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# HISTORY · OF · THE · NAVY

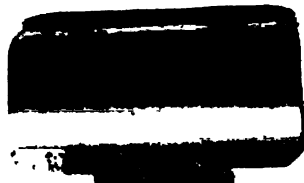


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A HISTORY OF  
THE UNITED STATES NAVY

VOLUME II







*In the Monitor's turret.*

# A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

FROM 1775 TO 1901

BY

EDGAR STANTON MACLAY, A. M.

AUTHOR OF A HISTORY OF AMERICAN PRIVATEERS  
REMINISCENCES OF THE OLD NAVY  
EDITOR OF THE JOURNAL OF WILLIAM MACLAY  
(U. S. Senator from Pennsylvania, 1789-1791)

WITH TECHNICAL REVISION BY  
LIEUTENANT ROY CAMPBELL SMITH, U. S. N.

NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II

*ILLUSTRATED*



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**May, 1901.**

NOTE TO VOLUME II OF THE EDITION  
OF 1898.

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IN the present edition of this work the second volume has undergone important changes. Some new chapters have been added, among them, Attack on the *Wyoming*, Cruising against Slavers, and Sea Power in the Civil War. Many items of minor importance have been incorporated in the text, and some of the first accounts of naval occurrences have been elaborated.

The author realizes that the history of our navy is a subject of vast and rapidly increasing importance in the estimation of the American people, and he would be glad to receive any additional suggestions or items of interest bearing on it, so that they may be used in future editions. Our navy is pre-eminently a growing navy, and a comprehensive record of it must necessarily keep pace with its growth.

E. S. M.

OLD FIELD POINT,  
SETAUKET, LONG ISLAND, N. Y.,  
*May 1, 1898.*





# CONTENTS.

## PART FOURTH.

### MINOR WARS AND EXPEDITIONS—1815-1861.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### WAR WITH ALGIERS.

	PAGE
England's Mediterranean policy—Hostility of Algiers—Two squadrons sail for the Mediterranean—Defenses of Algiers—Capture of the <i>Mashouda</i> and the <i>Estido</i> —Decatur brings the Dey to terms—Off Tripoli and Tunis—Sad loss of the <i>Épervier</i> —O. H. Perry before Algiers—Our cruisers in the Mediterranean . . . .	8-22

#### CHAPTER II.

##### SUPPRESSION OF PIRACY.

Growth of piracy—Death of O. H. Perry—Active operations against the pirates—Death of Lieutenant Allen—Attack on the <i>Fox</i> —Young Farragut's account—Capturing piratical craft—The Foxardo affair—Cutting out the <i>Federal</i> —Tattnall off Matamoras—The Greek pirates—Our war ships at Naples . . . .	23-43
--	-------

#### CHAPTER III.

##### QUALLA BATTOO.

Treacherous attack on the <i>Friendship</i> —Murder of her crew—Her recapture—The <i>Potomac</i> on the scene—Capture of Qualla Battoo . . . .	44-61
--	-------

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### CRUISING AGAINST SLAYERS.

Audacity of slavers—Experience of the <i>Contest</i> —Important capture by the <i>Cyane</i> —M. C. Perry's experience with King Crack O—The <i>Louisa Beaton</i> —The <i>Chatsworth</i> . . . .	62-71
---	-------

## CHAPTER V.

## CONQUEST OF CALIFORNIA.

	PAGE
Captain Thomas ap C. Jones occupies Monterey—Arrival of a British squadron—Capture of Los Angeles—Loss and recapture of that town—Battle of San Gabriel—Battle of Mesa . . . . .	72-87

## CHAPTER VI.

## IN THE GULF OF CALIFORNIA.

Gallant boat service—Capture of Guaymas and Mazatlan—Heroic defense of the mission house—The relief of Heywood . . . . .	88-98
--	-------

## CHAPTER VII.

## WAR IN THE MEXICAN GULF.

First failures—Capture of Frontera and Tabasco—At Tampico—Cutting out the <i>Creole</i> —Dangers of the climate—Bombardment and capture of Vera Cruz—Second attack on Tabasco . . . . .	99-118
---	--------

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE EXPEDITION TO JAPAN.

First attempts to open up Japan—Congress determines on a final attempt—M. C. Perry selected to command the expedition—Arrival in Japanese waters—Perry's splendid diplomacy—The President's letter delivered—Second visit of the American squadron—Success of the expedition . . . . .	119-132
--	---------

## CHAPTER IX.

## SCIENTIFIC AND EXPLORING EXPEDITIONS.

The Wilkes expedition—In seas of ice—A narrow escape—Cruising in the Pacific Ocean—On the coast of California—The Dead Sea expedition—Search for the Sir John Franklin explorers—In the Frozen North . . . . .	133-150
--	---------

## CHAPTER X.

## MINOR OCCURRENCES.

Tragedy in the <i>Somers</i> —The <i>St. Louis</i> and the <i>Hussar</i> —At the Barrier Forts—"Blood thicker than water"—Attack on Formosa—Trouble with Paraguay . . . . .	151-156
---	---------

## PART FIFTH.

## THE CIVIL WAR—1861—1865.

## CHAPTER I.

## BEGINNING OF HOSTILITIES.

	PAGE
Condition of the navy—Firing on Sumter—Rescue of the <i>Constitution</i> —Patrolling the Potomac—Capture of the <i>Judah</i> —The <i>Trent</i> affair—Cutting out the <i>Royal Yacht</i> —The <i>Rhode Island</i> and <i>Connecticut</i> —Affair of the <i>Jamestown</i> . . . . .	159-174

## CHAPTER II.

## HATTERAS AND PORT ROYAL.

Defenses of Hatteras Inlet—Bombardment of Forts Hatteras and Clark—Race on Hatteras Island—Loss of the <i>Fanny</i> —The Port Royal fleet—Off Port Royal—Dupont's plan of battle—Surrender of the enemy . . . . .	175-197
--	---------

## CHAPTER III.

## PAMLICO AND ALBEMARLE SOUNDS.

Defenses of Roanoke Island—The national fleet—Capture of Roanoke Island—Fight between the gunboats—Capture of New Berne— Bombardment of Fort Macon—Lieutenant Cushing's narrow es- cape . . . . .	198-217
--	---------

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE MERRIMAC IN HAMPTON ROADS.

Burning of Norfolk navy yard—Rebuilding the <i>Merrimac</i> —The Con- federate squadron enters the Roads—Sinking the <i>Cumberland</i> — The <i>Congress</i> on fire—Grounding of the <i>Minnesota</i> —Gloom in the North . . . . .	218-235
---	---------

## CHAPTER V.

## BUILDING THE MONITOR.

First ideas about the <i>Monitor</i> —Grave doubts about her worth—Im- aginary and real objections to the <i>Monitor</i> system—Origin of the name " <i>Monitor</i> "—Compared with the <i>Constitution</i> . . . . .	236-243
---	---------

## CHAPTER VI.

## IRON VERSUS IRON.

The <i>Monitor</i> nearly founders—Arrival in Hampton Roads—Battle be- tween the two ironclads—Ramming attempted—Worden disabled —Victory for the <i>Monitor</i> —Fate of the ironclads—Preparing for the second attack by the <i>Merrimac</i> —Loss of the <i>Monitor</i> . . . . .	244-266
---	---------

CHAPTER VII.

FORTS HENRY AND DONELSON.

Building a Western navy—Manning the gunboats—Skirmishing at Columbus—Bombardment of Fort Henry—Gallant fight of the gunboats—A lively chase up the Tennessee—Walke attacks Fort Donelson—Bombardment of the fort—Its surrender—The <i>Tyler</i> and the <i>Lexington</i> at Pittsburg Landing—Fitch on the Ohio . . . . .	PAGE 267-290
---	-----------------

CHAPTER VIII.

ISLAND NO. 10 AND MEMPHIS.

Defenses of Island No. 10—A night attack—The <i>Carondelet</i> runs the batteries—Battle of Fort Pillow—The great fight at Memphis—The attack on St. Charles . . . . .	291-305
--	---------

CHAPTER IX.

BLOCKADING THE MISSISSIPPI.

The affair at the Head of the Passes—The New Orleans expedition—David Glascoe Farragut—His arrival on the scene of operations—Defenses of New Orleans—The Confederate fleet—The bombardment by the mortar schooners—Daring night expeditions . . . . .	306-324
--	---------

CHAPTER X.

PASSING FORTS JACKSON AND ST. PHILIP.

A council of war—Farragut's line of battle—The ships under fire—Fire rafts—Great peril of the flagship—Between the forts—The ubiquitous ram <i>Manassas</i> —Above the forts—Fall of New Orleans . . . . .	325-349
--	---------

CHAPTER XI.

OPERATION ON WESTERN RIVERS.

Farragut's great task—He passes the Vicksburg batteries—Walke's desperate battle with the ram <i>Arkansas</i> —The <i>Arkansas</i> runs the gantlet of the national fleet—Farragut fights the ram under Vicksburg's guns—Destruction of the ram—The new ironclads—Attack on Arkansas Post and St. Charles—Loss of the <i>Queen of the West</i> —Loss of the <i>Indianola</i> —Repulse at Fort Pemberton . . . . .	350-373
---	---------

CHAPTER XII.

THE MISSISSIPPI OPENED.

Farragut passes Port Hudson—Sinking of the <i>Lancaster</i> —Porter passes Vicksburg—Attack on Grand Gulf—River skirmishing—Donaldsonville—The Red River expedition—Bache's spirited at-	
--	--

	PAGE
tack—Captain S. P. Lee in command—Minor occurrences on the Western rivers . . . . .	874-886

## CHAPTER XIII.

## ATTACK ON THE WYOMING.

Preparations of the Japanese—Land and naval defenses—Attacks on the French and Dutch—McDougal's splendid dash—Complete victory of the Americans . . . . .	887-896
---	---------

## CHAPTER XIV.

## OFF MOBILE BAY.

First action off Mobile—Building the ironclad <i>Tennessee</i> —The Confederate squadron—An attempted night attack—Defenses of Mobile—Farragut's instructions—On the eve of the great battle, 397-407	
---	--

## CHAPTER XV.

## FARRAGUT PASSES FORT MORGAN.

The night before the battle—The great fleet under way—The <i>Hartford</i> opens fire—Lashing Farragut to the rigging—Sinking of the <i>Tecumseh</i> —Craven's nobility—Ensign Neilds' gallantry—The monitor <i>Winnebago</i> in action—Commander Thomas Holdup Stevens in action—Dreadful carnage in the <i>Hartford</i> —"Damn the torpedoes!"—Confusion in the line—The <i>Tennessee</i> in the fight—Ramming the Confederate ironclad—Critical position of the <i>Onesida</i> —Heroic officers . . . . .	408-495
---	---------

## CHAPTER XVI.

## ABOVE THE MOBILE FORTS.

Chase of the Confederate gunboats—Jouett takes the <i>Selma</i> —A lull in the battle—"Follow them up, Johnston!"—Preparing for the final struggle—Buchanan singles out the <i>Hartford</i> —Ramming the <i>Tennessee</i> —The monitors in close action—National ships in collision—Surrender of the <i>Tennessee</i> —Losses and injuries—Caring for the wounded—Gallant officers—Attack on Fort Spanish—Losses from torpedoes . . . . .	436-456
---	---------

## CHAPTER XVII.

## OPERATIONS OFF CHARLESTON.

Raid of the <i>Palmetto State</i> and the <i>Chicora</i> —First and second attacks on Fort McAllister—The defenses of Charleston—Ironclads attack Charleston—The <i>Weehawken-Atlanta</i> fight—Attack on Fort Wagner—A boat expedition against Fort Sumter—Loss of the <i>Housatonic</i> —Surrender of Charleston . . . . .	457-474
--	---------

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE RAM ALBEMARLE.

	PAGE
Importance of the North Carolina sounds—Building the <i>Albemarle</i> —The ram's attack on the <i>Southfield</i> and <i>Miami</i> —Battle between the national gunboats and the ram—Roe's splendid dash—Lieu- tenant William Barker Cushing—Attempts to blow up the ram —Cushing's daring attack—Its complete success—Capture of Plymouth . . . . .	475-490

## CHAPTER XIX.

## ATLANTIC AND GULF COAST.

Difficulties of the blockade—Port Royal Island—Patrolling Southern waters—A reverse at Galveston and Saline Pass—In Virginia waters—Fort Fisher—Capture of Wilmington . . . . .	491-507
---	---------

## CHAPTER XX.

## CONFEDERATE CRUISERS.

Careers of the <i>Sumter</i> and <i>Florida</i> —Maffitt's daring—Stevens chases the <i>Florida</i> —Maffitt arms his prizes—Catching an Amazon— Collins captures the <i>Florida</i> —English "neutrality"—The <i>Rap- pahannock</i> —Career of the <i>Georgia</i> —Narrow escape from burn- ing—Her capture by the <i>Niagara</i> —Great damage inflicted by the <i>Shenandoah</i> —The <i>Stonewall Jackson</i> —Other Confederate cruisers . . . . .	508-523
--	---------

## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE KEARSARGE-ALABAMA FIGHT.

Fitting out the <i>Alabama</i> —Eluding national cruisers—The <i>Hatteras</i> sunk by the <i>Alabama</i> —The <i>Alabama</i> cruises in the South At- lantic and in the East Indies—Puts into Cherbourg—Compared with the <i>Kearsarge</i> —Winslow waits for the <i>Alabama</i> —The great battle—American gunnery wins—English "international" law . . . . .	523-534
---	---------

## CHAPTER XXII.

## BLOCKADE RUNNERS.

Southern dependence on European markets—Effectiveness of torpedo warfare—Confederate privateering promptly checked—Develop- ment of blockade running—English ports the center—Difficulties of blockade running—"Tricks of the trade"—The <i>Charlotte</i> and <i>Stag</i> —Chase of the <i>Kate</i> —Some clever captures—Breck's gallant exploit—British naval officers as blockade runners—English sym- pathy (and something more) for the South . . . . .	535-548
--	---------

CHAPTER XXIII.

SEA POWER IN THE CIVIL WAR.

	PAGE
Historical review—Strategetical importance of the Mississippi River system—Value of these waters to Northern States—If the South had sea power—Navy indispensable . . . . .	549-559





## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
In the <i>Monitor's</i> turret . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Scene of the naval operations in the Mediterranean . . . . .	10
Scene of the naval operations on the Pacific Coast . . . . .	76
Scene of the naval operations in the Mexican Gulf . . . . .	100
Map of the United States . . . . .	163
Scene of the naval operations on the Potomac . . . . .	167
Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds . . . . .	179
Plan of the battle of Port Royal . . . . .	191
Dupont's circle of fire . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 194
Scene of operations on Roanoke Island . . . . .	199
Diagram of the battle of Hampton Roads . . . . .	225
Raking the <i>Congress</i> at every shot . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 230
<i>Monitor</i> and <i>Merrimac</i> . . . . .	250
Scene of the naval operations on the upper Mississippi . . . . .	274
Bombardment of Fort Henry . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 278
Ironclads attack Fort Donelson . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 284
Island No. 10 . . . . .	292
Commander Walke runs the batteries at Island No. 10 . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 298
Battle of Memphis . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 302
Kennon fires through his own bow . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 332
Farragut's fleet passing the forts . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 346
Scene of the naval operations on the Western rivers . . . . .	356
Map of Mobile Bay . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 398
Diagram of the battle of Mobile Bay . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 412
Farragut's fleet going into action . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 418
Battle of Mobile Bay . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 440
At close quarters . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 442
Diagram showing where the <i>Tennessee</i> was rammed . . . . .	445
Deck plan of the <i>Tennessee</i> and her appearance after the battle . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 452
Map of Charleston Harbor and vicinity . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 458

	PAGE
Ironclads attacking Fort Sumter . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 466
The Confederate ironclad <i>Allanta</i> . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 468
A typical ferry gunboat . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 495
Chasing a blockade runner . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 508
The last of the <i>Alabama</i> . . . . .	<i>Facing</i> 526

**PART FOURTH.**  
**MINOR WARS AND EXPEDITIONS.**  
**1815-1861.**





## CHAPTER I.

### WAR WITH ALGIERS.

MENTION has been made of England's Mediterranean policy, which was to encourage the Barbary States in piracy, so that by paying them an annual tribute and by the aid of her fleets her commerce was freed from molestation while that of weaker maritime nations was constantly exposed. In his Observations on the Commerce of the American States Lord Sheffield said: "The armed neutrality would be as hurtful to the great maritime powers as the Barbary States are useful. The Americans can not protect themselves from the latter; they can not pretend to a navy." A fair interpretation of these diplomatic words is given by Smollett in his history when he says: "The existence of Algiers and other predatory states which entirely subsist upon piracy and rapine, petty states of barbarous ruffians, maintained, as it were, in the midst of powerful nations, which they insult with impunity, and of which they exact an annual contribution, is a flagrant reproach upon Christendom; a reproach the greater, as it is founded upon a low, selfish, illiberal maxim of policy." By means of this policy Great Britain secured a monopoly of the Mediterranean carrying trade, at that time the most important in the world.

But England was mistaken, as she has been on other memorable occasions, as to the ability of the United States to defend itself. After three years of bloody war (1802-1805) we subdued the Barbary States and secured privileges that were denied to European pow-

ers, and in a short time the Yankee skipper was driving, "his diplomatic cousin" from the mercantile marts of the world. It was not to be expected that the English merchant would look upon his American rival with any degree of complacency, and he only awaited the opportunity to "knife" the dangerous competitor. The War of 1812 afforded this opportunity. The United States needed all its energies in the struggle for independence on the high seas, and, as the British merchant rightly conjectured, could not look after its interests in the Mediterranean. Immediately upon the declaration of war British emissaries informed the Barbary States that the United States as a maritime nation would be swept from the face of the earth, that its commerce would be annihilated, and that England would consent to peace only upon the stipulation that the United States forever afterward should build no ship of war heavier than a frigate. Stimulated by this assurance, and smarting under the punishment the United States had given them in 1805, the Barbary States assumed a hostile attitude.

No sooner had the Dey of Algiers learned of the declaration of war than he hastened to pick a quarrel with the American consul at Algiers, Tobias Lear. He suddenly remembered that the Americans measured time by the sun, while the Moors reckoned it by the moon, and peremptorily demanded the difference in tribute, which during the seventeen years the treaty had existed amounted to about half a year, or twenty-seven thousand dollars, in the Dey's favor. In view of the war with England, Mr. Lear acceded to the Dey's extortion; and that potentate, relying upon the assurance that the United States navy would be annihilated, soon found another pretext for dissatisfaction. He complained that the stores that were sent by the United States in the sailing ship *Alleghany*, in lieu of tribute money, were of inferior quality, and on the 25th of July, 1812, he said that "the consul must depart in

the *Alleghany*, as he would not have a consul in his regency who did not cause everything to be brought exactly as he had ordered.”<sup>1</sup> About this time two large ships laden with powder, shot, cables, anchors and naval stores, sufficient to equip the entire Algerian fleet, arrived at Algiers under the escort of an English man-of-war—a present from the British Government.

The Dey lost no time in sending his corsairs out in search of American merchant ships. Fortunately, most of our traders, on learning of the probability of a war with Great Britain, had sought places of safety, so that only one vessel, the brig *Edwin*, of Salem, commanded by George Smith, was captured. She was taken on the 25th of August, 1812, while running from Malta to Gibraltar, and her commander and crew, ten in all, were sold into slavery. The Dey's buccaneers, in their eagerness to enslave Americans, even boarded a vessel sailing under Spanish colors, and took from her a Mr. Pollard, of Virginia, and held him in bondage also. Tripoli and Tunis, on the assurance of British agents that the United States navy would be swept from the seas in less than six months, allowed four prizes of the American privateer *Abellino*, which had been sent into their ports, to be recaptured by British cruisers. Our little navy was so occupied with its fight against the mistress of the ocean that these outrages could not be attended to immediately, but the Government secretly sent an agent to Spain to act in behalf of the friends of the captives and offered a ransom of three thousand dollars for each of them. The Dey rejected the offer, and defiantly expressed his determination of increasing the number of captives before entering upon negotiations.

English predictions relative to the United States, from the 4th of July, 1776, to the present day, have been an almost unbroken list of disappointments. The case

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lear's report to the Secretary of State, July 29, 1812.



in hand is one of them. When the British agent informed the Dey of Algiers that "the American flag would be swept from the seas, the contemptible navy of the United States annihilated and its maritime arsenals reduced to a heap of ruins," he had, apparently, good grounds for that belief. That a navy of seventeen efficient vessels, mounting fewer than four hundred and fifty guns, could exist in the face of a thousand war ships carrying nearly twenty-eight thousand guns, was indeed one of the marvels of naval history. But at the close of that struggle the United States navy had been increased to sixty-four vessels, mounting more than fifteen hundred guns, while the officers and crews had been trained in the severe school of war, and had developed into as fine a naval *personnel* as ever sailed the sea. They had humiliated the haughtiest flag on the ocean with overwhelming disasters, and, flushed with victory and confident in their prowess, they were just in the humor for chastising the insolent Turks of Algiers.

Five days after the treaty with England had been proclaimed, or February 23, 1815, the President of the United States recommended that war be declared against Algiers. Two squadrons under the orders of Captain William Bainbridge were detailed on this service, the first assembling at Boston, and the second, commanded by Captain Stephen Decatur, at New York. It was a striking proof of the confidence the Government had in Captain Decatur, and how little it held him accountable for the loss of the *President*, that he was placed in this important command while the court-martial was still investigating the capture of his ship.

The squadron collected at New York was the first to get under way, sailing May 20th, and having on board William Shaler, consul general to the Barbary States, who, with Captains Bainbridge and Decatur, had full power to wage war or negotiate peace. The New

York squadron consisted of the 44-gun frigate *Guerrière*, Captain Stephen Decatur; the 38-gun frigate *Macedonian*, Captain Jacob Jones; the 36-gun frigate *Constellation*, Captain Charles Gordon; the 18-gun sloop of war *Épervier*, Master-Commandant John Downes; the 18-gun sloop of war *Ontario*, Master-Commandant Jesse D. Elliott; the 12-gun brig *Firefly*, Lieutenant George W. Rodgers; the 12-gun brig *Flambeau*, Lieutenant John B. Nicholson; the 12-gun brig *Spark*, Lieutnant Gamble; the 10-gun schooner *Spitfire*, Lieutenant A. J. Dallas; and the 10-gun schooner *Torch*, Lieutenant Wolcott Chauncey; total, ten vessels, mounting two hundred and ten guns. At the request of Captain Decatur, all the surviving officers and men who had served under him in the *Chesapeake*, the *United States* and the *President* were permitted to sail in the *Guerrière*, and nearly all availed themselves of the opportunity.

It was no contemptible foe that the American fleet was directed against. The Algerian navy alone consisted of five frigates, six sloops of war, and one schooner; in all, twelve vessels, carrying three hundred and sixty guns—more than fifty per cent stronger than Decatur's squadron. Their frigates carried 18- and 12-pounders, while their sloops were armed with 12-, 9- and 6-pounders. Their vessels were well equipped and manned, and their crews were thoroughly trained in modern warfare. The Algerian admiral, Rais Hammida, was the terror of the Mediterranean. He came from the fierce race of Kabyle mountaineers, who routed with great slaughter the French army under General Trezel, and again defeated the French under General Valée. Hammida had risen from the lowest to the highest place in the Algerian navy. It was he who captured, by boarding in broad daylight, a Portuguese frigate within sight of Gibraltar, and again, in 1810, with three frigates, boldly offered battle to a Portuguese ship of the line and three frigates off the Rock

of Lisbon. Soon afterward he captured a Tunisian frigate, under the command of an admiral, in single-ship action.

*Comparative forces.*

American fleet : 10 vessels, mounting 210 guns.

Algerian fleet : 12 vessels, mounting 360 guns.

Besides this formidable naval force, the city of Algiers itself was strongly fortified. It was built on the slope of a hill in the shape of a triangle, the base of which, a mile long, fronted the sea, while the sides rose like a pyramid, the apex being crowned by the casbah—the ancient citadel of the deys—five hundred feet above sea level. The harbor, formed by an artificial mole, was defended by double and triple rows of heavy batteries, mounting two hundred and twenty guns. The town was protected by walls of immense thickness and mounted heavy guns, so that over five hundred pieces of ordnance bore upon the maritime approaches of the place. So strong were the defenses of this city that in the following year (1816), when England was compelled to act against the Barbary States, five ships of the line, five frigates, four bomb ketches and five gun brigs were deemed by the Lords of the Admiralty too small a force to send against it, while Lord Nelson, in a conversation with Captain Brisbane, mentioned twenty-five ships of the line as a requisite force.<sup>1</sup>

When a few days out Decatur's squadron encountered a violent gale, in which the *Firefly* sprung her masts and she was compelled to return to port. Afterward she joined Captain Bainbridge's squadron and went with it to the Mediterranean. The other vessels of Decatur's squadron continued on their course for the Azores. As the ships approached the coast of Portugal a careful lookout was maintained. Every sail was spoken to, and every inquiry made that might lead to the discovery of the Algerian squadron, which, it was

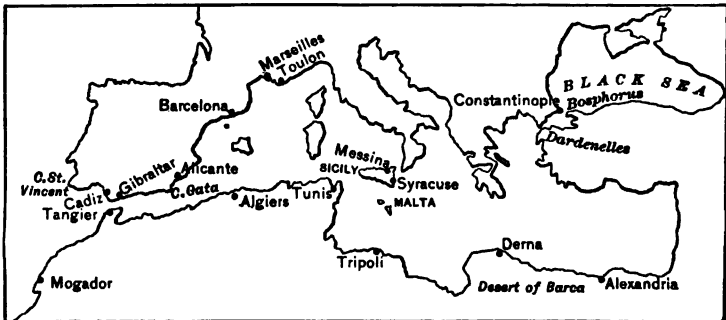
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<sup>1</sup> Life of Lord Exmouth, p. 309.

thought, might be cruising in the Atlantic for American merchantmen. Finding no traces of the enemy, Captain Decatur approached Cadiz to ascertain if Rais Hammida had passed the Straits of Gibraltar. Not wishing to make known the presence of an American naval force in these waters, he did not enter the port, but communicated with our consul by boat. It was learned that an Algerian squadron, consisting of three frigates and several smaller vessels, had been cruising in the Atlantic, but it was believed that it had passed into the Mediterranean. Still being in doubt as to the admiral's whereabouts, and wishing to take him by surprise, Captain Decatur arrived off Tangier June 15th, and from our consul at that port learned that Rais Hammida but two days before had passed the straits in the 46-gun frigate *Mashouda*, mounting 18- and 12-pounders, and was sailing up the Mediterranean with the intention of touching at Carthage. Satisfied that he was on the right track, Decatur immediately headed for Gibraltar, where he anchored on the same day and learned that the Algerian ships had hove to off Cape Gata, waiting for a tribute of half a million dollars which Spain was to pay for the continuation of peace.

Scarcely had the American squadron arrived at Gibraltar when a dispatch boat was observed getting under way, and upon inquiry it was found that it was making for Cape Gata to notify Rais Hammida of the presence of an American squadron. Soon afterward other boats were seen making off in the direction of Algiers, evidently for the purpose of warning the Dey. Well knowing how easily the Moorish ships could elude him by running into some neutral port should they be warned of their danger, Captain Decatur promptly made sail again, hoping to come upon the admiral before the swift dispatch boats could reach him, and with a fair breeze the American ships stood up the Mediterranean. On the following night (June

16th) the *Macedonian* and the brigs were sent in chase of several sails that were descried inshore, so that by daylight the squadron had become widely scattered. In the early dawn of the 17th, when the vessels were nearly abreast of Cape Gata, twenty miles from land, the *Constellation* discovered a large ship flying the flag of the grand admiral, and Captain Gordon signaled "An enemy to the southeast." Every precaution was taken to conceal the nationality of the American ships, as the Algerian had several miles the start and was within thirty hours of Algiers. Accordingly the *Constellation* was ordered back to her position on the beam of the flagship, while the other vessels quietly hauled up toward the unsuspecting Moor. The stranger was soon made out to be a frigate headed toward the African coast, lying to under her three topsails, with



*Scene of the naval operations in the Mediterranean in 1815.*

the maintopsail to the mast, evidently waiting for some communication from the shore. Master-Commandant Lewis asked permission to make sail and chase, but Decatur rightly conjectured that the news of his arrival in the Mediterranean had not reached the Algerian, so he gave the signal, "Do nothing to excite suspicion," and continued to bear down on the Moor.

In this manner the ships gradually drew near, carefully concealing all signs of hostility, as it was thought

that they would be taken for a British squadron. While they were still a mile from the chase, the *Constellation*, by some mistake of a quartermaster, hoisted American colors. To counteract this the *Guerrière* and all the other vessels showed English flags. But the mischief had been done. In an instant the Moor's rigging was swarming with men, and in an incredibly short time she was under a cloud of canvas and headed for Algiers. "Quicker work," remarked a spectator, "was never done by better seamen." The rigging of the American cruisers was now also alive with activity. Men were running up the shrouds and swinging out on the yards from dizzy heights; orders were shouted from the quarter-deck to be echoed by the shrill piping of the boatswain's whistle; all was hurry and seeming confusion—a startling contrast to the quiet that had pervaded the squadron but a moment before. Soon the great frigates were bowing under mountains of white canvas, the noise and confusion had subsided as suddenly as it arose, and the silence on their decks was disturbed only by the waves which, hurled back from the bows, dashed themselves against the sides of the ship. Every sail that would hold the wind was set, for Decatur feared that the Moor might elude him in the coming night, or gain a neutral port. The *Constellation*, being the southernmost ship in the squadron and nearest to the enemy, soon opened fire at long range, and several of her shot were seen to fall aboard the chase. Finding that he could not escape on this tack, the Moor suddenly came about and headed northeast, with a view of running into Carthage. The pursuing ships promptly followed the manœuvre, and the change brought the *Ontario* into such a position that she was obliged to cross the enemy's course about a quarter of a mile distant. But the *Guerrière*, passing between the *Constellation* and the *Épervier*, bore down to close.

As the American flagship came within range the Turks opened fire, and the musketry soon became ef-

fective, wounding a man at the *Guerrière's* wheel and injuring several others. Decatur, however, reserved his fire until his ship just cleared the enemy's yard-arms, when he poured in a full broadside. The havoc among the Algerians was awful. Their admiral, Rais Hammida, who had been wounded by a shot from the *Constellation* and refused to go below, and was resting on a couch on the quarter-deck, animating his men, was literally cut in two by a 42-pound shot. The *Guerrière's* men coolly loaded again, and before the smoke had cleared away they poured in a second broadside. At this second fire one of her main-deck guns burst, shattering the spar deck above and killed three men and wounded seventeen.

No signal of surrender had yet been made by the Turks, but a few of their men in the tops bravely remained at their posts and continued the action until shot down by American marines. Not wishing to shed blood unnecessarily, Decatur passed ahead and took a position off the enemy's bow, where he was out of range. Availing themselves of this, the Mussulmans put their helm up and endeavored to escape. This manœuvre placed the little 18-gun brig *Épervier* directly in the course of the huge Algerian; but, instead of getting out of the way, Master-Commandant Downes boldly opened his puny broadsides and took a position under the frigate's cabin ports, so that by skillfully backing and filling away he avoided a collision, and at the same time poured in nine broadsides, which compelled the enemy, after a running action of twenty-five minutes, to surrender. Decatur afterward remarked that he had never seen a vessel more skillfully handled, nor so heavy a fire kept up from one so small. The *Guerrière* now took possession, while Master-Commandant Lewis and Midshipmen Howell and Hoffman went aboard with the prize crew. The *Mashouda* had been severely cut up, and her decks presented a dreadful scene. Splashes of blood, fragments of the human body, pieces of torn

clothing and the general *débris* of battle were seen on all sides. Thirty out of a crew of four hundred and thirty-six men were killed or wounded, while four hundred and six prisoners were taken. The *Guerrière's* loss from the enemy's fire was three killed and eleven wounded.

In the afternoon after the capture Captain Decatur made a signal for all the officers of the squadron to come aboard the flagship. On being conducted to his cabin they found the table covered with Turkish daggers, scimiters, yataghans and pistols. Turning to Master-Commandant Downes, Captain Decatur said: "As you were fortunate in obtaining a favorable position and maintained it so handsomely, you shall have the first choice of these weapons." Each of the other officers selected some memento of the fight, in the order of their rank. The *Mashouda* was sent to Carthage under the escort of the *Macedonian*, while the remainder of the squadron, after taking prisoners aboard, set out in search of the other Algerian vessels, which were thought to be in the vicinity.

On the 19th of June, while they were approaching Cape Palos, a suspicious brig was sighted, and the American ships immediately gave chase, while the stranger made every effort to get away. After a hard run of three hours the brig suddenly ran into shoal water, where the frigates could not follow, but the *Épervier*, the *Spark*, the *Torch* and the *Spitfire* continued the pursuit and soon opened fire. Upon this the brig, still keeping up a running fire, ran ashore between the towers of Estacio and Albufera (which had been erected on the coast for the purpose of observing the approach of Barbary pirates in their kidnaping expeditions), and the Moors took to their boats, one of which was sunk by shot from the pursuing vessels. The Americans took possession and secured eighty-three prisoners. The prize proved to be the Algerian 22-gun brig *Estido*, with a crew of one hundred and



eighty men, twenty-three of whom were found dead on her decks. The prize was floated off and sent with the prisoners into Carthage.

Captain Decatur, supposing that the remaining Algerian vessels would make for Algiers, determined to sail for that port in the hope of cutting them off. A council of the officers was called, which resolved that this was the time for securing a treaty with the Dey, and it was decided to blockade the squadron and bombard the town if he failed to come to terms. On the 28th of June the squadron appeared before Algiers, and on the following morning the *Guerrière* displayed a white flag at the fore and Swedish colors at the main—a signal for the Swedish consul, Mr. Norderling, to come aboard. About noon the consul arrived, accompanied by the Algerian captain of the port. Decatur asked the latter what had become of the Algerian squadron, to which the port captain replied, "By this time it is safe in some neutral port." "Not the whole of it," responded Decatur, "for we have captured the *Mashouda* and the *Estido*." The Moor discredited the information, until a lieutenant of the *Mashouda*, emaciated and weak from his wounds, stepped forward and confirmed the news. Greatly affected, and trembling for the remainder of the squadron, the Moor intimated that peace might be negotiated, and inquired what terms were demanded. A letter from the President of the United States to the Dey was handed to him, in which the only conditions of peace were the absolute relinquishment of all claim to tribute in the future and a guarantee that American commerce would not be molested by Algerian corsairs. The captain of the port suggested that the commissioners should land according to custom, and then enter upon the negotiations, but as his real object was to gain time this was promptly rejected, and Decatur insisted that the treaty be negotiated on board the *Guerrière* or not at all. The Moor then went ashore to convey the news to his master.

On the following day, June 30th, the captain of the port boarded the *Guerrière* with full powers to negotiate. Decatur had determined to strike a mortal blow at their system of piracy, and he gave as the only terms that all Americans in the possession of Algiers be given up without ransom, all their effects (which long since had been distributed) be made good in money, Christians escaping to American vessels should not be returned, the sum of ten thousand dollars should be paid to the owners of the *Edwin*, and from this time the relations between the two nations be precisely the same as those between all civilized nations. The Moor urged that it was not the present Dey who had declared war against the United States, but Hadji Ali, who for his great cruelty had been surnamed the "Tiger," and that he had been assassinated March 23d, and his Prime Minister, who had succeeded him, had been murdered April 18th; that Omar Pasha, the present Dey, who for his great courage had won the title of "Omar the Terrible," had no agency in the war and was not accountable for the acts of his predecessors. But Decatur was inexorable. The Algerian captain requested that a truce might be declared until he could lay the terms before the Dey, but this also was denied. He then asked for a truce of three hours, but Decatur replied: "Not a minute! If your squadron appears before the treaty is actually signed by the Dey, and before the American prisoners are sent aboard, I will capture it." In great trepidation the Moor hastened ashore, and it was understood that if his boat was observed returning to the *Guerrière* with a white flag in the bow it meant that the Dey had acceded to the terms.

When he had been absent about an hour an Algerian ship of war was discovered approaching from the east. It was filled with Turkish soldiers from Tunis. Decatur promptly ordered his vessels to be cleared for action, and, laying his Turkish scimiter and pistols on the capstan of the *Guerrière*, he called the men aft and

addressed them in his usual hearty style. But before the vessels could fairly get under way the port captain's boat was observed pulling energetically from the shore with a white flag in her bow. Somewhat vexed, Decatur waited for it, and when it was within hailing distance asked if the treaty had been signed and the prisoners released. He was answered in the affirmative, and soon the boat ran alongside and the captives were brought aboard. It was a pitiful sight to see these men, wasted and emaciated by their years of bondage, greeting their fellow-countrymen. Some of them lovingly kissed the American colors, others wept for joy, and some gave thanks to the Almighty for the unexpected deliverance.

In less than sixteen days from the time the squadron arrived on the scene of trouble a more advantageous treaty than had ever been made with a foreign power had been signed by the Dey, and all the demands of the American Government were complied with. After signing the treaty the Dey's Prime Minister reproachfully said to the British consul: "You told us that the Americans would be swept from the seas in six months by your navy, and now they make war upon us with some of your own vessels which they have taken." The vessels referred to were the *Macedonian*, the *Épervier* and the (new) *Guerrière*.

The *Épervier*, Lieutenant John Templer Shubrick, was now sent to the United States with a copy of the treaty and the ten liberated captives. The little brig passed the Straits of Gibraltar on the 12th of July and never was heard from again. A vessel answering to her description was seen by the British West India fleet during a heavy gale, and as several of the merchantmen foundered in that storm it was thought possible that the *Épervier* might have been in collision with some of them. On board the lost man-of-war were Captain Lewis and Lieutenant Neale, who had married sisters on the eve of their departure for the Mediterranean and were now returning after the successful termination of

the war. Lieutenant Yarnell (who had distinguished himself in the battle of Lake Erie) and Lieutenant Drury also were aboard. Midshipman Josiah Tattnell, afterward commander of the celebrated *Merrimac*, was in the *Épervier* just before she sailed on her fatal voyage, but exchanged places with a brother officer in the *Constellation* who was desirous of returning home.

Captain Decatur now gave his attention to Tunis and Tripoli, which regencies had allowed the prizes of the American privateer *Abellino* to be seized by British cruisers. These towns also were strongly fortified and had a considerable naval force. The American squadron anchored before Tunis on the 28th of July, and with his usual promptness Captain Decatur informed the Bey that only twelve hours would be allowed him in which to pay forty-six thousand dollars for allowing the seizure of the *Abellino's* prizes by the British cruiser *Lyra*. Mordecai M. Noah, United States consul at that place, who conveyed the terms of the treaty to the Bey, describes the interview: " 'Tell your admiral to come and see me,' said the Bey. 'He declines coming, your Highness, until these disputes are settled, which are best done on board the ship.' 'But this is not treating me with becoming dignity. Hammuda Pasha, of blessed memory, commanded them to land and wait at the palace until he was pleased to receive them.' 'Very likely, Your Highness, but that was twenty years ago.' After a pause the Bey exclaimed: 'I know this admiral; he is the same one who, in the war with Sidi Jusef, of Trablis, burned the frigate' [the *Philadelphia*]. 'The same.' 'Hum! Why do they send wild young men to treat for peace with old powers? Then, you Americans do not speak the truth. You went to war with England, a nation with a great fleet, and said you took her frigates in equal fight. Honest people always speak the truth.' 'Well, sir, and that was true. Do you see that tall ship in the bay flying a blue flag? It is the *Guerrière*, taken from the Brit-

ish. That one near the small island, the *Macedonian*, was also captured by Decatur on equal terms. The sloop near Cape Carthage, the *Peacock*, was also taken in battle.' The Bey laid down the telescope, reposed on his cushions, and, with a small tortoise-shell comb set with diamonds, combed his beard. A small vessel got under way and came near the batteries; a pinnace with a few men rowed toward the harbor, and a man dressed in the garb of a sailor was taking soundings. It was Decatur."

The Bey decided to accept the terms, and afterward received Decatur with every mark of respect. A brother of the Prime Minister brought the money, and, turning angrily upon the British consul, said: "You see, sir, what Tunis is obliged to pay for your insolence. You should feel ashamed of the disgrace you have brought upon us. I ask you if you think it just, first to violate our neutrality and then leave us to be destroyed or pay for your aggressions?"

From this port Decatur proceeded to Tripoli, where he dropped anchor on the 5th of August, and with his usual straightforwardness came to the object of his mission. His terms with the Bashaw were thirty thousand dollars for the two prizes of the *Abellino* seized by the British cruiser *Paulina*, a salute of thirty-one guns from the Bashaw's castle to the flag at the American consulate, and that the negotiations take place in the *Guerrière*. At first the Bashaw put on a bold front, and, assembling his twenty thousand Arabs, manned his batteries and threatened to declare war; but when he heard of the treatment Algiers and Tunis had received he promptly changed his demeanor, the more speedily when he observed the American squadron making preparations to renew the scenes of the bombardment of 1804. The Governor of Tripoli boarded the *Guerrière* with full power to negotiate. On the assurance of the American consul that twenty-five thousand dollars would cover the loss of the prizes,

Decatur consented to this reduction, provided that ten Christians held by the Bashaw as slaves be released. "Two of these slaves were Danish youths, countrymen of the worthy Mr. Nissen, who had been so indefatigable in exercising kind offices toward the officers of the *Philadelphia* while they were captives in Tripoli. The others were Sicilians, being a gentleman with his wife and children who had been captured together and involved in one common misfortune."<sup>1</sup> These conditions having been acceded to by the Bashaw and the money handed over, the *Guerrière's* band was landed, and treated the natives to a purely American rendering of "Hail, Columbia!"

Having adjusted the difficulties with the Barbary States in true man-of-war style, Decatur sailed for Sicily and landed the captives, and the rest of the squadron made for Gibraltar. While the *Guerrière* was beating down the coast from Carthagen alone, against a moderate breeze, she met the remainder of the Algerian squadron, which had put into Malta. Fearing that the treacherous Moors might be tempted to renew hostilities under such favorable circumstances, Captain Decatur cleared for action, and, collecting his crew on the quarter-deck, addressed them as follows: "My lads, those fellows are approaching us in a threatening manner. We have whipped them into a treaty, and if the treaty is to be broken let them break it. Be careful of yourselves. Let any man fire without orders at the peril of his life. But let them fire first if they will, and we'll take the whole of them." The crew was sent back to quarters and all was expectation and silence, while care was taken not to approach too near the primed and leveled guns, lest they might be accidentally discharged. On came the Algerian ships in line of battle, seven in all—four frigates and three sloops. They passed close to the *Guerrière* in ominous

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<sup>1</sup> Mackenzie's Life of Decatur, p. 278.

silence, until their last ship, the admiral's, drew near and hailed, "Dove andante?" (Where are you going?) To this Decatur defiantly, replied "Dove mi piace" (Where it pleases me). Nothing followed this gruff retort, and the ships continued on their courses.

On the 6th of October Captain Decatur's squadron assembled at Gibraltar, where it found the vessels under Captain Bainbridge: the 74-gun ship of the line *Independence*, the 44-gun frigate *United States*, the 36-gun frigate *Congress*, the 18-gun sloop of war *Erie*, the 16-gun brig *Boxer*, the 16-gun brig *Chippewa*, the 16-gun brig *Saranac*, the 12-gun schooner *Enterprise*, the 12-gun brig *Firefly* and the 5-gun sloop *Lynx*. The imposing appearance presented by the two squadrons united at England's impregnable stronghold so soon after the cessation of hostilities occasioned no little chagrin in the British garrison, and caused some merriment among the Spanish and foreign residents. They took delight in pointing out the *Guerrière*, the *Macedonian*, the *Épervier* and the *Boxer*—names long associated with British naval supremacy, but now calmly flying American colors under the frowning Rock of Gibraltar and before the sullen faces of its garrison. The frequent recurrence of such names as Java, Erie, Champlain, Peacock, Ontario, Penguin, Frolic, Reindeer, Avon, Cyane and Levant, gave rise to much ill feeling and brought about several duels. English officials had circulated a report that the Americans were not allowed to build ships of the line, but the appearance of the noble *Independence* contradicted them.

It was not to be expected that the Dey of Algiers, on reflection, would calmly submit to the unusual conditions of his American treaty without many regrets. Some of the consuls of European nations at Algiers also were mortified at the affair, and encouraged the Dey in the belief that "it was disgraceful to the Faithful to humble themselves before Christian dogs" in this manner. The discontent of the Dey was further increased by

the treaty that he succeeded in negotiating with Lord Exmouth, shortly after Decatur's squadron left Algiers. Notwithstanding the fact that the British squadron consisted of six line of battle ships, two frigates, three sloops of war, a bomb ship and several transports, he consented to pay nearly four hundred thousand dollars for twelve thousand Neapolitan and Sardinian captives. Encouraged by this "diplomatic victory" over Lord Exmouth, the Dey became bolder, and on the departure of the English ships, the American consul, William Shaler, had an audience with the Dey and gave him the copy of Decatur's treaty that had been ratified by the Senate and was brought out in the *Java*, Captain Oliver Hazard Perry. The Dey affected not to understand why it was necessary to "ratify" a treaty, and said he believed it to be unsatisfactory to the United States Government. He was indignant because a brig captured by Captain Decatur on the coast of Spain within the three-mile limit had been delivered up to the Spanish authorities. The Dey abruptly terminated the conference by remarking that the Americans "were unworthy of his confidence." The next day he refused to hold another audience with Mr. Shaler, and referred him to the vizier, who returned the ratified treaty with insulting expressions, upon which Mr. Shaler hauled down his flag and went aboard the *Java*. In anticipation of some trouble of this sort a squadron had been collected off Algiers: the 44-gun frigate *United States*, Captain John Shaw; the 36-gun frigate *Constellation* Captain Charles Gordon; the 44-gun frigate *Java*; the 18-gun sloop of war *Erie*, Master-Commandant William Crane; the 18-gun sloop of war *Ontario*, Master-Commandant John Downes. This squadron sailed from Port Mahon early in April and arrived before Algiers on the 8th of April. When the Americans heard of the action of the Dey they drew up their squadron in a position to bombard the Algerian war ships at the mole. Arrangements also were made for a night at-



tack. All the boats in the squadron, with twelve hundred volunteers, were divided into two flotillas, one of which was to attack the water battery and spike the guns while the other was to carry the land batteries. Ladders were prepared for scaling the walls, and cutlasses and boarding-pikes were sharpened. Captain Gordon was to command the expedition, and Captain Perry to be second in command. But on the night the attack was to be made the commander of a French frigate discovered the preparations and informed the Dey, who became so alarmed that he quickly came to terms, with renewed expressions of friendship, and the treaty was formally signed.

From Algiers the squadron visited Tripoli, Syracuse, Messina and Palermo. At the latter port it was learned that the Bey of Tunis also was dissatisfied with the conditions of Decatur's treaty, and on the 18th of June the squadron appeared at that port, upon which the Bey retracted his warlike utterances. The *United States*, the *Constellation*, the *Erie* and the *Ontario*, under the command of Captain Shaw, were now detailed for the Mediterranean squadron, while the remainder of the American fleet sailed for America in October. Shortly afterward the 74-gun ship of the line *Washington*, Captain Isaac Chauncey, arrived at Gibraltar and became the flagship of the squadron.

## CHAPTER II.

### SUPPRESSION OF PIRACY.

THE success of the United States in securing its independence of Great Britain encouraged the Spanish colonies in America to throw off the yoke of the mother country, and a long series of bloody wars followed. The process of revolutionizing governments, at best, is generally attended by acts of violence, and when undertaken by the ignorant and depraved people of the Spanish-American colonies it led to rapine and piracy. When the standard of rebellion was raised in these provinces adventurers and outlaws from many countries flocked to it, ostensibly to serve against Spain, but in reality attracted by the prospects of plunder.

Shortly after the second war between the United States and Great Britain the republics of Buenos Ayres and Venezuela commissioned swift-sailing vessels, manned by twenty-five to one hundred men, as privateers to prey on Spanish merchantmen. It was not long before these ships began to plunder vessels of neutral nations, and, as their first acts of violence were not promptly checked, piracy soon spread to an alarming extent. Like their *confrères* of the preceding century, who began their depredations with prayer, these "patriots afloat" at first went to sea with a religious benediction and were denominated "Brethren of the Coast." Piracy became so lucrative that the farmers and salt-makers living near the sea abandoned their calling and took to buccaneering. Concealing their boats and schooners in creeks and coves, they attacked unsuspecting merchantmen, plundered the vessels, and

after murdering the crews or setting them adrift, as the exigencies of the occasion required, they returned to their homes. If a man-of-war visited the scene of outrage, or the civil authorities made an investigation, the buccaneers suddenly resumed their original vocation, and in this guise gave false information. It was not long before the pirates had organized themselves into a secret service, by means of which messages as to the movements of cruisers and merchantmen were sent along the coast in an incredibly short time. The local authorities and some of the high officials connived at the nefarious practice, while many merchants in the large cities boldly announced that they dealt extensively in goods "at a peculiarly low figure." Although not every instance of piracy was attended by murder, yet there were many cases of wanton cruelty and cold-blooded butchery that the cheap novels have failed to exaggerate. A drifting hulk, with strong boxes broken open, the hold plundered, and here and there splashes of blood on the cabin furniture or bulwarks, and putrefying corpses scattered about the decks covered with sea birds feeding on the carrion, were the unmistakable evidences of their work.

The Government of the United States was anxious to maintain friendly relations with the republics of Buenos Ayres and Venezuela, which it had been the first to recognize, but at the same time reports of outrages on American merchantmen continued to come in with alarming frequency, and in 1819 Captain Oliver Hazard Perry was called upon to perform the delicate task of putting a stop to piracy while still retaining the good will of these republics. The *John Adams*, flagship, the *Constellation*, Master-Commandant Alexander Scammell Wadsworth, and the *Nonsuch*, Lieutenant Alexander Claxton, were detailed for this duty. The principal point to be obtained from the Venezuelan Government was a complete list and description of all the privateers it had commissioned, so that American

cruisers would have less difficulty in distinguishing the miscreants. Captain Perry arrived at the mouth of the Orinoco River, July 15, 1819, and as there were only sixteen feet of water on the bar he shifted his flag to the *Nonsuch* and began the ascent of the river. He describes this journey in his private journal as follows: "The sun, as soon as it shows itself in the morning, strikes almost through you. Mosquitoes, sand flies and gnats cover you, and as the sun gets up higher it becomes entirely calm, and the rays pour down a heat that is insufferable. The fever that it creates, together with the irritation caused by the insects, produces a thirst which is insatiable, to quench which we drink water at a temperature of eighty-two degrees. About four o'clock in the afternoon a rain squall, accompanied by a little wind, generally takes place. It might be supposed that this would cool the air, but not so, for the steam which arises as soon as the sun comes out makes the heat still more intolerable. At length night approaches, and we go close inshore and anchor. Myriads of mosquitoes and gnats come off to the vessel and compel us to sit over strong smoke created by burning oakum and tar, rather than endure their terrible stings, until, wearied and exhausted, we go to bed to endure new torments. Shut up in the berth of a small cabin, if there is any air stirring not a breath of it can reach us. The mosquitoes, more persevering, follow us and annoy us the whole night by their noise and bites, until, almost mad with the heat and pain, we rise to go through the same troubles the next day."

On reaching Angostura, three hundred miles up the river, July 26th, Captain Perry asked for the list of commissioned privateers, and said that the American schooner *Brutus*, commanded by Nicholas Joly, had been illegally condemned and sold in a Venezuelan port. President Bolivar being away with the army, Vice-President Don Antonio Francisco Zea gave the American officer an audience and promised to furnish

the desired information in a few days. At that time the town was afflicted with fever, and two Englishmen, living in the house with Captain Perry, died from it. The crew of the *Nonsuch* became sickly, while the creoles were dying almost every day. The surgeon of the *Nonsuch* also was taken down with the fever. But still Perry remained in the plague-stricken place day after day, waiting for an answer to his communications. The natives of the place were opposed to the Americans and friendly to the English, and paragraphs from English papers hostile to the United States were translated and printed. On the 11th of August Captain Perry received an official reply to his demand, in which indemnity was promised. The Vice-President urged him to remain until August 14th, in order to attend a dinner to be given in his honor in the name of the Government. In spite of the danger, Captain Perry deemed it his duty to remain in the fever-stricken place, as he feared a refusal might give offense.

He sailed from Angostura on the 15th, and on the night of the 17th reached the bar, where he was detained by a strong southwest breeze. During the night occasional dashes of spray fell over the *Nonsuch*, and, descending the companionway, fell on Captain Perry, who was sleeping in his berth, but did not arouse him. At four o'clock in the morning he awoke with a chill, and it was not long before he showed all the symptoms of the dreaded fever, and on the 24th of August he died aboard ship just as the *Nonsuch* reached Port of Spain, Trinidad. It happened that many of the officers and men of the British regiment stationed at this place had served in the battle of Lake Erie and entertained the highest respect for Captain Perry, and remembered his kindnesses to them when they were his prisoners. When it was known that he was about to visit Trinidad, extensive preparations were made to give him a cordial reception; and when the dead body of the American commander was brought ashore the preparations for

festivity were changed into mourning. Captain Perry was buried with the highest civic and military honors, Sir Ralph Woodford, the governor, attending the funeral with his entire suite. Perry's body afterward was removed to Newport, R. I.<sup>1</sup>

It was not until 1821 that piracy became so general in the West Indies as to compel the United States Government to take vigorous measures against it. In the autumn of this year the following vessels were detailed for service in the West Indies. The 18-gun sloop of war *Hornet*, Master-Commandant Robert Henley; the 12-gun brig *Enterprise*, Lieutenant Lawrence Kearny; the 12-gun brig *Spark*; the 12-gun schooner *Shark*; the 12-gun schooner *Porpoise*, Lieutenant James Ramage; the 12-gun schooner *Grampus*, Lieutenant Francis Hoyt Gregory; and three gunboats. Considering the extent to which piracy had grown, the innumerable hiding places in which the marauders could conceal themselves and the facilities offered by the officials, it could not be expected that this force would accomplish much. Yet great activity was displayed by the commanders of these vessels, and Lieutenant Kearny, while cruising off Cape Antonio, October 16th, came upon four piratical craft in the act of plundering three American merchantmen. As the vessels were close inshore, where there was not enough water for the *Enterprise* to follow, Lieutenant Kearny promptly manned five boats and sent them to the rescue. On the approach of the Americans the buccanniers, after setting fire to two of the schooners, made sail to escape. Two of their schooners and one sloop, having about forty men aboard, were captured and taken to Charleston. A month later Lieutenant Kearny destroyed a resort of the pirates near Cape Antonio,

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<sup>1</sup> On November 16, 1825, Thomas Macdonough, the hero of the battle of Lake Champlain, died at sea, ten days out from Gibraltar, homeward bound. After the War of 1812 he was active in the service, and had just been relieved of the command of the Mediterranean squadron when he died.

and on the 21st of December he captured a piratical schooner, but its crew of twenty-five men escaped. While in the vicinity of this place the *Enterprise*, on the 6th of March, 1822, captured four barges and three launches with one hundred and sixty men. In the meantime, October 29, 1821, Master-Commandant Robert Henley, in the *Hornet*, captured the schooner *Moscow*, which he sent into Norfolk; and on the 17th of January, 1822, a boat party of forty men under Lieutenant James Freeman Curtis, of the *Porpoise*, captured a piratical schooner. Manning the prize, Curtis proceeded some ten miles down the coast and captured in handsome style the principal rendezvous of the pirates, making three prisoners and destroying five vessels, one of them "a beautiful new 60-ton schooner."

Piracy in the West Indies had become too widespread to be checked by a few captures, and in the spring of 1822 the American squadron was placed under the command of Captain James Biddle, and was re-enforced by the 38-gun frigate *Macedonian*, flagship; the 36-gun frigate *Congress*; the 28-gun corvette *John Adams*; the 18-gun sloop of war *Peacock*, Master-Commandant Stephen Cassin; and the 12-gun schooner *Alligator*, Lieutenant William Howard Allen. One of the first captures made by this squadron was effected by the *Shark*, Lieutenant Matthew Calbraith Perry, and the *Grampus*, Lieutenant Gregory. In June these little cruisers overtook and after a sharp fight captured the notorious pirate *Bandara D' Sangare*, and another piratical craft. Meeting the *Congress* at sea, July 24th, they put all the prisoners aboard the frigate, while the *Shark* and the *Grampus* continued their cruise, and before the season was over Lieutenant Perry captured five buccaneering craft. Near St. Croix the *Grampus* captured the famous pirate brig *Pandrita*, a vessel of superior force.

While cruising on this station, August 16, 1822, the *Grampus* chased a brigantine that was flying Spanish

colors, but, believing her to be a pirate, Lieutenant Gregory insisted on her surrender. In reply to his summons he received a discharge of cannon and musketry, which was promptly returned, and in less than four minutes the stranger hauled down her flag. On boarding, she was found to be the privateer *Palmira*, of Porto Rico, which had recently plundered the American schooner *Coquette*. The prize carried one long 18-pounder and eight short 18-pounders, with a crew of eighty-eight men, of whom one was killed and six were wounded. The *Grampus* was uninjured. The *Palmira* was one of the many vessels sailing with a privateer's commission that had resorted to piracy as the shortest road to wealth. On the 28th and 30th of September the *Peacock*, Master-Commandant Stephen Cassin, captured five piratical craft.

This success was followed, November 8th, by a spirited attack on three piratical schooners. While lying in the harbor of Matanzas, Lieutenant Allen, who had distinguished himself in the *Argus-Pelican* fight, in 1813, heard that three schooners flying the black flag and manned by about three hundred men were forty-five miles up the coast, with five merchantmen in their possession. Promptly getting under way, Lieutenant Allen came upon the buccaneers on the following day, and as the shoal water prevented the *Alligator* from closing on them the boats were ordered out. The pirates immediately made sail, and at the same time opened a heavy fire on the pursuing boats. One of their musket shot struck Lieutenant Allen in the head while he was standing in his boat (which was in advance of the others) animating his men by his example, and soon afterward another ball entered his breast, and in a few hours he died. The Americans continued the chase and captured one of the schooners, besides recapturing the five merchant vessels. The pirates did not wait to be boarded, but took to their boats and escaped with their two remaining schooners, not, however,



without a loss of fourteen killed and a large number of wounded. The American loss was three killed, two mortally wounded and three injured. The captured schooner mounted one long 12-pounder, two long 6-pounders, and four light guns. Lieutenant Allen was born in Hudson, N. Y., on the 8th of November, 1790, and entered the navy as a midshipman January 1, 1808. He was promoted to the rank of lieutenant July 24, 1817, and displayed great gallantry in the *Argus-Pelican* fight. Halleck wrote a poem on his death. In the night of November 19th the *Alligator* was lost on Carysford Reef, but her officers and crew were saved.

The service in which the American squadron was engaged was peculiarly hazardous and exhausting. Much of the work was done in open boats, so that the men were not only exposed to the enemy's bullets but to the fierce rays of the sun, while the cruisers were continually in danger of hurricanes and wreck on the treacherous shoals. From the proximity to swamps and sickly localities, fever and malaria were not the least dangerous of their foes. The connivance of the local authorities enabled many pirates to escape when chased to shore, and it was only with considerable diplomacy that Captain Biddle secured permission to land and pursue them into their haunts. It became more and more apparent to the Government that a larger number of small craft was necessary for this service, because of the shoal waters and narrow creeks in which the marauders took refuge. Early in 1823 Captain David Porter was appointed commander of the West India forces, but before sailing from the United States he secured five barges fitted with twenty oars each for the service. They were appropriately styled the mosquito fleet, and were named the *Mosquito*, the *Gnat*, the *Midge*, the *Sandfly* and the *Gallinipper*—insects with which their crews were destined to be unpleasantly familiar. To this force were added eight small schooners armed with three guns each, named

the *Greyhound*, the *Jackal*, the *Fox*, the *Wildcat*, the *Beagle*, the *Ferret*, the *Weasel* and the *Terrier*. A New York steam ferryboat, about one third of the size of the present vessels, was fitted up for the service and named the *Seagull*. The store vessel *Decoy*, mounting six guns also was purchased. Captain Porter's flagship was the *Peacock*, and the other cruisers under his orders were the *John Adams*, the *Hornet*, the *Spark*, the *Grampus* and the *Shark*. The entire force under his command was not equal to three first-rate frigates.

Arriving off Porto Rico in March, 1823, Captain Porter made it his first object to secure the co-operation of the local authorities, and with that end in view he dispatched the *Greyhound*, Master-Commandant John Porter, March 3d, with a letter to the Governor of Porto Rico. Not getting a prompt reply, he sent the *Fox*, Lieutenant W. H. Cocke, into the harbor to inquire about the governor's answer. As the *Fox* was standing into the port a shot was fired over her from the fort, and as she did not immediately heave to another shot was fired, which killed Lieutenant Cocke. The fort followed this up with four other shot, when the *Fox* came to anchor under its guns. On making an inquiry, Captain Porter was informed that the governor was absent and had left orders to the commander of the fort to allow no suspicious vessels to enter, and it was in pursuance of this order that the *Fox* had been fired upon. It was the general belief of the American officers that the act was a retaliation for the capture of the *Palmira*. The matter was reported to the Government, but nothing further was done.

The American naval force was now divided so as to scour the northern and southern coasts of St. Domingo and Cuba, after which the vessels were to rendezvous at Key West, where Captain Porter intended to build hospitals and storehouses and to make it his headquarters. In carrying out this programme, the *Greyhound*, Lieutenant Lawrence Kearny, and the *Beagle*, Lieuten-

ant J. T. Newton, came upon a nest of pirates at Cape Cruz and destroyed eight of their boats, besides a battery mounting a 4-pounder and two swivels. This was not done without a fierce struggle, and the wife of the pirate chief fought with desperate ferocity before she was overpowered, while her children kindled fires to warn other piratical resorts in the neighborhood. Many human bones and quantities of stolen merchandise were found in a cave near by. Midshipman David Glasgow Farragut, who commanded the landing party, gives a graphic description of this attack in his Journal as follows:

“Cruising all through the Jardines and around the Isle of Pines we kept a watchful eye on the coast, but nothing occurred until one day when we were anchored off Cape Cruz in company with the *Beagle*. Kearny and Newton went on shore in one of the boats to see if there was any game in the neighborhood. The boat's crew was armed as usual, and had been on shore but a short time when a man suddenly crossed the path. From his suspicious appearance one of the sailors, named McCabe, leveled his gun at the stranger and was about to pull the trigger, when his arm was arrested by Kearny, who asked what he was aiming at. ‘A d—d pirate, sir,’ was the response. ‘How do you know?’ ‘By his rig,’ said the man promptly. By this time the fellow had disappeared; but our men had scarcely taken their seats in the boat in readiness to shove off, when they received a full volley of musketry from the dense woods or chaparral. The fire was returned as soon as possible, but with no effect as far as could be ascertained, the pirates being well concealed behind the bushes. On board the *Greyhound* we could hear the firing, but could render no assistance, as Lieutenant Kearny had the only available boat belonging to the vessel. Kearny reached us at dark, related his adventure, and ordered me to be in readiness to land with a party at three o'clock the next morning.

“The schooner was to warp up inside the rocks to cover the attacking party. I landed, accompanied by Mr. Harrison, of the *Beagle*, the marines of both vessels, numbering twelve men, and the stewards and boys, making in all a force of seventeen. We had orders to keep back from the beach, that we might not be mistaken for pirates and receive the fire of the vessels. We were all ignorant of the topography of the coast, and when we landed found ourselves on a narrow strip of land covered with a thick and almost impassable chaparral, separated from the mainland by a lagoon. With great difficulty we made our way through marsh and bramble, clearing a passage with cutlasses, till we reached the mouth of the lagoon. We were compelled to show ourselves on the beach at this point, and narrowly escaped being fired upon from the *Greyhound*, but luckily, covered with mud as I was, Lieutenant Kearny with his glass made out my epaulet and immediately sent boats to transport us across to the eastern shore. We found the country there very rocky, and the rock was honeycombed and had the appearance of iron, with sharp edges. The men from the *Beagle* joined us, which increased my force to about thirty men. The captain, in the meantime, wishing to be certain as to the character of the men who had fired on him the previous evening, pulled boldly up again in his boat with a flag flying. Scarcely was he within musket range when from under the bluffs of the cape he received a volley of musketry and a discharge from a 4-pound swivel. There was no longer any doubt in the matter, and, considering that the enemy had too large a force to imperil his whole command on shore, Kearny decided to re-embark all but my original detachment, and I was ordered to attack the pirates in the rear while the schooners attacked them in front. The pirates had no idea that our schooners could get near enough to reach them, but in this they were mistaken, for, by pulling along

among the rocks, our people were soon able to bring their guns to bear on the bluffs, which caused a scattering among the miscreants. My party all this time was struggling through the thicket that covered the rocks, the long, sharp thorns of the cactus giving us a great deal of trouble. Then there was a scrubby thorn bush, so thick as almost to shut out the air, rendering it next to impossible to get along any faster than we could hew our way with the cutlasses. The heat had become so intense that Lieutenant Somerville, who had accompanied us, fainted. Our progress was so slow that by the time the beach was reached the pirates were out of sight. Now and then a fellow would be seen in full run, and apparently fall down and disappear from view. We caught one old man in this difficult chase.

“Our surprise was very great, on returning to make an examination of the place lately vacated by the pirates, to find that they had several houses, from fifty to one hundred feet long, concealed from view, and a dozen boats and all the necessary apparatus for turtling and fishing as well as for pirating. An immense cave was discovered, filled with plunder of various kinds, including many articles marked with English labels, with saddles and costumes worn by the higher classes of Spanish peasants. In the vicinity were found several of these caves, in which a thousand men might have concealed themselves and held the strong position against a largely superior force. We contented ourselves with burning their houses and carrying off the plunder, cannon etc., and returned to the vessel. The only man we captured, who had every appearance of being a leper, was allowed to go.

“My only prize on this occasion was a large black monkey, which I took in single combat. He bit me through the arm, but had to surrender at discretion. In our first march through the swamp our shoes became much softened, and in the last many were com-

pletely cut from the feet of the men. Fortunately for myself, I had put on a pair of pegged negro brogans and got along pretty well, while some of my comrades suffered severely. One of the officers lost his shoe in the swamp, and one of the men, in endeavoring to recover it, was mired in a most ludicrous manner—one arm and one leg in the mud and one arm and one leg in the air. Nothing could exceed the ridiculous appearance we made when we got to the shore. My pantaloons were glued to my legs, my jacket was torn to shreds, and I was loaded with mud. The men under Somerville saluted me as their commander, but the sight was too much for all hands and there was a general burst of laughter. Another ridiculous incident of the expedition may as well be mentioned. When we had advanced about half a mile into the thicket I ordered a halt, to await the preconcerted signal gun from the schooner to push forward as rapidly as possible. At this moment I heard a great noise in our rear, and it occurred to me that the pirates might be behind us in force. In forming my men to receive the attack from that direction, I made a most animated speech, encouraging them to fight bravely, but had scarcely concluded my harangue when, to my great relief, it was discovered that the noise proceeded from about ten thousand land crabs making their way through the briers.”<sup>1</sup>

About the 1st of April the *Fox*, the *Jackal*, the *Gallinipper* and the *Mosquito*, under the orders of Master-Commandant Cassin, kept guard on the northwestern coast of Cuba and gave convoy to a large fleet of merchantmen. Hearing that a suspicious-looking vessel was in the neighborhood, Master-Commandant Cassin dispatched the *Gallinipper*, Lieutenant Cornelius Kinchloe Stribling, in search of it. In the early dawn of April 8th Lieutenant Stribling discovered a strange

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<sup>1</sup> Farragut's Journal.

craft working close inshore, and opened fire on her with musketry for the purpose of bringing her to. The stranger responded with a discharge of round shot, grape and small arms, at the same time making strenuous efforts to escape, but finally she was compelled to run ashore, and all her men, except two who escaped, were killed. The prize was the fast-sailing schooner *Pilot*, of Norfolk, armed with a long 12-pounder, and had been captured by the pirates only eight days before. The leader of the pirates was the notorious Domingo, who showed a "nice sense of honor" by forwarding to Captain Porter and his officers letters that he had found in the *Pilot*, remarking that he did not "wish to deprive them of the pleasure of hearing from their friends."

About the same time that Master-Commandant Casin captured the *Pilot*, he destroyed several resorts of the pirates and three of their schooners. Entering a bay noted as a rendezvous for pirates, he discovered a felucca standing out, which, on being chased, ran ashore and her crew escaped into the woods. It was a newly coppered boat propelled by sixteen oars, and evidently was just setting out on its first marauding expedition.

Lieutenant Newell, while cruising with the *Ferret* in the vicinity of Matanzas, discovered a heavily armed barge in a bay and sent his only boat to reconnoiter. Scarcely had the boat got within musket shot when a number of pirates on shore ran down to the water's edge and opened a brisk fire on the Americans, and some of their shot took effect at the water line of the boat, so the party was compelled to return to the *Ferret*. Lieutenant Newell then stood inshore and opened fire on the barge and seven boats that were seen on the beach; but as it was blowing a heavy gale, and the *Ferret* could fire only when staying, she soon desisted and made sail for Matanzas to secure another boat. On his way to that port Lieutenant Newell fell in with an

English brig, and, obtaining a boat from her, he immediately returned to the attack. But the pirates had retreated to a lagoon some miles inland, taking with them all but two of their boats.

About three months after Captain Porter arrived at Havana several acts of piracy were reported, and he ordered the *Gallinipper*, Lieutenant William H. Watson, and the *Mosquito*, Lieutenant William Inman, having aboard five officers and twenty-six men in all, to cruise around the island and keep a careful lookout for the buccaneers. In carrying out these instructions Lieutenant Watson had reached the bay where Lieutenant Allen had been killed the year before, when a large topsail schooner, and a launch filled with men, were discovered working along the shore toward the anchorage of several merchant vessels. The *Gallinipper* and the *Mosquito* showed their colors and bore down on the strangers, upon which the schooner hoisted the Spanish flag and opened a rapid fire, and at the same time made sail to escape. In the long chase that followed the American barges were exposed to the pirates' fire. Having run close inshore, the schooner and the launch anchored with springs on their cables, and made preparations for an obstinate defense. Although there were from seventy to eighty of the pirates, and the entire force of the Americans was only thirty-one men, Lieutenant Watson gave the order to attack, and in spite of a hot fire the Americans, shouting "Hurrah for Allen!" dashed at the buccaneers and drove them into the sea. Not waiting to take possession of the prizes, the *Gallinipper* and the *Mosquito* sailed past, and were soon in the midst of the swimmers, and, laying about right and left, exterminated several dozens of them. With the aid of the local authorities, nearly all the miscreants were either killed or captured. None of the Americans were injured. The schooner proved to be the *Catalina*, mounting one long 9-pounder and three 6-pounders, commanded by Diabolito, or Little Devil, a notorious



pirate of the West Indies, who, on refusing to surrender, was killed in the water. The *Catalina* had been taken recently from the Spaniards, and was on her first piratical cruise. Lieutenant Watson took five prisoners, whom he handed over to the authorities when he arrived at Havana. Taken altogether, this was one of the most brilliant affairs of the year. Lieutenant Watson died shortly afterward from yellow fever.

Driven from the sea by the activity of the American naval force, many of the freebooters continued their depredations on land, and soon became as great a terror to the inhabitants of the towns and villages as they had been to merchantmen on the high seas. Several estates near Matanzas were plundered, and so many atrocities were committed on the outskirts of the cities that finally it became necessary to send the cavalry and infantry after them.

Further operations against the pirates was interrupted by the yellow fever that broke out at Key West in August, 1823. Several of the men died, and Captain Porter and some of the officers were taken down. Finding that there was little chance of overcoming the disease in this malarious place, Captain Porter sailed for the North with most of his vessels, and after the men had recovered in the pure air he returned to the scene of action.

The principal feature of the naval operations of 1824 was the celebrated Foxardo affair. On the 26th of October Lieutenant Charles T. Platt, of the *Beagle*, learned that the storehouse of the American consul at St. Thomas had been broken into and goods valued at five thousand dollars taken from it. It was believed that the stolen property had been carried to Foxardo, a small port on the eastern end of Porto Rico. Lieutenant Platt anchored off that port, and, waiting upon the civil authorities, informed them of his mission and asked their assistance in recovering the plunder and apprehending the robbers. The town officers treated

him with great incivility, and as the American lieutenant had landed without his uniform they demanded his commission. On his producing that paper it was pronounced a forgery, and Lieutenant Platt was arrested on the charge of being a pirate. He and Midshipman Robert Ritchie, who accompanied him, were placed under arrest, and were only released and allowed to return to their vessel after being subjected to great indignities. On hearing of this affair, Captain Porter, having his flag on the *John Adams*, anchored off the port with the *Beagle* and the *Grampus*, and the boats of the *John Adams*, under the command of Master-Commandant Alexander James Dallas, ran into the harbor. In a letter dated November 12th, addressed to the *alcalde*, Captain Porter demanded an explanation of the treatment the American officers had received, giving that magistrate one hour for an answer. The letter was sent by a lieutenant under a flag of truce. While waiting for an answer, Captain Porter noticed that preparations were being made in a shore battery to fire on him, whereupon he detailed a detachment of seamen and marines, who captured the battery and spiked the guns. Captain Porter now landed, and, after spiking a 2-gun battery that commanded the road, he reached the town in half an hour. Finding that the people were prepared to defend themselves, he halted to await the flag of truce. In a short time the *alcalde* and the captain of the port appeared and offered ample apology to Lieutenant Platt for the indignities to which they had subjected him, and expressed regret at the whole occurrence, upon which the Americans returned to their ships.

This affair incurred the displeasure of the United States Government, and, in an order dated December 27, 1824, Captain Porter was ordered home, and on being tried by court-martial he was sentenced to be suspended from the service for six months. Believing that he had been wronged, Captain Porter resigned, and

entered the Mexican navy, where he remained until 1829, when he was appointed by President Jackson as United States consul-general at Algiers. Afterward he became the Minister to Turkey, and he died at Pera, March 28, 1843. His body was brought home, and is buried in the grounds of the Naval Asylum at Philadelphia.

The only other naval operations in the West Indies in 1824 were the capture, by the *Porpoise*, Lieutenant Skinner, of a schooner which had been deserted by its crew, and the recapture of a French vessel from the pirates by the *Terrier*, Lieutenant Paine, the pirate crew escaping to the shore. On the 4th of February, 1825, the *Ferret* was capsized in a squall off Cuba and five of her men were lost, the rest of her crew being rescued by the *Seagull* and the *Jackal*.

Captain Porter was succeeded by Captain Lewis Warrington, who followed out much the same plan of operations that had been adopted by his predecessors. Such a vigilant watch was maintained that from this time but few instances of piracy were reported. Hearing that a piratical sloop was in the neighborhood of St. Thomas, Lieutenant John Drake Sloat, of the *Grampus*, who was cruising in that vicinity, March, 1825, secured a trading sloop, and, disguising her as a merchantman, placed in her two lieutenants and twenty-three men. The *ruse* proved successful, and the piratical craft running alongside opened fire, which the sloop promptly returned, and after an action of forty-five minutes the pirates ran their vessel ashore and escaped in the woods. Ten of them were taken prisoners by Spanish soldiers, and two were killed. All the prisoners were executed by the Government of Porto Rico, among them being the notorious pirate Colfreccinas. In the same month the *Seagull*, Lieutenant McKeever, and the *Gallinipper*, fell in with the British frigate *Dartmouth* and two English armed schooners. Believing that they were in the vicinity of a nest of pirates, Lieu-

tenant McKeever entered into an arrangement for the co-operation of the boats of the frigate, on condition that he should command the party. While they were approaching a bay on the afternoon of March 25th, the masts of a vessel concealed by bushes were discovered, and on being hailed the stranger showed Spanish colors and trained her guns on the advancing boats. Leaving one boat on guard and landing with the rest of his men, so as to cut off the retreat of the pirates on land, Lieutenant McKeever ordered the commander of the vessel to come ashore. After much hesitation the leader of the pirates complied, but immediately attempted to run away. In the meantime the men in the boat on guard had boarded the piratical vessel, and after a stubborn resistance overpowered the pirates, their loss being eight killed and nineteen taken prisoners. The prize carried two 6-pounders and four swivels, and was manned by thirty-five men. Numerous bales of American merchandise were found concealed in the bushes on shore and also in the hold of the vessel. The schooner was sailing under a forged Spanish commission. On the following day Lieutenant McKeever chased a fore-and-aft rigged boat on shore, the crew escaping to the woods.

This practically ended the active operations in the West Indies, but, in order to impress the lesson on the minds of evil doers, a squadron was maintained in those waters for several years, and in December, 1828, occurred an incident that showed the necessity for it. In this year the 18-gun sloop of war *Erie*, Master-Commandant Daniel Turner, was ordered to convey General William Henry Harrison, minister to the United States of Colombia, to that country. Touching at the island of St. Bartholomew, Master-Commandant Turner met the privateer *Federal*, belonging to Buenos Ayres, and learned that she had recently captured an American vessel under the plea that she had Spanish property aboard. The governor of the island was asked to sur-

render the *Federal*, which had run under the guns of the fort, and on his refusing to do so a boat party, led by First-Lieutenant Josiah Tattnall, of the *Erie*, was sent against the privateer. Setting out on a dark night, and favored by occasional rain squalls, the Americans pulled with muffled oars into the harbor unobserved and carried the *Federal* with little opposition. Some difficulty was experienced in tripping the anchor, and during the delay the fort opened a heavy but ill-directed fire. The privateer was finally got under way, and in a few minutes was brought safely out of the harbor. No loss was sustained on either side. The *Federal* was sent to Pensacola.

Four years after this (August 10, 1832) while cruising off Matamoros in command of the *Grampus*, Lieutenant Tattnall learned that the merchant vessel *William A. Turner*, of New York, had been plundered the day before by the Mexican war schooner *Montezuma*. Meeting the *Montezuma* off the bar of Tampico a few days later, Lieutenant Tattnall captured her within sight of the Mexican forts and several of their cruisers, and secured seventy-six prisoners. The prize carried three guns, one of them mounted on a pivot. As cholera broke out in the *Grampus* about this time, Lieutenant Tattnall landed his prisoners and made for Pensacola, where his ship was thoroughly cleaned. Returning to Tampico, he heard that the Mexicans were detaining in that port an American vessel laden with two hundred thousand dollars in specie, and, being anxious to secure the money, the Mexicans got up a pretext for detaining her, and held her under the guns of the fort. Availing himself of a favorable night, the American commander headed a boat attack and succeeded in bringing the merchantman out of the harbor.

Not only was the navy active in suppressing piracy in the West Indies, but in the Mediterranean also our cruisers gave material assistance in running down the

buccaneers. During the struggle of Greece for independence from Turkey several of the Greek war vessels perpetrated outrages on merchantmen of neutral nations, and on May 29, 1825, an American vessel from Boston was seized by one of their privateers. In 1827 Lieutenant Louis M. Goldsborough (afterward rear-admiral), while in command of four boats and thirty-five men of the United States sloop of war *Porpoise*, recaptured after a desperate struggle the English brig *Comet*, which was in the possession of Greek pirates. Lieutenant John A. Carr singled out the pirate chief and killed him with his own hand. One of the Americans was killed in this attack, while many of the pirates were exterminated. Several of the Mediterranean powers thanked Lieutenant Goldsborough for this affair.

During the reign of Joseph Bonaparte and Murat in Naples (1809-'12) a number of American vessels were confiscated by the Neapolitans, and shortly after the War of 1812 Captain Daniel Patterson was ordered to assist the American consul at Naples, John Nelson, in collecting two million dollars indemnity money. The first demand of the consul was haughtily rejected. A few days afterward the 44-gun frigate *Brandywine* sailed into the beautiful harbor of Naples. The demand for indemnity was then renewed, but only to be treated as the first. In a few days the 44-gun frigate *United States* joined the *Brandywine* at Naples, and four days afterward the *Concord* also dropped anchor in that harbor. The Bourbon Government now began drilling troops, and made great preparations for resisting the expected bombardment, but it still refused to pay the claim. Two days after the *Concord's* arrival the *John Adams* appeared in the harbor and greatly added to the excitement in the town. Finally, on the appearance of two more American war ships the Neapolitans yielded.

## CHAPTER III.

### QUALLA BATTOO.

ON the 7th of February, 1831, the American merchant vessel *Friendship*, of Salem, Mass., commanded by Mr. Endicott and manned by fourteen men, was lying at anchor off the Malay town of Qualla Battoo, on the northwestern coast of Sumatra, taking in a cargo of pepper. As the place was about four degrees north of the equator, the weather was hot and sultry, and the Americans found that the least physical exertion was attended with great exhaustion. On the day in question there was scarcely any breeze, and the sun beat down on the deck of the *Friendship* with overpowering force, seeming to cause the planks to warp and the oil to ooze from the seams and the rigging. Even the natives employed in loading the ship performed their tasks with more than ordinary indolence and listlessness. As there was no harbor at this place, the *Friendship* lay about half a mile off the town, exposed to the open sea, and carried on trade with the natives by means of boats. At this part of the coast the island rises abruptly out of the water in bold headlands and precipitous ridges, which culminate, a few miles inland, in the lofty Bukit Barisan mountain range, seven thousand to ten thousand feet high, while within sight of Qualla Battoo the peak of Mount Berapi holds its proud crest twelve thousand feet above the sea. Luxuriant vegetation and dense forests come down to the water's edge in many-hued verdure, and, extending along the coast in both directions as far as

the eye can reach, present a scene of enchanting tropical loveliness.

For many miles along the coast a tremendous surf beats unceasingly upon the beach. Assuming from a great distance from the shore, it gradually increases in volume, and moving rapidly landward until it attains a height of fifteen to twenty feet, it falls like a cascade, nearly perpendicularly, on the shore with a tremendous roar, which on a still night can be heard many miles up the country. None but the most experienced native boatmen dared to venture in it, and when trading vessels stopped at Qualla Battoo they invariably sent their boats ashore in charge of Malays. Even then a landing could be effected only at the entrance of the swift mountain streams that made their way to the sea, breaking gaps here and there in the line of foam that girded the western coast of Sumatra. At Qualla Battoo a turbulent stream tumbled through the town, and meeting the surf it melted a comparatively smooth passage through the breakers to the open sea. The pepper, which was the chief article of commerce at this place, was grown on the high table-lands some miles from the coast, and was brought down to the sea on bamboo rafts, the navigation of which along the tortuous mountain streams and dangerous rapids was a feat requiring no little skill and hardihood.

On the day the *Friendship* lay off Qualla Battoo a light haze rendered the beach somewhat indistinct, but well knowing the treacherous and warlike disposition of the natives the Americans in the ship maintained an unusually sharp lookout. According to custom, the boats of the *Friendship* had been placed in charge of Malays to be navigated through the surf. A large quantity of pepper had been purchased, and Mr. Endicott, with his second mate, John Barry, and four seamen, were on shore at the trading depot, a short distance up the river, superintending the weighing of the pepper and seeing that it was properly stowed away in the



boats so that the salt water could not reach it. The first mate and the remainder of the crew were aboard the *Friendship* ready to receive the boats and take aboard their cargoes. After the first boat had received its freight at the trading post it was manned by native seamen and rowed to the mouth of the river, but instead of putting directly to sea, as it should have done, Mr. Endicott—who had remained at the trading post, keeping a careful eye on all that was going on—noticed that the boat had run ashore and had taken aboard more men. Supposing that the Malays in charge of the boat required additional help to get through the unexpectedly heavy surf, Mr. Endicott did not feel alarmed, and continued weighing out pepper for the second boat load. He was sufficiently on the alert, however, to detail two of his men to watch the progress of the boat toward the *Friendship* and order them to report anything that was out of the usual course.

As a matter of fact, the Malays in the first boat, instead of taking aboard additional seamen to help them through the surf, as the Americans at the trading station had supposed, exchanged places with an armed body of warriors, double the number of the boat's crew. Then, standing boldly to the surf, the warriors concealed their weapons while the boat continued on its way toward the unsuspecting merchantman. The first mate of the *Friendship* noticed an unusual number of men in the boat, but he, like Mr. Endicott, supposed that the surf had increased in violence, and that an additional number was necessary to pull through it. Consequently the Malays were allowed to come alongside, and when they had made fast to the *Friendship's* gangway the larger part of them clambered over the side and gained the deck, concealing their short daggers in their clothing. Ever fearful of treachery, the first mate of the *Friendship* endeavored to prevent so many Malays from coming aboard, but, affecting not

to understand his words or gestures, they continued to press over the side until more than twenty of them were on deck. In keeping with their treacherous instincts, they, instead of beginning an attack on the Americans, whom they outnumbered three to one, immediately scattered to different parts of the vessel and pretended to be absorbed with wonderment at her guns, rigging and equipment. Somewhat relieved by their apparently harmless curiosity, the mate allowed them to remain, while he and his men devoted their attention to getting the boat load of pepper aboard and stowing it in the hold.

While he was thus busily engaged several of the Malays drew near and affected interest in the process. Seizing a favorable moment, they, with a swift, catlike motion for which they were celebrated, drove their daggers hilt deep into the mate's back. He turned quickly around and attempted to defend himself, but he had been mortally wounded, and falling, upon him with the fierceness of tigers, the Malays soon dispatched him. Observing the treacherous deed, five of the American sailors made a rush to assist the mate, but they were set upon by the other Malays in the ship and two were instantly killed, while the other three were made prisoners and reserved for a horrible fate. The remaining four sailors in the *Friendship*, seeing that it would be useless to contend against such numbers, jumped overboard and struck out for the land. They soon discovered, however, that the attack was a widespread conspiracy, for whenever they were raised on the crest of a wave and caught glimpses of the beach they saw that it was lined with armed warriors, who were shouting and brandishing their weapons. Seeing that it was worse than useless to attempt to land, the four swimmers held a brief consultation and then changed their course to a promontory, where the natives could not follow them, and after a swim of several miles they reached a place of comparative safety.

As soon as the treacherous Malays got complete possession of the ship they clambered up the bulwarks and rigging, and by gesticulating with their arms and weapons conveyed the news of the capture to their confederates on shore, and in a short time several boat loads of the miscreants had put off through the surf, and on gaining the decks of the merchant vessel began to rifle her of every article of value. Having taken everything out of her, even to the copper bolts in the timbers, they cut her cables and attempted to run her ashore, hoping to break her up and secure the iron in her.

In the meantime the two seamen who had been detailed by Mr. Endicott to watch the boat, observing the excitement on board the *Friendship* and the men plunging into the sea, reported the matter to their commander, who immediately inferred, that a treacherous assault had been made on his ship. Hastily ordering his men into the second boat, which was waiting at the trading depot, he hurriedly pulled down the river in hopes of getting through the surf and possibly regaining possession of the ship before his retreat was cut off. He left the trading post not a minute too soon, for the natives on shore rushed for the boat and endeavored to intercept it; but by dint of hard rowing, and after running a gantlet of missiles from both banks, the Americans managed to reach the mouth of the river. Although Mr. Endicott had escaped the savage foe on land, he found that he was confronted with the probability of perishing in the surf. At this critical moment a friendly Malay named Po Adam, rajah of the neighboring tribe of Pulu Kio, who had come to Qualla Battoo in his armed coasting schooner, deserted his vessel, as he feared the attack might be extended to him, and swam to the American boat. When Mr. Endicott saw him he exclaimed, "What, Adam, you come too?" to which the Malay replied in broken English, "Yes, captain. If they kill you they

must kill me first." By the aid of Po Adam the American boat managed to get through the breakers, but just as it had cleared the line of surf it was met by several Malay war canoes filled with warriors, who endeavored to cut off her retreat. So precipitate had been the flight of the Americans that they forgot to bring their firearms with them, and were now defenseless. Po Adam, however, had a saber, and by putting on a bold front and by a valorous flourishing of the sword he kept the warriors at a distance, and the boat got to sea unmolested.

Finding that it was impossible to recapture his vessel, Mr. Endicott, after picking up the four seamen who had jumped overboard, steered for Muckie, a small town twenty miles to the south, in search of assistance. He reached the place late at night and found three American merchant vessels—a ship and two brigs—anchored there, the commanders of which, on hearing of the treacherous attack on Mr. Endicott's vessel, resolved to attempt her recapture. On hundreds of occasions, which the historian has failed to record, the American merchant tar has proved himself to be a brave and daring sailor, and the case in hand was no exception. On hearing of the dastardly murder of their fellow-countrymen, the commanders of the three American merchant vessels promptly got under way, and appeared before Qualla Battoo on the following day. To the demand for the restoration of the *Friendship* the rajah of Qualla Battoo insolently replied, "Take her if you can," upon which the American vessels ran as close to the land as the shoal would allow, and opened a brisk fire with what guns they could bring to bear. In those days of piracy and outrage on the high seas all well-equipped merchant vessels carried a considerable armament, and their crews were as carefully trained in the use of firearms as in the handling of sails. The fire opened by the three American merchantmen was no child's play,

as the Malays in the *Friendship* soon found out, and notwithstanding that they returned it with considerable spirit and the forts at Qualla Battoo (which mounted several heavy guns) opened with effect, they soon discovered that they were at a disadvantage. Impatient at the prospect of a protracted bombardment, the three American commanders determined on the more expeditious method of a boat attack, although none of them had a crew that numbered over fifteen men, and the Malays had re-enforced their comrades in the *Friendship*. Accordingly, three boat loads of armed men put off from the merchant vessels and made a dash for the *Friendship* in gallant style. The Malays at first opened an ill-directed fire, but they soon became panic-stricken at the steady advance of the American boats, and plunged into the sea and made for the beach, where they were assisted ashore by their friends. On regaining possession of the ship Captain Endicott found that she had been rifled of everything of value, including twelve thousand dollars in specie, and this compelled him to abandon the voyage. The total loss to the owners of the ship was forty thousand dollars.

When the news of the outrage on the *Friendship* reached the United States, the 44-gun frigate *Potomac*, Captain John Downes, lay in New York harbor waiting to convey Martin Van Buren, the newly appointed minister to the court of St. James, to England; but hearing of the affair on the coast of Sumatra, President Jackson promptly ordered the *Potomac* to sail for the scene of violence and visit summary vengeance on the piratical Malays. Captain Downes got under way in August, and arrived off the coast of Sumatra early in February, 1832. When the *Potomac* drew near the scene of the outrage Captain Downes disguised his ship, as he was anxious to attack the Qualla Battooans before they knew of the arrival of an American war ship in that part of the world. The guns of

the frigate were run in, the ports closed, the topmasts housed, the sails rigged in a slovenly manner, and every precaution taken to give the frigate the appearance of a merchant craft. In this guise the *Potomac*, under Danish colors, appeared off Qualla Battoo, February 6, 1832, just a year after the treacherous attack on the *Friendship*. Scarcely had she dropped anchor when a sailboat rounded a point of land and made for her. When it came alongside it was found to be laden with fish and manned by four Malays from a friendly tribe, who desired to sell their cargo. Fearing that these men, if allowed to depart, might announce the arrival of the frigate to the Qualla Battooans, Captain Downes detained them on board until after the attack.

At half past two o'clock the whaleboat was sent toward the shore under the command of Lieutenant Shubrick to take soundings. The men in the boat were dressed as the boat crew of an Indiaman, and in case they came to a parley with the natives Lieutenants Shubrick and Edson were to impersonate the captain and supercargo of a trading vessel. As the natives lined the shore in great numbers and assumed a hostile attitude, no attempt was made to land, and having satisfied himself with the situation of the river, Lieutenant Shubrick returned to the ship at half past four o'clock. Everything now being in readiness, Captain Downes announced that the boats would leave the ship at midnight, and from five o'clock to that time the men selected for the expedition were at liberty to employ their time as they pleased. As the attack was likely to keep them late on the following day, many of the men improved the opportunity to sleep, using gun carriages, coils of rope and sails for pillows. Some of the more restless, however, in the face of the impending conflict, found it impossible to sleep. They were scattered about the ship conversing in low tones with their messmates, placing in trusty hands some token

of affection, such as a watch or a Bible, to be delivered to relatives or friends in case they fell.

Promptly at midnight all hands were summoned to quarters, and in an instant the gun deck was swarming with men, some with weapons in their hands, others girding on cutlasses, and all hurrying to their stations, while the boats were lowered and brought along the gangway on the off side of the ship, so that the natives on shore could not discover what was going on, even if they had been on the watch. The men silently and rapidly descended the frigate's side and took their places, and as each boat received its load it dropped astern or was pulled ahead and made fast to the lee boom to make room for others. The debarkation was made with the greatest secrecy, nothing breaking the silence of the hour except the splashing of the waves against the dark hull of the frigate, the chafing of the cables in the hawse holes, the whispered command of the officers as the boats came to and from the gangway, or the muffled rattle of the oars in the oarlocks as the boats shoved off to take their prescribed positions. So much care in maintaining silence, however, seemed unnecessary; for the roaring surf, which even at the distance of three miles could be distinctly heard aboard the ship, would have drowned all noise.

The light of the morning star was just discernible through a dense mass of dark clouds resting on the eastern horizon when the order was given to shove off and make for the land. The boats formed in line, and with measured stroke stretched out for the beach. When they had covered about a third of the distance "a meteor of the most brilliant hue and splendid rays," wrote an officer of the *Potomac*, "shot across the heaven immediately above us, lighting the broad expanse with its beams from west to east. We hailed it as an earnest of the victory and the bright augury of future fame." The bright star in the east had shone fully two hours before the boats gained the landing

place, and as the keels of the boats grated on the beach the men jumped out and hastened to their positions, each division forming by itself. The boats, with enough men to man them, were directed to remain together just outside of the surf until further orders.

No delay was allowed in beginning the march. Lieutenant Edson and Lieutenant Tenett led the van with their company of marines. John Barry, second mate of the *Friendship*, who had come out in the *Potomac* as a master's mate, now acted as a guide. Lieutenant Ingersoll followed the van with the first division of seamen, Lieutenant Hoff's division of musketeers and pikemen then came, and after this Lieutenant Pinkham with the third division, while Acting Sailing-Master Totten and a few men brought up the rear with the 6-pounder, called "Betsy Baker." After marching along the beach some distance the column turned abruptly inland and struck into the dense jungle. The fusileers, "a company of fine, stout and daring fellows,"<sup>1</sup> now distributed themselves in advance and on each flank of the little army, to guard against ambushes.

Lieutenant Hoff and three midshipmen, with the second division of musketeers and pikemen, then wheeled off to the left with his division and were soon lost to view in the thick foliage. He had been ordered to attack the fort on the northern edge of the town. As soon as he came in sight of this stronghold the Malays opened a sharp fusillade with cannon, muskets, spears, javelins, and arrows. The Americans returned the fire and then made a rush for the gate of the stockade, and, bursting it open, engaged the enemy in a short but fierce hand-to-hand encounter, in which the pikes and cutlasses of the seamen were employed to advantage. The open space within the palisade was soon cleared, but the Malays retreated to their citadel

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<sup>1</sup> Journal of one of the *Potomac's* officers.



on the high platform, hauling up the ladder leading to it, and for two hours fought with great bravery. Impatient at the delay, Lieutenant Hoff directed his men to tear up some of the poles forming the stockade and improvise ladders with them. Having done this, the men made a rush for the citadel from opposite directions, and, placing their ladders against the high platform, clambered up and made short work of the desperate defenders.

Rajah Maley Mohammed, one of the most influential chiefs on the western coast of Sumatra, commanded this fort, and fought with the ferocity of a tiger. After receiving numerous bayonet thrusts and musket balls he fell, but even in his death throes he continued to brandish his saber and to inflict injuries on the Americans around him, until a marine finally dispatched him. But as soon as the rajah fell, a woman, who from the richness of her dress was supposed to be his wife, seized his saber and wielded it with such energy that the Americans fell back, loath to make war against a female. She rushed at them and severely wounded a sailor on the head with a blow of her saber, and with catlike dexterity she aimed another blow at him which nearly severed the thumb from his left hand. Before she could repeat the stroke she fainted from loss of blood from a wound previously received, and, falling upon the hard pavement, soon died. At this fort twelve of the Malays were killed and many times that number were wounded.

While this fight had been going on at the northern fort, Lieutenants Edson and Tenett, with the marines and the first division of musketeers and pikemen under Lieutenant Ingersoll, had discovered the fort in the middle of the town, and after a short and bloody conflict carried it by storm and put the enemy to the sword. In this attack one of the marines was killed, one dangerously wounded, and several slightly wound-

ed. The Malays sustained greater loss here than at the first fort. It was now daylight.

The first division, under Lieutenant Pinkham, had been ordered to attack the fort in the rear of the town, but it had been so skillfully concealed in the jungle that Mr. Barry was unable to find it, and the division retraced its steps and joined the fusileers under Lieutenant Shubrick and the 6-pounder commanded by Acting Sailing-Master Totten, in an attack upon the most formidable fort of the town, which was on the bank of the river near the beach. Here the principal rajah of Qualla Battoo had collected his bravest warriors, who announced their determination to die rather than surrender; and they kept their word. The entire force of the division advancing to attack this stronghold was eighty-five men. As soon as the Americans came in sight the Malays opened a hot fire of musketry, and followed it up with a rapid discharge of their swivels, which, as usual, were mounted in a commanding position on the high platform. "The natives were brave, and fought with a fierceness bordering on desperation," wrote one of the *Potomac's* officers who was in the division. "They would not yield while a drop of their savage blood warmed their bosoms or while they had strength to wield a weapon, fighting with that undaunted firmness which is the characteristic of bold and determined spirits, and displaying such an utter carelessness of life as would have been honored in a better cause. Instances of the bravery of these people were numerous, so much so that were I to give you a detail of each event my description would probably become tiresome."

The Americans returned the enemy's fire with a brisk discharge of their muskets, and a sharp fusillade was maintained for some time, but with little effect upon the stout barricades. Anxious to complete the work of destruction as soon as possible, Lieutenant Shubrick left a body of men in front of the fort to en-

gage the attention of the Malays, while he, with the fusileers and the "Betsy Baker," made a detour through the woods to gain the rear of the fort unobserved. The manœuvre was successful, and in a few minutes the flanking party reached the river bank behind the citadel. Here three large, heavily armed schooners (the largest being the boat they had captured from Po Adam the year before), employed by the Malays in their piratical excursions, were discovered anchored in the river and filled with warriors awaiting a favorable opportunity to take a hand in the fray, and acting as a cover to the rear of the fort. Before the pirates realized it Lieutenant Shubrick had opened on them with his 6-pounder and raked the schooners fore and aft. This was followed up with a well-directed fire of musketry from the fusileers, which killed or wounded a great number and caused the surviving Malays to jump overboard and escape to the woods. The natives, however, succeeded in getting sail on the largest of the schooners, and in a short time they ran her up the river, where she was out of gunshot.

Unknown to the Americans, Po Adam had sighted the *Potomac* some days before, and believing her to be an American frigate, he had collected a band of his warriors, and, stealing along the coast, concealed himself in the woods on the outskirts of Qualla Battoo. When he saw the marines and seamen land and attack the town he drew nearer and lay in ambush with his men on the south bank of the river, awaiting an opportunity to attack. Po Adam noticed the Malays in the schooner, and when they moored her to the south bank so as to be safe from further attack by the Americans, he rushed from his place of concealment with his men, boarded the schooner, killed five of the Qualla Battoans, and put the remainder to flight. By this time it was broad daylight.

Having completed the circumvallation of the rajah's citadel, Lieutenant Shubrick gave the signal for a

simultaneous assault on front and rear, when the Americans attacked the outer stockade, and by hacking with axes succeeded in wrenching the massive gate from its place. The Malays were prepared for the attack, and the first American who exposed himself was shot through the brain, and three others fell, wounded. Unmindful of this, the hardy sailors rushed into the large open space within the palisades and drove the Malays to the high platform, where they made their final stand. To add to the confusion, the stockade that had been captured by the division under Lieutenants Hoff and Edson had been set on fire in pursuance of orders, and by this time the flames had spread and now threatened to engulf both the Americans and the Malays. Great columns of smoke rolled up while the fire and blazing sun rendered the heat almost unendurable. Scores of Malays were fleeing through the secret passages in the jungle, carrying such articles as they esteemed valuable, while beasts and reptiles, disturbed by the heat, were making their way through the forest in all directions. Finding that they were firing at a disadvantage, the men in charge of the "Betsy Baker" seized the little gun, carried it to an elevation on the upper side of the fort, and reopened with a steady and well-directed fire of grape and canister. Many Malays were laid low; but so rapid was the fire that the ammunition was soon exhausted, and it was necessary to send to the boats for another supply.

In the meantime Lieutenants Hoff and Edson, having performed the task allotted to them, came up with their divisions and joined in the attack on the principal fort. They were ordered to take a position between the fort and the water, where they poured in an effective cross fire upon the doomed pirates. But the Malays kept up a brave and spirited defense, and were still shouting to the Americans in broken English "to come and take them." The men who had been sent to

the boats for more ammunition for the "Betsy Baker" now returned with ten bags containing forty musket balls each. So eager were the crew of this gun that it was now overloaded, and at the third discharge it was dismounted and the carriage rendered useless for the remainder of the action. At this moment the flames in the central fort, which had been captured by Lieutenant Edson, reached the magazine, and it blew up with tremendous force. Seeing that further service could not be derived from the 6-pounder, Lieutenant Shubrick ordered a general assault on the citadel, and at the word the men sprang from cover, made a rush for the stockade, and, clambering up the platform in any way they could, overpowered the few remaining Malays and put them to the sword, and soon the American flag waved from the platform in triumph.

The victorious Americans now turned their attention to the fort on the opposite side of the river, which had kept up an annoying fire from its 12-pounder, but it was found to be impracticable to ford the deep and rapid stream, and as the surf was growing heavier every minute, Lieutenant Shubrick caused the bugle to sound the retreat. While they were returning to the beach a sharp and well-sustained fire was unexpectedly opened on the Americans from a jungle. It proved to be the fort for which the division under Lieutenant Pinkham had searched in vain. The Americans promptly returned the fire and then advanced to carry the fort by storm, and one of the hottest fights of the day ensued. The Malays fought with the energy of despair, but in a short time were overpowered, and were either put to the sword or escaped in the jungle, leaving many a bloody trail on the grass as evidence of their punishment.

The Americans then reassembled on the beach and began the roll-call, to ascertain their casualties and to discover if any had been left in the jungle. It was found that two men had been killed and eleven were

wounded. The bodies of the dead and wounded were carefully lifted into the boats, and the entire expedition re-embarked, and pushing off through the surf pulled for the frigate. Of the Malays, over one hundred were killed and two hundred wounded.

Learning that a number of Malays had gathered in the rear of the town, Captain Downes, at noon on the following day (February 7th), weighed anchor and stood in about a mile from the shore and opened a heavy fire on the fort on the south bank of the river. Another object of this second day's attack was to convince the Qualla Battooans that the United States did possess "ships with big guns" and knew how to use them. The rapid discharge of the *Potomac's* long 32-pounders appalled the natives, for they had never before heard such a terrible noise. For more than an hour the heavy shot from the frigate plowed their way into the wooden stockades, carrying death and destruction in their path.

At a quarter past one o'clock white flags began to appear at different points along the beach, and the *Potomac* ceased firing, and about six o'clock in the evening a native boat was seen making its way through the surf, with a white flag at the bow, pulling for the frigate. By seven o'clock it came alongside, and it was learned that it contained messengers from the surviving rajahs with overtures for peace. On being taken aboard they were conducted to Captain Downes, and, bowing themselves to the deck in humble submission, they pleaded for peace on any terms "if only the big guns might cease their lightning and thunder." Captain Downes impressed upon the envoys the enormity of the offense of the Qualla Battooans in attacking American seamen, and assured them that the full power of the United States Government was behind the humblest of its citizens in any part of the globe, and that any future misconduct on the part of the Malays toward an American citizen would be met with even

greater punishment than has just been meted out to them.<sup>1</sup>

Although this summary vengeance on the Qualla Battoos had a salutary effect on the natives of this coast, yet it required another bombardment before the lesson was fully impressed upon their minds. On the night of August 26, 1838, while the American trading ship *Eclipse*, Captain Wilkins, was loading with pepper at a village called Trabagan, twelve miles from Muckie, two canoes came alongside with the commodity. The Malays asked for permission to come aboard, and as their spokesman, named Ousso, was recognized by the second mate as being an old trader, the request was granted. In pursuance with the customary caution exercised by Americans doing business with these natives, their arms were taken from them as they came over the side of the ship and locked up. The work of weighing the pepper then went on, when Ousso reproached the Americans for locking up their arms as being a breach of good faith among old acquaintances, and the mate very foolishly returned the weapons.

Scarcely had this been done when one of the natives approached Captain Wilkins and mortally wounded him in the back. About the same time the too good-natured mate was dangerously injured in the loins, while some of the crew scrambled up the rigging and others jumped overboard. The cook, who had been placed in irons for insubordination, begged for his life, promising to reveal where the specie and a quantity of opium were kept. Having secured this plunder—the

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<sup>1</sup> In the following year (July 28, 1838) Captain William Bainbridge, the hero of the *Constitution-Java* action, died at Philadelphia. After the War of 1812 he was twice sent to the Mediterranean as the commanding officer of that squadron, having for his flagship the 74-gun ship of the line *Independence* the first time, and the 74-gun ship of the line *Columbus* when he assumed command in 1819. On his deathbed his mind dwelt on the sea, and shortly before he died he called for his sword and pistols. As they were not given to him, he raised himself up by a great effort and shouted for all hands to "board the enemy!"

specie amounting to eighteen thousand dollars—the natives fled with the cook.

At this time the American 44-gun frigate *Columbia* and the corvette *John Adams*, under the orders of Commodore George C. Reid, were making a cruise around the world. Hearing of the outrage on the *Eclipse*, Reid appeared off Qualla Battoo December 20, 1838, and through our old friend, Po Adam, learned that the chief of the Qualla Battooans, Po Chute Abdullah, had received two thousand dollars of the stolen money, and that one of the murderers was harbored there. On the failure of the natives to deliver the money or the man, Reid bombarded the place. He then proceeded to Muckie, where more of the money and the murderers were. As the natives here also failed to give satisfaction, that place was bombarded, a detachment of men was landed and the place destroyed. Satisfied with meting out this punishment, Reid sailed away without attacking Trabagan, the scene of the outrage. Returning to Qualla Battoo, the Americans again demanded the money. Po Chute Abdullah, terrified by the fate of Muckie, confessed that he had received the specie, but declared that it had been distributed among his people and he could not get it back. To avoid having his settlement destroyed, he promised to return the money at a specified time. Treaties were then made with a number of chiefs along this coast, whereby they bound themselves to protect traders sailing under the American flag.



## CHAPTER IV.

### CRUISING AGAINST SLAVERS.

EARLY in the century the United States entered into an arrangement with Great Britain for the suppression of the slave trade on the west coast of Africa. It would be difficult to overestimate the hardships and dangers to which our officers were exposed while engaged in this service. The fever-laden coast made it hazardous for white men to approach. To be assigned to this station meant death to many a gallant tar, the sick lists sometimes including half the ship's company. Many of the slave ships also were heavily armed, and being manned by unusually large crews they were prepared to make a good defense, as was demonstrated on more than one occasion. In fact, some of these slavers became out-and-out pirates, and were quite as dangerous to merchantmen as to negroes.

After the War of 1812 some of the swift-sailing privateers which had done good service in that struggle were turned into slavers, as their great speed and heavy armaments gave them every advantage. It was customary for these vessels to sail from home ports, having on board alleged Brazilian, Spanish, French or Italian passengers, and when on the slave coast the crew went ashore and the "passengers" took possession of the ship under a foreign flag, a double set of ship's papers being made out in some instances to accommodate this "lightning change." In this way American cruisers were foiled by the display of foreign colors and papers, while English war vessels found

themselves barred by the Stars and Stripes. As the vigilance of American and English war ships increased, the slavers diminished the size of their vessels so as more readily to elude detection.

A good illustration of the audacity of these sea-pests is given in Commodore Edward Trenchard's journal. A trading vessel on this coast, showing American colors, had aroused the suspicions of the commander of the British gunboat *Contest*. The English refrained from making a search of the trader, contenting themselves with keeping close to her so she could do no mischief. Day after day the vessels sailed in company, until the Yankee skipper, finding that he could not ship his cargo of slaves—for in truth he was a slave trader—challenged the British commander to a friendly sailing match to last twenty-four hours. The challenge was accepted, for the Englishmen could not restrain their desire to "win a race." This they easily did, as the crafty Yankee purposely retarded the progress of his boat so as to allow the gunboat to get as far ahead as possible, and under cover of night, when the cruiser was out of sight, the Americans ran inshore—where the slaves had been following the boat for days—took on the human freight and before daylight were fairly homeward bound, and not the faintest suggestion of the *Contest* anywhere to be seen.

One of the first American cruisers to be sent to the slave coast was the 20-gun sloop of war *Cyane*, Commander Edward Trenchard. Her officers were Lieutenants Matthew Calbraith Perry, Silas H. Stringham, William Mervine, Voorhees and Hosack, Midshipmen Montgomery, H. C. Newton, Sanderson and William Hudson, and Acting-Master's Mate Jacob Morris. The *Cyane* had not been long on this station when early in April, 1820, Captain Trenchard received secret information that there was a group of slavers at a certain point along the coast whose capture would prove a heavy blow to the iniquitous traffic. His in-

formant told him that seven slavers were at that moment at the mouth of the Gallinos River waiting for a gang of several thousand slaves to arrive from the interior.

Commander Trenchard resolved to come upon the slavers unannounced and if possible seize them all—an exceedingly hazardous and difficult undertaking for one cruiser to attempt, for, as has been said, the slavers usually were heavily armed and manned, and their combined force undoubtedly was several times greater than that of the little *Cyane*. As Trenchard drew near the mouth of the Gallinos he shortened sail, intending to enter the river under cover of night and come upon the slavers unawares and before they could get to sea and escape. The plan was successful. When day was about to break, the sloop of war was in the mouth of the river, and in the gray light of dawn the masts and spars of two brigs and six schooners at anchor close inshore were made out. That the slavers were keeping a sharp lookout is attested by the fact that they discovered the sloop of war almost as soon as they were made out by the cruiser, and in an incredibly short time they were under sail endeavoring to escape, excepting one of the brigs and one schooner, which seemed to be unmoved by the apparition of the massive spars and heavy rigging of the cruiser, and remained quietly at anchor as if undisturbed by a guilty conscience.

At the first intimation that the slavers were endeavoring to escape Trenchard gave orders to put about in chase, and for a few minutes there was the liveliest kind of bustle and seeming confusion in the cruiser as the men sprang up the shrouds and scrambled out on the yards to make sail. The broad entrance to the river gave the chase a fair opportunity to escape, and realizing this the Americans crowded on every stitch of canvas that would hold wind. As there was a fresh breeze at the time all the vessels were soon bowling

along at a smart rate, heeling over under clouds of canvas on the port tack.

It was here that Trenchard displayed great bravery in approaching the enemy. He took advantage of the formation of the coast so that the fleeing craft could sail in one direction only, thereby preventing them from scattering and enabling the *Cyane* to come up with all. In this the intrepid Trenchard courted a serious danger, for it kept the six slavers in a bunch and enabled them to combine their forces on the little cruiser.

After an exciting chase of an hour the *Cyane* had gained sufficiently on the slavers to head off the foremost, whereupon Trenchard tacked about and stood inshore so as to come to close quarters. About this time, 7 A. M., the wind failed, leaving the vessels becalmed and just out of gunshot. Observing that some of the schooners were getting out their boats with a view of towing to a place of safety, Trenchard ordered the *Cyane's* boats to be manned and prepared for a boat attack. The order was carried out in gallant style. The launch, first cutter and starboard quarter boat were lowered and manned, and at 8 A. M. dashed toward the nearest schooner, notwithstanding the ominous pointing of heavy guns at them and the loud threats of the slavers to blow the boats out of water if they persisted in coming nearer. Several shots were fired. Unmindful of this the Americans nerved themselves for a dash, and after a strong pull boarded the first vessel. She proved to be the American schooner *Endymion*, commanded by Alexander McKim Andrew. When Mr. Andrew saw that his threats to blow the boats out of water were unavailing, he hastily got into one of his boats and pulled toward the land. Noticing this from the deck of the *Cyane*, Trenchard ordered his quarter boat, under Lieutenant Montgomery, in pursuit, and after an exciting race the fugitive was captured. Midshipman New-

ton and a prize crew were placed aboard the *Endymion*.

At this moment a fresh breeze sprang up, and the launch and cutter, which were then pulling toward the second schooner with a view of boarding her also, soon found that they were losing ground instead of gaining, for the schooner, having all her sails set, was gradually drawing away from them. Upon discovering this the two boats returned to the *Cyane*, and that vessel set sail and resumed the chase. At 8.30 A. M. the *Endymion* picked up the quarter boat which had captured Mr. Andrew and followed the *Cyane*. But the breeze, although quite fresh for a time, began to fail again, and at noon Trenchard sent Lieutenant Stringham in the first cutter, Lieutenant Voorhees in the launch, and Lieutenant Mervine in the second gig to make a second boat attack on the slavers. This time the boats succeeded in getting alongside the chase, and took successively the brig *Annita*, commanded by Pedro Pushe; the schooner *Esperanza*, Luis Montefort; the schooner *Dasher*, Thomas Munro; the schooner *Eliza*, Constant Hastings; and the schooner *Louise*, Francis Sablon.

An examination of these vessels showed that they were all "deeply engaged in the traffic of slaves. There is but one, however, of those under foreign flags that we can ascertain is acting in contravention to the above law. This is the schooner *Esperanza* (formerly the United States revenue cutter *Alert*), now under Spanish colors. She sailed last from Charleston, S. C., without a clearance, at which place she enlisted the major part of her crew of American citizens. Her apparent captain is a Spaniard by the name of Montefort, but her real captain and probable owner is a Mr. Ratcliffe, an American, and who is now on shore collecting his complement of negroes."

Having captured six of the slavers by one bold stroke, Trenchard hastened back to the mouth of the

Gallinos, where a brig and a schooner had remained apparently indifferent to the fate that awaited them. These vessels were taken without opposition, and one was found to be the schooner *Science* or *Dechosa*, and the other was called the *Plattsburg* or *Maria Gattbreust*. After a search they were reported upon by the examining officers as follows: "The *Dechosa* or *Science*, of New York, is owned in New York; sailed from that port in January last and touched at Porto Rico, where she changed her name and came immediately to this coast, landed her cargo and made arrangements for receiving her slaves. There is little doubt of her being American property, and consequently we are of opinion that she is violating the laws of the United States. We can only learn that the *Maria Gattbreust* or *Plattsburg*, of Baltimore, sailed from Baltimore in December last, where she shipped her crew and cargo of goods; she touched at Cuba, at which place she changed her character and proceeded to this coast in quest of slaves. The number of men and her strong armament induces us to believe that she is not only a vessel engaged in the traffic of slaves, but she is fully prepared to commit piratical aggressions on the flag of any nation." All of these prisoners were sent to the United States in the *Eliza* for trial. By this daring act Trenchard captured seven slavers and probably one pirate. The blow was a severe one and did much toward checking the traffic.

Shortly after this affair the *Cyane* put into Port Praya. As she entered the port the Americans fired the customary salute of seventeen guns. As the shore batteries replied with only fifteen, Trenchard promptly sent Lieutenant Voorhees ashore to demand an explanation. The officials apologized for the slight and caused two more guns to be discharged.<sup>1</sup> We get some

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<sup>1</sup> Private Journal of Captain Trenchard.

idea of the danger of cruising on the African coast by the fact that while the *Cyane* was on this station the English war brig *Snapper* in eight months lost eleven officers and twenty men in a crew of about fifty all told. In April, 1820, Trenchard reported to the Secretary of the Navy that thirty-six of his men were prostrated by the malady. In consequence of this alarming condition the *Cyane* was ordered home and the *Hornet* took her place.

By the provisions of the Webster-Ashburton treaty the United States agreed to maintain a squadron mounting not less than eighty guns on the coast of Africa, for the suppression of the slave trade; and in carrying out this section of the treaty Captain Matthew Calbraith Perry, on the 20th of February, 1843, was ordered to the African coast in command of the 20-gun sloop of war *Saratoga*, flagship, the 38-gun frigate *Macedonian*, and the brigs of war *Decatur* and *Porpoise*. Prior to the arrival of this squadron on its station the American trading vessel *Mary Carver* had been seized by the natives, and her commander, Mr. Carver, was tied to a post, and for three hours the women and children tortured him by sticking thorns into his flesh. The *Edward Barley* also was seized by the Africans, and her master, Mr. Burke, her mate and cook were murdered.

When Captain Perry heard of these outrages he sent the *Porpoise*, Lieutenant Stellwagen, disguised as a merchantman, to the Berribee Coast, where the murders had been committed. As soon as the *Porpoise* dropped anchor a number of natives came aboard, and evidently would have murdered the crew had the vessel been a merchant craft, as they supposed. This was all the American commander wanted to know, and, sailing away without injuring the natives or revealing the character of his vessel, Lieutenant Stellwagen made his report to Captain Perry. On the 29th of November, 1843, the squadron anchored off Berribee and de-

manded the restoration of the *Mary Carver's* cargo and the surrender of the murderers. After a number of "palavers" Captain Perry agreed to land and hold a conference with King Crack O within the stockades. This negro was a giant, and Captain Perry had been warned of treachery, but in spite of the danger the intrepid American attended the conference with a small guard. In the middle of the interview King Crack O suddenly seized Perry with one hand and attempted to reach his iron spear (the handle of which had twelve notches in it, indicating the number of men he had slain) with the other. The sergeant of marines promptly shot the king and then bayoneted him twice; but the gigantic negro, frothing at the mouth, continued to fight with the ferocity of a demon, and it took three men to control him. The other blacks retreated to the camwood and opened a fire on the Americans, using the copper bolts of the *Mary Carver* as bullets. They were soon put to flight, however, and their town burned, King Crack O dying the next day.

