

II

1804—1814

Commercial career begins—Volunteering for military service—
Voyage to Archangel—Partnership in his father's business
—Declaration of war with England (1812)—Voyage to
Denmark and Sweden—Arrested for treason in Liverpool—
Return to New York.

I ENTERED my father's counting-house in the month of December, 1804, commencing in the humblest line of commercial drudgery, as was the custom at that time, rising at break of day, opening and sweeping out the counting-house, making the fires, then coming home to breakfast and back at the office at eight o'clock, and so on, not leaving it till the same hour in the evening, except to take a hasty dinner—rather a different course from the kid gloves and moustaches of the present smoking generation! In fact, smoking was scarcely known among respectable young men at that time, and a fine of two dollars was levied on persons smoking in the public streets. I have no doubt

that my own life has been greatly extended by avoiding this evil and unnecessary habit.

At that period my father had large interests in navigation engaged in the India and Mediterranean trade, besides a heavy contract to supply Dessolines, Emperor of Hayti, with munitions of war, in which business a ship of eighteen guns and two other vessels, also armed, were occupied, under the management of his kinsman, Bennett Forbes, father of the present eminent merchants in Boston.

In the month of September, 1805, the yellow fever broke out with violence in New York, and the merchants took refuge in the suburbs. Our own establishment was removed to my father's country seat, and he availed himself of this suspension of business to visit a large landed interest in New Hampshire, leaving me at the age of fifteen as his attorney to manage his concerns, which, as he was pleased to say on his return, was done to his satisfaction.

Three years passed quietly by in the monotonous life of a clerk, and during this time I had risen to the berth of a bookkeeper, with the privilege of sending small ventures in some of our vessels. I had in this way accumulated the (to me) enormous sum of \$3,000, or thereabouts, and with part of this I purchased an interest in a schooner and made a little in that way. But during this interval

political difficulties were increasing with England and France, and the Government instituted various retaliatory measures, such as non-intercourse, embargo, &c.

In 1807 I accompanied my Uncle Robert, then a confirmed invalid, as far as Norfolk, in Virginia, and in the course of our journey we passed through Washington, where I saw Mr. Jefferson, then President, and his Cabinet, with the public men of that day, noble in form, giants in intellect. In 1808 Governor Tompkins issued a requisition for part of 100,000 men, to be drafted to march to the Canadian line, with the double object of enforcing the embargo and meeting any possible hostile movement on the part of the British. My uncle, George W. Murray, was drafted in the artillery, and as he was engaged in a large business and had a family, I volunteered to take his place and so put on my uniform for the first time as a private of artillery. Our services on the draft were of short duration; but I, nevertheless, stuck to my colours, was soon elected a corporal, and before I resigned, after sixteen years' service, attained the rank of Colonel of Artillery.

In the course of the year 1808 two ships belonging jointly to my father and his kinsman, John Jones Clark, of Providence, the *Egeria* and *Favorite*, under charge of Jonathan Russell as Captain and Supercargo (the same person who was afterwards

a commissioner for negotiating the Treaty of Peace with England at Ghent), returned with a rich freight from a trading voyage round the world. The *Favorite* was sold and my father purchased the *Egeria*, a fine coppered ship (then a rarity) of 275 tons burthen, and placed her under the command of Captain Richard Law, who had been a commander in our Navy, and was the comrade of Truxton, Hull, Bainbridge, and others who had made our Navy the admiration of the world.

A voyage was planned for the *Egeria* to Archangel, this port being at that time almost a *terra incognita* to our commerce, and I was associated with Captain Law as Supercargo. We sailed in May, 1809, with an assorted cargo for Archangel, and made the Norwegian coast, nearly opposite the Maelström, in the latter part of June. The hills were covered with snow, and we proceeded along the coast to the North Cape, but found the White Sea obstructed by the ice, so we stood as far north as $72^{\circ} 30'$ to gain time. We encountered, however, an impenetrable barrier of ice, which compelled us to lay off and on for a few days; after which we made a second effort to enter the White Sea, and succeeded in edging along through blocks of ice, occupied by innumerable seals, until we reached the guardship at the mouth of the River Devina. While cruising in this region the sun remained continuously by day and night

above the horizon, and at midnight we were boarded by parties from two British armed cutters lying in wait for vessels loaded with grain, England being then at war with Russia.

