as a good many of the knees are broke from the very severe weather and heavy seas we have experienced. As this is in the upper works only it will not be long and will be much sooner done there than at Spithead at this season.

I congratulate you on having found the additional paintings. When at Cadiz I certainly did covet some I saw at the Ambassador's very much and wished them at Paxton. They were certainly very fine, by a Spanish master, Murillo, I think; and I am sure some of yours are by the same person. They were all Scripture pieces. I was twice at St. Michaels. . . . Your high rents you get in Berwickshire is nothing to what is got there. What do you think of £300 an acre? To be sure it is for oranges, and from first planting it takes 12 years to come to maturity, but bear well at 5 years. As for politics, it is impossible to say what may happen this winter. I think Bonaparte's career is now nearly finished. . . . DAVID MILNE.

Again Milne comments on America's desire to interfere with the Spanish colonies and thinks that now she will be willing to accept peace at any price. It is interesting to learn of the fate of Commodore Rodgers' piano and carriage.

"H. M. Ship Bulwark, Portsmouth, 2nd January, 1814:—

My dear Sir, I had the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 18th the day after I wrote you last. You will be surprised, as I was myself, to hear that I am ordered for foreign service; and as it is generally the case that the Captain is the last person who knows where he is going, I have been informed by others that we are going to America with Sir Alexander Cochrane²². This, I believe, is certain. This is what I could have desired myself, especially being so near my flag. . . . Should I get my flag Sir Alexander will certainly take the Bulwark, as the Asia, his flag ship, is a small and old ship. There is certainly now not the least appearance of peace, and I hope the allies will soon find themselves strong enough, even if Austria should leave them; for certainly we can have no lasting peace while Bonaparte has any power left out of old France or while his connexions govern any other parts of Europe. Under such circumstances no peace with him can be lasting. America, I should think, would now wish peace on any terms, but they ought to be made to feel our power and be made to refrain from any attack or interference with the Spanish colonies; indeed I think we ought to hold a territory between them. Sir John Warren²³ is coming home. I believe he has not at all given satisfaction; but the Prince is his friend. Commodore Rodgers' house has been plundered;²⁴ his pianoforte is in Sir John's house at Bermuda, and he was riding in his, the Commodore's, carriage at Halifax where he [torn] and I may not call it ill-treated by the populace. What do you think of a British Admiral and Commander-in-Chief? This is not the way to conquer America. . . .

DAVID MILNE.

We learn here that the British government is not in the least disposed to favor the Americans and that they are supported by the whole mercantile interest of the country. How true was Milne's conjecture that if peace should come in Europe that Lord Wellington's army would be transferred to America. The fate of these troops under Wellington's brother-in-law, Major General Packenham, at the battle of New Orleans is well known.

²²Admiral Sir Alexander Forrester Inglis Cochrane (1758-1832). Served in the West Indies during the American Revolution. He was Governor of Guadeloupe from 1810 until 1814 when he was appointed to command the North America station. Here with his flag in the *Tonnant* of 80 guns, he was employed during the next year in directing the operations along the coast, more especially the unsuccessful attempts against Baltimore and New Orleans, in which, however he had no active share.

²³Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren (1753-1822). Served in America in the *Venus* in 1777 and later with distinction against the French in 1793-4. He was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the North American station early in 1813, from which he was relieved in the following spring.

²⁴In 1813 when Commodore Rodgers was at sea on his third cruise, Havre-de-Grace, Maryland, was pillaged and burned by a detachment of British seamen and marines belonging to the fleet of Admiral Warren. The Commodore's house was set on fire and many of its valuable articles stolen or destroyed. His mother, wife, and two sisters (Mrs. William Pinkney and Mrs. Howes Goldsborough) fled to the house of Mark Pringle, a wealthy gentleman who lived near the village. They had no sooner reached this house than a British detachment made its appearance, having been detailed to destroy this residence also. Mrs. Goldsborough, on behalf of her aged mother, interceded with the officer in command, begging him not to burn the house. The officer replied that he acted under the Admiral's orders and it would be necessary to obtain his consent. Mrs. Goldsborough returned with the officer and obtained permission that the house should be spared. But when she reached it she found it on fire. With the help of William Pinkney and two of the marines it was saved by great exertion.