On the 15th of December, while the squadron was at a point fifteen miles down the coast, the woods suddenly resounded with war horns, bells, gongs, etc., and a fire was opened on the American boats pulling toward the shore. A detachment of men was landed and four towns were destroyed. The good effects of these severe measures were felt many years afterward. Swift runners carried the news a thousand miles along the coast, and on the 16th of December a treaty was concluded at Great Berribee.

When Lieutenant Andrew Hull Foote reached the slave coast in December, 1849, in the brig of war *Perry*, he found that the American brigantine *Louisa Beaton* had been overhauled by the British cruiser *Dolphin* under suspicion of being engaged in the slave trade. The people in the brigantine expressed great indignation over this proceeding, and so far asserted their



innocence that the English commander made a disavowal of the act and offered an indemnity. As showing the extreme delicacy of this service, it will be added that the *Louisa Beaton* was in truth a slaver, and after being released by the authorities got away with a cargo of human freight.

In the following year (June 7, 1850) Foote overhauled a large ship showing American colors off the coast between Ambriz and Loanda. As the American boarding officer came aboard to search, he noticed that her name on the stern was "*Martha*, of New York," yet as soon as her master recognized the uniform of the American officers he hauled down his colors and claimed the protection of the Brazilian flag. He then threw overboard his writing desk, and boldly declared that the ship was a Brazilian and that the Americans had no right to search. Unfortunately for this man his writing desk floated, and, on being recovered and searched, papers were found showing that he was a citizen of the United States, and that three fifths of the ship belonged to an American living at Rio Janeiro.

A further search showed that there were twenty-six thousand gallons of water aboard and sufficient quantities of farina and rice—the common food of negroes—to feed two thousand men. Besides this there were wooden spoons, iron boilers for cooking purposes, manacles used for securing slaves, and the ship was fitted with what was known as a "slave deck." As the proofs were too strong against him the master confessed that he expected to take on a full cargo of negroes that night. He was seized and sent with his men to New York and his ship was condemned as a slaver.

Not long after this the *Perry* seized the American brigantine *Chatsworth* and held her for adjudication, but she was released by the court as not having sufficient evidence against her to establish her character as a slaver. Afterward the *Chatsworth* was again seized

and this time two sets of papers were found aboard her. Again she was sent home and this time was condemned.

These energetic measures, together with the vigilance exercised by the American and British cruisers on the slave coast, gradually stamped out the nefarious traffic, so that in a few years after the seizure of the *Chatsworth* the slave trade virtually was stopped.

## CHAPTER V.

### CONQUEST OF CALIFORNIA.

ON the night of September 6, 1842, while the Pacific squadron, under the command of Captain Thomas ap C. Jones—consisting of the 44-gun frigate *United States*, flagship, the 20-gun sloop of war *Cyane*, Commander Cornelius Kinchiloe Stribling, the 16-gun brig of war *Dale*, Commander Thomas Aloysius Dornin, and the 12-gun schooner *Shark*—was at anchor in the harbor of Callao, the British frigate *Dublin*, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Thomas, suddenly appeared off the port, took a look at the American cruisers, and put to sea again without giving information as to her destination. Under ordinary circumstances the action of the British admiral would not have excited more than passing comment for the *Dublin* had been on the western coast of South America fifteen years, and was constantly running from one port to another. But her behavior on this particular occasion aroused Captain Jones' suspicions. For some time it had been rumored that England and France were in secret negotiation with Mexico for the cession of enormous tracts of land on the Pacific slope. These rumors were particularly applicable to Great Britain, as it was well known that Mexico was heavily in debt to British merchants, and there seemed to be no other way of meeting the obligation.

England had never lost sight of France's first project of founding a Western empire. It has been shown that the French ministry caused a chain of trading posts—in reality fortresses—to be erected along the

Great Lakes and down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans, with the view of uniting the Canadas and Louisiana into one vast domain, which would cut off the English colonies on the Atlantic seaboard from the Great West. When the Canadas passed under British rule the English endeavored to carry out this plan for the purpose of confining the United States east of the Great Lakes and the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers; but the naval victories on Lake Champlain and Lake Erie, and the battle of the Thames, in the War of 1812, frustrated this, and as a last resort the British ministers projected the most formidable expedition of the war against New Orleans, at a time when negotiations for peace were pending, hoping to secure a footing at the mouth of the Mississippi River, and thus establish a claim on the vast territory drained by its confluent. This was in keeping with England's policy of occupying strategic positions on the coasts of other nations in all parts of the world. By fortifying the little island of Heligoland, at the mouth of the Elbe, England for many years exercised a controlling influence over the German states, and by holding the Channel Islands she was a constant menace to France. Her impregnable strongholds at Gibraltar and Malta gave her a dominating influence over Spain, Portugal, Italy and other Mediterranean nations, and the occupation of Hong-Kong on the island of Victoria, near the mouth of several large rivers in China, put her in a threatening attitude toward that country. This "holding the clinched fist" close to the aquiline nose of Uncle Sam, so far as the Mississippi River was concerned, was prevented by the American naval forces at Lake Borgne and by General Jackson. But England was always on the watch to secure more strategic points.

Captain Jones had been put on his guard by the Government, and had recently read in a Mexican paper that war was likely to be declared between the United States and Mexico, if indeed hostilities had not

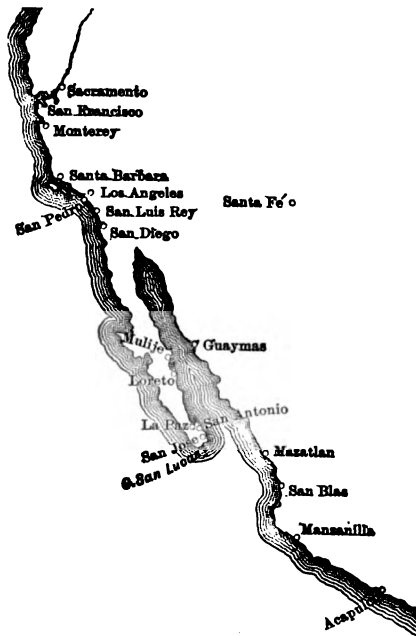
already begun. All these circumstances made the American commander suspect that the *Dublin* was bound for California for the purpose of occupying towns along the coast, and knowing that the policy of the United States was to extend its territory to the Pacific Ocean, he promptly got to sea with his entire squadron on the 7th of September. As soon as the vessels had gained an offing he called a council of his officers and laid the facts before them, and they came to the conclusion unanimously that it was their duty, at all hazards, to prevent the British from obtaining a foothold in California. The *United States* and the *Cyane* hastened northward, while the *Shark* returned to Callao and the *Dale* made for Panama with dispatches for the Government. Captain Jones reached Monterey on the afternoon of October 19th, but saw nothing of the *Dublin*. He heard enough, however, to convince him that his suspicions were well founded, and he insisted on the surrender of the place; but on the following day he learned that war did not exist between the United States and Mexico, and he promptly made amends for his hasty action. That the Government was not displeased with the vigilance of this officer is shown by the fact that he was not censured for the part he had played; but, as some action was necessary to conciliate Mexico, he was removed from the command of the squadron.

War was not declared between the United States and Mexico until May, 1846, and, learning of the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, Captain John Drake Sloat, who had succeeded to the command of the Pacific squadron, sailed from Mazatlan on the 8th of June in the 44-gun frigate *Savannah*, Captain William Mervine, and arrived at Monterey July 2d, where he found the *Warren*, the *Cyane* and the *Levant*. Landing two hundred and fifty seamen and marines, under Captain Mervine, he took possession of the place, and a week later the *Portsmouth*, Com-

mander John Berrien Montgomery, took formal possession of the magnificent bay of San Francisco and the adjoining territory. Sutter's Fort, on Sacramento River, Bodega and Sonoma also were occupied. On the 16th of July the 80-gun ship of the line *Collingwood*, Admiral Sir George F. Seymour, arrived at Monterey, and on the 19th of July Major John Charles Frémont, who was exploring California at the head of a company of topographical engineers, reached the same place with one hundred and sixty mounted riflemen, and placed himself under the orders of Captain Sloat. In his *Four Years in the Pacific in H. M. S. Collingwood*, Lieutenant Walpole of the royal navy says: "Frémont and his party were true trappers. They had passed years in the wilds, living upon their own resources. Many of them were blacker than the Indians. Their dress was principally a long, loose coat of deer skin, tied with thongs in front; trousers of the same, of their own manufacture. They are allowed no liquor—tea and sugar only." "It was a day of excitement when we entered Monterey," says Major Frémont in his *Memoirs*. "Four of our men-of-war were lying in the harbor, and also the *Collingwood*. Looking out over the bay, the dark hulls of the war vessels and the slumbering cannon still looked ominous and threatening. There lay the pieces on the great chess-board before me with which the game for an empire had been played." No doubt Admiral Seymour would gladly have had a pretext for seizing the territory, and incidentally recapturing the *Cyane* and *Levant*, which had been taken from the English in 1815, but he was checkmated by the superior force that Captain Sloat had collected at Monterey, and after an exchange of civilities he sailed on the 23d of July for the Sandwich Islands.

Anxious to interrupt communications between General José M. Castro, commander of the Mexican forces in California, and Mexico, Captain Sloat sent Major

Frémont with one hundred and fifty riflemen in the *Cyane*, Commander Samuel Francis Dupont, to San Diego. The *Cyane* arrived off that port on the 25th of



Scene of the naval operations on the Pacific coast.

July. Landing on the afternoon of the same day, Lieutenant Stephen Clegg Rowan hoisted the American colors and placed a garrison there under the command of Lieutenant George Minor. On the 30th of July the *Congress* took possession of San Pedro, seaport of Los Angeles and the seat of the Mexican Government in California. Desiring to return to the United States on account of his health, Captain Sloat, on the 23d of July,

1846, turned over the command of the squadron to Captain Robert Field Stockton (who had recently arrived in Monterey) and sailed for Panama in the *Levant*.

Finding that all the seaports on the Californian coast were in the possession of the Americans, Captain Stockton planned an expedition against Los Angeles. Leaving the *Savannah* on guard at Monterey, the *Portsmouth* at San Francisco, the *Warren* at Mazatlan and the *Erie* at the Sandwich Islands, Captain Stockton, on the 1st of August, sailed from Monterey in the *Congress*. Stationing a small force at Santa Barbara, he appeared off San Pedro August 6th, and, landing three hundred and fifty sailors and marines, estab-

lished a camp and began the arduous task of drilling the sailors in military tactics. "There were only about ninety muskets in the whole corps. Some of the men were armed with carbines, others had only pistols, swords or boarding-pikes. They presented a motley and peculiar appearance, with great variety of costume. Owing to their protracted absence from home the supplies of shoes and clothing had fallen short, and the ragged and diversified colors of their garments, as well as the want of uniformity in their arms and accoutrements, made them altogether a spectacle both singular and amusing."<sup>1</sup> Captain Stockton fully realized the importance of securing the strategic places in California before the several thousand well-armed and well-mounted soldiers then scattered in different parts of the State could come together. The many narrow passes, mountain ranges, and undulations of the land favorable for resisting invaders gave the Mexicans a great advantage. Their forces at Los Angeles also outnumbered the Americans three to one, and it was only by putting on a bold front that Captain Stockton had hopes of conquering them.

Several days after the camp at San Pedro had been established a flag of truce appeared on the hills, and Captain Stockton determined on a stratagem to deceive the enemy as to his force. "He ordered all his men under arms and directed them to march three or four abreast, with intervals of considerable space between each squad, directly in the line of vision of the approaching messengers, to the rear of some buildings on the beach, and thence to return in a circle and continue their march until the strangers had arrived. Part of the circle described in the march was concealed from view, so that to the strangers it would appear that a force ten times greater than the actual number was defiling before them. When the two

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<sup>1</sup> Life of Captain Robert F. Stockton, p. 119.



bearers of the flag of truce had arrived, he ordered them to be led up to him alongside of the artillery, which consisted of several 6-pounders and one 32-pound carronade. The guns were all covered with skins in such a manner as to conceal their dimensions excepting the huge mouth of the 32-pounder, at which the captain was posted to receive his guests. He supposed that in all probability neither of them had ever before seen such an instrument of war, and that the large and gaping aperture of the gun, into the very mouth of which they were compelled to look, would be likely to disturb their nerves. As his purpose was that of intimidation, he received them with sternness, calculated to co-operate with the impression produced by the artillery. . . . The messengers brought overtures for a truce, but, as this was merely a *ruse* to gain time, Captain Stockton ordered them to tell General Castro that he would not negotiate with him on any other terms than those of absolute submission to the authority of the United States. Having delivered this message in the most fierce and offensive manner, and in a tone significant of the most implacable and hostile determination, Captain Stockton imperiously waved them from his presence with the insulting imperative *Vamose!* The Mexicans made haste to escape from the presence of an enemy apparently so ferocious and formidable, and their ominous retiring glances at the terrific gun showed but too plainly that the work of intimidation was effectual. When they were beyond hearing Captain Stockton expressed the opinion to his officers that these messengers would carry to General Castro's camp such an account of their observations as would supersede the necessity of any very desperate battle."<sup>1</sup>

Forming his little army into a hollow square, with his baggage and provisions in the center, Captain

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<sup>1</sup> Life of Captain Robert F. Stockton, p. 120.

Stockton, on the 11th of August, began his tedious march to Los Angeles. Having only a few horses, the sailors seized the ropes attached to the heavy artillery and ammunition carts and dragged them over hills and valleys of sand under the burning rays of a semitropical sun. On the 12th he met a courier from General Castro with a pompous message informing Captain Stockton that "if he marched upon the town he would find it the grave of his men." The American commander replied: "Then tell your general to have the bells ready to toll in the morning at eight o'clock. I shall be there at that time." Stockton was as good as his word, and on the 13th of August he met Major Frémont's detachment, which had come up from San Diego, and entered Los Angeles unopposed. The Mexican general, having dispersed the bulk of his army, mounted his best men on his swiftest horses and made all speed for Sonora. The following day, August 14th, Andres Pico (the former governor) and General José Maria Flores surrendered and were liberated on parole. The news of the capture was sent overland to Washington by the celebrated scout Kit Carson. Organizing a civil government for the entire State, with Major Frémont as the head of it, Captain Stockton sailed northward on the 5th of September, leaving a garrison under the command of Lieutenant Archibald H. Gillespie, of the marines. Major Frémont also returned north for the purpose of enlisting men at Sacramento to take part in an expedition that Captain Stockton was planning against Acapulco.

While these operations were taking place along the coast of California, the *Warren*, Commander Joseph Bartine Hull, and the *Cyane*, Commander Dupont, were active in cruising along the western coast of Mexico and capturing hostile vessels. Thirteen or fourteen prizes were taken by them. Captain Stockton, in his official report, said Commanders Hull and Dupont "deserve praise for the manner in which they have blockaded

and watched the Mexican coasts during the most inclement season of the year." A spirited affair was undertaken by the boats of the *Warren* under Commander Hull. The celebrated privateer *Malek Adhel* had run into the harbor of Mazatlan, and Lieutenant Hull manned his boats and, pulling directly into the harbor, captured the vessel and brought her out.

Early in October a courier from Los Angeles arrived at San Francisco with the startling announcement that both Pico and General Flores, regardless of their parole, had secretly collected the remnants of their army and were besieging the American garrison in the Government house at Los Angeles. It was also learned that the Mexicans were attacking the garrison at Santa Barbara, and were advancing upon the little force under Lieutenant Minor at San Diego. Captain Stockton immediately dispatched the *Savannah* to the scene of trouble. Arriving at San Pedro, Captain Mervine found that the American garrison at Los Angeles had been forced to capitulate, and was awaiting the arrival of an American cruiser. Captain Mervine landed a detachment of seamen and marines, and began the march to the capital; but he had not advanced more than twelve miles when he came upon the Mexicans and a field piece intrenched in a commanding position. Unfortunately, the Americans were destitute of artillery, but, gallantly charging, they drove the enemy from cover. The Mexicans, being well mounted, carried off their field piece and, after retreating a short distance, formed another line. The Americans charged again, but Captain Mervine, finding that he was losing valuable men and that the enemy could repeat these tactics with comparative impunity, retired to San Pedro, closely followed by General Flores with eighteen hundred soldiers. In this affair the Americans had several men killed or wounded.

Captain Stockton sailed from San Francisco on the 12th of October in the *Congress*, having in company

the transport *Sterling*, with Major Frémont's corps, consisting "of one hundred and seventy good men"<sup>1</sup> aboard. On the way down the coast the vessels became separated in a fog, and as the weather was clearing up the *Congress* met the merchant vessel *Barnstable* and learned that the American garrison at Monterey, under the command of Lieutenant W. A. T. Maddox, of the marines, was threatened by an uprising of the people. Running into the bay, Captain Stockton landed fifty men and three pieces of artillery, under Midshipmen Baldwin and Johnston, and then continued his course southward. Arriving at San Pedro on the 23d of October, he landed three hundred men and established a camp. Hearing that the garrison at San Diego under Lieutenant Minor was besieged, and finding that the harbor at San Pedro was too exposed, Captain Stockton, after a few skirmishes with the enemy, changed his base of operations to the former place. In attempting to cross the bar at San Diego the *Congress* grounded. A second attempt to get the ship over was successful, but she grounded in the bay, and heeled over so much that it became necessary to shore her up with spars. While she was in this condition the Mexicans made a furious attack on the town. As many men as could be spared were landed under Lieutenant Minor and Captain Gillespie, and they drove the enemy back.

Being greatly in need of horses and live stock, Captain Stockton sent Captain Hensley and Captain Gibson with a detachment of men into Lower California for a supply, and these officers soon returned with ninety horses and two hundred head of cattle. Another expedition under Captain Gillespie was planned against the enemy's camp at San Bernardino, but before it got under way Captain Stockton received word from Brigadier-General Stephen W. Kearny that he had crossed

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<sup>1</sup> Memoirs of John Charles Frémont, p. 577.

the mountains from Santa Fé with one hundred dragoons, and desired to open communication with the American naval forces. Captain Gillespie, with Lieutenant Beale, Midshipman James M. Duncan and ten carbineers, together with a force of twenty-five volunteers under Captain Gibson and a field gun, were ordered to march immediately and effect a junction with him, which was done early in December. Early on the morning of December 6th General Kearny attacked the Mexican forces at San Pasqual, commanded by Captain Pio Pico, but was repelled with the loss of one of his guns and eighteen men killed and fifteen wounded, among the latter being General Kearny himself, Lieutenant Beale and Captain Gillespie. The general now found himself besieged by a force that was hourly growing stronger. On the night of December 7th Lieutenant Beale, with Mr. Godey and an Indian scout, slipped through the enemy's lines, and, after enduring great hardships, reached the American camp at San Diego on the night of December 9th.

The position of the American forces in California was extremely critical. Elated with the recapture of Los Angeles, the repulse of Captain Mervine on the road to that town, the abandonment of San Pedro by the powerful American squadron, and most of all by the defeat of General Kearny, the Mexicans were rallying in great numbers. Realizing the gravity of the situation, Captain Stockton resolved on prompt and decisive measures. The first thing to be done was to relieve General Kearny at San Bernardino. Accordingly, the attack on Los Angeles was postponed, while Andrew F. V. Gray, on the 10th of December, with two hundred and fifteen men, was sent in all haste to the aid of the general. That young officer carried out his instructions with spirit, and by making forced marches he reached the besieged dragoons and escorted them to San Diego. Captain Stockton began his march upon Los Angeles December 29th. His entire force now con-

sisted of nearly six hundred sailors and marines, General Kearny's sixty dismounted dragoons, six light guns and a howitzer. There were only two hundred muskets in the whole army, the sailors being armed with carbines and boarding-pikes, while the few horses were unfit for the march, and soon gave out.

The road to Los Angeles, about one hundred and forty-five miles long, was intersected with deep ravines, sand hills and deserts, affording many strong positions where a handful of determined men could have impeded seriously the progress of an army. The first day of the march was occupied in crossing the dry, sandy bed of San Diego River and in reaching Solidad, the guns and ammunition carts being drawn two thirds of the way by the officers and men. "After an advance of a quarter of a mile we found what labor was in store for us. Almost every ox team became stalled in the sandy bed of the dry river, and had to be dragged across by the troops. On a dead level the half-starved oxen managed to drag the carts, but when we came to a hill or a sandy bottom the troops had to pull them along. These extra labors were of hourly occurrence, and when we reached the place where we were to camp for the night the men were almost exhausted."<sup>1</sup> "Our men were badly clothed, and their shoes generally were made by themselves out of canvas. It was very cold, and the roads heavy. Our animals were all poor and weak, some of them giving out daily, which gave much hard work to the men in dragging the heavy carts, loaded with ammunition and provisions, through deep sands and up steep ascents."<sup>2</sup> On the morning of the second day the men came to Captain Stockton in squads and begged for twenty-four hours of rest. This, at first, was granted, but realizing that every day was increasing the enemy's strength,

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<sup>1</sup> Recollections of the Mexican War, Vice-Admiral Rowan.

<sup>2</sup> Official Report of Captain Robert F. Stockton.

Captain Stockton after a few hours resumed the march, in spite of urgent requests for rest. During the day straggling parties of Mexican horsemen appeared at different points along the route, showing that the enemy was on the alert and not far off. On the second day several of them appeared in front of a house on a hill, waving their lances in defiance; but on the approach of the advance guard they disappeared as suddenly as they came. When the little army had covered about two thirds of the distance, messengers bearing a letter from General Flores were met, but Captain Stockton refused to read the missive, saying that the Mexican commander had broken his parole and would be shot if he again fell into the hands of the Americans.

On the 2d of January Stockton reached San Luis Rey, and on the 3d a courier was dispatched to communicate, if possible, with the corps under Major Frémont. Continuing his march, Captain Stockton on the evening of January 7th approached San Gabriel River, and by sending out scouts he discovered that the Mexicans were intrenched between him and the river, apparently determined to give battle. Early on the following morning all the firearms were discharged and reloaded, so as to insure their being in good condition. Incidentally it was a reminder that the 8th of January was the anniversary of the battle of New Orleans. Having assigned every man to his position, and giving careful instructions how to proceed, Captain Stockton resumed the march at 9 o'clock in the morning, and on reaching the plains formed his army in a hollow square with the baggage and provisions in the center. When he was within two miles of the river the enemy, six hundred strong, appeared in three divisions on the hills on the opposite side of the San Gabriel. As the Americans approached the ford where the river was about fifty yards wide, a body of one hundred and fifty Mexicans crossed the San Gabriel at another point and en-

deavored to drive a herd of wild mares into the American ranks, but failing in this they retired across the river to their position about six hundred yards from the water. The main body of their army, two hundred strong, with two pieces of artillery, was stationed opposite the ford.

As the Americans approached the crossing place the Mexicans opened a heavy fire, one of their cannon balls striking Frederick Strauss, a seaman of the *Portsmouth*, in the neck and killing him instantly. Some of the other Americans were wounded about the same time, but in spite of their exposed position they struggled across the stream, while the officers and men assisted the mules in dragging the two 9-pounders through the deep sand. As soon as the advance guard had crossed the 9-pounders were unlimbered, and although exposed in the open plain they were loaded and fired with such precision that one shot knocked a Mexican gun out of its carriage. It was five minutes before the Mexicans recovered from the confusion created by this well-aimed missile, but finally twenty of them ran from their cover and hastily fastening lassoes to the gun dragged it to the rear. About this time the Mexicans made a flank movement and endeavored to capture the two 6-pounders in the rear of the American army, but they were repelled by the marines under Lieutenant Jacob Zeilin. The Mexican right wing then attempted to rout Captain Stockton's left, but it was repelled by the musketeers under Lieutenants William B. Renshaw and H. B. Watson and Midshipman John Guest.

Everything now being in readiness, Captain Stockton gave the word to charge, and the men rushed forward with great spirit. The Mexican center withstood the attack for some time, but finally broke and fled. At this moment their right wing wheeled round and charged the American rear, which was encumbered with baggage, horses and cattle, but Captain Gillespie



opened such a well-directed fire that the enemy was again repelled. The Americans were now in full possession of the enemy's breastworks, and "the band playing Hail Columbia and Yankee Doodle announced another glorious victory on the 8th of January."<sup>1</sup> In this affair the Americans lost two killed and had nine wounded, while that of the enemy was about seventy killed and one hundred and fifty wounded.

Anxious to follow up his advantage, Captain Stockton ordered the tattoo to be beaten at an early hour that evening, with the intention of resuming the march on Los Angeles at daybreak. At midnight the picket men were fired upon, and, fearing a general attack, Captain Stockton in a few minutes had his little army under arms, but finding that it was nothing more than a few straggling prowlers the men returned to their blankets. At 9 o'clock on the following morning the Americans were again formed into a hollow square, with the baggage and animals in the center, and resumed the march; but they had not proceeded more than six miles when they were again confronted by the Mexican army intrenched in a strong position on the plains of Mesa. When within range the enemy opened fire from a masked battery, which killed an ox and a mule of the American provision train. The fire was returned by the 6-pounder, under Acting-Master William H. Thompson. Observing that the enemy was dividing his cavalry so as to attack three sides of the American square simultaneously, Captain Stockton ordered his men to reserve their fire until they could distinctly see the faces of their foe. "The appearance which the Mexicans made on this occasion, mounted on fine horses, gayly caparisoned, with ribbons and pennons streaming in the breeze, was brilliant and exciting. On they came at full gallop, the earth quivering beneath their hoofs, their bright weapons flashing in the

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<sup>1</sup> Official report of Captain Stockton.

rays of the sun, apparently with desperate valor bent on hurling themselves upon the small, compact and silent mass that awaited their charge. But when they had approached as near as Captain Stockton thought proper he gave the signal, and a deadly fire checked their gallant advance."<sup>1</sup> Three times the Mexicans rallied and charged the hollow square, and three times they were repelled by the unflinching bravery of the little army, leaving many a horse galloping over the plains with an empty saddle. At last they retired in confusion, and on the following day Captain Stockton entered Los Angeles in triumph, where he was joined on the 15th of January by Major Frémont's corps.

In the battle of the 9th the Americans had one killed and five wounded, including Lieutenant Rowan and Captain Gillespie. Besides those already mentioned, the naval officers in these brilliant affairs were Lieutenant Richard L. Tilghman; Acting-Lieutenants B. F. B. Hunter and Edward Higgins; Midshipmen Benjamin F. Wells, P. Haywood, Robert C. Duvall, William Simmons, George E. Morgan, J. Van Ness Philip, Theodoric Lee, Albert Almand, Edward C. Grafton, J. Fenwick Stenson, Joseph Parrish and Edmund Shepherd; Surgeons Charles Eversfield, John S. Griffin and Andrew A. Henderson; Purser William Speeden; Captain Hensley, Captain Turner, of the dragoons, Captain Miguel de Pedrovena, Captain William H. Emory, of the topographical engineers, and Lieutenant Davidson. Soon after his brilliant victories Captain Stockton joined a party of hunters, and crossing the Rocky Mountains made his way overland to the United States. Captain William Brandford Shubrick succeeded him in the command of the Pacific squadron, re-enforcing it with the 54-gun ship of the line *Independence* and the 16-gun brig of war *Preble*.

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<sup>1</sup> Life of Captain Robert F. Stockton, p. 147.

## CHAPTER VI.

### IN THE GULF OF CALIFORNIA.

WHILE this vigorous campaign was under way in the north the vessels stationed on the coasts of Mexico and Lower California had not been idle. After landing Major Frémont's corps at San Diego, in July, 1846, the *Cyane*, Commander Dupont, appeared off San Blas on the 2d of September. A detachment of men under Lieutenant Rowan landed, spiked all the guns in the place (twenty-four in number) and then retired without the loss of a man. Running into the Gulf of California, Commander Dupont learned that a Mexican gunboat had sailed from Mulije for Guaymas, and, making all sail, he appeared off that port on the 6th of October. Discovering two gunboats and a brig in the harbor, he demanded that they be surrendered, but the Mexicans burned the gunboats and warped the brig into a cove within pistol shot of the shore, where two streets leading from the barracks opened on her. These barracks were in a commanding position and contained several hundred soldiers, besides artillery. It was thought that the brig thus defended was safe. But evidently the Mexicans had not heard of the daring cutting-out expeditions for which the United States navy is famous.

Determined to have the brig, Commander Dupont ordered out his launch and cutter under the command of Lieutenant G. W. Harrison, who was assisted by Lieutenant Higgins and Midshipman Lewis. The *Cyane* then hauled close inshore and opened a heavy fire, while the boat party, pulling toward the cove, boarded

the brig and began towing her out. Not wishing to injure the town unnecessarily, Commander Dupont now ceased firing, whereupon the Mexicans ran from their cover and opened a sharp discharge of musketry and artillery on the boat. This was returned by Lieutenant Harrison and the *Cyane*, and again the enemy ran to cover. In a short time, however, the boat party was in the line of the *Cyane's* fire, so that her gunners were compelled to desist. This was a signal for the Mexicans to resume their fire on the boats, and a party of Indians on the other side of the cove opened a cross fire. Seeing the danger of his men, Commander Dupont reopened his broadside, and by skillfully throwing his missiles over the heads of the boat party again routed the Mexicans and held them in check until his men were out of danger and the brig burned.

Running down to Mazatlan, the *Cyane* maintained such a vigorous blockade of that port that the town soon began to suffer for want of provisions, and in order to secure them the enemy attempted to run the blockade in small coasting vessels. As the only means of intercepting them, the Americans manned their boats and kept up this hazardous service many weeks. By keeping close inshore the coasters secured the support of cavalry with flying artillery. On two occasions the Americans succeeded in cutting off four of these blockade runners, and at one time, while three of the *Cyane's* smallest boats, under the command of Lieutenant Harrison, were returning from an expedition of this nature, two launches and two barges, carrying sixty soldiers, put out of the harbor in pursuit, the *Cyane* being some miles seaward. Notwithstanding the fact that the Mexicans had the support of their artillery on shore, Lieutenant Harrison turned on his pursuers and gallantly advanced to give battle. On coming within range both sides opened a sharp fire, but the Mexicans soon turned, ran their boats on the beach and escaped on shore. In her cruise off these

coasts the *Cyane* and her boats captured twenty-three craft of all kinds.

Some idea of the hardships and dangers to which the American officers and seamen on this coast were exposed may be gained from Lieutenant Tunis Augustus Macdonough Craven's journal, under date of December 21, 1846, when his ship, the *Dale*, was off Monterey. "In standing out to the northwest, the weather being quite thick and the rain pouring down in torrents, we came very near running into a low point of land forming the north point of the bay. We were obliged to haul by the wind, which had increased to a gale and suddenly shifted to the northwest, blowing strong. On neither tack could we clear the shore. Night came on; we could not regain the port; the rain poured down in violent squalls and the wind at times raged furiously; the lee shore was by calculation not more than nine miles off. We could not carry much sail, and were obliged to reduce what little we had. A tremendous swell set in from the southwest, and we felt that it was fast driving us toward the fatal shore. But the Almighty rendered us assistance when the hand of man was powerless."

Late in October, 1847, the *Congress*, Captain La Valette, and the *Portsmouth*, Commander Montgomery, hove to off Guaymas, and, landing two heavy guns on an island commanding the town, opened a heavy fire at sunrise on the following day, and in three quarters of an hour the enemy surrendered. All the water-front batteries were then destroyed, but on the evening of the same day General Campujano approached the place with a large force. Landing a detachment of seamen and marines, Captain La Valette prepared to defend the place, but the Mexican general, being deserted by many of his soldiers, left the Americans in quiet possession. Leaving the *Portsmouth* at Guaymas, Captain La Valette ran over to Loreto, and, standing down the coast, joined the *Independence* and

the *Cyane* at Cape San Lucas on the 16th of October. In November the *Dale*, Commander Thomas O. Selfridge, relieved the *Portsmouth* at Guaymas.

While on his way to that place Commander Selfridge learned that one hundred and fifty Mexican soldiers, under the command of a chief called Pineda, had captured Mulijé and were overawing the inhabitants, the majority of whom were friendly to the United States. The bold table mountain and broken crags of Mulijé were made out September 30th, and soon afterward the *Dale* brought her broadside to bear on the town, while Lieutenant Craven with fifty men in four boats pulled up the creek to cut out a schooner. This was done in handsome style, and although many Mexican soldiers were in sight they offered no resistance. On the following day Lieutenant Craven landed on the right bank of the creek with eighty officers and men, including Lieutenant William T. Smith, Lieutenant Tansill, of the marines, Past Midshipman James M. Duncan, and Midshipmen Thomas T. Houston, J. R. Hamilton and W. B. Hayes, and drove the Mexicans, one hundred and forty strong, three miles inland. Several ambuscades were prepared for the Americans, but the steadiness of the seamen carried everything before it. Two of the Americans were wounded. Lieutenant Craven, with Midshipman Hamilton and eleven men, was then placed in command of the schooner *Libertad*, fitted with a 9-pounder for the service, and was ordered to cruise in the Gulf and interrupt the enemy's communications. On the 9th of November Lieutenant Craven cut out the sloop *Alerta* from the harbor of Mulijé.

The *Dale* in the meantime had crossed over to Guaymas, and on the 17th of November Commander Selfridge landed with sixty-five men and marched upon the town. When he reached the plaza the Mexicans opened an unexpected fire from the houses that surrounded the place, which inflicted a severe

wound on the commander's foot and compelled him to return to his ship. It was discovered that four hundred soldiers were concealed in the houses. The Mexicans believed that they had the Americans in a trap. "Every house breathed fire from its doors and windows, and the officers thought that the whole party was doomed to destruction ; but the men were so well handled by Lieutenant Smith [who succeeded to the command], and their fire was so effectively poured upon the Mexicans, who were sallying from the houses and forming, that the enemy was thrown into the utmost confusion. A flight commenced, about four hundred Mexican soldiers being routed by about seventy seamen. In this affair Lieutenant Tansill commanded the marines and led that gallant little band into the thickest and hottest part of the fight."<sup>1</sup> Thirty of the Mexicans were killed or wounded.

Hearing that a body of Mexican soldiers had taken a position at Cochori, Lieutenant Yard, commanding the *Dale*, on Sunday morning, January 30, 1848, sent a boat party under Lieutenant Craven to attack them. Pulling four miles up the coast, the Americans landed some distance from the enemy's camp, and, cautiously making their way along the shore at night, suddenly came upon the Mexicans and routed them. Thirteen prisoners, including Captain Mendoza and a lieutenant, were taken, and five Mexicans were killed.

Leaving Lieutenant Charles Heywood with four midshipmen, twenty marines and a 12-pounder in the old mission house at San José, a small village twenty miles northeast of San Lucas, Captain Shubrick, on the evening of the same day (November 9th) sailed for Mazatlan with the *Independence*, the *Congress* and the *Cyane*, with the intention of capturing that important commercial center, which yielded an annual revenue of three million dollars to Mexico. As soon as the Ameri-

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<sup>1</sup> Journal of Lieutenant Craven.

can vessels came in sight of the town they made for positions prescribed by Captain Shubrick. The *Independence* anchored in a bend in the peninsula west of the town, and as her broadside swung round her lighted ports loomed up in the darkness like a walled city. The *Congress* took a dangerous but important position in the old harbor, where her guns could sweep the roads leading from that side of the town, while the *Cyane* and the *Erie* (the latter having joined the squadron off the port) boldly stood into the new harbor, and trained their guns on the town.

Early on the following morning Captain La Valette went ashore with a formal demand for the surrender of the place, but Colonel Telles, the Mexican commander, tore up the paper with insulting expressions and dared the Americans to attack. As soon as he heard of this Captain Shubrick ordered out the boats of the squadron and formed them in three lines under the command of Lieutenant Watson, Lieutenants Rowan and Page commanding the left and right wings. The boats from the *Congress*, commanded by Lieutenant John T. Livingston, had five pieces of artillery, which had been captured in Lower California. Notwithstanding the protection the stone walls and sand hills afforded the Mexicans, they did not open fire. Pulling directly for the landing, the Americans, six hundred in all, formed on the beach and marched to the town, and under a salute of twenty-one guns from the *Independence* hoisted the American flag. Captain Shubrick organized a municipal government for Mazatlan, with Captain La Valette at the head of it, while a commission consisting of Commander Dupont, Lieutenant Chatard, Purser Price and Thomas Miller arranged the terms of occupation. Pursers W. H. Greene and Speeden, as collectors of this port, in five months received nearly three hundred thousand dollars in duties. A garrison held the city till the close of the war.

Colonel Telles encamped not far from the town and



endeavored to cut off all communication with the interior. On the 20th of November a land party of ninety-four sailors, commanded by Lieutenant Seldon, and sixty-two men in boats, under Lieutenant Rowan, proceeded up the coast to Urias with a view of dislodging a detachment of Colonel Telles' troops. At daylight of the following day the Yankee sailors landed, and charged the Mexicans and soon dispersed them. Lieutenant Seldon's party, "having fallen into an ambush of the enemy's advance guard, was severely handled, losing twenty killed or wounded."<sup>1</sup>

Having secured this important city, Captain Shubrick sent out several expeditions against the smaller ports on the western coast of Mexico. Early in January, 1848, he sent the storeship *Lexington*, Lieutenant Theodorus Bailey, against San Blas. Lieutenant Bailey appeared off that place on the night of January 12th, and, landing a party of men under the command of Lieutenant Chartard, brought off two pieces of artillery and the customhouse boat. Soon afterward Chartard landed at Manzanilla and spiked the guns in that place. The Mexicans now had not a serviceable gun on their western coast except at Acapulco.

In the meantime several attempts were made by the enemy to recapture the posts taken by the Americans, the most serious being that against the garrison in the mission house at San José. On the 19th of November a large force of Mexicans unexpectedly appeared before that place and called upon the Americans to surrender; and although Lieutenant Heywood's force consisted of only twenty marines and four officers and twenty volunteers, he promptly refused to do so, prepared for a desperate defense, and placed Midshipman McLanahan and twelve men in a private dwelling adjoining the mission house. Late in the day the Mexicans began the attack by the rapid discharge of a 6-pounder, but find-

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<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Rowan's Recollections of the Mexican War.

ing that ineffectual they prepared a different plan. At ten o'clock that night they made a sudden assault in the front and rear of both houses, at the same time reopening the fire from their 6-pounder. The Americans responded with a 9-pounder, and with such good aim that the Mexicans sought the cover of buildings, from which they kept up a desultory fire until daybreak, when they retired.

On the following night they concentrated their entire force on the mission house and endeavored to carry it by assault. On they came with yells and shouts that were intended to strike terror into the hearts of the garrison. Their first object was to break down the front door and capture the 9-pounder which had caused them so much annoyance the day before. But Lieutenant Heywood, ever on the alert, was equal to the emergency, and had stationed some of his best men at the gun. Waiting until the enemy was within good range, the Americans discharged the gun, which brought down the Mexican leader with several of his men, and put the others to flight. At the same time a strong party of Mexicans with scaling ladders was approaching the mission house from behind, but, meeting with a hot fire and discouraged by the repulse of their comrades in front, they also fled. On the following morning a whaling vessel anchored in the bay, and, supposing her to be a man-of-war, the enemy retired. In these attacks the Americans had three men wounded, while the Mexicans left eight men dead on the field. Soon afterward Lieutenant Heywood received a small re-enforcement to his garrison.

On the 22d of January, 1848, the Mexicans renewed their attacks on this heroic little garrison, and succeeded in capturing Midshipmen Warley and Duncan, with six men, who were on the beach in front of the mission house, these men having no intimation that the enemy was in the neighborhood until a large body of cavalry dashed along the shore. This left Lieutenant

Heywood with only twenty-seven marines, ten seamen and twenty volunteers. It was soon discovered that this sudden dash of the Mexican cavalry was only the beginning of a determined effort on their part to crush the feeble garrison in the mission house. Fleeting glimpses of mounted horsemen hovering in the vicinity warned Lieutenant Heywood that the enemy was at hand in force and was about to renew his treacherous warfare. By the close of January the mission house was completely surrounded, and all avenues of retreat or succor were cut off. The inhabitants long since had fled, with the exception of fifty women and children who sought the shelter of the fort and were dependent on the scanty rations of the garrison. By the 4th of February the enemy had drawn his lines around the mission house and fired on all who exposed themselves.

Finding that something must be done immediately, Lieutenant Heywood, on the 6th of February, with twenty-five men, made a dash at a party of Mexicans who had taken a strong position in a house at the lower end of the street, and dislodged them; but as the Americans could not spare men to hold the place the enemy returned to it as soon as the victors had retired to the mission house. On the following day the Americans made another successful sortie, but sustained the loss of one man. Considering the overwhelming force of the Mexicans, this was a substantial victory for them, for although they lost fifteen, killed or wounded, their great numbers enabled them to withstand the loss. Evidently it was their plan to worry the garrison, picking off a man here and there until the Americans should be so reduced that resistance would be hopeless. The Mexicans soon got complete possession of the town, and, placing strong bodies of men in a church and other buildings near the mission house, they kept up an incessant fire. A few days afterward, while passing a window, Midshipman McLanahan was mortally wounded by a bullet in the neck, and during the fol-

lowing night the enemy erected an earthwork that commanded the place where the Americans obtained their supply of water, so that the garrison was compelled to dig a well. While they were engaged in this arduous task, the *Cyane*, Commander Dupont, on the evening of February 15th, appeared in the harbor, but, not understanding the situation, made no attempt to relieve the mission house until the following day.

At daylight on February 16th Commander Dupont got out his boats with ninety-four seamen and marines, with Lieutenants Rowan and Harrison, Acting-Master Fairfax, Midshipmen Shepherd, Lewis and Vanderhorst, and Sergeant Maxwell, and, pulling for the beach, effected a landing. The Mexicans prepared to dispute the road from the beach to the mission house, and having the protection of trees, houses and sand hills, were in a position to make a serious resistance. Notwithstanding a galling fire, Commander Dupont moved steadily on, returning the enemy's fire as well as he could, and fighting for every inch of ground he passed over. It was with difficulty that the impetuosity of the seamen could be restrained, for they were eager to come into close quarters with the "varmints" and "lay the enemy aboard," but Commander Dupont wisely concluded that he would lose the advantage of a compact force if his men became scattered in a charge, and so with great patience he continued to push his way steadily toward the mission house. Step by step the Mexicans were driven back, and one vantage point after another was wrested from them by the hardy Yankee tars. The *Cyane* was unable to bring her guns into play without danger of injuring her own people, but the crew watched the contest with great interest, every success being heralded with cheers.

Finding that they had been driven back almost to the point where the men in the mission house could fire on them in the rear, the Mexicans made a final stand at the junction of two streets, when Commander Dupont-

arranged his men for a charge and at the word they rushed to the attack. Just at this moment Lieutenant Heywood made a sally from the mission house, and, after dislodging a body of Mexicans in a neighboring house, joined the forces under Commander Dupont, and being attacked in both front and rear, the Mexicans broke and fled. In this brilliant affair the Americans had three killed and eight wounded, while the enemy had at least thirteen killed and many more injured.

This was the last serious effort of the Mexicans to regain their ground on the Western coast, although several guerrilla bands continued to overrun the surrounding country. With a view of checking these marauding expeditions, the Americans sent out several parties that succeeded in surprising a number of these bands. By making a forced march on the night of March 15th a detachment of the garrison at La Paz, commanded by Captain Steele, of the New York regiment, surprised the Mexican camp at San Antonio, put the enemy to flight and captured Midshipmen Warley and Duncan and the six men who had been taken on the 22d of January on the beach before the mission house at San José. On the 20th of April Lieutenant Heywood and his men were relieved at San José by a detachment of troops from a volunteer regiment and returned to their ship. At the close of the war Captain Shubrick sailed for home in the *Independence*, while Captain Thomas ap C. Jones, in the 74-gun ship of the line *Ohio*, became commander of the Pacific squadron.

## CHAPTER VII.

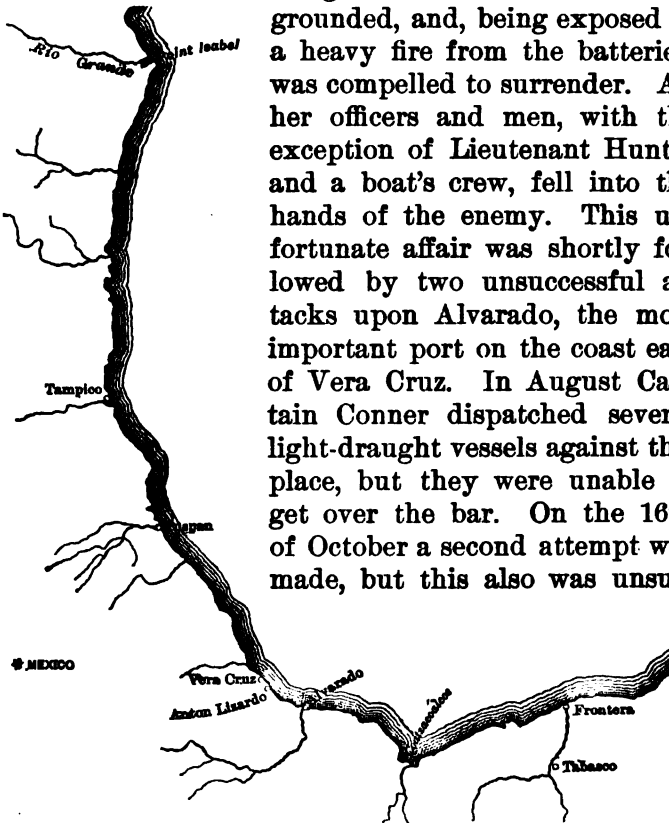
### WAR IN THE MEXICAN GULF.

THE distant booming of artillery at the battle of Palo Alto, May 8, 1846, announced to the American squadron at Point Isabel, under the orders of Captain David Conner, that war between the United States and Mexico had begun. Ignorant of the result of that battle, and fearing that the enemy might attack the garrison at Point Isabel, where the supplies of the army were guarded by a small body of troops under Major Monroe, Captain Conner landed five hundred seamen and marines in charge of Captain Francis Hoyt Gregory, of the *Raritan*, for additional protection. But the victories of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma rendered this precaution unnecessary, and on the 18th of May Captain John H. Aulick, with about two hundred seamen and marines, pulled fifteen miles up the Rio Grande in boats, and, effecting a junction with the army, established a post at Barita.

Shortly after the beginning of hostilities Captain Conner received orders from the Government to maintain a vigorous blockade of all the Mexican ports in the Gulf, and in order that these instructions might be properly carried out the following vessels were placed under his command: The 44-gun frigate *Potomac*, flagship; the 44-gun frigate *Cumberland*, Captain Forrest; the 44-gun frigate *Raritan*, Captain Gregory; the 10-gun side-wheel steamer *Mississippi*, Captain Matthew Calbraith Perry; the 20-gun sloop of war *Falmouth*, *Saratoga*, *St. Mary's*, *Albany*, *John Adams*; the 10-gun brigs *Somers*, *Lawrence*, *Porpoise*, *Perry*, *Trux-*

*tun*; and the 9-gun screw steamer *Princeton*. In accordance with his instructions Captain Conner scattered his vessels along the entire Mexican coast from the Rio Grande to the Tabasco River, making Pensacola his base of operations.

On the 15th of August he collected a naval force before Tuspan, but while the *Trustun* was endeavoring to enter the harbor she grounded, and, being exposed to a heavy fire from the batteries, was compelled to surrender. All her officers and men, with the exception of Lieutenant Hunter and a boat's crew, fell into the hands of the enemy. This unfortunate affair was shortly followed by two unsuccessful attacks upon Alvarado, the most important port on the coast east of Vera Cruz. In August Captain Conner dispatched several light-draught vessels against this place, but they were unable to get over the bar. On the 16th of October a second attempt was made, but this also was un-



*Scene of the naval operations in the Mexican gulf.*

successful. The *Mississippi* managed to get in range of the formidable batteries of this port and caused some damage, while the steamer *Vixen*, towing the schooners

*Bonita* and *Reefer* close inshore, ably supported her; but the steamer *McLane*, while endeavoring to tow into action the second division of gunboats, consisting of the *Nonita*, the *Petrel* and the *Forward*, grounded on the bar. The attack was abandoned and the vessels returned to a safe anchorage. This inauspicious opening of naval operations in the Gulf greatly encouraged the Mexicans, and threw a shadow of discouragement and distrust over the American squadron.

One of the first points to be gained by the navy was to secure the neutrality of Yucatan, and to this end it was deemed advisable to capture Tabasco, through which town supplies could be forwarded to Mexico. On the 16th of October Captain Perry sailed from Anton Lizardo, and on the 23d he appeared off Frontera, a small port at the mouth of Tabasco River, with the following vessels: The steamers *Mississippi*, *Vixen* and *McLane*, and the schooners *Bonita*, *Reefer*, *Nonita* and *Forward*, having on board a detachment of two hundred marines from the *Raritan* and the *Cumberland*, under the command of Captain Forrest. Frontera was the scene of Cortez's first battle on Mexican soil. The Mexican shipping at this place consisted of two steamers plying between Tabasco and Frontera, one brig, one sloop, five schooners and many boats and lighters, all admirably adapted for the difficult navigation of these waters. Having observed the grounding of the *McLane* at Alvarado, and supposing that the American steamers were too heavy to cross the bar, the Mexican commander at Frontera, General Bravo, dared the Americans to attack him. But so rapid were the movements of the squadron that he was taken by surprise. On arriving off the bar Captain Perry hastened aboard the *Vixen*, and, with the *Bonita* and *Forward* in tow and accompanied by a detachment of Captain Forrest's men in barges, dashed across the bar and made all speed for the Mexican flotilla, which was moored in fancied security under the



guns of the battery. Great volumes of smoke were observed ascending from the smokestack of the steamers, the largest of which was the *Petrita*, showing that every effort was being made to get up steam and escape up the river; but before the Mexicans could effect their object the Americans boarded, and ate a hot supper that the Aztecs had prepared for themselves. The United States flag was then hoisted over the town.

Leaving Lieutenant Walsh with a few men to hold Frontera, Captain Perry, early on the following day, began the difficult ascent of the river, hoping to come upon the Mexicans before they had time to strengthen their defenses, and the 24th and 25th of October were spent in this ascent, the steamers *Vixen* and *Petrita* towing the sailing vessels. At two o'clock in the afternoon of the 25th Captain Perry reached a difficult bend in the rapid stream called the Devil's Turn, a few miles below Tabasco, at which point there was a breastwork with four long 24-pounders advantageously mounted. Expecting some resistance at this place, Captain Perry landed a detachment and marched upon the breastwork, but it was found that the enemy had retired. The flotilla, with the exception of the *McLane*, which with her usual luck had grounded some distance below, arrived at Tabasco, seventy-two miles above Frontera, at three o'clock in the afternoon. Forming the vessels in a line so as to sweep the principal streets, Captain Perry sent Captain Forrest ashore with a demand for the surrender of the town; but the Governor, assuming a spirit of bravado, replied, "Fire as soon as you please." Three shots were fired from the *Vixen*, which brought down the flagstaff on the fort, and several Mexican officers then came aboard, begging that hostilities might cease until they could negotiate the terms of surrender. Not wishing to inflict unnecessary injury, Captain Perry assented, and at five o'clock Captain Forrest with two hundred men landed, but as they were awaiting the word to advance they were fired

upon by Mexican troops concealed in a chaparral. The Americans returned the fire as well as they could until night came on, when they retired to the flotilla. At daylight the next morning (October 28th) the Mexicans opened fire on the vessels, but were silenced after a few discharges of grape and canister. A delegation of the principal inhabitants and foreign residents now waited upon Captain Perry, and assured him that the firing had been done against the wishes of the people and that they desired to surrender.

Having effected the object of the expedition, Captain Perry prepared to move down the river. One of his prizes, in charge of Lieutenant William A. Parker and eighteen men, ran hard aground, and while in this condition it was attacked by eighty Mexican soldiers. Lieutenant Parker defended himself gallantly, and although one of his men was killed and two were wounded, he succeeded in holding the enemy at bay. Observing the difficulty he was in, Captain Perry sent Lieutenant Charles W. Morris to re-enforce him. Lieutenant Morris passed the gantlet of musketry from both sides of the river, but while standing up in his boat and cheering his men he was mortally wounded and fell back into the arms of Midshipman Cheever. He died November 1st in the *Cumberland*, and was buried on Salmadina Island. For this treachery Captain Perry opened a fire on the town, which he kept up for half an hour. The American flotilla arrived at Frontera at midnight; but the prize *Alvarado*, grounding on the shoals at Devil's Turn, was blown up. One of the prizes, the *Champion*, a fast river boat, which had run between Norfolk and Richmond, was taken into the service as a dispatch boat and placed under the command of Lieutenant Lockwood.

Leaving the *McLane* and the *Forward* to maintain the blockade off Frontera, Captain Perry returned to Anton Lizardo, where he rejoined the squadron under Captain Conner. On the 20th of September Captain

Perry, with the *Mississippi*, the *Vixen*, the *Bonita* and the *Petrel*, took possession of Laguna, where he left Commander Joshua Ratoon Sands with the *Vixen* and the *Petrel* to watch the place, while Lieutenant Benham, of the *Bonita*, was made commanding officer of the vessels collected off Tabasco River.

In order to divert the attention of the enemy from the main object of the naval operations in the Gulf, which was the capture of Vera Cruz, several expeditions of minor importance were undertaken. Learning from the wife of the American consul at Tampico that no resistance would be made to an attack on that place, Captain Conner, on the 14th of November, collected the following vessels before that town: The *Raritan*, the *Potomac*, the *Mississippi*, the *Princeton*, the *St. Mary's*, the *Vixen*, the *Nonita*, the *Bonita*, the *Spitfire* and the *Petrel*, besides one hundred seamen and marines from the *Cumberland*. Santa Anna, the Mexican general, endeavored to raise an army of deserters from the American forces, and made particular efforts to induce the Irish Roman Catholics to desert. A distinct brigade of the Mexican army was formed under the name of Santo Patricio, and seventy to eighty men were enlisted in it, but as a rule the Irish were loyal to their colors. The smaller vessels immediately crossed the bar, and, landing one hundred and fifty men, took possession of the town without opposition. Two merchant vessels and three gunboats were captured. From this place Commander Josiah Tattnall proceeded with the *Spitfire* and the *Petrel* eighty miles up Panuca River to a small town of the same name, and on the 19th of November he destroyed all the munitions of war collected there.

On the night of November 20th, while the brig *Somers* was on blockade duty off Vera Cruz, a boat put out from that vessel containing Lieutenant Parker, Passed-Midshipmen Rogers and Hynson and five seamen, boldly entered the harbor and boarded the bark

*Creole*, laden with munitions of war and securely anchored under the guns of the castle. Lieutenant Parker surprised the guard of the brig, and after burning her escaped without injury, thus adding another to the list of brilliant cutting-out expeditions for which the American navy is famous. Shortly after this Passed-Midshipman Rogers and Surgeon Wright, of the *Somers*, while on shore for the purpose of obtaining a better view of the fortifications around Vera Cruz, were surprised by a party of Mexican soldiers. Surgeon Wright escaped, but Mr. Rogers was captured and taken to the city of Mexico, where he narrowly escaped being hanged as a spy in spite of the fact that he wore his uniform. Afterward Mr. Rogers escaped, and with Lieutenant Raphael Semmes joined General Scott's army before Mexico, and served with distinction in the military operations against that city. On the 8th of December, while chasing a blockade runner, the *Somers* capsized, carrying down with her Acting-Master Clemson, Passed-Midshipman Hynson and nearly forty men, constituting half of her crew. The *John Adams* and the boats of English, French and Spanish war vessels near by assisted in rescuing the remainder of her crew. Congress afterward awarded gold and silver medals to the foreign officers who engaged in this work.

It was not the Mexicans alone that our officers and sailors were called upon to fight. They were constantly exposed to malaria and fever arising from the low swampy grounds along the coast near which the vessels were compelled to anchor. Decayed kelp along the shores caused a sour, nauseating effluvia to hang over the ships at night, which soon became more fatal than the enemy's bullets. Myriads of insects, coming from the malaria-laden districts, attacked the men night and day and inoculated them with disease. Frequent night attacks of roving bands of guerrillas compelled the men to turn out and stand by their

guns until daybreak, exposing them to the drenching dews and poisonous miasma. The sick list increased at an alarming rate, and the sick bay was always crowded. In one week four officers died, and the staff of surgeons was so reduced that at one time there was only one physician for seven ships, and only two assistants in the hospitals. In July, 1847, yellow fever broke out in the *Mississippi*, and she was sent to Pensacola. Captain Perry himself was taken down with sickness, but, changing his flag to the *German-town*, July 16, 1847, he returned to the scene of operations. The difficulty of securing fresh provisions also brought on symptoms of scurvy, and with the view of giving the men something besides salt meat the several ports along the coast were occupied throughout the war.

Having diverted the enemy's attention from the great object the Americans had in view—the capture of Vera Cruz—Captain Conner collected a fleet of seventy vessels of war and transports, having on board General Scott's army of 12,603 men, before Vera Cruz early in March. This town was the scene of Cortez's landing, and of the French debarkation in 1830, and again in 1865. It was strongly defended by massive walls of masonry and by the famous castle of San Juan d'Ulloa, which was on an island in the harbor, half a mile from the shore. The defenses were under the command of German artillerymen. In order that such a large number of men might be quickly landed in the face of an enemy, sixty-five boats, about thirty-five feet long, were constructed. At sunrise, March 9th, the steamers *Spitfire* and *Vixen*, with the gunboats *Petrel*, *Bonita*, *Reefer*, *Falcon* and *Tampico*, ran close inshore on the island of Sacrificios to cover the landing, as it was thought that the enemy might be concealed behind sand hills, but after a few discharges of grape and canister only a few horsemen were routed. The troops were landed in beautiful style. At a signal the

boats put out from the frigates and transports for the beach, and as fast as the men were landed they occupied the sand hills, each regiment planting its standard and collecting its men around it. By ten o'clock that night ten thousand men with arms, ammunition and provisions had been landed.

At dawn of March 10th the *Spitfire* ran into the harbor, and when within a short mile of the castle opened a spirited fire on the town and batteries, which was maintained two hours, when she was ordered back. From a Mexican newspaper that found its way into the squadron a few days afterward it was learned that many of her shells had been thrown into the heart of the city and to the gate of the market place. The chief purpose of the *Spitfire's* attack was to discover the position of the Mexican guns, and as the enemy promptly returned the cannonading from every gun that would bear, this was accomplished. From the 10th to the 20th of March the army was occupied in getting batteries into position, and in the meantime the enemy kept up a desultory fire, which did considerable injury. On the 20th of March Captain Perry arrived, and on the 21st he superseded Captain Conner in command of the Gulf fleet.

The Mexicans had entertained great hopes of yellow fever breaking out in the American squadron and doing more injury than they could expect to do with their cannon. Vera Cruz was the breeding place of the disease, and March was one of the months in which it assumed its most malignant form. The Americans were in great danger from this lurking enemy, for mosquitoes and flies from the shore visited the ships in myriads and carried the germs of the disease in their bites. Another peril to which the Americans were exposed, and on which the enemy counted, was the strong northerly gales which swept the approaches to the harbor with great fury. In the gale of March 21st the *Hunter* went down, and it was only by the greatest

exertions that Captain Perry managed to rescue her crew of sixty men.

On the 22d of March a formal demand was made for the surrender of Vera Cruz, which was haughtily rejected, and two guns were fired in defiance. On the afternoon of the same day the Americans opened fire from their batteries, and the Mexicans replied with spirit. Desiring to come to closer quarters, Commander Tattnall on the 23d of March got his division, consisting of the steamers *Spitfire* and *Vixen* and five schooners, under way, and leaving one of the schooners at Point Honorios opened fire on the city. To draw the enemy's attention from that point, he boldly stood out to sea as if he intended to rejoin the squadron at Sacrificios; but on clearing the shoal water at Point Honorios he suddenly changed his course, and, leading his division directly for the castle, hove to within grape-shot of bastion San Iago and opened a tremendous fire. The Mexicans were either taken completely by surprise or hoped to lure the boats to certain destruction, as they thought, for they did not fire a shot until the six little vessels hove to and began their fire. Then began a terrific cannonading from all the Mexican guns that would bear, and it seemed as if the division was doomed. "All expected to see us sunk, and that we escaped without loss is a miracle. The shot and shell rained around us and kept the water in a foam, and yet but three of the vessels were struck, two of the schooners and the *Spitfire*, the last by a shell which exploded directly under the quarter and knocked a plank out of the quarter boat. Not a man was hurt."<sup>1</sup> For an hour this terrific cannonading was kept up, when Tattnall slowly retired, cheered by the men of General Worth's army. Even before this affair Commander Tattnall had won the reputation of being an intrepid and fearless officer. While a lieutenant in command

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<sup>1</sup> Commander Tattnall in a private letter.

of the *Pioneer* (1835) he was ordered to convey Santa Anna, who had recently been captured by the Texans, to Vera Cruz. At that time the Mexican leader was exceedingly unpopular in his own country, and it was freely predicted that he would be shot the moment he placed his foot on Mexican soil. Arriving at Vera Cruz, Lieutenant Tattnall landed with his passenger. Crowds of angry citizens and soldiers awaited them, but, boldly taking Santa Anna's arm under his own, the American lieutenant walked up the main street. The crowds for a time gazed upon the two unprotected men in silent amazement until they reached a guard of soldiers who saluted, when the crowds burst into cheers. Lieutenant Tattnall remained with Santa Anna several days, until the Mexican could gather his friends around him. The course taken by the young lieutenant undoubtedly saved Santa Anna's life.

On the 21st of March General Scott asked Captain Perry for the loan of six heavy shell guns from the fleet. Captain Perry replied: "Certainly, general, but I must fight them." Scott was anxious to man the guns with his own troops, but Captain Perry, ever jealous of the reputation of the navy, said, "Wherever the guns go their officers and men must go with them." General Scott finally consented to the formation of a naval battery, and within an hour after obtaining this permission Captain Perry manned his boat, and, pulling under the stern of each of the war vessels, announced that guns were to be landed from the fleet and manned by seamen. The news was received with cheers. A position known as Battery No. 4, opposite Fort Santa Barbara, was assigned to the naval battery. Two 32-pounders from the *Potomac*, one 32-pounder from the *Raritan*, one 68-pound Paixhan from the *Mississippi*, one from the *Albany* and one from the *St. Mary's* were landed at night, with double crews, the junior officers casting lots for the service. This battery "was constructed entirely of sand sewed up in bags. It had



two traverses six or more feet thick, the purpose of which was to resist a flanking fire. The guns were mounted on their own ship's carriages on platforms, being run out with side tackles and handspikes and their recoil checked with sand bags. The balls were stacked within the sandy walls, but the magazine was stationed some distance in rear. The cartridges were served by the powder boys, as on shipboard, a small trench being dug for their protection while not in transit."<sup>1</sup>

Having obtained the exact distance to the enemy's batteries by a system of triangulation, the naval battery was ready for service shortly before ten o'clock on the morning of March 24th. Just as the last gun was being cleared of sand and sponged the Mexicans discovered the battery and opened fire with a good aim that showed they had determined the range some time before. This fire was the signal for seven forts to concentrate their attention on Battery No. 4, and 10- and 13-inch shells were dropping around the seamen with uncomfortable frequency. Captain Aulick, who commanded the battery the first day, responded with spirit, and began pounding away at the enemy in true man-of-war style. Such was the precision of his fire that a shot aimed by Lieutenant Baldwin carried away the flagstaff of Fort Santa Barbara. This was greeted with tremendous cheering, but a moment afterward Lieutenant D. Sebastian Holzinger, a German officer in the employ of the Mexicans, with a young assistant leaped over the parapet, recovered the flag and nailed it to the stump of its staff, although at one time he was nearly covered with the *débris* thrown up by American shot.

So rapid and well sustained was the fire of the naval battery that by half past two o'clock in the afternoon its ammunition was exhausted, and Midshipman Fauntleroy was sent to Captain Perry with a re-

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<sup>1</sup> Griffis' Life of Captain Perry, p. 227.

quest for more. At four o'clock a relief party under Captain Isaac Mayo (who had served as a midshipman in the *Hornet-Penguin* fight) arrived and continued the work of hammering the Mexican forts. This was done so effectually that, although the walls were built of massive shell rock, the naval battery soon cut through the curtains of the redoubt to the right and left and finally made a breach thirty-six feet wide; but at night the enemy filled the gap with sand bags. On this day Lieutenant Baldwin, of the *St. Mary's*, was wounded. During the night the sailors were employed repairing the breastworks, while the mortar schooners every now and then circled the sky with beautiful flights of shells. At daylight, March 25th, the naval battery renewed its fire, and the Mexicans concentrated four batteries on this earthwork, aiming even more accurately than the day before. Early in the day one of their shells dropped in the battery but did no damage, and several of their solid shot entered the embrasures, which were unusually wide to admit of a larger sweep of the guns.

Seeing that the castle was paying particular attention to the naval battery, Captain Perry ordered the *Spitfire*, Commander Tattnall, and the *Vixen*, Commander Sands, each having two gunboats in tow, to run into the harbor and divert the enemy's attention. "What point shall I engage, sir?" asked Tattnall. "Where you can do the most execution, sir," was the reply; and taking him at his word, the young commander stood into the harbor in the most audacious manner, and, forming a line about eighty yards from the castle, opened a furious cannonade. Not satisfied with this, he stood in still closer, actually taking a position within the Punto de Hornos, where for half an hour he was the center of a terrific fire. His vessels were almost hidden in the spray raised by the storm of iron that rained around them, but either the boldness of the attack or the nearness of the vessels pre-

vented the Mexicans from inflicting any considerable injury. Fearing that the little vessels would be blown to atoms, Perry signaled them to retire; but Commander Tattnall either could not or would not see the signal and continued his attack. Captain Perry finally sent a boat with peremptory orders for the return of the division. Loath to give up his congenial occupation, Commander Tattnall retired slowly with his face to the enemy, keeping up his fire as long as the guns would bear.

Fort San Iago now opened its fire on the naval battery, but after Captain Mayo had turned several guns on it it was silenced, and about two o'clock in the afternoon the enemy abandoned it. Jumping on a horse, the gallant captain hastened with the news to the army. "As he rode through the camp General Scott was walking in front of his tent. Captain Mayo rode up to him and said, 'General, they are done; they will never fire another shot.' The general in great agitation asked, 'Who? your battery—the naval battery?' Mayo answered, 'No, general, the enemy is silenced.' General Scott, in his joy, almost pulled Captain Mayo off his horse, saying, 'Commodore, I thank you and our brothers of the navy in the name of the army for this day's work.'" <sup>1</sup>

In the two days' fight the naval battery had four men killed, struck mostly by solid shot on the head or breast, while five officers and five sailors were wounded. Many of these men were hurt by splinters from yucca or cactus bushes in the chaparral. Among the killed was Midshipman Thomas Brandford Shubrick, a son of Captain Irvine Shubrick. He had just arrived on the scene of action in the *Mississippi*, and went to the battery full of life and enthusiasm. While in the act of aiming a gun at the tower he was struck by a solid shot, which took off his head. Commander Tattnall,

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<sup>1</sup> Griffis' Life of Captain Perry, p. 235.

who visited the naval battery during the engagement, describes his experiences as follows: "I landed and walked to our battery on the first day, and on reaching it saw stretched in a cart and dead a most noble seaman, an old boatswain's mate of mine in the *Saratoga*. His fine manly face, calm and unchanged, I could not mistake. Another poor fellow was lying in a cart severely wounded, to whom I offered a few words of condolence. In a few minutes afterward, when they had removed him to what was deemed a place of safety, he was again wounded."<sup>1</sup>

While this attack was in progress Captain Perry planned a boat attack on the water batteries of Vera Cruz for the night of March 25th, which he proposed to lead in person. The boats were formed in a column, and studding-sail booms of the *Mississippi* were made into ladders. But before these plans could be put into execution the Mexicans sounded a parley from the city walls, and at 8 A. M. the firing ceased. On the 26th of March a heavy gale set in from the north, which blew twenty-six transports to shore. In one of the gales a brig, fouling the *Potomac*, lost her masts. On the 28th of March the town was unconditionally surrendered, and on the following day the army and navy took possession. Captains Aulick and Alexander Sli-dell Mackenzie represented the navy in the negotiations.

The capture of Vera Cruz opened the way for the army to march upon the capital by the shortest route. Being greatly in need of horses, General Scott asked for the co-operation of the navy in securing a number of animals that the Mexicans had collected at Alvarado. The steamer *Scourge*, Lieutenant Charles G. Hunter, was immediately ordered to blockade the port, while Captain Perry was to follow with a larger naval force. General Quitman in the meantime was to pro-

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<sup>1</sup> Commander Tattall in a private letter.

ceed by land and cut off the enemy's retreat. Lieutenant Hunter reached the bar off Alvarado on the 30th of March, but he allowed his zeal to exceed his instructions, and began an immediate attack on the defenses of the place. On the following day the enemy retired up the river, leaving Lieutenant Hunter in quiet possession of the town and four schooners. Sixty guns were captured, thirty-five of which were shipped to the United States as mementoes of the war. Leaving a garrison at Alvarado, Lieutenant Hunter hastened up the river, chasing the enemy to Tlacahalpa, which he also took without opposition. Thus the apparent object of the mission was accomplished before Captain Perry arrived, April 2d; but the overhaste of Lieutenant Hunter enabled the Mexicans to escape through the mountain passes with the greatly desired horses before General Quitman could cut off their retreat. Lieutenant Hunter was tried by court-martial and dismissed from the service. Captain Mayo was placed in charge of the government of Alvarado, and occupied his time in securing the submission of towns in the interior, the majority of which meekly submitted; but in one of these expeditions some resistance was offered, and an American officer and five men were wounded.

In carrying out his plan of occupying every port on the coast through which the Mexicans could obtain supplies, Captain Perry next turned his attention to Tuspan, off which port the brig of war *Truxtun* had been lost the year before. The American squadron appeared off the town on the 17th of April, but owing to shoal water only the light-draught vessels could get over the bar. The place was defended by a fort on the right and one on the left bank of the river, many of the guns of which had been taken from the ill-fated *Truxtun*. The batteries were admirably situated for sweeping all approaches from the sea, and the guns were manned by six hundred and fifty Mexican soldiers under General Cos. On the 18th of April Captain

Perry led the attack in the *Spitfire* with fifteen hundred officers, seamen and marines, and four pieces of artillery. Captain Samuel Livingston Breese commanded the landing detachment. As soon as the assailants were within range the Mexicans opened a spirited fire, both from their batteries and with musketry on shore; but the Americans steadily advanced, and they fell back. The loss of the Americans in this affair was three killed and five officers and six seamen wounded.

Having secured all the ports on this coast, the Government decided to raise the blockade, in order that commerce might be resumed and the revenues redound to the benefit of its treasury. Cruising along the coast, Captain Perry destroyed a fort mounting twelve guns at Cozacocalcos. Leaving the bomb vessel *Stromboli* on guard at this place, and the *Albany* and the *Reefer* at Tuspan, Captain Perry turned his attention to Tabasco, which place, as no garrison had been left to hold it, had again fallen into the hands of the enemy. On the 14th of June he collected the following vessels off Frontera: The *Mississippi*, the *Raritan*, the *Albany*, the *John Adams*, the *Decatur*, the *Germantown*, the *Stromboli*, the *Vesuvius*, the *Washington*, the *Scorpion*, the *Spitfire*, the *Scourge*, the *Vixen*, the *Etna* and the *Bonita*. Entering the river with the light-draught vessels on the same day, Captain Perry shifted his flag to the *Scorpion* and began the difficult ascent of the stream. As the flotilla was approaching Devil's Bend it was suddenly attacked by one hundred Mexicans concealed in the dense chaparral on the banks. Captain Perry was standing on the deck of the *Scorpion* under an awning, and miraculously escaped injury, although the canvas and woodwork of the steamer were riddled with shot. The *Scorpion*, the *Washington* and the surf boats returned the fire, and soon afterward a 10-inch shell from the *Vesuvius* dispersed the Mexicans.

At six o'clock the vessels anchored for the night near Seven Palm Trees, and, as a precaution against surprise, barricades of hammocks were so arranged as to resist a night attack. Shortly after midnight a volley of musketry from the bushes startled the Americans, but as it was not followed by a general attack the men returned to their rest. On the following morning Lieutenant William May, while pulling ahead in a boat for the purpose of discovering the channel, was wounded by a party of Mexicans concealed in a breast-work called La Comena. Finding that the navigation of the river at this point had been obstructed by the Mexicans, Captain Perry landed with a detachment of his men and ten guns, with a view of attacking the fort from the rear. The banks of the river at this point were from thirty to forty feet high and almost perpendicular, and it was only by the united efforts of many men that the cannon were hoisted up. The enemy evidently supposed this movement was impossible, and was taken completely by surprise.

Rapidly forming the line of march, Captain Perry, with the pioneers under Lieutenant Maynard, led the way toward the rear of the fort, closely followed by the marines under Captain Edson and the artillery under Captain Mackenzie, Captain Mayo acting as adjutant general. At a place called Acahapan he came upon the Mexicans with two pieces of artillery strongly intrenched, but they fled on the approach of the Americans. As Captain Perry's little army came in sight of the fort, the gunboats under Lieutenant David Dixon Porter, which had gallantly advanced up the river in spite of their exposed position to co-operate with the land forces, were greeted with cheers. Captain Perry's men then rushed to the assault, while the *veteranos*, leaving their cooked meal behind, fled. Advancing about a mile farther up the river, the Americans attacked Fort Iturbide, mounting six guns. One of the shot from the fort struck the *Spitfire's* wheel, but did

not disable her. Observing that the enemy was flinching from his guns, Lieutenant Porter landed with sixty-eight men, and carried the fort by assault. The way to Tabasco was now clear, and the town was taken possession of on the 16th by a detachment from the *Scorpion* and the *Spitfire* under Lieutenant Sidney Smith Lee. During the land attack on the forts several of the Americans were overcome by the heat and the exertion of dragging the heavy ordnance through the mud. The total loss of the Americans in this expedition was two officers and seven seamen wounded.

After remaining here six days, Captain Perry left the *Scorpion*, the *Etna*, the *Spitfire* and the *Scourge*, with four hundred and twenty men under Commander Abraham Bigelow, as a garrison, and returned to Frontera. On the 25th of June seventy Mexicans made a sudden attack on a party of twenty seamen who were on shore at Tabasco. A short struggle followed before the enemy was repelled, in which the Americans had one man wounded and the Mexicans had one killed and six wounded. That night one hundred and fifty Mexican soldiers made an attack on the guard in the plaza, but were repelled. Captain Bigelow improved his time by sending out small parties to subdue roving bands of Mexican soldiers that occupied the ranchos in the outskirts of Tabasco. On the 30th of June he marched with two hundred and forty men and two field pieces to attack five hundred Mexicans who had intrenched themselves in a village called Tamultay, three miles distant. Approaching within a quarter of a mile of the place, Commander Bigelow fell into an ambush, but steadily returned the fire and put the enemy to flight. In this affair the Americans had two killed and five wounded.

This was the last action of the war in which the Gulf squadron was directly engaged. A detachment of marines under Lieutenant-Colonel Watson accompanied the army under General Scott, and in the attack



on Chapultepec, September 13th, they were among the volunteers who attacked the castle under the leadership of Major Levi Twiggs, of the marines. Captain Reynolds, of the marines, led the pioneer storming party. Major Twiggs was killed in the first advance. In the stubborn hand-to-hand conflict, in which the Mexicans showed more than usual courage, the marines were conspicuous for their bravery. They were also foremost in the charge along the causeway leading to the Belen gate, and when the Americans entered the capital, September 14th, Lieutenant Watson and his marines were assigned to the difficult task of keeping the criminal classes in order. In these battles the marine corps had seven men killed and four wounded. Peace between the United States and Mexico was made February 2, 1848. In this war the United States had about one hundred thousand men under arms, fifteen thousand of whom were in the navy.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE EXPEDITION TO JAPAN.

FROM the time when Marco Polo brought news, in 1295, of a large island inhabited by a warlike and highly civilized race east of Corea, Japan had been the goal toward which many ambitious explorers directed their energies. The vague rumors of Zipangu or Jipangu haunted Columbus night and day and touched upon the grand inspiration of his life. To his thoughtful mind they first awakened passing fancies, then serious reflections, but only to be laid aside by the seeming absurdity of his conclusions. But still again the recurring thoughts clung to him with strange persistency. Jipangu! To the east of Cathay! Could it be reached by sailing west? Japan was destined to be brought within the pale of civilized nations not by Columbus, but by an officer of the United States navy, a nation whose existence was a result of Columbus' great discovery. In 1549 the Jesuits, led by Francis Xavier, gained a footing in Japan, and, rapidly extending their influence, they aspired to temporal as well as spiritual power, so that in 1587 a decree of banishment was directed against them. Other edicts of expulsion were issued, but it was not until 1637, and after thousands of lives had been sacrificed, that they and their doctrines were driven from the empire. It was the recollection of the dangerous interference of the priests in government matters, and the resulting civil wars, that made Japan for so many years a hermit nation. Many attempts were made by Europeans to trade with the country, but they were always met

with the same reply : "So long as the sun shall warm the earth, let no Christian be so bold as to come to Japan ; and let all know that the King of Spain himself, or the Christian's God, or the great God of all, if he violate this command, shall pay for it with his head."

As early as 1797 Robert Shaw showed the United States flag at Nagasaki, and in the same year Captain Charles Stewart, while in the employ of the Dutch East India Company, stopped at Deshima, where, although he was supplied with water and provisions, he was not allowed to land. Various other attempts were made by American merchantmen to trade with the natives. President Jackson in 1831 appointed Edmund Roberts as agent "to open trade in the Indian Ocean," but he died at Macao in 1836, before he reached Japan. In 1845 Congress resolved that it was advisable to open Japan and Corea, and in the following year Captain James Biddle anchored at Uruga with the 90-gun ship *Columbus* and the *Vincennes* ; but the authorities refused to negotiate with him, and as he was instructed "not to do anything to excite a hostile feeling or a distrust of the United States," he sailed away without accomplishing his purpose. In 1846 Captain David Geisinger, commanding the East India squadron, sent Commander James Glynn in the *Preble* to Nagasaki to obtain the release of eighteen American seamen from the whaler *Lawrence*, who were confined by the Japanese. Arriving at Nagasaki April 17th, Commander Glynn found that the Japanese were greatly elated at what they considered a victory over Captain Biddle's squadron, and he determined to tolerate no trifling. Breaking through the cordon of guard-boats that surrounded the *Preble* as soon as she dropped anchor at Nagasaki, he brought his broadside to bear on the city. He waited two days without getting the prisoners, and then threatened to open fire, and after many parleys and excuses the men were brought aboard the *Preble* on April 26th. By 1850 the American flag

had become familiar to the Japanese, and in a twelve-month, according to the native records, "eighty-six of the black ships were counted from the shore."

The increasing commerce with China, the growth of whale-fishing, and the rapid development of California made it necessary to open Japan, and in 1851 Congress decided to send an expedition to that country. Captain John H. Aulick was placed in command of it, and was ordered to carry the Brazilian minister Macedo to Rio de Janeiro in the *Susquehanna* on his outward passage. Captain Aulick sailed from Norfolk June 8th, landed his passenger, doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and, after attending to some diplomatic business with the Sultan of Zanzibar, proceeded to Hong-Kong and began his preparations for the Japan expedition; but while at this place he received orders relieving him of the command. In the mean time Captain Franklin Buchanan assumed charge of the expedition, and afterward it was learned that the Government was displeased at some remarks that Captain Aulick was alleged to have made in reference to the Brazilian minister, declaring that he was being carried to Brazil at Aulick's expense. But Macedo subsequently exonerated Captain Aulick of all blame.

On the 24th of March, 1852, Captain Matthew Calbraith Perry was appointed commander of the East India squadron, and was ordered to carry out the instructions given to Captain Aulick. Commander Henry A. Adams, Commander Franklin Buchanan, Commander Sidney Smith Lee, and Lieutenant Silas Bent, who was in the *Preble* at Nagasaki, were to be associated with him in his negotiations. Captain Perry left Norfolk in the *Mississippi*, November 24, 1852, and arrived at Hong-Kong April 6, 1853, where he found the sailing vessels *Plymouth*, *Saratoga* and *Supply* and the steamer *Susquehanna*. With these he appeared off Uraga, early in July, 1853.

As the American squadron approached the coast of

Japan, early on the morning of July 8th, the fog gradually faded before the rays of the rising sun and revealed the beautiful scenery of the place in all its glory. Bold headlands clothed in bright verdure came down to the water's edge, sparkling and smiling as the sun fell upon the dew. Fishing-boats returning after their night's work, and junks with their huge square sails passing up the harbor to the metropolis, laden with the produce of the empire, dotted the bay in all directions, while towering over all was the perfect cone of Fusi-yama, or Peerless Mountain, with her head still in a cap of snow. As the American ships drew near the town the native boatmen scurried away in fear and amazement, and when those ahead of the squadron paused for a moment to gaze at the great splashing wheels of the steamer, they thought they were at a safe distance; but when they observed the huge steamers bearing down upon them without a thread of canvas set they were panic-stricken, and suddenly taking to their sculls, did not pause again until they had hauled their boats up high and dry on the shore.

Captain Perry now cleared his ships for action, for, although he came with the most pacific intentions, he was determined to be ready for any emergency. Furthermore, he was convinced that a bold front, backed by a good showing of force, would impress the natives with the dignity and power of the nation he represented. Several large boats bearing official flags soon put off from the shore for the American ships, evidently for the purpose of boarding and inquiring their business; but no attention was paid to them. The steamers, with the *Plymouth* and the *Saratoga* in tow, passed majestically by, leaving the official boats far behind, vainly struggling to catch up with them, and no doubt much mystified and perplexed at the inexplicable method of propulsion. About five o'clock, when the squadron anchored off Uraga, the reports of

two guns were heard, and an instant later a ball of smoke exploded in the sky. They were day rockets, giving notice of the arrival of strangers. A great number of boats now surrounded the American ships, so as to cut off communication with the shore. The Japanese had long regarded all foreigners as mercenaries, who would undergo any indignity for the sake of gain. The Dutch especially had submitted to the most degrading humiliation in order to hold their trade with that country. To the Japanese, familiarity meant contempt—a cringing deference was met with insolence and arrogance, while lack of ceremony and pomp was taken as proof of weakness and fear. Captain Perry had determined on a different policy, and when the native boats attempted to make fast to the ships their lines were promptly cut, and when some endeavored to climb up the chains they were ordered back at the point of the bayonet. Being informed through the interpreter that only their highest officials would be allowed on board, the natives fell back, but still surrounded the ships and kept a jealous eye on them.

A boat now came alongside of the *Mississippi*, and an official motioned for the gangway to be lowered. As his request was ignored, he showed an order for the ships to leave the harbor immediately; but the Americans replied that no orders would be received except from the officials of the highest rank. One of the natives, who spoke Dutch, now asked several questions, from which it appeared that the squadron was expected—they undoubtedly having learned of the intended visit through the Dutch of Nagasaki. It was then suggested that the Americans appoint some officer corresponding to the rank of the vice-governor of Uraga, and meet him for a conference. After some intentional delay this was agreed to, and Lieutenant John Contee was delegated to receive the official. The gangway was lowered, and the vice-governor and one aid were allowed to come on board. Captain Perry,

in keeping with his policy of exclusiveness, remained in his cabin, communicating with the vice-governor through Lieutenant Contee. The natives were now informed of the nature of the visit, and, in response to the vice-governor's reiterated requests that the squadron go to Nagasaki, the Americans steadily insisted on having negotiations conducted near the capital of the empire. The vice-governor furthermore was informed that the Americans would not tolerate any indignity, and that they considered the surrounding of their vessels with boats an insult, and if they were not immediately ordered off they would be fired upon. When this was interpreted to the vice-governor he left his seat, and, going to the gangway, motioned the boats away. This had the effect of dispersing them; but several remained at a little distance, keeping a sharp lookout. This was the first point gained in the mission. The vice-governor soon afterward left the ship, saying that he had no authority to promise anything, but that an official of high rank would visit it the next morning.

In the still watches of the summer night many of the officers and men kept the deck, curious to observe the strange land in which they had arrived and to discuss the doings of the day. The dark waters were filled with globelike jelly fish. Innumerable native craft, with their fantastically decorated paper lanterns at bow and stern, glided to and fro over the peaceful waters of the bay, centering their long scintillating rays of light on the ships, as if jealously watching every movement. Once in a while some coasting-junk, blanched and ghostly with ocean brine, hurried into port, as if still fearing the typhoon dragons, and moved swiftly up the bay; and when the hardy mariners passed the American squadron with a wondering stare they quickly vanished in the direction of the metropolis. Beacon fires lighted the harbor on all sides, while bodies of troops marching and countermarching gave token of the excitement on shore. Rockets were sent

up at frequent intervals, and fire-bells were rung. The town itself was thoroughly aroused, people hurrying from house to house, or burning incense before their gods, supplicating with deep intonation that the "smoking ships," which had so nearly ground some of their fishing-boats to pieces, might be removed. Other natives were assembling on the beach and gazing at the great vessels in profound amazement. The busy hum of wakefulness, together with the beating of drums and the deep, waving vibrations of the great temple bells, filling the air with melancholy music, caused the Americans to feel that they were indeed in a strange land and among strange people.

At sunrise a boat put off from the shore and took a convenient station near the visiting squadron, and on leveling glasses at it, the Americans saw that it contained artists sketching the ships. About seven o'clock two large boats, one of them flying a three-striped flag, indicating an official of the third rank,<sup>1</sup> ran alongside, and Yezaimen, Governor of Uraga, came aboard with his suite. Captain Perry refused to show himself, but appointed Commanders Buchanan and Adams and Lieutenant Contee to receive any communications. The governor, arrayed in a "rich silk robe of an embroidered pattern resembling the feathers of a peacock, with borders of gold and silver," emphasized the statement of his subordinate—namely, that the Americans must go to Nagasaki. But the Americans insisted on delivering the letter near the capital, and the governor then said that the answer would be sent to Nagasaki. It was now observed that the governor used a different title for the President and the Emperor, upon which the American officers affected much displeasure, and requested that the same title be applied to both. This was conceded, and perceptibly raised the Americans in the governor's estimation. The latter then said that he

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<sup>1</sup> Mito Yashiki: A Tale of Old Japan, p. 180.



would send an express to Tokio for further instruction, and on being asked how long that would take, he replied, "Four days." As a few hours' steaming would have brought the ships within sight of the capital, the American officers declared that they would wait only three days, and if an answer was not received within that time they would move the squadron nearer to the city, so as to enable the Japanese to get their reply in less time. This evidently was what the governor most feared, and in much trepidation he consented to have the reply in three days.

While this conference was being held, several well-armed boats had been sent out from the squadron to take soundings. Observing them, the governor inquired what their business was, and on being told, he said that it was against the laws and that they must return. The Americans replied that the American laws compelled them to take soundings and make hydrographic surveys in all strange waters, and that they were bound to obey American laws as well as Japanese. As these boats were approaching some earthworks mounting a few light guns, native soldiers armed with spears, lances, swords and matchlocks came down to the water's edge for the purpose of showing the foreigners that they were on the alert and fully prepared to resist any attempt to land. They made the best possible showing of their matchlocks, evidently with the idea of impressing the Americans with the fact that the Japanese were not so far behind the times in the matter of firearms as might have been thought. One of the boats pulled within a hundred yards of the soldiers, when a lieutenant, with the promptness becoming a man-of-war's man, whipped out his spyglass with a resounding crack and leveled it at a dignified warrior who seemed to be in command. The movement, harmless in itself, had a most unexpected effect, for the Japanese supposed some deadly weapon was being aimed at them, and the glass revealed to the lieuten-

ant's eye a confused mass of fluttering garments, antiquated armor, and flipflapping sandals, for the dignified warriors had dropped the austerity of their bearing, and, gathering up their skirts, got behind the earthworks with more haste than dignity.

On the following day (Sunday) a boat came alongside with some high officials; but permission to come aboard was refused, as the Americans held the day sacred. On this day Captain Perry conducted the services in person, and the familiar tunes of Old Hundred and "Before Jehovah's awful throne, ye nations, bow with sacred joy" were probably for the first time wafted across the waters of the bay. On Monday surveying parties were sent farther up the bay, accompanied by the *Mississippi*, and this so alarmed the governor that he immediately came aboard the flagship to inquire the cause of it. He was informed that the American commander intended to survey the entire bay, as the squadron expected to return in the following spring for an answer.

On Tuesday, the day appointed for receiving a reply from Tokio, three large boats ran alongside the *Susquehanna*, and the governor and his interpreter came aboard. After a long discussion it was finally agreed that the letter from the President would be received in a building on the beach near Uruga, by an official of the highest rank in the empire, especially appointed by the Emperor. Then again came up the ever-recurring question of Nagasaki, the governor saying that, although by special act of courtesy on the part of the Emperor the letter would be received at Uruga, yet the answer must be given at Nagasaki. To this Captain Perry sent the following message: "The commander in chief will not go to Nagasaki, and will receive no communication through the Dutch or Chinese. He has a letter from the President of the United States to deliver to the Emperor of Japan or his Secretary of Foreign Affairs, and he will deliver the original to none

other. If this friendly letter of the President to the Emperor is not received and duly replied to, he will consider his country insulted and will not hold himself accountable for the consequences. He expects a reply of some sort in a few days, and he will receive such reply nowhere but in this neighborhood."

No one was more aware of the impossibility of compelling by force of arms this spirited people to come within the community of nations than Captain Perry himself. Such a measure would not only have resulted disastrously, but would more than ever confirm the Japanese in their seclusion. A resort to any other than pacific measures was furthest from Captain Perry's intentions, yet he was fully alive to the importance of a strong presence with which to maintain the dignity of his country and impress the Japanese with the honor and value of the treaty he sought. His prompt resentment of the slightest indignity or lack of ceremony was admirably calculated to arouse the respect of this peculiar people. The governor left the ship, saying that he would shortly return. This probably was for the purpose of consulting higher officials, who undoubtedly were concealed in Uraga to superintend the proceedings. In the afternoon the governor again came aboard, and after a long discussion it was agreed that Thursday morning, July 14th, should be set aside for the ceremony of delivering the letter. There was to be no discussion of the subject, but merely an interchange of compliments, after which the Americans were to sail away and return in the following spring for an answer.

Early on the morning of the 14th the steamers weighed anchor and stood around a point of land where the ceremony was to be held, and anchored so as to command the landing-place. When this was done, the governor and his interpreters, richly dressed in silk and gold, came aboard and were escorted to their place on the quarter-deck, and a signal now called

fifteen cutters and launches from the different ships around the *Susquehanna*. Commander Buchanan led the boats in single file, each of which was escorted on either side by native craft. As the procession of boats drew out to its full length toward the land, the bright flags, gorgeous banners, and lacquered hats, glistening in the sunlight, presented a beautiful and imposing spectacle. When the boats were halfway to the land, Captain Perry, in full-dress uniform, stepped to the gangway, and, with a salute of thirteen guns, entered his barge and was rowed to the landing-place. As his boat reached the shore the American officers and men drew up in a double line to receive him. The land procession was then formed—one hundred marines, whose figures were in striking contrast to the diminutive Japanese, leading the way, followed by one hundred seamen. Captain Perry, guarded on each side by a gigantic negro and preceded by two boys carrying the President's letter, came next. This letter and accompanying documents "were in folio size, and were beautifully written on vellum, and not folded, but bound in blue silk velvet. Each seal, attached by cords of interwoven gold and silk, with pendant gold tassels, was incased in a circular box six inches in diameter and three in depth, wrought of pure gold. Each of the documents, together with its seal, was placed in a box of rosewood about a foot long, with lock, hinges, and mounting all of gold."<sup>1</sup>

Arriving at the reception-hall, Captain Perry and his suite entered a tent about forty feet square, where were seated two princes, who had been delegated to receive the letter. As the Americans entered, the princes courteously bowed and motioned their guests to a seat on the right. Further than this, however, they showed no curiosity or interest, but preserved a grave and stolid composure. For some minutes after

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<sup>1</sup> Official report of Captain Perry.

the company had been seated a profound silence prevailed. Finally, the Governor of Uraga, who acted as master of ceremonies, said that the princes were ready to receive the letter, upon which the two boys, who were at the lower end of the hall, marched up with the rosewood boxes, closely followed by the negroes, deposited them in a scarlet box prepared by the Japanese, and retired in perfect silence. A paper from the princes acknowledging the receipt of the letter was then given. It read as follows: "The letter of the President of the United States of North America and copy are hereby received and delivered to the Emperor. Many times it has been said that business relating to foreign countries can not be transacted here in Uraga, but at Nagasaki. Now it has been observed that the admiral, in his quality of ambassador of the President, would be insulted by it. The justice of this has been acknowledged, consequently the above-mentioned letter is hereby received in opposition to Japanese law. Because the place is not designed to treat of anything from foreigners, so neither can conference or entertainment take place. The letter being received, you will leave."

Again a deep silence pervaded the hall. Captain Perry then said that within a few days he would leave for China, and return in April or May for an answer. When asked if he would come with all the four ships, he replied, "With many more." The governor then informed the Americans that there was nothing more to be done, and, bowing to the right and left, he passed out of the hall. Upon this Captain Perry and his suite rose and retired also, the two princes standing until they had left the apartments. The interview had not lasted thirty minutes, during which the severest formality had been observed. The procession again formed and the Americans returned to their ships.

Captain Perry determined to explore the bay in the direction of the capital before he sailed away, for the purpose of marking out the channel and impressing

the natives with their inability to obstruct his movements. Accordingly, when the governor, who had accompanied the Americans aboard the *Susquehanna*, learned where the squadron was going to sail, he protested; but, unmindful of this, the American boats continued their work until the 17th, and, having come within sight of Shinagawa, a suburb of Tokio, the squadron sailed for China.

While visiting Macao, in November, waiting for the time for his return to Tokio, Captain Perry learned that the French admiral had left port suddenly with sealed orders, and nearly at the same time the Russian Admiral Pontiatine returned from Nagasaki with four vessels. Fearing that the French and Russians were contemplating a visit to Tokio, Captain Perry decided on a midwinter voyage to Japan in order to forestall them, notwithstanding the fact that navigation of the China Sea at that time was considered exceedingly hazardous. Accordingly, on the 12th of February, 1854, he appeared in the bay of Tokio with the steamers *Susquehanna*, *Mississippi* and *Powhatan*, and the sailing vessels *Macedonian*, *Southampton*, *Lexington*, *Vandalia*, *Plymouth* and *Saratoga*. Five days were spent in a courteous altercation with the Japanese officials as to where the squadron should anchor, the natives insisting that it should remain near Uraga, while Captain Perry was equally firm in having his ships go farther up the bay, declaring the anchorage at Uraga to be unsafe. Finally Yokohama was decided upon, and a treaty house was built at the present English Hatoba, where the Union Church is situated.

On the 8th of March the Americans landed with pomp and ceremony and began the negotiations. No little risk was involved in landing, for, as was afterward learned, there were several fanatics among the Japanese guards who had sworn to kill Perry. The negotiations extended over several days. On the first day Captain Perry asked why the grounds surrounding the treaty

house had been fenced in with large mats; and being told that it was to prevent the Americans from seeing the country, he requested that they be taken down, as he considered it an indignity; and his request was complied with. Finally, on the 31st of March, the terms of the treaty were agreed upon, and Simoda and Hakodate were opened to the Americans for commerce, under certain restrictions. On the 29th of July, 1858, Townsend Harris, American consul-general, in the presence of Commander Josiah Tattnall, signed the main treaty between the two countries, and on the 13th of February, 1860, a Japanese embassy of seventy-one persons left Yokohama in the *Powhatan* for Washington. And thus one of the greatest diplomatic triumphs of the age was recorded. Washington Irving wrote to Perry: "You have gained for yourself a lasting name, and have won it without shedding a drop of blood or inflicting misery on a human being. What naval commander ever won laurels at such a rate?" A residence of seven years in Japan has enabled the author to appreciate the great firmness, the rare diplomacy and indomitable perseverance that were shown by Captain Perry in bringing to a successful end his negotiations with this spirited and highly intelligent people.

On July 11, 1854, Perry concluded a commercial treaty with the king of the Lew Chew Islands, a small group south of Japan. By the terms of this compact the natives were to furnish pilots to American vessels approaching their harbors, and in case of shipwreck our people were to be provided for. The most remarkable clause in this treaty, one which reveals Perry's splendid tact and diplomacy, was that by which the natives agreed to set apart and hold sacred a graveyard for American citizens.

## CHAPTER IX.

### SCIENTIFIC AND EXPLORING EXPEDITIONS.

NOR only has the navy been of incalculable value in the wars of the United States, but in scientific and exploring expeditions also it has been of great service. On the 18th of May, 1836, Congress authorized an expedition for the purpose of "exploring and surveying the southern ocean, as well to determine the existence of all doubtful islands and shoals as to discover and accurately fix the position of those which lie in or near the track of our vessels in that quarter and may have escaped the observation of scientific navigators." Lieutenant Charles Wilkes was placed in command of the expedition, and on the 19th of August, 1838, he sailed from Hampton Roads with the 18-gun sloop of war *Vincennes*, flagship; the 18-gun sloop of war *Peacock*, Lieutenant William L. Hudson; the 12-gun brig of war *Porpoise*, Lieutenant Cadwalader Ringgold; the storeship *Relief*, Lieutenant Andrew K. Long; the tender *Sea Gull*, Passed-Midshipman J. W. E. Reid; and the tender *Flying Fish*, Passed-Midshipman Samuel R. Knox. Although the great object of this expedition was to enlarge the circle of commerce, it was also intended to acquire scientific knowledge, and for this purpose the following men accompanied it: Horatio Hale, philologist; Charles Pickering and Titian Ramsey Peale, naturalists; Mr. Couthouy, conchologist; James Dwight Dana, mineralogist; Mr. Rich, botanist; Mr. Drayton and Mr. Agate, draughtsmen; and J. D. Brackenridge, horticulturist.

In crossing the Atlantic the vessels sailed about four



miles apart, to take soundings and ascertain the temperature in the various currents. After remaining a week at Madeira the ships headed southward, touched at the Cape Verd Islands, and arrived at Rio de Janeiro on the 23d of November. They left that port on the 6th of January, 1839, and made Orange Harbor, Tierra del Fuego, their base of operations for explorations in the Antarctic Ocean. On the 25th of February, Lieutenant Wilkes, in the *Porpoise*, accompanied by the *Sea Gull*, made sail for the south pole. At daylight, March 1st, they fell in with ice islands and flurries of snow, and about noon an island was discovered, but owing to the surf it was impossible to land. Toward night another volcanic island was sighted, and at daylight, March 2d, O'Brien and Ashland Islands were discovered. On the 3d of March the vessels reached Palmersland. Lieutenant Wilkes wrote: "It was a day of great excitement to all, for we had ice of all kinds to encounter, from the iceberg of huge quadrangular shape, with its stratified appearance, to the sunken and deceptive masses that were difficult to perceive before they were under the bow. I have rarely seen a finer sight. The sea was literally studded with these beautiful masses, some of pure white, others showing all the shades of the opal, others emerald green, and occasionally, here and there, some of a deep black. Our situation was critical, but the weather favored us for a few hours. On clearing these dangers we kept off to the south and west under all sail, and at 9 P. M. we counted eight large ice islands. Afterward the weather became so thick with mist and fog as to render it necessary to lay to till daylight, before which time we had a heavy snowstorm. A strong gale now set in from the southwest; the deck of the brig was covered with ice and snow and the weather became exceedingly damp and cold. The men were suffering not only from want of sufficient room but from the inadequacy of the clothing."

By the 5th of March the gale had greatly increased and the vessels were in danger of being hurled against the icebergs. This, together with the appearance of incipient scurvy, resulting from constant exposure, induced Lieutenant Wilkes to head northward and return to Orange Harbor.

On the same day the *Porpoise* and the *Sea Gull* set out on their antarctic cruise (February 25th), the *Peacock* and the *Flying Fish* also got under way, but on the 27th they encountered a heavy gale and became separated. After waiting twelve hours in vain for her consort, the *Peacock* continued her cruise to the south and experienced moderate weather until the 4th of March, when she encountered another severe gale. The weather continued boisterous, with frequent squalls of snow and rain, but on the 11th it again cleared off. The *Peacock* was now continually beset with icebergs, fogs, and flurries of snow, so that navigation became exceedingly difficult. "The ship was completely coated with ice, even to the gun deck. Every spray thrown over her froze, and her bows and decks were fairly packed with ice." On the 25th of March the *Peacock* fell in with the *Flying Fish*, which vessel had not been heard from since the gale of February 27th. Lieutenant Walker reported that he had penetrated south as far as 70°. As both vessels were now in danger of being frozen in, and as they were not provisioned for a long imprisonment, Lieutenant Hudson called a council of his officers, and it was determined to head northward, and accordingly the vessels slowly made their way out of the antarctic circle. At midnight, March 29th, the people of the *Peacock* were startled by the smell of smoke, which issued from the main hold. All hands were instantly called to quarters, and on opening the main hatch dense volumes of smoke rolled out. With much difficulty the flames were extinguished. On the 1st of April, Lieutenant Hudson dispatched the *Flying Fish*, with his report, to Orange Harbor, while

he continued his course to Valparaiso, where he arrived on the 21st of April and found the storeship *Relief*. About the middle of May the *Vincennes*, the *Porpoise* and the *Flying Fish* also arrived at that port. The *Sea Gull* and the *Flying Fish* had sailed from Orange Harbor together, but had become separated in a gale, and the former was never heard from again. Soon afterward the *Relief* was sent to the United States, as she was a dull sailer and greatly impeded the movements of the other vessels.

The remainder of the squadron crossed the Pacific Ocean, examining many islands, and arrived at Sydney, New South Wales, on the 29th of November. Here it was determined to attempt another antarctic cruise, and the *Vincennes*, the *Peacock*, the *Porpoise* and the *Flying Fish*, on the 26th of December, stood out of the bay and headed for the south. On the 2d of January, while in a dense fog, the *Flying Fish* became separated from the squadron and did not again join it, and on the following day the *Peacock* also parted company. In hopes of falling in with these vessels, Lieutenant Wilkes made for Macquarie Island, the first rendezvous, and arrived in its vicinity on the 7th. On the 9th he made the second rendezvous, but still failed to meet the *Flying Fish*. The early separation of this tender had a most unfortunate effect on the officers and men of the entire squadron; coming so soon after the loss of the *Sea Gull*, it caused a depression of spirits and gloomy forebodings that rendered the antarctic cruise doubly hazardous. "Men-o'-war's men," wrote Lieutenant Wilkes, "are prone to prognosticate evil, and on this occasion they were not wanting in various surmises. Woeful accounts were soon afloat of the distress the schooner was in when last seen—and this in quite a moderate sea."

On the 10th of January the squadron met an iceberg about a mile long and one hundred and eighty feet high. The weather now became misty, with occa-

sional flurries of snow, while icebergs were so numerous as to necessitate changing the course several times. About nine o'clock on January 11th a low point of ice was discovered; and on rounding it the explorers found themselves in a large bay. Moving swiftly ahead for an hour and a half, they reached its limit, where their course was abruptly checked by a compact barrier of ice. The vessels were then hove to until daylight. It was a perfect night; no sound broke the great silence except the ghostly rustling of the ice-fields. The morning of the 12th dawned with a dense fog, during which the *Porpoise* was lost sight of, and the entire day was spent in beating out of the bay, a heavy fog frequently rendering it impossible to see more than a ship's length ahead.

The *Peacock*, since her separation from the squadron (January 3d), had made for Macquarie Island, and succeeded in landing two men on it. The place was found to be uninhabited, except by vast flocks of penguins, which on the approach of the explorers savagely flew at them, snapping at their clothing, heads and limbs in a most unpleasant manner. The *Peacock* resumed her course southward, and on the 15th of January fell in with the *Vincennes* and the *Porpoise* at the above-mentioned barrier.

The three vessels now cruised westward along the outskirts of the ice barrier, hoping to find some opening through which they could penetrate farther south. On the 16th of January land was seen over a long stretch of ice-fields from the masthead of the *Peacock*, and during the following night the *Vincennes*, by making short tacks, endeavored to gain as much southing as possible. "Previously to its becoming broad daylight," wrote Lieutenant Wilkes, "the fog rendered everything obscure, even at a short distance from the ship. I knew that we were in close proximity to icebergs and field ice, but from the report of the lookout at sunset I believed that there was an opening or large

bay leading to the south. The ship had rapid way on her and was much tossed about, when in an instant all was perfectly still and quiet. The transition was so sudden that many were awakened by it from a sound sleep, and all well knew, from the short experience we had had, that the cessation of the sound and motion usual at sea was a proof that we had run within a line of ice—an occurrence from which the feeling of great danger is inseparable. The watch was immediately called by the officer of the deck. Many of those below were seen hurrying up the hatches, and those on deck were straining their eyes to discover the barriers in time to avoid accident. The ship still moving rapidly along, some faint hopes remained that the bay might prove a deep one and enable me to satisfy my sanguine hopes and belief relative to the land. The feeling is awful and the uncertainty most trying, thus to enter within the icy barriers blindfolded, as it were, by an impenetrable fog, and the thought constantly recurring that both ship and crew are in imminent danger. On we kept, until it was reported to me by attentive listeners that they heard the low and distinct rustling of ice. Suddenly a dozen voices proclaimed the barriers to be in sight, just ahead. The ship, which a moment before seemed as if unpeopled, from the stillness of all on board, was instantly alive with the bustle of performing the evolution necessary to bring her to the wind, which was unfavorable to a return on the same tack. After a quarter of an hour on her new tack ice was again made ahead, and the full danger of our situation was realized. The ship was suddenly embayed, and the extent of sea room to which we were limited was rendered invisible by the dark and murky weather; yet, that we were closely circumscribed was evident from having made ice so soon on either tack, and from the audible rustling around us." After four hours of great danger and difficult navigation the *Vincennes* was extricated from her perilous position.

On the 17th of January Lieutenant Wilkes ordered the *Peacock* and the *Porpoise* to continue their explorations independently of each other, as he presumed that the rivalry between the several ships' companies would stimulate them to greater exertions. But the three vessels cruised in sight of each other, skirting along the ice barrier in a westerly direction, and on the 23d of January the *Peacock* discovered an opening that seemed to reach the land to the south. Standing into the bay at five o'clock in the morning, January 24th, the ship suddenly made stern-board, and while attempting to box off from some ice under the bow she was brought with great force against another mass of ice, which destroyed her rudder. As the ship was found to be rapidly entering the ice all hands were called, but every effort to direct her course failed. Scarcely a moment now passed without a collision with the ice, every blow threatening to sink the ship. In the hope of bringing the rudder again into use, a stage was rigged over the stern, but on examination the rudder was found to be so much injured that it was impossible to repair it in its place, and preparations were made for unshipping it. In the mean time the position of the vessel, surrounded by masses of ice and driving farther and farther into it toward an immense wall-sided iceberg, was every instant growing more critical. In consequence of her being so closely encompassed all attempts to get her on the other tack failed, and it was decided to bring her head around by hanging her to an iceberg with ice-anchors. The anchor was attached, but scarcely had the hawser been passed aboard when the ship took a sudden stern-board, and the rope was literally dragged out of the men's hands before they could get a turn round the bits. The ship now drove stern foremost into the huge masses of ice, striking the rudder a second time, wringing it off the head and breaking two of the pintles and the upper and lower brace.

As the wind began to freshen and the floe ice to set upon the ship, the sails were furled and the spars were rigged up and down the ship's side as fenders. Boats were again lowered and another attempt was made to plant the ice anchors, but the confined space and the force with which pieces of ice ground against each other was so great that the boats proved nearly as unmanageable as the ship. After much exertion, however, the ice-anchors were planted and the hawser hauled taut, and for a time there was comparative security, as the vessel hung by the anchors. But the ice continued to close in rapidly, gradually crushing and carrying away the fenders, and the wind, changing to seaward, rose with the appearance that foreboded bad weather. At 11.30 A. M. the anchors, in spite of the exertions of the officers and men who were near them, broke loose, and the ship was again at the mercy of huge floating masses. A rapid stern-board was the consequence, and a contact with the ice island—vast, perpendicular, and high as the masthead—appeared inevitable. Every possible preparation was made to meet the expected shock. The spars were got out and preparations were made to cockbill the yards.

“While these preparations were going forward,” wrote Lieutenant Wilkes, “the imminence of the danger lessened for a while—the anchors again held, and there was a hope that they might bring the vessel up before she struck. This hope, however, lasted but for a moment only, for the anchors, with the whole body of ice to which they were attached, came in, and the ship, going astern, struck, quartering upon a piece of ice which lay between her and the great ice islands. This afforded the last hope of preventing her from coming in contact with the ice island; but this hope failed also, for, grinding along the ice, she went nearly stern foremost and struck with her port quarter upon the island with a tremendous crash. The first effect of this blow was to carry away the spanker boom, the

port stern davit, and to crush the stern boat. The starboard stern davit was the next to receive the shock, and as this is connected with the spar-deck bulwarks the whole of them were started; the knee, a rotten one, which bound the davit to the taffrail, was broken off, and with it all the stanchions to the plank sheer as far as the gangway. Severe as the shock was, it happened fortunately that it was followed by as great a rebound. This gave the vessel a cant to starboard, and, by the timely aid of the jib and other sails, carried her clear of the island and forced her into a small opening. While doing this, and before the vessel had moved half her length, an impending mass of ice and snow from the towering iceberg, started by the shock, fell in her wake. Had this fallen only a few seconds earlier it must have crushed the vessel to atoms. It was also fortunate that the place where she struck the ice island was near its southern end, so that there was but a short distance to be passed before she was entirely clear of them. This gave more room for the drifting ice, and permitted the vessel to be worked by her sails. The relief from this pressing danger, however, gave no assurance of ultimate safety. The weather had an unusually stormy appearance, and the destruction of the vessel seemed inevitable, with the loss of every life on board. After dinner the former manœuvring was resorted to, the yards being kept swinging to and fro in order to keep the ship's head in the required direction. She was laboring in the swell, with ice grinding and thumping against her on all sides; every moment something either fore or aft was carried away—chains, bolts, bobstays, bowsprit, shrouds. Even the anchors were lifted, coming down with a surge that carried away the eyebolts and lashings, and left them hanging by the stoppers. The cutwater also was injured, and every timber seemed to groan."

Boats were now lowered for the purpose of planting ice anchors ahead of the ship, and after two hours of



hard work, during which the frail craft were in constant danger of being crushed by the ice, this was accomplished. At four o'clock it began to snow violently. The rudder was then unshipped and laid on the quarter-deck for repairs, and all night the ship was tossed helplessly about, every moment in imminent danger of being ground to pieces by the huge masses of ice. She remained in this position till the afternoon of the 24th of January, when, favored by a fresh breeze, she at last cleared the ice and gained the open sea.

During this time the *Vincennes* was making her way along the ice barriers, examining every opening that seemed to lead to the continent, which was distinctly seen over the fields of ice. Having proceeded as far as 97° East without being able to reach the land, Lieutenant Wilkes, on the 21st of January, headed north for Sydney, where he arrived on the 11th of March, and found the *Peacock* at anchor there. The *Porpoise*, after parting company with the other vessels on the 22d of January, skirted along the ice-bound coast in a westerly direction, and on the 30th she fell in with two French exploring ships under the command of Captain D'Urville. Having met the usual series of storms, icebergs and perils of antarctic navigation, the *Porpoise*, after reaching a point 100° East, and 64° 65' South, set out on her return northward, and on the 5th of March made Auckland Isle. The *Flying Fish*, whose separation from the squadron in January had caused so much anxiety, was compelled, on account of her unseaworthy condition, to return to port.

During the summer of 1840 the squadron was engaged in exploring the islands of the Southern Archipelago, and while examining one of the islands of the Fiji group in July, a party of Americans in a launch and a cutter was compelled by a storm to run into a bay for shelter. In beating out of the place the cutter ran on a reef, and while it was in this situation the natives attacked it, and as the ammunition of the

Americans had been spoiled by water they abandoned the cutter and returned to the *Vincennes*. A detachment of seamen, in eight boats, under the command of Lieutenants Wilkes and Hudson, promptly landed and burned the village. On the 24th of July the explorers were again attacked by the treacherous islanders. Past-Midshipman Joseph A. Underwood, with a small party of sailors, landed for the purpose of trading, but he was met with hostility. He ordered a retreat to the boats, upon which the savages, many of whom were armed with muskets, began a furious assault. Re-enforcements were landed, and the Americans succeeded in putting the islanders to flight; but Midshipmen Underwood and Henry Wilkes were mortally wounded, and one seaman was badly hurt. Lieutenant Ringgold then landed with a detachment of seventy officers and men, at the southeast end of the island, and marched upon a village in the vicinity, destroying the crops and plantations as he advanced. The village was defended by stockades formed by a circle of coconut trees planted a few feet apart, the intervening space being filled in with strong wickerwork. Behind this was a trench, in which the defenders could crouch in safety while firing through loopholes, and outside of the stockade was a ditch filled with water—by no means a despicable stronghold even for disciplined troops to attack. The savages, confident in their security, greeted their assailants with derisive shouts and flourished their weapons in defiance. By means of a rocket the Americans set fire to the huts within the stockade, and at the same time they opened a sharp fire of musketry, which killed a chief and six of his men. Upon this the savages fled by an opposite gate, leaving their town to be consumed by the flames. In this attack one American was severely wounded. Lieutenant Ringgold pursued the savages northward toward the only remaining village on the island, where he was joined by a boat party under Lieutenant Wilkes, who

had already destroyed the village. The next day the entire population sued for peace and promised good behavior in the future.

In August the squadron sailed for the Hawaiian Islands, and on the 2d of December Lieutenant Hudson, in the *Peacock*, accompanied by the *Flying Fish*, made an extended cruise among the Bowditch, Samoan, Ellice, and Kingmill Islands, returning to the Hawaiian Islands early in 1841, after a cruise of nineteen thousand miles. On an Island of the Kingmill group one of the American sailors was captured by the natives, but was not missed until the seamen regained their boats. Inquiries were then made for him, but the natives professed ignorance. After waiting two days in vain for some news of the man, Lieutenant Hudson ordered the *Flying Fish* to cover the landing, and an attacking party of eighty men, under Lieutenant Walker, made for the shore. Efforts to ransom the man proving unavailing, a rocket was fired into the crowd of natives that had assembled on the beach, and this was followed up by a discharge of musketry, which killed twelve of the warriors and put the rest to flight. The detachment under Lieutenant Walker then landed, and as the natives still failed to produce the lost seaman their village was destroyed.

Lieutenant Hudson afterward sailed for the coast of Oregon, but while attempting to cross the bar of Columbia River, July 18th, having no pilots aboard, he ran the *Peacock* aground. To make matters worse, the tide fell, and as the sea was rising, the ship was soon wrecked. Lieutenant Hudson and his crew managed to get ashore, and they were rescued some time afterward by the *Vincennes*. As early as 1818 Captain James Biddle, in the sloop of war *Ontario*, had explored the Pacific coast and taken formal possession of extensive tracts in the name of the United States. After carefully exploring the harbors and rivers on the Pacific slope, and sending a land expedition from Ore-

gon to Yerba Buena (now San Francisco) under the command of Lieutenant George Foster Emmons, Lieutenant Wilkes returned to the United States by way of the Cape of Good Hope, arriving in New York in June, 1842, after an absence of three years and ten months.

On the 26th of November, 1847, Lieutenant William Francis Lynch sailed from New York in the storeship *Supply* for an exploring expedition to the Dead Sea. He arrived in the Mediterranean early in 1848, and leaving his ship at Smyrna, he proceeded to Constantinople, where he received the necessary permission for his explorations. Returning to Smyrna, he made sail, and landed at Haifa on the 21st of March. At this place the two boats that had been constructed especially for the difficult navigation of the Dead Sea and the river Jordan, one made of copper and the other of galvanized iron, were placed on trucks and drawn across the country to Tiberias, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. The party consisted of Lieutenants Lynch and John B. Dale, Passed-Midshipman Richmond Aulick and eleven seamen. Their supplies were transported by twenty-three camels and twenty horses. At Tiberias the expedition was divided: one detachment was to embark in the boats, pull down the sea to the river Jordan, and descend that tortuous and rapid stream to the Dead Sea; while the other division, mounted on camels and horses, was to make the same journey by land, keeping as near to the boat party as possible, so as to defend it from wandering Arabs, or to assist in the navigation of the stream.

