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Edgar Stanton Maclay

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Introduction: It is seldom that the "inside history". of our navy has been so interestingly revealed as it is in the journal and private papers of the late Rear-Admiral Stephen Decatur Trenchard, and his father Captain Edward Trenchard. There are many acts of heroism, many thrilling episodes, and many romances wrapped up in the private lives of our officers which have not been made public, and are known only to a few of their most intimate messmates. The records left by the two Trenchards, covering eighty years of service in the United States Navy, are singularly rich in romance and in details of historic interest. It is, in truth, an "inside history" of the navy for the period covered. Both the Trenchards were careful writers, and had a keen eye to matters of human interest. The journal and various notes of a cruise for the suppression of the slave trade on the coast of Africa left by the elder Trenchard are replete with stirring events, while the extensive journals of the younger Trenchard, kept while on his cruise in the China Sea, and during his remarkable career as commander of the United States cruiser Rhode Island in the four years of the Civil War, together with their letters and correspondence, throw a flood of light on a side of our navy's career which has been kept too much in the dark.