“Portsmouth, 30 January 1814.—

My dear Sir, . . . Sir Alexander Cochran has been here some days. He goes in the Asia and the Superb accompanies him. The Saturn, Captain Nash, goes with me under small convoy. The Saturn is a cut down 74, of course a match for any American frigate. The Tennant is to follow us to be Sir Alexander Cochran's flagship, and Lord Cochran brings her out. From what I learn from Sir Alexander Government are not in the least disposed to favour the Americans, and they have now with them the whole mercantile interest of the country. This, of course; for as long as the Americans are shut up in their own harbours, our merchants will be the carriers of the whole world, and self interest will always guide their opinion. Something decisive must soon occur in France, and if we have peace in Europe I will not be surprised to see Lord Wellington's army transferred to America. We are certainly making great preparations to do something there. I shall sail the moment the wind comes to the eastward. We have had most severe weather and more frost and snow than ever remembered here. The wind is now westerly, and I think it likely to continue so for some time, having been so long to the eastward. A large reinforcement of troops are now embarked here for Lord Wellington, nearly 9,000, and a large proportion of them cavalry and in very fine condition. . . . Yours most faithfully, DAVID MILNE.

However poor Milne's opinion of the Americans may have been it was not so bad as that for the people of Bermuda. Their dependence on American supplies is in sharp contrast to the conditions prevailing since the Eighteenth Amendment became effective! American efforts to build up a Navy come in for comment and the captain gives it as his opinion that the slaves in the Southern states would rise against their masters if any force invaded that territory—thus showing the farsighted mind of this officer in the light of the events in the American Civil War. Other letters discuss this likewise.

H. M. Ship Bulwark, Bermuda, 26th April, 1814:—

My dear Sir,—We arrived here on the 17th instant after a tedious passage and a good deal of bad weather. I was two days at St. Michael where we got a good supply of everything, and lucky it was for us, for this is the most miserable place to get any supplies that I ever was at. Beef, (perfect carion) 4s. per pound, eggs 6s. a dozen, poultry 10s. a couple, and fish 10d. a pound. The island is certainly most beautiful, consisting of a number of small islands and large pieces of water very like Loch Lomond, and the cedar trees growing close down to the water. The whole islands are covered with them, and in them consists a Bermudian wealth. They build small vessels of them and sell them to those who may be in want of them. The trees are in general about 25 or 30 feet high and cut into planks of about 18 feet long and 10 or 12 inches broad. The inhabitants are a most indolent, inhospitable set of people I ever saw, and although they might raise plenty of every kind of provision, they are totally dependent on America for a supply, and since the embargo there, they have been almost starving. The cedar trees is all they look to and constant succession is produced from the shaken seed. They even neglect the fisheries and only catch as much as serves them daily. At this season there are abundance of spermeceti whales not a quarter of a mile from the shore, and yet they only kill a very few. They

are towed ashore, the oil taken from them and the flesh sold in the market as beef at 10d. a pound. So much for the Bermudians, and you will see I have formed no very favourable opinion of them. In a political point of view I think the island of much consequence to England. It is a rendezvous and depot for whatever operations may be carried on against the southern part of the United States and fortifications are now erecting which will secure it from any attempts of the enemy. It is very difficult of access, and indeed, I think, large ships should be ordered here as seldom as possible, as they frequently touch the ground coming in, and, of course, injure the copper, and the worm soon gets into the plank. Sir Alexander Cochran is now here waiting for the **Tennant**, but what our operations are to be I am ignorant, and I think Sir Alexander hardly knows himself. He certainly expects troops out; but I think this must depend on what passes in Europe. We brought the latest accounts from England and no vessel has since arrived. I am ordered to sail in a few days to cruise in Boston Bay. The Americans are using every exertion to get a naval force. They have several two deckers of a very large size in great forwardness. One, near Boston, is said to be launched next month. She is 2,500; and here ours are the largest class, 1,900 tons. They are to carry 42-pounders on the lower deck, 32-pounders on the upper deck, and 68-pounder carronades on the quarter deck and fore-castle, and to [be] manned in proportion. I cannot say what chance we shall have if we meet with them, but I must say it is a disgrace to the British nation to have such ships as we have. There is none of our new two-decked ships that can carry her lower deck guns out, if there is the least wind, and hardly one of them that does not want a thorough repair in less than two years after she is launched; and yet we have some of the French ships, very fine models and far superior to ours; and yet we will not improve from them; and I am much mistaken if the American ships will not give both nations a lesson. And as for being manned, we are not near as we ought to be either in the number or quality of the men; and as for the marines they hardly deserve the name of men. It will appear strange to you, but those sent on board ship are positively the refuse of the corps. They are first picked for the Marine Artillery, next for the Marine Battalion, then the best of what remains given to a flag-ship, and the rest distributed to the different ships, and bad enough they are. You, of course, know, the Marine Battalion and Marine Artillery are never employed in the ship; they only retain the name, and I may say the Marine Corps has been destroyed to add to the army. You may think I look upon the worst side of all this; but I cannot shut my eyes against what I see, and I cannot help feeling some anxiety as an officer where I am liable to meet with an enemy so superior in size of ship, weight of metal and number and quality of men. And this ship is really not manned as she ought to be; and yet there are few in the service better. I speak to you, my dear Sir, very freely on these subjects and should feel very happy if I was convinced they were any way exaggerated. I inclose a list of the crew as I did formerly of the *Impetueux*, and you will see what we are made up of, and although you may observe a good many seamen, yet many of them, although never of any other profession, are very far from being sailors.

