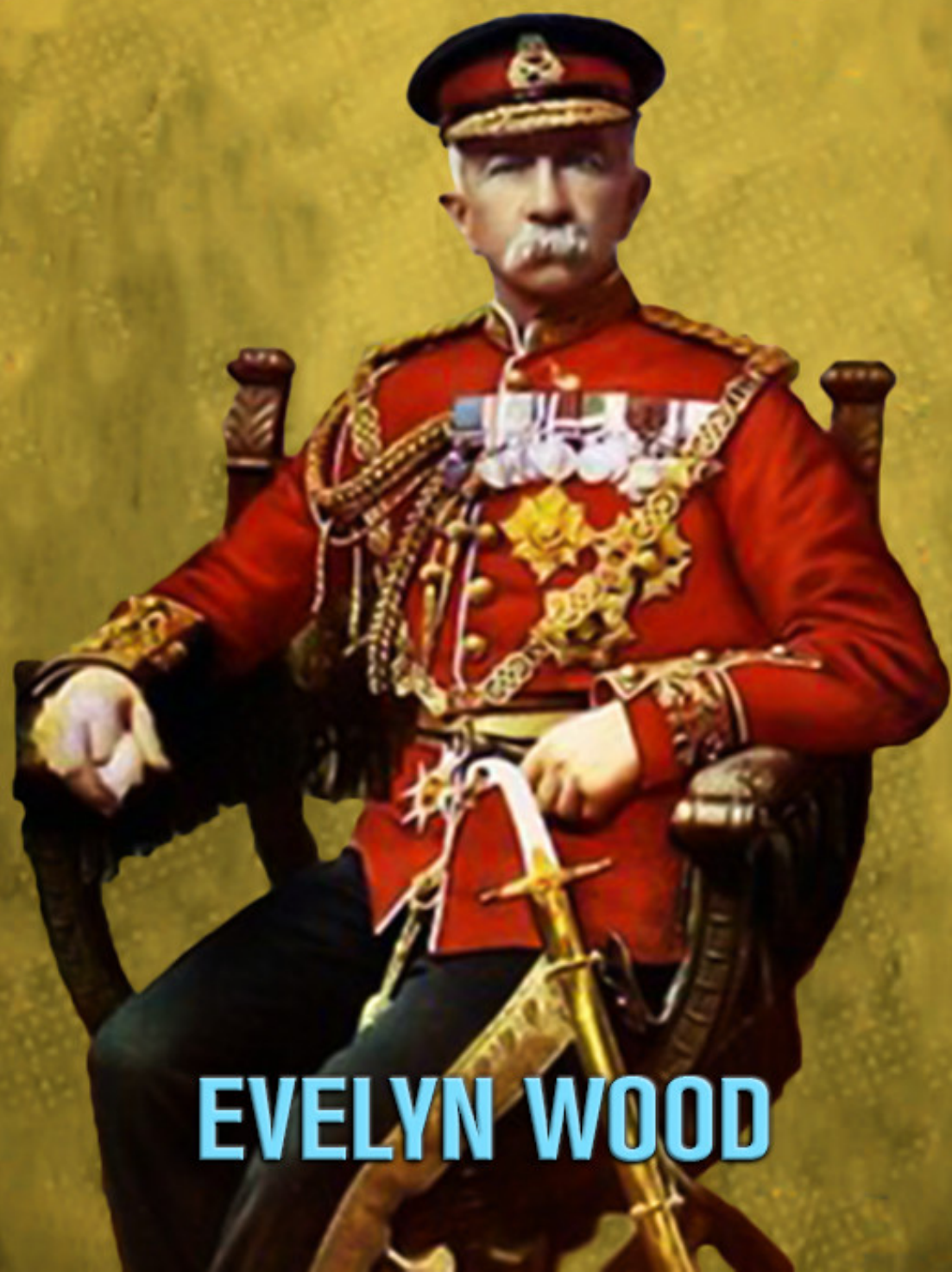


**CLASSICS TO GO**

**FROM MIDSHIPMAN  
TO FIELD MARSHAL**



**EVELYN WOOD**

**From Midshipman  
To Field Marshal**

**Evelyn Wood**

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# **FIELD MARSHAL SIR EVELYN WOOD**

V.C., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., D.C.L., P.S.C., BARRISTER-AT-LAW

## **RECORD OF APPOINTMENTS, STAFF APPOINTMENTS, AND WAR SERVICES EXTRACTED FROM THE OFFICIAL LIST**

### **APPOINTMENTS**

ROYAL NAVY, from 15th April 1852 to 6th September 1855.

CORNET, 13<sup>TH</sup> LIGHT DRAGOONS, 7th September 1855.

LIEUTENANT, 13<sup>TH</sup> LIGHT DRAGOONS, 1st February 1856.

LIEUTENANT, 17<sup>TH</sup> LANCERS, 9th October 1857.

