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THE  
TWO ADMIRALS.

A Tale.

INV. 1858.

BY J. FENIMORE COOPER.

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Come, all ye kindred chieftains of the deep,  
In mighty phalanx round your brother bend;  
Hush every murmur that invades his sleep,  
And guard the laurel that o'ershades your friend.

*Lines on Trippe.*

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COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

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NEW EDITION.

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NEW YORK:  
STRINGER AND TOWNSEND

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1856.

NEW YORK  
ALBION CITY

1842

PRINTED BY

**TWO ADMIRALS.**

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Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1842, by  
**J. FENIMORE COOPER,**  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for  
the Northern District of New York.

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PREFACE.

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AMONG all the sea-tales that the last twenty years have produced, we know of none in which the evolutions of fleets have formed any material feature. The world has many admirably drawn scenes, in which pictures of the manœuvres of single ships, and exquisite touches of nautical character, have abounded; but every writer of romance appears to have carefully abstained from dealing with the profession on a large scale. We have refrained ourselves from attempting such a subject, partly from a certain consciousness of incompetency; but more, perhaps, from a desire, in writing of ships, to write as much as possible under that flag to which we have been accustomed, and to which we properly belong. We would openly and loudly condemn the maudlin patriotism that is sensitive about the honour of cats and dogs; that fancies it nationality to extol inferior things, merely because they happen to be our own; that sets up the extravagant doctrine — one so new in the annals of literature as to find its only apology in the poor explanation of a miserable provincialism — that vice, folly, vulgarity and ignorance should not be rebuked because they happen to be *American* vice, folly, vulgarity and igno

rance — the best possible reason why they *ought* to be rebuked by all *American* pens ; and which reverses the liberality of Domitian, who tolerated even Juvenal, while he confined himself to satire on the public at large, and banished him from Rome, when he descended to private calumny. The idea, too, that works of fiction must be written solely in reference to the country of one's birth, is another provincial prejudice, that could not exist in a nation of confirmed character and enlarged views ; for which we entertain as little reverence, as for the indiscriminate property-commendation just mentioned ; but, our own feelings may fairly be adduced as a motive for doing that which, after all, must more or less depend on a writer's personal inclinations. We had a wish to attempt these pictures, and the disposition is a tolerably safe guide in matters of the imagination.

Nevertheless, the American who would fain write about fleets, must be content to desert the flag. An American fleet never yet assembled. The republic possesses the materials for collecting such a phenomenon, but has ever seemed to be wanting in the will. A strange and dangerous reluctance to create even the military rank that is indispensable to the exercise of a due authority over such a force, has existed in the councils of the state ; and had the name of this work been "*The One Admiral*," instead of "*The Two Admirals*," we should have been driven abroad in quest

of a hero for our tale. The legislators of the country apparently expect men will perform miracles without the inducements which usually influence human beings to perform any thing. How long such a policy can safely be adhered to, remains to be demonstrated.

While we assert our own independence, however, by claiming a right to select such scenes for our tales as may best meet our own impulses, we are ready enough to admit that, in this instance, we should gladly have selected the national flag to sail under, had the thing come within even the limits of fictitious probabilities. If not actually "native and to the manner *born*," we are certainly, in this particular, "to the manner *bred*," and confess our decided preference to the stars and stripes (tasteless as may be the emblems to the instructed eye) over the broad white field and George's cross of the noble English ensign; — the spotless banner of France, as it existed at the period of our tale, or that most beautiful of all the ensigns that wave at the gaff-end, the *tri-color* of our own time. Whenever the national councils shall give us admirals and fleets to write about, it will be our delight to aid, in our own humble way, in attempting to illustrate their deeds. Still, the colonists may claim an interest in all the renown of England which was earned previously to 1775; and we leave their descendants to dispute with the present possessors of the mother country, what portion of the fame earned

by Oakes and Bluewater shall properly fall to the share of each. By applying to our domestic publishers, Lea & Blanchard of Philadelphia, the American can obtain all the evidence we possess on the subject; and, for the convenience of the English, Mr. Richard Bentley, of New Burlington street, London, is furnished with duplicates of every particle of authority on which this legend is founded. We beg the gentlemen connected with these two great publishing-houses, not to be backward or reluctant on the occasion; but to communicate freely whatever they may happen to know, to all applicants; and more especially to the critics, a class of writers who, in general, are singularly assisted by the aid of a little knowledge of the subjects on which they treat.

We hope the reader will do us the justice to regard the **TWO ADMIRALS** as a *sea-story*, and not as a *love-story*. Our Admirals are our heroes; and, as there are two of them, those who are particularly fastidious on such subjects, are quite welcome to term one the heroine, if they see fit. We entertain no niggardly love of exclusion, on this head, and leave the selection entirely to themselves.

With these brief explanations, we launch our fleets, committing them to the winds and waves of public opinion, which are not unfrequently as boisterous and adverse as those of the ocean, and sometimes quite as capricious.

