EASTON GAZETTE.

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VOL. XXVIII. **EASTON. (MD.) SATURDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 1, 1845.** **NO. 44.**

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED EVERY
Saturday Morning,
BY
Alexander Graham.

TERMS.

TWO DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS Per Annum, payable half yearly *in* advance

ADVERTISEMENTS

Not exceeding a square inserted Three times for ONE DOLLAR, and TWENTY-FIVE CENTS for every subsequent insertion.

A STORY OF RUSSIAN MILITARY LIFE.

The New York Commercial translates the following horrible narrative, which originally appeared in the Paris Gazette. That journal gives it as a veritable story, furnished by one who was a witness of the scenes described.

On the 22d of May, 1841, a battalion of the military colony which the Russian Government has recently established at Novogoad, and which closely resembles in many respects the *land-wehr* of Prussia, was drawn up on the parade ground adjoining the extensive barracks constructed, a few years since, in the most ancient and solitary portion of the city, near the Church of Saint Sophia.

In front of the ranks stood General L——eff, a tall man of fifty, remarkable for his erect carriage, his meagreness, his sallow complexion and his large, grey restless eyes. He was known throughout the army for his bravery, of which he had given many brilliant proofs in the campaigns of Turkey and Persia; but, whether it was that domestic infelicities had soured his temper or that his heart had become hardened by the frequent application of a discipline, degrading in its nature, and often horrible in its effects, Gen. L——eff had become a terror to the soldiers, and scarcely a day passed in which his command was not signalized by acts of such severity as well deserved to be called ferocious.

It was known, however, that this man cherished a profound attachment for a young girl, the daughter of an old companion in arms, who had been killed in battle. He had adopted the orphan child, brought her up with care, and never allowed her to be separated from him. And she, though grateful for the kindness and affection of her father by adoption, was not the less governed by an irresistible feeling of constraint when in his presence; the result of his stern brevity of speech, his imperious manner, and the cold severity of his aspect. She was known among the troops by the expressive name of Solowiova, (nightingale) given to her in recognition of the grace with which she sang the wild pathetic ballads of the Slavonians.

Solowiova, to please the general, always appeared at the reviews and drills; and on the day when the incidents took place which are hereafter to be related, she was sitting at a window of the general's quarters, in a room on the ground floor, whence her eye ranged along the extended ranks—and a bright blush might be seen to overspread her features as her glance rested for a moment on the handsome features of a young surgeon-major, named Ivan Polovoi, whose manly form was set off to rare advantage by the simple uniform of his military grade.

General L——eff had passed and repassed along the front rank of the battalion without uttering a word, but with a frowning brow and angry expression on his features, for he perceived that some of the men were absent. Suddenly was heard the slow and muffled beat of a drum, and from the extremity of the plain was seen advancing a band of soldiers, each carrying in his hand one of those long rods which are still used in the Russian service as the tools of a hateful punishment. At this sight the general turned in amaze to his aids and in a voice of thunder demanded who had given the order, and who was to be the victim. A serjeant, conspicuous by his scarred and livid countenance, darted before the general, snatched from him his sword, struck him on the face and answered coldly, "You!"

At these words an electric shock seemed to pass along the ranks and a gleam of hate lighted up the habitually passionless features of the men. By a spontaneous movement the officers advanced from the line to the rescue of their commander, but in a moment they were seized, thrown to the ground, and menaced each by half a scorce of bayonets.

Ivan, the surgeon-major, was alone exempted, for his gentleness and humanity had won for him the affection of the troops. A grenadier who stood near him whispered in his ear, "Whether the nightingale sings or remains silent, do not move. A word, a single step and you are dead."

Recovering from his stupor General L——eff had grasped with each hand one of the bayonets pointed at his breast, turned them aside with a powerful effort and cried out, with a ferocious glance along the line, "To your knees, vile brutes; to your knees and beg for mercy, or there will not be skin enough upon your backs to expaciate your crime.

A savage chuckle was the answer to his threat, and the sergeant, with the frightful tranquility which indicates a settled purpose, said, "Every one of us knows the doom that awaits you, and is prepared to sacrifice his life. When your sentence is fulfilled we shall go before General Suroff, the Governor of Novogorod; we shall lay at his feet your sword, your belt, your orders and what remains of your body, and we shall say to him, "General L——eff was a tiger—we have slain him; here are our weapons, we await our punishment." And thus saying the sergeant tore away the general's epaulettes and trampled them under his feet.