CAPTAIN, 17<sup>TH</sup> LANCERS, 16th April 1861.

BREVET-MAJOR, 17<sup>TH</sup> LANCERS, 19th August 1862.

BREVET-MAJOR, 73<sup>RD</sup> FOOT, 21st October 1862.

BREVET-MAJOR, 17<sup>TH</sup> FOOT, 10th November 1865.

MAJOR, unattached, 22nd June 1870.

MAJOR, 90<sup>TH</sup> LIGHT INFANTRY, 28th October 1871.

BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL, 19th January 1873.

BREVET-COLONEL, 1st April 1874.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL, 90TH LIGHT INFANTRY, 13th November 1878.

Half-Pay, 15th December 1879.

MAJOR-GENERAL, 12th August 1881.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL, 1st April 1890.

GENERAL, 26th March 1895.

FIELD MARSHAL, 8th April 1903.

## **STAFF APPOINTMENTS**

NAVAL BRIGADE, ACTING AIDE-DE-CAMP, 1st January to 29th June 1855.

BRIGADE-MAJOR TO FLYING COLUMN, CENTRAL INDIA, 1st November 1858 to 15th April 1859.

AIDE-DE-CAMP IN DUBLIN, 22nd January 1865 to 31st March 1865.

BRIGADE-MAJOR, ALDERSHOT, 31st July 1866 to 13th November 1868.

DEPUTY-ASSISTANT ADJUTANT-GENERAL, ALDERSHOT, 14th November 1868 to 25th November 1871.

SPECIAL SERVICE, GOLD COAST, 12th September 1873 to 25th March 1874.

SUPERINTENDING OFFICER OF GARRISON INSTRUCTION, 10th September 1874 to 27th March 1876.

ASSISTANT QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL AT ALDERSHOT, 28th March 1876 to 1st February 1878.



SPECIAL SERVICE, SOUTH AFRICA, 25th February 1878 to 2nd April 1879.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL, SOUTH AFRICA, 3rd April 1879 to 5th August 1879.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL AT BELFAST AND CHATHAM, 15th December 1879 to 14th January 1881.

LOCAL MAJOR-GENERAL IN SOUTH AFRICA, 15th January 1881 to 27th February 1881.

MAJOR-GENERAL IN SOUTH AFRICA, 28th February 1881 to 16th February 1882.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL AT CHATHAM, 14th February to 3rd August 1882.

MAJOR-GENERAL IN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, 4th August 1882 to 31st October 1882.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL, CHATHAM, 1st November to 20th December 1882.

SIRDAR, EGYPTIAN ARMY, 21st December 1882 to 31st March 1885.

COMMANDED ON THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION ON THE NILE, 15th September 1884 to 14th June 1885.

MAJOR-GENERAL, EASTERN DISTRICT, 1st April 1886 to 31st December 1888.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL, COMMANDING AT ALDERSHOT, 1st January 1889 to 8th October 1893.

QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL TO THE FORCES, 9th October 1893 to 30th September 1897.

ADJUTANT-GENERAL TO THE FORCES, 1st October 1897 to 30th September 1901.

GENERAL, COMMANDING 2ND ARMY CORPS, LATER SOUTHERN COMMAND,  
1st October 1901 to 31st December 1904.

## WAR SERVICES

WOOD, SIR (H.) E., V.C., G.C.B. (FIELD MARSHAL).—

CRIMEAN CAMPAIGN, 1854-5. Served in the Naval Brigade in the battle of Inkerman, and at the bombardments of Sevastopol, in October 1854, April and June 1855, including the assault on the Redan of 18th June (severely wounded). Despatches, *London Gazette*, 2nd and 4th July 1855. Medal, with two Clasps; Knight Legion of Honour; 5th Class, Medjidie; Turkish Medal.

INDIAN MUTINY, 1858-60. Served as Brigade-Major, Beatson's Horse; commanded 1st Regiment of Beatson's Horse; raised and commanded 2nd Regiment of Central India Horse; was present at the action of Rajghur, Sindwaha, Kurai, Barode, and Sindhara. Despatches, *London Gazette*, 24th March and 5th May 1859. Medal and Victoria Cross.

ASHANTI WAR, 1873-4. Raised and commanded Wood's Regiment throughout the campaign; commanded the troops at the engagement of Essaman, Reconnaissance of 27th November 1873; commanded the Right column at the battle of Amoaful (slightly wounded), and was present at the action before Coomassie. Despatches, *London Gazette*, 18th and 25th November 1873; 6th, 7th, and 31st March 1874. Medal with Clasp. Brevet of Colonel; Companion of the Bath.