I cannot help sending you a short account of a phenomenon observed by Captain Hay and the officers of the *Majestic* on the 27th, 28th and 29th of last August—after that it gradually disappeared. It was the exact figure of a man most distinct holding a flag in his hand,

the flag over his head, seen on these days constantly in the sun. The figure was erect in the morning, horizontal at noon and reversed at sunset. If this had only been seen by one person I should not have thought it worth taking notice of, but all the officers with their different glasses saw it distinctly on these days, and the figures so exact and well defined as nothing to be left to imagination. . . . We have no intelligence of any consequence from America. The blacks in the Southern States would certainly join any force that might be landed there to get rid of their masters, who they detest; but whether this mode of warfare will answer, I have my doubts; but I rather think if any force comes from England it will be tried. The Americans cannot certainly remain much longer in their present situation with the embargo without much discontent, and I expect shortly to hear of some great change among them. . . .

27th.—Intelligence has arrived that the Americans have taken off the embargo. Sir Alexander Cochran has issued a proclamation declaring all the Northern ports in a state of strict blockade. I take this with me to our ships off New London, etc., and to Halifax, and am to sail directly. No arrivals yet from England. Ever yours, My dear Sir, with much regard. DAVID MILNE.

Captain Milne holds in this letter that the Americans must now yield to any terms that might be dictated by Britain. He considers that the Floridas and Louisiana and the Great Lakes should be given over to Britain. The inability of President Madison to effect a loan is stressed.

"H. M. Ship Bulwark, Halifax, 30th May, 1814:—
My dear Sir, . . . I arrived here four days ago from off New London, where I had taken a victualler for the squadron there. I sail to-day for my station off Boston Bay. I captured a few small craft while off New London with the boats and brought them here loaded with provisions, etc., and for which the Yankees have begun to abuse me in their papers. The late events in France, although we were in some measure prepared to expect them, yet to such an extent we had no idea. The Americans must now yield to any terms we may please to offer them, indeed I every day expect to hear of a rebellion in the country. The blockade has annoyed them very much, for they thought they would be allowed just to trade as usual on their taking off the embargo, and they were very much disappointed when I would not even allow them to trade along shore. I really think we ought even now oblige them to have a new form of government, for certainly the present one cannot remain. At all events they must be made to give up all the lakes in Canada, both Floridas and Louisiana to us. We will then be a barrier between them and Mexico. We have reports that a large body of troops are coming to this country. If so, we will soon conquer them and I am almost sure, half the population would join us. Never have a people so taken themselves in as the Americans have. No trade, their seamen are now all in a state of meeting at New York, and the money all disappearing; and Madison cannot effect a loan.²⁵ A good many names are put down, but

²⁵The U. S. Treasury at this time being on the verge of bankruptcy recourse was had to a loan and the President was authorized to borrow 16 millions of dollars. Subscriptions were opened in eleven seaboard towns but when the books were closed less than four millions had been subscribed. The books were again opened and the new loan yielded less than two millions. Finally several men of wealth came forward and, driving a mercilessly hard bargain, about eleven millions were subscribed. Of these, nine were taken by Parish and Girard of Phila-

no money, although every kind of inducement is offered. In short, never was a country so completely committed. To the southward the Blacks are all ready to rise and will so the moment we land an army, which I hope will be soon. I am happy, my dear Sir, you keep your health. The winter has been very severe. It has also been so here, and the convoy from England, just now coming in, have been in some danger from the ice. Some of the islands are aground on the Banks of Newfoundland in 30 fathom water, and it is feared some of the ships are lost on them. . . . Yours most sincerely, DAVID MILNE."

