THE GULF AND INLAND WATERS

THE NAVY IN THE CIVIL WAR.—III.

THE GULF

AND

INLAND WATERS

BY

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COMMANDER U. S. NAVY

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PREFACE.

THE narrative in these pages follows chiefly the official reports, and it is believed will not be found to conflict seriously with them. Official reports, however, are liable to errors of statement and especially to the omission of facts, well known to the writer but not always to the reader, the want of which is seriously felt when the attempt is made not only to tell the gross results but to detail the steps that led to them. Such omissions, which are specially frequent in the earlier reports of the Civil War, the author has tried to supply by questions put, principally by letter, to surviving witnesses. A few have neglected to answer, and on those points he has been obliged, with some embarrassment, to depend on his own judgment upon the circumstances of the case; but by far the greater part of the officers addressed, both Union and Confederate, have replied very freely. The number of his correspondents has been too numerous to admit of his thanking them by name, but he begs here to renew to them all the acknowledgments which have already been made to each in person.

A. T. M.

JUNE, 1883.

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CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY.

THE naval operations described in the following pages extended, on the seaboard, over the Gulf of Mexico from Key West to the mouth of the Rio Grande; and inland over the course of the Mississippi, and its affluents, from Cairo, at the southern extremity of the State of Illinois, to the mouths of the river.

Key West is one of the low coral islands, or keys, which stretch out, in a southwesterly direction, into the Gulf from the southern extremity of the Florida peninsula. It has a good harbor, and was used during, as since, the war as a naval station. From Key West to the mouth of the Rio Grande, the river forming the boundary between Mexico and the State of Texas, the distance in a straight line is about eight hundred and forty miles. The line joining the two points departs but little from an east and west direction, the mouth of the river, in 25° 26′ N., being eighty-three miles north of the island; but the shore line is over sixteen hundred miles, measuring from the southern extremity of Florida. Beginning at that point, the west side of the peninsula runs north-northwest till it reaches the 30th degree of latitude; turning then, the coast follows that parallel

approximately till it reaches the delta of the Mississippi. That delta, situated about midway between the east and west ends of the line, projects southward into the Gulf of Mexico as far as parallel 29° N., terminating in a long, narrow arm, through which the river enters the Gulf by three principal branches, or passes. From the delta the shore sweeps gently round, inclining first a little to the north of west, until near the boundary between the States of Louisiana and Texas; then it curves to the southwest until a point is reached about one hundred miles north of the mouth of the Rio Grande, whence it turns abruptly south. Five States, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas, in the order named, touch the waters bounded by this long, irregular line; but the shore of two of them, Alabama and Mississippi, taken together, extends over little more than one hundred miles. All five joined at an early date in the secession movement.

The character of the coast, from one end to the other, varies but slightly in appearance. It is everywhere low, and either sandy or marshy. An occasional bluff of moderate height is to be seen. A large proportion of the line is skirted by low sandy islands, sometimes joined by narrow necks to the mainland, forming inland sounds of considerable extent, access to which is generally impracticable for vessels of much draft of water. They, however, as well as numerous bays and the mouths of many small rivers, can be entered by light vessels acquainted with the ground; and during the war small steamers and schooners frequently escaped through them, carrying cargoes of cotton, then of great value. There is but little rise and fall of the tide in the Gulf, from one to two feet, but the height of the water is much affected by the direction of the wind.

The principal ports on or near the Gulf are New Orleans

in Louisiana, Mobile in Alabama, and Galveston in Texas. Tallahassee and Apalachicola, in Florida, also carried on a brisk trade in cotton at the time of the secession. By far the best harbor is Pensacola Bay, in Florida, near the Alabama line. The town was not at that time a place of much commerce, on account of defective communication with the interior; but the depth of water, twenty-two feet, that could be carried over the bar, and the secure spacious anchorage within made it of great value as a naval station. It had been so used prior to the war, and, although falling at first into the hands of the Confederates, was shortly regained by the Union forces, to whom, from its nearness to Mobile and the passes of the Mississippi, as well as from its intrinsic advantages, it was of great importance throughout the contest.

The aim of the National Government in connection with this large expanse of water and its communications was twofold. First, it was intended to enter the Mississippi River from the sea, and working up its stream in connection with the land forces, to take possession of the well-known positions that gave command of the navigation. Simultaneously with this movement from below, a similar movement downward, with the like object, was to be undertaken in the upper waters. If successful, as they proved to be, the result of these attacks would be to sever the States in rebellion on the east side of the river from those on the west, which, though not the most populous, contributed largely in men, and yet more abundantly in food, to the support of the Confederacy.

The second object of the Government was to enforce a strict blockade over the entire coast, from the Rio Grande to Florida. There were not in the Confederate harbors powerful fleets, or even single vessels of war, which it was necessary to lock up in their own waters. One or two *quasi* men-of-war escaped from them, to run short and, in the main,

harmless careers; but the cruise that inflicted the greatest damage on the commerce of the Union was made by a vessel that never entered a Southern port. The blockade was not defensive, but offensive; its purpose was to close every inlet by which the products of the South could find their way to the markets of the world, and to shut out the material, not only of war, but essential to the peaceful life of a people, which the Southern States were ill-qualified by their previous pursuits to produce. Such a blockade could be made technically effectual by ships cruising or anchored outside; but there was a great gain in actual efficiency when the vessels could be placed within the harbors. The latter plan was therefore followed wherever possible and safe; and the larger fortified places were reduced and occupied as rapidly as possible consistent with the attainment of the prime object—the control of the Mississippi Valley.

Before the war the Atlantic and Gulf waters of the United States, with those of the West Indies, Mexico, and Central America, were the cruising ground of one division of vessels, known as the Home Squadron. At the beginning of hostilities this squadron was under the command of Flag-Officer G. J. Pendergrast, who rendered essential and active service during the exciting and confused events which immediately followed the bombardment of Fort Sumter. The command was too extensive to be administered by any one man, when it became from end to end the scene of active war, so it was soon divided into three parts. The West India Squadron, having in its charge United States interests in Mexico and Central America as well as in the islands, remained under the care of Flag-Officer Pendergrast. Flag-Officer Stringham assumed command of the Atlantic Squadron, extending as far south as Cape Florida; and the Gulf, from Cape Florida to the Rio Grande, was assigned to Flag-Officer Wil-

liam Mervine, who reached his station on the 8th of June, 1861. On the 4th of July the squadron consisted of twenty-one vessels, carrying two hundred and eighty-two guns, and manned by three thousand five hundred men.

Flag-Officer Mervine was relieved in the latter part of September. The blockade was maintained as well as the number and character of the vessels permitted, but no fighting of any consequence took place. A dashing cutting-out expedition from the flag-ship Colorado, under Lieutenant J. H. Russell, assisted by Lieutenants Sproston and Blake, with subordinate officers and seamen, amounting in all to four boats and one hundred men, seized and destroyed an armed schooner lying alongside the wharf of the Pensacola Navy Yard, under the protection of a battery. The service was gallantly carried out; the schooner's crew, after a desperate resistance, were driven on shore, whence, with the guard, they resumed their fire on the assailants. The affair cost the flag-ship three men killed and nine wounded.

Under Mervine's successor, Flag-Officer W. W. McKean, more of interest occurred. The first collision was unfortunate, and, to some extent, humiliating to the service. A squadron consisting of the steam-sloop Richmond, sailing-sloops Vincennes and Preble, and the small side-wheel steamer Water Witch had entered the Mississippi early in the month of October, and were at anchor at the head of the passes. At 3.30 A.M., October 12th, a Confederate ram made its appearance close aboard the Richmond, which, at the time, had a coal schooner alongside. The ram charged the Richmond, forcing a small hole in her side about two feet below the water-line, and tearing the schooner adrift. She dropped astern, lay quietly for a few moments off the port-quarter of the Richmond, and then steamed slowly up the river, receiving broadsides from the Richmond and Preble,

and throwing up a rocket. In a few moments three dim lights were seen up the river near the eastern shore. They were shortly made out to be fire-rafts. The squadron slipped their chains, the three larger vessels, by direction of the senior officer, retreating down the Southwest Pass to the sea; but in the attempt to cross, the Richmond and Vincennes grounded on the bar. The fire-rafts drifted harmlessly on to the western bank of the river, and then burned out. When day broke, the enemy's fleet, finding the head of the passes abandoned, followed down the river, and with rifled guns kept up a steady but not very accurate long-range fire upon the stranded ships, not venturing within reach of the Richmond's heavy broadside. About 10 A.M., apparently satisfied with the day's work, they returned up river, and the ships shortly after got afloat and crossed the bar.

The ram which caused this commotion and hasty retreat was a small vessel of three hundred and eighty-four tons, originally a Boston tug-boat called the Enoch Train, which had been sent to New Orleans to help in improving the channel of the Mississippi. When the war broke out she was taken by private parties and turned into a ram on speculation. An arched roof of 5-inch timber was thrown over her deck, and this covered with a layer of old-fashioned railroad iron, from three-fourths to one inch thick, laid lengthways. At the time of this attack she had a cast-iron prow under water, and carried a IX-inch gun, pointing straight ahead through a slot in the roof forward; but as this for some reason could not be used, it was lashed in its place. Her dimensions were: length 128 feet, beam 26 feet, depth 12½ feet. She had twin screws, and at this time one engine was running at high pressure and the other at low, both being in bad order, so that she could only steam six knots; but carrying the current with her she struck the

Richmond with a speed of from nine to ten. Although afterward bought by the Confederate Government, she at this time still belonged to private parties; but as her captain, pilot, and most of the other officers refused to go in her, Lieutenant A. F. Warley, of the Confederate Navy, was ordered to the command by Commodore Hollins. In the collision her prow was wrenched off, her smoke-stack carried away and the condenser of the low-pressure engine gave out, which accounts for her "remaining under the Richmond's quarter," "dropping astern," and "lying quietly abeam of the Preble, apparently hesitating whether to come at her or not." As soon as possible she limped off under her remaining engine.

Although it was known to the officers of the Union fleet that the enemy had a ram up the river, it does not appear that any preparation for defence had been made, or plan of action adopted. Even the commonplace precaution of sending out a picket-boat had not been taken. The attack, therefore, was a surprise, not only in the ordinary sense of the word, but, so far as appears, in finding the officer in command without any formed ideas as to what he would do if she came down. "The whole affair came upon me so suddenly that no time was left for reflection, but called for immediate action." These are his own words. The natural outcome of not having his resources in hand was a hasty retreat before an enemy whose force he now exaggerated and with whom he was not prepared to deal; a move which brought intense mortification to himself and in a measure to the service.