I passed three months at Archangel, very industriously but pleasantly, in company with several intelligent Americans, among whom were Francis Dana¹ and Thomas Coffin, of Boston. Although we were in the first New York ship that ever entered the White Sea, we were followed by a number from that and other American ports and were cordially received by the Russians, who have always proved themselves to be sincere friends of the United States. The Civil Governor and his wife treated me with special kindness, and I was a frequent visitor at the palace. Our society was greatly enlivened by the officers of the Russian Army, some 20,000 soldiers being quartered in the immediate vicinity of the city.

I remained in Archangel until the month of October, having in the meantime made a favourable sale of my outward cargo and invested the proceeds in hemp, iron, bustles, sail-cloth, &c., which were in great demand on our return to New York, owing to the political troubles in which the world was then involved. Our voyage home was eighty-

¹ Hon. Francis Dana, b. 1743, d. 1811. Minister to Russia and Chief Justice of Massachusetts, and father of Richard Henry Dana, the elder.

three days in length, but was unattended by anything remarkable except continuous westerly gales and the prevalence of the Aurora borealis in the Frozen Ocean, where the sun set at about 3 p.m., and yet we were able to read on deck at midnight.

On my return, which was near Christmas, I found the family in Stone Street, No. 73, being the same lot on the rear of which in Slote Lane (now Beaver Street) stood our ancient warehouse.

On January 1, 1810, my father took me into partnership with him and I commenced in earnest a commercial career, which continued with many ups and downs for twenty years, during which our country passed through trials of great magnitude.

In the following year (1811) I went to Washington to make myself acquainted with the course of political affairs and probable results. Mr. Madison was President and Mr. Gerry Vice-President, Mr. Monroe Secretary of State, Mr. Gallatin in the Treasury. In the Senate were King, Otis, Lloyd, Mitchell, and in the House, Randolph, Mercer, Ames, Clay, Calhoun, Floyd, and others of the same mental strength. How are the mighty fallen! Dr. S. L. Mitchell was my mentor and introduced me everywhere, and Mrs. Madison took some pains to make my trip pleasant. The aggressions of England and France were gradually steeling the national heart to meet the inevitable crisis. Non-intercourse had followed the embargo,

partially suspended by a deceitful arrangement entered into with Mr. Erskine, the British Minister, which was discovered by his Government, and widened the breach. Napoleon, in the meantime, had the foresight to repeal the offensive decrees of France, and thereby left us to discuss single-handed with England. The affair finally culminated in a declaration of war on our part against England on June 18, 1812, and was entered upon vigorously by both countries. It opened gloriously for our Navy in the capture by Commodore Hull, in the *Constitution*, of the British frigate *Guerrière* (Captain Dacres); and by Commodore Decatur, on the frigate *United States*, of the frigate *Macedonia* (Captain Carden, who was killed in the action).

Among the early events of the war was the arrival of troops from Virginia under the command of Colonel (now Lieut.-General) Scott, Major Forsyth, and others, to aid in the defence of our Canadian frontier; and afterwards Governor Selby, with Kentucky troops, did gallant service in the same cause; while Massachusetts, under the direction of Governor Caleb Strong, formally withheld her support and denounced the war.

Volunteers and drafted men were called for from New York, and the call was answered with alacrity, as also from Vermont and New Hampshire, whose borders were threatened by the enemy.

The division of artillery in which I held the rank

of Second Lieutenant was commanded by Major-General Ebenezer Stevens and our brigade by General Morton. The district was placed under the command of General Bloomfield, of the regular Army, and our division volunteered unanimously. The Ninth Regiment, to which I belonged, was stationed at Fort Gansevoort, on the Hudson River, in the month of September, and remained through the year, at the close of which we were relieved and allowed to return to our business.