On the 10th of April, 1848, the expedition left Tiberias, and pulling down the Sea of Galilee began the hazardous navigation of the Jordan. The distance from this sea to the Dead Sea is not more than sixty miles, but the course pursued by the Jordan is over two hundred miles, and in this stretch there is a fall of thirteen hundred feet. In covering this distance the

Jordan rushes through narrow defiles, hurls itself down fearful rapids, boils over sunken rocks and twists around sharp curves at a tremendous speed, rendering it impossible for any craft, except those specially constructed, to pass. Down this rushing torrent the adventurers boldly headed their craft. They repeatedly struck on rocks, and at times the entire crew was compelled to leap into the torrent and force the boats over difficult places. After a perilous passage of eight days they reached the desolate waste of water appropriately called the Dead Sea. Here a permanent encampment was established, from which numerous scientific and exploring expeditions were made. After several weeks spent in this manner, Lieutenant Lynch occupied twenty-three days in measuring the depression of the Dead Sea below the level of the ocean, which he found to be thirteen hundred and twelve feet.

On the 24th of May, 1850, an expedition organized by Henry Grinnell, of New York, and commanded by Lieutenant Edwin J. De Haven, sailed from New York in search of Sir John Franklin's arctic explorers. Lieutenant De Haven's vessels consisted of two heavily reinforced brigs, the *Rescue* and the *Advance*. By the first of July they were fairly in Baffin's Bay, and six days later, while making for what appeared to be an unobstructed sea, they became imbedded in an ice-pack and were imprisoned twenty-one days, drifting northerly at the rate of a mile a day. Freeing themselves from the pack on the 28th of July, the little brigs, on the 19th of August, entered Lancaster Sound, where on the same day they met the steamer *Lady Franklin*, of Captain Penny's relief squadron. Two days later the *Advance* met the schooner *Felix*, commanded by Sir John Ross, which was also searching for Franklin's party. While off Radstock Bay, August 25th, the *Advance* discovered the first traces of the lost Franklin party, in the shape of a flagstaff and a ball, and, on landing, unmistakable evidences of an

encampment were found. Two days later the Americans began a search for the lost explorers and found three graves with wooden headboards, the inscriptions on them showing that they belonged to the lost exploring-party. On the 11th of September the *Advance* and the *Rescue* began their return passage, but the arctic winter set in before they could gain the open sea. After beating around for several weeks in a vain endeavor to force a passage, preparations were made for passing a winter in the Arctic Sea. Unfortunately, they were caught in the open channel, and during the winter months they were carried from one place to another by the ever-drifting ice, and their position was rendered more dangerous by the cracking of the ice, which at any time was liable to engulf the stores that were deposited on the ice-field.

On the 5th of December a crack in the ice several yards wide opened along the side of the *Advance*, so that she was again in her element; but two days later the immense ice-fields began to grind their edges together, catching the little brig between them. A vessel less substantially built would have been crushed like an eggshell. As it was, the little brig strained and groaned, and so far resisted the pressure that the ice-floe slipped under her and raised her bodily out of the water, with her stern eight feet higher than her bow. "On the 11th of January, 1851," wrote Lieutenant De Haven, "a crack occurred between the *Advance* and the *Rescue*, passing close under our stern. It opened and formed a lane of water eighty feet wide. In the afternoon the floes began to move and the lane was closed up, and the edges of the ice coming in contact with so much pressure threatened the demolition of the narrow space which separated us from the line of fracture. Fortunately, the floes again separated, and assumed a motion by which the *Rescue* passed from our stern to the port bow, and increased her distance from us seven hundred yards, when she came to a

stand. Our stores that were on the ice were on the same side of the ice as the *Rescue's*, and, of course, were carried with her. The following day the ice remained quiet; but soon after midnight on the 13th a gale having sprung up from the west, it was once more got into violent motion. The young ice in the crack near our stern was soon broken up, the edges of the thick ice came in contact, and a fearful pressure took place, forcing up a line of hummock which approached within ten feet of our stern. The vessel trembled and complained a great deal. At last the floe broke up around us into many pieces, and became detached from the sides of the vessel. The scene of frightful commotion lasted until 4 A. M. Every moment I expected the vessel would be crushed or overwhelmed by the mass of ice forced up far above our bulwarks. The *Rescue*, being further removed on the other side of the crack from the line of crushing, and being firmly imbedded in heavy ice, I was in hopes would remain undisturbed; but this was not the case, for, on sending to her as soon as it was light enough to see, the floe was found to be broken away entirely from her bow, and there formed into such high hummocks that her bowsprit was broken off, together with her head and all the light woodwork about it. Had the action of the ice been continued much longer she would have been destroyed. Sad havoc had been made among the stores and provisions left on the ice, and a few barrels were recovered; but a large portion were crushed and had disappeared."

On the 29th of May, 1851, the sun again appeared, having been concealed eighty-seven days, and the dreary night of the arctic winter had passed away. On the 6th of June a movement in the ice-floe liberated the brigs, and, shipping their rudders and leaving a portion of their false keels in the ice, they began their homeward voyage, the *Advance* arriving in New York on the 20th of August and the *Rescue* on the 7th of September.

The seizure of seven American fishing-vessels by British cruisers, acting under the orders of Admiral Seymour, aroused the indignation of the New England States, and on July 31, 1852, Captain Matthew Calbraith Perry, in the *Mississippi*, sailed from New York for the scene of trouble. He visited Halifax and Cape Breton, Prince Edward's Island, and found that between two thousand and three thousand American craft were engaged in this industry, "furnishing a nursery for seamen of inestimable advantage to the maintenance of the interests of the nation."<sup>1</sup> The difficulty grew out of two interpretations of the clause "three miles from the coast and bays," the Americans differing from the English in their views as to what size of indentation constituted a bay. The result of Captain Perry's visit was the reciprocity treaty with Canada in 1854, which lasted ten years.

In the summer of 1881 Commander Winfield Scott Schley, U. S. N., now a captain, was in Boston Navy Yard, where he heard of the expedition to Lady Franklin Bay, commanded by Lieutenant Adolphus W. Greely, U. S. A. Commander Schley remarked, "Well, I suppose some naval officer will have to bring the explorers back," little thinking at the time that he would be selected for the perilous undertaking. The explorers embarked in the *Proteus*, July, 1881, and after a remarkably favorable passage landed at Fort Conger, Grinnell Land, in August. The *Proteus* returned home, leaving enough provisions to support the explorers three years. It was arranged that another supply vessel was to be sent to Fort Conger in the following summer and another in the year after that; so Greely's party were left with every assurance that they were perfectly safe. According to this understanding the relief vessel *Neptune* was sent northward in the summer of 1882, but was prevented by the ice from

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<sup>1</sup> Official report of Captain Perry.



reaching the explorers. In the following summer the *Proteus* endeavored to reach Fort Conger, but the vessel was sunk and her crew narrowly escaped death.

Such was the alarming condition of the Greely expedition in 1884, when Commander Schley was called upon to command the third relief expedition. The vessels *Thetis*, *Bear* and *Alert* were placed under his orders. Commander Schley left New York May 1, 1884, arriving at St. John's May 9th. From this place the two vessels made their way north. After many weeks of battling with the ice, Commander Schley found the seven survivors of the twenty-five men composing the Greely expedition under a tent near Cape Sabine. Commander Schley, in his *Rescue of Greely*, p. 222, graphically describes the rescue: "It was a sight of horror. On one side, close to the opening, with his head toward the outside, lay what apparently was a dead man. His jaw had dropped; his eyes were open, but fixed and glassy; his limbs were motionless. On the opposite side was a poor fellow, alive, to be sure, but without hands or feet (those members having been frozen off), and with a spoon tied to the stump of his right arm. Two others, seated on the ground, in the middle, had just got down a rubber bottle that hung on the tent-pole, and were pouring from it into a tin can. Directly opposite, on his hands and knees, was a dark man with a long matted beard and tattered dressing-gown with a little red skull-cap on his head and brilliant, staring eyes." This was Greely. The other survivors were Sergeants Elison and Fredericks, Bierderbick the hospital steward, and Privates Connell, Brainard and Long. Had the rescue been delayed a few days longer even this wretched remnant of the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition would not have remained alive to tell the story of their terrible sufferings. With great difficulty Commander Schley got the men aboard his ships and made his way back to the United States.

## CHAPTER X.

### MINOR OCCURENCES.

IN December, 1842, the United States brig of war *Somers*, Commander Alexander Slidell Mackenzie, anchored in New York harbor after a protracted cruise, and announced that one of her midshipmen, Philip Spencer, the boatswain's mate, Samuel Cromwell, and an ordinary seaman, Elisha Small, had been hanged at the yardarm during the cruise on suspicion of mutiny. The announcement caused the greatest excitement throughout the country, especially when it was learned that the men had been executed without trial and that Spencer was the son of the then Secretary of War. The *Somers* had sailed from Norfolk, Va., for a cruise in the West Indies and off the West African coast, having on board a number of cadets, or "naval apprentices," as they were then called. After cruising off the African coast the *Somers* made for St. Thomas.

While nearing the West Indies on the night of November 25th, Midshipman Spencer, in a mysterious manner, asked the purser's steward, John W. Wales, to get on top of the boom, as he had something of the utmost importance to communicate and was fearful of being overheard. Having reached a safe place, Spencer—a youth of nineteen years—after having received Wales's oath to secrecy, said he was the ringleader of twenty of the seamen who had arranged to instigate a sham fight in a few nights, during which the officer of the deck was to be thrown overboard and the other officers were to be murdered, and then they were to become pirates. Wales accepted the proposition to

become one of the gang, but on the following day he reported the affair to the purser, and in a few minutes the whole matter was laid before Mackenzie, who only said: "I regard the story as monstrous and improbable, and am under the impression that Spencer has been reading piratical tales and was amusing himself with Wales."

A close watch was kept on Spencer, however, and he was observed examining the charts and taking down notes. It also was noticed that he asked the sailing master the rate of the chronometer, and was very intimate with the seamen. This induced Mackenzie to examine the young midshipman personally. The latter admitted his conversation with Wales, but declared that it was all a joke. Spencer was arrested and placed in irons. An investigation of his effects revealed a mysterious-looking paper having the names of the officers and crew spelled in Greek, and opposite to each name were the words "sure" or "doubtful," and puzzling pen marks.

On the night of Spencer's arrest there was a mysterious falling of a topmast and an unnecessary confusion among the seamen in clearing away the wreckage, which so far confirmed Mackenzie's suspicion that he armed all the officers and placed double guards. These suspicions had been further increased by the fact that Cromwell and Small had been detected in holding clandestine meetings with Spencer while he was in irons on the quarter-deck, and the result was that Cromwell and Small also were placed in irons. Mackenzie then assembled the crew and apprentices, and warned them that he was acquainted with Spencer's plans and would proceed to extreme measures on the first attempt to carry out their suspected mutiny.

On the following day the officers reported that the men worked discontentedly and showed a sullen spirit, and that they frequently collected in groups and conversed in a suspicious manner. Mackenzie's suspicions

of a mutiny increased during the four days Spencer was kept in irons, and he summoned his six officers in council. It was decided that the three men under arrest were "guilty of a full and determined intention to commit a mutiny in this vessel of a most atrocious character," and it was recommended that they be put to death at once. This was done promptly, no trial or examination of the men having been made, save in Spencer's case already noted. All of them protested their innocence to the last. The bodies were buried at sea. Others of the suspected crew were placed in irons and carried to New York, where they were released by order of the Secretary of the Navy. A court to inquire into the conduct of the *Somers'* officers was at once instituted. The excitement all over the country was intense, powerful supporters being found for each side. A court martial quickly followed the court of inquiry, which resulted in a verdict of "Not guilty." Cooper, the naval historian, voiced the dominating sentiment of the people when he said of Mackenzie's act, "If not one of basest cowardice, it was of lamentable deficiency of judgment.

There were a number of highly creditable affairs in which the navy of the United States was engaged, which, occurring in times of peace, attracted little attention and were soon forgotten. While in command of the sloop of war *St. Louis* at Smyrna, July 2, 1853, Commander Duncan Nathaniel Ingraham boldly prepared to attack the Austrian war ship *Hussar*, which was considerably superior in force. Aboard the *Hussar* was Martin Koszta, an Austrian who, two years before, in New York city, had declared his intention of becoming an American citizen. Having incurred the displeasure of the Austrian Government, Koszta was seized while in Smyrna on business and confined in the *Hussar*. Ingraham cleared for action, and declared that he would attack the Austrian war ship if Koszta was not surrendered by 4 P. M. Before that

hour, however, satisfactory arrangements were made and battle was averted.

While endeavoring to protect the property of American residents in Canton, China, November 16, 1856, just before the beginning of the war between England and China, Commander Andrew Hull Foote, of the sloop of war *Portsmouth*, was fired upon by one of the forts. His demand for an apology being refused, he got the permission of Captain James Armstrong, commander of the Asiatic squadron, to avenge the insult. Landing with two hundred and eighty-seven sailors and marines and four howitzers, November 20th, after the *Portsmouth*, the *San Jacinto*, Commander Henry H. Bell, and the *Levant*, Commander William Smith, had bombarded the Chinese, Foote attacked the forts. There were four of them, built of massive granite eight feet thick, and mounting in all one hundred and seventy-six guns and garrisoned by about five thousand men. On account of the shoal water, the boats could not run close in to the bank, whereupon our men jumped into the water waist deep and waded to the shore, where they formed into three columns, led by Commanders Foote, Bell and Smith, while Captain John D. Simmes led the detachment of marines. Making a detour so as to gain the rear of the first fort, the men waded through the soft mud of the rice fields, dragging the howitzers after them. Forging a creek, they charged the works, which mounted fifty-three guns, many of them of the heaviest calibers. The Chinese fled with a loss of about fifty killed. The fort on the opposite side of the river now opened on the victorious Americans, but was soon silenced by the guns in the captured fort. An army from Canton threatened the rear of the Americans, but our seamen opened such a galling fire that the enemy retreated.

On the following day our cruisers and boats advanced upon the remaining forts. While under a heavy fire one of the *San Jacinto's* boats was raked

by a 64-pound shot, which killed three and wounded seven of the crew. The *Portsmouth's* launch also was sunk. In spite of this fire, our men eagerly pressed forward to attack the second fort, which mounted forty-one guns. This place was carried in handsome style at 4 P. M., and its guns were turned on the third fort, which also surrendered. Meantime a detachment of marines had captured a 6-gun battery on shore. Early on November 22d the fourth and last fort, mounting thirty-eight guns, was captured, the total loss of the Americans in these attacks being twelve killed and twenty-eight wounded. About four hundred of the Chinese were killed. Having accomplished their purpose, the Americans returned to their ships. Master George Eugene Belknap commanded one of the launches, and assisted in undermining and blowing up the works.

Three years after this, Captain Josiah Tattnell rendered a conspicuous service to the English and French gunboats that were attacking the Chinese forts at the mouth of the Peiho River, China. While attempting to remove the obstructions in the river, June 25, 1859, the eleven gunboats under the command of Admiral Sir James Hope were unexpectedly fired upon by the Chinese forts, and a desperate battle followed, in which several hundred of the English were killed and they were finally routed. Tattnell, as a neutral, had witnessed the affair in the chartered steamer *Toey-Wan*, and exclaiming, "Blood is thicker than water," called for his launch, and, pulling through the thickest of the fire, visited the British flagship. Just before reaching the vessel the American boat was sunk by a Chinese shot, the coxswain was killed and Lieutenant Stephen Decatur Trenchard was dangerously wounded. During the half hour or more the Americans were aboard the boat crew assisted the English in firing the guns. Afterward the *Toey-Wan* towed up the English reserves and brought them into action. Although this

was a violation of the neutrality of the United States, Tattnell was not seriously punished for the affair, and he won the gratitude of the British for his heroism. The expression "Blood is thicker than water" was conspicuous at the dinner given to Rear-Admiral Erben and Captain Mahan in London, June, 1894.

Learning that the American bark *Rover* had been wrecked on the southeast end of the island of Formosa, and that her crew had probably been murdered, Commander John Carson Febiger, in the *Ashuelot*, appeared off that island, April, 1867. The officials disclaimed all responsibility for the affair, saying that the outrage had been perpetrated by a horde of savages over whom they had no control. Febiger returned to Rear-Admiral Henry H. Bell, then commanding the Asiatic squadron, with this report, upon which the admiral sailed for Formosa with the *Hartford* and the *Wyoming*, and on June 13th landed one hundred and eighty-one men, under Commander George Eugene Belknap, who gallantly drove the savages into the interior and burned their huts. While leading a charge into one of the numerous ambuscades skillfully prepared by the natives, Lieutenant-Commander Alexander Slidell Mackenzie was killed. A few months later, January 11, 1868, Rear-Admiral Bell was drowned while endeavoring to enter Osaka River, Japan. Lieutenant-Commander Francis John Higginson, now rear-admiral, was present on this occasion and assisted in recovering the admiral's body.

On January 25, 1859, Captain William Branford Shubrick arrived at Asuncion, Paraguay, with a fleet of nineteen vessels, carrying two hundred guns and twenty-five hundred men, to take decisive measures against the people of that country for firing on the United States steamer *Water Witch* the preceding year. Hostilities were averted only by the prompt apology and payment of indemnity by the Paraguayan Government. Shubrick was highly complimented for his spirited management of this affair.

**PART FIFTH.**  
**THE CIVIL WAR.**  
**1861-1865.**





## CHAPTER I.

### BEGINNING OF HOSTILITIES.

WHEN President Lincoln came into office, March 4, 1861, the navy of the United States consisted of ninety vessels, of which twenty-one were unserviceable, twenty-seven were out of commission, and forty-two were in commission. The forty-two vessels in commission were the screw frigate *Niagara*, returning from Japan; the first-class screw sloops of war *San Jacinto* on the coast of Africa, *Lancaster* in the Pacific, *Brooklyn* at Pensacola, *Hartford* in the East Indies and *Richmond* in the Mediterranean; the second-class screw sloops of war *Mohican* on the coast of Africa, *Narragansett* in the Pacific, *Iroquois* in the Mediterranean, *Pawnee* in Washington, *Wyoming* in the Pacific, *Dakota* in the East Indies, *Pocahontas* returning from Vera Cruz and *Seminole* at Brazil; the third-class screw steamers *Wyandotte* at Pensacola, *Mohawk* and *Crusader* at New York and *Sumter* and *Mystic* on the coast of Africa; the side-wheel steamers *Susquehanna* in the Mediterranean, *Powhatan* returning from Vera Cruz and *Saranac* in the Pacific; the sailing frigates *Congress* on the coast of Brazil and *Sabine* at Pensacola; the sailing sloops of war *Cumberland* returning from Vera Cruz, *Constellation*, *Portsmouth* and *Saratoga* on the coast of Africa, *Macedonian* at Vera Cruz, *St. Mary's*, *Cyane* and *Levant* in the Pacific; the *John Adams* and the *Vandalia* in the East Indies; the *St. Louis* at Pensacola; the side-wheel steamers *Michigan* on Lake Erie, *Pulaski* on the coast of Brazil and *Saginaw* in the East Indies; the storeship *Relief* on the

coast of Africa, the *Release* and the *Supply* in New York; and the steam tender *Anacostia* in Washington.

From this list of the vessels in commission it will be seen that only eleven, carrying about one hundred and thirty-four guns, or less than half of the entire force, were in American waters, while the other vessels were scattered all over the globe and the most formidable vessels in American waters were in a Southern port.<sup>1</sup> This disposition of the navy had been made under the preceding Administration in the interests of the Confederacy that was so soon to be formed. Although orders recalling the vessels stationed on the African coast had been made out as soon as possible after March 4th, they did not begin to arrive at home ports until some months later. A number of the cruisers were commanded by Southern officers, and it was confidently asserted that they would run their vessels into some Southern port and deliver them over to the Confederacy; but it speaks well for the loyalty of the navy that no attempt of this kind was made. In the sailing vessels, 32-pounders and 8-inch shell guns were the principal armaments, while the new steam frigates and sloops of war were armed with 9-, 10- and 11-inch Dahlgren smooth-bore shell guns. The 10-inch guns were usually mounted as pivot guns. The total

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<sup>1</sup> The vessels that were out of commission but could be readily made available for service were the screw frigates *Roanoke*, *Wabash*, *Colorado*, *Merrimac* and *Minnesota*; the first-class screw sloop of war *Pensacola*; the side-wheel steamer *Mississippi*; the third-class side-wheel steamer *Water Witch*; the ship of the line *Vermont*; the sailing frigates *Potomac*, *Brandywine*, *St. Laurence*, *Raritan* and *Santee*; the sailing sloops of war *Savannah*, *Plymouth*, *Jamestown*, *Germantown*, *Vincennes*, *Decatur*, *Marion*, *Dale* and *Preble*; the brigs of war *Bainbridge*, *Perry* and *Dolphin*; and the steam tender *John Hancock*. The unserviceable vessels were the screw frigate *Franklin* on the stocks at Kittery; the side-wheel vessel *Fulton*; the steam floating battery *Stevens*; the ships of the line *Pennsylvania*, *Columbus*, *Ohio*, *North Carolina*, *Delaware*, *New Orleans*, *Alabama*, *Virginia* and *New York*; the sailing frigates *Constitution*, *United States* and *Columbia*; the store and receiving vessels *Independence*, *Fredonia*, *Falmouth*, *Warren*, *Allegheny* and *Princeton*.

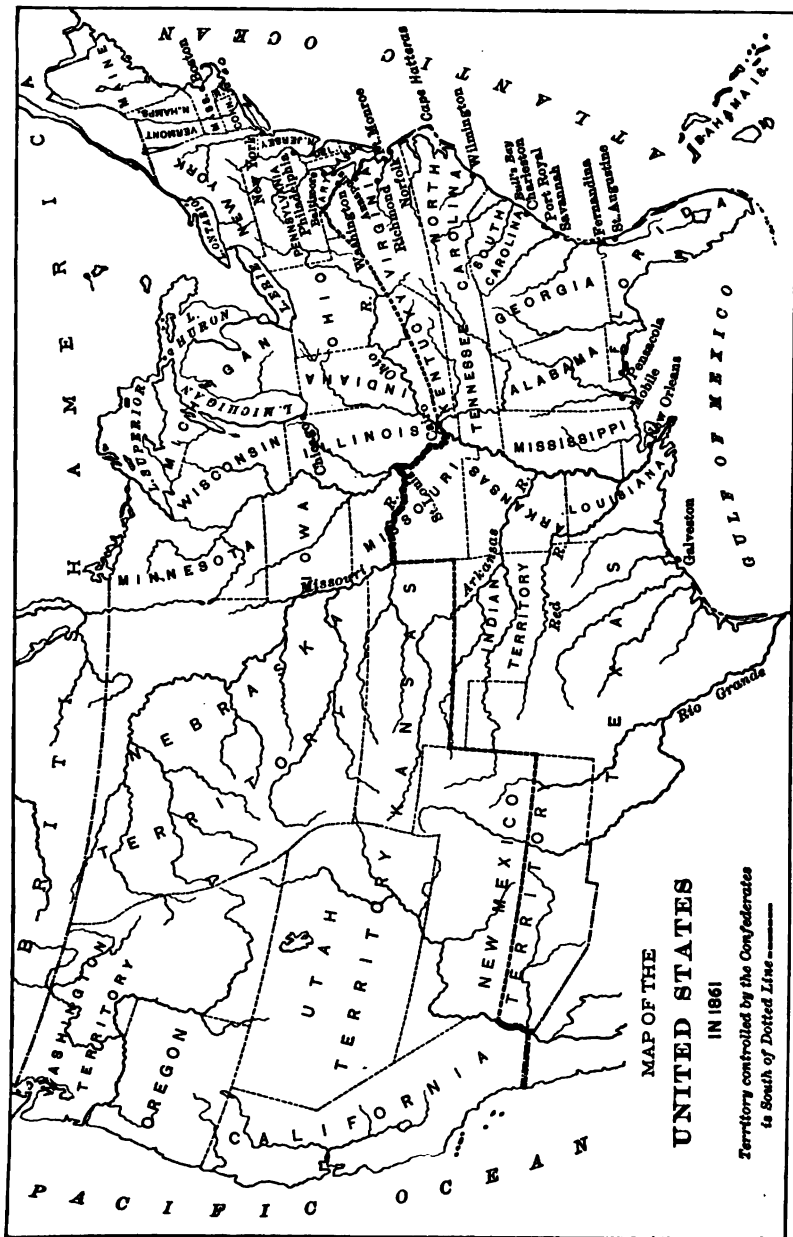
number of officers of all grades in the navy on August 1, 1861, was fourteen hundred and fifty-seven, besides whom a large volunteer force was called for, and seven thousand five hundred volunteer officers enrolled before the close of the war. Three hundred and twenty-two officers resigned from the United States navy and entered the navy of the seceding States, of which number two hundred and forty-three were officers of the line. The number of sailors in the navy at the opening of the war was seven thousand six hundred, which number was increased to fifty-one thousand five hundred before the close of hostilities.

A glance at the map will show how inadequate was this force to blockade the extensive and intricate coast line of the seceding States. From Chesapeake Bay with its many tributaries, down the Atlantic seaboard and along the Gulf to the Rio Grande, were three thousand miles of coast line broken by many harbors and inlets, which it was necessary to blockade. Seeing the impossibility of accomplishing this essential object with the force in hand, the Government immediately began increasing its naval power. By purchasing every merchant craft that could be adapted to war purposes, either as a transport or a fighting vessel, the Government secured a large fleet that proved effective in the kind of warfare for which it was designed. The construction of eight additional sloops of war was begun, and contracts with ship-builders were entered upon for heavily armed and iron-plated gunboats. The latter were ready for commission in three months, and became famous as the "ninety-day gunboats." Thirty-nine double-end side-wheel steamers for river service were also rapidly pushed to completion, while several ironclads were begun. By these energetic measures the strength of the navy was greatly increased, and at the close of the war the United States was the most powerful maritime nation in the world.

The Secretary of the Navy during the civil war

and for several years after was Gideon Welles. Realizing the necessity of having a professional man near him in this great emergency, Mr. Welles secured Lieutenant Gustavus Vasa Fox for assistant secretary. Mr. Fox entered the navy as a midshipman in 1838, and rose to the rank of lieutenant, but in 1856 he resigned. He always took a deep interest in the navy, and was one of the first to proffer his services when they were needed. The chiefs of bureaus at the beginning of Lincoln's administration were: Yards and Docks, Captain Joseph Smith; Construction, John Lenthal; Provisions and Clothing, Horatio Bridge; Ordnance and Hydrography, Captain George W. Magruder; Medicine, Surgeon William Whelan. These were the men (excepting Captain Magruder, who resigned and entered the Confederate service) who had the management of the United States navy at the outbreak of and during the civil war, and to them in a large measure is due the credit of raising the nation from one of the least to the greatest maritime power in the world. The seceding States were not only destitute of war vessels, but did not have a large merchant marine. Furthermore, they were deficient in skilled mechanics, shipyards and plant with which to build a navy, and while they had able officers they were lacking in trained sailors. Such being the case, the navy of the Confederacy, except in a few notable instances, remained on the defensive.

Previously to the firing on Fort Sumter the Southern forces at Charleston had assumed such a threatening attitude as to leave no doubt as to their intention of gaining possession of that stronghold. Repeated calls were made by Major Anderson, commander of the fort, for re-enforcements, but the new Administration was beset with many difficulties and perplexities. In the mean time the steamer *Star of the West*, which had attempted to re-enforce Fort Sumter early in the year, had been fired upon by the State batteries near



MAP OF THE  
**UNITED STATES**  
IN 1861  
Territory controlled by the Confederates  
is South of Dotted Line

Charleston and failed to accomplish its mission. Between the 7th and the 10th of April, the sloops of war *Pawnee* and *Pocahontas*, the steamers *Harriet Lane* and *Baltic* and two tug boats, sailed separately from New York with provisions and re-enforcements for Sumter. At three o'clock in the morning of April 12th the *Baltic* and the *Harriet Lane* arrived off Charleston, and three hours later the *Pawnee* hove in sight. While the commanders of these vessels were approaching the harbor they heard the report of shotted guns; soon afterward smoke was seen in the direction of Fort Sumter, and by daylight the continuous roar of heavy artillery proclaimed that civil war had begun. When it was seen that the American flag was still waving at Sumter, Commander Stephen Clegg Rowan, of the *Pawnee*, immediately declared his intention of running in to the relief of the garrison. But Lieutenant Gustavus Vasa Fox, commander of the expedition, would not consent to so perilous an undertaking, and all day long they lay off the harbor, watching with agonized interest the pitiless rain of iron that fell upon the fort. Early on the morning of the 13th dense volumes of smoke were seen rising from the fort, showing that the woodwork was burning, and at four o'clock in the afternoon the heroic defenders surrendered. Fort Sumter was evacuated on the 14th of April, and its garrison was placed in the *Baltic* and taken to New York. On the day Sumter was fired upon the frigate *Sabine* and the sloop of war *Brooklyn* arrived at Fort Pickens, in Pensacola harbor, and landed re-enforcements.

The old frigate *Constitution*, which at the beginning of hostilities was lying at Annapolis as a training ship, was in great danger of falling into the hands of the Confederates, which would give a sentimental support to their cause. About this time the Eighth Massachusetts Regiment, under Brigadier-General Benjamin Franklin Butler, was in the vicinity, and with the aid

of a detachment of these troops the ship was guarded until towed to New York. This was as narrow an escape as the *Constitution* ever had from having any other than the American flag floating at her gaff.

One of the most important and dangerous services in the war, and yet one that was least likely to lead to fame, was that of surveying the Southern rivers, bays and sounds, and replacing the buoys. On the withdrawal of Virginia from the Union the Confederates promptly removed all light-boats and buoys and destroyed the range of guiding marks in the Potomac River. This, together with the destruction of the Gunpowder and Nye bridges in Maryland and the hostility of the people in Baltimore, for the time almost cut off Washington from communication with the North. Realizing the necessity of regaining the control of this water-way, the Government cast about for an officer to perform the perilous duty of surveying the stream and replacing the buoys. Lieutenant Thomas Stowell Phelps was selected, by ballot of a board consisting of the chiefs of departments, as an officer "skilled in surveying." On his arrival in Washington early in May, Lieutenant Phelps found at the navy yard six river steamboats and the armed tender *Anacostia*. He selected the *Anacostia* and a large steamer called the *Philadelphia* for his work. Four 12-pound army field guns were placed aboard the *Philadelphia*, two mounted on each end, covered with old canvas, so as to conceal them as much as possible from the enemy. Besides the crew, a company from the Seventy-first New York Regiment was placed aboard.

The work of surveying the Potomac was immediately begun and was steadily pushed to completion, although the men engaged in it were constantly exposed to the enemy's bullets. The *Anacostia*, an exceedingly slow boat, was soon lost sight of, so that most of the work was done by the *Philadelphia*. The crew was carefully concealed, and the surveying party



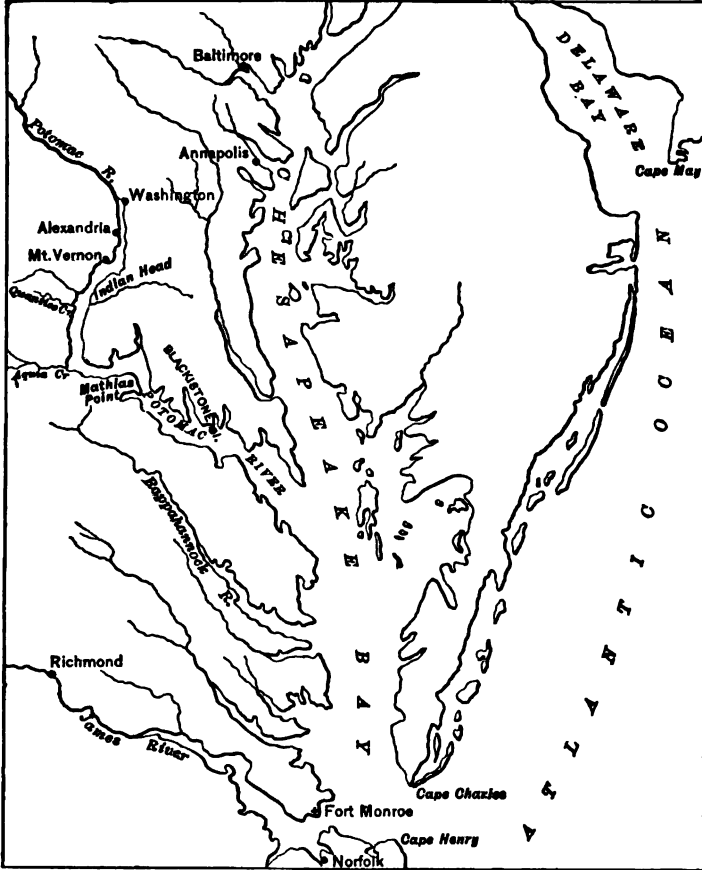
was judiciously stationed so that the two leadsmen, the pilot and helmsmen in the pilot-house, and Lieutenant Phelps directing the work with the draughtsman Charles Junkin near him to assist in angling, were the only people in view. Thus organized, the men rapidly advanced with their work, and on the first night they anchored near Blackistone Island. The people on both sides of the river were hostile, and when the boats anchored at night the greatest care was necessary to guard against surprises. At Aquia Creek the Confederates had erected a battery of eighteen or twenty guns, and as it was particularly important that this part of the river should be surveyed, Lieutenant Phelps boldly ran under the guns, so near that even without the aid of a field glass the gunners could be seen with lock strings in hand ready to fire. For two hours the guns were kept trained upon the little steamer as she passed to and fro over the water, frequently so near as to require extreme depression of the cannon to keep them bearing, and at no time beyond easy reach of the iron messengers. But not a gun was fired. A few years afterward it was learned that Colonel William F. Lynch, the commander of the battery, refrained from firing because he believed her to be the "property of some poor devil who had lost his way, and from her appearance was not worth the powder," although he said that both the officers and men "were crazy to try and sink the vessel, and vainly implored for permission to do so."<sup>1</sup> If they had suspected her character and object she would have been promptly riddled with shot. Lieutenant Phelps accomplished his work in the most thorough manner, and he was highly complimented by the Navy Department.

For a few months after the firing on Sumter there was a lull in the excitement. In the mean time a patrol of Potomac River was maintained night and day.

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<sup>1</sup> Rear-Admiral Phelps to the author.

This hazardous service was performed by Commander James Harman Ward with the improvised gunboats *Freeborn*, a side-wheel steamer carrying three guns, the *Anacostia*, a propeller carrying two guns, and the



*Scene of naval operations on the Potomac.*

*Resolute*, carrying two guns. With these vessels Commander Ward, on the 31st of May, opened fire on the batteries at Aquia Creek, and in two hours drove the Southerners from the lower batteries to the guns they had mounted on the hill. As the National vessels

could not elevate their guns sufficiently to drive the enemy from his second position, Commander Ward retired, with little or no damage to his flotilla. On the following day the sloop of war *Pawnee*, Commander Rowan, came down from Washington, and the attack was renewed. For five hours a spirited fire was maintained, which finally drove the Confederates from their position. In this affair the *Pawnee* was struck nine times. On the 27th of June Commander Ward attacked the enemy at Mathias Point. A body of sailors was landed under the command of Lieutenant James C. Chaplin, of the *Pawnee*, and the vessels opened a heavy fire. While in the act of sighting a gun, Commander Ward was shot in the abdomen, and he soon died. About this time a large body of Confederate soldiers approached the sailors under Lieutenant Chaplin and compelled them to return to their boats. Lieutenant Chaplin was the last man to retire, and aroused much admiration by his coolness. The vessels were unable to withstand the enemy's fire, and retreated, with a loss of one killed and four wounded.<sup>1</sup>

Captain Thomas Tingey Craven succeeded Commander Ward in command of the Potomac flotilla. On the night of October 11th, Lieutenant Abram Davis Harrel, with three boats, entered Quantico Creek, destroyed a schooner that the enemy had anchored there, and escaped in spite of a heavy fire. Many daring cutting-out exploits like this took place along these waters

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<sup>1</sup> James Harman Ward was born in 1806 in Hartford, Conn. He entered the navy as a midshipman March 4, 1823, and with several other midshipmen received his education in the military school at Norwich, Vt. He was in the *Constitution* in 1824-'28, and became a lieutenant March 3, 1831. From 1845 to 1847 he was an instructor in the Annapolis Naval Academy, and in 1849-'50 he commanded the *Vixen*, of the home squadron. On September 9, 1853, he was made a commander, and in May, 1861, he was ordered to the command of the Potomac flotilla. He was the author of two text-books that were used in the Naval Academy many years—Manual of Naval Tactics and Elementary Course of Instruction in Naval Ordnance and Gunnery. He also wrote *Steam for the Million*.

which can not here be recorded. The several commanders of the patrol of the Potomac who succeeded Captain Craven were Commanders Robert Harris Wyman, Andrew Allen Harwood and Foxhall Alexander Parker. On the 24th of June the *Pawnee*, Commander Rowan, in co-operation with Ellsworth's Zouaves, compelled the Confederates to evacuate Alexandria, and Lieutenant Reigart B. Lowry, landing with a detachment of seamen, took possession of the town in the name of the United States.

About this time a dashing cutting-out affair occurred at Pensacola. The Confederates had been fitting out the schooner *Judah* as a privateer in the navy yard in that harbor, and as an additional protection a thousand soldiers were stationed on the wharf near by. At three o'clock on the morning of September 14th a boat party from the frigate *Colorado*, under the command of Lieutenant John Henry Russell—consisting of the launch with thirty-nine men; the first cutter, Lieutenant John G. Sproston, with eighteen men; the second cutter, Lieutenant Francis B. Blake, with twenty-six men; the third cutter, Midshipman Tecumseh Steece, with seventeen men—set out to capture the *Judah*. When about a hundred yards from the schooner the boats were discovered by sentinels and fired upon. The men bent to their oars, and in a few minutes the first and third cutters were alongside the wharf and the sailors landed. Only one man was found on guard, and he was shot, while in the act of discharging a gun, by Gunner Borton. The other boats made directly for the schooner, where a desperate hand-to-hand encounter took place, some of the Confederates getting into the tops and firing with effect. Assistant Engineer White, with a coal-heaver, rushed into the cabin, where they kindled a fire and soon had the vessel in flames, upon which the men returned to their boats. By this time a large crowd of soldiers and civilians had gathered on the wharf and opened a straggling fire, which was re-

turned with six discharges of the boat howitzer. About twenty of the boat party were killed or wounded,<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Russell being among the latter. That officer was highly complimented by the Navy Department for this handsome affair. Lieutenant Sproston was killed June 8, 1862, in Florida, by an outlaw. From this time to the close of the war there was little or no activity around Pensacola, except on November 22, 1861, when the *Niagara* and the *Richmond* joined Fort Pickens in the bombardment of Fort McRae.

Having heard that the British mail steamer *Trent* would sail from Havana, November 7th, for England, with two agents of the Confederate Government, John Slidell and James Murray Mason, with their secretaries, Messrs. Eustis and McFarland, on board as passengers, Captain Charles Wilkes (who had commanded the *Vincennes* in her celebrated scientific and exploring expedition around the world in 1838-'42), of the *San Jacinto*, stationed his vessel in the passage of the Old Bahama Channel, where the *Trent* was likely to pass. About eleven o'clock in the morning of November 8th the lookout in the *San Jacinto* reported the smoke of a steamer approaching, and soon afterward the *Trent* was made out from the deck. Captain Wilkes immediately sent his crew to quarters, and about 1 P. M.<sup>2</sup> he unfurled his colors and fired a shell across the Englishman's bow. Mr. Moir, commander of the *Trent*, showed English colors and continued on his course, upon which Captain Wilkes fired another shot. This brought the *Trent* to. A boat was sent alongside under the orders of Lieutenant Donald McNeill Fairfax, who reported to Captain Wilkes that the Confederate agents insisted on force being used in their removal from the packet. Lieutenant James Augustin Greer accordingly was sent with an armed party, and the Confederate commissioners and their secretaries

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<sup>1</sup> Rear-Admiral Russell to the author. Midshipman Francis John Higginson, now rear-admiral, was wounded by a musket shot in this gallant affair.

<sup>2</sup> Rear-Admiral Greer to the author.

were transferred to the *San Jacinto*. The affair was managed so cleverly by Lieutenant Fairfax that the commander of the *Trent* forgot to throw his ship as a prize on the hands of Captain Wilkes—a neglect for which the Admiralty and the Southerners expressed much disappointment, as it undoubtedly would have involved the United States and Great Britain in war. The *Trent* proceeded on her way to England, and Captain Wilkes made for the United States with his prisoners, who after some delay were placed in a fort near Boston. The news of this proceeding aroused great excitement both in the United States and in Europe, and nearly caused a war with England. France denounced the act and assumed a threatening attitude. After the excitement had subsided the Government disavowed the act of Captain Wilkes and released the commissioners, who, on January 1, 1862, sailed for England.

On the 7th of November, when the sailing frigate *Santee*, Captain Henry Eagle, was off Galveston, Texas, Lieutenant James E. Jouett volunteered to run into the harbor and destroy the steamer *General Rusk*, which was being fitted by the Confederates as a war vessel, and the schooner *Royal Yacht*, mounting one 32-pound gun. Leaving the *Santee* at 11.40 P. M. that night, with forty men in the first and second launches, Lieutenant Jouett pulled boldly into the harbor and made for the *General Rusk*, then lying at a wharf about seven miles from the frigate. Passing the *Royal Yacht*, Lieutenant Jouett had almost reached the *General Rusk* when his boat grounded and was run into by the second launch, the noise of the collision discovering the party to the Confederates, who immediately opened fire, and several steamers started out in pursuit. Seeing that it was impossible to carry the *General Rusk* now that her people were aroused, Lieutenant Jouett determined to board the *Royal Yacht*.

Orders were given for the "first launch to board on the starboard beam and the second launch to board on the starboard bow."<sup>1</sup> While yet two hundred yards from the *Royal Yacht* the launches were hailed twice, but, paying no attention to them, the boats dashed forward. Just as the first launch ran alongside, William W. Carter, the gunner, fired the 12-pound howitzer, the shell crashing through the schooner's side at the water line. The recoil of the gun, however, gave the launch stern-board, leaving Carter, who had leaped upon the schooner's deck, unsupported. By a great effort the launch was brought alongside again, but just as Lieutenant Jouett had boarded he was dangerously wounded in the arm and lung by a sword bayonet fastened to a pole held by a Confederate. Drawing the blade from his side, Jouett felled his assailant with it, and rushed to the aid of Carter. Twice during the desperate struggle in the schooner the retreat was sounded and the party began to pull back without their leader, and twice the first launch was brought back. The crew of the *Royal Yacht*, thirteen in all, was finally got in the launch, and after an exhausting pull and several narrow escapes they were safely placed aboard the *Santee*. In this handsome affair the Nationalists had one man killed, two officers and six men wounded—two of them mortally. The *Royal Yacht* was destroyed, but the loss of the enemy is not definitely known.

One of the first difficulties to be overcome by our naval administration in the civil war was that of supplying the blockading ships with fresh provisions, ice, medical stores, and the transportation of the sick and wounded northward. Nothing could exceed the monotony of the blockade service, especially off the fever-stricken coasts of the Gulf States. Long spells of foggy weather kept the vessels in a damp and unhealthy condition, which, together with the difficulty of getting

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<sup>1</sup> Rear-Admiral Jouett to the author.

fresh meat and vegetables, had a most depressing effect on the men. Early in the war the Government secured two small steamers, which were rechristened *Rhode Island* and *Connecticut*, and kept them constantly employed throughout the war as messengers from the Northern ports to the several blockading squadrons. The *Rhode Island* was commanded (1861-1865) by Commander Stephen Decatur Trenchard, afterward Rear-Admiral. In the course of the war she steamed fifty-six thousand two hundred miles.

The value of this service is touchingly illustrated by Flag-Officer James S. Lardner, when he wrote to Trenchard at Key West, October 6, 1861: "Many thanks for your kind note and handsome present of fruit, most acceptable in these scorching times. I regret extremely that the fever prevents me from having the pleasure of seeing you. . . . With the present weather there is no danger of new cases. . . . There has been only one death in the last ten days."<sup>1</sup> "Only one death" tells the story of their sufferings.

Besides having rooms fitted for carrying ice, special luxuries not allowed in general rations, these steamers were fitted with conveniences for taking North the officers' wash. The paymaster for the entire fleet also took up his quarters in these steamers. The *Rhode Island* and *Connecticut* were fitted with heavy guns and performed service as gunboats; in fact, toward the close of the war the former was relieved of supply duty and ordered to cruise in the West Indies.

Early in August, 1861, Commander Charles Green, of the sailing sloop of war *Jamestown*, had an exciting chase after a blockade runner off the mouth of the St. Mary's. The stranger was discovered in the morning. Green promptly gave chase, and in a moment both vessels were under full sail. Finding that he could not escape, the Confederate commander ran his ship aground, when a party of soldiers hastened to the shore

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<sup>1</sup> Private letter from Lardner to Trenchard.



to assist. Green sent his boats to take possession, the Confederates opening fire with musketry and artillery. They also endeavored to get a cannon from the shore to the stranded vessel, but the National boats frustrated this, and in a few minutes gained her deck, her officers and crew escaping on the other side in boats. The prize was the sailing ship *Alvarado*, of and for Boston from Cape Town, and the Nationalists believed that she had been captured by the enemy or that her master was endeavoring to run her into a Southern port. The last entry made in the log—evidently written by a female—was, “We are chased by a man-of-war, but I think we will escape her and get safely into St. Mary’s.” As it was impossible to get her afloat, Green caused the prize to be burned. “It was a gallant affair,” wrote Lieutenant Trenchard, who arrived at Fernandina in the *Rhode Island* at that time, “on the part of the *Jamestown*, and the officers and crew deserve the greatest credit for the daring exploit. They were exposed during the greater part of the time to a heavy fire from the artillery brought to bear on them from the shore.”<sup>1</sup>

On the morning of July 4, 1862, while the *Rhode Island* was about seventeen miles southwest of Galveston, engaged in her duties as a supply vessel, chase was given a strange vessel close inshore, which promptly ran aground. A force of cavalry and infantry appeared on the beach to assist in unloading and defending her, but a well-directed fire from the gunboat put them to flight. Three boats, commanded by Paymaster Douglass, Acting-Paymaster Pennell, and Engineer McCutcheon, of the *Rhode Island*, boarded the vessel, which was found to be the English schooner *Richard O'Brien* from Jamaica. A few days before she had been warned off by the *De Soto*. Securing a part of the cargo of rum, sugar and drugs, the Nationalists destroyed the prize and returned to the *Rhode Island*.

<sup>1</sup> Private Journal of Rear-Admiral Trenchard.

## CHAPTER II.

### HATTERAS AND PORT ROYAL.

IN keeping with his determination to repossess the United States of all the forts, arsenals and harbors that had fallen into the hands of the Confederates, President Lincoln convened a board of officers for the purpose of examining the coast defenses and deciding upon a comprehensive plan of operation. This board, consisting of Captain Samuel Francis Dupont and Captain Charles H. Davis, of the navy, Major John G. Barnard, of the army, and Professor Alexander D. Bache, of the Coast Survey, met in June, 1861, and after a careful examination into the topographical and hydrographical peculiarities of the Southern ports, their defenses and their importance to the cause, a well-adjusted plan of attack was laid before the President. The primary object of this scheme was the interruption of all communication between the Southern States and their foreign sympathizers. From the mouth of the Rio Grande to Chesapeake Bay the coast is indented with many safe harbors, the defenses of which were mostly in the hands of the enemy, while places like Pamlico Sound and Port Royal had so many and such intricate approaches that it was almost impossible to prevent ingress or egress of blockade-runners. From the 25th of June to the 4th of August Confederate cruisers brought into Hatteras Inlet sixteen prizes.

The first of the series of attacks proposed by the board was directed against the forts that commanded the main entrance to Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds. The rivers Neuse, Roanoke, Pamlico and Chowan, reach-

ing far into the interior, the Dismal Swamp Canal, connecting Albemarle Sound with Norfolk, and the several inlets from the ocean afforded every convenience to the light-draught British blockade-runners, which were constructed expressly to navigate these shoal waters, bringing in rifles, ammunition, heavy guns, iron plates and military stores, and taking out cotton for English manufacturers. Hatteras Inlet, the main entrance to these waters, was strongly guarded by fortifications, so that a squadron would be unable to follow a blockade-runner into the sound, while the lesser inlets were closed to the heavy vessels by shoals and bars. The fortifications at Hatteras Inlet, built by the State of North Carolina and constructed with considerable skill, consisted of Fort Hatteras and Fort Clark, on the southern end of Hatteras Island, a barren strip of land forty miles long and about half a mile wide. Fort Hatteras, an earthwork covering about an acre and a half of ground, with a bombproof chamber, mounting twenty-five guns,<sup>1</sup> commanded the inlet proper, while Fort Clark, a redoubt with five 32-pound guns, commanded the approach from the sea.

On the 26th of August a fleet of war vessels and transports under the command of Flag-Officer Silas H. Stringham, with nearly eight hundred and sixty troops under the command of Major-General Benjamin F. Butler, together with some schooners and surfboats to be used in landing, sailed from Hampton Roads. The vessels were the steam frigates *Minnesota* (flagship), two 10-inch, twenty-eight 9-inch, fourteen 8-inch, two 12-pound guns, Captain Gershom Jaques Van Brunt; the steam frigate *Wabash*, two 10-inch, twenty-eight 9-inch, fourteen 8-inch, two 12-pound guns, Captain Samuel Mercer; the sloop of war *Cumberland*, twenty 9-inch, four 24-pound guns, Captain John Marston; the sloop of war *Susquehanna*, fifteen

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<sup>1</sup> Scharf's History of the Confederate Navy, p. 370.

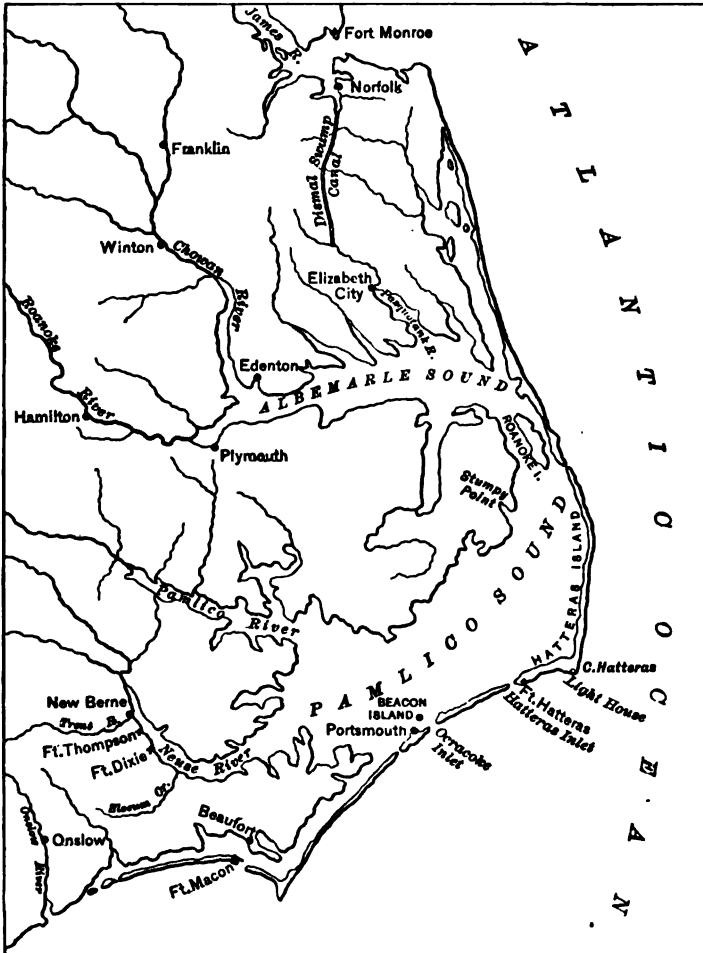
8-inch, one 24-pound, two 12-pound guns, Captain John S. Chauncey; the sloop of war *Pawnee*, eight 9-inch, two 12-pound guns, Commander Stephen Clegg Rowan; the steamer *Monticello*, six 8-inch guns, Commander John P. Gilliss; the steamer *Harriet Lane*, five guns, Captain John Faunce; the transports *Adelaide*, Commander Henry S. Stellwagen; *George Peabody*, Lieutenant Reigart B. Lowry; and *Fanny*, Lieutenant Pierce Crosby. Late in the afternoon of the next day these vessels rounded Hatteras Lighthouse and anchored. From this point to Hatteras Inlet, thirteen miles, the surf rolls on the beach with great violence, making it exceedingly dangerous for boats to land, and in view of this difficulty the expedition had been provided with iron surfboats, which were to ply between the land and two schooners anchored just outside the breakers. At 6.40 A. M., August 28th, the *Pawnee*, the *Harriet Lane* and the *Monticello* ran close inshore at the point selected for landing—about two and a half miles above the forts—so as to cover the debarkation of the troops. After three hundred and fifteen men had been placed ashore the increasing surf made it impossible for the remainder to land. Persisting in their efforts to get more men ashore, the surfboats were violently hurled on the beach and destroyed, while a boat from the *Pawnee*, in endeavoring to make a second landing, was swamped and its crew narrowly escaped drowning. The men ashore were thus left without provisions or water and with only two howitzers for their protection, and most of the ammunition had been made useless by water. To make their position more critical, the threatening weather compelled the gunboats to stand offshore, where they were out of range.

In the mean time the *Minnesota*, the *Wabash*, the *Cumberland* and the *Susquehanna* approached Fort Clark, and at 10 A. M. they opened a heavy fire. This was the first real test in this war of the efficacy of wooden ships against earthworks, and the result was a

matter of widely differing speculation on the part of the officers. Captain Stringham, instead of anchoring his ships so that the enemy could acquire the range, kept them in constant motion, passing and repassing the batteries at varying distances, so that each shot from the fort was only a test of the range, and the Confederate gunners were compelled to fire at a moving target. The great success of this plan caused National commanders to imitate it in several instances afterward in the war. The shot from the fort rarely struck, while shells from the ships speedily drove the gunners to shelter. By 12.25 P. M. the enemy's flag was carried away, and the gunners were observed running toward Fort Hatteras or leaving the shore in boats. Signal was now made in the vessels to cease firing, and at 2 P. M. Fort Clark was occupied by the troops who had been landed early in the day.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the *Monticello* was ordered to push into the inlet, as it was thought that the enemy had abandoned both forts. Carefully feeling her way among the breakers, the little gunboat continued on her tortuous course, although frequently grounding, in hopes of getting into deeper water in the sound beyond, and when she turned the spithead where there was so little water that she could not proceed, Fort Hatteras opened on her. Commander Gilliss promptly responded, but for fifteen minutes the gunboat was in a most perilous position, and had not the larger ships immediately reopened their broadsides and silenced the enemy she would have been destroyed. As it was, she was struck five times by 8-inch shells, once amidship on the port side, the shot lodging in a knee. Another shell on the same side struck a davit, and drove fragments of both the shell and the davit through the armory, pantry and galley. A third shot carried away part of the fore-topsail yard, another entered the starboard bow and lodged in the knee at the forward end of the shell locker, and a fifth shot entered

the starboard side amidships, passed across the berth deck, went through paint locker and bulkhead, crossed the fire room and landed in the port coal bunker, rip-



*Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds.*

ping up the deck in the gangway over it. After the *Monticello* had escaped from this tight place, the cannonading from the National ships was renewed with

great effect until 6.15 P. M., when the signal to haul off was given, and the squadron was made snug for the night, the *Pawnee*, the *Monticello* and the *Harriet Lane* running close inshore so as to protect the troops that had been landed.

On the abandonment of Fort Clark that morning the troops who had landed early in the day took possession of the work ; but owing to its proximity to Fort Hatteras shells from the squadron fell among them, and, finding their position dangerous, they abandoned the fort. Returning to the place where they had landed, they made preparations for passing the night and repelling an attack which they had every reason to expect would be made upon them. They had been compelled to go through the severe work of the day without food or water, and, with the exception of a few sheep and geese which they captured and cooked on swords and bayonets, they had nothing to eat until the following day. To make their lot even more miserable, it began to rain, and as they were destitute of tents or shelter of any kind they were compelled to lie out on the drenched sands. In the night the enemy was reinforced by the arrival of a regiment and supplies from New Berne, but fortunately the Confederates were too busy repairing the damages of the bombardment, and in making preparations for a desperate resistance on the morrow, to give any attention to the stranded troops.

At half past five on the following morning, August 29th, the squadron prepared to renew the bombardment of Fort Hatteras, in which work the Confederates had now concentrated all their forces. At 8 A. M. the *Susquehanna* opened fire, shortly followed by the *Minnesota*, the *Wabash* and the *Cumberland*. In this attack fifteen-second fuses were used, and so accurate and rapid was the firing that three shells sometimes exploded within the fort about the same instant. "The shower of shell in half an hour became literally tremendous, falling into and immediately around the

works not less, on an average, than ten each minute, and, the sea being smooth, the firing was remarkably accurate. One of the officers counted twenty-eight shells, and several others counted twenty as falling in a minute."<sup>1</sup> No men could long stand such a terrible downfall of iron as that. The Confederate gunners were soon driven from their stations, and, in spite of the remonstrances and commands of their officers, rushed to the bombproof chamber and filled it to its utmost capacity, while those who could not get in sought shelter in other parts of the fort. When three hundred men were thus closely packed together in the bombproof chamber, a huge shell entered through the ventilator and landed among them. A fearful panic ensued. The dark chamber was filled with smoke and dust, while each man was struggling to get out of the narrow doorway before the explosion. Fortunately the fuse went out, but the alarm was given that the place was on fire, and the magazine, separated only by a thin partition, was in imminent danger of exploding. The probability of being blown to atoms in no way tended to abate the panic, and it was not until most of the men had gained the open air that they realized that immediate danger had passed.

But the garrison had escaped only to be exposed again to the merciless shells that fell around them. Shortly afterward another exploded over the magazine, threatening to ignite it. Seeing that a shot would surely pierce the powder mine in a short time, while it was impossible to reply with a single gun, the commander called a council of the officers at 10.45 A. M., and a few minutes after eleven o'clock the white flag was raised. The squadron immediately ceased firing, while troops marched up and took possession. Several Confederate gunboats, which had been watching the bombardment from the sound,

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<sup>1</sup> Scharf's History of the Confederate Navy, p. 373.



waiting for an opportunity to take part in the fight, now fled. Six hundred and fifteen prisoners, including their commander, Captain Samuel Barron, were unconditionally surrendered. The enemy had four killed and about twenty-five wounded, while the National forces escaped without the loss of a man, and sustained no damage in their ships. The prisoners were taken to New York in the *Minnesota* and confined on Governor's Island, while a garrison under Colonel Rush Christopher Hawkins was placed in the fort. All the vessels of the squadron made for different points, excepting the *Pawnee*, the *Monticello* and the *Fanny*. This was one of the most brilliant, successful and clean-cut enterprises ever undertaken by the United States navy. The style in which Captain Stringham received the troops on board and sailed away on the same day, the wonderful accuracy of the squadron's fire, and the capture of over six hundred men without the loss of a single man or the slightest injury to his squadron, were most creditable.

Although the possession of the forts at Hatteras Inlet gave the National forces control of the main entrance to these inland seas, there were other openings through which English smuggling craft could enter and feed the rebellion. One of these inlets, called Ocracoke, was twenty miles southwest of Cape Hatteras, and Beacon Island, commanding the passage, was about to be fortified with twenty heavy guns. As it was of great importance to secure or destroy these guns, Lieutenant James G. Maxwell, in the steamer *Fanny*, with sixty-seven men, and a launch from the *Pawnee* with twenty-two sailors and six marines, having a 12-pound howitzer under the command of Lieutenant Thomas H. Eastman, was sent against this place. The party set out early in the morning of September 16th, and by eleven o'clock was about two miles from Beacon Island when the *Fanny* ran aground. While the launch was sounding for the channel, a sailboat

containing two men was captured, and by their aid the *Fanny* was floated off and piloted within a hundred yards of the fort. This proved to be a deserted octagonal earthwork containing four shell rooms and a bombproof chamber one hundred feet square. Lieutenant Maxwell burned the gun-carriages, while the four 8-inch shell guns and the fourteen 32-pounders were made useless by firing solid shot at the trunnions. All the lumber on Beacon Island was then collected in the bombproof chamber and fired, also a storeship that had been run ashore; and while this was being done Lieutenant Eastman was sent to Portsmouth village, a mile distant, with the launch, where four 8-inch guns were found and destroyed. Having thoroughly executed his orders, Lieutenant Maxwell returned to Fort Hatteras on the 18th, without the loss of a man.

The Confederates next fortified Roanoke Island, so as to secure Albemarle Sound and an inlet to the north; and with a view of frustrating their plans the steamers *Ceres* and *Putnam*, with the Twentieth Indiana Regiment, Colonel W. L. Brown, were dispatched September 29th to occupy the northern end of Hatteras island. In the afternoon of the same day this force arrived at its destination, but the water was found to be so shallow that even light-draught steamers could not get nearer than three miles from the beach, so that the men were obliged to debark in boats. Two days later, October 1st, the steamer *Fanny* started out with arms, ammunition, clothing and provisions for the troops. The commander of the Confederate naval forces in these waters, Captain William F. Lynch, who led the Dead Sea exploring expedition in 1848, learned of the approach of the *Fanny*, and came out of Croatan Sound with the *Curlaw*, armed with a 32-pound rifled gun and a 12-pound smooth-bore; the *Raleigh*, two 6-pound howitzers; and the *Junaluska*, one 6-pound gun. The *Fanny* was a transport carrying

two light rifled guns. Just as the unsuspecting Nationalists were anchoring near the troops and preparing for the tedious process of landing their cargo on the beach, the enemy's flotilla, headed by the *Curlew*, came in sight. As soon as they were within range they opened fire, which the Union gunboats promptly returned, at the same time hurrying off a boat-load of stores to the land; but before the boat reached the beach the enemy had come to close quarters. The *Fanny* fired nine shot, one striking one of the gunboats in the bow, but the superior weight of the Confederate guns soon compelled her to surrender, with her valuable cargo and forty-nine men.

Encouraged by this success, the Confederates determined to capture the entire Indiana Regiment, consisting of six hundred men, and then march upon Fort Hatteras. Their plan was to land troops above the Indianians, and also a large body of soldiers below, so as to cut off their retreat. Having captured the regiment, their entire force was to embark on the flotilla, move swiftly down the sound and attack Fort Hatteras before the alarm could be given. On the 4th of October, just as the Confederate troops under Colonel A. R. Wright had begun this movement, and when Colonel Brown was preparing for a desperate defense, orders were received from Fort Hatteras for the National troops to retreat. Accordingly the soldiers—who, on account of the loss of the *Fanny*, were destitute of stores—began the difficult march of forty miles over marshes, through inlets and across sand, with a confident enemy in hot pursuit. Observing this movement, the second division of the Confederate troops, under Colonel Shaw, made all haste down the sound in the gunboats, hoping to land and cut off the retreat of the Indianians; and, realizing their danger, the men hastened the march until it became a race between them and the steamers. During the night the National forces succeeded in passing the Confederates before

they could land, and after enduring great hardships they reached Hatteras Lighthouse, where they met a relief party from the fort under Colonel Hawkins. In this affair the National troops had forty-four men taken prisoners.

Finding that the Indianians had escaped them, the Confederates turned toward the northern end of the island to pick up any stragglers that might have eluded them during the pursuit. While this was going on, Lieutenant Daniel L. Braine, in the gunboat *Monticello*, which was coasting along the seaward side of Hatteras Island, noticed several vessels on the sound, and a regiment of soldiers carrying a Confederate flag marching in a northerly direction. They were the Confederate troops retreating after the unsuccessful pursuit of the Indianians. Lieutenant Braine promptly stood close inshore, and at 1.30 P. M. opened a heavy fire, which had the effect of hastening the Southerners' march, for they rolled up their flag, broke ranks and ran for the place where their flotilla was awaiting them. The *Monticello* easily kept up with them, and as they were confined to a narrow island they were constantly exposed to her fire. When they arrived at the landing-place they sought refuge in a clump of trees. About this time two men were observed on the beach signaling the *Monticello*. A boat was sent to them, and in attempting to swim through the breakers one of them was drowned, but the other succeeded in reaching the boat, and reported himself as a private of the Indiana regiment who had just effected his escape. He directed the gunners to a clump of trees in which a number of Confederates had taken refuge, and a few shells drove them from shelter. The enemy had now been followed four miles along the coast, and, as most of them had gained their flotilla, the *Monticello*, at 5.25 P. M., returned to her station.

On New Year's eve Commander Oliver S. Glisson, of the steamer *Mount Vernon*, sent a detachment of

men in two boats to destroy a lightship that was anchored in fancied security under the guns of Fort Caswell. This vessel formerly had been stationed off Fry-ing-Pan Shoal, but it was now armed with eight guns as an additional defense to the fort. The boat party boarded the lightship, and after setting her on fire retreated without the loss of a man, although exposed to a heavy fire from the fort.

The first point along the Southern seaboard that had been suggested for occupation was now in the hands of the National forces. The second and equally important object to be gained was to secure a safe harbor, where workshops could be erected and vessels put in repair and supplied, thus avoiding the great waste of time in frequent voyages to Northern ports. The introduction of steam in ships of war made a convenient coaling-station almost a necessity. As it was, the steamers engaged in the blockade on the Atlantic seaboard were far removed from a base of supplies, and as only a limited amount of coal could be carried in each vessel, much time was lost in running from the blockaded ports to coaling-stations in the North. Another difficulty under which the blockade was maintained was the frail construction of many of the blockading ships. A large proportion of them were river or Sound steamers chartered for the emergency, and, having heavy guns mounted on them, were especially liable to strain and leakage; consequently they were continually in need of repairs, which could not be effected at sea, and when they were obliged to run several hundred miles to a Northern port the blockade was weakened. The introduction of iron ships, or ships plated with that material, being somewhat of an experiment, gave rise to innumerable little alterations in the hull, armament or machinery, which, owing to the peculiar difficulties of working this metal, could be done only by extensive machinery in some friendly port.

These considerations determined the Government upon securing a safe harbor on the Southern coast, where the largest vessels could enter. Some of the ports suggested were Fernandina, Brunswick, Port Royal, and Bull's Bay. On the 29th of October the fleet destined for this purpose sailed from Hampton Roads, under the command of Flag-Officer Samuel Francis Dupont, with sealed orders, and, after some delay outside the harbor in forming the vessels in the shape of an inverted V, it stood down the coast. Aboard the transports were twelve thousand troops, under the command of General Thomas W. Sherman. The fleet consisted of the steam frigate *Wabash*, flagship, two 10-inch, twenty-eight 9-inch, fourteen 8-inch, two 12-pound guns, Commander Christopher Raymond Perry Rodgers; the steam sloops of war *Mohican*, two 11-inch, four 32-pound, one 12-pound guns, Commander S. W. Godon; *Seminole*, one 11-inch, four 32-pound guns, Commander John P. Gilliss; *Pawnee*, eight 9-inch, two 12-pound guns, Lieutenant Robert H. Wyman; the sailing sloop of war *Vandalia*, four 8-inch, sixteen 32-pound, one 12-pound guns, Commander Francis S. Haggerty; the gunboats *Augusta*, Commander Enoch G. Parrott; *Pocahontas*, Commander Percival Drayton; *Bienville*, Commander Charles Steedman; *Unadilla*, Lieutenant Napoleon Collins; *Ottawa*, Lieutenant Thomas Holdup Stevens; *Pembina*, Lieutenant John P. Bankhead; *Seneca*, Lieutenant Daniel Ammen; *Curlew*, Acting-Lieutenant Pendleton G. Watmough; *Penguin*, Acting-Lieutenant Thomas A. Budd; the *R. B. Forbes*, Lieutenant Henry S. Newcomb; the *Isaac Smith*, Lieutenant James W. A. Nicholson.

On the day before this fleet sailed from Hampton Roads twenty-five storeships and coalers had sailed under the escort of the *Vandalia*. With a view of concealing the destination of the fleet, these vessels were ordered, in case they became separated, to ren-

devious off Savannah. The fleet, after leaving Hampton Roads, met with fair weather until about noon of November 1st. Off Cape Hatteras a dull leaden sky and a fresh southeast wind gave warning of a storm. As the afternoon wore on, the wind increased to a steady gale, and Captain Dupont made signal for every vessel to take care of itself. When night fell on the angry sea the vessels scattered far and wide, and occasionally a few of them could be seen staggering under storm sails. A peculiar feature of the gale on this night was the phosphorescent animalculæ which lighted up the frothing waves with strange brilliancy. Through the long watches of that anxious night the commanders of the vessels kept the deck, while huge drops of rain, driven by the fierce wind, struck their faces with the sting of pebbles. It was fully expected that many of the vessels would founder, for, aside from the regular war vessels and the gunboats, few of the craft were constructed for an ocean voyage, many of the transports being New York ferryboats. When day broke on November 2d, only one gunboat could be descried from the masthead of the flagship, and the greatest apprehensions were felt for the safety of the fleet.

On the morning of the 3d the *Seneca* was dispatched to the blockading fleet off Charleston, with instructions to Captain James L. Lardner, of the *Susquehanna*, to detain the vessels of the squadron detailed for the Port Royal expedition off Charleston until nightfall, so as to deceive the enemy as to the destination of the fleet. When the *Seneca* was sighted off Charleston Fort Sumter fired an alarm gun, which was repeated on shore, the Confederates evidently believing her to be the advance guard of the fleet that was to attack their city. But these efforts to conceal the destination of the fleet were unnecessary, for a few hours after it left Hampton Roads the following telegram was sent to Governor Pickens,

of South Carolina, and to Generals Drayton and Ripley :

“RICHMOND, *November 1, 1861.*

“I have just received information, which I consider entirely reliable, that the enemy's expedition is intended for Port Royal.

“J. P. BENJAMIN, *Acting Secretary of War.*”

The *Wabash* continued on her way to Port Royal, where, in the course of a few days, the scattered vessels began to heave in sight, many of them reporting narrow escapes from foundering. The *Governor* went down on the 3d. She had on board six hundred and fifty marines, under the command of Major John G. Reynolds, and they were saved only by the greatest exertion of the officers and crew of the *Sabine*, Captain Cadwalader Ringgold, and the *Isaac Smith*. In spite of every effort, however, seven men were lost. In order to assist the *Governor*, the *Isaac Smith* was compelled to throw overboard all her guns except one 30-pounder. The army transport *Peerless* also went down, but her crew was rescued by the *Mohican*, Lieutenant Henry W. Miller, of the latter, being highly complimented for his efforts in saving the drowning men. Three other transports also failed to arrive before the attack was made; they were the *Belvidere*, the *Union* and the *Osceola*.

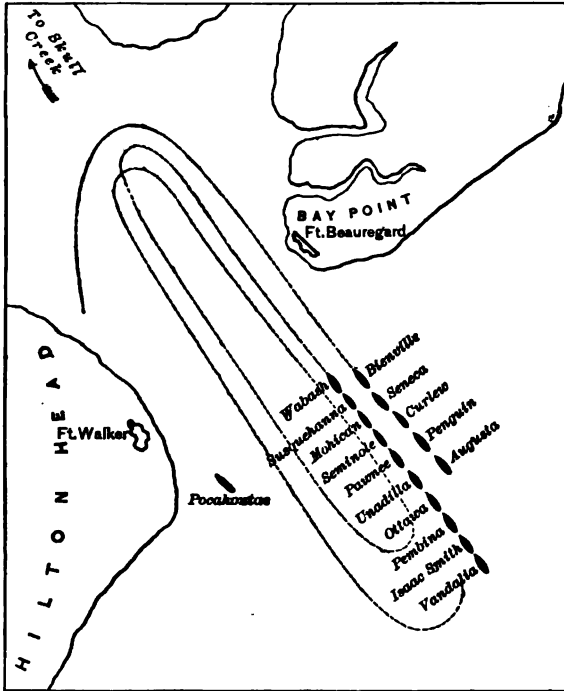
On arriving off Port Royal, Captain Dupont found that the usual landmarks for determining the channel had been destroyed, and that the buoys were displaced, which rendered it exceedingly difficult and dangerous to get the vessels over the bar. Under Captains Charles H. Davis, and Boutelle of the Coast Survey, in the *Vixen*, accompanied by the *Ottawa*, the *Seneca*, the *Pawnee*, the *Pembina* and the *Curllew*, the sounding party, although at times subjected to a heavy fire, rapidly discovered the channel and returned the buoys to their proper places, so that the gunboats and transports were brought over the bar without accident. The three gunboats under Commodore Tattnall were observed coming



down to engage. As Dupont's flagship was not in signaling distance, Lieutenant Stevens, then the senior officer of the gunboats, gave the order for chase. The Confederate vessels were driven under the guns of the fort, but on the following day the enemy's flagship, the *Savannah*, probably in Tattnall's absence, came within range and fired on the gunboats at twenty-five hundred yards. A single shell from the *Seneca*, aimed by Lieutenant Ammen, struck the *Savannah* abaft the starboard wheelhouse, and had the fuse not failed to ignite the *Savannah* would have been sent to the bottom. As it was, she promptly retreated. Earlier in the morning the *Ottawa*, under Commander John Rodgers, with Brigadier-General Horatio G. Wright aboard, in company with the *Seneca*, the *Curlew* and the *Isaac Smith*, made a reconnoissance in the harbor, exchanged a few shot with the fort, and sustained some damage in their rigging. Great difficulty was experienced in getting the *Wabash* over the bar, which even at flood tide allowed only two feet for the vessel's keel, but on the 5th of November she was taken across and anchored with the rest of the fleet.

Port Royal was guarded by two formidable earthworks, one at Hilton Head, called Fort Walker, afterward named Fort Welles, and the other, two and a half miles across the Roads, at Bay Point, called Fort Beauregard, afterward called Fort Seward. Fort Walker had two 6-inch rifled guns, twelve 32-pounders, one 10-inch and one 8-inch columbiad, three 7-inch seacoast howitzers, one 8-inch howitzer, and two 12-pounders; in all, twenty-two guns. Fort Beauregard proper was armed with five 32-pounders, one 10-inch and one 8-inch columbiad, one 6-inch rifled gun, and five 42-pound seacoast guns. In some outworks flanking the main work, commanding the land approaches as well as the channel near by, were three 32-pounders, two 24-pounders and two 6-inch Spanish guns; in all, twenty guns. At the farther end of Hilton Head and

near the wharf were one 10-inch columbiad, two 5½-inch rifled guns, and two 12-pound howitzers. The commander of these forts was Thomas F. Drayton, a brother of Commander Percival Drayton, of the *Pocohontas*. The Confederate naval force, which was under the command of Commodore Josiah Tattnall, who had been one of the most dashing and successful officers in the old



*Plan of battle at Port Royal.*

navy, consisted of the steamer *Savannah*, Lieutenant John N. Maffit; the *Samson*, Lieutenant J. S. Kennard; and the *Resolute*, Lieutenant J. Pembroke Jones, each mounting two 32-pounders.

Having collected his forces within the bar, Captain Dupont summoned the commanders aboard the flagship and gave them instructions for the attack. His

orders were for the *Wabash* to lead the line of battle, to be followed by the *Susquehanna*, the *Mohican*, the *Seminole*, the *Parnee*, the *Unadilla*, the *Ottawa*, the *Pembina* and the *Vandalia*, the last being towed by the steamer *Isaac Smith*. These vessels were to pass up the Roads in the order given, on the Bay Point side, delivering their port broadsides on Fort Walker, and their starboard guns, if possible, on Fort Beauregard, until they had reached a point two miles above the fort, where they were to turn and come down the Roads in the same order on the Fort Walker side, using their bow guns so as to enfilade that work as they approached, their starboard guns when they came abreast and their quarter guns as they drew away. Having completed the circuit, the line was to repeat this ellipse manœuvre, until the forts surrendered. A second line, consisting of the gunboats *Bienville*, *Seneca*, *Curlew*, *Penguin* and *Augusta*, was to flank the movements of the main line while passing up the Roads, but on reaching the first turning-point, two miles above Fort Beauregard, it was to remain there and hold the enemy's flotilla in check, and it was particularly enjoined not to allow them to attack the transports. By this admirable arrangement the ships were kept in rapid and constant motion, which prevented the enemy from obtaining an accurate range.

The 7th of November dawned bright and clear, with scarcely a ripple disturbing the broad waters of the bay. Early in the morning the signal was given to get under way, and the vessels dropped into their prescribed positions. At 9 A. M. the signal for close order was shown, and the imposing lines of battle advanced steadily toward the enemy at the rate of six knots an hour. At 9.26 A. M. Fort Walker opened with her heavy guns, and was quickly followed by her sister fort, but the shot fell short. Soon afterward the *Wabash* opened with her bow guns, which were promptly seconded by the other vessels in the advancing fleet.

When in full range the *Wabash* opened her formidable broadsides, and as her example was promptly followed by the other vessels the engagement became general. The enemy's flotilla had dropped down the Roads and fired with great skill; but as the National ships majestically swept past the forts and came to the turning-point, where their powerful broadsides came into play, the Confederate gunboats fled up Skull Creek. When the flanking line of Dupont's gunboats wheeled off from the main line to take a position north of Fort Walker, so as to open an enfilading fire, the Confederate gunboats came out again, evidently under the impression that the fleet was retreating, but the *Seneca* soon drove them up the creek. While the bombardment was in progress the *Pocahontas*, which had been detained by the storm, joined in the attack and opened an enfilading fire.

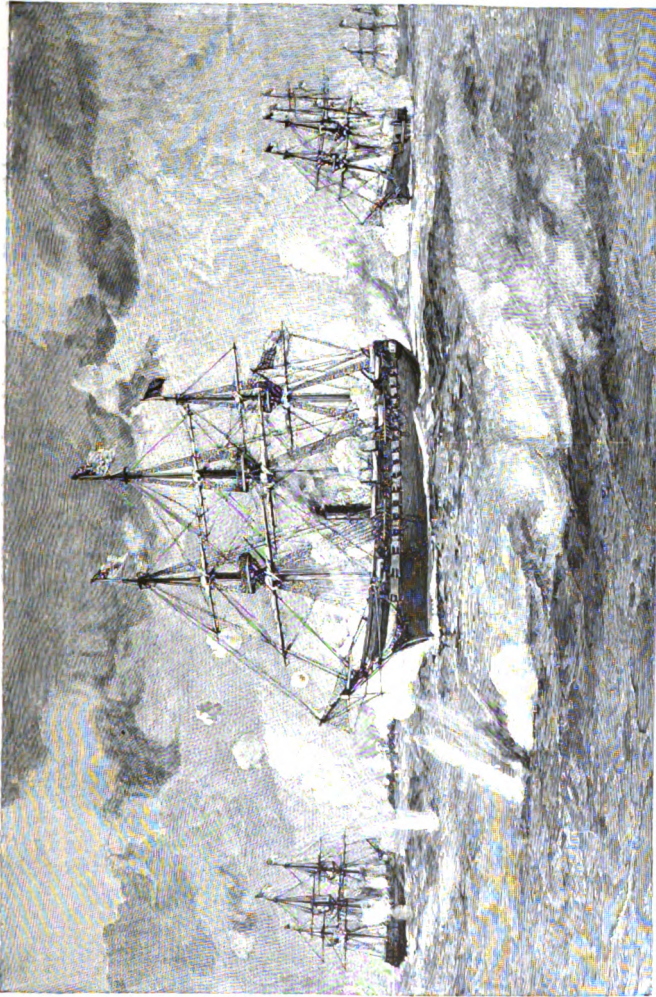
The *Wabash*, still leading the unbroken line, now turned down the Roads toward Hilton Head. As the vessels came within long range they opened a most destructive enfilading fire with their bow guns; for the Confederates, not expecting an attack from that side, had mounted only one 32-pounder in that part of their works, and this was soon shattered by round shot. At 10.40 A. M. the *Wabash* was abreast of Fort Walker, distant not more than eight hundred yards, when she delivered a broadside with great effect, at which time the vessels astern of her were still enfilading the enemy with their pivot guns. The *Susquehanna* next came abreast of Fort Walker and discharged her heavy broadside, and by this time the *Wabash* had again loaded and hurled in a second torrent of death-dealing missiles. All the vessels were now reloading and firing as rapidly as possible at the disconcerted enemy, and in order that the column might not pass the forts too rapidly the engines were slowly reversed. At 11 A. M. the *Wabash* reached the place in which the ellipse had been started, and now again turned up the Roads.

Being the flagship, she received the largest share of the enemy's attention. One shell passed between Captain Dupont and Captain Rodgers, narrowly missing each of them. Fort Beauregard was passed in the same order as before, and received a heavy fire so long as the ships were in range. By 11.20 A. M. the *Wabash* had again reached the northern turning-point of the ellipse, and for the second time bore down to engage Fort Walker at close quarters. The moment the bow guns came within range the same enfilading fire was opened by each vessel in turn, so that by the time the *Wabash* and the *Susquehanna* were delivering their broadsides the vessels astern were pouring in a destructive cross fire.

In this circuit Captain Dupont passed three hundred yards nearer to Fort Walker than at the first, so as to destroy the range which the enemy's gunners had secured before the ships had passed them on their first circuit. "At half past eleven o'clock," says an eyewitness, "the *Wabash* and her consorts drew near to Hilton Head again. Occasionally the pivot guns of the *Wabash* and the *Susquehanna* threw a shell into the battery, but the grand affair was yet to come. At 11.50 A. M. the ships were again enveloped in a dense cloud of white smoke, and a few seconds later the shells were bursting in the battery in a splendid manner. The sand was flying in every direction, and it seemed impossible that any one in the battery could be saved from death. The Confederates now worked only two guns, but I will give them the credit of saying that they worked them beautifully."<sup>1</sup> By this time over two hundred shells had been dropped into the fort. Dr. Buist, the surgeon in the fort, was killed by a shell, and his body was buried by the falling of a parapet. Ten minutes after twelve, the National ships were out of gunshot, preparing to repeat their ellipse.

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<sup>1</sup> Correspondent of the New York Herald.



*Du Pont's circle of fire.*



A few minutes before this the flag at Bay Point had been lowered, but as the ships passed out of range it was rehoisted. The *Wabash* now for the third time headed northward on that terrible circle of fire, and at 12.20 P. M. Bay Point opened on her, but was silenced when the National broadsides came into play. The flanking gunboats took a position north of Fort Walker, and, being within six hundred yards, kept up an enfilading fire that "annoyed and damaged us excessively," as General Drayton expressed it. These vessels drifted so near to Fort Walker that "the enemy's sharpshooters, concealed in depressions of the shore, opened a heavy fire on us, to which we replied with our 24-pound howitzers loaded with canister."<sup>1</sup>

The transports now got out one hundred surfboats in readiness to land the troops, and at half past two o'clock the *Wabash* again got under way, and running close to the batteries fired one gun. As the enemy did not reply, it was believed that the works were abandoned. The line of battle accordingly came to anchor, and Commander John Rodgers put off in a boat with a flag of truce. With some degree of awe the entire fleet, now resting on its guns, watched the whale-boat pull out from the wing of the huge frigate and make its way like a cockleshell toward the grim and silent fort. Thousands of eyes centered on the little boat with increasing interest as she drew nearer the shore. Her keel soon grated on the beach, and the officers were seen to jump out, approach the fort and enter, and for a time they were lost to view. Then Commander Rodgers was seen scrambling up the highest part of the ramparts, carrying the American colors with him; and at the first glimpse of the beautiful ensign the long suspense gave place to tremendous cheers from every craft in the fleet.

Lieutenant Daniel Ammen, of the *Seneca*, landed

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<sup>1</sup> Rear-Admiral Stevens to the author.



soon afterward with thirty armed men and hoisted the flag over a small frame house that had been used by the enemy as headquarters. On abandoning the fort the Confederates had planted torpedoes with wires attached to them in different parts of the works, and one of the machines was placed under the floor of this house. Scarcely had Lieutenant Ammen and his men left the place when "a dull explosion was heard, a cloud of smoke went up, and when it passed away there was no vestige of the house."<sup>1</sup> One of the seamen had caught his foot in a wire, igniting the torpedo. The man was knocked senseless, but fortunately no lives were lost. By sunset it was discovered that Fort Beauregard had been abandoned; and on the following morning the Union flag was waving over that work also. The National loss in this affair was only eight killed and twenty-three wounded, which must be attributed to the masterly manner in which the attack had been planned and carried out by the commander-in-chief. The enemy's loss was eleven killed, forty-eight wounded and four missing.<sup>2</sup> A chart of the Southern coast was found in General Drayton's headquarters, on which were indicated in red ink the positions of Confederate batteries. This was of great assistance in the operations on the Atlantic seaboard.

An eyewitness describes the scene in Fort Walker immediately after its surrender as follows: "On the line along the front three guns were dismounted by the enfilading fire of our ships. One carriage had been struck by a large shell and shivered to pieces, dismounting the heavy gun mounted upon it and sending the splinters flying in all directions with terrific force. Between the guns and the foot of the parapet was a large pool of blood mingled with brains, fragments of skull, and pieces of flesh evidently from the

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<sup>1</sup> Ammen's Atlantic Coast, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Official report of Brigadier-General Drayton.

face, as portions of whiskers still clung to it. This shot must have done horrible execution, as other portions of human beings were found all around it. Another carriage to the right was broken to pieces, and the guns on the water front were rendered useless by the enfilading fire from the gunboats on the left flank. Their scorching fire of shell, which swept with resistless fury and deadly effect across this long water pond, where the enemy had placed his heaviest metal *en barbette* without taking the precaution to place traverses between the guns, did as much as anything to drive them from their works. The fort was plowed up by shot and shell so badly as to make an immediate repair necessary. All the houses and many of the tents about the works were perforated and torn by flying shell, and hardly a light of glass could be found intact in any building. The trees in the vicinity showed marks of heavy visitation. Everything, indeed, was in ruins."

## CHAPTER III.

### PAMLICO AND ALBEMARLE SOUNDS.

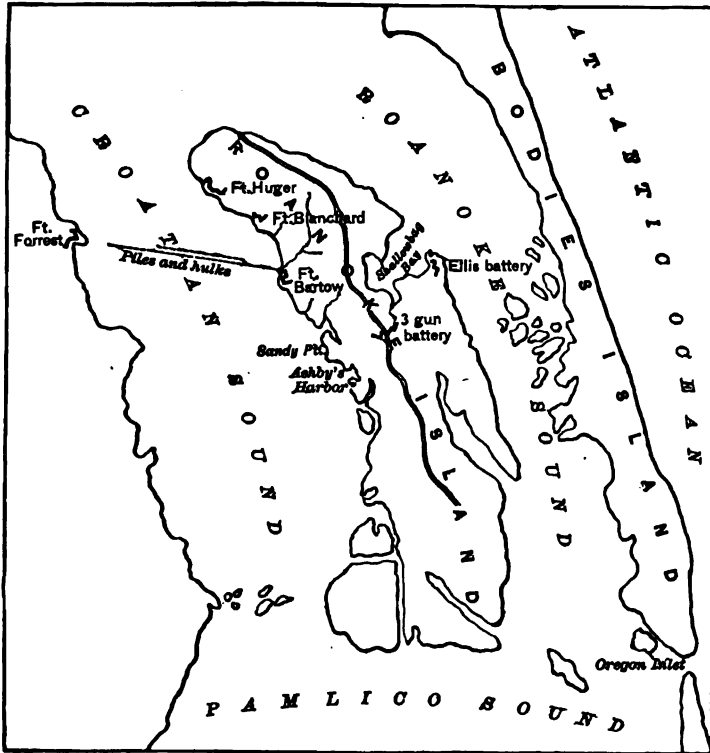
ALTHOUGH the capture of Forts Hatteras and Clark gave the National forces control of Hatteras Inlet and Pamlico Sound, yet the enemy was still in possession of the important towns of New Berne and Washington, and the large rivers on which they were situated, besides holding undisputed sway in Albemarle Sound. From the latter place light-draught steamers passed into the Atlantic and preyed on the coastwise commerce. Furthermore, it was rumored that several ironclads of the *Merrimac* type were in course of construction, and would prove formidable antagonists to the frail wooden vessels that composed the National fleet in these waters.<sup>1</sup> The possession of Albemarle Sound was necessary before Norfolk could be attacked from the rear, or any attempt made against the Confederate inland communications. Realizing the importance of these waters, the enemy, after the loss of Fort Hatteras, began fortifying Roanoke Island, which commanded the only entrance to Albemarle Sound from the south. The island is nine miles long and three miles wide in its broadest part, and was defended by several batteries, which, together with the neighboring marshes and the difficulty of navigating the narrow channels or landing troops, rendered the place a stronghold. The only road running the length of the island was guarded, at a point where the swamp extended from it on each side to the water's edge, by a

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<sup>1</sup> For map of the North Carolina naval operations, see page 179.

masked battery of three guns, which were trained to sweep the approach for several hundred yards, while trees and other obstructions were placed across the causeway to impede an attacking party.

Two miles north of this battery was Fort Bartow, commanded by Lieutenant B. P. Loyall. This was a heptagonal earthwork, five sides of which mounted eight 32-pound smooth-bore guns and one 68-pound rifled gun, while a battery of three field pieces protected the rear. A mile and a half above this was Fort



*Scene of operations at Roanoke Island.*

Blanchard, mounting four 32-pound smooth-bore guns ; and one mile above this was Fort Huger, mounting

twelve 32-pounders, rifled and smooth-bore, commanded by Major John Taylor, formerly of the United States navy. On the eastern side of the island was Ellis Battery, mounting two 32-pounders. Opposite Fort Huger, on the mainland, was Fort Forrest, mounting seven 32-pounders. This work, like the others, was built on the marsh at the edge of the channel, canal boats and piles being used as foundations, which rendered a land attack almost impossible. Across the channel, between Fort Forrest and Fort Bartow, was a double row of piles and sunken vessels, which effectually obstructed the channel leading into Albemarle Sound; and just above this barrier the Confederate squadron, under Commodore Lynch, was held in readiness to assist the forts. It consisted of the steamers *Seabird*, Lieutenant Patrick McCarrick; the *Curlew*, Commander Thomas T. Hunter; the *Ellis*, Lieutenant J. W. Cooke; the *Beaufort*, Lieutenant W. H. Parker; the *Raleigh*, Lieutenant J. W. Alexander; the *Fanny*, Midshipman Tayloe; and the *Forrest*, Lieutenant James L. Hoole; each carrying one rifled 32-pound gun, while the *Seabird* had an additional 30-pound rifled gun. The Confederate forces in all did not number four thousand men.

One of the first steps to be taken in the contemplated expedition against Roanoke Island was the buoying and sounding of the intricate channels leading to Pamlico Sound. In this perilous work Lieutenant Thomas Stowell Phelps, in the coast-survey steamer *Corwin*, was engaged in November, 1861, and although frequently fired upon by the Confederates on shore, he pushed it to a successful termination. On November 15th the heavily armed Confederate steamer *Chocura* opened on the *Corwin*, driving the surveying boats from their work. Lieutenant Phelps promptly responded with his two brass chasers, "unequaled in the service for their extraordinary range, loaded with pebble powder and Hotchkiss shell, four or five miles

was their range,"<sup>1</sup> and soon put the enemy to flight. The storm that scattered Dupont's fleet shifted the entire channel at Hatteras about fifty feet.

Early in January, 1862, twelve thousand soldiers, commanded by Brigadier-General Ambrose E. Burnside, and a naval force under the orders of Flag-Officer Louis M. Goldsborough, with Commander Stephen Clegg Rowan as divisional commander, was detailed for an expedition against Albemarle Sound. The naval part of the expedition consisted of a promiscuous assortment of ferry, river and tug boats, armed with guns. They were in no way adapted for war purposes, and could easily be disabled by a single shot. Even the firing of their own guns strained them seriously. The troops and vessels were ordered to rendezvous at Annapolis, from which place they proceeded early in January to Fort Monroe. The vessels, as they passed each other down the Potomac, "saluted with their steam whistles," wrote General Burnside, "while the band played and the troops cheered, the decks being covered with bluecoats, some chatting, others sleeping, others writing their last letters to their loved ones at home. On the night of January 10th they arrived at Fort Monroe. The harbor probably never presented a finer appearance than on that night. All the vessels were illuminated, and the air was filled with the strains of martial music and the voices of brave men. Not a man in the fleet knew his destination, except a few officers, yet there was no complaint or inquisitiveness, but all seemed ready for whatever duty was before them. Much discouragement was expressed by nautical and military men high in authority as to the success of the expedition. The President was frequently warned that the vessels were unfit for sea, and that the expedition would be a total failure. Great anxiety was manifested to know its des-

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<sup>1</sup> Rear-Admiral Phelps to the author.

tinuation. One public man was very importunate, and in fact almost demanded that the President should tell him where we were going. Finally the President said, 'Now, I will tell you in great confidence where they are going, if you will promise not to speak of it to any one.' The promise was given, and Mr. Lincoln said, 'Well, now, my friend, the expedition is going to sea.'"<sup>1</sup>

The motley marine force sailed from Hampton Roads on the night of January 11th, and by the 13th most of the vessels had arrived off Hatteras Inlet.<sup>2</sup> While entering the Sound the little steamer *Picket*, in which were General Burnside and several staff officers,

<sup>1</sup> Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. i, p. 662.

<sup>2</sup> The vessels collected for the expedition were: The *Philadelphia*, flagship, two 12-pound guns, Lieutenant Silas Reynolds; the *Stars and Stripes*, four 8-inch, one 30-pound Parrott, two 12-pound guns, Lieutenant Reed Werden; the *Louisiana*, one 8-inch, three 32-pound, one 12-pound rifled gun, Lieutenant Alexander Murray; the *Heitzel*, one 9-inch, one 80-pound rifled gun, Lieutenant H. K. Davenport; the *Underwriter*, one 8-inch, one 80-pound rifled, two 12-pound guns, Lieutenant William N. Jeffers; the *Delaware*, one 9-inch, one 32-pound, one 12-pound gun, Lieutenant Stephen P. Quackenbush; the *Commodore Perry*, four 9-inch, one 32-pound, one 12-pound gun, Lieutenant Charles W. Flusser; the *Valley City*, four 32-pound, one 12-pound gun, Lieutenant James C. Chaplin; the *Southfield*, three 9-inch, one 100-pound gun, Lieutenant C. F. W. Behm; the *Commodore Barney*, three 9-inch, one 100-pound gun, Acting-Lieutenant Richard T. Renshaw; the *Hunchback*, three 9-inch, one 100-pound gun, Acting-Lieutenant Edmund R. Colhoun; the *Morse*, two 9-inch guns, Acting-Master Peter Hayes; the *Whitehead*, one 9-inch gun, Acting-Master Charles A. French; the *I. N. Seymour*, one 30-pound rifled, one 12-pound gun, Acting-Master F. S. Wells; the *Shawsheen*, two 20-pound rifled guns, Acting-Master Thomas G. Woodward; the *Lockwood*, one 80-pound, two 12-pound guns, Acting-Master George W. Graves; the *Ceres*, one 30-pound rifled gun, one 32-pound gun, Acting-Master John McDiarmid; the *Putnam*, one 20-pound rifled, one 32-pound gun, Acting-Master William J. Hotchkiss; the *Brinker*, one 30-pound rifled gun, Acting-Master John E. Giddings; the *Granite*, one 32-pound gun, Acting-Master's-Mate Ephraim Boomer. Besides this force there were forty-six army transports, each armed with one small gun, under Commander Samuel F. Hazard, of the navy. As the channels in Albemarle Sound were exceedingly shallow, vessels drawing more than eight feet of water could not be operated in them.

was almost sunk by two large vessels that dragged their anchors and came near crushing her between them. On the way to Hatteras Inlet the old steamer *Pocahontas* was so much injured as to compel her officers to run her ashore, and of her cargo of one hundred and thirteen horses ninety were lost. The large transport *City of New York* also went ashore and became a total wreck, and a part of her cargo of four hundred barrels of gunpowder, fifteen hundred rifles, eight hundred shells, and other valuable stores, was lost. Her officers and men clung to the rigging all night, and were rescued on the following day. The gunboat *Zouave* sank after crossing the bar, and while passing from headquarters to the ships in a surf-boat Colonel J. W. Allen and Surgeon Frederick A. Welles were drowned near Cape Hatteras by the swamping of the boat. Although the expedition had arrived off Hatteras Inlet by the 13th of January, it was not until the 4th of February that all the vessels were brought over the bar. This delay was caused by many of the transports drawing more than eight feet of water.

Early on the morning of February 5th the gunboats formed in three columns, led by the *Stars and Stripes*, the *Louisiana* and the *Hetzel*, and, carefully feeling their way, proceeded up the channel, the sounding boats being kept ahead to ascertain if the buoys had been displaced. In some places the channel was so narrow that two vessels could not ride abreast. By evening the fleet anchored off Stumpy Point, as it was impossible to follow the channel at night. On the next morning the vessels got under way, but at 11 A. M., two miles above Stumpy Point, a dense fog compelled them to anchor again. Captain Goldsborough then shifted his flag to the *Southfield*, taking with him staff officers Commander Case, Captain's Clerk Fisher as signal officer, and Lieutenants T. R. Robeson and N. S. Barstow. At nine o'clock, February 7th, while



the vessels were drawing near Roanoke Island, the *Ceres*, the *Putnam* and the *Underwriter*, led by Commander Rowan, were sent a quarter of a mile in advance of the fleet to feel the way, and to ascertain if Sandy Point, the place selected for debarkation, was fortified. The gunboats mounting 9-inch guns now massed themselves around the flagship in anticipation of a fight, and by 10.30 A. M. the enemy's gunboats were observed taking a position behind the line of piles. The *Underwriter* shelled Sandy Point, and in twenty-five minutes signaled that it was not fortified. The army transports *Picket*, Acting-Master Thomas Boynton Ives; the *Huzzar*, Acting-Master Frederick Crocker; the *Pioneer*, Acting-Master C. E. Baker; the *Vidette*, Acting-Master I. L. Foster; the *Ranger*, Acting-Master S. Emerson; the *Lancer*, Acting-Master M. B. Morley; and the *Chasseur*, Acting-Master John West, formed in close order and opened a heavy fire on Fort Bartow, Fort Forrest and Fort Blanchard, which was returned by the enemy.

At 11.30 A. M. the vessels advanced to cover the landing of the troops at Sandy Point. A heavy fire of shrapnel and shell was thrown on shore, and at the same time an animated cannonade was maintained with the Confederate gunboats and the land batteries. By noon the action had become general, the enemy returning the fire with promptness and skill. At 1.30 P. M. flames were observed in Fort Bartow, and in an hour it was destroyed. The Confederate gunboats had taken position at fourteen hundred yards and fired with considerable accuracy, and suffered somewhat in return. Early in the fight the *Forrest* was disabled in her machinery, and her young commander, Lieutenant Hoole, was badly wounded in the head by a piece of shell. She then ran under the guns of Fort Forrest and anchored. About 3 P. M., when the fire was heaviest, the troops embarked in light steamers and boats, and effected a landing in Ashby Harbor. But while

they were approaching the shore, a large body of Confederate soldiers with a field piece attempted to dispute the landing, upon which the *Delaware*, Commander Rowan, took a position south of Fort Bartow, and with a free use of 9-inch shrapnel put the enemy to flight. While this was going on, Fort Bartow and Fort Blanchard, at 4.30 P. M., were silenced, and the Confederate steamers retired behind Fort Huger, apparently much injured. At five o'clock, however, they returned to the attack, and with the forts opened a heavy fire; but in forty minutes they again retired, the *Curlew* disabled and seeking refuge behind Fort Forrest. A heavy shell had dropped on her hurricane deck and gone through her decks and bottom as if they were so much paper. The batteries slackened fire, and by 6 P. M. Fort Bartow alone was replying to the attack, firing only at long intervals. As it was fast growing dark, the order to cease firing was given, but the work of landing troops was pushed until midnight, when about a thousand men, together with six navy howitzers, under the orders of Midshipmen Benjamin J. Porter and Hammond, were placed ashore.

At daybreak, February 8th, General Foster's brigade, consisting of the 23d, the 25th and the 27th Massachusetts, and the 10th Connecticut regiments, with the navy howitzers, moved forward, and after fording a creek came upon the Confederate pickets, who discharged their muskets and retreated to their main body. The National forces soon reached the road running northward, and after a march of a mile and a half came in sight of the battery of three guns which commanded the causeway through the marsh. The 27th Massachusetts was now detailed to the right, with orders to force its way through the morass, and if possible rout the enemy's sharpshooters, while General Reno's brigade, consisting of the 21st Massachusetts, the 51st New York and the 9th New Jersey, pushed through the swamp and thick undergrowth on the left,

so as to turn the enemy's right wing. At nine o'clock the 25th Massachusetts, with the navy howitzers, began the attack along the causeway. The fire at this point soon became heavy, the enemy firing with deliberation and accuracy upon the exposed assailants, while the National troops, stopping to remove the large timbers from their path, could not fire as effectively.

Just as the ammunition for the howitzers was giving out, General Parke, with the 4th Rhode Island, the 10th Connecticut and the 9th New York (Hawkins Zouaves), came to their support; but it was impossible to continue the attack until the howitzers were replenished, unless the enemy's position was carried by storm. For this hazardous undertaking Colonel Hawkins gallantly offered his services. His men formed with fixed bayonets and started for the Confederate guns, leaping over fallen trees and other *débris* at the top of their speed, yelling, "Zou! Zou! Zou!" The onslaught was irresistible, and the Confederates deserted their guns after the first fire. Leaving the redoubt to be secured by the troops that were behind them, the Zouaves followed up the road in hot pursuit of the fleeing enemy, until they reached the path leading to Fort Bartow, where they halted, as it was understood that a large body of troops guarded the land approach to that fort. While they were thus waiting, General Foster's command came up, and the Zouaves were ordered to secure the battery at Shallowbag Bay, while the remainder of the brigade, after leaving a regiment to march against Fort Bartow, resumed the pursuit of the fleeing Confederates to the north. Abreast of Fort Blanchard a flag of truce was met, and after a brief negotiation two thousand Confederates unconditionally surrendered, and about the same time six hundred men surrendered at Fort Bartow.

At the time General Foster was attacking the three-gun battery on the causeway the gunboats under Com-

mander Rowan moved up the channel and opened a heavy fire on the forts. But at ten o'clock the order "Cease firing" was given, as it was thought that the troops might be attacking the forts from the rear. At 1 P. M. the *Underwriter*, the *Valley City*, the *Seymour*, the *Lockwood*, the *Ceres*, the *Shawsheen*, the *Putnam*, the *Whitehead* and the *Brinker* were ordered to break through the line of piles that crossed the channel leading into Albemarle Sound. This was done in gallant style, and by five o'clock the vessels had gained the other side. About the same time the United States colors were seen waving from Fort Bartow, and a few minutes later the enemy fired the woodwork in Fort Forrest, and the steamer *Curlew*, both blowing up in the night.

In this affair the navy had six men killed, seventeen wounded and two missing, while the troops had forty-one killed and a hundred and eighty-one wounded. The Confederate loss, owing to the protection afforded by their earthworks, was much less. Two thousand six hundred and seventy-five prisoners were taken, together with three thousand small arms. In his official report, Captain Goldsborough, while speaking in the highest terms of all his officers, specially commended the gallantry of Commanders Rowan and Case.

Driven from Roanoke Island, the Confederates collected the remnants of their forces and made a gallant stand at Elizabeth City, which guarded the approach to the Dismal Swamp Canal. The National forces entered Albemarle Sound on the morning of February 9th, with the following gunboats, under Commander Rowan: *Delaware* (flagship), *Louisiana*, *Hetzel*, *Underwriter*, *Commodore Perry*, *Valley City*, *Morse*, *Lockwood*, *Ceres*, *Shawsheen*, *Brinker* and *Putnam*. Making their way among the treacherous shoals, they discovered two steamers at three o'clock in the afternoon, heading for Pasquotank River, and gave chase, but without success. By sunset the National gunboats ap-

proached the river, and at 8 P. M. they dropped anchor about ten miles below Cobb's Point. At daylight, February 10th, they advanced toward Elizabeth City, where the six Confederate gunboats were drawn up in line of battle three hundred yards behind a battery mounting four 32-pounders. The *Commodore Perry*, the *Morse* and the *Delaware*, flanked by the *Ceres* on the right, led the advance. As the ammunition of the National gunboats had been reduced to twenty rounds, Commander Rowan issued orders that no gun be fired except within short range, where every shot would tell.

The gunboats steamed rapidly up the river, passed the battery without slackening speed and made straight for the enemy's flotilla. The *Commodore Perry*, steering for the Confederate flagship, the *Seabird*, ran her down and crushed in her sides, so that she began to sink. The *Ceres*, selecting the *Ellis*, ran alongside and carried her by boarding, but not without a desperate resistance on the part of her men, who did not surrender until their commander, Lieutenant Cooke, had been badly wounded. The *Delaware* chased the *Fanny* ashore, where she was blown up by her own men. The *Black Warrior* was run ashore and burned, her crew escaping on shore; and Captain Lynch's boat, in which he was endeavoring to get into action, was cut in two by a shot. The *Appomattox*, Captain Sims, attempted to escape by the canal, but drew too much water and was blown up. The *Valley City* and the *Whitehead* meantime returned to the battery on land, and soon compelled it to surrender. Thus in fifteen minutes four of the enemy's steamers were destroyed, one captured, and two, the *Raleigh* and the *Beaufort*, put to flight up the Pasquotank River, where they escaped to Norfolk by the Dismal Swamp Canal. The National loss in this affair was two killed and two wounded; that of the enemy was considerably greater. Two days later Lieutenant Murray, with the *Louisiana*, the *Underwriter*, the *Commodore Perry* and the *Lockwood*, took

possession of Edenton, and on the 13th Lieutenant Jeffers, with the *Lockwood*, the *Shawsheen* and the *Whitehead*, went to the mouth of the Chesapeake and Albemarle Canal, dispersed some Confederate troops that had collected there, and sank two schooners so as to obstruct the canal.

On the 19th of February Commander Rowan, with eight gunboats and a small detachment of troops under the command of Colonel Hawkins, ascended Chowan River to Winton, where it was rumored there were a number of Union men who would enlist if they had an opportunity. Being a little suspicious of these reports, Colonel Hawkins, as the vessel approached Winton, stationed himself in the crosstrees of the *Delaware's* mainmast, so as to get a better view of the town. As the vessels were about to run alongside the wharf, at 3.30 P. M., a negro woman stood on the shore waving a welcome to them; but from his elevated position Colonel Hawkins caught a glimpse of the glistening barrels of many muskets in the bushes on shore and two pieces of artillery trained to sweep the wharf. He gave the warning to the officer of the deck just in time to prevent a landing, and the vessels passed on at full speed, clearing the wharf by less than ten feet. Finding that they were discovered, the Confederates opened fire, riddling the bulwarks and masts of the vessels, but fortunately hurt no one. Under cover of the flotilla's guns, Colonel Hawkins landed with his men, dispersed the enemy, and destroyed all public stores in the place. The expedition then returned to the sound.

Control of Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds being secured, the next step was to capture the towns adjoining these waters, the most important of which was New Berne, a town of six thousand inhabitants, connected by rail with Beaufort and Richmond, at the junction of the Neuse and Trent rivers. The navigation of the Neuse was obstructed a few miles below

the town by twenty-four vessels locked together with cables and spars and sunk across the channel; their masts, appearing above the water, were firmly interwoven with timbers and chains, so as to make it exceedingly difficult for an enemy to break through even when not under fire. A second and perhaps more formidable obstruction was placed a short distance down the stream. It consisted of a row of piles across the channel, driven firmly into the bed of the river and having their heads cut off below the water. A second row, with heads capped with sharp iron, was driven across the first row at an angle of forty-five degrees, so that the iron heads pointed down stream, and, being submerged, would pierce the thin hulls of steamers coming up the river. In front of this barricade were thirty torpedoes, fitted with trigger lines attached to the piles so as to explode when a vessel struck, each torpedo containing two hundred pounds of powder. A large raft laden with cotton saturated with turpentine was in readiness to be fired and sent down the narrow channel on the approach of a hostile squadron. These formidable obstructions were supplemented with forts and earthworks, which had been constructed with great labor and considerable skill. The first fortification, Fort Dixie, about six miles from New Berne, mounted four guns. Then came Fort Thompson, mounting thirteen guns, which was four miles below New Berne; and a mile above this was Fort Ellis, with eight guns. Two miles from New Berne was Fort Lane, with eight guns, and within a mile of the town was Union Point, with two guns. All these works were on the south side of the river, their land approaches being guarded by rifle pits, while a movable battery on a railroad track enabled the enemy to send speedy re-enforcements to any threatened point.

After ascertaining the character of these defenses, General Burnside determined to land his troops at Slocum Creek, ten miles below New Berne, and attack

the forts from the rear, while the flotilla was to open a bombardment from the river. Accordingly, early on the morning of March 12th the naval expedition left Hatteras Inlet, the vessels under the orders of Commander Rowan consisting of the steamers *Delaware* (flagship), *Stars and Stripes*, *Valley City*, *Commodore Barney*, *Southfield*, *Brinker*, *Louisiana*, *Hetzel*, *Commodore Perry*, *Underwriter* (now commanded by Lieutenant A. Hopkins), *Hunchback*, *Morse* and *Lockwood*. About half past two o'clock in the afternoon the advance division of gunboats reached the mouth of the Neuse, where it was learned that two steamers had been discovered in Pamlico River and might come out and cut off some of the transports. The *Lockwood* was detailed to watch them, and at five o'clock chase was given to a small steamer that was reconnoitering the fleet, and the steamer hastily retired under the guns of the fort. The flotilla then anchored for the night off Slocum's Creek.

At eight o'clock on the following morning, March 13th, the troops, with six boat howitzers, under the command of Lieutenant Roderick S. McCook, assisted by Captains Drayton and Bennett of the marines, landed under cover of a heavy fire of grape and shell from the gunboats. The *Commodore Perry* then ran up the river and opened an animated fire on Fort Dixie, which was maintained until dark, while the troops got under way and continued their march over heavy roads till 9 P. M. At daylight on the 14th the march was resumed, and by seven o'clock they came in sight of Fort Thompson and began the attack. For two hours a fierce conflict raged in front of the earthworks and rifle pits. The naval howitzers under Lieutenant McCook being deployed to the right made a splendid fight under a heavy fire of grape and shell from six of the enemy's guns. Between 9 and 10 A. M. the troops ran short of ammunition, when they were ordered to charge with the bayonet. This was done



with great spirit, and after a momentary repulse they carried the earthworks and put the enemy to flight. This left the road clear to New Berne, for after their defeat at Fort Thompson the Confederates abandoned their remaining posts.

During this attack a heavy fog settled over the river, making it difficult for the gunboats to manœuvre; but as soon as the first gun was heard on the morning of the 14th, the *Delaware*, the *Hunchback* and the *Southfield* opened fire on Fort Dixie. As no reply was made by the fort, a boat was sent ashore, and the place was found to be deserted. The gunboats next advanced against Fort Ellis and fired a shell into it, causing the magazine to explode. At this moment the troops were hotly engaged in the rear of Fort Thompson, and the gunboats approached the barriers and fired at the earthwork from a distance. Learning that his shells were falling near the National troops, Commander Rowan ceased firing, and, boldly taking the lead, drove his vessel against the line of piles and torpedoes. Fortunately the torpedoes failed to ignite, else the flagship and her gallant commander would have been blown to atoms. The iron-pointed piles were more effective. The *Commodore Perry*, running against one of them, broke off the head and carried it for some time sticking in her hull. The *Commodore Barney* also had a hole cut in her bottom, while the *Stars and Stripes* was severely injured.

Without waiting to repair damages, the gunboats hastened to get abreast of Fort Thompson, so as to participate in the fight at close quarters; but just as they cleared the line of obstructions the troops carried the fort by storm and greeted the approaching steamers with the National colors. Upon this, Commander Rowan passed rapidly ahead, threw a few shells into Fort Lane, and, getting no reply, ordered the *Valley City* to take possession. The remaining gunboats pushed up the river and took possession of New Berne

just as the enemy had fired the town in several places. At this moment some steamboats and a schooner laden with commissary stores were discovered attempting to escape up the Neuse, whereupon the *Delaware* gave chase and compelled one of the steamers to run ashore, while the other two with the schooner were captured. By noon the gunboats had complete possession of the town. The flames started by the Confederates were extinguished, and all the arms and public stores were secured. At two o'clock in the afternoon the victorious National troops appeared on the opposite bank of the Trent, and before night were transferred to the New Berne side. In this affair the navy had two men killed and eleven wounded, all in Lieutenant McCook's command. The loss of the land forces, on account of their exposed position, was much greater.

The next point of attack in this quarter was Fort Macon, a massive work mounting nearly fifty guns, but manned by only four hundred and fifty men, and two hundred and fifty of these were reported as being unfit for service. Late in March General Burnside landed troops and erected batteries on the narrow peninsula, at the end of which was Fort Macon, and by April 23d the fort was cut off from all communications. The National batteries consisted of three 30-pounder Parrott rifled guns, under the command of Captain L. O. Morris; four 10-inch mortars, under the command of Lieutenant M. F. Prouty; and four 8-inch mortars, under Lieutenant D. W. Flagler. At 5.40 A. M. on the morning of April 25th the bombardment was begun. The naval force consisted of the gunboats *Daylight* (flagship), Commander Samuel Lockwood; *Chippewa*, Lieutenant Andrew Bryson; *State of Georgia*, Commander James F. Armstrong, and the *Gemsbok*, Lieutenant E. Cavendy. At 9 A. M. these vessels, although not intended for participation in the bombardment, came into range and opened fire. At first their shot fell wide of the mark, but soon, in spite of the heavy sea,

they secured the range and enfiladed the fort. After being in action two hours they were compelled by the increasing sea to haul off into deeper water. In this short fight the *Gemsbok* suffered somewhat in her rigging, and a 32-pounder shot struck the *Daylight* near the gangway, passed through the engine room, carried away a portion of the iron stairway, broke Engineer Eugene J. Wade's left arm, entered the captain's cabin and lodged in the port side. The shore batteries, however, bore the brunt of the conflict. Their fire was exceedingly effective, driving the enemy from his water batteries and silencing his remaining guns one by one, until at four o'clock the fort was surrendered.

Compared with the more important naval operations in the war, the service on the North Carolina sounds was of minor importance, but owing to the peculiar difficulties under which our officers and men labored it called for great endurance and gallantry. The facilities for constructing ironclads afforded by the several rivers entering Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds compelled the National forces to make frequent incursions to such towns as Washington, Plymouth and Hamilton, to assure themselves that such craft were not in course of construction. If the Confederates could complete an ironclad, it would soon clear these waters of the frail wooden steamers that constituted the National naval force; and, in spite of great watchfulness, as will be seen in another chapter, they succeeded in completing a powerful ironclad, constructed especially for operations in these shallow waters. On the 9th of July the *Commodore Perry*, the *Ceres* and the *Shaw-sheen*, under the command of Lieutenant Charles W. Flusser, with forty soldiers, forced the barricades in Roanoke River and steamed up to Hamilton. The narrow channel compelled the steamers to move cautiously, while the high, thickly wooded banks gave the Confederate sharpshooters every opportunity to pick off the officers and men. Notwithstanding a loss of

one man killed and ten wounded, Lieutenant Flusser reached Hamilton, where he captured the steamer *Wilson* and destroyed the battery and earthworks, and returned unmolested.

On the 3d of October a detachment of troops under Major-General John A. Dix and a naval force under Lieutenant Flusser advanced against Franklin. When about two miles from that town the steamers *Commodore Perry* (flagship), *Hunchback*, Lieutenant Edmund R. Colhoun, and the *Whitehead*, Acting-Master Charles A. French, while endeavoring to round a bend in the river, were fired upon by riflemen in ambush. The stream at this point was so narrow that even these little steamers could not turn round, and they could not elevate their guns sufficiently to reach the high banks. Nothing remained but to push ahead, which they did, only to find themselves cut off from further progress by barricades across the river. In the mean time the enemy greatly increased in numbers, and the fire of musketry made it extremely hazardous for any man to expose himself on deck or at an open port; and at the same time the Confederates began to fell trees across the stream below the ensnared gunboats so as to cut off their retreat. The National troops failed to co-operate with the navy, and "having no support from the army we had to fight a large force of the enemy with only three gunboats."<sup>1</sup> The situation was nearly hopeless, but after much difficulty the steamers managed to turn their heads downstream, and slowly pushed their way through the fallen timbers and were again free. In this affair the navy had four men killed and eleven wounded.

On the 23d of November the *Ellis*, Lieutenant William Barker Cushing, steamed up the river Onslow with a view of surprising the town of that name, seizing arms and other military stores that had been col-

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<sup>1</sup> Rear-Admiral Colhoun to the author.

lected there, and capturing the Wilmington mail. When five miles up the river the *Ellis* met an outward-bound steamer laden with cotton and turpentine, which the enemy burned to prevent capture. By one o'clock in the afternoon Lieutenant Cushing arrived at Onslow, where twenty-five stands of arms, two schooners and the Wilmington mail were captured, and an extensive salt-work was destroyed. At daylight the next day, while returning down the river with the schooners, the *Ellis* was fired upon by two pieces of artillery from the shore; but after an hour of spirited cannonading the enemy was silenced, and Lieutenant Cushing proceeded on his way. About five hundred yards from a bluff, however, the pilot ran the *Ellis* aground, the headway forcing her over a sand bank and into deeper water on the other side, which was surrounded by shoals. Every effort was made to get her into the channel again, but in vain.

