THE BLOCKADE

AND

THE CRUISERS

JOHN L. WORDEN.

THE NAVY IN THE CIVIL WAR

VOLUME I.

THE BLOCKADE AND THE CRUISERS

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PREFACE.

As the introductory volume of a series, it is the purpose of this book to deal not only with the specific subjects mentioned in the title, but also with the general condition of the Navy at the outbreak of the War, the peculiar difficulties before it, and the way in which the difficulties were met. In this connection it has been necessary to touch incidentally upon matters that are the subject of animated controversy in the Navy at the present moment. Such a reference to actual questions cannot be avoided, if the lessons of the War are to be fairly and fearlessly regarded.

For statements of fact, reliance has been chiefly placed upon the written accounts, official or unofficial, of those who took part in the events recorded. In describing the operations of the blockade-runners, the narratives of Maffitt, Roberts, and Wilkinson have been largely used. Finally, the writer must acknowledge his obligations to many kind friends, both in and out of the service, who have aided him with valuable advice and suggestions.

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THE BLOCKADE AND THE CRUISERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE PREPARATIONS.

THE Naval War of 1861 was marked by two principal features. The first is that while one side had a small force of naval vessels, which were generally good of their kind, the other entered the contest with absolutely nothing that could be called a man-of-war. The second is that though certain developments in the character and construction of ships and of weapons had been foreshadowed before the war, and had even been partially realized, it was while the struggle was actually in progress that changes took place in these respects which amounted to a revolution in naval warfare. At the beginning the fact that sailing vessels were soon to be laid aside was still far from general recognition, especially among officers of conservative tendencies; the three great weapons of to-day, the rifled gun, the ram, and the torpedo, were almost unknown in the service; and iron armor was still an experiment. The modifications of the past fifteen years had accustomed men's minds to the idea that considerable changes would gradually take place; but none foresaw or were prepared for the tremendous development that was wrought in four years of actual fighting.

Modern naval warfare was therefore almost a new art to the officers that were called in 1861 into active service. The long period of profound peace that followed the wars of Napoleon had been broken only by the war with Mexico in 1846, the Crimean War in 1854, and the Franco-Austrian War in 1859. None of these was marked by naval operations on any important scale, and such operations as there were indicated but faintly the coming development. In the contest with Mexico, steamers were used in war for the first time; but the enemy was so destitute of naval resources that their overwhelming importance was not fully recognized. The operations of the navy were confined to the attack of imperfectly-fortified points on the seaboard, and to blockading a country that had no commercial importance. The Crimean War advanced a step farther. The destruction of the Turkish fleet at Sinope, in 1853, showed the effectiveness of horizontal shell-firing, as invented by Paixhans, while the success of the French ironclads at Kinburn led the way to the practice of casing ships-of-war in armor. In 1858 experiments were made at Portsmouth with the Erebus and Meteor, two lightly-armored floating batteries; and these were followed, in France and in England, by the Gloire and the Warrior, veritable ironclad cruisers. But the new system was still in its experimental stage; and it was left to the war of 1861 to show clearly its practical value.

The application of armor to the sides of vessels was accompanied, or rather induced, by improvements in ordnance, especially by the introduction of rifled guns in Europe and of the heavy cast-iron smooth-bores of Dahlgren in America. Both these improvements, however, were of recent date. The first successful employment of rifled cannon in actual war was made by the French in the Italian campaign of

1859; while the heavy Dahlgren guns had hardly been ten years in use, and were still undergoing development.

In regard to the ram, though seemingly a paradox, it may be said that its employment in naval warfare was so ancient that in 1861 it was really a new weapon. Its revival was a direct consequence of the application of steam to the propulsion of vessels. The Greeks and Romans had used it in their galley-fights with destructive effect; and it was only displaced by heavy guns when oars were displaced by sails, when ships no longer fought end-on, but broadside to broadside, and when the close-hauled line ahead took the place of the direct attack in line abreast, of the old galley tactics. The introduction of steam, by giving ships-of-war a motive power under their own control, independent of the action of the wind—an advantage similar to that which the triremes possessed in their banks of oars—revived the trireme's mode of attack, and made the ram once more an effective weapon. But in 1861 this phase of naval development had not been recognized, and the sinking of the Cumberland, in March of the next year, first revealed the addition that steam had made to the number and variety of implements of destruction.

Torpedoes, though of more recent introduction than rams, were not wholly new weapons. The idea of the torpedo, first discovered by Bushnell, and developed by Fulton, was rejected by the English Government in 1805, because it was recognized as giving an advantage to a weak navy over a powerful one, and its adoption could only impair the maritime supremacy of Great Britain. On account of this advantage which the torpedo gave to the weaker side, it was brought into use by the Russians in the Crimea, and, though none of the allied vessels were destroyed by its agency, it none the less contributed appreciably to the protection of Russian harbors. But its great importance was not estab-

lished until the Civil War, and then only in the second year. The Confederates took it up for the same reason that the Russians had adopted it in 1854, and the English had rejected it in 1805. Driven by the poverty of their naval resources to the use of every device that ingenuity could suggest, in the fall of 1862 they established a bureau at Richmond to elaborate and systematize torpedo warfare; and the destruction of the Housatonic, the Tecumseh, the Patapsco, and many smaller vessels, showed the tremendous power of the newly adopted weapon.

From the fact that the navy at this period was concerned with an essentially living and growing science, it was important that its officers, above all in the senior grades, should be men of progressive minds and of energetic and rapid action. Especially was this the case when the navy found itself upon the threshold of a great war, in which every variety of naval operation was to be attempted, and every contrivance of mechanical art was to be employed. No doubt a war always brings new men to the front, irrespective of rank or age. But the main object of a navy's existence in time of peace is to be in a condition of instant readiness for war, and this object can only be attained by having the ablest and most energetic men in the foremost places. Unless such a provision is made, and made before war begins, the possibilities of naval development will be neglected; the vigor and audacity that should mark the earlier operations of a war will be wanting; and the opportunity of striking sharp and sudden blows at the outset will be lost.

Unfortunately, in 1861, the arrangement of the navy list failed to meet this essential condition of readiness for active operations. Long years of peace, the unbroken course of seniority promotion, and the absence of any provision for retirement, had filled the highest grade with gallant veter-

ans, most of whom had reached an age that unfitted them for active service afloat. At the head of the list were the seventy-eight captains. A few of them were men of commanding talents, and these few left their mark upon the records of the war. Of the rest, some had obtained distinction in an earlier period of their career. But it is only in exceptional men that the physical and mental vigor is to be found that resists the enfeebling influences of advancing years; and it would be unjust to expect the active operations of war to be successfully carried on by a body of commanding officers most of whom had passed their sixtieth year.

This was, however, only one of the difficulties of the situation. The excessive accumulation of older officers at the head of the list was felt as a heavy drag all the way down to the foot. Promotion was blocked, as there was no provision for retirement; and the commanders and lieutenants, many of whom were conspicuous for ability and energy, were stagnating in subordinate positions. The commanders at the head of the list were between fifty-eight and sixty years of age—a time of life at which few men are useful for active service. The upper lieutenants were forty-eight or fifty—some indeed were past fifty—and very few were in command of vessels, as there were two hundred officers above them. The first-lieutenant of the Hartford, at that time the flagship of the East India squadron, had been thirty-four years in the service. He and his contemporaries, who had entered the navy at sixteen or thereabout, had not yet risen to the responsibilities of command. This enforced continuance in subordinate stations could not fail to tell upon even the best men. The tendency of such a system is to make mere routine men, and to substitute apathy and indolence for zeal and energy. If a man that has had proper

training is not fit for command at thirty-six, it is not likely that he will ever be fit for it. If he has reached the point of fitness, every year of postponement, unless he is a very extraordinary man, is a year of deterioration.

The efficiency of the service was further weakened by the vicious system of promotion by seniority, to which the navy has always clung tenaciously, in the face of reason and precedent, of the analogies of civil preferment, and the example of other military and naval establishments. The defects of this system may be briefly indicated. Every man who lives long enough, unless gross incompetency can be proved against him, goes to the head of the list, while those who have entered the service later, however much they may excel in ability or zeal, remain below to wait their turn. It is purely a question of survival. An officer comes to look upon promotion as his right, apart from any considerations of merit or distinction. Public opinion in the service has no leaders, for the leading minds are not destined, as they would be in every other profession, to gravitate to the leading positions. They simply take their turn. The natural conservatism of a military body is exaggerated, and judgment becomes warped by tradition. As promotion is sure, there is no inducement to effort. No one will readily assume responsibility, for he only runs a risk without any prospect of reward. It is not so much the presence of poor material that injures a service, as its elevation by an iron rule of promotion, and the enforced subordination of more capable men. As the Secretary of the Navy in 1855 tersely put it, "It is neither more nor less than elevating the incompetent, and then ordering the unpromoted competent to do their work."

It became evident, shortly after the war began, that steps must be taken to remedy the existing state of things; but

nothing could be done at once, and it was only in December, 1861, that a law was passed retiring all officers at the age of sixty-two, or after forty-five years of service. By the same law, any captain or commander might be selected for the command of a squadron, with the rank of flag-officer, which should give him authority over his seniors in the squadron. Another act, passed in the following summer, created the grades of rear-admiral and commodore, recast the whole corps of officers, and established promotion by selection temporarily in the highest grade. These measures, though late in coming, had the desired effect. The veterans were gradually replaced by younger men; the commanders and lieutenants were raised to the places they were qualified to fill; and new life was infused into the service.

But the spirit of routine had for thirty years pervaded the naval establishment, and the change could not be effected in a day. The whole tendency of the navy had been to preserve traditions, and to repress individuality in the junior officers. Men thought alike, talked alike, and acted alike. The officers in active service, grown old in the lower grades, and but little encouraged to exercise their powers of volition, had come to regard themselves as parts of a machine, and to wait for the orders of their superior. As a general thing, the assumption of responsibility was neither desired nor permitted; and the subordinate who presumed, even in an emergency, to act upon his own judgment, was apt to bring down upon himself official censure. It is related of one of the captains at the battle of New Orleans, a man of unquestioned courage, that when he fell in with the Manassas, he hailed ship after ship to obtain an order from the admiral to run her down. Nor was this an extreme case. As it happened, the character of the war was such as to call especially for self-reliance, resolute action, readiness of resource, and

the exercise of individual judgment. But confirmed habits are not easily shaken off; and the operations of the first two years show from time to time the persistence of old traditions. Nothing short of a complete upheaval of the service brought about the needful change; commanders became admirals by a single step; and junior officers became first-lieutenants of the ships in which they were serving as midshipmen. Finally, when the great leaders came into positions of active command, their encouragement and approval of individual enterprise gave to their juniors the opportunities of which the latter were only too eager to avail themselves.

It was another unfortunate feature of the situation, that while there was a superabundance of old officers, there was a deficiency in the junior grades. Below the lieutenants there were less than a hundred masters and midshipmen. These, together with a dozen of the younger lieutenants, were graduates of the Naval Academy; and their service during the war showed the value of their thorough training. To fill the gap at the foot of the list the three upper classes of acting midshipmen were ordered from the Academy into active service. Most of these were mere boys. They found themselves, with only the experience of two or three years at the Naval School, suddenly placed in positions of difficulty and responsibility. Many of them were lieutenants at nineteen; but no better work was done in the naval war than that which was placed in the hands of these lads from the Academy.

The deficiency of officers was increased by the resignation or dismissal of those who took side with the South. There were 322 of these of all grades and corps, and among them were several of marked ability. But even without the losses occasioned by retirement and by resignation, the number of

officers would have been wholly insufficient to meet the demands of the war. Volunteers were called for, and great numbers entered the service. There were appointed altogether about 7,500. The regular officers formed only one-seventh of the whole service; but in general they filled the most important positions. The additions to the line of the navy were composed of a great variety of material. Some were merchant captains and mates of experience; others had never been at sea. Those employed on the Mississippi were chiefly steamboat men and pilots. Many of them were capable and gallant men, who, though unused to the handling of guns and the discipline of a military service, conducted themselves honorably and acquitted themselves with credit. As a class, the volunteers were an indispensable addition to the naval force, and rendered valuable service. Without the least reflection upon their good qualities, it may be said that their efficiency would have been increased by a previous military training. But no attempt had ever been made to form a reserve for the navy; and the administration was fortunate when it secured any nautical experience, although military training might be wholly wanting.

Great as was the want of officers, the want of trained seamen was equally great. The complement of the navy had been fixed at 7,600. Of these there were on March 10, 1861, only 207 in all the ports and receiving-ships on the Atlantic coast. It was a striking illustration of the improvidence of naval legislation and administration, that in a country of thirty millions of people only a couple of hundred were at the disposal of the Navy Department. Seamen could not be had either to man the ships that might be commissioned, or to protect the exposed stations at Annapolis and Norfolk. Prompt measures were taken during the first year to in-

crease the force; and later, a great expansion took place. In July, 1863, there were 34,000 men in the service. But at all times there was a difficulty in obtaining trained seamen. Large bounties were offered by State and local authorities for enlistment in the army, and transfers between the two services were not authorized by law. When the draft was established, mariners were subjected to it like other citizens, without any regard to the service which they would prefer, or for which they might be specially fitted. In assigning the quotas to each locality, no allowance was made to maritime communities for the seamen they had furnished; so that they were forced, in self-defence, to send their seafaring population into the army. In 1864, a law was passed correcting these evils; but meantime the navy suffered, and vessels were occasionally unable to go to sea for want of men. As the necessities of the service grew more pressing, the number of men in the navy increased. To obtain them, it was necessary to hold out extraordinary inducements; and in the last months, bounties as high as one thousand dollars were offered and paid for a single seaman. When the war ended, there were 51,500 men in the service.

Nothing shows more forcibly the dependence of the navy upon the merchant marine for recruiting its ranks in time of war than the enormous additions both of officers and seamen that took place between 1861 and 1865. It is from the merchant marine that such reinforcements must always be chiefly drawn. To fill the cadres of the army a well-trained and organized militia stands always ready, at least in many of the States; but no steps have ever been taken toward establishing a sea-militia, even since its importance has been demonstrated by the war. A trained reserve force is a greater necessity for the navy than for the army, not because the one service is more important than the other, but be-

cause its ranks are less easily recruited. It may be said that drill will make any man a soldier, while a special training is required to make an efficient man-of-war's man. The army is purely a military profession; the navy combines two professions—each an occupation by itself—the military and the nautical. Hence the greater necessity for the navy of a large body of trained officers; and hence, also, the greater importance of a partially-trained naval reserve.

In matériel, the navy was by no means in a backward condition. The wise policy, begun before the establishment of the Navy Department, of building vessels which should be the best possible specimens of their class, had been steadily adhered to; and in war-ship construction the United States still held, and continued to hold until 1867, a place very near the highest. When the importance of steam as a motive power had become established, the early side-wheelers were built,—first the Mississippi and Missouri, and later the Powhatan, Susquehanna, and Saranac. The Powhatan and Susquehanna, at the time they were launched, in 1850, were the most efficient naval vessels afloat. Next came the six screw-frigates, which were built in 1855, and were regarded all the world over as the model men-of-war of the period. Of these the largest was the Niagara. The other five, the Roanoke, Colorado, Merrimac, Minnesota, and Wabash, were vessels of a little over three thousand tons, and they carried, for their day, a powerful battery. Again, in 1858, twelve screw-sloops of two classes were built, most of which were admirable vessels, though they were wanting, with a few exceptions, in the important quality of speed. The first class, vessels of about two thousand tons, included the Lancaster, Hartford, Richmond, Brooklyn, and Pensacola. The second class, of which the Pawnee and Iroquois were the largest, were also serviceable vessels. Finally, in February,

1861, Congress had made appropriation for seven new screw-sloops, which were intended to be as efficient as their predecessors.

But these measures, well-judged though they were, were only a first step in the general conversion of the naval force from sailing vessels into steamers. Of the ninety names borne on the Navy Register in 1861, fifty were those of vessels of the older type—ships-of-the-line, frigates, sloops, and brigs. Several of the liners were still on the stocks, never having been completed. The others were notable ships in their day, but their day was past and gone forever. The list of frigates was headed by the Constitution and the United States, built originally in the last century, and rendered famous by the victories of 1812. Others had been built within a more recent period, but the type had not been materially altered. The frigates were useful as receiving and practice-ships; but as far as war-service was concerned, they had only a historic value. But little more could be said of the sloops and brigs; and the remainder of the sailing fleet were store-ships.

Though swelling the total of ships-of-war to a considerable figure, the sailing vessels added little or nothing to the efficiency of the force. This fact explains, in some degree, the inadequacy of the navy at the beginning of the war. A change had taken place about fifteen years before in the motive power of ships, so radical that all the constructions of an earlier date were completely superseded. In 1840 the navy was stronger for its day than in 1860; because in 1840 all its ships were ships of the period, while in 1860 only half the fleet could be so regarded. The distance in time that separated the second Macedonian from the Powhatan was not much greater than that between the Powhatan and the Hartford; yet in the first case the change was a revolu-

tion, while in the second it was only a development. A captain that fought the Invincible Armada would have been more at home in the typical war-ship of 1840, than the average captain of 1840 could have been at that time in the advanced types of the Civil War. As a matter of fact, it was no uncommon thing in 1861 to find officers in command of steamers who had never served in steamers before, and who were far more anxious about their boilers than about their enemy. As naval science had advanced more in the last twenty-five years than in the two hundred years preceding, more than half the vessels on the navy list had become suddenly useless, and the effective force was narrowed down to the forty that had steam as a motive power.

Another fact which helped to account for the want of preparation in 1861 was the supineness of the Navy Department during the last months of Buchanan's administration. Few wars come on without some note of warning; and this was no exception. The effective force, small as it was, might easily have been so disposed as to be ready for an emergency, without even exciting comment. The failure to take the necessary measures need not, however, be imputed to a treacherous sympathy with the insurgents. It was only a part of the general policy of inaction, deliberately adopted by the Government during the winter of 1860–'61, which forbade any measures pointing even remotely to coercion. The most ordinary preparations were neglected; and if the crippling of the fleet had been intentional, it could not have been more effectual.

Of the forty steamers included in the general list, five were unserviceable, two of them being still on the stocks, and the others useless except as receiving-ships. Two more were mere tugs, and, together with the Michigan, stationed on the lakes, may be thrown out of the calculation.

Eight others, including the five frigates, were laid up in ordinary. There remained twenty-four steamers, whose disposition on the 4th of March was as follows:

Class.	Name.	Station.
One screw-frigate.....	Niagara.....	Returning from Japan.
Five screw-sloops (1st class).	San Jacinto ..	Coast of Africa.
	Lancaster	Pacific.
	Brooklyn.....	Home Squadron (Pensacola).
	Hartford.....	East Indies.
	Richmond ...	Mediterranean.
Three side-wheel steamers ..	Susquehanna .	Mediterranean.
	Powhatan....	Home Squadron (returning from Vera Cruz).
	Saranac.....	Pacific.
Eight screw-sloops (2d class).	Mohican	Coast of Africa.
	Narragansett .	Pacific.
	Iroquois	Mediterranean.
	Pawnee	Washington.
	Wyoming	Pacific.
	Dacotah.....	East Indies.
	Pocahontas...	Home Squadron (returning from Vera Cruz).
	Seminole.....	Coast of Brazil.
Five screw steamers (3d class)	Wyandotte...	Home Squadron (Pensacola).
	Mohawk	New York.
	Crusader.....	New York.
	Sumter	Coast of Africa.
	Mystic.....	Coast of Africa.
Two side-wheel steamers	Pulaski	Brazil.
	Saginaw	East Indies.

It will be observed that of the twelve vessels composing the Home Squadron, seven were steamers; and of these only three, the Pawnee, Mohawk, and Crusader, were in northern ports and at the immediate disposal of the new administration. The best part of the fleet was scattered all over the world.

In the matter of ordnance, as in ships, the navy had been making active progress. In the old sailing vessels, the

32-pounder, which was simply a development of the 18s and 24s of 1812, and the VIII-inch shell-gun were still the usual guns. Since 1850, the powerful Dahlgren smooth-bore shell-guns had been introduced, and the new steam-frigates and sloops were armed with them. The IX-inch guns of this description were mounted in broadside, and the XI-inch (with a few X-inch) on pivots. The powers of the XI-inch had not been fully tested, and the prescribed service-charge was smaller than it was afterward found that the gun would bear. The latest development of the smooth-bore gun was the XV-inch, one of which was generally mounted in each monitor turret. Rifled guns were gradually introduced during the war. These were chiefly Parrott guns, 20-, 30-, and 100-pounders. They were cast-iron guns, strengthened by a wrought-iron band around the breech. Later, 60-pounders and 150-pounders were manufactured. The Parrott gun of the smaller calibres was serviceable, but as a heavy gun it was dangerous, and occasionally burst. Besides the Parrott guns, a few light cast-iron Dahlgren rifles were made; and in the Western flotilla, when it was transferred to the navy, there were several army rifled 42-pounders, which were so dangerous as to be nearly useless.

The demands of the new service were many and various. There was the river service, where the navy acted largely in co-operation with the army, in the reduction of fortified points, and in opening and keeping open the lines of communication. For this the essential qualification was light draft. It needed small handy vessels, capable of approaching the shore, and of passing through shallow and difficult channels. Quite distinct from it was the ocean service, which meant the pursuit and capture of Confederate cruisers, and of vessels engaged in illegal trade. The prime necessity here was speed. Lastly, there was the coast service,

comprising the maintenance of the blockade, and detached operations against fortifications protected by powerful batteries. The blockade required vessels that combined both speed and light draft, together with seaworthiness, and a certain degree of force to resist the sudden attacks which were made from time to time, in the hope of raising the blockade, or what was perhaps of equal importance, of inducing a belief abroad that such a result had been accomplished. The attack of fortified harbors, on the other hand, though from the nature of things carried on in connection with the blockade, called for an entirely different type of vessel. Here, force pure and simple, was needed; force offensive and defensive, heavy guns and heavy armor.

For all these kinds of service, vessels were required, and vessels in great numbers. A small force could accomplish nothing. The operations on the Mississippi and its tributaries alone, operations which were second to none in extent and efficiency, and carried on wholly in the enemy's country, required a large fleet. For the ocean service, the vessels, to accomplish their object, must be numerous; while a very few served every purpose of the enemy. It was easy for the half-dozen commerce-destroyers to catch merchantmen, with which every sea was filled, while it was a very difficult matter to catch the half-dozen commerce-destroyers. Similarly, the blockade service required vessels at every port and inlet; otherwise it was not even legal, to say nothing of its being ineffective.

In meeting the wants of the navy, the new administration proceeded with energy. All the ships on foreign stations, except three, were recalled. Measures were taken at once to increase the force by fitting out all the serviceable vessels that were laid up, by building in navy yards, and in private yards on contract, and by purchase in the open market. The

difficulties were great, for the force required was enormous; and there were neither officers, men, ships, nor guns available, nor authority to procure them. Ship-owners had failed to see that steamers were to supplant sailing-vessels for commercial purposes, and though the merchant marine was still considerable, it had not been modernized. Nor had any systematic plan been adopted, by which a Government inspection might secure the construction of merchant vessels, imperfectly perhaps, yet in some degree adapted for conversion into men of war. Indeed, in the absence of a demand, ship-builders were not prepared to supply steamers of any kind to a considerable extent. The number of machine-shops was small—from twenty to thirty at the most—and their plant only equal to the ordinary work of the construction and repair of machinery. There were not more than eight of these of any considerable size; and, in the sudden demand for locomotives and transports for the army and for marine engines for the navy, they were strained to the utmost.

Five distinct measures were immediately adopted for the increase of the naval force. The first was to buy everything afloat that could be made of service. Purchases were made directly by the Department, or by officers acting under its direction. By the 1st of July, twelve steamers had been bought, and nine were employed under charter. Subsequently it appeared that the business of purchasing, being a purely mercantile matter, might be suitably placed in the hands of a business man, who should act as the responsible agent of the Department in conducting the transactions. This plan was adopted in July. Each purchase was inspected by a board of officers, and in this way the Department was enabled to secure, as far as any such were to be found, suitable vessels at a suitable price. The board of inspection could not exact a very high degree of excellence or

fitness, because everything afloat that could in any way be made to answer a purpose was pressed into the service. The vessels were of all sizes and descriptions, from screw-steamers and side-wheelers of two thousand tons to ferry-boats and tugs. Some of the larger steamers were fast vessels and made efficient cruisers. The Connecticut, the Cuyler, the De Soto, and the Santiago de Cuba paid for their cost several times over in the prizes they captured. The majority of the purchased steamers were between one hundred and eight hundred tons. Some of the least promising of these improvised men-of-war did good service against blockade-runners. The steamer Circassian, one of the most valuable prizes made during the war, was captured outside of Havana by a Fulton ferry-boat. Even for fighting purposes, however, the ferry-boats, with their heavy guns, were by no means to be despised. There were purchased altogether up to December, 1861, 79 steamers and 58 sailing vessels, 137 in all. The number of vessels bought during the whole war amounted to 418, of which 313 were steamers. After the war was over, they were rapidly sold, at less than half their cost.

The second measure adopted by the administration was the construction of sloops-of-war. Seven of these had been authorized by Congress in February, but the Department resolved to build eight, assigning two to each navy yard. Four of these vessels, the Oneida, Kearsarge, Wachusett, and Tuscarora, were reproductions of three of the sloops of 1858, which made the work of construction quicker and easier, the designs being already prepared. In the latter part of 1861, six additional sloops were built, of the same general class, but larger. All these fourteen sloops, like their models of two years before, were excellent vessels, and several of them are still in the service as second-rates and third-rates.

The third measure adopted by the Department, on its own responsibility, without waiting for the action of Congress, was to contract with private parties for the construction of small, heavily armed screw-gunboats. Twenty-three of these were built, of which the Unadilla and Pinola may be regarded as types. They were of five hundred and seven tons each, and mounted from four to seven guns. Some of them, within four months from the date of contract, were afloat, armed, and manned, and took part in the battle of Port Royal. From their rapid construction, they were commonly known as the "ninety-day gunboats." Nine of them were in Farragut's fleet at the passage of the forts below New Orleans. They were an important addition to the navy, and were actively employed both in fighting and blockading during the whole war.

For service in the rivers and in narrow sounds and channels, still another class of vessels was needed. To meet this want, a fourth measure was adopted, by building twelve paddle-wheel steamers, three or four hundred tons larger than the gunboats, but still small vessels, and of very light draft. To avoid the necessity of turning, they were provided with a double bow, and a rudder at each end. These were the famous "double-enders." The first twelve were the so-called Octorara class. Twenty-seven larger vessels of the same type were afterwards built, composing the Sassacus class. The Wateree, a vessel of the same size and general design, was built of iron. Finally the Mohongo class, also of iron, consisted of seven double-enders of still larger size, and carrying a heavier armament. The Ashuelot[1] and Monocacy still represent this class in the service.

The fifth and last measure for the increase of the naval

[1] News of the loss of the Ashuelot is received as this volume is going to press.

force was the construction of ironclads. Congress had passed, at the extra session in August, an appropriation of a million and a half dollars for armored vessels, to be built upon plans approved by a board of officers. The board was composed of three of the ablest captains in the service, Smith, Paulding, and Davis. Out of a large number of plans proposed, three were selected by the board and ordered by the Department. Upon these plans were built the New Ironsides, the Galena, and the Monitor.

Most of the measures, as outlined above, refer to the first year of the war; but these five types of vessels, converted merchantmen, sloops, gunboats, double-enders, and ironclads, represent the additions to the sea-going navy during the four years. There was also an immense river fleet, composed of river-steamboats, rams, ironclads, "tinclads," and mortar-boats, a collection of nondescripts, which under the leadership of able commanders, made the naval operations on the Mississippi as brilliant and successful as any in the war.

In the construction of the new ships-of-war, no attempt was made to reproduce the fine screw-frigates of 1855, as they failed to show their usefulness, except perhaps at Port Royal and at Fort Fisher. The Colorado could not be got over the bar, when Farragut went up to New Orleans, and the Roanoke and Minnesota were helpless at Hampton Roads. In the latter half of the war, however, the Department undertook the construction of a class of vessels of considerable size, but very different in character. These were large, wooden steamers, with fine lines, excessively long and sharp and narrow, of light draft for their size, in which every quality was sacrificed to speed. In some of these the length was as great as eight times the beam. They were to be sea-going cruisers. Their main purpose was to capture the commerce-destroyers; and perhaps, in case of foreign complica-

tions, to do a little commerce-destroying themselves. Their armament was heavy; but armament was not their principal feature. Above all things, they were to be fast; and in those that were built, the desired result was generally secured. One of them, the Wampanoag or Florida, succeeded in attaining for a short time the extraordinary speed of seventeen and three-fourths knots an hour.

The plan which comprehended the construction of these vessels was a scheme of somewhat large dimensions, and was never completed. Of the three principal types, named respectively after the Ammonoosuc, the Java, and the Contoocook, twenty-five vessels were projected, and most of them were begun; but few of them were launched, and these only after the close of the war. Under the pressure of urgent necessity, they were built of unseasoned white-oak timber, instead of the live-oak which had been hitherto used for ships-of-war; and such of them as were finished were no sooner in the water than they began to decay. Six years after the war was ended, the chief constructor, writing of these vessels, reported that some of them, costing over a million of dollars, had made only one cruise, and then had been found too rotten to be repaired. They served the purpose, however of contributing, with other circumstances, to modify the menacing attitude of foreign powers; and their serious imperfections were the necessary result of the situation. The Administration was bound to do its utmost to provide for every contingency; and the failure of preparation during peace, when plans could be matured, and materials accumulated at leisure, compelled, when the time of action came, a hurried and lavish expenditure.

Great as was the task before the United States Government in preparing for a naval war, it was as nothing to that

of the enemy. The latter had at his disposal a small number of trained officers imbued with the same ideas, and brought up in the same school, as their opponents. Some of these, like Buchanan, Semmes, Brown, Maffitt, and Brooke, were men of extraordinary professional qualities; but except in its officers, the Confederate Government had nothing in the shape of a navy. It had not a single ship-of-war. It had no abundant fleet of merchant-vessels in its ports from which to draw reserves. It had no seamen, for its people were not given to seafaring pursuits. Its only ship-yards were Norfolk and Pensacola. Norfolk, with its immense supplies of ordnance and equipments, was indeed invaluable; but though the three hundred new Dahlgren guns captured in the yard were a permanent acquisition, the yard itself was lost when the war was one-fourth over. The South was without any large force of skilled mechanics; and such as it had were early summoned to the army. There were only three rolling-mills in the country, two of which were in Tennessee; and the third, at Atlanta, was unfitted for heavy work. There were hardly any machine-shops that were prepared to supply the best kind of workmanship; and in the beginning the only foundry capable of casting heavy guns was the Tredegar Iron Works, which under the direction of Commander Brooke, was employed to its fullest capacity. Worst of all, there were no raw materials, except the timber that was standing in the forests. The cost of iron was enormous, and toward the end of the war it was hardly to be had at any price. Under these circumstances, no general plan of naval policy on a large scale could be carried out; and the conflict on the Southern side became a species of partisan, desultory warfare.