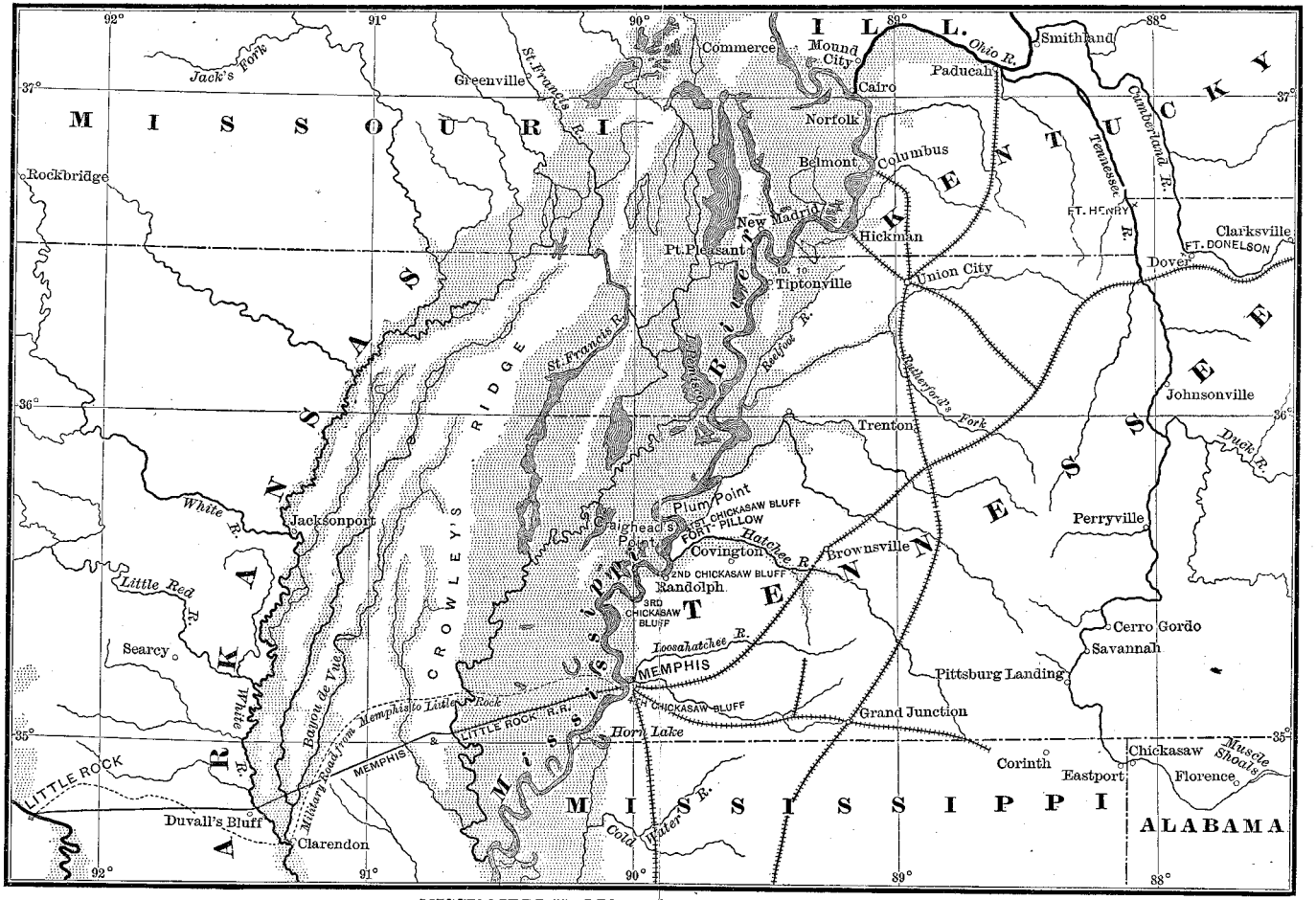
It is a relief to say that the Water Witch, a small vessel of under four hundred tons, with three light guns, commanded by Lieutenant Francis Winslow, held her ground, steaming up beyond the fire-rafts until daylight showed her the larger vessels in retreat.

During the night of November 7th the U. S. frigate San-

tee, blockading off Galveston, sent into the harbor two boats, under the command of Lieutenant James E. Jouett, with the object of destroying the man-of-war steamer General Rusk. The armed schooner Royal Yacht guarding the channel was passed unseen, but the boats shortly after took the ground and were discovered. Thinking it imprudent to attack the steamer without the advantage of a surprise, Lieutenant Jouett turned upon the schooner, which was carried after a sharp conflict. The loss of the assailants was two killed and seven wounded. The schooner was burnt.

On November 22d and 23d Flag-Officer McKean, with the Niagara and Richmond, made an attack upon Fort McRea on the western side of the entrance to Pensacola Bay; Fort Pickens, on the east side, which remained in the power of the United States, directing its guns upon the fort and the Navy Yard, the latter being out of reach of the ships. The fire of McRea was silenced the first day; but on the second a north-west wind had so lowered the water that the ships could not get near enough to reach the fort. The affair was entirely indecisive, being necessarily conducted at very long range.

From this time on, until the arrival of Flag-Officer David G. Farragut, a guerilla warfare was maintained along the coast, having always the object of making the blockade more effective and the conditions of the war more onerous to the Southern people. Though each little expedition contributed to this end, singly they offer nothing that it is necessary to chronicle here. When Farragut came the squadron was divided. St. Andrew's Bay, sixty miles east of Pensacola, was left in the East Gulf Squadron; all west of that point was Farragut's command, under the name of the Western Gulf Blockading Squadron. Stirring and important events were now at hand, before relating which the course of the war on the Upper Mississippi demands attention.



MISSISSIPPI VALLEY—CAIRO TO MEMPHIS.

CHAPTER II.

FROM CAIRO TO VICKSBURG.

At the 37th parallel of north latitude the Ohio, which drains the northeast portion of the Valley of the Mississippi, enters that river. At the point of junction three powerful States meet. Illinois, here bounded on either side by the great river and its tributary, lies on the north; on the east it is separated by the Ohio from Kentucky, on the west by the Mississippi from Missouri. Of the three Illinois was devoted to the cause of the Union, but the allegiance of the two others, both slave-holding, was very doubtful at the time of the outbreak of hostilities.

The general course of the Mississippi here being south, while that of the Ohio is southwest, the southern part of Illinois projects like a wedge between the two other States. At the extreme point of the wedge, where the rivers meet, is a low point of land, subject, in its unprotected state, to frequent overflows by the rising of the waters. On this point, protected by dikes or levees, is built the town of Cairo, which from its position became, during the war, the naval arsenal and dépôt of the Union flotilla operating in the Mississippi Valley.

From Cairo to the mouths of the Mississippi is a distance of ten hundred and ninety-seven miles by the stream. So devious, however, is the course of the latter that the two points are only four hundred and eighty miles apart in a due

north and south line; for the river, after having inclined to the westward till it has increased its longitude by some two degrees and a half, again bends to the east, reaching the Gulf on the meridian of Cairo. Throughout this long distance the character of the river-bed is practically unchanged. The stream flows through an alluvial region, beginning a few miles above Cairo, which is naturally subject to overflow during floods; but the surrounding country is protected against such calamities by raised embankments, or dikes, known throughout that region as levees.

The river and its tributaries are subject to very great variations of height, which are often sudden and unexpected, but when observed through a series of years present a certain regularity. They depend upon the rains and the melting of the snows in their basins. The greatest average height is attained in the late winter and early spring months; another rise takes place in the early summer; the months of August, September, and October give the lowest water, the rise following them being due to the autumnal rains. It will be seen at times that these rises and falls, especially when sudden, had their bearing upon the operations of both army and navy.

At a few points of the banks high land is encountered. On the right, or western, bank there is but one such, at Helena, in the State of Arkansas, between three and four hundred miles below Cairo. On the left bank such points are more numerous. The first is at Columbus, twenty-one miles down the stream; then follow the bluffs at Hickman, in Kentucky; a low ridge (which also extends to the right bank) below New Madrid, rising from one to fifteen feet above overflow; the four Chickasaw bluffs in Tennessee, on the southernmost of which is the city of Memphis; and finally a rapid succession of similar bluffs extending for two hundred and fifty miles,

at short intervals, from Vicksburg, in Mississippi, about six hundred miles below Cairo, to Baton Rouge, in Louisiana. Of these last Vicksburg, Grand Gulf, and Port Hudson became the scenes of important events of the war.

It is easy to see that each of these rare and isolated points afforded a position by the fortification of which the passage of an enemy could be disputed, and the control of the stream maintained, as long as it remained in the hands of the defenders. They were all, except Columbus and Hickman, in territory which, by the act of secession, had become hostile to the Government of the United States; and they all, not excepting even the two last-named, were seized and fortified by the Confederates. It was against this chain of defences that the Union forces were sent forth from either end of the line; and fighting their way, step by step, and post by post, those from the north and those from the south met at length around the defences of Vicksburg. From the time of that meeting the narratives blend until the fall of the fortress; but, prior to that time, it is necessary to tell the story of each separately. The northern expeditions were the first in the field, and to them this chapter is devoted.

The importance of controlling the Mississippi was felt from the first by the United States Government. This importance was not only strategic; it was impossible that the already powerful and fast-growing Northwestern States should see without grave dissatisfaction the outlet of their great highway pass into the hands of a foreign power. Even before the war the necessity to those States of controlling the river was an argument against the possibility of disunion, at least on a line crossing it. From the military point of view, however, not only did the Mississippi divide the Confederacy, but the numerous streams directly or indirectly tributary to it, piercing the country in every direction, af-

forded a ready means of transport for troops and their supplies in a country of great extent, but otherwise ill-provided with means of carriage. From this consideration it was but a step to see the necessity of an inland navy for operating on and keeping open those waters.

The necessity being recognized, the construction of the required fleet was at the first entrusted to the War Department, the naval officers assigned for that duty reporting to the military officer commanding in the West. The fleet, or flotilla, while under this arrangement, really constituted a division of the army, and its commanding officer was liable to interference, not only at the hands of the commander-in-chief, but of subordinate officers of higher rank than himself.

On May 16, 1861, Commander John Rodgers was directed to report to the War Department for this service. Under his direction there were purchased in Cincinnati three river-steamers, the Tyler, Lexington, and Conestoga. These were altered into gunboats by raising around them perpendicular oak bulwarks, five inches thick and proof against musketry, which were pierced for ports, but bore no iron plating. The boilers were dropped into the hold, and steam-pipes lowered as much as possible. The Tyler mounted six 64-pounders in broadside, and one 32-pounder stern gun; the Lexington, four 64s and two 32s; the Conestoga, two broadside 32s and one light stern gun. After being altered, these vessels were taken down to Cairo, where they arrived August 12th, having been much delayed by the low state of the river; one of them being dragged by the united power of the three over a bar on which was one foot less water than her draught.

On the 7th of August, a contract was made by the War Department with James B. Eads, of St. Louis, by which he

undertook to complete seven gunboats, and deliver them at Cairo on the 10th day of October of the same year. These vessels were one hundred and seventy-five feet long and fifty feet beam. The propelling power was one large paddle-wheel, which was placed in an opening prepared for it, midway of the breadth of the vessel and a little forward of the stern, in such wise as to be materially protected by the sides and casemate. This opening, which was eighteen feet wide, extended forward sixty feet from the stern, dividing the after-body into two parts, which were connected abaft the wheel by planking thrown from one side to the other. This after-part was called the fantail. The casemate extended from the curve of the bow to that of the stern, and was carried across the deck both forward and aft, thus forming a square box, whose sides sloped in and up at an angle of forty-five degrees, containing the battery, the machinery, and the paddle-wheel. The casemate was pierced for thirteen guns, three in the forward end ranging directly ahead, four on each broadside, and two stern guns.

