

**THE HURRICANE:
A POEM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649438631

The Hurricane: A Poem by Anonymous

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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ANONYMOUS

**THE HURRICANE:
A POEM**

THE HURRICANE:

A POEM,

*Descriptive of the unparalleled perseverance and constancy of the Seamen on board
H. M. Ship THUNDER, 74 guns, commanded by Captain (now Rear-Admiral)
E. Hawker, the flag-ship of the late Rear-Admiral Dacres, during three days'
and nights' hurricane, which, in company with the HEBECOLE, she encountered
North-East of Monte Christi, in the Island of St. Domingo.*

BY AN EYE-WITNESS.

~~~~~  
"It seemed the wrathful angel of mankind,  
Had all the horrors of the storm combined;  
And here, to our ill-fated ship opposed,  
At once the dreadful magazine disclosed."  
FALCONER.

ALSO,

## HISTORICAL NOTICES OF ST. DOMINGO,

*From the Seizure of Toussaint L'Ouverture to the Death of Christophe.*

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

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BATH :

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR BY C. CLARK, BROAD STREET.

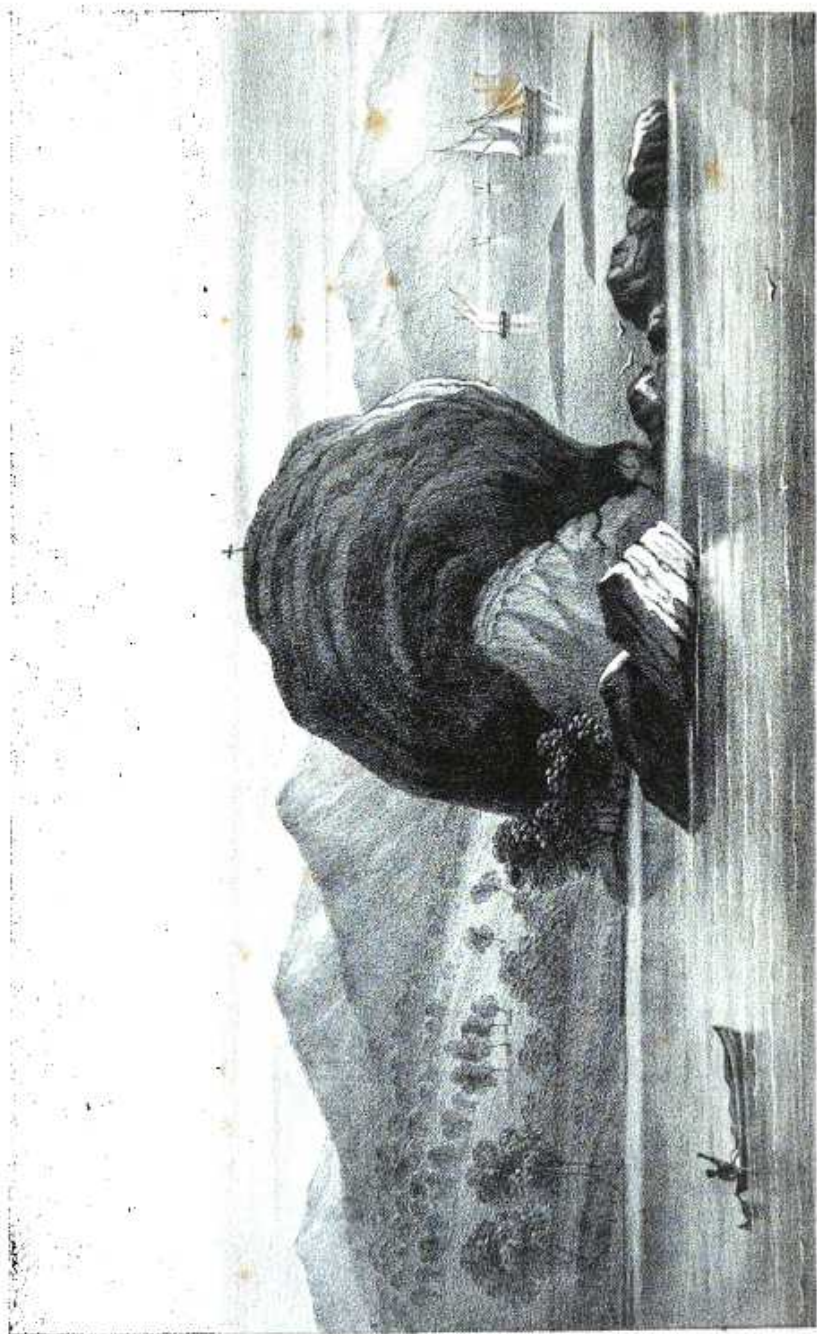
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MONTE CHRISTI, ST DOMINGO.



## INTRODUCTION.

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" July stand by, August you must,  
September ransumber, October it's all over."—

*An old adage of the West Indies, descriptive of the periods at which  
the Hurricanes occur.*

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IN the following pages a feeble effort is made to describe, in rhyme-verse, the hurricane encountered by the *Theseus* and *Hercule*, during the time Vice-Admiral Sir John T. Duckworth was Commander-in-Chief on the Jamaica station. The *Hercule* was Sir John's flag-ship, and Capt. R. D. Dunn his Flag Captain.

Sir John's term of three years, as Commander-in-Chief at Jamaica, having expired, the Government sent Rear-Admiral Dacres to succeed him. Some doubt occurred in Sir John's mind, which occasioned a reference to the Admiralty in England, and until such doubt was explained, he deemed it expedient to send Rear-Admiral Dacres to sea for a three months' cruise. At this time much prize-money was making by a French and Spanish war. The *Hercule* accordingly sailed with the *Theseus*, Sir John's flag having been shifted to the *Shark* receiving ship, at Port Royal, Jamaica. The vessels had reached the North side of St. Domingo, off Cape Francaise, unattended by any material occurrence.

It is to be observed that, due North of Cape Francaise, (the chief harbour on the North side of St. Domingo) some 20 leagues, lie banks, called, "The Silver Cayes," which, though under water, are so near the surface, that, in gales, the sea breaks heavily upon them. The *Theseus* and *Hercule* had stood to the northward when the hurricane assailed them; the banks distant sixty miles, bearing S.W., the hurricane blowing N. E. The following day, by calculation, the banks bore S.W. 20 to 15 miles, the ships drifting upon them!