Milne writes now of his promotion to flag rank (this took place on June 4, 1814). The letter is filled with accounts of duty near Boston and his hatred for the Yankees. We read also of the burning of Washington by British troops.

"H. M. Ship Bulwark, Penobscot river, 6th September 1814:—

My dear Sir, . . . I am now promoted but as yet have not had any official information, and am perfectly ignorant whether I am to hoist my flag on this station or return home. The account must have gone to the Chesapeake, where Sir Alexander Cochrane is, and a very short time must determine it. . . . We have been very actively employed on this coast. My station has been almost constantly off Boston. We have just taken possession of this river and small town (Castin) without any opposition, and the boats and part of the army proceeded up the river under the command of Captain Barrie of the Dragon and have taken possession of a good many vessels. The Adams, American sloop of war, had taken shelter in the river and was burnt by her commander on the approach of the boats. I was to have commanded the expedition, but Sir John Sherbrooke,²⁶ Governor of Nova Scotia, thought it of so much consequence that he embarked with it, and the Admiral of Halifax (Griffiths) was obliged also to come, so the honour is of course all theirs. With the boats of this ship we have kept the whole coast in continual alarm, and of course, we are finely abused in their newspapers. Not a boat can pass, and Boston is in the greatest distress for fuel and flour, and the new 74 gun ships boats were obliged to be carried overland in waggons to her from Salem where they were built. A little exertion in sending a good large body of troops from England at this moment will conquer America, and I do not hesitate to say I am certain they would be glad to place themselves again under the British Government. They detest their own government and they have no trust in one another, and the people of property in the town and on the coast are more afraid of their own people in the country than they are of our troops. Yet there always appears a hatred and jealousy of the English. They are a sad despicable set, and self-interest governs them in every situation; but they are now so reduced and their mutual distrust is such that I am sure at this moment they would be glad to be again under our protection;

delphia and two millions by John Jacob Astor of New York. Almost nothing was subscribed in New England much to the delight of the Boston press. These difficulties had no little to do with the firm establishment of internal taxation.

²⁶General Sir John Coape Sherbrooke (1764-1830). Appointed Governor of Nova Scotia, 1811. Upon the declaration of war with the United States his measures for defense were taken with so much vigor that he was voted 1000 pounds after peace had been declared. He commanded the expedition up the Penobscot in 1814 which did something to counterbalance the British defeat at Plattsburg. An American brigade capitulated and the port of Maine, which lies between the Penobscot and New Brunswick was for the time being a British possession. He was made Governor-in-Chief of Canada in 1816.

and I am sure a proposal of this kind would be gladly listened to. But they should not be allowed breathing time, but a large force poured into their country, and not on any account to be divided in small detachments in taking and keeping possession of places of no great consequence such as this is, and at so great a distance from the seat of government. So far from making them feel the pressure of the war by this expedition, we are making them much easier and in a better situation than ever, and it is the intention of the General and Admiral to grant them a trade to Nova Scotia and to fish on their own coast. And all this—all the great and good effects we have seen arise from the blockade ordered by Sir Alexander Cochrane! This surely could not be the orders from home. It cannot be. Sir Alexander Cochrane has destroyed the public works, etc. at Washington, and we hear it reported that the troops are again embarked, but I think he would first have destroyed Baltimore and then probably take Rhode Island and winter there. . . . Yours, with much regard and esteem, most faithfully, DAVID MILNE.

Herein we have the Admiral's comments on the Battle of New Orleans.