A Navy Department had been established by an act of the Provisional Congress on February 21. Mallory, who

had been Chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs in the United States Senate, was appointed Secretary of the Navy. In matters relating to ordnance and armor, the leading spirit at the Department was Commander Brooke, who was afterward Chief of Bureau. As early as the 15th of March an appropriation of one million dollars was made for the construction or purchase of ten steam-gunboats. The Administration made tremendous efforts to create a navy; but in spite of the greatest perseverance and ingenuity, it found itself checked and hampered at every turn. By dint of using everything it could lay hands on, it got together in the beginning a small and scattered fleet, which had hardly the semblance of a naval force. Six of the revenue-cutters came early into its possession. The steam-battery Fulton was seized at Pensacola, and $25,000 were appropriated to complete and equip her. The Merrimac was presently raised at Norfolk, and found to have no serious injury. Encouragement was given to private enterprise, by Davis's immediate adoption of the plan of issuing letters-of-marque. It was recognized that one of the most vulnerable points on the Union side lay in its commerce; and it was against commerce alone that the insurgent navy throughout the war was able to sustain the offensive. The Federal Government could not retaliate, because there was no commerce to retaliate upon. The carrying trade of the South was in foreign hands; and the only way to assail it was by establishing a blockade, which affixed to it an illegal character. Powerless to raise the blockade of their own coast, and much less to establish one at the North, the Confederates confined their aggressions chiefly to merchant vessels; and having, by the address of their agents, and the negligence of the English authorities, secured a few cruisers well adapted for the purpose, they inflicted injur-

ies on the American merchant marine from which it never recovered.

But this was warfare for which only a few vessels were needed. For strictly naval warfare, where ships-of-war measured themselves against each other, the South was never able to accumulate a sufficient force. Old vessels were altered, new vessels were built at different points, and some of them were for a time successful, or at least did not yield without a hard struggle; but there was no possibility, except perhaps for a time on the Mississippi, of sustained or concerted action. The naval force that opposed Goldsborough in the Sounds was pitifully weak, as was that which Dupont found at Port Royal. Little more could be said of the squadron at New Orleans, though the ironclad Mississippi, if accident and mismanagement had not delayed her commission, might have given Farragut's fleet some annoyance. At Mobile the Tennessee, under the gallant Buchanan, fought almost single-handed the whole fleet, only to be captured after a heroic defence. At Savannah, the Atlanta was captured almost as soon as she appeared. Charleston was never able to make more than a raid or two on the blockading force. The Albemarle maintained herself for six months in the waters of North Carolina, but she was blockaded in the Roanoke River, and was finally destroyed by the daring of Cushing. Finally the Merrimac, which was lost through our own shortcomings, had a brilliant but brief career in Hampton Roads.

These isolated attempts comprised, together with the exploits of the cruisers, the sum of the naval operations on the Southern side. Viewed in the light of the difficulties to be met by the Confederate navy, they were little less than phenomenal. But as forming a standard of comparison for future wars, or for the strength of future enemies, they are hardly

to be considered. To-day we are worse off, for the period in which we live, than we were in 1861, when the feebleness of our enemy gave us eight months for preparation; and if it should ever be our misfortune to be involved in another war, we shall probably have a far more formidable antagonist to encounter, and one prepared to carry on hostilities from the very outset.

CHAPTER II.

THE BLOCKADE.

THE first measure of naval warfare undertaken by the Administration, and the one which it carried out for four years with the most sustained effort, was one that seemed at the outset in the highest degree impracticable. A navy of thirty-five available modern vessels, while it might be expected to produce substantial results by concentrated attacks at isolated points on the seaboard, or in engagements with the enemy's ships-of-war, counted for almost nothing as an effectual barrier to commerce along 3,000 miles of coast. To undertake such a task, and to proclaim the undertaking to the world, in all its magnitude, at a time when the Navy Department had only three steam-vessels at its immediate disposal in home ports, was an enterprise of the greatest boldness and hardihood. For the days of paper blockades were over; and, though the United States were not a party to the Declaration of Paris, its rule in regard to blockade was only the formal expression of a law universally recognized. "Blockades, to be binding, must be effective—that is to say, maintained by a force sufficient really to prevent access to the coast of the enemy;" or, according to the general interpretation given to the treaty, sufficient to create an evident danger in entering or leaving the port. In this sense, the Government understood its responsibilities and prepared to meet them.

It was natural, in view of the inadequacy of the force, that foreign governments should look at the measure with suspicion, and should watch its execution with careful scrutiny. Commercial communities abroad doubted the seriousness of the undertaking, because, in their ignorance of the energy and the resources of the Government, they doubted its feasibility. An effective blockade on such a scale was a thing unprecedented, even in the operations of the foremost naval powers of the world. It seemed to be an attempt to revive the cabinet blockades of half a century before, when England and France laid an embargo upon each other's coasts, and captured all vessels at sea whose destination was within the proscribed limits; and when Spain interdicted commerce with the northern colonies in South America, and as a matter of form, kept a brig cruising in the Caribbean Sea.

No time was lost in announcing the intentions of the Government. On the 19th of April, six days after the fall of Sumter, the President issued a proclamation declaring the blockade of the Southern States from South Carolina to Texas. On the 27th the blockade was extended to Virginia and North Carolina. The terms of the proclamation were as follows:

"Now therefore I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States . . . have further deemed it advisable to set on foot a blockade of the ports within the States aforesaid, in pursuance of the laws of the United States and of the Law of Nations in such case provided. For this purpose a competent force will be posted so as to prevent entrance and exit of vessels from the ports aforesaid. If, therefore, with a view to violate such blockade, a vessel shall approach or shall attempt to leave any of the said ports, she will be duly warned by the commander of one of the blockading vessels, who will endorse on her register the fact and date of such warning, and if the same vessel shall again attempt to enter or leave the blockaded port, she will be captured, and sent to the nearest convenient port for such proceedings against her, and her cargo as prize, as may be deemed advisable."

Upon the issue of the proclamation, the Government immediately found itself confronted with the question whether the movement at the South should be regarded as rebellion or as war. From the legal point of view the acts of the insurgents could be looked upon in no other light than as armed insurrection, "levying war against the United States," and under the constitutional definition, the actors were guilty of treason. But the extent of the movement, its well-defined area, and, above all, its complete governmental organization, made it impossible to put the legal theory into practice; and almost from the beginning hostilities were carried on precisely as in a regular war. The Government, however, in its dealings with foreign powers always asserted stoutly that the movement was purely an insurrection, and that those in arms against it were rebels, and not belligerents.

This position, though it involved occasional inconsistencies, was maintained with considerable success, except in relation to the status of prisoners, and in those cases where the operations of the war affected foreign interests. The question first arose in reference to the blockade. Blockade, in the ordinary sense, is purely an act of war. It means the closing of an enemy's ports, and the capture of all vessels, neutral or hostile, attempting to enter with knowledge of the blockade. It enables a belligerent to seize vessels on the high seas bound for a blockaded port. It stands on the same footing as the right of search, which is exclusively a war right; and like the right of search, it is a benefit to the belligerent, and a hardship to the neutral.

Even after the President's proclamation, which was to all intents a belligerent declaration, and after the blockade had been set on foot, the Government still held to its theory that the parties to the contest were not belligerents, and that

rebellion was not in any sense war. In his report of July 4, 1861, at the special session of Congress, the Secretary of the Navy referred to the blockade in these terms:

"In carrying into effect these principles, and in suppressing the attempts to evade and resist them, and in order to maintain the Constitution and execute the laws, it became necessary to interdict commerce at those ports where duties could not be collected, the laws maintained and executed, and where the officers of the Government were not tolerated or permitted to exercise their functions. In performing this *domestic municipal duty*,[1] the property and interests of foreigners became to some extent involved in our home questions, and with a view to extending to them every comity that the circumstances would justify, the rules of blockade were adopted, and, as far as practicable, made applicable to the cases that occurred under this embargo or non-intercourse of the insurgent States. The commanders of the squadron were directed to permit the vessels of foreigners to depart within fifteen days, as in cases of actual effective blockade, and then vessels were not to be seized unless they attempted, after having been once warned off, to enter an interdicted port in disregard of such warning."

In referring to the blockade in these words, the Navy Department clearly had in mind a measure of internal administration; and this domestic application of a belligerent right was excused on the ground of a desire to extend every possible comity to foreigners. But in putting forward this plea, the Secretary failed to see that the application of the rules of blockade to a domestic embargo, so far from extending comity to foreigners, abridged their rights, and imposed on them liabilities and penalties which no domestic embargo of itself could produce. It was not the foreign trader, but the belligerent cruiser that gained by the adoption of the rules of blockade. A government has the right to close its own ports, and to impose heavy penalties upon all who attempt

[1] The italics are not in the original.

to enter; but it cannot by virtue of any such measure search and seize foreign vessels on the high seas, even though bound for the embargoed port. To do this it must establish a blockade. In other words, it must wage war, and the two parties in the contest must become belligerents.

Although it may have been the intention of the Executive in July to regard the blockade as a domestic embargo, it soon gave up the idea in practice. Neutral vessels were searched and captured at sea. Prizes were sent in for adjudication, and condemned for breach of blockade and for carrying contraband, "in pursuance of the laws of the United States and the Law of Nations in such case provided," and not in pursuance of any law imposing civil forfeitures or penalties for violation of a domestic embargo. The forms of examination and procedure were those of belligerent prize-courts; and the decisions expressly recognized a state of war, and could be founded on no other hypothesis.

Under these circumstances, the complaint against the British Government of having done an unfriendly act in recognizing the rebels as belligerents, had no very serious foundation. The Queen's proclamation of neutrality, published on May 13, was a statement that hostilities existed between the Government of the United States and "certain States styling themselves the Confederate States of America," and a command to British subjects to observe a strict neutrality between the contending parties. Its form and contents were those commonly found in the declarations of neutrals at the outbreak of war. The annoyance it gave to the Government and the elation it caused at the South were due to the fact that it appeared somewhat early in the struggle, and that it was the first recognition from abroad of the strength and organization of the insurgent Government. As a matter of law, Great Britain had the right to declare her-

self neutral, especially after the blockade was proclaimed, as blockade is a purely belligerent act. Her offence, reduced to its exact proportions, consisted in taking the ground of a neutral before the magnitude and force of the insurrection were such as to justify it. But the hopes raised at the South by the proclamation led to the prevalent belief throughout the Union that it was dictated by unfriendly motives; while the undisguised sympathy for the Southern cause shown by the upper classes in England tended to strengthen the impression and to aggravate the wound.

The inception of the blockade was somewhat irregular. Ordinarily a blockade may begin in one of two ways; either by a public announcement coupled with the presence of a force before the blockaded port; or by stationing the force without an announcement. The first is a blockade by notification; the second is a blockade in fact. As breach of blockade only becomes an offence when accompanied by knowledge, actual or constructive, of the existence of the blockade, it is a question of some importance when the blockade begins and how knowledge of it is to be acquired. In a blockade by notification, knowledge is held to have been acquired when sufficient time has elapsed for the notice to have been generally received; and after this time a neutral vessel, by sailing for the blockaded port, has committed an offence and incurred a penalty. With a blockade that is purely *de facto*, on the other hand, knowledge must be obtained on the station, and neutrals have a right to sail for the port and to be warned off on their arrival.

Whether a blockade is initiated as a blockade by notification or as a blockade *de facto*, the indispensable condition of its establishment is the presence of a force at the blockaded port. Actual notice of the fact can never precede the

existence of the fact. The President's two proclamations did not therefore constitute actual notice, because at the date of their issue there was not even a pretence that the blockade existed. Nor do they appear to have been so intended. The idea was rather to publish a manifesto declaring in a general way the intentions of the Government, and then to carry them out as promptly as circumstances would permit.

The blockade therefore began as a blockade *de facto*, not as a blockade by notification. During the summer of 1861 vessels were stationed at different points, one after another, by which the blockade at those points was separately established. Notices, of a more or less informal character, were given in some cases by the commanding officer of the blockading force; but no general practice was observed. When Captain Poor, in the Brooklyn, took his station off the Mississippi, he merely informed the officer commanding the forts that New Orleans was blockaded. Pendergrast, the commanding officer at Hampton Roads, issued a formal document on April 30, calling attention to the President's proclamation in relation to Virginia and North Carolina, and giving notice that he had a sufficient force there for the purpose of carrying out the proclamation. He added that vessels coming from a distance, and ignorant of the proclamation, would be warned off. But Pendergrast's announcement, though intended as a notification, was marked by the same defects as the proclamation. The actual blockade and the notice of it must always be commensurate. At this time, there were several vessels in Hampton Roads, but absolutely no force on the coast of North Carolina; and the declaration was open to the charge of stating what was not an existing fact.

The importance of these early formalities arises from the

fact that the liability of neutral vessels depends on the actual existence of the blockade, and upon their knowledge of it. Until the establishment of the blockade is known, actually or constructively, all vessels have a right to be warned off. When the fact has become notorious, the privilege of warning ceases. In the statement about warning, therefore, the President's proclamation said either too much or too little. If it was intended, as the language might seem to imply, that during the continuance of the blockade—which, as it turned out, was the same thing as during the continuance of the war—all neutral vessels might approach the coast and receive individual warning, and that only after such warning would they be liable to capture, it conceded far more than usage required. If it meant simply that the warning would be given at each point for such time after the force was posted as would enable neutrals generally to become aware of the fact, it conveyed its meaning imperfectly. In practice, the second interpretation was adopted, in spite of the remonstrances of neutrals; and the warnings given in the early days of the blockade were gradually discontinued, the concessions of the proclamation to the contrary notwithstanding. The time when warning should cease does not appear to have been fixed; and in one instance at least, on the coast of Texas, it was given as late as July, 1862. The fact of warning was commonly endorsed on the neutral's register. In some cases the warnings had the same fault as Pendergrast's proclamation, in being a little too comprehensive, and including ports where an adequate force had not yet been stationed. The boarding officers of the Niagara, when off Charleston, in May, warned vessels off the whole Southern coast, as being in a state of blockade, though no ship-of-war had as yet appeared off Savannah; and the Government paid a round sum to

their owners in damages for the loss of a market, which was caused by the official warning.

The concession of warning to neutrals at the port, if it had continued through the war, would have rendered the blockade to a great extent inoperative. Vessels would have been able to approach the coast without risk of capture, and to have lain about the neighborhood until a good opportunity offered for running past the squadron. In other words, the first risk of the blockade-runner would have been a risk of warning, instead of a risk of capture; and the chances in his favor would have been materially increased. The courts, as well as the cruisers, disregarded the proclamation as soon as the blockade was fairly established, and held, in accordance with English and American precedents, that warning was unnecessary where actual knowledge could be proved.

It is probable that when the blockade was proclaimed it was thought that the measure could be adequately carried out by stationing a small squadron at the principal commercial ports, supplemented by a force of vessels cruising up and down the coast. The number of points to be covered would thus be reduced to four or five on the Atlantic and as many more on the Gulf. Had this expectation been realized, the blockade would have been by no means the stupendous undertaking that it seemed to observers abroad. Acting upon such a belief, the Government entered upon its task with confidence and proceeded with despatch. The Niagara, which had returned from Japan on April 24, was sent to cruise off Charleston. The Brooklyn and Powhatan moved westward along the Gulf. Before the 1st of May, seven steamers of considerable size had been chartered in New York and Philadelphia. One of these, the Keystone State, chartered by Lieutenant Woodhull, and intended es-

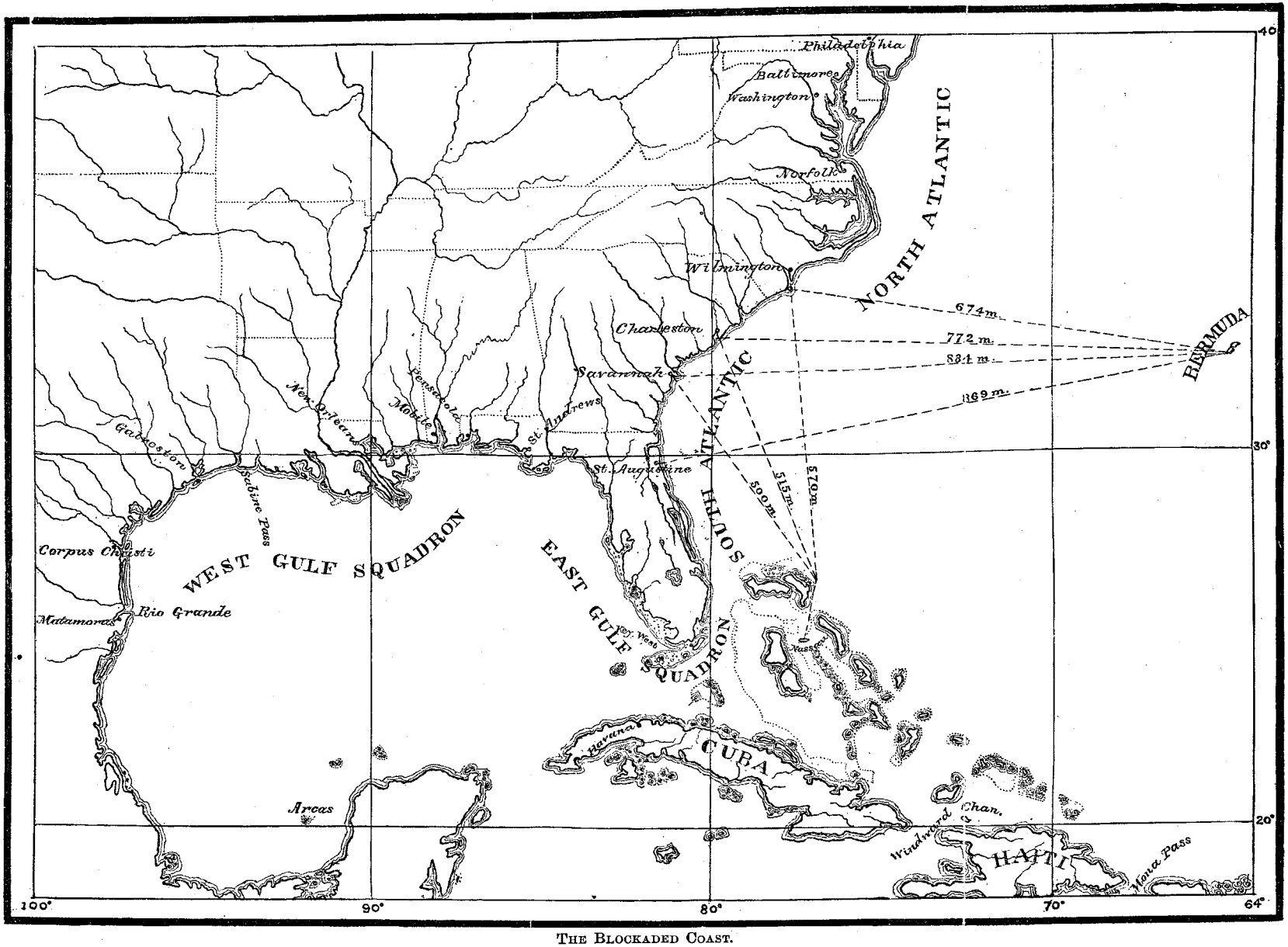
pecially for use at Norfolk, was at her station in Hampton Roads in forty-eight hours after Woodhull had received his orders in Washington to secure a vessel. The screw-steamer South Carolina, of eleven hundred and sixty-five tons, purchased in Boston on May 3, arrived off Pensacola on June 4; and the Massachusetts, a similar vessel in all respects, and bought at the same time, was equally prompt in reaching Key West.

Notwithstanding these efforts, the blockade can hardly be said to have been in existence until six weeks after it was declared, and then only at the principal points. When the Niagara arrived off Charleston on the 11th of May, she remained only four days; and except for the fact that the Harriet Lane was off the bar on the 19th, there was no blockade whatever at that point for a fortnight afterward. The British Government called attention to this fact, and suggested that a new blockade required a new notification, with the usual allowance of time for the departure of vessels; but the State Department did not regard the blockade as having been interrupted. Savannah was blockaded on the 28th of May. In the Gulf, Mobile and New Orleans received notice on the 26th from the Powhatan and the Brooklyn; and a month later the South Carolina was at Galveston. At the principal points, therefore, there was no blockade at all during the first month, and after that time the chain of investment was far from being complete. Indeed it could hardly be called a chain at all, when so many links were wanting. Even Wilmington, which later became the most important point on the coast in the operations of the blockade-runners, was still open, and the intermediate points were not under any effective observation.

As liability for breach of blockade begins with the mere act of sailing for the blockaded port, the distance of this

port from the point of departure becomes an important consideration to the blockade-runner. The longer the distance to be traversed the greater the risk; and some method of breaking the voyage must be devised, so that as much of it as possible may be technically innocent. The principal trade of the South during the war was with England; and it became an object to evade liability during the long transatlantic passage. For this purpose, all the available neutral ports in the neighborhood of the coast were made entrepôts for covering the illegal traffic.

There were four principal points which served as intermediaries for the neutral trade with the South; Bermuda, Nassau, Havana, and Matamoras. Of these Nassau was the most prominent. Situated on the island of New Providence in the Bahamas, it is only about one hundred and eighty miles in a straight line from the coast of Florida. Florida, however, was not the objective point of the leading blockade-runners. It had neither suitable harbors nor connections with the interior. The chief seats of commerce on the Eastern coast were Savannah, Charleston, and Wilmington. The run to these points from Nassau was from five hundred to six hundred miles, or three days, allowing for the usual delays of the passage. For such trips, small quantities of coal were needed, which gave great room for stowage of cargo. There was no great depth of water at Nassau, which was an advantage to the blockade-runners; and the cruisers generally took their station off Abaco Light, fifty miles away. New Providence was surrounded by numbers of small islands, over whose waters, within a league of the shore, the sovereignty of a great power threw a protection as complete and as effective as that of guns and fortifications. A vessel bound to Nassau from one of the blockaded ports must have been hard-pressed indeed if she could not



THE BLOCKADED COAST.

find a refuge. The navigation among the islands was dangerous and difficult, the channels were intricate, and reefs and shoals abounded; but skilful pilots were always at the command of the blockade-runners.

Nassau was a place of no special importance before the war. Its inhabitants lived chiefly by fishing and wrecking. But with the demands of the moment, it suddenly became a commercial emporium. Its harbor was crowded with shipping. Its wharves were covered with cotton-bales awaiting transportation to Europe, and with merchandise ready to be shipped for the blockaded country. Confederate agents were established here, and took charge of the interests of their Government in connection with the contraband trade. Money quickly earned was freely spent, and the war, at least while it lasted, enriched the community.

Bermuda shared, though in a less degree, the profits of the blockade-running traffic. Its connection was closest with Wilmington, which was six hundred and seventy-four miles distant, and which was the favorite port of the blockade-runners, especially in the last year of the war. In the Gulf, Havana had a similar importance. The run to the coast of Florida was only a little over one hundred miles. But Key West was inconveniently near, the Gulf blockade was strict, and after New Orleans was captured, the trade offered no such inducements as that on the Atlantic coast. Nevertheless it is stated by Admiral Bailey, on the authority of intercepted correspondence of the enemy, that between April 1 and July 6, 1863, fifty vessels left Havana to run the blockade.

The situation of Matamoras was somewhat peculiar. It was the only town of any importance on the single foreign frontier of the Confederacy. Situated opposite the Texan town of Brownsville, on the Rio Grande, about forty miles

from its mouth, and in neutral territory, it offered peculiar advantages for contraband trade. The Rio Grande could not be blockaded. Cargoes shipped for Matamoras were transferred to lighters at the mouth of the river. On their arrival at Matamoras they were readily transported to the insurgent territory. Accordingly, in 1862, the place became the seat of a flourishing trade. The sudden growth of the city was a notorious fact, as was also the cause that led to it. Yet the Government was unable to put a stop to the traffic, unless evidence could be brought to show that the cargoes were really destined for the enemy. Several vessels bound for Matamoras were captured and sent in, but in most of the cases the prize court decreed restitution, on the ground that a neutral port could not be blockaded, and therefore there could be no breach of blockade in sailing for it. Even in the case of the Peterhoff, which was captured near St. Thomas under suspicious circumstances, and whose papers showed Matamoras as her destination, only the contraband part of the cargo was condemned.

When the advantage of a neutral destination was fully understood, it became the practice for all the blockade-runners out of European ports to clear for one or the other of these points, and upon their arrival to wait for a favorable opportunity to run over to their real destination. Nobody could be deceived by this pretence of an innocent voyage; and the courts, looking only at the final destination, condemned the vessels when there was evidence of an ultimate intention to break the blockade. This decision rested upon an old principle of the English prize-courts, known as the doctrine of continuous voyages, according to which the mere touching at an intermediate port of a vessel engaged in an illegal voyage could not break the continuity of the voyage or remove the taint of illegality. Hence, if a vessel cleared

from Liverpool with the intention of merely touching at Nassau, and then proceeding to Charleston, and if this intention could be proved from the papers, the character of the cargo, and the examination of persons on board, the two voyages were held to be one, and condemnation followed.

In order to meet the new difficulty, a new device was adopted. Cargoes were sent out to Nassau, and were there transshipped, sometimes directly, from vessel to vessel, in the harbor, sometimes after being landed on the wharf; and thence were transported in a new conveyance to the blockaded port. Return cargoes were transshipped in the same way. This had a double advantage. It made the continuity of the transaction much more difficult of proof, and it enabled the capitalists engaged in the trade to employ two different classes of vessels, for the service for which each was specially adapted. For the long voyages across the Atlantic heavy freighters could be used, of great capacity and stoutly built; and the light, swift, hardly visible steamers, with low hulls, and twin-screws or feathering paddles, the typical blockade-runners, could be employed exclusively for the three days' run on the other side of Nassau or Bermuda. But here again the courts stepped in, and held that though a transshipment was made, even after landing the cargo and going through a form of sale, the two voyages were parts of one and the same transaction, and the cargo from the outset was liable to condemnation, if the original intention had been to forward the goods to a blockaded port. Nor did the decisions stop here. As all the property, both ship and cargo, is confiscated upon proof of breach of blockade, it was held that the ships carrying on this traffic to neutral ports were confiscable, provided the ultimate destination of the cargo to a blockaded port was known to the owner. In the words of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, "The

ships are planks of the same bridge, all of the same kind, and necessary for the convenient passage of persons and property from one end to the other."

The adoption of this rule by the highest courts in the United States raised a loud outcry on the part of those interested in the traffic, and was severely criticised by publicists abroad, especially by those who favored, in general, the continental view of the laws of war. The United States were accused of sacrificing the rights of neutrals, which they had hitherto upheld, to the interests of belligerents, and of disregarding great principles for the sake of a momentary advantage. In truth, however, the principle adopted by the court was not a new one, though a novel application was made of it to meet a novel combination of circumstances. It had formerly been applied to cases where neutrals, engaged in illegal trade between two ports of a belligerent, had endeavored to screen the illegality of the voyage by the interposition of a neutral port, with or without the landing of goods and the employment of a new conveyance. In these cases Lord Stowell held that the continuity of the voyage was not broken, unless the cargo was really imported into the common stock of the neutral country. That the principle had not been applied to blockades was due to the fact that circumstances had never called for it, as the practice of breaking a blockade had never before been carried out on such a scale, with such perfect appliances, and by the use of such ingenious devices. The really difficult question before the court was as to the sufficiency of the evidence in each case. It was to be expected that every artifice in the nature of simulated papers, pretended ownership, false destination, and fictitious transfers would be adopted to escape liability; and it was the business of the court to penetrate all these disguises, and to ascertain the real char-

acter of each transaction. It is probable that in no case was injustice done in brushing aside and disregarding the various ceremonies, more or less elaborate and artificial, that were performed over blockade-running cargoes at Nassau and Bermuda; and it must often have happened that the ingenuity of shippers was rewarded by a decree of restitution for the want of technical evidence, when there was no moral doubt as to the vessel's guilt.

As a last resort, the blockade-running merchants adopted an expedient so original and so bold that it may almost be said to have merited success. As cargoes from Liverpool to Nassau ran a risk of capture, the voyage was broken again, this time not by a neutral destination, but by one in the country of the very belligerent whom the trade was to injure. Goods were shipped to New York by the regular steamship lines, to be carried thence to Nassau, and so to find their way to the blockaded territory. It was supposed that the United States would not interfere with commerce between its own ports and those of a neutral. This expectation, however, was not well-founded. The Government of the United States, although federal in its organization, was not so impotent in regard to the regulation of trade as was that of Great Britain in enforcing the neutrality of its subjects; and if action could not be taken through the Courts, it could be taken through the custom-houses. As soon as it was discovered at New York that the trade with Nassau and Bermuda was assuming large proportions, instructions were issued to collectors of customs in the United States to refuse clearances to vessels which, whatever their ostensible destination, were believed to be intended for Southern ports, or whose cargoes were in imminent danger of falling into the hands of the enemy; and if there was merely ground for apprehension that cargoes were destined for

the enemy's use, the owners were required to give ample security.

The instructions were perfectly general in character, naming no particular port or country. The agents of the blockade-runners, however, styling themselves merchants of Nassau, adopted a tone of righteous indignation, and actually had the effrontery to complain of this "unjust discrimination" against what they ingenuously called the trade of the Bahamas. As if, indeed, the Bahamas had had any trade, or Nassau any merchants, before the days of blockade-running! They succeeded, however, in persuading Earl Russell to take up the diplomatic cudgels in their behalf; but from the long correspondence that followed, the English Government, being clearly in the wrong, derived little satisfaction, and a stop was put to the traffic.