"These decorations belong not to you," he continued; "a knout should be borne by the executioner.—Remember the soldier Betsakoff, scouraged with rods for having been a moment too late in presenting arms. Remember that old subaltern who, for a spot upon his uniform, was ordered by you from the ranks and struck upon the face with your whip until the blood ran down his cheeks. The unhappy man, frantic with rage and pain, lifted his hand in resistance—and for this he was flogged and sent, maimed and dying, to Siberia."

The sergeant while he spoke had continued with a terrible composure to strip the general of his belt, his coat and his under garments. He went on:—

"That subaltern, like myself, bore the name of Guedenoff; we were borne in the same hovel—he was my brother."

Spite of his indomitable firmness the general could not refrain from shuddering as he listened to this fearful accusation, so eloquent in its calm simplicity, so passionless in its vengeful brevity. As for Solowiova, she had looked on at first with vague wonder, unable to comprehend the scene that passed before her; but when she saw the general deprived of his sword, his uniform torn away, his form exposed, then she began to conceive the purpose of his assailants and to understand that he was doomed to receive the degrading punishment he had so often caused to be inflicted.—Seized with horror she rose to her feet, clasped her hands in supplication and shrieked aloud in terror and despair.

Ivan, the surgeon-major, had till this moment stood motionless and silent; but he could not resist the anguish of her he loved. He forgot the stern excitement of the troops, the hopelessness of his interference, and made a step forward; but the loud ringing of a musket was heard. Ivan threw up his arms, turned on his heel convulsively and fell to the ground a corpse.—The bullet had pierced his heart.

A gigantic soldier stepped forward from the ranks, lifted the body and bore it to the window where Solowiova stood; he threw it at her feet and said, "Nightingale, this belongs to you."

White as marble Solowiova gazed upon the corpse of her lover, bent toward it, wiped the bloody forehead with her handkerchief, gave forth one terrible cry and fell lifeless by its side.

Meantime General L——eff had been bound to a gun carriage, dragged through the ranks and scourged with rods, the torture of which was but the beginning of his punishment. He had scarcely reached the extremity of the line when a voice exclaimed "To the ovens!"

The unhappy general, though half dead with agony, heard these words, and knew their horrid meaning.—A hundred voices repeated "To the ovens!"

A mortal paleness overspread his features; his courage gave way, he groaned and begged for mercy. But the hurrahs of the battalion drowned his voice, and Sergeant Guedenoff, approaching him once more, replied,

"I too begged for mercy when my brother fell dying under the blow you ordered."

We will not pursue the hideous details of the scene that followed, only adding that General L——eff and the superior officers of the battalion, shut up in the ovens which the vengeful soldiers took care to heat slowly, were literally baked alive.

This crime presented a frightful originality and it was deemed meet that its expiation should be likewise. The tidings were borne to the Emperor, and eight days afterward several battalions of artillery marched through the streets of the ancient Russian capital; they had been preceded by a major-general who had won for himself in the Polish campaign the title of the Warsaw executioner. One of his aids appeared at the barracks of the mutineers and ordered them to parade the next morning, in fatigue dress and without their weapons, in the small square at the Western end of the city. They replied by their invariable *karacho* (good,) put on their long grey coats and their round caps, and oiled their mustaches as for an ordinary field day; then pale, silent and with white lips, but keeping perfect order in their ranks they traversed the city between triple files of Cossacks, followed by the terrified and mournful gaze of the inhabitants. On their arrival in the square they posted themselves in solid columns, noiselessly and without confusion.

The drums beat—the bells of the Churches pealed forth a solemn clang—and batteries of cannon, planted in the avenues that led into the square, opened upon them a deadly fire of grape shot. Each discharge was succeeded by a shout, by a multitudinous groan, with which were mingled the wild songs of those who prided themselves on dying like men who knew no fear. Three hours the fire was kept up; and when at its close the executioners of this awful sentence traversed the place through a lake of blood, they found but five whom the grape shot had not reached; among these was the sergeant Guedenoff. They all perished under the murderous blows of the knout.—The sergeant maintained his firmness and composure to the end. Stretched on the fatal plank, he seemed unconscious of the lash that tore his bleeding flesh, and addressing the executioner, coolly asked if his allotted number of blows would soon be completed. "They are finished now," said the executioner. "So much the better," replied Guedenoff, "for I am very hungry."