"Inveresk, 23rd March, 1815:—

My dear Sir, . . . What a change in the political world since you left Edinburgh. I was informed that the expedition to New Orleans²⁷ consisted of 10,000 troops besides the black regiments from the West Indies. With such a force I thought the capture of the place certain. But they never had 6,000 in all. With this small force it was impossible to carry it and defeat was certain. I wrote to Lord Melville on my arrival that landing with small bodies of men from 4 to 6,000 would not be attended with any success and only tended to unite them and show them their weak points; and if we could not land a large army, not a man should be landed, but the blockade strictly kept up, which would be complete ruin to them. I am sorry to see by to-day's papers that Bonaparte is still keeping his own, if not advancing, but I can hardly think the French nation will be so lost to themselves and to Europe as not to rise in a mass and crush him, for I think it can only be a part, a small part of the army that will join him. I understand a fleet is to be collected to go to the Mediterranean to be commanded by Lord Exmouth.²⁸ If by to-morrow's papers Bonaparte is not on the retreat I shall write to Lord Melville offering my services anywhere; for if he advances I have no doubt the Toulon fleet will require to be watched, and I trust that all the ships from America will be ordered there without first coming to England, for we have at present hardly any disposable seamen at home; we have been rather quick in discharging them. . . . DAVID MILNE."

²⁷It is usually stated that there were about 7000 troops landed by the British fleet of whom more than 2000, including Major-Generals Pakenham, Gibbs, and Keane, fell in the first half hour of the engagement. The American loss was but 8 killed and 13 wounded. Perhaps the most important result of the battle, fought as it was after the signing of the Treaty of Ghent, was the impression it made on Europe and the giving of a sunset glow of success on an otherwise somewhat inglorious war.

²⁸Admiral Edward Pellew, afterwards Viscount Exmouth (1757-1833). He was present as a lieutenant with a body of seamen under General Burgoyne and was captured at the surrender at Saratoga, New York. He returned to England in 1778 but considered himself bound by the terms of the surrender not to take any further part in the war. His victory at Algiers in 1816 was partly responsible for the abolition of Christian slavery in the Barbary states.

On the eve of Decatur's expedition to Algeria, the Admiral takes occasion to wish him defeat. However, it will be remembered that the successful outcome of this undertaking was the first step in checking the power of the Barbary pirates and the Americans' example was soon followed by the various countries of Europe.

"Inveresk, 24th May, 1815:—

My dear Sir, . . . I am still without any notice from the Admiralty. . . . I understand there are few ships fitting out. Indeed the want of seamen is such that they cannot man many, and it is not probable there will be any naval war at present. The Americans and Algerines are, however, going to war, and nothing would give me so much pleasure as to hear of the Yankees getting a good thrashing. I almost think it would be good policy for some of the European powers to join the Algerines and destroy the American squadron; for their entering into this petty warfare is only to form a navy and keep their ships employed; and which at no very distant period may give trouble enough, particularly to Great Britain. I cannot yet think there will be a Continental war. It is impossible the French nation can be so mad. . . . DAVID MILNE.

Evidently the Admiral's feelings towards the Americans were not shared by Mr. Home of Wedderburn whose reply to the former letter called forth the following response in which the Admiral admits the advisability of a better understanding between the two nations but thinks the American Navy had better be nipped in the bud to avoid any possible future trouble in the West Indies, particularly American protection of Cuba.

"Inveresk, 31st May 1815:—

My dear Sir, . . . I agree most perfectly with you that it is the interest of this Government and America to be on the most intimate footing possible; but the people of America have a hatred and jealousy towards Great Britain it is impossible to describe. But I even think we ought to sacrifice a great deal to keep up that amity and concord so much the interest of both countries; to endeavour to get the better of it. But I most sincerely wish to see their naval power nipt in the bud, for if ever they get it to any extent they will give us trouble enough, and none of our West India possessions would be safe; and the present degraded state of the Spanish Government renders it in my opinion not improbable that the Island of Cuba may put themselves under the protection of America. They have had for the last 15 years a free trade and close intercourse with America which they never had before, and it will not now be easy to stop it; and many Americans have settled there; and if they get possession of that island, they will soon become a great naval power. . . . DAVID MILNE.

The Admiral, evidently thinking that the North American colonies had already cost Great Britain enough money, believes that it might be well to be quit of Canada also, that the expense of fortifying the frontier against the Americans would cost more than the country is worth. One wonders what the writer would have had to say on the subject of the subsequent policy as to the unguarded frontier between the United States and Canada and the era of peace and good will that has followed.