# THE TWO ADMIRALS.

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## CHAPTER I.

“Then, if he were my brother’s,  
My brother might not claim him; nor your father,  
Being none of his, refuse him: This concludes—  
My mother’s son did get your father’s heir;  
Your father’s heir must have your father’s land.”

KING JOHN.

THE events we are about to relate, occurred near the middle of the last century, previously even to that struggle, which it is the fashion of America to call “the old French War.” The opening scene of our tale, however, must be sought in the other hemisphere, and on the coast of the mother country. In the middle of the eighteenth century, the American colonies were models of loyalty; the very war, to which there has just been allusion, causing the great expenditure that induced the ministry to have recourse to the system of taxation, which terminated in the revolution. The family quarrel had not yet commenced. Intensely occupied with the conflict, which terminated not more gloriously for the British arms, than advantageously for the British American possessions, the inhabitants of the provinces were perhaps never better disposed to the metropolitan state, than at the very period of which we are about to write. All their early predilections seemed to be gaining strength, instead of becoming weaker; and, as in nature, the calm is known to succeed the tempest, the blind attachment of the colony to the parent country, was but a precursor of the alienation and violent disunion that were so soon to follow.

Although the superiority of the English seaman was well

established, in the conflicts that took place between the year 1740, and that of 1763, the naval warfare of the period by no means possessed the very decided character with which it became stamped, a quarter of a century later. In our own times, the British marine appears to have improved in quality, as its enemies' deteriorated. In the year 1812, however, "Greek met Greek," when, of a verity, came "the tug of war." The great change that came over the other navies of Europe, was merely a consequence of the revolutions, which drove experienced men into exile, and which, by rendering armies all-important even to the existence of the different states, threw nautical enterprises into the shade, and gave an engrossing direction to courage and talent, in another quarter. While France was struggling, first for independence, and next for the mastery of the continent, a marine was a secondary object; for Vienna, Berlin, and Moscow, were as easily entered without, as with its aid. To these, and other similar causes, must be referred the explanation of the seeming invincibility of the English arms at sea, during the late great conflicts of Europe; an invincibility that was more apparent than real, however, as many well established defeats were, even then, intermingled with her thousand victories.

From the time when her numbers could furnish succour of this nature, down to the day of separation, America had her full share in the exploits of the English marine. The gentry of the colonies willingly placed their sons in the royal navy, and many a bit of square bunting has been flying at the royal-mast-heads of King's ships, in the nineteenth century, as the distinguishing symbols of flag-officers, who had to look for their birth-places among ourselves. In the course of a chequered life, in which we have been brought in collision with as great a diversity of rank, professions, and characters, as often falls to the lot of any one individual, we have been thrown into contact with no less than eight English admirals, of American birth; while, it has never yet been our good fortune to meet with a countryman, who has had this rank bestowed on him by his own government. On one occasion, an Englishman, who had filled the highest civil office connected with the marine of his nation, observed to us, that the only man he then knew, in the British navy, in

whom he should feel an entire confidence in entrusting an important command, was one of these translated admirals; and the thought unavoidably passed through our mind, that this favourite commander had done well in adhering to the conventional, instead of clinging to his natural allegiance, inasmuch as he might have toiled for half-a-century, in the service of his native land, and been rewarded with a rank that would merely put him on a level with a colonel in the army! How much longer this short-sighted policy, and grievous injustice, are to continue, no man can say; but it is safe to believe, that it is to last until some legislator of influence learn the simple truth, that the fancied reluctance of popular constituencies to do right, oftener exists in the apprehensions of their representatives, than in reality.—But to our tale.

England enjoys a wide-spread reputation for her fogs; but little do they know how much a fog may add to natural scenery, who never witnessed its magical effects, as it has caused a beautiful landscape to coquette with the eye, in playful and capricious changes. Our opening scene is in one of these much derided fogs; though, let it always be remembered, it was a fog of June, and not of November. On a high head-land of the coast of Devonshire, stood a little station-house, which had been erected with a view to communicate, by signals, with the shipping, that sometimes lay at anchor in an adjacent roadstead. A little inland, was a village, or hamlet, that it suits our purposes to call Wychemcombe; and at no great distance from the hamlet, itself, surrounded by a small park, stood a house of the age of Henry VII., which was the abode of Sir Wycherly Wychemcombe, a baronet of the creation of King James I., and the possessor of an improveable estate of some three or four thousand a year, which had been transmitted to him, through a line of ancestors, that ascended as far back as the time of the Plantagenets. Neither Wychemcombe, nor the head-land, nor the anchorage, was a place of note; for much larger and more favoured hamlets, villages, and towns, lay scattered about that fine portion of England; much better roadsteads and bays could generally be used by the coming or the parting vessel; and far more important signal-stations were to be met with, all along that coast. Nevertheless, the roadstead was entered,

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