As the expectation was to fight generally bows on, the forward end of the casemate carried iron armor two and a half inches thick, backed by twenty-four inches of oak. The rest of the casemate was not protected by armor, except abreast of the boilers and engines, where there were two and a half inches of iron, but without backing. The stern, therefore, was perfectly vulnerable, as were the sides forward and abaft the engines. The latter were high pressure, like those of all Western river-boats, and, though the boilers were dropped into the hold as far as possible, the light draught and easily pierced sides left the vessels exposed in action to the fearful chance of an exploded boiler. Over the casemate forward was a pilot-house of conical shape, built of heavy oak, and plated on the forward side with 2½-inch iron, on the after

with 1½-inch. With guns, coal, and stores on board, the casemate deck came nearly down to the water, and the vessels drew from six to seven feet, the peculiar outline giving them no small resemblance to gigantic turtles wallowing slowly along in their native element. Below the water the form was that of a scow, the bottom being flat. Their burden was five hundred and twelve tons.

The armament was determined by the exigencies of the time, such guns as were available being picked up here and there and forwarded to Cairo. The army supplied thirty-five old 42-pounders, which were rifled, and so threw a 70-pound shell. These having lost the metal cut away for grooves, and not being banded, were called upon to endure the increased strain of firing rifled projectiles with actually less strength than had been allowed for the discharge of a round ball of about half the weight. Such make-shifts are characteristic of nations that do not prepare for war, and will doubtless occur again in the experience of our navy; fortunately, in this conflict, the enemy was as ill-provided as ourselves. Several of these guns burst; their crews could be seen eyeing them distrustfully at every fire, and when at last they were replaced by sounder weapons, many were not turned into store, but thrown, with a sigh of relief, into the waters of the Mississippi. The remainder of the armament was made up by the navy with old-fashioned 32-pound and VIII-inch smooth-bore guns, fairly serviceable and reliable weapons. Each of these seven gunboats, when thus ready for service, carried four of the above-described rifles, six 32-pounders of 43 cwt., and three VIII-inch shell-guns; total, thirteen.

The vessels, when received into service, were named after cities standing upon the banks of the rivers which they were to defend—Cairo, Carondelet, Cincinnati, Louisville, Mound

City, Pittsburg, St. Louis. They, with the Benton, formed the backbone of the river fleet throughout the war. Other more pretentious, and apparently more formidable, vessels, were built; but from thorough bad workmanship, or appearing too late on the scene, they bore no proportionate share in the fighting. The eight may be fairly called the ships of the line of battle on the western waters.

The Benton was of the same general type as the others, but was purchased by, not built for, the Government. She was originally a snag-boat, and so constructed with special view to strength. Her size was 1,000 tons, double that of the seven; length, 202 feet; extreme breadth, 72 feet. The forward plating was 3 inches of iron, backed by 30 inches of oak; at the stern, and abreast the engines, there was 2½-inch iron, backed by 12 inches of oak; the rest of the sides of the casemates was covered with ⅝-inch iron. With guns and stores on board, she drew nine feet. Her first armament was two IX-inch shell-guns, seven rifled 42s, and seven 32-pounders of 43 cwt.; total, sixteen guns. It will be seen, therefore, that she differed from the others simply in being larger and stronger; she was, indeed, the most powerful fighting-machine in the squadron, but her speed was only five knots an hour through the water, and her engines so little commensurate with her weight that Flag-Officer Foote hesitated long to receive her. The slowness was forgiven for her fitness for battle, and she went by the name of the old war-horse.

There was one other vessel of size equal to the Benton, which, being commanded by a son of Commodore Porter, of the war of 1812, got the name Essex. After bearing a creditable part in the battle of Fort Henry, she became separated by the batteries of Vicksburg from the upper squadron, and is less identified with its history. Her armament was three IX-inch, one X-inch, and one 32-pounder.

On the 6th of September Commander Rodgers was relieved by Captain A. H. Foote, whose name is most prominently associated with the equipment and early operations of the Mississippi flotilla. At that time he reported to the Secretary that there were three wooden gunboats in commission, nine ironclads and thirty-eight mortar-boats building. The mortar-boats were rafts or blocks of solid timber, carrying one XIII-inch mortar.

The construction and equipment of the fleet was seriously delayed by the lack of money, and the general confusion incident to the vast extent of military and naval preparations suddenly undertaken by a nation having a very small body of trained officers, and accustomed to raise and expend comparatively insignificant amounts of money. Constant complaints were made by the officers and contractors that lack of money prevented them from carrying on their work. The first of the seven ironclads was launched October 12th and the seven are returned by the Quartermaster's Department as received December 5, 1861. On the 12th of January, 1862, Flag-Officer Foote reported that he expected to have all the gunboats in commission by the 20th, but had only one-third crews for them. The crews were of a heterogeneous description. In November a draft of five hundred were sent from the seaboard, which, though containing a proportion of men-of-war's men, had a yet larger number of coasting and merchant seamen, and of landsmen. In the West two or three hundred steamboat men, with a few sailors from the Lakes, were shipped. In case of need, deficiencies were made up by drafts from regiments in the army. On the 23d of December, 1861, eleven hundred men were ordered from Washington to be thus detailed for the fleet. Many difficulties, however, arose in making the transfer. General Halleck insisted that the officers of the regiments must accompany their

men on board, the whole body to be regarded as marines and to owe obedience to no naval officer except the commander of the gunboat. Foote refused this, saying it would be ruinous to discipline; that the second in command, or executive officer, by well-established naval usage, controlled all officers, even though senior in rank to himself; and that there were no quarters for so many more officers, for whom, moreover, he had no use. Later on Foote writes to the Navy Department that not more than fifty men had joined from the army, though many had volunteered; the derangement of companies and regiments being the reason assigned for not sending the others. It does not appear that more than these fifty came at that time. There is no more unsatisfactory method of getting a crew than by drafts from the commands of other men. Human nature is rarely equal to parting with any but the worst; and Foote had so much trouble with a subsequent detachment that he said he would rather go into action half manned than take another draft from the army. In each vessel the commander was the only trained naval officer, and upon him devolved the labor of organizing and drilling this mixed multitude. In charge of and responsible for the whole was the flag-officer, to whom, though under the orders of General Fremont, the latter had given full discretion.

Meanwhile the three wooden gunboats had not been idle during the preparation of the main ironclad fleet. Arriving at Cairo, as has been stated, on the 12th of August, the necessity for action soon arose. During the early months of the war the State of Kentucky had announced her intention of remaining a neutral between the contending parties. Neither of the latter was willing to precipitate her, by an invasion of her soil, into the arms of the other, and for some time the operations of the Confederates were confined to

Tennessee, south of her borders, the United States troops remaining north of the Ohio. On September 4th, however, the Confederates crossed the line and occupied in force the bluffs at Columbus and Hickman, which they proceeded at once to fortify. The military district about Cairo was then under the command of General Grant, who immediately moved up the Ohio, and seized Paducah, at the mouth of the Tennessee River, and Smithland, at the mouth of the Cumberland. These two rivers enter the Ohio ten miles apart, forty and fifty miles above Cairo. Rising in the Cumberland and Alleghany Mountains, their course leads through the heart of Tennessee, to which their waters give easy access through the greater part of the year. Two gunboats accompanied this movement, in which, however, there was no fighting.

On the 10th of September, the Lexington, Commander Stembel, and Conestoga, Lieutenant-Commanding Phelps, went down the Mississippi, covering an advance of troops on the Missouri side. A brisk cannonade followed between the boats and the Confederate artillery, and shots were exchanged with the gunboat Yankee. On the 24th, Captain Foote, by order of General Fremont, moved in the Lexington up the Ohio River to Owensboro. The Conestoga was to have accompanied this movement, but she was up the Cumberland or Tennessee at the time; arriving later she remained, by order, at Owensboro till the falling of the river compelled her to return, there being on some of the bars less water than she drew. A few days later this active little vessel showed herself again on the Mississippi, near Columbus, endeavoring to reach a Confederate gunboat that lay under the guns of the works; then again on the Tennessee, which she ascended as far as the Tennessee State Line, reconnoitring Fort Henry, subsequently the scene of Foote's first decisive victory over the enemy. Two days later the Cumberland was entered for

the distance of sixty miles. On the 28th of October, accompanied by a transport and some companies of troops, she again ascended the Cumberland, and broke up a Confederate camp, the enemy losing several killed and wounded. The frequent appearances of these vessels, while productive of no material effect beyond the capture or destruction of Confederate property, were of service in keeping alive the attachment to the Union where it existed. The crews of the gunboats also became accustomed to the presence of the enemy, and to the feeling of being under fire.

On the 7th of November a more serious affair took place. The evening before, the gunboats Tyler, Commander Walke, and Lexington, Commander Stembel, convoyed transports containing three thousand troops, under the command of General Grant, down the Mississippi as far as Norfolk, eight miles, where they anchored on the east side of the river. The following day the troops landed at Belmont, which is opposite Columbus and under the guns of that place. The Confederate troops were easily defeated and driven to the river's edge, where they took refuge on their transports. During this time the gunboats engaged the batteries on the Iron Banks, as the part of the bluff above the town is called. The heavy guns of the enemy, from their commanding position, threw easily over the boats, reaching even to and beyond the transports on the opposite shore up stream. Under Commander Walke's direction the transports were moved further up, out of range.

Meanwhile the enemy was pushing reinforcements across the stream below the works, and the Union forces, having accomplished the diversion which was the sole object of the expedition, began to fall back to their transports. It would seem that the troops, yet unaccustomed to war, had been somewhat disordered by their victory, so that the return was

not accomplished as rapidly as was desirable, the enemy pressing down upon the transports. At this moment the gunboats, from a favorable position, opened upon them with grape, canister, and five-second shell, silencing them with great slaughter. When the transports were under way the two gunboats followed in the rear, covering the retreat till the enemy ceased to follow.

In this succession of encounters the Tyler lost one man killed and two wounded. The Lexington escaped without loss.

When a few miles up the river on the return, General McClernand, ascertaining that some of the troops had not embarked, directed the gunboats to go back for them, the general himself landing to await their return. This service was performed, some 40 prisoners being taken on board along with the troops.

In his official report of this, the first of his many gallant actions on the rivers, Commander Walke praises warmly the efficiency as well as the zeal of the crews of the gunboats, though as yet so new to their duties.

The flotilla being at this time under the War Department, as has been already stated, its officers, each and all, were liable to orders from any army officer of superior rank to them. Without expressing a decided opinion as to the advisability of this arrangement under the circumstances then existing, it was entirely contrary to the established rule by which, when military and naval forces are acting together, the commander of each branch decides what he can or can not do, and is not under the control of the other, whatever the relative rank. At this time Captain Foote himself had only the rank of colonel, and found, to use his own expression, that "every brigadier could interfere with him." On the 13th of November, 1861, he received the appointment

of flag-officer, which gave him the same rank as a major-general, and put him above the orders of any except the commander-in-chief of the department. Still the subordinate naval officers were liable to orders at any time from any general with whom they might be, without the knowledge of the flag-officer. It is creditable to the good feeling and sense of duty of both the army and navy that no serious difficulty arose from this anomalous condition of affairs, which came to an end in July, 1862, when the fleet was transferred to the Navy Department.

After the battle of Belmont nothing of importance occurred in the year 1861. The work on the ironclads was pushed on, and there are traces of the reconnoissances by the gunboats in the rivers. In January, 1862, some tentative movements, having no particular result, were made in the direction of Columbus and up the Tennessee. There was a great desire to get the mortar-boats completed, but they were not ready in time for the opening operations at Fort Henry and Donelson, their armaments not having arrived.