"41, Norfolk Street, Strand, London, 1st June, 1816.—

My Dear Sir, . . . I have been all yesterday at the Admiralty about different matters respecting the lakes in Canada, I regret to find it the intention of Government to expend large sums of money there in making canals, roads, wharfs, etc. I told Lord Melville today that in a few years the ships would be quite decayed. He said they only intended to keep up the frames. I cannot help thinking it would be better for this country if we were quit of Canada altogether. . . . From what I have seen at the Admiralty yesterday I find I shall have a very laborious duty to perform when I get to Halifax, the station is so extensive, and a large establishment to be kept up at Bermuda. . . . DAVID MILNE."

"London, 13th June, 1816. . . . I expected my orders yesterday, but was told I must now wait until the papers we have been busy at the Admiralty with be laid before Lord Bathurst.²⁹ Ministers are, I believe, much at a loss how to act with respect to Canada. If we are to keep up our establishment there and be ready to act against the Americans, the expense will be so enormous that the country cannot afford it. . . . There will arise many disputes, the Americans claiming islands and water passages that it is impossible for us to grant without throwing our frontier, particularly the Niagara one, quite open to them. . . . From what I have seen it would be lucky for this country to be well rid of it. It is certainly a fine country, but too distant for us to defend against so powerful a neighbour. The command of Nova Scotia has been offered to Sir Gordon Drummond,³⁰ now in Canada, but it is understood he will not accept of it, and when his answer comes Lord Dalhousie³¹ will proceed to Halifax. . . . DAVID MILNE.

The admiral thinks that there is danger of the Americans again declaring war on the mother country (this is some two years after the close of the war of 1812) and feels that Canada cannot be held if they do. His idea regarding the designs of the Americans on the Spanish possessions makes him again consider the advisability of abandoning Canada.

"London, 29th January, 1817.—

My dear Sir, . . . I am still without my orders to proceed to my station, and Ministry are so much alarmed that they are reducing the expence of the Navy as much as possible. All the frigates are to be taken from the Newfoundland station, and some of the ships from me, and the vessels on the lakes of Canada are to be paid off and only a very few men left to take charge of them. I told Lord Melville I hoped he would go a step further and abandon them altogether; it is such an enormous expence to this country; and we cannot keep Canada if the Americans declare war against us. I believe Ministry now view it in this light. I think our West India possessions are in much more danger from what is going on in the Spanish Colonies, and the as-

²⁹Henry, third Earl of Bathurst (1762-1834).

³⁰General Sir Gordon Drummond (1772-1854), played an important part in the War of 1812 upon the Canadian frontier, his most important feat of arms being the winning of the battle of Niagara, July 25, 1814, his forces consisting largely of troops from the Peninsular regiments.

³¹General George Ramsay, Ninth Earl of Dalhousie (1770-1839) commanded the Second Foot in the West Indies in 1795. In 1816 he was Major General and Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia. From 1819 to 1828 he was Governor of Canada, Nova Scotia and adjacent provinces.

sistance the Americans are giving the insurgents; and should they get possession of Cuba, which is certainly what they are looking to, our colonies would be in more danger than from our abandoning Canada; and while we keep possession of Nova Scotia, Canada would be of very little use to them. You will see by the papers the outrage committed yesterday on the Prince Regent.³² Two balls were certainly fired from an air gun. The glass being very thick they made two holes and drove the small splinters in, but the balls had dropped outside from want of force in the gun. If only one ball had been fired it might have been fatal. . . . I cannot write . . . to-morrow or the day after as I accompany Lord Exmouth to Ironmongers' Hall exactly at three o'clock to get our freedom and afterwards with the officers of the Company to the Mansion House to receive our swords from the Lord Mayor, and then back again to Ironmongers' Hall to dinner at 5. . . . DAVID MILNE.

Herein the Admiral deals with the much vexed question of the rights of American fishermen in the waters off Newfoundland, a number of whom were tried and acquitted much to the Admiral's disgust.