THE FRIGATE'S TENDER;
A TALE OF THE LAST WAR,
FOUNDED ON FACT.

BY J. H INGRAHAM.

CHAPTER I.

It was early on Sunday morning during the progress of the last war with Great Britain, that a young naval officer, walking on the Battery at New York, had his attention drawn to a group of persons earnestly engaged in watching two vessels just visible far down the harbor.

"What is it, my friends?" he asked, in a frank, hearty tone, as he joined them.

'The tender, again chasing in a schooner, sir, answered an old tar, touching the point of his hat as he noticed the anchor button on the officer's coat.

"Here is a spy-glass, sir," said a master's mate, who stood near, and at the same time respectfully handed it to him.

"Thank you, my man," answered the lieutenant, with a smile, as he took the instrument and placed it to his eye.

By its aid he could clearly distinguish an armed schooner, of about ninety tons, crowding sail in chase of a trading "fore-and-after" that was making every exertion to escape, both by towing and throwing water upon the sails.

'The chase is about a half a mile ahead, sir," said the master's mate; but the tender sails like a shark in chase of a dolphin. The fore-and-after don't stand a chance of getting in past the fort.'

'The tender can sail, and I am the one that ought to know it,' said a stout, weather beaten looking man. 'She was a pilot boat, and the fastest craft that ever danced over the waves. Three weeks ago, I and my crew were out in her, when your English frigate suddenly made her appearance out of a fog bank and brought us to. But I took to my yawl, and pulled for the land a league away, and escaped; for the fog was so thick the Englishman could not get a glimpse of me. It is my schooner they have turned into a tender sir, and that's made so many captures the last three weeks of our small coasters."

'She carries forty men, and a long thirty-two so I hear,' observed a seaman in the group.

'And is commanded by a luff and a reefer,' added the master mate.

'It would be a blessing,' observed a man of war's-man, who had not yet spoken, 'if that craft could be caught napping. It an't safe for a sloop to put her nose out of the harbor, beyond the cape; but while the frigate was there alone, they could slip along the coast in light water, and show their heels. But now, every thing that ventures out is brought by that long gun of the tender's.'

'That's a fact, Ben,' responded another seaman. 'She has taken or driven back into port no less than twenty-six crafts in the last three weeks. I shall be glad, for one, when our frigate lying off there gets her armament aboard, for then I think we'll swallow the English frigate outside and pick our teeth with the tender.

All these remarks were heard by the young officer, who all the while continued to look through the spy-glass at the tender and her chase.

'There goes a gun!' cried several spectators, as a flash and a jet azure smoke came from the tender's bows.

'That is bold enough,' observed the young officer, as if speaking his thoughts aloud; 'the impudent tender is almost up with the fort, and dares to fire at the chase in the very face of the batteries'

'It is only to try and do her mischief, sir," said the master's mate; 'for she finds the fore-and-after will escape her—so she fires a gun to cutaway something.'

'You are right, my man,' responded the officer, 'for she has put about and stands seaward again.

He continued to watch the retiring tender for some moments in silence.

'It's a pity we had'nt an armed cutter in port that would sail faster than she can, so that we might give her a chase out,' said a lad, approaching the group. His dress was that of a midshipman, and his air singularly free and fearless.

'Ah, Frank, are you there?' said the lieutenant. When did you get back from your father's?'

'Last night. I was in hopes to find the ship ready for sea, Mr. Percival; but I am told it will be three weeks before we get away. I want to have a brush with John Bull's frigate who hovers off and on the harbor with such bravadoing. When did you get in town sir?'

'Yesterday morning. Have you been witnessing the pretty chase down the bay Frank?

'Yes. I would give a year's pay if I could have a hand in capturing that rogue.'

'Come aside with me,' said the officer, putting his arm in that of the midshipman. Your words but express my own wishes. I have conceived a plan for capturing that tender.'

'In what way?' demanded the youth, with animation.