On the 2d of February, Flag-Officer Foote left Cairo for Paducah, arriving the same evening. There were assembled the four armored gunboats, Essex, Commander Wm. D. Porter; Carondelet, Commander Walke; St. Louis, Lieutenant Paulding; and Cincinnati, Commander Stembel; as well as the three wooden gunboats, Conestoga, Lieutenant Phelps; Tyler, Lieutenant Gwin; and Lexington, Lieutenant Shirk. The object of the expedition was to attack, conjointly with the army, Fort Henry on the Tennessee, and, after reducing the fort, to destroy the railroad bridge over the river connecting Bowling Green with Columbus. The flag-officer deplored that scarcity of men prevented his coming with four other boats, but to man those he brought it had been necessary to strip Cairo of all men except a crew for one gunboat.

Only 50 men of the 1,100 promised on December 23d had been received from the army.

Fort Henry was an earthwork with five bastions, situated on the east bank of the Tennessee River, on low ground, but in a position where a slight bend in the stream gave it command of the stretch below for two or three miles. It mounted twenty guns, but of these only twelve bore upon the ascending fleet. These twelve were: one X-inch columbiad, one 60-pounder rifle, two 42- and eight 32-pounders. The plan of attack was simple. The armored gunboats advanced in the first order of steaming, in line abreast, fighting their bow guns, of which eleven were brought into action by the four. The flag-officer purposed by continually advancing, or, if necessary, falling back, to constantly alter the range, thus causing error in the elevation of the enemy's guns, presenting, at the same time, the least vulnerable part, the bow, to his fire. The vessels kept their line by the flag-ship Cincinnati. The other orders were matters of detail, the most important being to fire accurately rather than with undue rapidity. The wooden gunboats formed a second line astern, and to the right of the main division.

Two days previous to the action there were heavy rains which impeded the movements of the troops, caused the rivers to rise, and brought down a quantity of drift-wood and trees. The same flood swept from their moorings a number of torpedoes, planted by the Confederates, which were grappled with and towed ashore by the wooden gunboats.

Half an hour after noon on the 6th, the fleet, having waited in vain for the army, which was detained by the condition of the roads, advanced to the attack. The armored vessels opened fire, the flag-ship beginning, at seventeen hundred yards distance, and continued steaming steadily ahead to within six hundred yards of the fort. As the dis-

tance decreased, the fire on both sides increased in rapidity and accuracy. An hour after the action began the 60-pound rifle in the fort burst, and soon after the priming wire of the 10-inch columbiad jammed and broke in the vent, thus spiking the gun, which could not be relieved. The balance of force was, however, at once more than restored, for a shot from the fort pierced the casemate of the Essex over the port bow gun, ranged aft, and killing a master's mate in its flight, passed through the middle boiler. The rush of high-pressure steam scalded almost all in the forward part of the casemate, including her commander and her two pilots in the pilot-house. Many of the victims threw themselves into the water, and the vessel, disabled, drifted down with the current out of action. The contest was vigorously continued by the three remaining boats, and at 1.45 P.M. the Confederate flag was lowered. The commanding officer, General Tilghman, came on board and surrendered the fort and garrison to the fleet; but the greater part of the Confederate forces had been previously withdrawn to Fort Donelson, twelve miles distant, on the Cumberland. Upon the arrival of the army the fort and material captured were turned over to the general commanding.

In this sharp and decisive action the gunboats showed themselves well fitted to contend with most of the guns at that time to be found upon the rivers, provided they could fight bows on. Though repeatedly struck, the flag-ship as often as thirty-one times, the armor proved sufficient to deflect or resist the impact of the projectiles. The disaster, however, that befel the Essex made fearfully apparent a class of accidents to which they were exposed, and from which more than one boat, on either side, on the Western waters subsequently suffered. The fleet lost two killed and nine wounded, besides twenty-eight scalded, many of whom died.

The Essex had also nineteen soldiers on board; nine of whom were scalded, four fatally.

The surrender of the fort was determined by the destruction of its armament. Of the twelve guns, seven, by the commander's report, were disabled when the flag was hauled down. One had burst in discharging, the rest were put out of action by the fire of the fleet. The casualties were few, not exceeding twenty killed and wounded.

Flag-Officer Foote, having turned over his capture to the army, returned the same evening to Cairo with three armored vessels, leaving the Carondelet. At the same time the three wooden gunboats, in obedience to orders issued before the battle, started up river under the command of Lieutenant Phelps, reaching the railroad bridge, twenty-five miles up, after dark. Here the machinery for turning the draw was found to be disabled, while on the other side were to be seen some transport steamers escaping up stream. An hour was required to open the draw, when two of the boats proceeded in chase of the transports, the Tyler, as the slowest, being left to destroy the track as far as possible. Three of the Confederate steamers, loaded with military stores, two of them with explosives, were run ashore and fired. The Union gunboats stopped half a mile below the scene, but even at that distance the force of the explosion shattered glasses, forced open doors, and raised the light upper decks.

The Lexington, having destroyed the trestle-work at the end of the bridge, rejoined the following morning; and the three boats, continuing their raid, arrived the next night at Cerro Gordo, near the Mississippi line. Here was seized a large steamer called the Eastport, which the Confederates were altering into a gunboat. There being at this point large quantities of lumber, the Tyler was left to ship it and guard the prize.

The following day, the 8th, the two boats continued up river, passing through the northern part of the States of Mississippi and Alabama, to Florence, where the Muscle Shoals prevented their farther progress. On the way two more steamers were seized, and three were set on fire by the enemy as they approached Florence. Returning the same night, upon information received that a Confederate camp was established at Savannah, Tennessee, on the bank of the river, a party was landed, which found the enemy gone, but seized or destroyed the camp equipage and stores left behind. The expedition reached Cairo again on the 11th, bringing with it the Eastport and one other of the captured steamers. The Eastport had been intended by the Confederates for a gunboat, and was in process of conversion when captured. Lieutenant Phelps reported her machinery in first-rate order and the boilers dropped into the hold. Her hull had been sheathed with oak planking and the bulkheads, forward, aft, and thwartships, were of oak and of the best workmanship. Her beautiful model, speed, and manageable qualities made her specially desirable for the Union fleet, and she was taken into the service. Two years later she was sunk by torpedoes in the Red River, and, though partially raised, it was found impossible to bring her over the shoals that lay below her. She was there blown up, her former captor and then commander, Lieutenant Phelps, applying the match.

Lieutenant Phelps and his daring companions returned to Cairo just in time to join Foote on his way to Fort Donelson. The attack upon this position, which was much stronger than Fort Henry, was made against the judgment of the flag-officer, who did not consider the fleet as yet properly prepared. At the urgent request of Generals Halleck and Grant, however, he steamed up the Cumberland River

with three ironclads and the wooden gunboats, the Carondelet having already, at Grant's desire, moved round to Donelson.

Fort Donelson was on the left bank of the Cumberland, twelve miles southeast of Fort Henry. The main work was on a bluff about a hundred feet high, at a bend commanding the river below. On the slope of the ridge, looking down stream, were two water batteries, with which alone the fleet had to do. The lower and principal one mounted eight 32-pounders and a X-inch columbiad; in the upper there were two 32-pounder carronades and one gun of the size of a X-inch smooth-bore, but rifled with the bore of a 32-pounder and said to throw a shot of one hundred and twenty-eight pounds. Both batteries were excavated in the hillside, and the lower had traverses between the guns to protect them from an enfilading fire, in case the boats should pass their front and attack them from above. At the time of the fight these batteries were thirty-two feet above the level of the river.

General Grant arrived before the works at noon of February 12th. The gunboat Carondelet, Commander Walke, came up about an hour earlier. At 10 A.M. on the 13th, the gunboat, at the general's request, opened fire on the batteries at a distance of a mile and a quarter, sheltering herself partly behind a jutting point of the river, and continued a deliberate cannonade with her bow guns for six hours, after which she withdrew. In this time she had thrown in one hundred and eighty shell, and was twice struck by the enemy, half a dozen of her people being slightly injured by splinters. On the side of the enemy an engineer officer was killed by her fire.

The fleet arrived that evening, and attacked the following day at 3 P.M. There were, besides the Carondelet, the ar-

mored gunboats St. Louis, Lieutenant Paulding; Louisville, Commander Dove; and Pittsburg, Lieutenant E. Thompson; and the wooden vessels Conestoga and Tyler, commanded as before. The order of steaming was the same as at Henry, the wooden boats in the rear throwing their shell over the armored vessels. The fleet reserved its fire till within a mile, when it opened and advanced rapidly to within six hundred yards of the works, closing up later to four hundred yards. The fight was obstinately sustained on both sides, and, notwithstanding the commanding position of the batteries, strong hopes were felt on board the fleet of silencing the guns, which the enemy began to desert, when, at 4.30 P.M., the wheel of the flag-ship St. Louis and the tiller of the Louisville were shot away. The two boats, thus rendered unmanageable, drifted down the river; and their consorts, no longer able to maintain the unequal contest, withdrew. The enemy returned at once to their guns, and inflicted much injury on the retiring vessels.

Notwithstanding its failure, the tenacity and fighting qualities of the fleet were more markedly proved in this action than in the victory at Henry. The vessels were struck more frequently (the flag-ship fifty-nine times, and none less than twenty), and though the power of the enemy's guns was about the same in each case, the height and character of the soil at Donelson placed the fleet at a great disadvantage. The fire from above, reaching their sloping armor nearly at right angles, searched every weak point. Upon the Carondelet a rifled gun burst. The pilot-houses were beaten in, and three of the four pilots received mortal wounds. Despite these injuries, and the loss of fifty-four killed and wounded, the fleet was only shaken from its hold by accidents to the steering apparatus, after which their batteries could not be brought to bear.

Among the injured on this occasion was the flag-officer, who was standing by the pilot when the latter was killed. Two splinters struck him in the arm and foot, inflicting wounds apparently slight; but the latter, amid the exposure and anxiety of the succeeding operations, did not heal, and finally compelled him, three months later, to give up the command.

On the 16th the Confederates, after an unsuccessful attempt to cut their way through the investing army, hopeless of a successful resistance, surrendered at discretion to General Grant. The capture of this post left the way open to Nashville, the capital of Tennessee, and the flag-officer was anxious to press on with fresh boats brought up from Cairo; but was prevented by peremptory orders from General Halleck, commanding the Department. As it was, however, Nashville fell on the 25th.

After the fall of Fort Donelson and the successful operations in Missouri, the position at Columbus was no longer tenable. On the 23d Flag-Officer Foote made a reconnoissance in force in that direction, but no signs of the intent to abandon were as yet perceived. On March 1st, Lieutenant Phelps, being sent with a flag of truce, reported the post in process of being evacuated, and on the 4th it was in possession of the Union forces. The Confederates had removed the greater part of their artillery to Island No. 10.

About this time, March 1st, Lieutenant Gwin, commanding the Lexington and Tyler on the Tennessee, hearing that the Confederates were fortifying Pittsburg Landing, proceeded to that point, carrying with him two companies of sharpshooters. The enemy was readily dislodged, and Lieutenant Gwin continued in the neighborhood to watch and frustrate any similar attempts. This was the point chosen a few weeks later for the concentration of the Union army, to

which Lieutenant Gwin was again to render invaluable service.