"Halifax, 14th June, 1817.—

My dear Sir, We arrived here the 8th instant. . . . I think in my last I mentioned having given orders to seize all American vessels found fishing in the harbours of this station. Twenty have been sent in by Captain Chambers of the *Dee*. This question of right of fishing must now be settled. . . . The inhabitants have hitherto received much injury from the swarms of American vessels taking away their fish and otherwise annoying them very much. If we are to keep this province the inhabitants must be protected, and if the fishery is encouraged it will prove a great source of wealth to the mother country and this, and become a great nursery for seamen. Before the declaration of war by America they were allowed to fish and cure them in all our creeks and harbours. By declaring war our Government say they have forfeited that right. I have done my duty. It must now rest with the Government at home. I do not mean to proceed to Canada this summer as I have no frigate but the *Leander* here. The *Pactolus* being found rotten I was obliged to order her home. I mean to go all round this province in a short time, and Lord Dalhousie goes with me. It has been much neglected, and large tracts of land having been granted to individuals hinders settlers getting small lots—is a great bar to the prosperity and improvement of the county. Lord Dalhousie is using all his endeavours to get back these large grants which have not been improved in a certain degree which they were obliged to do. But it will be a difficult task, as the principal people in the Government here hold the largest grants and oppose his Lordships intention all in their power. . . . DAVID MILNE."

"Halifax, 2nd October, 1817.—

My dear Sir, . . . The trial of the American fishing vessels I ordered to be detained has at last come on, and the judge has ac-

³²At this period the Regent (afterwards George IV) was extremely unpopular, due chiefly to his enormous extravagance. The populace wrote ominously on the walls, "Bread or the Regent's head." The mob attacked his carriage in June 1817, stoned him and fired upon him with air guns. The act of Parliament of 1795 for the security of the King's person was later extended to include the person of the Regent.

quitted them.³³ I never was so surprised or disgusted with anything in my life. In giving the decision he stated he had seen no orders or instructions respecting them from our Government. Yet I attended at the request of Lord Dalhousie a meeting of Council of which the judge is a member, and laid all my instructions and correspondence with our Minister in America before them, which were clear and distinct, yet he acted perfectly contrary to the intentions of our Government in acquitting them. I have wrote to the Admiralty in the strongest manner I can respecting this, and will still order every vessel of that description to be brought in. . . . I am aware that I am responsible for everything respecting this delicate question and will be particularly cautious neither to commit myself or the ministry. I have just returned from visiting the different harbours in the Eastern part of this province an in the mouth of the St. Lawrence. It is a county capable of raising any kind of grain and full of the finest harbours I ever saw. . . . Every part of the coast swarms with fish which can be exported to any amount. At Picton I visited a strata of coal which can be put into barges at a few hundred yards distance. . . . The seam is fifty feet thick and the same quality as the best Newcastle Coal. . . . I visited Prince Edwards Island, which is the finest land I ever saw for farming, and I traced the same seam of coal I have mentioned to that place. . . . DAVID MILNE.

Here is another letter on the subject of American designs on Cuba and the action of the insurgent, "really American", privateers.

"Bermuda, 26th January, 1818.—

My dear Sir, . . . The Americans have taken possession of Amelia Islands from the Spaniards. What reason they can assign it is impossible to say. They are a most insidious set, and I am certain their ultimate aim is to get possession of Cuba. It is surprising to me the Continental powers take no notice of these things; and, although their Acts of Congress and proclamations breath nothing but goodwill to Spain, yet they allow the insurgent (really American) privateers to fit out in their harbours, and bring in their prizes there. I perfectly agree in your opinion that it is the interest of England and America to be on good terms; but rest assured they will only be so until they have an opportunity to injuring us. . . . DAVID MILNE."

³³The treaty of 1783 recognized the liberty of the people of the United States to use the northeastern fisheries as freely as they had done when subjects of the British Crown. The British claimed that the War of 1812 ended all rights under that treaty. During the war the cry in New England had been "No peace without the fisheries," but New England's conduct in the war had won her no friends and the Treaty of Ghent was silent on the subject of the rights of American fishermen. When the fishing season of 1817 opened a fleet of 20 fishing vessels sailed from New England ports for the western banks. Admiral Milne dispatched Captain Samuel Chambers of the *Dee* to cruise between Sambro Light and Cape Sable. "You will," said his orders, "protect the fisheries on the coast against the encroachment of foreigners. On your meeting with any foreign vessel fishing or lying at anchor in any of the harbours or creeks in his Majesty's North American province, you will seize and send her to Halifax for adjudication, unless it should appear that she has put in there in distress." McMaster's *Hist. of the People of the U. S.*, IV, 467. The ships taken in compliance with these orders are the ones mentioned above by Admiral Milne. At the trial, while admitting the claim that the War of 1812 had abrogated the fishing rights, the court held that the American fishermen had so long enjoyed this liberty without specific prohibition and as the ships had not been taken in the act of fishing or trading, the vessels were not condemned but were ordered restored upon their owners paying the costs. The Convention of 1818 finally settled the dispute as to the fishing rights of the Americans. Thus was arranged the "commercial treaty" mentioned in another of the Admiral's letters, without which he was no doubt right in thinking that another war could not have been avoided.