SOUTH AFRICAN WAR, 1878-9-81. Kafir Campaign, commanded a force in clearing the Buffalo Poort and Perie Bush, and at the attack on the Tutu Bush; at attack on Intaba Ka Udoda Bush, and in the operations on the Buffalo Range. Zulu Campaign, commanded a column at the actions

at Zunguin Mountains, and Inhlobane (horse killed), Kambula, and at the battle of Ulundi. Despatches, *London Gazette*, 17th May, 11th and 18th June, 1878; and 21st February, 5th, 15th, 21st, 28th March, 4th, 14th, 21st April, 7th and 16th May, and 21st August, 1879. Medal with Clasp; Knight Commander of the Bath. Transvaal Campaign, conducted negotiations and concluded peace with the Boers. Promoted Major-General; Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George.

EGYPTIAN EXPEDITION, 1882. Commanded 4th Brigade, 2nd Division. Operations near Alexandria, and surrender of Kafr Dowar and Damietta. Despatches, *London Gazette*, November 1882. Thanked by both Houses of Parliament. Medal; Bronze Star; 2nd Class, Medjidie.

SUDAN EXPEDITION, 1884-5. Nile As Major-General on Lines of Communication. Despatches, *London Gazette*, 25th August 1885 Clasp.

GRAND CORDON OF THE MEDJIDIE, 1st Class, 1885.

KNIGHT GRAND CROSS OF THE MOST HONOURABLE ORDER OF THE BATH, 1901.

## **OTHER DISTINCTIONS**

PASSED STAFF COLLEGE, 1864.

BARRISTER-AT-LAW, 1874.

HONORARY COLONEL, 2nd BATTALION ESSEX RIFLE VOLUNTEERS 1879; and 14th MIDDLESEX (INNS OF COURT), 1900.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, 1885.

DEPUTY-LIEUTENANT FOR THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, 1897.

GRAND CROSS IMPERIAL LEOPOLD ORDER, 1904.

D.C.L., 1907.

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Ancestry—Parentage—The Grammar School and College  
at Marlborough—I become a Naval Cadet.

THE Woods, from whom I am descended, were for hundreds of years owners of Hareston Manor, Brixton, a small village near Plymouth. There is a record of a John a' Wood living there in the eighth year of the reign of King Edward the Third, and in the north aisle of the church a ledger stone with coat of arms to John Wood, who died A.D. 1724. The Hareston Woods died out, but a younger branch settled at Tiverton, the head of which manufactured lace and serge, and to him was born and duly apprenticed as a lad, Matthew. He soon started in business on his own account, and eventually became a successful hop merchant, being chosen Lord Mayor of London in 1815 and 1816. He represented the City in nine successive Parliaments,<sup>1</sup> and was as fearless in defending the cause of Queen Caroline, which he warmly espoused, as he was in all matters aldermanic and magisterial. When Lord Mayor, he faced, practically alone, a riotous mob, whose leader was exhorting his followers to storm the Bank of England. Mr. Wood running out into the crowd, pulled the ringleader off his horse, and dragged him inside the Bank railings, a prisoner.

In 1819 the Alderman was sitting in his counting-house, when an agent of the Duke of Kent, calling late on Saturday

afternoon, asked Matthew Wood for the loan of £10,000. The agent explained it was important for reasons of State that the expected baby<sup>2</sup> of the Duchess of Kent, who was then at Ostend, should be born in England, and that His Royal Highness the Duke could not cross over unless he received that sum of money to satisfy his more pressing creditors. Mr. Wood promised to reply on the Monday, after consulting his partners; the agent urged, however, that the state of the Duchess's health admitted of no delay and that she ought to cross immediately, so my grandfather gave him the cheque.

Sir John Page Wood, my father, who was very popular in Essex, was aptly described in an Obituary notice in *The Times*.<sup>3</sup> My mother, the bravest woman I ever knew, and to whom I owe any good qualities I may possess, came of a race of Cornish squires. John Michell represented Truro in Parliament in the reign of Elizabeth. My uncle, Admiral Sir Frederick Michell, had a lease of a tin mine from the Crown, granted to Thomas Michell, gentleman, of Croft West,<sup>4</sup> dated more than three hundred years ago. The Michells were in comfortable circumstances till Thomas, my mother's grandfather, formed, and maintained, the Four Barrow Hunt. This expense and the investment of £60,000 in tin mines resulted in the sale of the family estate. Sampson Michell, the son of Thomas, entering the Royal Navy, fought under Lord Howe. He joined the Portuguese Navy in 1783, and was in 1807 its Commander-in-Chief. The Government appointed his eldest son, Frederick, Lieutenant when he was eight years old!

When the French invaded Portugal, and Marshal Junot entered Lisbon with a small escort, the two Michell girls were playing in the garden, and to escape capture were hurried down to the river without a change of clothes, and put on board H.M.S. *Lively*, a frigate, which only reached Falmouth after a voyage of twenty-three days!

Sampson Michell, Admiral in the Portuguese Navy, died at the Brazils in 1809, leaving a widow and five children. From savings effected out of his pay he had bought a house at Truro, but Mrs. Michell had only £90 per annum on which to keep herself, two unmarried daughters, and Molly, a life-long servant. The income tax, then raised as a war tax, was at that time 10d. in the pound; bread sold at 14d. the quartern loaf, so life was difficult for the widow.