After the fall of Columbus no attempt was made to hold Hickman, but the Confederates fell back upon Island No. 10 and the adjacent banks of the Mississippi to make their next stand for the control of the river. The island, which has its name (if it can be called a name) from its position in the numerical series of islands below Cairo, is just abreast the line dividing Kentucky from Tennessee. The position was singularly strong against attacks from above, and for some time before the evacuation of Columbus the enemy, in anticipation of that event, had been fortifying both the island and the Tennessee and Missouri shores. It will be necessary to describe the natural features and the defences somewhat in detail.

From a point about four miles above Island No. 10 the river flows south three miles, then sweeps round to the west and north, forming a horse-shoe bend of which the two ends are east and west from each other. Where the first horse-shoe ends a second begins; the river continuing to flow north, then west and south to Point Pleasant on the Missouri shore. The two bends taken together form an inverted S (∾). In making this detour, the river, as far as Point Pleasant, a distance of twelve miles, gains but three miles to the south. Island No. 10 lay at the bottom of the first bend, near the left bank. It was about two miles long by one-third that distance wide, and its general direction was nearly east and west. New Madrid, on the Missouri bank, is in the second bend, where the course of the river is changing from west to south. The right bank of the stream is in Missouri, the left bank partly in Kentucky and partly in Tennessee. From Point Pleasant the river runs southeast to Tiptonville, in Tennessee, the extreme point of the ensuing operations.

When Columbus fell the whole of this position was in the hands of the Confederates, who had fortified themselves at New Madrid, and thrown up batteries on the island as well as on the Tennessee shore above it. On the island itself were four batteries mounting twenty-three guns, on the Tennessee shore six batteries mounting thirty-two guns. There was also a floating battery, which, at the beginning of operations, was moored abreast the middle of the island, and is variously reported as carrying nine or ten IX-inch guns. New Madrid, with its works, was taken by General Pope before the arrival of the flotilla.

The position of the enemy, though thus powerful against attack, was one of great isolation. From Hickman a great swamp, which afterward becomes Reelfoot Lake, extends along the left bank of the Mississippi, discharging its waters into the river forty miles below Tiptonville. A mile below Tiptonville begin the great swamps, extending down both sides of the Mississippi for a distance of sixty miles. The enemy therefore had the river in his front, and behind him a swamp, impassable to any great extent for either men or supplies in the then high state of the river. The only way of receiving help, or of escaping, in case the position became untenable, was by way of Tiptonville, to which a good road led. It will be remembered that between New Madrid and Point Pleasant there is a low ridge of land, rising from one to fifteen feet above overflow.

As soon as New Madrid was reduced, General Pope busied himself in establishing a series of batteries at several prominent points along the right bank, as far down as opposite Tiptonville. The river was thus practically closed to the enemy's transports, for their gunboats were unable to drive out the Union gunners. Escape was thus rendered impracticable, and the ultimate reduction of the place assured; but

to bring about a speedy favorable result it was necessary for the army to cross the river and come upon the rear of the enemy. The latter, recognizing this fact, began the erection of batteries along the shore from the island down to Tiptonville.

On the 15th of March the fleet arrived in the neighborhood of Island No. 10. There were six ironclads, one of which was the Benton carrying the flag-officer's flag, and ten mortar-boats. The weather was unfavorable for opening the attack, but on the 16th the mortar-boats were placed in position, reaching at extreme range all the batteries, as well on the Tennessee shore as on the island. On the 17th an attack was made by all the gunboats, but at the long range of two thousand yards. The river was high and the current rapid, rendering it very difficult to manage the boats. A serious injury, such as had been received at Henry and at Donelson, would have caused the crippled boat to drift at once into the enemy's arms; and an approach nearer than that mentioned would have exposed the unarmored sides of the vessels, their most vulnerable parts, to the fire of the batteries. The fleet of the flag-officer was thought none too strong to defend the Upper Mississippi Valley against the enemy's gunboats, of whose number and power formidable accounts were continually received; while the fall of No. 10 would necessarily be brought about in time, as that of Fort Pillow afterward was, by the advance of the army through Tennessee. Under these circumstances, it cannot be doubted that Foote was justified in not exposing his vessels to the risks of a closer action; but to a man of his temperament the meagre results of long-range firing must have been peculiarly trying.

The bombardment continued throughout the month. Meanwhile the army under Pope was cutting a canal through the swamps on the Missouri side, by which, when completed

on the 4th of April, light transport steamers were able to go from the Mississippi above, to New Madrid below, Island No. 10 without passing under the batteries.

On the night of the 1st of April an armed boat expedition, under the command of Master J. V. Johnson, carrying, besides the boat's crew, fifty soldiers under the command of Colonel Roberts of the Forty-second Illinois Regiment, landed at the upper battery on the Tennessee shore. No resistance was experienced, and, after the guns had been spiked by the troops, the expedition returned without loss to the ships. In a despatch dated March 20th the flag-officer had written: "When the object of running the blockade becomes adequate to the risk I shall not hesitate to do it." With the passage of the transports through the canal, enabling the troops to cross if properly protected, the time had come. The exploit of Colonel Roberts was believed to have disabled one battery, and on the 4th of the month, the floating battery before the island, after a severe cannonade by the gunboats and mortars, cut loose from her moorings and drifted down the river. It is improbable that she was prepared, in her new position, for the events of the night.

At ten o'clock that evening the gunboat Carondelet, Commander Henry Walke, left her anchorage, during a heavy thunder-storm, and successfully ran the batteries, reaching New Madrid at 1 A.M. The orders to execute this daring move were delivered to Captain Walke on the 30th of March. The vessel was immediately prepared. Her decks were covered with extra thicknesses of planking; the chain cables were brought up from below and ranged as an additional protection. Lumber and cord-wood were piled thickly round the boilers, and arrangements made for letting the steam escape through the wheel-houses, to avoid the puffing noise ordinarily issuing from the pipes. The pilot-house, for ad-

ditional security, was wrapped to a thickness of eighteen inches in the coils of a large hawser. A barge, loaded with bales of hay, was made fast on the port quarter of the vessel, to protect the magazine.

The moon set at ten o'clock, and then too was felt the first breath of a thunder-storm, which had been for some time gathering. The Carondelet swung from her moorings and started down the stream. The guns were run in and ports closed. No light was allowed about the decks. Within the darkened casemate or the pilot-house all her crew, save two, stood in silence, fully armed to repel boarding, should boarding be attempted. The storm burst in full violence as soon as her head was fairly down stream. The flashes of lightning showed her presence to the Confederates who rapidly manned their guns, and whose excited shouts and commands were plainly heard on board as the boat passed close under the batteries. On deck, exposed alike to the storm and to the enemy's fire, were two men; one, Charles Wilson, a seaman, heaving the lead, standing sometimes knee-deep in the water that boiled over the forecastle; the other, an officer, Theodore Gilmore, on the upper deck forward, repeating to the pilot the leadsman's muttered "No bottom." The storm spread its sheltering wing over the gallant vessel, baffling the excited efforts of the enemy, before whose eyes she floated like a phantom ship; now wrapped in impenetrable darkness, now standing forth in the full blaze of the lightning close under their guns. The friendly flashes enabled her pilot, William R. Hoel, who had volunteered from another gunboat to share the fortunes of the night, to keep her in the channel; once only, in a longer interval between them, did the vessel get a dangerous sheer toward a shoal, but the peril was revealed in time to avoid it. Not till the firing had ceased did the squall abate.

The passage of the Carondelet was not only one of the most daring and dramatic events of the war; it was also the death-blow to the Confederate defence of this position. The concluding events followed in rapid succession. Having passed the island, as related, on the night of the 4th, the Carondelet on the 6th made a reconnoissance down the river as far as Tiptonville, with General Granger on board, exchanging shots with the Confederate batteries, at one of which a landing was made and the guns spiked. That night the Pittsburg also passed the island, and at 6.30 A.M. of the 7th the Carondelet got under way, in concert with Pope's operations, went down the river, followed after an interval by the Pittsburg, and engaged the enemy's batteries, beginning with the lowest. This was silenced in three-quarters of an hour, and the others made little resistance. The Carondelet then signalled her success to the general and returned to cover the crossing of the army, which began at once. The enemy evacuated their works, pushing down toward Tiptonville, but there were actually no means for them to escape, caught between the swamps and the river. Seven thousand men laid down their arms, three of whom were general officers. At ten o'clock that evening the island and garrison surrendered to the navy, just three days to an hour after the Carondelet started on her hazardous voyage. How much of this result was due to the Carondelet and Pittsburg may be measured by Pope's words to the flag-officer: "The lives of thousands of men and the success of our operations hang upon your decision; with two gunboats all is safe, with one it is uncertain."

The passage of a vessel before the guns of a fortress under cover of night came to be thought less dangerous in the course of the war. To do full justice to the great gallantry shown by Commander Walke, it should be remembered that

this was done by a single vessel three weeks before Farragut passed the forts down the river with a fleet, among the members of which the enemy's fire was distracted and divided; and that when Foote asked the opinion of his subordinate commanders as to the advisability of making the attempt, all, save one, "believed that it would result in the almost certain destruction of the boats, passing six forts under the fire of fifty guns." This was also the opinion of Lieutenant Averett, of the Confederate navy, who commanded the floating battery at the island—a young officer, but of clear and calm judgment. "I do not believe it is impossible," he wrote to Commodore Hollins, "for the enemy to run a part of his gunboats past in the night; but those that I have seen are slow and hard to turn, and it is probable that he would lose some, if not all, in the attempt." Walke alone in the council of captains favored the trial, though the others would doubtless have undertaken it as cheerfully as he did. The daring displayed in this deed, which, to use the flag-officer's words, Walke "so willingly undertook," must be measured by the then prevalent opinion and not in the light of subsequent experience. Subsequent experience, indeed, showed that the danger, if over-estimated, was still sufficiently great.

Justly, then, did it fall to Walke's lot to bear the most conspicuous part in the following events, ending with the surrender. No less praise, however, is due to the flag-officer for the part he bore in this, the closing success of his career. There bore upon him the responsibility of safe-guarding all the Upper Mississippi, with its tributary waters, while at the same time the pressure of public opinion, and the avowed impatience of the army officer with whom he was co-operating, were stinging him to action. He had borne for months the strain of overwork with inadequate tools; his health was

impaired, and his whole system disordered from the effects of his unhealed wound. Farragut had not then entered the mouth of the Mississippi, and the result of his enterprise was yet in the unknown future. Reports, now known to be exaggerated, but then accepted, magnified the power of the Confederate fleet in the lower waters. Against these nothing stood, nor was soon likely, as it then seemed, to stand except Foote's ironclads. He was right, then, in his refusal to risk his vessels. He showed judgment and decision in resisting the pressure, amounting almost to a taunt, brought upon him. Then, when it became evident that the transports could be brought through the canal, he took what he believed to be a desperate risk, showing that no lack of power to assume responsibility had deterred him before.

In the years since 1862, Island No. 10, the scene of so much interest and energy, has disappeared. The river, constantly wearing at its upper end, has little by little swept away the whole, and the deep current now runs over the place where the Confederate guns stood, as well as through the channel by which the Carondelet passed. On the other shore a new No. 10 has risen, not standing as the old one, in the stream with a channel on either side, but near a point and surrounded by shoal water. It has perhaps gathered around a steamer, which was sunk by the Confederates to block the passage through a chute then existing across the opposite point.