Here are the Admiral's remarks on the subject of the destruction of the fortifications of Louisbourg, together with a further reference to the often recurring question of the rights of American fishermen.

"Picton, Gulf of St. Laurence, 17th September, 1818.—

My dear Sir, . . . We have been again visiting this part of Nova Scotia and also Louisberg³⁴ and several places in Cape Briton. Louis-berg must have been a fine place when the French had possession of it, and nothing could surprise me more than our having blown up the fortifications and abandoning it and making the capital on the other side of the island where there is even now only a few miserable houses. The fortifications are, however, still formidable, and might be again repaired, and should we be drove out of Canada, would be a proper place for our troops to retire to as it commands the entrance of the Gulf of St. Laurence and they would be ready to act in the defence of the Isthmus of Nova Scotia. That such a thing may come to pass some years hence I think very probable. The American fishing vessels I ordered to be sent in have been brought to trial and condemned, but not for having been found fishing in our harbours, but for a breach of our Trade and Navigation Acts; so this question is left as it was. . . . Next packet will, I hope, bring me accounts from Lord Melville of my being superseded. Of course, when my successor arrives I will immediately return home. . . . DAVID MILNE."

The Admiral writes, even several years after the end of the War of 1812 that either a satisfactory commercial treaty with the United States must be made or there will be another war.

"Bermuda, 14th November, 1818.—

My dear Sir, We arrived here on the 2nd instant after a very rough passage of eight days. . . . The yellow fever has got into the island and many have died of it. There is no doubt it was imported in an American vessel. The master and one man died a few days after her arrival; and part of her cargo was purchased by the Naval Yard, where the fever immediately broke out, and many of the artificers and soldiers fell victims to it. It generally proved fatal the third day. . . . It has been chiefly confined to new comers, young people under 20 and women. I expect soon to have Lord Melville's answer to my application about being superseded, and I shall not be very sorry to return home. My successor, I think, may have a troublesome time of it, for we cannot remain long in our present political situation with America. I give till next June, either to have a commercial treaty or a war. . . . Yours very truly. DAVID MILNE.

The correspondence of Admiral Milne ends here abruptly on the death of his friend George Home who died at Wedderburn Castle in the year following the receipt of this letter, at the age of 94.

Sir Henry Raeburn's full length life size portrait of Admiral Milne in the uniform of a Rear-Admiral now hangs at Paxton House in Berwickshire near the portrait of his friend George Home by Nasmyth,

³⁴Commanding the entrance of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Louisbourg was of great importance in the French and English wars of the eighteenth century. It was secured to the French by the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, who erected a formidable fortress inclosing and commanding the harbor. Twenty-five years were spent in completing the work.

the painter of the well known portrait of Robert Burns. There is preserved a letter from Raeburn to Home regarding the portrait of Admiral Milne which is of interest in this connection:

Edinburgh, 17th March 1818.

Dear Sir:

I have the pleasure of telling you that the portrait of your friend Sir David Milne, is not only finished, but shipped this morning for London for the Exhibition according to your wish, and I flatter myself it is a picture that will do me some credit. As the weather is upon the whole boisterous, I presume you will think it proper that I insure it. The picture itself is 140 guineas, and the frame and case, altho' I do not yet know precisely the amount, yet I do not think they will be much under 30 guineas, at which sum I will insure them, as I suppose you will think with me that it is not necessary to risk the loss of that money.

I remain, with very great esteem, Dear Sir, your most obedient and faithful servant, HENRY RAEBURN.

The cost of this portrait, 170 guineas, or about \$900, gives a good idea of the value of Raeburn's work during his lifetime, when one bears in mind that this sum represented several times the present value of the money. A copy of this portrait by G. F. Clark is in the Painted Hall at Greenwich.