The character of the blockade changed materially as the war went on. At first the prevailing idea seems to have been that its object was to put a stop to legitimate trade, and that this object was secured by the official declaration. The squadrons seem to have been employed rather to comply with the requirements of international law, and to make the prohibition binding upon neutrals, than as being themselves the agency by which the prohibition was to be enforced, and without which it was only so much waste paper. This idea had some foundation in view of the fact that from the beginning, though the blockading force was then inconsiderable, the regular course of trade at the Southern ports was actually interrupted, neutrals for a time respecting the proclamation, or being satisfied to receive their warning and to go elsewhere. In place of the regular commerce, however, a contraband trade grew up, little by little, which, beginning with any materials that came to hand, and carried on chiefly by people along the coast, gradually grew to con-

siderable proportions. Then, and then only, was the true character of the blockade recognized, and measures were taken, by increasing the force and by perfecting its organization, to make the watch so close as really to prevent egress and ingress. But by this time the capital embarked in the business was so large as to secure the construction of vessels built especially for the purpose, beautifully adapted to the work, and far more difficult to capture. Therefore, while the efforts of the blockaders were redoubled, the difficulties before them were vastly increased. The old traditional idea of a blockade, maintained by a few large vessels moving up and down before a port, at a distance, gave place to the entirely novel practice of anchoring a large number of small and handy steamers in an exposed position close to the bar at the entrance of the blockaded harbors; and the boldness with which, after the first six months, men kept their vessels close in with the shore and manfully rode out the gales at their anchors—a thing which seafaring men, as a rule, had regarded as impossible, and which would have appalled the stoutest captains of former times—showed as clearly as the actual engagements the real stuff of which the navy was made.

As to the legal efficiency of the blockade after the first six months, there can be no question; and by the end of the second year its stringency was such that only specially-adapted vessels could safely attempt to run it. If proof of its efficiency was needed, it could be found in the increased price of cotton and in the scarcity of manufactured goods at the South. In the last year it became as nearly perfect as such an operation can be made. Taking its latest development as a type, it is probable that no blockade has ever been maintained more effectually by any State; and it is certain that no State ever had such a blockade to maintain.

Apart from its enormous extent, it had four characteristics which mark it as wholly unprecedented: in the peculiar formation of the shore, which gave almost a double coast-line throughout, penetrated by numerous inlets, giving access to a complicated network of channels; in the vicinity of neutral ports friendly to the blockade-runners; in the cotton-monopoly of the South, which made the blockade a source of irritation to neutrals; and finally, but the most important consideration of all, in the introduction of blockade-running vessels propelled by steam.

The success of this undertaking, so unprecedented both in its magnitude and difficulty, can best be judged by the results. The number of prizes brought in during the war was 1,149, of which 210 were steamers. There were also 355 vessels burned, sunk, driven on shore, or otherwise destroyed, of which 85 were steamers; making a total of 1,504 vessels of all classes. The value of these vessels and their cargoes, according to a low estimate, was thirty-one millions of dollars. In the War of 1812, which has always, and justly, been regarded as a successful naval war, the number of captures was 1,719. But the War of 1812 was waged against a commercial nation, and the number of vessels open to capture was therefore far greater. Of the property afloat, destroyed or captured during the Civil War, the larger part suffered in consequence of the blockade. Moreover, in the earlier war, out of the whole number of captures, 1,428 were made by privateers, which were fitted out chiefly as a commercial adventure. In the Civil War the work was done wholly by the navy; and it was done in the face of obstacles of which naval warfare before that time had presented no example or conception.

As a military measure, the blockade was of vital importance in the operations of the war; and it has been com-

monly said that without it hostilities would have been protracted much longer, and would have been far more bitter and bloody than they were. Its peculiar importance lay in the isolation of the Southern States and in their dependence upon the outside world for the necessaries of life. The only neutral frontier was along the Rio Grande; and the country, for many miles on both sides of the boundary, offered few facilities for trade or transportation. All supplies must come from the seaboard; and the purely agricultural character of Southern industry made supplies from abroad a necessity. Had the position of the two opponents been reversed, and an efficient blockade maintained against the Northern ports, it would have told with far less severity than at the South.

Besides the exclusion of manufactured goods, and especially of munitions of war, which was one of the prime objects of the blockade, its second and equally important object was to prevent the exportation of cotton, with which at this time the Southern States supplied the world. The amount of floating capital at the South was never large; land and slaves were the favorite forms of investment; and the sale of cotton was therefore the main source of income. When exportation was cut off, the Government was deprived of its revenues for the war, and the people of the very means of existence. It was the common impression at the South that the rest of the world, and especially England, had too great an interest in the cotton supply to tolerate a prohibition on exportation; and it was believed, or at least hoped, that the blockade would prove a fatal measure for its originators, by the injury it would work abroad. The injury was not over-estimated; and it doubtless had its effect upon the sympathies of the interested foreign state. Lancashire, the great centre of the cotton

manufacture, was compelled to close its mills; and the distress that resulted among the operatives may be estimated by the fact that, two years after the war had begun, no less than ten millions of dollars had been disbursed by the Relief Committees. But the British Government, whatever may have been its disposition, had at no time a plausible pretext for intervention; and the blockade continued to be enforced with increased rigor.

As the war went on, the naval forces, securing the cooperation of small bodies of troops, gradually obtained a foothold at various points and converted the blockade into a military occupation. These points then became the headquarters of the different squadrons—ports for rendezvous, refitment, and supply, for the "repairs and coal" that were forever drawing away the blockaders from their stations at critical moments. By the spring of 1862 all the squadrons were well provided in this respect, though some of the centres of occupation were occasionally recovered by the enemy. Especially on the coast of Texas, blockade and occupation alternated at the different Passes throughout the war, partly in consequence of the want of troops to hold the occupied points. Curiously enough, too, these centres of occupation became in a small way centres of blockade-running—Nassaus and Bermudas on a diminutive scale. Norfolk, Beaufort in North Carolina, Hilton Head with its sutler's shops, Pensacola, and New Orleans each carried on a trade, prosperous as far as it went, with the surrounding coast. At New Orleans, the blockade of Lake Ponchartrain was kept up long after the city was taken, not to prevent access to the port, but to capture the illicit traders that cleared from it; and Farragut was obliged to remonstrate sharply with the Collector for the readiness with which papers covering the trade were issued by the custom-house.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHESAPEAKE.

THE blockade began, both in name and in fact, at Hampton Roads, and here it continued to be maintained with the highest efficiency. The only attempt to raise it was that made by the Merrimac in March, 1862; and after this attempt was defeated, the blockading squadron remained in undisturbed possession until the close of the war. The safe and commodious anchorage in the Roads, its nearness to Washington, and the protection afforded by Fortress Monroe made it a convenient naval rendezvous; and for this reason it seems to have been adopted as the station for the flag-ship of the North Atlantic squadron. Its importance as a blockading station, especially in the early part of the war, was due to the fact that it commanded the entrance to the James and Elizabeth Rivers, upon one of which lay the Confederate capital, and upon the other their principal naval dépôt. The events of the first year, however, which took place in and about the Roads, had little to do with the outside blockade, and properly form an episode by themselves, which has its beginning and end in the loss and the recovery of Norfolk.

The loss of the Norfolk Yard at the outbreak of the war has been already alluded to. This Yard had always been extensively used as a dépôt for arms and munitions of all kinds; and in the spring of 1861 it contained a very large

supply. The ordinary work was going on actively; and there was nothing to be seen on the spot to indicate that a crisis was at hand. The vessels at the Yard comprised an old ship-of-the-line, the Pennsylvania, which was used as a receiving ship; five large sailing-vessels, laid up in ordinary; the sailing-sloops Germantown and Plymouth; and the brig Dolphin. The last three were ready for sea. The steam-frigate Merrimac, whose importance was greater than that of all the others combined, was undergoing repairs in her machinery.

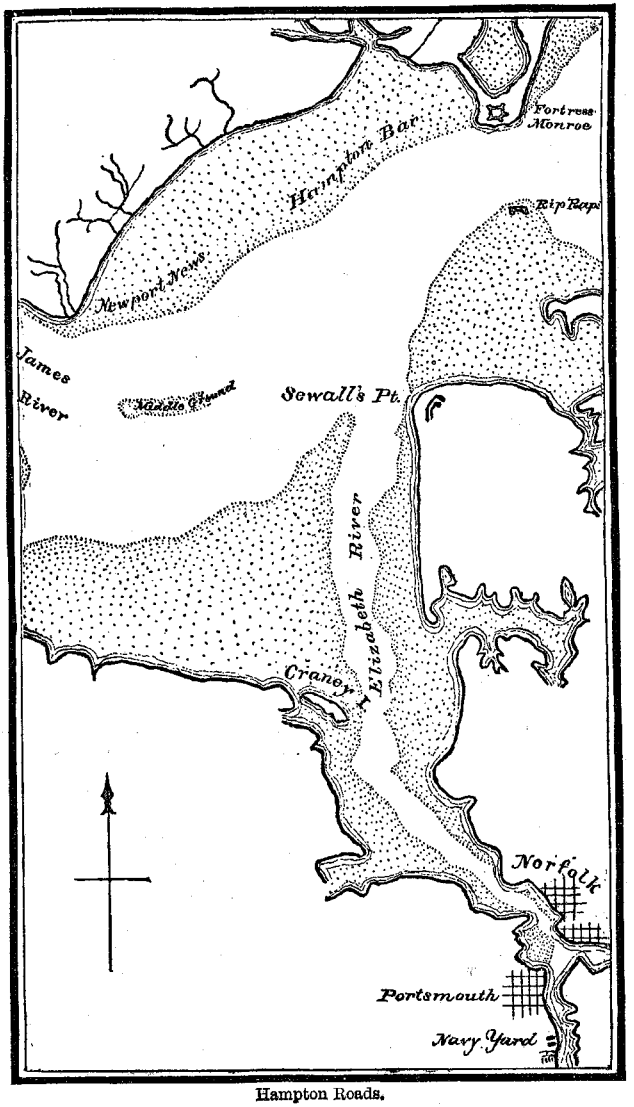
The Navy Yard was situated on the left bank of Elizabeth River, nearly opposite the town of Norfolk, and nine miles above Sewall's Point, where the narrow channel that forms a continuation of the river enters the Roads. There were only a few seamen and marines to hold it, the community outside was unfriendly, and the employees were only waiting for the action of the State to range themselves against the Government. The majority of the officers were Southern men, and were in sympathy with the Southern cause. Late in March, the Cumberland, the flagship of the Home Squadron, came in from the Gulf and was sent to Norfolk. She had a crew of 300 men, and a heavy battery, and the towns on both sides of the river were at her mercy, if she chose to attack them. As a sailing sloop-of-war, she could not be of material assistance in bringing off the threatened vessels; but she held the key to the position.

The State convention of Virginia had been in session since the middle of February, but nothing had yet been done which indicated its final action. The secret session, at which the ultimate question was to be decided, began on the 16th of April. Up to the critical moment the idea had prevailed in Washington that any action tending to show a want of confidence in public sentiment in Virginia would crystallize the opposition to the Union, and drive the State into secession.

This idea had found expression in the instructions issued to the Commandant of the Yard, Commodore McCauley, who was repeatedly warned to take no steps that would give rise to suspicion of hostile intention. On the 10th of April, as affairs grew more threatening, the Commandant was ordered to put the shipping and public property in a condition to be moved out of danger; but at the same time he was cautioned not to give needless alarm. Two days later, orders were given for the Merrimac to be prepared with the utmost despatch to proceed to Philadelphia; and as it was stated that the necessary repairs to the engine would take four weeks, the Engineer-in-Chief of the Navy was sent down in person to forward matters. He was the bearer of a letter from the Secretary of the Navy to Commodore McCauley, which contained these words:

"The Department desires to have the Merrimac removed from the Norfolk to the Philadelphia Navy Yard with the utmost despatch. The Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. B. F. Isherwood, has been ordered to report to you for the purpose of expediting the duty, and you will have his suggestions for that end carried promptly into effect."

On the afternoon of Wednesday, the 17th, it was reported by Isherwood, the Engineer-in-Chief, that the Merrimac was ready for steam; and fires were started the next morning at daybreak. Everything was in readiness to proceed to sea, and officers and men were detailed for the vessels that were to go out. But the Commodore, still influenced by the desire to allay suspicion, and by the assertions of some of his officers that if the Merrimac were removed Virginia would certainly go out of the Union, could not bring himself to take decided action, notwithstanding the explicit instructions of the Department; and at two in the afternoon, he ordered the fires to be hauled. Meantime the enemy were taking



Hampton Roads.

advantage of every hour of delay. Troops were thrown into Norfolk in considerable numbers, and batteries were erected opposite the Yard. Light-ships had already been sunk in the narrow channel off Sewall's Point, and other obstructions were put in position on the subsequent night. McCauley sent a message to the Commanding General, Taliaferro, to the effect that if he continued to throw up works in a threatening position, the Commodore would regard it as an act of war, and fire upon them. In reply, General Taliaferro disclaimed any knowledge of the existence of the batteries; and McCauley was obliged to rest satisfied with this answer. Lieutenant Selfridge of the Cumberland volunteered to take the Dolphin down to Craney Island, and prevent any further obstructing of the river; but the Commodore, though at first consenting, finally refused to give him permission.

On Friday, the 19th, Commodore McCauley resolved to destroy the principal vessels. It is hard to say why he arrived at this conclusion, the Merrimac's engine having been reported ready and her fires lighted the day before. The time for heeding the sensitiveness of the population was now past; and, in this respect, it made little difference whether the other ships were sunk and the Cumberland went out alone, or whether they all left the place together. Nothing, however, was done during the day. On Friday night the guns in the parks were spiked—an injury which could be repaired in a few hours. At the same time, a quantity of ordnance stores was put on board the Cumberland. On the next day, the Southern officers on duty at the Yard resigned or deserted; the destruction or removal of the property was continued; and finally, the four ships were scuttled.

Already on the 18th, Commodore Hiram Paulding had been directed by the Department to proceed to Norfolk with the Pawnee, then lying at Washington, and take command of the

vessels, using force, if necessary, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy. He was also ordered to destroy what he could not bring off before abandoning the Yard. At the same time, officers were sent to New York and Philadelphia to charter steamers, and to proceed with all despatch to Hampton Roads.

The Pawnee left Washington on Friday, and arrived at Fortress Monroe on the afternoon of Saturday. Here she took on board Captain Wright of the Engineers, and a regiment of Massachusetts volunteers. At this very moment, the work of disabling the vessels at the Navy Yard had begun. Two hours later, at eight o'clock in the evening, the Pawnee came in sight of Norfolk. The Cumberland was lying off the Yard, and went to quarters as the strange vessel approached. A fresh wind, blowing down the stream, prevented her from making out the Pawnee's answer to her hail, but the latter could hear the voice of the officer commanding the Cumberland's pivot gun, asking if he should fire. On board the Pennsylvania, which was lying below the Cumberland, Lieutenant Allen, seeing the imminence of the danger, with extraordinary presence of mind, called out to the commanding officer, asking him to cheer the approaching vessel. In an instant it was done; and the Pawnee was saved from what seemed an inevitable catastrophe.

It had been Paulding's intention to make a disposition of the vessels at various points between Norfolk and the mouth of the river in such a way as to command the channel. He would have been able to hold this position until the arrival of the newly-chartered steamers, when he could have brought off all the ships in safety. But the action which had been taken only two hours before at the Yard forestalled his plan; and though the Pawnee and Cumberland were a really formidable force, which, with the infantry regiment,

could have held the enemy in check until either reinforcements arrived or the property was removed—or, at least, until the work of destruction was completed—Paulding decided to burn the principal buildings, and abandon the Yard. For this purpose parties were hurriedly organized; one under Commander Alden to prepare the storehouses and workshops; another under Commander Sands for the ship-houses; a third to distribute combustibles among the sinking vessels; and a fourth, under Commander John Rodgers, assisted by Captain Wright, to blow up the dry-dock. An attempt was made to disable the guns that had been spiked, by knocking off the trunnions; but this was unsuccessful.

Shortly before two in the morning, the reports came from the various parties that all was ready. A little delay was occasioned at this point by the Commandant of the Yard. The veteran Commodore, with obstinate gallantry, refused to leave his post. Finally Alden was sent to bring him off. All the officers and men were withdrawn except eight, who were divided among the three firing parties. The Pawnee left the wharf, took the Cumberland in tow, and started down the river. Two boats were left behind, one for the firing parties on shore, the other for that which was to destroy the ships. At 4.20 a rocket was fired as a signal, and in a few minutes ship-houses, shops, and vessels were in a blaze.

The people on shore were brought safely off, except Rodgers and his party, who had far to go, and who were cut off from the wharf by the burning buildings. They passed out into the town, and obtained a boat; but the river was now lighted by the conflagration, and they had not gone far before they were obliged to surrender.

Though a few shops and houses were burnt, the work was done so hurriedly that the best part of the valuable material

at the Yard fell into the hands of the enemy. The dry-dock was not destroyed, as the fuse failed to ignite the powder; but whether from accident or from the work of other hands has never been discovered. The magazine, with great numbers of loaded shells, and one hundred and fifty tons of powder, had already been seized. Two thousand guns of all descriptions were left practically uninjured, three hundred of them being new Dahlgren guns of various calibres. Besides the guns, machinery, steel plates, castings, construction materials, and ordnance and equipment stores in vast quantities came into the possession of the Confederates; and severe as the loss of so much material would have been by itself to the Federal Government, it was rendered tenfold greater by supplying the necessities of the enemy.

The latter immediately set about utilizing their new acquisition. The captured Dahlgren guns were distributed throughout the country, and many were the occasions when the Government had cause to regret the irreparable disaster which had supplied the enemy so cheaply with a priceless armament of first-class modern ordnance. The Germantown and Plymouth were raised and restored, but the Confederates had neither time nor money to waste in equipping them for sea. The Merrimac was also raised, and though her upper works were destroyed, her hull and boilers, and the heavy and costly parts of her engine were but little injured. A board of officers, of which Lieutenant John M. Brooke was the principal member, prepared a design for converting her into an ironclad, by constructing upon her hull an armored casemate with inclined sides and submerged eaves. The plates were made under Brooke's superintendence at the Tredegar foundry, and it was hoped that the vessel would be invulnerable, even against the powerful broadsides of the United States fleet.

While the Confederates were thus preparing their ironclad, the Federal Government was at work upon the construction of a suitable antagonist. The war, for the moment, was being carried on, not at Hampton Roads, but at Norfolk and Brooklyn, and the victory was to depend not only upon the bravery of the officers, but upon the speed of the mechanics. It was a race of constructors; and in spite of the difficulties at the South, and the comparative facilities at the command of the Department at Washington, the Confederates were the winners. The secret of their success lay in promptness of preparation. On the 10th of June Brooke was ordered at Richmond to prepare the designs and specifications of an ironclad vessel, and on the 23d an engineer and a constructor were associated with him in the work. The board reported without delay, and work on the Merrimac was begun at once. On the other hand, nothing was done at Washington until the meeting of Congress. The extra session began July 5, and the appropriation was made August 3. The ironclad board was convened on the 8th of the same month. Its report was made September 16; and the contract for the Monitor was not completed until October 4. To this delay may be directly traced the action of the 8th of March, and the destruction of the Congress and the Cumberland.

The hull of the Monitor was built at the Continental Iron Works, at Greenpoint, Brooklyn, from Ericsson's plans and under his supervision. The vessel was begun in the latter part of October. The mechanics worked in three gangs, each for the space of eight hours, so that the work, when finally undertaken, went on without interruption night and day. The construction of the vessel was pushed forward so rapidly that on the 30th of January, 1862, not quite four months after the signing of the contract, the Monitor was launched.

The new structure consisted of a small iron hull, upon

which rested a large raft, surmounted by a revolving turret. The hull was one hundred and twenty-four feet long, and thirty-four feet wide at the upper edge. The raft projected at the bow and stern, its total length being fifty feet greater than that of the hull. Its overhang amidships was three feet eight inches wide, gradually increasing towards the bow and stern. The raft was five feet deep, and was protected by a side armor of five one-inch iron plates backed by oak. The deck was covered with two half-inch plates, over timber laid on heavy wooden beams. The turret was armored with eight one-inch plates, and its roof was protected by railroad iron. In it were two XI-inch Dahlgren guns. The pilot-house was placed on deck, in front of the turret, and was built of square iron bars or logs, notched together, with a bolt through the corners. On the top of the pilot-house was an iron plate, an inch and a half thick, set in a ledge without fastenings.

The Department selected Lieutenant John L. Worden for the command of the Monitor. He was ordered on January 13, while the vessel was still on the stocks. Lieutenant S. Dana Greene volunteered to go in her, and at Worden's request was ordered as executive officer. Two acting-masters, Stodder and Webber, also joined her. There were four engineer officers, of whom the senior was First Assistant-Engineer Isaac Newton. Chief-Engineer A. C. Stimers made the passage in the vessel, as the Government inspector, to report upon her machinery. The crew were volunteers, selected by Worden from the receiving-ship North Carolina and the frigate Sabine; and "a better one," to quote Worden's statement, "no naval commander ever had the honor to command."

The first cruise of the Monitor was a novel experiment and, as the event showed, full of hazard. Had she been intended merely as a floating battery to protect the harbor in which

she was built, the service would have called for no extraordinary sacrifice. But she was to go to sea; and many experienced officers, both in the navy and in the merchant service, doubted seriously her ability to keep afloat in any but the calmest weather, and regarded the enterprise as desperate—an opinion which the Monitor's subsequent career fully justified. If she sank, she would sink quickly; and there was small chance that any of the devoted men penned up in her submerged hull would escape. All this was well understood by her officers and men; and with a courage and self-devotion of no common order, they voluntarily accepted the conditions, and prepared to meet the danger.

The general plan of the Monitor, as originally invented by Ericsson, was little less than an inspiration of genius. But the first vessel of the type was by no means perfect in its details, and many improvements were made in those subsequently built. The defects, for grave defects they were, had a marked influence upon both her sea-going and her fighting qualities, and put her at a great disadvantage as compared with her successors. Her armored deck or raft was attached to the hull by a single set of rivets, which were unequal to the strain caused by a heavy sea striking the projecting bow from underneath. Her smoke-pipes and blower-pipes projected only a few feet above the deck, and could hardly fail to ship large quantities of water in a heavy sea. In action, her weakest point was the pilot-house. Its rude structure, that of an iron log hut, was ill-calculated to resist the blow of a heavy projectile. Its roof was detached, merely resting by its weight on the walls. Its position on the deck forward of the turret was disadvantageous, as it precluded end-on fire when the vessel was approaching an enemy, and reduced the circular sweep of the guns by nearly eight points. But the worst feature of the arrangement was the separation of the

captain who was manœuvring the ship from the lieutenant who was working the turret and firing the guns. Each was completely cut off from the other, except by a speaking-tube, which opened in the floor of the movable turret, and through which the sound would only pass when the turret was in its normal position. The experience of the first Monitor led to the simple device of putting the pilot-house over the turret, a change that was suggested by Newton, the engineer of the vessel. Finally the machinery for turning the turret, a wheel and rod connected by gearing with the turret-engine, was so defective that the turret was equally slow in starting, and, once started, in coming to a stop; and there was hardly time to point the guns before the muzzles had swept by their target. But considering the time in which she was built, the wonder is not that she was imperfect, but that she was in anywise ready; and it was well for the country that she did not wait another day to complete her preparations.

The first trial of the Monitor was made February 19, on the day that she was delivered at the Navy Yard. She was put in commission on the 25th, when a second trial took place; but her steering gear was not in working order, and she did not go out of the East River. At a third trial, a week later, she steamed down to Sandy Hook, and tried her guns. The mechanics were still at work upon her; indeed, the vessel was hardly completed when she left New York, though the workmen were busy during the night before she sailed. Finally, at 11 o'clock on the morning of Thursday, March 6, she started down the harbor; and in the afternoon she was fairly at sea on her way to the Chesapeake.

The passage down was difficult and dangerous. The Monitor was in tow of the Seth Low, a small tug, and was accompanied by two unseaworthy gunboats, the Currituck and Sachem. The ten days between the commission of the Mon-

itor and her departure had given the crew little time for practice in the management of the novel craft, with its complicated mechanism. The wind was moderate during Thursday night and Friday morning; but about noon, off the Delaware, it freshened to a strong breeze from the northwest, and caused a rough sea, which broke over the vessel's deck, forcing the water in floods through the hawse-pipes and under the turret. In the afternoon the sea increased, and breaking over the smoke-pipe and blower-pipe, caused the blower-bands to slip and break. This stopped the draft in the furnace, and filled the engine-room and fire-room with gas. Newton, with the other engineers and the firemen, strove in vain against the gas, trying to repair the injury, and they were only rescued as they lay unconscious on the floor of the engine-room. As the engines were now useless either for propulsion or pumping, the water gained rapidly. The hand-pump was used and the men set to bailing, but with little effect, as the water could only be carried off over the wall of the turret. At last the tug was headed for the shore. After five hours' steaming, the vessels came into smoother water; the engine-room was cleared of gas, the blower-bands were repaired, and the engine once more moved slowly.

So matters continued until shortly after midnight, when the Monitor, in crossing a shoal, suddenly ran into a heavy head-sea. The water came up through the anchor-well, forced the air through the hawse-pipe, and flowed in a stream over the ward-room table to the berth-deck. Efforts were made to close the hawse-pipe, and the rush of water was partly checked. But the sea now broke violently over the deck, and again entered the blower-pipes. Another disaster seemed imminent. The head wind prevented Worden from hailing the tug, and in the hurry of preparation no arrangement had been made for signalling at night.

Every sea that dashed the spray over the blowers was anxiously watched; and every few minutes word came from the engine-room that the engine could not go much longer unless the water was kept out. About this time the wheel-ropes jumped off the steering wheel, owing to the pitching of the ship, and became jammed. The vessel was now unmanageable and began to sheer about wildly; but the tow-rope held, and half an hour's work repaired the injury. After five critical hours, daylight broke, and the tug was ordered to go nearer the shore. By eight o'clock the danger was over. At four in the afternoon of the 8th of March the Monitor passed Cape Henry. Immediately afterward the hawser parted, but the vessel was now in smooth water.

In the absence of Flag-Officer Goldsborough, the Commander-in-Chief of the North Atlantic blockading squadron, who was engaged at this time in the expedition against Roanoke Island, the senior officer present in Hampton Roads was Captain John Marston of the Roanoke. The force consisted of the Roanoke and the Minnesota, lying near Fortress Monroe, and two sailing-vessels, the Congress and the Cumberland, at anchor off Newport News. All were admirable vessels of their class. The Congress was a fifty-gun frigate, and though rebuilt, or rather built anew, in 1841, represented the type of 1812. The Cumberland was a sloop-of-war of twenty-four guns. The Roanoke and the Minnesota were screw-frigates of forty guns. These vessels have been already referred to. They were the pride of the navy, and before the war had been regarded as the highest and most perfect type of the men-of-war of the period. Yet it required but the experience of a single afternoon in Hampton Roads, in the month of March, 1862, to show that all of them were antiquated, displaced, superseded, and that a new era had opened in naval warfare.

The Merrimac, which had been a sister ship of the Minnesota and Roanoke, was now completed and in commission at Norfolk, under her new name of the Virginia. She was to all intents a new vessel. Her masts had been removed, and her casemate, which sloped at an angle of forty-five degrees, and resembled the roof of a house, had been armored with two layers of wrought-iron plates, each two-and-a-half inches thick, with a seven-inch wooden backing. She was armed with six IX-inch Dahlgren guns and two 32-pounder Brooke rifles in broadside, and VII-inch Brooke rifles on pivots in the bow and stern; and a cast-iron ram projected eighteen inches from her bow.

The Congress and Cumberland had been lying off Newport News for several months. Their ostensible duty was to blockade the James River; but it is not very clear how a sailing-vessel at anchor could be of any use for this purpose. Most of the old sailing-vessels of the navy had by this time been relegated to their proper place as school-ships, store-ships, and receiving-ships, or had been sent to foreign stations where their only duty was to display the flag. Nothing shows more clearly the persistence of old traditions than the presence of these helpless vessels in so dangerous a neighborhood. Although the ships themselves were of no value for modern warfare, their armament could ill be spared; and they carried between them over eight hundred officers and men, whose lives were exposed to a fruitless sacrifice.[1]

Commander William Smith, who had commanded the Congress for six months, had been detached early in March. He turned over the command to his executive, Lieutenant Joseph B. Smith, but remained on board while waiting for his steamer, and during the engagement of the 8th he

[1] Captain Fox, in his testimony before the Select Committee, says that the sailing-vessels were left in Hampton Roads at the request of the military authorities.

served as a volunteer. Radford, the commander of the Cumberland, was attending a court of inquiry on board the Roanoke when the Merrimac came out, and the command of the sloop devolved on Lieutenant Morris. When the Merrimac was reported, Radford landed, and rode to Newport News; but he only arrived in time to see the end of the action. Both ships were therefore fought by their first lieutenants; but they could not have been defended with more resolution and gallantry, and no skill would have availed to alter the final result.

So many rumors about the Merrimac had been current in the fleet, without any visible results, that the prevalent feeling in regard to her was one of skepticism. It was known that extensive alterations had been made in the vessel, but it was not supposed that her powers of resistance would render her shot-proof under the fire of such broadsides as the two vessels could bring against her. Moreover, her sister ships, the Roanoke and Minnesota, lay below near the fort. A careful lookout was kept up, however; the ships were anchored with springs on their cables, and half the watch slept at quarters.

On the 6th of March, the frigate St. Lawrence came in, a vessel in all respects similar to the Congress. But so far from increasing the force to be opposed to the Merrimac, she only added another to the list of probable victims.

On Saturday, the 8th, a little before one o'clock in the afternoon, while the Monitor was still outside the Capes, the Merrimac finally came out from Norfolk. She was under the command of Franklin Buchanan, whose ability and energy had won him a high place in the esteem of his brother-officers in the navy before the war. She was accompanied by two gunboats, the Beaufort and Raleigh, of one gun each. Turning directly into the channel by which she could

reach Newport News, the Merrimac approached the two vessels at anchor. The latter had been cleared for action, the Cumberland when the enemy was sighted, and the Congress after he had entered the James River channel. They would have been no better off if they had got under way; the wind was light, and their tug, the Zouave, was not powerful enough to tow them off. Soon after two o'clock the Merrimac opened fire with grape from her bow gun. Passing along the starboard side of the Congress, whose shot rebounded from her iron side like pebbles, she steered directly for the Cumberland. The latter received her with a discharge of shot which entered the port, knocked off the muzzles of two guns, and killed or wounded nineteen men, but did not stop her progress. Approaching steadily, bows on, she raked the sloop with her pivot gun, and keeping her way, struck her full under the starboard fore-channels, delivering her fire at the same time. The force of the blow drove the Merrimac's ram so far into the planking that it was wrenched off, as she withdrew; and a hole was opened in the side of the Cumberland, into which the water rushed in a full stream.