The Admiral left to his sons only a fine example, and sound advice: "Never get into debt; do your duty to God and to your country." The elder, Frederick, had joined the Royal Navy six years earlier, and died in 1873, when eighty-four years of age, an Admiral, with eight wounds and eleven decorations; but he appears again in my story. The younger son, Charles, having joined the Royal Artillery from Woolwich, was attached to the Portuguese Army in 1810, and though only a Lieutenant in our Service, commanded a Battery with marked gallantry and ability up to the final engagement, in 1814, at Toulouse. While quartered there he eloped with an attractive but penniless French girl<sup>5</sup> from a convent school, and was soon after, on the reduction of the Army, placed on half pay, his income being a mere pittance. Seven years later, when still in France, with an increasing family, he received from a friend in England a cutting from the *Times*, in which the Government advertised for a teacher of "Fortification and Military Drawing" for Sandhurst College, which had been recently moved to its present position.

Charles was not only a good draughtsman but an engraver, having studied the art under Bartolozzi, and as specimens of his work he sent an engraving of a plan he had made of Passages, a little seaport in Guipuzcoa, Spain, and a sketch of Nantes, Brittany, where he lived.

Having obtained the appointment in this unconventional manner, he joined the Instructional Staff, at what is now known as Yorktown, Camberley, in 1824, and was promoted later to a similar but better paid post at Woolwich, whence he was sent in 1828 to the Cape of Good Hope as Surveyor-General, and remained there until he was invalided home in 1848. While holding this appointment he made locomotion possible for Europeans, constructing also lighthouses and sea-walls.

I was born at the Vicarage, Cressing, a village near Braintree, Essex, on the 9th of February 1838, the youngest son of John Page Wood, Clerk in Holy Orders, who was also Rector of St. Peter's, Cornhill, in the City of London. My father,<sup>6</sup> educated at Winchester and Cambridge, visited as a lad the Field of Waterloo a few days after the 18th of June 1815, and brought back the small book<sup>7</sup> of a French soldier, killed in the battle. This book, which I still possess, has within its leaves a carnation, and belonged evidently to a Reservist who had been recalled to the Colours in "The Hundred Days." He had served in the campaigns of 1812, 1813, and 1814, and had been discharged on Napoleon's abdication, as is shown by his last pay settlement.

My father took his degree early in 1820, and was immediately appointed Chaplain and Private Secretary to Queen Caroline. In the following year he married Emma Carolina Michell, with whom he had been acquainted for some time; for he frequently accompanied his uncle, Benjamin Wood, to visit copper mines in Cornwall in which the Woods had an interest. Benjamin Wood was later for many years Member for Southwark.

In 1846, owing to monetary troubles, our governess was sent away, and her time having been previously fully occupied with the elder children, I had but little instruction, and when I went to the Grammar School, Marlborough, in



February 1847, I could only read words of one syllable. This I was ashamed to admit, and was greatly distressed when as a first lesson the master gave me two lines of Latin to learn by heart. My elder brother, understanding my trouble, beckoned me to the bench at his side, and repeated my task until I was word perfect.

After two years at the Grammar School, where boys were sufficiently fed, but caned severely for false quantities, I went to the College at the other end of the town. The food was poor and scanty, yet I preferred the College to the Grammar School, from the greater liberty we enjoyed. I gave no trouble while at the College, or at least escaped adverse notice, till December 1851, when unjust punishment made me anxious to leave the School for any place, or for any profession.

In October our pocket money (mine was 6d. weekly) was collected for providing fireworks, as had been the annual custom, for Guy Fawkes' Day. On the 5th November, after the fireworks had been purchased, and distributed, the Head Master forbade their being displayed. It did not affect me, as boys of our Form, the Lower Fourth, were considered to be too young to let off the crackers and squibs their money had purchased. When night fell, the younger masters endeavoured to enforce the prohibition; several personal acts of violence occurred in which the boys were victorious, for the Upper Fifth and Sixth averaged from seventeen to eighteen years of age, and many were as big as their teachers. Fireworks were let off in the dormitories during the night, and acts of insubordination continued throughout November.

The Head was a learned scholar and kind-hearted man, but not strong enough to master 500 boys, of whom 100 were verging on manhood. I saw him when approaching his desk in the Upper School struck by a swan-shot thrown by a

crossbow. The pellet stuck in his forehead, and he allowed it to remain there till school was up. If, as I believe, the feeling of the Lower Fourth was representative of the School, a tactful man might have utilised the shame and remorse we felt, to quell the rebellion; but neither he nor his assistants understood us, and later the masters' desks were burnt, an attempt made to fire some of the out-buildings, and a Translation of the Greek Plays was burnt with the Head's desk. In December the Master expelled three or four boys, and gave the Upper Sixth the choice of being gradually expelled, or of handing up ringleaders for punishment. The low tone of the School was shown by the fact that several selected by the older lads were like myself, under fourteen years of age.