While Walke was protecting Pope's crossing, two other gunboats were rendering valuable service to another army a hundred miles away, on the Tennessee River. The United States forces at Pittsburg Landing, under General Grant, were attacked by the Confederates in force in the early morning of April 6th. The battle continued with fury all day, the enemy driving the centre of the army back half way from

their camps to the river, and at a late hour in the afternoon making a desperate attempt to turn the left, so as to get possession of the landing and transports. Lieutenant Gwin, commanding the Tyler, and senior officer present, sent at 1.30 P.M. to ask permission to open fire. General Hurlburt, commanding on the left, indicated, in reply, the direction of the enemy and of his own forces, saying, at the same time, that without reinforcements he would not be able to maintain his then position for an hour. At 2.50 the Tyler opened fire as indicated, with good effect, silencing their batteries. At 3.50 the Tyler ceased firing to communicate with General Grant, who directed her commander to use his own judgment. At 4 P.M. the Lexington, Lieutenant Shirk, arrived, and the two boats began shelling from a position three-quarters of a mile above the landing, silencing the Confederate batteries in thirty minutes. At 5.30 P.M., the enemy having succeeded in gaining a position on the Union left, an eighth of a mile above the landing and half a mile from the river, both vessels opened fire upon them, in conjunction with the field batteries of the army, and drove them back in confusion.

The army being largely outnumbered during the day, and forced steadily back, the presence and services of the two gunboats, when the most desperate attacks of the enemy were made, were of the utmost value, and most effectual in enabling that part of our line to be held until the arrival of the advance of Buell's army from Nashville, about 5 P.M., allowed the left to be reinforced and restored the fortunes of the day. During the night, by request of General Nelson, the gunboats threw a shell every fifteen minutes into the camp of the enemy.

Considering the insignificant and vulnerable character of these two wooden boats, it may not be amiss to quote the language of the two commanders-in-chief touching their ser-

vices; the more so as the gallant young officers who directed their movements are both dead, Gwin, later in the war, losing his life in action. General Grant says: "At a late hour in the afternoon a desperate attempt was made to turn our left and get possession of the landing, transports, etc. This point was guarded by the gunboats Tyler and Lexington, Captains Gwin and Shirk, United States Navy, commanding, four 20-pounder Parrotts, and a battery of rifled guns. As there is a deep and impassable ravine for artillery and cavalry, and very difficult for infantry, at this point, no troops were stationed here, except the necessary artillerists and a small infantry force for their support. Just at this moment the advance of Major-General Buell's column (a part of the division under General Nelson) arrived, the two generals named both being present. An advance was immediately made upon the point of attack, and the enemy soon driven back. In this repulse much is due to the presence of the gunboats." In the report in which these words occur it is unfortunately not made clear how much was due to the gunboats before Buell and Nelson arrived.

The Confederate commander, on the other hand, states that, as the result of the attack on the left, the "enemy broke and sought refuge behind a commanding eminence covering the Pittsburg Landing, not more than half a mile distant, under the guns of the gunboats, which opened a fierce and annoying fire with shot and shell of the heaviest description." Among the reasons for not being able to cope with the Union forces next day, he alleges that "during the night the enemy broke the men's rest by a discharge, at measured intervals, of heavy shells thrown from the gunboats;" and further on he speaks of the army as "sheltered by such an auxiliary as their gunboats." The impression among Confederates there present was that the gunboats saved the army by saving the land-

ing and transports, while during the night the shrieking of the VIII-inch shells through the woods, tearing down branches and trees in their flight, and then sharply exploding, was demoralizing to a degree. The nervous strain caused by watching for the repetition, at measured intervals, of a painful sensation is known to most.

General Hurlburt, commanding on the left during the fiercest of the onslaught, and until the arrival of Buell and Nelson, reports: "From my own observation and the statement of prisoners his (Gwin's) fire was most effectual in stopping the advance of the enemy on Sunday afternoon and night."

Island No. 10 fell on the 7th. On the 11th Foote started down the river with the flotilla, anchoring the evening of the 12th fifty miles from New Madrid, just below the Arkansas line. Early the next morning General Pope arrived with 20,000 men. At 8 A.M. five Confederate gunboats came in sight, whereupon the flotilla weighed and advanced to meet them. After exchanging some twenty shots the Confederates retreated, pursued by the fleet to Fort Pillow, thirty miles below, on the first, or upper Chickasaw bluff. The flag-officer continued on with the gunboats to within a mile of the fort, making a leisurely reconnoissance, during which he was unmolested by the enemy. The fleet then turned, receiving a few harmless shots as they withdrew, and tied up to the Tennessee bank, out of range.

The following morning the mortar-boats were placed on the Arkansas side, under the protection of gunboats, firing as soon as secured. The army landed on the Tennessee bank above the fort, and tried to find a way by which the rear of the works could be reached, but in vain. Plans were then arranged by which it was hoped speedily to reduce the place by the combined efforts of army and navy; but these

were frustrated by Halleck's withdrawal of all Pope's forces, except 1,500 men under command of a colonel. From this time the attacks on the fort were confined to mortar and long-range firing. Reports of the number and strength of the Confederate gunboats and rams continued to come in, generally much exaggerated; but on the 27th news of Farragut's successful passage of the forts below New Orleans, and appearance before that city, relieved Foote of his most serious apprehensions from below.

On the 23d, Captain Charles H. Davis arrived, to act as second in command to the flag-officer, and on the 9th of May the latter, whose wound, received nearly three months before at Donelson, had become threatening, left Davis in temporary command and went North, hoping to resume his duties with the flotilla at no distant date. It was not, however, so to be. An honorable and distinguished career of forty years afloat ended at Fort Pillow. Called a year later to a yet more important command, he was struck down by the hand of death at the instant of his departure to assume it. His services in the war were thus confined to the Mississippi flotilla. Over the birth and early efforts of that little fleet he had presided; upon his shoulders had fallen the burden of anxiety and unremitting labor which the early days of the war, when all had to be created, everywhere entailed. He was repaid, for under him its early glories were achieved and its reputation established; but the mental strain and the draining wound, so long endured in a sickly climate, hastened his end.

The Confederate gunboats, heretofore acting upon the river at Columbus and Island No. 10, were in the regular naval service under the command of Flag-Officer George N. Hollins, formerly of the United States Navy. At No. 10 the force consisted of the McRae, Polk, Jackson, Calhoun, Ivy, Ponchartrain, Maurepas, and Livingston; the floating battery

had also formed part of his command. Hollins had not felt himself able to cope with the heavy Union gunboats. His services had been mainly confined to a vigorous but unsuccessful attack upon the batteries established by Pope on the Missouri shore, between New Madrid and Tiptonville, failing in which the gunboats fell back down the river. They continued, however, to make frequent night trips to Tiptonville with supplies for the army, in doing which Pope's comparatively light batteries did not succeed in injuring them, the river being nearly a mile wide. The danger then coming upon New Orleans caused some of these to be withdrawn, and at the same time a novel force was sent up from that city to take their place and dispute the control of the river with Foote's flotilla.

In the middle of January, General Lovell, commanding the military district in which New Orleans was, had seized, under the directions of the Confederate Secretary of War, fourteen river steamboats. This action was taken at the suggestion of two steamboat captains, Montgomery and Townsend. The intention was to strengthen the vessels with iron casing at the bows, and to use them with their high speed as rams. The weakness of the sterns of the ironclad boats, their slowness and difficulty in handling, were well known to the Confederate authorities. Lovell was directed to allow the utmost latitude to each captain in fitting his own boat, and, as there was no military organization or system, the details of the construction are not now recoverable. The engines, however, were protected with cotton bales and pine bulwarks, and the stems for a length of ten feet shod with iron nearly an inch thick, across which, at intervals of about two feet, were bolted iron straps, extending aft on either bow for a couple of feet so as to keep the planking from starting when the blow was delivered. It being intended that they

should close with the enemy as rapidly as possible, but one gun was to be carried; a rule which seems not to have been adhered to. While the force was to be under the general command of the military chief of department, all interference by naval officers was jealously forbidden; and, in fact, by implication, any interference by any one. Lovell seems to have watched the preparations with a certain anxious amusement, remarking at one time, "that fourteen Mississippi pilots and captains will never agree when they begin to talk;" and later, "that he fears too much latitude has been given to the captains." However, by the 15th of April he had despatched eight, under the general command of Captain Montgomery, to the upper river; retaining six at New Orleans, which was then expecting Farragut's attack. These eight were now lying under the guns of Fort Pillow; the whole force being known as the River Defence Fleet.

When Foote left, the ironclads of the squadron were tied up to the banks with their heads down stream, three on the Tennessee, and four on the Arkansas shore, as follows:

Arkansas Shore.

Mound City, COMMANDER A. H. KILTY.
Cincinnati, COMMANDER R. N. STEMBEL.
St. Louis, LIEUTENANT HENRY ERBEN.
Cairo, LIEUTENANT N. C. BRYANT.

Tennessee Shore.

Benton (flag-ship), LIEUTENANT S. L. PHELPS.
Carondelet, COMMANDER HENRY WALKE.
Pittsburg, LIEUTENANT EGBERT THOMPSON.

The place at which they lay on the Tennessee side is called Plum Point: three miles lower down on the Arkansas side

is another point called Craighead's. Fort Pillow is just below Craighead's, but on the opposite bank. It was the daily custom for one of the gunboats to tow down a mortar-boat and place it just above Craighead's, remaining near by during the twenty-four hours as guard. The mortar threw its shells across the point into Pillow, and as the fire was harassing to the enemy, the River Defence Fleet, which was now ready for action, determined to make a dash at her. Between 4 and 5 A.M. on the morning of the 10th of May, the day after Foote's departure, the Cincinnati placed Mortar No. 16, Acting-Master Gregory, in the usual position, and then made fast herself to a great drift-pile on the same side, with her head up stream; both ends of her lines being kept on board, to be easily slipped if necessary. The mortar opened her fire at five. At six the eight Confederate rams left their moorings behind the fort and steamed up, the black smoke from their tall smoke-stacks being seen by the fleet above as they moved rapidly up river. At 6.30 they came in sight of the vessels at Plum Point. As soon as they were seen by the Cincinnati she slipped her lines, steamed out into the river, and then rounded to with her head down stream, presenting her bow-guns, and opening at once upon the enemy. The latter approached gallantly but irregularly, the lack of the habit of acting in concert making itself felt, while the fire of the Cincinnati momentarily checked and, to a certain extent, scattered them. The leading vessel, the General Bragg, was much in advance of her consorts. She advanced swiftly along the Arkansas shore, passing close by the mortar-boat and above the Cincinnati; then rounding to she approached the latter at full speed on the starboard quarter, striking a powerful blow in this weak part of the gunboat. The two vessels fell alongside, the Cincinnati firing her broadside as they came together; then the ram swinging clear made

down stream, and, although the Confederate commander claims that her tiller ropes alone were out of order, she took no further part in the fray.