The bow of the Cumberland immediately began to settle, and her fate was decided. Nevertheless she continued to fight with the persistence and energy of desperation. The gun's crews kicked off their shoes, and stripped to the waist. Tanks of cartridges were hoisted on the gun-deck and opened, and round after round was fired at the ironclad. Never did a crew fight a ship with more spirit and hardihood than these brave fellows of the Cumberland while the vessel was going down. Nor was it a mere idle display of gallantry, this holding on till the last; for in these days, in naval battles, the game is not over until the last gun is fired, and a chance shot may recover the day for a seemingly beaten combatant.

For three-quarters of an hour, from the time when the Cumberland was struck until she sank, the enemy's fire was concentrated upon her with terrible effect. A shell passing through the hatch burst in the sick-bay, killing four of the wounded. On the berth-deck, the wounded men were lifted upon racks and mess-chests, to keep them from drowning; and as the water rose, those who fell on the upper decks were carried amidships and left there. The Merrimac hailed and demanded a surrender; but Morris returned a refusal. Already, the boats had been lowered and made fast in a line on the shore side. At half-past three, the forward magazine was drowned, and five minutes later the order was given to the men to leave quarters and save themselves. The water had now risen to the gun-deck; a last shot was fired as the ship heeled over to port, and officers and crew jumped for their lives into the water. A moment more, and the Cumberland, with her ensign still flying at the peak, sank to her tops.

While the Merrimac was occupied with the Cumberland, three steamers, the Patrick Henry, Jamestown, and Teazer, which had been lying at the mouth of the James River, ran past the batteries at Newport News, and joining the other gunboats, opened a brisk fire upon the Congress, which told severely upon her crew. Seeing the fate of the Cumberland, Smith sought to escape the enemy's ram by running ashore. He set the jib and topsails, and with the assistance of the tug, ran up on the flats, hoping in this way to delay the battle until the other frigates should arrive; but his movement was only escaping destruction in one form to meet it in another. No sooner was the Congress hard and fast than the Merrimac, taking a position astern of her, at a distance of one hundred and fifty yards, raked her fore and aft with shells; and the smaller steamers joined in the attack with

spirit and effect. The Congress could only reply with her two stern guns, and these were soon disabled.

The unequal contest lasted for an hour. The old frigate could do nothing. Her decks were covered with the dead and dying; her commander was killed, and fire had broken out in different parts of the ship. The affair had ceased to be a fight; it was simply a wholesale slaughter. As the Minnesota had run aground, there was no prospect of relief; and Lieutenant Pendergrast, upon whom the command had fallen, to prevent the useless carnage, hoisted a white flag.

The Beaufort and Raleigh were sent alongside the Congress to receive possession and to remove the prisoners; but a sharp fire of artillery and small arms from the shore drove them off. The Teazer was then ordered to set fire to the Congress, but she also was beaten back. The Merrimac thereupon renewed her fire, using incendiary shot, and the people of the Congress, who had remained passive while the contest was going on over and around them, manned their boats and escaped to the shore. The ship, left to herself, continued to burn slowly, and at one o'clock the next morning she blew up.

While these battles were in progress, the two screw-frigates, which formed the only effective force on the ground, made an effort to get into action, but not with any great success. The Minnesota, under Captain Van Brunt, was the first to move, getting under way soon after the enemy was sighted, at a signal from the Roanoke. As she passed Sewall's Point, the batteries opened fire on her, but did not stop her progress. After steaming five miles she grounded. She was then a mile and a half from the scene of action. When the abandonment of the Congress left the Merrimac free to engage a new antagonist, she turned her attention to the stranded frigate. Fortunately for the latter, the Merrimac drew too

much water to approach within less than a mile of her position; and her fire at this distance was ineffective. The Patrick Henry and Jamestown, taking their position on the bow and stern of the Minnesota, did her more injury with their rifled guns than did their powerful consort. The Minnesota's fire had no effect upon the Merrimac, but she succeeded in beating back the gunboats; and during two or three hours of conflict, neither side gained or lost.

The Roanoke, which was disabled by a broken shaft,[1] got under way soon after the Minnesota, and with the assistance of a couple of tugs, moved slowly in the direction of Newport News. She went far enough to see the Cumberland sink and the Congress surrender. Soon after the second event, she grounded; but the tugs managed to tow her head around and to get her afloat. Sending the tugs to assist the Minnesota, the Roanoke now withdrew and dropped down to her anchorage.

As the Roanoke was on her way back, the St. Lawrence passed her, making her way laboriously to the scene of action in tow of a gunboat. Captain Purviance, with a gallantry that deserved a better instrument, was endeavoring to bring his fine old fifty-gun frigate to battle with the ironclad. Fortunately for him and for his ship, he also went aground,

[1] Captain Fox, in his testimony before the Select Committee on March 19, 1862, says: "The shaft of the Roanoke was broken about the 5th of November, and it was believed that it could be repaired in about two months. That was the report made to us. But upon inquiry, it was found that every forge in the country capable of doing the work was employed. There being a large number of contracts out for steamers, every one of which must have a shaft, every available forge in the country was running to the utmost of its capacity. Finally, we found one establishment that agreed to forge the shaft, but refused to turn and finish it, which, of itself, is as important and difficult a matter as the forging. The Government had no adequate means to turn such an enormous piece of forging. They undertook it, however, with such means as they had at the New York Navy Yard, and it is now about finished, although it broke every piece of machinery they had which was put upon it, and special machinery had to be made for it."

while still at some distance from the enemy, against whom he discharged a series of futile broadsides. Night was now approaching; and the St. Lawrence slowly returned to her place in the roads below.

At seven o'clock the Merrimac ceased firing, and withdrew to Sewall's Point. She had done a good day's work. She had sunk one of her opponents, and burnt another. Only daylight was needed to capture or exterminate the rest. She saw her prey within her grasp; and by all human calculation the whole force must fall into her hands on the next day. The conflict had left her without any material injury; and she returned to her anchorage fully satisfied with the work of the day, and the prospects for the morrow.

But an event had already occurred which put a new aspect upon affairs in Hampton Roads. At four in the afternoon the Monitor had passed Cape Henry. Her officers had heard the heavy firing in the direction of Fortress Monroe, and the ship was stripped of her sea-rig and prepared for action. A pilot-boat, spoken on the way up, gave word of the disastrous engagement that had just ended; and presently the light of the burning Congress confirmed the news. At nine o'clock the Monitor had anchored near the Roanoke, and Worden went on board to report.

In order to carry out the project of opening the Potomac River, explicit orders had been given to Captain Marston to send the Monitor directly to Washington. Similar orders had been sent to Worden, but they only reached New York two hours after he had sailed. The state of affairs was such, however, that Marston and Worden were more than justified in disregarding the orders. No sane man would have done otherwise. Worden accordingly proceeded to the assistance of the Minnesota, which was still aground off Newport News. Acting-Master Samuel Howard volunteered to act as pilot. Be-

fore midnight the Monitor had joined the Minnesota; but the frigate failed to get afloat at high water, and the Monitor remained by her during the rest of the night.

At daylight on the morning of Sunday, March 9, the Merrimac was discovered with her attendant gunboats under the batteries at Sewall's Point. The Minnesota lay still in the same position, apparently helpless. The diminutive iron battery beside her was hardly noticed; and at half-past seven the Merrimac was under way, confident of repeating, on a larger scale, the victory of the day before. Buchanan had been disabled by a wound, and she was now commanded by Lieutenant Catesby Jones. She steamed down leisurely toward the Rip Raps, turned into the Minnesota's channel, and opened fire while still a mile away. She succeeded in putting a shot under the Minnesota's counter, near the water line, but did no further injury. The Monitor's anchor was up, her men at quarters, her guns loaded, and everything ready for action. She immediately got under way, to engage as far as possible from the Minnesota, and, to Van Brunt's surprise and relief, headed directly for the Merrimac's starboard bow, covering the frigate. Worden reserved his fire until he was close upon the enemy; then, altering his course, he gave orders to commence firing, and, stopping the engine, passed slowly by. The Merrimac returned the fire, but with little effect; the turret was a small target, and the projectiles passed over the low deck. Shell, grape, canister, and musket balls, flew about in every direction, but did no injury. Acting-Master Stodder carelessly leaned for a moment against the turret, and a shot striking the outer wall, produced a concussion that disabled him. As the turret was struck the shot glanced off from its curved side; and though, from the imperfections of the machinery, it was regulated with difficulty, it continued to revolve as freely as ever.

After passing the Merrimac, Worden turned, and, crossing her stern, attempted to disable her screw, which he missed by a few feet. Returning, he passed up along her port side, firing deliberately. The vessels were so close that several times they nearly came in contact. Presently they separated, and the Merrimac attacked the Minnesota. In shifting her position, she grounded, but got off soon after. The frigate received her as she approached with a discharge from her full broadside and X-inch pivot; of which Van Brunt observed, somewhat extravagantly, that "it would have blown out of water any timber-built ship in the world." But the days of timber-built ships were numbered, and nothing proved it more clearly than Van Brunt's ineffectual broadside. The Merrimac replied with a shell from her rifled bow-gun, which entered the berth-deck amidships, tore four rooms into one, and set the ship on fire. The flames were soon extinguished. A second shell exploded the boiler of the tugboat Dragon. Van Brunt concentrated his broadside upon the ironclad, and fifty solid shot struck her side with no more effect than the pelting of hail-stones. By the time she had fired her third shell, the Monitor had interposed again; and the Merrimac, running down at full speed, attempted to repeat her successful attack on the Cumberland. Worden saw the movement, and suddenly putting his helm hard-a-port, he gave his vessel a broad sheer, receiving the blow of the ram on his starboard quarter, whence it glanced off without doing any injury.

During the engagement, Worden had taken his place in the pilot-house, from the lookout-holes of which he was able to see the course of the action and to direct the working of the ship and of the guns. Greene had charge of the turret and handled the battery. These two men fought the ship. Acting-Master Stodder was at first stationed at the wheel that

started the revolving-gear, and when he was disabled, Chief-Engineer Stimers volunteered to take his place, and did the best that could be done in the exhausting work of turning the refractory turret. The powder division on the berth-deck was in charge of Acting-Master Webber. The paymaster and captain's clerk, also stationed on the berth-deck, passed the orders from the pilot-house. The men had gone into the engagement worn out, having had no rest for forty-eight hours, and little to eat. But they were picked men, and during the short time that Worden had been with them he had won, in an extraordinary degree, their confidence and regard. Accordingly they did their work with unflinching courage and resolution.

The situation in the turret was a difficult one. Shut up in a revolving iron cask, on a moving platform, and cut off from the captain except through slow and imperfect communication by passing the word, when minutes and even seconds were important, Greene fought under heavy disadvantages. The direction of the bow and stern and of the starboard and port beam were marked on the stationary flooring, but the marks were soon obliterated, and after one or two revolutions it was impossible to guess at the direction of the ship or the position of the enemy. The only openings through which anything could be seen were the gunports; and these were closed except at the moment of firing, as an entering shot would have disabled the guns. Curiously enough, neither of the port-stoppers was struck, though the edges of the ports and the turret wall between them were jagged and dented by the Merrimac's shot. At last the difficulties became so great, the revolutions so confusing, and the mechanism governing the movements of the turret so little under control, that it was left stationary, and the ship was fought and the guns pointed by the helm.

After fighting for two hours, the Monitor hauled off to hoist shot into the turret. At half-past eleven, the engagement was renewed. The enemy now concentrated his fire on the pilot-house, which was the weakest part of the vessel. At a moment when Worden was looking through one of the openings, a shell struck the wall at the opening, and exploded. The explosion fractured one of the iron logs of the frame, and lifted half-way off the iron hatch that rested insecurely on the top. Worden's eyes were filled with powder and slivers of iron, and he was blinded and stunned. Blind as he was, he could see the stream of light from the roof, and unable to determine the extent of the injury, he had the presence of mind to give orders to put the helm to starboard and sheer off. With the captain disabled and the quartermaster dazed by the shock, it was some minutes before word was passed to the turret of the disaster in the pilot-house. When Greene came out and passed forward he found the captain at the foot of the ladder, stunned and helpless, his face black and streaming with blood. Leaving him to the surgeon, Greene mounted to the pilot-house, while Stimers replaced him in the turret; and the vessel, which during these moments of unavoidable delay had been without a captain, and steaming no one knew whither, once more faced the enemy.

Seeing the Monitor draw off, Van Brunt, under the supposition that his protector was disabled and had left him, prepared for the worst, and made ready to destroy his ship. But, at this point, the Merrimac withdrew to Norfolk. As she moved off, Greene fired at her twice, or at most three times. He then returned to the Minnesota, and remained by her until she got afloat. To have followed the Merrimac under the batteries of Sewall's Point would have been running a greater risk than the circumstances would warrant,

considering the important interests at Hampton Roads, of which the Monitor afforded the sole protection.

It appears that the movements of the Monitor, at the time when there was no captain to direct her, led others besides Van Brunt to suppose that she had given up the fight; and the assertion has since been confidently made that she was beaten and driven off by the enemy. The statement is not borne out by the facts, as the Monitor only went off a short distance into shoal water, and presently renewed the combat. But assuming for the moment that the Merrimac was left in possession of the field, why did she not continue her operations? The retreat of the Monitor would have left matters in precisely the situation in which the Merrimac supposed them to be when she came out in the morning. It is to be presumed that her object then was to destroy the Minnesota. The Monitor prevented her for four hours from doing this; now, however, if the Monitor had retreated, why did she not attack the frigate?

Instead of continuing the fight, the Merrimac steamed to Norfolk. Jones gives as his reason for returning that he believed the Minnesota to be entirely disabled. What ground he had for forming such a belief does not appear. It has also been suggested that his pilots led him to suppose that delay would prevent him from crossing the bar. But what need had he to cross? The bar was a mile above Sewall's Point; he had anchored safely the night before under the battery, and after destroying the Minnesota—supposing that the Monitor had disappeared—he could do the same again, and go up to Norfolk at his leisure. If, however, his injuries were so great that he was compelled to lose no time in returning to Norfolk, it would seem that instead of his having defeated the Monitor, the Monitor had defeated him. In truth, the claim that the Merrimac was victorious is singu-

larly bold, in view of the fact that half an hour after the last shot was fired the Minnesota was lying aground in the very spot she had occupied in the morning, the Monitor was lying alongside her, neither of them being materially injured, and the supposed victor was steaming as fast as possible to Elizabeth River, in order to cross the bar before the ebb-tide.

Though both the ironclads were severely pounded in the engagement, neither had developed fully its offensive strength, and all things considered they got off rather easily. The only serious casualty on either side was the injury received by Worden. The Merrimac leaked somewhat from the collision of her unarmed stem with the Monitor's overhang, and the plates of her armor were broken where they were struck, but the wooden backing was not penetrated. The roof of the Monitor's pilot-house was partly displaced, and one of its beams was cracked; but otherwise the vessel was left intact. She was struck twenty-one times; eight times on the side-armor, twice on the pilot-house, seven times on the turret, and four times on deck. The deepest indentations on the sides were four inches, on the turret two inches, and on the deck one inch. Had the Monitor's guns been depressed to strike the enemy at the water line, where there was only one inch of armor, or had the latter concentrated his fire on the pilot-house of the Monitor, which was her weakest point, the result might have been more decisive. So with the ordnance. The service charge for the XI-inch guns was fifteen pounds, and the Bureau had enjoined upon Worden to limit himself to this, though it was found later that thirty pounds could be safely used; and on the other hand, owing to the great demand among the Confederates for projectiles at other points, and to the supposition that she would have only wooden vessels to encounter, the Merrimac was not sup-

plied with solid shot, which would have been far more effective against armor than shells.

No single event of the naval war produced more momentous results than the victory of the Monitor. The first day's battle in Hampton Roads had shown that the enemy possessed an engine of destruction whose offensive powers were a new revelation in maritime warfare. There was nothing at hand to offer even a show of effective resistance. On that memorable Saturday night dismay and consternation pervaded the fleet; the Merrimac had the frigates at her mercy, and the waters of Hampton Roads under her control. To all appearances the confidence of the country in its navy was on the point of being rudely shaken by the sudden destruction of a large force of its most powerful ships. The blockade was about to be raised at the point where it had seemed to be most firmly established. A roadstead whose occupation was of the highest strategic importance was about to pass into the hands of the enemy; and the proposed plan of an invasion of the Peninsula would be rendered impracticable if the army's base and communications were threatened by the Merrimac. It was even feared that the ironclad would issue from the Chesapeake and levy contributions on Northern ports; and though it was afterward known that she could not have gone to sea with safety, the fact that she was at large and that her egress was unchecked would have produced incalculable mischief both at home and abroad.

But the renown of the Monitor and of the gallant officer who commanded her rest no less on the courage and conduct that carried her to victory than on the importance of the action and the dramatic interest that surrounded it. The expedition had started from New York as a forlorn hope. To Worden it was doubly so, for he had left a sick-bed to as-

sume the command, and he had been told by his physician that he could hardly hope to come back alive. With a fortitude beyond all praise he held to his purpose, and carried the experimental craft through her first perilous sea-voyage. After two sleepless days and nights he entered Hampton Roads, only to find that the fleet was demoralized and that the whole weight of the crisis rested upon him. With hardly a moment for rest or for preparation, he took his untried vessel boldly into action with an enemy whose powers had just been proved in a successful engagement, and whose enormous size caused his little battery to sink into comparative insignificance. The close of the battle found the enemy in retreat, the blockade unbroken, the fleet saved, and the Roads reconquered. For these overwhelming results, and for the skill and heroism that achieved them in the face of extraordinary difficulties, the names of Worden and the Monitor will always be linked by the country in affectionate remembrance.[1]

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[1] Though not, strictly speaking, within the province of history, it may be worth while to quote here, as it has never before been made public, a touching letter which was sent to Worden by the crew of the Monitor at the time when he was lying in Washington disabled by his wound. As an expression of genuine feeling from rough and untrained men, and as showing the enthusiastic devotion which Worden had gained from his crew, its interest is both human and historical.

To Captain Worden.

"HAMPTON ROADS, April 24th, 1862.
"U. S. MONITOR.

"*To our Dear and Honored Captain.*

"DEAR SIR: These few lines is from your own crew of the Monitor, with their kindest Love to you their Honored Captain, hoping to God that they will have the pleasure of welcoming you back to us again soon, for we are all ready able and willing to meet Death or any thing else, only give us back our Captain again. Dear Captain, we have got your Pilot-house fixed and all ready for you when you get well again; and we all sincerely hope that soon we will have the pleasure of welcoming you back to it. . . . We are waiting very patiently to engage our Antagonist if we could only get a chance to do so. The last time she came out we all thought we would have the Pleasure of sinking her. But we all got disap-

After the battles of the 8th and 9th of March, Buchanan was relieved, in consequence of his wound, by Commodore Tattnall, who assumed command of the "naval defences of the waters of Virginia" on the 29th. His fleet was composed of the same vessels that had taken part in the two actions. The Merrimac came out of dry-dock on the 4th of April. She had been thoroughly repaired, and was in as good condition as before the engagement. Another layer of iron had been partially put on, a new ram had been adjusted, and she was furnished with solid shot. Her only weak points were in her ports, which were without covers; and in her engines, upon which full dependence could not be placed.

On the morning of April 11, the Merrimac steamed down the river, and came out into Hampton Roads. Goldsborough had now returned from the Sounds. The Minnesota, with the Monitor and the other vessels of the squadron, was lying at Fortress Monroe, or a little below; and the Merrimac took her position between Sewall's Point and Newport News, out of range of the guns of the fort.

Goldsborough, impressed with the importance of keeping the Merrimac in check, in order that she might not interfere with McClellan's operations, and in accordance with the wishes of the Department, was inclined to take no unnecessary risk, and to do nothing that would precipitate a conflict.

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pointed, for we did not fire one shot and the Norfolk papers says we are cowards in the Monitor—and all we want is a chance to show them where it lies with you for our Captain We can teach them who is cowards. But there is a great deal that we would like to write to you but we think you will soon be with us again yourself. But we all join in with our kindest love to you, hoping that God will restore you to us again and hoping that your sufferings is at an end now, and we are all so glad to hear that your eyesight will be spaired to you again. We would wish to write more to you if we have your kind Permission to do so but at present we all conclude by tendering to you our kindest Love and affection, to our Dear and Honored Captain.

"We remain untill Death your Affectionate Crew

"THE MONITOR BOYS."

He had no intention of taking the offensive, or of engaging, except under the most favorable circumstances. Additions to his force were expected to arrive shortly, and the situation was considered too critical to leave anything to chance. No action therefore took place, the vessels of the squadron having steam up, but remaining in their position near the fort.

A large number of transports, store-ships, and chartered vessels were lying at this time in or about the Roads. Goldsborough had cautioned them about the danger of lying near Hampton, and most of them had withdrawn below the fort. On the 11th, however, two brigs and a schooner, employed by the Quartermaster's Department, were still lying between Newport News and Hampton Bar. By Tattnall's direction the Jamestown and Raleigh steamed across, captured the vessels, and brought them over to Sewall's Point, in full sight of the fleet. Humiliating as the incident was, it was not of sufficient importance to change Goldsborough's plan, supposing that his plan was right. In the occurrences of this day, the Department commended Goldsborough's action, and it left to his discretion the conduct of subsequent operations.

Matters remained in this position for nearly a month, the squadron having been increased during this time by the addition of the new ironclad Galena, the Vanderbilt, and other vessels. In May it became apparent to the Confederates that the progress of military operations would compel the abandonment of Norfolk, and consultations were held by the military and naval authorities as to the disposition of the Merrimac. Early on the morning of May 8, the United States steamers Galena, Aroostook, and Port Royal were sent up the James River. The Merrimac was at Norfolk, and a demonstration was made by the rest of the squadron against the battery at Sewall's Point. Presently the Merrimac came down the river. It was not Goldsborough's intention to

make a serious attack on the fort, his object being merely to ascertain the strength of the works and the possibility of effecting a landing of the troops.

The Monitor had orders to fall back into fair channel way, and only engage the Merrimac seriously in such a position that the Minnesota and the other vessels could run her down, if an opportunity presented itself. According to Goldsborough, "the Merrimac came out, but was even more cautious than ever. The Monitor was kept well in advance, and so that the Merrimac could have engaged her without difficulty had she been so disposed; but she declined to do it, and soon returned and anchored under Sewall's Point." [1]

On the 10th, Tattnall learned that the fort at Sewall's Point had been abandoned, and that the United States troops, having landed at Ocean View, were rapidly advancing on Norfolk. By the evening Norfolk had surrendered, and he resolved to withdraw to the James River. The pilots informed him that they could take the ship up with a draft of eighteen feet. The Merrimac drew twenty-two feet, and preparations were made to lighten her. After working half the night, and stripping the ship so that she was unfit for action, the pilots, apparently not wishing to go out, declared that it would be impossible to take her up as far as Jamestown Flats, the point to which McClellan's army was supposed to have occupied the river. Tattnall thereupon concluded to destroy his

[1] It is impossible to reconcile the statements of the two opposing commanders, in regard to the events of this day. Tattnall says: "We passed the battery and stood directly for the enemy for the purpose of engaging him, and I thought an action certain, particularly as the Minnesota and Vanderbilt, which were anchored below Fortress Monroe, got under way and stood up to that point, apparently with the intention of joining their squadron in the roads. Before, however, we got within gunshot, the enemy ceased firing and retired with all speed under the protection of the guns of the Fortress, followed by the Virginia, until the shells from the Rip Raps passed over her. The Virginia was then placed at her moorings near Sewall's Point."

ship; and, setting her on fire, he landed his officers and men and escaped by way of Suffolk. At five o'clock on the morning of the 11th the Merrimac blew up.

Possession of Norfolk being now resumed, active operations came to an end, and the blockading station at Hampton Roads ceased to be the scene of conflict. The Monitor, after remaining all summer in the James River, was sent to Washington for repairs in September, and two months later returned to Hampton Roads.

The career of the Monitor was now nearly over. On the afternoon of the 29th of December, she set out for Beaufort, N. C., in tow of the Rhode Island. Admiral Lee had left the time of departure at the discretion of Bankhead, the commander of the Monitor; and the latter chose a clear pleasant day, when a light wind was blowing from the southwest, and everything promised fair weather. The passage to Beaufort was about as long as that from New York to Hampton Roads. The Monitor was accompanied by the Passaic, which was in tow of the State of Georgia. All went well until the morning of the second day, when the ships began to feel a swell from the southward. Gradually the wind freshened, and the sea broke over the pilot-house of the Monitor. The weather was threatening all day, with occasional squalls of wind and rain: but the bilge-pumps were kept at work, and the ironclads remained free from water.

As evening came on, and Hatteras was passed, matters began to grow worse. The wind increased and hauled to the southward, causing a heavy sea. As the Monitor rose to the swell, the projecting armor of her bow received the shock of the advancing wave full on its flat under-surface, coming down with a clap like thunder. The sea rose fast, submerging the pilot-house, and forcing its way into the turret and

blower-pipes. Trenchard, who commanded the Rhode Island, stopped his vessel, to see if the Monitor would not ride more easily or make less water; but the inert mass of iron only fell off and rolled heavily in the trough of the sea. Again the Rhode Island started, with the Monitor yawing and plunging behind her. The strain on her forward overhang had loosened the plates under her bow, and she began to leak; and though all the pumps were working, the water gained on them fast. At ten o'clock it became evident that no efforts would avail to save the ship; and Bankhead made the signal of distress, cut the hawser, and ranged up under the lee of the Rhode Island. Boats were lowered, and the dangerous work began of removing the crew of the sinking ironclad, over whose deck the seas were now breaking in quick succession. As the vessels touched, ropes were thrown over the Rhode Island's quarter; but the crew could not or would not seize them. The Rhode Island's cutter took off a boat-load of men successfully, but the launch was stove by the working of the Monitor; and Trenchard, finding that his own vessel was imperilled by the sharp bow and sides of her companion, was obliged to move away.

It was now nearly midnight; the ship was sinking fast, the rising water had put out the fires, engines and pumps had stopped, and again the Monitor fell off into the trough of the sea, where she rolled sluggishly. Seeing this, Bankhead let go the anchor, which brought her head to wind. The greater part of the crew had now been rescued; but a few had been washed overboard, and twenty or so still remained on board, waiting for the boats to return. During these trying moments Bankhead set a bailing party at work, not in the hope of reducing the water, but to give occupation to his men. Slowly and cautiously the last boat approached, keeping off with her oars from the side of the ironclad, and while Bank-

head held the painter she took off the remnant of the crew,—all but a few poor fellows who, dazed and terrified, could not be made to leave the turret. Last of all Bankhead jumped in, and the boat pulled toward the Rhode Island, and was got safely on board. A few moments more, and the Monitor slowly settled and disappeared.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ATLANTIC SQUADRONS.

THE first step in the establishment of the Atlantic blockade was the proclamation issued by Commodore Pendergrast, still in command of the Home Squadron at Hampton Roads. The only effective blockade then existing was maintained by the Cumberland, and such other vessels as had been hastily collected, in the neighborhood of Fortress Monroe. In carrying out the plan, it was decided to put the whole force on the Atlantic coast under one command, and Commodore Stringham was accordingly appointed flag-officer commanding the Atlantic Blockading Squadron. The Minnesota, which had been laid up in ordinary at Boston, was assigned to him as flagship, and on the 13th of May he arrived at Hampton Roads, and entered upon his command.

The instructions sent to Stringham on May 1 will serve to show exactly the views of the Department in its first efforts to establish the blockade. They were as follows:

"The President, by Proclamation of April 19, 1861, ordered a blockade of the ports within the States of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas; and by a supplemental Proclamation of the 27th of April, 1861, he extends the blockade so as to include the ports of Virginia and North Carolina. In pursuance of the laws of the United States, and of the Law of Nations, in such cases provided, it becomes necessary that a competent force be posted so as to prevent the entrance and exit of vessels from the ports aforesaid.

"With this view you will establish and enforce a blockade at each and all of the ports in the States enumerated east of Key West, and a sufficient disposable force will be placed under the command of yourself that you may carry these orders into effect. On you will devolve the duty of blockading all the ports east of Key West. You will duly notify neutrals of the declaration of blockade, and give to it all the publicity in your power. The blockade must be strict and absolute and only public armed vessels of foreign powers should be permitted to enter the ports which are placed in a state of blockade. To neutral or foreign vessels, that are already in the ports, you will allow a reasonable number of days to leave them. The country relies upon your command, with the squadron of the Gulf, to make this blockade effectual, so as to close all of the ports of the States above named, protect our commerce from the depredations of privateers, and contribute, by your activity and vigilance, to the speedy suppression of the insurrectionary movements and the adjustment of the present unhappy difficulties. It will not be improper to state to you that a lawful maritime blockade requires the actual presence of an adequate force stationed at the entrance of the port, sufficiently near to prevent communication. . . . You will permit no neutral or foreign vessel proceeding toward the entrance of a blockaded port to be captured or detained if she shall not have previously received from one of the blockading squadron a special notification of the existence of the blockade.

"This notification must be inserted in writing on the muster-roll of the neutral vessel, by the cruiser which meets her; and it should contain the announcement, together with statements of the day and the latitude in which it was made.

"The United States have at all times maintained these principles on the subject of blockade, and you will take care not to attempt the application of penalties for a breach of blockade except in cases where your right is justified by these rules."

The following additional instructions were issued May 4:

"The Department would in every instance allow at least fifteen days for vessels to depart with or without cargo after the blockade is set with a sufficient force. Notice should be given, by such extended publicity as you can command, at each and every port as soon as the blockade is established.

"Commodore Pendergrast will inform you of the condition of affairs and orders received. He will also assist with the Cumberland in enforcing the blockade for the present.

"I need not enjoin vigilance and promptness to prevent privateering and depredations.

"There are several vessels in the waters of the Chesapeake to aid you, and others which are being equipped will soon arrive out and report. The names, officers, crews, and armaments of these vessels are not yet reported in full to the Department, in consequence of the haste and activity necessary to get them afloat at the earliest moment.