About the middle of December I was reported on a Monday morning for being "Out of bounds, when 'confined to gates,' on the previous Saturday." I pleaded guilty to being out of bounds, but added, "I was not 'confined to gates'; it ended on Friday at sunset." The Head said, "You are so reported, and I mean to flog you." "The punishment for being out of bounds is 2s. 6d. fine; may I not ask the Master (he was sitting at the next desk) if he has not erred?" "No; you are a bad boy, and I'll flog you." "But, sir, for five years of school-life I have never been flogged." "Now you will be:" and I was. The Reverend — at once expressed regret on paper for his error, and the Head Master said he was sorry for his mistake.

On the Friday of the same week the decisions on the senior boys' investigations were announced, and I heard read out: "Wood, Quartus, to be flogged, to be kept back two days, and until he repeats by heart three hundred lines of any Latin author, and to be fined £2." It would be difficult to imagine greater travesty of justice than to so punish a boy of thirteen, and moreover by fining his parents. I urged my flogging on the Monday should cancel that now ordered,

but the Head dissented, adding, "I apologised for that; and you are such a bad boy, I'll flog you before your Form." My twenty-two classmates were marched in to the Sixth Form classroom, and I was ordered to get up. The culprit knelt on a bench, his elbows on a desk. Two prefects held his wrists (nominally) with one hand, and the tail of his shirt with the other. When the Master was about to strike, a noise made him look round: he saw all my classmates looking at the wall. He raged, vowed he would flog them all, but in vain; for when the top boys of the class were forcibly turned about by the prefects they faced round again, and my punishment was inflicted without the additional indignity intended. My class gave me £5. I chose the Fourth Book of the *Æneid*, and next morning repeated the three hundred lines.<sup>8</sup>

I begged my parents to let me leave, offering to go into a London office, Green's Merchant Service, or anywhere, to avoid remaining under the Head Master. My father was negotiating with Green & Co., when shortly after I returned to Marlborough College, in February 1852, I unexpectedly received a nomination for the Royal Navy, being ordered to report for examination at the Royal Naval College, Portsmouth Dockyard, in April. I was placed in charge of Mr. Eastman, a crammer at Portsea, for three weeks, that I might acquire the necessary amount of arithmetic to satisfy the Examiner; for at Marlborough nearly all my school-time was given to Latin and Greek.

Thirty-eight boys faced Captain (later Admiral) Chads on the 15th April. He read out to us half a page from the *Spectator* deliberately, with clear enunciation, and many repetitions, so that no boy could fail to catch the words. While the Examiner was reading, "And this was a very barren spot, barren, barren," he passed up and down the room, and as he turned his back a boy held up a sheet of

paper on which he had written "baron" with a big mark of interrogation. I had time only to shake my head when Captain Chads turned, and that boy did not get into the Navy. We were given a short paper on English history, but this presented no difficulties to me, because I had been taught it by my mother at home before I could read.

The examination for soldiers was often at that time even less formidable, certainly in the case of a distinguished officer who has since risen to command the Army, for on joining at Sandhurst a kindly Colonel asked him his name, and continued, "What! a son of my friend Major ——?" and on receiving an affirmative reply, said, "Go on, boy; you have passed."

