

BATTLE OF THE POTOMAC



WITH THE



MALAYS.

Written by one of the Crew.

AS the sun was retiring behind the high mountains,
The forts of our enemy full in our view ;
The frigate Potomac, JOHN DOWNES, our commander,
Rode proudly at anchor, off Quallah Battoo.

The land breeze blew mild, the night was serene,
Our boats was the word and our tackles were mann'd ;
Six miles was the distance that now lay between
Our fine lofty ship and the enemy's land.

Our boats were launch'd on the breast of the billows,
And moor'd till the word of command should be given ;
On deck we reposed with our swords for our pillows,
And committed our cause with its justness to Heaven.

At the dead hour of night, when all nature was silent,
The Boatswain's pipe call'd each man to his post ;
Our hearts arm'd with justice, our minds fully bent,
To attack and destroy that piratical host,

Who boarded the Friendship and murdered her crew,
Just twelve months before the memorable day,
When SHUBRICK led forth the Potomac's so true,
To fight and to vanquish the hostile Malay.

Our boats were all ready, and we were prepared,
To fight or to die for our cause it was just ;
Our muskets were loaded and our bosoms were bared,
To the strife or the storm, for in God was our trust.

When thus spoke our brave and respected commander,
I charge you by all that is sacred below,
From the true paths of honour, or virtue ne'er wander,
If mercy's requested, then mercy bestow.

Never let it be said that the sons of Columbia,
Sheath'd their swords in the breast of the female or child ;
And may virtue and honour attend you this day,
Be you death to the arm'd, to the helpless be mild.

Now silence and darkness prevail'd all around,
We left the Potomac, and steered for the shore ;
Save the noise of the sea-beach, we heard not a sound,
Our rowlocks were matted and muffled each oar.

The white surf run high as our boats near'd the strand,
And the gray streaks of morning began to appear ;
But by prudence and caution we safely did land,
Though the waters were wild and the enemy near.

To their force, to their arms, to their strength we were strangers,
But bravely advanced to the forts of our foe ;

We thought of no trouble, we thought of no dangers,
Determined, unless we in death were laid low,

To revenge the sad wrongs that our friends and our nation,
So oft have sustain'd from those demons of hell ;
Our work we commenced, and the bright conflagration,
Left but few of our foes the sad story to tell.

Their forts, they were strong, and like heroes they fought,
For mercy or quarters they never had shown ;
And the blood of victims forever they sought,
But the God of the Christians they never had known.

All around us in ambush those savages lay,
And the bullets like stones were scatter'd abroad ;
But still on their forts continued to play,
To conquer our object the Potomac's our word.

Exposed to their fires, the Potomac's advanced,
Beneath their rude ramparts, stood firmly and brave ;
Resolv'd that the stripes and the stars of Columbia,
E'er long on their ramparts triumphant should wave.

Their firing soon ceased, and our brave pioneers
Then open'd a path and we entered their gates ;
We paus'd but a moment, gave three hearty cheers,
Then hoisted the flag that is worn by the States.

The white dashing surf now began to increase,
And warn'd us the hour of departure was near ;
Our wounded and slain we collected in peace,
And formed, with our pikes and our muskets, a bier.

To convey them all weltering and pale, from the shore,
To our ship that majestically rode on the wave ;
To comfort the wounded, the dead to deplore,
And commit their remains to a watery grave.

The Potomac victorious, once more under weigh,
Floats proudly along the smooth Eastern waters ;
Columbia! Columbia! the deeds of that day,
Shall be told by thy sons, and be sung by thy daughters.

Our officers valiant in battle or war,
In the calm time of peace, they are generous and kind ;
Our crew for the brave and American Star,
Are all in one voice and one body combined.

May success then attend us, wherever we roam,
And nothing our cause, or our progress impede ;
May the Potomac, with glory and honour come home,
And her name ne'er be stained with an unworthy deed.

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