Several men were now sent to secure the two pieces of artillery which had just been silenced on shore, so that they could be used in defense of the *Ellis*, but on reaching the place it was found that they had been carried off. When night came on, one of the captured schooners was brought alongside, and everything in the *Ellis* was transferred to it except the pivot gun, some ammunition, two tons of coal, and a few small arms; but still the steamer could not be moved from her position. The men were then placed in the schooner and ordered to make the best of their way down the river and there await Lieutenant Cushing, who, with six volunteers, resolved to remain in the *Ellis* and fight her to the last plank. Early the next morning, November 25th, the Confederates opened on the steamer with four rifled guns from as many points of the compass. Lieutenant Cushing replied to this cross fire as well as he could, but his boat was soon cut to pieces, and the only alternative was surrender, or flight in an open boat which for a mile and a half would be ex-

posed to the enemy's fire. The plucky lieutenant chose the latter, and after setting the *Ellis* on fire and loading her 32-pounder for the last time, he pulled away with his men, leaving her flag flying, and made down stream with all speed. After a hard pull the men escaped the batteries and passed the bar just in time to elude the Confederate cavalry, which had galloped around in the hope of cutting them off before they could gain the open sound. The *Ellis* shortly afterward blew up.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE MERRIMAC IN HAMPTON ROADS.

THE successful introduction of iron in the construction of merchant vessels had turned the attention of naval architects to the utility of that material in ships of war. The great objection that had hitherto been urged against it was that shot, in passing through, left an irregular hole, which could not be easily plugged. In the days of wooden war ships shot holes below the water line were easily repaired by stoppers made to fit 12, 18, 24 or 32-pound shot, as the case required. But this objection was soon overcome by plating the ships so heavily as to render them impervious to shot, while iron gave the further advantage of water-tight bulkheads and greater security against fire. The scarcity of large timber, both in England and in France, was a powerful stimulus in the introduction of iron in ship-building. In 1859 the French launched *la Gloire*, a timber-built steam frigate resembling a line of battle ship cut down and incased with four and three quarters inches of iron. She carried thirty-four 54-pound guns and two shell guns forward, her draught being twenty-seven and a half feet and her speed eleven knots an hour. In that year the French and English navies stood as follows: Forty line of battle ships, forty-six frigates and four iron-plated ships on the side of the French, and fifty line of battle ships and thirty-four frigates for the English. The ominous "four iron-plated ships" on the French list turned the scale heavily in favor of France. The wooden line of battle ships and frigates were suddenly found to be valueless,

and many that were on the stocks were not completed. In great alarm the Admiralty, in 1860, hastened the construction of the ironclad steam frigate *Warrior*, the first of this type in the British navy. The central portions of her sides were plated with four and a half inches of iron, and her speed was thirteen and a half knots an hour.

Shortly before the civil war began, Captain Charles Stewart McCauley, commandant of the Norfolk Navy Yard, was cautioned by the Government to do nothing that might lead the people of Virginia to think their loyalty to the Federal Government was doubted. The State was then debating the question of secession, and it was feared that any step to fortify or destroy the navy yard at Norfolk by the United States officials might precipitate hostilities. The attitude of the State authorities became so threatening, however, that on the 19th of April Captain McCauley determined to destroy the stores and vessels there, the latter consisting of the old ship of the line *Pennsylvania*, the sailing frigate *Cumberland*, the steam frigate *Merrimac*, five large sailing vessels, the sailing sloops of war *German-town* and *Plymouth* and the brig *Dolphin*.

Before the work of destruction was begun the *Parnee*, Captain Hiram Paulding, having on board Captain Wright, of the engineers, and a regiment of Massachusetts volunteers, steamed up Elizabeth River, on the 20th of April, to assist in saving the vessels and destroying whatever could not be removed. It was eight o'clock in the evening when the *Parnee* came in sight of Norfolk, and as the breeze made it impossible for her answering signal to be distinguished aboard of the National ships in the yard, preparations were made to attack her. Seeing that the officer in charge of the pivot gun aboard the *Cumberland* was ready to fire on the *Parnee*, and realizing that Captain Paulding would be likely to return it under the impression that the yard was actually in the hands of the Confed-



erates, and that he had been lured into a trap, Lieutenant Allen, of the *Pennsylvania*, with great presence of mind, suggested that his people cheer the *Pawnee*. By this means the other National vessels knew that the approaching stranger was a friend, and a possible disastrous fight between the ships was thus averted.

At twenty minutes after four o'clock on the morning of April 21st a rocket was sent up as a signal for the ships and the woodwork in the navy yard to be destroyed, and in a few minutes all the shops, houses, and war vessels, excepting the *Cumberland* and the *Pawnee*, were set on fire. But the most valuable part of the stores, with two thousand cannon of the best make, fell into the hands of the Confederates, and was distributed over the South. The charge of powder that was to blow up the dry dock failed to ignite. The *Cumberland* was in great danger of being captured, for the enemy had obstructed the channel with sunken vessels; but the powerful chartered steamer *Keystone State*, Lieutenant Stephen Decatur Trenchard, and the tugboat *Yankee*, after an hour of persistent ramming, succeeded in crushing through the obstructions.

The 40-gun frigate *Merrimac*, of three thousand five hundred tons, after burning to the water's edge, sank before the flames had made serious headway on her lower hull. On the 30th of May she was raised, and her hull and engines were found to be intact. She was then placed in the dry dock, and her upper woodworks were raised to the level of the berth deck, which was three and a half feet above the light water line. On this deck, for one hundred and seventy feet amidships, bulwarks consisting of twenty inches of pitch pine covered with four inches of oak, and sloping at an angle of thirty-five degrees, were built, meeting the roof seven feet above the deck. Outside of this twenty-four inches of solid wood backing were laid rolled-iron plates two inches thick and eight inches

wide, in horizontal courses, and over this again were laid similar plates running up and down, the four inches of iron being bolted through with  $1\frac{1}{8}$ -inch iron rivets, which were secured on the inside. The shot-proof casemate was covered with a light grating twenty feet wide and about one hundred and sixty feet long, forming the promenade deck. Forward of the smoke-stack was the pilot house, protected by the same thickness of iron as the sides. Forward and aft of this gunroom the vessel's hull was decked over so as to be awash when in fighting trim, and attached to the bow and about two feet under water was a cast-iron ram projecting some distance beyond the cutwater. This formidable craft was pierced for ten guns, the ends of the gunroom being rounded so as to carry 7-inch rifled guns, which, being mounted on pivots, could be fired abeam or in the keel line forward and aft. The broad-side armament consisted of two rifled 6-inch guns and six 9-inch Dahlgren guns. The four rifled guns were heavily re-enforced by 3-inch steel bands shrunk around the breech.

This novel craft, renamed by the Confederates *Virginia*, was built after a model made by John L. Porter, a constructor in the Confederate navy, which was similar to some rough drawings prepared by Lieutenant John M. Brooke, formerly of the United States navy. The work of rebuilding the *Merrimac* was carried on by Constructor Porter, the repairing of the engines was done by Chief-Engineer William P. Williamson, of the Confederate navy, and Lieutenant Brooke provided the rolled-iron plates and the heavy batteries. The difficulties of rebuilding the *Merrimac* were greatly enhanced by the lack of machinery and experienced laborers. The Confederacy was well supplied with engineers and officers of the old navy, but the skilled mechanics were largely in the North, while the workshops in the Norfolk Navy Yard had been almost destroyed by the conflagration. The only mills in the

South at this time capable of rolling the plates were the Tredegar works at Richmond.

Such being the extraordinary difficulties under which the builders of the new *Merrimac* labored, it is surprising that their designs were ever realized. Work on the formidable craft, however, was steadily pushed; and when, toward the close of 1861, news came through the lines that an ironclad vessel was being built at New York, it stimulated the Confederates to redoubled efforts. But, in spite of their greatest exertions, it was not until March, 1862, that the new *Merrimac* approached completion. She was placed under the command of Captain Franklin Buchanan, recently of the United States navy, who had a naval staff of officers, many of whom had been in the old service. They were Lieutenants Catesby ap Rogers Jones, Charles C. Simms, Robert D. Minor, Hunter Davidson, John Taylor Wood, John R. Eggleston, Walter R. Butt; Midshipmen R. C. Foute, H. H. Marmaduke, H. B. Littlepage, W. J. Craig, J. C. Long and Thomas R. Rootes; Paymaster James A. Semple, Surgeon Dinwiddie B. Phillips, Assistant-Surgeon Algernon S. Garnett, Captain of Marines Reuben Thorne, Engineer Henry A. Ramsay, Assistant-Engineers John W. Tynan, Loudon Campbell, Benjamin Herring, Jack and Wright; Boatswain Charles H. Hasker, Gunner Charles B. Oliver, Carpenter Hugh Lindsay, Clerk Arthur Sinclair, Jr.; Volunteer-Aids Lieutenant Douglas A. Forrest and Captain Kevil, of the infantry. The *Merrimac's* crew of three hundred and twenty was largely made up of volunteers from the army around Yorktown, Richmond and Petersburg.

An hour before noon on the 8th of March, 1862, the *Merrimac* cast loose from her moorings in Norfolk and steamed down Elizabeth River. Up to the last moment she was crowded with mechanics, coalers and laborers, many of whom were put ashore after the vessel was well under way, and so great had been the confusion

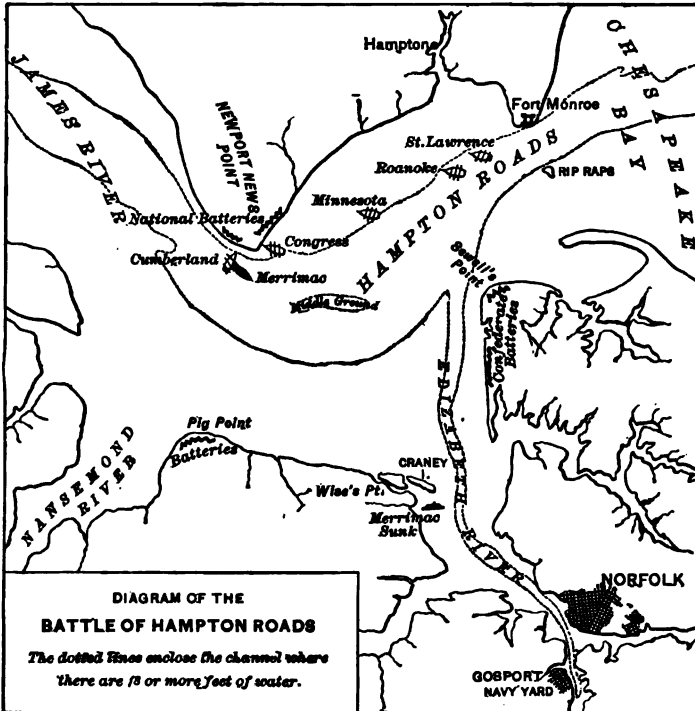
and haste in the last few weeks that not a gun had been fired. The crew had not been exercised even in the ordinary duties of man-of-war's men, the engines had not made a single revolution, the officers and men were strangers to each other, while the ship itself was a bold experiment, a complete revolution in naval warfare, which had not undergone the test of even a trial trip. In short, the people of the *Merrimac* were about to make one of the most hazardous experiments in naval warfare. Captain Buchanan for some time had been suffering from nervous prostration, and the doctors had pronounced his case hopeless; but, undaunted by the great risks involved, he shipped his cables and stood down the river, loudly cheered by Confederate soldiers who lined the shores. From the first it was seen that the engines were unsatisfactory, making only five knots at the best, while the great length of the craft and her twenty-two feet draught made her manœuvres in the narrow channels exceedingly difficult and limited.

In the James River lay the Confederate 12-gun steamer *Yorktown*, Captain John R. Tucker; the 2-gun steamer *Jamestown*, Lieutenant-Commander Joseph N. Barney, and the 1-gun river tug *Teaser*, Lieutenant-Commander William A. Webb, ready to join the *Merrimac* in the attack on the National ships. The *Yorktown* (or *Patrick Henry*) was partially protected by 1-inch iron plates, which were secured abreast of her boilers, and, running a few feet forward and aft of her machinery, extended a foot or two below the water line. Iron shields in the form of a V were also placed on the spar deck forward and aft of the engines, to afford protection from raking shot. The *Merrimac* was escorted down Elizabeth River by the steamers *Beaufort*, Lieutenant-Commander William H. Parker, and *Raleigh*, Lieutenant-Commander Joseph W. Alexander, mounting one gun each. Leaving the *Beaufort* and the *Raleigh* at Sewell's Point, Captain Buchanan

pushed boldly into the south channel alone, and headed for Newport News, where lay the United States 50-gun frigate *Congress*, Lieutenant Joseph B. Smith, and the 24-gun sloop of war *Cumberland*, Commander William Radford, anchored in fancied security under the guns of the Federal batteries, which commanded all water communications to Richmond by way of James River. It was of great importance to the Southern cause that these interruptions to their communications should be removed. Farther down Hampton Roads, off Fort Monroe, were the sailing frigate *St. Lawrence*, Captain Hugh Young Purviance, and the steam frigates *Roanoke* and *Minnesota*, Captain Gershom Jaques Van Brunt, the last two being sister ships of the old *Merrimac*.

It was a beautiful spring morning, and the gentle sea breeze scarcely rippled the waters of the Roads. The National ships, with their towering masts, swung lazily at their anchors, their rigging strung with drying clothes. Barges and cutters rocked gently at the booms, while officers and seamen walked quietly about the decks in the ordinary routine of duty or listlessly whiled away the time in various occupations. On shore the same feeling of security and ease prevailed, the soldiers going through their drills, their polished bayonets and musket barrels glistening in the bright sunlight, while others were busy with preparations for the midday meal. Everything betokened an entire absence of fear or suspicion of danger. Early in March Commander William Smith had been detailed from the *Congress*, and although he had turned over the command of the ship to his executive officer, Lieutenant Joseph B. Smith, he was still aboard waiting for a steamer to carry him North. Observing the *Merrimac*, he volunteered his services while the frigate was in danger. Commander Radford, of the *Cumberland*, was attending a court of inquiry in the *Roanoke*, some miles down the Roads, leaving Lieutenant George Upham Morris in charge of the ship. There had been

so many rumors about the *Merrimac* that some of the National officers had become skeptical of her prowess, and anticipated little trouble from her.



At nine o'clock on the morning of March 8th the people in the Union ships noticed the smoke of two steamers over the woodlands that concealed Elizabeth River from the *Cumberland's* lookout. Two hours later a trailing line of smoke lying along the course of the river indicated the approach of a third steamer, and at noon the three Confederate vessels were distinctly seen from the decks of the *Cumberland* moving down the river toward Sewell's Point. The gunboat *Zouave*, lying alongside the *Cumberland*, was ordered to run down to Pig Point and ascertain who the strangers

were. When the *Zouave* had proceeded about two miles on her mission her officers saw what looked to them like the roof of a large barn belching forth smoke from a chimney, and they were somewhat mystified as to what it could be. It was decided finally that it was the *Merrimac*, and the 32-pounder Parrott gun of the *Zouave* was trained on the stranger and six shot were fired at her; but the enemy took no notice of this, and the *Zouave* was recalled to the *Cumberland*. A little before one o'clock the *Merrimac* emerged from the river, and came in full view of the National ships.

The peaceful scene in the Roads was speedily transformed into one of hurried preparation for battle. The soldiers on land paused in their several occupations to gaze at the novel craft in astonishment and curiosity until the sharp call to arms sent them to their batteries. On board the men-of-war, the shrill piping of the boat-swain's whistle mingling with the rapid orders of officers indicated a scene of unwonted activity. The riggings were quickly cleared of the "wash," boats were dropped astern, booms swung alongside, decks cleared for action, magazines opened, extra sentinels stationed, ammunition piled in symmetrical rows on deck and the guns loaded, while down in the cockpit tables were cleared and bandages arranged in convenient reach, and the surgeons polished their glittering instruments and awaited their duties in grim silence.

All this time the *Merrimac*, with her ports closed, well in advance of her escorts, had been steadily moving toward the *Congress* and the *Cumberland*, and by one o'clock she was within long range. About this time the *Cumberland* opened with her heavy pivot guns, which were shortly followed by those of the *Congress* and the shore batteries, but the huge projectiles glanced harmlessly from the iron mail of the leviathan, while on she came in majestic silence. About half past two o'clock, when within easy range, the *Merrimac* opened her bow port and fired her 7-inch rifled gun,

which was aimed by Lieutenant Simms. The shot hulled the *Cumberland's* quarter, and killed or wounded most of the crew of her after pivot gun. Both National ships, now only a hundred yards distant from the *Merrimac*, delivered full broadsides from their powerful batteries, which would have blown any wooden craft out of the water; but the storm of iron glanced from the *Merrimac's* plating with no more effect than so many pebbles. Franklin Buchanan had a brother in the *Congress*—Paymaster McKean Buchanan—but this did not deter him from his purpose of destruction. He returned the fire of the National ships deliberately and with deadly effect from his bow gun, and when near enough the four starboard ports of the *Merrimac* were raised, four black muzzles were run out, four long tongues of flame leapt from her side, and four shells crashed into the wooden hull of the *Congress*. Not waiting to repeat this terrible blow, Buchanan kept steadily on under full head of steam for the helpless *Cumberland*, with a view of testing the power of his ram. The iron prow of the *Merrimac* struck the *Cumberland* nearly at right angles under the fore rigging in the starboard fore channels. The shock was scarcely felt in the ironclad, but in the *Cumberland* it was terrific. The ship heeled over to port and trembled as if she had struck a rock under full sail, while the iron prow of the *Merrimac* crushed through her side and left a yawning chasm. In backing out of the *Cumberland*, the *Merrimac* left her iron prow inside the doomed ship. Following up the blow by the discharge of her bow gun, she backed clear of the wreck. In response to a demand for surrender, Lieutenant Morris defiantly answered, "Never! I'll sink alongside." For three quarters of an hour the *Merrimac* and her consorts concentrated their fire on the doomed *Cumberland*, and the Confederate gunboats *Yorktown*, *James-town* and *Teaser* came down from James River and joined in the attack.



The National commanders now realized the hopelessness of the struggle, but, with that indomitable heroism which has ever characterized the American seaman, they prepared to fight to the last plank rather than permit the enemy to secure the ships. Many of the men stripped to the waist, took off their shoes and hoisted tank after tank of cartridges on deck so that the water could not cut them off from their ammunition. The scene in the *Cumberland* soon became awful. One shell, bursting in the sick bay, killed or wounded four men in their cots. More than a hundred of the crew very soon were killed or wounded, the cockpit was crowded, the decks were slippery with blood and were strewn with the dead and dying, while the inrushing waters and the rapid settling of the ship too plainly indicated that she would soon go to the bottom. In order to prevent the helpless wounded on the berth deck from being drowned, they were lifted up on racks and mess chests, and as the ship settled more and more they were removed from this temporary refuge and carried on deck and placed amidship. This was all that their shipmates could do for them, and when the ship finally went down they perished in her. The heroic commander of the *Cumberland* maintained the fight with superb gallantry. It was not long before the advancing water drove his men from the guns on the lower deck, but they immediately manned the upper batteries and renewed the unequal struggle. The red flag "No quarter" was run up at the fore, as it was resolved to sink with the ship rather than let her fall into the hands of the enemy. As soon as possible boats were lowered and made fast to a line on the shore side, but the ship was settling perceptibly. All this time the guns of the *Cumberland* were trained and fired at the enemy as rapidly as possible, and a man in the *Merrimac* who ventured outside of the casemate was cut in two. At half past three o'clock the forward magazine in the *Cumberland* was flooded, and the

water had reached the gun deck and was creeping around the gun carriages, when five minutes later the order was given for every one to save himself. The ship listed heavily to port and went down amid a roar of escaping air. The colors at the gaff were dragged beneath the water as the ship settled on the bottom, but the other ensigns at the mastheads were still visible, reaching a few feet above the water. "No ship," said Lieutenant Wood, of the *Merrimac*, "was ever fought more gallantly."

After ramming the *Cumberland*, the *Merrimac* stood up the channel with a view of turning round and attacking the *Congress*. During the thirty-five minutes required for turning she maintained a fire on both ships. Three times she raked the *Congress* from stem to stern with 7-inch shell. Seeing the hopelessness of the struggle, and observing that the ironclad was preparing to ram his ship, Lieutenant Smith slipped his cables, set his fore topsail and jib, and with the aid of the gunboat *Zouave* ran ashore under the National batteries, where the shoal water would not allow the *Merrimac* to follow.

The *Merrimac*, at 3.40 P. M., accompanied by her consorts, approached the *Congress*. After some manoeuvring she secured a position from one hundred and fifty to two hundred yards, where she could rake the *Congress* with her entire broadside, to which the *Congress* could not reply except with her two stern chasers. The murderous shells tore through the frigate with horrible effect. Lieutenant Smith was soon killed, but still the heroic crew fought on against tremendous odds, while the blood running out of her scuppers splattered the decks of the gunboat *Zouave*, which was lying alongside. The gunboats *Raleigh* and *Beaufort*, taking advantageous positions, also poured in a heavy fire. But in spite of the fearful condition of the ship and the terrible losses she had sustained, Lieutenant Pendergrast, upon whom the command had devolved, main-

tained the unequal contest for more than an hour after the sinking of the *Cumberland*, and did not surrender until one of his two stern guns had been dismounted and the muzzle of the other was knocked off. By this time fire had broken out in several places in the ship. At 4.40 P. M. the *Congress* lowered her colors and displayed a white flag, upon which the gunboats *Beaufort* and *Raleigh* ran alongside to take off her crew and fire the ship.

Not understanding the situation, the shore batteries opened a hot fire of cannon and small arms, which compelled the steamers to haul off with only thirty prisoners and the colors of the *Congress*. This flag was rolled up and taken to Richmond, and three days afterward, when it was unrolled in the presence of Jefferson Davis and several of his Cabinet officers, it was found to be saturated with blood in several places. It was hastily rolled up and sent to the Navy Department, where it was probably destroyed when that building was burned at the close of the war. The *Teaser* also was driven off in an attempt to burn the *Congress*. This fire not only killed Lieutenant Tayloe and wounded Lieutenant Hutter of the *Raleigh*, who were assisting the wounded out of the frigate, but also injured some of the people in the *Congress*. The remainder of the National crew endeavored to escape to the shore by swimming or in boats. Observing this, the enemy opened with hot shot, and soon had the ship in flames, and she burned all that afternoon and far into the night. About this time a rifle ball from the shore struck Buchanan and Flag-Lieutenant Minor, so that the command of the *Merrimac* devolved on Lieutenant Jones. When the news of the loss of the *Cumberland* and the *Congress* reached Washington, Sunday morning, Captain Joseph Smith, father of the commander of the *Congress*, was attending church. After the service was over Secretary Welles informed him that the *Cumberland* had been sunk and the *Congress* had surren-



*Raking the Congress at every shot.*



dered. "What!" exclaimed the veteran, "the *Congress* surrendered? Then Joe is dead." The Secretary reassured the veteran by saying that the casualties were as yet unknown, but the heartbroken commodore replied: "Oh, no; you don't know Joe as I do. He'd never surrender his ship."<sup>1</sup>

While this spirited fight was going on, the frigates *Minnesota*, *Roanoke* and *St. Lawrence*, which had been lying at Fort Monroe, seven miles below, got under sail, and with the assistance of tugboats set out for the scene of action. The *Minnesota* was the first to get under way, and, running past a brisk fire from the battery at Sewell's Point, hastened upstream, but when about a mile and a half from the scene of action she grounded. Why this ship, with one of Norfolk's best pilots in charge of her, should have run upon a well-known shoal at such a critical moment may well excite suspicion of treachery, and a deeper investigation reveals it. On the declaration of Mr. Mallory, the Confederate Secretary of the Navy, it is learned that "the pilot of the *Minnesota*, although bound by an oath of fealty to the United States, was also under sworn allegiance to the Confederacy and in the service and pay of its Department of Marine, and the stranding of that ship was in obedience to instructions from the office in Richmond, where information of the disaster was received in one hour and fifteen minutes after its occurrence." The pilot was discharged from the United States service April 19, 1862, and immediately on his arrival at Norfolk he was appointed second pilot in the *Merrimac*. The *Roanoke* and the *St. Lawrence* also grounded a little above Fort Monroe.

Having completed the destruction of the *Cumberland* and the *Congress*, the *Merrimac*, at five o'clock

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph B. Smith entered the navy as a midshipman October 19, 1841. Going through the usual routine of a young naval officer, he became passed midshipman, August 10, 1847; master, August 22, 1855; and lieutenant, September 14, 1855.

in the afternoon, turned her attention to the stranded *Minnesota*, the *St. Lawrence* and the *Roanoke*. Fortunately, the water in the north channel at that time was so low that the ram was compelled to take the south channel and attack the frigates from that quarter. This placed the middle ground between her and the ships, so that she could not approach nearer than a mile until high tide. At this long range the ironclad opened fire, but only one shot struck, and that passed through the bow. The light-draught consorts of the *Merrimac* took a position at easy range, where the *Minnesota* could bring but one heavy gun against them, and before they were driven off they had inflicted serious injury. One of their heavy shells "passed through the chief engineer's stateroom, crossing and tearing up the deck over the cockpit, and striking the clamp and knee in the carpenter's stateroom, where it exploded, carrying away the beam clamp and knee, and completely demolishing the bulkheads, setting fire to them and ripping up the deck."<sup>1</sup> Two shells passed through a port, carried away the planking and timbers, and splintered several beams and casings. Another shell passed through the mainmast about fourteen feet above the deck, cut away one third of the mast, and parted some of the iron bands. Another shot passed through the hammock netting abaft the main rigging, striking the spar deck on the starboard side, cutting through four planks, then, ricocheting, carried away the truck and axle of a gun carriage and injured the water-ways.

For about an hour and a half this unequal combat was kept up, the *Minnesota* using her 10-inch guns against the ironclad, while her single stern chaser played on the mischievous gunboats. It is doubtful if Captain Van Brunt could have held out long under the dreadful fire of heavy shells that was steadily and

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<sup>1</sup> Official report of the carpenter.

deliberately rained upon him at this range. At 6.30 P. M. the *St. Lawrence* was floated off, and in tow of the tugboat *Cambridge* was brought into range, but while still half a mile from the combatants she again grounded. Her approach, however, relieved the *Minnesota* of the distressing fire of the Confederate gunboats. The *St. Lawrence* then discharged several broadsides at the *Merrimac*, but with no effect. In return she received a heavy shell that penetrated the starboard quarter about four inches above the water line, passed through the pantry of the wardroom and into the stateroom of the assistant surgeon on the port side, completely demolished the bulkhead, and then struck a strong iron bar that secured the bull's-eye of the port. It then bounded into the wardroom, where it was spent. Fortunately it did not explode, and no person was injured. It was now seven o'clock in the evening, and was so dark that the pilots refused to keep the *Merrimac* longer in her present position, as the fast ebbing tide threatened to leave her aground. Accordingly, her head was turned toward Sewell's Point, and shortly afterward she anchored there with her consorts for the night, intending to renew the work of destruction on the following morning.

Thus ended the most disastrous day in the career of the United States navy. Of her crew of four hundred and thirty-four men, the *Congress* had one hundred and thirty killed or drowned, including her commander, and a large number of wounded, and thirty taken prisoners. The *Cumberland*, with a crew of three hundred and seventy-six, had one hundred and twenty killed or drowned, and a large number of those who escaped to the shore were wounded. On the part of the enemy, two were killed in the *Merrimac*, and eight, including Captain Buchanan, were wounded. The total loss of the Confederates, including the gunboats, was twenty-one killed or wounded. Although the *Merrimac* had been the target for more than one hundred heavy guns,



her casemate had not been materially injured. But everything exposed was swept away. Her flagstaff had been repeatedly shot away, and her colors were several times fastened to the smokestack, but only to be carried away again. The flag was finally fastened to a boarding pike. Stanchions, railings, davits, steam pipes and boats had been demolished, while two of the broadside guns had been disabled by having their muzzles shot away. Further than this she was as dangerous as ever, and only awaited the return of daylight and tide to complete the destruction of the wooden vessels in the Roads.

The disastrous results of this day's fight spread the profoundest gloom over the North, and caused corresponding rejoicing in the South. Extraordinary measures for protecting Northern ports were suggested, for the appearance of the "terrible monster" was momentarily expected at all the seaports. Anything strange or abnormal pertaining to the sea is peculiarly liable to the wildest exaggeration among the average landmen. The *Merrimac* certainly was a "new fish" in naval architecture, and she had proved her terrible power. It is not strange, then, that immediately following the announcement of the disaster of March 8th the wildest reports found credence. The scuttling of the noble frigate *St. Lawrence*, so as to obstruct the channel of the Potomac, was seriously considered, while the only measure proposed possessing the elements of success was considered a prodigious joke: this was stretching a huge fish net across the Potomac so as to entangle the *Merrimac's* propeller. The President called a special meeting of the Cabinet, and the fear was freely expressed that the whole character of the war was changed. The proposed peninsular campaign was rendered impracticable if the base of operations was at the mercy of the *Merrimac*, and the blockade of the most important Southern port would be raised. Nothing now, in the opinion of all, could prevent the iron mon-

ster from destroying all the ships in Hampton Roads, making her way up the Potomac, and laying Washington in ashes. Then, after raising the blockade of other Southern ports, she would turn northward and lay the great seaports under enormous contribution. This done, there could be no doubt that England and France would acknowledge the independence of the Confederate States. Such were the hopes of the *Merrimac's* people as they rested that night off Sewell's Point and dreamed of easy victory on the morrow. Such were the fears of the loyal sailors as with dread and agony they awaited the renewal of the bloody scene. Nothing but an act of Providence could save them. And that act of Providence was at hand.

## CHAPTER V.

### BUILDING THE MONITOR.

ON October 4, 1861, four months after the raising of the *Merrimac* at Norfolk, the Government entered into a contract with John Ericsson, of New York, for the construction of a war vessel of such type as the world had never seen and few had ever dreamed of. An iron-plated raft one hundred and seventy-two feet over all, forty-one and a half feet beam and eleven and one-third feet depth of hold, and a revolving iron turret containing two 11-inch Dahlgren guns, were the striking features of this novel craft. As less than two feet of the hull was to appear above water, the target surface was reduced to a minimum; and as a further security, this surface was plated with five layers of iron, each of which was one inch thick, while the deck was protected by two layers of half-inch plates. The turret, twenty feet in diameter, inside measurement, and nine feet high, was built of eight layers of one-inch iron plates; and the roof was protected by railroad iron, while the propeller and the rudder at the stern and the anchor at the bow were protected by the overhang of the deck. The pilot house on deck forward was made of massive bars of iron, and a movable iron plate, an inch and a half thick, covered the top of it.

The idea of such a war ship was suggested to John Ericsson nearly half a century before, by observing the motions of the lumber rafts on the lakes in Sweden. He wrote to Gustavus Vasa Fox, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, under date of October 5, 1875: "I found that while the raftsman in his elevated cabin experi-

enced very little motion, the seas breaking over his nearly submerged craft, these seas at the same time worked the sailing vessels nearly on their beam ends." Ericsson's enmity for Russia, the old-time enemy of his native land, seems to have been the principal motive in developing and perfecting this raft idea of naval warfare, and on the outbreak of the war between the northern empire and the Franco-Anglican alliance he sent the plan of a monitor, in 1854, to the Emperor of the French. Napoleon III was not much impressed with the scheme, and wrote: "I have found your ideas very ingenious and worthy of the celebrated name of their author, but I think the results to be obtained would not be proportionate to the expenses or to the small number of guns which could be brought into use." Napoleon III prided himself upon his knowledge of artillery; but when he saw how badly his cruisers fared in the Black Sea, and how the Russian squadron was able to steam into Sinope and destroy the Turkish fleet, he was greatly chagrined, and, says William Conant Church: "If he did not take Ericsson's plan, he certainly adopted the suggestion of armor defense, and built five armor-clads, England following in humble imitation with an equal number on the same general plan."

On the 8th of August, 1861, a naval board, consisting of the veteran Captains Joseph Smith and Hiram Paulding and Commander Charles Henry Davis, was appointed by President Lincoln for the purpose of examining plans for ironclad vessels. Among the hundreds of novel suggestions laid before this board was the plan, in a modified form, that Napoleon III had rejected. At the outbreak of the civil war Ericsson perfected a few details of this craft and forwarded it to Washington in the care of C. S. Bushnell, of New Haven, Conn. "I succeeded at length," said Mr. Bushnell, "in getting Captains Smith and Paulding to promise to sign a report advising the building of one trial

battery, provided Captain Davis would join with them. On going to him I was informed that I might 'take the little thing home and worship it, as it would not be idolatry, because it was in the image of nothing in the heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth.'"

The idea of a turret had been suggested before Ericsson's *Monitor*. Theodore Ruggles Timby, in 1841, planned a system of coast defense based upon the idea of a revolving turret, either on land or afloat, and in 1859 Captain Coles, of the British navy, perfected a revolving cupola on a vessel in the form of a raft, but it was never properly tested. Three types of armored vessels were finally recommended by the naval board for adoption—the floating battery *Ironsides*, the *Galena* and the *Monitor*. In recommending the last type the members of the board exhibited a courage seldom equaled in naval history. The weight of professional experience and prejudice was against them. The most advanced naval constructors of that day, the French, had recently rejected the *Monitor*. Ericsson himself, although one of the most brilliant engineers of the age, had been the inventor of some notable failures—from a practical point of view, though all were valuable to science. The naval bureaus for many years had been strongly prejudiced against him, and had unjustly associated with him the bursting of the *Princeton's* 12-inch gun, February 28, 1844, by which the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Navy, Captain Beverly Kennon and Colonel Gardiner, of Gardiner's Island fame, had been killed. It required bold men to advocate the *Monitor* idea in the face of such circumstances. If the craft was successful, the glory would go to the inventor; if a failure, the full weight of odium would fall on the men who recommended it. They were responsible men, who had spent a lifetime in studying the science of naval warfare. The hundreds of inventions brought before them for consideration

were largely the products of irresponsible men, whose only object was that of getting contracts out of the Government. Joseph Smith, Hiram Paulding and Charles H. Davis wagered a lifetime of brilliant service when they selected Ericsson's plan and gave their signatures to it. Ericsson wrote, "A more prompt and spirited action is probably not on record in a similar case than that of the Navy Department as regards the *Monitor*"; and Ericsson's intimate acquaintance with the English Admiralty and the French Department of the Marine eminently qualified him as a judge in this particular. "Go ahead!" was the order the inventor received, and while the contract was being drawn up at Washington the keel-plate of the *Monitor* was being run through the rolling-mill in New York.

Some idea of the great responsibility resting on the naval board in recommending Ericsson's plan can be gained by the doubts and sneers from men high in the profession. One of the first objections urged against the *Monitor* was that the concussion of such great guns in the confined space of the turret would be greater than the gunners could endure; but Ericsson's experience in firing heavy guns from little huts while he was an officer in the Swedish army had demonstrated that, if the muzzles protruded from the turret, the concussion would be inconsiderable. Naval experts besieged the board with calculations showing that the *Monitor* would not float with the amount of iron that was to be placed on her. Even the builders of the strange craft took the precaution of constructing wooden tanks to buoy up her stern when she was launched, lest she should plunge and stay under water. "Even if the ridiculous structure does float," said the experts, "she is top-heavy and will promptly capsize." Misgivings as to her stability, "on account of the abrupt termination of the iron raft to the wooden vessel," were even in the minds of the naval board after it had sanctioned the building of the craft, and it was sug-

gested that the angles be filled in with wood. "But," added the board, "if the whole thing is a failure this will be of little consequence." It was even suggested that some of the essential features of the *Monitor* be sacrificed in order to "save her from the possibility of failure." It was urged that in a heavy sea one side of the vessel would rise out of the water, or the sea recede from it, and the wooden hull underneath the iron raft would strike the water with such force when it came down as to knock the people on board off their feet. Others were confident that in heavy weather the overhang at the bow and stern would slap down on waves with such force as to rip it off the hull below; and some were confident that the iron plating would settle the sides of the wooden vessel so that her deck would become curved and finally break.

The best-grounded objections to the new craft were to the confined quarters of the officers and crew, many predicting that in heavy weather they would be smothered by possible defects in the ventilation or escaping gas from the engine fires. Sailors, like other people, object to being buried before they are dead, and the quarters of the *Monitor* were unpleasantly suggestive of Davy Jones' locker. To be stowed away for days in an iron box under water, with artificial light and ventilation, with no place for exercise and with little chance for throwing off the accumulating smells of a kitchen, engine room, mess room and sleeping quarters, is too much like death to make life worth living. It is possible to pack machinery away like this, and in machinery Ericsson had no equal; but when he endeavored to treat human beings in the same way he met the serious defect in his *Monitor* system. Captain Smith saw this, and suggested that a temporary house be built on the deck for the accommodation of the officers and crew. This suggestion was followed out in several instances, the *Winnebago* at the battle of Mobile Bay having a large wooden structure on her deck;

but lack of time and the prospect of an early battle made it impracticable to carry it out in the case of the *Monitor*.

In the light of the present day these many doubts and misgivings relative to the *Monitor* may seem childish; but at that time the experiment had not been made, and the criticisms were eminently pertinent and showed the intelligence of the critics. It is common to ridicule the doubts and distrusts arising in the minds of people of past generations when some new invention, such as a steamboat, a railroad or an electric machine, first came in vogue; but it is safe to say that equal distrust would arise in the minds of the present generation should some equally radical invention be brought to our notice.

The keel of the *Monitor* was laid in the shipyard of Thomas F. Rowland, Continental Iron Works, Greenpoint, Long Island, on the 25th of October, 1861. In order to test the confidence of the builders in the new vessel, a clause in the contract stipulated that "the money was to be refunded to the Government if the ironclad proved to be a failure." On the 30th of January, 1862, or in one hundred days, the ironclad was launched. This was a most extraordinary feat in naval construction, the building of a war vessel in six months at that time being considered almost an impossibility. On the 19th of February the new ironclad went on her trial trip and was handed over to the Government; but it was not until March 4th that her guns were mounted and a board of naval officers reported favorably upon her. At the request of Ericsson the new craft was called *Monitor*. In a letter to Mr. Fox, he said: "The impregnable and aggressive character of this structure will admonish the leaders of the Southern rebellion that the batteries on the banks of their rivers will no longer prevent the entrance of Union forces. The ironclad intruder will thus prove a severe monitor to those leaders. But there are other



leaders who will also be startled and admonished by the booming of the guns from the impregnable iron turret. 'Downing Street' will hardly view with indifference this last 'Yankee notion,' this monitor. To the Lords of the Admiralty the new craft will be a monitor, suggesting doubts as to the propriety of completing those four steel-clad ships at three and a half millions apiece. On these and many similar grounds I propose to name the new battery *Monitor*." It was at first intended that the *Monitor* should join the expedition to New Orleans, and in reference to this Assistant-Secretary Fox wrote to Ericsson, February 6, 1862, "Can your monitor sail [steam] for the Gulf of Mexico by the 12th inst.?" But the report of the completion of the *Merrimac*, at Norfolk, changed the destination of the new ironclad.

It required no ordinary degree of courage for officers and men to enlist in such a novel ship of war as this. When Stephen Decatur, at the head of seventy-six men, entered the harbor of Tripoli in 1804 in a ketch, and destroyed the *Philadelphia* under the guns of Turkish batteries, Nelson pronounced it the most daring act of the age. The officers and men of the *Monitor* were not only entering a place of equal danger, but were navigating an entirely new machine, which at any moment might become more formidable and merciless to them than even the Confederate guns. The officers who volunteered for this service were Lieutenant John Lorimer Worden, Lieutenant Samuel Dana Greene, Acting-Master Louis N. Stodder, Acting-Master John J. N. Webber, Acting-Assistant-Surgeon Daniel C. Logue, Acting-Assistant-Paymaster William F. Keeler, First-Assistant-Engineer Isaac Newton, Second-Assistant-Engineer Albert B. Campbell, Third-Assistant-Engineer Robinson W. Hands, Fourth-Assistant-Engineer Mark Trueman Sunstrom, Captain's-Clerk D. Toffey, Quartermaster P. Williams, Gunner's-Mate J. Crown and Boatswain's-Mate J. Stocking. Lieutenant Wor-

den left a sick bed to take this command. Chief-Engineer Alban C. Stimers volunteered to go on board as a passenger, and performed valuable service in the vessel. The crew were volunteers selected from the frigate *Sabine* and the receiving-ship *North Carolina*.

There were many points of similarity in the *Monitor* and the old 44-gun frigate *Constitution*. Both were radical innovations in naval construction in their day, the mounting of 24-pounders in the broadside of a frigate in 1797 being almost as startling as the huge 11-inch guns in the *Monitor*. The *Constitution* and the *Monitor* caused marked changes in the naval architecture of their days; both were superior to anything afloat, *Old Ironsides* being heavier in armament than any frigate of her day, while her speed enabled her to outsail the line-of-battle ships. The deck measurements of the *Monitor* and the *Constitution* were within a few feet of each other; the latter mounted fifty-five guns, with a total shot weight of seven hundred and sixty-five pounds to the broadside, while the former mounted but two guns, with three hundred and sixty pounds. The cost of the *Monitor* was two hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars, and that of the *Constitution* was three hundred and two thousand dollars. When the *Constitution* sailed from Boston, in 1812, to try a battle with an English frigate, orders arrived a few hours afterward to have her remain in port. When the *Monitor* sailed to meet the enemy, in 1862, orders arrived, as will be seen in the next chapter, changing her destination.

## CHAPTER VI.

### IRON VERSUS IRON.

AT eleven o'clock on the morning of March 6, 1862, the *Monitor*, although designed for the smooth waters of harbors and rivers, in tow of the tugboat *Seth Low*, and escorted by the steamers *Currituck* and *Sachem*, ventured into the boisterous waters of the Atlantic. Scarcely had she passed the Narrows when orders were received to change her destination to Washington, and a tugboat was immediately sent in chase of the iron-clad, but in vain. Similar orders were then telegraphed to Captain Marston at Hampton Roads. When the *Monitor* passed Sandy Hook there was but little wind, and on the first day out she experienced pleasant weather. On the second day the breeze freshened, and drove seas over her exposed decks in alarming quantity. In spite of every contrivance, the berth-deck hatches leaked and the water poured in like a cascade. The waves, rolling completely over the pilot house, knocked the helmsmen from the wheel, poured into the sight-holes or sweeping aft broke against the turret, and ran around the massive tower in swift eddies. The turret did not revolve on rollers, but slid on a smooth, bronze ring let into the deck. Before she left New York hemp rope had been packed into the crevice between the ring and the base of the turret to keep out the water; but in a short time this packing was washed away, and the sea poured through the opening. The people in the *Monitor* also neglected to stop the hawse holes, and quantities of water entered by that way, so that before long the vessel was in dan-

ger of foundering. The seas increased in violence until the gunboats escorting her rolled so much that it was possible at times to look down their holds from the turret of the *Monitor*. The waves broke over the smokestack of the ironclad, which was only six feet high, and poured down into the fires. The steam pumps were started, but the waves broke over the blower pipes, which were only four feet high, and, running down in large streams, drenched the blower machinery so that the belts slipped. Thus deprived of their artificial draft, the furnaces could not get air for combustion, and the engine room was soon filled with suffocating gas. Engineers Newton and Stimers rushed into the confined space to check the inflowing water, but were overcome with the gas, and with great difficulty they were dragged out, more dead than alive, and carried to the top of the turret—the only place in the vessel where fresh air could be obtained—and here they slowly revived. Water continued to pour down the blower pipes and smokestack and nearly extinguished the fires, and filled the engine room with such quantities of gas that it was impossible for any man to remain there.

The fires soon got so low that the steam pumps would not operate. The hand pumps were then manned, but were found to be useless, as they were not of sufficient power to force the water to the top of the turret, the only place through which it would pass. Bailing was then resorted to, but the buckets had to be passed from the hold through a series of passages and ladders, so that even if they were not emptied by the tossing and rolling of the ship when they reached the top of the turret, the time required rendered this a vain endeavor. From the forward part of the ship came the most dismal and unearthly screams and groans, which were caused by the air in the anchor well. "They resembled," said Lieutenant Greene, "the death groans of twenty men, and were the most dismal and

awful sounds ever heard." These discordant noises did not tend to raise the spirits of the seamen. The water continued to pour through the hawse holes, hatches, pilot house, smokestack and blower pipes in alarming quantities. Destruction stared the heroic crew in the face, and undoubtedly the vessel would have foundered in a few hours had not the wind toward evening died away and the waves subsided. When at last, in comparatively smooth waters, the engines were put in motion and the men took heart. But toward midnight they again got into a rough sea and had to fight the intruding water. To add to their complication of the previous day, the wire wheel-ropes for steering the vessel came off the wheels, and all hands were occupied most of that night in hauling on ropes by hand and readjusting the steering gear. Saturday morning, March 8th, they again came into smooth water. Although exhausted and dispirited by thirty-six hours of struggle for life, and sadly discouraged by the many defects that were developed in the "trial trip" of their novel craft, the men immediately set to work pumping out the water and making repairs.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, while they were passing Cape Henry, the distant booming of shotted guns was heard. It was the *Merrimac* completing the destruction of the *Congress*, and soon afterward the pilot came aboard and told the dreadful story of that day. With quickened pulse the men of the *Monitor* keyed up the turret, cleared for action and made every exertion to reach the scene of hostilities, but it was nine o'clock in the evening before they arrived off Fort Monroe. As the night advanced the burning frigate presented a magnificent spectacle. "The moon in her second quarter was just rising over the waters, but her silvery light was soon paled by the conflagration of the *Congress*, whose glare was reflected in the river. The burning frigate, four miles away, seemed much nearer. As the flames crept up the rigging, every mast, spar

and rope glittered against the dark sky with dazzling lines of fire. The hull was plainly visible, and upon its black surface the mouth of each porthole seemed the mouth of a fiery furnace. For hours the flames raged with hardly a perceptible change in the wondrous picture. At irregular intervals loaded guns and shells, exploding as the fire reached them, shook up a shower of sparks and sent forth their deep reverberations. The masts and rigging were still standing, apparently almost intact, when at one o'clock in the following morning she blew up."<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Worden immediately reported to Captain Marston, of the *Roanoke*, and the latter, in view of the disastrous results of that day, disobeyed his order to send the *Monitor* to Washington, and directed her to remain in the Roads. Acting-Master Samuel Howard volunteering as pilot, the *Monitor* again got under way, steamed up the channel, and about midnight anchored beside the *Minnesota*, which ship was still fast aground.

The gloom and depression pervading the National forces at Hampton Roads on the night of the 8th was scarcely disturbed by the arrival of this untried and diminutive stranger, which had barely escaped a premature end in her own element, and which now could hardly be distinguished as she lay in the dark shadow of the powerful frigate she presumed to protect. Nor were the men in the *Monitor* in a condition to go through the terrible ordeal of the morrow. They were completely exhausted. Isaac Newton was confined in his bunk. He had been under a severe strain during the trip from New York, and he was not expected to be ready for duty for at least a week. During the last fifty hours this heroic ship's company had been battling against the sea night and day for mere existence, and now, just as they were exhausted to the last degree, they were called upon to face a foe flushed with

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<sup>1</sup> R. E. Colston, in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. i, p. 714.

victory, whose vessel had safely passed the test of one hundred heavy guns, and who were resting in security and quiet, dreaming of greater victories on the morrow.

All night long the sounds of preparation for the impending conflict were heard in the little ironclad. There was no time for rest, and as the dawn of Sunday, March 9th, broke over the placid waters of Hampton Roads, they eagerly sought the first glimpse of their confident antagonist. Gradually her dark outlines began to assume shape through the mist that shrouded the shores, and by daylight she was in full view, silent and majestic in the consciousness of her prowess. Soon dense volumes of black smoke began to curl lazily upward, indicating that she was beginning preparations for the work of destruction. At eight o'clock Sunday morning the *Merrimac* slipped her moorings, and in command of Lieutenant Jones turned her head toward the *Minnesota*, evidently with the intention of beginning on her. The iron monster leisurely steamed toward the Rip-Raps, and while yet a mile away fired a gun, the shot striking the *Minnesota's* counter.

Now was the time for the *Monitor* to make her *début*. All eyes were turned on the insignificant craft, some with hope, others with contempt, but all feeling that on her depended what little chance there was for escape from a renewal of the horrible scenes of the day before. It was with a sense of relief and astonishment, therefore, that they beheld the *Monitor* swing from her anchorage and boldly head for the iron monster. From descriptions and plans that the Confederates had received from the North, they immediately recognized the novel machine as the *Monitor*. One of the men in the *Merrimac* wrote: "We soon descried a strange-looking iron tower sliding over the waters toward us. It had been seen by the light of the burning *Congress* the night before, and it was reported to us by one of the pilots." The presence of the *Monitor* caused a change in the Confederate programme, which was, to

destroy the *Minnesota* first, and then the *Roanoke* and the *St. Lawrence*, after which the way to Washington and New York would be open to the all-powerful *Merrimac*. Instead of proceeding directly for her prey, therefore, the *Merrimac* turned on the little *Monitor*, to settle immediately all questions as to who should be master of the Roads.

The two strange vessels, so different both from each other and from everything else afloat, now approached in silence. The other vessels and the shores of the Roads were crowded with eager and anxious spectators. On the one side the Unionists awaited the issue with deepest anxiety and palpitating hearts, while on the other side the Confederates watched the approaching duel with confidence and expectant delight. But all felt that the result of the combat before them would tilt the scales of the civil war heavily one way or the other. About this time Lieutenant Worden took his station in the pilot house with the pilot and quartermaster, while Lieutenant Greene and Chief-Engineer Stimers, with sixteen men, manned the guns in the turret and the machinery for revolving it. Acting-Master Stodder was first stationed at the wheel for revolving the turret, and when he was disabled Stimers took his place. Acting-Master Webber commanded the powder division on the berth deck, while the paymaster and the captain's clerk on the berth deck passed orders from the pilot house. The remainder of the crew—thirty-six men—were at their stations in the engine room, cockpit and magazines. Lieutenant Butt, of the *Merrimac*, had been a roommate of Lieutenant Greene in the Naval Academy at Annapolis.

About 8.30 A. M. the *Merrimac* opened with her bow gun, but now she did not have the broad side of a frigate to aim at and her missile went wide of the mark—one point in favor of the *Monitor* which the spectators of the duel were quick to note. Lieutenant Worden reserved his fire until within short range, when he



changed his course so as to run alongside of his antagonist ; then he stopped his engines and gave the order "Begin firing!" Immediately the port covers were triced back, the turret revolved until the guns bore, and massive 11-inch solid shot were hurled at the *Merrimac*. Almost at the same instant the *Merrimac* brought her starboard broadside to bear, and, taking more careful aim, fired. Lieutenant Greene and his men heard the heavy shot strike viciously on their turret, and for a moment they looked anxiously about them to discover the result of this first test of their citadel. It was seen at a glance that the shot had not penetrated, and as the turret again revolved obediently to the order, a look of confidence and hope spread over every countenance and the men reloaded with a will.

After this first pass of arms the ironclads turned and again fired, this time even at closer quarters than before. The *Monitor* used solid shot, and fired about once in eight minutes, while the *Merrimac* fired shells exclusively. The broadsides were exchanged, with no effect on the *Monitor*, while her men, growing more confident in the protection of her turret, even presumed



*Monitor and Merrimac.*

to look out of the ports and see what effect their shot had on the enemy. No damage could be discovered on the sides of the *Merrimac*, but the difference in the superior weight

of 11-inch shot and the lighter guns of the wooden frigates was realized by the Confederate crew. About this time Acting-Master Stodder was disabled while leaning against the side of the turret when it was struck by a shell from the *Merrimac*. The guns of

the *Merrimac* were now fired as fast as they could be loaded, and the *Monitor* responded every seven or eight minutes. In this contest the latter had the advantage over her huge antagonist, for her light draught and superior speed enabled her to manœuvre with adroitness, while her revolving turret brought her guns into range whenever they were loaded. The *Merrimac*, of course, could not fire until her guns bore, and on account of her great draught she was confined to the narrow channel, while the loss of her smokestack on the day before caused her fires to run so low that Chief-Engineer Ramsay reported that it was exceedingly difficult to keep up any steam at all. This enabled the little *Monitor* to counterbalance the superior number of the enemy's guns by keeping out of range. At one time she secured a position from which she poured in her heavy shot, while the *Merrimac* for several minutes could not bring a gun to bear.

After firing broadside after broadside with no apparent effect upon his antagonist, Lieutenant Worden sought for some vulnerable place where he could ram the *Merrimac*, and Lieutenant Jones, of the *Merrimac*, says, "This manœuvring caused us great anxiety." At length a dash was made at the *Merrimac's* stern, in the hope of disabling the rudder or the propeller. The blow was well aimed, but missed its mark by three feet, so that the *Monitor* grazed along the *Merrimac's* quarter, and at this instant Lieutenant Greene discharged both his guns at the same time. The solid 11-inch shot struck close together halfway up the casemate and crushed in the iron plates two or three inches. The concussion was terrific, knocking over the crew of the after guns in the *Merrimac* and causing many of her men to bleed at the nose and ears. Another shot planted in the same place would have penetrated; but this could not easily be done, owing to the peculiar difficulties under which the people in the turret labored and the want of practice in working the machinery

that revolved it. Lieutenant Jones says: "We wondered how proper aim could be taken in the very short time the guns were in sight."

The only view the men in the turret had of the outside world was over the muzzles of their guns, which cleared the ports by only a few inches. When the guns were run in after each discharge the heavy iron stoppers covered the ports, leaving the gunners totally at loss as to what was going on outside until the guns were again run out. As the turret began to revolve again, they had to watch through their narrow strip of light until the *Merrimac* was swung into their line of vision. It was only with great difficulty that the enormous mass of iron composing the turret could be started on its revolution. The machinery and the turret itself had become rusty on the passage from New York, so that when once started it was even more difficult to stop it at the desired point. Consequently the men in the turret were obliged to fire "on the fly," or while the turret was revolving, lest they should be carried past the range before the engine could bring them to a standstill.

Another great embarrassment under which the gunners labored was that of distinguishing the bow from the stern and the starboard from the port side when inclosed in their dark tower. White marks had been made on the stationary deck inside the turret, which was next to the revolving deck on which they stood; but soon their confined space in the turret was filled with burnt gunpowder and smoke, which blackened the faces of the men and their clothing, and everything in the place was covered with a thick layer of soot, which completely obliterated all traces of the distinguishing white marks, leaving the men ignorant as to which direction the bow, stern, starboard or port side was in. Furthermore, the rotary motion of the turret made them dizzy and confused their vision. The question was constantly passed to the pilot house, "How does

the *Merrimac* bear?" The answer would be, "On the starboard beam" or "On the port quarter," as the case might be; but the men in the turret were at loss to know in which direction the starboard or port side lay. Consequently, when the guns were ready to be fired the port covers were hauled back and the turret set in motion, while the gunners, without the least idea as to the whereabouts of their foe, closely watched their narrow strip of horizon until the frowning sides of the *Merrimac* swept into view, when they fired.

This complication of difficulties led to the danger of firing into their own pilot house. Soon after the action began both vessels were involved in volumes of smoke, which frequently enveloped them so as to render their outlines exceedingly indistinct, if not entirely concealed. This, together with the fact that the *Monitor's* turret was filled with smoke, might easily induce an excited gunner, already confused by the whirligig motion of the turret, and fully convinced that he must fire on the fly, to pull the lanyard as the beclouded outlines of the pilot house came into view. The speaking-tube that connected the pilot house with the turret was broken early in the action, so that all orders had to be transmitted verbally. This led to much delay in executing orders, and also caused errors, as the messenger intrusted to this duty was a landsman and frequently confused the technical terms he conveyed. Another great object constantly held in view by the sorely embarrassed men in the turret was to prevent the enemy from landing a shell within it. Such a disaster would be irreparable, as there were not enough men in the vessel to form a relief crew, even if the turret and guns were not disabled by such an explosion. The effect of heavy shot striking the turret was not serious unless men happened to be standing near the iron where the shot struck. Three men were knocked down in this way, including Chief-Engineer Stimers, who was

not seriously hurt. The other two men were carried below and recovered before the battle was over.

Despairing of injuring the *Monitor*, Lieutenant Jones made for the *Minnesota*, but in so doing he ran his vessel aground. In a short time, however, he got her afloat again. As the *Merrimac* approached the *Minnesota* the latter delivered full broadsides, but with no effect, although fifty solid shot were fired. The enemy responded with shells from his bow gun, one of which exploded amidships on the berth deck, and tore four rooms into one and started a fire. The second shell exploded the boiler of the steamer *Dragon* that was lying alongside the frigate. By the time the *Merrimac* fired her third shell at the *Minnesota* the *Monitor* was again in range, and the duel between the iron-clads was renewed. After hurling broadside after broadside at the *Monitor* with no effect, the *Merrimac* determined to try her ram, manœuvring some time for a position, and an opportunity at last presented itself. On went the ironclad at full speed, but her vigilant foe eluded the shock, so that only a slanting blow was given.

One of the men in the *Merrimac* wrote: "Nearly two hours passed, and many a shot and shell were exchanged at close quarters, with no perceptible damage to either side. The *Merrimac* is discouragingly cumbersome and unwieldy. To wind her for each broadside fifteen minutes are lost, while during all this time the *Monitor* is whirling around and about like a top, and the easy working of her turret and her precise and rapid movements elicit the wondering admiration of all. She is evidently invulnerable to our shell. Our next movement is to run her down. We ram her with all our force. But she is so flat and broad that she merely slides away from under our hull, as a floating door would slip away from under the cutwater of a barge. All that we could do was to push her. Lieutenant Jones now determined to board her, to choke

her turret in some way, and lash her to the *Merrimac*. The blood is rushing through our veins, the shrill pipe and the hoarse roar of the boatswain, 'Boarders away!' are heard, but lo, our enemy has hauled off into shoal water, where she is safe from our ship as if she was on the topmost peak of Blue Ridge." "Her bow passed over our deck," wrote Chief-Engineer Albans C. Stimers, who was a volunteer in the *Monitor*, to Ericsson, "and our sharp upper edge rail cut through the light iron shoe upon her stem, and well into her oak." At the instant of the collision Lieutenant Greene planted an 11-inch shot on the *Merrimac's* forward casemate, which crushed in the iron and shattered the wooden backing, but did no further damage. Had the gun been charged with fifty pounds of powder, the shot would have penetrated; but peremptory orders had been issued by the department to use only fifteen pounds in the charge, as the guns were new and were of extraordinarily large caliber for those days. On the other hand, had the *Merrimac* used solid shot, the effect of her blows on the *Monitor* would have been far more serious.

After two hours of incessant action the ammunition in the *Monitor's* turret began to fail, upon which Lieutenant Worden hauled off to replenish his stock. This could be done only when the scuttle in the revolving deck of the turret was exactly over a corresponding opening in the stationary deck immediately below it, which compelled Lieutenant Worden to retire from the action until ponderous shot were hoisted from the hold into the turret. This was the movement that led the *Merrimac's* people to believe that their antagonist was retreating. In this short lull Lieutenant Worden passed through the portholes of the turret to the deck, so as to get a better view of the situation.

In fifteen minutes the *Monitor* was again ready for the struggle and gallantly bore down on her huge antagonist, and the enemy, despairing of making any im-

pression on the turret, now concentrated their fire on the pilot house. About 11.30 A. M., while Lieutenant Worden was watching the enemy through a sight-hole in the pilot house, a shell struck on the outside not more than fifteen inches from him and exploded, filling his face and eyes with powder. For a moment it was thought that the pilot house was demolished, and Lieutenant Worden gave the order to sheer off, at the same time sending for Lieutenant Greene. The latter officer hastened forward and found his commander leaning against the ladder that led to the pilot house. As the dim yellow light of the ship's lantern fell upon Lieutenant Worden he presented a ghastly sight. Blood seemed to be oozing from every pore in his face, while with closed eyes he helplessly clung to the ladder for support. Lieutenant Greene assisted him to a sofa in his cabin, where he was attended by Dr. Logue; but even there the heroic man could not forget the great struggle that was going on above him, and constantly inquired about the progress of the battle, apparently forgetful of the intense pain caused by his wound. When told that the *Minnesota* had been saved, he said, "Then I can die happy."

The command of the *Monitor* now devolved upon Lieutenant Greene, who hastened to the pilot house and once more gave his attention to the foe. On examination, it was found that only the heavy iron plate had been fractured, while the steering gear remained intact. In the confusion of the moment, however, the *Monitor* had been drifting aimlessly about, but at noon she was again headed for the enemy. Lieutenant Jones, of the *Merrimac*, observing the *Monitor* running to shoal water where he could not follow her, determined to return to Norfolk. The *Monitor* fired two or three shot at her retiring foe, indicating her willingness to continue the fight, but the *Merrimac* held on her course up Elizabeth River, and the *Monitor* returned to her station by the side of the *Minnesota*,

which vessel was still hard aground. So little hope of the successful repulse of the *Merrimac* had been entertained by the officers of the *Minnesota*, that when Lieutenant Greene came aboard he found every preparation had been made to abandon and fire the ship.

In this fight between the ironclads the *Monitor* was struck nine times on her turret, twice on the pilot house, three times on the deck and eight times on her side. The deepest indentation was made by a shot that entered four inches into the iron on her side. One shell crushed in the turret two inches. The *Monitor* fired forty-one shot. Ninety-seven indentations of shot were found on the *Merrimac's* armor, twenty of which were from the 11-inch guns of the *Monitor*. None of her lower layers of iron plates were broken, but six of the top layers were smashed by the *Monitor's* shot.

After her action with the *Monitor* the *Merrimac* withdrew to Norfolk and was placed in dry dock for repairs. She was then supplied with a new steel ram, wrought-iron shutters were fitted to her ports, the hull for a distance of four feet below the casemate was covered with two-inch plates, and her rifled guns were supplied with steel-pointed solid shot. These changes increased her draught to twenty-three feet and reduced her speed to four knots. On the 11th of April she again steamed down Elizabeth river in command of Commodore Josiah Tattnall, with the expectation of meeting the *Monitor*, which at that time was anchored below Fort Monroe with the other National vessels. But the *Monitor* remained strictly on the defensive, as she was the only effective ironclad ship in the possession of the Government in any way capable of meeting the *Merrimac*. For much the same reason Commodore Tattnall was not permitted to run past Fort Monroe and attack the *Monitor*, as the loss of the *Merrimac* would expose the more important operations of the Confederate forces on land.

At this time the National naval force in Hampton



Roads, in anticipation of another attack from the *Merrimac*, had been increased to about twenty-five war vessels of all classes. The vital point to be gained by the Government at this time was to prevent the *Merrimac* from becoming mistress of these waters, and to attain this object every minor consideration was sacrificed. In the Union fleet was the swift river boat *Baltimore*, which drew only six inches forward, and it was proposed to drive her bow upon the submerged deck of the *Merrimac* and thus hold the ironclad steady while the other vessels took turns in ramming her. The vessels were anchored in two columns, one headed by the *Minnesota* and the other by the *Vanderbilt*, and all were held in readiness for immediate action. Of such great importance was the possession of Hampton Roads to the National cause that the *Monitor* was held in reserve, to be called into action only when the fleet of twenty-five vessels failed to accomplish the destruction of the *Merrimac*.

Observing three merchantmen anchored above Fort Monroe, the *Jamestown* made a gallant dash at them, and in spite of the heavy fire from the land batteries carried them off in triumph, amid cheers from the crew of the British corvette *Rinaldo*. Two of the prizes were brigs laden with supplies for McClellan's army. At another time the *Merrimac* again dropped down the Roads and exchanged a few shot with Fort Monroe, in hope of inducing the *Monitor* to give battle. On this occasion Commodore Tattnall had made preparations for his four gunboats to surround the *Monitor*, board her with overwhelming numbers, cover her gun ports and pilot house with tarpaulins, wedge the turret so it could not be used, and throw hand grenades into the turret and down the smokestack. The people in the *Monitor* were prepared for such an emergency, but they were still compelled by the orders of the Government to remain strictly on the defensive.

An effort has been made to show that the action be-

tween the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac*, if not a victory for the latter, was at least a drawn battle. It is difficult to understand how such a conclusion could be arrived at. On the morning of March 9th the *Merrimac* came out with the avowed purpose of destroying the remaining ships in Hampton Roads, knowing at that time that the *Monitor* had arrived, for, says a Southern account, on the evening of March 8th "one of the pilots chanced, about 11 P. M., to be looking in the direction of the *Congress*, when there passed a strange-looking craft, brought out in bold relief by the brilliant light of the burning ship, which he at once proclaimed to be the *Ericsson* [*Monitor*]. We were therefore not surprised in the morning to see the *Monitor* at anchor near the *Minnesota*." This shows that the *Merrimac*, on the morning of March 9th, assumed the offensive, knowing that the *Monitor* was among the National ships. It is also shown by Southern records that on that memorable day the *Monitor* at no time assumed any but a defensive position. The *Monitor* entered Hampton Roads with the avowed purpose of preventing the destruction of the National ships. On the evening of March 9th the *Merrimac* retired from Hampton Roads without having accomplished her object, but the *Monitor* had accomplished hers. On the morning of March 9th the *Merrimac* was master of the situation in Hampton Roads, but in the evening of that day the *Monitor* was. If the argument that because the *Monitor* did not capture her antagonist she did not win a complete victory is held good, then General Jackson did not win the battle of New Orleans, because the British army was not captured; Wellington did not win at Waterloo, because Napoleon's army was allowed to escape; and a long list of celebrated naval victories were not victories because the bulk of the defeated squadron escaped. After the battle the *Monitor* was ordered to protect the National ships at Hampton Roads but attempt nothing further. This she did in

the most effectual manner. More than one battle has been won by masterly inactivity, and the destruction of the *Merrimac* a few weeks later was directly due to the prolonged presence of the *Monitor* in the Roads acting strictly on the defensive.

Realizing that shot and shell could not be relied upon to destroy the *Merrimac*, the Government collected a large fleet of vessels in Hampton Roads, determined to crush the "monster" by sheer weight. Rumors of the *Merrimac's* coming out as soon as her repairs were finished came to the Nationalists from time to time, and stimulated them to greater exertions, and by April 9, 1862, twenty-five unarmored vessels, besides the *Monitor*, under the orders of Flag-Officer Goldsborough, were in the Roads. The most important of these were the *Minnesota*, *Susquehanna*, *Dakota*, *Seminole*, *San Jacinto*, *Octorara*, *Wachusett*, *Aroostook*, *Maratanza*, *Vanderbilt*, *Oriole*, *Aroga*, *Rhode Island*, *Illinois*, *Stevens*, *Ericsson* and *Baltimore*.

The last was "a light river boat, side wheeler, of great speed and curved bow, drawing only six inches forward and six feet aft, held in front for the purpose of being forced upon one of the nearly submerged ends of the *Merrimac*, if possible, either forward or abaft the superstructure, according to circumstances, in order to render the ironclad immovable, and while thus held she was to be rammed by the vessels of the National fleet."<sup>1</sup> This great fleet was anchored in two columns, headed by the *Minnesota* and *Vanderbilt*, about a mile and a half east of Fort Monroe, the right column consisting of merchant vessels and the left of war craft. The *Monitor* and *Stevens* were held in reserve in case the wooden ships failed to destroy the *Merrimac*. Of these vessels only the *Vanderbilt* had her bow protected with iron.

On April 11th the *Merrimac*, accompanied by the

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<sup>1</sup> Rear-Admiral Thomas Stowell Phelps to the author.

gunboats *Jamestown* and *Raleigh* and four other vessels,' ventured into the Roads, the gunboats promptly seizing two brigs and a schooner which had grounded near Beaches Landing, having moved over to that side of the road in disobedience to orders. After reaching Middle Ground, however, the *Merrimac* remained stationary, and late in the afternoon retired toward her mooring, above Craney Island. "The boats of an English and a French man-of-war anchored northward of Newport News shoal were observed to communicate with the *Merrimac*, and about 2 P. M. the French ship weighed, and running leeward of the fleet her commander boarded the *Minnesota*, and in conversation with the flag officer remarked that during his interview with Commodore Tattnall that officer had stated "that he perfectly understood Goldsborough's plans, and did not propose to subject his ship to certain destruction, thus explaining why he refrained from attempting to accomplish the object of his visit to the Roads."¹ Soon afterward the *Merrimac* returned to Norfolk for necessary repairs.

The subsequent careers of these celebrated ironclads were short and tragic. In the following May Norfolk was abandoned by the Confederates, and on the 10th of that month the *Merrimac* was set on fire and on the following morning she blew up. Five days later the crews of the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac* again met in battle, the latter being on shore. After the destruction of the *Merrimac* her men were ordered to assist in the defenses of Richmond, and with great efforts they erected a battery of three 32-pounders and two 64-pounders at Drewry's Bluff, and on May 15th the ironclad *Galena* (Commander John Rodgers), the *Monitor*, the *Port Royal* and the *Naugatuck* came up the river within six hundred yards of this battery and opened

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¹ Private Journal of Rear-Admiral Trenchard.

² Rear-Admiral Thomas Stowell Phelps to the author.

fire. Owing to the great height of the bluffs on which the Confederate batteries were placed, the fire from the gunboats was not so effective, but two guns of the battery were dismantled, and several Confederates were killed or wounded. After a battle of four hours the vessels retired. The *Galena* in this affair had thirteen killed and eleven wounded, the *Port Royal* one wounded, and the *Naugatuck* two wounded; total, thirteen killed and fourteen wounded. A sheet-iron breastwork about four feet high had been placed on the *Monitor's* turret as a protection against sharpshooters.

On the 29th of December the *Monitor*, Commander John Pine Bankhead, in company with the steamer *Rhode Island*, Captain Stephen Decatur Trenchard, sailed for Beaufort, N. C. Unusual precautions were taken to insure the safety of the ironclad, as her experiences on her trip from New York to Hampton Roads in the spring gave well-grounded cause for anxiety. Commander Trenchard accordingly gave the following night orders: "The officer of the deck is directed to have a very bright lookout kept off the bow and beam. He will sound at ten o'clock and inform me of the depth of water; also at four o'clock in the morning. The course will be south-southeast as at present steered until order is changed. Keep a sharp lookout upon the *Monitor* astern, and should she signal *attend to it at once*; then report to me. Inform me of every change of wind and weather. The speed of the steamer should be regulated by the sea. If it increases, moderate the speed; if smooth, increase it. Inform me when the steamer has made sixty miles from 10 P. M."<sup>1</sup>

The following day was pleasant, and when off Hatteras Shoals the steamer *State of Georgia*, with the monitor *Passaic* in tow, passed them to the northeast, and the steamer *Cahanta* with a troop-ship tow came

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<sup>1</sup> Private Journal of Rear-Admiral Trenchard.

in sight. About 7 P. M. the wind increased in violence, and at 9 P. M. Bankhead signaled the *Rhode Island* to stop. "Finding that the *Monitor* had fallen off into the trough of the sea and that the waves were making a complete breach over her, we started the engines again. The steamer soon brought her head to the wind under easy steam, when the *Monitor* appeared to make better weather.

"At 11 P. M. Captain Bankhead signaled that he required assistance, and upon stopping the engines and on the *Monitor* ranging up alongside, he hailed, and said, 'The *Monitor* is sinking!' Our boats were immediately cleared away, and arrangements were made to get the officers and crew from the sinking ironclad to the *Rhode Island* with as little delay as possible. The port hawser with which we were towing the *Monitor* had parted in the early part of the evening, and the stream cable was cut by some one on board the ironclad. About eleven o'clock, or soon afterward, our boats succeeded in getting nearly all on board, and the first cutter had started to get the remainder on board, when, unhappily, about 1.30 A. M. on the 31st of December the *Monitor* suddenly disappeared. Acting-Master's Mate D. Rodney Brown was in charge of the cutter, having with him Charles H. Smith, coxswain, Morris Wagg, coxswain, Hugh Logan, captain of the afterguard, Lewis A. Horton, seaman, George Moore, seaman, Luke M. Griswold, ordinary seaman, and John Jones, landsman, who composed the crew of the boat. We lost sight of the cutter, and kept as near the position as possible until daylight, and then cruised up in the direction of Hatteras Shoals for the remainder of the day in hopes of picking up our boat."<sup>1</sup> Nothing was seen of the boat, however, and the *Rhode Island* made for Beaufort.

The fate of this heroic boat's crew was almost as

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<sup>1</sup> Private Journal of Rear-Admiral Trenchard.

tragic as that of the *Monitor* herself, as the Rhode Islanders learned several days later. Brown, after having made two trips to the *Monitor*, started on the third, and after leaving the *Rhode Island* he saw the red lights burning at the flagstaff of the *Monitor* and apparently about one mile distant.<sup>1</sup> As the sea and the wind were "against him he made but little progress, yet he continued gaining until within a quarter of a mile of the *Monitor*, when the light suddenly became extinguished. It appeared to settle gradually in the water as he approached her, and then it disappeared altogether. When he approached to what he supposed to be the position of the vessel, he could perceive no other trace of her except an eddy produced by the sinking craft. He remained near that position as long as he deemed prudent, in order to rescue any of the crew who might be in the water; but he found none. He then started for the *Rhode Island*, which then appeared to be two miles distant, the weather being overcast and attended with a slight rain, the wind hauling off to the north. Soon afterward he lost sight of the *Rhode Island*, but in a few minutes saw the first, second and third lights. This is the last he saw of the *Rhode Island* that night. He then made a drag of the boat's mast by which he kept her head to the sea, the men being constantly on the lookout for a signal. As none could be seen, he then made for the northward and westward, finding the sea too rough to pull directly to the west, hoping to fall in with some coasting vessel.

"Mr. Brown kept the boat's crew pulling all night in order to overcome the great strength of the current. He thought that if they did not do this they would drift far away from the track of all vessels before daylight. At break of day he discovered a schooner some four or five miles away from them. He also mentioned

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<sup>1</sup> Brown's official report to Commander Trenchard.

seeing a small boat some distance off with two or three men in her, observing her as she rose two or three times upon the crest of a wave and then disappearing. At this time Brown's crew was engrossed with the management of their own boat, the sea being very irregular and the waves seeming to come from all quarters. After losing sight of the schooner referred to, Mr. Brown saw a large ship close hauled, the wind being from the northward and eastward. He had approached her sufficiently near to make out the men upon her decks, but she passed on without noticing his signals for assistance. He then pulled directly in for the land, which he estimated to be about ten miles distant. This was about half past nine o'clock in the morning of December 31st, and about an hour afterward he made a schooner to leeward. He got up the crew's coats in order to make the sail, and broke some of his oars to assist in rigging the sail. He then ran down for the schooner, and about eleven o'clock managed to get alongside. The schooner proved to be the *A. Colby*, commanded by H. D. Harriman, of Buckport, Me., bound for Fernandina, with bricks for Government use. Mr. Brown and his crew were received with every kindness.

"The cutter was taken aboard the schooner, and Mr. Harriman was requested to change his course so far as to land the officers and men at Beaufort, N. C. This he consented to do, but in running in for the coast, with a view of ascertaining more correctly his position, having been without an observation for several days, his schooner struck on Diamond Shoals, off Cape Hatteras. Being laden with brick, which strained the vessel dangerously every time she struck bottom, it was feared that the *A. Colby* would soon go to pieces. As it was, she began to leak dangerously. Mr. Harriman managed to get her afloat, and, continuing on his course for Beaufort, he anchored that night under the land near Cape Hatteras inlet. The men were kept



constantly at work pumping out the water as fast as it leaked in. On the following day they sighted a steamer, and made the signal of distress. Harriman went aboard the vessel, which proved to be the United States gunboat *Miami*, Captain Townsend. Mr. Harriman reported the situation of his schooner and the crew, upon which Captain Townsend dispatched a boat with twelve men to assist in getting the schooner into port.

“That same afternoon they started for Beaufort, reaching there on the morning of the 2d of January.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Maclay's Reminiscences of the Old Navy.

## CHAPTER VII.

### FORTS HENRY AND DONELSON.

THE Mississippi River has been called the "Backbone of the Rebellion." From the outbreak the Confederate leaders realized its importance in extending their territory westward, and the more ambitious looked to an ultimate formation, with the West India Islands and Mexico, of one great slave empire. Possession of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers from Smithland to New Orleans gave them the control of the Red, Arkansas, White, Tennessee and Cumberland, while the conquest of the enormous basin drained by their confluents they hoped would follow in the course of time. It would be difficult to exaggerate the important part that the Mississippi River played in this great struggle. In New Orleans, the center of the mightiest river system in the world, the Confederacy possessed a considerable plant for building ironclads, casting great guns and making small arms, and there skilled mechanics were in sympathy with the cause. From the fertile State of Texas—which, being remote from the seat of war, escaped its ravages—immense supplies of beef were driven across the Mississippi to the Confederate army, long after the seaboard States had been exhausted. At New Orleans enormous quantities of cotton, collected from hundreds of miles around and placed on swift vessels, eluded the vigilance of the blockaders, and on returning supplied the secessionists with arms and munitions of war.

No one was more alive to the importance of this stream than the Confederate leaders themselves. From

the beginning their most skillful engineers were engaged in fortifying its banks from Columbus to Forts Jackson and St. Philip. A large portion of the money and the strength of the South was massed along this river, presenting a frowning gantlet through which, it was confidently asserted, "no craft afloat could pass." Every strategic point was crowned with bristling batteries, and the most difficult bends were obstructed until one formidable line of fortifications guarded the river for a thousand miles. Beginning at the north, the Confederates erected strong batteries at Columbus, Island No. 10, Fort Pillow, Vicksburg (which may be regarded as the citadel of their river system of fortifications), Grand Gulf, Port Hudson, Baton Rouge and Forts Jackson and St. Philip; so that, should they lose either end of the line, their troops need only to fall back on the next post, gradually concentrating their forces with each defeat, until their entire strength massed at Vicksburg might well defy the armies of the North. The northernmost line of defense began at Columbus, and extended eastward by Forts Henry and Donelson on the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers, through Bowling Green to Mill Spring.

The first measure taken by the Government for the repossession of the Mississippi was the construction of a squadron of gunboats suitable for river navigation and operations against heavy land batteries. No naval station, dockyard or arsenal had been established on the Mississippi or its tributaries, as an enemy had not been expected in that quarter, so that the great undertaking of building a flotilla of war vessels had to begin with constructing the plant for such work. This task was at first assumed by the War Department, as it was thought that the fortifications on the Mississippi would be attacked principally by land forces and only a few transports would be required. In the spring of 1861 James Buchanan Eads and Commander John Rodgers went to Cairo and began the work of creating

an inland navy. In May, Commander Rodgers went to Cincinnati, where he purchased the side-wheel steamers *Conestoga*, *A. O. Tyler* and *Lexington*. Their boilers and steam pipes were lowered into the hold and were partially protected by coal bunkers, while oak bulwarks five inches thick, and pierced for guns, shielded the crew from musketry. The *Conestoga* was armed with four smooth-bore 32-pounders, the *Tyler*, renamed *Taylor*, with six 8-inch shell guns and three rifled 30-pounders, while the *Lexington* mounted four 8-inch smooth-bore guns, one 32-pounder and two rifled 30-pounders. On the 12th of August these improvised war vessels were taken to Cairo. In the earlier operations these gunboats did not carry rifled guns, and at the battle of Belmont they did not have stern guns.

In the mean time the War Department advertised for seven flat-bottomed vessels, capable of mounting thirteen heavy guns each, and drawing not more than six feet of water. They were to be about six hundred tons burden, fitted with high-pressure engines, capable of steaming nine miles an hour, to be one hundred and seventy-five feet long and fifty-one and a half feet wide. Their wooden hulls had sides inclined inward from the water's edge at an angle of thirty-five degrees. As these vessels were expected to fight bows on, the forward casemate was built with twenty-four inches of solid oak, covered with two and a half inches of iron. The same thickness of iron was laid abreast of the boilers and engines, but without the wood backing, which left the stern and the sides, forward and abaft of the machinery, vulnerable. The conical pilot house was built with heavy oak and plated on the forward side with two and a half inches of iron, and on the after side with one and a half inches of iron. The armaments of these gunboats were made up of such cannon as could be picked up at the moment. Thirty-five old-fashioned 42-pounders supplied by the army were rifled, which weakened them, as they were not re-

enforced by steel bands. They were always regarded as dangerous, and several of them burst.

These vessels were to be propelled by a wheel in the middle, sixty feet forward of the stern, covered by the casemate. This left a chasm in the stern of the same width as the paddle wheel, eighteen feet. This chasm in the hull of the vessel was planked over and was called the fantail. These vessels mounting thirteen guns (generally three 8-inch shell guns, six 32-pounders and four rifled 42-pounders), were named the *De Kalb* (*St. Louis*), the *Carondelet*, the *Cincinnati*, the *Louisville*, the *Mound City*, the *Cairo* and the *Pittsburgh*. They were built by Mr. Eads. They were begun in August, 1861, and by working day and night and seven days in the week they were launched and ready for their armaments and crews within one hundred days.

Before the completion of these ironclads Mr. Eads converted the snag boat *Benton*, of about one thousand tons burden, into a formidable gunboat. She was constructed on two hulls, twenty feet apart, which were braced together with heavy timbers, the space between the two hulls being planked so that there was a continuous flat bottom. The upper side was decked over in the same manner, and by extending the outer sides of the two hulls until they joined each other forward and aft the twin boats became one wide substantial hull. The false bottom of the *Benton* was carried within fifty feet of the stern, where it was brought up to the deck so as to leave a space open for a wheel, which was turned by the original engine of the snag boat. Thus altered, the *Benton* was two hundred and two feet long and had seventy-two feet beam. A casemate covered with iron plates was built on her deck, slanting inward at an angle of about thirty-five degrees, and this casemate was carried up so as to cover the wheel. On the bow the casemate was plated with three and a half inches of iron backed by thirty inches of oak, while the wheelhouse and stern were covered with

two and a half inches of iron and twelve inches of oak. The rest of the casemate was covered with  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch iron. Thus completed, the *Benton* drew nine feet of water and made about five miles an hour. She was armed with two 9-inch shell guns, four rifled 42-pounders, two rifled 50-pounders and eight smooth-bore 32-pounders. Another vessel, the *Essex*, named after the *Essex* of the War of 1812, and commanded by William David Porter, a son of Captain David Porter, was armed with one 10-inch, three 9-inch, one 32-pounder and two rifled 50-pounders. Besides these vessels there were thirty-eight mortar boats or rafts, each mounting one 13-inch mortar. Commander Porter had two sons in the Confederate service.

The difficulty of manning these vessels was even greater than that of building them. Their crews, as finally brought together, consisted of landmen, steamboat hands, soldiers and seamen. Five hundred sailors arrived from the Atlantic States in November, 1861, and on the 23d of December eleven hundred troops were ordered for the service from Washington. The mixed character of these crews gave rise to many difficulties, Major-General Halleck insisting that the officers of the regiments from which the troops came should accompany the men and owe no obedience to naval officers except to a commander of the gunboat. This necessarily caused confusion and prevented a large number of troops from serving. On the 30th of August, 1861, Captain Andrew Hull Foote was appointed commander of the Western flotilla. Arriving at Cairo on the 12th of September, he found his movements greatly embarrassed by "want of funds and material for naval purposes." At the time of his arrival he had only the rank corresponding to colonel, and he very properly complained that "every brigadier could interfere with him." Even when he received his appointment as flag officer, November 13, 1862, which gave him the relative rank of major-general, the naval

officers under him were constantly liable to be harassed by conflicting orders from any superior army officer under whom they might be serving. With this eminently improper complication of authority the early operations of the Western flotilla were carried on, and it is greatly to the credit of both the navy and the army officers that they got along as harmoniously as they did. It was not until July, 1863, that the fleet was transferred to the Navy Department. There is another class of men who served in these gunboats who should be honorably mentioned—the pilots. These men, although denied all the professional advantages of officers, and cut off from all hope of regular promotion, served, as a rule, loyally and with conspicuous gallantry all through the naval operations on the Western rivers. It called for unusual bravery to act as a pilot in this service, as it was well known that the pilot house would be the first and last target of the enemy, for, the pilot killed or disabled, the gunboat was practically thrown out of action. The pilot house might well be called the slaughter pen, for in the action at Fort Henry two pilots were killed—Marshall H. Ford and James McBride; in the Fort Donelson affair two more were killed—Frank Riley and William Hinton—and others were wounded, two of the gunboats dropping out of action largely for this reason. Another pilot was killed just above Fort Donelson, while the number of officers who were killed or wounded in their pilot houses shows that it was pre-eminently a post of danger.

The neutral attitude assumed by Kentucky at the outbreak of the war at first made both sides reluctant to invade her territory; but early in September the Confederates occupied Columbus and Hickman, upon which General Grant seized Paducah and Smithland. In September, Grant, who was in command of the troops in Cairo, determined to march against Norfolk, eight or nine miles below, where a considerable body

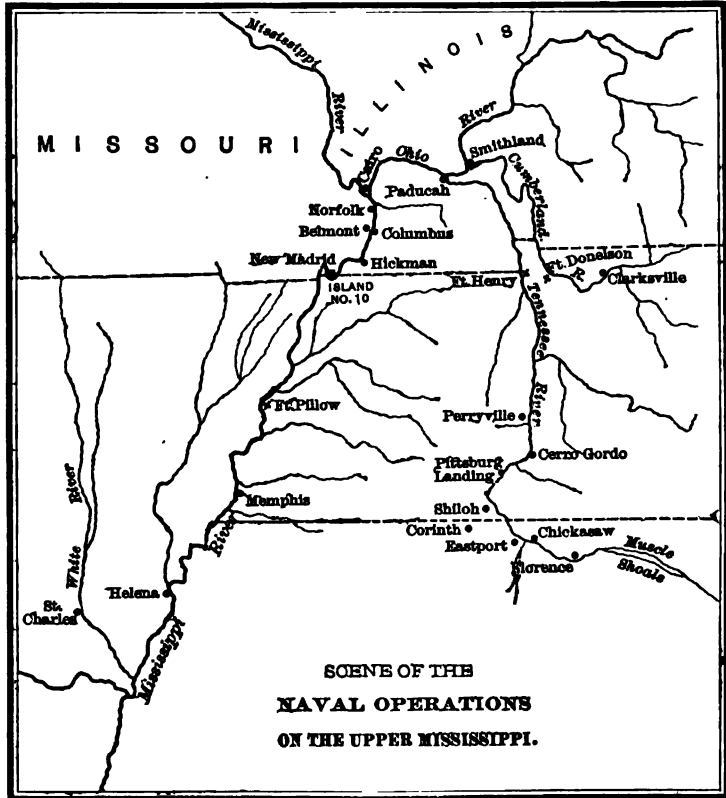
of Confederates had assembled. Accordingly, on the 10th of September the gunboats *Lexington*, Commander Roger N. Stembel, and *Conestoga*, Lieutenant S. Ledyard Phelps, dropped down the river so as to support the troops. A few miles down the *Lexington* was fired upon by a battery of sixteen field pieces, supported by a body of cavalry that assisted in moving the artillery from place to place along the river bank. But the Confederate guns were too light to effect much damage, and shells from the gunboats, bursting among the horsemen, scattered them.

The *Lexington* pursued and drove them under the guns of their fortifications at Columbus. On the same afternoon the Confederate gunboat *Yankee* came up the river and opened fire at long range on the *Conestoga* and the *Lexington*. The first shot from the *Conestoga's* heavy gun compelled the *Yankee* to retreat, and when she was about two miles distant an 8-inch shell from the *Lexington* exploded on her starboard wheelhouse, which so injured her that only one engine could be used in reaching Columbus. As the National gunboats were retiring from this skirmish one man was severely wounded by fire from an ambush. On the 24th of September the *Lexington* moved up the Ohio River, where she was joined a few days later by the *Conestoga*, and visited several points on the Cumberland, Tennessee, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. The appearance of these gunboats did much toward keeping alive the spirit of loyalty to the National cause. On the 28th of October the *Conestoga* broke up a Confederate camp on the Cumberland, inflicting a loss of several killed and wounded. Although these operations were not important, yet they proved to be excellent practice for the green crews, and accustomed them to the strange craft they were manning.

Early in November Grant advanced upon Belmont for the purpose of destroying a Confederate camp, and also to prevent the enemy from sending troops into Mis-



souri to interfere with an expedition that had been sent into that State for the purpose of driving General M. Jeff. Thompson out of it. Accordingly, on the evening of November 6th, the *Tyler*, Commander Henry Walke,



and the *Lexington*, Commander Stembel, dropped down the river to convoy a half dozen transports, and engaged the batteries at Columbus with a view of diverting the enemy's attention from the real point of attack. Moving in a circle so as to prevent the enemy establishing the range, these gunboats, on November 7th, opened fire; but as they were not capable of engaging the formidable batteries at close quarters, they soon

drew out of range. They returned, however, several times during the day and opened a spirited fire. In the last attack a shot passed obliquely through the *Tyler's* side, deck and scantling, killed one man and wounded two others. Finding that the firing in the direction of Belmont had ceased, the gunboat discharged a few more broadsides and then returned to the landing where the transports were anchored. The troops under General Grant, having accomplished their purpose, were returning, and soon appeared at the landing, pursued by a superior force of Confederates. As the Southerners eagerly pressed forward in anticipation of cutting off the retreat of the National troops before they could embark in their transports, the gunboats opened with shell and grape.

An eyewitness says: "The enemy planted their fresh artillery, supported by infantry, in a cornfield just above our transports with the intention of sinking them when we started up the river, and of bagging the entire army; but thanks to the gunboats *Tyler* and *Lexington* and their experienced gunners, they saved us from a terrible doom. They took up a position between us and the enemy and opened their guns upon them, letting slip a whole broadside at once. This movement was performed so quickly that the Confederates could not fire on us. Their guns were silenced as soon as they opened, or probably were dismounted. The first shot from the gunboats made a perfect lane through the enemy's ranks." The Confederates endeavored to reply with musketry, but without effect, and the fire from the gunboats soon put them to flight. As the National vessels were returning to Cairo Commander Walke learned that some of our troops had been left behind. He promptly put down the river and met straggling groups of soldiers who were directed to go on board the transports. Satisfied that all had been rescued, Walke rejoined the vessels up the river.

On the 11th of January, 1862, Commander Porter, of the *Essex*, was informed that seven Confederate steamers, having in tow a floating battery, were moving up the river from Columbus. Immediately signaling Lieutenant Leonard Paulding, of the *De Kalb*, Commander Porter stood down the river. A heavy fog obstructed the view until about ten o'clock, when the mist rolled aside and revealed a large vessel at the head of a bend, in company with two steamers. The National gunboats immediately bore down to close. When at long range the enemy opened with a heavy shell gun, and the missile struck a sandbar and ricocheted within two hundred yards of the *Essex*, when it exploded. The *Essex* did not immediately reply, but moved steadily downstream until at long range, when the *De Kalb* discharged a rifled gun, immediately after which the *Essex* opened, and for twenty minutes an animated fire was maintained on both sides. At the end of this time the enemy retired, rounding to once in a while to fire a broadside. The *Essex* and the *De Kalb* kept up a running fight until the chase, in a crippled condition, ran under the cover of the battery above Columbus.

The first of the three strongholds that constituted the Confederate northern line of defense in the West was Fort Henry, on Tennessee River. This was an earthwork with five bastions on low ground at a bend in the river, mounting one 10-inch columbiad, one 6-inch rifled gun, two 42-pounders, eight 32-pounders, five 18-pounders and four 12-pounders. The garrison consisted of the Fourth and Seventh Mississippi, the First Kentucky, one Louisiana regiment, and a cavalry company under the command of Brigadier-General Lloyd Tilghman. The plan of attack was to send fifteen regiments of infantry, with several batteries of artillery and a body of horse, to make a reconnoissance toward Columbus, with a view of deceiving the enemy as to the real point of attack. At the same time Brig-

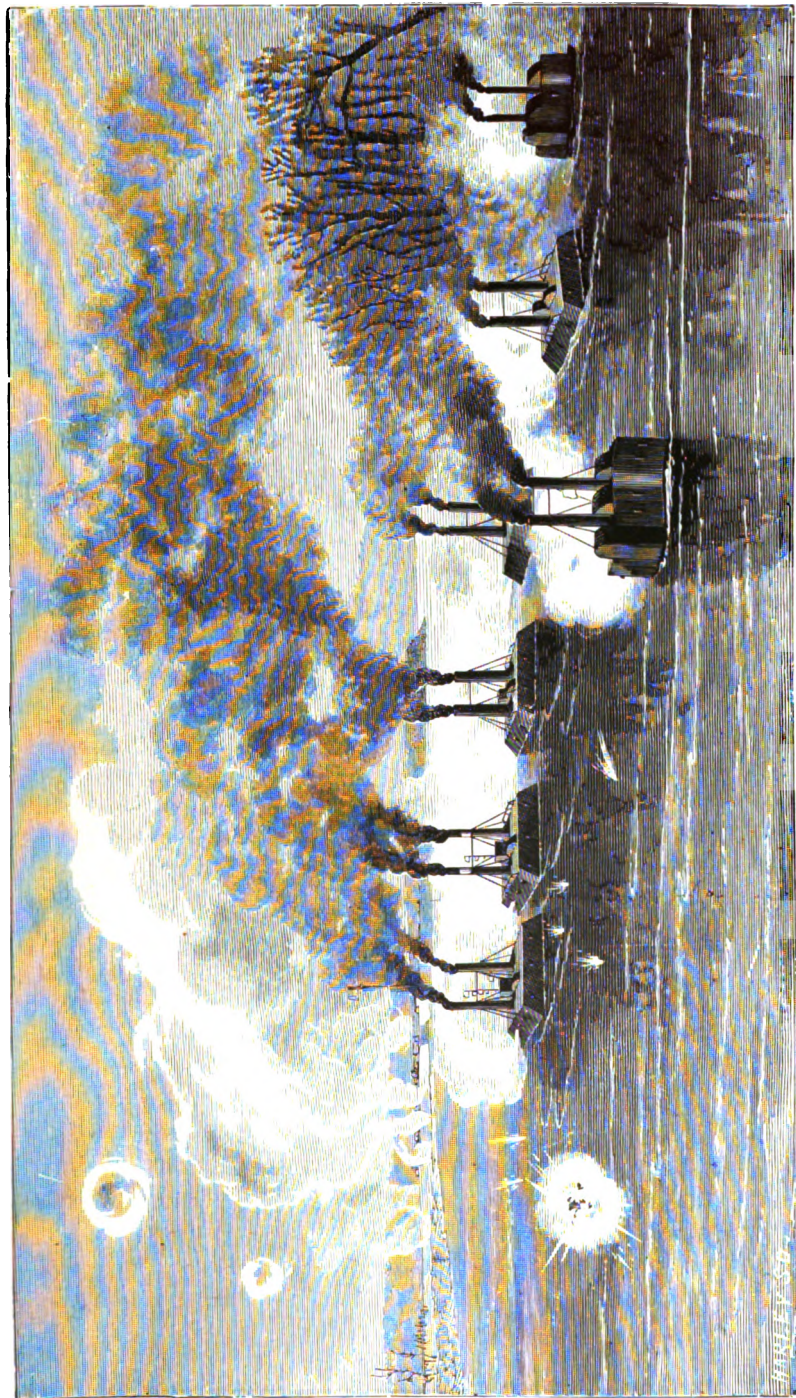
adier-General C. F. Smith, with six thousand men, was to march overland to Forts Henry and Donelson, but on reaching Paducah they were to return, so as to lead the enemy to believe that the expedition on Fort Henry had been abandoned.

On the morning of February 2, 1862, the naval part of the expedition, under command of Captain Foote, left Cairo, and in the evening it reached the mouth of Tennessee River. This force consisted of the *Cincinnati* (flagship), Commander Stembel; the *Essex*, Commander Porter; the *Carondelet*, Commander Walke; the *De Kalb*, Lieutenant Paulding; and the wooden gunboats *Conestoga*, Lieutenant Phelps; *Lexington*, Lieutenant James W. Shirk; and *Tyler*, Lieutenant William Gwin. These vessels when approaching the fort were ordered to keep in constant motion by steaming ahead or dropping back with the current, so as to destroy the enemy's range, at the same time keeping their heavily protected bows toward the fort. On the 4th of February the squadron anchored six miles below Fort Henry, where the troops were landed and stationed at several points, so as to prevent reinforcements from reaching the garrison and cut off all avenues of escape in case the fort surrendered. On the 5th of March General Grant and his staff went aboard the *Essex* and ran close up to the forts to reconnoiter. While they were thus engaged the enemy opened fire and sent a shot through the officers' quarters and into the steerage, upon which the *Essex* drew out of range and returned to her anchorage.

Heavy rains had raised the river to an unusual height, and had so accelerated the current that at times it required a full head of steam and both anchors to keep some of the ironclads in place. Immense quantities of logs and trees also came down the river, keeping the officers and men at work day and night to disencumber their vessels. Although this unlooked-for difficulty exhausted the crews before the attack was

begun, yet it proved a most fortunate occurrence, inasmuch as the torpedoes that the enemy had thickly planted in the river were dragged from their moorings and carried harmlessly away. At 10.20 A. M. on the 6th of February signal was made for the gunboats to clear for action, and half an hour later they got under way and steamed up the river, the four ironclads leading the way, the *Carondelet* and the *De Kalb*, lashed together, on the left wing, as the stream was narrow at this point, while the *Cincinnati* and the *Essex* were on the right, thus presenting an ironclad battery of twelve guns toward the enemy. The three wooden gunboats followed about a mile astern. At 11.30 A. M. the ironclads, rounding a bend in the stream, suddenly came in full view of the fort, and an hour later, while at a distance of seventeen hundred yards, the *Cincinnati* fired the first shot as the signal for the battle to open. This promptly drew the enemy's fire, and their rifled shells were soon heard on all sides. The ironclads steadily pushed up the stream until about four hundred and fifty yards from the fort, where they maintained a well-contested action. At first the Confederates fired with greater precision than the gunboats, as they had long since obtained the exact range of the position that any vessel must take in approaching; but as the National gunboats drew nearer their fire became effective and the walls of the fort rapidly crumbled before the blows of solid shot and exploding shell. The Confederate gunners were much exposed in their open earthwork, while their opponents were partially protected by casemates.

A little before one o'clock a shot penetrated the *Essex's* armor just above a porthole on the port side, killing Acting-Master's-Mate S. B. Brittan, Jr., and pierced the middle boiler. Instantly the forward gunroom was filled with scalding steam, which caused fearful havoc. Those who could rushed aft, others leaped into the river through the ports, while Commander



Tyler.

Conestoga.

Essex.  
Lexington.

Cincinnati.

Carondelet.

De Kalb.

*Bombardment of Fort Henry.*



Porter himself barely escaped with his life through a port on the starboard side. He was badly wounded, and was rescued from the river by a seaman named John Walker. Twenty-eight men were scalded, and many of them died. The shellman of gun No. 2, James Coffey, was found on his knees in the act of taking a shell from the box. While he was in this position the scalding steam had struck him full in the face, killing him instantly. The two pilots were found dead in the pilot house, one of them, Marshall Ford, with his left hand holding a spoke of the wheel and his right hand grasping the signal-bell rope. Thus crippled, the *Essex* drifted out of action, but the remaining ironclads maintained the battle with unflinching zeal and made encouraging progress, for two of the enemy's guns were disabled, one by bursting and the 10-inch columbiad by having its priming-wire jammed in the vent.

"Precisely forty minutes past one' the enemy, after a most determined resistance, surrendered, and shortly afterward the fort was occupied by a detachment of seamen under Commander Walke. While the *Essex* was drifting helplessly out of action the news of the surrender reached her, and a seaman named Jasper T. Breas, who was badly scalded, sprang to his feet exclaiming, 'Surrender! I must see that with my own eyes before I die.' Before any one could interfere he clambered up two short flights of stairs to the spar deck, shouted 'Glory to God!' and sank exhausted. He died that night."

In this sharp action the *De Kalb* was struck seven times, but none of her people were hurt. Thirty-one shot struck the *Cincinnati*, and one, passing through a paddle wheel, killed one man and wounded several others. Two of her guns were disabled, while her smokestack, after cabin and boats were riddled through and through. The *Carondelet* fired one hundred and

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<sup>1</sup> Correspondent of the Cincinnati Gazette.



seven shot and shell. She was struck thirty times, eight shot taking effect within two feet of the bow ports on a direct line with the boiler ; but none of her men were injured. The *Essex* fired in all seventy-two shot from her two 9-inch guns. Her total loss was thirty-two killed, wounded or missing. The wooden gunboats, being less formidable to the Confederates, escaped with little notice. Aside from the men who were injured by scalding, the squadron had two men killed and nine wounded. The enemy's loss is placed at five killed, eleven wounded and five missing. Seventy-eight prisoners were taken, while the remainder of the garrison, numbering two thousand five hundred and fifty-eight men, escaped to Fort Donelson.

Immediately upon the surrender of the fort the gunboats *Conestoga*, *Tyler* and *Lexington* hastened up the river in pursuit of several steamers which were seen getting under way. Toward evening they reached a railroad bridge twenty-five miles up the river, and the enemy, after passing it, had jammed the machinery for hoisting the draw so that it could not be readily raised. Observing the escaping vessels on the other side, and believing them to be laden with troops and valuable stores, Lieutenant Phelps ordered some men ashore, and after an hour of hard work they managed to force the draw. The *Tyler* was then left to destroy the railroad, while the *Conestoga* and the *Lexington* resumed the pursuit, and with such success that toward midnight two of the chase were blown up by their own men. So great was the force of the explosion that, although the National gunboats were half a mile away, much of their glass work was broken in, the doors were started and the light upper deck lifted. On the evening of the next day (February 7th) the gunboats reached Cerro Gordo, where they captured the large steamer *Eastport*, which was being plated with iron.

The *Tyler* was left to guard the *Eastport* and take aboard large quantities of lumber, while the *Lexington*

and the *Conestoga* continued up the river. At Chickasaw two steamers were captured, one laden with iron. Pushing on to Muscle Shoals, the gunboats captured three steamers that had been set on fire by the enemy, and a portion of their cargo and military stores was saved. Returning down the river, a detachment of men was landed to destroy the baggage and stores of a Confederate camp that had been hastily abandoned. The gunboats returned to Cairo with the *Eastport* and one steamer on the 11th. The *Eastport* was built on a beautiful model and had great speed. Her hull was sheathed with oak, and bulwarks of oak increased her strength. When she was taken into the National service her boilers were lowered into the hold. In the Red River expedition, two years later, she was partially destroyed by a torpedo, and, finding that it was impossible to save her, Phelps, then lieutenant commander, blew her up.

The next attack on the Confederate northerly line of defense was directed against Fort Donelson. This work was built on a bold bluff one hundred and twenty feet above the level of Cumberland River, on the west side, about twelve miles from Fort Henry. It was garrisoned by fifteen thousand troops under Brigadier-Generals Gideon Johnson Pillow and Simon Bolivar Buckner. The defenses of the place were divided into three batteries, the first mounting nine 32-pounders and one 10-inch columbiad, about twenty feet above the water's edge; another, armed with one columbiad, rifled as a 32-pounder, and two 32-pound carronades, about fifty feet above the river; while a third battery, mounting three or four heavy guns, crowned the bluff. On the 12th of February the *Carondelet*, Commander Walke, towed by the transport *Alps*, arrived a few miles below this formidable work, and, casting off boldly, steamed toward the Confederates to engage them single-handed; but everything about the fort was quiet; not a gunner was to be seen. At 12.50 the

*Carondelet* announced her presence by the discharge of her three bow shell guns ; but even this failed to draw a response, and after ten shells had been dropped in and around the silent batteries Commander Walke retired and anchored three miles below, the enemy at this time being wholly engrossed by a land movement of the twenty thousand troops under General Grant. The Confederate sharpshooters on the banks, however, soon gave evidence of their presence, and were constantly on the watch to pick off any man exposing himself outside of the casemates or in the open ports.

The next morning, February 13th, the *Carondelet*, at the request of Grant, again moved toward the batteries, and at five minutes after nine o'clock opened fire. This time the enemy promptly replied with all the guns that bore, but owing to a heavily wooded point of land which intervened they caused little damage. The gunboat fired one hundred and thirty-nine shells at the batteries, killing one of the engineer officers of the fort and doing considerable injury. At 11.30 A. M. a 128-pound solid shot penetrated the *Carondelet's* casemate on the port side, and "in its progress toward the center of our boilers glanced over the temporary barricades in front of them and then passed over the steam drum, struck the beams of the upper deck, carried away the railing around the engine room and burst the steam heater, and then, glancing back into the engine room, 'seemed to bound after the men,' as one of the engineers said, 'like a wild beast pursuing its prey.' . . . When it burst through the side of the *Carondelet* it knocked down and wounded a dozen men. An immense quantity of splinters were blown through the vessel ; some of them, as fine as needles, shot through the clothes of the men like arrows."<sup>1</sup>

After receiving this shot the *Carondelet* drew out of range to repair damages, but at 12.15 P. M. she again

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<sup>1</sup> Rear-Admiral Walke, *Battles and Leaders, Civil War*, vol. i, p. 481.

returned to the attack and maintained a stubborn action until nearly dark, when she retired. At half past eleven o'clock that night Flag-Officer Foote arrived on the scene of action with his gunboats, making the entire naval force in the river off Fort Donelson as follows: The ironclads *St. Louis* (flagship), Lieutenant Paulding; *Louisville*, Commander Benjamin M. Dove; *Carondelet*, Commander Walke; and *Pittsburgh*, Lieutenant Egbert Thompson; and the wooden gunboats *Tyler*, Lieutenant Gwin, and *Conestoga*, Lieutenant Phelps. The morning of February 14th was taken up with preparations for a serious attack from the river. Owing to the great height of the Confederate batteries, the upper decks of the ironclads were exposed to plunging shot, besides which shot from the upper battery would strike the sloping bulwarks of the gunboats almost at right angles. To guard as much as possible against this, chains, lumber, bags of coal and hard material of all descriptions were strewn on deck so as to break the force of heavy shot from the heights.

"At 2 P. M. precisely the signal was given from the flagship to get under way."<sup>1</sup> The four ironclads formed as nearly in a line abreast as the narrow river would admit, the *Carondelet* on the left, then the *Pittsburgh* and the *St. Louis*, with the *Louisville* on the extreme right, the two wooden gunboats being stationed about half a mile astern. At 3.30 P. M., when the flotilla had proceeded about a third of a mile, the upper battery fired two shot by way of testing the distance. Without replying, Captain Foote steamed ahead until within a mile of the batteries, when he fired his starboard rifled gun, which was followed by those of the *Louisville*, the *Pittsburgh* and the *Carondelet* in rapid succession. These missiles fell short, but at the next round a slight elevation of the guns caused the shot and shell to fall in and around the

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<sup>1</sup>Correspondent of the Cincinnati Gazette, who was in the *Louisville*.

fort with great precision. The vessels rapidly diminished the distance between them and the fort to six and finally to four hundred yards. From this time the firing on both sides became rapid and more accurate. The narrowness of the stream somewhat disarranged the National line of battle, so that the *St. Louis* was compelled to take the lead, closely followed by the *Louisville*, the *Pittsburgh* and the *Carondelet*, thus presenting a formidable battery of twelve guns to the enemy. A large shell from the *Louisville* exploded under a gun in the water battery, dismantled the piece and killed a dozen or more men.

But the gunboats also suffered severely. They were repeatedly struck by solid shot, some of which penetrated the iron mail and caused fearful havoc on the crowded decks. One shot struck the *Louisville* at the angle of the upper deck and pilot house, penetrated the iron plating and heavy timber backing, and buried itself in a pile of hammocks in a direct line with the boiler. Soon afterward a shell raked her from stem to stern, passed through the wheel house, and exploded in the river just astern. This was followed by a solid 10-inch shot, which entered the starboard bow port, wrecked the gun carriage, killed three men, wounded four, and passed through the entire length of the gun deck and into the river beyond. To finish the work of destruction, a shell passed through the starboard forward port, killed one man, wounded two, and disabled the steering-gear so as to make the boat unmanageable, and compelled her to drop out of action.

The flagship *St. Louis* was struck fifty-nine times, but only one shot penetrated. This one, however, entered the pilot house and exploded, killing the pilot and severely wounding Captain Foote. Soon afterward her wheel ropes were carried away, so that she drifted helplessly out of action with the *Louisville*. The *Carondelet* also was handled severely. A 128-pound shot smashed her anchor into flying bolts, and,



*Ironclads attack Fort Donelson.*  
From a painting by Rear-Admiral Walke.



bounding over the casemate, carried away a portion of the smokestack. Another shot penetrated her iron mail, but was checked by the heavy timber backing, and a third missile struck her square on the pilot house, sending a shower of iron fragments and splinters, which killed one of the pilots. Everything outside of the ironclad was swept away—boats, smokestack, davits and flagstaff—while the iron plates were ripped and torn as if struck by lightning. In their eagerness to fire the gunners in the *Carondelet* loaded too hastily, and a rifled gun exploded, knocking down a dozen men, but fortunately killed no one.

The *Pittsburgh* was struck by forty shot, two of which entered below the guards and caused her to leak so much that it was feared she would sink before morning. In turning round to draw out of range she fouled the *Carondelet's* stern, breaking her starboard rudder. This compelled Commander Walke to go ahead in order to clear the *Pittsburgh*, so that he found himself within three hundred and fifty yards of the batteries at a moment when his consorts were drifting out of action in a disabled condition. Taking in the situation at a glance, and greatly encouraged by the results of the engagement so far, the Confederates turned their remaining guns on the *Carondelet* with renewed vigor. There was no alternative for Commander Walke but to drop out of action also, and this he did, keeping his bow toward the enemy, slowly retiring and deliberately firing so long as he was in range. Two 32-pound shot entered the *Carondelet's* bow between wind and water, which undoubtedly would have sunk her had not the water-tight compartments kept her afloat until the shot holes could be plugged. She was struck fifty-nine times, and everything outside of her casemate was carried away. The smokestack was riddled; six shot struck the pilot house, shattering one section to pieces and cutting through the iron plating; four struck the casing forward of the rifled gun, and



three on the starboard side. One of her rifled guns burst.

Commander Walke said: "Our gunners kept up a constant firing while we were falling back, and the warning words 'Look out!' 'Down!' were often heard and heeded by nearly all the gun crews. On one occasion, while the men were at the muzzle of the middle bow gun loading it, the warning came just in time for them to jump aside as a 32-pound shot struck the lower sill and glancing up struck the upper sill, then falling on the inner edge of the lower sill bounded on deck and spun around like a top, but hurt no one. It was very evident that if the men who were loading had not obeyed the order to drop, several of them would have been killed. So I repeated the instructions and warned the men of the guns and the crew generally to bow or stand off from the ports when a shot was seen coming. But some of the young men, from a spirit of bravado or from a belief in the doctrine of fatalism, disregarded the instructions, saying it was useless to attempt to dodge a cannon ball, and they would trust to luck. The warning words 'Look out!' 'Down!' were again soon heard. Down went the gunner and his men as the whizzing shot glanced on the gun, taking off the gunner's cap and the heads of two of the young men who trusted to luck and in defiance of the order were standing up or passing behind him. This shot killed another man also who was at the last gun of the starboard side, and disabled the gun. It came in with a hissing sound, and three sharp spats and a heavy bang told the sad fate of three brave comrades. Before the decks were well sanded there was so much blood on them that our men could not work the guns without slipping."<sup>1</sup> The following day, February 15th, Grant followed up the attack of the gunboats by a combined assault of the navy and army, and early on the

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<sup>1</sup> Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. i, p. 435.

morning of the 16th the fort surrendered. The loss to the gunboats on the 14th was one man killed and nine wounded in the *St. Louis*, two wounded in the *Pittsburgh*, four killed and six wounded in the *Louisville* and six killed and twenty-six wounded in the *Carondelet*; total, eleven killed and forty-three wounded.

The capture of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson broke the first line of defense, and compelled the Confederates to abandon Bowling Green on the east and Columbus on the west, the latter place being occupied by Captain Foote on the 2d of March. The Confederates then formed a second and perhaps more formidable line, having Island No. 10 on the west and extending eastward through Corinth. Here they made a most determined effort not only to hold their position, but by a *coup de main* to overwhelm the National army in Tennessee, regain the lost ground and assume the offensive. They expected that the powerful ironclads of the *Merrimac* type then being built at New Orleans, Yazoo River and other points along the Mississippi would make short work of the comparatively frail gunboats under Captain Foote. This would give them the all-important command of the Mississippi and its many tributary waters, and enable them to carry the war far into the Northern States. At the same time, by suddenly massing their forces on some point of the widely extended National line they hoped to sweep all before them. This was not altogether fancy on the part of the Confederate leaders. Their plans were perfect, and their success might have been complete had it not been for an unexpected check given by the two insignificant wooden gunboats *Tyler* and *Lexington*.

In pursuance of this brilliant scheme, General Albert Sidney Johnston, after leaving enough troops to hold Island No. 10, ordered the divisions under Generals Beauregard, Bragg, Hardee and Breckenridge quietly to concentrate at Corinth, from which place they were to overwhelm Grant's army at Pittsburg Landing, and

then, proceeding rapidly down the Tennessee River, recapture Fort Henry and Fort Donelson before they could be re-enforced. This done, the way would be clear for an invasion of the North. By the 5th of April the Confederate troops had been massed around Corinth. The National army was encamped in the form of a semicircle just above Pittsburg Landing, not more than fifteen miles distant, both wings resting near the river, while the center swelled out five miles from its banks. About daybreak, April 6th, the enemy began a furious assault on the National center, intending to crush it and then sweep around so as to attack the wings in the rear. The division under General Prentiss, which held the center, stubbornly contested the ground, but was gradually forced back, until by 10 A. M. the enemy was in possession of the camp. The Confederates then wheeled round to annihilate the wing under General Hurlburt, which guarded the stores at Pittsburg Landing, and by 3 P. M. they had nearly accomplished their purpose; for the National troops, though fighting gallantly, were swept back in confusion, the river cutting off their retreat. There was now a pause in the battle while the victorious Confederates massed their forces for a final charge to capture the landing with all the army stores.

During the progress of the great battle the *Tyler*, Lieutenant Gwin, and the *Lexington*, Lieutenant Shirk, moved up and down the river, seeking an opportunity to reach the enemy. At 1.25 P. M. Lieutenant Gwin sent a messenger to General Hurlburt asking permission to open on the enemy, and was directed to do so, the general expressing himself "grateful for this offer of support, saying that without re-enforcements he would not be able to maintain the position he then occupied for an hour." The *Tyler* at 2.30 P. M. opened on a battery and in half an hour silenced it, and at 3.50 P. M. she dropped down to the landing opposite Pittsburg, where she was joined by the *Lexing-*

ton. The two gunboats took a position where their guns would sweep a ravine through which the enemy was compelled to pass in his final charge. At 5.30 P. M. the Confederates started from cover with yells of confidence, and wave after wave of glistening bayonets rolled from the woods across the ravine. At this moment the gunboats opened at short range, together with a battery of 32-pounders hastily prepared by Colonel Joseph D. Webster, and swept the ravine from end to end with a terrific fire of shot, shell and shrapnel.

The Confederates had not anticipated the fire of the gunboats, and in their eagerness to seize the prize so nearly in their grasp they rushed on to destruction. Hissing shells tore bloody chasms in their lines, and, exploding, struck down the men in wide circles, while a pitiless storm of grape and canister sprinkled death on all sides. No mortal army could withstand such a terrific fire, and gradually the enemy fell back, until at 6.30 P. M. they retired beyond the reach of the gunboats. During the night the Confederates occupied the captured camps, where the gunboats kept dropping shells among them until daylight. The battle was renewed with fresh troops on the following day, when the enemy was compelled to retreat. Not a man in the gunboats had been injured. The *Tyler* alone threw one hundred and eighty-eight shells at point-blank range.

After the surrender of Forts Henry and Donelson the presence of National gunboats in these rivers was necessary, as guerrillas were a constant menace to the army lines of communication. This hazardous service was gallantly performed by the gunboats under Captain Alexander M. Pennock. On the 30th of January, 1863, Captain Pennock sent the *Lexington*, Lieutenant-Commander S. Ledyard Phelps, up the Cumberland River. Twenty miles above Clarksville Phelps landed and burned a house that had been used as a head-

quarters by the enemy. Returning from this expedition, the *Lexington* was fired upon by a battery of heavy guns, and although struck three times she soon silenced the enemy.

While moving up Cumberland River with a number of transports under convoy of the *Lexington* and five light-draught gunboats, February 3d, Lieutenant-Commander Le Roy Fitch learned that Colonel Harding, commanding the garrison of eight hundred men opposite Fort Donelson, was surrounded by an overwhelming force of Confederates and that his ammunition was exhausted. Hastening to the scene of battle with his six gunboats, Fitch stationed his vessels where they could sweep a graveyard in which the main body of the enemy was stationed, and opened a terrific fire. Being thus unexpectedly attacked in the rear, the Confederates fled in confusion, leaving one hundred and forty of their dead on the field. Fitch afterward went up the Tennessee as far as Florence, dispersing bodies of Confederate troops wherever found. On the 24th of April, Fitch, in the *Lexington*, assisted Ellet's vessels in silencing a Confederate battery. When General J. H. Morgan made his raid into Ohio, July, 1863, Fitch stationed his gunboats at various points along the Ohio River to cut off the enemy's retreat. On the 19th of July, in the little gunboat *Moose*, he overtook the Confederates at a ford two hundred and fifty miles east of Cincinnati, and notwithstanding a battery of two field pieces the *Moose* prevented the enemy from crossing. This compelled the Confederates to abandon their wounded and dismounted men and to scatter in a headlong flight. The *Moose* kept abreast of them and frustrated two other efforts to cross, and she did not relinquish the chase until the water was too shoal even for her.

