

# **GENTLEMEN ROVERS**

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Gentlemen rovers by E. Alexander Powell

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**E. ALEXANDER POWELL**

**GENTLEMEN  
ROVERS**





Commodore Truxtun leaped into the shrouds.

The Great  
Admiral

# GENTLEMEN ROVERS

BY

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ILLUSTRATED

UNIV OF  
CALIFORNIA

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TO VIVALDI  
AMSTERDAM



To  
THE FINEST GENTLEMAN I KNOW  
MY FATHER

287955



“There’s a Legion that never was ’listed,  
That carries no colors or crest,  
But, split in a thousand detachments,  
Is breaking the road for the rest.

\* \* \*

The ends o’ the Earth were our portion,  
The ocean at large was our share,  
There was never a skirmish to windward  
But the Leaderless Legion was there.

\* \* \*

We preach in advance of the Army,  
We skirmish ahead of the Church,  
With never a gunboat to help us  
When we’re scuppered and left in the lurch.  
But we know as the cartridges finish  
And we’re filed on our last little shelves,  
That the Legion that never was ’listed  
Will send us as good as ourselves.

\* \* \*

Then a health (we must drink it in whispers)  
To our wholly unauthorized horde—  
To the line of our dusty foreloopers,  
To the Gentlemen Rovers abroad!”

—*The Lost Legion.*

## FOREWORD

THIS book is written as a tribute to some men who have been overlooked by History and forgotten by Fame. Though they won for us more than half the territory comprised within our present-day borders, not only have no monuments been erected to perpetuate their exploits in bronze and marble, but they lie for the most part in forgotten and neglected graves, some of them under alien skies. Boyd, Truxtun, Eaton, Reed, Lafitte, Smith, Ide, Ward, Walker—even their names hold no significance for their countrymen of the present generation, yet they played great parts in our national drama. After two decades of history-making in Hindustan, Boyd came back to his own country and ably seconded William Henry Harrison in breaking the power of the great Indian confederation which threatened to check the white man's westward march. When both France and England were our enemies, and the gloom of despondency hung like a cloud over the land, it was Truxtun and his

## Foreword

bluejackets who put new heart into the nation by their victories. Eaton and his motley army marched across six hundred miles of African desert, and by bringing the Barbary despots to their knees accomplished that which had been unsuccessfully attempted by every naval power in Europe. Captain Reed, of the *General Armstrong*, after holding off a British force twenty times the strength of his own, sunk his vessel rather than surrender. To a pirate and smuggler named Jean Lafitte, more than any other person save Andrew Jackson, we owe our thanks for saving New Orleans from capture and Louisiana from invasion. Jedediah Smith blazed the route of the Overland Trail and showed us the way to California, and a quarter of a century later Frémont, Ide, Sloat, and Stockton made the land beyond the Sierras ours. William Walker came within an ace of changing the map of Middle America, and made the name of American a synonym for courage from the Rio Grande to Panama, while on the other side of the world another American, Frederick Townsend Ward, raised and led that ever victorious army whose exploits were General Gordon's chief claim to fame. There was not one of these men of whom we have not reason to be proud. But because they did their work unoffi-