"Some of the vessels can, it is believed, aid in blockading the Mississippi and Mobile. But much must be committed to your judgment and discretion.

"Commodore Mervine will shortly proceed to the Gulf with the [steamer] Mississippi, and other vessels will be speedily despatched to reinforce the blockading squadron, and close Galveston and other ports."

No time was therefore lost in making a beginning. But for the first three months it was only a beginning; and at some points it cannot be said to have gone so far as that. The Niagara, under Captain McKean, had arrived at Boston, April 24, and was sent to New York for necessary repairs. These were hurriedly completed and she proceeded to Charleston to set on foot the blockade at that point. She arrived at her post on May 11. After lying off the bar four days, and warning several vessels "off the whole Southern coast," for which, as already mentioned, the Government afterward paid heavy damages, she was directed to proceed to sea to intercept certain shiploads of arms and munitions of war, which were known to be on their way from Europe to New Orleans or Mobile. The Niagara touched at Havana, and later joined the Gulf blockade. The Harriet Lane was off Charleston on the 19th, and cruised for some days near that part of the coast; but the blockade in reality was raised, for the port remained open until May 28, when the Minnesota

arrived. On the same day the blockade of Savannah was established by the Union, a steamer which had been chartered at Philadelphia five days after the President's first proclamation was issued. At the beginning of July, the Atlantic Squadron comprised twenty-two vessels, but most of them were stationed in Hampton Roads or were cruising at a distance from the coast.

The line of operations of the Atlantic Blockading Squadron began originally at Washington, and extending down the Potomac River and the Chesapeake, passed out to sea between the Capes, following the coast to Key West. The boundary was afterward fixed at Cape Canaveral.

Upon this line there were three principal points of blockade, Wilmington, Charleston, and Savannah. They became centres of blockade in the beginning, because of their commercial importance; and the first two remained so until the end, because they offered peculiar advantages to blockade-runners, and were capable of defence almost to the last against attacks by sea.

The different stretches of coast that lay between and outside the blockade centres had peculiar features of their own. Between Washington and Hampton Roads lay the military frontier. The blockade in the Potomac River was therefore largely devoted to the restriction of communication between the two shores, and to keeping open the water-approaches of the capital; and the work of the Potomac flotilla was of a kind by itself. Below the Potomac lay the mouths of the Virginia rivers, near the upper waters of which were the great battlefields of the war; and the naval operations carried on in this neighborhood were always subsidiary to the movements of the army.

The Potomac flotilla was organized in May, 1861, under the command of Commander James H. Ward, and formed at first

a part of the Atlantic Blockading Squadron. On May 31 Ward attacked the Confederate batteries at Acquia Creek, in the steamer Freeborn, assisted by the other vessels of the flotilla, the Anacostia and Resolute. The shore batteries were silenced, and the enemy retreated to their works on the heights. This was the first naval engagement of the war. On the next day, the Pawnee, under Commander Rowan, was sent down from Washington, and the attack was renewed, the Pawnee joining in the bombardment with her heavy battery.

On June 27, Ward made a landing at Matthias Point with a small party of men. He was accompanied by Lieutenant Chaplin of the Pawnee. His object seems to have been to clear away the woods on the point, which afforded shelter to the enemy; but he underestimated the force opposed to him, and he had hardly landed, when a body of troops, numbering four or five hundred, came over the brow of the hill to attack him. Ordering the men to lie off in their boats, Ward returned to the Freeborn, and opened fire on the advancing column. Chaplin landed his handful of men a second time, and threw up a breastwork; but about this time Ward was killed while sighting his bow-gun, and the fire from the vessel ceased. In consequence of this accident, signal was made to Chaplin to return; but the enemy had now advanced within two hundred yards, and opened a galling fire upon the party. Chaplin collected his men and sent them to the boats, waiting himself until the last. When he came to the beach, only one man remained with him, and the boat had drifted out. But Chaplin, who was a man of uncommon character, was unwilling to bring it back under the enemy's fire; and as the man who was with him could not swim, Chaplin took him on his shoulders, musket and all, and swam out with him to the boat.

After Ward's death, Commander Craven succeeded to the command of the flotilla. Occasional brushes with the enemy took place, schooners were cut out or burned, and the river was kept open until the end of October, when the heavy batteries thrown up on the Virginia shore made it impassable.

Early in 1862 the Confederates withdrew from their positions along the river. The work of the flotilla in the Potomac during the remainder of the war, under its successive commanders, Wyman, Harwood, and Parker, was chiefly confined to the suppression of the small attempts at illicit traffic which are always found along a frontier of belligerent operations. In the other Virginian rivers the flotilla at the same time took part in active operations, in connection with the movements of the army and the protection of transports and supplies.

Outside the Chesapeake the real blockade service began. A little to the south of the Capes is found the double coast which extends as far as Wilmington. The peculiar conformation of the coast consists of a long narrow belt of sand, jutting out in three prominent headlands, Cape Hatteras, Cape Lookout, and Cape Fear. The sand-belt is broken at intervals by shallow inlets. Within it lie the two Sounds, extensive sheets of water, upon whose tributary rivers are a number of more or less important towns. Below Wilmington the coast sweeps in, describing a long curve, at the southern extremity of which, in a deep recess, lies Georgetown. At this point the shore begins to assume the insular character which is so well defined below Charleston. From here to Fernandina it forms a series of low swampy islands, separated by narrow rivers and arms of the sea, making an intricate network of water-courses. At intervals the groups of islands are broken by large estuaries at the mouths of rivers. There are five of these between Charleston and Savannah—

Stono Inlet, North Edisto, South Edisto, St. Helena, and Port Royal. Below Tybee Roads, the entrance to Savannah, the same formation continues, with six important sounds— Wassaw, Ossabaw, St. Catherine, Sapelo, Doboy, and Altamaha. Brunswick is the only town of importance in this region, with an entrance at St. Simon's Sound. From St. Simon's the line of islands and sounds continues, including St. Andrew's, Cumberland Sound at Fernandina, St. John's, and St. Augustine. Below this point, the coast of Florida consists of narrow reaches of sand enclosing long lagoons, only broken by small and infrequent passes. In the whole extent of the South Atlantic Squadron there were twenty or more of these small inlets, in each of which it was necessary to keep a vessel, if the blockade was to be rigidly maintained.

During the summer of 1861 great efforts were made by the Confederates to show that the blockade was inefficient. It was commonly spoken of in their newspapers as "the paper blockade," and steps were taken by foreign governments, and especially by that of Great Britain, to ascertain its true character. The Gladiator, an English cruiser, commanded by Captain Hickley, whose name is an all-sufficient guarantee of the accuracy of his reports, made two cruises of observation off the Atlantic coast, at the beginning and at the end of July. On his first cruise, after a careful search, he could find nothing in the shape of a blockader between Cape Henry and Cape Fear. The force in Hampton Roads was composed of the Minnesota, Roanoke, and Susquehanna, the sailing-frigate Santee, the Cumberland, and the steamers Anacostia, Dawn, Daylight, and Quaker City. On his second cruise, the eastern entrance of Wilmington was still open, as were the inlets to the northward; but four vessels, the frigate Roanoke, the small steamer Albatross, and two sailing-vessels, the St. Lawrence and the Savannah, were cruising off

the coast. Hickley did not round Cape Fear on his second cruise; had he done so, he would have found one vessel off the mouth of Cape Fear River. This was the steamer Daylight, which arrived on the 20th of July, and immediately notified the commanding officer of Fort Caswell of the establishment of the blockade.

Notwithstanding the very inadequate force on the station, the vessels of the squadron acted upon the assumption of the existence of an efficient blockade. On July 16, the British brig Herald, two days out from Beaufort, was captured by the St. Lawrence, on the edge of the Gulf Stream, two hundred miles from land. The Department ordered the release of the Herald, but she was detained by the court, and finally condemned. Three days earlier, Pendergrast, then in command of a projected "West India Squadron," was lying at Charleston, and published anew his proclamation of April 30, announcing an efficient blockade of Virginia and North Carolina, and repeating the warning that he had a sufficient naval force "here" (that is, at Charleston) for the purpose of carrying out the proclamation. Proclamations, however, even though they may be of questionable validity, are not entirely without effect. Hickley reported that trade on the coast of North Carolina was stagnant; and, as has been already said, regular commerce was for the time being actually stopped by the original proclamation of the President. In the months of June, July, and August forty-two vessels entered and cleared at Wilmington, but nearly all were small coasters. The arrivals at Charleston, from June 1 to December 1, numbered one hundred and fifty vessels of the same description. Most of these entered at some of the numerous side channels to be found in the network of inlets in the neighborhood of the port. Indeed, vessels made the inshore passage from Charleston to Fernandina without

interruption as late as the end of July, 1861, and perhaps later. The Wabash and Vandalia were at this time off Charleston, and the Jamestown and Flag off Savannah. These vessels, though hardly fitted for the work, nevertheless made the blockade legally efficient at the main entrances of these two ports. But the intermediate points, on the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, and the whole inland passage, as far south as Fernandina, were entirely without a blockade of any kind.

The increase of the blockading forces, and the gradual extension of the blockade, led to a division of the duties of the station. The North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, including the coast of Virginia and North Carolina, was assigned to Flag-Officer Goldsborough, who assumed command on September 23. Flag-Officer Dupont was appointed to the South Atlantic Squadron, from the northern boundary of South Carolina to Cape Florida, and hoisted his flag in the Wabash on October 29. Goldsborough remained in command just a year. He was relieved September 5, 1862, by Acting Rear-Admiral Lee, who retained the squadron for two years. The later blockade of Wilmington was brought to a remarkable state of efficiency, through the untiring efforts and zeal of the officers of the squadron. In the last year of the war, when the expedition against Fort Fisher was decided on, the command of the North Atlantic Station was offered to Farragut, and, upon his declining it, Porter was appointed. Porter entered upon his duties October 12, 1864, and Lee was transferred to the Mississippi.

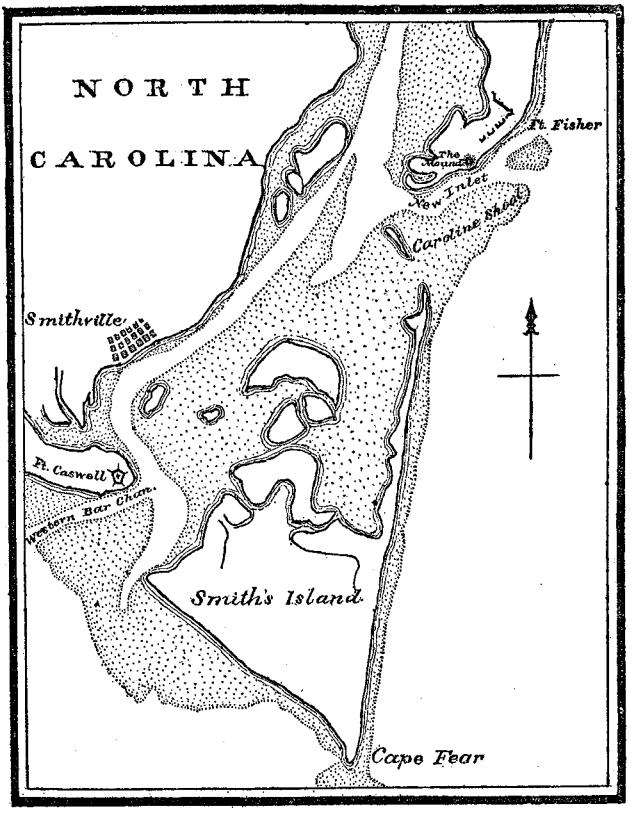
The first step in the conversion of the blockade of the North Atlantic coast into a military occupation was the capture of the forts at Hatteras Inlet, by Stringham, with a small body of troops under General Butler, August 29, 1861. This was followed, in February, 1862, by the expedition of

Goldsborough and Burnside against Roanoke Island, and the active operations conducted subsequently by Rowan in the Sounds. The most important points in the interior waters of North Carolina were then occupied, and the small commerce in the Sounds came to an end. After a while Beaufort became the centre of occupation, though the headquarters of the squadron and the station of the flagship continued for a long time to be at Hampton Roads.

On the 20th of July the steamer Daylight took her station off the mouth of Cape Fear River. With this diminutive force began the famous blockade of Wilmington—the port which later in the war became the scene of the most brilliant successes of the blockade-runners and the most strenuous efforts of the blockaders. The town is situated on Cape Fear River, about twenty-eight miles from its mouth. There are two entrances to the river, one from the eastward, called New Inlet, the other from the southward at the river mouth. The entrances are not more than six miles apart in a straight line; but between the two lies Smith's Island, a long strip of sand and shoal, with the headland of Cape Fear projecting far out at the southern extremity. Continuing the line of Cape Fear, the dangerous Frying Pan Shoals extend out ten miles farther, making the distance by water between the two entrances little short of forty miles.

Each of the channels was protected by strong works, and each required a separate blockading force. Smithville, a small town on the Cape Fear River about equidistant from the two entrances, was the point of departure of the blockade-runners. Dropping down from Wilmington to this place, they could here await their opportunity and take their choice between the main channel and New Inlet, whichever seemed at the moment most favorable. Neither presented any serious difficulties to the navigator, though vessels entering from

the south were occasionally caught on "the Lump," a round shoal in the channel. To the north of New Inlet, on Federal



Entrances to Cape Fear River.

Point, was Fort Fisher. Fort Caswell overlooked, in the same way, the mouth of the river. Each of the blockading squadrons, obliged to keep out of range of the forts, was

stationed in a semicircle, ten miles or more in length, with its extremities near the shore. The forts kept a sharp look-out, and if a stray blockader ventured in too far, he was quickly apprised of it by a shell, and made to keep his distance. The blockade-runners, sighting the land toward evening, would wait outside until it was dark, and then, making a dash at full speed through the fleet, would be under the guns of the fort in a twinkling, and safe from capture. Such a port, so protected, it was almost impossible to close, and fast vessels could slip in past the most vigilant force. Accordingly it was at Wilmington that blockade-running maintained itself longest and most actively, after it had nearly ceased elsewhere. In 1863–64, it was at its height; but toward the end of the latter year it began gradually to decline. Even after the first attack on Fort Fisher, a few vessels succeeded in passing in and out with impunity; and the practice only came to an end when the fort succumbed.

The improvement in the efficiency of the Wilmington blockade was partly due to the increase in the number of vessels, and partly to a better understanding of the exigencies of the service. In August, 1862, one of the blockade-running captains reports that the vessels of the inshore squadron carried lights at their peaks all night; and the same captain states a year later that a portion of the fleet remained at anchor during the night. On the other hand, Admiral Lee, describing the blockade of the same port in October, 1864, says that the smaller vessels were kept as near the bar and batteries as the state of the weather, the light, and their draft would allow. These were pressed in by a line of larger vessels, and these again by the divisional officer, moving along the line. Vessels of the outer line which discovered blockade-runners were allowed to chase, but those on the inner line were re-

quired to keep their station. All the vessels were kept under way all night. In the summer of 1864, the headquarters of the squadron were removed from Hampton Roads to Beaufort. In the fall the blockading force at the two entrances numbered fifty steamers, some of them the fastest in the service. Nowhere was the work of the blockade more arduous and difficult than at Wilmington. The squadron captured or destroyed sixty-five steam blockade-runners during the war; and yet they continued to effect an entrance. The result only shows that the absolute locking-up of a well-fortified port, whose trade offers powerful inducements to commercial enterprise, is an actual impossibility.

It was during his service on this station, while in command of the Monticello, that Cushing performed two of those dare-devil exploits which gave him a name and a fame apart in the history of the war. The first of these took place in February, 1864, while the Monticello was blockading the mouth of Cape Fear River. On the night of the 28th, Cushing fitted out two boats, and taking with him Acting-Ensign Jones, Acting-Master's Mate Howarth, and twenty men, he proceeded past the fort and up the river to Smithville. His object was to land at the town, capture the commanding officer, and board any vessels he might find in the harbor. It was an enterprise hardly worth the risk, for the danger was great, and the capture of a dozen commanding officers at such posts as Smithville would not compensate for the loss of one Cushing. Still, Cushing's coolness and audacity would counterbalance almost any risk, and he had no idea of being lost on this occasion.

The party reached the town, and landed in front of the hotel. Concealing his men under the bank, Cushing proceeded to capture some negroes, from whom he obtained the information he wanted; then, taking with him the two officers

and a seaman, he walked to General Herbert's headquarters. On the opposite side of the street were the barracks, in which the garrison was quartered, numbering about 1,000 men. Unfortunately, the General was out, having gone to Wilmington. Cushing entered the house with his party and captured an engineer officer. The Adjutant-General was also in the house, but went off in haste to the woods, and neglected to call out the garrison. Cushing returned quietly with his prisoner to the boat, passing within a few yards of the sentry on the wharf. A few minutes after he had embarked the alarm was given, and signal was made to Fort Caswell that boats were in the harbor; but the party had passed the fort before it could open fire.

The second expedition was made in the following June. Cushing had received permission from Admiral Lee to attempt the destruction of the Confederate ram Raleigh, supposed to be lying in the river. On the night of the 23d of June, he left his ship, the Monticello, in the first cutter, with Jones and Howarth, the same officers that had accompanied him on his previous expedition, and fifteen men. Pulling up the river, the party passed the forts and the town of Smithville. Meantime the moon had come out, and when about fifteen miles from the mouth of the river, they were discovered by sentries on the bank. Making a feint of going back, Cushing doubled as soon as he reached the shadow of the opposite bank, and continued on his course. Toward morning, when within seven miles of Wilmington, he landed and hid the boat in a swamp. The boat's crew remained all day in concealment, watching the river. At night, as they were preparing to move, two boats were captured, containing a fishing party returning to Wilmington, who were pressed into service as guides.

During the remainder of the second night, Cushing was

occupied in making a thorough examination of the obstructions three miles below the town. At daybreak he moved up one of the creeks, until he found a road. Leaving a few of his men with the boat, he landed, and followed the road until he came upon the main road between Wilmington and Fort Fisher. Presently, by lying in wait, he captured a mounted courier with the mail from the fort, which contained much valuable information. The courier from the town came along two hours later, but, catching sight of a blue-jacket, made off with all speed. Cushing galloped after him on the captured horse, but the second courier was better mounted than the first, and made his escape.

Cushing had now been away from the boat for some hours, and his men had had nothing to eat. He therefore set about in a characteristic way to obtain provisions. After capturing other prisoners, he learned that a store was to be found two miles off; and mounting Howarth on the captured horse with the courier's coat and hat, he sent him to market. Howarth, who was a man of easy manner and a fine assurance, engaged freely in conversation with the people whom he met on the road, and passed without suspicion. Presently he returned with a supply of provisions. After dinner, the party amused themselves by cutting the telegraph wires, and at dark they rejoined the boat.

The third and last night in the river had now begun, and Cushing prepared to return. Embarking with the prisoners, he went to examine the condition of the Raleigh. She was found to have been destroyed, and was now a total wreck. Proceeding down the river, Cushing set his prisoners adrift in boats, without oars or sails, so that they might not report his presence too early. The moon had now risen, and as he reached the mouth of the river, he was discovered by a guard-boat. Just as he was preparing to attack her, three

others came out from the shadow, and at the same instant five more appeared from the other side. The cutter was nearly surrounded, and Cushing, turning in the only direction left open, found a schooner filled with troops ahead of him. It seemed now that the game was up; but Cushing's never-failing pluck stood by him. He made a dash in the direction of the western bar, and the enemy endeavored to intercept him; but as the side of his boat that was toward them was in shadow, they lost sight of him for a time. Taking advantage of a favorable moment, Cushing turned suddenly and headed at full speed for New Inlet. His coolness communicated itself to the men; the strokes of the oars kept perfect time, and the boat, after a vigorous pull, shot ahead into the breakers. Here the enemy did not venture to follow; and the cutter was brought back after her three days' absence, without any casualty whatever.

Only one serious attempt was made by the Confederates to raise the blockade and put an end to the occupation of the Sounds of North Carolina. This took place in 1864, when the ram Albemarle made her appearance at Plymouth. This vessel was built at Edward's Ferry, on the Roanoke River. Attention had been called to her formidable character as early as June, 1863, by Lieutenant-Commander Flusser, commanding the naval forces at Plymouth, an officer whose bravery and ability had won recognition both in and out of the service. His vessels could not reach the Ferry, on account of the shallowness of the water and the batteries that lined the bluffs; and urgent representations had been made to the Admiral in command, to the Department, and finally to the Secretary of War, at Flusser's instance. But no action had been taken, and the work of construction went on without interruption.

By April, 1864, the ram was completed, and preparations were made for a combined movement against the Federal

forces at Plymouth. On the 17th and 18th, vigorous attacks were made upon the forts by the Confederates, supported by artillery. At this time, the force under Flusser consisted of the Miami, one of the smaller double-enders, the Southfield, and two tugs used as picket-boats. The Miami and Southfield carried a rifled 100-pounder, and five or six IX-inch guns each; and during the action on shore, by throwing shells at the enemy, they helped to repel the assaults on the forts. On the evening of the second day, the two vessels were lashed together, in expectation of the ram's approach, the Miami, Flusser's vessel, being on the starboard side.

At midnight, the picket-boat announced that the Albemarle was descending the river. She came down slowly, under cover of the trees on the river bank, and as she approached the vessels, she ran out obliquely. Passing the Miami's bow, she made straight for the Southfield. Her ports were closed, she did not fire a shot; but she struck the Southfield fairly on the starboard bow, forcing her ram into the fireroom. As the ram was drawn out, the Southfield filled and sank.

Meantime both vessels had opened fire on the assailant with their heavy guns. The guns had been left loaded with shell since the afternoon firing, although the Albemarle was expected; and as the projectiles struck the ram's iron side, they burst into fragments which rebounded over the Miami's deck. Three or four of the pieces struck Flusser, who was instantly killed. Half a dozen others were wounded; but the ram received no injury. The hawsers that lashed the vessels parted, and the crew of the sinking steamer jumped to the Miami. The latter then retreated, and with the two tugs, dropped down to the mouth of the river. The Albemarle followed for a short distance, and shots were exchanged, but without effect on either side. Next day Plymouth surrendered.

It now became a matter of importance to reinforce the blockading vessels in the Sounds, as the ram might at any moment come out of the river and repossess all the waters of North Carolina. Three of the larger double-enders, the Sassacus, Mattabesett, and Wyalusing, were sent down, and the force was placed under the command of Captain Melancton Smith.[1] The squadron was posted off the mouth of the Roanoke, and careful preparations were made for the expected attack.

On the 5th of May the Albemarle came down, accompanied by a steamer carrying troops, and a captured army-transport loaded with provisions and coal, prepared for an extended cruise in the Sounds. The squadron got under way, and met her about ten miles from the mouth of the river. At a little before five in the afternoon she opened the engagement, by firing two shots at the Mattabesett, the leading vessel. The latter, followed by the Sassacus and Wyalusing, passed up alongside the Albemarle, delivering their broadsides at a distance of one hundred and fifty yards. Turning, they came back on the opposite side, and the smaller vessels took their place. The ram was thus placed between two fires. The Sassacus, which had drawn off a little from the line, now turned, and, gathering headway, struck the enemy fairly with her stem, just abaft the beam. Though the double-enders were not adapted for ramming, it had been decided to try this, as well as every other expedient, in the hope of inflicting some injury. The ram careened a little, but did not sink; and as the Sassacus remained alongside, the Albemarle's port opened, and a 100-pound Brooke rifle-shot was discharged through one of the boilers of the double-

[1] Each of these vessels carried the following armament: two 100-pound Parrotts, four IX-inch guns, four 24-pounders, two 12-pound howitzers. The Sassacus had two 20-pounders in addition.

ender. The escaping steam filled the vessel, scalding many of the crew, and she drifted off, firing until out of range. The other vessels continued the action until dark, but without disabling the enemy. At night, the ram returned to the river, her armor somewhat battered, but her machinery apparently intact. Though not destroyed, she had been severely hammered; the store-vessel she had brought with her was captured; and her projected conquest of the Sounds came to naught. The next time she ventured down the river, a shell from the Whitehead caused her to turn back; and she seemed to have no inclination for a second conflict.

An effort was now made to destroy the ram by placing torpedoes in the river, but without success. One of these attempts was planned and carried out by enlisted men, and deserves to be noticed, if only as showing the pluck and devotion of the seamen of the navy during the war. The men who took part in the expedition were John W. Loyd, coxswain, Allen Crawford and John Laverty, firemen, and Charles Baldwin and Benjamin Loyd, coalheavers. All were volunteers from the Wyalusing. On the afternoon of the 25th of May, the party ascended the Middle River, a small branch of the Roanoke, in a boat, taking with them two torpedoes. These were carried on a stretcher across the swamps to the main river. Loyd, the coxswain, and Baldwin swam the river with a line, and hauled the torpedoes to the Plymouth side, above the town. They were then connected by a bridle, and floated down the river, guided by Baldwin. It was his intention to place them across the bow of the Albemarle, and Crawford, from the swamps on the opposite side, was to explode them at a signal. All went well until the torpedoes were within a few yards of the ram, when the line fouled a schooner. At the same moment, Baldwin was discovered by a sentry, and shots were fired,

followed by a volley of musketry. As success was no longer possible, the line was cut, and the five men made their escape, reaching the vessel with difficulty, some of them after several days of wandering in the swamps.

The Department now determined to take energetic measures to destroy the Albemarle, and selected Cushing, whose latest performances at Wilmington had made him famous, to carry out its design. Two steam-launches or picket-boats were fitted out at New York under the direction of Admiral Gregory, and rigged with spar-torpedoes designed by Chief-Engineer Wood. Both the launches were to be used in the expedition, but one of them was lost in crossing Chesapeake Bay, on the way down from New York. Cushing was not the man to be deterred by an accident, and he proceeded to carry out his purpose with the remaining boat.

Late in October Cushing appeared with his launch in Albemarle Sound. The senior officer at this time was Commander Macomb, whose vessel, the Shamrock, was lying with the rest of the division in the Sound, some miles from the Roanoke. One or two of the small steamers were stationed as a picket at the mouth of the river, and midway between them and the squadron lay one of the double-enders, as an outpost. After a day or two spent in preparations, during which several additional officers and men joined the launch, she was taken up the Sound by the Otsego. Remaining alongside until everything was ready, she started up the river, on the night of the 26th of October; but after proceeding a short distance she grounded, and the time lost in getting her off made it too late to carry out the purpose of the expedition. So the party returned to the Otsego.

The Albemarle at this time was lying at the wharf at Plymouth, on the right bank of the river, eight miles from its mouth. The stream averaged two hundred yards in width,

and was lined on both sides by Confederate pickets. A mile below the town was the wreck of the Southfield, surrounded by schooners. It was known that the enemy kept a careful watch at this point, and that a gun was in position to command the bend of the river.

The launch started for the second time at midnight on the 27th. The party consisted of Cushing; three Acting-Master's Mates, Howarth, Gay, and Woodman; Paymaster Swan; two engineer officers, Steever and Stotesbury; and eight men. The Shamrock's second cutter, with two officers and eleven men, was taken in tow, ready to cast off and to board the Southfield if the party was discovered in passing. The torpedo was placed at the end of a spar, at the starboard bow of the launch. The bow was decked over and carried a 12-pound howitzer. The engines were covered with tarpaulins, to shut off the light and sound, and at low speed the noise of the machinery could scarcely be heard.

The night was dark and stormy, with now and then a heavy fall of rain. Most of the officers stood or sat in the forward part of the launch. Cushing, Howarth, and Woodman stood abaft the deck. Cushing was on the right, holding the torpedo lines; Howarth, his companion in the enterprises at Wilmington, was next him; and Woodman, who knew the river well, was on the left by the wheel. On the deck by the howitzer stood Gay; and Swan was on the right behind Cushing. The engineers and the firemen were at their post by the engine, and the rest were stationed on the bow, near the wheel, and in the stern. The last were to clear the tiller ropes, in case they should foul.

Running cautiously under the trees on the right bank, the launch proceeded on her way up the enemy's river. It was Cushing's intention, if he could get ashore unobserved, to land below the ram, board her from the wharf, and bring

her down the river. To carry out this plan, it was necessary that the attack should be a surprise; but, failing in this, he was prepared to attack with the torpedo. In either case, he meant to give the enemy as little warning as he could. After the first mile or two, perfect silence was maintained, and the little craft sped noiselessly on its course. Arriving at the Southfield, it passed her within twenty yards, but the guards either were asleep or failed to notice the two boats as they moved along in the darkness. Rounding the bend of the river, the launch came to an open reach upon which lay the town of Plymouth. Here a fire had been kindled on the bank, which reflected a faint light over the water from the houses.

Creeping along silently and stealthily, the launch approached the landing below the wharf. Just then a dog barked, and a sentry, aroused, discovered the boat and hailed her. Receiving no answer, he hailed again and fired. Up to this moment not a word had been uttered. But in an instant the situation was changed. The time for surprises was past; and Cushing, giving up without a second thought his cherished project, at once threw off all concealment, and in a loud voice called out, "Ahead fast!" In the same breath he ordered the cutter to cast loose, capture the Southfield's pickets, and go down the river. Pushing on two hundred yards further, he saw for the first time the dim outlines of the Albemarle, on the port bow, and close aboard. The light of the fire showed a line of logs in the water, within which, at a distance of thirty feet, lay the vessel. The launch was too near the logs to rise over them at the sharp angle her course was then making, and Cushing saw that he must sheer off and turn before he could strike them fairly and with sufficient headway.

The alarm on board the Albemarle had now become gen-

eral; rattles were sprung, the bell was rung violently; and a shower of rifle-bullets was poured in upon the launch. Swan received a slight wound, and Cushing had three bullets in his clothing, but no one was disabled. Passing close to the enemy, the launch took a wide sweep out to the middle of the river; then turning, it headed at full speed for the ram. As he approached, Cushing, with the rollicking bravado and audacity that marked all his doings, shouted at the top of his voice, "Leave the ram! We are going to blow you up!" with more exclamations of the same kind, in which the others joined. To Cushing, who went into action with the zest of a schoolboy at football, and the nerve and well-balanced judgment of a veteran, the whole affair was half sport, even while the bullets were flying around him, and while he could hear the snapping of the primers, as the guns of the ram were brought to bear. Luckily they missed fire. As he came near, Cushing ordered the howitzer to be trained and fired; and he directed every movement himself, which was promptly carried out by those in the bow. He says of this incident in his report: "The enemy's fire was very severe, but a dose of canister, at short range, served to moderate their zeal and disturb their aim."