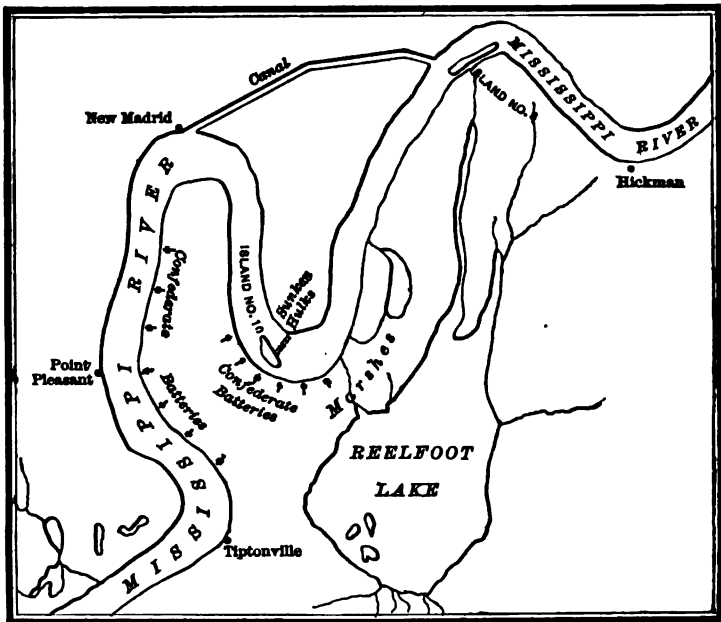
## CHAPTER VIII.

### ISLAND NO. 10 AND MEMPHIS.

WHEN General Johnston concentrated his forces at Corinth with a view of overwhelming Grant at Pittsburg Landing, he left enough men, as he thought, to hold the powerful fortifications at Island No. 10 against any force that could be brought against them. This place was of great strategic strength. The earthworks on the island itself were from ten to fifteen feet thick, and mounted two 10-inch columbiads, four 8-inch guns, five 32-pounders and five 64-pounders. Opposite the island, on the Kentucky shore, were mounted thirty heavy guns, while a floating battery of sixteen guns was anchored just below battery No. 1 on Island No. 10. A line of hulks obstructed the northern channel, compelling vessels to pass on the southern side, where they were exposed at short range to the fire of about sixty heavy guns. At the northern bend of the river was New Madrid, held by several thousand Confederate soldiers, and fortified so as to guard Island No. 10 on the Missouri side; and below New Madrid, on the eastern shore, were planted batteries which prevented a force from crossing at that point. All land approaches to the fortifications around Island No. 10, on the south, were cut off by impassable swamps. On the 15th of March Captain Foote appeared before Island No. 10 with twelve hundred troops under Colonel Napoleon Bonaparte Buford; eleven mortar boats under Captain Henry E. Maynadier; and the ironclads *Benton* (flagship), Lieutenant S. Ledyard Phelps; *Carondelet*, Commander Henry Walke; *St. Louis*, Lieutenant Leon-

ard Paulding; *Mound City*, Commander Augustus Henry Kilty; and *Pittsburgh*, Lieutenant Egbert Thompson.

At this time the river was swollen by rains and had overflowed its banks, sweeping houses, fences and lumber down the stream in its rapid current. The heavy ironclads, whose engines even in ordinary times made slow progress upstream, were now barely able to save themselves from being swept under the enemy's guns. In their action with Fort Henry and Fort Donelson they had approached the enemy from below, so that in case their machinery became disabled—which happened in both of these attacks—they could drift out of range; but in attacking Island No. 10 the situation was reversed, and should the engines of a gun-



Island No. 10.

boat become impaired it would be swept helplessly under the enemy's guns. Realizing the difficulty of

the situation, and well knowing how dependent the movements of the land forces were on the gunboats, Captain Foote acted with great caution. This was the more necessary as the ironclad *Louisiana* was nearly ready for service, and with other ironclads of her type was expected up the river in a short time to give battle. Should the National gunboats be worsted in such an action (and the recent achievements of the *Merrimac* gave reason for fearing it), the great cities of the Northwest would be exposed to an attack from the Confederates.

On the 16th of March the mortar boats, under the command of Captain Maynadier, of the army, and Commander Joseph P. Sanford, of the navy; were placed in position, and opened with some effect; but, owing to the great distance, their fire was without important results. On the 17th the ironclads moved down for a more serious attack; the *Benton*, owing to her deficient steam power, was lashed between the *Cincinnati* and the *St. Louis* and moved down the eastern side of the river, while the *Mound City*, the *Carondelet* and the *Pittsburgh* took the western side. At 1.20 P. M. they opened fire on the upper batteries on Island No. 10 at long range, and the enemy promptly responded; but no serious damage was inflicted on either side. The *Benton* was struck four times, but the greatest injury was occasioned by the bursting of a rifled gun aboard the *St. Louis*, by which fifteen men were killed or wounded, among the latter being Lieutenant Paulding.

From the 17th to the 26th of March, during which time General Johnston was beginning to carry out his plan of massing his forces at Corinth, little was done toward reducing the enemy's stronghold at Island No. 10. The National forces maintained a desultory fire, inflicting some trifling damage which was speedily repaired, and the only immediate result of the bombardment was to afford amusement rather than annoyance to the Confederates. Yet it lulled them into a greater



sense of security. On the 23d of March, while the *Carondelet* was close under the shore, two large trees fell without warning on her decks, wounding two men, one mortally. While this tedious bombardment was in progress, General Pope, with two thousand troops, had been working around the Confederate position with a view of cutting off retreat, and by blockading the river twelve miles below Point Pleasant he compelled them to evacuate New Madrid. The enemy was now hemmed in on three sides, being cut off on the north and the west by the Mississippi, and on the east by an impassable swamp, so that his only avenue for supplies or retreat was on the south side. It was this southern opening that General Pope desired to close, but as the enemy controlled the river below Island No. 10 with heavy batteries on the eastern bank, he could not attain his object without the aid of the gunboats. It was finally suggested that one of the ironclads attempt to run the batteries, but in a council of officers this was declared to be too hazardous.

It was then determined to cut a canal from Island No. 8 across the swamps to New Madrid, and in that way get the ironclads below the Confederate stronghold. After a vast amount of labor and exposure to the miasma of the marshes, the canal was cut in nineteen days; but it was found that the gunboats could not pass through it, and even the smaller transports could get through only with difficulty. In the mean time the Confederate ironclads being built at various points along the Mississippi were rapidly approaching completion, and they would have no difficulty in relieving the garrison of Island No. 10 and compelling Captain Foote to act on the defensive. Such being the serious extremity to which the National flotilla was placed, another council of officers was held in the *Benton* on the 28th and 29th of March, but with one exception it was unanimously decided that it would be too hazardous to risk an ironclad in an attempt to run

the Confederate batteries. The one exception was Commander Walke, of the *Carondelet*, who volunteered to take his vessel past the batteries, and obtained the reluctant permission of Captain Foote to do so.

While these preparations were under way one of those daring exploits which have ever characterized the American navy was undertaken. On the night of April 1st forty picked sailors under the command of Master John V. Johnston, and fifty soldiers under the command of Colonel George Washington Roberts, of the Forty-second Illinois Regiment, embarked in five barges, and, pushing out from the shadow of the willows that fringed the Kentucky shore, dropped down the river with the current toward the Confederate lines. Strict silence was observed, and even the muffled oars were used only once in a while to give the barges steerage way. Thus for an hour the boats glided downstream, stealing along the shores in the shadow of the overhanging trees and availing themselves of every means of concealment. They arrived within a few rods of the first battery above Island No. 10 before they were discovered. Here they were challenged by a sentinel, and almost at the same instant the order "Give way!" was heard. The oars splashed in the water and the barges dashed toward the battery at full speed. The sentinel discharged his musket and fled to give the alarm. The boats ran ashore, the men landed, stationed their guards, and in half an hour had spiked the seven guns of this battery, one of them a formidable 10-inch columbiad. They then returned to their boats and escaped up the river without the loss of a man.

One of the obstacles to the passage of the *Carondelet* being thus removed, Captain Foote directed the fire of his mortars toward the floating battery, which was moored near the head of the island. Fortunately, a shell cut her moorings, and she was carried three miles below her station before she could be secured again. Having received his orders to run the batteries

on the "first foggy or rainy night," and in case of failure to "destroy the steam machinery, and, if impossible to escape, set fire to your gunboat or sink her and prevent her from falling into the hands of the enemy," Commander Walke made preparations for running the gantlet. An 11-inch hawser was coiled round the pilot house to a level with the windows, chains and cables were placed over the more vulnerable parts of the machinery, planks taken from the wreck of a barge were strewn over the deck as an additional protection against plunging shot, while hammocks were stowed in the netting and cord wood was piled round the boilers. A barge laden with coal and baled hay was then lashed along the port side so as to protect the magazine, and a course of bales was laid over the after end of the casemate, as that part of the ironclad after she had passed the batteries would be exposed. As a precaution against discovery, the escape steam, which in the high-pressure engines made a loud puffing noise, was led into the paddle-wheel house so as to deaden the sound.

By the 4th of April these preparations had been nearly completed, and Commander Walke announced his intention of attempting the passage that night if the weather was favorable. During the day the heavens were watched with the closest scrutiny, the weather-wise tars scanning each cloud and "tasting" each puff of air with serious countenances as they discussed the probabilities of the weather. As the afternoon wore on and the indications for a clear and starlit night became more pronounced, the seamen grew more gloomy. But as evening drew near dark clouds were observed massing on the western horizon, and shortly afterward the wind, shifting in that direction, brought to their ears the faint muttering of distant thunder. At the same time a light haze was noticed creeping up the river, and as evening approached it gradually diffused itself over the surrounding landscape and finally enshrouded everything in a damp fog. The happy omen

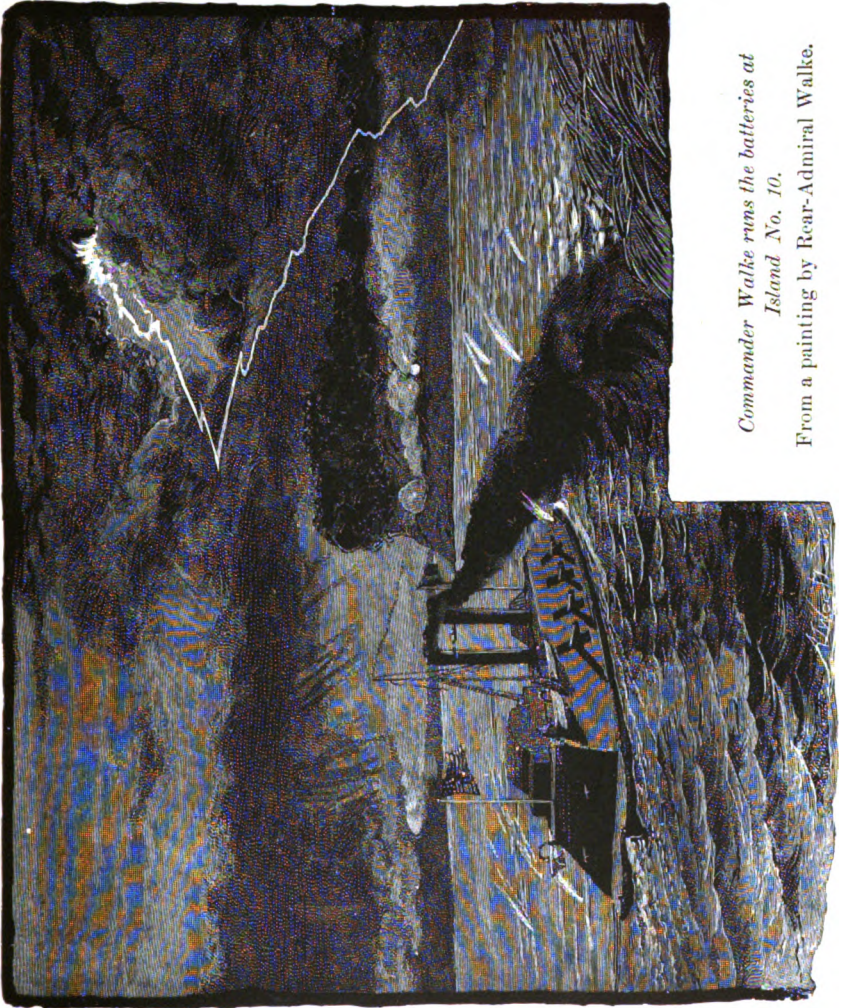
put every man on the alert. The final preparations were completed with alacrity; the guns were run in and the ports carefully closed, so that no stray beam of light would discover them to the enemy; small arms, cutlasses and boarding-pikes were stacked in convenient reach, while hose was attached to the boilers to turn streams of scalding steam on the enemy in case they attempted to board.

By ten o'clock the moon had disappeared, leaving the river in darkness, while the threatening storm-clouds that had been massing in the west lowered over the scene and finally broke in a drenching rain. Commander Walke now gave the order to cast off the lines. The *Carondelet* swung heavily into the current and was soon plunging downstream. By the time she was fully under way the night was black as pitch, so that it would have been impossible to keep clear of the shoals and banks had it not been for the frequent and vivid flashes of lightning that illuminated the river with dazzling brilliancy, giving occasional glimpses of the drenched landscape and the trees bending under the storm. For half an hour the men on the gun deck stood at their stations in grim silence, hearing nothing but whistling of the wind and incessant pattering of rain on the deck above them. Onward glided the phantom gunboat under the skillful piloting of Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant William R. Hoel, and all went well until the *Carondelet* had passed the battery that had been so daringly spiked on the night of April 1st, when the soot in both smokestacks took fire and blazed upward in the black night like two immense torches. This mishap was caused by the escaped steam being led into the paddle-wheel house to drown the puffing noise. Ordinarily this steam passed into the smokestacks and kept the soot moist, thus preventing its taking fire. The firemen were immediately called away and the flames were extinguished, so that the *Carondelet* was again wrapped in darkness. But the alarm had been

given, and though the cannon in this battery had been effectually spiked, signal rockets were sent up giving notice to the lower batteries of an approaching enemy. There was warm work ahead for the *Carondelet*.

Commander Walke soon realized that he was in the midst of an aroused and powerful enemy, and if he would accomplish his purpose he must act with determination and promptness. Full speed was ordered, and the ironclad dashed through the darkness at a dangerous rate. When she was opposite the second battery on the shore the smokestacks again took fire and revealed her exact position. Then began a crash of heavy artillery and a rattling fire of musketry on all sides. Without replying, the *Carondelet* sped on her way down the river. Realizing the extreme peril of their position, and knowing that the safety of all depended upon an uninterrupted and speedy passage of the batteries, the heroic pilot, Hoel, in order the better to guide the boat down the river, took his station with the leadsmen, Charles Wilson and Theodore Gilmore, forward on the open deck, exposed to the drenching rain and the enemy's shot. The lead was continuously kept going, for the course of the gunboat was rendered doubly uncertain by the broad surface presented to the current, which among the many abrupt bends and eddies would frequently give her a sheer toward some bank or shoal before it was discovered. In a few minutes of total darkness a brilliant flash of lightning showed that the *Carondelet* was rushing directly upon a dangerous shoal under the guns of the Confederate battery. Instantly the watchful pilot cried out "Hard aport!" and the clumsy craft swung heavily around, almost grazing the island, and so near that the voice of a Confederate officer was distinctly heard ordering his men to elevate the guns, the Confederates having lowered the muzzles of their cannon to keep the rain from destroying the charges of powder in them.

After this narrow escape the *Carondelet* passed the



*Commander Walke runs the batteries at  
Island No. 10.*

From a painting by Rear-Admiral Walke.





remaining batteries on the island unscathed. The enemy, deceived by the flashes of lightning, had elevated their guns too much, so that most of their shot went over. Only one obstacle now remained in the course of the *Carondelet*, and that was the formidable floating battery three miles below the island moored to the western bank. As the *Carondelet* was not in fighting trim, Commander Walke hugged the opposite shore, to give the enemy as wide a berth as possible. But the dreaded battery offered little opposition to the flight of the National gunboat, firing only seven or eight shot at her. The *Carondelet* had now safely passed the Confederate batteries and had added another to the brilliant achievements of the navy. Not a man in her had been injured, and only two shot were found in the barge at her side. The great risk involved in running these batteries is seen in the *Carondelet's* grounding hard and fast on one of the treacherous shoals while rounding to as she approached New Madrid, immediately after her passage of the batteries, where it required the utmost exertions of her crew to get her afloat. Some of the forward guns were run astern and all the men assembled aft, and by putting on a full head of steam she was backed off after an hour of hard work. Had this happened under the enemy's batteries, she would have been destroyed.

The passage of the ironclad blighted the enemy's hope of holding Island No. 10, for now there was nothing to prevent General Pope's army from crossing the river and taking a position in the rear, thus cutting off the retreat and supplies. The second night after the *Carondelet's* exploit the *Pittsburgh*, Lieutenant Thompson, also passed the batteries, upon which the National troops assembled at New Madrid and Point Pleasant crossed the river to the eastern side, the *Carondelet* having on the 6th and 7th of April silenced the enemy's batteries of eight 64-pounders. On the 8th of April



Island No. 10 was surrendered to Captain Foote and General Pope, together with five thousand men.

On the 13th of April five Confederate steamers came up the river to reconnoiter, but on the appearance of the ironclads retired under the guns of Fort Pillow. From this time until early in May the Western flotilla was not engaged in any serious operations, as General Pope's army was ordered to Corinth, leaving only one thousand five hundred men to hold the ground already won. On the 9th of May, Captain Foote, to whose skillful and prudent management so much of the success of the navy in the West was due, was relieved of his command at his own request, as the wound he had received at Fort Donelson, together with illness, had so impaired his health as to compel him to seek rest in a change of service. His successor was Captain Charles Henry Davis.

Early in the war, at the suggestion of two Mississippi River steamboat captains—J. E. Montgomery and Townsend—the Confederates organized a river defense fleet consisting of fourteen river boats having their bows plated with 1-inch iron and their boilers and machinery protected with cotton bales and pine bulwarks, and on the 9th of May eight of these vessels were stationed near Fort Pillow under the command of Mr. Montgomery. They were the *Little Rebel*, flagship; the *General Bragg*, William H. H. Leonard; the *General Price*, H. E. Henthorne; the *General Sumter*, W. W. Lamb; the *General Van Dorn*, Isaac D. Fulkerson; the *General M. Jeff. Thompson*, John H. Burke; the *General Beauregard*, James Henry Hurt; and the *General Lovell*, James C. Delancey. After the capture of Island No. 10 Captain Foote moved down the river, and from the 14th of April to the 10th of May he divided and moored his flotilla at Plumb Point, and on the opposite side of the river six miles above Fort Pillow, and every day sent a mortar boat under the protection of one of the ironclads down the river to a

point about two miles above Fort Pillow, where 13-inch shells were fired at the enemy. This fire proved to be exceedingly annoying to the Confederates, and they determined to make a dash up the river and give battle to the flotilla.

Early on the morning of May 10th, while the mist was hanging over the river, the enemy's vessels, led by the *General Bragg*, a brig-rigged side-wheel steamer, came swiftly up the river, intending first to destroy the mortar boat and the ironclad defending it before the other National ironclads could come to their assistance. The ironclad defending the mortar boat at this time was the *Cincinnati*, and Acting-Master Gregory was in charge of the mortar boat No. 16. When the Confederate steamers were discovered coming up the river, Mr. Gregory reduced the charge of his mortar, and, lowering the elevation, deliberately fired eleven shells at them. Paying no attention to this, the *General Bragg* came swiftly up the Arkansas side, far in advance of her consorts, and, passing some distance above the *Cincinnati*, turned down the river at full speed and rammed the ironclad on her starboard quarter, which was her most vulnerable point. The blow crushed in the side and made a hole in her shell-room, into which the water poured in great quantities. The warning was given for the remaining National gunboats to get under way, but owing to the mists and the want of a breeze the signal flags could not be readily distinguished. Word was then passed from boat to boat, and they stood down the river as rapidly as possible.

After ramming the *Cincinnati*, the *General Bragg* swung alongside and received a broadside, and, backing clear of the ironclad, stood downstream disabled. In the mean time the other rams had arrived on the scene, and the *General Price* and the *General Sumter* also succeeded in ramming the *Cincinnati*. About this time Commander Stembel was dangerously wounded in the neck by a pistol shot, and Master Reynolds fell,

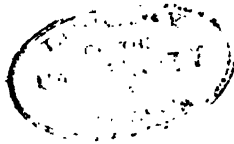
mortally wounded. With the assistance of the *Pittsburgh* and a tug, the *Cincinnati* was taken to the Tennessee shore, where she sank in eleven feet of water. The *Carondelet* disabled the *General Price* with a shot. The *General Van Dorn*, the fourth Confederate steamer, passed the disabled *Cincinnati* and rammed the *Mound City* on her starboard bow and compelled the ironclad to make for the Arkansas shore in a sinking condition. The *General M. Jeff. Thompson*, the *General Beauregard* and the *General Lovell* fired into the *Carondelet*, to which Commander Walke replied with his stern guns. One of his shot struck the *General Sumter* just forward of her wheelhouse, and, cutting the steam pipe, filled the vessel with scalding steam. The Confederates now retreated down the river with all their vessels, which were not so seriously damaged but that they were repaired and ready for another battle a few weeks later. The *Cincinnati* and the *Mound City* also were repaired. The loss in the *Cincinnati* was three wounded, in the *Mound City* one wounded. The Confederates had two killed and one wounded.

On the 27th of March, 1862, Charles Ellet, a civil engineer, was directed by the Government to purchase a number of river steamers and fit them up as rams. Seven steamers were secured for this purpose, four of them side-wheelers and three stern-wheelers, their hulls strengthened by solid timber bulwarks twelve to sixteen inches thick, running fore and aft (the central one being on the keelson) and firmly braced together. Iron rods ran through the hull from side to side, giving additional strength, while oak bulwarks two feet thick protected the boilers. These vessels, hastily fitted out in six weeks, joined the squadron under Captain Davis above Fort Pillow on the 25th of May. On the 4th of June Fort Pillow was abandoned by the enemy, and on the following day the squadron moved down the river, two miles above Memphis.

On the 6th of June the following ironclads, under



*Battle of Memphis.*



the command of Captain Davis, moved down the river to engage the enemy: *Benton* (flagship), Lieutenant S. Ledyard Phelps; *Carondelet*, Commander Walke; *Louisville*, Commander Dove; *St. Louis*, Lieutenant Wilson McGunnege; and *Cairo*, Lieutenant Nathaniel C. Bryant; with two of Ellet's steam rams, the *Queen of the West*, Colonel Ellet, and the *Monarch*, Lieutenant-Colonel Alfred W. Ellet (a younger brother). As they came within sight of Memphis the Confederate vessels, mounting two to four guns each, under the command of Montgomery, were found drawn up in a double line of battle opposite the city. The National ironclads formed in line of battle, with the two rams a short distance astern. The bluffs around the city were crowded with people eager to witness a naval engagement, and the National vessels refrained from firing lest some of their shots might fall among the citizens.

While they were some distance from the enemy the *Queen of the West* and the *Monarch* dashed past the ironclads at full speed and made straight for the Confederate vessels, Colonel Ellet selecting the *General Lovell*, which was about the middle of the enemy's line of battle. The *Queen of the West* and the *General Lovell* approached each other in gallant style, and every one expected there would be a head-on collision in which both vessels would probably be sunk; but just before the steamers came in contact the *General Lovell* suddenly turned her head inshore, exposing her broadside at right angles to the *Queen of the West*. On went the National ram at a tremendous speed and crashed into the Confederate flagship, cutting her nearly in two, causing her to disappear under the water in a few seconds. At the moment of the collision Colonel Ellet, who was standing in an exposed position on the hurricane deck, was wounded above the knee by a pistol shot. He died from the effect of this wound June 21, 1862. Before the *Queen of the West* could disengage herself from the wreck she was rammed by the

*General Beauregard* on one side and by the *General Sumter* on the other and one of her paddle wheels was carried away, but by using the remaining wheel she managed to reach the Arkansas shore, where she was run aground.

The *Monarch*, closely following the *Queen of the West*, had selected one of the enemy's steamers, when the *General Beauregard* and the *General Price* made a dash at her from opposite sides; but the commanders of the Confederate vessels had not calculated on the great speed of the new National vessel, and supposed that they were still dealing with the slow-going ironclads. The result was that they missed her altogether and crashed into each other, the *General Beauregard* tearing off the *General Price's* port wheel and seriously injuring her hull. The latter ran ashore on the Arkansas side near the *Queen of the West*. The *Monarch* then turned on the *General Beauregard*, which was fleeing down the river, but the *Benton* disabled the Confederate vessel with a shot in her boiler, causing her to sink soon afterward. The *Little Rebel* received a shot in her steam chest from one of the ironclads and drifted on the Arkansas shore, where her men escaped. The remaining Confederate vessels fled down the river and were pursued about ten miles. The *M. Jeff. Thompson*, being on fire, soon blew up, and the *General Bragg* and *General Sumter* were overtaken and captured. The *General Van Dorn* alone escaped, although pursued by the *Monarch* and the *Switzerland*, the latter having joined in the battle at its close. The loss to the National fleet in this brilliant affair was only four wounded; that of the Confederates is not definitely known. The *Little Rebel*, the *General Bragg*, the *General Sumter* and the *General Price* were repaired and added to the National flotilla.

On the 17th of June, Commander Kilty, in the *Mound City*, with the *St. Louis*, Lieutenant McGunagle, the *Lexington*, Lieutenant James W. Shirk and

the *Conestoga*, Lieutenant Blodgett, with an Indiana regiment under Colonel Fitch, attacked two Confederate earthworks at St. Charles, on White River. Early in the action a shell entered the casemate of the *Mound City*, killing three men in its flight, and exploded her steam drum. A fearful scene followed, and the men, endeavoring to escape from the scalding steam, jumped into the river, where forty-three were drowned or killed by the enemy's shot. Eighty-two men died from scalding or wounds, and only twenty-five out of the complement of one hundred and seventy-five were uninjured. Commander Kilty himself was so badly scalded that it became necessary to amputate his left arm. The disabled ironclad was towed out of action by the *Conestoga*. In spite of this terrible disaster the remaining gunboats maintained the attack until Colonel Fitch, who had landed with his regiment to attack the earthworks in the rear, signaled for them to cease firing, and the troops carried the battery by storm. The gunboats pushed sixty-three miles farther up the river and then returned. For his brilliant services Captain Davis received the rank of rear-admiral February 7, 1863.



## CHAPTER IX.

### BLOCKADING THE MISSISSIPPI.

WHILE the National gunboats were opening the Mississippi River from the north, the Government was projecting an expedition against New Orleans, with a view of capturing that most important seaport of the South by an attack from the mouth of the river. Soon after the beginning of hostilities Captain William Mervine, who had served on the coast of California during the Mexican War, was placed in command of the blockading squadron in the Gulf, and he arrived off the mouth of the Mississippi on the 8th of June, 1861. For a short time before his arrival the *Brooklyn*, Commander Charles H. Poor, the *Niagara* and the *Powhatan*, Lieutenant David Dixon Porter, had been blockading Southwest Pass and Pass à l'Outre, and on the 13th of June the *Massachusetts* arrived. Captain Mervine was relieved of his command in the latter part of September by Captain William W. McKean. The escape of the Confederate cruiser *Sumter* showed the necessity of holding the Head of the Passes, where the river broadens out into a deep bay two miles wide, giving ample room for the manœuvres of a fleet; and early in October the steam sloop *Richmond*, Captain John Pope; the sailing sloop *Vincennes*, Commander Robert Handy; the sailing sloop *Preble*, Commander Henry French; and the side-wheel steamer *Water Witch*, Lieutenant Francis Winslow, moved up to the Head of the Passes, took possession of the telegraph station and began the erection of a fort.

On the night of October 11th, Captain George Nich-

olas Hollins, of the Confederate navy, with the ironclad *Manassas*<sup>1</sup> and six wooden steamers, left New Orleans, and, stealing down the river, approached the National vessels unobserved. In the early dawn of October 12th the *Manassas* rammed the *Richmond* as she lay at anchor. Fortunately, a schooner from which the *Richmond* was coaling was lying alongside and prevented serious results; but as it was, a small hole was made in the *Richmond's* side two feet below the water line, abreast of the port fore chains. The shock of the collision started the boilers in the *Manassas*, and before she could ram again Captain Pope had slipped his cable and ranged ahead. The ram then crept off in the night, and although many missiles were aimed at her she escaped without serious damage. About this time three lights were discovered coming swiftly down the river, and as they drew nearer they were seen to be fire rafts guided by two steamers, the *Tuscarora* and the *Watson*. The flames, sweeping across the river from bank to bank like a wall of fire, presented an appalling appearance; and, fearing that his vessels would be destroyed by this new species of warfare, Captain Pope hoisted a red light as a danger signal and retreated down Southwest Pass. Lieutenant Winslow, in the *Water Witch*, remained at the Head of the Passes until daylight, when he saw the smoke of four steamers and the masts of a propeller that had every appearance of a blockade runner. He hastened down the pass, overtook Captain Pope at the bar, and begged him to return, but Pope deemed it unadvisable to do so.

In attempting to cross the bar the *Richmond* and the *Vincennes* grounded, and while they were in this position the Confederate vessels, at eight o'clock in the morning, approached, and for two hours kept up a desultory cannonading. As the *Richmond* had her broadsides in a position to rake any craft going up or

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<sup>1</sup> For a description of the *Manassas*, see page 815.

down the river, Captain Hollins did not care to risk his vessels before her heavy shell guns. The *Water Witch* maintained a spirited fire from her few guns and kept the enemy at a respectful distance. The *Richmond* was soon floated off, but, drifting down the current, she grounded again below the *Vincennes*. Captain Pope then made signal for the vessels below the bar to get under way, but Commander Handy, of the *Vincennes*, mistook the signal for an order to abandon his ship, and applying a slow match to the magazine at a time when the enemy was actually withdrawing, he sent a part of his crew aboard the *Water Witch*, while he, at 9.30 A. M., went aboard the *Richmond* with the rest of his men. After waiting a reasonable time for the magazine to explode, Captain Pope ordered Handy back to the *Vincennes*, and the next day, by the aid of the *South Carolina*, which had come up from Barataria, she was floated off. After this humiliating occurrence a vessel was stationed off each of the passes, as it was deemed too hazardous to hold the Head of the Passes. On the 16th of September troops were landed from the *Massachusetts* and took possession of Ship Island, with a view of making that a naval headquarters. On the 19th of October the *Florida*, Captain Hollins, engaged the *Massachusetts* in a distant cannonading off Ship Island, but with no decisive results.

In the mean time the Government at Washington had learned, through fishermen in the Gulf and other sources, that the defenses of New Orleans on the south had been neglected by the Confederates, as they deemed an attack from that quarter impracticable. In November, 1861, President Lincoln considered a plan for the capture of New Orleans, submitted by Gustavus Vasa Fox, Assistant Secretary of the Navy. It was proposed to have wooden ships run past Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip and take possession of the city; the forts, being cut off from their base of supplies, would thus be compelled to surrender. Although Washing-

ton, nearly a hundred years before, had urged upon Comte de Grasse the feasibility of running wooden ships past the land batteries of Lord Cornwallis on York River, saying, "I should have the greatest confidence in the success of that important service," yet the plan was never carried out, and had always been regarded by naval authorities as too hazardous even to be seriously considered. It was proposed to send about ten thousand soldiers to hold the city after the fleet had passed the forts, and it was decided to have a mortar flotilla to bombard the forts before the fleet made its attempt to run past. Six thousand Massachusetts troops, together with some Western regiments, under the command of General Benjamin F. Butler, were detailed for the expedition.

The proposition was one of the boldest and seemingly most foolhardy plans that had ever been seriously contemplated. Its success depended entirely upon the selection of a sagacious, fearless and well-balanced commander, and it was this part of the enterprise that most seriously engaged the attention of the Government. Of all the officers at the disposal of the United States, Captain David Glasgow Farragut seemed to be the one best fitted for this command, and it was only his Southern birth and affiliations that caused the Government to hesitate; but on the 9th of January he was formally appointed commander of the expedition, and also commander of the Western Gulf Blockading Squadron, the new sloop of war *Hartford* being assigned as his flagship.

Farragut's name was first noticed in these pages as a midshipman in the *Essex* at the opening of the war for independence on the high seas. At the close of that war he was ordered to the Mediterranean in the new ship of the line *Washington*. In 1821 he received his commission as lieutenant and took part in the suppression of piracy in the West Indies. When off Tortugas, about 1823, he took passage in a vessel laden with brick

for Fort Jackson. In 1832 he was in the Norfolk Navy Yard. During the nullification troubles, in 1833, he was in the man-of-war that was sent to South Carolina by President Jackson with the message, "The Union must and shall be preserved." In 1837 he was executive officer in the sloop-of-war *Natchez*, and in 1840 he was again at Norfolk, about which time he married the daughter of Mr. Loyall, of that city. In the following year he sailed for the coast of Brazil in the ship-of-the-line *Delaware*, when he was made commander. In 1844 he commanded the receiving ship *Pennsylvania* at Norfolk, and in 1847 the sloop-of-war *Saratoga*, of the home squadron. From 1848 to 1854 he was on shore duty, after which he was sent out to establish the navy yard in California, where he remained until 1858, by which time he had been promoted to the rank of captain and was ordered to the sloop-of-war *Brooklyn*. When the civil war broke out he was in Norfolk and was strongly urged to serve the Southern cause.

It is difficult for a landsman to understand how attached a thoroughbred seaman becomes to his colors. It was under the United States flag that the youthful Farragut received his commission as a midshipman, and in that proud moment of gratified ambition he took his boyish oath to die rather than strike that flag. On more than one occasion he had seen the haughtiest colors on the ocean bow with respect before Old Glory. At Valparaiso he stood on the bloody decks of the *Essex* with that gallant ship's company and saw men give life and limb in order that the flag might not be hauled down. He had seen sailors writhing in the agonies of death expend their last vitality in some feeble defense of that flag. He had traveled from ocean to ocean, and had seen the star-spangled banner towering proudly among the powers of the earth, feared by some, blessed by others for its manly upholding of the rights of humanity, respected by all. He had seen kings and princes do it homage. Many a time when in distant

lands, surrounded by strange scenes and by strange people, he had stood under the protecting folds of the Stars and Stripes and felt that he had a true friend by him. Often, on the lonely ocean, he had watched the beautiful flag caressed by gentle zephyrs, brightly returning the smiles of the sun, or, drawing itself out to its full length, grandly maintain its dignity in the face of storm.

And this was the flag against which Farragut was asked to raise his hand. The secessionists little understood how those stripes could entwine themselves about the heart of a sailor who had once fought for that flag, who had endured sickness, hardship, insult and ignominy in order that it might remain unsullied. They understood still less the emotion of men who have once gazed on those stars proudly floating over the enemy's colors after a bloody struggle. Stung with the insult contained in the suggestion, and remembering the glorious triumphs achieved under the flag, Farragut replied, "I would see every man of you damned before I would raise my hand against that flag!" Being informed that he could no longer remain in the South, he replied, "I will seek some other place where I can live, and on two hours' notice." And he was as good as his word. On that same evening, April 18th, he left Norfolk and most of his worldly possessions, and with his wife and only son went to Baltimore, and thence to Hastings on the Hudson. His first service was on the board appointed under the act of Congress, August 3, 1861, to retire superannuated officers from active service, from which duty he was called to assume command of the New Orleans expedition.

While the preparations for the expedition were under way in the North, the blockade of the mouths of the Mississippi had been maintained as well as the few vessels stationed there could do it. The dreary monotony of blockade on this coast was enhanced by fogs so dense that it was impossible at times to see one

hundred yards ahead, which afforded every opportunity for blockade runners to get to sea. At times the rigging and spars of the vessels were soaked with moisture, and the continual dripping kept the ships damp and unhealthful. The only relief was the daily drill of the men at the great guns and other exercises. As they were cut off from all communication with the North, and knew little or nothing about the progress of the war except such exaggerated and discouraging accounts as were allowed to pass through the enemy's lines or were picked up from the fishermen, the thankless service did not tend to raise the spirits of the officers or the men. Occasionally the lookout at the topmast crosstrees would sing out with a dismal drawl, "Smoke, ho-o-o!" and it was one of the treats of the service for the officer of the deck to call back through his trumpet, "Where away?" "Up the river, sir." But the smoke seldom came out of the river. The *Brooklyn*, Commander Thomas Tingey Craven, was engaged in blockading Pass à l'Outre from February 2 to March 7, 1862. Some excitement was afforded to her people on the 24th of February by the smoke of a steamer coming down the river, for in this instance the vessel actually came out and attempted to run the blockade, and in a short time the sloop-of-war was in readiness for the chase. Owing to the fog, it was impossible to see the steamer from the deck, and the only way of following her was by an officer going aloft and keeping track of the smoke, which could be seen above the fog. After a run of many miles the stranger was overtaken, and proved to be the *Magnolia*, having on board twelve hundred bales of cotton.

Farragut arrived at Ship Island, near the mouth of the Mississippi, in the *Hartford*, on the 20th of February, and from that time there was plenty of excitement. The preparations for entering the river were actively begun; the men were kept busy firing at targets, getting in coal and provisions and protecting the

machinery with chains, sand bags etc. "Farragut was about the fleet from early dawn until dark, and if any officer had not spontaneous enthusiasm, he certainly infused it into him. I have been on the morning watch from four to eight o'clock, when he would row alongside the ship at six o'clock, either hailing to ask how we were getting along, or perhaps climbing over the side to see for himself."<sup>1</sup> The first difficulty to be overcome was that of getting the heavy ships over the bar.

When Farragut received his orders to command this expedition it was thought that there were nineteen feet of water on the bar,<sup>2</sup> so that such ships as the *Brooklyn* and the *Hartford* could readily cross, while heavier frigates like the *Wabash* and the *Colorado*, which drew twenty-two feet of water, could be taken over after being relieved of their guns, coal and other heavy stores; but when the squadron assembled before the passes it was found that the ever-changing sands had reduced the depth to fifteen feet. All hope of getting the *Wabash* and the *Colorado* over was immediately abandoned, while grave doubts were entertained as to the possibility of getting even the *Mississippi* and the *Pensacola* across. The *Colorado* was deemed especially valuable in the operation against the forts, as the commanding height of her masts enabled her topmen to fire over the parapets and sweep the interior of the forts with grape and canister. The *Pensacola* was finally got over the bar on the 7th of April, after a delay of two weeks. In one of the attempts to tow her over the hawser parted, killing two men and wounding five. The pilots were found to be either nervous or treacherous, and the vessels were frequently run aground. The dense fogs off these low sandy coasts also rendered the navigation unusually

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<sup>1</sup> Commander John Russell Bartlett, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*.

<sup>2</sup> Secretary of the Navy to Farragut, February 10th.



difficult. After many futile attempts to get the *Brooklyn* over the bar at Pass à l'Outre, she was taken to Southwest Pass, where also she grounded. Finally several steamers took her in tow and hauled her through the mud by sheer force. The *Mississippi* was stripped of everything that could possibly be taken out of her, and after eight days of tugging and hauling she was brought over. These unexpected obstacles delayed the expedition at the passes many days, giving the Confederates ample time to ascertain the force of the fleet and to make their defenses accordingly.

The defenses of New Orleans were of the most formidable kind. The river about ninety miles below New Orleans was guarded by two forts under the command of General Johnson K. Duncan. On the right bank of a bend in the stream was Fort Jackson, having bomb-proof chambers and all the appliances for modern warfare. It stood about one hundred yards from the levee, the casemate rising just above its level, while a water-battery extended below the fort along the river's edge. The fort was divided into three sections; an outer wall surrounded by the overflow water, formed a substantial moat, and between this and the fort proper was a wide ditch of mud and water, forming the second moat, while the fort itself, a massive structure of stone and brick in the shape of a star, stood in the center. Between this and the citadel of solid masonry was a third ditch. The armament of this formidable work consisted of three 10-inch columbiads and five 8-inch guns, one 7-inch rifled gun, six 42-pounders, seventeen 32-pounders and thirty-five 24-pounders—in all, sixty-seven guns. The commander of this fort was Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Higgins, formerly of the United States navy. On the opposite bank of the river, a little above, was Fort St. Philip, commanded by Captain Squires. It mounted six 8-inch guns, one rifled 7-inch gun, six 42-pounders, nine 32-

pounders and twenty-one 24-pounders, one 13-inch mortar and five 10-inch mortars—in all, forty-nine pieces.

As an auxiliary battery, a formidable fleet of gunboats and ironclads, under the command of Commodore John K. Mitchell, was held in readiness to attack any craft that might attempt to pass up the river. The most dangerous of these was the *Louisiana*, Captain Charles F. McIntosh, which was rapidly approaching completion. She was built under the direction of E. C. Murray from timber cut in the forest bordering on Lake Pontchartrain. Her engines were taken from the steamer *Ingomar*. Although the construction of this vessel was begun on the 15th of October, 1861, work on her was delayed by strikes and the imperfect appliances for handling iron. Upon her lower hull, which was nearly submerged, was erected a casemate plated with a double row of T-railroad iron sloping at an angle of forty-five degrees. In this shot-proof gun-room were two paddle wheels, besides which she had two propellers. The deck above the casemate was surrounded by sheet-iron bulwarks as a protection against sharpshooters. Her armament consisted of seven rifled 32-pounders, three 9-inch and four 8-inch smooth-bore guns and two rifled 7-inch guns—in all, sixteen guns. A serious defect in her construction was that the gun ports were too small, so that the arc of fire of the guns was not more than five degrees.

A second ironclad was the ram *Manassas*, Lieutenant A. F. Warley. This was formerly the twin-screw tugboat *Enoch Train*, built in Boston in 1855 by J. O. Curtis. She was one hundred and twenty-eight feet over all, and had twenty-six feet beam and eleven feet draught. Her frame was of white oak. Under the personal direction of John H. Stephenson, the *Enoch Train* was covered with five-inch timbers and with about an inch of flat railroad iron; the beams, meeting at the bow, formed a solid mass twenty feet thick. The only entrance to this craft was by a trap door, the

port cover of the single gun in the bow springing back when the gun was withdrawn. She had two "telescoping" smokestacks, which could be drawn into the vessel when necessary, and steam pipes were so arranged as to throw boiling water over the deck if an enemy should attempt to board. She was armed with one 32-pounder, and had a crew of thirty-five men, all told. This vessel was built by private subscription at New Orleans, in order to get the twenty per cent of the value of any Federal vessel that it might destroy; but on the 12th of October, 1861, it was purchased by the Confederate Government.

Besides these two ironclads there were wooden steamers that had been converted into gunboats. One of the most efficient of these was the steamer *McRae*, Lieutenant Thomas B. Huger, formerly the steamer *Marquis de la Habana*, mounting six 32-pounders and one 9-inch shell gun. The two steamers *Governor Moore* and *General Quitman* had been fitted out by the State of Louisiana. The *Governor Moore* (named after the war Governor of Alabama), Commander Beverley Kennon, formerly the wooden paddle-wheeled steamer *Charles Morgan*, was armed with two rifled 32-pounders and was manned with ninety-three men, all told, and pieces of railroad iron were fastened to her bows to form a sort of ram. The *General Quitman*, Captain Grant, a little smaller than the *Governor Moore*, was armed with two smooth-bore 32-pounders. The steamer *Jackson*, Lieutenant Francis B. Renshaw, mounted two 32-pounders. Launch No. 6, Acting-Master Fairbanks, and launch No. 3, armed with one howitzer, Acting-Master Telford, were among the vessels. All these were protected about their boilers and machinery with double barricades of pine boards, the space between them being filled in with compressed cotton. None of them had rams under water. Each was manned with about thirty-five men, and they were fitted out under the direction of Lieutenant-

Colonel William S. Lovell, formerly of the United States navy.

Besides this, the Confederates had under way the powerful floating battery *New Orleans*, mounting twenty guns; the *Memphis*, eighteen guns; and the *Mississippi*, sixteen guns. The last-mentioned vessel was regarded "as the greatest vessel in the world," so far as her fighting capacity was concerned. She was two hundred and seventy feet over all, had fifty-eight feet beam, was to make eleven knots an hour and cost two million dollars. The enemy worked day and night and Sundays, and hoped to have her ready by the first of May. Distinct from the Confederate naval force was what was termed a "river defense fleet," consisting of boats mounting one or two guns each. They were the *Warrior*, John A. Stephenson; the *Stonewall Jackson*, Mr. Phillips; the *Resolute*, Mr. Hooper; the *Defiance*, Mr. McCoy; and the *R. J. Breckenridge*. There were also seven unarmed steamers: the *Phoenix*, the *W. Burton*, Mr. Hammond; the *Landis*, Mr. Davis; the *Mosher*, Mr. Sherman; the *Belle Algérienne*, the *Star*, Mr. La Place; and the *Music*, Mr. McClellan.

As a further defense, the Confederates, early in the winter, had thrown a raft across the river under the guns of the forts. This raft consisted of cypress logs several feet in diameter and about forty feet long, placed three feet apart, so that driftwood would pass between them. The logs were held together with iron cables two and a half inches thick, while thirty heavy anchors held them across the stream. The freshet in the spring of 1862 caused such an unusually rapid current that on the 10th of March about a third of the raft was carried away. Eight schooners joined together with chains, and with their masts dragging astern so as to entangle the screws of passing steamers, were anchored in this gap. The Confederates also collected a great number of long flatboats filled with pine knots,

ready to be fired and sent down the swift current into the midst of the hostile fleet.

On the 16th of April, 1862, Farragut steamed up to a point about three miles below Fort Jackson with his fleet of twenty-four vessels besides twenty schooners, each armed with one 13-inch mortar and two long 32-pounders and manned by seven hundred and twenty-one men, under the command of Commander Porter. The following steamers were detailed as tenders to the mortar flotilla: the *Harriet Lane*, Lieutenant Jonathan M. Wainwright; the *Owasco*, Lieutenant John Guest; the *Westfield*, Commander William B. Renshaw; the *Clifton*, Acting-Lieutenant Charles H. Baldwin; the *Miami*, Lieutenant Abram Davis Harrell; and the *Jackson*, Acting-Lieutenant Selim E. Woodworth. The *Harriet Lane* had been transferred from the revenue service, the *Owasco* was of the same class as the *Cayuga*, the *Miami* was a double-ender built for the Government, while the *Clifton*, the *Jackson* and the *Westfield* were ordinary side-wheel ferry boats mounting heavy guns.

As yet Captain Farragut had little idea of the strength and character of the fortifications he was about to attack or the defenses in the river. He had received from the Secretary of the Navy sketches of the works and a memorandum prepared by General Barnard, who had constructed Fort St. Philip. Since the outbreak of hostilities, however, it was known that the enemy had greatly strengthened these fortifications, besides augmenting the defenses and obstructions in the river. The first thing to be done, therefore, after getting the fleet into the river, was to survey the situation as well as possible from a distance. The *Kennebec*, under Commander Bell, and the *Wissahickon*, were sent up the river to reconnoiter, and reported that "the obstructions seemed formidable."

The hazardous duty of getting the mortar schooners in position was performed under the direction of F. H.

Gerdes, of the Coast Survey service, who, with the assistance of J. G. Oltmannis and Joseph Harris, made a careful survey of the river for several miles below Fort Jackson. The work occupied several days, and as it was performed in open boats the surveyors were exposed to a fire from sharpshooters concealed in the bushes along the banks, and sometimes shells from the forts landed in unpleasant proximity. The river was finally triangulated for seven miles, and white flags, each having the name of the boat that was to be anchored near it, were placed with great accuracy. The position selected for the mortar boats was on the south bank of the river, about two miles from Fort Jackson, where the trees and the dense underbrush effectually concealed them and made it difficult for the enemy to get the range; and even if the enemy succeeded in firing with accuracy, the schooners could easily move a few rods without being observed and thus again leave the enemy in doubt as to their whereabouts. To hide their movements more perfectly, the upper masts and rigging of the schooners were dressed with branches and vines, so that the enemy could not distinguish them from the trees. The mortar schooners were anchored in three divisions: the first, of seven vessels, under the command of Lieutenant Watson Smith, was stationed on the west bank, about twenty-eight hundred and fifty yards from Fort Jackson and about thirty-six hundred and eighty yards from Fort St. Philip.

This division consisted of the *Norfolk Packet*, Lieutenant Smith; the *Oliver H. Lee*, Acting-Master Washington Godfrey; the *Para*, Acting-Master Edward G. Furber; the *C. P. Williams*, Acting-Master Amos R. Langthorne; the *Arletta*, Acting-Master Thomas E. Smith; the *Bacon*, Acting-Master William P. Rogers; the *Sophonra*, Acting-Master Lyman Bartholomew. The third division, of six schooners, commanded by Lieutenant Kidder Randolph Breese, was in the rear of

the first division. It consisted of the *John Griffith*, Acting-Master Henry Brown; the *Sarah Bruen*, Acting-Master Abraham Christian; the *Racer*, Acting-Master Alvin Phinney; the *Sea Foam*, Acting-Master Henry E. Williams; the *Henry Janes*, Acting-Master Lewis W. Pennington; the *Dan Smith*, Acting-Master George W. Brown. The second division, of seven schooners, under the command of Lieutenant Walter W. Queen, was stationed on the east bank, about thirty-six hundred and eighty yards from Fort Jackson. This division consisted of the *T. A. Ward*, Lieutenant Queen; *Maria J. Carlton*, Acting-Master Charles E. Jack; the *Matthew Vassar*, Acting-Master Hugh H. Savage; the *George Mangham*, Acting-Master John Collins; the *Oroetta*, Acting-Master Francis E. Blanchard; the *Sidney C. Jones*, Acting-Master J. D. Graham; the *Adolph Hugel*, Acting-Master Van Buskirk. The position of the second division was greatly exposed to the enemy's fire.

At ten o'clock on the morning of April 18th the signal for the mortar schooners to open fire was given, and shortly afterward huge 13-inch shells were whistling through the air in their graceful flight and dropping in and around the fort, each schooner firing one shell every ten minutes. The Confederate forts responded with spirit, but owing to the concealment afforded by the trees they fired with little accuracy. The division under Lieutenant Queen, on the left bank of the river, fired with great precision, but from its exposed position it suffered considerably in return. To divert the enemy's fire from these schooners as much as possible, two gunboats took turns with one of the smaller sloops in steaming up on the west side of the river, suddenly shooting out in full view of the forts and opening a rapid fire from their 11-inch pivot guns. As they were constantly in motion, it was difficult for the Confederate gunners to get their range, while the fire from the 11-inch guns was always effect-

ive. Lieutenant Guest, in the *Owasco*, held the position at the head of the line an hour and fifty minutes, and left only when his ammunition gave out.

About midday the *T. A. Ward* was struck by a 120-pound shot, which crashed into her cabin and nearly fired the magazine, while soon afterward a 10-inch shot struck the water line of the *George Mangham*. Finding that their position was becoming critical, the schooners dropped downstream, anchored two hundred yards below, and resumed their fire. The mortars kept up their fire throughout the day, and about five o'clock in the afternoon dense volumes of smoke were observed rolling upward from Fort Jackson. As night came on, the mortars increased their fire to a shell every five minutes from each, or two hundred and forty shells an hour. Toward midnight they reduced their fire to a shell every half hour, so as to allow the crews of the mortar schooners a little rest. At two o'clock in the morning the six schooners under Lieutenant Queen were removed from the left to the right bank under cover of the woodland.

The labor of the men in the mortar schooners was most exhausting. Little or no sleep could be had, while the terrific shock caused the little vessels to shiver from stem to stern and threatened to rack them. Every time the mortars were fired the men were compelled to run aft, and that the concussion might be as little as possible they stood with mouths open and on tiptoe. The explosion of so much powder soon blackened them from head to foot. One of the schooners, the *Maria J. Carlton*, had been sunk.

That night the enemy sent down an immense flat-boat, one hundred and fifty by fifty feet, laden with burning pine knots piled up twenty feet high, while the flame leaped a hundred feet into the air. As the huge mass of fire came down the river toward the thirty-five wooden ships of the National fleet anchored close together in the narrow channel, it presented a



fearful spectacle. The roaring and crackling flames, sometimes caught in a puff of air, swept across the entire breadth of the river, licking the water into steam or scorching and wilting the trees on the bank. Good discipline, together with the indomitable pluck of the American seamen, came to the rescue. The vessels that stood in the course of the fire quickly slipped their cables and ran inshore, allowing the raft to pass harmlessly by ; but immediate preparations were made to meet other attacks from fire-boats. The steamer *Westfield*, fitted with hose, was detailed as a fire patrol, while a number of boats armed with grapnels, buckets and axes were held in readiness to tow the rafts inshore before they should reach the fleet. From that time a number of these rafts were sent down, but so perfect were the arrangements for receiving them that no further alarm was felt, while the sailors hailed their approach with delight as affording amusement and relieving the monotony of the siege.

On the third night of the bombardment, April 20th, the *Pinola*, Lieutenant Peirce Crosby, and the *Itasca*, Lieutenant Charles Henry Bromedge Caldwell, under the orders of Commander Bell, were sent up the river to sever the line of hulks and chains that stretched across the stream under the guns of the forts. The gunboats, having first had their lower masts and rigging taken out so as to render them less visible to the enemy, set out under cover of darkness. As they approached the raft they were discovered by the enemy and a heavy fire was opened on them, upon which the mortars increased their fire, at times keeping nine shells in the air at once. With this diversion in his favor, Commander Bell kept steadily on his course until he reached the obstructions, when the *Pinola* ran alongside the third hulk from the eastern shore and her men boarded. Charges of powder with slow matches and a petard were placed aboard, after which the crew returned to their ship and the *Pinola*

dropped astern. But the current carried the gunboat down so rapidly that the wires attached to the petard were severed and the charges failed to explode. The *Itasca* then boldly ran alongside the second schooner from the eastern shore and threw a grapnel aboard, which caught on the hulk's rail; but the rail gave way under the strain, and the gunboat was carried some distance downstream before she could stem the current. She then ran alongside the easternmost hulk, and by keeping her engines going slowly ahead held her position alongside while Lieutenant Caldwell, Acting-Masters Amos Johnson and Edmund Jones jumped aboard with a party of seamen. While Caldwell was making his preparations for firing the hulk the chains holding her were slipped without his knowledge, and as the *Itasca's* engines were going ahead and had her helm apart, the sudden releasing of the schooner caused both vessels to turn inshore and run aground under the guns of the fort. The *Itasca* was compelled to remain in this perilous position until the *Pinola* came to her assistance. So far from being discouraged by this mishap, Lieutenant Caldwell headed his vessel up the river, passed through the gap in the obstructions, and after going some distance to obtain a good headway he came down the stream with a full head of steam, and, striking the chains holding the hulks together, he ran the bow of his vessel three or four feet out of water and her weight parted the chains, leaving a larger gap in the obstruction. The two gunboats then returned to the fleet.

On the night of April 23d, Lieutenant Caldwell, with Acting-Master Edmund Jones, pulled up the river in one of the *Hartford's* boats to make a final reconnaissance, as some doubt had been expressed as to the opening made in the raft; and if an opening had been made at all, it was feared that the enemy had repaired the injury. The doubt of there being a clear passage was increased by the rippling of water in the narrow

gap, as if a chain were there, which some of the officers noticed. After an exhausting pull of several miles against the rapid current the boat reached a place where a fire kindled by the Confederates lighted the river like day and would have discovered the adventurers to sharpshooters. In order to avoid this light Lieutenant Caldwell headed his boat to the opposite bank, and by passing close under the trees and bushes he came within one hundred yards of the obstructions. Here the party was directly under the guns of Fort Jackson, and so near that the voices of the soldiers could be heard. From this place it could be distinctly seen that the water in the gap was unobstructed; but, in order to be absolutely certain, Lieutenant Caldwell ordered his men to pull to the gap. In doing this the boat was compelled to pass directly across a broad belt of light and was in full view of the enemy. The Confederates probably believed it to be one of their own boats, for they did not fire. It was found that two or three of the schooners had been torn from their position and were ashore. After pulling above the obstructions, where the lead showed twelve to fifteen fathoms, the boat party rested on its oars and floated downstream, with a heavy lead line at the bow so as to ascertain if there were any barricades or explosives under the water. The lead caught nothing, and after pulling above the hulks and making this test a second time Lieutenant Caldwell was satisfied that the channel was clear, and he returned with this report.

## CHAPTER X.

### PASSING FORTS JACKSON AND ST. PHILIP.

ABOUT noon of April 20th thirteen boats were quietly trailing at the stern of the *Hartford*. The commanders of the National war ships were in the flagship's cabin, holding a council of war. Opinions differed widely as to the best means to be adopted. Effective as the bombardment by the mortar flotilla seemed to have been, the forts still held out, and every moment the enemy was strengthening his defenses. The ram *Louisiana* was thought to be completed, and in a short time the ironclads *New Orleans* and *Memphis* would be added to the Confederate naval force, while the most powerful war vessel ever projected by the South, or any other country up to that time—the *Mississippi*—would be finished in a few days; so that, instead of taking the offensive, the National fleet would be driven out of the river and again reduced to a mere blockading force. Taking the enemy unprepared was the first element of success that had been counted upon when the great New Orleans expedition was planned, and Farragut accepted the place of commander-in-chief with the understanding that he was to run past the forts—not merely to act as an escort to twenty mortar schooners. His long experience in active service had taught him to place little reliance on mortars, and he had accepted them merely as an auxiliary battery, because they had been ordered before he was assigned to the command. Day after day was passing, and the enemy showed no sign of weakening. As a matter of fact, fewer than ten guns of the one

hundred and twenty-six in the two forts had been disabled by the sixteen thousand eight hundred shells dropped in and around them, and only four men had been killed and fourteen wounded.

The proposition of running past the forts did not meet with the unanimous approval of the Union officers. The weight of tradition and long-established rules of war were against it. It was demonstrated with incontrovertible accuracy that wooden ships could never pass such batteries and remain afloat. Had not a French admiral and Captain Preedy, of the English frigate *Mersey*, just been up the river as far as the forts and reported that they were impassable? But Farragut had known English predictions in regard to American naval prowess to fail before this. He saw clearly enough that if New Orleans was to be captured by the fleet, it was to be done only by the vessels running past the forts. "Whatever is to be done will have to be done quickly," he said, and the night of April 23d was fixed for the attempt.

At first it was intended to have the ships pass the forts in a double column, as there would be less straggling and this would enable the larger vessels to give more protection to the lighter ones. But the narrow gap in the line of obstructions would greatly increase the chances of collision with the hulks, and, what was more serious, collision between the vessels themselves; and Farragut therefore determined to range his vessels in single line and to pass the forts in three divisions, one after the other. The vessels were arranged in the following order: First Division, Captain Theodorus Bailey;<sup>1</sup> the *Cayuga*, Lieutenant Napoleon Bonaparte Harrison; the *Pensacola*, Captain Henry W. Morris; the *Mississippi*,<sup>2</sup> Commander Melancton Smith; the *Oneida*, Commander Samuel Phillips Lee; the *Varuna*, Command-

<sup>1</sup> The present Rear-Admiral Francis John Higginson acted as aide and signal midshipman to Bailey.

<sup>2</sup> Admiral Dewey was serving in the *Mississippi* as a lieutenant.

er Charles Stuart Boggs; the *Katahdin*, Lieutenant George Henry Preble; the *Kineo*, Lieutenant George Marcellus Ransom; and the *Wissahickon*, Lieutenant Albert N. Smith. The Second or Center Division was to be led by Captain Farragut himself in the *Hartford*, Commander Richard Wainwright; followed by the *Brooklyn*, Captain Thomas Tingey Craven, and *Richmond*, Commander James Alden. The Third Division, commanded by Commander Henry H. Bell, was to be led by the *Sciota*, Lieutenant Edward Donaldson; followed by the *Iroquois*, Commander John Decamp; the *Kennebec*, Lieutenant John Henry Russell; the *Pinola*, Lieutenant Peirce Crosby; the *Itasca*, Lieutenant Charles Henry Bromedge Caldwell; the *Winona*, Lieutenant Edward Tattnell Nichols.<sup>1</sup>

The 23d of April was taken up with final preparations for the great battle. Bags of sand, ashes and coal, sails, hammocks, etc., were piled around the machinery and exposed parts of the ships, some of the hulls were daubed with yellow river mud to make them less visible to the Confederate gunners, and many of the decks and gun carriages were whitewashed, so that objects on them would be more readily distinguished in the night,

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<sup>1</sup> These vessels carried the following armaments: *Hartford*, twenty-two 9-inch, two rifled 20-pounders; *Brooklyn*, twenty 9-inch, one rifled 80-pounder, one rifled 30-pounder; *Richmond*, twenty-two 9-inch, one rifled 80-pounder, one rifled 30-pounder; *Pensacola*, one 11-inch, twenty 9-inch, one rifled 100-pounder, one rifled 80-pounder; *Mississippi*, one 10-inch, fifteen 8-inch, one rifled 20-pounder; *Oneida*, two 11-inch, four 32-pounders, three rifled 30-pounders; *Iroquois*, two 11-inch, four 32-pounders, one rifled 50-pounder; *Varuna*, eight 8-inch, two rifled 30-pounders; *Cayuga*, *Katahdin*, *Kennebec*, *Kineo*, *Pinola*, *Sciota*, *Winona*, *Wissahickon*, each carried one 11-inch, one rifled 30-pounder; *Itasca*, one 10-inch, one rifled 30-pounder. The armaments of the steamers of the mortar flotilla were: *Harriet Lane*, three 9-inch guns; *Clifton*, two 9-inch, four 32-pounders, one rifled 30-pounder; *Jackson*, one 10-inch, one 9-inch, one 6-inch rifled Sawyer, four 32-pounders; *Westfield*, one 9-inch, four 8-inch, one rifled 100-pounder; *Miami*, two 9-inch, one rifled 100-pounder, one rifled 80-pounder, one rifled 30-pounder; *Owasco*, one 11-inch, one rifled 80-pounder,

as it was proposed to have as few lanterns lighted as possible. At the suggestion of Chief-Engineer J. W. Moore, of the *Richmond*, the sheet cables were arranged up and down the hulls of the ships, so as to protect the machinery. The holds or the cockpits of the vessels were cleared of the stores piled there, and made ready—for the first time, perhaps—for the reception of wounded men. Tables were arranged in convenient positions, and the surgeons prepared their instruments, while buckets and tubs were placed in readiness to receive the blood and severed members of the human body. Aboard the *Brooklyn* a cot frame was slung from two davits and so arranged that the wounded could be lowered down the main hatch and taken to the surgeon's table in the fore hold. The ropes, hawsers etc. were packed in the sick bay in a solid mass, kedge anchors attached to hawsers were slung to the main-brace bumkins on each quarter in case it became necessary to turn the ship suddenly, and, in some, hammocks or netting made of rope were spread so as to catch splinters. The men in the tops were protected from musketry fire by iron bulwarks; the heavy weights in the ship were stowed in the forward part, so that if they grounded at all the bow would strike first and the swift current would not swing them broadside to across the river. All unnecessary spars, boats, rigging etc. had been sent ashore at Pilot Town and the vessels stripped for the fight. Five of the nine gunboats took out their masts entirely, as the *Pinola* and the *Itasca* had done when severing the raft on the 20th of April.

On the afternoon of April 23d Farragut personally visited every vessel in the fleet, to see if his orders for the night were clearly understood. Having done this, he returned to his own ship and made his personal arrangements for the battle. The evening came on clear and starlit, while nothing served to break the silence or to conceal the movements of the vessels. At about five min-

utes of two o'clock in the morning, April 24th, two ordinary red lights (so as not to attract the enemy's notice) in a vertical line appeared in the rigging of the flagship, and immediately afterward the click of capstans and the harsh grating of cables fell upon the midnight air from all parts of the anchorage, and proclaimed to the Confederate lookouts concealed in the woods that the fleet was about to begin some serious movement. The alarm was quickly conveyed to the forts, and scarcely were the ships under way before the enemy was in readiness to receive the attack. The unusual strength of the current delayed the ships, so that it was 3.30 before the entire fleet was under way. The five steamers that had been used for towing the mortar schooners were moved up the river to a position about two hundred yards from the water-battery opposite Fort Jackson, where, by running close under the levee, their hulls would be entirely protected from the enemy's shot, and about the time the first division of ships was well under way the mortar steamers opened their fire. The sailing sloop of war *Portsmouth*, Commander Samuel Swartwout, also was towed by the steamer *Jackson* to a position where she could enfilade the enemy's batteries. Soon after the fleet got under way large bonfires on the banks and huge fire rafts on the water illuminated the whole scene, enabling the Confederate gunners to fire with accuracy. The mortar schooners now began to thunder out their huge shells, keeping two constantly in the air, while the five steamers near the water-battery opened with grape and shrapnel.

As soon as the head of the National line was in range the Confederates opened from every gun that bore. The scene was one of indescribable grandeur. The huge 13-inch shells left their beds with thunderous reports; revolving the light of their fuses rapidly in the air, they rushed to the apex of their flight, where they seemed to pause for a moment, and then descended in a graceful curve, exploding in or over the forts. Some



of them burst in mid-air, sending a shower of iron fragments and sparks in all directions. The constant flashing of so many guns, together with the flickering light of the fire-rafts, produced a shimmering illumination over the river, which, although brilliant, was illusive and made it difficult to take accurate aim. Soon dark masses of smoke began to float across the river, obstructing the line of vision here and there and adding greatly to the confusion.

About 3.45 A. M. the *Cayuga* was well under the forts. Captain Bailey, whose ship, the *Colorado*, was unable to cross the bar, had asked for an opportunity to take part in the fight and was placed in command of the first division, while his men were distributed among the crews. He pressed gallantly toward Fort St. Philip, leaving the other divisions to attack Fort Jackson. The *Cayuga* was now the center of a terrific storm of shot, to which she could make no effective answer. "The air," said Lieutenant Perkins, who was piloting the *Cayuga*, "was filled with shells and explosives, which almost blinded me as I stood on the forecastle trying to see my way, for I had never been up the river before. I soon saw that the guns of the forts were well aimed for the center of the midstream, so I steered close under the walls of Fort St. Philip, and although our masts and rigging got badly shot through, our hull was but little damaged. After passing the last battery and thinking we were clear, I looked back for some of our vessels, and my heart jumped into my mouth when I found I could not see a single one. I thought they all must have been sunk by the forts. Looking ahead, I saw eleven of the enemy's gunboats coming down upon us, and it seemed as if we were gone, sure."

Undaunted by the heavy odds, Captain Bailey boldly stood on and prepared to attack three large steamers that made a dash at him with the intention of running him down. One headed for the *Cayuga's* starboard bow, another came on at right angles amidship, and a

third came up on the stern. The 11-inch Dahlgren gun was deliberately trained on the second steamer, and when at a distance of thirty yards it was fired. The shot crippled the enemy, and he sheered off, ran in-shore, and was soon wrapped in flames. The Parrott rifled gun on the forecastle also lodged a shot in the steamer off the starboard bow, which compelled her to haul off. This left only the steamer coming up on the starboard quarter. The boarders were immediately called aft, but at this moment the *Varuna*, which had been fifth in line, came swiftly up the river and crippled the enemy with a shell. The *Cayuga* had now been struck by forty-two shot. Her masts were so shattered as to be unfit for use, the carriage of her 11-inch Dahlgren gun was broken, and her smokestack was riddled; but as her machinery remained intact she still advanced. The *Varuna*, however, soon passed her and sped up the river, delivering her fire right and left. A steamer filled with soldiers soon appeared off her starboard beam, and Commander Boggs put a shot into her boiler, which caused her to drift ashore. Two other steamers and one gunboat also were crippled and driven ashore in flames by the *Varuna*. But, unknown to Commander Boggs, a more formidable enemy was swiftly pursuing and gradually overtaking him.

When the National fleet was getting under way, the *Governor Moore* lay near Fort St. Philip, with her lights carefully concealed and with a double guard of sentinels. About half past two in the morning her vigilant commander, Lieutenant Beverley Kennon, detected unusual sounds down the river, and climbing over the side of the vessel, he placed his ear near the water and distinctly heard the stroke of a paddle-wheel steamer apparently coming up stream. He rightly conjectured that it was the *Mississippi* coming up with the fleet, and firing two alarm guns, he got up steam in three minutes, and proceeded a short distance

up the river so as to have a better opportunity for ramming. While feeling his way in the gloom, Lieutenant Kennon saw a large two-masted steamer emerge from the darkness and pass between him and the light of the burning steamer, "rushing upstream like an ocean racer, belching black smoke, firing on each burning vessel as she passed." It was the *Varuna*, leading the line of vessels up the river. As the stranger carried a white light at the masthead and a red light at the peak, Lieutenant Kennon knew that she was one of the National vessels. He also knew that General Lovell, commander of the Confederate forces at New Orleans, had come down the river to visit the forts that evening, and had just passed up the river in the steamer *Doubloon*, on his return to the city.

Knowing that the "ocean racer" would soon overtake the *Doubloon*, Lieutenant Kennon, after shooting away his blue distinguishing light at the masthead with a musket (for hauling it down would have attracted attention), set off in chase of the *Varuna*. The trees and thick underbrush on the bank of the river near which the *Governor Moore* was steaming formed a dark background and prevented the people in the National gunboat from discovering her. By putting oil on his fires Kennon got up a full head of steam, and soon had the steamer "shaking all over and fairly dancing through the water." In order to deceive the *Varuna*, Lieutenant Kennon now hoisted the Union distinguishing lights, and in this way the two steamers sped up the river, the *Governor Moore* gradually gaining and the people in the *Varuna* ignorant of an approaching foe.

When near the battery at Chalmette, day just breaking, the two vessels were only one hundred yards apart, and Lieutenant Kennon hauled down the Union light and fired at the *Varuna*. But the shot missed its mark. The people in the *Varuna* responded to this unexpected attack with such guns as bore, but they



*Kennon fires through his own bow.*



were afraid to yaw across the river so as to bring their broadside to bear lest they should be rammed by the rapidly approaching enemy. In this way a running fight ensued, with the advantage decidedly in the *Varuna's* favor, for her shells were raking the *Governor Moore*, killing and wounding men at every fire. One shot from the Confederate gunboat, however, raked the *Varuna* along the port gangway, killing four men and wounding nine. Finding that his bow gun was too far abaft the knightheads to hull the *Varuna*, Lieutenant Kennon ran up to close quarters and deliberately fired through his own bow, hoping to throw a shell into the *Varuna's* engine room. The missile struck the hawse pipe, was deflected, and passed through the *Varuna's* smokestack. But a second shot, fired through the hole made by the first in the *Governor Moore's* bow, struck the *Varuna's* pivot gun and killed or wounded several men. Soon after this the *Varuna* ported her helm, and the *Governor Moore* followed the example, but under cover of smoke the latter suddenly put her helm hard to starboard, and before the *Varuna* could right herself she was rammed near the starboard quarter, at the same instant delivering her broadside and receiving a shell from the Confederate steamer. Backing clear, the *Governor Moore* again rammed, striking in nearly the same place as before; while Commander Boggs managed at the same time to get in three 8-inch shells, which set fire to his antagonist and caused her to drop out of action. Lieutenant Kennon attempted to fight again, but all his boat's steering gear was destroyed, a large piece of the walking-beam had been carried away, the slide of the engine fell and cracked the cylinder, filling the engine room with steam, and fifty-seven of his men had been killed and seventeen wounded. After drifting about helplessly some time he ran the *Governor Moore* ashore, where she was burned to the water's edge.

But scarcely had the *Varuna* disposed of this ene-

my when another, the *Stonewall Jackson*, loomed out of the darkness on the port side and struck the *Varuna* on the gangway, doing considerable damage. The *Varuna* delivered her fire, but with little effect. The enemy then backed off and again rammed the *Varuna* in the same place, this time crushing in her side below the water line. Without diminishing her speed, the *Varuna* dragged the ram ahead so as to bring her broadside guns into play, and fired five 8-inch shells into the *Stonewall Jackson*, so that she drifted ashore in flames. But as the *Varuna* also was rapidly sinking, Commander Boggs ran her ashore, let go his anchor and made fast to the trees on the bank, during which time, however, his guns were still playing on the *Governor Moore*, which was making a feeble effort to get up steam. The guns of the *Varuna* were fought until the water covered the gun-trucks, when attention was given to getting the men ashore. "In fifteen minutes from the time the *Varuna* was struck [by the *Stonewall Jackson*] she was on the bottom, with only her topgallant forecandle out of water."<sup>1</sup>

In approaching the forts the vessels of the first division maintained their prescribed positions until passing the obstructions, when they became somewhat confused. The *Oneida* soon overhauled the *Mississippi*, and, being caught in a strong eddy, was carried swiftly past Fort St. Philip, and so close under its guns that the sparks from the cannon came aboard. The enemy, miscalculating the distance, fired too high, so that she passed almost unscathed, while her grape and shrapnel swept the parapets at short range. One shell from Fort Jackson entered the coal bunker on the port side but did not explode. Getting past the forts and out of their line of fire, the *Oneida* pushed ahead to join the *Cayuga* and the *Varuna*, then struggling with the Confederate gunboats. Passing the ram *Manassas*

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<sup>1</sup> Official report of Commander Boggs.

without being able to strike her, Commander Lee discovered a steamer crossing his course only a short distance ahead, and, putting on a full head of steam, he struck the enemy amidships, crushing in her starboard quarter, so that she drifted away in a sinking condition. Continuing his course, he soon found himself among the enemy's vessels and began delivering his broadsides right and left. Just as he fell in with the *Cayuga*, the *Governor Moore* loomed up within a few feet, and on being hailed "What ship is that?" Lieutenant Kennon answered, "The United States steamer *Mississippi*." But the Union commander was not so easily deceived, and, observing the distinguishing lights in the stranger, he raked her with his starboard guns. Learning that the *Varuna* was ahead and unsupported, Commander Lee hastened on and discovered his consort in a sinking condition. As Captain Boggs declined all assistance, the *Oneida* passed ahead.

The *Mississippi* and the *Pensacola* deliberately slowed up when passing the forts, frequently stopping so that their powerful batteries could play with full effect on the fortifications, while the smaller vessels passed ahead with but little injury. So near were these vessels to the enemy that at times the jeers of defiance and the oaths and imprecations exchanged by the contending men could be heard above the roar of battle. The *Mississippi* was struck repeatedly, eight shot passing entirely through the ship, but fortunately inflicting no vital injury, although one of them caused a slight alteration in a bearing of the shaft. Her rigging was badly cut up, and the mizzen mast was struck about twelve feet above the deck.

The ram *Manassas*, after passing the *Varuna*, came rapidly down the river in search of larger game. The *Pensacola* was the next vessel she discovered, and, putting on full steam, she endeavored to ram her; but Captain Morris discovered the ram just in time, and Lieutenant Francis Asbury Roe, who was conning the



*Pensacola*, "avoided a collision beautifully,"<sup>1</sup> and, passing close by, fired his starboard broadside. The shot did not take effect, except cutting away the flag-staff, and the next instant the *Manassas* had vanished in the darkness. After remaining in front of the forts two hours, the *Pensacola* steamed up the river, and, observing the *Varuna* in a disabled condition, sent her boats aboard and took off seven officers and about sixty of the crew.

Having missed the *Pensacola*, the *Manassas* made for the *Mississippi*, and, favored by the darkness and dense smoke, managed to strike her on the port quarter, a little forward of the mizzen mast, making a gash seven feet long and four inches deep, and took off fifty copper bolts under the water line. Had the blow been a little deeper, the *Mississippi* would have sunk immediately. After this escape Commander Smith steamed ahead, passed the Confederate line of fire, and disabled an enemy's steamer with a broadside.

The *Katahdin* followed close in the *Varuna's* wake. The fire of her pivot gun was much embarrassed by the shells jamming in the bore, the sabots being too large. Five shells were passed up before one could be found to fit. By keeping up a full head of steam, Lieutenant Preble was enabled to maintain his position close astern of the *Varuna*, although the dense smoke hid everything from view except when lighted by the fitful flashes of the guns. Overtaking the *Mississippi*, he ran above the forts and passed within fifty yards of the ironclad *Louisiana*, which was moored near Fort St. Philip. Fortunately, the iron monster did not fire upon her, or the course of the *Katahdin* would have been cut short. But Lieutenant Preble fired an 11-inch shot at the ram with some effect. The *Katahdin* had passed the fort almost uninjured. "Several of the men had their clothing torn by shot and fragments

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<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant A. F. Warley, of the *Manassas*.

of shell, but not a man was even scratched. The vessel also escaped without serious damage. One shell passed through the smokestack and the steam-escape pipe and burst, making a dozen small holes from the inside outward, and another shot cut about four to six inches into the foremast, while the same or another shot cut the foresail and some of the running rigging about the foremast."<sup>1</sup> The *Kineo*, in passing the hulks, came into violent collision with the *Brooklyn*, but no serious injury was done. The *Wissahickon* also passed the forts without serious injury.

While the first division of the fleet was getting into close quarters with Fort St. Philip, Captain Farragut, leading the second division in the *Hartford*, passed the barriers and came into range. For fifteen minutes after the enemy had opened on him he did not reply, but kept steadily on his course under a full head of steam. When in easy range, about 3.55 A. M., he opened with his bow guns, and as he swept past Fort St. Philip he discharged his broadside. By this time the river between the two forts was covered with a dense mass of smoke, completely enveloping the ships and shores, so that even the monstrous fire-rafts, which in the earlier part of the action illuminated the scene like day, now failed to penetrate the gloom, merely making a dull red glow in their direction and rendering the darkness the more striking by the contrast.

At 4.15 A. M., while the *Hartford* was carefully feeling her way along, a huge fire-raft suddenly loomed up off her port quarter, and, guided by an unseen hand, made directly for the flagship. The order "Hard aport!" was instantly given, but the current caught the frigate, and, giving her a broad sheer, ran her hard and fast on the muddy bank, where the bushes on shore could be reached from her bowsprit, and at such a short distance from Fort St. Philip that the gunners

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<sup>1</sup> Official report of Lieutenant Preble.

in the casemates could be distinctly heard talking. The enemy quickly recognized the *Hartford* by her three ensigns and the flag-officer's flag at the mizzen, and began firing on her with great rapidity. "It seemed to be breathing a flame," said Farragut after the action. "On the deck of the ship it was bright as noonday, but out over the majestic river, where the smoke of many guns was intensified by that of the pine knots of the fire rafts, it was dark as the blackest midnight."<sup>1</sup> Fortunately the Confederates aimed too high, so that most of their shot passed over the bulwarks.

But the terrible fire-raft was at hand. Guided by the thirty-five-ton tugboat *Mosher*, it was pushed against the wooden side of the flagship, and the flames, pouring into the portholes, drove the men from their guns, or, rolling up her sides and mounting into the well-oiled rigging, ran up to the mastheads and seemed to envelop the ship in a sheet of flame. Two years afterward Farragut wrote: "It was the anxious night of my life. I felt as if the fate of my country and my own life and reputation were all on the wheel of fortune." But the men, animated by the example of their intrepid commander, maintained perfect self-command, and under the direction of Commander Wainwright they attacked the fire. At one time a long tongue of flame was thrust through a port, and for a moment the men were driven from their guns. Farragut, who was calmly pacing the poop deck, shouted out, "Don't flinch from that fire, boys! There is a hotter fire for those who don't do their duty! Give that rascally little tug a shot, and don't let her go off with a whole coat." A stream of water was brought to bear, and the flames were extinguished before they had made serious headway; soon afterward a shot entered the *Mosher's* boiler and sank her. The engines were then

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<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Albert Kautz, of the *Hartford*.

reversed, the ship swung around, and as she once more got into deep water her crew gave three cheers. All this time the *Hartford* had maintained a heavy fire on Fort St. Philip, which was kept up until she was out of gunshot. About this time a large steamer filled with troops made a dash at her, with the intention of getting alongside and boarding, but a single well-aimed shell crippled the stranger and sent her drifting down the stream.

Closely following the *Hartford* was the sloop of war *Brooklyn*. Captain Craven had taken every precaution for the battle. Just before getting under way his decks had been washed down and sanded so as to make them less slippery when blood began to flow. For twenty minutes after the ship was well within range of the enemy's fire he refrained from answering, the men standing silently at their guns while shot and shell seemed to fill the air over their heads. Captain Craven himself, calm and collected, stood on the break of the poop deck, resting his hands lightly on the ratline, intently watching the progress of the battle and giving the few necessary orders in his deep bass voice that could be heard in all parts of the ship. The clouds of smoke, shutting in the view to a short distance, rendered it impossible to aim with accuracy, and Captain Craven determined to bring his broadside guns into full range before opening fire.

As the *Brooklyn* approached the obstructions the water-battery opposite Fort Jackson opened a most destructive fire on her, to which Craven responded with grape and canister. In the darkness and confusion he lost sight of his leader, the *Hartford*, and instead of passing through the opening he ran into the line of chains. Backing clear of this, the *Brooklyn* steamed up the river again to find the opening, but she ran again into the obstruction. This time, however, the chains broke, and as she swung alongside one of the hulks, the *Brooklyn's* stream anchor, which was hanging on

the starboard quarter in readiness to let go at a moment's notice, caught the hulk and held the ship just where the gunners in the fort had long since got the most accurate range. While thus entangled she was subjected to a dreadful fire. One shot from Fort Jackson broke off the port-quarter anchor close to the stock, scattering the fragments over the deck. Several shot hulled her, one of them striking the rail at the break of the poop deck and plowing a deep furrow across the planks. Another shot cut Midshipman John Anderson and the signal quartermaster, Barney Sands, almost in two. Young Anderson, whose ship had been detailed for another duty, had volunteered to serve in the *Brooklyn*. Early in the fight Quartermaster James Buck received a painful wound, "but for seven hours afterward he stood bravely at the wheel and performed his duty, refusing to go below until positively ordered to do so; and on the morning of the 25th, without my knowledge, he again stole to his station and steered the ship from early daylight until 1.30 P. M., over eight hours."<sup>1</sup>

The hawser holding the *Brooklyn* to the hulk was quickly severed, and again the sloop of war headed upstream; but scarcely had she got under way when a sudden jar was felt, the engine stopped, "and a thrill of alarm ran through the ship." To prevent the *Brooklyn* from being carried downstream by the strong current, Captain Craven now called out, "Stand by the starboard anchor!" and it seemed for a moment as if the ship must come to anchor directly under the guns of both forts, where, being a stationary object, her destruction would be a question of a very few minutes. The blades of the propeller had struck some hard object in passing the line of hulks, but after a pause of a few minutes the engines were started, and again the ship moved slowly up the river. The *Brooklyn* now

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<sup>1</sup> Official report of Captain Craven.

poured shell and shrapnel into Fort Jackson as fast as the guns could be loaded, receiving a heavy fire in return. About this time a shot entered the port of gun No. 9 on the port side, and at the same moment a shell burst directly over the gun, wounding nine men and taking off the first captain's head. Acting Midshipman Bartlett, who was standing amidships between the starboard and port No. 10 guns, was struck on the back by a splinter and thrown down. Quickly regaining his feet, he found that only two of the gun crew on the port side were standing. The first loader and sponger were leaning against the side of the ship, while the rest of the men were lying flat on the deck, one of them directly in the rear of the gun. As the gun had just been loaded, Bartlett dragged this man aside so as to be clear of the recoil and fired it. On the discharge of the gun the men got up and returned to their stations, none of them having been seriously injured. "The captain of the gun found a piece of shell inside his cap, which did not even scratch his head; another piece went through my coat-sleeve."<sup>1</sup>

While the *Hartford* was hard aground, exposed to a terrible fire from both Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip, as already narrated, the *Brooklyn* passed her. Captain Craven did not discover the peril of the flagship until he had the *Hartford* on his starboard quarter. Taking in the situation at a glance, notwithstanding the fact that he was in a most exposed position himself, he promptly gave the order "One bell!" (slow down), and a moment later "Two bells!" (stop), intending to remain alongside of his commanding officer until he was extricated from his perilous position. The *Brooklyn's* bow now swung around, and she dropped down to a position where she was on a line between the two forts, when she poured in a terrific fire of shell and shrapnel from the port battery. As soon as the enemy

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<sup>1</sup> Lieut. Bartlett. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. ii, p. 63.

discovered her they diverted a portion of their fire from the flagship, just as Captain Craven had desired. Had the Confederates aimed more accurately, they would have blown the *Brooklyn* out of water. As it was, a storm of shot, shell and shrapnel passed just over the bulwarks and cut the rigging, the hammock nettings and the boats all to pieces, there being scarcely a sound rope left to the spars. Craven deliberately kept his ship under this terrific fire until he saw that Farragut was free from the fire-raft, and then continued on his course up the river.

As she passed within a hundred feet of Fort St. Philip a long blaze of musketry was opened on her from the parapets. One of the bullets, entering the port of gun No. 1, struck Lieutenant James O'Kane in the leg ; but although he fell to the deck he would not allow himself to be carried below until he had fired two of the broadside guns with his own hands. Soon afterward a shot took off the head of a marine who was standing on the starboard quarter. But the greatest carnage had taken place in the forward division of guns. A shell exploded near the powder man of the pivot gun, literally blowing him to pieces, and parts of his body were scattered all over the forecastle. The primer of the gun was broken off at the vent, disabling the gun. As soon as possible the *Brooklyn* responded to this fire with grape, which drove the Confederates to shelter. A prisoner afterward remarked that "the grape came in like rain, but the worst of all were the infernal lamp-posts or the stands that held the grape. The fort was full of them." At times the *Brooklyn* was so close to Fort St. Philip that the flashes of the Confederate cannon scorched the faces and clothing of the ship's gunners. All this time a heroic quartermaster, Thomas Hollins, stood at the starboard main chains, undismayed by the storm around him, and his voice every few minutes was heard above the din of battle, calmly singing out the varying fathoms of water.

When abreast of the fort, where the flashes leaped out of the enemy's guns and seemed almost to touch him, he coolly called out, "Only thirteen feet, sir!" On examining the ship after the battle, it was found that her side near the place where he stood was peppered with bullets.

Just as Craven was clearing Fort St. Philip he caught a glimpse, through a break in the smoke, of the *Louisiana*. The National commanders had little or no reliable information as to the condition of the ram, but rumor had pictured the *Louisiana* as a most terrible monster, and with a feeling that they had met their greatest danger they drew near the ironclad. The *Brooklyn* delivered her starboard fire of solid shot, which could be distinctly heard striking the ram, but they glanced harmlessly upward. Lieutenant James McBaker, of the *Louisiana*, at this moment was standing astride two beams in the pilot house (the floor not yet being laid), and the shock caused him to fall to the deck. Captain McIntosh, who was in charge of the *Louisiana*, was mortally wounded while in the act of throwing a fireball at a National vessel. The *Louisiana* fired a heavy shell that struck the *Brooklyn* about a foot above the water line on the starboard side of the cutwater near the wood ends, and, forcing its way three feet into the dead wood and timbers, remained there. Had that shell exploded, the entire bow would have been blown off and the ship would have gone to the bottom in a few minutes. But the Confederates, in their haste to fire, had neglected to remove the lead patch from the fuse.

After passing the ram the *Brooklyn* swung out into the middle of the river and continued on her slow course against the current. A number of vessels could now be made out through the smoke, engaged in a desperate struggle at close quarters, but as it was impossible to distinguish between friend and foe, Captain Craven refrained from firing. A few minutes later the



cry ran through the ship, "A steamer coming down on our port bow!" and soon they saw black smoke from the double smokestack of a river boat, quickly followed by the outlines of a steamer having her fore-castle crowded with men as if in readiness to board. The order "Stand by to repel boarders!" was passed, the guns were loaded with shrapnel and the fuses were cut so as to burn one second. On the steamer came; but just before a collision took place the *Brooklyn* gave a sheer to starboard, and as the steamer passed to port the broadside guns of the *Brooklyn*, beginning with the forward one, were discharged one after another as they bore. The missiles sped with fatal precision, as the rush of steam and the shrieks and yells of the injured speedily proclaimed. The shells exploded almost on leaving the guns, and when it came time for the after guns in the *Brooklyn* to be fired the steamer was nowhere to be seen.

Scarcely had this enemy been disposed of when some of the men who had been looking out of the ports saw another black column of smoke creeping out of the night, and a moment later the cry "The ram! the ram!" passed through the ship. "Four bells! [full speed]. Put your helm hard a-starboard!" called out Craven. But it was too late, for in a moment there was a shock that nearly threw the men off their feet. The *Manassas* had struck the *Brooklyn* almost at right angles and nearly amidships. At the moment of striking the ram fired her gun. The shot, piercing the chain and planking on the starboard side, entered the berth deck, made its way through the pile of rigging and passed into the sand-bags that had been placed around the steam drum. The chain plating was driven into the outer planking, and on the inside the planks were splintered and crushed for about five feet, and had it not been for the fact that her bunkers were full of coal she would undoubtedly have been sunk. When the *Brooklyn* went to sea some weeks after this, the rolling of the

ship caused her to leak so seriously that she was compelled to run into Pensacola, where a large patch of planking was bolted over the wound. Mr. Bartlett writes: "I ran to the No. 10 port, the gun being in, and, looking out, saw her [the ram] almost directly alongside. A man came out of the little hatch aft and ran forward along the port side of the deck as far as the smokestacks, placed his hand against one of the funnels and looked to see what damage the ram had done. I saw him turn, fall over and tumble into the water, but did not know at the moment what caused his sudden disappearance until I asked the quartermaster who was leadsman in the chains, if he had seen him fall. 'Why, yes, sir,' he said, 'I saw him fall overboard—in fact, I helped him; for I hit him alongside of the head with my hand-lead.'"<sup>1</sup> The shock of the collision threw the boilers of the *Manassas* out of position and prevented her from repeating the attack immediately. As the men had just been working the port guns and the *Manassas* came up suddenly on the starboard side, none of the *Brooklyn's* guns could be fired at her, although an attempt was made to depress the muzzle of the 30-pounder Parrot. The *Manassas* vanished in the night as suddenly as she appeared.

After these narrow escapes Captain Craven pressed on, feeling his way in the darkness and guiding the ship by the flashes of the guns. Finding that he was getting too far to the western side, he headed his ship for Fort St. Philip, but in so doing exposed himself to a terrible raking fire from Fort Jackson. At this moment a large three-masted steamer loomed out of the smoke and opened fire. Waiting until his entire port broadside bore, Captain Craven fired eleven 9-inch guns, which sent the stranger down the river in flames. Pushing carefully across the river until the starboard lead showed thirteen feet, Captain Craven headed up-

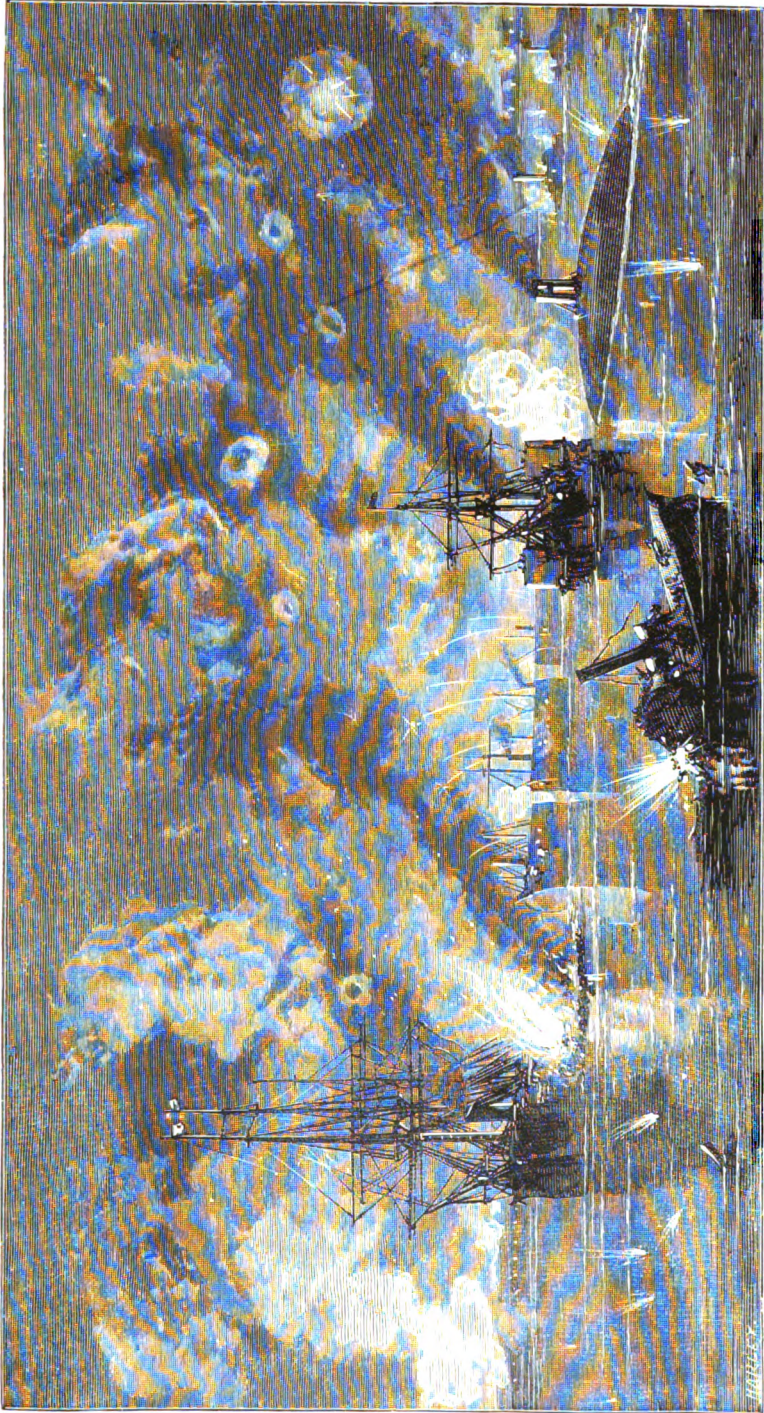
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<sup>1</sup> Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. ii, p. 67.

stream, and again brought his broadside to bear on Fort St. Philip. A torrent of grape and canister was then poured into that work and completely silenced it. By the flashes of the guns the enemy could be seen running to cover. After passing out of range of the forts the *Brooklyn* destroyed several gunboats. She had now been under fire about an hour and a half, and had eight men killed and twenty-six wounded.

The *Richmond*, Commander James Alden, the third vessel of the second division, passed up with less difficulty. Like the others, she got out of line soon after starting, and was carried close to Fort Jackson at a time when the guns in that fort were nearly silenced by the fire from the mortars and their tenders. Her loss was two killed and four wounded. Much injury to the men was saved by a carefully prepared splinter-netting. At one point between the guns the netting was forced out to its utmost tension; "indeed," says Commander Alden, "large pieces of plank were thus prevented from sweeping the deck and perhaps destroying the men at the guns."

Commander Bell, leading the third division in the *Sciota*, got under fire a little before 4 A. M. and passed the forts with slight damage. Following him came the *Iroquois*, Commander Decamp, which hotly engaged the forts. Shortly afterward she was attacked by the *McRae* and another war vessel, which, coming up on her quarter and stern, poured in a destructive fire of grape, copper slugs and langrage. One 11-inch shell and a stand of canister, skillfully aimed, drove off the *McRae* and mortally wounded her commander, Lieutenant Huger. Huger was serving in the *Iroquois* when he resigned his commission in the United States navy. The command of his vessel then fell upon Lieutenant Read, who fought his ship gallantly to the end. The *Iroquois*, although passing within fifty yards of Fort Jackson, received no injury from that work, but suffered severely from the raking fire of Fort St. Philip.



**Hartford.**

*Farragut's fleet passing the forts.*

**Mississippi.**

**Manassas.**



Through a misunderstanding of the order "Starboard!" as "Stop her!" the *Iroquois* was carried close alongside the *Louisiana*. Half of the Confederate crew, supposing that an attempt at boarding was to be made, ran outside of her casemate to repel boarders, and the *Louisiana* double-shotted her guns and delivered a heavy fire at the *Iroquois*. After getting beyond the line of fire of the forts, the *Iroquois* was attacked by five or six steamers, but as she brought her broadsides into play they were sent down the stream in a crippled condition. Four miles above this point Commander Decamp captured gunboat No. 3, which was armed with one 24-pounder howitzer and was well supplied with fixed ammunition and small arms. Lieutenant Henderson, with four hundred and thirty soldiers, also was captured. In passing the forts the *Iroquois* was badly injured in her hull, her bowsprit and jib boom were struck by heavy shot, and all the boats were smashed to pieces. Her loss was eight killed and twenty-four wounded.

The *Winona* took her station astern of the *Itasca*, and was following her red light when she became entangled in a mass of logs and driftwood held together by chains in the moorings of the hulks. While endeavoring to back clear of this, she fouled her consort on the starboard bow, causing a delay of nearly half an hour. Although the larger part of the fleet by this time had passed the forts, Lieutenant Nichols pushed ahead. But day was fast breaking, and by the time the *Winona* had passed the obstruction she stood out in bold relief against the bright sky, presenting a fair mark to the enemy's gunners. Fort Jackson opened on her, and the first shot killed one man and wounded another, while the third and fourth shot killed or wounded all the men of the 30-pounder except one. In spite of this disastrous fire, Lieutenant Nichols pressed on to Fort St. Philip; but his vessel and the *Itasca* soon became the center of such a terrific fire that Commander

Porter signaled them to retire. The *Winona* had three killed and had five wounded, while she had been "hulled several times, and the decks were wet fore and aft from the spray of the falling shot." The *Itasca* received fourteen shot, one in her boiler, and was so injured that Lieutenant Caldwell ran her ashore below the mortar boat to prevent sinking. The *Kennebec* also failed to pass the forts. The *Pinola*, which was in line astern of the *Iroquois*, had her starboard quarter boat crushed by a chain on the hulks. When abreast of Fort Jackson, Lieutenant Crosby opened with his 11-inch Dahlgren and Parrott guns, the flashes of the Confederate guns being the only mark presented to the gunners. The enemy promptly replied, but, miscalculating the distance, sent most of his shot over the *Pinola*, so that only two of them struck her hull.

Lieutenant Crosby then ran within one hundred and fifty yards of Fort St. Philip, where the fire-rafts exposed his vessel to the enemy's view. The Confederates opened a heavy fire, and one shot, entering her starboard quarter, cut away part of the wheel and wounded several men, including Quartermaster William Ackworth. Another shot entered the hull at the water line on the starboard side, eight inches forward of the boiler, passed through the coal-bunkers, cut the sounding-well in two, and lodged in the pump-well. A third shot cut away the top of the steam-escape pipe, and the starboard chain cable from the anchor, while another passed entirely through the hull immediately over the magazine. After these narrow escapes the *Pinola* passed beyond the line of fire, and in the early dawn sighted a steamer which was thought to be the *Iroquois*. Discovering her to be the *Governor Moore*, however, Lieutenant Crosby gave her a shot from his 11-inch Dahlgren and Parrott guns, both of which took effect near the water line. At this moment

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<sup>1</sup> Official report of Lieutenant Nichols.

the dark hull of the *Manassas* was discovered in the *Pinola's* wake, coming up the river under a full head of steam. Lieutenant Crosby immediately opened on the dangerous ram, but before he could come to close quarters the *Mississippi* dashed past for the purpose of running into the iron craft. Just as all were expecting to see the *Manassas* crushed, she sheered to one side and ran ashore, where her crew escaped. The *Mississippi*, balked of her prey, checked her swift course down-stream, ran up to the ram, and riddled her with shot.

At five o'clock in the morning the *Cayuga* reached the Confederate batteries at Chalmette, where, after an exchange of shot, the regiment under the command of Colonel Szymanaski surrendered to Captain Bailey. Farragut's fleet did not anchor off New Orleans until one o'clock on the afternoon of April 25th. New Orleans was surrendered on the 29th, Forts Jackson and St. Philip having surrendered the day before. The total loss in the National fleet was thirty-seven killed and one hundred and forty-seven wounded, while that of the Confederate land forces was twelve killed and forty wounded. The loss in the Confederate flotilla can not be accurately determined, but it must have been equal to that of the Nationalists.



## CHAPTER XI.

### OPERATIONS ON WESTERN RIVERS.

DRIVEN from one stronghold after another by the National gunboats on the upper Mississippi, and compelled by the genius of Farragut to abandon New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Natchez on the lower Mississippi, the Confederates gradually concentrated around Vicksburg. By the time the National forces were ready to make a serious demonstration against this place, many of the troops, guns and munitions of war that had been scattered over the Western States of the Confederacy were massed at Vicksburg, so that it became one of the most formidable strongholds the world has ever seen. On the other hand, while the Confederates were growing stronger by concentration after each defeat, the Nationalists were becoming weaker as their forces were spread over a larger territory and they were required to guard many points on the river and the Gulf. Besides this, Farragut's vessels, which had not been designed for river service, were greatly in need of repairs. The many collisions between vessels of the same squadron, caused by the swift current in narrow waters, their frequent grounding on shoals, and the heavy impact of enormous logs carried down stream in the swift current, strained the hulls and perceptibly weakened the ships. The constant exposure to the enemy's shot and the wear and tear on the engines, many of which were old and built for lighter service, also were beginning to be felt.

The great difficulty of patrolling such a vast and intricate river system in the heart of an enemy's coun-

try was further enhanced by the difficulty of obtaining a coal-supply. The towing and guarding of coal-vessels over a distance of many hundred miles against a swift current, with the men constantly exposed to sharpshooters and the sudden fire of masked batteries, was in itself a work of appalling magnitude. But one of the most serious tasks which the commanders of both the lower and the upper Mississippi fleets had to perform was to guard the health of their men, most of whom were from the North and, being unaccustomed to the peculiar climate of the Mississippi Valley, fell easy victims to disease. On the 25th of July nearly half of the men in the upper flotilla were reported unfit for duty and there was nearly as much illness among Farragut's crews. The time of enlistment for many of the men had expired, and much difficulty was experienced in keeping the complements of the vessels even partially filled. As it was, several of the National craft went into action short-handed.

Notwithstanding these serious obstacles, Farragut determined to push his advantage. Personally he believed it to be impossible to hold the points along the river and attack Vicksburg with any hope of permanent success without the co-operation of a strong land force. He wrote to the Navy Department: "The Government officials appear to think we can do anything. They expect me to navigate the Mississippi, nine hundred miles, in the face of batteries, ironclad rams, etc.; and yet, with all the ironclad vessels they have North, they could not get to Norfolk or Richmond. The ironclads, with the exception of the *Monitor*, were all knocked to pieces. Yet I am expected to take New Orleans, and go up and release Foote from his perilous situation at Fort Pillow, when he is backed by the army and has ironclad boats built for the river service, while our ships are in danger of getting aground and remaining there till next year; or, what is more likely, be burned to prevent them from falling into the enemy's

hands." But he had received peremptory orders from Washington to "clear the Mississippi," and, like the true seaman he was, he gallantly proceeded to obey.

Seeing that New Orleans was securely in the hands of the army, Farragut ordered the *Brooklyn*, Captain Thomas Tingey Craven, up the river. Baton Rouge and Natchez surrendered without opposition. On the 22d of May Commander Samuel Phillips Lee summoned Vicksburg to surrender, but was met with a prompt refusal, while the attack on the gunboats *Wissahickon* and *Itasca* on June 9th, by a battery of rifled guns that the enemy had hastily thrown up at Grand Gulf, plainly indicated that the Confederates had not yet given up the fight, and showed how easily they could erect batteries on almost any commanding point along the river and make it dangerous for vessels to pass. The *Brooklyn* and the *Richmond* anchored below Vicksburg on the 18th of June, and soon afterward Farragut with his other ships and the mortar steamers *Octorara*, *Miami*, *Jackson*, *Westfield*, *Clifton*, *Harriet Lane* and *Owasco*, and seventeen mortar schooners under Commander Porter, arrived, and on the 26th the mortars began shelling the works.

The promptness of Farragut's attack prevented the enemy from fortifying Vicksburg as well as they did a few months later, but as it was, its defenses were formidable. They consisted of one 9-inch and three 8-inch guns, and one 18-pounder rifled gun mounted in a battery on the highest point of the bluff above the town, where they could deliver a plunging fire and where the guns in the vessels could not reach them. Near by was a battery of four 24-pounders, two of them rifled, and half a mile below the town was a water-battery mounting four 42-pounders and two rifled 32-pounders, commanded by Captain Todd, a brother-in-law of President Lincoln. Besides these batteries, there were two 10-inch and one 8-inch, one 42-pounder, five 32-pounders, and two rifled 12-pounders along the bluff where it

would be difficult for a passing vessel to discover them. These guns were spread over a distance of three miles. The current of the river at this place ran at least three miles an hour.

At three o'clock on the morning of June 28th Farragut got under way with the intention of running the batteries, as he had done with such astonishing success at New Orleans. He arranged his squadron in two columns, the *Richmond*, the *Hartford* and the *Brooklyn* forming the starboard line, or that nearest to the enemy, while the port column consisted of the *Iroquois*, Commander James Shedden Palmer, and the *Oneida*, which were to steam ahead of the *Richmond* and keep off her port bow; the *Wissahickon* and the *Sciota*, which were to take a position between the *Richmond* and the *Hartford*; the *Winona* and the *Pinola*, between the *Hartford* and the *Brooklyn*; and the *Kennebec* and the *Katahdin*, taking a position on the port quarter of the *Brooklyn*. As these vessels drew in range about 4 A. M. the mortar flotilla opened a heavy fire, while the mortar steamers moved up the river on the *Hartford's* starboard quarter, and, taking a position about fourteen hundred yards from the water-battery, kept up a spirited fire until the vessels were beyond the reach of the enemy's guns. As the two columns came within range they suffered from a severe plunging and raking fire, but when fairly abreast of the enemy they silenced the lower batteries.

Observing that he was getting too far in advance of his vessels, Farragut gave the order to slow down, and at times he came to a full stop, so as to keep as compact a line as possible and to give the vessels the advantage of mutual support. Commander Palmer, of the *Iroquois*, when he reached the sharp bend in the river above the town, stopped his engines and drifted down within supporting distance of the flagship. Not understanding Palmer's object, Farragut called out through

his trumpet, "Captain Palmer, what do you mean by disobeying my orders?" Palmer replied: "I thought that you had more fire than you could stand, and so I came down to draw off a part of it." Farragut never forgot the incident. By 6 A. M. all the vessels had passed and anchored above Vicksburg except three. The *Brooklyn*, the *Kennebec* and the *Katahdin*, which brought up the rear of the National line, through a misunderstanding, remained two hours before the batteries and then retired below. In this affair the loss in the fleet was seven killed and thirty wounded. The *Clifton* received a shot in her boiler and eight men were killed by the escaping steam, making fifteen men in all killed. The Confederates reported no losses.

On the 1st of July Farragut's vessels joined the flotilla under Captain Charles H. Davis, and the combined fleets took a position above Vicksburg, about three miles below the point where the Yazoo River flows into the Mississippi, the war vessels being moored on the eastern bank and the transports on the western. Learning that the Confederates were completing the ram *Arkansas*, up Yazoo River, Captain Davis, on the 14th of July, ordered the *Carondelet*, Captain Henry Walke, the *Tyler*, Lieutenant-Commander William Gwin,<sup>1</sup> and the steam ram *Queen of the West*, Colonel Ellet, having sharpshooters aboard, to ascend the Yazoo and reconnoiter. The *Arkansas* was one of two rams that were being built to destroy the National flotilla in the Mississippi River. These rams, not quite completed, were at Memphis, and were nearly captured in the battle of Memphis. As it was, one of them, the *Tennessee*, was burned, while the *Arkansas* just escaped and was taken up the Yazoo; showing how valuable were the prompt and decisive movements of the Union gunboats. In constructing these boats the Confederates experienced their usual difficulty in build-

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<sup>1</sup> These officers received their new ranks July 16, 1862.

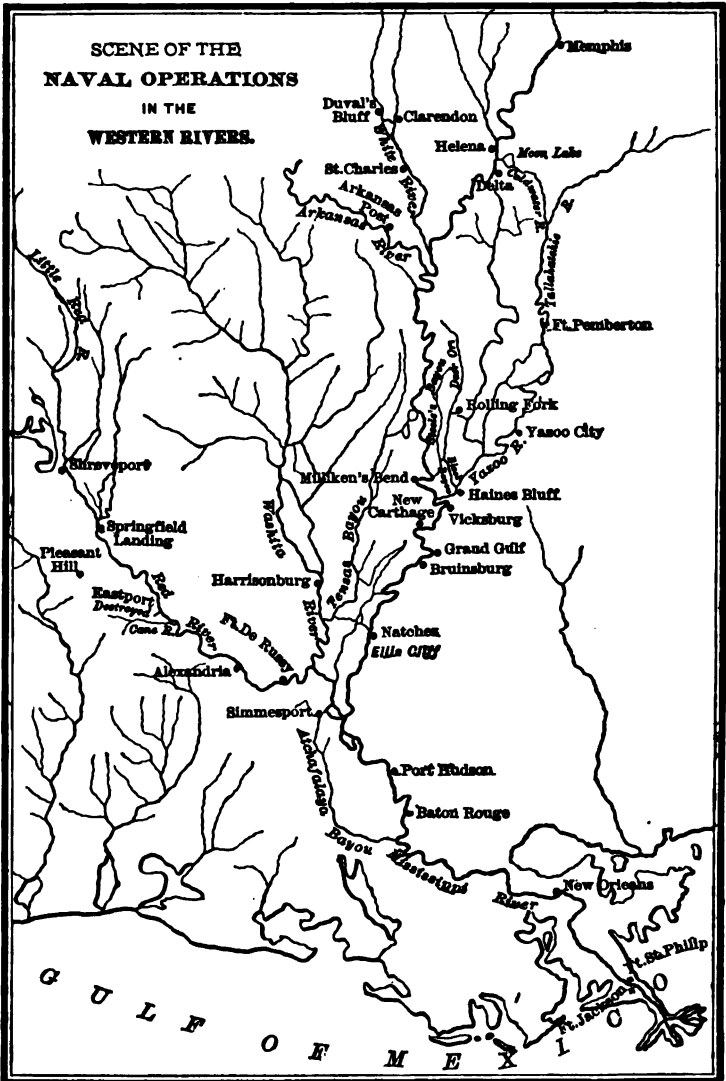
ing ironclads. The country was scoured for miles for iron, worn-out railroad tracks forming a part of the casemate. When the *Arkansas* went into action she was manned by inexperienced men, whose hands were blistered and bleeding from the little exercise they had undergone in hauling on the gun tackles. The *Arkansas* was constructed for a seagoing ship after the general plan of the *Merrimac*, being one hundred and eighty feet over all, and armed with two 8-inch columbiads, four 6.4-inch rifled guns, two 32-pounders and two 9-inch Dahlgren shell guns. Her heavy wooden casemate, which on the sides was perpendicular, was inclined at the bow and stern, and was protected by railroad iron laid in horizontal courses, dovetailed and forming a nearly solid mass of iron three inches thick. In the casemate between the ports were bales of compressed cotton sheathed in wood so as to guard against fire. Her bow was armed with a sharp cast-iron beak. The vessel had twin screws but her engines, which were below the water line, were too light for her and frequently broke down. Her captain was Commander Isaac Napoleon Brown, formerly of the United States Navy.

Captain Walke's vessels got under way at 4 A. M. July 15th. "All was calm, bright and beautiful. The majestic forest echoed with the sweet warbling of its wild birds, and its dewy leaves sparkled in the sunbeams. All seemed inviting the mind to peaceful reflection and to stimulate it with hopes of future happiness at home."<sup>1</sup> There had not been the slightest intimation that the *Arkansas* was expected. Suddenly, when the National gunboats had proceeded about six miles up the Yazoo, they met the ironclad coming down under a full head of steam. At this moment the *Tyler* was about one mile and the *Queen of the West* two miles in advance of the *Carondelet*, and being un-

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<sup>1</sup> Rear-Admiral Walke's Naval Scenes, p. 304.

fit for a battle with a vessel of this type, the *Tyler* gave the alarm and retreated. Captain Walke, realiz-



ing the hopelessness of a struggle between his vessels and a craft of the *Merrimac* class, and having so

many of his men prostrated by the river fever that he could not man more than one division of guns, decided to fall back on the fleet. It would have been certain destruction for the *Carondelet* to have continued up the river, for by so doing she presented her square bow as a broad target to the *Arkansas's* ram, and would easily have been cut down and sunk.

Walke's only course was to retreat. The stern of his vessel had recently been strengthened with fenders and barricades, but it had the weakest battery. The *Queen of the West* opened a brisk fire on the ram and then fled down the river to give the alarm, while the *Tyler*, in spite of the fact that she was filled with troops who were exposed on her decks, pluckily kept her place beside her consort, and the two vessels opened as heavy a fire at a distance of five hundred to fifty yards as they could against their advancing foe. One of their shot struck the *Arkansas's* pilot-house, mortally wounding Chief Pilot John Hodges (who was looking through the peephole) and injuring Commander Brown and the Yazoo River pilot, J. H. Shacklett, with splinters. Commander Brown had a severe contusion on the top of his head, and soon afterward a musket shot grazed his left temple. He fell insensible through the hatchway to the deck below. But in spite of this serious loss the Confederate ironclad kept steadily on her course, evidently with the intention of boarding the *Carondelet*. As the distance between the two vessels diminished, Captain Walke, who was constantly on deck, called his men to repel boarders. The Confederates did not make the attempt to board, however, and the Nationalists returned to their guns. The *Carondelet*, then passing an island, crowded the ram to the northern bank of the river, and the *Arkansas* gradually forged ahead, when the *Carondelet* fired her bow guns at the ram, but having her wheel-rope cut away for the third time she ran aground. At one time the colors of the *Carondelet* became entangled with the



staff, and one of the men was trying to release it. Observing the man, but not immediately understanding his object, Captain Walke, as he came from his bow guns, called out, "I'll shoot the first man that lowers that flag." It probably was this circumstance that led Commander Brown to think that the National gunboat lowered her colors. The *Carondelet's* flag was not lowered.

The *Arkansas*, with her colors shot away and smokestack damaged, continued down the river in chase of the *Tyler*, which vessel, although suffering heavy losses, kept up the heroic fight. The *Carondelet* received injuries in her hull and machinery. Thirteen shot went through her. The crew of the *Carondelet* saw a man thrown overboard from the ram, whose people also were seen to be bailing. This man had recklessly thrust his head out of a porthole and was cut in two by a cannon ball. His head and shoulders fell into the river and his legs and body were immediately thrown after them. At the time of this battle two of the *Carondelet's* 84-pounder rifled guns had been replaced by a 50- and a 30-pounder rifled gun. Walke and Brown were old friends, having been messmates in a voyage around the world. They had not met since that voyage, and were not aware of each other's presence until after the battle.

So unexpected was the approach of the ram that the only vessel in the National fleet that had steam up ready for immediate action was the *General Bragg*. As the *Arkansas* entered the Mississippi she turned her head downstream with the intention of running through the National fleet and reaching the batteries at Vicksburg. By this time her smokestack had been riddled and her steam had gone down so that she could make only one mile an hour, and this with the current gave her a speed of about three miles an hour. On went the ironclad, firing from her bow guns as rapidly as possible, to which the National vessels responded

with a terrific fire, but most of their missiles fell harmlessly from the mailed sides. Two 11-inch shells, however, pierced her armor, exploded, and one of them killed or wounded sixteen of her people, besides setting fire to the cotton backing. Few of the vessels were able to fire at the ram more than one or two broadsides. Many of the guns were fired at close quarters, but most of the solid shot glanced off the casemate, while the shells were shattered into a thousand pieces by the concussion.

An officer in the *Arkansas*, describing the running of the gantlet, says: "We were passing one of the large sloops of war when a heavy shot struck the side abreast of my bow gun, the concussion knocking over a man who was engaged in taking a shot from the rack. He rubbed his hip, which had been hurt, and said, 'they would hardly strike twice in a place.' He was mistaken, poor fellow! for immediately a shell entered the breach made by the shot and, imbedding itself in the cotton lining of the inside bulwark proper, exploded with terrible effect. I found myself standing in a dense, suffocating smoke, with my cap gone and hair and beard singed. The smoke soon cleared away, and I found but one man (Quartermaster Curtis) left. Sixteen were killed and wounded by that shell, and the ship set on fire. Stevens, ever cool and thoughtful, ran to the engine-room hatch, seized the hose, and dragged it to the aperture. In a few moments the fire was extinguished without an alarm having been created. The columbiad was fired but once after its crew was disabled. By the aid of an army captain, Curtis and myself succeeded in getting a shot down the gun, with which he struck the *Benton*. The ill luck which befell the crew of the bow gun was soon to be followed by a similar misfortune to the crew of my broadside gun. An 11-inch shot broke through immediately above the port, bringing with it a shower of iron and wooden splinters, which struck down every man at a

gun. My master's mate, Mr. Wilson, was painfully wounded in the nose, and I had my left arm smashed. Curtis was the only sound man in the division when we mustered the crew to quarters at Vicksburg. Nor did the mischief of the last shot end with my poor gun's crew. It passed across the deck, through the smokestack, and killed eight and wounded seven men at Scales's gun. Fortunately, he was untouched himself, and afterward did excellent service at Grimbald's columbiad.

