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RUNNING, SLAYER-HUNTING,  
AND WAR AND SPORT IN TURKEY**

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**AUGUSTUS CHARLES HOBART-HAMPDEN**

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# HOBART PASHA

By AUGUSTUS CHARLES HOBART-HAMPDEN

Blockade-Running, Slaver-Hunting,  
and War and Sport in Turkey

EDITED BY  
HORACE KEPHART



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NELSON DOUBLEDAY

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## INTRODUCTION

Hobart Pasha was one of the most remarkable men of the nineteenth century. Nature had fitted him for the rôle of an Elizabethan corsair, but he was born out of his due time, and, by some strange jugglery of fate, was projected into the Victorian era.

Full of energy and overflowing with animal spirits, he craved a life of excitement and adventure. The long dull intervals of naval routine in times of peace bored and irritated him. He chafed under the iron discipline of his period and rebelled against the tyranny of superiors. Daring and self-confident, he scorned the conventions that frowned upon his fondness for romantic enterprises. And so, finally, when convinced that the royal navy offered no scope for his peculiar talents, nor prospect of the advancement he deserved, Hobart abandoned the service to become a free lance, a soldier of fortune, who might fight under any flag he chose.

The following reminiscences, which he called "Sketches from My Life," were jotted down in the enforced leisure of the sick-room, from which

Richard S. Up  
1-12-34



he was never to emerge alive. Despite the offhand style in which they were composed, and the impossibility of revision, these memoirs are among the most interesting in our literature. Hobart's tales of his youthful experiences as a man-o'-war'sman read like pages from "Midshipman Easy" or "Peter Simple"; his record of blockade-running during our civil war is as thrilling as a nautical romance by Jules Verne. He is never prolix. The stories are told in a plain, bluff, sailorlike way, though with instinctive choice of the apt word or phrase; and when told, he quits.

Hobart has been accused of interweaving fact and fiction to produce a story that would be *ben trovato* if not *vero*. His critics admit that no man of his time crowded more romantic and exciting episodes into the span of a lifetime; but, like that earlier paladin of adventure Captain John Smith, he is taxed with inventing extraordinary situations, whereas if he had been content to tell the plain facts about his career they would have been marvellous enough. This charge is worth looking into.

An expert who had access to the British naval archives put Hobart's "Sketches" to the test of close comparison with the records. He found, in the first nine chapters of the book (but not elsewhere) that "times, places, and actors are so jum-

bled together as to make the unravelling of the real thread a process something like that of winding off a silken cord from a badly tangled skein. . . . Statements and narratives which on the face of them we should receive with cautious doubt are true enough; others which we should read without the slightest suspicion are the veriest dreams."

The best informed reviewers have absolved Hobart from any intention to deceive. The inaccuracies and fancies in the fore part of the book may be ascribed to the confused memory of an old and sorely stricken man, who, in some instances was unable to distinguish what he had heard from what he had seen. The first nine chapters cover the period of his youth and early manhood. On the sick-bed he had no opportunity to check off his recollections of that far-off time against written or printed records. In the present edition all errors that are of any consequence have been corrected by footnotes.

Chapters ten to sixteen are of an entirely different order. They narrate the author's experiences as a blockade runner in our war between the States. They were published by him at the close of the war in a little volume entitled "Never Caught." All the scenes and adventures were then fresh and vivid in his memory, and they are accepted as un-

varnished truth by men who participated in the thrilling events that are here portrayed.

The rest of the book relates to Hobart's service as admiral and pasha in the Turkish navy. This part of his life was the "to-day" of him who described it, and the accuracy of his record has not been questioned.

So it turns out that the really remarkable feats he claims to have performed he *did* perform. Compared with them it is of no consequence whether in his youth, when he was rollicking or chasing slavers, his ship happened to be where he says it was, at a given time, or on the other side of the Atlantic.

One will note that the names of the author's personal enemies, and even of their ships, are purposely obscured or merely indicated by initials. He respected the feelings and dignity of his adversaries. Another likable trait in the man is his modesty: there is no swashbuckling nor braggadocio here.

Of his ancestry he simply says "I was born of respectable parents"—not a pretentious claim, in view of the fact that he was a younger son of the 6th earl of Buckinghamshire, and lineal descendant of no less a personage than John Hampden.

Augustus Charles Hobart-Hampden was born