'I will show you. The tender's game appears to be coasting vessels, from which she takes men to impress in the British navy, and also plunders the craft of such things as they contain which are of any value. My plan is to charter an old sloop the worst looking one that it is possible to find in port, yet a tolerably sailer, for she must work well, and readily over her helm. I will load her deck with hencoops, filled with poultry, pen crammed with pigs, and a few sheep, and a calf or two, by way of variety. You laugh, Frank; but the commander of the tender will find it no laughing matter, if I succeed as I anticipate. I shall ship about thirty-five men and conceal them in the hold, and taking command of my craft with one hand only visible on deck, I shall set sail out of the harbour. When I get outside I think I shall be able to show John Bull, a Yankee trick he will not be likely to forget very soon.—But all will depend on our good management of the affair. Now you see what I would be at Frank! Will you join me?

'Heart and hand, sir,' responded Frank Talbot, with enthusiasm. 'Will you allow me to be the hand on deck to help work the sloop?'

'Yes, if you can talk Weathersfield Yankee.'

'Wall, I rayther guess I ken; tho' I aint been to Connecticut amongst 'em since last grass.'

This reply was pronounced in such an inimitably Yankee dialect than the lieutenant burst into a hearty laugh.

'You will do, Frank! Now we want to proceed at once at action. I want you to go to the Anchor rendezvous in Pearl street, and drum up about five and thirty men. Take only those that are daring and ready for any thing. Let none of them know your object, lest we should be betrayed by information being conveyed to the tender. You will find men enough in these times that will ask no questions.—Meet me at twelve o'clock, at the Exchange Reading Rooms and report to me.'

The midshipman then took leave and hastened up the Battery. The lieutenant returned to the group and taking aside the master's mate, whom he knew, laid briefly before him his project. The old tar entered into it with all zeal. Together they went to the dock, where on account of the blockade lay idle a large number of vessels of every description. They were not long in discovering such a craft as suited them; a Hudson sloop of seventy tons. She was immediately put in trim, for sailing by the master's mate, and three or four men whom he employed; while the officer proceeded to buy up and send on board his live stock.

CHAPTER II.

On the morning which followed these events, the Tender of the British frigate was standing off and on under easy sail, and close in with Sandy Hook. The wind was from the southwest and blowing about a five knot breeze. The sky was without a cloud, and only a gentle undulation lifted the surface of the ocean. The tender was a clipper built vessel, very long and narrow in the beam; and constructed wholly with an eye to her fast-sailing qualities, and she gave proof of them by overhauling everything. She carried amidships a long thirty two pounder. Her crew consisted of about forty men in uniform of the British Navy. They were now principally assembled in the bows and on the windlass, talking together or watching the shore. All, the officer of the deck, a bluff fell faced young English "middy," was lounging over the quarter railing smoking a cigar. The man at the helm had a sinecure of his post, for the vessel skipped along so easily that she seemed almost to steer herself.

"Sail, ho!" cried the look-out, from the heel of the bowsprit.

'Where away?' quickly demanded the officer.

'In shore, two points forward the beam.

'Aye aye! I see,' answered the middy, levelling his glass at a sloop just stealing out of the harbor, closely hugging the shore. 'It is another of the Yankee coasters. A sail in shore Mr. Stanley,' said he, speaking through the sky light.

The lieutenant, a stout fleshy, port wine visaged John Bull, come on deck and took sight at the stranger, which was about a league distant.

'It is a lumber sloop; but we will bring her to, if she dares to venture out—for we may get some fresh provisions and vegetables from her if nothing more.'

"Shall I put her on the other tack, sir

'Not yet. Keep on as we are, till the sloop gets an offing. If we run for her now, she will take refuge in the harbor.'

The sloop stood out for half a mile, and then hauling her wind, beat down along the land. The tender delayed the chase until she had got too far from the entrance of the harbor to get back again, and then putting about, began to make the best of her way towards the harbour she had left. Confident in the speed of his own vessel, the English lieutenant felt satisfied that the chase was already his, and laughed at the efforts of the sloop to get away.

At length they came near enough to see that her decks were covered with pigs and poultry.

'A rare haul we shall make this morning!" said the middy. "Enough chicken pie for the whole of the frigate's crew, to say nothing of turkies and roast pig for the cabin!"

"What a regular slap sided Yankee skipper she has at her helm! Man and boy, she has a stout crew!" said the lieutenant, laughing. "They look frightened out of their senses, as they begin to think they are gone for it! Sloop ahoy!"

