

**REMINISCENCES OF TWO
YEARS IN THE UNITED
STATES NAVY, PP. 10-125**

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OF
TWO YEARS
IN THE
UNITED STATES NAVY.

By JOHN M. BATTEN, B. E., M. D.,
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By JOHN M. BATTEN, B. E., M. D.,
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TO THE
Grand Army of the Republic,

AND TO THE
Soldiers and Sailors

WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES AS AN OFFERING FOR THE
PRESERVATION OF THE UNION,

AND TO MY MOTHER,
SARAH BATTEN,

THIS LITTLE BOOK OF REMINISCENCES

IS MOST

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

THE only excuse I offer for publishing this little book of reminiscences is that a story half told is better than a story not told at all.

J. M. B.

73 Sixth Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa., May 8, 1881.

After bidding my relatives and friends good-bye, I proceeded to Philadelphia, Pa., and reported for duty on board the United States steamer Princeton, which was lying anchored in the Delaware river off Philadelphia, and which was the same vessel on which Abel Parker Upshur, Secretary of State under President Tyler, was killed by the explosion of a monster cannon whilst visiting said vessel, in company with the President and other members of the Cabinet. The duty aboard this vessel was of an initiatory character, to prepare officers for clerical duties peculiar to each of their particular offices. I made the acquaintance on this vessel of Surgeon James McClelland, who was the Surgeon of the Princeton. He had entered the United States Navy when a young man, and had been in the service ever since. He was about fifty-five years of age. The first morning after sleeping aboard this vessel, I was awakened by what is always usual aboard a man-of-war, a large gun fired at sunrise. The concussion and reverberation from the report of the heavy gun shook the vessel till it creaked, and, in my half-slumbering condition, I wondered to myself whether it was not a real battle in which the vessel was engaged; but upon mature reflection and inquiry, I learned it was only the report of the sunrise gun.

One day, whilst on board the Princeton, a blank book in which were copied a number of choice prescriptions used by many of the old celebrated physicians of Philadelphia, fell into my hands. The book belonged

to Surgeon James McClelland. I thought, as I had nothing else special to do, I would occupy the time in re-copying these prescriptions into a blank book of my own; and just as I was re-copying the last prescription, Dr. James McClelland came aboard. He noticed me engaged in writing, and came into the state-room where I was, and observed his book. He immediately asked me where I had got the book. I told him where I had got it.

"Why," said he, "I would not take any money for a copy of those prescriptions. I consider them very valuable, and would not for any consideration let my best friend have a copy of them."

I told him that I believed it to be very wrong not to let prescriptions which have been found valuable in disease, be known. After reprimanding me for re-copying the prescriptions, he cooled down, and became very affable. I, however, got a copy of the prescriptions.

Another day, in rowing aboard the Princeton from the United States Navy Yard at Philadelphia, Pa., I acted as coxswain, and came very near capsizing the boat in the Delaware river. The river was very rough, and I got the boat in what the sailors call the "trough of the sea." I, however, arrived on board the Princeton safely, after running the boat "bows on" against the steamer. The officer of the deck said:

"Sir, why don't you bring that boat alongside in a sailor-like manner?"

"Why," I said, "I am glad to get aboard in any

manner, even though there were a hole stove in the side of the Princeton by my boat; besides, sir, I know nothing about bringing a boat alongside in a sailor-like manner." I soon, however, learned to manage a small boat in water very well.

On receiving the following order:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, 5th April, 1864.

SIR: You are hereby detached from the Princeton, and you will proceed to Hampton Roads, Va., without delay, and report to Acting Rear Admiral Lee for duty on board the United States steamer Valley City.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant.

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy.*

Acting Assistant Surgeon John M. Batten, U. S. Navy, Philadelphia.

I left the Princeton, and after bidding my mother farewell, who was stopping with my sister, who resided in Philadelphia—this was a hard task, and it affected us both greatly; but separate we did, and whether we should ever meet again in this world was a question which time alone would determine—on turning a corner I looked back, and saw my mother standing on the steps of the doorway, weeping. It was to me an affecting separation. I journeyed to the Philadelphia and Baltimore railroad depot, located in the southern part of Philadelphia, Pa., and at 8 o'clock a. m. of a beautiful day I took the train for Baltimore, Md., arriving in that