“Stationed on the ladder leading to the berth deck was a quartermaster named Eaton. He was assigned the duty of passing shells from the forward shell room, and also had a kind of superintendence over the boys who came for powder. Eaton was a character. He had thick, rough, red hair, an immense muscular frame, and a will and a courage rarely encountered. Nothing daunted him, and the hotter the fight, the fiercer grew Eaton. From his one eye he glared furiously on all who seemed inclined to shirk, and his voice grew louder and more distinct as the shot rattled and crashed upon our mail. At one instant you would hear him pass the word down the hatch, ‘9-inch shell, 5-second fuse. —Here you are, my lad, with your rifled shell; take it and go back, quick.—What’s the matter that you can’t get that gun out?’ and, like a cat, he would spring from his place and throw his weight on the side tackle, and the gun was sure to go out. ‘What are you doing here—wounded? Where are you hurt? Go back to your gun, or I’ll murder you on the spot! —Here’s your 9-inch shell.—Mind, shipmate’ (to a wounded man), ‘the ladder is bloody; don’t slip; let me help you.’”

While the *Arkansas* was running the terrible gantlet her colors, which had been hoisted a second time, were carried away again. Midshipman Dabney M. Scales hastened out on the casemate, where he was exposed to as terrific a fire as was ever concentrated on

one ship, and bravely hoisted the Confederate colors. The flag of the *Arkansas* was again carried away, and young Scales was about to replace it for the second time when his superior officer ordered him back. After each discharge the *Arkansas* closed her ports, thus presenting an almost impenetrable mass of iron. One port was left open for an instant, and a shot entering killed and wounded a number of men. Had the *Arkansas* been subjected to this fire any length of time she would have been destroyed; but as the vessels of the squadron were unable to follow her, she passed them in a short time and was moored under the Vicksburg batteries. Commander Brown afterward said that when he saw the National fleet he had no hope of seeing Vicksburg. That belief was shared by many of his officers. An attempt was made by the *Lancaster* to ram, but she was disabled by a shot, and escaping steam scalded a number of her people, two of them fatally.

Determined that the audacious ram should not get off thus easily, Farragut immediately began preparations for following and destroying her under the guns of Vicksburg, his plan being to have each of his vessels fire at the *Arkansas* as they passed. Late in the afternoon Captain Davis moved his flotilla down and began a bombardment of the upper batteries by way of a diversion, and at dark Farragut's fleet, with the ram *Sumter*, Lieutenant-Commander Henry Erben, ran past the batteries. Anticipating this move, the Confederates moved the *Arkansas*, after dark, to a place where she could not be so readily seen; but Farragut discovered the change, and many of his ships delivered an effective fire upon her. Her casemate was badly shattered, the iron being loosened so as to render her unfit for service, and afterward most of her men were sent to assist in working the shore batteries. One 11-inch shot pierced her casemate and killed or wounded several men. In this second passage of the Vicksburg

batteries the National vessels had five killed and sixteen wounded, while the flotilla under Davis lost thirteen killed, thirty-four wounded and ten missing. Of this loss the *Carondelet*, in her action with the ram, had four killed, six wounded and two drowned, and the *Tyler* eight killed and sixteen wounded. The loss in the *Arkansas* is placed at ten killed and fifteen wounded.

Still determined on completing the destruction of the *Arkansas*, Commodore William D. Porter, in the *Essex*, with the *Queen of the West*, Lieutenant-Colonel Alfred E. Ellet, at dawn of July 22d boldly ran under the batteries of Vicksburg to attack the ram, while the *Benton*, the *Cincinnati* and the *Louisville* opened a heavy fire on the upper batteries. As Commodore Porter was approaching the ram, Commander Brown slackened his forward moorings so that the head of his vessel swung out into the stream, thus presenting her sharp ram to the square bow of the National gunboat, which was coming down at a high speed with a view of ramming. Seeing that his own vessel would be sunk in such a collision, Porter at a distance of fifty yards fired three solid 9-inch shot at the *Arkansas*, one of which struck her casemate a foot beyond the forward port, cutting off the ends of the railroad iron and drove the pieces diagonally across the gunroom. The shot pierced the casemate, split upon the breech of the starboard after-gun and killed eight and wounded six of her complement of forty-one men. At the same time Porter changed his course as rapidly as his clumsy craft would admit, and so far avoided a collision as to graze the port side of the Confederate ironclad, and his vessel was carried ashore just astern of the *Arkansas*.

In this critical position the *Essex* remained fully ten minutes exposed to a heavy fire, but getting afloat again she continued her course down the river and soon ran out of range. The *Queen of the West* succeeded in giving the *Arkansas* a heavy blow, and for

a moment the Confederates believed that their vessel was destroyed. The Nationalist ram then backed off and struck again, but the iron-bound hull of the *Arkansas* remained intact. All this time the Union ram had been subjected to a terrific fire. Large holes were yawning in her hull, one of her steam pipes had been carried away and her smokestacks were perforated like a nutmeg grater. As his vessel had been struck about twenty-five times, and was leaking seriously, Ellet endeavored to escape up stream, but, although exposed to a heavy fire, he managed to rejoin the flotilla above Vicksburg. One heavy shot passed through an iron safe and dismounted a gun. On the 3d of August the *Arkansas*, with two gunboats, left Vicksburg to assist a detachment of troops under General Breckenridge in making an attack on the National garrison at Baton Rouge. The attack was made on the 5th of August, but the Confederates were repelled, the gunboats *Katahdin* and *Kineo* supporting the land forces with a heavy fire. The *Arkansas* was detained from participating in this affair by her machinery breaking down several times, and finally she ran aground. On the approach of the *Essex*, whose commander had been on the watch for the ironclad, Lieutenant H. K. Stevens, then commanding the *Arkansas*, escaped with his men on shore and blew her up.

It became more and more evident to the Government that it was impossible to hold the points on the river captured by the navy without the co-operation of a land force, and as the troops could not be spared immediately, the flotilla under Davis retired to Helena and the lower squadron to New Orleans, while the larger vessels were detailed on blockade duty. Several expeditions were undertaken by the navy, however, with a view of preventing the enemy from fortifying the banks. On the 14th of August, Lieutenant Commander Phelps, with the gunboats *Benton*, *Mound City* and *General Bragg*, and the rams *Monarch*, *Samson*

and *Lioness*, with a land force under Colonel Woods, left Helena, and, going down the Mississippi, dispersed several bodies of Confederate troops and captured two steamers. Entering Yazoo River, he destroyed a battery about twenty miles up the stream. In all, about half a million dollars' worth of public property was destroyed in this expedition. On January 15, 1863, the gunboats *Calhoun*, *Estrella*, and *Kinsman* destroyed the Confederate steamer *Cotton* in Bayou Tèche. Lieutenant-Commander Thomas McKean Buchanan, the senior officer in the squadron, was killed. Farragut called him "one of our most gallant and persevering young officers."

On the 1st of October, 1862, the Mississippi flotilla was transferred from the Army to the Navy Department. Meantime two new types of war vessel had been added to the fleet. At the suggestion of Captain Davis a number of light-draft stern-wheel steamers were purchased, and were covered from bow to stern, to the height of eleven feet, with iron plate a half to three quarters of an inch thick. These were called tinclads. They drew not over three feet, were designed for operations in shallow waters and were armed with six to eight 24-pounder brass howitzers each, intended principally to disperse sharpshooters and troops with light field pieces on the banks of narrow streams. Another class of war vessels was designed for heavy fighting. They were the *Lafayette*, the *Tuscumbia*, the *Indianola*, the *Choctaw* and the *Chillicothe*. These were flat-bottomed vessels drawing from five to seven feet of water (the *Lafayette* and *Choctaw* drew nine feet), having side wheels three quarters of the way aft, each wheel acting independently of the other, which gave greater rapidity in turning.

Two of these vessels—the *Indianola* and the *Tuscumbia*—also had propellers, and were regarded as unusually efficient. The casemate on the forward deck was plated with two to three inches of iron, while the

forward plating in some of the craft was six inches thick. Sliding shutters, three inches thick, covered the ports when the guns were run in. Between the side wheels in the two larger vessels there was a wooden casemate plated with 2-inch iron on the after end and with 1-inch iron on each side. The *Tuscumbia* carried three 11-inch guns in her forward casemate and two rifled 100-pounders in the after casemate. The *Indianola* carried two 11-inch guns in the forward and two 9-inch guns in the after casemate. The *Chillicothe* had two 11-inch guns, and the *Choctaw* three 9-inch guns and one rifled 100-pounder in the forward casemate. She also had a second casemate forward of the wheels, mounting two 24-pounder howitzers, and a third casemate abaft the wheel containing two 30-pounder Parrott rifled guns. The *Lafayette* carried two 11-inch Dahlgren guns forward, four 9-inch guns in broadside, and two 24-pounder howitzers and two 100-pounder Parrott guns in the stern. The *Samson* had been fitted as a floating machine-shop to accompany the flotilla and repair damages, while the steamer *Black Hawk*, fitted as a school ship, carried an apparatus for raising sunken vessels.

Commander David Dixon Porter, with the local rank of Acting Rear-Admiral, succeeded Captain Davis October 15, 1862, and on the 21st of November he ordered Captain Walke to blockade Yazoo River and destroy any batteries he might find. Arriving at the mouth of the river, Captain Walke sent the light-draft steamers *Signal*, Acting-Master Scot, and *Marmora*, Acting-Master Letty, some miles up the river, where they destroyed several torpedoes and returned. On December 12th Walke sent them up again, accompanied by the *Cairo*, Lieutenant-Commander Thomas Selfridge, Jr., the *Pittsburgh*, Lieutenant Hoel, and the *Queen of the West*. While these vessels were engaged eighteen or twenty miles up the river in lifting the torpedoes (demi-johns filled with powder to be ignited by a wire that was



operated by a Confederate naval officer concealed on shore), one or two of them exploded under the *Cairo's* bow, and in twelve minutes she sank in thirty-six feet of water. In spite of this disaster the remaining gunboats proceeded with the work. On December 26th they came within reach of the batteries at Drumgoold's Bluff, by which time Porter had arrived with the other gunboats. Taking a position twelve hundred yards distant, the gunboats opened fire, while National troops under General William Tecumseh Sherman attacked the works from the rear on the 29th, but were repelled. In this affair the *Benton* was struck twenty-five times, and her commander, Lieutenant-Commander William Gwin, was mortally wounded, Master-at-Arms Robert Boyle was killed, and eight men were wounded, one of them mortally. The flotilla then retired to the Mississippi.

The capture of the transport *Blue Wing* with its cargo of valuable stores by a Confederate expedition fitted out at Arkansas Post, induced the Nationalists to send an expedition against that place. Arkansas Post was defended by a bastioned fort on the left bank of Arkansas River, mounting three 9-inch guns, one 8-inch shell gun, four rifled and four smooth-bore guns and six light guns. Rifle pits also were dug around the fort. The place was defended by Lieutenant John W. Dunnington, formerly of the United States Navy, with five thousand men. On January 9, 1863, Porter, with the *De Kalb*, Lieutenant-Commander Walker, the *Louisville*, Lieutenant-Commander E. K. Owen, the *Cincinnati*, Lieutenant George M. Bache, and the light-draft gunboats *Black Hawk*, *Lexington*, *Rattler*, *Glide*, *Signal*, *Forest Rose*, *Romeo*, *Juliet* and *Marmora*, together with the transports conveying troops under General McClernand, appeared before the fort, and while the troops were being landed four miles below, the ironclads, with the *Rattler*, Lieutenant-Commander Watson Smith, moved up the river and at 5.30 P. M.

opened a heavy fire. The three ironclads approached, bows on, within four hundred yards of the earthwork, while the lighter gunboats, with the *Black Hawk* and the *Lexington*, took a position a short distance behind them and threw shell and shrapnel.

Before the attack was over, Lieutenant-Commander Smith ran past the fort and opened an enfilading fire, but becoming entangled in driftwood he was obliged to return, suffering a considerable loss. At 1.30 P. M. on the following day the gunboats renewed the attack and the troops began the assault in the rear. At 4 P. M. the *Rattler*, the *Glide*, Lieutenant Woodworth, and the *Monarch*, Colonel Charles Ellet, ran by the fort and destroyed a ferry ten miles above. At 4.40 P. M., when the troops were about to make an assault, the fort surrendered. In this affair the *De Kalb* sustained some damage in her hull, one of her 32-pounder guns was dismounted and one 10-inch gun was destroyed. The other ironclads also were injured in their hulls. The injuries to the men in the flotilla were confined to the *De Kalb* and the *Louisville*, the casualties being six killed and twenty-five wounded.

On the 12th the *De Kalb* and the *Cincinnati*, with the transports and troops under General Gorman, pushed up White River and reached St. Charles on the morning of the 14th. This place was found to be deserted, the Confederates having retreated up the river in the *Blue Wing*, taking with them a field battery and two 8-inch guns. Leaving the *Cincinnati* at St. Charles, the *De Kalb* with the transports hastened up the river in chase and reached Duval's Bluff (fifty miles farther) at three o'clock in the afternoon of the 16th, and found that the *Blue Wing* had left that place only a few minutes before, but the two 8-inch guns had been landed and were captured while the enemy was putting them in a railroad car. The guns were destroyed, and the gunboats returned to Vicksburg.

At 4.30 A. M., February 2d, the *Queen of the West*, Colonel Charles Rivers Ellet, went down the river to run the Vicksburg batteries. Owing to some difficulty with the wheel, it was broad daylight before she approached them; but her intrepid commander kept steadily on his course, in spite of the angry protests of all the Confederate guns. When opposite Vicksburg he deliberately rounded to and rammed the steamer *Vicksburg* that was moored to the bank. At this moment two shells entered the cotton-protected bulwarks of the *Queen of the West* and started a fire near her starboard wheel, while at the same time the flashes of her guns set the ram on fire forward. Hastening downstream, Colonel Ellet cut his cotton bales adrift and arrived below Vicksburg in safety, although his vessel had been struck twelve times by heavy shot and one of his guns had been dismounted. Continuing down the river the same day, he was fired upon by two batteries, but no injury was done, and on the next day, when fifteen miles below the mouth of Red River, he captured the steamers *A. W. Balser* and *Moro*, laden with stores for the Confederate army. Retracing his course up the river, Colonel Ellet captured seven Confederate officers and a third steamer, the *Berwick Bay*, laden with stores.

Having burned his prizes and replenished his coal-bunkers from a barge that had been floated past Vicksburg on the night of February 7th, Colonel Ellet in company with the *De Soto*, a small ferry-boat partially protected with cotton and iron, and the barge, went down the river, destroying all craft and property that fell in his way. Proceeding up Red River to Atchafalaya Bayou, he left the *De Soto* and the barge at that point, entered the bayou and destroyed a large quantity of Government property, including a train of army wagons and seventy barrels of beef. At one time the *Queen of the West* was fired on by guerrillas and one of her officers was wounded. Returning to Red River,

the *Queen of the West*, with the *De Soto*, pushed up that stream and on the morning of February 14th seized the transport *Era No. 5*, with two Confederate officers. On rounding a bluff near Gordon's Landing, seventy-five miles from the mouth of the river, the *Queen of the West* was suddenly fired upon by a battery of four 32-pounders, and in attempting to back out of range she ran aground in easy reach of the enemy. A shot soon severed a steam-pipe and compelled the crew to abandon the ship. This was done without attempting to burn it, as Ellet was unable to remove a wounded officer. There being only one boat in the *Queen of the West*, most of her men escaped to the *De Soto* on bales of cotton.

In her haste to retreat down the river, the *De Soto* ran into a bank and lost her rudder, so that the fugitives were compelled to drift with the current, picking up, from time to time, fugitives from the *Queen of the West* as they floated down the stream on bales of cotton. When ten miles from the place of the disaster the *De Soto* was overtaken by her yawl, which had been sent to bring off some of the men from the *Queen of the West*. Reaching the place where they had left the *Era No. 5*, the fugitives burned the *De Soto* and continued their flight in the transport, reaching the Mississippi on the 15th. On the next day, when eight miles below Natchez, they met the *Indianola*, Lieutenant-Commander George Brown, who on the night of February 12th, with a coal barge on each side, had run the Vicksburg batteries unscathed. The two National vessels now turned downstream, and at Ellis Cliff met the Confederate gunboat *Webb*, which was in hot pursuit of the *Era No. 5*. A chase followed, but the *Webb* soon distanced the *Indianola*, encumbered as she was with the coal barges. Arriving at the mouth of Red River, Brown, on the 18th of February, sent the *Era No. 5* to communicate with the army near Vicksburg while he prepared his vessel for an attack from

the *Webb* and the *Queen of the West* by filling his gangways and casemates with cotton.

When a little below New Carthage, at 9.30 P. M., February 24th, the *Indianola* discovered several steamers in chase of her. They were the *Queen of the West*, Captain James McCloskey; the *Webb*, Captain Charles Pierce; the cottonclad steamer *Dr. Batey*, Lieutenant-Colonel Brand, having on board two hundred and fifty riflemen under Major J. L. Brent; and the tender *Grand Era*. The Confederates determined to attack under cover of darkness, when the National gunboat could not fire with accuracy. When a little above Palmyra Island the *Queen of the West*, leading the other Confederate vessels by five hundred yards, attempted to ram the *Indianola* abaft the port wheel, but, by backing, Lieutenant-Commander Brown received the blow on the coal barge, which was crushed in, and, being cut adrift, sank. Making downstream, the *Indianola* met the *Webb*, which was coming up the river at full speed, and a head-on collision took place, the bow of the latter being crushed in eight feet, but as this part of her hull had been filled in solid she did not sink. The *Indianola* was not seriously injured. The *Webb* aimed a second blow, but succeeded only in carrying away the second barge.

By this time the *Queen of the West* had turned and was now coming downstream at full speed with the intention of ramming the *Indianola* again, but the National gunboat also had turned and was heading upstream, so that the Confederate ram struck the *Indianola* a glancing blow on the starboard bow, and as the *Queen of the West* passed, Lieutenant-Commander Brown sent two 9-inch shot into her, killing two and wounding four men besides disabling two guns. In the uncertain light it was exceedingly difficult for those peering out of the narrow sight-holes in the pilot house of the *Indianola* to keep track of so many lively foes, and it was impossible to fire with any accuracy except

at close quarters. The *Indianola* soon received another blow from the *Queen of the West* just abaft the wheelhouse, which disabled the starboard rudder. Almost at the same instant the *Webb* struck her stern, causing the water to rush in at an alarming rate. Thus disabled, Brown ran aground on the west bank and surrendered, but the Confederates towed their prize over to the east bank, where she sank near Jefferson Davis' plantation. In this affair the *Indianola* had one killed, one wounded and seven missing, while the Confederate loss is reported at two killed and five wounded.

As the Confederates were attempting to raise the *Indianola* two days later, the Nationalists above Vicksburg made a dummy monitor by placing pork barrels on a coal-barge so as to resemble smokestacks, and building fires in mud furnaces sent her down the river at daylight. As she neared the Vicksburg batteries a terrific fire was opened on her, but she passed unscathed and ran ashore about two and a half miles above the *Indianola*. When the Confederate commanders saw the "terrible-looking" monitor coming down they fled precipitately, leaving the *Indianola* to her fate, and on the following day, although the dummy monitor was still hard and fast aground, they destroyed their prize. Two months afterward, or April 14, the *Queen of the West*, then commanded by Captain Fuller, was destroyed in Grand Lake (in Bayou Atchafalaya), after a spirited action, by National gunboats, *Estrella*, *Calhoun*, and *Arizona*, under the command of Commander Cook.

By cutting the levee near Delta so as to flood the surrounding country, it was hoped to enter Yazoo River through Moon Lake, Cold Water and the Tallahatchie Rivers and attack Vicksburg from that side. Under the direction of Lieutenant-Colonel James H. Wilson, of the engineers, the work of cutting the levee was begun February 2d, and the river was let in on the

following evening, but it took several days for the water to attain its level in the vast territory flooded. Late in February the following gunboats under the command of Lieutenant-Commander Watson Smith, and transports with six thousand troops, were detailed by Porter for this service: *Rattler*, flagship; *Chillicothe*, Lieutenant-Commander James P. Foster; *De Kalb*, Lieutenant-Commander John G. Walker; *Marmora*, *Signal*, *Romeo*, *Petrel*, *Forest Rose*, and the rams *Lioness* and *Fulton*. After nearly four days' struggle against overhanging trees and masses of driftwood, the vessels got as far as Cold Water River. When the Confederates learned of the expedition they felled enormous trees across the stream, which so delayed the gunboats that it was March 6th before they entered Tallahatchie River.

By this time many of the transports and several of the gunboats had been seriously injured by this "land cruise." The smokestacks of the *Romeo* were carried away, the *Petrel* lost her wheel and the *Chillicothe* had a plank started under water by running on the stump of a tree. But despite these injuries the vessels pushed on and approached Fort Pemberton on the 11th of March. This fort was hastily constructed of earth and cotton and mounted one 64-inch rifled gun, some field pieces, and three 20-pounder Parrott rifled guns, under the command of Lieutenant F. E. Shepperd, of the Confederate Navy. The channel was obstructed by a raft and the hull of the *Star of the West*, the little steamer that had been fired on by the Confederates in Charleston early in 1861.

As the river was so narrow at this point that only one gunboat at a time could act freely, the *Chillicothe*, at 10 A. M. on March 11th, advanced and opened a heavy fire on Fort Pemberton, but in a short time she was struck twice on the turret, and she retired in order to get cotton bales for additional protection. At 4.25 P. M. she returned with the *De Kalb*, but soon after-

ward a shell struck the muzzle of her port 11-inch gun just as the gunners had entered a shell and were stripping the patch from the fuse. Both shells exploded at the same instant, killing two men and wounding eleven. After the *Chillicothe* had received a shot that killed a man she drew out of range, Lieutenant-Commander Foster reporting four killed and fifteen wounded. The next day was spent in preparing for another attack, and at 11.30 A. M. on March 13th the *Chillicothe* and the *De Kalb* again came into action. After maintaining a severe fire until 2 P. M. the *Chillicothe* retired, having been struck forty-four times; but the *De Kalb* still kept up the fight, firing every fifteen minutes, although getting no reply. The attack was renewed on the following day by the *Chillicothe* and the *De Kalb*, but they were badly cut up and compelled to retire, the former having four killed and sixteen wounded, and the latter three killed and three wounded. On March 15th a gun from the *De Kalb* was landed and placed in a battery, but on the 18th the expedition was abandoned and the gunboats retreated.

Meantime Porter, with the *Louisville*, Lieutenant-Commander E. K. Owen; the *Cincinnati*, Lieutenant George M. Bache; the *Carondelet*, Lieutenant John M. Murphy; the *Mound City*, Lieutenant Byron Wilson; the *Pittsburgh*, Lieutenant William R. Hoel, and four mortar boats and four tugs, attempted to reach the Yazoo below Yazoo City. Entering Steele's Bayou March 16th, the vessels forced their way through the bushes and trees of Black Bayou and up Deer Creek to Rolling Fork, where the enemy began felling trees, not only to prevent a further advance, but to cut off the retreat of the gunboats. Finding that it was impossible to carry out his plans, Porter, on the 20th of March, began a difficult retreat and narrowly escaped losing his entire squadron.



## CHAPTER XII.

### THE MISSISSIPPI OPENED.

WHILE this indecisive warfare was taking place in the upper Mississippi, Farragut was attending to his extensive command in the Gulf; but on the 14th of March, 1863, he appeared with his fleet at Port Hudson and determined to run past the place. The batteries at this point, on a bluff about a hundred feet high, mounted two 10-inch and two 8-inch columbiads, two 42-pounders, two 32-pounders, three 24-pounders and eight rifled guns. The National vessels formed in pairs, each of the heavier ones taking a gunboat on its port side, excepting the *Mississippi*: the *Hartford* (flagship), Captain James Shedden Palmer, and the *Albatross*, Lieutenant-Commander John E. Hart; the *Richmond* (the slowest ship), Captain James Alden, and the *Genesee* (the fastest vessel), Commander William Henry Macomb; the *Monongahela*, Captain James Paterson McKinstry, and the *Kineo*, Lieutenant-Commander John Watters; and the *Mississippi*, Captain Melancton Smith.

As these vessels drew near the enemy at eleven o'clock that night, six mortar schooners, with the *Essex*, Commander Charles Henry Bromedge Caldwell, and the *Sachem*, took a position and opened a heavy fire on the lower batteries. When the fleet was in range the batteries opened a fire, to which the ships responded with their bow guns and the howitzers in their tops. Large bonfires were lighted along the shores, and the dense smoke in the damp night air settled on the river, causing an impenetrable gloom and

throwing the line of battle into confusion. Being in the lead, the *Hartford* was able to push ahead of the smoke; but when she got to the bend in the river her bow was caught by the five-mile current and she was nearly carried ashore, her stern actually touching ground under the guns of a battery. By the assistance of her consort the flagship backed clear and again headed upstream, passing beyond the line of fire with only one man killed and two wounded. One marine fell overboard, and although his cries for help were heard in the other ships, he could not be saved. Just as the *Richmond* and the *Genesee* had reached the last battery and were about to turn, a plunging shot came into the berth deck of the former, pierced a pile of hawsers and clothes bags, entered the engine room, displaced the starboard safety valve, and, twisting the lever of the port safety valve, threw it partly open. The escaping steam quickly filled the fire room and berth deck and reduced the pressure to nine pounds, which made it impossible for the *Richmond* to stem the current, even with the aid of her consort, and she was compelled to retreat. In doing this Captain Alden had to run the gantlet of the enemy's batteries again, besides taking great risks of being fired into by the other Union vessels. The *Richmond* had three men killed and fifteen wounded, Lieutenant-Commander Andrew Boyd Cummings being among the latter. He was mortally hurt while cheering his men.

When the *Monongahela* and the *Kineo* were under fire of one of the heaviest Confederate batteries, a shot disabled the latter's rudder, and soon afterward the *Monongahela* ran aground. The *Kineo*, still having headway, broke adrift from her consort and also ran aground a short distance below. At this moment a shot carried away the bridge under Captain McKinstry, throwing him to the deck, disabled. Lieutenant Nathaniel W. Thomas succeeded to the command of the ship and conducted himself with credit. The *Monon-*

*gahela* remained in this condition nearly half an hour, when the *Kineo*, getting afloat again, managed to tow her off; but Lieutenant-Commander Watters, finding that it was impossible to steer his craft, drifted out of action. No one on board was injured. The *Monongahela* continued up the river until near the bend, when a crank-pin became heated and she also drifted helplessly out of action, sustaining a loss of six killed and twenty-one wounded.

The *Mississippi*, which was the last vessel in line, passed the batteries and was approaching the bend at full speed when she ran hard and fast aground. After thirty-five minutes spent in a vain endeavor to get her afloat, during which she was subjected to a terrific fire, Captain Smith decided to abandon her, and when every one had been set ashore a fire was started in the forward storeroom; but before the flames had made serious headway three shot pierced the hull below the water line and the intruding water extinguished the flames. The ship was then fired aft, and when assured that she would be destroyed Captain Smith left her. At 3 A. M. she drifted down the river, and at 5.30 A. M. blew up. Her loss was reported to be twenty-five killed and many wounded. Such was the fate of Perry's flagship in his expedition to Japan. The *Missouri*, a sister ship, was burned twenty years before at Gibraltar.

After communicating with General Banks, Farragut proceeded up the river with the *Hartford* and the *Albatross*. At Grand Gulf these vessels were fired on by four rifled guns and sustained a loss of two killed and six wounded. Farragut arrived below Vicksburg March 20th, where he was joined by the ram *Switzerland*, Colonel Charles Rivers Ellet, which ran the batteries on the 25th. The ram *Lancaster*, Lieutenant-Colonel John A. Ellet, also attempted to run the gantlet, but she was sunk, her men floating down the river on bales of cotton. On the 31st of March the three vessels went down the river, destroying a large number of boats, and

at Grand Gulf the Confederate batteries fired on them, killing one man in the *Switzerland*. Reaching Port Hudson on April 6th, Farragut was anxious to communicate with the rest of his squadron and General Banks, from whom he had been separated three weeks. As the ordinary means of signaling were futile, Farragut's secretary, Mr. Gabaudan, on the night of April 7th got into a skiff covered with twigs so as to resemble driftwood, and, lying in the bottom with a revolver and a paddle by his side, he floated past the batteries unmolested, although at one time some Confederate sentinels put off in a boat to examine his craft. On the 8th of April Farragut captured a Confederate steamer at the mouth of Red River, and from this time a vigorous patrol of that stream was maintained and the enemy's communications interrupted. Soon afterward Farragut returned to the Gulf, leaving Porter in charge of the fleet in the upper Mississippi.

On the night of April 16th Porter ran the batteries at Vicksburg with the gunboats *Benton* (flagship), Lieutenant-Commander James A. Greer; the *Lafayette*, Captain Henry Walke; the *Louisville*, Lieutenant-Commander Elias K. Owen; the *Mound City*, Lieutenant-Byron Wilson; the *Pittsburgh*, Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant William R. Hoel; the *Carondelet*, Acting-Lieutenant John McLeod Murphy; the *Tuscumbia*, Lieutenant-Commander James W. Shirk; the *General Price*, Commander Selim E. Woodworth; and the army transports *Silver Wave*, *Henry Clay* and *Forest Queen* and the tug *Joy*. An officer in the *Lafayette* wrote: "The firing began at 10.55 p. m. and continued about an hour and a quarter, during which a perfect tornado of shot and shell continued to shriek over our deck and among all the vessels of the fleet. Five hundred, perhaps a thousand, shot were discharged, but not more than one in ten struck or did any damage to the fleet. They mostly went over. On running out the guns a good view could be had through the ports of the rebel

batteries, which now flashed like a thunderstorm along the river as far as the eye could see ; but the incessant spatter of rifle balls, the spray from falling shot, the thunder of steel-pointed projectiles upon our sides, did not incline one to take a very protracted view of the scenery. A few discharges of grape, shrapnel and percussion shell was all we could afford at the time to bestow upon our rebel friends in exchange for their compliments. At each round the Confederate artillerymen gave a shout, which seemed surprisingly near. At one time we could not have been one hundred yards from the Vicksburg wharves. Our vessel, with the steamer and barge lashed to our starboard side, became almost unmanageable, drifted in the eddy and turned her head square round, looking the batteries in the face. At this time we seemed to be receiving their concentrated fire at less than a hundred yards from the shore. The smoke from our own and the rebel guns, with the glare of the burning buildings from the opposite shore, rendered it difficult for the pilots to make out the direction we were going. The enemy, supposing we were disabled, set up a fiendish yell of triumph. We soon, however, backed round, and once more presented our broadside to them, and slowly drifted past, as if in contempt of their impotent efforts. Shells burst all around the pilot-house, and at one time John Denning, our pilot, was literally baptized with fire. He thought himself killed, but he brushed the fire from his head and found he was unhurt." The vessels passed without serious injury, excepting the transport *Henry Clay*, which took fire and sank. On the night of the 22d six more army transports ran the batteries, but one of them sank.

On the 29th of April the gunboats *Benton*, *Truscumbia*, *Louisville*, *Carondelet*, *Lafayette*, *Mound City* and *Pittsburgh* attacked the Confederate batteries at Grand Gulf, which now mounted two 8-inch and two 7-inch rifled guns, one rifled 100-pounder gun, two 32-pounders, one 30-pounder rifled gun and five light guns.

After a spirited fire of five and a half hours, when the enemy was nearly silenced, Porter retired with a loss of seven killed and nineteen wounded in the *Benton*, five killed and twenty-four wounded in the *Tuscumbia*, six killed and thirteen wounded in the *Pittsburgh* and one wounded in the *Lafayette*. On the same night Porter ran the batteries, with the loss of one killed in the *Mound City*, and assisted the army in crossing the river at Bruinsburg. On the 30th of April the gunboats above Vicksburg, under the command of Lieutenant-Commander Kidder Randolph Breese, opened a heavy fire on Haines's Bluff to divert the enemy's attention from Grand Gulf. The *Choctaw*, Lieutenant-Commander Francis Munroe Ramsay, was struck forty-six times. Early in May the enemy evacuated Grand Gulf.

On the 4th of May the gunboats *Albatross*, Lieutenant-Commander John E. Hart, *Calhoun*, *Clifton*, *Arizona* and *Estrella*, Lieutenant-Commander Augustus P. Cooke, attacked Fort De Russy. The *Albatross*, running within five hundred yards of the battery, for forty minutes maintained a spirited fire, when she was compelled to retire, having been hulled eleven times and having two men killed and four wounded. The *Benton*, the *Lafayette*, the *Pittsburgh* and the *General Price*, under Porter, came to their assistance the next day, but the fort was found to be deserted, and shortly afterward Alexandria was occupied by the National forces.

While making a reconnoissance down the Atchafalaya, the *Switzerland*, Lieutenant-Colonel J. A. Ellet, was fired upon at Simmesport by Confederate artillery, June 3, 1863, and several of her men were injured. The next day Captain Walke, in the *Lafayette*, with the *Pittsburgh*, shelled the Confederates from their position and destroyed their camp.

During the attack on Port Hudson, May 27th, a battery of four 9-inch shell guns was handled with great spirit by a detachment of seamen from the *Rich-*

*mond* and the *Essex*, under the command of Lieutenant-Commander Edward Terry, while from May 23d to June 26th half a dozen mortar schooners, with the *Essex* and *Carondelet*, kept up a heavy fire on Port Hudson. The *De Kalb*, Lieutenant-Commander John G. Walker, destroyed property in Yazoo City and a vessel three hundred and ten feet long.

On the day when Grant assaulted Vicksburg, May 22d, the gunboats under Porter opened a heavy fire on the enemy and received some damage in return. While engaging the batteries on the 27th of May, the *Cincinnati*, Lieutenant George M. Bache, was pierced below the water line by several shot. When the vessel was under this heavy fire Quartermaster Frank Bois went out of the casemate and coolly nailed the colors to the stump of the flagstaff. Before the *Cincinnati* could be properly secured to the bank she sank. Her loss was five killed, fourteen wounded and fifteen missing. During the siege of Vicksburg thirteen heavy guns were landed from the flotilla and did good service under Lieutenant-Commanders Thomas Oliver Selfridge, Jr., and John G. Walker, and Acting-Masters Charles B. Dahlgren and J. Frank Reed. These guns fired one thousand shells into Vicksburg. A 9-inch, a 10-inch and a 100-pounder rifled gun on a scow, under the orders of Lieutenant-Commander Francis M. Ramsay, enfiladed the batteries. In his official report Porter says: "The mortar-boats were under charge of Gunner Eugene Mack, who for thirty days stood at his post, the firing continuing night and day. He performed his duty well, and merits approval. The labor was extremely hard, and every man at the mortars was laid up with sickness owing to excessive labor. After Mr. Mack was taken ill, Ensign Miller took charge and conducted the firing with marked ability. We know that nothing conduced more to the end of the siege than the mortar-firing, which demoralized the Confederates, killed and wounded a number of persons, killed the

cattle, destroyed property of all kinds and set the city on fire. On the last two days we were enabled to reach the outer works of the enemy by firing heavy charges of twenty-six pounds of powder; the distance was three miles, and the falling of shells was very annoying to the rebels. To use the words of the Confederate officer, 'our shells intruded everywhere.'" On July 4, 1863, Vicksburg surrendered, and five days later Port Hudson fell.

While the siege of Port Hudson was in progress the *Princess Royal*, Commander Melancthon Brooks Woolsey, and the *Winona*, Lieutenant-Commander Aaron Ward Weaver, gave great assistance, repelling the Confederate attack on the fort at Donaldsonville, June 28th. The *Kineo* arrived on the scene later. Two days before the surrender of Port Hudson the *Monongahela*, Commander Abner Read, was fired upon by a masked battery of fieldpieces, by which two of her men were killed and four wounded, among the latter being her commander (mortally) and Captain Thornton A. Jenkins.

On the day that Vicksburg fell an overwhelming force of Confederate troops made a sudden attack on the garrison of four thousand men, under Major-General B. M. Prentiss, at Helena. Having broken through the National center, the Confederates were pressing down a hillside, confident of capturing the post. At this moment Lieutenant-Commander James M. Pritchett, commanding the *Tyler*, took a position where his guns bore on the enemy and then opened a terrific fire. "The slaughter of the enemy at this time was terrible, and all unite in describing the horrors of that hillside and the ravines after the battle as baffling description, the killed being literally torn to pieces by shell, and the avenging fire of the gunboat pursued the enemy two or three miles to his reserve forces, creating a panic there which added not a little to the end of victory."<sup>1</sup> The enemy was repelled with a loss of four

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<sup>1</sup> Official report of Lieutenant-Commander S. Ledyard Phelps.



hundred killed and eleven hundred prisoners. This was the third instance in which this gallant little gunboat figured prominently in retrieving the fortunes of the Union army—first at Belmont, again at Pittsburg Landing and finally at Helena. Shortly afterward the *De Kalb*, while ascending Yazoo River, was sunk by a torpedo. A month before this, June 6th, the *Choctaw*, Lieutenant-Commander Ramsay, rendered material assistance in routing the Confederates after their successful attack on a brigade of negro troops at Miliken's Bend. About six weeks later Lieutenant-Commander Thomas O. Selfridge, Jr., entered Red River and proceeded up Tensas River as far as Tensas Lake, and by Ouachita River reached Harrisonburg, destroying much public property and four steamers. In August, Lieutenant Bache went two hundred and fifty miles up White River with the gunboats *Lexington*, *Cricket* and *Marmora*. The *Cricket* went forty miles up Little Red River and returned, having one man killed and eight wounded by sharpshooters.

Early in March, 1864, Rear-Admiral Porter accompanied General Banks' expedition against Shreveport up Red River, with the following gunboats: *Essex*, Commander Robert Townsend; *Eastport*, Lieutenant-Commander S. Ledyard Phelps; *Black Hawk*, Lieutenant-Commander K. Randolph Breese; *Lafayette*, Lieutenant-Commander James P. Foster; *Benton*, Lieutenant-Commander James A. Greer; *Louisville*, Lieutenant-Commander Elias K. Owen; *Carondelet*, Lieutenant-Commander John G. Mitchell; *Osage*, Lieutenant-Commander Thomas O. Selfridge, Jr.; *Ouachita*, Lieutenant-Commander Byron Wilson; *Lexington*, Lieutenant George M. Bache; *Chillicothe*, Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant Joseph Couthony; *Pittsburgh*, Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant William R. Hoel; *Mound City*, Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant Amos R. Langthorne; *Neosho*, Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant Samuel Howard; *Ozark*, Acting-Master George W. Browne;

*Fort Hindman*, Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant John Pearce ; *Cricket*, Acting-Master Henry H. Gorringer ; *Gazelle*, Acting-Master Charles Thatcher. This magnificent flotilla, with a large fleet of transports, began the ascent of Red River on the 12th of March. Lieutenant-Commander Phelps, with the lighter gunboats, forcing his way through the obstructions eight miles below Fort De Russy, arrived opposite that place on the 14th, and dropped a few shells just before the fort was carried by troops who had marched from Simmesport.

The expedition reached Alexandria on the 15th and the 16th, where a garrison was established, and Porter, with the *Cricket*, the *Fort Hindman*, the *Lexington*, the *Osage*, the *Neosho* and the *Chillicothe*, pressed forward, and in spite of the low water and extremely difficult navigation reached Springfield Landing on the 10th of April. There he learned that the National troops had been checked at Pleasant Hill and were retreating, which compelled the gunboats to begin their difficult retreat of four hundred miles in the heart of the enemy's country. On the 12th of April two thousand Confederate troops made a furious attack on the *Osage*, the *Lexington* and six transports (the *Osage* and two of the transports being aground), but were repelled with heavy loss. On the 15th the *Eastport* was sunk by a torpedo, but after great exertions by her officers and crew she was raised on the 21st and moved some distance down the stream. The vessel had been so damaged, however, that on the 26th Lieutenant Phelps destroyed her. At this moment the gunboats accompanying her—the *Cricket*, the *Juliet* and the *Fort Hindman*—and two pump-boats were attacked by the Confederates, but the enemy was repelled. Five miles above Cane River these vessels were roughly handled by a heavy battery. Porter, being in the *Cricket*, made a dash past the battery, and although his vessel was struck thirty-eight times and sustained a loss of twenty-five killed or wounded in a crew of fifty, he rejoined his squadron. The *Juliet*

had fifteen killed or wounded, and the *Fort Hindman* three killed and five wounded.

When the vessels reached Alexandria it was found that the water had fallen so low that it was impossible to pass the rapids. Destruction seemed to await this magnificent fleet, but under the direction of Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Bailey, and with the assistance of several hundred troops from a Maine regiment, a dam was built across the stream, and from the 9th to the 13th of May the gunboats were passed over the rapids and saved. For this invaluable service Bailey was promoted to the rank of Brigadier-General. The *Pittsburgh*, the *Mound City*, the *Louisville*, the *Carondelet* and the *Ozark* were stripped of their iron plating, which, together with eleven 32-pounders, was thrown into the river. Before the fleet reach a place of safety the gunboats *Covington*, Lieutenant Lord, and *Signal*, Lieutenant Morgan, and the transport *Warner* were attacked, and after a heroic defense they were captured, the *Covington* having had forty-four killed, wounded or missing out of a complement of seventy-six men. From this time to the close of the war Red River remained in Confederate hands, but was carefully blockaded. Porter was relieved of his command, and Captain Alexander M. Pennock was left in charge.

While stationed at Tunica Bend, near Port Hudson, the tinclad *Naiad*, Acting-Master Hubbell, and the *General Bragg* were suddenly fired upon at daylight, June 24th, by a battery of 6-pounders that had been captured from General Banks. The National gunboats promptly responded, and for about an hour maintained a heavy fire, when at the approach of the monitor *Winnebago* the enemy fled. The *General Bragg* was uninjured, but the *Naiad* was badly cut up, having her pilot-house, armory and dispensary destroyed. One of her pilots was mortally wounded, and Mr. Hubbell was severely injured below the right knee.

On the 24th of June, 1864, Lieutenant Bache left

Duval's Bluff with a number of troops in transports convoyed by the *Tyler* and the tinclads *Naumkeag* and *Fawn*, but before he had gone twenty miles he picked up two men who had escaped from the light-draught steamer *Queen City*, which had been captured by the Confederates only five hours before. Sending back the transports, Lieutenant Bache formed his three vessels in line of battle and boldly attacked a battery of seven field-pieces and two thousand Confederate troops who were advantageously posted near Clarendon. Steaming past the battery, the *Tyler* and the *Fawn* received shot in their pilot-houses, and the latter's pilot was killed. Soon afterward another shot entered the *Fawn's* pilot-house. The *Tyler* and *Naumkeag*, after passing the battery, returned to the assistance of their consort and put the enemy to flight. This was the battery that had taken the *Queen City* by surprise and disabled her engines at the first fire, and killed two and wounded eight of her men. The other boats had three killed and fifteen wounded.

On the 1st of November Captain Samuel Phillips Lee succeeded to the command of the Western flotilla. The removal of the seat of war to the east of Mississippi River made the patrol of the Western waters even more hazardous than before, as roving bands of guerillas were able to plant masked batteries along the banks and open fire on unsuspecting gunboats and transports. Early in November the Confederates erected a battery on the upper Tennessee, which cut off eight transports and the little gunboats *Key West*, *Elfin* and *Tawah*, commanded by Lieutenant King, from the support of the larger Union gunboats below. The gunboat *Undine* also fell into the hands of the enemy and was destroyed. On November 4th, Lieutenant-Commanders Shirk and Leroy Fitch attacked the batteries with some light gunboats, while Lieutenant King opened fire from above; but although fighting gallantly and being repeatedly struck, the gunboats could not dis-

lodge the enemy. To prevent his vessels from falling into the hands of the Confederates, Lieutenant King destroyed them.

Acting-Master Gilbert Morton, on October 28th, rendered valuable assistance to the Union troops under General Granger when they were attacked by the Confederates above Muscle Shoals. On December 4th, Fitch, with the *Carondelet* and the *Fairplay*, opened an effective fire on Hood's troops that were advancing upon Nashville. On the 6th he engaged a battery with the *Neosho* and the *Carondelet*, the former being struck by more than a hundred shot. Our gunboats also played an important part in the attack on Hood's army on the 15th, Lieutenant Moreau Forrest assisting greatly in cutting off the enemy's retreat.

In April, 1865, the *Webb*, Lieutenant-Commander Charles W. Read, ran the blockade at the mouth of the Red River and attempted to get to sea with a load of cotton, and actually got twenty-three miles beyond New Orleans before she was captured. In June, 1865, the small Confederate naval force in Red River surrendered, and on the 14th of August Captain Lee was relieved of his command and most of the vessels of the Western flotilla were sold.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### ATTACK ON THE WYOMING.

WHILE these stirring scenes were taking place in the United States an incident occurred in Japan which was attended with most serious circumstances. At the outbreak of the civil war the Government ordered the steam frigate *Wyoming*, Commander David Stockton McDougal, to cruise in Asiatic waters and keep a sharp lookout for Confederate commerce destroyers. McDougal entered the navy in 1828, and when Mare Island was purchased by the Government for a navy yard he was in command of the storeship *Warren* at San Francisco, Commander David Glasgow Farragut being ordered to that station. As the place then was destitute of quarters for officers, Farragut and his family became the guests of McDougal aboard the *Warren*.<sup>1</sup> In 1860 McDougal was ordered to command the *Wyoming*, then at Panama, in place of Captain John K. Mitchell, who entered the Confederate service. The *Wyoming* was a sister ship to the *Kearsarge*, which also was engaged in the same duty in European waters. She carried two 11-inch Dahlgren guns on pivots amidship, and had four 32-pounders in the broadside. Her complement was one hundred and sixty men.

About the time of the *Wyoming's* arrival in Eastern waters the edict of the Mikado of Japan expelling foreigners was in force. Availing themselves of the opportunity this edict gave them to embroil the

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. D. McDougal Van Voorhis to the author.

Mikado in trouble with some foreign power, the Choshu clansmen began the erection of batteries at the Straits of Shimonoséki. "The Straits of Shimonoséki form the western entrance into the inland sea and divide the great islands of Hondo and Kiushiu. They are three miles long and from one half to one mile wide, the navigable channel being from three to seven hundred feet wide. The town, of eighteen thousand inhabitants, consists chiefly of one very long street at the foot of bold bluffs, except that in the center the houses completely encircle and cover two or three small hills, and cluster thickly in a ravine. . . . Some have called it 'the Gibraltar of the Japanese Mediterranean.' The tide in its ebb and flow runs like a mill race at the rate of five miles an hour, and the violent oscillations acting upon the numerous sunken rocks and shoals have, in the course of centuries, furnished an appalling list of wrecks and great loss of life. Every landmark in the region is eloquent or ominous with traditions of gloom. . . . On one of the rocky ledges stands the monument of the young Emperor Antoku, drowned in the great naval battle (A. D. 1185) between the Genji and the Héiké, the white and red flags, where possibly one thousand war ships fought together."<sup>1</sup>

On commanding bluffs from fifty to one hundred feet high and overlooking this "terror to navigation" the Choshu men erected seven batteries mounting from two to seven guns each, mostly 32-pounders, and a few 12- and 24-pounders. Some of the guns were 8-inch Dahlgrens, a present from our Government. Besides this the warlike clansmen had purchased the iron steamer *Lancefeld*, the bark *Daniel Webster* and the brig *Lanrick*. On the steamer they mounted four guns, on the bark six and on the brig four, mostly 24-pounders.

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<sup>1</sup> William Elliot Griffis, in *Century Magazine*.

On June 25, 1863, the clansmen had the first opportunity to show their power. On that day the American steamer *Pembroke*, from Yokohama for Nagasaki, entered the straits, but instead of attempting the passage when the tide was in force, she followed the custom of dropping anchor and waiting for slack water. Soon after the *Pembroke* came to, the *Daniel Webster* moved by and dropped anchor a short distance from her. No suspicions of foul play seem to have been entertained by the master of the *Pembroke*, for he had shown his colors, and his pilot had been furnished by the Government at Tokio.

About an hour after midnight the bark, without the slightest warning, opened fire on the *Pembroke*, and soon the *Lanrick* approached, her crew shouting, and anchoring near the bark, opened on the steamer. Realizing that the Japanese were determined to sink his vessel, the master of the *Pembroke* retraced his course and eluded his assailants. Complaint was made to the officials at Tokio, and indemnity to the amount of ten thousand dollars was demanded and paid.

Two weeks after the attack on the *Pembroke*, on July 8th, the French dispatch boat *Kien-chang* anchored at the entrance to the straits to await the turn of the tide, just as the American steamer had done. Without warning, the batteries opened fire, seven shot taking effect. The Frenchmen then lowered a boat to inquire the reason for the attack, but it had scarcely left the ship's side when it was sunk by a shot and several of the men killed. With great difficulty the *Kien-chang*, in a sinking condition, reached Nagasaki, where the affair was reported to the commander of the Dutch cruiser *Medusa*, Captain de Cassembroot.

The *Medusa* approached the straits in daylight on July 11th. "No sooner was the *Medusa* opposite to the brig, than the *Lanrick*, which flew the flag of Nagato, the bark *Daniel Webster* and the heavy battery of Sennenji, mounting six guns, opened simul-



taneously. In a few minutes the frigate was within the concentrated fire of six batteries. What most astonished the Hollanders were the projectiles, such size and weight being undreamed of. The splendid abilities of the Japanese artillerists and the rapidity of their fire were astonishing. To find 6- and 8-inch shells exploding on their ship was a novelty to the Dutchmen in the Eastern World, and showed that the Japanese were up to the times. With his port broadside Captain de Cassembroot illustrated true 'Dutch courage' for an hour and a half. Unable on account of his draft to attack the ships directly, he passed on his way. The *Medusa* was hit thirty-one times. Seven shots pierced the hull, sending bolts and splinters in showers about the decks. Three 8-inch shells burst on board. The long-boat, cutter and smokestack were ruined. Four men were killed and five wounded."<sup>1</sup> For this service—although it is difficult to discover just what service was performed—Captain de Cassembroot, on his return to Europe, was knighted and his crew received medals of honor. The *Medusa* was a much heavier war ship than the *Wyoming*.

Nine days after this the French gunboat *Tancrede* while swiftly steaming through the straits was fired upon and struck three times; and not long afterward a Japanese steamer—mistaken for a foreigner—was attacked, burned and sunk by the batteries, the bodies of nine officers and nineteen seamen who were killed being swept out to sea.

This firing on unsuspecting vessels from a safe eminence of fifty to one hundred feet, of course, was great sport for the Choshu clansmen, but their day of reckoning was coming. The word "reckoning" having been ascribed by our English cousins as being characteristically Yankee, we need feel no surprise in finding the avenger to be the American war craft *Wyoming*.

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<sup>1</sup> William Elliot Griffis, in *Century Magazine*.

Commander McDougal was a true American seaman. He was a man who did not know what fear was, which, combined with a clear insight into the motives for action, made an ideal officer. He was a contemporary of Rear-Admirals John Rodgers, Middleton, Alden and Case. While on board the *Natchez*, in the harbor of Pensacola, engaged in surveying, he gave an exhibition of dauntless courage which was a marked characteristic all his life. The bay at the time was alive with sharks, especially around the ship, where they swarmed ready to snatch the mess refuse thrown overboard. One day the cry "Man overboard!" startled the ship's company. Without hesitation McDougal whipped off his coat, jumped into the water, and managed to keep the man afloat and fight off the sharks until a boat came to the rescue.<sup>1</sup>

When the news of the attack on the *Pembroke* reached Commander McDougal he was under orders to return home with the *Wyoming*, but this affair determined him in proceeding immediately to the scene of hostilities. Accordingly he dropped anchor at the eastern end of the straits on the evening of July 15th, having first learned that the *Lancefield* drew no more water than his ship. Early the next morning the *Wyoming* rounded a point of land, when one of the batteries opened fire, the first shot striking the ship just above the engine room, cutting away some rigging—ample evidence of the accuracy of Japanese gunners. Making no reply to this, the *Wyoming* steamed on until she rounded another promontory, when she came in full sight of the town and within long range of all the batteries and the Japanese war ships.

Then began the serious work of the day. The shrewd American commander had noticed a line of stakes driven into the mud, evidently marking the edge

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. D. McDougal Van Voorhis (daughter of Rear-Admiral McDougal) to the author.

of the main channel. Rightly guessing that the enemy had long got the precise range of this water way, McDougal ordered his pilots to take his ship toward the northern shore, close under the batteries on that side. The *Daniel Webster* was anchored close to the town, the *Lanrick* about fifty yards beyond, and a length ahead and near her was the *Lancefield*. All these vessels were rigged with kedge anchors and grappling irons at their yardarms ready to close on the *Wyoming* and carry her by boarding. Their decks were crowded with men, shouting and defying the Americans to come on.

Making directly for these vessels, McDougal shook out his colors but reserved his fire, intending to attack the vessels first and give his attention to the batteries afterward. The sight of the American flags seemed to have acted like oil on the fire, for now the Japanese opened from other batteries with savage ferocity. McDougal's shift from the main channel somewhat disconcerted their plans, as seen by the fact that most of their shot took effect in the *Wyoming's* rigging. Observing a good opportunity to deliver a few blows, McDougal opened with his pivots and starboard guns, and with such effect that one battery was torn to pieces and silenced at the first broadside.

Keeping steadily on for the ships, the *Wyoming* when nearly abreast of the squadron was fired upon by the *Daniel Webster*, by which two men, William Clark and George Watson, who were stationed near the *Wyoming's* anchor, were killed, the latter by a chain shot. About the same time a shot from one of the batteries came aboard and killed a marine stationed at the gangway. The Americans were now firing from every gun in the ship, and with splendid effect, as was shown by the clouds of earth and broken gun mountings that were hurled into the air.

Aided by the strong tide the *Wyoming* swiftly passed down the straits, so that the Japanese gunners

in the ships, although firing with admirable rapidity, could discharge no more than three broadsides. One of their shells killed all the crew of the forward 32-pounder excepting three men. The captain of the gun, William Thompson, had his left arm torn off. Observing that the tackle of this gun had been carried away, one of the American seamen, Charles J. Murphy, though badly wounded, bent on new tackle and fought the gun short-handed until Lieutenant Barton sent him a few men from the pivot gun. About that time Barton's sword-guard was struck by a piece of shell and bent out of shape.

The *Wyoming* had now passed the ships, when she rounded to with the intention of making a target of them, but at this critical juncture she ran aground where six batteries and the squadron could concentrate their fire upon her, and for a moment it looked very much like defeat. The *Lancefield* was now observed to slip her cable and steam over to the northern shore, probably with a view of gathering headway for ramming the helpless American. Realizing the danger, McDougal directed all his attention to the steamer, hoping to disable her before she could do the threatened mischief.

Meantime the *Wyoming's* engines had been reversed, and after a powerful effort she was backed clear of the mud and into deep water. Manœuvring as well as the five-knot current and sunken rocks would admit of, McDougal got his two pivot guns into play on the *Lancefield*, and soon 11-inch shells were doing their awful work on the hull of the steamer. The second carefully aimed shell from the forward pivot gun crashed through the side of the *Lancefield*, one foot above the water line, pierced the boiler, and came out on the other side, tearing a great hole in the hull. As if not satisfied with this work, the shell speeded over the water and exploded in the town a quarter of a mile away.

In an instant the *Lancefield* was enveloped in a mass of steam, smoke, flame and cinders. A native boat put off from her side with a crowd of men, while scores of other men threw themselves into the sea. Two more shells were then sent into the *Lancefield* to insure her destruction. The pivot guns were then turned on the *Daniel Webster*, which ship had been keeping up a destructive fire. A few well-directed shells settled her fate, and she followed the *Lancefield* to the bottom. McDougal was now able to devote his entire energy to the shore batteries. He deliberately retraced his course through the straits, keeping up a most effective fire, so much so that, although greatly exposed, his vessel was scarcely injured.

After passing the last battery and getting beyond the reach of the Japanese guns the *Wyoming* came to and the men had time to count their losses. The action had lasted just one hour and ten minutes, in which time the ship had been struck more than twenty times, ten shot having pierced her hull. Six holes were found in the smokestack, four shot had taken effect in both main and fore masts and the rigging was badly injured. The ship had fired fifty-five rounds, or nearly one for every minute of the action. Six men were killed and four wounded. A coal heaver named Michael Lynch had both legs taken off below the knees. He walked half the length of the deck and complained of his "toes hurting him" before he died. Four days later the French frigate *Semiramis* and gunboat *Tancrede* entered the straits, and after landing a detachment of two hundred and fifty men captured the batteries.

Speaking of this brilliant action, Griffis says: "To the Choshu clansmen, brave and capable as they themselves were, it seemed as though McDougal possessed more than human nerve in thus running his vessel into the fierce fire which they had prepared for him. Long afterward they spoke respectfully of the 'American devils.' They had fought the Dutch frigate, and four

days later were chastised at one point by the French, but neither of these combats, carried on in mid-channel at long range, or by a charge after the single battery had been emptied by long bombardment, so impressed the thinking men of Japan's most intellectual clan as that of the commander of a single ship coolly and of choice meeting such overwhelming odds at close quarters and winning so surprising a victory. The Choshu men were noted for their thinking and for the power of profiting by their reverses, and this time their profit was great.

"Yet this act of McDougal was not a mere 'running amuck,' a rash plunge; it was as cool and scientific a movement, albeit one requiring as much nerve and courage, as Cushing's attack on the *Albemarle*. With Japanese prison cages and torture all foreigners in Japan of that day were acquainted by daily report. Even casual walks around Yokohama had made the American officers familiar with the pillories near the blood pits, which were almost daily decorated with human heads. Besides, it had been immemorial law and custom for the beaten party in Japan to perform *hara-kiri*; or, failing, to suffer decapitation. It was a clear knowledge of these facts that led McDougal, while shrinking from nothing within the bounds of possibility, to give an order not mentioned in his amazingly modest official report. He had only a few days before seen the American flag hauled down and the legation of the United States driven from the capital, and this was humiliation enough for McDougal. Hence he determined neither to see nor to have the like thing done on the ship he commanded. If boarded or overwhelmed, or made helpless by grounding or a shot in the boilers, it was his deliberate purpose to blow up the ship and all on board, the officer of the powder division being instructed to that effect."

Speaking of this action, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt, in a private interview, said,

“Had that action occurred at any other time than during the civil war its fame would have been echoed all over the world.” During her protracted search for the *Alabama* in Eastern seas the *Wyoming* experienced the usual covert hostility on the part of British fort officials. On one occasion, when entering Singapore, she was mistaken for the famous Confederate cruiser, the result being that every courtesy was shown to her, the English merchants “sending files of late papers, flowers, etc.”<sup>1</sup>

Commander Charles J. McDougal, the only son of McDougal, was drowned March 28, 1881, when off Cape Mendocino serving as a lighthouse inspector.

The executive officer of the *Wyoming* in this affair was Lieutenant George W. Young; Lieutenant William Barton, navigator, was in charge of the forward division of guns, and Acting-Master John C. Mills commanded the after division; E. R. Denby was surgeon, George Cochran paymaster (now pay director), Philip Inch (now chief engineer) was engineer and Walter Pierce was ensign.

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. D. McDougal Van Voorhis to the author.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### OFF MOBILE BAY.

IN the earlier part of the civil war Mobile Bay was far removed from the more active naval operations in the Gulf, and nothing disturbed the quiet of that important seaport except the occasional rush of the swift ocean racers that stole past the blockading squadron and attempted to gain the harbor. Three large rivers entered this bay, giving unusual facilities for reaching the interior, and made Mobile the second port of the Confederacy. The enemy kept up water communications with New Orleans by means of Mississippi Sound until the capture of the steamer *Anna*, early in December, 1861, and soon afterward that of the *P. C. Wallace* by the National gunboat *New London*, made this route too hazardous.

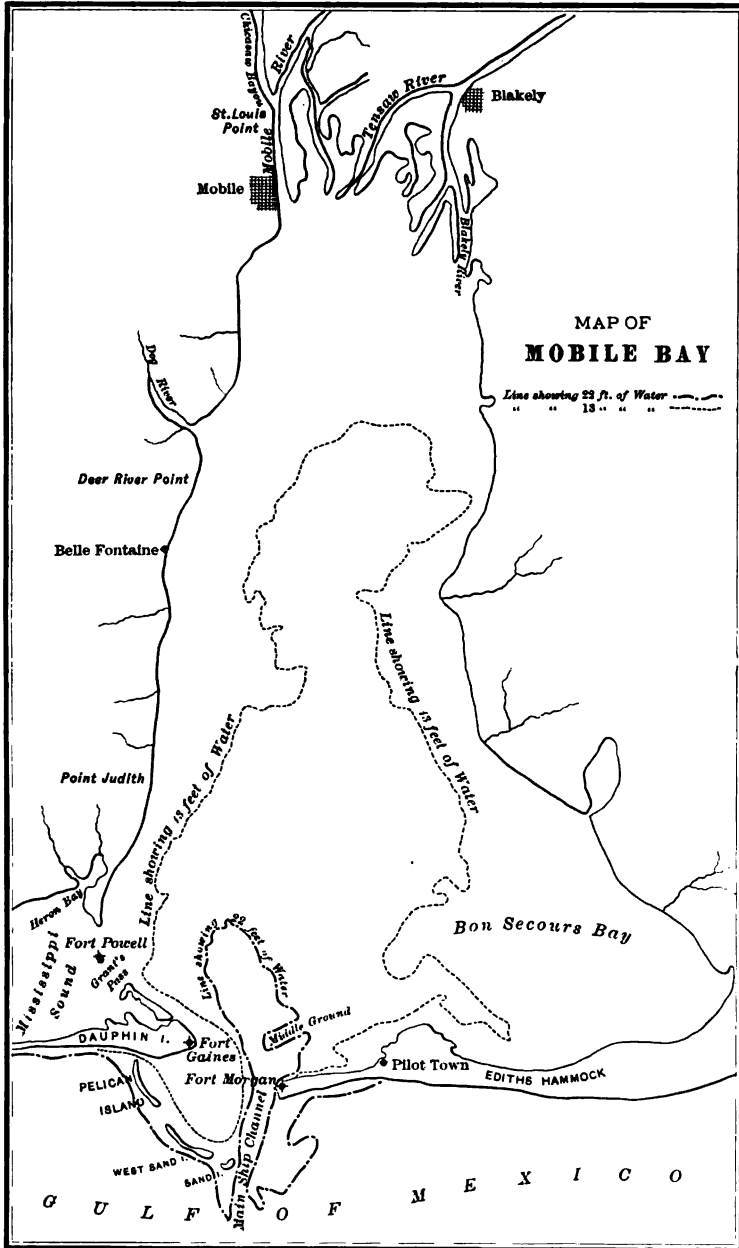
The first active fighting before Mobile occurred on the 29th of January, 1862, when the schooner *Wildier*, with a valuable cargo from Havana, was chased ashore while flying British colors. As the National boats were removing the cargo a company of Confederate rangers, under the command of Captain Cottrill, hastened down from Mobile, opened a brisk fire, and drove off the launches with a loss of fifteen to twenty-five killed or wounded. In the night the gunboats towed off the *Wildier*. On the following 28th of June the British steamer *Ann*, from St. Thomas, laden with a valuable cargo of war materials, attempted to run the blockade under cover of darkness, but was chased ashore. Her crew escaped after endeavoring to scuttle the steamer, but her water-tight compartments kept her



afloat and she was captured by the gunboats. August 30th the *Winona* exchanged a few shells with Fort Morgan, without much injury to either side, and on Christmas eve, 1862, the *Florida*, which had run into the port on September 4th, opened a long-distance cannonade with the *New London* near Sand Island.

When New Orleans fell, in April, 1862, the Confederates fully believed that the next point of attack would be Mobile, and they hastened their preparations accordingly. Realizing the importance of this port, the authorities at Richmond, early in 1863, ordered Admiral Franklin Buchanan, who commanded the *Merrimac* on the first day of her celebrated battle in Hampton Roads, to take command of the naval forces in Mobile Bay. In the spring of 1863 five gunboats were in course of construction under the direction of Commander Ebenezer Farrand, at Selma, one hundred and fifty miles up the Alabama River, which at that time was the largest naval station in the South. The ablest engineers in the Confederacy were engaged in the construction of these vessels. In the winter of 1863-'64 the ram *Tennessee*, the most formidable iron-clad completed by the South, was built at Selma. The *Tennessee* was of the type of the *Merrimac*, but improved. She was two hundred and nine feet over all, had forty-eight feet beam, and drew over thirteen feet of water. Her casemate, which rose eight feet above the deck, was placed amidships and sloped at an angle of thirty-three degrees to the deck. It was seventy-eight feet and eight inches long by twenty-nine feet wide, inside measurement, and was constructed of yellow-pine beams thirteen inches thick, placed vertically. Over this were five and a half inches of the same wood in horizontal courses, and on top of that four inches of oak in vertical courses. Within, the casemate was sheathed with two and a half inches of oak.

Over this twenty-five inches of solid wood backing were laid five inches of iron plating on the sides





and stern, and six inches at the forward end of the casemate. These plates were of the toughest malleable iron, made at the Atlanta rolling-mills, two inches thick, seven inches wide, and twenty-one feet long; but where the plating was only five inches deep there was a single layer of plates one inch thick. This plating was secured by iron bolts having a diameter of one inch and a quarter, which ran entirely through the wood backing and were fastened on the inside of the casemate with nuts and washers. The pilot-house was formed by carrying the forward end of the casemate two feet higher, and was pierced with slits so as to enable the line of vision to extend on all sides. The top of the casemate and pilot-house were covered with heavy iron grating, while the deck outside the casemate was protected by two inches of iron. As an additional protection, netting was stretched along the four sides of the casemate within to prevent splinters from injuring the gun-crews.

The iron-plated casemate extended two feet below the water line, and was then bent at the same angle so as to meet the hull seven feet below water, thus forming a solid knuckle ten feet thick, which protected the hull from ramming. This knuckle was carried all around the ship, and, being covered with four inches of iron, it made a formidable ram at the bow. Massive sliding shutters five inches thick covered the gun-ports when the guns were run in. This formidable craft was armed with one 7-inch Brooke rifled gun in the bow and one in the stern, and on each broadside she carried two 6.4-inch rifled guns which were cast in the foundry at Selma, under the supervision of Commander Catesby ap Rogers Jones. The command of this vessel was given to Commander James D. Johnston.

The two defective points about the *Tennessee* were her low speed and exposed steering-gear. Her high-pressure engines were designed for a river steamer, and on her trial trip in March she made only six knots an

hour. Her steering-gear was laid outside the casemate and was exposed to an enemy's shot. But these defects were owing to the lack of facilities for constructions of this kind. In his official report Admiral Buchanan says: "I seriously felt the want of experienced officers during the action." The crew, as finally brought together, consisted of eighteen officers and one hundred and ten men.

The conditions under which this craft was built were singularly like those under which the brigs *Lawrence* and *Niagara* were constructed by Master-Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry on Lake Erie in 1813. In both cases the vessels were literally hewn out of the forest, and as the brigs had to be lifted over the bar at Presque Isle, or Erie, on camels, so it became necessary to raise the *Tennessee* five feet in order to get her over the bar at Dog River, where there were only nine feet of water. The Southern papers expressed the impatience of the people at these delays in harsh criticisms, and were daily urging Admiral Buchanan to attack the National fleet. After great exertions the timber for the floats was sawed out of the forest, ten miles up the river, and floated down to Mobile, but just before they were ready for use they were destroyed by fire, and the tedious operation had to be repeated.

Besides the *Tennessee* the Confederates had three gunboats, which took a share in the battle of August 5th. They were unarmored except around the boilers and machinery. The first of these was the side-wheel steamer *Morgan*, Lieutenant George W. Harrison, mounting two 7-inch rifled guns and four 32-pounders. The *Gaines*, Lieutenant J. W. Bennett, also was a side-wheel steamer, and mounted one 8-inch rifled gun and five 32-pounders. The *Selma*, Lieutenant Peter U. Murphy, was an open-deck steamer mounting one 6-inch, two 9-inch and one 8-inch smooth-bore shell guns. The last was a heavily built steamer, but the other two were entirely unsuited for war purposes.

It was Admiral Buchanan's intention to take the blockading ships by surprise. The night of May 18th was selected for the attack, and, having been buoyed up, the ram was taken in tow by two steamers, one containing her coal and the other her ammunition, and carried over the bar and down the bay toward the National fleet. All haste was made to prepare her for the fight, and while she was being towed down the channel her crew was busily engaged in taking on board her coal and ammunition. According to the programme laid out by the Southern papers, the *Tennessee* was to destroy the fleet off Mobile Bay, immediately capture Fort Pickens at Pensacola, and then proceed northward or to New Orleans. It was midnight before the vessels reached a point down the bay where there was sufficient water to float the *Tennessee*, but the tide had fallen so low that when the floats were cast off the ram was found to be hard and fast aground. Before she could be got off daylight revealed her to the Union fleet, and the advantage of taking it by surprise was lost. When the next tide floated the *Tennessee* she was carried down the channel and anchored under the guns of Fort Morgan, where she remained until the 5th of August, her crew improving the interim with daily practice at the great guns.

Returning from a brief visit in the North, where he had been resting after his brilliant services in Mississippi River, Farragut resumed command of the Gulf squadron January 18, 1864, the senior officer of the blockading squadron off Mobile at that time being Captain Thornton A. Jenkins, of the *Richmond*. On the 20th of January, Farragut, in the *Octorara*, Lieutenant-Commander Lowe, with the *Itasca* in company, made a reconnoissance in Mobile Bay, and reported that "if I had one ironclad I could destroy their whole force." Early in the year Farragut visited the several stations of his extensive command, using a light river steamer called the *Tennessee* as his flagship; but from the

middle of May he spent most of his time off Mobile. He had heard many rumors regarding the strength of its land and water defenses, and, knowing that the Confederates were strengthening them by every means in their power from day to day, he was anxious to make his attack early in the spring; but the Red River expedition drew away the only available troops, and the ironclads necessary for the attack on Mobile did not arrive until late in the summer. He wrote repeatedly to the Government, begging that at least "one of the many ironclads that are off Charleston and in the Mississippi," and a few thousand troops, might be placed under his orders.

By August the defenses of Mobile were among the most formidable in the South. A brick fort on Dauphin Island, called Fort Gaines, built on the ruins of Fort Tombigbee, defended by eight hundred and sixty-four men under the command of Colonel Charles D. Anderson, mounted three 10-inch columbiads, four 32-pounder rifled guns, and twenty smooth-bore guns of 32, 24 and 18-pound calibers. Fort Powell commanded the principal pass to Mississippi Sound, and mounted one 10-inch and one 8-inch columbiad and four rifled guns. The principal fortification was Fort Morgan, which was an old-fashioned pentagonal brick work, mounting its guns in three tiers with a full scarp brick wall four feet eight inches thick, the entire front being protected by enormous piles of sand-bags. This fort was built on the site of the little redoubt called Fort Bowyer, which repelled the British fleet in 1814 with the loss of the war ship *Hermes* and two hundred men. Fort Morgan proper mounted seven 10-inch, three 8-inch and twenty-two 32-pounder smooth-bore guns, and two 8-inch, two 6.5-inch and four 5.82-inch rifled guns. The exterior batteries mounted four 10-inch columbiads, one 8-inch rifled gun and two rifled 32-pounders. Within the fort was a citadel, loopholed for musketry, the brick walls being four feet thick.

This fort was commanded by Brigadier-General Richard L. Page, who had six hundred and forty men.

From Fort Gaines to the edge of the ship channel was a double line of stakes, the heads of which were just visible at low water, which prevented light-draught steamers from entering the bay. Across the ship channel the Confederates had planted a double row of torpedoes, extending from the western edge of the ship channel to within three hundred feet of the water battery at Fort Morgan, the termination of the line being indicated by a red buoy. This passage was left clear for blockade-runners. Forty-six of these torpedoes were lager-beer kegs filled with powder. Four or five sensitive primers were placed on the upper side, which would be exploded by a vessel striking them. One hundred and thirty-four of the torpedoes were tins shaped like a truncated cone, the lower part being filled with powder, and the upper part used as an air-chamber for floating the machine. They were anchored with old grate bars. The torpedo would be exploded by a passing vessel knocking off a cast-iron cap which pulled the trigger. There were also nine submarine mortar batteries in course of construction, under the direction of Brigadier-General G. J. Rains, and three of them were completed to close the ship channel.<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant-Commander Jouett and Lieutenant Watson spent some time in dragging for the torpedoes. They were about seven feet under water, the fuse being on the upper point of the cone. One of these fuses was sent to Farragut. He placed it on his cabin table, but, rolling off, it fell to the deck and exploded. "Young man," said Farragut to the person who sent the fuse, "don't send any more of those infernal machines to me. When it exploded I thought some one had shot me."

The Confederates made more than one attempt to

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<sup>1</sup> Official report of Brigadier-General Rains.



inflict injury on the blockading squadron off Mobile. Lieutenant James McC. Baker and his brother, Page M. Baker, offered to go out in a boat on a dark night with a spar torpedo. Having selected the ship, Lieutenant Baker was to keep the boat in position while his brother was to dive overboard and explode a torpedo under the ship's water line. The capture of the *Creole* under the guns of Fort Pickens by these young officers, and their other gallant exploits during the war, sufficiently demonstrated their ability and pluck to carry out this project, but they failed to get the necessary permission. To guard against such attacks as these, Farragut reluctantly resorted to torpedoes. He wrote: "I have always deemed it [torpedo warfare] unworthy of a chivalrous nation, but it does not do to give your enemy such a decided superiority over you."

An attempt was made on the 28th of February, 1864, by the light-draught steamers of the Union squadron to enter Mobile Bay from Mississippi Sound, but the vessels could not get within effective range of Fort Powell, and they retired without accomplishing their purpose. Several shot were exchanged, and four 100-pound shells struck the mortar schooner *John Griffiths* in succession, but fortunately none of them exploded, and only one man was hurt. The attack, however, served to divert the enemy's attention from Sherman, who was then making a raid in Mississippi.

On the night of July 5th Lieutenant John Crittenden Watson volunteered to lead a boat party against a blockade-runner that was beached under the guns of Fort Morgan. Watson was accompanied by Lieutenant Herbert B. Tyson and Ensigns Dana, Whiting, Glidden and Pendleton, and Master's-Mate Herrick, while the *Metacomet*, Lieutenant-Commander James Edward Joutt, and the *Kennebec*, Lieutenant-Commander William Penn McCann, stood in to assist the attacking party. Under cover of darkness the men pulled boldly under the guns of the fort, boarded the blockade-runner, fired

her and returned to the fleet without the loss of a man. Watson also made night explorations in an open boat under the guns of Fort Morgan to determine the position of torpedoes.

By the 4th of August the Union fleet had been increased to twenty-one wooden vessels and four iron-clads. Farragut had intended to go in that day, but as the monitor *Tecumseh* and the *Richmond* did not arrive in time the attack was postponed until the next day. It was only by the greatest exertions that the commanders of these vessels, which were at Pensacola, arrived off Mobile on the night of August 4th. Farragut's plan was to pass up the channel close under the guns of Fort Morgan, and in his general orders he instructed the several commanders to place nets in position to catch splinters, and to lay chains and sand-bags along their decks so as to protect the machinery from plunging shot. He said: "Hang the sheet chains over the side. Land your starboard boats or lower them on the port side, and lower the port boats down to the water's edge. Place a leadsman and a pilot in the port-quarter boat or the one most convenient to the commander." While at Pensacola the *Richmond* took aboard three thousand bags of sand, which were piled in a barricade several feet thick around the starboard side from the port bow to the port quarter and from berth to spar decks, so as to afford additional protection from a raking fire. Many of the commanders filled their vacant ports on the starboard side with guns from the port batteries. Some of the boats were lowered with sails under them, to take up the concussion and to catch them in case the falls were shot away.

The vessels were ordered to sail in pairs, lashed together, the larger ship on the starboard and the smaller vessel on the port side, so that in case either became disabled the other could be depended upon for carrying them along: The *Brooklyn*, Captain James Alden, with the *Octorara*, Lieutenant-Com-

mander Charles H. Greene; the *Hartford*, flagship, Captain Percival Drayton, with the 6-gun double-ender side-wheel steamer *Metacomet*, Lieutenant-Commander Jouett; the 20-gun sloop-of-war *Richmond*, Captain Thornton Alexander Jenkins, with the 6-gun side-wheel steamer *Port Royal*, Lieutenant-Commander Bancroft Gherardi; the 8-gun sloop-of-war *Lackawanna*, Captain John Bonnett Marchand, with the 8-gun propeller *Seminole*, Commander Edward Donaldson; the 8-gun sloop-of-war *Monongahela*, Commander James Hooker Strong, with the 5-gun propeller *Kennebec*, Lieutenant-Commander McCann; the 11-gun sloop-of-war *Ossipee*, Commander William Edgar Le Roy, with the 5-gun propeller *Itasca*, Lieutenant-Commander George Brown; the 9-gun sloop-of-war *Oneida*, Commander James Robert Madison Mullany, with the 10-gun propeller *Galena*, Lieutenant-Commander Clark Henry Wells. Farragut at first had intended to lead the ships in the *Hartford*, but, yielding to the earnest solicitations of the officers, he consented to let the *Brooklyn* take the post of danger, as she was fitted with an apparatus for catching torpedoes, and had four bow guns which could be used to advantage while approaching the fort. The monitors were to go in single file, a little ahead of the wooden ships, in the following order: the *Tecumseh*, Commander Tunis Augustus Macdonough Craven, the *Manhattan*, Commander James William Augustus Nicholson, the *Winnebago*, Commander Thomas Holdup Stevens, and the *Chickasaw*, Lieutenant-Commander George Hamilton Perkins.

In order that the fleet might hold rapid communication with the land forces, a number of army signal officers were sent from New Orleans in a tugboat and were distributed among the principal vessels. Fifteen hundred soldiers were landed on Dauphin Island under cover of the guns of the *Conemaugh*, Lieutenant-Commander James Charles Philip DeKrafft, August

3d. The steamers *Genesee*, *Pinola*, *Pembina*, *Sebago*, *Tennessee* and *Bienville*, under the command of Lieutenant-Commander Edward C. Grafton, were instructed to take a position southeast of Fort Morgan and keep up a flank fire, but they were unable to get near enough to the enemy to take an important part in the action.

On the afternoon of August 4th, Farragut, with the commanders of his vessels, ran into the harbor in the tender *Cowslip* to make a final inspection of the defenses. All around the bay seemed to be quiet and in readiness to receive the long-expected attack. The triple tier of cannon at Fort Morgan, protected by immense piles of sand-bags, frowned upon the little tender, while the three saucy-looking gunboats and the bow of the formidable ram *Tennessee*, just poking its nose around the point of land, like a great tiger awaiting its prey, lay above the fort in quiet readiness. While the *Cowslip* was making this reconnaissance a Confederate transport came down the bay and began landing troops and provisions with another transport at Fort Gaines. Commander Stevens, of the *Winnebago*, was ordered to drive her off, but was cautioned not to approach the fort nearer than a mile. His orders read: "Get back to your anchorage before night. We go in a little after daylight in the morning, so don't use up your crew too much." Running up to easy range of Fort Gaines, Stevens opened a well-directed fire on the transports, and drove them up the bay. The *Cowslip* then returned to the flagship, and after Farragut had given his final instructions to his commanders they returned to their several vessels.

## CHAPTER XV.

### FARRAGUT PASSES FORT MORGAN.

PREPARATIONS for the great battle of Mobile Bay were now completed. Every precaution that a sagacious commander could devise had been taken, and on the night of August 4th the fleet rode quietly at anchor, with top-lights glimmering and twinkling through the rigging as the ships gently swayed with the ocean swell, in readiness for the morrow. Every one felt the seriousness of the work before him. The seamen discussed the chances of a battle in quiet tones, or were leaving last messages or some keepsake with a mess-mate, in case "something happens to me." In the earlier part of the evening the officers of the flagship gathered around the wardroom table, feeling that perhaps it was the last time they would be together, and spent the first hour in writing home and in making their personal arrangements for the battle. This being done, "there followed an hour of unrestrained jollity. Many an old story was retold and ancient conundrum repeated. Old officers forgot for a moment their customary dignity, and it was evident that all were exhilarated and stimulated by the knowledge of the coming struggle. There was no other 'stimulation,' for the strict naval rules prevented. Finally, after a half hour's smoke on the forecastle, all hands turned in."<sup>1</sup> It rained heavily in the evening, but as the night advanced it cleared up, leaving the atmosphere hot, close and oppressive, with scarcely a breath of air stirring.

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<sup>1</sup> Lieut. Kinney, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. iv, p. 386.

As the great ships swung restlessly at their anchors the ebbing and flowing tide played around the cables and rippled along their black hulls ; the eddies swirling under their quarters like imps of darkness, and then flitting on to the next ship. In the distance, just discernible in the gloom, lay the sullen batteries of Fort Morgan, with a double force of sentinels pacing back and forth, ready to fire on any adventurous boat party or give the alarm at the first approach of the ships.

The National fleet was one of the most formidable collection of war vessels that at that time had ever been commanded by one man. Farragut carried in the palm of his hand more power for destruction than the combined English, French and Spanish fleets at Trafalgar. Yet during the silent watches of that night the great admiral was restless. However calm he appeared to his officers and men, he was uneasy on the eve of this his greatest battle. Descending into the privacy of the cabin, he made his personal arrangements for the terrible ordeal, and wrote to his wife: "I am going into Mobile in the morning if God is my leader, as I hope he is, and in him I place my trust. If he thinks it is the place for me to die, I am ready to submit to his will. God bless and preserve you if anything should happen to me!"

About midnight a fog rolled in from the Gulf and enveloped the ships in its dense folds. A little before daybreak Farragut sent for his steward and asked how the weather was, and learning that a fresh breeze had sprung up in the west, which would blow the smoke from the ships over Fort Morgan, he quietly remarked, "Then we will go in this morning." And soon afterward the merry piping of the boatswain's whistle and the hoarse cry of "All hands ahoy! Up all hammocks!" resounded in all corners of the flagship, and in an instant the sepulchral silence of a few minutes before had given place to a most spirited scene. Hundreds of men hastened up from the berth deck, bearing

the hammocks in their arms, and deposited them where they would best protect the crew from the enemy's shot or from splinters, after which they hastened to the performance of their various duties. About this time the steam launch *Loyall*, named after Farragut's wife, "with its pert howitzer in the bow," came along the port side to receive orders. This work in the *Hartford* was promptly imitated by all the other vessels in the fleet, and for a short time the piping of many silver whistles breaking over the peaceful waters resembled not a little the chirping of forest birds at daybreak.

By this time the mists of early dawn had been dispelled by a light southwest breeze, and the rays of the morning sun shone over the scene in unimpeded splendor. In the admiral's cabin, from which had emanated the orders changing so suddenly the sleeping fleet into a scene of exhilarating activity, all was quiet and composed. Farragut was breakfasting as calmly as if nothing unusual were going on. Finally, at 5.30 A. M., while sipping his tea, he remarked to his fleet captain, "Well, Drayton, we might as well get under way." In an incredibly short time this simple expression had been flashed all over the fleet, and "in one minute" all the ships had made answering signals and were getting under way. By half past six o'clock the vessels had crossed the bar, and after a few minutes' delay they drew out in an imposing line of battle and slowly moved up the channel. Each ship had colors flying at the peak and at each masthead, and as the beautiful folds of the American flags were gently tossed about in the light breeze, their bright hues gleaming and glancing in the sunlight, they presented a vision of beauty never to be forgotten. But the ominous absence of the tompions in the muzzles of the cannon, the silent groups of men standing beside the monstrous pivot guns in the bows, the lowering of the topmasts and the absence of all superfluous rigging, gave the ships a peculiarly grim and vicious look and too plainly indicated that

they were entering the harbor strictly on business. On May 27, 1861, the Natchez Courier said, "Fort Morgan welcomed the Union ships by displaying the United States flag with the union down and below the Confederate flag." The National fleet was now steaming up Mobile Bay to inquire about it.

The scene in the flagship at this stage of the action was thrilling. As the noble *Hartford* drew near to undergo her part in the battle she seemed to nerve herself for the terrible ordeal. An almost unbroken silence pervaded her decks, disturbed only by the lapping of the waves against her dark hull as she passed up the channel, and the musical calls of the leadsmen in the chains: "By the mark three!" or "A quarter less four!" As the men stood at their guns, in momentary expectation of the order to fire or of being cut down by the enemy's shot, they instinctively cast inquiring glances at the determined faces of their officers. Serious thoughts were passing through their minds, and many faces bore an anxious expression. The good and bad deeds of their lives came before them in swift review, for they realized that at the next moment they might be standing before their Maker. Yet there were no signs of flinching. They had been looking forward to this fight for months. They had speculated on its chances and counted on its costs, and were now—with minds made up, with set faces and with tense nerves—deliberately advancing to the great struggle. In the cockpit were Surgeon Lansdale and Assistant-Surgeon Commons and their aids, with their instruments spread out for the first victim. As their bloody task had not yet begun, they held their watches in their hands, to time the different periods of the battle. To them, ignorant of everything going on above, each minute seemed an hour.

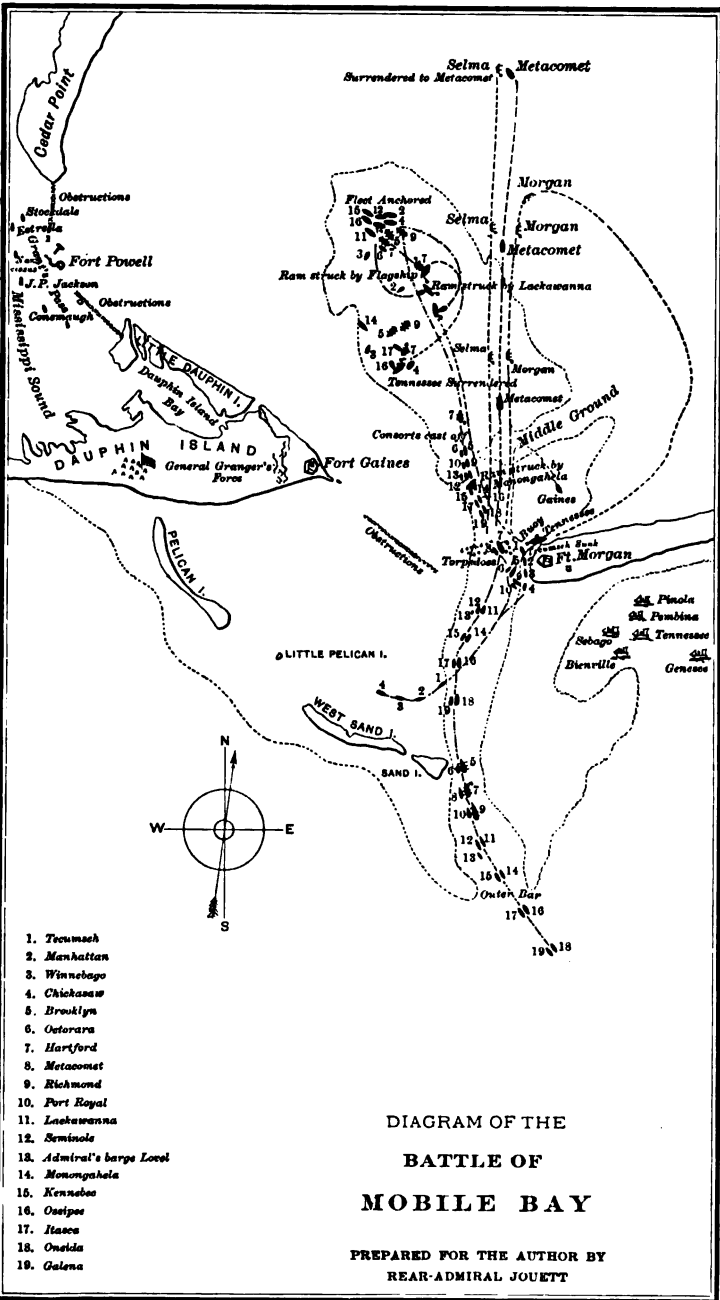
At the wheel, under the break of the poop-deck, snugly barricaded up to their chins with canvas, were the veteran seamen McFarland, Wood and Jassin,



who had been in every engagement of the ship, and on their coolness in a great measure depended its safety. Grasping the spokes of the wheel with a determined clutch, they had ears alone for the captain. On the quarter-deck was the commanding figure of Captain Drayton, surrounded by his staff officers, Lieutenant J. C. Watson, Lieutenant Arthur Reid Yates, whose duty was to keep a watch on Farragut and convey his orders to all parts of the ship, Secretary McKinley, who was busily engaged in taking notes of the battle, and Acting-Ensign Henry Howard Brownell. Close to them was the Signal-Quartermaster Knowles, who had hoisted more than one signal that led to victory. Farragut himself had taken a position in the port main shrouds on the upper sheer ratline, twenty-five feet up, so as to command a better view of the battle and at the same time be within easy speaking distance of Jouett, who had stationed himself on the wheelhouse of the *Metacomet*. Above Farragut in the top was Martin Freeman, the pilot, within easy reach of the admiral.

There they stood—the boy graduate from the academy beside the weather-beaten tar who had seen service in all quarters of the globe, the youthful marine officer beside the scarred veteran of a dozen actions, each placing implicit confidence in the other, for they well knew that a master mind was guiding them. Truly, the *morale* of the ship was superb!

At 6.47 A. M., the *Tecumseh*, being well in the lead of the monitors, fired the first two guns of the battle, and one of the shells was seen to explode over Fort Morgan. This afforded a welcome relief to the dreadful suspense. But she did not repeat this, nor did the Union ships or Fort Morgan follow her example, for all were anxious to get to close quarters before firing in earnest. Fort Morgan maintained its silence so long that finally it was thought that the Confederates were waiting for the fleet to run into some snare; but in this they were mistaken, for at 7.06 A. M. a puff of white



1. Tremach
2. Manhattan
3. Winnebago
4. Chickasaw
5. Brooklyn
6. Octorara
7. Hartford
8. Metacomet
9. Richmond
10. Fort Royal
11. Lackawanna
12. Seminole
13. Admiral's barge Lovel
14. Monongahela
15. Kennebec
16. Onispe
17. Itasca
18. Onida
19. Galena



smoke and a long tongue of flame leaped from the parapets, followed a few seconds later by a distant boom, and a heavy shell splashed the water near the *Brooklyn*. Another and yet another puff of smoke curled up from the parapets, and shot began to fall unpleasantly near the ships.

It was intended that the monitors should take the lead and draw the first fire of Fort Morgan, but owing to their low speed they were gradually overhauled by the wooden ships, and it was not long before the *Brooklyn* began to double on the quarter of the rear monitor. About 7.10 A. M. the *Brooklyn* opened with her bow guns, and the other ships followed her example as soon as their forward guns bore. Ten minutes later the enemy's gunboats and the ram *Tennessee* moved out from their position behind Fort Morgan, and, crossing the channel, took a position within the line of torpedoes and opened a raking fire on the advancing wooden ships, paying particular attention to the *Hartford*. This fire became more and more destructive as the fleet drew near, for at first the Confederates aimed high, and one of their shot struck the foremast of the *Hartford*, and soon afterward a 120-pound shot lodged in the main topmast, throwing a cloud of splinters over the ship. But they soon got a better range, and splinters, some veritably logs of wood, began to fly around the decks by the cord. The gunboat *Selma*, particularly, was handled with great skill and coolness. Before going into action her men were sent to breakfast, and several shot had been fired by the Union fleet before they were sent to their stations.

In the *Hartford* the order to go ahead "Slowly, slowly," and to elevate the guns for fourteen hundred yards, was passed along the deck, but it was fully five minutes after Fort Morgan opened before the flagship returned the fire. Finally, when the ship was in easy range, a bow gun was carefully trained and fired, and as she drew nearer to the fort some of

the other forward guns were brought into action. When abreast of the enemy the *Hartford's* formidable broadside was in full play. But aside from the booming of heavy ordnance, the only sounds that could be heard aboard were the quiet orders, "Steady, boys, steady! Left tackle a little—so, so," and then a murderous broadside would leap from the black side of the flagship, driving the Confederate gunners from their water batteries; but they returned to their guns whenever an opportunity was afforded, like the brave fellows they were. As the National ships advanced head-on toward the enemy they presented an excellent target, for if the Confederates missed one vessel they were almost sure to rake the one next to it. A shell from their gunboats struck the *Metacomet's* hawse pipe, knocked a piece of the pipe upon deck and cut off a man's head. The shell then was deflected into the yeoman's storeroom, and bursting among the oils, paints and turpentine, set the room in a flame. Observing the danger, Ensign George E. Wing, who commanded the powder division, with his men rushed into the room and fought the flames with wet blankets and hammocks. Finally he called out, "Batten down the hatches, and leave us to fight it out." After a fierce struggle the fire was extinguished. When the heroic men came out of the hatch their clothing was scorched, and their faces were black with the smoke.

The terrific cannonading deadened the light breeze, and as the smoke of battle collected around the ships the gunners in the fort were unable to see them distinctly. As the smoke gradually rose higher and higher, Farragut, almost unconsciously, climbed up the rigging, a ratline at a time, until at last he found himself partly above the futtock bands and clinging to the futtock shrouds. Here he had free use of both hands, either for holding his spyglass or for any other purpose. Once or twice he reached through the lubber hole and touched the pilot's foot in order to attract his

attention, for the roar of battle drowned his voice. In the earlier part of the battle Captain Drayton, who had been keeping a watchful eye on the admiral, fearing that some damage to the rigging might cause him to fall overboard, ordered Knowles to ascend the rigging and secure him to the shrouds. "I went up," said Knowles, "with a piece of lead-line and made it fast to one of the forward shrouds, and then took it around the admiral to the after shroud, making it fast there. The admiral said, 'Never mind, I am all right,' but I went ahead and obeyed orders."<sup>1</sup> When the smoke of battle compelled Farragut to ascend higher in the rigging in order to get a better view of what was going on, he unfastened the lashings with his own hands, and as he reached the futtock shrouds he passed the line two or three times around himself and fastened the end to the rigging.

"About this time," wrote Acting-Ensign Joseph Marthon, who was in charge of the howitzer in the *Hartford's* maintop, only a few feet above the admiral, "my attention was called to the admiral's position by his hailing the top in a low tone of voice, asking 'where this water was coming from.' Upon looking about, I found that the water-breaker placed in the hole of a coil of rigging I was sitting on had been capsized by a piece of shell knocking a hole in the top, and the water was running down on the admiral's head. I informed him of the fact, and he replied, 'I noticed it is not salt.'"<sup>2</sup>

Farragut at 7.15 A. M. signaled for closer order, which was gallantly obeyed, each vessel closing up within a few yards of the one ahead, so that by 7.20 A. M. the larger vessels had their broadsides playing on the fort with great effect, while the monitors, with the exception of the *Tecumseh*, ran under the guns of the

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<sup>1</sup> Loyall Farragut's Life of Admiral Farragut, p. 415.

<sup>2</sup> Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. iv, p. 407.

fort and delivered terrific blows with their enormous guns. The *Tecumseh*, after firing the first two shot at the fort, as just narrated, reloaded with sixty pounds of powder (the heaviest charge at that time used, although one hundred pounds afterward were fired in each gun) and steel shot, and, with a view of singling out the *Tennessee* and giving battle to her, Commander Craven steamed ahead as fast as the foul bottom of the monitor would allow, paying no attention to the fort, intent only on meeting the huge ram. Farragut wrote: "I believe that the *Tecumseh* would have gone up and grappled with and captured the *Tennessee*. Craven's heart was bent upon it."<sup>1</sup> In order that he might better direct the movements of his craft, he had stationed himself in the pilot-house beside the pilot, John Collins. Collins was the *Metacomet's* pilot, but Jouett gave him to Craven, as he hoped to see the two ironclads meet on equal terms. When they arrived at the red buoy marking the termination of the triple line of torpedoes, he turned abruptly to the pilot and said: "It can not be possible that the admiral means to have us go inside that buoy; I can not turn my ship there." At this moment the ram moved from her position on the east of the buoy and shaped her course to the west. Commander Craven, who had been eagerly watching every motion of the ram, observed this change of position, and, fearing that Buchanan might be retreating and thus deprive the *Tecumseh* of the opportunity of attacking him first, he ordered his helm to starboard and moved directly for the *Tennessee*, regardless of the fact that his vessel was running into the line of torpedoes.

It appears that Admiral Buchanan also had posted his flagship with a view of engaging the *Tecumseh*. His vessel had been anchored behind a long tongue of land on the extremity of which Fort Morgan was situated, and when the National ships were observed ad-

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<sup>1</sup> Mahan's Life of Farragut, p. 273.

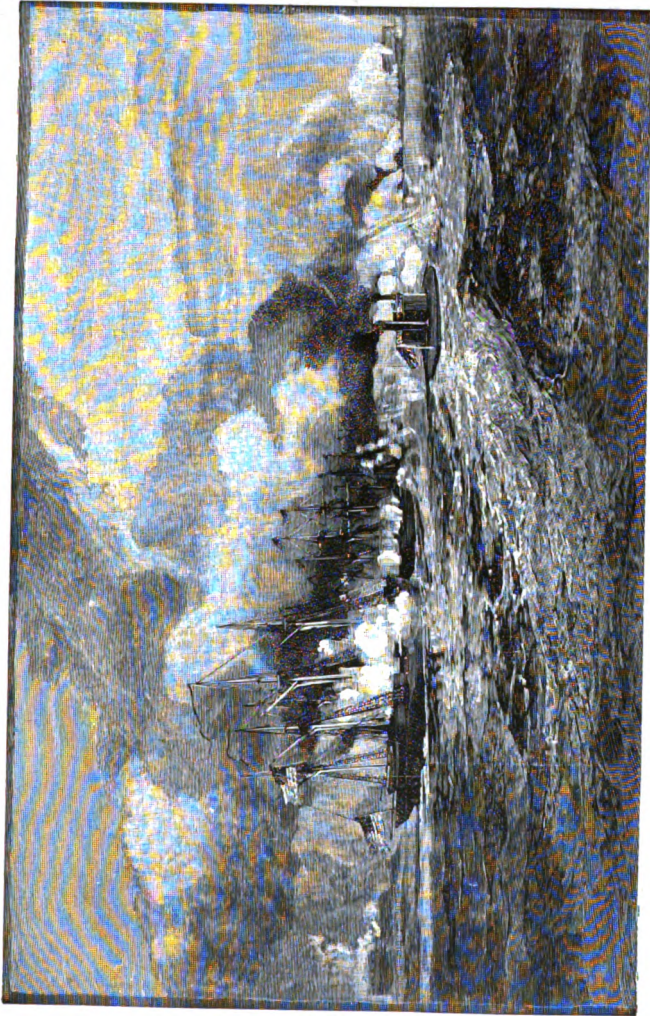
vancing in battle array he gave the signal to prepare for action. His men hurriedly took their coffee and hastened to their quarters on the narrow gun-deck of the ram, which, surrounded by the massive walls of oak, pine and iron, and covered by bars of iron, appeared more like a dungeon than a ship's deck. Admiral Buchanan called his crew aft, and, as the rays of the sun poured through the iron grating and slowly threw its checkered light over the men and decks filled with the dreadful paraphernalia of war, he addressed them as follows: "Now, men, the enemy is coming, and I want you to do your duty; and you shall not have it to say when you leave this vessel that you were not near enough to the enemy, for I will meet them, and then you can fight them alongside of their own ships; and if I fall, lay me on one side and go on with the fight, and never mind me, but whip and sink the Yankees or fight until you sink yourselves, but do not surrender."

Buchanan then stationed himself in the *Tennessee's* pilot-house, and, like a gladiator warily approaching his opponent, fixed his eye on the ominous black turret of the *Tecumseh*, that, revolving on the mailed raft propelled by an unseen power and with scarcely perceptible motion, was every moment creeping closer upon him. For the time there seemed to be a lull in the roar of battle, as those whose view was not obstructed by the smoke instinctively turned their eyes to these champions of the two new types of war vessel approaching to grapple in a deadly struggle. Determined to have the contest at the closest quarters, Buchanan, scarcely taking his eyes off the black wall of the monitor, scanned the riveting of the iron plates with the closest scrutiny. The craft were now so near that he could almost see the whites of the pilot's eyes in the monitor gleaming out at him through the massive bars that protected the sight-holes of the pilot-house. Buchanan now sent the order through Captain Johnston to Lieu-



tenant Wharton, who was in charge of the forward division of guns, "Not to fire until the vessels are in actual contact." "Ay, ay, sir," responded the Confederate lieutenant. Wharton had been in all the desperate engagements between the *Arkansas* and the National fleet, and was a cool and determined officer. A few minutes later the ironclads had approached so near that he instinctively tightened the lock-string of the bow gun, which had been carefully trained on the *Tecumseh*. But when the ships were less than a hundred yards apart there was a sudden muffled explosion, like the distant boom of a cannon, and at the same instant a great column of water sprang up from the bay alongside of the *Tecumseh*, leaving a chasm. The ironclad gave a deep lurch to port, a heavy roll to starboard and then her bow sank out of sight. Her stern rose bodily out of the water, and the screw, relieved of resistance, whirled with tremendous rapidity in the air. One or more torpedoes had exploded under her. The next instant, or in thirty seconds from the time the explosion occurred, the doomed ironclad, with her colors still flying, plunged bow-foremost to the bottom of the channel, carrying down with her ninety-three men out of a crew of one hundred and fourteen. Only the day before Craven had been warned of the torpedoes, but he replied, "I don't care a pinch of snuff for them!"

In the midst of this scene of horror one of those acts of heroism which furnish the brightest pages of naval history stood out with all the brilliancy of a great soul. When it was seen that the *Tecumseh* was going down, Commander Craven and the pilot instinctively made for the opening, through which only one man at a time could pass, leading out of the pilot-house, into the turret chamber below. Both men arrived at the opening at the same time. A delay of a few seconds meant death for both. With the greatness of soul that might be expected of a descendant of



*Farragut's fleet going into action.*



Captain Thomas Tingey, of the Revolution, Commander Craven drew back and quietly said to Collins, "You first, sir." "There was nothing after me," said the pilot, "for when I reached the last round of the ladder the vessel seemed to drop from under me."<sup>1</sup> When divers went down to examine the wreck of the *Tecumseh*, a week afterward, nearly all her officers and men were found at their posts. On the night before the battle Chief-Engineer John Faron (who, although an invalid, left his bed at Pensacola to participate in the fight) had received a letter from his young wife in New York. When found by the divers he stood with one hand on the revolving bar of the turret engine, and in the other hand he grasped the letter, which his sightless eyes seemed to be reading.

Farragut, who from his elevated position in the main shrouds of the *Hartford* had seen the disaster, immediately hailed Jonett, who was on the starboard wheel-

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<sup>1</sup> Tunis Augustus Macdonough Craven, a grandson of Captain Thomas Tingey, of the United States navy, was born in Portsmouth, N. H., January 11, 1813. He entered the navy as a midshipman in February, 1829, and went through the usual course. In 1841 he was made a lieutenant, and served in the *Falmouth* until 1843, when he was transferred to the *North Carolina*. As a lieutenant in the *Dale* he performed gallant service in the cruise of that vessel in the Gulf of California during the Mexican War. He returned to the Atlantic seaboard in 1849, and commanded various vessels engaged in the coast survey. In 1857 he commanded the *Atrato* in the surveying expedition at the Isthmus of Darien. While in command of the *Mohawk*, off Cuba, he captured a brig having on board five hundred slaves. He received a gold medal from the Queen of Spain for saving the crew of a Spanish merchant vessel, and about the same time the New York Board of Underwriters gave Mrs. Craven a silver service of plate for the protection her husband had afforded to merchantmen on the high seas. While in command of the *Crusader*, at the outbreak of the civil war, he was instrumental in preserving the fortress at Key West to the National cause. In April, 1861, he was made a commander, and cruised for Confederate commerce-destroyers. He blockaded the *Sumter* at Gibraltar for two months, so that her officers and crew deserted her. Returning home from this service, he was placed in command of the monitor *Tecumseh* and was ordered to join the James River flotilla, but a few months afterward he was attached to the Gulf squadron under Farragut.

house of the *Metacomet*, and asked him if he could spare a boat for the survivors ; but Jouett had already sent a boat, in charge of Acting-Ensign Henry C. Neilds, of the Volunteer Corps, to the scene of the disaster. Notwithstanding the fact that the boat was exposed "to one of the most galling fires I ever saw,"<sup>1</sup> Mr. Neilds, starting from the port quarter of the *Metacomet*, pulled under the *Hartford's* stern and across the *Brooklyn's* bow within a hundred yards of Fort Morgan, where, observing the boat and surmising her mission, General Page gave the order "Don't fire on that boat ; she is saving drowning men." In the haste of getting under way Mr. Neilds forgot to hoist his colors, and as he was passing the *Hartford's* broadside an officer who commanded the fore-castle division of guns in the flagship, observing "the boat without a flag and knowing nothing of its object, but having torpedoes uppermost in his mind, connected its presence with them, trained one of his 100-pounders upon it, and was about to pull the lock-string, when one of the ship's company caught his arm, saying, 'For God's sake, don't fire ! it's one of our own boats !'"<sup>2</sup> Unconscious of the narrow escape he had had at the hands of his friends, young Neilds soon afterward was hailed by some one and told that his colors were not flying, and stooping down he hoisted them before the eyes of the fleet and the men in the fort. "I can scarcely describe how I felt at witnessing this most gallant act," said one of the *Tennessee's* officers. "The muzzle of our gun was slowly raised, and the bolt intended for the *Tecumseh* flew harmlessly over the heads of that glorious boat's crew far down the line of our foes."

Reaching the spot where the *Tecumseh* had sunk, Mr. Neilds picked up an officer, eight men and the pilot, and after placing them aboard the *Winnebago* he pulled to the *Oneida*, in which ship he remained

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<sup>1</sup> Farragut.

<sup>2</sup> Mahan's Gulf and Inland Waters, p. 234.

as signal officer until the fleet passed the fort. Four of the survivors swam to the beach and were made prisoners by the garrison of the fort. When the men in the fort saw the fate of the *Tecumseh* they cheered, but General Page promptly checked them, and told them to sink the *Hartford* first and then cheer. Owing to the smoke and confusion of battle few of the men in the fleet realized the appalling nature of the catastrophe, and, the report having started that the *Tecumseh* had sunk the *Tennessee*, many of the crews gave cheers, which were taken up by one ship after another until nearly the whole fleet joined in a mistaken shout of joy.

Commander Thomas Holdup Stevens, speaking of this incident, said: "As I was walking to the after turret of the *Winnebago*, and when about midway between the two turrets, I was startled by a series of loud cheers and yells coming from all directions seemingly, and looking forward to discover the cause, I saw, to my consternation, the *Tecumseh* going down bow foremost, with the propeller of the ill-fated vessel revolving rapidly in the air. For a moment I was stunned by the appalling disaster, whose effects were immediately observed in the changed condition of the situation, in the feeble fire of the wooden ships, which but now were belching forth broadsides of destructive missiles, and in the sudden increase of the vigorous and pitiless fire from the fort, the ram and the Confederate gunboats upon our wooden ships."

About the time of the terrible fate of the *Tecumseh* torpedoes were reported almost under the bow of the *Brooklyn*, and Captain Alden immediately ordered his army signal officers to report to the flagship: "The monitors are right ahead; we cannot go on without passing them." Observing that the *Brooklyn* was signaling, Farragut ordered his army signal officers to come on deck. Lieutenant Kinney obeyed, and, running to the fore-castle, took the *Brooklyn's* message.

Farragut promptly replied, "Order the monitors ahead and go on," but the engines of the *Brooklyn* and the *Octorara* had been reversed, as Captain Alden feared a repetition of the *Tecumseh's* disaster. As these two vessels backed down their bows swung round so that they lay directly across the channel, exposed to a raking fire from the fort and completely blocking the progress of the other vessels. As a matter of fact the people in the *Brooklyn* did not see torpedoes at all, but simply shell boxes, which they mistook for torpedo buoys. The Confederate gunboats "fired very rapidly, and as they used shells the empty shell boxes were thrown overboard, consequently they were in line across the channel."<sup>1</sup>

In order to prevent a collision, the *Hartford* and her consort, the *Metacomet*, which were the next in line, reversed their engines also, but before they could come to a standstill their momentum and the flood tide had carried their bows so near the *Brooklyn's* stern that a collision seemed inevitable. To make matters worse, the *Richmond* and the *Port Royal* were following close in the flagship's wake, and for a time it looked as if the fleet was doomed to disaster. The broadsides of the heavy ships were now out of range, and, relieved of their fire, the Confederates in Fort Morgan returned to their guns and opened a terrific cannonade. At this moment, says an eye-witness, "the whole fort seemed to be enveloped in flame. Looking aloft from the deck of the *Winnebago* while the hulls of our ships were obscured by the smoke of battle, I could distinctly see, by the flags flying from the different vessels, the confusion in the order of the fleet, which seemed to be all tangled up, as was in reality the fact, and but for Farragut's genius for war, which enabled him at once to grasp the situation and apply the remedy, the most complete and crushing disaster would have followed.

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<sup>1</sup> Rear-Admiral Jouett to the author.

This crisis grew out of the hapless disaster to the *Tecumseh*, which was thus far-reaching in its effects."

At this critical period of the battle the National vessels suffered their heaviest losses. Believing that the leading ship, the *Brooklyn*, was the *Hartford*, the Confederate gunners in the fort concentrated their fire on her, and before the battle was over she was struck seventy times. Besides this, the ships were subjected to a fearful raking fire from the Confederate gunboats, the greatest carnage occurring aboard the *Hartford*. One man had both legs carried away, and, as he threw up his hands in agony, another shot took off both his arms; yet he survived his injuries. Another man was killed while climbing up the ladder from the berth deck. In falling, his body struck Wilson Brown, a sailor who was stationed at the shell whip, or davit for hoisting shells on the berth deck. Brown was knocked into the hold, where he lay senseless some minutes, but on recovering consciousness he returned to his post. The men at the shell whips were twice scattered by bursting shells. A shot crashed through the bulwarks and swept away all the men that were stationed on that side of one of the guns, and about the same time a shot came through the bow and took off the head of a gunner at one of the forward guns. The foremast was twice struck, once slightly, and again by a shell from the *Selma* that came tumbling end over end and buried itself butt end first in the heel of the topmast, just at the doubling of the mast. Had the shot struck point on and so exploded, or had it struck the spar at any other place, the entire mast would have been carried away.

During the time the fleet was in effective range of Fort Morgan, which was about an hour, the fort fired four hundred and ninety-one shot, or an average of about eight a minute. But there were times when they fired with much greater rapidity, and, adding the fire of the Confederate gunboats, it will be seen that the



National ships were literally in a storm of shot, principally directed against the *Brooklyn* and the *Hartford*.

While Lieutenant Tyson was commanding a forward division of guns, a shell exploded between two of the guns and killed or wounded fifteen men. The decks of the *Hartford* soon presented a horrible spectacle. The planks were slippery with blood, which ran into the scuppers in a sluggish stream, while fragments of the human body, tufts of hair, shreds of clothing and splashes of blood adhered to the bulwarks, masts and other parts of the ship. As fast as the men were struck the bodies of those still living were hurried to the cockpit to undergo the knife or bandage treatment, as their condition demanded, while those killed outright were laid in a long row on the port side. The sight of these bodies was not calculated to raise the spirits of the survivors, and they were mercifully concealed from view by a canvas covering.

While the leading wooden ships were thus entangled and unable to bring their broadsides into play, the remaining monitors were handled with conspicuous gallantry. They ran close up to the fort and kept up a heavy fire of grape and canister, which acted as a partial check on the enemy's gunners and prevented a more serious loss of life in the wooden ships. The *Winnebago* was so near the fort that a stone's throw would have measured the distance, and at intervals above the roar of battle could be distinctly heard the officers in the fort directing the fire of the batteries. The monitors were repeatedly struck by the heaviest shot, and were damaged to a considerable extent. The temporary house built on the deck of the *Winnebago*—abaft the after turret, for the messing and sleeping quarters of the officers—was riddled with shot, all the boats except one were destroyed, and the davits were saved only by having been unshipped and stowed away. Her after turret became so jammed that it could not be turned, and the gunners could fire only

when the vessel was headed in the right direction. One of the *Manhattan's* 15-inch guns was disabled by a piece of iron falling into the vent. The *Chickasaw's* smokestack was pierced through and through, which so affected the draft that her steam went down; but this was partially remedied by throwing tallow and coal-tar on the fire. The *Winnebago* was struck nineteen times, three of the shot penetrating her deck.

At this stage of the action Commander Stevens, whose father had taken a gallant part in the battle of Lake Erie in 1813, especially aroused the admiration of the officers of the flagship and other vessels of the fleet by the cool deliberation with which he walked back and forth from one turret to another, exposed to the enemy's fire on the deck of the *Winnebago*. "About 7.30 A. M., while on deck directing the fire of our guns," wrote Rear-Admiral Stevens to the author, "and watching the course steered by the pilot of the *Winnebago*, who was in the pilot-house, I became uneasy lest he might get too close to the sand point making off southwest from the sea face of Fort Morgan, and went from the after to the forward turret of the vessel to direct him to give the point a little wider berth. By the time we were abreast of Fort Morgan we were pouring grape and canister, while the sabots from the projectiles of our heavy vessels, which were firing over us, were falling freely upon our decks."

The view of the battle obtained from the tops of the National vessels was one of appalling grandeur. To windward the fleet and harbor were spread out in a beautiful panorama, the crews being distinctly seen firing and reloading their guns, while officers stood at the back of their men to see that there was no flinching, and others ran to and fro shouting orders in their endeavors to prevent a collision. To leeward dense volumes of smoke, illuminated by rapid flashes of guns, partly obstructed the vision, but in the occasional rifts a tall mast with men in the rigging and with

Old Glory still flying in the breeze would be revealed. Above all rose the dreadful roar of the tremendous cannonading, whose sharp impact upon the ear, giving the peculiar sound of shotted guns, seemed to come from all quarters with deafening rapidity, while the ships and their masts quivered like aspens from the recoil of their murderous broadsides. A glance below on the deck of the *Hartford* revealed the men in their different capacities, some loading and aiming the guns, some bringing up ammunition, and others carrying down the wounded, but all stimulated to their utmost exertions by the ever-vigilant officers. Most of the men were stripped to the waist, many of them smeared with the blood of shipmates whom they had carried below. Others, although wounded, refused to go below, and remained on deck fighting. What a pandemonium! What a hell upon earth!! Shot, shell, grape, shrapnel and canister. How they shriek! how the men fight! dragging dead or wounded shipmates away, so as not to encumber the guns. Bloody and blackened with burned powder, the perspiration running down their bodies revealing streaks of white skin, causes them to look like fiends. The sight of their fallen shipmates arouses the brutish thirst for vengeance, and they load and fire with muttered imprecations on the enemy. Their officers walk among them, with "Steady, boys!" "Take your time!" "Be sure of your aim!" "Let each shot tell!" In the midst of all this uproar stand Drayton and his executive officer, Kimberly, the latter smiling and twirling his goatee, both as cool as if "twa a daily drill." It was in reference to the heroism of the crew that Brownell wrote:

But ah, the pluck of the crew!  
Had you stood on that deck of ours  
You had seen what men may do.

The position of the *Brooklyn* made it impossible for the *Hartford* to take the lead, and when Far-

ragut saw that Captain Alden did not go ahead he said to his pilot, "What is the matter with the *Brooklyn*? She must have plenty of water there." "Plenty, and to spare, Admiral," replied the pilot. The next moment the *Brooklyn* was signaled, "What's the trouble?" "Torpedoes," was the reply. This was the critical moment of the battle. There was no time for counsel. The ships were fast drifting on the line of torpedoes, and were in imminent danger of sinking each other. Whether the fleet was to suffer an inglorious defeat or win a great victory depended upon the next order of Admiral Farragut. The tremendous cheering and renewed firing of the Confederates showed that they regarded the victory as theirs. Again the message came from the *Brooklyn*, "Tell the admiral that there is a heavy line of torpedoes ahead." Taking in the situation at a glance, Farragut shouted: "Damn the torpedoes! damn the torpedoes!!<sup>1</sup> Go ahead, Captain Drayton! Four bells!!" The *Metacomet* then backed at full speed until the *Hartford* was twisted clear of the *Brooklyn*, when Jouett asked if he should go ahead. The *Hartford's* pilot answered with a nod, and held up four fingers, meaning four bells (full speed), for the roar of battle rendered speaking at that distance difficult, and the *Hartford* cleared the *Brooklyn* and took the lead.

"The effect of this order," wrote Rear-Admiral Stevens, "was magical in restoring the line of battle. Order grew out of chaos, men sprang to their guns with renewed vigor, again the air was filled with bursting shells and the roar of guns from the Union fleet." The position of the *Brooklyn* rendered it impossible for the *Hartford* to take the lead without passing to the west of the red buoy or directly across the fatal line of torpedoes which but a few seconds before had

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<sup>1</sup> "The only approach to an oath I ever heard him utter."—Rear-Admiral Jouett.

sunk the *Tecumseh*. Farragut's order was one of the boldest and most courageous in naval history. Many eyes watched the result with painful anxiety. Every moment they expected to see the masts of the *Hartford* thrown into the air, her hull rent into fragments, and her crew and daring commander blown to atoms. But on went the flagship, without delay or hesitation, toward the fatal torpedoes. An almost unbroken silence pervaded her decks as the officers and men, in grim silence, stood in momentary expectation of being blown into eternity. The frigate soon reached the fatal line. Her bow began to pass over the torpedoes. The men in the magazines, away down in the bottom of the ship, heard strange objects grating along her hull as she continued steadily on her course. But fortunately none of the machines exploded, and as the grand ship of war passed beyond the fatal line in safety the spectators realized that one of the most daring feats in the naval history of the world had been accomplished.