"What do ye want?" came across the water, in the strongest nasal of Yankeedom.

"I want you to heave to brother Jonathan! I'd rather not if it's all the same to you! I'm in a mity hurry! Frank!" added the distinguished American officer, in an under tone, "when I order you to let go the jib you must draw it aft as hard as your strength will let you. I at the same time will put the helm hard up, so the sloop will pay rapidly off, and fall aboard of the tender; for I am determined to fall aboard of her I shall curse your blunders and order you to go; but don't mind me, keep pulling the jib-sheet hard to windward. Leave the rest to me. Now, my men," he said speaking through the companion-way, "take a good grasp of your pistols and cutlasses. When I stamp my foot on the deck over your heads, throw off the hatches and leap on deck, and follow me."

"Heave to, or I will sink you! What are you palavering about?" shouted the Englishman.

The two vessels were now side by side, steering on the same course, abeam of each other, the tender to leeward and about a hundred farhoms off.

"Wall, don't be too free with your powder and I will. Aminidab, let go that 'ar jib sheet!"

"Yes, I will," answered the young recruit; and with a hearty will he began to draw it to windward. At the same moment the American officer put his helm hard up, and the sloop rapidly played off right towards the tender.

"Let go that jib sheet!" shouted the English officer.

"Yes, Aminidab, you' tarnal fool you, let it go, I say. Let it go! Don,t you see we are comming right aboard the Capting's vessel!"

But "Aminidab" pulled the harder, and fairly took a turn with the sheet about a belaying pin.

The English officer was about to pour out upon him a volley of oaths, seeing that the sloop would certainly fall foul of him, he turned to give orders for the protection of his own vessel, but ere he could utter them, the sloop's bows struck her near the fore rigging, and swung round stern with stern. At the same instant, the American officer stamped on the deck, and forty armed men made their appearance from the hatches, forecastle and cabin, and leaped after Percival upon the tender's deck.—The Englishman, taken by surprise, surrendered without scarcely striking a blow; and getting both vessels under sail, in the very sight of the frigate, the gallant young captor sailed with his prize back into harbor, and safely anchored her on the Battery, after an absence of six hours and twenty seven minutes.

This exploit is doubtless one of the boldest and most spirited affairs that came off during the war. *The* account given above is a faithful narrative of the transaction, and the chief circumstances will be recognized both by the brave officer in question, as well as by his friends.

COMMODORE STEWART has published a manly vindication of himself and Com. BAINBRIDGE from the imputations cast upon them by Mr. C. J. INGERSOLL in his History of the last War. It appears in the New York Courier of Saturday. Our readers will recollect Mr. Ingersoll's statement that the Government in 1812 was not willing to have our national ships go to sea, since it would be, as was supposed, merely to expose them to capture. The two Commodores, BAINBRIDGE and STEWART, being in Washington when this determination was made known, remonstrated against it, and finally succeeded in prevailing upon Mr. MADISON and his Cabinet to send the ships to sea. Mr. INGERSOLL had got most of the facts pertaining to this matter from Com. STEWART; yet it seems that he could not narrate them without imputing selfish and sordid motives to the gallant officers whose patriotic sensibilities, strongly excited on the occasion referred to, prompted them to efforts which resulted so gloriously for their country. The following passages are taken from Mr. Ingersoll's history.

"*It was the mere remonstrance of a couple of naval officers against being deprived of their livelihood*, which prevented the flag so gloriously triumphant in every sea from being veiled before that of Great Britain," &c. &c.

"Stewart had built a privateer called the "Snapper, eventually commanded by Captain Peregrine Green, and captured as soon as she cleared the Delaware Capes. "In that privateer, if deprived the authority "to go forth in frigates, these gentlemen "proposed to *seek their fortunes* on the "ocean, serving each in rotation as Captain "or first officer. *It was not with them, "therefore, matter of mere national character;* nor were they to be moved entirely by puerile or unselfish considerations. "*They wanted fortune as well as fame, "livelihood besides distinction. If the navy was laid up, they saw their occupation gone for all advancement and all acquisition.*"