Two other Confederates now approached the Cincinnati, the General Price and General Sumter. One of them succeeded in ramming in the same place as the Bragg, and it was at this moment that Commander Stembel, who had gathered his men to board the enemy, was dangerously shot by a rifle-ball through the throat, another officer of the vessel, Master Reynolds, falling at the same time mortally wounded. The other assailant received a shot through her boilers from the Benton, which was now in action; an explosion followed and she drifted down stream. The Cincinnati, aided by a tug and the Pittsburg, then steamed over to the Tennessee shore, where she sank on a bar in eleven feet of water.

As soon as the rams were seen, the flag-ship had made a general signal to get under way, but the morning being calm, the flags did not fly out well. Orders were passed by hail to the Carondelet and Pittsburg, and the former vessel slipped immediately and stood down. The Mound City on the other side did not wait for signals, but, being in advance, started at once, taking the lead with the Carondelet; the Benton following, her speed being less. The Carondelet got up in time to open fire upon the Bragg as she retreated, and to cut the steam-pipe of the other of the two rams which had attacked the Cincinnati after the Bragg's fatal assault.

The fourth Confederate, the General Van Dorn, passed by the Cincinnati and her assailants and met the Mound City. The latter, arriving first of the Union squadron on the Arkansas side of the river, had already opened upon the Sumter and Price, and now upon the Van Dorn also with her

bow-guns. The Confederate rounded to and steered to ram amidships, but the Mound City sheered and received a glancing blow in the starboard bow. This disabled her, and to avoid sinking she was run on the Arkansas shore.

Two of the Union gunboats and three rams were now disabled; the latter drifting down with the current under the guns of Fort Pillow. Those remaining were five in number, and only two gunboats, the Benton and Carondelet, were actually engaged, the St. Louis just approaching. The enemy now retired, giving as a reason that the Union gunboats were taking position in water too shoal for the rams to follow.

There can be no denying the dash and spirit with which this attack was made. It was, however, the only service of value performed by this irregular and undisciplined force. At Memphis, a month later, and at New Orleans, the fleet proved incapable of meeting an attack and of mutual support. There were admirable materials in it, but the mistake of withdrawing them from strict military control and organization was fatal. On the other hand, although the gunboats engaged fought gallantly, the flotilla as an organization had little cause for satisfaction in the day's work. Stated baldly, two of the boats had been sunk while only four of the seven had been brought into action. The enemy were severely punished, but the Cincinnati had been unsupported for nearly half an hour, and the vessels came down one by one.

After this affair the Union gunboats while above Pillow availed themselves of shoal spots in the river where the rams could not approach them, while they could use their guns. Whatever the injuries received by the Confederates, they were all ready for action at Memphis a month later. The Cincinnati and Mound City were also speedily repaired and again in service by the end of the month. The mortar-

boat bore her share creditably in the fight, levelling her piece as nearly as it could be and keeping up a steady fire. It was all she could do and her commander was promoted.

Shortly after this, a fleet of rams arrived under the command of Colonel Charles Ellet, Jr. Colonel Ellet was by profession a civil engineer, and had, some years before, strongly advocated the steam ram as a weapon of war. His views had then attracted attention, but nothing was done. With the outbreak of the war he had again urged them upon the Government, and on March 27, 1862, was directed by the Secretary of War to buy a number of river steamers on the Mississippi and convert them into rams upon a plan of his own. In accordance with this order he bought,[1] at Pittsburg, three stern-wheel boats, having the average dimensions of 170 feet length, 31 feet beam, and over 5 feet hold; at Cincinnati, three side-wheel boats, of which the largest was 180 feet long by 37 feet beam, and 8 feet hold; and at New Albany, one side-wheel boat of about the same dimensions; in all seven boats, chosen specially with a view to strength and speed. To further strengthen them for their new work, three heavy, solid timber bulkheads, from twelve to sixteen inches thick, were built, running fore and aft from stem to stern, the central one being over the keelson. These bulkheads were braced one against the other, the outer ones against the hull of the boat, and all against the deck and floor timbers, thus making the whole weight of the boat add its momentum to that of the central bulkhead at the moment of collision. The hull was further stayed from side to side by iron rods and screw-bolts. As it would interfere with this plan of strengthening to drop the boilers into the hold, they were left in place; but a bulwark

[1] Letter of Colonel Ellet to Lieutenant McGunnegle, United States Navy.

of oak two feet thick was built around them. The pilot-houses were protected against musketry.

It is due to Colonel Ellet to say that these boats were not what he wished, but merely a hasty adaptation, in the short period of six weeks, of such means as were at once available to the end in view. He thought that after striking they might probably go down, but not without sinking the enemy too. When they were ready he was given the command, and the rank of Colonel, with instructions which allowed him to operate within the limits of Captain Davis's command, and in entire independence of that officer; a serious military error which was corrected when the Navy Department took control of the river work.

No further attack was made by the Confederate fleet, and operations were confined to bombardment by the gunboats and constant reply on the part of the forts until June 4th. That night many explosions were heard and fires seen in the fort, and the next morning the fleet moved down, found the works evacuated and took possession. Memphis and its defences became no longer tenable after Beauregard's evacuation of Corinth on the 30th of May.

On June 5th, the fleet with transports moved down the river, anchoring at night two miles above the city. The next morning at dawn the River Defence Fleet was sighted lying at the levee. They soon cast off, and moved into the river, keeping, however, in front of the city in such a way as to embarrass the fire of the Union flotilla.

The Confederate vessels, still under Montgomery's command, were in number eight, mounting from two to four guns each: the Van Dorn, flag steamer; General Price, General Lovell, General Beauregard, General Thompson, General Bragg, General Sumpter, and the Little Rebel.

The Union gunboats were five, viz.: the Benton, Louis-

ville, Carondelet, St. Louis, recently taken charge of by Lieutenant McGunnegle, and Cairo. In addition, there were present and participating in the ensuing action, two of the ram fleet, the Queen of the West and the Monarch, the former commanded by Colonel Ellet in person; the latter by a younger brother, Lieutenant-Colonel A. W. Ellet.

The Confederates formed in double line for their last battle, awaiting the approach of the flotilla. The latter, embarrassed by the enemy being in line with the city, kept under way, but with their heads up stream, dropping slowly with the current. The battle was opened by a shot from the Confederates, and then the flotilla, casting away its scruples about the city, replied with vigor. The Union rams, which were tied up to the bank some distance above, cast off at the first gun and steamed boldly down through the intervals separating the gunboats, the Queen of the West leading, the Monarch about half a mile astern. As they passed, the flotilla, now about three-quarters of a mile from the enemy, turned their heads down the river and followed, keeping up a brisk cannonade; the flag-ship Benton leading. The heights above the city were crowded by the citizens of Memphis, awaiting with eager hope the result of the fight. The ram attack was unexpected, and, by its suddenness and evident determination, produced some wavering in the Confederate line, which had expected to do only with the sluggish and unwieldy gunboats. Into the confusion the Queen dashed, striking the Lovell fairly and sinking her in deep water, where she went down out of sight. The Queen herself was immediately rammed by the Beauregard and disabled; she was then run upon the Arkansas shore opposite the city. Her commander received a pistol shot, which in the end caused his death. The Monarch following, was charged at the same time by the Beauregard and Price; these two

boats, however, missed their mark and crashed together, the Beauregard cutting the Price down to the water-line, and tearing off her port wheel. The Price then followed the Queen, and laid herself up on the Arkansas shore. The Monarch successfully rammed her late assailant, the Beauregard, as she was discharging her guns at the Benton, which replied with a shot in the enemy's boiler, blowing her up and fatally scalding many of her people. She went down near shore, being towed there by the Monarch. The Little Rebel in the thickest of the fight got a shot through her steam-chest; whereupon she also made for the limbo on the Arkansas shore, where her officers and crew escaped.

The Confederates had lost four boats, three of them among the heaviest in their fleet. The remaining four sought safety in flight from the now unequal contest, and a running fight followed, which carried the fleet ten miles down the river and resulted in the destruction of the Thompson by the shells of the gunboats and the capture of the Bragg and Sumter. The Van Dorn alone made good her escape, though pursued some distance by the Monarch and Switzerland, another of the ram fleet which joined after the fight was decided. This was the end of the Confederate River Defence Fleet, the six below having perished when New Orleans fell. The Bragg, Price, Sumpter, and Little Rebel were taken into the Union fleet.

The city of Memphis surrendered the same day. The Benton and the flag-officer, with the greater part of the fleet, remained there till June 29th. On the 10th Davis received an urgent message from Halleck to open communication by way of the White River and Jacksonport with General Curtis, who was coming down through Missouri and Arkansas, having for his objective point Helena, on the right bank of the Mississippi. The White River traverses Arkansas from

the Missouri border, one hundred and twenty miles west of the Mississippi, and pursuing a southeasterly and southerly course enters the Mississippi two hundred miles below Memphis, one hundred below Helena. A force was despatched, under Commander Kilty, comprising, besides his own ship, the St. Louis, Lieutenant McGunnegle, with the Lexington and Conestoga, wooden gunboats, Lieutenants Shirk and Blodgett. An Indiana regiment under Colonel Fitch accompanied the squadron. On the 17th of June, at St. Charles, eighty-eight miles up, the enemy were discovered in two earthworks, mounting six guns. A brisk engagement followed, the Mound City leading; but when six hundred yards from the works a 42-pound shell entered her casemate, killing three men in its flight and then exploding her steam-drum. Of her entire crew of 175, but 3 officers and 22 men escaped uninjured; 82 died from wounds or scalding, and 43 were either drowned or killed in the water, the enemy, in this instance, having the inhumanity to fire on those who were there struggling for their lives. Unappalled by this sickening catastrophe, the remaining boats pressed on to the attack, the Conestoga taking hold of the crippled vessel to tow her out of action. A few minutes later, at a signal from Colonel Fitch, the gunboats ceased firing, and the troops, advancing, successfully stormed the battery. The commander of the post was Captain Joseph Fry, formerly a lieutenant in the United States Navy, who afterward commanded the filibustering steamer Virginius, and was executed in Cuba, with most of his crew, when captured by the Spaniards in 1874. There being no further works up the stream and but one gunboat of the enemy, the Ponchartrain, this action gave the control of the river to the fleet.

After taking possession of St. Charles, the expedition went on up the river as far as a point called Crooked Point Cut-

off, sixty-three miles above St. Charles, and one hundred and fifty-one miles from the mouth of the river. Here it was compelled to turn back by the falling of the water. The hindrance caused by the low state of the rivers led Davis to recommend a force of light-draught boats, armed with howitzers, and protected in their machinery and pilot-houses against musketry, as essential to control the tributaries of the Mississippi during the dry season. This was the germ of the light-draught gunboats, familiarly called "tinclads" from the thinness of their armor, which in the following season were a usual and active adjunct to the operations of the heavier vessels.