Among the spoiliations committed by the two great belligerent powers of Europe were many captures in the Baltic by French privateers and also on the coast of Norway, among which captures our ship *Egeria* (Captain Law) was one, and she was carried into Fahrsend, in Norway. After much tedious litigation through several courts, attended by perjury in every shape, the vessel and cargo were eventually liberated; but the danger of a second capture was so great that Captain Law remained in Copenhagen with the cargo and sent the ship home in charge of his first officer. On her passage she was captured by a British frigate and ordered to Halifax, but while on her way was cast away on the coast and totally lost.

It was deemed advisable that I should go out to Denmark to look after our interests, and the Russian Minister, Mr. Daschkoff, having offered to make me a special bearer of despatches relating

to the mediation of his Government with a view to peace, I sailed in the ship *Pacific* (Captain Stanton) in March, 1813, for Lisbon with about thirty other passengers, American and English, and arrived after a passage of twenty-one days.

On landing, I presented to Sir Charles Stewart, then British Minister at Lisbon (afterwards Lord Londonderry), my credentials as a special bearer of despatches to the Russian Government, and was received with great courtesy. He offered to send me to England in a ship of war, but as my ship-mates on the *Pacific* had become much endeared to me and were embarking on a British armed packet, the *Queen Charlotte*, I preferred to go in their company. In the number were S. N. S. Wilder, Nicholas Heard, John A. Brown, &c.

Our stay in Lisbon was enlivened by visiting the neighbourhood, and as I was provided with introductory letters to Lieutenant-General Sir James Kemp and other officers of rank, and my cousin, John Browne (Captain of the 13th Portuguese) being on the staff of Field-Marshal Beresford, my time was fully occupied. Lisbon was at this time in possession of the British, and the Army under Lord Wellington had possession of Torres Vedras, and was advancing on the French under Soult.

From Lisbon I embarked for Falmouth, where we arrived after a protracted and stormy passage of fifteen days. Among our fellow-passengers was

Colonel Charles Palmer, of the 10th Dragoons, M.P. for Bath, a colleague of Lord John Russell, and *aide-de-camp* to the Prince Regent, whose politeness to the Americans was very marked. He gave great facilities at Falmouth in enabling them to proceed to London, where it was their duty to return to the Alien Office. He afterwards purchased a part of the Margaup Estate, failed, and died in Bow Street Prison.

I proceeded at once to London, and presented my credentials to Prince Lieven, the Russian ambassador, who gave me every facility in the prosecution of my northern journey.

In May, 1813, I left London for Harwich, where I embarked on board of a British armed cutter (Captain Sherlock) for Gothenburg. Among my fellow-passengers were John Cam Hobhouse (afterwards Lord Broughton), the intimate friend and companion of Lord Byron. At this time England was at war with Denmark, and was engaged in forcing the separation of Norway from Denmark and its annexation to Sweden, a measure which was resisted to the last extremity by both Denmark, and Norway, while England resorted to every species of cruelty to carry her plan into execution. Starvation was one of these measures, and several British ships of war were cruising in the North Sea to capture the little vessels carrying grain from Denmark to Norway, and it was not an uncommon thing to

see a British warship with a dozen or more of these small vessels in tow and their unfortunate owners prisoners on board.

On approaching the coast of Holstein we discovered two large vessels, believed to be gunboats, approaching us by means of sweeps, as the sea was dead calm. Our captain beat to quarters, and, as the passengers were required to aid in the defence, Mr. Hobhouse and I were stationed at the same gun. At this moment a man-of-war brig hove in sight, which proved to be the *Woodlark*, commanded by Captain (afterwards Lord) Byron, cousin of the poet and successor to his title.

The gunboats sought safety in flight, and we were soon boarded by Captain Byron, who was charmed to meet Mr. Hobhouse, and several of us were invited to join Captain Byron at dinner.

On our arrival at Gothenburg we all took up our quarters at the same hotel, and we spent several days very pleasantly together. While there, Lord Aberdeen, who had been appointed Ambassador from England to Russia, also arrived, but soon left in his heavy English state carriage, to which were attached no less than twelve of the little Swedish horses to drag his Excellency over the stony and hilly roads.