This bears upon the face of it the marks of a gratuitous imputation. Commodore Stewart, upon seeing the foregoing, which appeared in the New York Courier before the book was published, wrote to Mr. Ingersoll regretting that the manuscript had not been submitted to him as was promised in May last. "Had I seen the manuscript," says the Commodore, "it would "have enabled me to correct several inaccuracies in your account of that affair; "and to have satisfied you that the motives "which you have assigned to Commodore "Bainbridge and myself for our course on "that occasion, *have no foundation in "truth, but quite the reverse was the "case.* We had both, but a short time previous, returned home from our mercantile enterprises, which we had been prosecuting "for more than four years, (on furlough) "in various parts of the world, *having "each of us realized a fortune ample "enough for all our purposes.*"

The following narrative by Commodore STEWART will be found interesting:

"On the 19th June, 1812, setting out from Philadelphia for Washington, in the stage, I was unexpectedly joined by Commodore Bainbridge, whom I supposed at his command, the Charlestown or Boston Navy Yard; but he was also on his way to Washington. We arrived at Baltimore the same night, and *we there learned, for the first time, of the Declaration of War by Congress on the previous day.* The next day we proceeded to the seat of Government. On the 21st of June we made an official call on the Secretary of the Navy. On entering the room of the Chief Clerk, Mr. CHARLES W. GOLDSBOROUGH, he arose from the desk at which he was engaged, with a paper in his hand, and expressed great gratification at our arrival in Washington at so opportune a moment, saying that war was declared, and that he wished us to read the paper he was holding, before he went to the Secretary. I read it with attention, but extreme mortification, and handing it to Bainbridge observed, "this blasts all hopes for the Navy." Bainbridge's manner when excited was remarkable; and on this occasion, as on all occasions when his indignation was aroused, with a vehemence which impeded his utterance, he exclaimed, "*Unto, unto, you will ruin the Navy if such be its destiny.*" This paper contained the orders which had just been drawn for *Commodore Rogers not to leave the waters of New York with his naval force.*

We then entered the Secretary's room, and were received by him with much kindness of manner. Mr. HAMILTON observed that war was declared, and that he was glad to see us there, as it had been decided by the President and the Cabinet to lay up our vessels of war in the harbor of New York; —that Mr. Gallatin had suggested that they would be useful there in defending the city and its adjacent waters from attacks of the enemy; that the guns were to be taken from one side of the ships and landed at the Batteries and wharves, to which the officers and men could eventually retreat, and there use the cannon in case they could no longer fight in the ships. To these arrangements for the guns, however feasible they might appear to persons unacquainted with the mode of using guns on board of a ship, we urged our objection respecting their carriages and management with tackles, for which there were no conveniences on the wharves or batteries, and expressed our sorrow and disappointment in learning from him, as well as by the orders preparing for Commodore Rodgers' squadron, that no other disposition was to be made of our naval force than for harbor defence: that we did hope, as war had at last been declared against England, a wide and glorious field would be opened to the Navy: that to meet and conquer those on their peculiar element with whom, and where, no other nation had been heretofore able to cope successfully, was an object of such high moment to the American Navy, that we still hoped it would not be lost. "Aye," replied the Secretary, "there will be no difficulty in meeting them; but to conquer men so practised in naval warfare, proud of their long glorious and distinguished services, may be found difficult. I do not wish to disparage our little Navy, but compared with the British Navy it must be considered in its infancy; unpractised, the midshipmen inexperienced, our seamen unaccustomed to blood and battle, in the carnage of an action they might become downcast and flinch; and in case of an accident to the Captain, might not the result differ from our hopes?" He continued: "In a contest, man to man, and gun to gun, with the most expert and best trained naval foe that ever existed, in constant practice, and with an experience of 18 years, how can we hope to be successful in battle with them? With every confidence in the skill of our Commanders, and in the courage of all, it should not be forgotten that the British Navy has triumphed over all the navies of Europe, and of nations, too, long skilled and practised in maritime warfare."

We did our best to answer these searching remarks of the Secretary, and what we said seemed to make a deep impression upon him. He rose from his chair, and observed that he would see if the President was at leisure, in order that we might communicate to him, in person, the views and information we had just set forth. A few moments after, we were summoned to the presence of Mr. MADISON. Mr. Hamilton desired us, for the information of the President, to answer the questions he proposed to put to us. Mr. Madison *asked no questions*, but listened to what was said; then rising, he addressed Mr. Hamilton and said they ought not to despair of

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