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National Cipher Challenge 8 Part A

Vanguard, off the Mouth of the Nile, third August, seventeen ninety eight.

My Lord,

Almighty God has blessed his Majesty's Arms in the late Battle, by a great Victory over the Fleet of the Enemy, whom I attacked at sunset on the first of August, off the Mouth of the Nile. It may be true, as remarked by Walsingham in his last, that "makynge war by means of money is of utmost import", but by gad Sir, making war by fire and wind quickens the spirit and nothing could withstand the Squadron your Lordship did me the honour to place under my command. Their high state of discipline is well known to you, and with the judgment of the Captains, together with their valour, and that of the Officers and Men of every description, it was absolutely irresistible. Could anything from my pen add to the character of the Captains, I would write it with pleasure, but that is impossible.

The Enemy were moored in a strong Line of Battle for defending the entrance of the Bay, flanked by numerous Gun-boats, four Frigates, and a Battery of Guns and Mortars on an Island in their Van. Under our guns The Ships of the Enemy, all but their two rear Ships, were nearly dismantled, and men of both sides watched in awe as L'Orient blew her powder room, taking with it all the hopes of that devil Napoleon. Though men fled the ship many were lost to the water or the fire and all trace of the conspiracy was consigned to the deep, presses, coins and the agents of the orient all lost in that most aptly named vessel. Captain Berry will present you with the Flag of the Second in Command, that of the Commander-in-Chief being burnt.

Martin was most impressed by the cunning methods employed by Walsingham in this his last letter. Enciphered by means of the autoclave, the initial key for the message shows much classical prescience given the fate of Marlowe. It seems that their story ends

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badly, as, it appears, do the lives of the Chinese agents on L'Orient. Let us pray that ours ends well.

*SIR HORATIO NELSON, K.B., REAR-ADMIRAL OF THE BLUE, ETC. IN ACTION WITH THE FRENCH, AT ANCHOR, ON THE firST OF AUGUS
NILE.*

NOTES