I left Gothenburg in a light post-carriage and pair of horses for Helsingborg, and then crossed the Sound to Elsinore, from whence I took a convey-

ance to Copenhagen, where I found quarters in Baccaldo Hotel, on the Koenig's Nye Torve or King's Square. My residence in Copenhagen ran over a period of about three months, during which time I was engaged in realising the cargo of our ship *Egeria*, and converting it to goods adapted to the American market, which I loaded on board of two Swedish vessels, one at Stockholm and the other at Gothenburg, the goods being shipped in the names of Swedish firms. They arrived safely in the United States, and were sold at considerable profit, thus converting the capture into a money-making speculation.

I found many agreeable countrymen of mine at Copenhagen, among whom were Commodore Barron, who commanded the *Constellation* when she was so barbarously fired into by the British man-of-war *Leopard* in 1808, and was suspended for striking his flag without giving battle to an immensely superior force. On his return to the United States he challenged Commodore Decatur, who had been prominent in hostility to him, and killed him in the duel.

William McIlvane and Redwood Fisher, both prominent Philadelphians, were also there, looking after captured property. My kinsman, John Murray Forbes, was Consul-General at the time, and was greatly instrumental in promoting both my business and pleasure. While there, the Peace

Commissioners, Albert Gallatin and James A. Bayard, with their secretaries, George M. Dallas and George Milligan, arrived in the ship *Neptune* (Captain William Jones, afterwards Secretary of the Navy), and passed a week at the same hotel with me, which was a very agreeable incident. With them I visited the Crown Battery, the palace and gardens at Frederibstadt, &c., and with all the Americans there accompanied them on their embarkation for St. Petersburg, bidding them God-speed on their holy mission.

In August, 1813, I took my departure for Gothenburg, but as war had been recently declared between Denmark and Sweden, I had some difficulty in procuring the necessary passports. On the road I fell in with an English king's messenger, carrying to England the important intelligence of the junction of Austria with the Allies, which was the first important change in the prospects of Napoleon.

I also met Count Alexis Orloff, one of the Emperor Alexander's ministers (afterwards highly distinguished as a diplomatist), who was on his way to Bath for the benefit of his wife's health, and they were accompanied by the young and beautiful Baroness Rehbinder, their niece. Count Orloff sided with America in her contest with England, and appeared to entertain very kind feelings towards me, as he insisted on my joining their party, which I cheerfully did, and took passage in the cutter

which was engaged to carry them to England. We finally separated in London, although I afterwards joined them again in Bath, where I passed some days in company with my friend George M. Dallas, who had come over with despatches to England, and with whom I made an excursion into Wales.

In this journey we stopped at Bristol, where Mr. Dallas was visited by Dr. Stock, who had fled from England in 1798 to escape being tried for treason, and had settled in Philadelphia, but, being pardoned, had returned to his native country. He gave us some curious anecdotes of a Jacobin club in Philadelphia of which he was a member, with William Duane, John Binny Calendar, and others, and stated that dreadful results would have followed the events of those days had it not been for the wise and benevolent counsels of Alexander James Dallas and other prominent members of the democratic party.

While staying in Gothenburg with Count Orloff and his family, the ship *Beaver* arrived from New York, having on board General Moreau, on his way to join the Allied Army, Mr. Bentzoa, Governor of St. Croix, and C. C. Cambreling. General Moreau stayed but a day or two, during which time he invited me to breakfast on board the ship, and talked freely, but mournfully, of his position, evidently doubtful of being justified in taking up arms

against his native country. A few weeks after he paid the forfeit of his life at Dresden.

During my stay in London I met Lord Byron, the poet, who had made the acquaintance of Mr. Dallas through the introduction of his uncle, Baron Dallas, and occasionally visited him at his lodgings.

