

A MAN, A DOG AND A BOTTLE

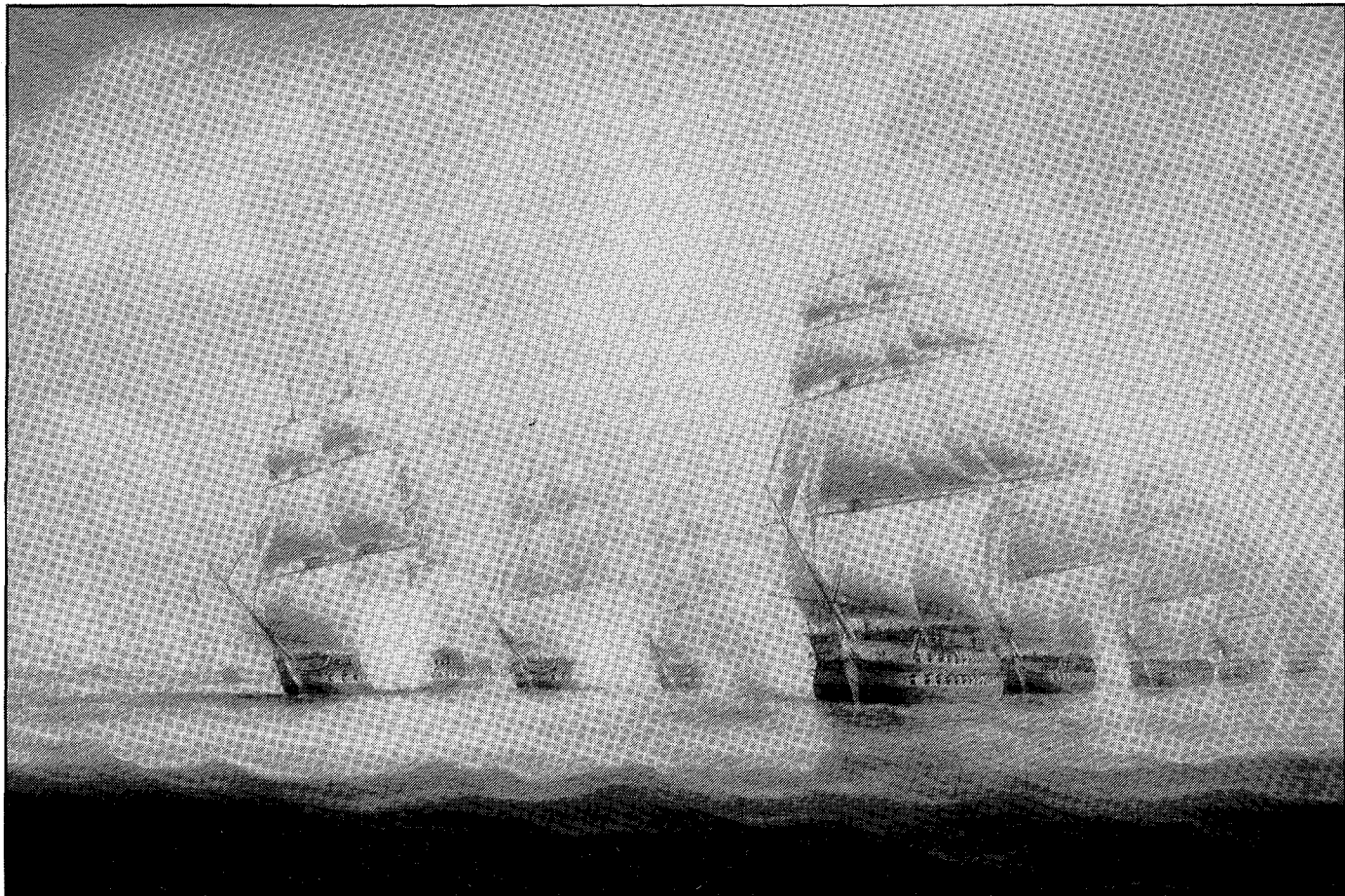
BY BRIAN HODKINSON

The following two extracts appear in the Recollections of J.A. Gardner in *The Navy Records Society*, Vol. 31, pages 47 and 51. James Anthony Gardner was born in Waterford in 1770-71 and, in the mid-1780s, was serving as midshipman and master's mate in Vice Admiral John Campbell's flagship, *the Salisbury*, on the Newfoundland and Home stations, when the events described opposite occurred. The recollections were written in the 1830s, after he retired from the navy.

We had a drunken Irishman by the name of Collins, who, when sent to the hospital at St. John's (Newfoundland), contrived to get liquor in spite of all precaution to prevent it. At last it was found out by the following circumstance. He had one of those dogs that could do anything but speak. He used to sling a bottle round his neck and then put a shilling in his mouth and send him off in the evening. The dog knew well where to go, for he had been often there with Collins. It was to a public-house between the hospital and St. John's. He'd howl as soon as he got there; the landlord knew well what he wanted, and would fill the bottle with rum. The dog would then drop the shilling but not before, and scamper off to return to his

master; not at the gate of the hospital – he was too cunning for that – but like a Roman conqueror, through a hole in the wall; when one night he was discovered by the watch going their rounds, and by that means the business was brought to light. From the ingenuity of the master and his dog, both escaped punishment.

One of those fellows, Darby Collins, who had the dog that I have mentioned at the hospital – did positively beat at the back of the Point, Portsmouth, eleven men by cracking their heads at single-stick one after the other. He was a tall raw-boned Irishman, a Garry-owen boy that stood up manfully for the honour of his country.



British Navy ships in action, c. 1800, by Thomas Buttersworth.