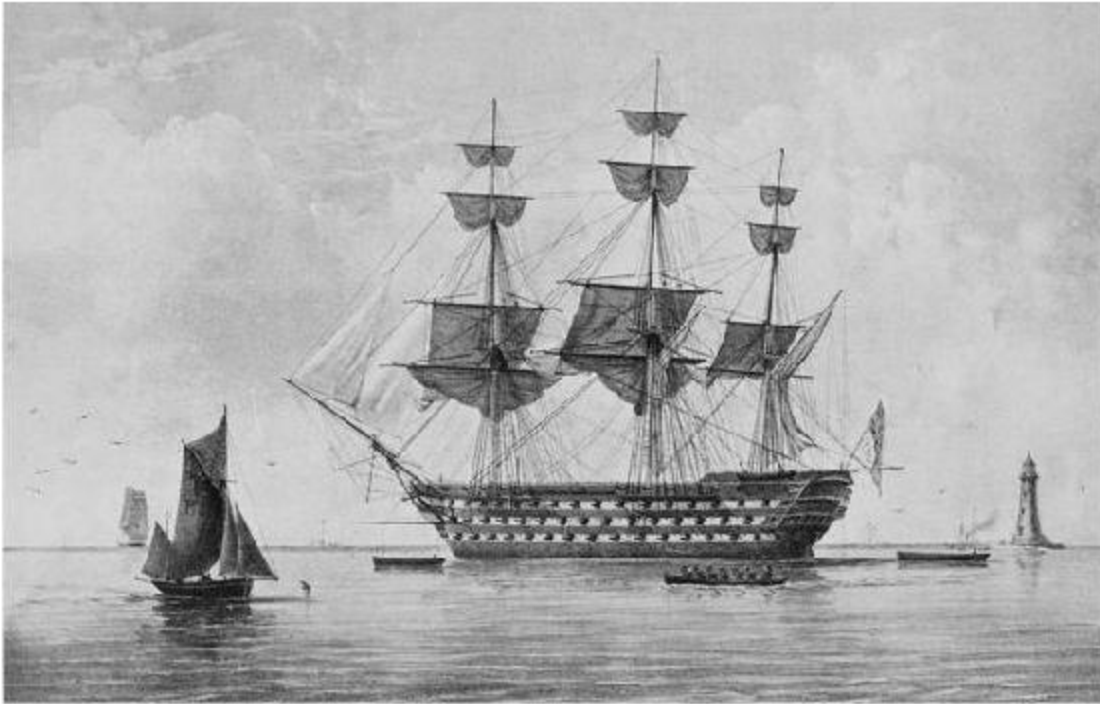
## CHAPTER II

### 1852—H.M.S. *QUEEN*, 116 GUNS

Drill aloft—A daring but unpopular Captain defies a riotous crew, but is removed—Captain F. T. Michell succeeds him—Disappoints a Patronage Secretary—Officers of H.M.S. *Queen*—Some hard drinkers—Hugh Burgoyne—His stoical endurance.

I JOINED H.M.S. *Victory* on the 15th May, and five days later was transferred to H.M.S. *Queen*, 116 guns (a first-rate, of 3000 tons, launched in 1839, costing about £100,000). She had just returned from the Mediterranean, where she bore the Vice-Admiral's flag, and was by universal consent allowed to be the smartest three-decker in the Fleet. She had "held the record," to employ a term not then in use, for reefing topsails, an operation curtailing the spread of canvas, which was frequently practised every week in the summer in the Vice-Admiral's squadron. The "yard," or spar supporting the canvas, is lowered to the cap, and the sailors crawling out on the yard, take in a reef by passing the reef points, or in other words fasten up the upper part of the sail in a roll on to the yard. The Fleet Orders ordained time was to be recorded from the words "lower away," which was in practice "let go," to "belay," as the reduced canvas was raised again to the required height. No man was supposed to be on the yard while it was being moved down or up, but usually the yardarm men, selected for activity and courage, reached the outer clew before the yard was down, and were

seldom in from it till the sail was half-way up. Loss of life occasionally resulted, but the spirit of emulation always produced successors for the dangerous task.



H.M.S. *QUEEN* IN PLYMOUTH SOUND, 1852

In 1853 I saw this operation, which was not directly useful when completed in such haste, for the greater the speed the more ineffective was the reefing, done many times in 63 seconds; but in 1851 the *Queen's* men did it more than once in 59 seconds. Such almost incredible rapidity was in a measure due to the Captain, a man under whose command I now came for a few weeks. He was a strongly-built, active man, much feared, and still more disliked, by all hands on account of his severity. Nevertheless, he was respected for his activity, indomitable

courage, and practical seamanship. His face was scarred by powder marks, a Marine having fired at him close up, when defending a position at Malta, which the Captain attacked at the head of a landing party.

Before H.M.S. *Queen* left the Mediterranean, one morning a treble-reefed topsail broke loose in a gale of wind, and the mass of canvas, flapping with violence, daunted the topsail yardmen, who feared they would be knocked off the yard, on which they hesitated to venture, till the Captain reached them from the deck, and "laying out," passed a rope round the sail and secured it. A few days after I joined, when we were weighing anchor from St. Helen's, Isle of Wight, and had got the stock of our best bower anchor awash, the forecastle man,<sup>9</sup> whose duty it was to shin down the cable and pass a rope through the ring on the stock, to run a hawser in order to "cat" the anchor, twice went half-way down and then climbed back, fearing to be washed off the stock, for the ship's bow rising and falling quickly, gave but little time to pass the rope, and each time the bow fell, the stock went out of sight under water. The Captain, who was as usual dressed in loose frock coat and gold-band cap, cursing the sailor for "a lubberly coward," slid down the chain cable with the rope in his hand on to the stock, and went with it right under water, but when he reappeared he had passed the rope end through the ring.