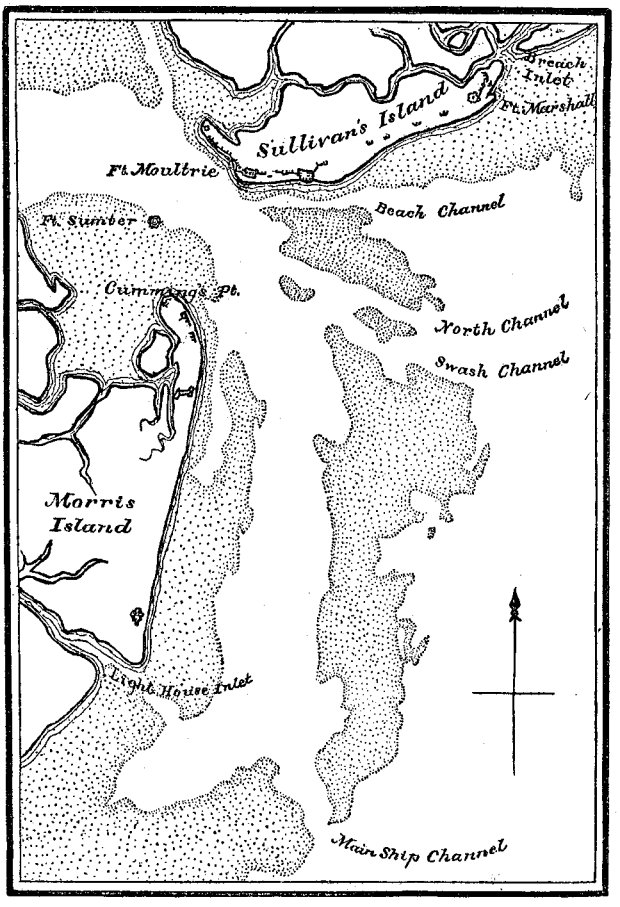
In a moment the launch struck the boom of logs, abreast of the ram's quarter port, and pressed over them. As it approached the side of the ram, the torpedo-spar was lowered; and going ahead slowly until the torpedo was well under the Albemarle's bottom, Cushing detached it with a vigorous pull. Waiting until he could feel the torpedo rising slowly and touching the vessel, he pulled the trigger-line and exploded it. At the same second, as it seemed to those in the boat, the Albemarle's gun was fired, while the launch was within a dozen feet of the muzzle. To Cushing it seemed that the shot went crashing through his boat, though in fact

she was not touched. A column of water, thrown up by the explosion of the torpedo, fell in the launch, and the latter, being entangled in the logs, could not be extricated.

When he saw that he could not bring the boat off, Cushing, after refusing to surrender, ordered the crew to save themselves, and taking off his coat and shoes, jumped into the river. Others followed his example; but all returned except three, Woodman, and two of the crew, Higgins and Houghton. Houghton made his escape, but the other two were drowned. Cushing swam to the middle of the stream. Half a mile below he met Woodman in the water, completely exhausted. Cushing helped him to go on for a little distance, but he was by this time too weak to get his companion ashore. Reaching the bank with difficulty, he waited till daylight, when he crawled out of the water and stole into the swamp, not far from the fort. On his way he fell in with a negro, whom he sent to gain information as to the result of the night's work. As soon as he learned that the Albemarle was sunk, he moved on until he came to a creek, where he captured a skiff, and in this he made his way the next night to the picket-boat at the mouth of the river.

The rest of the party, unable either to resist or to escape, surrendered, and were taken ashore by a boat from the Albemarle. The ram heeled over and sank at her moorings and so remained until Plymouth was finally recaptured.

The South Atlantic Blockading Squadron had but two commanders, Dupont and Dahlgren. The transfer was made July 6, 1863. Dupont's command opened with the victory of Port Royal, which gave the squadron the best and most commodious harbor on the Atlantic coast. After the first success, the activity of Admiral Dupont, seconded by the ability and energy of his captains—a body of officers remark-



Entrances to Charleston Harbor.

able for their high professional qualities—secured the control of the vast network of lagoons and inlets extending on the one hand to Charleston, and on the other to Fernandina. The blockade was made thoroughly efficient in the sounds; and the capture of Fort Pulaski in the following summer, in which a detachment from the fleet assisted, made the Savannah River nearly inaccessible to the blockade-runners. Port Royal then became the centre of occupation, and the headquarters of the fleet.

The principal centre of blockade in the South Atlantic was Charleston. An attempt was made early in the war to close the entrance by placing obstructions in the channel. A number of vessels, most of them old whalers, were bought for the purpose by the Navy Department at a cost of $160,000. They were loaded with stone and sunk in rows on the bar, under the direction of Captain Davis. The plan proved a failure, not through any want of skill in carrying it out, but from the operation of natural causes. The vessels soon buried themselves in the sand, or were gradually moved out of position by the action of the water, and blockade-runners passed in as freely as if no obstructions existed. The experiment was tried at other points with the same result, and the attempt was finally given up.

The bar at Charleston extends several miles out to sea, and the main ship channel, running nearly north and south, follows the trend of Morris Island at a distance of a mile from the shore. During the first half of the war the batteries on Morris Island kept the fleet outside the bar, and the blockade was maintained at a great disadvantage. Moreover, several inlets to the north and south afforded access to Charleston for vessels of light draft. These were only closed after Dupont had taken command. In the summer and fall of 1863 the army, supported by the ironclads, grad-

ually drove the Confederates out of their works on the Island, and the monitors took their station inside, somewhat to the southward of Cumming's Point. Blockade-runners were then driven to the use of the Beach channel, at the northern side of the harbor. This channel skirted the shore of Sullivan's Island, and opened into the harbor through a narrow passage close to Fort Moultrie. Its outer end lay abreast of Breach Inlet, near which was Fort Marshall; and from this point to Fort Beauregard, and thence to Fort Moultrie, heavy batteries lined the beach. It became usual to send a vessel at night to this entrance, which, weighing early, got away from the Breach Inlet batteries before daybreak. Occasionally it happened that blockade-runners, which had come in during the night, would be seen in the morning hard and fast aground at the inner entrance. No attempt could be made to seize them, lying as they did directly under the guns of Moultrie; but they could be destroyed by the fire of the monitors, and a collection of wrecks was gradually accumulated at this point.

Toward the close of the war the blockade of Charleston, like that of Wilmington, increased in stringency. Dahlgren describes it as being perfectly close, until a few very fast steamers of trifling draft were built in England expressly for the purpose of evading it, and these did not pass with impunity. So keen did the watch afterward become that a vessel on the way out, whose presence was only known by seeing her two masts cut off the light on Sumter, was captured by the observer's signalling the cruisers outside. But even then the port could not be absolutely closed. The "very fast steamers of trifling draft" were so difficult to catch that up to the last moment they were occasionally going in and out; and three or four of them were at the wharves of Charleston when the city was taken.

The Savannah River was easily blockaded after the capture of Fort Pulaski. Its channel, narrow and difficult at the best, was well-nigh impassable when stripped of buoys and lights; and the fort, lying opposite the narrowest point, prevented access in the daytime. The principal side entrance to the city of Savannah, through Wassaw Sound, was effectually closed when the Sounds were occupied after the battle of Port Royal.

The Confederates were not at any time sufficiently strong to raise the blockade on the South Atlantic coast. The raids that were made with this object—sudden dashes into the midst of the blockading fleet—though well organized and conducted, failed to accomplish any more important result than disabling one or two vessels, and increasing the watchfulness of the blockaders.

One of the boldest of these attempts was made in the winter of 1863, off Charleston. On the morning of January 31, before daylight, two ironclad rams, the Chicora and the Palmetto State, came out of the harbor, crossed the bar, and, under cover of a thick haze, approached the vessels stationed outside. It happened that at this time two of the largest vessels of the blockading fleet, the Powhatan and Canandaigua, had been sent to Port Royal for coal and repairs. Of those that remained, numbering ten or more steamers, the Housatonic was the only war-vessel of considerable size. The others were chiefly purchased vessels and gunboats. It was one of the many disadvantages of the exposed station outside the bar that it necessitated the distribution of the ships over a wide area, and at this time they were spread out in a line five or six miles in length.

The Mercedita was the first vessel attacked. It could not be said that she was off her guard, for, only an hour before, she had slipped her cable and overhauled a troop-ship, which

was running for the channel by mistake. She had returned to her anchorage, when one of the rams suddenly appeared out of the mist, close aboard. The ram lay so low in the water, just under the starboard quarter, that the Mercedita's guns could not be trained upon her; and before the steamer could move away, a rifle-shell from the ram, passing through her condenser and steam-drum, and exploding on the port side, for a time disabled her. Stellwagen, the commander of the Mercedita, in response to a demand from the ram, surrendered, and sent Abbot, his first lieutenant, on board, who gave his parole for the officers and crew.

The ram now abandoned the Mercedita, and joined her consort, which had already engaged Commander Leroy in the Keystone State. Leroy had discovered his assailant in time to get under way and exchange shots. The enemy, uninjured by his fire, succeeded in exploding a shell in his fore-hold, and Leroy kept off until the flames were extinguished. Returning, he attempted, under a full head of steam, to run down his antagonist; but the latter had now been joined by her companion, and the Keystone State was received with a fire that effectually checked her. Two shells burst on her quarter-deck; others struck the sides, near or below the water-line; and finally one passed through the port steam-drum and lodged in the starboard. Her engines were now useless, her motive power was gone, the water began to pour in through the shot-holes, and the fore-hold was again on fire. Thereupon she lowered her colors; but as the enemy continued his fire, and did not take possession, they were again hoisted and the engagement renewed.

By this time, nearly the whole squadron was under way; and, at the critical moment, three of the small steamers came up, and the rams retreated after a protracted but desultory conflict. As they went off, shots were exchanged with

the squadron, but little damage was done on either side, and the rams gained a safe refuge under the guns of Fort Sumter. The attack had been judiciously planned and boldly executed, as far as it went; though it might have been more successful if it had been maintained persistently after the first onset. Among the vessels of the blockading squadron there was a want of systematic co-operation. The first shot was fired at five o'clock; and the rams had not retreated out of range until half-past seven. During this period of two hours and a half, the brunt of the battle was borne by the Mercedita and the Keystone State. The other vessels supposed that a number of blockade-runners had come in together, and no arrangement seems to have been made for prompt communication and support. The Memphis came in for a share of the attack, but after passing one of the rams and discovering its strength in an exchange of shots, she steamed out of range to the eastward. The Augusta was also engaged, but as she did not get under way until half-past six, her part in the action was not important. In fact, neither of these vessels was any more fitted than a ship of pasteboard to cope with the ironclads; and their light batteries made no impression on the enemy. The Quaker City was more actively engaged, but with little more effect than to divert the attention of the rams, and prevent the Keystone State from being blown out of the water. The Housatonic, lying at some distance from the scene of conflict, had got under way shortly after the Augusta, and during the last hour of the engagement, she did much firing, but little execution, further than to knock away the pilot-house and flagstaff of one of the retreating assailants.

After the engagement was over, a question arose as to what was the status of the Mercedita. When Abbot went on board the ram, he gave his parole, as already men-

tioned, in the name of the captain, for the officers and crew. The agreement was verbal, and Abbot's report stated that he had given his word that the officers and crew would not "take up arms against the Confederate States unless regularly exchanged." It does not appear that Abbot had authority to make this engagement, but no steps were taken by the captain to repudiate it. Possibly there was no opportunity to take any steps. In his report, Stellwagen simply says: "He proceeded aboard, and according to their demand, gave his parole on behalf of himself and all the officers and crew." In regard to this proceeding, it may be remarked that it is a well recognized principle that prisoners cannot be forced to give their parole; and it is manifestly improper to give a parole voluntarily, during the progress of an engagement. It enables the assailant to neutralize portions of the force in detail, without being diverted from his operations by the necessity of guarding prisoners; and it precludes recapture, or rather, it takes away any advantage that may be derived from recapture.

At six o'clock, according to Stellwagen's account, which was one hour after the engagement began, and an hour and a half before it was over, the injuries to the Mercedita were partially repaired, and she "got things in order to start, a little steam on; hove [up] anchor." It is not clear whether she then went off, but it is at least certain that she changed her position. After the battle she proceeded without assistance to Port Royal. This removal of the Mercedita was afterward the foundation of a charge made by the Confederates that the officers of the vessel had violated their parole, by taking the Mercedita out of their hands. The proceeding was, in fact, a questionable one, as it is merely quibbling to draw a distinction between "taking up arms," and navigating a ship-of-war out of reach of an enemy. It can only be

excused on the supposition that the enemy were unable to take possession owing to the presence of a superior force; and it shows forcibly the predicament in which an officer may place himself by giving a parole which virtually places his ship *hors de combat* during the progress of an action.

In consequence of the attack of the rams, the authorities of Charleston seized the opportunity to declare that the blockade was raised. A proclamation was published the same afternoon, signed by Beauregard and Ingraham, the Commanding General and Senior Naval Officer, declaring that the naval forces attacked the blockading squadron, and "sunk, dispersed, or drove off or out of sight, the entire blockading fleet." The proclamation was accompanied in the newspapers by the statement that two vessels were sunk, four burnt, and the rest driven away; and the assertion was said to be sustained by the testimony of several of the foreign consuls, who had gone out in the afternoon in a tug, and had seen nothing of the blockaders. It was also asserted that the consuls had held a meeting in the evening, and had come unanimously to the opinion that the blockade was legally raised.

The asseverations of the Charleston newspapers were extensively quoted abroad, and grossly exaggerated as they were, raised a serious doubt as to the continued efficiency of the blockade. It is an established rule that the absence of a blockading fleet, caused by stress of weather, if the blockade is immediately resumed, constitutes only a temporary interruption; but the dispersion of a squadron by a hostile attack puts a stop to the blockade *in toto*, and a renewal of the operation requires a new proclamation, or rather, requires knowledge of the re-establishment of the blockade as a ground for condemnation. If the assertion that the blockade was raised had been true, every blockade-runner in

Nassau would have been able to make directly for Charleston, and if captured without having received warning would have escaped condemnation on the ground of want of knowledge. As a matter of fact, the report so industriously spread was essentially false, though it had enough color of truth to give it a ready acceptance, in the absence of proof to the contrary, especially when backed by official testimony. Out of ten vessels on the station, two had been disabled by the attack, and had proceeded to Port Royal. Two other vessels were sent the same morning to Port Royal, the Augusta, with despatches for the Admiral, and the Memphis to tow the Keystone State. Both were sent back immediately by Dupont. In the afternoon, firing was heard in Stono Inlet, and the Flag was sent thither. Of the other five vessels, the Stettin, Ottawa, and Unadilla were not engaged at all, and neither they, nor the Housatonic and Quaker City left the usual line of blockade during the day. If the consuls did not see these five vessels, whose logs show that they were in plain sight all day, and several times in communication, it was because they did not look at them. The report, however, had served its purpose, and it was commonly believed that the blockade of Charleston was raised, although a written declaration of five captains of the squadron was published, containing a complete refutation.

The attack had a good effect in showing the necessity of strengthening the force before Charleston, which had hitherto only been adequate to cope with blockade-runners. The Powhatan was sent to Charleston the same evening, and the New Ironsides and Canandaigua joined a day or two later. The blockade was thereafter continued with redoubled vigilance, and with a new sense of the necessity of perfect cooperation.

The disposition of the vessels of the South Atlantic Squadron, as given by Admiral Dupont on February 15, 1863, shows what a radical change had taken place under his command in the character and efficiency of the blockade. The arrangement of the squadron was as follows:

At Georgetown, the double-enders Sebago and Conemaugh.

Off Bull's Bay, the steamer Lodona.

Off Charleston, the New Ironsides; the side-wheel steamer Powhatan; sloops-of-war Canandaigua and Housatonic; steamers Flag, Quaker City, James Adger, Augusta, Huron, and Memphis; schooners G. W. Blunt and America.

In Stono Inlet, the steamers Pawnee, Unadilla, and Commodore McDonough.

In North Edisto, the steamer South Carolina.

In St. Helena, the bark Kingfisher.

In Wassaw, the monitor Passaic, and steamer Marblehead.

In Ossabaw, the monitor Montauk, gunboats Seneca and Wissahickon, and steamer Dawn.

Guarding St. Catherine's, Sapelo, Doboy, and St. Simon's Sounds, the steamers Paul Jones, Potomska, and Madgie; barks Braziliera and Fernandina; and mortar-schooner Norfolk Packet.

In St. Andrew's, the bark Midnight.

At Fernandina, the steamer Mohawk.

In St. John's River, the steamers Nonsuch and Uncas.

At Port Royal, the headquarters of the station, were the frigate Wabash, the flagship, the storeship Vermont, five tugs, and two despatch-vessels; and temporarily in port, undergoing repairs or taking in provisions, the monitors Weehawken and Patapsco, and the steamers Keystone State, Stettin, Wamsutta, and Ottawa. The experience of eighteen months had wrought a change indeed in the methods of the coast blockade, since there were on a single station more

vessels than the navy had had in commission at the outbreak of the war.

The next attempt of the Confederates to raise the blockade on the South Atlantic station resulted disastrously to its projectors. This was the brief cruise of the Atlanta, formerly the Fingal, in Wassaw Sound, in June, 1863.

The Fingal was an iron steamer of English origin, which had run the blockade of Savannah in November, 1861. She had been taken by the Confederate Government, re-named the Atlanta, and altered and strengthened for service as a man-of-war. In making the alterations, she had been cut down so as to leave the deck about two feet above the water when loaded. From this deck rose a casemate, with a flat roof and inclined sides. Within the casemate were four Brooke rifles, two VI-$\frac{4}{10}$-inch in the midship ports, and two VII-inch on pivots at the bow and stern, so contrived that they could be fired either laterally or fore-and-aft. The armor protecting this powerful battery was four inches thick, made of English railroad iron, rolled into two-inch plates. The deck was of enormous strength, and its edges projected six feet from the side of the vessel, the projection being filled in and protected with a heavy covering of wood and iron. The Atlanta's bow ended in a ram, over which projected a torpedo spar. She was in every way one of the most powerful vessels which the Confederates had got afloat; and great things were expected of her.

Intimations had reached Admiral Dupont that the Atlanta and other ironclads at Savannah were on the point of leaving Wilmington River and entering Wassaw Sound for the purpose of raising the blockade at that place, and in the inlets to the southward. It was to be another raid on the blockaders, like that of the 31st of January; but the vessel to be employed was much more powerful. Dupont, however, was

careful to be well informed, and the experience of the previous winter had not been lost. The double-ender Cimmerone was at this time maintaining the blockade alone, and two monitors were despatched to Wassaw, the Weehawken, under Captain John Rodgers, and the Nahant, under Commander Downes. The Weehawken had already won an enviable fame, and was known throughout the squadron as a vessel that was always ready for any service and always handled with masterly skill.

Early on the morning of the 17th of June, the ironclad was discovered coming down the river. She was accompanied by two steamers, filled with spectators who had come out in the confident expectation of witnessing the speedy destruction of the Federal fleet. It was to be a spectacle, a party of pleasure, like that which tempted the people of Boston, just fifty years before, to sail down the harbor, on the day when Lawrence went out to encounter the Shannon; and like that memorable excursion, it was doomed to end in disappointment.

As soon as the Atlanta came in sight, Rodgers beat to quarters and cleared the ship for action. Ten minutes later he slipped his cable, and steamed slowly around the point at the entrance of the river. The Nahant, having no pilot, followed in his wake. Just before five o'clock, the Atlanta, then lying across the channel and awaiting the attack, fired the first shot, which passed astern of the Weehawken. For twenty minutes more, the monitors advanced steadily until within three hundred yards of the enemy. Then the Weehawken opened.

With the deliberateness which characterized him in the most trying moments, Rodgers delivered the fire of his two heavy guns, the XI-inch and the XV-inch. He fired five shots, of which four hit the Atlanta. The first, a XV-inch

cored shot, struck the inclined side of the vessel, in the line of the ports; and though fired at an angle of fifty degrees with her keel, penetrated the armor, and, ripping out the wooden backing, the two inner layers of which were of brittle Georgia pine, covered the deck with splinters. From the effects of this shot, forty or more men were prostrated, several of whom received ugly wounds from the fragments of wood and iron. The second shot, from the XI-inch gun, struck the edge of the overhang, and started the plating. The third carried off the roof of the pilot-house, wounded the two pilots, and stunned the men at the wheel. The fourth shattered a port-shutter, driving the fragments in through the port.

Upon this the Atlanta hauled down her colors, and hoisted a white flag. It was just fifteen minutes after the Weehawken had commenced firing. The Atlanta was not disabled, nor had there been any great number of serious casualties among the crew; but they had had enough. The possibilities of a XV-inch gun, fired at a range of two hundred yards, were matters that they had no wish to investigate further. As Rodgers drily remarked in commenting upon the action, the first shot took away their disposition to fight, and the third their ability to get away.

The battle was so short and decisive that the Nahant had no opportunity to take part in it. When the Weehawken ranged up to her prize, the latter was found to be aground; but she was backed off a few hours later with little difficulty, and steamed without assistance to Port Royal.

The engagement of the Weehawken and the Atlanta was one of the extraordinary events of the war, and illustrates, perhaps better than any other, the revolution which fifty years of scientific progress had wrought in naval warfare. The action of the Chesapeake and Shannon, which took

place in June, 1813, off Boston, had enough points of resemblance to make the two engagements a fair subject of comparison. Both were exceptional victories, for so complete a victory in fifteen minutes, the time covered in each of the two fights, will probably always be exceptional. Nor does the resemblance stop here. In both actions the victorious captain is one of the marked men of his service—bold but prudent, attentive to details, minutely careful in preparation, skilful in action. Each is a splendid type of his kind in the age to which he belongs. As Broke was the model captain of his day, so Rodgers is of his. The Shannon was always ready for any kind of service, her discipline exact, her crew willing, her gunnery precise. The Weehawken shows her surpassing excellence in the same qualities; for no man knew better than Rodgers how to get good work and ready service from his men. But the captain of 1813 is an able executive, a skilful seaman, a capable gunnery officer; while the captain of 1863 is all this, and a man of science in addition. On the losing side, the parallel is equally striking. There is in both engagements the same negligence of preparation, shown in the case of the Atlanta by the extreme disorder of the vessel, and in that of the Chesapeake by the disorganization of the crew. There is the same ineffective gun-practice, the same speedy demoralization. Both captains are brave men; but both go into action with the same easy confidence, in each case fully shared, perhaps largely created, by the people around them, who go off in pleasure-boats to witness the fight, as if it were to be merely an exhibition of fireworks.

But here the parallel ceases. There is little in common between the stately frigates—the Chesapeake, bearing down before the wind under all sail, or the Shannon, with her lofty spars, and her maintopsail against the mast, and the two rafts whose armored citadels protect everything but the

decks and the funnel. As little do the batteries of carronades and long eighteens resemble the Brooke rifles of the Atlanta or the huge Dahlgren smooth-bores of the monitor. The mode of fighting corresponds to the character of the ships and the weapons. The Chesapeake ranges up alongside her antagonist, and the two vessels deliver their broadsides almost in contact. An accident brings them foul: and straightway the crew of the Shannon, their captain at the head, rush on board the enemy with pike, cutlass, and pistol. After a bloody struggle, a hand-to-hand pell-mell fight, the crew of the Chesapeake is overpowered and surrenders. Fifty years later, the vessels do not approach nearer than two hundred yards, and four shots, deliberately aimed, settle the whole affair. There is little bloodshed; no one is touched on board the Weehawken, and the injured among the prisoners comprise about a tenth part of the defeated crew.

CHAPTER V.

THE GULF SQUADRONS.

THE command of the Gulf Blockading Squadron was assigned to Flag-Officer William Mervine, who had served in California during the Mexican war, and who had now been fifty-two years in the service. He arrived in the Gulf on June 8, 1861, whither he was shortly followed by his flagship, the Colorado. Before his arrival the blockade had been set on foot by the vessels already on the station. Some of these had pushed westward late in May, and on the 26th of that month, the Powhatan, under Porter, arrived off Mobile, while the Brooklyn, taking her station on the same day off Pass-à-Loutre, announced the blockade of New Orleans. The Powhatan remained off Mobile until the 29th, when she was relieved by the Niagara, which came in from Havana. Porter then proceeded off the Southwest Pass of the Mississippi, which he blockaded on the 31st. On the 13th of June the Massachusetts arrived off the Passes, where she remained on blockade duty. Galveston was invested by the South Carolina, on the 2d of July. When Mervine arrived at his post on the 8th of June, in the frigate Mississippi, he found a beginning already made, and by July he had a force of twenty-one vessels.

Mervine's first act after his arrival on the station was to publish a proclamation declaring, in the usual form, that "an effective blockade of the port of Key West, Florida, has

been established and will be rigidly enforced and maintained against any and all vessels (public armed vessels of foreign powers alone excepted) which shall attempt to enter or depart from the said port of Key West, Florida." As Key West was wholly in the possession of the United States authorities, and as it is a barren island, dependent on supplies by sea for the barest necessaries of life, the proclamation caused some consternation among the inhabitants. Next day, however, the order was rescinded, and it was announced that trading with the loyal States and with Cuba would be permitted under certain restrictions.

A cruise made by H. M. S. Jason, Captain Von Donop, shortly after Mervine's arrival, showed the following disposition of the forces in the Gulf: the Cuyler was off Tampa Bay; the Montgomery in Appalachee Bay; the Mississippi, Niagara, and Water Witch off Pensacola; the Huntsville and the sailing-sloop St. Louis off Mobile; and the Brooklyn, Powhatan and two gunboats were off the Mississippi Passes. The Jason did not go to Galveston. This report, coupled with other evidence, goes to show that during the first few months, the main entrances to the principal ports in the Gulf, as in the Atlantic, were efficiently blockaded; but there was no blockade of the intermediate stretches of coast, and the side entrances to the ports were also without a guard.

The general course of operations in the Gulf was similar to that in the Atlantic; and the same plan of converting the blockade at various points into an occupation was gradually but systematically carried out. A lodgment was effected at New Orleans before the first year was over, and the necessity of a blockade was largely obviated at the most important point on the coast. From this base, further operations checked the desultory commerce carried on by small vessels in the Louisiana bayous. The occupation of Ship Island

covered the waters of Mississippi Sound, where a small coasting trade with Mobile was, nevertheless, persistently carried on. At Pensacola, Fort Pickens commanded the entrance from the beginning; and in 1862 the city was evacuated, and became the depot of the West Gulf Squadron. Galveston was occupied by the United States forces from October, 1862, until the disaster on the first day of 1863. During the following year, possession was taken of various points in Texas, but the land forces were subsequently withdrawn and the blockade re-established. Finally, in August, 1864, Mobile was closed by the surrender of the forts to Admiral Farragut and General Granger.

In the latter part of September, 1861, Mervine was relieved by Flag-Officer William W. McKean. It was decided that a division of the squadrons in the Gulf was necessary, such as had been made in the Atlantic, and the Department only waited until its plan of active operations in that quarter could be matured and a sufficient force sent to the station. Farragut had been selected to command the expedition against New Orleans, and on the 21st of February he assumed command of the West Gulf Squadron, with a cruising-ground extending from Pensacola to the Rio Grande. Farragut remained in command until late in 1864, when Commodore Thatcher was appointed to succeed him.

The Eastern Gulf Squadron extended from Cape Canaveral on the eastern coast of Florida, to Pensacola. Its headquarters were at Key West. McKean remained in command until June 4, 1862, when he was relieved by Captain Lardner. Lardner was soon followed by Commodore Theodorus Bailey, who retained the command two years, and whose health finally broke down, as did that of many of his officers, upon this undesirable station. After a short interval, Commodore Cornelius K. Stribling assumed the command

on the 12th of October, and retained it until the close of the war.

The blockade of Florida required a different management from that of other parts of the coast. There were no large commercial centres which might influence the destination of steamers with valuable cargoes; nor were there any points whose position, by giving ready access to the interior, made it indispensable that they should be strongly intrenched. Hence the main force of the blockade could not be concentrated at a few points. On the other hand, there were innumerable bays and inlets, difficult and dangerous of access, where small vessels might enter unobserved, and remain concealed for an indefinite time. It was well-nigh impossible, no matter how large or vigilant the force in these waters, to prevent absolutely the trade carried on by these vessels. The best that could be done was to keep up a constant watch, and to scour the coast at intervals, sending in small parties in boats to seize a vessel whenever its presence was known. Numberless little affairs thus took place on the station — engagements with small batteries, boarding parties, cutting-out expeditions, raids upon salt-works, sudden dashes into remote and unfrequented inlets, on dark nights, through tortuous channels, usually followed by the capture of cotton-laden schooners, or stray boats, or bales of cotton, with the loss of a man or two here and there.

While the Tahoma was lying off Cedar Keys, on February 23, 1862, a boat expedition was sent in, under Lieutenant Crosman, to cut out a schooner lying in the boat-channel between Cedar Keys and the mainland, and to capture a ferry-boat which had been used for communicating between the land and the Keys. Crosman secured the ferry-boat, but the schooner lay on the other side of the railroad trestle crossing the channel; and, night coming on, he was obliged

to defer operations. Going into the channel next morning, he found that the schooner had disappeared; and, as he was coming out of the narrow passage, a heavy fire of small arms was opened from a stockade on the shore. His men were at the oars, pulling against a strong flood tide and a fresh wind; and the two officers of the boats were the only people who could return the fire. The leading boat had barely got out of range, when the prize capsized. Nothing daunted, Crosman pulled back under the fire of the troops, which covered the prize, and endeavored to right her; but after some time spent in unavailing efforts, he scuttled and sank her, returning with the loss of only one man to his ship.

