

*To the Editor of the Naval Chronicle.*

SIR,

It was with much pleasure that I read, in your Number for September, a biographical notice of the late lieutenant John T. Shubrick: and I now take the liberty of bringing to your view *an incident* in the life of that gallant and lamented officer, which, as it was perhaps the most brilliant of his eventful life, ought not certainly to remain unnoticed. It is strictly true, that lieutenant S. had seen more service, and been engaged in a greater number of actions, than any American naval officer of equal age. It has been correctly stated, that he was a midshipman on board of the Chesapeake, when she was attacked by the Leopard. On that occasion, a man, standing by his side, was struck by a cannon ball in the face, and lieutenant S. was covered with gore; yet, amidst the horrors of his situation, infinitely more terrible than any combat, however sanguinary, he displayed so much coolness and intrepidity, that all who saw him predicted the eminence which, if his life was spared, the youthful midshipman must ultimately attain. It has also been correctly stated, that Shubrick was next engaged as a lieutenant on board the Constitution, in the memorable action which terminated in the capture of the Guerriere, and captain Hull bears testimony to his "gallantry and good conduct" on that occasion. The writer of the biographical sketch, however, after noticing these actions, proceeds to state, "that, after the capture of the Guerriere, and the return of the Constitution into port for repairs, lieutenant Shubrick joined the Hornet, and was present in the affair with the Peacock." It should

have been stated that lieutenant Shubrick sailed in the *Constitution*, under commodore Bainbridge, and was present in the affair with the *Java*; after which, he volunteered to go on board the *Hornet*, then blockading the harbour of St. Salvador, the ship *Bonne Citoyenne*, with which an action was daily expected, as captain Lawrence had invited a meeting, and commodore Bainbridge had pledged his honour to be out of the way. But as captain Greene declined the meeting, under the pretext of distrusting the sincerity of commodore Bainbridge, the *Hornet* sailed on a cruise, and, on the 22d of February, fell in with the *Peacock*, and sunk her in fifteen minutes. "Never (says the author of the *British Synopsis*) was there a finer specimen of marine gunnery than the Americans displayed in this engagement." Captain Lawrence, in his official letter, says, "I would be doing injustice to the merits of lieutenant Shubrick, and acting lieutenants Conner and Newton, were I not to recommend them particularly to your notice. Lieutenant Shubrick was in the actions with the *Guerriere* and *Java*; captain Hull, and commodore Bainbridge, can bear testimony to his coolness and good conduct on both occasions." The noble spirit which animates the bosoms of our naval heroes, has been seldom more conspicuously displayed than in this voluntary offer, on the part of lieutenant Shubrick, to leave a victorious ship (in whose glory he had a double right to participate, having twice contributed to its acquisition) in order to join another, expecting daily to encounter a superior enemy. When it is considered that the *Constitution* was on her way home, where the honours and rewards of a grateful country awaited her officers and men—to quit such a ship at such a moment—to relinquish the satisfaction of a triumphant entry into an American port—to forego the pleasure of meeting anxious and expecting friends—and this too where duty could not exact the sacrifice, which the danger of the occasion seemed so absolutely to require—cannot but be regarded as one of the highest efforts of heroism. In making a proper estimate of such an action, we ought not to forget, that he who performed it was a youth of exquisite sensibility—alive to every impression of joy—to whom the rewards of virtuous ambition were dearer than life, and whose home was endeared to him by the tenderest ties. The other incidents in the life of lieutenant Shubrick have been correctly de-

tailed. He was present in the action with the British squadron, which terminated in the surrender of the *President*; and he afterwards served as first lieutenant in the *Guerriere*, throughout the war with Algiers. In the official account of the former, commodore Decatur remarks, that "if the issue of this affair had been fortunate, I should have felt it my duty to recommend to your attention lieutenants Shubrick and Gallagher. They maintained, throughout the day, the reputation they had acquired in former actions." On the termination of the war with Algiers, the *Epervier* was dispatched with the treaty of peace, and the command of her bestowed upon lieut. Shubrick. As he had married an amiable lady in New York, who had recently presented him with a son, his anxiety to meet these objects of his affection, added to his uniform good conduct and faithful services, the commodore was, no doubt, partly influenced by these considerations in investing him with so distinguished a command. The result is well known: He who had been engaged in six bloody battles, and had encountered danger in every shape, without injury, fell in the inglorious capacity of a messenger of peace. Lieutenant Shubrick, it is believed, was a favourite wherever he was known; but in South Carolina his memory is cherished with peculiar affection. The legislature voted him a sword, valued at five hundred dollars, and he was presented with one of equal elegance by the citizens of Charleston, within three miles of which city he was born and brought up. A great part of his early days were spent among its citizens. The writer of this article knew him intimately; and is fully persuaded, that had he lived he must have become one of the most distinguished officers in the service. To a mind naturally acute and discriminating, he added a store of valuable information. His manners were so mild, and his conduct, on all occasions, so amiable and dispassionate, that a stranger might, at a first introduction, suppose him deficient in that *force of character* so essential to military greatness. But a very short acquaintance dispelled this idea: his character gradually unfolded itself; and at length he exhibited a *boldness* and *daring* for which no enterprise was too arduous—no danger too great—no trial too severe. A sense of honour so refined and delicate, that death itself would have been regarded as the lightest of ills when put in competition with it, and a self-possession which no difficul-

ties could disturb, were the peculiar characteristics of Shubrick. His was a name, dear to Carolina. His father was an officer distinguished in the war of the revolution: he left six sons, and every one of them were in the army or navy during the late war. Richard, a surgeon of the third regiment of infantry, and Thomas, a lieutenant of artillery, both sacrificed their lives in the service of their country. William B. Shubrick, now a lieutenant on board the *Washington*, in the Mediterranean, eminently distinguished himself in the defence of Craney island. The two younger brothers (one recently promoted to a lieutenancy, and the other a midshipman, in the navy) fought gallantly, and still live to support the reputation of their father and their brothers.

A SOUTH-CAROLINIAN.

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