

**OLIVER HAZARD
PERRY AND THE
BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE**

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Oliver Hazard Perry and the Battle of Lake Erie by James Cooke Mills

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JAMES COOKE MILLS

**OLIVER HAZARD
PERRY AND THE
BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE**

TO VINDI
AMERICAN



OLIVER HAZARD PERRY

From a portrait in the collection of the late Jay Cooke,
Gibraltar Island, Lake Erie

OLIVER HAZARD PERRY
AND THE
BATTLE *of* LAKE ERIE

BY
JAMES COOKE MILLS
"AUTHOR OF "OUR INLAND SEAS"
"SEARCHLIGHTS ON AMERICAN INDUSTRIES"

ILLUSTRATED WITH
PICTURES OF BATTLE SCENES FROM RARE
OLD ENGRAVINGS



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P. D. 4/6/13

TO
THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY,
WHOSE DEEDS OF VALOR, IN PEACE AND
IN WAR, WERE INSPIRED BY THE
NOBLE EXAMPLE OF THE
HERO OF ERIE

PREFACE

AMONG the noblest traditions of the nation is the memory of its great men and heroes of war. For who among all true Americans does not cherish the memory of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Grant, and Farragut, and of other patriots, whose deeds of valor and achievements of state have moulded our national progress? Among these patriots was another — the immortal Hero of Erie — upon whom was bestowed all the attributes that give lustre to valorous action and chivalrous self-devotion to the cause of his country; blended with modesty, kindness, courtesy, and with lively sympathies for humanity.

To place the deeds and public services of Oliver Hazard Perry before his countrymen, of the present and succeeding generations, in a complete and enduring form, to show his true character, to depict his virtues without concealing his faults, is the purpose of this work. It is not intended to be an eulogy upon him, but a faithful history of the events of his life, so far as they are deemed of interest or of any importance in appreciating his character. If, however, some passages may seem to be unduly laden with praise, it is because the author has found it impossible, after delving into old and authenticated records of a century ago, to give a true account of the short but troubled life of Commodore Perry, without indulging in enthusiasm for the nobility of his character and for the important nature of his public services.

In narrating, therefore, the events of his active and useful life, this work becomes much more than a mere biography of a great man; it is a faithful history of

P R E F A C E

the naval operations on Lake Erie in 1813, and of the subsequent movements of the army under the command of General William H. Harrison, in the peninsula of Upper Canada. The success of these operations resulted in the overthrow of British power in the Northwest, maintained the integrity of the United States, and promoted the great material expansion of the vast territory now known as the Middle West.

In celebrating the centenary of these glorious events, which added so much lustre to the American arms, it is not intended to reflect the least feeling of exultation over a conquered foe, but rather to celebrate the greatness of our country. It is to commemorate above all things the one hundred years of uninterrupted peace with Great Britain, a peace which was made possible by Perry's decisive victory on Lake Erie. In no other naval engagement were the consequences to the whole country of such momentous character. The Hero of Erie was only twenty-eight years old at the time of that crowning event in his career, and he was but thirty-four when he gave up his final command; but his life was filled with fine things finely done. In his life he was subject to the respect and admiration of his countrymen; in his death to their deepest sorrow. The universal esteem which was felt for his many virtues was translated into reverence for his memory, into veneration for his example. He still lives in the hearts of his countrymen, clothed in perpetual youth, just as he stood on the quarter deck of the *Niagara*, when he saw that his efforts were crowned with success, and could send them this glowing message: "We have met the enemy and they are ours."

J. C. M.

Saginaw, Mich.
February 22nd, 1913.