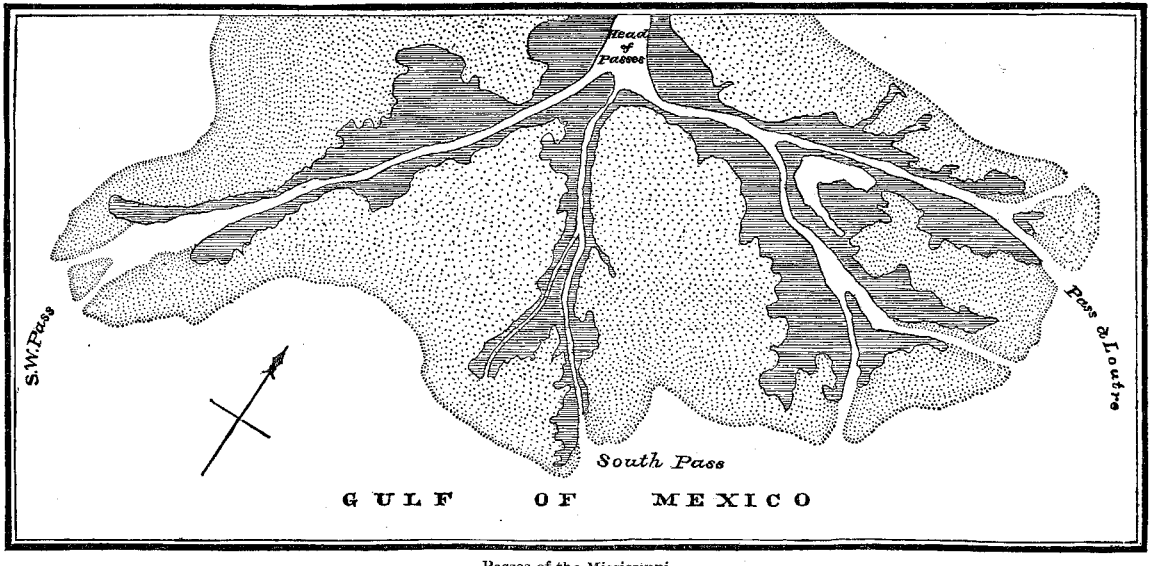
The ferry-boat Somerset, under Lieutenant-Commander Earl English, attacked the salt-works near Dépôt Key on October 4, 1862. After a few shells had been fired, a white flag was hoisted on the works, and a party was sent on shore to destroy them. No sooner had the party landed, than they were fired upon from the building displaying the flag of truce, and half of them were disabled. Immediately after the affair, the gunboat Tahoma arrived, under Commander John C. Howell. A strong force was landed, led by Crosman with his usual energy and judgment, and fifty or sixty salt-boilers were destroyed.

These are only a few out of numberless small affairs that took place on the coast. They made little noise, but the service was one that involved hardship and danger, and it exacted ceaseless activity and untiring effort. It was more like the old conflicts of the excisemen and smugglers on the Scottish coast than the regular operations of warfare; though the contrabandistas of Florida had no occasion to sell their lives as dearly as the Hatteraicks of eighty years ago.

In the West Gulf, the most important points were Mobile

and New Orleans. The latter was by far the largest and wealthiest city at the South; in fact, it ranked sixth in point of population among the cities of the Union. Its tonnage movement was enormous, its export trade being one of the most extensive in the world. There were two principal entrances to the Mississippi, Pass-à-Loutre and Southwest Pass, though there were several others of less importance. At these two entrances the deposits of mud made by the river were continually altering the channels; and the position of the bar and the depth of water were shifting and uncertain. The channel was deeper now in one, now in the other, and the commerce of New Orleans varied its course accordingly. The smaller passes admitted only vessels of the lightest draft.

The main passes were about fifteen miles in length and there were from fourteen to seventeen feet of water on the bars at their mouth. The three smaller passes had from six to ten feet. At the point of divergence, known as the Head of the Passes, the stream of the Mississippi is broad and deep, and though the current is strong, there is a safe and roomy anchorage. The two forts that formed the main defences of New Orleans lay twenty miles above this point, and there was nothing to obstruct the movements of the blockading fleet between the forts and the bar. It would seem that the first step in the blockade of New Orleans would naturally be to station a force at the Head of the Passes, where all the outlets could be closed at once. It was clearly the most economical and most effectual way to blockade the river; but the position was exposed to sudden attacks by the enemy, and in order to be maintained successfully, it required a force that should combine strength for resisting attack with handiness of movement. A sloop-of-war with one or two small, active, well-armed despatch-vessels or gun-



Passes of the Mississippi.

boats, to act as pickets, could close the passage effectually, and by the exercise of constant vigilance could reduce the risk of lying in the enemy's waters to a minimum.

Early in October, 1861, the squadron was moved up from the bar, and took its post at the Head of the Passes. Possession was taken of the telegraph station, and work was begun on a fortification. The force consisted of the Richmond, commanded by Captain John Pope, the senior officer present; the Vincennes, Commander Robert Handy; the Preble, Commander French; and the side-wheel steamer Water Witch, Lieutenant Francis Winslow. The Vincennes and the Preble were sailing sloops-of-war. The Richmond was one of the smaller of the first-class screw-sloops built shortly before the war, and an admirable vessel, carrying a powerful battery of twenty-two IX-inch guns, one 80-pounder, and one rifled 30-pounder. The Vincennes carried four VIII-inch shell guns, and fourteen 32-pounders. The Water Witch, a small vessel, well adapted for river service, had one 24-pound howitzer, two 12-pounders, and one Dahlgren 20-pounder. It was known that considerable preparations were making at New Orleans to fit out a naval force under the direction of Commodore Hollins, and in particular that a formidable ram, the Manassas, was in process of construction; but no extraordinary precautions seem to have been taken by the blockading squadron to prevent a surprise.

On the 11th of October, the Water Witch had towed a coaling schooner alongside the Richmond, and had afterward anchored on her starboard quarter, a little inshore. The Preble lay in advance of the Richmond, about one hundred and fifty yards off, on her starboard bow. The Vincennes was lower down the river, on the opposite side.

A little before four o'clock, on the morning of the 12th, while the watch on deck was getting coal on board the Rich-

mond from the schooner alongside, a ram was discovered close aboard. This was the Manassas, commanded by Lieutenant-Commander Warley. The Preble saw her at the same moment, as well as the prize-schooner Frolic, and giving the alarm at once, beat to quarters. A moment later, the ram struck the Richmond abreast of the port fore-channels, making a small hole in her side, and tearing the schooner from her fasts. The injury was speedily repaired; and the Richmond, slipping her cable and ranging ahead, avoided a second blow on her quarter. The ram, having been herself seriously injured by the shock, then gave up the attempt, and standing up the river, received broadsides from the Richmond and from the Preble as she passed them. Steaming ahead, the Richmond found herself near the shore, and attempted to turn, but only succeeded in getting half-way round, with her broadside up and down the river. Orders were then given to the two sailing-sloops to proceed down the Southwest Pass, while the Richmond covered their retreat.

As the ram passed up the river she fired a rocket. Immediately afterward three lights were seen in motion, which gradually brightened and expanded until they were discovered to be fire-rafts, drifting down on the squadron. The Water Witch avoided them without difficulty, steering to the northeast, up the stream, while the rafts, left to the wind and current, drifted to the western shore, doing no injury. The rest of the squadron was already out of their reach, on its way to the bar.

Winslow now remained alone in the Water Witch, near the Head of the Passes, having interpreted the commanding officer's last signal to mean "Act at discretion," and being under the conviction that a force was still required at this point if the blockade was to be efficiently maintained. The

rest of the squadron apparently took a different view of the state of affairs. It was now daylight and, making a reconnoissance, Winslow discovered the smoke of four steamers, above a bend in the river, and a bark-rigged propeller higher up, having the appearance of a blockade-runner. As the propeller would have a clear path through Pass-à-Loutre unless the squadron could be brought back, the Water Witch steamed at full speed down the Southwest Pass until she overtook the retreating blockaders. When she came up with them, the Richmond was making a general signal to cross the bar. Winslow ranged up alongside and earnestly represented the necessity of returning immediately up the river, but Pope, deeming the position of the squadron unsafe, overruled the suggestion and ordered the Water Witch to the assistance of the sailing vessels. This order was carried out. The Preble was piloted across the bar by Davis, the executive of the Water Witch, and the gunboat went herself to assist the Vincennes; but before Winslow could reach her, the sloop grounded. A moment later the Richmond also ran ashore.

In this position the vessels of the squadron found themselves when Hollins came down the Pass with his flotilla. It was now about eight o'clock. The enemy's attack was not maintained with any great spirit, and though the cannonade lasted for a couple of hours, no advantage was gained by either side. As the Richmond lay with her broadside up the river, she could rake the channel effectually; and the Confederates, whose force of lightly-armed river-boats was no match for the squadron, kept at a respectful distance from her heavy battery. Their firing was inaccurate, their shells bursting around and beyond the Richmond. On the other hand, the Richmond's shot fell short. She succeeded once or twice in backing off into deeper water, and drifted down

with the current, grounding finally about a quarter of a mile below the Vincennes; but the little Water Witch pluckily held her position, although she was obliged to keep actively moving to leave a clear space for the Richmond's fire.

The position of the Vincennes would now have become critical had the enemy shown a bold front and approached her; but they kept off, satisfied with a mere demonstration. Then came the most singular incident of this singular conflict. The Richmond made signal to the vessels below the bar to get under way. This was erroneously interpreted on board the Vincennes as an order to abandon the vessel. Captain Handy, apparently himself in some doubt as to his interpretation, sent an officer to the Water Witch asking if such a signal had been made, and announcing that he should defend his vessel. Winslow replied to the question that it was impossible, and suggested to Handy that he should fight his ship. Handy did not adopt the suggestion, however, but concluded to obey the supposed order. Having first caused a slow-match to be applied to the magazine, he manned the boats, and sending a part of his crew on board the Water Witch, he repaired to the Richmond with the rest. From some dramatic fancy, he wrapped a large American ensign about his waist, and in this strange guise he appeared over the side of the commanding officer's vessel. This was at 9.30, when the enemy's forces were beginning to draw off from the attack; and shortly after Captain Handy reached the Richmond they withdrew up the river.

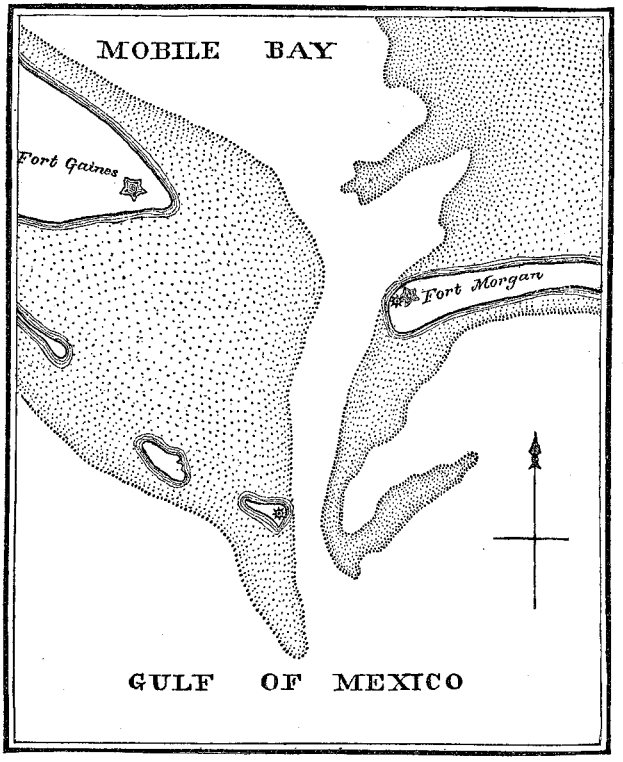
Captain Pope, after waiting "a reasonable time," as he says in his report, for the explosion, and thinking, "from the description of the slow-match," that it had gone out, ordered Handy back to the Vincennes. The latter thereupon divested himself of his colors, and returned to his vessel. The next day she was got afloat, with the assistance of

the South Carolina, which was ordered up from Barrataria. A new disposition was made of the vessels, and the blockade was continued by keeping a ship off the mouth of each of the Passes.

On the 16th of September Ship Island had been evacuated by the Confederates. A force was landed from the Massachusetts, and the fort was occupied. The island became an important station, and facilitated the blockade of Mississippi Sound, where the cruisers might intercept the small vessels running between New Orleans and Mobile. On the 19th of October, the steamer Florida came out, under Commodore Hollins, and engaged the Massachusetts off the island. The Florida, being a faster vessel, and of less draft, was able to choose her distance, and the engagement was carried on at long range. A 68-pounder rifle-shell was exploded in the Massachusetts, but it did not seriously injure the vessel, and the enemy finally retreated out of reach. Ship Island served as the depot of the West Gulf Squadron until the evacuation of Pensacola, which then became the headquarters.

Mobile, the second point of importance in the Gulf, presented few natural difficulties to the blockaders; and the same peculiarities that made it an easy port to defend made it an easy port to blockade. The city lies at the head of a bay twenty-four miles long and ten miles wide in its upper part, expanding to twenty miles at its southern end. Very little, however, of this large sheet of water is accessible for vessels of even moderate draught. The upper anchorage has only twelve feet of water. The lower anchorage has from eighteen to twenty feet, and is five miles north of Mobile Point, at the main entrance to the bay. This entrance lies between two long, narrow sand-spits, and is approached by a channel running north and south. The channel, five miles

in length, and only half a mile wide at its narrowest point, has at its southern extremity a bar, upon which there is a depth of nearly twenty-one feet. The northern end was pro-



Entrance to Mobile Bay.

tected by two forts, one of them, Fort Morgan, a work of considerable strength. But as the entrance of the channel was five miles from the forts, the blockading squadron could

take a position close to the bar; and the blockade was reduced to a limited area. At this point, therefore, it could be maintained more effectually and by a smaller force than at almost any other place of trade on the coast.

There were two other entrances to the bay, one to the westward, with so little water as to be comparatively unimportant, and the other to the northeast, extending, like the Beach Channel at Charleston, close along the shore, and terminating directly under Fort Morgan, just as the northeast channel at Charleston terminated at Fort Moultrie. Though it was less than twelve feet deep at low water, and therefore does not appear on the map, it could be used, when the tide served, by many of the blockade-runners; and when they had once entered, it was next to impossible to cut them out. Additional blockading vessels were generally stationed at both these side-entrances.

Early in the war, the force off Mobile consisted sometimes of a single vessel, which might be found cruising eight or ten miles from the entrance; but after the first year a really efficient force was stationed off the port, and toward the end the vessels lay within two hundred yards of the bar buoy, often with a single gunboat posted inside the channel.[1] Especially after the second escape of the Florida, the officers of the squadron were put on their mettle, and during the year before its capture, Mobile was a difficult port for blockade-runners to attempt.

The simplest operations on the blockade, however, were liable to a variety of accidents and incidents, and no service

[1] The old theory with reference to the danger of lying off Mobile finds expression in the following passage of Blunt's Coast Pilot (ed. 1841): "Those off Mobile should recollect the necessity of getting an offing as soon as there are appearances of a gale on shore, either to weather the Balize or, which is better, to take in time the Road of Naso, as destruction is inevitable if you come to anchor outside Mobile Bar during the gale."

demanded a higher degree of preparation and perseverance in action. This was illustrated again and again. A case occurred early in 1862, which will serve as one instance out of many. On the 20th of January, the steamer R. R. Cuyler, watching the eastern passage over Mobile bar, discovered a schooner at anchor, near the shore, several miles to the eastward. The Cuyler was commanded by Lieutenant Francis Winslow, the same officer who had shown his judgment and courage in the affair at the Head of the Passes. Apparently it was a simple enough matter for the Cuyler, a fast and well-armed steamer, to make the schooner an easy prize. As the Cuyler approached, however, the blockade-runner got under way, and steered for the beach. Here she grounded, her crew making for the land. A boat was sent to take possession, and the Cuyler was anchored as near the shore as she could safely go.

Meantime, a party of men had collected on the beach, and opened a sharp fire of musketry, under cover of the dunes. This was returned from the Cuyler, and with the help of an occasional shell, the steamer silenced the fire from the shore. A hawser was carried out, and an attempt was made to start the schooner. The hawser was parted by the strain; and a second attempt met with a similar result, except that this time the hawser fouled the Cuyler's propeller. The largest hawser in the ship was now made fast to the schooner's foremast, and the working party was recalled; but just as they got off, their boat swamped. Two other boats at once put off to the rescue, and, as they approached, received a warm fire from the sand-hills, the enemy having now gathered in considerable force. As the Cuyler's stern was secured to the schooner, and her propeller was still clogged, her broadside could not be brought to bear, and she could only answer with small arms. One of the boats had a howitzer; but half her

crew, including the officer in charge, were already disabled, and the four men who remained could not use the gun. At this critical juncture, the Huntsville arrived with two of the Potomac's cutters in tow. Master Schley pulled gallantly in with the cutters, and the Huntsville opened on the beach; and a series of mishaps which had nearly resulted in disaster finally ended in success.

The most prominent event in the history of the blockade of Mobile was the daring passage of the Confederate cruiser Florida past the blockading squadron, on two separate occasions. The first was on the 4th of September, 1862. At this time the blockade was maintained by the sloop-of-war Oneida, and the gunboats Winona and Cayuga. The senior officer was Commander George H. Preble of the Oneida. The Oneida was one of the four sloops built at the beginning of the war, and she was armed with two XI-inch guns, four 32-pounders, and three Dahlgren 30-pounders. The frigate Susquehanna had been lying off the port, but had gone to Pensacola for repairs five days before. The gunboats Pinola, Kanawha, and Kennebec were also attached to the blockading squadron, and temporarily absent for repairs or coal. On the evening of the day before, the Cayuga had been sent to Petit Bois and Horn Island, the entrances of Mississippi Sound, which had been left unguarded. The boilers of the Oneida needed some slight repairs, and on the morning of the day in question, the fire had been hauled under one boiler, while a full pressure of steam was kept on the other. The repairs were nearly completed soon after noon, and at 3.45 P.M., the fire was again started, though a working pressure of steam was not obtained for some time, and the speed of the vessel was reduced from ten knots to seven. The blockading force, therefore, on this critical day, consisted only of the Oneida, undergoing repairs, and the Winona.

On the 7th of August the Confederate cruiser Florida had left Nassau, where she had been lying for three months, and had put into Cardenas in Cuba. Intelligence of this fact had been received at Pensacola, the headquarters of the squadron, but no intimation had been sent to the blockading officer off Mobile, though several vessels had come from Pensacola in the meantime. The Florida was in a crippled state; her crew was short; what men she had were most of them sick with yellow fever; and her battery was unprovided with the necessary equipments. Her captain, Maffitt, found it necessary to make a port where he could obtain a crew, and the equipments that he needed; and he decided to attempt Mobile. Knowing that his ship was an exact duplicate of the English gun-vessels that were constantly cruising on the coast and going in and out of the blockaded ports, he adopted the bold course of personating an Englishman, and attempting to run the blockade of Mobile in broad daylight.

At 3.35 on the afternoon of the 4th, the squadron off the port, composed of the Oneida and the Winona, had sighted a sail to the southward and westward, and the Winona was ordered in chase. The sail was found to be the United States man-of-war schooner Rachel Seaman; and the two vessels were returning towards the Oneida, when at five o'clock another sail was reported in the southeast. She was presently discovered to be a steamer with a barkantine rig, burning bituminous coal, and heading directly for the senior officer's vessel. Satisfied that she was an English gun-vessel inspecting the blockade, Preble got under way, and went to quarters, steering for the stranger's port bow. The latter had been carrying a pennant, and she now hoisted the English ensign.

The rules adopted on the blockade allowed foreign ships-of-

war the privilege of entering the blockaded ports ; but this was of course never done without first communicating with the squadron outside. No vessel, whatever her character or nationality, can be permitted to run past a blockading squadron without this formality. As the Oneida approached the supposed Englishman, she put her helm to starboard in order not to pass him, and came around until she was heading in the same direction, still a little on his port bow. He kept on at full speed, and when at a distance of about one hundred yards the Oneida hailed him. Receiving no reply, she fired a shot across his bow, from the rifled pivot gun on the forecastle, followed quickly by another, also across his bow, and by a third, close to his forefoot. As these produced no impression, the order was given to fire into him, and the starboard broadside was immediately discharged. This is stated to have been done three minutes after the first shot was fired. But with a blockade-runner alongside running fourteen knots to the blockader's seven, time is counted by seconds. When the broadside was fired, the stranger's ensign and pennant were hauled down. It turned out that orders were given on board the Florida, for such she proved to be, to hoist the Confederate flag, but the quartermaster lost his fingers in the attempt, and the vessel kept on her course without any colors. An attempt was also made on board the Florida to loosen sail; but the Oneida's fire drove the men out of the rigging. According to Maffitt, "had their guns been depressed, the career of the Florida would have ended then and there." The Winona and Rachel Seaman joined in the firing, from a greater distance ; but the Florida did not slacken her speed, and made no attempt at resistance. An XI-inch shell from the Oneida passed through the coal-bunker on the port side, but did not explode. Another exploded close to the port gangway. A third entered a few inches above the water-

line, and passed along the berth-deck; and a shot from the Winona went through the cabin and pantry.

During the firing the Florida had been gaining rapidly on her assailants, and she now passed ahead, making directly for the entrance of the channel. The Oneida was obliged to yaw, to bring her guns to bear, but the chase was continued until the Florida had crossed the bar. Then the blockading vessels hauled off. An hour later, the Florida was safely anchored under the guns of Fort Morgan.

After remaining four months at Mobile, repairing and completing her equipments, the Florida came out. This time no disguise was possible, and when his ship was ready, Maffitt only waited for a northerly wind and a dark night. On the afternoon of January 15, the prospect seemed favorable, and the Florida ran down to Mobile Point. The violence of the wind delayed her for a few hours, but at two o'clock on the morning of the 16th, she weighed and stood out by the main ship-channel across the bar.

The blockading fleet now consisted of seven vessels. Among these was the R. R. Cuyler, a fast steamer that had been sent down especially to stop the Florida. When Maffitt had come down in the afternoon, he could see the blockading vessels aligned off the main entrance, two miles from the bar. He was also sighted from the squadron; and the Cuyler was ordered to change her position, and be prepared to give chase, with the Oneida. Between two and three o'clock in the morning, the enemy was reported. He passed between the Cuyler and the flagship Susquehanna, at a distance of three hundred yards from the former. After a considerable delay, a part of the squadron started in pursuit. It is stated by an officer of the Cuyler, in a letter quoted by Maffitt, that half an hour was lost in getting under way, owing to a regulation of the ship by which the officer of the watch

was required to report and to wait for the captain to come on deck before slipping the cable. The Oneida, when she saw the signal from the flagship, beat to quarters, but remained at anchor; and at 3.50, "having seen no vessel running out, beat a retreat." [1] So says her log. The Cuyler, however, saw the Florida distinctly, and chased her during the rest of the night and the whole of the day; but though the blockading steamer could make at times fourteen knots, her highest speed that day was twelve and a half. At night the Florida changed her course and ran off to Cuba, where she was burning prizes the next day, while the Cuyler was looking for her in the Yucatan channel.

On the day after the Florida ran out, the Oneida was sent to Key West with despatches for Admiral Bailey, informing him of the escape of the Florida. Bailey sent her to the coast of Cuba; but she missed the Confederate cruiser, and Wilkes, commanding the Flying Squadron, having fallen in with her, constituted her a part of his force, as well as the Cuyler, to the no small injury of the blockade; an act which subsequently brought down upon him the displeasure of the Department.

Galveston, the third point of importance in the Gulf, was, like Mobile, comparatively easy of blockade, except against vessels of the lightest draft. The absence of strong fortifications, especially in the early part of the war, enabled the blockading vessels to lie near the shore; and the town was exposed to the fire of the squadron, as it found to its cost in August, 1861, when a shore battery fired upon one of the South Carolina's tenders. Alden was then commanding the blockading force, and he brought the South Carolina, which drew only twelve feet, within a mile of the shore, and opened

[1] Meaning "beat *the* retreat."

on the batteries. One or two of his shells fell in the town, which led to a protest from the foreign consuls against bombardment without notice; but the injury to the town was afterwards shown to be accidental.

Occupied as he was with active operations in the Mississippi, Farragut early turned his attention to the necessities of the Gulf blockade. In a letter written home shortly after his arrival, he had said: "My blockading shall be done inside as much as possible." The special charge of the vessels in the Gulf was entrusted to Commodore Henry H. Bell, and the steps already taken to convert the blockade of prominent points into an occupation were continued, especially to the westward of the Mississippi, on the coast of Louisiana and Texas. The principal entrances were Atchafalaya Bay and the Calcasieu, on the coast of Louisiana, Sabine Pass, at the western boundary of the State, and Galveston, Pass Cavallo, Aransas, and Corpus Christi, in Texas. Several small vessels were sent to operate in connection with a detachment of troops in Atchafalaya and its inner waters, under Lieutenant-Commander Buchanan. These operations continued for a long period, though Buchanan was killed two months after his arrival, in an engagement in the Têche. The other points were seized by different expeditions, whose operations were attended with varying success; and on the coast of Texas, blockade and occupation alternated at the different passes with considerable frequency during the rest of the war. One great difficulty in holding the occupied points was the want of troops. In December, 1862, Farragut writes: "It takes too much force to hold the places for me to take any more, or my outside fleet will be too much reduced to keep up the blockade and keep the river open"—two primary considerations in the operations of the squadron.

At all the passes on the coast of Texas and Louisiana there

had been considerable blockade-running by small craft from Havana. To break it up and seize the passes three expeditions were sent out, one to Corpus Christi, one to Calcasieu and Sabine Pass, and one to Galveston. The first of these, under Acting-Lieutenant Kittredge, consisted of the bark Arthur, the steamer Sachem, the yacht Corypheus, and one or two smaller sailing-vessels. There were only about one hundred men in all the vessels. Kittredge was confident of success, but he could hardly have counted on meeting with serious opposition. Corpus Christi lies at the mouth of the Nueces River, on a bay which is enclosed by the long narrow islands that make a double coast along nearly the whole line of the Texas shore. Entering the lagoon, Kittredge proceeded up the bay. On August 16 and 18 attacks were made upon the city, and a battery which had been thrown up on the levee was silenced. On the 18th, a landing party of thirty men with a howitzer was sent into the town, but by this time the enemy had collected a considerable force, estimated at five hundred men; and though their attack was repulsed, there was no possibility of holding the place, and the landing party was withdrawn. The vessels, however, continued to cruise inside of the Passes of Corpus Christi and Aransas. Several vessels were destroyed or captured, and the blockade became really efficient. The only casualty was the capture of Kittredge and his gig's crew, when making an incautious reconnoissance.

The second expedition, under Acting-Master Crocker, set out in September for the Sabine River. The importance of this point as an entrance for blockade-runners had been underrated, and no adequate blockade had been established. A railroad crossed the river at a point not very far above Sabine City, and the town was actively occupied in the exportation of cotton and the reception of large quantities of munitions

of war. The expedition, consisting of the steamer Kensington and the schooner Rachel Seaman, found the mortar-schooner Henry Janes lying off the entrance. The Janes constituted the whole blockading force, and she had been there only a few days. Crocker was an energetic officer, and at once set about active operations. The vessels ascended the river and attacked the fort protecting Sabine City. The fort was soon evacuated and the city surrendered. Crocker then made a reconnoissance at the two entrances to the eastward, Mermenteau and Calcasieu, and on his return captured a blockade-running schooner, the Velocity, which he armed and manned as a cruiser. Going once more to Calcasieu, he pulled up the river eighty miles in boats, and captured the steamer Dan, which he also fitted out for service, putting on board a rifled 20-pounder and a howitzer. This new acquisition was taken around to Sabine, and a few days later Crocker moved her up the river, and destroyed the railroad bridge, although the enemy were posted there in force. On his return, he found that the pickets from a camp of the enemy's cavalry, five miles back of Sabine City, had given some annoyance. Landing with a party of fifty men and a howitzer, Crocker marched to the place, drove off the enemy, burned their stables, and broke up their encampment. After these gallant and successful operations, to which were added the capture of several blockade-runners, Crocker returned in the Kensington to Pensacola, leaving the Rachel Seaman, and the prize-vessels Dan and Velocity to keep up a real blockade at Sabine Pass.

The expedition to Galveston was under the command of Commander W. B. Renshaw, and consisted of the ferry-boat Westfield, Renshaw's vessel, another ferry-boat, the Clifton, under Lieutenant-Commander Law, the side-wheel steamer Harriet Lane, Commander Wainwright, and the gunboat

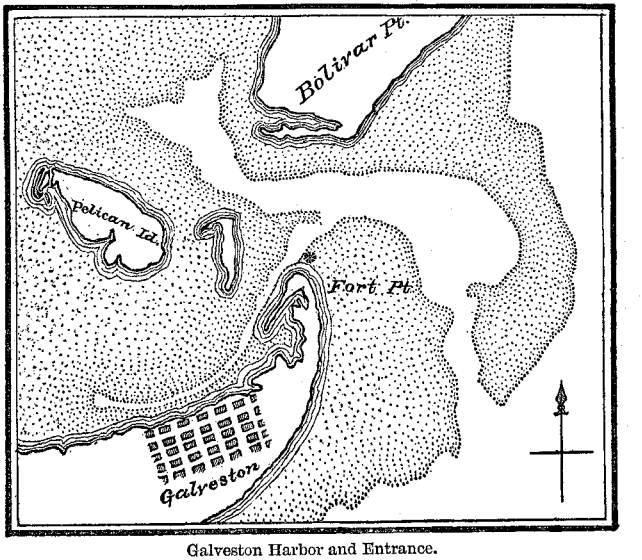
Owasco, Lieutenant-Commander Wilson. The squadron, though small, was a formidable one to send against Galveston, which was imperfectly protected. All the vessels carried for their size heavy batteries.[1]

No fighting took place, however. Several days were spent in negotiations, and a truce was granted by Renshaw, under a verbal stipulation that the force on shore should not be increased. The Confederates took advantage of this somewhat loose arrangement to carry off the guns from the fortifications—a proceeding against which Renshaw remonstrated unsuccessfully. At the end of the truce, the city was surrendered, and the fleet thenceforth occupied a secure position inside the bay.

Captain Renshaw requested that a military force should be sent to hold Galveston, and reported that two or three hundred men, with half a dozen pieces of artillery, could easily defend themselves on Fort Point or Pelican Island. An expedition was accordingly fitted out, which was to land at Galveston, and make that point the base of military operations. The first detachment of troops consisted of three companies of a Massachusetts regiment, under Colonel Burrill, numbering two hundred and sixty men, but without any artillery. This force was clearly inadequate to hold the place; but with such an efficient squadron, it seemed unlikely that the enemy would be able to accomplish any great results by an attack, particularly as they had no vessels specially adapted for hostilities in those waters. This ab-

[1] The general statement gives so imperfect an idea of the powerful armament of Renshaw's squadron, and especially of the ferry-boats, that it may be worth while to mention the guns in detail. They were as follows: Westfield—One 100-pounder rifle, four VIII-inch shell guns (56 cwt.), one IX-inch. Clifton—two IX-inch, four heavy 32-pounders (57 cwt.), one 30-pounder. Harriet Lane—three IX-inch, two 24-pound howitzers. Owasco—one XI-inch, one 20-pounder Parrott, one 24-pound howitzer.

sence of an enemy in force seems to have given Renshaw a false sense of security, and he neglected to destroy the railroad bridge connecting Galveston with the mainland—a fatal omission. Whatever may be the disadvantages under which an enemy labors, there is always danger to be apprehended for a small squadron lying in his waters; and nothing can justify the want of vigilance or of preparation.