On the 24th May 1852, H.M.S. *Queen* was lying moored to the Dockyard wall. Now, some fifty years later, attendant tugs are in readiness for outgoing ships, and in those days Captains preferred to have the assistance of a steamer when passing through the narrow exit of the harbour. Our man, however, disdained all such aid. Due honours to the Sovereign's birthday having been paid, at high tide we set sail, and, casting off, proceeded to Spithead, where, as was then the custom, all the heavy guns, and water for the

cruise, were shipped. The *Queen* passed so close to the northern shore that it was necessary to run in our flying-jib boom to save the windows of the "Quebec Hotel," which has since disappeared. Most Captains would have been sufficiently preoccupied with the ship's safety to disregard a small boy. Not so, however, was our Chief. His eye rested on me, standing with hands in both pockets. "What are you doing, sir, with hands in pockets? Aft here, sail-maker's mate, with needle and tar." A big hairy seaman came aft, with his needle and tar bucket. "Sew this young gentleman's hands up in his pockets." I was seized, but as the first stitch was put in the Captain said, "Not this time, but if I see your hands there again, there they'll be for a week." Ten days later, when we were lying inside Plymouth Breakwater, I was ordered to the Captain's cabin. He was writing when the Marine sentry ushered me in, and did not look up. Presently he glanced at me, and said, "Youngster, your uncle, Captain Michell, writes asking me to see after you," and then went on writing. I stood silent, respectful, cap in hand, till raising his head he shouted, "Well, get out of the cabin."

Orders were issued to "pay down" the ship's company, but they had served long enough with their Chief, and the whole crew of Bluejackets, about 770, the 200 Marines standing aloof, came aft in a body, and demanded to be "paid off." When asked for their reasons, they said anything but what they meant, but gained their point, and were by orders of the Admiralty "paid off" on the 2nd July. When nearly all the men had landed, the Captain "called" his gig, and ordered the coxswain to pull for Mutton Cove. Robert Cowling, his coxswain, when the boat was opposite to Drake's Island, said, "Beg your pardon, your honour, but might I be allowed to land you at Mount Wise?"<sup>10</sup> The Captain growled, "Mutton Cove." After another quarter-mile, Cowling began again: "Your honour, might we land you this



last time at Mount Wise? There are a good many waiting for you at the Cove ——” “Curse you, do you hear me?” And the boat went on. There was a large crowd of men just paid off, of wives lawful as well as temporary, whose demeanour and language indicated their hostile intentions. Undaunted, the Captain shouted, as he jumped on to the slimy stone step, “Put the women back, and I’ll fight the d——d lot of you, one after the other.” Then the Bluejackets, who had been waiting to throw him into the water, ran at him in a body, and raising him shoulder high, carried him, the centre of a cheering mob, to his hotel.

The pennant having been hauled down on the 2nd July, was rehoisted next day by my mother’s elder brother, Captain Frederick Michell, a man differing in all characteristics from his predecessor, except that each was courageous, had a strong sense of duty as understood, and possessed a consummate knowledge of seamanship.

My uncle, born A.D. 1788, was in his sixty-fourth year, of middle height, and slight in figure. A courteous, mild manner hid great determination and force of character. In his earlier service he had repeatedly shown brilliant dash, and had been awarded by the Patriotic Fund a Sword of Honour and a grant of a hundred guineas, for gallantry in a boat attack, when he was wounded; and was warmly commended in despatches for the remarkable determination he had shown in the attack on Algiers in 1816. When re-employed in 1852 he had been living at Totnes, Devon, for many years, his last command having been H.M.S. *Inconstant*, paid off in 1843. His influence in the little borough where he lived in an unostentatious manner, befitting his means, was unbounded. He paid his household bills weekly, never owed a penny, was universally respected, and had been twice Mayor.

A vacancy for the Parliamentary representation, impending for some time, occurred within a few weeks of Michell's re-employment. Every voter but the Captain knew, and had told the election agents who solicited the electors, mostly shopkeepers, for their votes and interest, that they "would follow the Captain."

On the morning of the polling-day, Captain Michell called on the Port Admiral and asked for a day's leave to record his vote. The Admiral said somewhat shortly, "I do not like officers asking for leave often; pray when did you have leave last?" "Well, sir, Lord Collingwood gave me six weeks' leave in 1806." This settled the question. My uncle went to Totnes, plumped against the Government candidate, and then returned to his ship. The bulk of the electors had waited for him, and the Government candidate was badly defeated. Within a few days Captain Michell received an indignant letter from a Secretary in Whitehall to the effect, "My Lords were astonished at his ingratitude." My uncle, the most simple-minded of men, was painfully affected. He had imagined that he owed his appointment to his merits, and to the consideration that the troubled Political horizon necessitated the nomination of tried seamen to command. He wrote officially to the Admiralty, stating that unless the Secretary's letter was repudiated, he must resign, and ask for a Court of Inquiry. In replying, "My Lords much regretted the entirely unauthorised and improper letter," etc.

Captain Michell had the reputation of being strict and autocratic with relatives, and my messmates in the gunroom concurred in advising me to ask for a transfer to another ship, so I asked to be sent to H.M.S. *Spartan*, then in the Sound; but another cadet was selected. Later, when two cadets were required for H.M.S. *Melampus*, bound for the Cape of Good Hope, I volunteered; but two boys junior to me were chosen. If I had gone to the Cape, I should have

missed the Crimea. My uncle asked me why I had volunteered, and I said frankly mainly to get away from him.