A Confederate officer who was stationed in the water-battery at Fort Morgan says: "The manœuvring of the vessels at this critical juncture was a magnificent sight. At first the ships appeared to be in inextricable confusion, and at the mercy of the guns. But when the *Hartford* dashed forward they realized that a grand tactical movement had been accomplished." "Farragut's coolness and quick perception," said General Page, "saved the Union fleet from a great disaster, and probably from destruction."

As the *Hartford* thus took the lead she passed about two hundred yards ahead of the *Tennessee*, which was waiting for an opportunity to ram. Lieutenant Wharton, of the *Tennessee*, had loaded the forward 7-inch rifled gun with a percussion shell, believing, and with good reason, that it would sink the flagship under the guns of the fort. This done, the destruction of the remainder of the fleet seemed to be assured. Lieutenant Wharton writes: "I took the

lock-string from the captain of the gun myself, took a long, deliberate aim, and gave the command: 'Raise!' 'Steady!' 'Raise!' 'Little more!' 'Ready!' 'Fire!' I was as confident that our shell would tear a hole in the *Hartford's* side big enough to sink her in a few minutes as I was that I had fired it. It did tear the hole expected, but it was above the water line. I have often speculated since upon the effect of not having raised the breech of our bow gun, and thus caused that shell to *ricochet* before striking the *Hartford*. I wish I had let the captain of the gun fire the piece himself." Buchanan endeavored to ram the *Hartford* and sink her, as he had sunk the *Cumberland* at Hampton Roads, but Farragut avoided this by turning to one side, and continued up the channel.

When the *Hartford* passed the line of torpedoes and thus took the lead of the column, she left the *Brooklyn* and her consort, the *Octorara*, lying with their bows toward Fort Morgan, receiving a tremendous raking fire. The *Richmond* and her consort, the *Port Royal*, which were close behind, were carried rapidly forward by the flood tide, and a collision seemed inevitable. Knowing that if the four vessels became entangled in the narrow channel—or, worse yet, if one or more of them were sunk—it would prevent the other vessels of the fleet from passing up the bay to the aid of their flagship, Captain Jenkins gave the order for the *Richmond* and her consort to back. He, like the other Union commanders who had seen the *Hartford* pass above the fort, was extremely anxious for the admiral's safety, as the smoke of battle made it impossible to see all that was occurring above the line of torpedoes. He only knew that the terrible ram and her three consorts were lying in readiness to attack the first vessel that passed the fort, and that the *Hartford* and *Metacomet* were quite alone to contend with the enemy's naval force. This fact seems to have been uppermost in the minds of the Union officers at

this period of the battle, and they exerted themselves to the utmost to get once more within supporting distance of their famous leader. In backing, the *Richmond's* bow fell off to port and enabled her gunners to open such an effective fire from the starboard batteries, at a distance of two hundred and fifty yards, that the Confederates were again driven from their water-battery. The *Richmond* had her topmasts down, and so rapid was her fire at this moment that she was completely enveloped in smoke. Admiral Buchanan, of the *Tennessee*, who was well acquainted with Captain Jenkins (having had him as a midshipman before the war, and again as his first lieutenant during the Mexican War), lost sight of the *Richmond*, owing to this circumstance, and after the battle he asked: "What became of Jenkins? I saw his vessel go handsomely into action and then lost sight of her entirely."<sup>1</sup> The *Brooklyn* was less fortunate in being concealed from the enemy, for her tall masts, which had not been lowered before the action, enabled the Confederate gunners to aim at her with considerable accuracy, and all this time she lay bow-on, receiving a dreadful raking fire from the fort.

The situation of the Union vessels, entangled off Fort Morgan, was rendered more critical by the shoal water; and while the frequent backing and running ahead were going on, Captain Jenkins at one time was compelled to navigate his ship with less than a foot of water under his keel. Farragut's adage that "the safest way to prevent injury from an enemy is to strike hard yourself" was never better illustrated than in this battle. He had given orders for the vessels to run close to Fort Morgan, and to use plenty of grape and shrapnel, and it was this terrible storm of iron and the dense volume of smoke from the cannonading that discomfited and blinded the Confederate gunners. Finally,

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<sup>1</sup> Mahan's Gulf and Inland Waters, p. 235.

after great risks of collision, the *Richmond* and her consort were extricated from their perilous position and once again were steaming up the channel, with the *Brooklyn* and the rest of the wooden ships close behind. In this manner the head of the column passed the fort, and with the aid of the monitors kept up such a terrific fire that the enemy was scarcely able to reply.

But as the heavier ships passed up the bay and out of range, the smaller vessels in the rear of the line were severely punished by the guns of the fort. One 7-inch shell passed through the *Oneida's* chain armor and pierced her boiler, the escaping steam injuring thirteen men. For a moment one of the gun-crews wavered, but Commander Mullany cried out, "Back to your quarters, men!" and they returned to their stations. Another 7-inch shell exploded in her cabin and severed the wheel-ropes, and about the same time one of her 11-inch bow guns and an 8-inch gun were disabled. Her consort, the *Galena*, was uninjured, and succeeded in carrying the disabled *Oneida* past the fort.

At this stage of the action the *Tennessee*, having missed the *Hartford* and the *Metacomet*, was observed coming down the channel to attack the remaining vessels. "As she approached," wrote Captain Jenkins, of the *Richmond*, "every one in the *Richmond* supposed that she would ram the *Brooklyn*; that, we thought, would be our opportunity, for if she struck the *Brooklyn* the concussion would throw her port side across our path, and, being so near to us, she would not have time to straighten up, and we would strike her fairly and squarely, and most likely sink her. The guns were loaded with solid shot and with the heaviest charges of powder; the fore-castle gun crew was ordered to get its small arms and fire into her gun ports; and, as previously determined, if we came into collision at any time, orders were given to throw gun charges of powder and bags from the fore and main yardarms down her smoke-stack. To our great surprise, she sheered off from the



*Brooklyn*, and at about a hundred yards put two shot or shells through and through the *Brooklyn's* side, doing much damage."<sup>1</sup>

After passing the *Brooklyn*, as just described, the ram made for the *Richmond* and the *Port Royal*. Captain Jenkins had his broadside ready and fired at short range, producing no more effect upon the mailed side of the ram, however, than so many pebbles. As the ram passed the starboard side of the *Richmond* Buchanan fired two shot, but owing to the lively musketry fire played into his ports the gunners missed their aim. One of the shot passed uncomfortably close to Lieutenant Terry's head, and the other passed just under the feet of the pilot and cut a ratline in the port main shrouds. The *Richmond* fired three full and well-aimed broadsides of 9-inch solid shot, each broadside consisting of eleven guns, but without any apparent effect upon the ram. Like the flagship, the *Richmond* was compelled to cross the line of torpedoes, and the men in the *Richmond* also heard the torpedoes scraping along the hull of their vessel.

As Buchanan approached the next brace of ships in the column, the *Lackawanna* and the *Seminole*, he suddenly made a sheer as if to ram the former, but owing to her imperfect machinery the *Tennessee* could not execute the manœuvre in time, and only succeeded in placing herself athwart the course of the Union ships. This gave the *Monongahela* (which had been provided with an artificial iron prow), the ship directly behind the *Lackawanna*, an admirable chance for ramming, and Commander Strong put his helm to port and then sheered around so as to strike the ram at right angles. For a moment it seemed as if he would be successful, but the *Kennebec*, which was lashed alongside, prevented him from getting full speed, and he merely struck the ram a glancing blow on the port quarter, at

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<sup>1</sup> Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. iv, p. 393.

the same time pouring in a broadside of solid 11-inch shot, which, like the others, glanced harmlessly off the mailed side of the ram.

This blow had the effect of throwing the *Tennessee's* stern around so that she was again heading straight down the channel, but on the port side of the Union column. She rasped along the port side of the *Kennebec*, scraping the planking and leaving one of her boats and an iron davit clinging to the *Kennebec* as a memento of their meeting. A shell from the ram now exploded on the berth deck of the *Kennebec*, wounding an officer and four men. About this time First-Lieutenant Roderick Prentiss, of the *Monongahela*, was mortally wounded, both of his legs being taken off. At the moment of the collision with the *Monongahela* the *Kennebec's* cutwater passed through the ram's barge, completely destroying it. The shell from the ram caused a fire on the *Kennebec's* berth deck, and for a moment it seemed as if the vessel would be destroyed, but by the intrepid efforts of Lieutenant-Commander McCann and his-officers it was extinguished.

The next ship in line was the *Ossipee*, which at the time the ram changed her position from the starboard to the port side of the wooden ships was on the port quarter of the *Monongahela*; and when Commander Le Roy saw his leader preparing to ram, he also followed the *Monongahela's* motion. But as the *Tennessee* swung round under the pressure of the *Monongahela's* blow, Admiral Buchanan passed between the two Union vessels, and two shot from the ram entered below the *Ossipee's* spar deck, close together, just abreast the forward pivot gun. About this time Lieutenant-Commander George Brown, of the *Itasca*, was painfully injured by a splinter. The executive officer of the *Ossipee*, which was lashed alongside, called out to him, "What's the matter, Brown? Have you been struck by a splinter?" "You may call it a splinter in your big vessel," roared Brown in reply, "but aboard this little

craft it ranks as a log of wood." Running on the starboard side of the *Oneida*, which had been crippled early in the action and was in tow of her consort, the *Galena*, Buchanan endeavored several times to fire a broadside into her, but his primers failed, so that only one gun was discharged, the shot striking the after 11-inch pivot gun, which had just been fired.

At 8.20 A. M. the Confederate ironclad passed under the *Oneida's* stern and delivered a raking fire, which dismounted a 12-pounder howitzer on the poop deck, and also carried away Commander Mullany's left arm. While David Naylor, the powder-boy of the 30-pounder Parrott gun in the *Oneida*, was running along the deck his passing-box was knocked out of his hands and fell overboard into a boat that was towing alongside. He jumped overboard after it, recovered his box, and returned to his duties as though nothing had happened.

At this stage of the action occurred one of those spirited incidents that always appeal to the hearts of brave men. Commander Stevens had been the commander of the *Oneida*, and was greatly attached to the officers and men of that ship. Just before the battle, Commander Mullany, whose ship was not fitted for such an engagement, earnestly entreated that a suitable vessel might be given to him so that he could take part in the battle. In response to this request Stevens gave up the *Oneida* and was placed in command of the monitor *Winnebago*, while Mullany took the *Oneida*, and, as we have just seen, lost an arm by his devotion to the cause. The other vessels of the Union fleet, having their full head of steam, were able to avoid the ram, but the *Oneida*, having her boiler pierced, was dependent entirely upon the *Galena*, which reduced the speed of both vessels so much that both were completely at the mercy of Buchanan. When Commander Stevens saw the predicament of his old ship and former crew, he hastened to their defense, and just as the *Tennessee* was passing under the stern of the helpless

*Oneida* he placed the *Winnebago* between the ram and the *Oneida* and harassed Buchanan until the wooden vessels were beyond his reach. When the people in the *Oneida*, who had every reason to expect that they would be sent to the bottom at the first blow of their huge antagonist, saw the *Winnebago* come to their rescue they jumped upon the bulwarks and gave three heartfelt cheers for their old commander. Stevens, who had remained outside of the turrets of the *Winnebago* from the beginning of the battle, at this moment was standing on the open deck on the starboard side, or that nearest to the ram, directing a broadside of solid shot to be fired into the enemy. Hearing the cheers, he stepped to the port side and took off his hat in acknowledgment.

Lieutenant-Commander George H. Perkins, of the *Chickasaw*, and Volunteer Lieutenant William Hamilton were starting for the North on a leave of absence just before the battle, but learning that an attack was to be made on Mobile, they asked permission to take part in the fight. Lieutenant J. C. Watson entered the fight under similar circumstances. Farragut wrote of him: "I would not advise Watson to go home for the world; it would break his heart. He thinks he is bound to see the war out."

Seeing that her prey was veritably snatched from her jaws, the *Tennessee* ran under the guns of Fort Morgan for a "breathing-spell," while the Union vessels proceeded on their way up the channel. About this time the ram's colors were shot away, but they were soon replaced. Lieutenant-Commander DeKrafft had formed his flotilla in the shape of a crescent and opened a spirited fire on Fort Powell.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### ABOVE THE MOBILE FORTS.

WHILE the *Hartford* was boldly passing through the line of torpedoes, the Confederate gunboats *Selma*, *Morgan* and *Gaines* seized their opportunity of delivering a terrific raking fire upon the flagship. Knowing that the big sloop-of-war could not readily turn in the narrow channel, the commander of the *Selma* kept his vessel from seven hundred to a thousand yards straight ahead, so that his stern guns could bear on the *Hartford*, while Farragut could only bring a few bow chasers into play, one of which was soon disabled by a shell bursting under it. One shot from the *Selma* killed ten men and wounded five in the fore-castle division, the fragments of their bodies being blown upon the deck of the *Metacomet*. Many of the gun crews were reduced to half of their number. Although most of the men were newly enlisted, great steadiness was shown by them, and the vacancies were promptly filled up. Farragut was able to deliver one or two broadsides at the *Gaines*, and the splendid marksmanship of the Union gunners was never shown to better advantage. In less than half an hour the *Gaines* was aground under the guns of Fort Morgan and deserted.

Finding that the gunboats were occasioning serious damage, and observing that the last of the Union vessels was safely past Fort Morgan, Farragut at 8.02 A. M. gave the signal, "Gunboats chase enemy's gunboats." Jouett, of the *Metacomet*, had repeatedly asked for permission to go in chase, and, now that it was given, he ordered the men to cut the heavy

hawsers with sharp broadaxes, and he backed clear of the *Hartford* and went, at 8.05, in chase of the gunboats. The *Port Royal*, the *Kennebec* and the *Itasca* also joined in the pursuit, but being without pilots they accomplished little. The *Morgan*, taking advantage of a heavy rain and a dense fog that came over the bay, succeeded in running under the guns of Fort Morgan, and on the following night, by going slowly and covering her lights, she made her escape to Mobile. It was afterward learned that the *Morgan*, on receiving a broadside from the *Metacomet*, hauled down her colors, but as the rainstorm came on at that moment her surrender was not known, and, re-hoisting her flag, she made her escape. The *Metacomet*, being the fastest gunboat in the fleet, soon outstripped the others and made after the *Selma*. As his ship could not fire directly ahead, Jouett at first yawed once or twice to fire his guns, but finding that he was losing ground by so doing he settled down to a dogged pursuit. "I had given my pilot to the gallant Craven, of the ill-fated *Tecumseh*, and having no time to consult the chart and knowing nothing of the channel, and as the admiral's instructions were imperative—not to allow any of the Confederate gunboats to reach Mobile—I abandoned the attempt to fight with my guns in this running chase." Being more familiar with the bay, the pilot of the *Selma* led the *Metacomet* into shoal water. This fact was conveyed to Jouett from time to time by the leadsman, until at last less than a foot of water under the *Metacomet's* keel was reported. The situation was critical, for the *Metacomet* was far beyond supporting distance of her consorts, and should she run aground the *Selma* undoubtedly would turn back and, selecting a position where the National gunboat could not return the fire, would soon compel her surrender. Jouett was an officer, however, who knew only one duty—"obey orders"; and as the leadsman continued to call out the alarming soundings Jouett

finally exclaimed to his executive officer: "Mr. Sleeper, order that man out of the chains! He makes me nervous"; and the *Metacomet*, trembling under the heavy pressure of steam, went plowing through the soft mud after the *Selma*. When the squall that for a time concealed the enemy's gunboats cleared up, Jouett found himself on the starboard bow of the *Selma*, which at 9.10 A. M., surrendered. Her commander, P. U. Murphy, had been wounded in the wrist, while his executive officer, Lieutenant J. H. Comstock, and seven men were killed. "The coolness and promptness of Lieutenant-Commander Jouett," wrote Farragut in his official report, "merit high praise." In this fight the *Metacomet's* rigging was badly cut, and she was struck eleven times in the hull.

Before the war, Commander Murphy, then a lieutenant, was very kind to Jouett, who was then a midshipman. Remembering that Murphy was fond of good eating, Jouett, while at Pensacola two days before the battle, purchased a quantity of crabs and oysters and placed them on ice. When he was blockading off Mobile harbor the three Confederate gunboats came down and lay under Fort Morgan. Knowing who commanded them, Jouett often remarked to the officers that he was fond of "Murphy" and that he intended to catch him, and always kept on hand some good wines and cigars for him. It so happened that Jouett did catch him, and as soon as the fight was over he ordered his steward to prepare a breakfast. When the *Selma* struck her colors, Murphy, who was about sixty-five years old, tall, erect and with long snow-white hair and beard, having his right arm in a sling, came on board the *Metacomet* to surrender his sword. Ascending the gangway, he stepped on deck, when his aid advanced and handed him his sword. Jouett had sent all the crew forward in order that Murphy might not be unnecessarily mortified, and no one was with him at the gangway save the officer of the deck and

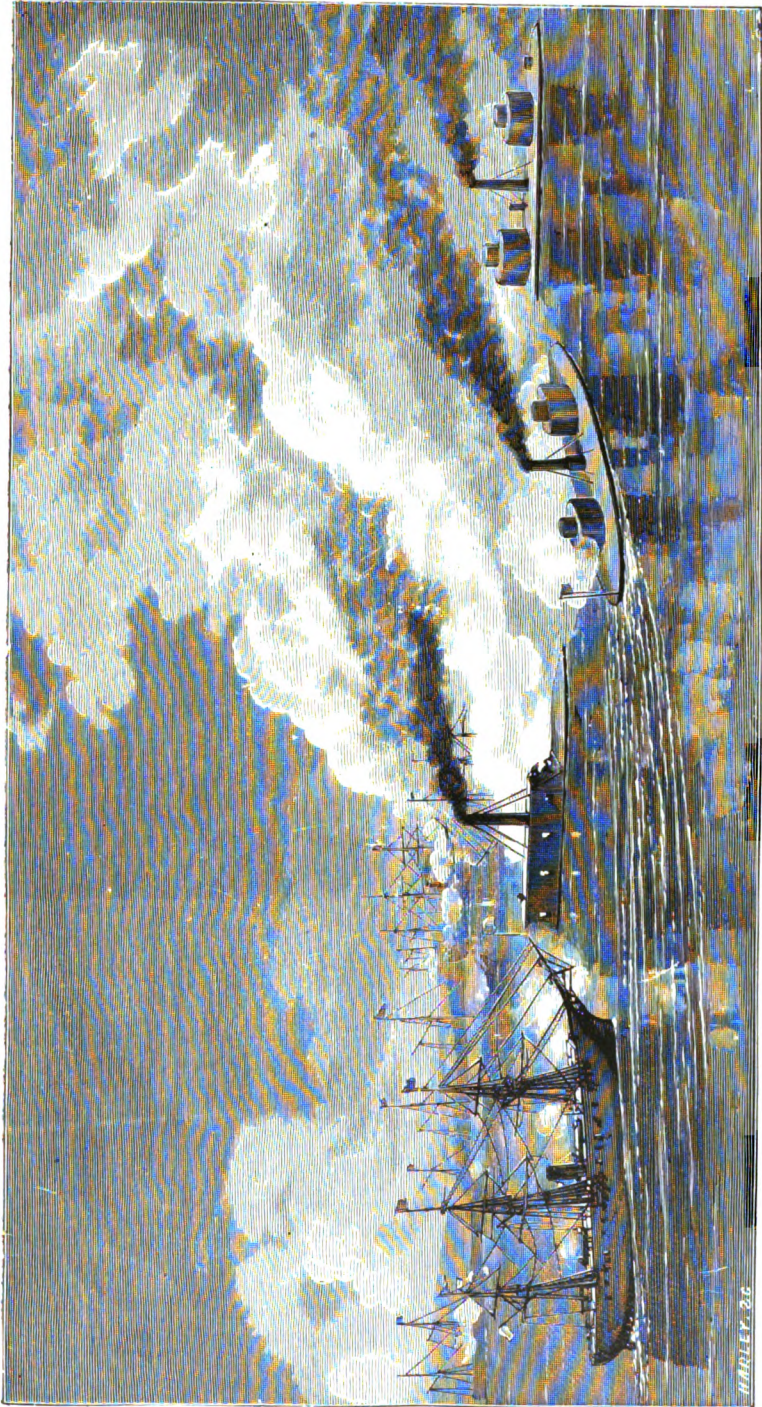
Lieutenant Sleeper ; the other officers were on the port side of the quarter-deck. Murphy turned, drew himself up to his full height, held out his sword and began a nice speech, but Jouett took his hand and, putting an arm on his back, said : " I am glad to see you, Murphy. Come on ; your breakfast has been waiting some time." Going into the cabin, Murphy saw a beautiful table laden with oysters, crabs, beefsteaks, wines etc. Turning to Jouett in astonishment, he said, " Why didn't you let me know you had all this ? I would have surrendered sooner." And the officers sat down at the table as though they had never drawn swords against each other.

With the successful passage of Fort Morgan and the dangerous line of torpedoes, the dispersion of the Confederate gunboats and the retreat of the *Tennessee* under the guns of the water-battery, Farragut was left in undisputed possession of Mobile Bay, and he now brought his fleet to anchor about four miles above Fort Morgan. Captain Drayton about this time said to him : " What we have done has been well done, sir ; but it all counts for nothing so long as the *Tennessee* is there under the guns of Fort Morgan." Farragut replied, " I know it, and as soon as the people have had their breakfast I am going for her." This plan, however, seems to have been abandoned, for he wrote, " Had Buchanan remained under the fort I should have attacked him, as soon as it became dark, with the monitors." His second plan was to change his flag to the *Manhattan* and attack under cover of darkness and the smoke of battle, when it would be impossible for the gunners in Fort Morgan to distinguish between friend and foe. The belief was prevalent among the National officers that the battle, for some time at least, was over, and the crews were engaged in clearing away the dreadful *débris*, in washing out the blood-stains and in removing the fragments of bodies that were strewn over their decks,



In the distance the ram *Tennessee* could be seen under the guns of Fort Morgan steaming and smoking like some huge monster taking breath after a desperate struggle. The intense excitement of battle was over, the strained nerves were relaxed, and the serious, determined expression on the faces of the officers had changed into smiles of congratulation as those off duty assembled in the wardroom to discuss the exciting work of the morning or to make inquiry for missing friends. The cooks and mess boys were hurrying about the decks with their preparations for breakfast. Among the men the same air of relaxation and relief was observable. Those who had been intrusted with little keepsakes intended for some loved one far away in the North, in case "something should happen to me," were returning them to their owners. But an occasional stifled groan coming up from the cockpit, as the surgeons performed their tasks, was a painful reminder of the terrible scenes through which they had just passed, while a glance at the long row of mutilated bodies under the canvas on the port side served to check any undue outburst of merriment, for a true seaman never forgets to respect a dead shipmate. Once in a while a sailor would approach the "dead row" with an anxious, troubled face, and, half fearfully lifting the canvas, peer at the blanched faces to see if a missing messmate was among the dead.

In the midst of this scene of leisurely recovery from the battle, the startling cry, "The ram is coming!" passed through the fleet, and many eyes were instantly turned in the direction of Fort Morgan. Slowly creeping up the channel, with dense volumes of black smoke rolling out of her dilapidated smokestack, the *Tennessee* was seen advancing to renew the contest, while the parapets of Fort Morgan, as well as those of Fort Gaines and Fort Powell, were seen to be crowded with Confederate troops eager to witness the *finale* of this stupendous naval conflict. When the ram was first



*Hartford.*

*Tennessee.*

*Battle of Mobile Bay.*

*Monitors.*



seen to be getting under way the National officers thought she might be going out to sea to destroy the steamers *Genesee*, *Pinola*, *Pembina*, *Sebago*, *Tennessee* and *Bienville*, which in vain had attempted to bombard Fort Morgan from that direction, and Farragut said, "We must follow her out." But a moment later, when he saw that the ram was coming up the bay to give battle, he added, "No, Buck's coming here. Get under way at once! We must be ready for him!"

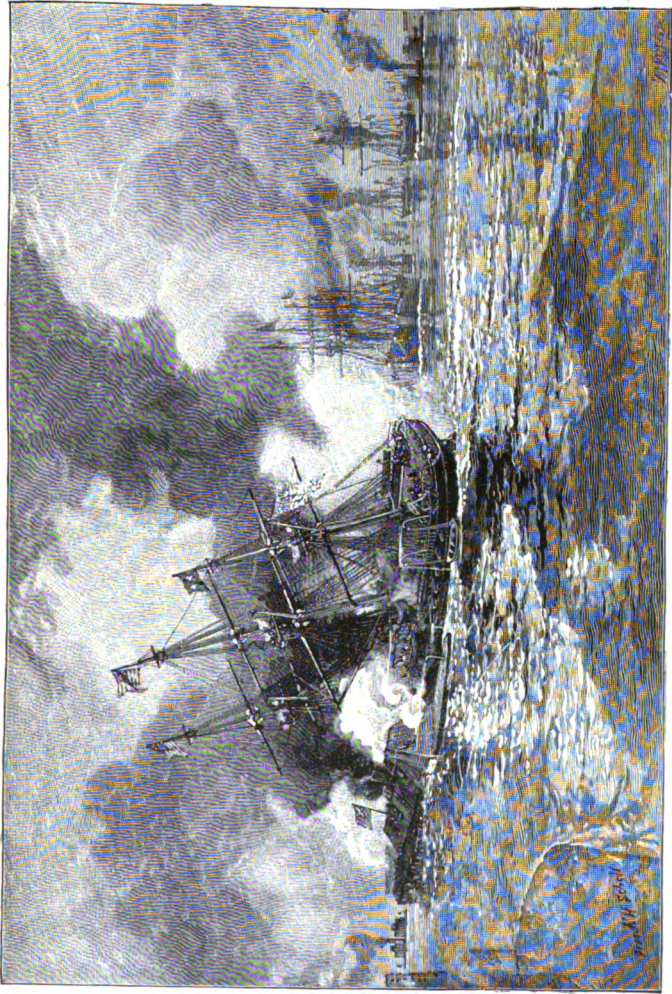
After running under the guns of Fort Morgan, as described in the last chapter, Admiral Buchanan spent a half hour in examining the damages of his vessel. Captain Johnston went outside the casemate, and after making a thorough investigation reported that no serious injury had been sustained. Some dents were visible in the iron plating, and part of the smokestack was gone, but further than this the *Tennessee* was not materially hurt. Learning this, Buchanan said, "Follow them up, Johnston; we can't let them off that way." With some difficulty the unwieldy *Tennessee* brought her head round and advanced toward the wooden fleet. Buchanan had been worsted in the first contest, when he had the powerful support of Fort Morgan's batteries, three gunboats and the torpedoes. But now he was advancing single-handed beyond the support of the Confederate batteries, without the assistance of the gunboats, and with no torpedoes to depend upon to sink the monitors, to give battle to the whole fleet. He had once seen the *Merrimac* defeated by a single monitor; now he was about to engage three monitors and nearly a score of heavy war-ships.

When it was seen that the ram was coming up the bay for the purpose of giving battle, the mess gear in the Union ships was hastily put aside; the decks were cleared for action, and the ships got under way. The anchor of the *Hartford* was weighed so hurriedly that it was left hanging under the bow. The naval signal

was now given, "Attack the ram, not only with your guns, but bows, at full speed!" and by the more rapid system of army signals, the *Lackawanna*, the *Monongahela* and the monitors were ordered, "to run down the ram!" At this juncture Fleet-Surgeon Palmer (who had left his station at Pensacola for the express purpose of attending the injured in this battle), having cared for the wounded in the flagship, was shoving off in the steam barge *Loyall* for the purpose of visiting the wounded in the other vessels, when Farragut called out to him, "Go to the monitors and tell them to attack the *Tennessee*!" As the National ironclads were some distance apart, the execution of this order involved much exposure; but the heroic surgeon carried out his instructions to the letter.

Knowing that it was useless to rely entirely on the heavy guns of the wooden ships to disable the *Tennessee*, Farragut had determined to try the effects of ramming, and his orders were executed in gallant style. Captain Johnston, of the *Tennessee*, says, "The heavier vessels seemed to contend with each other for the glory." Waiting until the *Tennessee* was some forty yards distant, Commander Strong, about 9.25 A. M., ordered full speed on the *Monongahela* and succeeded in striking the ram amidships on the starboard side, the shock knocking down many of the men in both ships. The collision, which would have sunk any vessel in the National fleet, occasioned no damage to the ram further than starting a small leak, and after the surrender it was almost impossible to tell where the blow had been delivered; but the iron prow of the *Monongahela* was wrenched off and the butt ends of the planks on her bow were badly shattered. At the time of the collision the *Tennessee* fired two shells, which exploded in the berth deck of the *Monongahela*, wounding an officer and two men. The Union vessel then swung round and delivered her starboard broadside, and although fired at a distance of about ten





*At close quarters.*



yards, the enormous shot glanced harmlessly off the sloping sides of the ram.

Commander Strong was closely followed by the *Lackawanna*, the latter, about 9.30 A. M., striking the *Tennessee* a full blow on the port side at the after end of the casemate. The collision caused the ram to heel over heavily, and then to swing round, so that the two vessels lay side by side, bow and stern, their port sides scraping against each other. The *Lackawanna's* crew poured a sharp fire of musketry into the ports of the ram, and John Smith, captain of the *Lackawanna's* forecastle, threw a holystone through one of the *Tennessee's* ports, which struck a Confederate gunner who was using abusive language against the Union crew. A shell exploding in the *Lackawanna* started a fire in the shellroom. George Taylor, the armorer, although wounded, coolly walked into the room filled with explosives and extinguished the flames with his hands. Captain Marchand had shifted several of his port guns to the starboard side, in order to bear on Fort Morgan when passing up the channel, so that at this moment only one 9-inch gun could be brought to bear on the ram. But this gun did more damage than whole broadsides had accomplished before, for the shot smashed one of the ram's shutters, and drove the fragments within the shield. Notwithstanding the fact that the *Lackawanna's* bow had suffered seriously from the collision, it being crushed in for a distance of five feet below and three feet above the water line, causing a considerable leakage, Captain Marchand manœuvred for another opportunity to ram. These two collisions caused the *Tennessee* to leak at the rate of about six inches an hour.

Admiral Buchanan had determined to come to close quarters with the flagship, and, paying no more attention to the *Lackawanna* than firing two shot through her, he headed directly for the *Hartford*. Farragut was equally anxious to get at the ram, and at this moment the two flagships were headed for each other



at full speed. It was impossible in that short distance for the *Hartford* to circle round so as to ram the *Tennessee* on her side, and the only safety for the Union admiral was to continue on his present course. A bow-on collision seemed unavoidable, and the other ships could do nothing but pour in futile broadsides. The only hope for the *Hartford* was that the iron beak of the *Tennessee* would penetrate so far that she would be unable to back clear of the wreck, and the two ships would be dragged down together.

Seeing that a collision was imminent, Fleet-Captain Drayton hastened to the *Hartford's* forecastle, while Farragut sprang to the port-quarter rail, holding to the mizzen rigging. Observing his exposed position, Flag-Lieutenant Watson approached the admiral, and, passing a rope's end around his body, secured him to the rigging. For some unexplained reason the *Tennessee* avoided a head-on collision by slightly changing her course just before the vessels were in contact, so that the *Hartford's* port bow scraped against the port beam of the ram. The vessels were now so near that Farragut, from his position in the mizzen rigging, could easily have stepped aboard the ram; and the *Hartford's* anchor, which had been left hanging under her bow, was caught between the two vessels as they came together, and was bent out of shape. Several of the *Hartford's* 9-inch guns were loaded with solid shot and the heaviest charge of powder, and were discharged at the ram, but although the vessels were not ten feet apart the missiles did no perceptible injury. The ram attempted to return the broadside, and her gun-hammers were heard by the people in the *Hartford* giving ominous clicks, but the powder failed to ignite. One of the ram's guns, however, was fired, the shell from which entered the *Hartford's* berth deck, killed an officer and four men and wounded eight. This gun, the last that the *Tennessee* fired, was so close that the flash scorched the *Hartford's* side.

All this time the *Lackawanna* had been manoeuvring for another chance to ram, and, seizing what appeared to be a favorable opportunity, Captain Marchand ordered full speed. Unfortunately, the *Hartford*, after her collision with the *Tennessee*, had put her helm to starboard and was making a circle, also

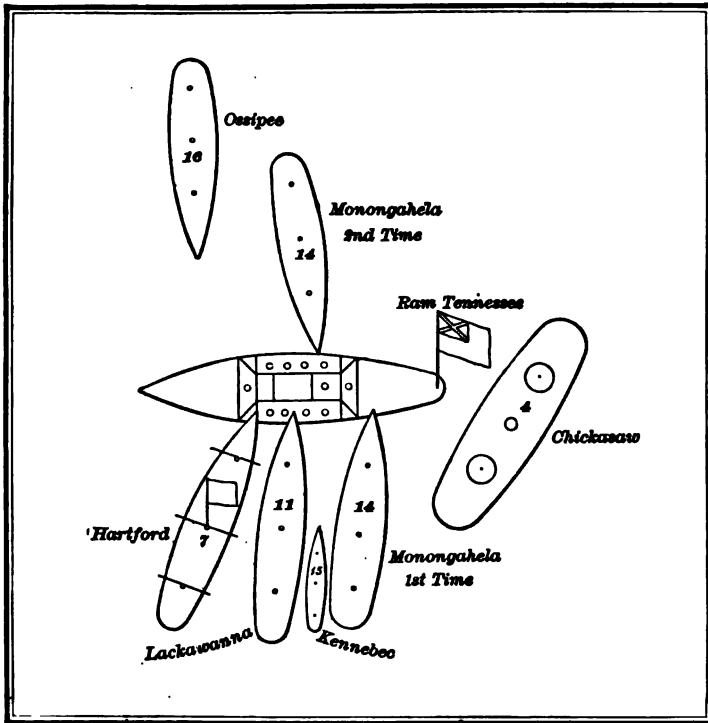


Diagram showing the different points at which the *Tennessee* was rammed by Farragut's vessels.

with a view of butting the enemy again. At this moment she got in the way of the *Lackawanna*, the latter striking the flagship just forward of the mizzenmast on the starboard side near the spot where Farragut stood, narrowly missing him. The bow of the *Lackawanna* crushed in the side of the flagship within two

feet of the water line, knocking two ports into one and upsetting a Dahlgren gun. For a moment there was some confusion, as it was feared the ship was sinking, and orders were given to lower the port boats. At the moment of the collision Farragut was standing on the poop deck, and he immediately climbed over the side into the starboard mizzen rigging to ascertain the extent of the damage. The cry immediately rang out above the din of battle, "Save the admiral! Save the admiral!" but finding that the *Hartford* could float, Farragut again appeared to the view of his men, allayed their fears for his safety, and gave the order for full speed and ram again.

The *Lackawanna* now resumed her efforts to secure a position to butt the *Tennessee*, and a few minutes later another collision between the two wooden vessels seemed unavoidable. "And now," wrote Lieutenant Kinney,<sup>1</sup> "the admiral became a trifle excited. He had no idea of whipping the rebels, to be himself sunk by friends, nor did he realize at the moment that the *Hartford* was as much to blame as the *Lackawanna*. Turning to the writer, he inquired, 'Can you say *For God's sake* by signal?' 'Yes, sir,' was the reply. 'Then say to the *Lackawanna*, *For God's sake*, get out of our way and anchor!' In my haste to send the message, I brought the end of my signal staff down with considerable violence upon the head of the admiral, who was standing nearer than I thought, causing him to wince perceptibly. It was a hasty message, for the fault was equally divided, each ship being too eager to reach the enemy, and it turned out all right, by a fortunate accident, that Captain Marchand never received it.

Up to this time the *Tennessee* had been dealing with wooden ships, and had it not been for her low speed and defective guns, she would have sent the fleet to

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<sup>1</sup> *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. iv, p. 397.

the bottom in a few minutes. But while this desperate and unequal contest had been going on, the three monitors were approaching to take part in the fight. Scarcely had the *Monongahela* cleared the *Tennessee*, after ramming, when Lieutenant Wharton, of the *Tennessee*, glancing out of the side of one of his gun ports, caught a glimpse of a "hideous-looking monster [the *Manhattan*] creeping up on our port side, whose slowly revolving turret revealed the cavernous depths of a mammoth gun. 'Stand clear of the port side!' I shouted. A moment afterward a thunderous report shook us all, while a blast of dense sulphurous smoke covered our portholes, and four hundred and forty pounds of iron, impelled by sixty pounds of powder, admitted daylight through our sides where, before it struck us, there had been over two feet of solid wood covered with five inches of solid iron. This was the only 15-inch shot that hit us fair. It did not come through; the inside netting caught the splinters, and there were no casualties from it."

The *Chickasaw*, having received less injury than the other monitors, passed the *Tennessee* on the port side, and after firing her guns she ran under the ram's stern and doggedly held that position to the close of the fight, keeping up a terrific fire from her 11-inch guns. From that time Lieutenant-Commander Perkins was never more than fifty yards from his antagonist, and frequently the vessels were in actual contact. He planted fifty-two 11-inch solid shot on the *Tennessee's* casemate, most of them on the after end, where the greatest injury was done and many plates were started. That night, when the *Metacomet* was taking the National and Confederate wounded to Pensacola, the pilot of the *Tennessee* asked Lieutenant-Commander Jouett, "Who commanded the monitor that got under our stern? Damn him, he stuck to us like a leech!"

The *Winnebago* and the *Manhattan* also were pounding away at the ram whenever their partially

disabled batteries bore. The *Manhattan* was able to fire only six shot at the *Tennessee*, one of which, however, pierced the mauling on the port side of the ram and shattered the oak and pine backing, though the shot itself did not penetrate.

About this time the position of the men within the casemate of the *Tennessee* began to be alarming. Early in the action the pilot had been wounded by having the trapdoor on the top of the pilot house knocked down upon his head by a shot that struck it on the edge while it was thrown back to admit of his seeing more clearly the position of the vessels. Up to this stage of the action the massive walls of the casemate had afforded ample protection to the men, and they peered out of their portholes and saw their missiles crash through the wooden ships with deadly effect, while they were safe from the heaviest shot. But the persistent hammering of the National ships began to change the situation. Within a few feet of one of the after gun ports nine 11-inch solid shot crashed against the casemate, and the carriage of one of the guns had been disabled and nearly all the iron plates on the after side of the casemate had been started. Three of the port shutters were jammed so that the guns could not be used for the remainder of the action. The atmosphere within the casemate, which early in the fight had been over 100°, had risen to 120°. The shock of the rammings the *Tennessee* had received broke off the smokestack under the casemate, and the coal smoke began to pour into the gunroom and stifle the gunners, which, added to the smoke from exploding powder, made their position almost intolerable, and for relief many of the men stripped to the waist. "Frequently during the contest we were surrounded by the enemy, and all our guns were in action almost at the same moment."<sup>1</sup> A well-directed shot from the *Chickasaw*

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<sup>1</sup> Official report of Admiral Buchanan.

jammed the *Tennessee's* stern-port shutter so that the gun could not be run in or out, and it was not long before the rudder chains, which were exposed on the deck of the *Tennessee*, were shot away. Relieving-tackles for steering the ship were adjusted, but these also, in a short time, were carried away.

Seeing that the battle was against him and that there was no hope of contending successfully against the fleet, Buchanan now ordered Johnston to steer for Fort Morgan, with a view of seeking the shelter of its guns. Buchanan at this time was directing a gun, when a shot from the *Chickasaw* jammed the shutter so that it could not be moved. He sent to the engine-room for a machinist to push out the pin of the shutter, hoping that it would fall away, thus leaving the port open; and while the machinist was endeavoring to do this a heavy shot struck the edge of the port cover outside where the man was working. The concussion mutilated the man in a horrible manner, scattering the fragments of his body all over the deck, which afterward were shoveled into a bucket and thrown overboard. The same shot mortally wounded one of the gun crew, and drove the washers and nuts across the deck with such force as to break Buchanan's leg below the knee. He was carried to the surgeon's table below, and while his wound was being dressed he sent for Johnston (who after the accident to the pilot had been directing the movements of the ram from the pilot-house), and said: "Well, Johnston, they've got me. You'll have to look out for her now."

When the command of the *Tennessee* devolved upon Captain Johnston her condition was indeed desperate. The forward and after port covers were jammed so that the guns were useless. The steam, owing to the wreck of the smokestack, was going down. Shot were raining on the after part of the casemate so that it must soon have fallen in and exposed the men to the dreadful effect of shells exploding in their confined space.

For some time the *Tennessee* was heading aimlessly about the bay, with the monitors and the wooden ships relentlessly pursuing her and keeping up a terrific fire and seeking opportunities to ram. Captain Johnston now made a personal examination of the broken wheel chains, and found it was impossible to repair them without sending a man outside the casemate, which was constantly swept by a storm of iron, and finally the tiller was unshipped from the rudder head.

After enduring this fearful battering twenty minutes without being able to fire a gun or to direct the movements of his vessel, Captain Johnston went below to consult with Admiral Buchanan, who said, "Well, Johnston, if you cannot do them any further injury you had better surrender." Johnston then returned to the pilot-house to see if he could get another shot, and finding that this was impossible, he went on top of the casemate and took down the flag, which had been attached to a gun scraper and thrust through the grating. The National vessels did not immediately understand that a surrender had been made, and continued their fire. Captain Johnston then went on the casemate, and at 10 A. M. exhibited a white flag, when the firing ceased.

But at this moment the *Ossipee* had seized a favorable opportunity for ramming, and was coming down on the *Tennessee* at right angles under a full head of steam, on the starboard side. Commander Le Roy, of the *Ossipee*, in passing the *Winnebago*, exchanged a pleasant greeting with Commander Stevens, who was still outside his turrets. Observing a man on the *Tennessee's* casemate waving a white flag, and recognizing him as Captain Johnston, Commander Le Roy put his helm over and reversed his engines, but was too late to avoid a collision. As the vessels came into contact, the Union officer came out on his forecastle deck and called out: "This is the United States steamer *Ossipee*. Hello, Johnston! how are you? I'll send a boat

alongside for you. Le Roy, don't you know me?" These two officers had been warm friends in the navy before the war. A moment later a boat put out from the *Ossipee* and Johnston was cordially received by Le Roy. An officer now hoisted the National colors over the battered casemate of the ram, on seeing which cheers upon cheers burst from the victorious crews. The *Chickasaw* then took the *Tennessee* in tow and anchored her near the *Hartford*.

In this desperate battle the *Hartford* was struck twenty times, the *Brooklyn* thirty, the *Octorara* seventeen, the *Metacomet* eleven, the *Lackawanna* five, the *Ossipee* four, the *Monongahela* five, the *Kennebec* two, and the *Galena* seven times. Of the monitors, the *Manhattan* was struck nine times, the *Winnebago* nineteen times and the *Chickasaw* three times. Nearly all the plating of the *Tennessee* on the after end of the casemate was started, one bolt had been driven in, several nuts and washers had been knocked off, the steering-rods had been cut off near the after pivot gun and the carriage of that gun was damaged; but there was no visible injury from the ramming by the *Hartford*, the *Monongahela* and the *Lackawanna*. "Fifty-three shot-marks in all were counted on the *Tennessee's* shield, three of which had penetrated so far as to cause splinters to fly on board, and the washers from the ends of the bolts wounded several men."<sup>1</sup>

The loss in the National fleet was: *Hartford*, twenty-five killed and twenty-eight wounded; *Brooklyn*, eleven killed and forty-three wounded; *Lackawanna*, four killed and thirty-five wounded; *Oneida*, eight killed and thirty wounded; *Monongahela*, six wounded; *Metacomet*, one killed and two wounded; *Ossipee*, one killed and seven wounded; *Richmond*, two wounded; *Galena*, one wounded; *Octorara*, one killed and ten wounded; *Kennebec*, one killed and six wounded;

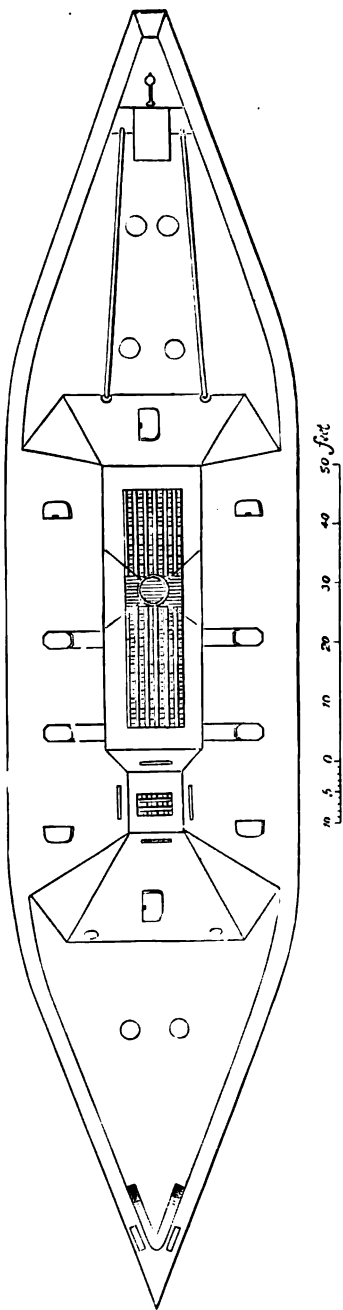
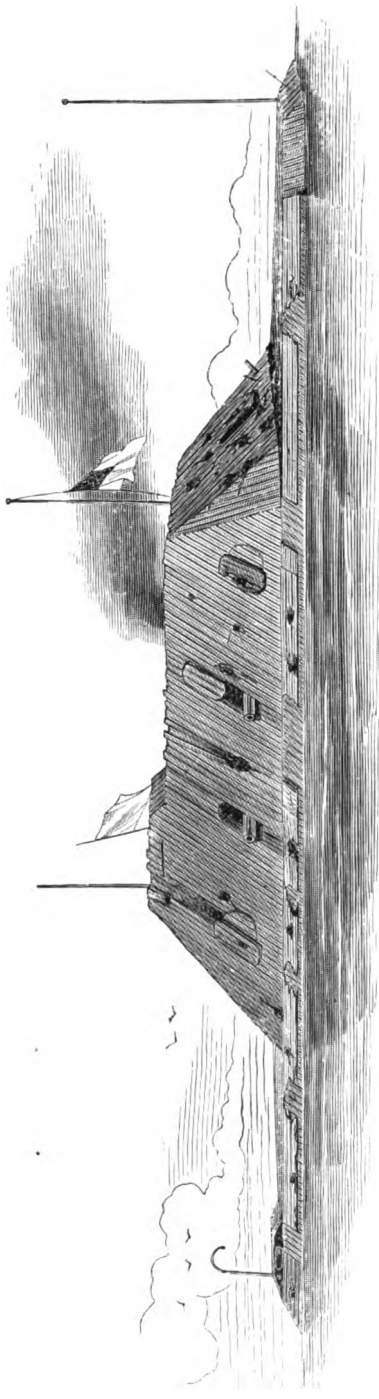
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<sup>1</sup> Official report of Captain Johnston.



total, fifty-two killed and one hundred and seventy wounded. The *Tennessee* had two killed and nine wounded ; the *Gaines*, two killed and three wounded ; the *Selma*, eight killed and seven wounded ; the *Morgan*, one wounded ; total Confederate loss, twelve killed and twenty wounded. Two hundred and eighty prisoners were taken. Ninety-three men were drowned in the *Tecumseh*, and four were captured.

That night the *Metacomet* carried all the wounded to Pensacola, being piloted through the torpedoes by the *Tennessee's* pilot. Rear-Admiral Jouett writes : "I was detailed by Admiral Farragut to take the wounded of both sides to Pensacola. The awnings and side curtains were all spread, and the *Metacomet* became a hospital ship. Admiral Buchanan was wounded in the knee, as he had been in the fight between the *Merrimac* and the *Monitor*. Captain Mullany, of the *Oneida*, lost an arm, and there were many others wounded. They lay in cots on the quarter-deck, slinging side by side, chatting familiarly, taking medicine, tea, coffee or wine, as the doctor thought best. 'Twas amusing to hear those poor fellows, who but an hour ago were trying to kill each other, now spinning yarns of olden times." Among the Union wounded were Lieutenant Adams and Mr. Heginbotham, the latter being hurt mortally. Another one of the wounded was an Irish lad who had been stationed at a shell whip during the action, hoisting ammunition to the deck. While he had his hands above his head, in the act of hoisting, a shell cut off both his arms at the elbows. Another man had lost both his legs in the *Hartford*, and after the war the two men entered into a peculiar partnership, putting what was left of their bodies together as capital (one man supplying the legs and the other the arms) and selling pictures of Admiral Farragut in the streets of New York. As the *Metacomet* was swinging from the wharf at Pensacola on her return trip to Mobile, Midshipman Carter, of the *Ten-*



*Deck plan of the Tennessee and her appearance after the battle.*





*nessee*, called out to Jouett, "Don't attempt to fire No. 2 starboard gun, as there is a shell jammed in the bore, and the gun will burst and kill some one."

Hearing from Dr. Conrad of the condition of Admiral Buchanan, Farragut ordered his fleet surgeon to go aboard the *Tennessee* and personally attend him. Surgeon Palmer ran alongside the battered ram in the steam barge *Loyall*, but such was the slope of the *Tennessee's* sides that the boat could not get near enough for him to step aboard, and it required a long jump. Gaining the *Tennessee's* deck, Palmer climbed through one of the gun ports, and, picking his path across the piles of wreckage that encumbered the deck, he found his way to the Confederate admiral. Preparations had been made to amputate his leg, but on Dr. Palmer's advice the operation was postponed and the limb was saved. In his official report Buchanan said, "We have received all the attention and consideration we could desire or accept from Fleet-Surgeon Palmer." Lieutenant Giraud, of the *Ossipee*, attended by Captain Heywood, of the marines, and a guard, was sent to receive Buchanan's sword; and when Captain Heywood met Buchanan he could not refrain from reminding the Confederate admiral that they had met before when the *Cumberland* was sunk by the *Merrimac*.

Farragut spoke of all his officers "as deserving my warmest commendation, not only for the untiring zeal with which they prepared their ships for the contest, but for their skill and daring in carrying out my orders during the engagement." He particularly commended the gallantry of Captains Percival Drayton and Thornton A. Jenkins; Commanders Mullany, Nicholson and Stevens; Lieutenant-Commanders Jouett and Perkins; Lieutenants Watson and Yates; Acting-Ensigns Henry C. Nields, Bogart and Heginbotham; Ensign Henry Howard Brownell, Secretary McKinley, the pilot Martin Freeman, Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenants William Hamilton and P. Giraud. Of his crew he

said: "I have never seen a crew come up like ours. They are ahead of the old set in small arms, and fully equal to them at the great guns. They arrived here a mere lot of boys and young men, and have now fattened up and knocked the 9-inch guns about like 24-pounders, to the astonishment of everybody. There was but one man who showed fear, and he was allowed to resign. This was the most desperate battle I ever fought since the days of the old *Essex*."<sup>1</sup>

At half past two that afternoon Lieutenant-Commander Perkins got under way in the *Chickasaw* and for an hour bombarded Fort Powell, and on the following night the fort was abandoned by the Confederates and blown up. The next day Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant Pomeroy, of the *Estrella*, hoisted the National ensign over the fort. On the 6th of August the *Chicka-*

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<sup>1</sup> Aside from the officers, the men who won especial distinction in this great battle were: Wilson Brown,\* Thomas Fitzpatrick,\* Martin Freeman, James R. Garrison,\* John Lawson,\* John McFarland, Charles Melville,\* Thomas O'Connell,\* William Pelham, William A. Stanley,\* all in the *Hartford*. John Brown, William Blageen, William H. Brown,\* John Cooper, J. Henry Denig, Richard Dennis, Samuel W. Davis, Michael Hudson, William Halstead, Joseph Irlam, Nicholas Irwin, John Irving, Burnett Kenna, Alexander Mack,\* William Madden, James Machon, James Miffin, William Nichols, Miles M. Oviatt, Edward Price, William M. Smith, James E. Sterling,\* Samuel Todd, all in the *Brooklyn*. Thomas Atkinson, Robert Brown, Cornelius Cronin, Thomas Cripps, James B. Chandler,\* William W. Call, William Densmore, Adam Duncan, Charles Deakin,\* William Doolin,\* Thomas Hayes, Hugh Hamilton, James McIntosh, John H. James,\* William Jones, James H. Morgan, Andrew Miller, James Martin, George Parks, Hendrick Sharp, Walter B. Smith, Lebbeus Simpkins, Oloff Smith, John Smith, James Smith, David Sprowle, Alexander H. Truett, all of the *Richmond*. John M. Burns,\* Michael Cassidy, Louis G. Chaput,\* Adam McCulloch,\* Patrick Dougherty, John Edwards,\* Samuel W. Kinnaird, William Phinney, John Smith, George Taylor,\* James Ward,\* Daniel Whitfield, all of the *Lackawanna*. William Gardner, John E. Jones,\* Thomas Kendrick, William Newland, David Naylor, John Preston,\* James S. Roantree, James Sheridan,\* Charles B. Woram, all of the *Oneida*. Andrew Jones of the *Chickasaw*. Those marked with an asterisk either left the sick-bay to take part in the battle, or continued to fight after being wounded, many of them leaving the surgeon's table to return to the deck.

*saw* opened fire on Fort Gaines, which surrendered on the following morning. This left only Fort Morgan in the possession of the enemy, and on the 22d of August the fleet, assisted by land forces under General Granger and a siege train that had been sent from New Orleans, opened fire upon it, and in twelve hours threw three thousand missiles into and around the works. The next day it surrendered, and this effectually closed Mobile as a port for blockade-runners. Soon after this brilliant victory Admiral Farragut went North, and Captain James S. Palmer assumed command of the fleet. In February, 1865, he was relieved by Acting-Rear-Admiral Henry K. Thatcher, although Palmer still remained in the fleet.

In the spring of 1865 the naval force in Mobile Bay materially assisted the National troops under General Canby in reducing the city of Mobile. The vessels taking part in this affair were the *Octorara*, Lieutenant-Commander W. W. Low; the monitors *Kickapoo*, Lieutenant-Commander M. P. Jones; *Osage*, Lieutenant-Commander William W. Gamble; *Milwaukee*, Lieutenant-Commander James H. Gillis; *Winnebago*, Lieutenant-Commander W. A. Kirkland; and *Chickasaw*, Lieutenant-Commander G. H. Perkins. On the 27th of March these vessels moved up Dog River and opened fire on the Confederate batteries. While the *Winnebago* and the *Milwaukee* were returning from Spanish Fort, on the 28th of March, after shelling a transport two miles up the river, the *Milwaukee*, when some two hundred yards from the Union fleet, struck a torpedo about forty feet from her stern on the port side, and although her bow remained above water nearly an hour afterward, her stern sank in three minutes. All her people fortunately escaped. Lieutenant-Commander Gillis afterward commanded a naval battery, and rendered conspicuous service. It was known that many torpedoes had been planted in these waters, but it was thought that the drag-nets had removed

them. On the 29th of March the *Winnebago* dragged her anchor in the fresh breeze, and in order to avoid a collision the *Osage* tripped anchor and moved ahead, but just as she was anchoring again she struck a torpedo and sank almost immediately. None of her men were drowned, but five of them were killed and eleven wounded by the force of the explosion. A few days after this—April 1st—the steamer *Rodolph*, having on board a machine for raising the *Milwaukee*, was also struck by a torpedo thirty feet aft from her bow, which caused her to sink in a few minutes. The explosion killed four men and wounded eleven.

On the 8th of April Spanish Fort surrendered. Commander Pierce Crosby was ordered to proceed in the *Metacomet* and clear the river of torpedoes (which the enemy still continued to send down), and he succeeded in lifting over a hundred and fifty of them. On the 10th the ironclads and the *Octorara* moved up the river and shelled the earthworks named Huger and Tracy, which were abandoned on the following evening. On the 12th, Commander Palmer, in the *Octorara*, accompanied by the ironclads, moved up the river within easy shelling distance of Mobile, while Admiral Thatcher, conveying eight thousand troops under General Granger, crossed the bay in the gunboats; but the city, having been evacuated by the Confederate troops, surrendered without further resistance.

While engaged in the work of clearing these waters of torpedoes, the tugboats *Ida*, *Althea* and one of the *Cincinnati's* launches were blown up, eight men being killed and five wounded; and on the 14th of April the gunboat *Scioto* had six men killed and five wounded by a torpedo.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### OPERATIONS OFF CHARLESTON.

FROM the time Sumter was fired on a sentimental interest centered around Charleston, both among the Nationalists and the Southerners, and it became the scene of one of the most obstinate sieges in history. In December, 1861, and January, 1862, a number of old whalers filled with stones were sunk in the main ship channel of Charleston and in Sullivan Island channel, with a view of closing the port to blockade-runners. This aroused a storm of opposition in Europe, as it was feared that it would destroy the harbor; but as a matter of fact the obstructions proved to be of the most temporary character. Many of the blockade-runners had been built in England with a view of entering the shallow harbors and rivers on the Southern coast, so that few of them found it necessary to take the channels in Charleston harbor. Furthermore, this "stone fleet" caused better and deeper channels to be formed.

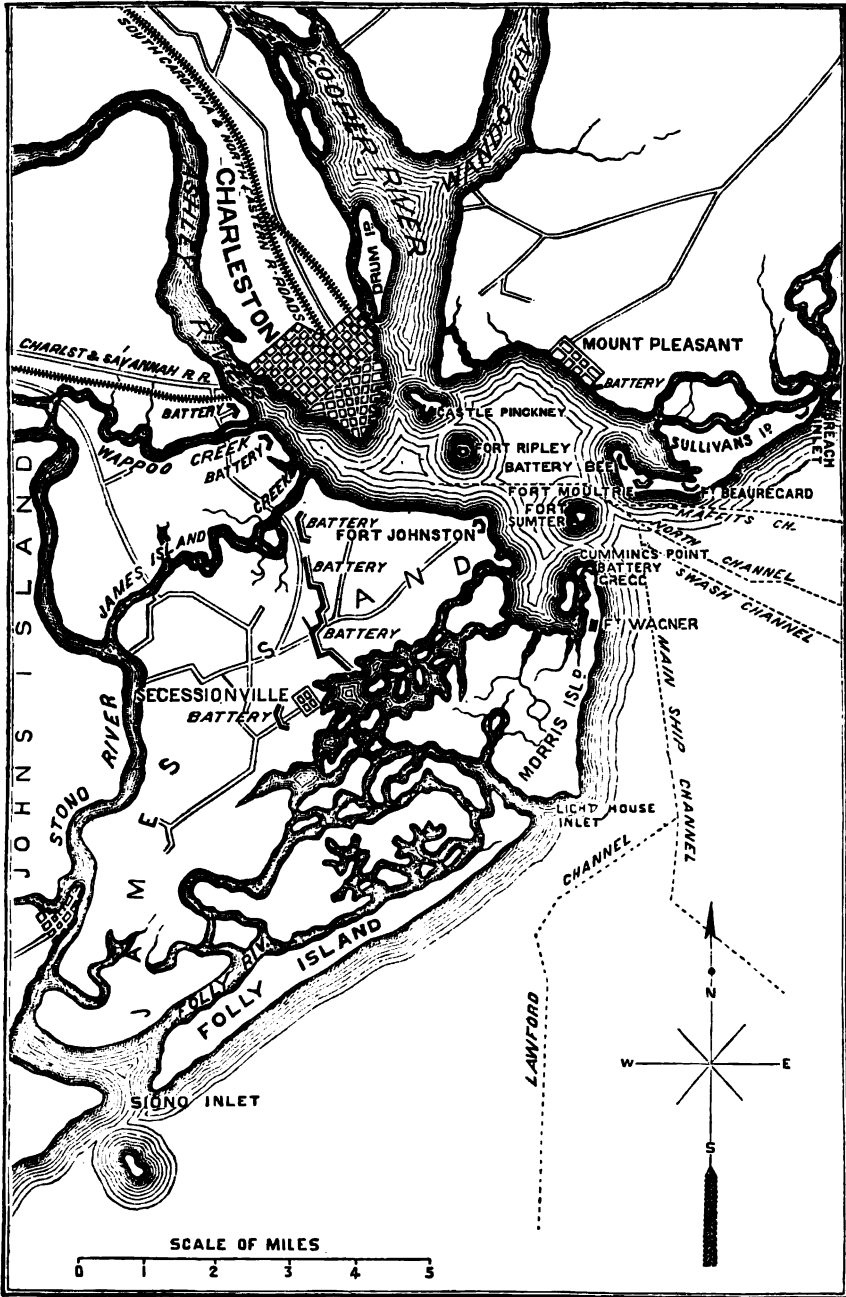
A blockading force was maintained off Charleston early in the war, under the command of Rear-Admiral Samuel Francis Dupont, but it was not until 1863 that any important naval actions took place off that port. Early on the morning of January 31st of this year two ironclad rams, built somewhat in the style of the *Merrimac*, came out and gave battle to the blockading squadron. These vessels—the *Palmetto State*, Commodore Duncan Nathaniel Ingraham, and the *Chicora*, Captain John Randolph Tucker—had been built by James M. Eason, after plans submitted by John L. Porter, who was identified with the construction of the *Merrimac*.



They were one hundred and fifty feet over all, had thirty-five feet beam and drew twelve feet of water. Both vessels were covered with two layers of 2-inch iron, which were laid on twenty-two inches of pine and oak backing. The iron plating was continued five feet below the water line, and also covered the ram, which was a formidable elongation of the bow. Under favorable conditions they could steam seven knots. The Confederates also were building the ironclads *Charleston* and *Columbia*, which were plated with six inches of iron, the ladies of Charleston contributing the money for the former. The *Palmetto State* was armed with one 80-pounder and one 60-pounder rifled gun and two 8-inch shell guns, while the *Chicora* carried two 9-inch guns and four 32-pounders, which had been hooped and rifled to fire a 60-pound projectile.

At the time the *Palmetto State* and the *Chicora* came out of Charleston harbor, two of the most powerful vessels of the Union squadron, the *Powhatan* and the *Canandaigua*, were coaling at Port Royal, so that only the following gunboats were off the port: *Housatonic*, *Ottawa*, *Unadilla*, *Mercedita*, *Keystone State*, *Quaker City*, *Memphis*, *Augusta*, *Stettin* and *Flag*. Of these vessels, only the *Housatonic*, the *Ottawa* and the *Unadilla* were built for war purposes.

The sea was enveloped in a dense fog, so that the first intimation the Nationalists had of the attack was about 4.30 A. M., when the *Mercedita*, Captain Henry S. Stellwagen, discovered a strange craft looming out of the mist off to the starboard, making directly toward her. The people in the Union steamer called out: "What steamer is that? Drop your anchor or you will be into us!" Commodore Ingraham replied, "The Confederate States' steamer *Palmetto State*," and almost at the same instant he fired a 7-inch shell into the *Mercedita*, which killed a gunner, and, piercing the condenser and steam drum of her port boiler, exploded, blowing a hole four feet square in the opposite side near



Map of Charleston Harbor and vicinity.



the water line. The escaping steam killed several men and scalded three others. The Confederates then called on the disabled steamer to surrender and send a boat aboard. Lieutenant Abbott accordingly went aboard and gave a parole for all the officers and men in the Union vessel. Not stopping to secure her prize, the *Palmetto State* joined the *Chicora* in an attack upon the *Keystone State*, Commander William Edgar Le Roy, whose people had been aroused by the report of the gun, and soon discovered above the fog the smoke of a tugboat—as they supposed—approaching from the direction of the *Mercedita*.

Meantime, lights in a dark object moving a little ahead of the *Mercedita* were discovered, and Commander Le Roy ordered his cables to be slipped, steam got up, and the forward rifled gun to be trained on the vessel approaching from the *Mercedita*. Hailing the stranger and getting an unsatisfactory answer, the *Keystone State* fired her forward gun, and about the same instant the Confederate steamer sent a shell into the forward hold of the Union vessel, setting her on fire. Directing his men to fire as the guns bore, Le Roy put his helm aport and held a northeasterly course until he found the water shoaling, when he headed his vessel southeast. After ten minutes in this direction the flames in the hold had been extinguished, and the *Keystone State* made for a black smoke with the intention of ramming. The two vessels exchanged shot at about 6.17 A. M., when a shell entered the port side of the *Keystone State*, destroyed the steam-pipes, emptied the port boiler and filled the vessel with steam, while two shot pierced the hull under the water line. As the ship heeled heavily to starboard and eighteen inches of water were reported in the well, it was thought that she was sinking and preparations were made for abandoning her. All this time the stranger was firing into the *Keystone State*, killing or wounding men at each shot. Seeing the hopelessness of the struggle, Le Roy

hailed down his colors, but as the enemy continued to fire he rehoisted the flag and renewed the action from his stern guns. After exchanging a few shot with several other Union vessels the Confederate vessels returned to Charleston.

The fog hung over the sea all that morning, and it was not until late in the afternoon that the ironclads could be seen at anchor near Fort Moultrie. Commander Le Roy ran in his port guns, so as to heel the ship over, thus raising the two shot-holes above the water line, and in this condition was towed to Port Royal, where the *Mercedita* also arrived. The *Keystone State* had twenty killed and twenty wounded, Assistant-Surgeon J. H. Gotwold being among the former. Most of the injuries were caused by steam. The Confederates reported that the rams were uninjured, but they did not again attempt to come out of the harbor. The partial success of this dashing affair so elated the Confederates that they declared the blockade raised, and that the National vessels had been driven out of sight. The dense fog hanging over the coast might, in truth, have rendered the blockading squadron invisible to those on shore, as the proclamation of General Beauregard and Commodore Ingraham declared, but when the fog rose late in the afternoon a strong blockading force was seen to be on hand.

On the evening before this attack the gunboat *Isaac Smith*, Acting-Lieutenant F. S. Conover, while making a reconnoissance up the Stono River in company with the *McDonough*, Lieutenant-Commander George Bacon, was fired upon by a masked battery on James Island, and almost at the same moment two other batteries opened on her. Conover attempted to retreat, but a shot disabled his vessel's machinery, so that he was compelled to surrender, having eight men killed and seventeen wounded. The *Isaac Smith* was taken into the Confederate service under the name *Stono*. In May, 1862, the gunboats *Unadilla*, *Pembina* and

*Ottawa*, under the orders of Commander Marchand, went up the Stono as far as Legaréville and captured a picket guard.

Anxious to test the monitors that were detailed for the Atlantic blockade, Rear-Admiral Dupont, in January, 1863, ordered the *Montauk*, Commander John Lorimer Worden, mounting one 15-inch and one 11-inch gun, one of the first to arrive, to Ossabaw Sound to attack Fort McAllister. This fortification mounted nine guns and was commanded by Captain George W. Anderson, Jr. Another object Dupont had in view was the destruction of the blockade-runner *Nashville*, which had been fitted as a cruiser and was in the Great Ogeechee River, waiting for an opportunity to get to sea. This vessel, owing to the extreme vigilance of Lieutenant-Commander John Lee Davis, of the *Wissahickon*, and Lieutenant John S. Barnes, of the *Dawn* (afterward commanded by Lieutenant-Commander Gibson), had been kept in port eight months. To render her position more secure, Fort McAllister had been strengthened, and a diagonal line of piles was driven across the channel and a line of torpedoes planted.

At 7 A. M., January 27th, the *Montauk*, handsomely supported by the gunboats *Seneca*, Lieutenant-Commander William Gibson, *Wissahickon*, *Dawn* and *Williams*, opened fire on the fort, Lieutenant-Commander Davis having reconnoitered the waters the night before in boats and destroyed the enemy's range marks. Having expended his shells, Commander Worden about noon retired and signaled the gunboats to follow. In this affair the ironclad was struck thirteen times, but none of the Nationalists were injured. These vessels renewed the attack on February 1st, but although Captain Anderson reported that "at times the fire was terrible," and that the "mortar firing was unusually fine, a large number of shells bursting over the battery," yet no damage was done which could not be repaired at night. The Confederate loss was

one officer killed, seven men wounded and one gun disabled. Although struck forty-six times in this second attack, the *Montauk* escaped without serious injury.

Discovering that Captain Baker, commander of the *Nashville*, on the evening of February 27th had run his ship aground, Commander Worden, early on the morning of February 28th, moved close up to the line of piles, where he could reach the stranded cruiser across a marsh, a distance of twelve hundred yards, with his guns. Only her upper decks were visible from the turret of the monitor. At this moment the Union gunboats opened a heavy fire on Fort McAllister, while Worden coolly set about making a target of the *Nashville*, in spite of a furious protest from Fort McAllister. A few shells soon determined the range, and then one of the most beautiful exhibitions of target firing in the war was given. In twenty minutes Commander Worden had the *Nashville* on fire aft, forward and amidships, in spite of the fog that at one time obstructed the view, and in fifty minutes the flames reached the magazine and she blew up. So excited and exasperated were the Confederates at the audacious attack of the monitor that the fire from Fort McAllister was wild, and only five shot struck the *Montauk*. This was one of the brilliant achievements of the civil war. More than one victory has been won by tireless watching. Finding that he could make no serious impression on Fort McAllister, Worden, instead of wasting his powder, quietly bided his time. When the *Nashville* grounded his quick eye took in the situation at a glance. He seized his opportunity and snatched a brilliant victory from a tedious and unusually inglorious blockade. When the *Montauk* was retiring from this attack a hole was blown in her bottom by a torpedo. Worden promptly ran her ashore and had pieces of boiler iron bolted over the wound, and continued on his station.

Anxious to subject the new monitors to a further

test, and at the same time give their officers and crews a chance to become more familiar with the novel craft before beginning serious operations off Charleston, Dupont ordered the *Passaic*, Captain Percival Drayton, the *Patapsco*, Commander Daniel Ammen, and the *Nahant*, Commander John A. Downes, with three 13-inch mortar schooners, to join the *Montauk* in an attack upon Fort McAllister. This was done with great spirit on March 30th, but the shoaling water and the line of piles prevented the ironclads from approaching nearer than twelve hundred yards, while the mortar schooners took a position at four thousand yards. For eight hours the monitors kept up a heavy fire, but although great craters were made in the parapets and two guns were disabled, no serious injury was inflicted. As Captain Drayton boldly took a position in front of the fort, where seven guns bore on him, his vessel was severely handled. She was struck thirty-four times. One mortar shell filled with sand landed on her deck and would have penetrated had it not struck a beam. The deck of the monitor was badly shattered in other places. The remaining ironclads came out of the action without serious injury. During the attack the gunboats *Seneca*, *Wissahickon* and *Dawn* took a position two miles from the fort, to signal the effect of the shells.

The ironclads that were built for the Atlantic blockade arrived in the spring of 1863, and by April 7th Admiral Dupont, in obedience to instructions from Washington, made an attack on Charleston. He formed his line of battle with the *Weehawken*, Captain John Rodgers, leading, followed by the *Passaic*, Captain Percival Drayton; the *Montauk*, Captain John Lorimer Worden; the *Patapsco*, Commander Daniel Ammen; the *New Ironsides* (flagship), Commander Thomas Turner; the *Catskill*, Commander George Washington Rodgers; the *Nantucket*, Commander Donald McNeil Fairfax; the *Nahant*, Commander John A. Downes; and the *Keokuk*, Commander Alex-



ander Colden Rhind. All these vessels, excepting the *New Ironsides* and the *Keokuk*, were ironclads of the monitor type, and were armed with one 15-inch and one 11-inch gun each, excepting the *Patapsco*, which carried a 150-pounder rifled gun in place of the 11-inch gun. The *New Ironsides*, named after the famous 44-gun frigate *Constitution*, was protected with four and a half inches of iron. She was armed with two 150-pounder rifled guns and fourteen 11-inch guns. The *Keokuk* also was an experiment in iron-clad ships. She was one hundred and fifty-nine feet over all, had thirty-nine feet beam, eight feet draft and carried two turrets, in which were two 11-inch guns. The number of guns in the attacking fleet was seven 15-inch, twenty-two 11-inch and four 150-pounder rifled guns; in all, thirty-three guns.

The defenses of Charleston at this time were of the most formidable character. The harbor was fairly bristling with cannon, while the waters were filled with piles and rope obstructions and thickly planted with dangerous torpedoes. The guns bearing on the ironclads were ten 10-inch columbiads, two 9-inch Dahlgren guns, twenty 8-inch guns, two 7-inch rifled guns, six rifled 42-pounders, eight rifled 32-pounders, fifteen 32-pounders, one rifled 24-pounder, and five 10-inch mortars; in all, sixty-nine guns.

Having received instructions to pay no attention to the guns on Morris Island, but to concentrate their fire on the center embrasure of Fort Sumter, the National vessels got under way at 1.15 P. M.; but so much delay was caused by the cumbrous torpedo-catcher that had been rigged on the bow of the *Weehawken* that it was 2.50 P. M. before the vessels were in gunshot of Fort Moultrie. Soon afterward the ironclads were subjected to a terrific cross fire, and as the Confederates had long since determined the exact range, they fired with great accuracy. The *Weehawken* opened at 3.05 P. M., and ran close up to the rope obstructions between

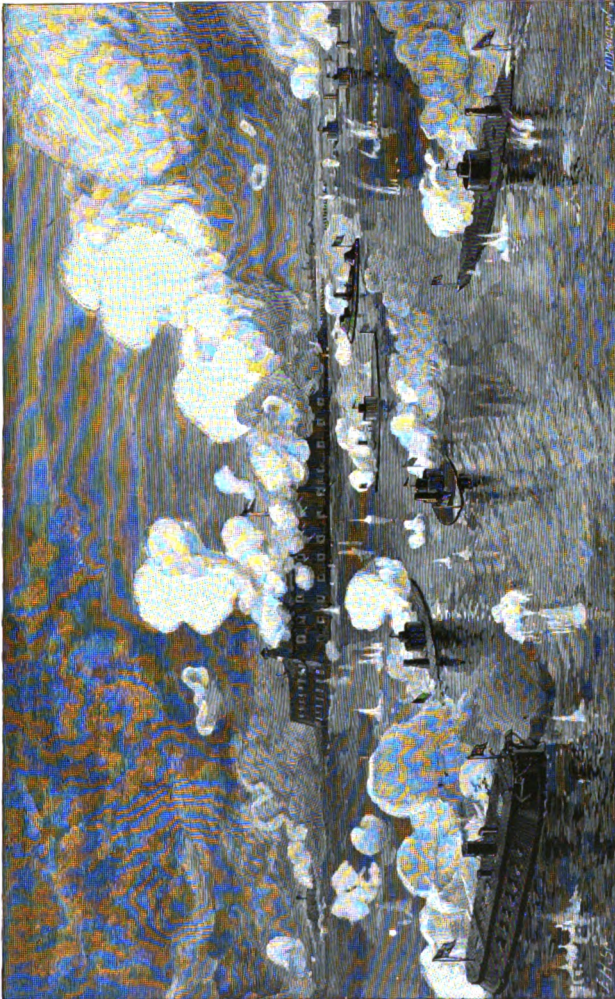
Forts Sumter and Moultrie, when a torpedo exploded near her bow ; but aside from straining the vessel a little it did no serious damage. Observing a row of casks ahead, and thinking it imprudent to entangle his vessel in the rope obstructions, Captain Rodgers turned the bow of his monitor seaward, but still kept up a heavy fire. The vessels following the *Weehawken's* lead were subjected to the same destructive fire. In order to avoid a collision with the *Nahant*, the *Keokuk* ran ahead and was exposed to a terrific fire. In thirty minutes she was struck ninety times, nineteen shot piercing her hull at the water line, while her turrets were riddled. Seeing that it was impossible to keep her afloat, Commander Rhind steamed out of range and anchored, and on the following morning, in spite of all efforts, she sank off Morris Island.

After braving the fire of sixty-nine guns for about an hour the ironclads retired, some of them seriously injured. During the attack the *New Ironsides* for an hour held a position directly over a boiler-iron torpedo containing two thousand pounds of powder, which was connected by wires with the shore. The Confederates made every effort to explode the machine, but without success, and the operator was accused of treachery, until it was learned that one of the wires had been severed by an ordnance wagon passing over it.

After this unsuccessful attack on Fort Sumter, Dupont, by the special direction of President Lincoln, kept up a formidable demonstration before Charleston, so as to divert the enemy's attention from other points. Learning that the Confederates were completing an ironclad of the *Merrimac* type at Savannah, with which they expected to raise the blockade, Dupont ordered the *Weehawken*, Captain John Rodgers, and the *Nahant*, Commander Downes, to Wassaw Sound to head it off. This ironclad, christened *Atlanta*, had been the British steamer *Fingal*, purchased on the Clyde in September, 1861. At that time she

was a new ship and had made one or two trips to the north of Scotland, at which time her log gave her thirteen knots an hour. In October, 1861, the *Fingal* sailed from Greenock, Scotland, with a number of Confederate officers aboard, and running into Holyhead, on a stormy night, she accidentally sank an Austrian brig, the *Siccardi*. Taking aboard some Confederate officers at this point, she arrived at Bermuda, November 2d, and afterward reached Savannah.

She made several efforts to run the blockade, but the National vessels so vigilantly guarded the coast that the Confederates found it impossible to get her to sea. She was then cut down to the main deck, which was widened amidships and overlaid with a foot of wood and iron plating, and upon this foundation was built the casemate, the sides of which inclined at an angle of thirty-three degrees. She was two hundred and four feet over all, had forty-one feet beam and drew fifteen feet nine inches of water, but her speed had been reduced to less than eight knots an hour. Yet even this speed would have made her a dangerous antagonist for the slow-going monitors. The top of the casemate was flat, and the pilot house rose three feet above it. The casemate was covered with four inches of iron plates in two layers, laid on top of three inches of oak and fifteen inches of pine. The *Atlanta* was fitted with a formidable ram and a spar torpedo. Her armament consisted of two 7-inch Brooke rifled guns, mounted on pivots in the bow and stern, and two 6.4-inch Brooke rifled guns in the broadside. The 7-inch guns could be used with broadside guns, so that there were three guns to each broadside. The Confederates were also building the *Georgia* after the same plan. This vessel was two hundred and fifty feet over all and had sixty feet beam, while her casemate was twelve feet high. The *Atlanta*, commanded by Lieutenant William A. Webb, was designed as a seagoing cruiser, and had twenty-one officers and one hundred and twenty-one men.



***Ironclads attacking Fort Sumter.***



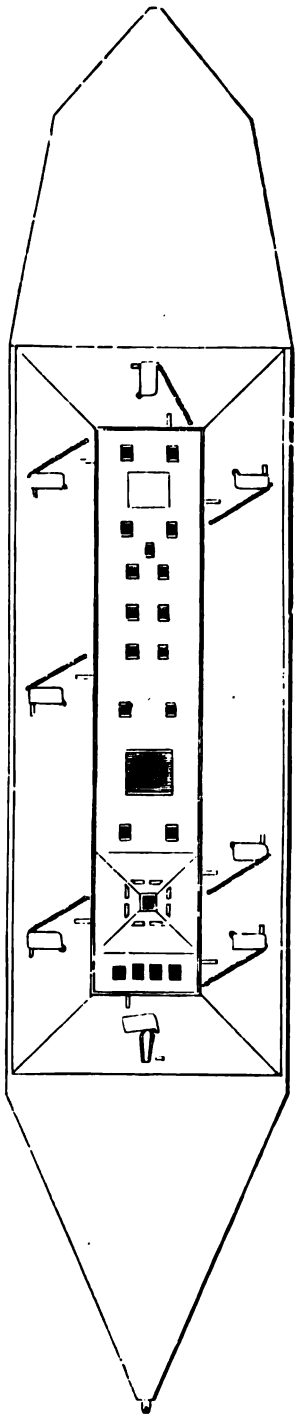
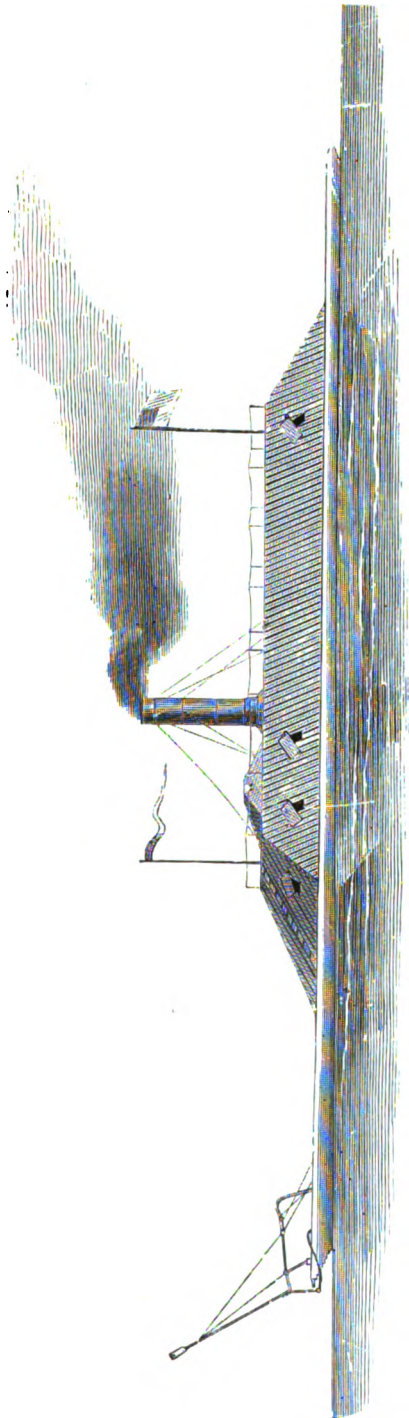
Shortly after daylight, June 17th, the *Atlanta* was discovered coming down Wilmington River, accompanied by several steamers filled with people eager to witness the expected victory over the monitors. On making out the ironclad, the *Weehawken* and the *Nahant* slipped their cables and ran down to the east end of Wassaw Island, where there was more room for manœuvring. Having led the *Atlanta* far enough out, the monitors, about 4.30 A. M., advanced to meet the enemy. While yet a mile and a half away Lieutenant Webb fired a rifled shell, which struck the water beyond the *Weehawken* and near the *Nahant*. Rodgers being considerably in advance of his consort, at 5.15 A. M. fired a shot at a distance of three hundred yards. This missile knocked a hole in the *Atlanta's* casemate, scattering a great quantity of wood and iron splinters over her gun deck, wounding sixteen men and prostrating about forty. Another shot from the *Weehawken* struck the top of the pilot house, crushing and driving down the bars on the top and sides, and wounding both pilots and two helmsmen. The *Weehawken* fired three more shots, one of them smashing a port shutter and starting the joint of the casemate with the deck.

The *Atlanta* fired in all eight shot, none of which struck the monitors. At 5.30 A. M., after an action of only fifteen minutes, Lieutenant Webb hauled down his colors. A prize crew was placed aboard the *Atlanta*, and she was taken to Port Royal. She was repaired, and in February, 1864, she was stationed at Hampton Roads.

On July 4, 1863, Rear-Admiral John Adolphe Bernard Dahlgren arrived at Port Royal, and on the 6th he succeeded Dupont in command of the fleet. With a view of making a combined naval and land attack on Morris Island, the monitors, at 4 A. M., July 10th, crossed the bar in the following order—*Catskill* (flagship), *Montauk* (now commanded by Commander Fairfax), *Nahant*, *Weehawken* (now commanded by Com-

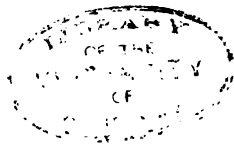
mander Edmund R. Colhoun)—and attacked the Confederate fortifications at the southern end of Morris Island. At the same time General Gillmore opened fire from the batteries he had erected on the northern end of Folly Island. After four hours of firing the Confederate batteries were silenced and the National troops took possession. The ironclads then advanced upon Fort Wagner, which mounted ten or twelve heavy guns, and, taking a position as close as the shoal waters would permit, at 9.30, opened fire. In spite of the suffocating heat, to which the men in the National vessels were little accustomed, a severe fire was maintained until noon, when, two engineers and several firemen in the *Catskill* being prostrated by the fearful heat, the monitors dropped out of action to allow their crews to rest, after which the fight was renewed until 6 p. m., when the vessels retired, having fired five hundred and thirty-four shells and shrapnel. The *Catskill*, being the flagship, received the largest share of the enemy's attention, and was struck sixty times. The side of her pilot house was bulged in, but the vessel was not disabled. The other monitors escaped—the *Weehawken* without a shot striking her, the *Montauk* struck only twice, and the *Nahant* six times. Our troops assaulted Fort Wagner on the 11th, but were repelled with heavy losses. On that and the following day the ships shelled the Confederate works.

With a view of diverting the enemy's attention from Morris Island, the troops under General A. H. Terry were sent up Stono River, accompanied by the *Pawnee*, Commander George B. Balch, the *McDonough*, Lieutenant Bacon, and the *Marblehead*, Lieutenant Scott. On July 9th the monitor *Nantucket*, the *Pawnee*, the *McDonough* and the *Williams* opened fire on James Island while the troops landed. Two days later a Confederate battery opened on the army transport *Hunter*, to which the *McDonough* and the *Williams* promptly responded. Early on the 16th the enemy opened on



*The Confederate ironclad Atlanta.*





the *Pawnee* and the *Marblehead*, disabling the steering wheel in the former. The fire of the *Pawnee* checked the advance of the Confederate troops.

On the 18th of July another naval and land attack was made on Fort Wagner, the vessels firing with great precision. At 4 P. M. they ran in with the flood tide within three hundred yards of the fort and silenced its guns. At the same time the gunboats *Paul Jones*, Commander Rhind; *Ottawa*, Lieutenant-Commander William Danforth Whiting; *Seneca*, Lieutenant-Commander William Gibson; *Chippewa*, Lieutenant-Commander Thomas Cadwalader Harris; *Wissahickon*, Lieutenant-Commander John Lee Davis, fired with their pivot guns at long range. General Gillmore had erected batteries on Morris Island, about a thousand yards south of Fort Wagner, and opened an effective fire. As evening came on the National troops made another assault, but were again repelled.

On the night of August 7th the Confederates captured a Federal barge and its crew between James and Morris Islands. On the following night Lieutenant Philip Porcher, in the *Juno*, while steaming below Morris Island, captured the first launch of the *Wabash* and a 12-pound howitzer. Twelve men of the launch's crew threw themselves overboard, five being drowned and seven being rescued by the other picket boats. The remaining eleven were captured. On August 4th a picket boat captured a Confederate launch in which was Major W. F. Warley of their artillery.

Several attempts were made by the Confederates to destroy the National vessels by torpedoes, their efforts being directed chiefly against the *New Ironsides*. On the night of October 5th Lieutenant William T. Glassell, in command of a David torpedo boat, managed to get alongside of the *New Ironsides* and exploded a torpedo three feet under water, but, although giving the massive ship a bad shaking up, it did no vital injury. The torpedo boat was destroyed and Lieutenant Glassell

was made a prisoner. Expeditions also were organized to surprise some of the monitors and "smother" them by wedging the turrets, covering the hatchways with tarpaulins and throwing explosives down the smokestacks. On the night of April 12th one of these expeditions was ready to start, but at the last moment the men were recalled.

The naval and land attack on Fort Wagner was not renewed until August 17th, when the ironclads *Weehawken* (flagship), *Catskill*, *Nahant*, *Montauk* and *New Ironsides* ran in with the flood tide within four hundred and fifty yards of the enemy's batteries and opened a heavy fire. The gunboats *Canandaigua*, *Mahaska*, *Cimmerone*, *Ottawa*, *Wissahickon*, *Dai Ching* and *Lodona* opened fire at a greater distance. In two hours Fort Wagner was silenced. Fort Moultrie occasionally reached the *New Ironsides* with her shot. While the bombardment was in progress the pilot house of the *Catskill* was struck by a heavy shot, and Commander George Washington Rodgers and Acting-Assistant-Paymaster Josiah G. Woodbury were killed, while Pilot Penton and Master's-Mate Wescott were wounded. After transferring their bodies to a tugboat the *Catskill* resumed her fire. At one time Dahlgren, transferring his flag to the *Passaic*, accompanied by the *Patapsco*, ran within two thousand yards of Sumter and opened an effective fire. From this time the land batteries kept up a constant fire on the forts and batteries.

Another attack was made on Sumter by five monitors on August 23d. Before daybreak they ran within range and kept up a heavy fire until 6 A. M. A night attack was made by all the ironclads on September 2d, and in five hours two hundred and forty-five shot were fired at the enemy. In this affair the ironclads were hit seventy-one times, one shot driving an iron fragment in the *Weehawken*, which broke Captain Badger's leg. During these attacks the four rifled guns that had been

landed and fired under the direction of Commander Foxhall A. Parker did good service.

On the night of September 6th the Confederates evacuated Morris Island. On the following night the *Weehawken*, in attempting to pass into the harbor between Sumter and Cumming's Point, grounded and remained in that position until daylight. As soon as she was discovered the Confederates opened from their batteries on Sullivan and James Islands. The monitor responded as well as she could, and some of her shells caused an explosion in Fort Moultrie, destroyed an 8-inch columbiad, killed sixteen men and wounded twelve. The *New Ironsides*, Captain Rowan, with the other monitors, observing the perilous position of their consort, ran in and opened a heavy fire on the enemy until the *Weehawken* was floated off. On this day the *Patapsco* made a handsome dash into the harbor to examine the obstructions.

With a view of surprising Fort Sumter, a boat expedition under the command of Commander Thomas Holdup Stevens attacked the fort on the night of September 8th. The boats moved in five divisions, commanded by Lieutenant-Commander Edward P. Williams, Lieutenants George C. Remey, S. W. Preston and Francis J. Higginson, and Ensign Charles H. Craven. There was also a detachment of marines under Captain McCawley, making a total force of four hundred men. Unfortunately, the Confederates had learned of the proposed attack. The boats in tow of a tug, when about eight hundred yards from Sumter, dropped the line, and, receiving their final instructions and the watchword, pulled for the fort. Lieutenant Higginson's division was to make a diversion toward the northwest front, while the main attack was to be made on the southeast front. Through a misunderstanding, however, the boats followed Higginson's division. When they approached the fort a heavy fire of shell, hand grenades and small arms was opened,

while the Confederate gunboats and rams poured in a cross fire. Several of the boats got their men ashore, where they were promptly captured, but the others, finding that the Confederates were prepared, retreated. The Nationalists had three men killed, while thirteen officers and one hundred and two men were made prisoners.

The army batteries again opened on Fort Sumter, October 28th, while the *Patapsco* and the *Lehigh* opened a cross fire with the 150-pounder rifled guns.

On the 6th of December, while the commander of the *Weehawken*, Commander Jesse Duncan, was aboard the flagship, the monitor suddenly sank. The disaster was due to leaks in the vessel. The monitors generally had been trimmed so that the stern would be deeper than the bow, by which means all water accumulating from leaks would run aft and could be thrown out by powerful pumps. The *Weehawken*, however, had been taking aboard a number of heavy shells. The ironclads frequently had been compelled to run out of action for want of ammunition, and to increase her supply the *Weehawken's* forward hold was filled with 15-inch shells. This brought her bow down so much that the water did not run aft freely. In the heavy swells the vessel took in considerable quantities of water through the hawse holes, which, accumulating in the forward extremity of the vessel, gradually brought her down by the head. This prevented the pumps from reaching the water that accumulated. The increase of water in the vessel was so gradual that there was no apprehension of danger until a few minutes before she went down, when the signal "Assistance required" was given. Five minutes afterward the *Weehawken* rolled heavily to starboard, and, gradually settling, she rose to an upright position and plunged to the bottom, carrying down four officers and twenty seamen.

At six o'clock on Christmas morning the *Marble-*

*head*, Lieutenant-Commander Meade, while at anchor near Legaréville had an engagement of an hour and a half with the Confederate batteries on John's Island. Hearing the sound of shotted guns, Commander Balch, in the *Pawnee*, with the mortar schooner *Williams*, Acting-Master Freeman, got under way and opened a cross fire on the Confederates, driving them from their guns. In this affair the *Marblehead* had three men killed and four wounded, and her hull had been struck twenty times.

While lying off Charleston on the night of April 18th, the *Wabash* was approached by a torpedo boat, but by slipping her cables and going ahead she avoided trouble. A round shot struck the machine, and it was seen no more. On the 9th of July a naval force assisted General Schimmelfennig, who commanded the troops in an attack on James Island.

On the morning of November 5th the *Patapsco* destroyed a sloop that had run aground near Fort Moultrie. Five days later the *Pontiac*, while endeavoring to pick up her anchor near Moultrie, was struck by a rifled shell, which killed five men and wounded seven. On the night of the 15th of January, 1865, the *Patapsco*, while on picket duty near the line of obstructions, was struck by a torpedo and sank in fifteen seconds, in five fathoms of water. Of her crew, numbering one hundred and seven men, only five officers and thirty-eight men escaped.

On the 17th of February, 1864, the *Housatonic* was sunk by a torpedo boat. This submarine craft had a singular history. She was built in Mobile, in 1863, and was designed to dive under water, the motive power being a propeller worked by eight men. While on her trial trip she sank, the crew of ten men suffocating. Being raised, she was taken to Charleston in 1864, where she was sunk by the wash of a passing steamer, her crew, with the exception of Lieutenant Payne, going down with her. She was raised, but while at the wharf near

Fort Sumter sank for the third time, carrying down all her men excepting Lieutenant Payne and two seamen. Soon afterward she made several successful dives in Stono River, but at last stuck her nose in the mud at the bottom of the river and the crew suffocated. For the fourth time she was raised, but in attempting to dive under a schooner for practice she fouled the cables, and again the crew perished. After being under water a week she was raised, and Lieutenant George E. Dixon, with Captain J. F. Carlson and five men, volunteered to go in her and blow up the *Housatonic*, in spite of the fact that the torpedo boat had already been the coffin of over thirty men. The daring men set out a little before nine o'clock, February 17th, and came near the Federal ship before discovery, and exploded the torpedo. The *Housatonic* sank quickly, carrying down Ensign Hazeltine and four men, while the rest of the crew took refuge in the rigging, which remained above water when the hull touched bottom. The torpedo boat, however, never came to the surface again. After the war, when the wrecks off Charleston were being removed, the boat was discovered on the bottom about a hundred feet from the *Housatonic*; all her men were at their stations.

On the approach of General Sherman's army the Confederates, on February 17th, evacuated Charleston.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE RAM ALBEMARLE.

THE loss of Roanoke Island and its adjacent waters was a severer blow to the Confederates than the National Government at first realized. Roanoke Island was the key to all the rear defenses of Norfolk, and ten of the most important rivers in North Carolina flowed into Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds, by means of which the Nationalists could make their way far into the interior. The Albemarle and Chesapeake and the Northwest and Norfolk Canals and two railroads—the Petersburg and Norfolk and the Seaboard and Roanoke—were largely in their power, and the command of General Huger was cut off from its most efficient means of transportation. Gosport Navy Yard and the Confederate forces at that point were endangered.

Realizing the importance of these sounds, the Confederates made several gallant efforts to recover them. On March 14, 1863, they made a sudden attack on Fort Anderson, which the Nationalists had built on the River Neuse, opposite New Berne, and bombarded the place for several hours; but with the assistance of the gunboats *Hetzel* and *Hunchback* this attack was repelled. On January 30, 1864, the Confederates made another dashing attempt to recapture the place. The gunboats *Lockwood*, *Commodore Hull* and *Underwriter* were guarding the river side of the town. A boat-expedition under the command of Commander John Taylor Wood made a night attack on the *Underwriter*, then commanded by Acting-Master Jacob Westervelt, and



in the desperate fight that took place on the decks of the gunboat the Nationalists were finally overpowered, having had nine killed, twenty wounded and nineteen made prisoners, while the Confederate loss was six killed and twenty-two wounded. The Confederates destroyed the *Underwriter* and escaped.

Recognizing the necessity of an ironclad of the *Merrimac* type to co-operate with them on these sounds, the Confederates began the construction of several such vessels, which, it was confidently asserted, would make short work of the frail wooden gunboats that composed the National fleet in the North Carolina waters. Early in 1863 they began work on the *Albemarle*, at Edward's Ferry, some miles up the Roanoke. The building of the craft proceeded under great difficulties. Several contracts for construction of war-vessels were made, but were broken off on account of the activity of the National forces. The greatest difficulty in the case of the *Albemarle* was in securing iron, and the country was ransacked for miles around for bolts, bars and metal in every form for the construction of the ironclad. Captain Cooke, who was chiefly interested in the *Albemarle*, became known as the "Ironmonger Captain." The keel was laid in an open cornfield, while an ordinary blacksmith's outfit constituted the plant for building. Even the most enthusiastic had little hopes of a successful war-ship constructed under such circumstances. The contractor was Gilbert Elliott, and the plans were perfected by Chief-Constructor John L. Porter, who also was concerned in the building of the *Merrimac*. The craft was one hundred and twenty-two feet over all, had forty-five feet beam and drew eight feet of water. The casemate, built of massive pine timbers, covered with four-inch planking, was sixty feet long and was covered with two layers of 2-inch iron. The vessel was propelled by twin screws, operated by engines of two hundred horse power each. She was armed with an Armstrong 100-pounder in the bow and one in the

stern, while the casemate was so pierced that they could be used as broadside or quarter guns.

On April 17th and 18th the Confederate troops under General Hoke made a desperate attack on Plymouth. The wooden gunboats *Miami* and *Southfield*, mounting five 9-inch guns and a rifled 100-pounder each, were in the river, under the command of Lieutenant Charles W. Flusser, and gave great assistance in checking the Confederate assaults. Lieutenant Flusser was aware that the *Albemarle* was nearly completed, but obstructions had been placed across the river a little above the town, which would prevent her coming down and taking part in the attack. The unusually high water in the river, however, enabled the ram to float over the obstructions, and on the night of April 18, 1864, under the command of Captain James Wallace Cooke, she approached the Union vessels. Down to the moment of going into action the men had been at work completing the ship. John N. Maffitt, of the Confederate navy, says: "At early dawn on the 18th steam was up, ten portable forges, with numerous sledge hammers, were placed on board, and thus equipped the never-failing Cooke started on his voyage in a floating workshop. . . . On the turtle-back numerous stages were suspended, thronged with sailors wielding sledge hammers. Upon the pilot house stood Captain Cooke, giving directions. Some of the crew were being exercised at one of the big guns. 'Drive in spike No. 10!' sang out the commander. 'On nut below and screw up! Serve vent and sponge! Load with cartridge!' was the next command. 'Drive in No. 11, port side—so! On nut and screw up hard! Load with shell—Prime!' And in this seeming babel of words the floating monster glided by on her trial trip and into action."

At midnight, April 19th, the *Albemarle* was discovered by the picket boats. In case the ram succeeded in passing the obstruction Lieutenant Flusser had connected the *Miami* and the *Southfield* with long spars

and chains, intending to hold the ironclad between the two vessels, which would in some degree counterbalance the Confederate advantage of armor plating. As soon as Captain Cooke found that he had been discovered, he hugged the southern shore, so as to avoid running between the two gunboats, and when nearly abreast of them he put on a full head of steam, and, running diagonally across the river, passed the *Miami's* bow and rammed the *Southfield*. The iron beak of the *Albemarle* struck the starboard bow and entered the fire room of the gunboat, and the chain plates on the forward deck of the ram became entangled with the *Southfield's* hull. As the *Southfield* settled and gradually sank she carried down the bow of the ironclad, so that the water poured through the forward open ports, and both vessels would have sunk had not the *Southfield*, on touching bottom, rolled over and released the *Albemarle*.

Both gunboats, as soon as the ironclad was discovered, had opened a heavy fire with shells; but these, on striking the iron casemate, were shivered into thousands of pieces. Lieutenant Flusser, who stood behind a gun in the *Miami*, fired a heavy shell at a distance of a few feet at the *Albemarle*, but the missile was only shattered into fragments, which, bounding back, killed Flusser, tearing him almost to pieces, and wounded a dozen other men. When it was seen that the *Southfield* would sink, the lashings were cut and many of the *Southfield's* crew jumped on the *Miami's* deck. Some of the *Miami's* people attempted to board the ram, but were repelled. Realizing the hopelessness of the struggle, the *Miami* with two tugboats retreated down the river, exchanging shot with the ram as long as the guns bore. On the following day Plymouth surrendered to General Hoke. The *Bombshell* had been sunk by the Confederate land artillery. This vessel was an ordinary canal-boat mounting one gun and two light pieces. She had been purchased for the Burnside

expedition together with four other vessels of this class, which bore the warlike names of *Grapeshot*, *Shrapnel*, *Grenade* and *Rocket*. These vessels were officered and manned by the Marine Artillery Corps under Colonel Haward, formerly of the revenue service. The Confederates afterward raised the *Bombshell*.

The Nationalists rightly conjectured that this was only a beginning of the programme laid out for the *Albemarle*, and that in a short time she might be expected in the sound to give battle to the wooden gunboats. In anticipation of this, Captain Melancton Smith stationed the double-ender gunboats *Mattabesett*, Commander John C. Febiger; *Sassacus*, Lieutenant-Commander Francis A. Roe; *Wyalusing*, Lieutenant-Commander Walter W. Queen; and *Miami*, Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant Charles A. French; and the ferryboats *Commodore Hull*, Acting-Master Francis Josselyn; *Whitehead*, Acting-Ensign G. W. Barrett; and *Ceres*, Acting-Master H. H. Foster, at the mouth of the Roanoke to watch for the *Albemarle*. The armament of the double-enders consisted of two 100-pounder Parrott guns, four 9-inch, four 24 pounders and two 12-pounder howitzers. The *Sassacus* carried two additional 20-pounders, while the *Miami* had been fitted with a torpedo, which was to be exploded under the hull of the ironclad, and she was also provided with a net, which was to entangle the propellers.

On May 5th the *Albemarle* came out of Roanoke River, accompanied by the *Bombshell*, filled with two hundred sharpshooters, and the transport *Cotton Plant*, for the purpose of escorting military supplies to Alligator River by order of Commander R. F. Pinckney, commander of the Confederate naval force in North Carolina waters. On the completion of this errand, Captain Cooke intended to make an extended cruise on the sound against the Union gunboats. As soon as the Confederate vessels were discovered, Captain Smith got his little squadron under way, and shortly before

5 P. M. drew near the enemy, then fourteen miles from the mouth of the Roanoke. It was reported that thirty armed launches, then being fitted out in Chowan River under Lieutenant R. B. Minor, would come out and join the *Albemarle*. The smaller Union vessels were directed to look out for them, the *Bombshell* and the *Cotton Plant*, while the larger vessels were to pass the ram, deliver their broadsides, and then, turning, repeat the manœuvre. While they were yet at some distance a puff of white smoke and a faint flash from the *Albemarle's* forward gun were seen, showing that the Confederates had opened the battle. This was quickly followed by another discharge, and two shells skillfully aimed cut away the rails and spars and wounded six men at the *Mattabesett's* rifled pivot gun.

The *Mattabesett*, followed by her consorts, avoided the *Albemarle's* attempt to ram, and passing, delivered broadsides of solid 9-inch and 100-pound shot. These missiles, although delivered at short range and with full charges of powder, glanced harmlessly from the iron casemate. The gunboats then turned and endeavored to renew the action on the other side, but the *Albemarle* also turned, thus forming the ships in a circle. Well knowing that he could not hope to inflict serious injury by cannon-fire alone, Captain Smith had instructed his vessels to attempt ramming. The *Sassacus*, after passing the *Albemarle*, captured the *Bombshell*. About this time she was four hundred yards from the ironclad, and observing her change course a little so as to avoid ramming from the *Mattabesett*, Roe saw his opportunity to strike a full blow on the broadside. He ordered his engineer to put oil and waste on the fires so as to get a full head of steam. Then, backing until he had secured the right position, he gave the order for full speed.

On went the swift *Sassacus* at the top of her speed, aimed straight for the ram's side, and all hands were ordered to lie down just before the collision took place.

The *Sassacus* struck the ironclad at right angles on the starboard side just abaft the casemate. The shock was terrific, careening the *Albemarle* over and tearing away the bow of the *Sassacus*. The *Sassacus* swung alongside, and her paddle-wheel, continuing to revolve, struck the deck of the ironclad and forced the vessel several feet below the surface of the water, and many of the Confederates believed they were sinking. The *Albemarle* righted, however, and it was discovered that she had not been seriously injured. About the time of the collision the Confederates fired 100-pound shot, which crashed through the wooden side of the *Sassacus* as if it had been so much paper. Assistant-Surgeon Edgar Holden, who was in the *Sassacus*, said: "Through the starboard shutter, which had been partly jarred off by the concussion, I saw the port of the ram not ten feet away. It opened, and like a flash of lightning I saw the grim muzzle of the cannon, the gun's crew naked to the waist and blackened with powder; then a blaze, a roar and the rush of the shell as it crashed through, whirling me round and dashing me to the deck."<sup>1</sup>

The Confederates followed this up with a shot that pierced one of the boilers of the *Sassacus*, and in an instant the lower deck was filled with steam, which scalded many of the crew. The enemy then attempted to board, but was repelled. The disabled *Sassacus* slowly drifted out of action, but heroically kept up a fire as long as she was in range. But another danger threatened the gunboat. In order to ram the ironclad, Captain Roe had ordered a full head of steam. The lower decks were now filled with steam and the remaining boilers were in danger of exploding. Realizing the peril First-Assistant-Engineer James M. Hobby called on his men to follow him into the fire-room and draw the fires. This was done none too soon, and,

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<sup>1</sup> Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. iv, p. 639.

blinded and helpless, the heroic engineer was then brought back to the deck.

The other vessels of the squadron kept up a heavy fire on the ironclad, but were unable to injure their shot-proof antagonist. As night came on, the *Albemarle* retired up the river. She had been severely battered, but not disabled. One of her two guns had its muzzle cracked, her smokestack was riddled, her tiller had been disabled and everything exposed outside of her casemate had been swept away. With a few repairs, she was once more as formidable as ever. On May 24th she came down the river to drag for torpedoes, but finding the *Whitehead* on guard she retreated. In this desperate battle the *Mattabesett* had two men killed and six wounded; the *Sassacus*, one killed, six wounded and thirteen scalded; the *Wyalusing*, one killed.

Although driven from the sound, the *Albemarle* was a constant menace to the fleet. An attempt was made on May 25th to destroy her with torpedoes. A party of volunteers from the *Wyalusing*—consisting of Coxswain John W. Lloyd, firemen Allen Crawford and John Laverty, and coal-heavers Charles Baldwin and Benjamin Lloyd—pulled up a branch of the Roanoke in a boat containing two torpedoes. Reaching a point opposite Plymouth, eight miles from the mouth, where the ram was moored, the men landed, and, carrying the torpedoes across the intervening swamp on a stretcher, they reached the Roanoke. Swimming across the river, John W. Lloyd and Baldwin hauled the torpedoes to the Plymouth side. The machines were then connected by a bridle and floated downstream, guided by Baldwin, with the intention of exploding them across the bow of the ram; but when within a few yards of the ironclad the line fouled a schooner, and at the same time Baldwin was discovered by a sentry on the wharf and a volley of musketry was fired. The men then scattered, and after wandering several days in the swamps they regained their vessels.

Hearing that the Confederates had nearly completed a sister ship to the *Albemarle*, the Government decided to attempt her destruction at her moorings. Two steam picket boats with spar torpedoes attached, which were the invention of First-Assistant-Engineer John L. Lay and were introduced by Chief-Engineer William Willis Wiley Wood, were fitted out under the direction of Edward Gregory in New York. The bows of the boats were decked over, and the engines were so constructed that when they were covered with tarpaulins all light and sound were shut in, and at low speed they made scarcely any noise. A 12-pounder howitzer was mounted in the bow, and a spar was fitted on the starboard bow, at the end of which a torpedo was to be attached.

Lieutenant William Barker Cushing was selected to command the expedition. This officer, although only twenty-one years old, was celebrated for the many daring and successful expeditions he had led while in command of the *Monticello* off Cape Fear River. On the night of February 28, 1864, accompanied by Acting-Ensign J. E. Jones, Acting-Master's-Mate William L. Howarth and twenty men, in two boats, he boldly passed Fort Caswell and landed in front of the hotel at Smithville, opposite which were the barracks in which the garrison of about a thousand men was quartered. Concealing his companions under the bank, Cushing, with two officers and a seaman, entered General Hébert's headquarters and captured an engineer officer. General Hébert himself was absent. Returning to the boat with his prisoner, Cushing pulled beyond the fort before the Confederates could fire on him, although the alarm had been given.

On the night of the following June 23d Cushing again entered the river with Howarth and fifteen men in a boat, for the purpose of destroying the ironclad ram *Raleigh*, which the Confederates had constructed for the purpose of raising the blockade. This vessel,



on the night of May 6, 1864, under the command of Captain William F. Lynch, and accompanied by two small river steamers, the *Yadkin* and the *Equator*, and under cover of darkness, attacked the blockading vessels. After exchanging shot with the National vessels without much damage on either side, the *Raleigh* returned to the river, but in crossing the bar she strained herself. It was deemed necessary to destroy this iron-clad, and Cushing volunteered for the hazardous service. When the boat was fifteen miles from the starting-point the moon revealed it to the enemy. Pulling downstream as if retreating until he reached the shade on the opposite bank, Cushing again headed upstream unobserved, and at daybreak, when within seven miles of Wilmington, he hid his boat in a swamp. On the following night he captured a fishing party and compelled them to act as guides, and with their aid he thoroughly examined the obstructions in the river three miles below the town. The next morning Cushing moved up one of the creeks until he came to a road, where he left his men and landed. Reaching the main road between Wilmington and Fort Fisher, he captured a courier with valuable information. Two hours later he attempted to seize another courier from the town, but, although chase was given on horseback, the courier escaped. Howarth then disguised himself in the clothes of the first courier, went to a store, and secured provisions without exciting suspicion, although conversing freely with the people he met. Having ascertained that the *Raleigh* had been destroyed by the Confederates, the adventurers on the third night set out on their return. When they reached the mouth of the river they were discovered and surrounded by nine guard boats and a schooner filled with troops. With indomitable pluck Cushing made a dash for the western bar, hotly pursued by the Confederate boats. Availing himself of the shade, he suddenly changed his course for New Inlet, and after

an absence of three days he rejoined his ship without loss.

On the completion of the picket boats in New York they were taken to Norfolk by way of the canals, but in crossing Chesapeake Bay one of them was lost. From Norfolk they reached Albemarle Sound by the canal in October, and Lieutenant Cushing reported to Commander Macomb, of the *Shamrock*, who was then the senior officer in these waters. At this time the *Albemarle* was commanded by Captain Alexander F. Warley, who in the ram *Manassas* had taken a distinguished part in opposing the passage of Farragut's ships at New Orleans. Every precaution had been taken by the Confederates to prevent the *Albemarle* from being blown up by torpedoes. She was moored to the wharf at Plymouth, where a thousand soldiers remained on guard, and a double line of sentries was stationed along the river. Her crew, now reduced to sixty men, was extremely vigilant. As an additional protection, cypress logs connected by chains and boomed off some distance from her hull made it impossible for a torpedo boat to approach within striking distance. At this point the river is about one hundred and fifty yards wide, and a gun was kept constantly loaded and trained, so as to sweep the bend around which an attacking party must come.

After several days spent in final preparations, the picket boat, in tow of the *Otsego*, was taken near the mouth of Roanoke River. On the night of October 26th Cushing went up the stream under favorable circumstances, but before he had proceeded far he ran aground, and before he could get afloat again it was too late to carry out his plans, and he returned to the *Otsego*. The night of October 27th came on dark and stormy, and about midnight Cushing again set out, having in tow a small cutter, for the purpose of capturing the Confederate guard in a schooner anchored near the *Southfield* and preventing them from sending up

an alarm rocket. Cushing had with him in the picket boat Acting-Ensign William L. Howarth, Acting-Master's-Mates Thomas S. Gay and John Woodman, Acting-Assistant-Paymaster Francis H. Swan, Acting-Third-Assistant-Engineers Charles L. Steever and William Stotesbury, and eight men : Samuel Higgins, first class fireman ; Richard Hamilton, coal-heaver ; William Smith, Bernard Harley, Edward J. Houghton, ordinary seamen ; Lorenzo Deming, Henry Wilkes and Robert H. King, landsmen. Cushing took his station in the stern. On his right was the imperturbable Howarth, and next to Howarth was Woodman, who was familiar with the river. Behind Cushing and a little to his right was Swan. The engineer and firemen were at their usual stations, while forward on the deck beside the howitzer was Gay. The plan of attack was to land a short distance below the ram and board her from the wharf, carry her by surprise and take her downstream. If unable to do this, Cushing determined to blow her up.

The night was dark, with occasional squalls of rain. Creeping cautiously up the river, the launch hugged the shore as closely as possible, so as to avail herself of the shadows of the trees for concealment. As the adventurers began to draw near the object of the expedition strict silence was observed, even the most necessary orders being given in a whisper, and the speed of the launch was reduced so as to lessen the chances of the sound of machinery or the churning of the screw being heard by the pickets who were known to be guarding each shore. Onward glided the phantom boat in sepulchral silence. The rippling of the dainty waves against her bow, parting in graceful, slanting lines and lapping the banks, was scarcely heard in the stillness of the night.

About 2.30 A. M. they were a mile below Plymouth, when the dark outlines of the wrecked *Southfield* (which the Confederates had attempted to raise), with

her hurricane deck out of water, began to assume shape, standing out ghostly and forbidding, as if a warning of what might be the fate of the audacious launch. Twenty-five Confederate soldiers had been stationed under a lieutenant in a schooner anchored near the wreck with a fieldpiece and a rocket. As the picket boat passed within thirty yards of the *Southfield* the men nerved themselves in readiness to board in case of discovery. But they were not challenged, although the outlines of the wrecked steamer were perfectly distinct, and the launch must have been visible from the shore. The guards were drowsy. Encouraged by this success, Cushing determined to land near the wharf, take the *Albemarle* by surprise, cut her moorings, and bring her into the sound.

Passing the *Southfield* with this object in view, the two boats rounded the bend of the river, which was commanded by the cannon, and came in full view of the town. At this place the Confederates had been in the habit of keeping fires all night, in order to discover the approach of an enemy, but on this occasion the fires had been allowed to go almost out, so that only a faint glimmer fell over the river. Avoiding this light as much as possible, Cushing crept stealthily toward the shore, intending to land.

The dark, gloomy outlines of the ram could now be distinctly seen at the wharf like some huge leviathan asleep. At this moment, when the adventurers began to hope that the surprise would be complete, a dog on shore began a furious barking and aroused the sentry. Quickly discovering the strange boats, the sentinels challenged, but no answer was given. Another challenge came, quickly followed by the sharp crack of a musket. In an instant the midnight quiet was changed into a hubbub of wild excitement. Other dogs joined in the barking, sentinels suddenly loomed up on both sides of the river, alarm rattles were sprung and bells were jangled, where but a moment before all had been

profound silence. Fuel was immediately heaped on the smoldering fires, which soon illuminated the river for miles. Soldiers, hastily aroused from sleep, were seizing arms and rushing to their quarters, while the harsh cries of the officers could be heard.

Knowing that it was useless to maintain further secrecy, Cushing shouted out, "Ahead fast!" at the same time cutting the tow line, and ordering the cutter to go down the river and capture the picket guard near the *Southfield*. The launch was now going through the water at full speed. Coming within a short distance of the ram, Cushing discovered for the first time that it was protected by a cordon of timber. Believing that the logs had been in the water long enough to become slimy, he sheered off one hundred yards so as to gather headway. Making a broad sweep out on the river, he attained the desired position, and then came down at full speed, hoping to slip over the logs and get within the barricades, where he could use his torpedo. As the launch came down a volley greeted her, filling the back of Cushing's coat with buckshot and tearing off the sole of his shoe, while the ominous snapping of the primers of the Confederate cannon showed that the great guns had missed fire. Paymaster Swan was slightly wounded, but no one was seriously injured.

As the launch approached the *Albemarle*, Cushing called out: "Leave the ram! We're going to blow you up!" Others of the party gave the Confederates similar advice, more with a view of inducing them to leave the vessel, however, than from any philanthropic motive of sparing lives other than their own. Just then the launch fired her howitzer. Passing over the logs she approached the side of the ram where her men found themselves looking down the yawning muzzle of a cannon not ten feet away.

At this moment Cushing lowered the torpedo spar, and when assured that it was well under the ram's overhang he detached it with a vigorous pull. The

torpedo slowly rose, and when he felt it touch the *Albemarle's* bottom he pulled the trigger line. A dull, muffled explosion was heard, a column of water shot upward, the ram careened and "a hole in her bottom big enough to drive a wagon in" was made.<sup>1</sup> The torpedo had been exploded none too soon, for almost at the same instant the Confederates fired a rifled gun loaded with 100 pounds of canister, the muzzle of the gun being only a few feet from the adventurers. The report was terrific. It seemed as if the launch had been blown to pieces, but fortunately the explosion of the torpedo a fraction of a second before the gun was fired destroyed the aim of the gunners. Had there been a second's delay in exploding the torpedo the entire boat's company would have been blown into eternity; but everything had been arranged under the immediate supervision of Cushing, and the programme had been carried out to the letter without the slightest hitch or delay.

The Confederates twice called on the party to surrender, and several of the men did so; but Cushing, having accomplished his purpose, called on every man to save himself, and, taking off his sword, revolver, shoes and coat, he jumped into the river and boldly struck off downstream. After swimming half a mile he met Woodman, who was almost exhausted, and helped him along a short distance, when Cushing also became exhausted. Being unable to get to shore, Woodman was drowned, and it was only with great difficulty that Cushing managed to reach the bank. At daylight he hid himself in a swamp near the fort. Meeting a negro, from whom he learned that the *Albemarle* had sunk, Cushing, on the following night, escaped down the river, and securing a skiff rejoined the squadron, almost dead with exhaustion and exposure. Samuel Higgins, the fireman, was drowned.