As usual in hurricanes, the wind veered from N.E. to N. and W.S.W.,—a most providential change, as it carried us from those dangerous rocks, upon which both ships must otherwise, in a few hours, have been wrecked. This wonderful escape I leave to the consideration of those who, like myself, attribute causes and effects to Divine Providence.

The escape of the *Theseus* was still more miraculous, envired as she was, and totally dismasted. The whole ship's crew of 500 men having been employed in pumping and bailing for three days and nights successively, had become completely exhausted. At this period it was reported to the Admiral, who was lashed under the poop to the ship's weather side, that, in spite of every exertion that could be made, the water gained on the ship. This was the period alluded to in the poem, when our amiable Admiral, with calmness, said, "Let the officers join in the pumps, and let us go down doing our duty."

It is to be observed, that, from the heavy lurching of the ship, the quantity of water in her hold, together with that which was pumped up on the lower deck, and the pressure by the unbridled force of the hurricane on her lee side, caused that side and the pump-dale to be so immersed, that the water upon the lower deck could not be got out but by taking it up in buckets, handing them

up the hatchway, and emptying them on the main-deck, which partially got rid of it—sieve like!

The swinging of the main-yard with each successive lurch, and the trembling of the ship's whole fabric, at this period, was dreadful beyond description.

In this condition, by the example and cheering of their officers, the men were excited to continue their efforts for a few hours longer, when, just at the time their worn-out bodies were incapable of further exertion, and their spirits were fast sinking within them, it pleased the Disposer of all events to abate the fury of the hurricane, which, had it continued but a short time longer, in all probability "not a soul would have been left to tell the tale."

During the hurricane, an indefatigable Irishman, of the name of Bracken, went out on the main-yard-arm, holding on by the main-lift, to cut away the main-top-mast, which, in its fall, had become entangled with the main-yard-arm; this being lowered down, was occasionally immersed in the sea with the seaman, who held on with one hand, while, as often as he rose from the waves, he was seen cutting away with his hatchet—an unrivalled act of seamanship and energy.

The French Privateer firing into us at twilight, is referred to as an apt illustration of the fable of the ass kicking the crippled and infirm lion.

Upon the arrival of the ships at Port Royal, Jamaica, which occurred fifteen days after the hurricane, they were hauled alongside the Dock-yard wharfs, to be thoroughly examined and repaired. From the commencement of the hurricane, the *Theseus* continued to leak, making four feet per hour, until a day or two after her having been at anchor, when her leak discontinued.