When Michell took command, the crew consisted of a draft of Seamen-gunners and 200 Marines, and his task was to train the large numbers of West Country lads who made up the balance of 970, all told. Very patient, methodical, and precise in all his ways, he always put back every serious case, which might take a prisoner to the gratings,<sup>11</sup> for twenty-four hours' consideration. Some weeks after he joined, overhearing me speak of the third cutter as "My boat," he called me up and rebuked me, saying, "You mean, sir, Her Majesty's boat you have the honour to command."

The Commander of the ship was very different in disposition, manners, and temperament. A Scotchman, with a high sense of duty, he was much feared by those inclined to indulge in alcohol.

Drinking to excess was common, and the Midshipmen sent below in the middle watch to mix the tumbler of spirits and water (gin being then the favourite beverage) of the officers in charge of the watch, used to bet who would put in most spirit and least water. In my first year's service two of our officers died from alcoholism.

Our Commander, naturally of a choleric though kindly disposition, was severely tried by some of the older officers in the gunroom, two of whom he often "Proved," when they returned on board from shore leave. He occasionally lost his temper when answered, as he was on many occasions by a hard-drinking officer. One day giving an answer which was deemed to be unsatisfactory, he was greeted by an outburst of passion. "I'll bring your nose to the grindstone; I'll reduce you to a gooseberry." My messmate calmly replied, in the slow, solemn manner of a man who is conscious of having drunk too much, "You cannot, sir, bring my nose to a grindstone, and to reduce me to a gooseberry is a physical

impossibility.” However, sometimes the Commander won in these wordy contests.

One of our officers, tried in Queenstown Harbour for drunkenness, was defended by a Cork attorney as his “next friend,” who thus attempted to trip up the Commander’s evidence:—“You say, sir, the prisoner was drunk. I suppose you have had much experience? Yes. Well, kindly define what you mean by being drunk.” “A man may be drunk—very drunk—or beastly drunk. Your client was beastly drunk.” This settled the case, and the prisoner was dismissed the Service.

The First Lieutenant knew his duty and did it, but amongst men of marked characteristics attracted but little notice. Many of the younger officers were above the average in ability and efficiency, the most striking personality being a Mate, named Hugh (commonly called Billy) Burgoyne, a son of the Field Marshal whose statue stands in Waterloo Place. Mr. Burgoyne was as brave as a lion, as active as a cat, and a very Mark Tapley in difficulties.

We were intimate, for I worked under his orders for some months in the maintop, of which I was Midshipman, and he Mate, and I admired him with boyish enthusiasm for his remarkable courage and endurance of pain, of which I was an eye-witness. In 1852 we were at sea in a half gale of wind increasing in force, and the ship rolling heavily, the topmen of the watch went aloft to send down the topgallant-mast.

I presume that most of my readers are aware that the tall tapering poles which they see in the pictures of sailing ships were not all in one piece, but for the sake of those who are unacquainted with nautical terms I explain that the lower mast has a head which supports the top-mast, which in its turn supports the topgallant-mast, and at the head of the topgallant-mast is similarly fixed a royal-mast. When

sailors speak of sending up a topgallant-mast, it means that the mast is placed alongside the top-mast, and pulled up into position by a rope which, passing over a pulley in the top of the top-mast, is then fixed in its position by a wedge-shaped piece of iron called a "Fid," which being pushed in a hole in the top of the top-mast, receives and supports the weight of the topgallant-mast.

When it is desired to "house" or send down the topgallant-mast, the man at the top-masthead pulls out the fid on which the topgallant-mast rests. The fid is composed of wood, shod with iron in parts, and for the purpose of extraction is fitted with a "grummet" of rope, or hemp handle. In ordinary weather there is not much difficulty in extracting the fid, and most Able-seamen, holding on with their legs, manage to get both hands on to the grummet and pull out the fid; on this occasion, however, continuous rain had caused the mast to swell, and the fid was embedded tightly; as the ship rolled heavily in the trough of the sea, the man at the top-masthead did not care to trust to his legs, and therefore put only one hand on the fid-grummet. We were losing time, and Burgoyne, with strong language at the man for his want of courage, ran smartly aloft, and pushing him aside, put both hands on to the fid and attempted to withdraw it; at first he failed, for the swollen wood defeated his efforts.



MR. E. WOOD, R.N., 1852

The Marines on deck, who had the weight of the mast on their arms during the several minutes which elapsed while the Bluejacket was making half-hearted efforts with one hand, had got tired of supporting three-quarters of a ton of dead weight, and thus it happened that just as Burgoyne, getting his fingers inside the hole, had slightly moved the fid, the Marines “coming up”—that is, slacking their hold—let the topgallant-mast down on Burgoyne’s hand, which was imprisoned by the tips of the fingers.