

There was something melancholy and grand in the sight. Although the frigate was a wreck floating about, a mastless hulk for the sport of the waves, she bore marks of her former greatness. Much of her ornamental work had been untouched; and her long, high, black sides rose in solitary majesty before us, as we bade her farewell ... her years were now ended; her course was run; she was about to sink into the deep ocean forever.

Captain Dacres stood by our taffrail as we squared away from the Guerriere.... At the distance of about three miles we hove to and awaited the result. Hundreds of eyes were stretched in that one direction, where the ill-fated Guerriere moved heavily on the deep. It was like waiting for the uncapping of a volcano — or the bursting up of a crater. Scarcely a word was spoken on board the Constitution, so breathless was the interest felt in the scene.

The first intimation we had that the fire was at work was the discharge of the guns. One after another, as the flame advanced, they came booming toward us. Roar followed roar, flash followed flash, until the whole mass was enveloped in clouds of smoke. We could see but little of the direct progress of the work, and therefore we looked more earnestly for the explosion — not knowing how soon it might occur. Presently there was a dead silence; then followed a vibratory, shuddering motion, and streams of light, like streaks of lightning running along the sides; and the grand crash came! The quarter deck, which was immediately over the magazine, lifted in a mass, broke into fragments, and flew in every direction. The hull, parted in the center by the shock, and loaded with such masses of iron and spars, reeled, staggered, plunged forward a few feet, and sank out of sight.

It was a grand and awful scene. Nearly every floating thing around her went down with the Guerriere ... We immediately squared away, and were again under a crowd of sail for our native land.