Galveston Harbor and Entrance.

By the end of November Farragut held nearly all the principal points in the West Gulf except Mobile. About this time, he writes: "We shall spoil unless we have a fight occasionally. Blockading is hard service, and difficult to carry out with perfect success, as has been effectually shown at Charleston, where they run to Nassau regularly once a week. We have done a little better than that; we take them now

and then. I don't know how many escape, but we certainly make a good many prizes." Farragut was not quite accurate in his comparison, as the number of prizes reported for Charleston in 1862 considerably exceeded that at Mobile. In December he says again of the blockade at the latter place: "We have taken or destroyed all the steamers that run from Havana and Nassau except the Cuba and Alice, and I hope to catch those in the course of time."

But Farragut's hope of improving the efficiency of the Gulf blockade was destined to be rudely shattered. It was only a few days after he wrote the letter just quoted that the aspect of affairs on the coast of Texas was suddenly changed by the defeat of the squadron at Galveston, and the consequent cessation of the blockade at that point.

On the last day of December, intimations were received by both commanders at Galveston, ashore and afloat, that an attack would be made that night. The affair was therefore no surprise; in fact, the presumption is that it was expected. Moreover, there was a bright moonlight on the night chosen for the attack; and the steamers of the approaching force were seen in the bay above, both by the Clifton and the Westfield. This was about half-past one on the morning of the 1st of January.

At this time the troops were occupying a wharf in the town, in order that they might have the fleet as a base. The small steamer Sachem, which had been a part of Kittredge's force at Corpus Christi, had come in from Aransas two days before, in a broken-down condition. The schooner-yacht Corypheus had come with her as escort, and the two vessels were lying opposite the wharf. The Harriet Lane was stationed higher up the channel, to the westward, and therefore nearer the enemy. The Westfield lay three or four miles off, in Bolivar channel, a body of water to the north-

ward of the town, only accessible from the harbor of Galveston by a roundabout passage to the eastward. With the Westfield were the schooner Velocity, which Crocker had captured at Sabine Pass, and some transports and coal-barks. The Clifton and Owasco were about midway between the two groups of vessels.

Though the enemy first made their appearance at half-past one, it was three o'clock before the attack began in the town, and only at daylight that the Confederate steamers reached the Harriet Lane, the nearest of the blockading force. The latter was at the time under way, and anticipated the attack, herself taking the offensive. Her opponents were two river-steamers, the Bayou City and the Neptune, the first armed with a rifled 68-pounder, the second with two small brass pieces. Each carried from 150 to 200 men, and both were barricaded with cotton bales, twenty or more feet above the water-line.

As the two steamers came down, the Harriet Lane advanced to meet them, firing her bow gun. The Bayou City replied, but her gun burst at the third fire. The Harriet Lane then ran into her, carried away her wheel-guard, and, passing, gave her a broadside, which did her little damage. The Neptune then rammed the Harriet Lane, but she was herself so much injured by the collision that she backed off out of action, and soon after sank on the flats in eight feet of water. The Bayou City rammed the Lane in her turn, and her bow catching under the guard-rail of the other vessel, she was held fast. A sharp fire of musketry was now exchanged between the two vessels, which caused no great mortality on either side, though it inflicted an irreparable loss on the Federal steamer by wounding the captain and first lieutenant, Wainwright and Lea, both excellent officers. The fire drove the Harriet Lane's crew from their guns, and

the enemy boarded, and, after a short struggle, carried the vessel. Wainwright was killed at the head of his men, defending his ship gallantly to the last, and fell after having received seven wounds. Lea had already been mortally wounded before the enemy boarded.

After Wainwright fell, no defence was attempted. The surviving senior officer, an acting-master, almost immediately surrendered, though less than a dozen men were seriously hurt out of his crew of 112. Upon this proceeding Farragut makes the following brief comment: "It is difficult to conceive of a more pusillanimous surrender of a vessel to an enemy already in our power."

Meantime the other vessels were variously occupied. The Sachem and Corypheus, lying near the wharf held by the troops, supplied in some measure the want of artillery; and the battle on shore, which had begun about three o'clock, was kept up until daylight, the Confederates gradually coming closer to our lines. The Owasco, at the beginning of the engagement in the city, had moved up to a position between the Sachem and Corypheus, and united with them in the support of the troops. When daylight showed the Harriet Lane engaged with two of the enemy's vessels, the Owasco moved up to assist her, occasionally touching the ground, as she steamed up the channel, which was two hundred yards wide at this point. After proceeding a short distance, she was driven back by the small-arm fire of the Bayou City; and when the howitzers of the Lane opened on her, she backed down below the Sachem and Corypheus, and took up her berth opposite the town.

It remains to account for the two other steamers, the Westfield and the Clifton, which, despite the fact that they were ferry-boats, were well-fitted to act with effect in such an encounter as this. The Westfield got under way at the first

sight of the enemy's steamers, but had no sooner begun to move than she went fast aground. It was high water at the time, and Renshaw signalled for assistance. In response to the signal, Lieutenant-Commander Law took the Clifton around to Bolivar channel, and made an effort to get the Westfield afloat. In the midst of this operation, the attack began in the town, and Renshaw sent the Clifton back to support the other vessels.

The moon had now gone down, and in the darkness Law made his way back slowly, shelling the Confederate batteries as he passed Fort Point, the eastern end of Galveston Island. On his arrival opposite the town, he came to anchor. According to the report of the Court of Inquiry, the Clifton "did not proceed up to the rescue of the Harriet Lane, owing to the failure of the Owasco, the intricacy of the channel, and the apprehension of killing the crew of the Harriet Lane, who were then exposed by the rebels on her upper deck."

The enemy now sent a flag of truce to demand the surrender of the vessels, at the same time offering the privilege of taking one out of the harbor with the crews of all. The bearer of the demands announced the capture of the Lane, and the death of Wainwright and Lea, and represented that two-thirds of her crew were killed and wounded—a misrepresentation in which he was sustained by an officer of the Harriet Lane, whom he brought with him. It appears that the object of this proceeding was to gain time. Law received the message, made a verbal arrangement for a truce, in which the status quo was to be maintained, and went in a boat to the Westfield, to refer the question to Renshaw. After a long delay, which the Confederates, taking advantage of the absence of written stipulations, occupied in bringing down the Harriet Lane, moving up their artillery, and making prisoners of the troops, Law returned with Renshaw's refusal.

The truce being now ended, Law proceeded to carry out his instructions, which were to take the vessels out of the harbor; a movement that was accomplished successfully and with celerity. It was Renshaw's intention to blow up the Westfield, which was still hard aground, and to come out in one of the army transports. By some one's carelessness or negligence, the explosion took place prematurely, and Renshaw, together with some of his officers, and a few of his crew, who had not yet been transferred, were killed. The remainder of the vessels, except the two coal-barks, crossed the bar; and in view of the fact that the remains of the squadron were not deemed equal to an engagement with the Harriet Lane, they steamed off at once to Southwest Pass, and the blockade of Galveston was raised.

The blockade did not long remain broken. Immediately after the arrival of the Clifton, Admiral Farragut sent Commodore Bell to Galveston with the Brooklyn, the Hatteras, and several gunboats, to resume the blockade. They arrived off the town on the 8th, so that the interruption lasted only seven days. Had they been a day or two later, they would probably have found the Alabama lying snugly in the port. As it was, she was sighted outside, and the Hatteras was sent to overhaul her. The chase resulted in an encounter twenty-five miles from Galveston, which lasted thirteen minutes, and which ended in the sinking of the Hatteras. The squadron cruised all night in search of the Hatteras, and finding the wreck in the morning returned to Galveston.

In consequence of the withdrawal of the squadron from Galveston, after the capture of the Lane, a proclamation was issued, on the 20th of January, by Magruder, the Confederate General commanding in Texas, declaring that the blockade had ceased, and inviting neutrals to resume commercial intercourse until an actual blockade had been re-established

"with the usual notice demanded by the law of nations." Though the blockade had indisputably been raised, the proclamation was a little late in giving the information, and Bell replied by a counter-proclamation of the same date, giving a general warning that an actual blockade was in existence. To another proclamation of Magruder's, announcing the cessation of the blockade at Velasco, a port forty miles to the southward of Galveston, Bell could make no reply, as the only vessel assigned to that point was on duty off Aransas.

Shortly after these events, on the 21st, an attack was made on the Morning Light and Velocity, two sailing-vessels blockading Sabine Pass. The enemy's force consisted of two "cotton-clad" steamers. One of the steamers was armed with a rifled 68-pounder, the other with two 24-pounders. The wind was light and the blockaders were manœuvred with difficulty; and after some resistance they surrendered. On receiving news of the event, Commodore Bell despatched the New London and the Cayuga to Sabine. When they arrived they found that the Morning Light, which was too deep to cross the bar, had been set on fire, and was still burning. Bell's promptness took away any foundation for a claim that the blockade was raised, and the incident led to the conclusion that it was impossible to maintain a blockade with small sailing-vessels at points where the enemy had a force of steamers. Altogether the month of January, 1863, was a disastrous period on the Texas blockade.

During the rest of the year there was little change in the state of affairs. An attack on Sabine Pass, now strongly defended, was made by an expedition under Acting-Lieutenant Crocker, who had conducted the successful affair at the same point the year before. Upon this occasion Crocker had a larger force, and a detachment of troops was ordered

to co-operate. The expedition, however, was a failure. The Clifton and Sachem were forced by the fire of the fort to surrender, and the other vessels, with the transports, were withdrawn. Toward the end of the year 1863, and in the early part of 1864, a series of combined operations made by the army and navy resulted in the occupation of Brazos, Aransas, and Pass Cavallo, and the blockade of these ports was thenceforth discontinued. In the following summer, it became necessary to withdraw the troops for operations elsewhere, and early in September the occupation was again replaced by a blockade, which continued till the end of the war.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BLOCKADE-RUNNERS.

DURING the early part of the war blockade-running was carried on from the Capes of the Chesapeake to the mouth of the Rio Grande. It was done by vessels of all sorts and sizes. The most successful were the steamers that had belonged to the Southern coasting lines, which found themselves thrown out of employment when the war broke out. The rest were small craft, which brought cargoes of more or less value from the Bahamas or Cuba, and carried back cotton. They answered the purpose sufficiently well, for the blockade was not yet rigorous, speed was not an essential, and the familiarity of the skippers with the coast enabled them to elude the ships-of-war, which were neither numerous nor experienced in the business. By April, 1861, the greater part of the last year's cotton crop had been disposed of, and it was estimated that only about one-seventh remained unexported when the blockade was established. Cotton is gathered in September, and shipments are generally made in the winter and spring, and considerable time must consequently elapse before a new supply could come into the market. The proclamation of the blockade caused for a time a cessation of regular commerce; and it was only after a considerable interval that a new commerce, with appliances specially adapted to the altered state of things, began to develop. Meantime illicit trade in a small way flourished.

The profits were considerable, though not comparable to those of later years; and the work required neither skill nor capital.

This guerilla form of contraband traffic gradually decreased after the first year, though there was always a little going on from the Bahamas, and on the coast of Texas. By the end of the second year it was only to be found in out-of-the-way nooks and corners. Little by little the lines were drawn more tightly, as Dupont threw vessels into the inlets below Charleston, and Goldsborough into the Sounds of North Carolina, while the blockading force grew from a dozen vessels to three hundred. In all the squadrons the burning and cutting out of schooners gave frequent occupation to the blockading forces, and the smaller fry were driven from their haunts. As these vessels were captured or destroyed one by one, there was nothing to replace them, and they gradually disappeared.

Meantime the blockade was beginning to tell both upon friends—or, to speak with exactness, upon neutrals—and upon enemies. The price of cotton decreased at the South, and advanced abroad. The supply was short, the crop of 1861 being about half that of the previous year; East India cotton had not yet come into the market, and the demand was great. The price of manufactured goods at the South advanced enormously. The time was ripe for judicious action; and the Liverpool cotton-merchant, who in the winter of 1861–62 had found ruin staring him in the face, suddenly awoke to the fact that the ports of the South were an Eldorado of wealth to the man who could go in and come out again in safety.

With cotton at fourpence a pound in Wilmington and two shillings a pound in England, the Liverpool merchant was not a man to hesitate long. Blockade-running from Europe

had already been attempted, but the profits had not been sufficient to outweigh the risk of capture during the trans-atlantic voyage. Now, however, when half-crowns could be turned into sovereigns at a single venture, capitalists could afford to run almost any risk; and as it happened, at the very time when the profits increased, a plan was devised to lessen the danger. Attempts had already been made to obviate the risk by a fictitious destination to Nassau or Bermuda; but the capture and condemnation of one or two vessels proved this device to be a failure. The plan of transshipment was then adopted, and two vessels were employed, each specially fitted for its peculiar service, one for the long and innocent passage across the ocean, the other for the short but illegal run to the blockaded port; and liability to confiscation was thus reduced to a minimum. Capital was invested in large amounts in the new industry; shrewd north-countrymen embarked in it, and companies were formed to carry on operations on a large scale. Officers of rank in the English navy, on leave of absence, offered their services, under assumed names, and for large compensation, to the owners of vessels in the contraband trade, and met with distinguished success in their enterprises. Doubtless there were few of these last; but the incognito which they preserved has been respected, and neither their names nor their number have been generally made known.

The Confederate Government did not hesitate to enter the field and take a share in the business. Vessels adapted to the purpose were bought by agents in England, and loaded with munitions of war, and Confederate naval officers under orders from the Department were placed in command. These vessels cleared under the English flag, taking out a sailing captain to comply with the requirements of law. Later they were transferred to the Confederate flag, and

carried on a regular trade between Nassau or Bermuda and Wilmington or some other blockaded port. The Government owned three or four such vessels, and was part-owner in several others. These last were required to carry out cotton on Government account, as part of their cargo, and to bring in supplies. Among the vessels wholly owned by the Government was the Giraffe, a Clyde-built iron side-wheel steamer, of light draft and considerable speed, which had been used as a packet between Glasgow and Belfast. She became famous under a new name, as the R. E. Lee; and under the efficient command of Captain Wilkinson, who had formerly been an officer of our navy, and who was now in the Confederate service, she ran the blockade twenty-one times in ten months, between December, 1862, and November, 1863, and carried abroad six thousand bales of cotton. The cotton was landed at Nassau, the Government not appearing in the transaction as shipper or owner. Here it was entrusted to a mercantile firm, which received a large "commission" for assuming ownership, and by this last it was shipped to Europe under neutral flags. The firm employed for this purpose is reported to have obtained a handsome return from its transactions.

The trade was now reduced to a system, whose working showed it to be nearly perfect. The short-voyage blockade-runners, destined for the passage between the neutral islands and the blockaded coast, began to make their appearance. In these every device was brought into use that could increase their efficiency. Speed, invisibility, and handiness, with a certain space for stowage, were the essentials; to these all other qualities were sacrificed. The typical blockade-runner of 1863–4 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 telescopic funnels, which might be lowered close to the deck. The hull rose only a few feet out of the 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 "turtle-back," to enable the vessel to go through a heavy sea. Anthracite coal, which made no smoke, was burned in the furnaces. This coal came from the United States, and when, in consequence of the prohibition upon its exportation enforced by the Government, it could not be obtained, the semi-bituminous Welsh coal was used as a substitute. When running in, all lights were put out, the binnacle and fire-room hatch were carefully covered, and steam was blown off under water. In the latest vessels of this class speed was too much studied at the expense of strength, and some of them were disabled before they reached their cruising-ground.

The start from Nassau or Bermuda was usually made at such a time that a moonless night and a high tide could be secured for running in. A sharp lookout was kept for cruisers on the outside blockade, and the blockade-runner, by keeping at a distance, could generally pass them unobserved. If by accident or carelessness he came very close, he took to his heels, and his speed enabled him to get away. He never hove to when ordered; it was as hard to hit him as to overtake him; a stray shot or two he cared nothing for. Even if his pursuer had the advantage of him in speed, which was rarely the case, he still kept on, and, by protracting the chase for a few hours, he could be sure that a squall, or a fog, or the approach of night would enable him to escape. Wilkinson describes a device which

was commonly employed under these circumstances. In running from Wilmington to Nassau, on one occasion, he found himself hard pressed by a sloop-of-war. His coal was bad, but by using cotton saturated with turpentine, he succeeded in keeping ahead. The chase had lasted all day, and at sunset the sloop was within four miles, and still gaining. The engineer was then directed to make a black smoke, and a lookout was stationed with a glass, to give notice as soon as he lost sight of the pursuer in the deepening twilight. The moment the word came, orders were given to close the dampers, and the volumes of smoke ceased to pour out; the helm was put hard-a-starboard, changing the course eight points; and the blockade-runner disappeared in the darkness, while the cruiser continued her course in pursuit of a shadow.

Having passed the outside blockade successfully, and arrived in the neighborhood of his destination, the blockade-runner would either lie off at a distance, or run in close to the land to the northward or southward of the port, and wait for the darkness. Sometimes vessels would remain in this way unobserved for a whole day. If they found the place too hot and the cruisers too active, one of the inlets at a little distance from the port of destination would give the needful shelter. Masonboro Inlet, to the north of Wilmington, was a favorite resort for this purpose. At night the steamers would come out of hiding and make a dash for the entrance.

The difficulty of running the blockade was increased by the absence of lights on the coast. In approaching or skirting the shore, the salt-works in operation at various points served as a partial substitute. Temporary lights were used at some of the ports to aid the blockade-runners. At Charleston, there was a light on Fort Sumter. At Wilmington, in the first year, the Frying Pan light-ship was taken in-

side the entrance, and anchored under Fort Caswell, where she was burnt in December, 1861, by two boat's crews from the Mount Vernon. At New Inlet, a light was placed on "the Mound," a small battery that flanked the works on Federal Point. In the earlier blockade, the lights of the squadron served as a guide to blockade-runners. After the general practice was discontinued, the plan was adopted of carrying a light on the senior officer's vessel, which was anchored in the centre of the fleet, near the entrance. This fact soon became known to the blockade-runners; indeed, there was little about the squadron that was not known and immediately disseminated at Nassau, that central-office of blockade-running intelligence. Thenceforth it served as a useful guide in making the channel. After a time the blockading officer discovered his error, and turned it to account by changing his position every night, thereby confusing many calculations.

The run past the inshore squadron was always a critical moment, though by no means so dangerous as it looked. It was no easy matter on a dark night to hit, much less to stop, a small and obscure vessel, going at the rate of fifteen knots, whose only object was to pass by. But the service nevertheless called into action all the faculties of the blockade-runner. It required a cool head, strong nerve, and ready resource. It was a combat of skill and pluck against force and vigilance. The excitement of fighting was wanting, as the blockade-runner must make no resistance; nor, as a rule, was he prepared to make any. But the chances, both outside and inshore, were all in his favor. He had only to make a port and run in, and he could choose time, and weather, and circumstances. He could even choose his destination. He always had steam up when it was wanted. He knew the critical moment, and was prepared for it; and

his moments of action were followed by intervals of repose and relaxation. The blockader on the other hand, was in every way at a disadvantage. He had no objective point except the blockade-runner, and he never knew when the blockade-runner was coming. He could choose nothing, but must take the circumstances as they happened to come; and they were pretty sure to be unfavorable. He was compelled to remain in that worst of all situations, incessant watchfulness combined with prolonged inaction. There would be days and nights of anxious waiting, with expectation strained to the tensest point, for an emergency which lasted only as many minutes, and which came when it was least expected. There was no telling when or where the blow would need to be struck; and a solitary moment of napping might be fatal, in spite of months of ceaseless vigilance.

At New Inlet, which was a favorite entrance, the blockade-runners would frequently get in by hugging the shore, slipping by the endmost vessel of the blockading line. Even on a clear night a properly prepared craft was invisible against the land, and the roar of the surf drowned the noise of her screw or paddles. Having a good pilot and little depth, she could generally run well inside of the blockaders. After passing the line, she would show a light on her inshore side; this was answered from the beach by a dim light, followed by another, above and beyond the first. These were the range-lights for the channel. By getting them in line, the blockade-runner could ascertain her position, and in a few moments, she would be under the guns of the fort. When the practice of blockade-running was reduced to a system, a signal-service was organized on shore, and signal officers and pilots were regularly detailed for each vessel. After the fall of Fort Fisher, and before the fact was known,

the duties of the signal-service were assumed by the officers of the Monticello, under the direction of Cushing; and two well known blockade-runners, the Stag and the Charlotte, were helped in by range-lights from the shore, only to find themselves prizes when they were comfortably anchored in the river.

Vessels passed so often between the squadron and the shore that special measures were taken to stop it. The endmost vessel was so placed as to leave a narrow passage. When the blockade-runner had passed, the blockader moved nearer and closed the entrance, at the same time sending up signal rockets. Two or three of her consorts were in waiting and closed up, and the adventurous vessel suddenly found herself hemmed in on all sides, and without a chance of escape.

Whenever a blockade-runner was hard pressed in a chase, it was a common practice for the captain to run her ashore, trusting to favorable circumstances to save a fragment of his cargo. Communicating with the forces in the neighborhood, he would obtain the co-operation of a detachment of infantry, often accompanied by one or two pieces of artillery, which would harass the parties sent from the blockading vessels to get the steamer off. At Wilmington, lunettes were thrown up along the shore, large enough for two guns, and a field-battery of Whitworth 12-pounders was kept in constant readiness to run down and occupy them. Sometimes the blockaders were able to command the land approaches, and so prevent the people on shore from doing mischief; but at other times the latter had it all their own way. It was no easy matter in any case to float off a steamer which had been beached intentionally under a full head of steam, especially if the tide was running ebb; and the fire of one or two rifled guns placed close by on the beach made the operation hazardous. The only course left was to burn the wreck; and even then, if

the work was not done thoroughly, the chances were that the fire would be extinguished, and the damaged vessel ultimately recovered. In July, 1863, the Kate, one of the new English-built craft, after running to Charleston and being chased off, put into Wilmington. She attempted to pass the fleet off New Inlet, but choosing her time badly, she was sighted about five in the morning, and, after a chase, she was run ashore on Smith's Island, and abandoned. The troops came down, but did nothing. A party was sent in from the Penobscot to get her off; but this failing, she was set on fire, and the officer in charge of the boat-party reported that he had disabled her so effectually that she would be of no further use. Three weeks later, however, she was floated off by the Confederates, and anchored under the batteries; a position from which she was cut out with some difficulty.

The Hebe, a Bermuda steamer, was run ashore a fortnight later on Federal Point, under circumstances generally similar, except that it was blowing a gale from the northeast. A boat sent in from the Niphon was swamped, but the crew succeeded in getting on board the Hebe. A second boat was driven ashore, and the crew were taken prisoners by the cavalry on the beach. The Hebe was covered by a two-gun Whitworth battery and fifty or more riflemen. Other boats put off, and rescued a few of the men on board the steamer. The last boat capsized; and the remaining men of the first party fired the ship, and making for the shore were captured. This time the vessel was destroyed. A few days later the large vessels of the squadron came in, silenced the battery, and finally sent in a landing-party, and brought off the guns.

One night in October of the same year the Venus, one of the finest and fastest of the vessels in the Nassau-Wilmington trade, made the blockading fleet off New Inlet. She was

first discovered by the Nansemond, commanded by Lieutenant Lamson. Lamson was always on the alert, and his work was always done quickly and thoroughly. After a short chase, he overhauled the Venus. When abeam he opened fire on her. Four well-directed shells played havoc with the blockade-runner. The first struck her foremast; the second exploded in the cabin; the third passed through forward, killing a man on the way; and the fourth, striking near the water-line, knocked in an iron plate, causing the vessel to make water fast. This was good practice, at night, with both vessels making nearly fourteen knots. The blockade-runner headed straight for the shore, and she was no sooner hard and fast, than the boarders had taken possession, and captured her officers and crew. As it was impossible to move her, she was riddled with shells and finally burnt where she lay.

One of the prettiest captures made off Wilmington was that of the Ella and Anna, by Acting Master J. B. Breck of the Niphon, in the following November. Breck was an officer of pluck and resource, and he won a name for himself by his dashing successes on the Wilmington blockade. About five o'clock on the morning of the 9th of November, as he was returning along the shore from a chase near Masonboro Inlet, he discovered a side-wheel steamer to the northward, stealing along toward the entrance of the river. Outside of her lay a blockader, which opened on her with grape, and the blockade-runner, finding herself intercepted, steered directly for the Niphon with the intention of running her down. Breck saw the intention, and fixed on his plan in an instant. Heading for the steamer, he formed his boarders on the bow. The blockade-runner dashed on at full speed under a shower of canister, and struck him a blow that carried away his bowsprit and stem. In a moment, his boarders were over the rail and

on the deck of the blockade-runner; and a few seconds made her a prize. She had on board three hundred cases of Austrian rifles and a quantity of saltpetre; and the prize-sale netted $180,000. The Ella and Anna was taken into the service, and in the next year, under her new name of the Malvern, became famous as the flagship of Admiral Porter.

The warfare on both sides was accompanied by a variety of ruses and stratagems, more or less ingenious and successful, but usually turning out to the benefit of the blockade-runner. When a steamer was sighted, the blockading vessel that made the discovery fired signals in the direction she had taken. This was at best an uncertain guide, as the blockaders could only make a rough guess at the stranger's position. The practice was no sooner understood than the enterprising captains at Nassau sent for a supply of signal rockets, and thereafter they were carried as a part of the regular equipment. Running through the fleet, and finding himself discovered, the captain immediately fired his rockets in a direction at right angles to his course; and the blockaders were sent on a wild-goose chase into the darkness. If there were many of them, they were apt to get in each other's way; and more than once serious damage was done by a friendly vessel. The Howquah, off Wilmington, on a dark night, in September, 1864, had nearly succeeded in making a prize, when the concentrated fire of the batteries, the blockading squadron, and, according to the belief of the commander, of the blockade-runner, proved to be too much for him, and caused him to draw off.

One of the blockade-running captains relates that, on a certain night, when he found himself alongside a vessel of the fleet and under her guns, he was told to heave to. Accordingly, steam was shut off, and he replied that he had stopped. There was a moderate sea, and the boat from the

cruiser was delayed. As it reached the side of the blockade-runner, the captain of the latter gave the order, "Full speed ahead," and his vessel shot away toward the channel. A deception of this kind, whatever may be thought of it abstractly, was one that would be likely to recoil on the blockade-runners. A vessel or two might avoid being sunk by pretending to surrender, but a blockader would hardly be caught twice by such a trick. The next time, instead of hailing before he fired, he would fire before he hailed; and he would be perfectly justified in so doing. Indeed, it is a question whether in a blockade so persistently broken as that of Wilmington, the ordinary rules of action for belligerent cruisers should not be modified, and vessels found *in flagrante delicto*, whether neutrals or not, be destroyed instead of being captured. Certainly, if destruction and not capture had always been the object, fewer blockade-runners would have escaped, and possibly fewer would have undertaken the business. There is always a possibility that a vessel met at sea, however suspicious the circumstances, may be innocent; but when found running through the blockading fleet, her guilt is established, and if there is any question about bringing her to—and at Wilmington there was always rather more than a question—the blockader is not far wrong whose first thought is to inflict a vital injury.

As it was, blockade-running was not an occupation involving much personal danger, and little apprehension was felt about running through the fleet. Calcium lights were burned, and shot and shell flew thickly over and around the entering vessel, but they did not often hit the mark. At Wilmington it was perhaps not so much the inshore blockade that killed the trade as the practice of keeping fast cruisers outside. Until near the end of 1864, when the stringency of the blockade became extreme, the captures were not

numerous enough to take up more than a slight margin of the enormous profits that it netted. These profits were made both on the outward and the inward voyages, and it is hard to say which were the more extraordinary. The inward cargoes consisted of all kinds of manufactured goods, and especially of "hardware," the innocent name under which arms and ammunition were invoiced. The sale of these brought in from five hundred tc one thousand per cent. of their cost. The return cargo was always cotton, and the steam-presses at Wilmington, reducing it to the smallest possible bulk, enabled the long, narrow blockade-runners to carry six hundred, eight hundred, or even twelve hundred bales, of five or six hundred pounds each. Even the upper deck was piled up with two or three tiers of bales. As a clear profit of £30,000 each way was no uncommon result, it is easy to believe that owners could afford to lose a vessel after two successful trips. It was the current opinion in the squadron off Wilmington, in the early part of the last year, that two-thirds of the vessels attempting to enter were successful; and it has been estimated that out of the sixty-six blockade-runners making regular trips during the war, forty were captured or destroyed, but only after a successful career for a shorter or longer period. Gradually, in the last few months, too many vessels were caught to make the trade profitable; and it was slowly declining, though it did not cease altogether until the blockade was raised.

As for the compensation of those who did the work, it may be interesting to give the schedule of rates of pay, on board a first-class vessel, when the business was at its height. The figures are given by "A. Roberts," one of the most famous of the *noms de guerre* in the contraband trade of Nassau. The rates are for a single trip from Nassau to Wilmington and back. Half the amount was given as a bounty at the

beginning of the voyage, and half at its successful completion. The amounts are as follows:

Captain	£1,000
Chief Officer	250
Second and Third Officer	150
Chief Engineer	500
Crew and firemen (about)	50
Pilot	750

Besides the money received, officers were able to stow away little cargoes of their own, and so to make on each trip a private speculation; and an occasional cotton-bale was brought out for a friend, by way of making a handsome present. In fact, the blockade-running captains, after six months of employment, could afford to retire with a snug competency for the rest of their life.

The merchants who withdrew early from the business acquired considerable fortunes; but those who kept on until the end met with heavy losses. Any speculation that brings sudden and excessive profits is likely to be overdone; and large amounts of capital were sunk in the last months of the war. At the close, the thriving business of Nassau and Bermuda suddenly collapsed, and they reverted to their former condition of stagnation; while the mercantile enterprise of Liverpool was directed to other and more legitimate channels.