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the *Albemarle's* carpenter.

The others surrendered, and were taken ashore in boats.

For this brilliant service Cushing received a vote of thanks from Congress and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-commander. In many respects the destruction of the *Albemarle* was similar to Stephen Decatur's destruction of the frigate *Philadelphia* in the harbor of Tripoli in 1804. Lord Nelson at that time declared it to be "the most heroic act of the age"; while Captain Warley, of the *Albemarle*, generously admitted that "a more gallant thing was not done during the war." The *Albemarle* was raised and taken to Norfolk, where in 1867 she was stripped and sold.

Learning that the *Albemarle* was destroyed, Commander W. H. Maccomb, on October 30th, attempted to reach Plymouth with his flotilla, but the Confederates had effectually blocked the channel by sinking the guard schooner near the wreck of the *Southfield*. On October 31st he passed into Roanoke River by Middle River, and engaged the Confederate batteries in a spirited cannon fire at comparatively short range, and for over an hour dropped shells in and around the Confederate works. Finally one shell exploded the enemy's magazine, upon which the Confederates retreated. The vessels engaged were the double-enders *Shamrock* (flagship), Lieutenant Rufus K. Duer; *Otsego*, Lieutenant-Commander H. N. T. Arnold; *Wyalusing*, Lieutenant-Commander Earl English; *Tacony*, Lieutenant-Commander W. T. Truxtun; the gunboats *Commodore Hull*, Acting-Master Francis Josselyn, and *Whitehead*, Acting-Master G. W. Barrett; and the tugs *Belle*, Acting-Master James G. Green, and *Bazley*, Acting-Master Mark D. Ames. The National loss in this affair was six killed and nine wounded. Afterward the *Otsego* and the *Bazley* were sunk by torpedoes.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### ATLANTIC AND GULF COASTS.

THE brilliant victories of Stringham, Dupont and Farragut at Hatteras, Port Royal and New Orleans early in the war compelled the Confederates to abandon many of their strongholds on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts and to concentrate their energies on a few important ports. This resulted in the extraordinary strength of Mobile on the Gulf and Savannah, Charleston and Wilmington on the Atlantic. From the beginning of the war the Government endeavored to maintain a vigorous blockade on the southern coast, a distance of about three thousand miles. In many places the coast line was doubled and penetrated by innumerable inlets and intricate channels that gave great facilities to the blockade-runner, the South Atlantic squadron alone, having more than twenty small inlets to guard. One of the most important objects of the blockade was the interruption of commerce between the seceding States and Europe. The States of the Confederacy, being largely agricultural, had always been dependent on the outside world for manufactured articles, and as they had little floating capital it was necessary for them to realize on their crops.

Ever since Admiral Warren, in 1813, issued his proclamation declaring the United States to be in a state of blockade, it has been acknowledged that a blockade to be binding must be effective; and when President Lincoln, six days after the surrender of Fort Sumter, declared the Southern States to be blockaded, he undertook a task that called for all the maritime re-



sources of the North. Four neutral ports near the coast of the Confederacy speedily became headquarters of the blockade-runners. They were Matamoras in Mexico on the Rio Grande, Nassau in the Bahamas, Havana and Bermuda. These places, excepting Havana, were insignificant towns until the outbreak of the war, when they suddenly sprang into prominence.

At first the blockade was irregular and imperfect, but as the squadrons were increased from time to time it was vigorously maintained. The Atlantic squadron was divided into the North and South Atlantic blockading squadrons, the former being directed against the coast of North Carolina and Virginia, while the latter cruised from the northern coast of South Carolina to Florida. On September 23d, Flag-Officer Goldsborough assumed command of the North Atlantic blockading squadron, and on October 29th Flag-Officer Dupont commanded the South Atlantic blockading squadron. That the blockade was rigorously and effectively maintained will be seen from the number of prizes taken or destroyed. At Wilmington, sixty-five blockade-runners were intercepted, while the total number of prizes made during the war was fifteen hundred and four, of which three hundred and fifty-five were destroyed, and the others, valued at thirty-two million dollars, were brought into port. Early in March, 1862, Flag-Officer Dupont occupied Fernandina and St. Augustine, Fla., with little opposition. Commander Christopher Raymond Perry Rodgers hastened up the river with the *Ottawa* and the steam launches and captured St. Mary's. Acting-Lieutenant Thomas A. Budd and Acting-Master S. W. Mather, commanders of the Union steamers *Penguin* and *Henry Andrew*, while examining an abandoned earthwork near Mosquito inlet, March 22d, were fired upon from an ambush and killed. Three of the crew were killed and two were wounded and taken prisoners. Fort Clinch and Brunswick were occupied.

While a boat's crew from the *Pocahontas* was

ashore, February 11, 1862, to procure fresh beef near Brunswick, it was fired upon by forty Confederate soldiers in ambush and two of the crew were killed and six wounded. Assistant-Surgeon Archibald C. Rhoades refused a summons to surrender, and by the aid of Paymaster Kitchen regained the vessel with the rest of the crew.

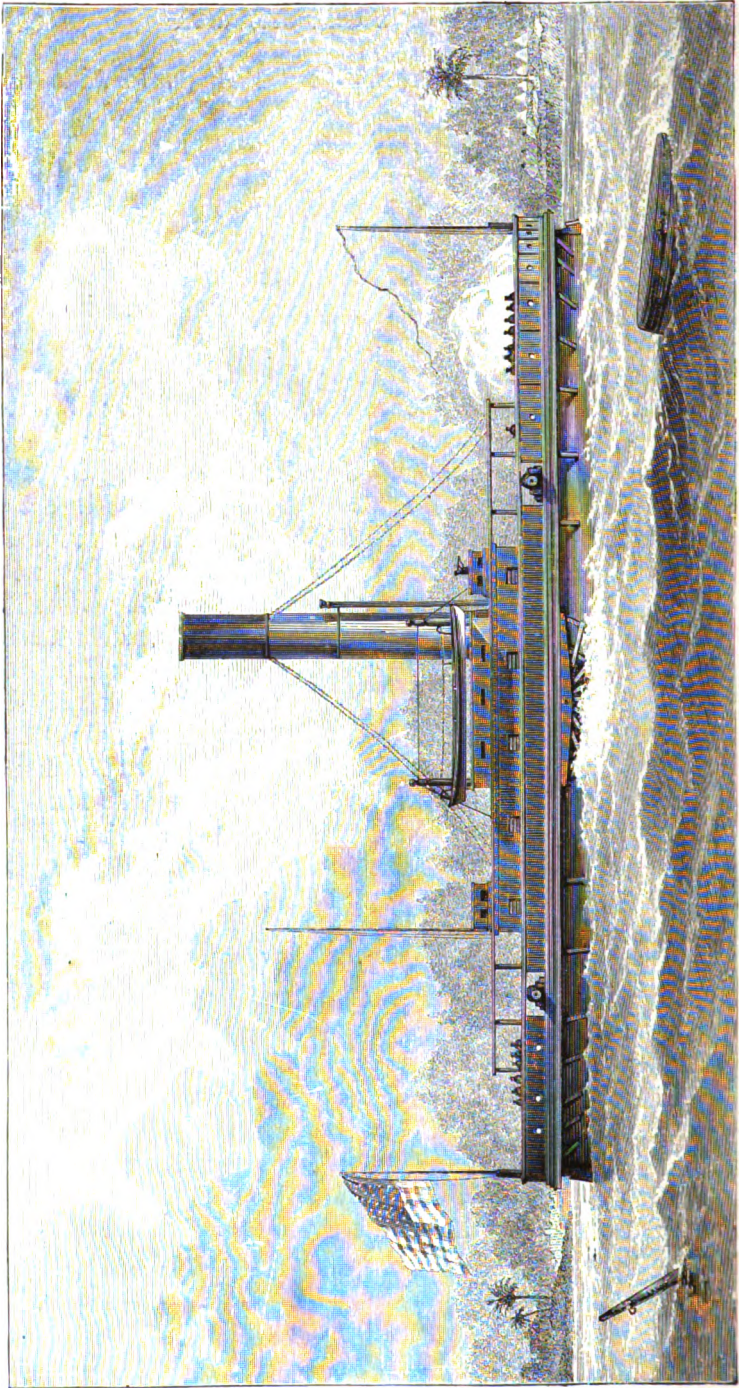
On April 10th, Commander Rodgers, with Lieutenant John Irwin, Acting-Master Robertson, Acting-Midshipmen Mortimer L. Johnson and Frederick Pearson, Captain of Forecastle Lewis A. Brown, Quartermaster George H. Wood and a detachment of seamen from the *Wabash*, landed on Tybee Island with three 30-pounder Parrott guns and one 24-pounder, and assisted the army in the capture of Fort Pulaski.

Although Hatteras and Port Royal had been captured, the Confederates were constantly on the watch for an opportunity to retake these posts. To guard against this danger Dupont kept his gunboats and launches constantly engaged in patrolling the intricate water-ways and sounds that girded the Southern coast. This service was attended with much hardship and exposure. The first move of the Confederates after losing Port Royal was to cut off that place from inland communications, by placing obstructions in the Coosaw River and Whale Branch and by erecting batteries at Port Royal Ferry and near Seabrook. This they believed would prevent the gunboats from ascending those streams, and would enable them to throw a large force upon Port Royal Island and capture a regiment of soldiers holding Beaufort. Commander Rodgers was directed to co-operate with the troops under General Stevens in an attack on these works with the following vessels: the *Ottawa*, Lieutenant Thomas Holdup Stevens; the *Pembina*, Lieutenant John Pine Bankhead; the *Seneca*, Lieutenant Daniel Ammen; the armed ferryboat *Ellen*, Acting-Lieutenant Budd; and the tugboat *Hale*, Acting-Master Foster. Added

to this force were four boats from the *Wabash*, each armed with a howitzer, under the command of Lieutenants John Henry Upshur, Stephen Bleecker Luce, John Irwin and Acting-Master Louis Kempff. In order that the enemy might not be forewarned of the attack, these vessels did not leave Beaufort until dark, December 31, 1861. Early on the morning of January 1, 1862, the troops were landed, together with two howitzers and a body of seamen under Lieutenant Irwin. In spite of every precaution the Confederates had learned of the intended expedition and were prepared to dispute the landing. They were soon put to flight, however, by a fire from the gunboats. The next morning they appeared in force but were again dispersed.

Captain Charles H. Davis got under way for a reconnoissance near Savannah, January 26, 1862, with the gunboats *Ottawa* and *Seneca*, and the steamers *Isaac Smith*, Lieutenant James William Augustus Nicholson, *Potomaska*, Lieutenant Pendleton Gaines Watmough, *Ellen*, Acting-Lieutenant Budd, *Western World*, Acting-Master Samuel B. Gregory, two armed launches of the *Wabash*, and the transports *Cosmopolitan*, *Delaware* and *Boston*, having on board two thousand four hundred troops under Brigadier-General Horatio Gouverneur Wright. As the vessels entered Little Tybee River Fort Pulaski did not fire on them, as it had no guns mounted on that side. Anchoring near a line of piles beyond Wilmington Island, Captain Davis sent out boat parties to explore the creeks and inlets. The approach of the expedition caused great excitement at Savannah. At five o'clock in the evening several Confederate steamers came in sight, and as they had it in their power to select positions and give battle it was thought that an engagement would result. At 11.15 the next morning these steamers, having scows in tow, passed down the river and opened a spirited fire on the Union flotilla. Three





*A typical ferry gubboat, the Ellen.*

of the steamers passed down to Fort Pulaski, but the other two were driven back.

Acting-Master William D. Urann, of the *Crusader*, while assisting a Government agent at North Edisto, was severely wounded by the enemy. At three o'clock on the morning of April 19th a force of sixty men reached the neighborhood and after a short skirmish put the Confederates to flight. In this affair three of our seamen were wounded. On the 26th of April the *Wamsutta*, Lieutenant Alexander Aldebaran Semmes, with the *Potomska*, went up the Riceborough River and at Woodville Island was fired upon with musketry, by which two men were killed. The Unionists returned the fire and soon routed the enemy. On the 29th of April, while a boat crew from the *Hale* was destroying a battery at the junction of the Dawho and South Edisto Rivers, the *Hale* was fired upon by a Confederate battery. The Unionists returned the fire and routed the enemy. Twenty men then landed and destroyed the battery, which consisted of two 24-pounders. Commander George Aldrich Prentiss in the *Albatross*, accompanied by the *Norwich*, made a reconnoissance at Georgetown, S. C., on May 21st. On the following day while they were passing the town a woman appeared in the belfry of the church and displayed the Confederate flag. The Union vessel did not notice the incident, as, said Commander Prentiss, "a contest in the streets would have compelled me to destroy the city."

Commander Charles Steedman in the *Port Royal*, with the armed steamer *Darlington*, Lieutenant-Commander Williams, and the *Hale*, Lieutenant Alfred T. Snell, on the 5th of October attacked some batteries the enemy had erected on St. John's Bluff, about seven miles from the mouth of St. John's River. The Confederates were quickly driven from their works and the guns were seized. The steamer *Morton* was also captured farther up the river. In the latter part of November, 1862, the *Albatross*, Lieutenant-Commander

John E. Hart, destroyed extensive salt works at St. Andrew's Bay, Florida.

In the summer of 1862 Farragut sent several light squadrons to cruise along the coast of Texas. One of these, under the command of Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant John W. Kittredge, captured Corpus Christi; another, under Commander William Bainbridge Renshaw, took Galveston; and a third, consisting of the light gunboats *Kensington*, Acting-Master Crocker, and *Rachel Seaman*, Acting-Master Quincey A. Hooper, and a launch with the mortar schooner *Henry Janes*, was sent to Sabine Pass. On August 12th the yacht *Corypheus*, armed with a 30-pounder Parrott gun, with the *Elmer*, chased several Confederate vessels ashore near Corpus Christi. Four days later a squadron consisting of the *Corypheus*, the *Sachem* and the schooner *Reindeer* was fired upon by a battery and the *Sachem* was injured, while the magazine of the *Corypheus* exploded. After silencing the battery the vessels retired out of range, but on the following day Kittredge gallantly came into action again. Thirty men with a 12-pounder howitzer were landed and by the aid of the cruisers succeeded in repelling an attack of one hundred and fifty infantry and afterward a charge of two hundred and fifty cavalry. Seeing that it was impossible to hold the town without troops, Kittredge retired, shortly after which he and seven men were surprised and made prisoners.

The vessels ordered to Sabine Pass opened fire on the fort defending that place September 24th. It mounted four 32-pounders, while the vessels could use only a 20-pounder rifled gun and two 32-pounders. The Confederates responded briskly, but during the night they retired.

At half past one o'clock New Year's morning, 1863, the Confederate cotton-protected steamers *Bayou City* (carrying a 68-pounder gun and two hundred soldiers) and *Neptune* (armed with two small howitzers and

carrying one hundred and sixty men) made an attack on the Union squadron off Galveston, which at that time consisted of the gunboats *Westfield*, *Harriet Lane*, *Clifton*, *Owasco*, *Sachem* and *Corypheus*. At the same time Confederate troops made an attack on the Union garrison, which was quartered on a wharf. The *Sachem* and the *Corypheus* took a position close inshore to assist the troops. About daylight the *Harriet Lane*, Commander Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright, approached the Confederate steamers, opening fire with her bow gun. The *Bayou City* replied with her 68-pounder, but at the third discharge it burst. Wainwright rammed the *Bayou City* and carried away her wheel-guard, at the same time pouring in a broadside. The *Neptune* rammed the National gunboat, but was so injured by the collision that she hauled off and sank near the scene of action. As her upper deck remained above water the troops were still able to fire on the Union vessel. Running alongside and making fast, the soldiers in the *Bayou City* poured volley after volley into the *Harriet Lane*, mortally wounding Wainwright and Lieutenant-Commander Edward Lea, together with several of the men, upon which the vessel surrendered. At the time of the attack the *Westfield* was aground at another entrance to the bay, and the *Clifton* went to her assistance. Finding he could not get his vessel afloat, Commander Renshaw blew her up, but in doing so he, with Lieutenant Charles W. Zimmerman, Acting-Second-Assistant-Engineer William R. Greene and about thirteen of the crew, was killed. The surviving senior officer of the National squadron, Lieutenant-Commander Law, of the *Clifton*, believing that none of his vessels could cope with the *Harriet Lane*, retired and raised the blockade.

The occupation of Mexico by the French, June 10, 1863, and the efforts of the French agents to detach Texas from both the United States and the Confederacy, made it desirable to have a demonstration in that quar-



ter, and on September 5th Major-General Franklin with four thousand National troops sailed from New Orleans for Sabine Pass, accompanied by the gunboats *Clifton*, *Sachem*, *Arizona* and *Granite City*, under the command of Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant Frederick Crocker. Crossing the bar at Sabine Pass September 8th, the gunboats, at 3.30 P. M., opened as heavy a fire as their light armaments would permit, but in half an hour a shot pierced the *Sachem's* boiler, and shortly afterward the *Clifton* grounded and also received a shot in her boiler. Both vessels maintained a spirited fire to the last, but in thirty minutes they were compelled to surrender, upon which the expedition was abandoned. The *Clifton* had ten killed and nine wounded, and the *Sachem* seven killed and a number injured. Thirty-nine men were reported missing. The sailing vessel *Morning Light* and the schooner *Velocity* also were captured off Sabine Pass.

Repelled at Sabine Pass, the Nationalists next organized an expedition for the purpose of making a landing near the Rio Grande, and on October 26th three thousand five hundred soldiers under Generals Banks and Dana sailed from New Orleans under convoy of the *Monongahela*, Commander James Hooker Strong, the *Owasco* and the *Virginia*. On November 2d they effected a landing on Brazos Island, near the mouth of the Rio Grande. Leaving a garrison at Brownsville, the expedition cruised along the coast to Corpus Christi, on Mustang Island, where troops were landed and captured a 3-gun battery. Matagorda Bay also was taken without serious opposition.

The naval operations in the Chesapeake and adjoining waters were closed with a number of spirited actions. On April 19, 1863, a flotilla consisting of eight small gunboats, under the command of Lieutenant Roswell H. Lamson, assisted three hundred men under General Getty in capturing a battery at Hill's Point, while on the 22d Lieutenant William Barker Cushing

led a successful land expedition to Chuckatuck. While engaged in a reconnoissance up the James River, August 4th, the ferryboat *Commodore Barney* was seriously injured by a torpedo. On the following morning the monitor *Sangamon*, the *Commodore Barney* and the small steamer *Cohasset*, under the command of Captain Guert Gansevoort, had two indecisive engagements with masked batteries, in one of which the *Commodore Barney* had a shot through her boiler. The National loss was three killed and three wounded. While exploring Four Mile Creek, May 6, 1864, the little gunboat *Commodore Jones* was blown up by a torpedo and half of her people were killed or wounded, and two days later the *Shawsheen* was destroyed by a shore battery.

The torpedo that destroyed the *Commodore Jones* was an electric mine, and marks a new era in this department of naval warfare. In the autumn of 1862 the Confederates organized an electrical torpedo department, placing at the head of it Lieutenant Hunter Davidson, who commanded the forward division of guns in the *Merrimac* in her action with the *Monitor*, March 9, 1862. It is instructive to note, in the light of the present developments, the objections that were raised against this "uncivilized and illegitimate" method of warfare, not only by the Nationalists but by the Confederates themselves. Hunter Davidson says: "One of the Northern commanders sent word to me that I was not engaged in civilized or legitimate warfare, and that he would not respect a flag of truce if I came with it, which amused me very much at the time, in view of General Grant's explosion of the mine at Petersburg. . . . Papers were picked up on the banks of the James River after the destruction of the *Commodore Jones* offering a reward of twenty-five thousand dollars for my head, but I never believed this was done with any other motive than to intimidate. My own brother naval officers used to look at

me at times with expressions of pity and even contempt, and the Confederate States navy chief of ordnance told the Secretary of the Navy that it was 'abominable that the labor and resources of the country should be wasted in such nonsense.'"<sup>1</sup>

In spite of opposition from within and without the Confederates pushed their torpedo work with remarkable success, considering their lack of skilled mechanics, materials and machinery, it being necessary to send to Europe or North for the insulated wires for the electric torpedoes. The destruction of the *Commodore Jones* was caused by a torpedo mine containing eighteen hundred pounds of sporting powder and placed in six fathoms of water. It was ignited under the personal direction of Hunter Davidson, who says: "The explosion was effected at midday, when the gunboat was accompanied by a powerful fleet. In the fleet was a servant of mine, a negro boy, who warned the officers that they were on dangerous ground. I was aware that the negro had deserted in the direction of the fleet, and for that reason had wires leading to the batteries on both sides of the river, believing that if the Nationalists cut the wires on the high left bank they would be content with that and proceed, not supposing that there was a battery with mines on the other side also, which was a swamp.

"My surmise was somewhat correct, for had the battery station on the left bank been occupied we should have been discovered, as at one time the *Commodore Jones* was high enough upstream to have looked into the station. She could have been destroyed sooner, but we were waiting for an ironclad. The orders given on board were distinctly heard by us, and it was in consequence of certain orders that the *Commodore Jones* was destroyed as she dropped back and over the mine. . . . Many valuable articles from

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<sup>1</sup> Hunter Davidson to the author.

the wreck were picked up, especially official correspondence of importance to the Confederate Government. The captain's trunk, private correspondence, Bible, etc., were carefully packed up and sent at once to Major Mulford, of the United States flag of truce steamer."

Mr. Davidson also succeeded in exploding a fifty pound torpedo under the frigate *Minnesota*, near where a great quantity of shot and shell were stored in her hold ready for transportation southward. Mr. Davidson says: "The torpedo was too small. I thought so at the time. I could not get a larger steamer suitable for the purpose, and the one I used would not manœuvre with a larger torpedo down in an ordinary seaway in such open waters as the mouth of the James. . . . It must be considered that I had to explode my torpedo against perpendicular sides. . . . As to being drawn into the hole in case I had made one in the side of the *Minnesota*, I had provided for that by previous practice of direct ramming at an angle, always stopping the engine before striking, and instructing the engineer to go full speed astern as soon as he felt the blow, without waiting for orders.

"My torpedo struck the side of the *Minnesota* and exploded in just about one second after contact—an excellent result for the fuse of that day. The pole was shattered to pieces and the little steamer driven back forcibly. When she backed off about fifty yards and stopped to reverse and go ahead, her single cylinder engine caught 'on centre' and there we remained—it seemed to me about forty years—under the fire of the *Minnesota*. The engineer, Mr. Wright, one of the bravest and coolest men I ever knew, got the engine free again, having to feel for the different parts in the dark. The little steamer was peppered all over with bullets, several passing through my clothes, but we got off without any injury. I then steered in the direction of Norfolk to throw pursuers off the scent, which proved successful."

Mr. Davidson adds: "Mr. Mallory, the Secretary of the Navy, in writing me after the war, uses these words: 'The destruction of the *Commodore Jones*, the leading vessel of Lee's fleet, which was ascending the James River to co-operate with General Butler in the attack on Drewry's Bluff, by causing the retirement of that fleet, undoubtedly saved Drewry's Bluff, the key of Richmond.' And in the same letter he adds: 'I always regarded the submarine department under your command as equal in importance to any division of the army.'

"Admiral Porter states that the man who fired the torpedo that destroyed the *Commodore Jones* was shot from one of Lee's boats. This is a mistake. He was still living in 1889. The man shot was a carpenter of no torpedo importance."

On the destruction of the *Merrimac*, or *Virginia*, the Confederates set about building other ironclads of the same type in the James, and by 1864 they had completed the *Fredericksburg*, the *Richmond* and the *Virginia No. 2*, the last being the most formidable of all, having six inches of armor on her sides and eight on her ends, and carrying two 8-inch and six 6-inch Brooke rifled guns. The Nationalists had stationed the monitors *Tecumseh*, *Canonicus* and *Saugus*, the turret ship *Onondaga*, and the captured ram *Atlanta* with a view of meeting the Confederate ironclads. On January 23, 1865, while all the Union ironclads, except the *Onondaga*, Commander William A. Parker, were absent, the enemy's rams, under the command of Commodore John K. Mitchell, came down the river, but the *Virginia No. 2* and the *Richmond* ran aground. In this condition they were subjected to a heavy fire from the Union batteries and the *Onondaga*, and when floated off they retired up the river.

The blockade of Wilmington, N. C., had been maintained during the war by a force numbering from thirty to forty vessels, yet a large percentage of the

blockade-runners succeeded in getting into and out of the harbor. The two widely separated entrances of the port afforded the Confederates unusual facilities for eluding the vigilance of our officers, and toward the close of 1864 it was decided to make a determined attack upon the forts guarding the place. These consisted of Fort Caswell, guarding the southern entrance of Cape Fear River, and Fort Fisher, at the northern entrance. The latter was one of the most formidable earthworks on the Atlantic coast. Every art of engineering had been used to make it impregnable. The parapets were twenty-five feet thick, with an average height of twenty feet, while the traverses, ten feet higher, were ten to twelve feet thick. The fort mounted forty-four guns. Its commander was Colonel William Lamb. A combined navy and army expedition was projected against this place under the command of Rear-Admiral David Dixon Porter and General Benjamin Franklin Butler, and an imposing fleet of about one hundred and fifty vessels was collected in Hampton Roads.

As a preliminary blow, the old steamer *Louisiana* was filled with powder, which was to be exploded under the walls of the fort. Notwithstanding the fate of Lieutenant Somers and his gallant shipmates in the ketch *Intrepid*, which was blown up with all hands in the harbor of Tripoli in 1804, Commander Alexander Colden Rhind, Lieutenant Samuel W. Preston, Second-Assistant-Engineer Anthony T. E. Mullen and Master's-Mate Boyden, with seven men, volunteered for service in this floating mine. On the night of December 23, 1864, the *Louisiana*, in tow of the *Wilderness*, Acting-Master Arey, having the *Gettysburg*, Lieutenant Lamson, in company, set out on her perilous mission. She was towed near her station and guided by Mr. Bradford, of the Coast Survey, and Mr. Bowen, the pilot. At 11.30 P. M. the *Louisiana* dropped her towline and steamed boldly toward Fort

Fisher. When four hundred yards from the fort the steamer anchored and the sailors were put into a boat, while Commander Rhind and Lieutenant Preston proceeded to light the fuses, which had been arranged by Engineer Mullen. These officers then got into a boat and reached the *Wilderness* at midnight. The vessel then steamed out to sea at full speed, and when twelve miles out hove to. At 1.40 A. M. the powder blew up, inflicting little or no injury upon the enemy.

At daylight, December 24th, the fleet stood in to begin the attack on Fort Fisher. The signal to engage the fort was given at 11.30 A. M., and for the next few hours one of the most stupendous cannonades in history was witnessed. The fort seemed to be literally covered with bursting shells, which dug tremendous craters in the parapets. But aside from exploding two service magazines and burning several buildings the bombardment did no material injury, and at sunset Porter signaled the vessels to retire. As little difficulty was found in silencing the guns of the fort, the National vessels were scarcely injured by the enemy's shot. The *Osceola* was struck by a shell, which came near her magazine and caused a serious leak. The *Mackinaw's* boiler was exploded by a shell, but she fought the battle out. The principal injuries in the Union fleet were caused by the bursting of guns, most of them 100-pounder rifled Parrott guns. In this way eight men were killed and eleven wounded in the *Ticonderoga*, two killed and three wounded in the *Yantic*, five killed and eight wounded in the *Juniata*, one killed in the *Mackinaw* and one wounded in the *Quaker City*. On the following day, December 25th, the bombardment was renewed. Seventeen gunboats under the command of Captain Oliver S. Glisson, aided by the *Brooklyn*, covered the landing of the troops. About three thousand men were landed, but on a close inspection of the fort General Butler deemed it unadvisable to attack. After a bombardment of seven

hours the fleet retired again, and the attack was postponed. In these affairs the fleet lost twenty men killed and sixty-three wounded, while the Confederate loss was six killed and fifty-two wounded. Eight of the forty-four guns of the fort were rendered unserviceable.

A second expedition against Fort Fisher sailed on January 12th, and on January 13th six thousand men were landed, General Alfred Howe Terry commanding the troops.<sup>1</sup> At 3.30 P. M. the fleet got under way and

<sup>1</sup> The vessels engaged in the expedition were the *Colorado*, Commodore Henry Knox Thatcher; *New Ironsides*, Commodore William Radford; *Minnesota*, Commodore Joseph Lanman; *Powhatan*, Commodore James Findlay Schenck; *Susquehanna*, Commodore Sylvanus William Godon; *Santiago de Cuba*, Captain Oliver S. Glisson; *Wabash*, Captain Melancton Smith; *Fort Jackson*, Captain Benjamin Franklin Sands; *Vanderbilt*, Captain Charles W. Pickering; *Shenandoah*, Captain Daniel Boone Ridgely; *Ticonderoga*, Captain Charles Steedman; *Brooklyn*, Captain James Alden; *Tuscorara*, Commander James Madison Frailey; *Monadnock*, Commander Enoch Greenleaf Parrott; *Rhode Island*, Commander Stephen Decatur Trenchard; *Nereus*, Commander John Cumming Howell; *Mohican*, Commander Daniel Ammen; *Iosco*, Commander John Guest; *Pawtuxet*, Commander James Hanna Spotts; *Osceola*, Commander John Mellen Brady Clitz; *Mackinaw*, Commander John C. Beaumont; *Saugus*, Commander Edmund R. Colhoun; *Pontoonuc*, Commander William Grenville Temple; *R. R. Cuyler*, Commander Charles Henry Bromedge Caldwell; *Juniata*, Lieutenant-Commander Thomas Stowell Phelps; *Yantic*, Lieutenant-Commander Thomas Cadwalader Harris; *Chippewa*, Lieutenant-Commander Edward Eells Potter; *Sassacus*, Lieutenant-Commander John Lee Davis; *Tacony*, Lieutenant-Commander William Talbot Truxtun; *Kansas*, Lieutenant-Commander Pendleton Gaines Watmough; *Unadilla*, Lieutenant-Commander Francis Munroe Ramsay; *Maratanza*, Lieutenant-Commander George W. Young; *Maumee*, Lieutenant-Commander Ralph Chandler; *Pegot*, Lieutenant-Commander Daniel Lawrence Braine; *Canonicus*, Lieutenant-Commander George Eugene Belknap; *Mahopac*, Lieutenant-Commander Aaron Ward Weaver; *Huron*, Lieutenant-Commander Thomas Oliver Selfridge, Jr.; *Seneca*, Lieutenant-Commander Montgomery Sicard; *Monticello*, Lieutenant William Barker Cushing; *Geltyburg*, Lieutenant Roswell H. Lamson; *Montgomery*, Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant Thomas C. Dunn. The reserve division under the command of Lieutenant-Commander John Henry Upshur, in the *Frolic* (formerly the *A. D. Vance*), consisted of the *Britannia*, Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant W. B. Sheldon; the *Tristram Shandy*, Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant Francis M. Green; the *Lillian*, Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant T. A.



began the bombardment. Again the terrific cannonading of December 24th and 25th was exhibited. As evening came on the fleet retired, but the ironclads maintained a desultory fire all night. The bombardment was renewed on the 14th. In the evening General Terry made arrangements with Porter for a combined naval and army attack on the morning of the 15th. Sixteen hundred sailors and four hundred marines were landed under the command of Lieutenant-Commander Kidder Randolph Breese and Lieutenant-Commander James Parker, Lieutenant-Commander Upshur covering the landing with the light gunboats. At 9 A. M., January 15th, the vessels opened fire, which they kept up until 3 P. M., when they ceased in order that the land forces might rush to the assault. The attacking column of the army, which was lying concealed under the river bank, charged the left flank of the fort, while the naval column came up on the open beach, where it was entirely exposed. Colonel Lamb, commander of the fort, had stationed most of his men to sweep the approach from the beach. The sailors were divided into three divisions, Lieutenant Cushman commanding the first, Lieutenant-Commander Parker the second, Lieutenant-Commander Thomas O. Selfridge, Jr., the third, while the marines were under the command of Captain L. L. Dawson. The seamen were repelled with a loss of eighty-two killed and two hundred and sixty-nine wounded. The troops, having less resistance, carried the fort. Among the killed were Lieutenants Samuel W. Preston and Benjamin H. Porter, Assistant-Surgeon William Longshaw, Jr., and

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Harris; the *Aries*, Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant Francis S. Wells; the *Governor Buckingham*, Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant John Macdiarmid; the *Alabama*, Acting-Volunteer-Lieutenant A. R. Langthorn; the *Fort Donelson*, Acting-Volunteer-Master G. W. Frost; the *Wilderness*, Acting-Master Henry Arey; the *Nansemond*, Acting-Master James H. Porter; the *Little Ada*, Acting-Master Samuel P. Crafts; the *Æolus*, Acting-Master Edward S. Keyser; and the *Republic*, Acting-Ensign John W. Bennett. The *Malvern* was Porter's flagship.

Acting-Ensign Robert Wiley. An explosion of a magazine in the fort on the 16th killed two hundred men. Among the wounded were Paymaster Jewett and Ensign Leighton, Lieutenant-Commander Allen, Lieutenants Bache, Lamson and Baury, Ensigns Evans, Harris, Chester, Bertwhistle, O'Connor, Coffin and Wood, Acting-Master Louch and Masters-Mates Green, Sims and Aldrich. The assaulting columns of the army were led by Generals Comstock and Ames. The losses to the troops were about seven hundred killed or wounded. The place was garrisoned with fewer than two thousand men, including officers.

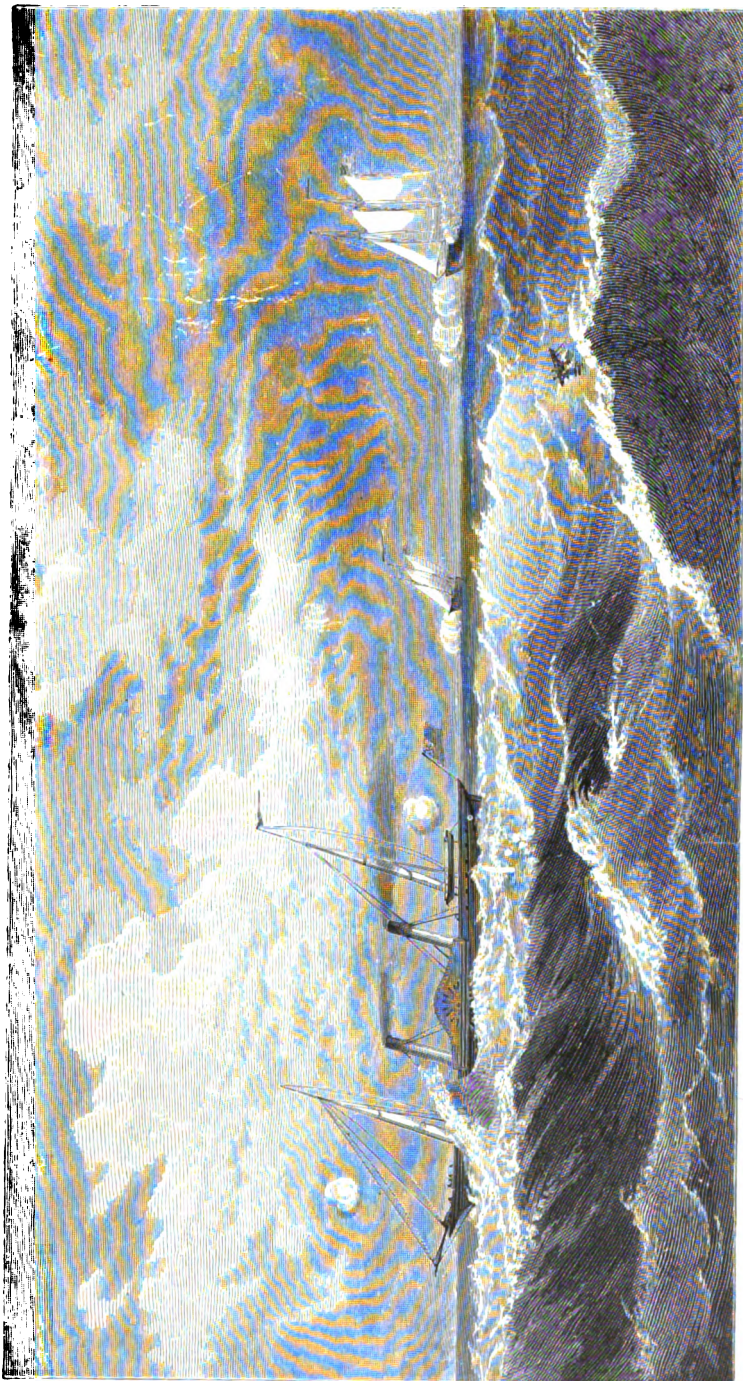
On February 17th Rear-Admiral Porter attacked Fort Anderson, which was halfway between Fort Fisher and Wilmington. The attacking vessels were the *Montauk* and the gunboats *Pawtuxet*, *Lenapee*, *Unadilla*, *Pequot*, *Mackinaw*, *Huron*, *Sassacus*, *Pontoosuc*, *Maratanza*, *Osceola*, *Shawmut*, *Seneca*, *Nyack*, *Chippewa* and *Little Ada*. The attack was begun on the 18th, and a heavy fire was maintained until three o'clock in the afternoon, when the fort was silenced. The Confederates abandoned the place during the night. The gunboats had three men killed and four wounded. While the river was being dragged for torpedoes on the 20th and 21st, one of the machines exploded under the bow of the *Shawmut*, killing two men and wounding an officer and one man. On the 22d, Porter attacked Fort Strong at Big Island. Before the enemy was driven from his guns the *Sassacus* was badly injured by several shot, one of them at the water line. On the night of the 20th a torpedo that the Confederates had floated down from Wilmington struck the wheel of the *Osceola*, blowing the wheelhouse to pieces, but, although doing considerable damage, it did not injure the hull.

## CHAPTER XX.

### CONFEDERATE CRUISERS.

AT the outbreak of the civil war the commerce of the United States was next to the largest in the world, and as most of it was tributary to the Northern States the leaders of the Confederacy from the first exerted themselves to fit out commerce-destroyers. One of the first of these vessels to get to sea was the *Sumter*, formerly the *Habana* of the line running between New Orleans and Havana. She was armed with an 8-inch pivot gun and four 24-pounder howitzers. On June 18, 1861, under the command of Captain Raphael Semmes, she dropped down from New Orleans to the Head of the Passes, but it was several weeks before she could evade the blockading squadron. Finally, while the *Brooklyn* was in chase of a sail, she made a dash for the bar, and, although closely pursued, got to sea. Within a week the *Sumter* made eight prizes. During the two months she cruised along the South American coast she stopped at Curaçao, Trinidad, and Maranhão, where, although her character was well known, she was cordially received and every facility was given to her.

The *Sumter* put into St. Pierre, Martinique, for coal and supplies, November 9th, where she received the usual hospitalities in spite of the neutrality of the port. Five days later Commander James Shedden Palmer, in the *Iroquois*, appeared off the port, and learning that the rule forbidding the stronger vessel to leave the port within twenty-four hours of the other would be enforced, he took a position off the harbor, intending to blockade the cruiser. Arrangements had been made



*Chasing a blockade-runner.*



with the *Sumter* of an American schooner in port to signal to the *Iroquois* the direction the *Sumter* took in case she attempted to get to sea at night. On the night of November 23d Semmes headed for the southern part of the roads, which are twelve miles wide, and observing that the schooner was signaling, he divined its object, and, waiting until he was sure that the *Iroquois* was making for the southern entrance, suddenly turned back, and, favored by a squall of rain, made his escape by the northern side of the harbor.

Taking three prizes on his way across the Atlantic, Semmes docked at Cadiz and then ran round to Gibraltar, taking two more merchantmen. At this place he was blockaded by the *Tuscarora*, the *Kearsarge* and the *Ino*, and finding that it was impossible to escape, he sold his vessel and disbanded the crew. Later in the war the *Sumter* became a blockade-runner. The total number of prizes taken by this vessel was fifteen, of which six were released in Cuban ports, seven were burned, one ransomed and one recaptured.

Having few vessels in their own ports suitable for commerce-destroyers, the leaders of the Confederacy purchased, through their agents and middlemen, vessels in England, which, sailing without guns, ammunition or crews, were met, sometimes at sea and other times in out-of-the-way places, by another vessel laden with armament and stores, and thus became Confederate cruisers. The principal agent for these transactions for the Confederate States in England was Captain James D. Bulloch, while Commodore Samuel Barron represented the Confederacy in France. The conditions under which these vessels were secured, equipped and commissioned were sufficiently like those obtained by Benjamin Franklin in France during the Revolution to warrant the designation "cruisers."

The first of this class of Confederate cruisers was the *Florida*, built at Liverpool, 1861-'62, exactly on the lines of the British gunboat of that day, under the

name of *Oreto*, ostensibly for the Italian Government. Although our minister to England, Charles Francis Adams, laid conclusive evidence before the British Government that the *Oreto* was in reality a Confederate cruiser, and in spite of the fact that the Italian consul disclaimed all knowledge of the vessel, she was allowed to clear from Liverpool, March 22, 1862, consigned to Adderly & Co., of Nassau, the correspondents of Fraser, Trenholm & Co., of Liverpool, the well-known financial agents of the Confederate Government. On April 28th the *Oreto* arrived at Nassau, where she was joined by the English steamer *Bahama* from Hartlepool, England, laden with guns, ammunition and a complete outfit for a cruiser. In order to keep up a semblance of complying with the laws of neutrals, the *Oreto*, when she began taking aboard her armament, was libeled, but was quickly released by the sympathetic jury, and on August 7th, under Commander John Newland Maffitt, sailed for an uninhabited island in the Bahamas, where her two rifled 7-inch guns and six 6-inch guns, together with the ammunition, were taken aboard, and she began her career as the Confederate cruiser *Florida*. At this time the vessel had only twenty-two men for a crew, and this number was reduced by yellow fever to only three or four efficient men.

Touching at Cardenas, Cuba, where he got a re-enforcement of twelve men, Maffitt stood over to Mobile, sighting that port September 4th. The blockading squadron, under the command of Commander George Henry Preble, at that time consisted of the *Oneida* and the *Winona*. As the *Florida* was constructed on the lines of the English cruisers that were constantly inspecting the blockade about that time, Maffitt hoisted English colors, and in broad daylight stood for the Union vessels. Deceived by this, Preble went to quarters and approached the *Florida*, believing her to be an English man-of-war. When near enough he hailed

the stranger, but no attention was paid to it. The *Oneida* then fired three shots in succession across the *Florida's* bow without getting an answer, upon which Preble fired his broadside, but the *Florida* still continued on her swift course. The *Oneida*, the *Winona*, and the schooner *Rachel Seaman* (the last having just arrived off the port) fired as rapidly as possible, but the *Florida* was speeding away at fourteen knots an hour to the seven of the Union vessels, and although somewhat damaged she gained the port.

Speaking of the injuries the *Florida* received from this fire, one of her midshipmen, G. Terry Sinclair, records: "We received one 11-inch shell opposite our port gangway, near the water line. It passed through our coal bunker, painfully wounding one man and beheading another, thence to the berth deck, where our men had previously been ordered as a place of safety. Fortunately this shell did not explode, the fuse having been knocked out, probably by contact with the ship's side. Another shell entered the cabin and, passing through the pantry, raised havoc with the crockery. The ship to the day of her destruction bore the marks of upward of fourteen hundred shrapnel balls. Our additional casualties were two men slightly wounded."<sup>1</sup>

Having shipped a crew, Maffitt, at two o'clock in the morning of January 16, 1863, boldly steamed through the Union blockading squadron and escaped, in spite of the additional vessels that had been detailed especially with a view of capturing him. Taking three prizes, the *Florida* was chased for thirty-four hours by the *Sonoma*, Commander Thomas Holdup Stevens, but escaped by her superior speed. Running into Nassau, she was received with every demonstration of joy by the British inhabitants, and was permitted to remain in port thirty-six hours, or twelve more than allowed by Government instructions. She also took aboard coal

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<sup>1</sup> Century Magazine, July, 1898.



for three months, although the authorities had forbidden a larger supply than would suffice to carry her to the nearest Confederate port.

Cruising between Bahia and New York, Maffitt in five months took fourteen prizes, one of which, the *Clarence*, was armed with a few light guns, and, being placed in charge of a prize crew under Lieutenant Charles W. Read, went on an independent cruise against our commerce. Between May 6th and May 10th Read destroyed four vessels, and finding his fifth prize, the *Tacony*, better adapted for cruising, he transferred his crew and armament to her and burned the *Clarence*. The *Tacony* in two weeks made ten prizes, one of which, the *Archer*, suited Lieutenant Read even better than the *Tacony*, and, burning the latter, he continued the work of destruction in the *Archer*. Running into the harbor of Portland, Me., with a boat party shortly after this, Read, with a daring equal to Connyngham in the Revolution, cut out the revenue cutter *Caleb Crushing*; but on the following day he was attacked by a number of steamers that came out in chase, and was captured after burning his prize.

Another prize of the *Florida*, the bark *Lapwing*, was converted into a consort. This vessel was captured March 27th, and, being placed in charge of Lieutenant R. S. Floyd and Midshipman Sinclair and seven men, made an independent cruise. Sinclair describes a clever capture made by the *Lapwing* as follows: "With the *Lapwing* we captured and bonded a ship by a little ruse and impudence. Having first sawed a spar to the requisite length to represent a long gun, we painted and mounted it on two wheels taken from a family carriage found on board. With this trained on the enemy, but not too conspicuously in view, we hove him to with a shot from our 12-pounder [the only gun the *Lapwing* carried]. With four well-armed men I was sent on board, and brought the captain, with his papers,

back with me, he coming in his own boat. It was not until the captain came on board our ship that he discovered our weakness; but it was then too late, and there was nothing else to be done, so he bonded his ship to us, returning in his own boat."<sup>1</sup> Making Barbadoes May 30th, Lieutenant Floyd burned the *Lapwing*, and reached the settlement with his men. From this place they proceeded to Queenstown in an English bark, eventually rejoining the *Florida* at Brest.

Meantime the *Florida* had sailed from Brest, where she remained six months, and being completely overhauled was placed under command of Captain Charles Manigault Morris. She then crossed the Atlantic, and, after being allowed by the British authorities to coal at Bermuda, continued her depredations on American commerce in the Atlantic Ocean. The peculiar nature of this service is interestingly revealed by Midshipman G. T. Sinclair when he says: "Another of our captures, a vessel from the East Indies, contained a rare character in an old lady, who, we were told, was a missionary on her return home for a vacation. As usual, Captain Morris gave this lady one of the staterooms in his cabin; but it was not long before she had the entire cabin, and, I think, had she stayed much longer, would have been captain. She was intensely Union, and had little use for 'rebels,' nor did she hesitate to tell us so. We got in the habit of watching for her head as it came up out of the cabin hatch, when there would be a general scamper; but the poor officer of the deck was compelled to stand and take her tongue lashing. The old lady usually promenaded the deck with a green cotton umbrella raised, and on one occasion one of the retreating ones returned and found that Lieutenant Stone, who was in charge of the deck, had gone into the rigging, where he remained, looking very much like a cat up a tree with a dog watching him."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Century Magazine, July, 1898.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

After touching at Teneriffe, Morris, on October 5, 1864, anchored at Bahia (intending to take in supplies and then pass around Cape Horn to make a raid on American whalers in the Pacific), where he found the United States sloop of war *Wachusett*, Commander Napoleon Collins, of Wilkes' flying squadron. Fearing that a battle might be precipitated in the harbor, a Brazilian corvette anchored between the two vessels. A little before daybreak, October 7, 1864, Collins crossed the bow of the corvette, intending to ram and sink the *Florida* at her anchorage. Captain Morris and many of his officers and men were ashore. Failing to strike square on, the *Wachusett* carried away the *Florida's* mizzenmast, main yard, and some of the bulwarks. After an exchange of a few shot, Lieutenant Thomas K. Porter, the senior officer in the *Florida*, surrendered with sixty-nine officers and men. Collins, who had only three men injured in the affair, took the cruiser in tow and carried her out of the harbor, in spite of the remonstrances of the Brazilian authorities. The other officers of the *Florida* were Lieutenants S. G. Stone, Samuel Barron, Jr., R. S. Floyd, and George D. Bryan; Surgeon Thomas J. Charlton, Assistant-Surgeon Thomas Emory, Paymaster Richard Taylor, Chief Engineer W. S. Thompson, Midshipmen William B. Sinclair, Jr., James H. Dyke, G. Terry Sinclair, and Master's Mate Thomas T. Hunter, Jr.

That the act of Commander Collins was a flagrant violation of the rights of a neutral port can not be denied. But in view of the fact that England, France, Spain, and many of the South American states had repeatedly, outrageously, and to a far more serious extent violated their neutrality toward the United States, his course does not seem so unjustifiable. The attack of the British cruisers *Phæbe* and *Cherub* on the *Essex* at Valparaiso and that of Sir George Collier's squadron on the *Levant* in the harbor of Port Praya, the capture of two American vessels in the port of Tunis by the

British cruiser *Lyra*, and two in Tripoli by the English war ship *Paulina* in the War of 1812, showed how little England regarded the rights of neutral nations. The act of Commander Collins was promptly disavowed by the United States Government, but we have yet to hear of any satisfactory reparation being made by the British Government in the cases of the *Essex* and the *Levant*. The same contempt for international law was shown by England during the civil war until the result of the battle of Gettysburg was known in London. Brazil also had been notorious for violating her neutrality in our struggle with the Confederate States. Only the year before her officials at Fernando de Noronha had permitted the *Alabama* to take into the anchorage the American merchant vessel *Louisa Hatch* and coal from her and then burn her. About the same time two more American vessels appeared off the port, and, running out, the *Alabama* destroyed them, returning to the harbor the same day. This certainly was quite as gross a violation of the neutrality of Brazil as the act of Commander Collins; and when the sum total of such outrages on the part of Brazil and the United States has been added up, the balance of charges will be found weighing heavily against Brazil. The *Florida* was taken to the United States and was accidentally sunk in port. While under Captain Maffitt's command the *Florida* and her tenders captured fifty-five vessels, and under Morris some twenty were added to the list.

On November 10, 1863, the British Government sold its dispatch boat *Victor* to men acting in the interests of the Confederate States, and after the inspector of machinery in the royal dockyard at Sheerness had enlisted part of her crew she put to sea under the name of *Rappahannock*. When she put into Calais for the purpose of completing her outfit the French officials decided that they would not allow her to finish the work in their waters, and she remained in that port till the close of the war.

Another English vessel, the *Georgia*, Lieutenant William L. Maury, built for the Confederacy on the Clyde, got to sea April 1, 1863, and off Morlaix she met a steamer laden with her armament and stores. Her first prize was the *Dictator*, of New York, many of her crew being persuaded to ship in the *Georgia* to take the places of Englishmen who had decided, at the last moment, not to enlist in the Confederate vessel. After burning the *Dictator*, Lieutenant Maury appeared off the Cape de Verde Islands, and, eluding a National war ship, joined the *Alabama* at Bahia. The *Georgia* then stood down the coast to Rio de Janeiro, off which port she captured the *George Griswold*. In making the run for Trinidad this cruiser captured and destroyed several vessels, among them the *Good Hope*. It was while this merchantman was burning that the American bark *Seaver* drew near, attracted by the flames. Her master promptly put off in his gig, and unsuspectingly boarded the *Georgia*. "His first words, as he stepped over the side, were, 'Can I be of any assistance? How did she catch fire?' Poor fellow! He thought the blaze was accidental, and had headed for the burning ship to offer assistance. . . . He explained that he had been for a long time in the Pacific Ocean, and was ignorant of the fact that civil war was raging at home. Under the circumstances Captain Maury decided not to burn him. Our prisoners were put on board his vessel, and he went his way rejoicing."<sup>1</sup>

After passing the National steam frigate *Niagara* one dark night, so closely that voices could be heard aboard her, the *Georgia* arrived at Simonstown, Cape of Good Hope, a few hours after the *Alabama* had left there for the East Indies. At this port the Confederates were cordially received by the people in the Brit-

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<sup>1</sup> James Morris Morgan, who served in the *Georgia* as midshipman. See *Century Magazine* for August, 1898.

ish troop ship *Himalaya*. Putting to sea a few days afterward, the *Georgia* made a short cruise to the south and met the tea fleet, eastward bound. "By this move," writes Midshipman Morgan, "we missed running into the United States ship *Vanderbilt*, which was hunting for us. When we turned to the north with the fleet, and while going from one vessel to another inquiring of them their nationality, we came under the shadow of Table Mountain late in the afternoon, and saw the *Vanderbilt* on the horizon steaming for Table Bay. We did not molest her, but satisfied ourselves with making a prize of the merchant ship *John Watt*." The *Georgia* next put into Santa Cruz, in the Canaries, where she was hospitably treated by the governor. Continuing her course northward, this cruiser, during a calm, captured the American merchantman *Bold Hunter*, laden with coal. "We tried to replenish our stock from her," wrote Mr. Morgan, "but, the wind rising, the sea became too high, and we recalled our prize crew, who before returning, fired the ship.

"The officer of the deck on the *Georgia*, through carelessness, allowed his vessel to drift too near the burning prize, which was forging ahead under all sail, with no one aboard to control her movements. Seeing a collision imminent, he pulled the engine bell to go ahead at full speed. As the engine started there was a crash in the engine room, and we knew that the usual accident had happened—namely, that the wooden cogs which turned the shaft had broken. In an instant the *Bold Hunter* was upon us. She rose on a high sea, and came down on our rail, smashing boat davits and boats. She recoiled, and rushed at us again like a mad bull. This time, plunging from the top of a huge wave, she came down on our taffrail, doing much damage. It now looked as though the cruise of the *Georgia* was about to end; and had not the *Bold Hunter* suddenly sheered off and passed to lee-

ward of us, the cruiser undoubtedly would have been destroyed.”<sup>1</sup>

On the following day Captain Maury fell in with the French bark *La Patrie*, and, as her master refused to allow his vessel to be boarded, the Confederates resorted to force. No injury was inflicted, and, finding that her papers were correct, the *Georgia* continued on her course. This incident gave rise to diplomatic correspondence between the French and Confederate Governments. Arriving at Cherbourg, the *Georgia*, after many weeks of delay, was permitted to enter a Government dock and undergo much-needed repairs. It was here decided by the Southern naval authorities in Europe to place the *Georgia* out of commission as soon as her armament could be transferred to the *Rappahannock*, then at Calais. Captain Maury accordingly was detached from the *Georgia*, while that vessel, in charge of her executive officer, put to sea and made all speed for a rendezvous on the coast of Morocco, some thirty miles south of Mogador, where the *Rappahannock* was to join her and receive her armament. As has been shown, the French authorities would not permit the *Rappahannock* to leave port; so the *Georgia*, after a long wait at the appointed rendezvous—at one time narrowly escaping shipwreck on a lee shore—made for Bordeaux, where it was learned that French *gendarmes* still guarded the moorings that held the *Rappahannock* to the quay of Calais. After a stay of several weeks at this place, the *Georgia*, eluding a National cruiser in the night, stood out to sea, and on May 9, 1864, reached Liverpool. Here the crew was paid off and the vessel sold to a British merchant, who had a contract to carry the mails between Liverpool and Lisbon. On her first trip the *Georgia* was seized by the *Niagara* off Lisbon and sent to Boston, where she was condemned by a prize court, the British

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<sup>1</sup> Century Magazine, August, 1898.

merchant never receiving compensation for the fifteen thousand pounds he paid for her. In all, the *Georgia* made eight prizes.

The last of the British-built vessels in the service of the Confederacy was the *Sea King*, a fast-sailing vessel with auxiliary steam power, engaged in the East India trade. On October 8, 1864, she sailed from London for Bombay, her commander having the authority to sell her within six months. On precisely the same day the British steamer *Laurel* sailed from Liverpool, and by one of the strange coincidences so common with English ships during our war these two vessels a few days later met one another near some deserted islands of the Madeira group. Another coincidence was that the *Laurel* had nineteen Confederate naval officers aboard, and in her hold were a large number of cases marked "machinery," which proved to be just the kind of guns that would be suitable for the *Sea King*. After the arms and ammunition had been transferred to the *Sea King* she was placed in commission as the Confederate cruiser *Shenandoah*, Captain James Iredell Waddell. The principal object of the *Shenandoah's* cruise was the destruction of the American whaling trade in the Japan Sea and the Arctic Ocean, where it had always been a formidable rival to the English.

After taking a few prizes in the Atlantic Ocean the *Shenandoah* proceeded to Melbourne, Australia, where, strange to say, she met another ship from England laden with coal, just at a time when Captain Waddell most needed that commodity. Remaining here nearly a month instead of "twenty-four hours," she enlisted forty-two men and sailed for Behring Straits, where she destroyed a large number of American whalers. In her career as a Confederate cruiser the *Shenandoah* captured nearly forty American merchantmen, most of which were destroyed at sea. "We made it a rule from the start," wrote Midshipman John Thomson Mason, of the *Shenandoah*, "that there should be no



pillaging of the captured vessels. If we needed stores for the ship's use we took them, but our sailors were never allowed to plunder on their own account."<sup>1</sup> Captain Waddell had been an officer in the United States navy. His executive was Lieutenant William C. Whittle, Jr., son of Captain Whittle, U. S. N., while the other lieutenants were John Grimbball, Sidney Smith Lee, son of Captain S. S. Lee, U. S. N., and nephew of General Robert E. Lee, Francis T. Chew, and Dabney Minor Scales. Lieutenants Whittle and Grimbball had been classmates of Admiral Dewey at Annapolis. The sailing master of the *Shenandoah* was Irvine S. Bulloch, brother of the Confederate agent in England, and had served in the same capacity in the *Alabama* in her action with the *Kearsarge*. The other ward-room officers were Surgeon Charles E. Lining, Assistant-Surgeon F. J. McNulty, Paymaster W. B. Smith, Chief-Engineer Matthew O'Brien, Passed Midshipmen Orris A. Browne and John Thomson Mason. Twelve of the *Shenandoah's* crew had served in the *Alabama* during her action off Cherbourg. Learning, on June 28, 1865, that the war had ended, Waddell returned to Liverpool and gave up his vessel to the British Government.

Strenuous efforts were made by the Confederate Government to secure formidable ironclads, with which it was hoped to raise the blockade on the Atlantic coast and recover the Mississippi River. It was only after the most earnest remonstrances of our minister that England seized the ironclad rams and prevented them from going to sea. Captain Bulloch contracted with the builders of the *Alabama* for two swift double-turreted rams plated with five and a half inches of iron and armed with four 9-inch rifled guns, which would have made them superior to any vessel then in the possession of the United States. These vessels were allowed

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<sup>1</sup> Century Magazine, August, 1898.

to be launched before the British Government could be induced to take action concerning them. Finally, on the threat of Mr. Adams that the equipment and sailing of these rams meant a declaration of war, they were taken into the British navy as the *Scorpion* and the *Wivern*. In France the Confederate agents contracted for four corvettes and two rams, but only one of these, the *Stonewall Jackson*, Captain Thomas Jefferson Page, got into the hands of the Confederate agents. She was sold first to Denmark, and then to the agents of the Confederate States. Being plated with four and a half inches of iron and armed with a 300-pounder rifled Armstrong gun and two rifled 70-pounders, she would have made short work of any of our wooden ships. Springing a leak on her first cruise, she put into Ferrol, and in March, 1865, offered battle to the sloop of war *Niagara*, Commodore Thomas Tingey Craven, and the *Sacramento*; but Craven very properly refused to fight such a formidable antagonist. Proceeding to Havana, the *Stonewall Jackson* was surrendered by the Spanish officials to the United States. Finally she was sold to Japan.

Several of the blockade runners were temporarily turned into cruisers. In October, 1864, the *Edith* came out of Wilmington as the *Chickamauga*, and in the course of several weeks captured four or five coasters. On the night of August 6, 1864, the Confederate cruiser *Tallahassee*, Captain John Taylor Wood, ran the blockade off Wilmington and shaped her course for Sandy Hook. This craft, originally the *Atlanta*, had been built on the Thames ostensibly for the Chinese opium trade, but, through one of those adroit manipulations so frequently experienced by English vessels in this war, she soon found her way to Wilmington, and was manned and equipped as a Confederate war ship. She carried one rifled 100-pounder, one rifled 60-pounder, one 32-pounder, and a long Parrott gun. Cruising off Sandy Hook several days the *Tallahassee* made a num-

ber of prizes, many of them small craft of little value, the most important capture being the packet ship *Adriatic*, of one thousand tons. Destroying his prizes, Captain Wood appeared off Boston and then put into Halifax, taking a number of vessels on the way. Having replaced his mainmast—which had been carried away in a collision with the *Adriatic*—and taking aboard coal, Captain Wood evaded the several National war ships that were in waiting for him off the port, and, running down the coast, rushed the blockade off Wilmington and regained that port, having made thirty-five prizes in this short cruise. The *Tallahassee* made another cruise under the names *Olustee* and *Chameleon*—this time commanded by Lieutenant Ward—after which she was taken to England, and eventually was sold to Japan as a cruiser.

The tribunal that assembled at Geneva for the purpose of arbitrating the “*Alabama* claims” decided that England should pay to the United States fifteen million five hundred thousand dollars for the losses caused by the *Florida*, the *Alabama*, and the *Shenandoah* after she left Melbourne.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE KEARSARGE-ALABAMA FIGHT.

THE most famous of the English-built Confederate cruisers was the *Alabama*, the two hundred and ninetyeth ship built in the Lairds' shipyard. In spite of the clearest evidence submitted by Minister Adams that this vessel was fitting out at Liverpool for service against United States commerce, the English Government allowed her to sail July 29, 1862. After completing her preparations at a point fifty miles from Liverpool, she passed to the north of Ireland and arrived at the Azores August 10th, where she was met eight days later by the bark *Agrippina*, from London, laden with guns, ammunition, stores etc. On the 20th the steamer *Bahama*, from Liverpool, arrived, having on board Captain Raphaël Semmes with a complement of officers and a crew, most of the latter being Englishmen. Steaming beyond the line of neutral jurisdiction, Semmes lashed the two vessels alongside and went through the formality of commissioning the *Alabama* as a Confederate cruiser, and on the 24th began his famous cruise. The *Alabama* was both a sailing vessel and a steamer. Her propeller could be detached and hoisted in fifteen minutes, so that she could make from ten to twelve knots with sails alone, and with steam added fifteen knots.

Captain Semmes had nicely calculated the time it would take for news of his whereabouts to reach the United States and a cruiser to overtake him, so his plan was to cruise in one locality not more than two months and then renew his depredations in some other quarter

of the globe. Sailing leisurely across the Atlantic, the *Alabama* burned twenty American vessels, Captain Semmes constituting a prize court in all cases where doubt arose as to the ownership of captured cargoes. Reaching the Banks, he headed southwest and touched at Martinique, where, on November 18th, by a previous arrangement, the *Agrippina* was found waiting for him with a full supply of coal. While the *Alabama* was in this port the United States sloop of war *San Jacinto*, Commander William Ronckendorff, which vessel had been dispatched in search of the *Alabama*, entered the harbor. Discovering the Confederate cruiser, and learning that the twenty-four-hour rule would be enforced, Commander Ronckendorff immediately stood out and waited for the *Alabama*. On the night of October 20th, however, Semmes got to sea unobserved. Cruising among the West India islands, he captured the mail steamer *Ariel*, December 7th, which was released under bonds to pay ransom. Another sailing vessel laden with coal met the *Alabama* at an out-of-the-way rendezvous, and having replenished her stores she was again cruising.

From newspapers found in his prizes Semmes had learned of the intended expedition of General Banks against Galveston, and with the hope of intercepting the Union transports he headed for that port, and on January 11, 1863, drew near the place. At that time the blockade squadron consisted of the *Brooklyn*, Commodore Henry H. Bell, the *Hatteras*, Lieutenant-Commander Homer C. Blake, the *Cayuga*, the *Sciota* and several light gunboats. The *Hatteras* was a frail side-wheel passenger steamer designed for service on the Delaware. Her machinery was entirely exposed to shot. In the great demand for steamers early in the war she was taken into the service and mounted four short 32-pounders, two rifled 30-pounders, one rifled 20-pounder and one 12-pounder howitzer, having a total shot weight of two hundred and twenty pounds. The *Ala-*

*bama* carried one rifled 100-pounder Blakely gun, one 8-inch shell gun and six long 32-pounders, with a total shot weight of three hundred and sixty pounds, three hundred and twenty-eight pounds of which could be pivoted on either broadside.

About meridian, January 11th, the lookout at the *Brooklyn's* masthead reported a three-masted schooner or a bark about twelve miles off making for the port. As the sloop of war was having new grate bars put in she did not have steam up, and Commodore Bell signaled the *Hatteras* to run down to the stranger. The Union vessel promptly made for the newcomer, who was seen to be making sail as if desirous of escaping seaward. As the afternoon wore on, Blake discovered the stranger to be a steamer, and in view of the fact that the *Hatteras*, although an exceedingly slow vessel, was rapidly overhauling the chase, he began to suspect that she was not so anxious to escape as her manœuvres indicated. When the pursuit had extended about twenty miles the stranger hove to, waiting for the *Hatteras* to approach. Running within hailing distance, Blake asked what ship it was, and was told "Her Britannic Majesty's ship *Petrel*," which bore a strong resemblance to the vessel before him. While this was going on the *Alabama* attempted to secure a raking position, but Blake skillfully avoided it. The Union commander then gave the name of his ship and ordered a boat aboard the stranger, but scarcely had it left the side when a voice from the stranger called out, "This is the Confederate States steamer *Alabama*." Then a broadside was poured into the *Hatteras*, which immediately showed that the Union vessel was under the guns of a vessel of superior force. Seeing that his only hope was at close quarters, Blake put on full speed and attempted to board; but Semmes, aware of his advantage, steamed ahead, and, crossing the *Hatteras'* course about forty yards distant, continued the action on the other side.

At first the firing on both sides was spirited, but the odds were too great and the guns in the National vessel were quickly silenced. The *Alabama* fired with great accuracy. Shell after shell crashed through the thin hull of the National gunboat and exploded with dreadful effect. In ten minutes the *Hatteras* was on fire in several places, her walking beam was shot away, and water rushed through the openings made by sheets of iron being torn off. In thirteen minutes she was disabled and rapidly sinking, upon which Blake surrendered. The Confederates promptly got out their boats and rendered every assistance in saving our men, and showed them much kindness and attention when aboard the *Alabama*. Ten minutes after the surrender the *Hatteras* sank out of sight, bow first. The *Alabama* then made for Port Royal, Jamaica, and landed her prisoners.

On hearing the distant booming of guns and the flashes of light the *Brooklyn*, the *Sciota* and the *Tioga* got under way and steered for the scene of action, but, although cruising all night, they saw nothing of the *Hatteras* or of the mysterious stranger. On the following morning the masts of a sunken vessel with the tops awash were made out, which, on closer examination, proved to be the *Hatteras*. Nothing about the wreck indicated who the stranger was.

On leaving Port Royal Semmes headed southward, and for two months held a position on the belt one hundred miles wide near the equator, which was the "cross roads" for the homeward-bound East India and Pacific trade. Taking eight prizes here, he proceeded to Fernando de Noronha, where he coaled from a prize, the *Louisa Hatch*. While he was in this port two American vessels appeared in the offing, and, without any remonstrance from the Brazilian authorities, he ran out and destroyed them and returned on the same day. Taking ten prizes in the two months that she was off Brazil, the *Alabama*, in July, sailed for the Cape of



*The last of the Alabama.*





Good Hope, in company with the bark *Conrad*, a prize, which had been fitted up, armed with two 12-pounder howitzers and placed in commission as the *Tuscaloosa*, Lieutenant John Lowe. The British authorities of Cape Town extended every assistance to the *Alabama* in her work of destroying England's great commercial rival. Learning that the *Vanderbilt*, Commander Charles H. Baldwin, one of the vessels that had been fitted out with a roving commission for the express purpose of capturing the *Alabama*, was in the vicinity, Semmes determined to change his cruising-ground to the East Indies. There he remained six months, and after capturing seven vessels and eluding the sloop of war *Wyoming*, he returned to the Cape of Good Hope.

Sunday morning, June 12, 1864, the United States sloop of war *Kearsarge*, Captain John Ancrum Winslow, lay off the sleepy town of Flushing, Holland. Many of her officers and men were ashore, and everything about the ship denoted an entire absence of thought of immediate action. As the day wore on, however, a cornet suddenly appeared at her foremast and a gun was fired, a signal for every member of the ship's company to repair on board immediately. Winslow had just received a telegram from Mr. Dayton, our minister to France, saying that the *Alabama* had arrived in Cherbourg. On leaving the Cape of Good Hope Semmes had sailed for Europe, arriving at Cherbourg June 11th. Hastily making his preparations for an immediate departure, Winslow steamed to Dover for dispatches, and on Tuesday appeared off Cherbourg, where the Confederate flag could be seen across the breakwater, flying from the *Alabama*. Fearing that the twenty-four-hour rule might be applied to his ship, Winslow did not anchor in the harbor, but took a station off the port. A close watch was placed in order to prevent the *Alabama* from again getting to sea unobserved. In this instance, however, the precaution was unnecessary, for Captain Semmes had determined to

offer battle to the National ship, and intimated this intention to the United States consul.

The two vessels were remarkably well matched, the *Kearsarge* carrying two 11-inch pivot guns, four short 32-pounders and one rifled 30-pounder, in all seven guns, having a total shot weight of four hundred and thirty pounds; while the *Alabama* carried one 100-pounder Blakely gun, one 8-inch shell gun and six long 32-pounders, in all eight guns, with a total of three hundred and sixty pounds shot weight. In the battle, however, which was fought with the starboard batteries of each ship, the *Kearsarge* used only five guns, with a total shot weight of three hundred and sixty-six pounds, while the *Alabama* used seven guns, with a total shot weight of three hundred and twenty-eight pounds, which lessened the difference in weight of metal to an inconsiderable question of thirty-eight pounds. The *Kearsarge's* complement was one hundred and sixty-three men, while that of the *Alabama* was one hundred and forty-nine. The former had a slight superiority of speed, but this was not utilized in the action. A year before, while at the Azores, Captain Winslow had arranged his sheet chains for a distance of forty-nine feet six inches amidships over the side of his vessel and extending six feet two inches down, as additional protection to his machinery. These chains were secured up and down by marline to eye-bolts and covered with 1-inch deal boards. But as this part of the ship was struck only twice in the action, this protection can not be counted as having materially favored the National ship.

*Comparative forces.*

	Tons.	Guns.	Pounds.	Crew.
<i>Kearsarge</i> :	1,031	7	366	163
<i>Alabama</i> :	1,016	8	328	149

The sentiment among the townsfolk was overwhelmingly in favor of the *Alabama*. Whenever her men

were recognized in the streets they were received with enthusiasm and with prophecies of victory. The scene in the lonely ship that cruised back and forth in quiet reaches beyond the breakwater was quite different. The cheap plaudits of the populace were not needed to nerve the Yankee sailor to his duty. Winslow realized that the public feeling in France and England was against him and his crew, but he cared naught for that. He knew what the American tars had done in former wars, and he had an implicit confidence in his own ship's company. And so day after day and night after night the *Kearsarge* in grim silence stood guard over the harbor. With each passing hour the hope of a battle grew fainter. Wednesday came and no *Alabama*. Thursday came and passed, with the same barren result; then Friday and Saturday, yet no fight.

Sunday, June 19th, dawned with a light haze hanging over the harbor and town, but in the light westerly breeze the mists were gradually cleared away, revealing the shipping and town in all the beauty of a bright summer's day. A careful scrutiny of the harbor gave no indication of the *Alabama's* coming out that day, and the usual routine of the Sabbath in an American war ship began. The decks were hollystoned until they shone with dazzling whiteness, the brass works and guns were polished, ropes were coiled away and everything made shipshape in keeping with the holy day. After the men, dressed in their best clothes, had been inspected, they were dismissed to attend divine service. At 10.20 A. M., while the bell was tolling for church, the officer of the deck reported a steamer coming out of the harbor, but as this was a common occurrence it aroused no special interest, and preparations for worship went on. But a few seconds later the words "She's coming, and heading straight for us!" flashed over the ship. It was not necessary to ask "Who?" Everybody knew what the "she" meant. Captain Winslow immediately put aside his

prayer book, and, seizing the trumpet, ordered the ship about and the decks cleared for action.

Between nine and ten o'clock Semmes had got under way, accompanied by the French ironclad *Couronne*, flying the pennant of the commandant of the port, whose duty it was to see that the fight should not take place within the marine league. Having performed this duty, the Frenchman returned to port. Closely following him was the private English yacht *Deerhound*. Soon the hills and vantage points along the coast were black with spectators, many supplied with camp stools and spyglasses, eager to witness a naval battle, while special wires to Paris reported each stage of the action to the excited throngs in the metropolis. It was estimated that more than fifteen thousand people witnessed the battle, several of them being the masters of merchant vessels that had been destroyed by the *Alabama*. Excursion trains from Paris arrived frequently, adding to the crowds of spectators. As the *Kearsarge* was burning Newcastle coal and the *Alabama* Welsh coal, causing a distinction in the smoke, little difficulty was experienced in following the movements of the two vessels.

In order that no question about neutral waters should be raised, Winslow led the *Alabama* seaward, and at 10.50 A. M., on reaching a point about seven miles from land, he turned round and headed straight for the *Alabama* notwithstanding that he was exposed to a raking fire from the entire broadsides of the Confederate cruiser. At 10.57, when the vessels were about eighteen hundred yards apart, the *Alabama* opened the action with a broadside, which cut away a little of the rigging, but did no material damage. A second and part of a third broadside were fired with a similar want of serious effect, when Captain Winslow, fearing a raking fire, sheered round and delivered his broadside of five-second shells at a distance of about nine hundred yards. Without slackening his speed, Winslow en-

deavored to pass under the *Alabama's* stern, but Semmes prevented this manœuvre by putting his helm hard to port. Each vessel then continued to keep its starboard broadside toward the other, which resulted in a circular motion, the ships going round a common center. Seven complete revolutions were made in this way, the three-mile current carrying the ships westward.

Early in the action a shot from the *Kearsarge* carried away the *Alabama's* gaff and colors. Observing this, the National crew cheered, but the Confederates soon hoisted another ensign at their mizzen. About the close of the battle a shot carried away the halyards of the *Kearsarge's* colors, stopped at the mizzen, and in so doing pulled sufficiently to break the stop and thereby unfurled the flag that was to be shown in case of victory. The firing of the *Kearsarge* was another exhibition of that magnificent American gunnery which formed one of the notable features of the War of 1812. Word was passed along the American battery to let every shot tell. The wisdom of this was shown in the result, the *Kearsarge* firing only one hundred and seventy-three missiles, nearly all of which took effect, while the *Alabama* fired three hundred and seventy, of which only twenty-eight struck. The 11-inch pivot guns in the *Kearsarge* especially were handled with great skill. One 11-inch shell entered the port of the *Alabama's* 8-inch gun, sweeping off a part of the gun crew. Another 11-inch shell entered the same port, killing one man and wounding several, which was quickly followed by a third shell of the same caliber in the same place. Another heavy shell entered the wardroom and swept away the table on which Assistant-Surgeon Llewellyn was operating, and, exploding, blew out the side of the ship. Our 11-inch shells, however, were aimed principally a little below rather than above the *Alabama's* water line, with a view of sinking her, while the 32-pounders swept her decks. The after pivot gun crew of the *Alabama* was reformed four

times during the action. As the vessels circled round they gradually drew nearer to each other, and toward the close of the action they were less than six hundred yards apart, at which time the fire from the National vessel was reported as being terribly accurate.

Of the twenty-eight shot that struck the *Kearsarge*, one, a 68-pounder shell, penetrated the starboard bulwark and exploded on the quarter-deck, wounding three men, one of them, William Gowin, mortally. When he was taken below, his interest in the battle was unabated notwithstanding his terrible injuries. "Lying on his mattress, he paid attention to the progress of the fight, so far as he could by the sounds on the deck, his face showing satisfaction whenever the cheers of his shipmates were heard; with difficulty he waved his hand over his head and joined in each cheer with a feeble voice."<sup>1</sup> One shell exploded in the hammock nettings and started a fire, but the firemen were called away and speedily extinguished the flames. One shell lodged in the sternpost, and had it exploded it might have done serious injury, but the fuse failed to ignite. No great damage was done by the other shot that struck the vessel.

At noon the *Alabama* ceased firing, set her fore trysail and jib and endeavored to run inshore. This manœuvre for the first time brought her port broadside to bear where only two guns could be used, Semmes hoping to bring the shotholes on the starboard side above the water line by heeling his ship to port. Observing the *Alabama's* intention, Winslow quickly steered so as to cross her bow, and was about to pour in a raking fire when she hauled down her flag. Not knowing whether the colors had been carried away by a shot or by accident, and thinking that it might be merely a *ruse* to enable the *Alabama* to reach the neutral waters, now only two miles distant, Winslow ceased

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<sup>1</sup> Surgeon John M. Browne, of the *Kearsarge*.

firing, but held his guns in readiness to open again at a moment's notice. About this time the white flag was displayed, which convinced the National commander that the *Alabama* intended to surrender, and he began his preparations for rendering her assistance. But at this moment the *Alabama* renewed her fire, upon which the *Kearsarge* discharged three or four guns. Yet the course of the famous cruiser had been run. She was rapidly settling, and the only two serviceable boats in the *Kearsarge* were sent to save the drowning men. In a few minutes the *Alabama* settled by the stern, and, lifting her bow high out of the water, plunged to the bottom of the sea.

About this time a boat from the *Alabama*, in charge of Master's-Mate Fullam, an Englishman, came alongside, begging for assistance. On his promising to return to the *Kearsarge*, Winslow allowed Fullam to turn back and save the drowning men, but the promise was broken and Fullam repaired on board the *Deerhound*. On the approach of the British steam yacht Captain Winslow requested her to assist in saving the men. She did so, and picked up forty-two men, including Semmes and fourteen officers, but instead of placing them aboard the *Kearsarge*, as Winslow's request implied, she gradually edged off, and then put on full steam for Southampton. After picking up the remaining men the *Kearsarge* put into Cherbourg.

In response to our minister's request that these men be given up, the British Government declined to do so, claiming that it could not consistently with international law. This was only another of the many instances of Great Britain's straining at a gnat when international law favored the South and swallowing a camel when it favored the North. In fact, England, not only in this but in all other wars, had so outrageously violated both the letter and spirit of international law that it is with surprise that we find her offering a point of it as an excuse for not surrendering



these men in 1864. Americans had come to believe that not even a shred of that legal texture was left in England. As to the owner of the *Deerhound*, one fact stands out above controversy, and that is that he was not actuated by any principles of international law whatever (of which he at that moment was densely ignorant), but was impelled by the general desire of all England to see the United States divided and thus become a less formidable rival to Great Britain.

This celebrated sea fight was among the last of the actions in which the navy took part in the civil war. From the time our gunboats began fighting on the Potomac and the western rivers, to Rear-Admiral Porter's operations near Wilmington, the record of the navy has been notable. Whether the claim of Southern writers, that had it not been for the United States sea forces the South would have triumphed, is exaggerated or not, the fact remains that the services of our naval officers and seamen were of incalculable value. At Forts Henry and Donelson, at Memphis and Vicksburg, in the many desperate actions on the western rivers, at the great victories in Hampton Roads, New Orleans, and Mobile Bay, and in the hazardous and brilliant service on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, the navy demonstrated its great value as a defensive and offensive force.

**NOTE.**—Lieutenant James S. Thornton, the executive officer of the *Kearsarge*, was executive officer of the *Hartford* when Farragut passed the New Orleans forts and served with conspicuous bravery in the subsequent river engagements. For his gallantry in the *Kearsarge-Alabama* fight he was advanced thirty numbers. Acting-Master Edward E. Preble, who served in this action with gallantry as the navigator of the *Kearsarge*, was a grandson of Captain Edward Preble, who commanded the American squadron before Tripoli early in the century.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### BLOCKADE RUNNERS.

ONE feature of the maritime operations in the civil war deserving special notice was that directed against blockade runners. The magnitude of these operations is seen when we remember that in the course of the war eleven hundred and forty-nine prizes were brought in, two hundred and ten of them being steamers, besides which three hundred and fifty-five craft were destroyed, of which eighty-five were steam vessels, making a total of fifteen hundred and four vessels captured by the National cruisers. It is well known that the Confederacy was dependent on Europe for nearly all of its manufactured supplies, and that its only means of making payment was the produce of the South. In fact, it might almost be said that the Confederacy was vulnerable only at this point, and a systematic attack on this weakness of the South engaged the attention of many of our cruisers and men during the four years of the war.

The humiliating dependence of the South on Europe for manufactured articles is well illustrated by R. O. Crowley, who commanded a Torpedo Division of the seceding States, when he says: "To give some idea of the many difficulties we encountered, I will mention, first, the scarcity of cannon powder; secondly, we had only about four miles of insulated copper wire in the entire Confederacy; thirdly, we could obtain only about four or five feet of fine-gauge platinum wire. Battery material was very scarce, and acids could be purchased

only from the small quantity remaining in the hands of druggists when the war broke out. . . . During the last year of the war arrangements had been perfected to secure a large quantity of insulated wire, cables, acids, batteries, and telegraph apparatus, etc., from England, an officer having been sent there for that purpose. Every material requisite for the extension of our torpedo system throughout the entire South was obtained, and a small advance shipment did actually reach us through the blockade at Wilmington. The remainder was put on board a swift steamer with the intention of running the blockade and returning with a full cargo of cotton; but from the stress of weather, or other causes, the steamer put into the port of Fayal, and, as I understand, was wrecked in that port either from the stupidity of the pilot or from treachery. The entire cargo was lost, and it was impossible to duplicate our material before the war ended."<sup>1</sup>

We have noted in these pages what awful havoc the Confederates created, even with the scanty and defective materials they had, among our war ships. The sinking of the *Tecumseh*, with nearly one hundred of her men, in Mobile Bay, the destruction of the *Commodore Jones*, with half of her complement, in James River, the loss of the *Housatonic* in Charleston harbor, the damaging or destruction of a dozen or more of our monitors and wooden war craft at other points along the Atlantic and on the Western rivers, cause us to shudder when we come to speculate on the catastrophes the Southern Torpedo Board could have brought to our doors had they possessed adequate material for properly carrying on that diabolical—as it was then generally considered—style of warfare. Yet, on the testimony of the men engaged in that particular service, we see that one of the most dangerous and dreaded

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<sup>1</sup> Century Magazine, June, 1898.

means of defense was eliminated from the problem confronting the Nationalists by reason of the blockade maintained by our maritime forces.

Speaking of the operations in Charleston harbor, Mr. Crowley says: "We were without the necessary material to extend our system to Charleston harbor; besides, the exigencies of the situation at Richmond and Wilmington were too pressing to permit us to think of Charleston. However, some attempts were made by the local military authorities to lay torpedoes in the harbor, and a large one was planted in the main channel, the wires being led into Fort Sumter. On April 7, 1863, the Federal fleet, commanded by Admiral Dupont, moved up the channel northward toward Sullivan's Island, the frigate [*New*] *Ironsides* in advance, followed by the ironclad *Keokuk* and the wooden vessels. At a distance of about one thousand yards these powerful war ships opened on Fort Sumter with terrific effect, and received in return a heavy fire from all the adjacent forts. The [*New*] *Ironsides* passed over and over the torpedo before mentioned, and everybody awaited with intense anxiety the moment when it was expected she would be blown to pieces by its explosion. It failed to 'go off,' however. Several reasons were assigned for the failure, but probably the true reason was wet powder and want of system in properly testing the wires and the torpedo tank. The Federals believed that the harbor was thickly studded with explosives; and, although this belief exercised a very considerable moral effect, it did not prevent them from advancing bravely to attack powerful forts, not knowing at what moment their ships might be destroyed."<sup>1</sup>

That President Lincoln's proclamation early in the war, declaring all the ports of the Confederacy to be in a state of blockade, ran us afoul of that sound principle of international law—namely, "that a blockade,

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<sup>1</sup> Century Magazine, June, 1898.

to be recognized as such, must be effective"—can not be denied, but as the struggle progressed one after the other of the Southern ports were closed to the seceding States, and, our National sea forces concentrating their efforts on the remaining harbors, the blockade became most damaging to the South. At first the blockade runners had little to fear from our navy, and an almost uninterrupted supply of arms and ammunition flowed into the South, and it is to be noted that, for the first two years of the strife, the armies of the South were remarkably successful. The control and patrol of the Mississippi and other Western rivers cut off that vast territory to the southwest from the Confederacy, and greatly simplified the problem of blockading the remaining coast line of the South.

It was not until the price of cotton had fallen in the South to eight cents a pound and had risen to fifty cents a pound in Liverpool that blockade running was reduced to the nice science which made it celebrated. Early in the war any of the vessels remaining to the Confederacy could have engaged in this trade with comparative impunity; but as the lines of the blockading squadrons were tightened the first blockade runners were captured or driven to other service, while the enormous profits soon induced the British merchant to build vessels especially adapted for the traffic. As a rule, these vessels were required only for the short runs between Nassau or Bermuda to Charleston, Wilmington, and Savannah. Every device that ingenuity could suggest was adopted to render these craft swift, invisible, and handy for the conditions peculiar to the service. "The typical blockade runner of 1863-'64 was a long, low, side-wheel steamer of from four to six hundred tons, with a slight frame, sharp and narrow, its length perhaps nine times its beam. It had feathering paddles and one or two raking, telescope funnels, which might be lowered close to the deck. The hull rose only a few feet out of water, and was painted a dull gray or

lead color, so that it could hardly be seen by daylight at two hundred yards. Its spars were two short lower masts, with no yards, and only a small crow's nest in the foremast. The deck forward was constructed in the form known as 'turtleback,' to enable the vessel to go through a heavy sea. Anthracite coal, which made no smoke, was burned in the furnaces. . . . When running in all lights were put out, the binnacle and fireroom hatch were carefully covered, and steam was blown off under water."<sup>1</sup>

The difficulty of detecting a vessel painted lead color, at night, is well illustrated in the account of Midshipman G. Terry Sinclair. Sinclair had been ordered from Richmond to Nassau, and on reaching Charleston he says: "On arriving and taking a survey of the blockading fleet off the bar, I concluded it was easier to issue such orders than to execute them. On the evening of June 3d [1862] I went on board the *Cecile*, a small river steamer, painted lead color to render her difficult of observation at night. About midnight, as the moon settled behind the hills, we steamed slowly out of the harbor, and were soon in the midst of the enemy, whose dark hulls were plainly visible to us. We crept slowly by, our wheels barely revolving lest the sound should reach the ears of the enemy. Knowing well that discovery meant a prison for an indefinite time, each minute seemed an hour. To us, who so plainly saw the dark hulls of the enemy, it seemed barely possible that they did not also see or hear us; but they did not."<sup>2</sup>

Usually the blockade runner left Bermuda or Nassau at a time calculated to bring his vessel off the desired Southern port at night and when the moon would be down. Having accomplished this most important part of the programme, he usually found everything in favor

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<sup>1</sup> James Russell Soley, in *The Blockade and the Cruisers*, pp. 156-157.

<sup>2</sup> *Century Magazine*, July, 1898.

of his attempt. Keeping a sharp lookout for the lights of the blockading force, he stood as far away as possible, until, gaining the desired position, when, everything having been prepared for the crisis, he made the dash for the port, frequently passing within pistol shot of the National vessels with impunity. Not knowing when the rush would be made, the blockading vessels seldom had a full head of steam up; while the blockade runner, vibrating from stem to stern with her highest pressure, generally got beyond gunshot before the blockading force was fairly under way. Of course, once under the guns of the land batteries the blockader was comparatively safe, but even then there have been instances where the craft was destroyed by daring boat parties from the National vessels.

In short, when we come to consider the many circumstances favoring the blockade runner, and the stupendous difficulties confronting the blockader, the wonder is that such a large number of vessels of this ilk were captured. It shows in a very forcible manner that our officers and crews were most diligently and skillfully performing one of the most hazardous and inglorious duties known to active service. It was seldom, indeed, that a blockade runner, when detected on the high seas, failed to outspeed our usually slower war ships, and, even in the few cases where the Nationalists happened to have the swifter ship, the coming on of night, or a squall, or the shoaling of water too frequently demonstrated the time-honored saying, "There's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip." An interesting illustration of this is given by Captain John Wilkinson, formerly of the United States navy, who became one of the most successful blockade runners, having run the blockade twenty-one times between December, 1862, and November, 1863, in which time he carried out six thousand bales of cotton, the value of which in England was over a million dollars. Wilkinson relates that on one occasion, while making the

run from Wilmington to Nassau, he was hard pressed by a sloop of war which was gradually overhauling him. As night fell over the sea the sloop was about four miles astern and gaining rapidly, when Wilkinson directed his engineer to make a black smoke which could be readily seen by the pursuing war ship, even though the darkness soon rendered the outlines of the chase indistinct, and finally obliterated every trace. When Wilkinson was satisfied that his pursuer had nothing but the black smoke from his funnels to steer by he ordered the dampers to be turned off, thus causing the smoke to cease; the ship's course changed eight points, so that in a short time she had completely disappeared, while the sloop was still chasing the smoke.

One of the most serious difficulties the blockade runner had to contend with was the absence of guiding lights along the coast where he desired to make port. Soon after hostilities began many of the lights were discontinued and temporary guides were established. In the first year of the war the Frying Pan Shoal light-ship was carried inside the entrance of the port of Wilmington and anchored in fancied security under the guns of Fort Caswell. The gallant attack on the craft by two boats from the *Mount Vernon*, Commander Oliver S. Glisson, has been noted.<sup>1</sup> To repair this serious loss the Confederates established a light on the Mound Battery at New Inlet. At first the blockade runners availed themselves of the lights on the blockading vessels; but, quickly detecting this, the National officers extinguished all the lights in their squadrons, with the exception of a single lantern on the senior officer's ship, which usually was anchored in the center of the force and nearest to the entrance of the port. As showing how well informed those centers of blockade running—Nassau and Bermuda—were kept of the

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<sup>1</sup> See pp. 185-186, vol. ii.



doings of the Nationalists, it will be remarked that soon after this new arrangement for the lights went into effect all the blockade runners were made aware of it, and changed their tactics accordingly, so that the single light from the senior officer's ship, so far from inconveniencing the enemy, actually improved the conditions for the dash into port. The vigilance of our officers also is attested by the fact that they soon discovered the advantage the single light afforded the enemy, and turned it to account by changing the position of the flagship each night. This resulted in several blockade runners miscalculating their bearings and going ashore, where the vessel and cargo were either entirely or partially destroyed.

Finding that the bold dash through the center of the blockading force was becoming more and more hazardous, the blockade runner resorted to the plan of hugging the shore at one end of the blockade line, and slipping past the endmost vessel unobserved. In this the enemy was favored by the shadow the headlands threw over the sea, the roar of the surf drowning the noise from the paddlewheels, so that even on clear, starlit nights it was almost impossible for him to be detected. Once having passed the blockade line, the runner would show a light on her land side—invisible from the sea—which, by prearrangement, was answered by two dim lights on land, which enabled the blockade runner to form the range of the channel. A regular system of signals was devised between the blockade runners and their accomplices on shore which greatly mitigated the dangers of making port. When Fort Fisher fell Lieutenant Cushing assumed the duties of this signal service, and performed the work so skillfully that two notorious blockade runners, the *Charlotte* and the *Stag*, were inveigled under the guns of the fort, and captured before the astonished blockade runners knew that those fortifications had fallen into National hands. With a view to thwarting the blockade runner in his

attempt to round the end of the blockading line, the Nationalists stationed a light-draft vessel at either end, while several other smaller gunboats were placed half a mile within the line. A careful watch was kept for the enemy, and when discovered the blockade runner was permitted to pass the first gunboat, when signals were sent up, and the inside gunboats quickly surrounded the audacious craft and captured her.

At times, even when the blockade runner had been chased ashore, the bulk of her cargo—and in many instances the cargo was worth as much as the craft—was saved. In fact, it was well understood that the Confederates had erected batteries at certain points along the coast, generally near a favorite port of entry, which could have protected a beached vessel, at least long enough to land her cargo, and in some cases to save the vessel itself. Owing to the scarcity of artillery, the Confederates did not station guns permanently in these batteries, but held cavalry and guns in readiness to be rushed to any earthwork near which a blockade runner had beached.

The experience of the new English-built blockade runner *Kate* is a case in point. In July, 1863, she attempted to put into Charleston, but being chased off by the blockading forces there she made for Wilmington, and attempted to pass the National ships off New Inlet. On being sighted early in the morning, chase was given, and her commander was compelled to beach on Smith's Island, where the crew landed. A boat party from the *Penobscot* attempted to float her, but failing in this they set her on fire and left her, believing her destruction to be assured. Two or three weeks afterward, however, the Confederates managed to float her off, and anchored her under a battery. It was only with great difficulty that she was finally destroyed by a daring boat party.

The dangers attending attacks on blockade runners are well illustrated in the case of the *Hebe*, a Bermuda

steamer laden with contrabands of war, which ran ashore on Federal Point about August 1, 1863. She was attacked by a boat from the blockading vessel *Nippon*, a screw merchant steamer converted into a gunboat for the war; but, as it was blowing a heavy gale at the time, the boat was swamped, though its crew managed to gain the decks of the stranded craft. A second boat party was not so fortunate, their boat also being swamped, the men cast ashore, and made prisoners on the beach. Several other boats now put off to the assistance of our men in the *Hebe*, as that vessel was covered by a 2-gun battery. One of these boats was upset, and finding that the chances of rescue were small the men aboard the *Hebe*, after firing the vessel so as to insure her destruction, made the best of their way to the shore and were captured. Several days later the large vessels of the squadron drew close inshore, and after silencing the Confederate battery landed a force and brought off the guns.

Another gallant affair of this kind was that conducted by Lieutenant Roswell H. Lamson, of the *Nansemond*. On one of the darkest nights of October, 1863, Lamson, while stationed with the blockading fleet off New Inlet, Wilmington, discovered a strange vessel attempting to run the blockade. She was the *Venus*, one of the swiftest craft engaged in the contraband trade between Wilmington and Nassau. The *Nansemond*, a purchased side-wheel steamer, was quickly put about in chase, and after a hard run got within easy gunshot, when Lamson opened fire, his first shell taking effect in the enemy's foremast, the second exploding in the cabin, while the third killed a man as it passed forward, and the fourth struck the *Venus* between wind and water, causing her to leak seriously. Considering that it was an exceptionally dark night, and that the two vessels were moving at their highest rate of speed, we may well admire the marksmanship that rendered four successive shells effective. Finding that his craft

must sink in a short time, the commander of the *Venus* headed straight for the shore, with the persistent *Nansmond* close behind him. Indeed, so rapid had been the movements of the Nationalists that scarcely had the keel of the *Venus* begun to grate on the gravelly beach, and before her people could get ashore, when a boat full of armed men from the gunboat shot alongside, the men sprang up her sides, and in a twinkling had the entire ship's company prisoners. Finding that it would be impossible to float his prize, Lieutenant Lamson, after removing his prisoners, riddled the *Venus* with shell, so that in a short time she was totally destroyed.

Early on the morning of November 9, 1863, the *Niphon*, under the command of Acting-Master J. B. Breck, while returning to her station off Wilmington after a chase toward Masonboro Inlet, discovered a side-wheel steamer endeavoring to run the blockade from the north. Behind the stranger, and in hot pursuit, was a National gunboat, which kept up a continual fire on the fleeing blockade runner—the *Ella and Anna*. Finding that he was completely trapped, the commander of the *Ella and Anna* determined on the bold course of running the *Niphon* down. Observing this move, Breck massed his men at the bow, intending to board and carry the stranger, even if his own ship went down. On dashed the blockade runner at the top of her speed, and, unmindful of the storm of canister, crashed into the *Niphon*, carrying away the latter's bowsprit and stern. Not waiting to see if there was anything left of his own ship, Breck ordered the men to board, and in a few minutes they had full possession of their prize. In her hold were found three hundred cases of Austrian rifles, besides other warlike stores, the sale of the cargo netting one hundred and eighty thousand dollars. The prize was taken into the service under the name *Malvern*.

One contrivance for eluding the vigilance of the

blockaders merits notice. As has been said, the blockade runner usually managed to approach the port at night; consequently orders were given to the officers of the National vessels, on the discovery of a blockade runner, to sound a general alarm and to fire rockets in the direction the suspected craft was taking when last seen, which served as a guide for the other vessels employed in the blockade. In an incredibly short time this order was known to all the commanders of vessels engaged in carrying contraband of war, and forthwith they supplied themselves with rockets, and when pursued at night they fired off enough rockets for a fleet, and of course in a direction they had little idea of taking. This confused the signals made by the National boat discovering the enemy, and threw the entire blockading force off the scent. On one dark night in September, 1864, this trick resulted in an exasperating escape of a blockade runner off Wilmington. The *Howquah* had almost run down a contraband, when she suddenly found herself subjected to a severe fire from several of her consorts, which mistook her for the "other ship," and she was compelled to withdraw and allow the "real ship" to escape in order to save herself from disaster.

An unpleasant feature of blockade running was in the fact that a number of officers in the Royal Navy assumed command of such craft under fictitious names, and, undoubtedly with the connivance of the Admiralty, engaged in service against the United States. Doubtless the enormous profits to be made out of a few successful runs between Southern ports and Bermuda or Nassau was the main incentive for the British naval officer to engage in this discreditable service. One British officer, under the name of "A. Roberts," states that when blockade running was in the zenith of its prosperity the rates of pay in a vessel of the first class for a single round trip between Nassau and Wilmington were: Captain, one thousand pounds; chief

officer, two hundred and fifty pounds ; second and third officers, one hundred and fifty pounds each ; chief engineer, five hundred pounds ; crew and firemen, about fifty pounds each ; pilot, seven hundred and fifty pounds—half of the pay for each venture being paid in advance. It will be observed that the pay was in British gold, which at that time commanded a large premium over the currency of the United States, so that, when figured in dollars, twenty-five per cent could easily be added to each man's salary. Aside from these enormous rates of pay, the officers were able to stow away little cargoes on their own account, so that a six-hundred-pound bale of cotton snugly packed away under a bunk and in different parts of a stateroom, valued in Liverpool at three hundred dollars, was one of the little perquisites within the grasp of these mercenary officers. We can easily believe, then, that many officers engaged in this contraband trade retired in six months on comfortable fortunes.

Another barrier to blockade running, and perhaps one more feared by the enemy, was the flying squadron created by the Nationalists, which was directed to cruise some fifty miles from the blockaded ports and in the vicinity of Bermuda and Nassau. This force was under the command of Acting Rear-Admiral Charles Wilkes, having the *Wachusett* as his flagship, and the *Sonoma*, Lieutenant Thomas Holdup Stevens, and *Tioga*, Lieutenant George W. Rodgers, in company. The squadron was rapidly increased and its field of operations enlarged, until it finally covered the entire Atlantic Ocean. Some of the other vessels added to it were the *Dacotah*, *Cimmerone*, *Octorara*, *Santiago de Cuba*, and *Rhode Island*. Speaking of this flying squadron, Captain John Taylor Wood, of the Confederate cruiser *Tallahassee*, said, after describing his rush past the blockading force off Wilmington: "More to be feared than the inshore squadron were the vessels cruising offshore from forty to fifty miles, in a position

to sight at daylight the vessels that might come out during the night, and these were the fastest and most efficient blockaders. . . . The fact that we were chased by four cruisers on our first day out proved how effective was the blockade."<sup>1</sup>

On November 29, 1862, Wilkes, in the *Wachusett*, having the *Sonoma* and *Tioga* in company, appeared off St. George's harbor, Bermuda. The flagship, with the *Tioga*, entered the port, and, observing that the fort at the entrance showed no colors, Wilkes landed and demanded an explanation of the governor. That official replied that there was only a sergeant's guard in the fort. "But it was observed," records Lieutenant Stevens, "that when Wilkes left his anchorage for the sea the meteor flag of England was promptly hoisted."<sup>2</sup>

In striking contrast to this treatment of Wilkes, we have the statement of Midshipman G. Terry Sinclair, of the Confederate cruiser *Florida*, Captain Maffitt, which visited the same port in the spring of the following year. Sinclair says: "When Captain Maffitt called on the governor, who was an admiral in the English navy, the latter, in a joking way, expressed surprise that an ex-officer of the American navy should be guilty of such a breach of etiquette as entering the harbor without saluting the English flag. To this Captain Maffitt replied that he could not do otherwise, as his salute would not be returned. The governor replied that he (Captain Maffitt) could not tell unless he tried. This was hint enough for Captain Maffitt, who returned to his ship, went to quarters, and hoisting the English ensign at his masthead saluted it, to which the fort replied."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Century Magazine, July, 1898.

<sup>2</sup> Rear-Admiral Stevens to the author.

<sup>3</sup> Century Magazine, July, 1898.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### SEA POWER IN THE CIVIL WAR.

THAT we may better understand the importance of the part played by maritime forces, both North and South, in the civil war, a brief historical digression is necessary. French, English and American statesmen for nearly three hundred years have recognized the Mississippi River system as being the key to the United States. The French discovered this at the time of the earliest settlements, and while the English, Dutch, Scandinavians, Scotch-Irish and Spaniards were establishing themselves along the seaboard, the French were pushing their way one thousand miles inland, perfecting a chain of trading posts (in reality forts) along the St. Lawrence, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and the Great Lakes, by means of which they hoped to merge the Canadas and Louisiana into one vast domain which not only would cut off the littoral settlements from the boundless West, but would give the French great advantages over the English in time of war.

How sound was the judgment of these statesmen as to the superior advantages of this enormous river system over the seaboard is forcibly shown to-day in the general decadence of commerce in our Atlantic cities and the unprecedented massing of population and trade along these great inland waters. When we see the vast commerce of the great West pass direct to Europe without paying toll to our seaboard cities, we marvel at the foresight of the French statesmen who nearly three hundred years ago devoted their energies



to controlling these inland water ways, well content to allow their rivals to occupy the thin outer edge of the vast continent so long as the French were making sure of the continent itself. As early as 1678 De la Salle launched a craft of ten tons on Lake Ontario, and a year later one of sixty tons was launched on Lake Erie. No one was more alive to the great power threatening him in the rear than the English settler himself, and in this we have the explanation of the persistent efforts made by the seaboard colonists to wrest this territory from their inveterate foe.

When the war for American independence broke out the English followed the old scheme of the French ministers to control all inland waters, and to use them as a means of attacking the seaboard territory in the rear. Their first attempt was made in 1776, when a combined army and navy expedition came down the Richelieu River from the St. Lawrence and endeavored to reach New York by way of Lakes Champlain and George and the Hudson River, thus cutting off the New England States from the West. That expedition, as has been shown in this work, was frustrated by the stubbornly contested naval action on Lake Champlain, in which, it is true, the Americans were defeated, but, like the repulse at Bunker Hill, it was a victorious defeat, for the enemy's object was thwarted and they were compelled to retreat. Captain Mahan, in an advance chapter of his *History of the Royal Navy of Great Britain*, rightly attributes the capture of Burgoyne's army, when attempting the same passage two years later, to this naval engagement—and Burgoyne's capture has been classed as one of the "decisive battles of the world."

In the War of 1812 the enemy made desperate attempts—as has been fully shown in this work—to control the Great Lakes, which plainly shows how important they considered these inland waters. "They are a portion of our marine dominion," said the London

Times in 1813, "which must on no account be yielded." In these efforts they were baffled by our naval forces on Lake Ontario in 1812, defeated by Perry's squadron on Lake Erie in 1813, and then, changing their point of attack, they were overwhelmed with disaster by our naval forces on Lake Champlain in 1814. Still determined to get a hold on these inland waters, the English in the winter of 1814-'15, when the announcement of peace was daily expected, projected their most formidable expedition of the war against New Orleans, hoping to obtain a hold on the great river system which they believed—and with reason—they could extend to all the territory drained by it. How these efforts also were frustrated by our sea power has been shown in this work, not only by the heroic fight made by our gunboats on Lake Borgne, but by the detention of a large section of the expedition at Fayal, in its attack on the American privateer *General Armstrong*. These stubborn sea contests so delayed and harassed the expedition that our land forces obtained indispensable time in which to prepare defenses from which the British finally recoiled.

Such being the strategical importance of the Mississippi River system in the eyes of French and English statesmen, when the West was nothing but a wilderness, of how much greater value must it have been in 1861, when its banks were inhabited by millions of people and its waters bore thousands of tons of shipping? The Ohio, Missouri and other confluent of the Mississippi would have been of little value to the bordering States if the only natural outlet of those water ways to the outside world was held by an enemy. With that mightiest of all river systems in their control, the Confederates could well hope not only to cut off absolutely the Northern States from the West, but even to carry their conquests to wherever these waters came. Truly, the Mississippi was rightly termed the "backbone of the rebellion."

That the credit of wresting this highly important water way from the control of the South belongs almost exclusively to our maritime forces, can not be gainsaid. From New Orleans to Fort Donelson our navy was the dominating and almost only considerable factor in that stupendous struggle. Not only in making this all-important conquest, but in keeping it, in patrolling the rivers night and day from end to end, thereby cutting the Confederates off from the much-needed supplies in the States of Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas, the navy bore the brunt of attack.

And it must not be forgotten that on more than one occasion our river gunboats saved our land forces from overwhelming defeat. Grant's army was rescued from ignominious disaster at Belmont in 1861 by the wooden gunboats *Tyler* and *Lexington*, for an eyewitness says: "The enemy planted their fresh artillery, supported by infantry, in a cornfield just above our transports, with the intention of sinking them when we started up the river and of bagging the entire army; but thanks to the gunboats *Tyler* and *Lexington* and their experienced gunners, they saved us from a terrible doom. They took up a position between us and the enemy and opened their guns upon them, letting slip a whole broadside at once. This movement was performed so quickly that the Confederates could not fire on us. Their guns were silenced as soon as they opened, or probably were dismounted. The first shot from the gunboats made a perfect lane through the enemy's ranks." The Confederates endeavored to reply with musketry, but without effect, and the fire from the gunboats soon put them to flight.

In the following year these same gunboats—and under very similar circumstances—saved the National army from capture at Pittsburg Landing (see vol. ii, pages 287-289). Then again six gunboats—the ubiquitous *Lexington* among them—rescued Colonel Hard-

ing's garrison of eight hundred men when surrounded by an overwhelming Confederate force (see vol. ii, page 290). It was our gunboats that did so much toward neutralizing the effect of Morgan's raid in 1863 and in intercepting his retreat, the little *Moose* overtaking the Confederates at a ford two hundred and fifty miles east of Cincinnati and compelling them to scatter in headlong flight.

We must keep in mind that the mere independence of the seceding States was not the only aim of the Confederates. They had definitely in view the formation of one great slave empire, embracing *at least* the southern half of the United States to the Pacific coast, all of Mexico, the West India Islands and the Hawaiian Islands. They well knew that by holding the lower half of the Mississippi River her vast tributaries were comparatively useless to any other States, and that their conquest or friendly attitude would follow in course of time. In other words, they recognized, just as the French and English statesmen did, that Nature had designed this enormous territory to be occupied by one and only one nation. It would never do for the Nationalists to simply keep possession of the sections already held by them. They must control the river system from sources to the mouth, else lose all. To the Government at Washington a failure to open the Mississippi meant the ultimate surrender of the vast territory drained by its confluents. To the leaders at Richmond the failure to hold their part of the river system meant the surrender of the most alluring part of their programme and the perpetual confinement of the Confederacy to a small area, where there was little prospect of future expansion, and where the rapid growth of the Northern and Western States in a few generations would, if the Confederacy succeeded in securing its independence, completely overshadow and in time overwhelm them. Briefly, the fight for the Mississippi was a gigantic struggle for the control of the

West, and the victory was won for the North by her superior maritime power.

One of the most important objects of the National policy was to exhaust the resources of the South, and a long step was taken to this end by our control of the Mississippi River, for it cut off from the Confederacy the invaluable supplies of beef and cotton from the fertile States of Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas. This territory being more remote from the seat of war was less exposed to its ravages, and when the other Southern States were exhausted Texas and Arkansas could have furnished almost illimitable supplies—the beef for sustenance and the cotton for purchasing military supplies.

While the struggle for the Mississippi was going on in the West the far-reaching plans of our Government were operating most effectively in the “drying up” process on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. It is well known that the South was deficient in manufacturing plants and skilled mechanics, but so long as military supplies could be obtained abroad and cotton could be produced with which to pay for them, these deficiencies were comparatively insignificant. But here our sea power was exerted again with telling effect. Our Western gunboats cut off the very considerable supply of cotton from Texas and Arkansas, and the seagoing navy wrested seaport after seaport from the South, and the harbors that could not be taken were blockaded. True, many swift vessels eluded the blockade, but many *were* captured, and in just that proportion crippled the Secessionists, while, as the war progressed, our blockade lines were drawn closer and closer, gradually drying up the vitality of the South until she was veritably gasping.

To the unprejudiced student of the military operations of this unfortunate strife it must be apparent that the Confederacy could never have been put down had it not been for the aid of our maritime forces. It was

very similar to the conditions in the War of 1812, when disaster after disaster befell our armies and victory after victory was won by our sea forces, and the contrast became so marked in 1814 that the London Times of that year was led to exclaim: "It seems fated that the ignorance, incapacity, and cowardice of the Americans by land should be continually relieved in point of effect on the public mind by their successes at sea."<sup>1</sup> In the first two years of the internecine strife disaster after disaster befell our land forces, while in striking contrast we find an almost unbroken series of great victories to the credit of our navy. It could not be said that "it is all quiet along the Potomac" with our navy. Within eighteen months after war was declared Forts Donelson and Henry, Island No. 10, Fort Pillow, Memphis, New Orleans had all been taken after superb fighting, with the result that three of the largest States of the Confederacy were isolated. On the seaboard Fort Hatteras, Port Royal, Fort Macon, and many lesser points had been captured by the sea forces of the North, while the dreaded *Merrimac* had been thwarted in her far-reaching designs.

In short, when we come to sum up the comparative number of victories won by the National army and navy in this war, we find that, in proportion to the number of men engaged—there being only fifty-five thousand men in the navy at the most—the navy is immeasurably ahead; and when it comes to a proportionate comparison of killed and wounded, the navy suffered quite as much as the army. Our naval forces were almost invariably successful, and, what is more, that which they took was generally kept, while the sum total of defeat and victory for our land forces nearly balance with the further discredit of too frequently losing all that their victories gave them.

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<sup>1</sup> The writer in no way indorses the epithets "ignorance, incapacity, and cowardice," the words necessarily being quoted.

Again it must be admitted that had this war been settled by land forces alone the result would have been extremely doubtful. It is generally conceded that offensive operations require many more men than defensive work to insure any hope of success. As a rule, the South was acting on the defensive. We point with pride to the larger population of the North, but we must not forget that that larger population was needed to carry on an offensive campaign. Furthermore, the Southerners were fighting in defense of their homes, while a large portion of the Northern troops drafted into the service were of foreign birth, and too plainly showed on more than one occasion that they had little relish for the cause in which they were engaged. The adage that a man fighting for his own home is equal to three, is not inapplicable in this war; so that when we point to the larger population of the North at that time we must not forget that, even if all were loyal Americans, it required a great preponderancy of force to carry the war successfully into the South. In view of these facts it must be admitted that so far as the land forces of the North and South were concerned they were sufficiently well matched to have made the result extremely doubtful.

European statesmen saw this. England and France did not covertly and openly side with the South without first carefully weighing the chances, no matter how much they desired to see the Union dismembered. After looking the situation over carefully they were satisfied that the South would win, for at that time they had not counted—nor did we count—on the extraordinary development and unprecedented exploits of our navy, which gave such a crushing blow to the hopes of the Confederacy. Had any one in 1861 said that wooden ships could run past Forts Jackson and St. Philip or capture batteries like those at Port Royal and Hatteras, he would have been set down as mad. Had any one told these statesmen that in eighteen months the North would

have a fleet of ironclads capable of withstanding the heaviest shot or sinking all the wooden ships in the world, he would have been laughed at. It was this unprecedented and unexpected development of our maritime strength and prowess that changed the attitude of France and England after the second year of the struggle.

Looking at the war from another standpoint we are confronted by an even more striking illustration of the potency of sea power in that struggle. Suppose, for a moment, that the South had an equally effective maritime force or equally good facilities for building ironclads. We have seen what dreadful havoc their wretchedly constructed ironclads occasioned, and following all these actions critically we will be startled by discovering in how many instances the Confederates were overcome not by our ships or guns but by their own faulty construction and defective armament and machinery. It is appalling to think of what the *Merrimac* could have done had she been constructed with all the facilities and promptness of a Northern shipyard. She would have got to sea several weeks before any monitor could possibly have been made ready. Had she the proper hull, suitable engines, perfect workmanship, our seaboard cities would have been at her mercy and our wooden ships sunk or scattered in flight. France and England unquestionably would have acknowledged the independence of the South, and there would have been a free outflow of cotton from the Confederacy to Europe and as free a flow of military supplies of the best quality in return.

Suppose the ironclad *Albemarle*, instead of having been built in an open cornfield, had been constructed in all the perfection of a properly equipped shipyard. There was not one of the dozens of National vessels in Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds that could have resisted her twenty minutes. The ironclad fleet projected and begun by the South was quite as formidable, if



not more so, than that built by the North ; and what is more, the South, in spite of its deficiency in skilled mechanics and machine shops, had their "monsters" more advanced toward completion than the North. Look over the list : The *Louisiana*, of sixteen guns (nearly completed in April, 1862, in spite of strikes of employees, lack of material, etc.) ; the *Manassas*, one gun ; the *New Orleans*, twenty guns ; the *Memphis*, eighteen guns ; the *Mississippi*, sixteen guns ; the *Arkansas*, ten guns ; the *Tennessee* (No. 1), ten guns ; the *Tennessee* (No. 2), six guns ; the *Palmetto State*, four guns ; the *Chicora*, six guns ; the *Merrimac*, eight guns ; the *Atlanta*, six guns ; the *Georgia*, six guns ; the *Albemarle*, four guns ; the *Fredericksburg*, six guns ; the *Richmond*, six guns ; the *Virginia*, eight guns—in all, sixteen ironclads, mounting one hundred and forty-three guns. In almost every instance these vessels were wretchedly put together, and there was so much delay in their construction that few got into active service.

The record of our naval operations on the Western rivers would have been very different if the Confederates could have supplemented the strength of their land batteries and forts with a fleet of ironclads equally as good as those of the North. As it was, they made an effective fight with their frail passenger boats, and in one case captured one of our most formidable ironclads, while the unfinished *Arkansas* safely ran the gauntlet of the entire National fleet. We have seen how the upper Mississippi was opened by our ironclads and wooden gunboats. If the Confederates had equally good or better vessels—and the *Arkansas* type proved to be superior to our ironclads—they could not only have secured their section of this river system, but could have carried their operations northward.

It is impossible to conceive of Farragut successfully passing Forts Jackson and St. Philip if the ironclads *Louisiana*, *New Orleans*, *Memphis* and *Mississippi*

had been properly built and ready to be let loose among the National wooden ships on that night. We have seen what the *Merrimac* did five weeks before at Hampton Roads, yet the *Mississippi* alone was equal to three *Merrimacs* and was regarded as the "greatest vessel in the world." We all know how much time and blood it took for our land forces—even with the aid of the navy—to capture Vicksburg. Suppose the Confederate ironclads had control of the Mississippi instead of the Nationalists—as undoubtedly would have been the case had their various ironclads been properly and promptly constructed—how many Vicksburgs would there have been before our land forces could have opened the river; and after capturing all the Vicksburgs, what was to prevent the Confederate ironclads from passing and repassing those batteries with impunity—just as our wooden ships did—and still be virtually in possession of the river?

And so the comparison could be carried out to the minutest details of the maritime strength of the North and the South, each conclusion pointing most unmistakably to the belief that, first, had it not been for the sea power of the North the war would have gone on almost indefinitely; and, secondly, had the South had equally good facilities for increasing its sea power or for creating a new iron-mailed sea power the secession could not have been suppressed by force of arms.



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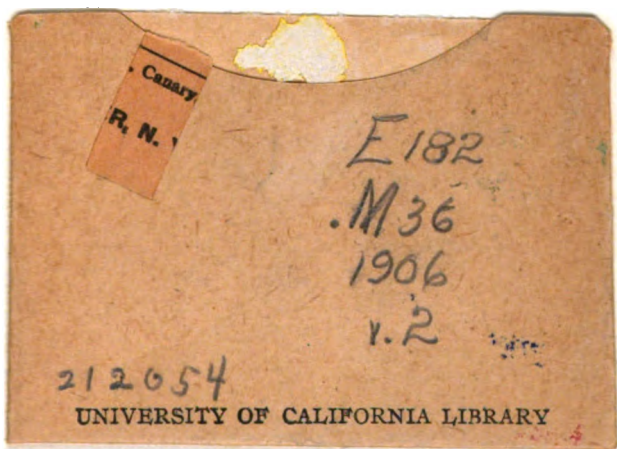
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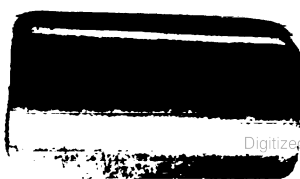


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