From my Welsh journey I proceeded to Liverpool, where I had some business matters to look after. While there an American party was made up to visit Ireland, notwithstanding the refusal of the Government to allow our countrymen to visit that country, whose predilection for America and Americans had assumed a treasonable shape. Among my companions were John A. Brown, George Morrison, and Joshua Hacher, of Philadelphia, Samuel Myers, of Norfolk, and others.

We proceeded to Dublin, where we were most hospitably entertained by many of its inhabitants, and especially by the Messrs. English, one of whom was a Consul of the United States before the war. Our first excursion was into the romantic county of Wicklow, and while there we met with Henry Grattan, the distinguished advocate and statesman, who was accompanied by his daughter, and also Becky Hamilton, of Philadelphia, married to an Irish officer. After our return from Wicklow I took a northern route to Belfast and Londonderry, and thence to Raphoe to visit my mother's birthplace.

Still farther north I went to the Giant's Causeway, and thence by the way of Port Patrick and Donaghadee into Ayrshire, where I saw the house and room in which the poet Burns was born, thence to Greenock, Glasgow, and Paisley, where I made the acquaintance of a Mr. Campbell, who proposed a pedestrian tour through the Highlands.

We accordingly crossed to Dumbarton Castle and by Loch Lomond to the foot of Ben Lomond, which we crossed and travelled to Loch Katrine, the scene of Scott's poem. I passed the night at a cabin at the head of the loch which was Walter Scott's headquarters while familiarising himself with the scenery. The next morning we were rowed down the lake in the same boat that was used by the poet, and landed and traversed the island on which Douglas and Ellen had sought shelter, and from thence we crossed to the foot of the Trossachs, where Fitzjames sought his lady-love; thence by way of Callender to Stirling, where we found our luggage, which had been forwarded from Glasgow by coach. After visiting the castle and other objects of interest, among which was John Knox's pulpit, I parted from my companion and returned through Edinburgh, Carlisle, and Lancaster to Liverpool, and went to my old quarters at the Star and Garter Hotel, where I found several Americans who had arrived in a cartel from New York.

Not many days after my return to Liverpool I arranged with John Howard Payne (the American *Roscious*, who had been performing at Liverpool and Birmingham) to go in company to London. On the day of our proposed departure, however, while at dinner, I was arrested for high treason by an order from Lord Sidmouth, Secretary of State, and despite unlimited offers of bail by our venerable Consul, James Maury, William Rathbone, William Brown, Silas Richards, and others, I was forthwith committed to the French prison on the River Mersey.

I remained there several weeks without any specification of my offence, but was finally allowed to proceed to London on parole, through the influence of my uncle, Charles Murray, who made the application to Lord Sidmouth. On appearing at the State Department I learned that information had been lodged against me in consequence of my bearing a military commission in the service of the enemy, and having violated my passport as a bearer of despatches by travelling through the forbidden Emerald Isle, visiting forts, &c. I believe, however, that the department rather regretted the severity of their action, as I received a sort of apology from Lord Sidmouth, and an assurance that I should have any facility I might require in the future.

During my confinement I was most kindly treated

by Mr. Amos, the Governor of the prison, and twenty-seven years afterwards, hearing that I was in Liverpool, he came thirty miles to find me, although nearly or quite four score years old and retired on a pension.

This brought me into the winter of 1813-14, and I led a monotonous life in London until the spring of 1814, when the cartel *Fair American* (Captain Adams) arrived from New York, bringing a number of passengers, principally English, seeking a refuge from the retaliatory measures which the two countries had inaugurated. In April, 1814, I embarked in the same vessel from Liverpool with a very large number of passengers, among whom were my old friends S. V. S. Wilder, John S. Mumford, Miss Harriet Howland (afterwards Mrs. James Roosevelt), Barney Smith of Boston, wife, and daughter (afterwards Mrs. Jonathan Russell), &c. After a passage of about forty days we made the land off Rockaway, and were boarded by a gunboat from the flotilla commanded by Commodore Jacob Lewis. Finding that I was charged with despatches from the Russian Government, Commodore Lewis immediately despatched a gunboat to carry me to New York, where I was safely landed after an absence of some fifteen months.