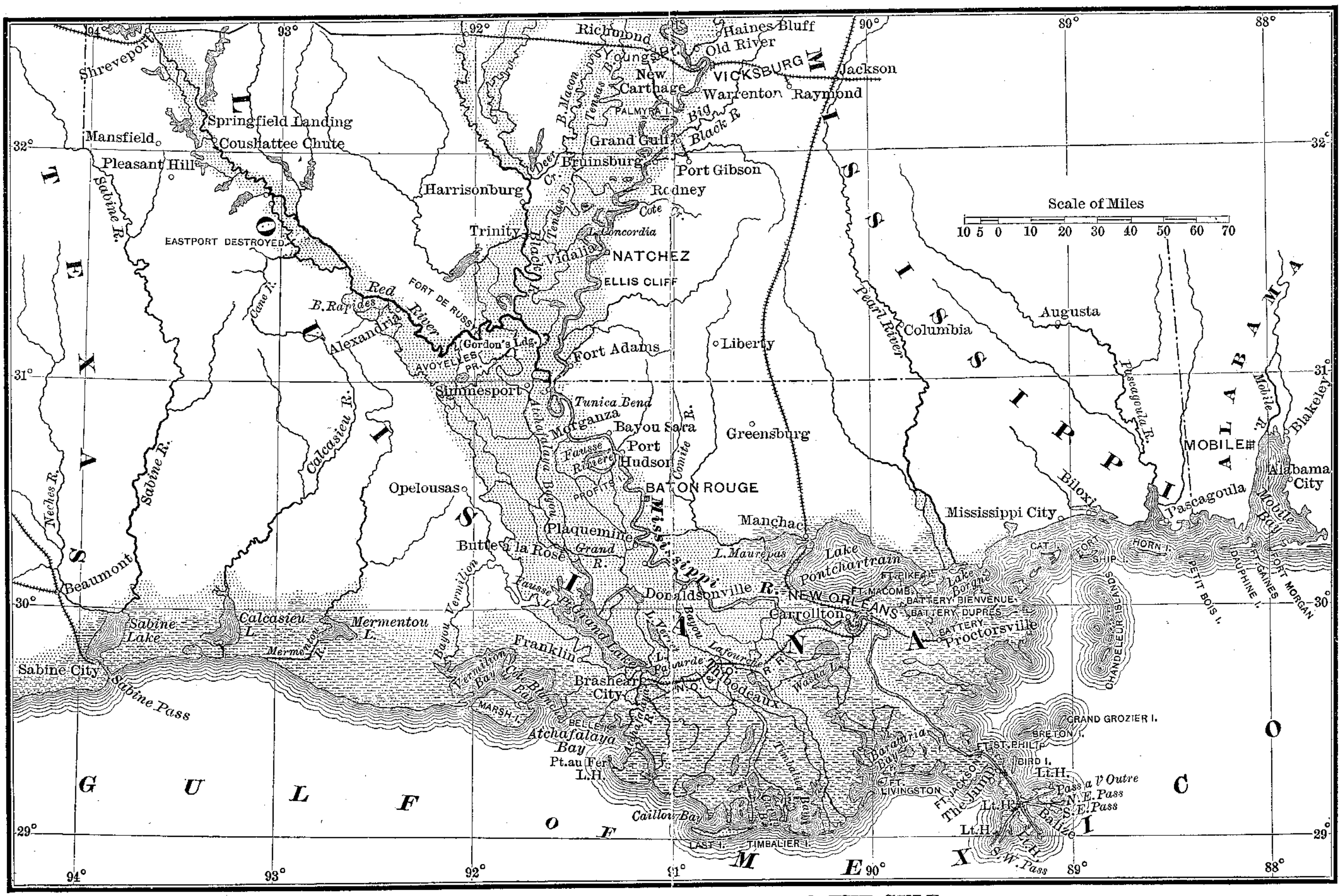
On the 29th of June, Flag-Officer Davis, who had received that rank but a week before, went down the river, taking with him the Benton, Carondelet, Louisville, and St. Louis, with six mortar-boats. Two days later, July 1st, in the early morning, Farragut's fleet was sighted, at anchor in the river above Vicksburg. A few hours more and the naval forces from the upper waters and from the mouth of the Mississippi had joined hands.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE GULF TO VICKSBURG.

THE task of opening the Mississippi from its mouth was entrusted to Captain David G. Farragut, who was appointed to the command of the Western Gulf Blockading Squadron on the 9th of January, 1862. On the 2d of February he sailed from Hampton Roads, in his flag-ship, the Hartford, of twenty-four guns; arriving on the 20th of the same month at Ship Island in Mississippi Sound, which was then, and, until Pensacola was evacuated by the Confederates, continued to be the principal naval station in the West Gulf. Here he met Flag-Officer McKean, the necessary transfers were made, and on the 21st Farragut formally assumed the command of the station which he was to illustrate by many daring deeds, and in which he was to make his brilliant reputation.

With the exception of the vessels already employed on the blockade, the flag-ship was the first to arrive of the force destined to make the move up the river. One by one they came in, and were rapidly assembled at the Southwest Pass, those whose draught permitted entering at once; but the scanty depth of water, at that time found on the bar, made it necessary to lighten the heavier vessels. The Pensacola, while at Ship Island, chartered a schooner, into which she discharged her guns and stores; then taking her in tow went down to the Pass. She arrived there on the 24th of March and made five different attempts to enter when the



MISSISSIPPI VALLEY—VICKSBURG TO THE GULF.

water seemed favorable. In the first four she grounded, though everything was out of her, and was got off with difficulty, on one occasion parting a hawser which killed two men and injured five others; but on the 7th of April, the powerful steamers of the mortar flotilla succeeded in dragging her and the Mississippi through a foot of mud fairly into the river. These two were the heaviest vessels that had ever entered. The Navy Department at Washington had hopes that the 40-gun frigate Colorado, Captain Theodorus Bailey, then lying off the Pass, might be lightened sufficiently to join in the attack. This was to the flag-officer and her commander plainly impracticable, but the attempt had to be made in order to demonstrate its impossibility. After the loss of a fortnight working she remained outside, drafts being made from her crew to supply vacancies in the other vessels; while her gallant captain obtained the privilege of leading the fleet into action, as a divisional officer, in the gunboat Cayuga, the commander of the latter generously yielding the first place on board his own ship.

A fleet of twenty mortar-schooners, with an accompanying flotilla of six gunboats, the whole under the command of Commander (afterward Admiral) David D. Porter, accompanied the expedition. Being of light draught of water, they entered without serious difficulty by Pass à l'Outre, one of three branches into which the eastern of the three great mouths of the Mississippi is subdivided. Going to the head of the Passes on the 18th of March, they found there the Hartford and Brooklyn, steam sloops, with four screw gunboats. The steam vessels of the flotilla were at once ordered by the flag-officer to Southwest Pass, and, after finishing the work of getting the heavy ships across, they were employed towing up the schooners and protecting the advance of the surveyors of the fleet.

The squadron thus assembled in the river consisted of four screw sloops, one side-wheel steamer, three screw corvettes, and nine screw gunboats, in all seventeen vessels, of all classes, carrying, exclusive of brass howitzers, one hundred and fifty-four guns. Their names and batteries were as follows:

NAME.	Tons.	Guns.	Commanding Officer.
Screw Sloops.			
Hartford	1990	24	Flag-Officer David G. Farragut. Fleet-Captain Henry H. Bell. Commander Richard Wainwright.
Pensacola	2158	23	Captain Henry W. Morris.
Brooklyn	2070	22	Captain Thomas T. Craven.
Richmond	1929	24	Commander James Alden.
Side-Wheel.			
Mississippi	1692	17	Commander Melancthon Smith.
Screw Corvettes.			
Oneida	1032	9	Commander S. Phillips Lee.
Varuna	1300	10	Commander Charles S. Boggs.
Iroquois	1016	7	Commander John De Camp.
Screw Gunboats.			
Cayuga	507	2	Lieutenant Napoleon B. Harrison.
Itasca	507	2	Lieutenant C. H. B. Caldwell.
Katahdin	507	2	Lieutenant George H. Preble.
Kennebec	507	2	Lieutenant John H. Russell.
Kineo	507	2	Lieutenant George M. Ransom.
Pinola	507	2	Lieutenant Pierce Crosby.
Sciota	507	2	Lieutenant Edward Donaldson.
Winona	507	2	Lieutenant Edward T. Nichols.
Wissahickon	507	2	Lieutenant Albert N. Smith.

About ninety per cent. of the batteries of the eight larger vessels were divided, as is usual, between the two sides of the ship, so that only one half of the guns could be used at any one time, except in the rare event of having an enemy on each side; and even then the number of the crew is based

on the expectation of fighting only one broadside. A few guns, however, varying in number in different ships, were mounted on pivots so that they could be fought on either side. In estimating the number of available guns in a fleet of sea-going steamers of that day, it may be roughly said that sixty per cent. could be brought into action on one side. In the Mississippi Squadron sometimes only one-fourth could be used. To professional readers it may seem unnecessary to enter on such familiar and obvious details; but a military man, in making his estimate, has fallen into the curious blunder of making a fleet fire every gun, bow, stern, and both broadsides, into one fort, a hundred yards square; a feat which only could be performed by landing a ship in the centre of the works, in which case it could enjoy an all-round fire. The nine gunboats carried one heavy and one light gun, both pivots and capable of being fought on either side. None of this fleet could fire right ahead. All the vessels were built for ships of war, with the exception of the Varuna, which was bought from the merchant service.[1]

The mortar-schooners each carried one XIII-inch mortar. Of the six gunboats attached to this part of the expedition, one, the Owasco, was of the same class as the Cayuga and others. The Clifton, Jackson, and Westfield were large side-wheel ferry boats, of the ordinary double-ended type; carrying, however, heavy guns. They were powerful as tug-boats and easily managed; whereas the Miami, also a double-ender, but built for the Government, was like most of her kind, hard to steer or manœuvre, especially in a narrow stream and tideway. The sixth was the Harriet Lane, a side-wheel steamer of 600 tons, which had been transferred from the Revenue Service.

[1] For particulars of batteries, see Appendix.

The tonnage and batteries of these steamers were :[1]

NAME.		Tons.	Guns.	Commanding Officer.
Screw Gunboat.				
Cayuga.....		507	2	Lieutenant John Guest.
Paddle-Wheel Steamers.				
Westfield	Double-enders.	891	6	Commander William B. Renshaw.
Miami		730	5	Lieutenant A. Davis Harrell.
Clifton		892	7	Lieutenant Charles H. Baldwin.
Jackson		777	7	Lieutenant Selim E. Woodworth.
Harriet Lane		619	3	Lieutenant Jonathan M. Wainwright.

When the ships were inside, the flag-officer issued special instructions for their preparation for the river service. They were stripped to the topmasts, and landed all spars and rigging, except those necessary for the topsails, jib, and spanker. Everything forward was brought close in to the bowsprit, so as not to interfere with the forward range of the battery. Where it could be done, guns were especially mounted on the poop and forecastle, and howitzers placed in the tops, with iron bulwarks to protect their crews from musketry. The vessels were ordered to be trimmed by the head, so that if they took the bottom at all it would be forward. In a rapid current, like that of the Mississippi, a vessel which grounded aft would have her bow swept round at once and fall broadside to the stream, if she did not go ashore. To get her pointed right again would be troublesome; and the same consideration led to the order that, in case of accident to the engines involving loss of power to go ahead, no attempt should be made to turn the ship's head down stream. If the wind served she should be handled under sail; but if not, an anchor should be let go, with cable

[1] For detailed account of these batteries, see Appendix.

enough to keep her head up stream while permitting her to drop bodily down. Springs were prepared on each quarter; and, as the ships were to fight in quiet water, at short range, and in the dark, special care was taken so to secure the elevating screws that the guns should not work themselves to too great elevation.

In accordance with these instructions the ships stripped at Pilot Town, sending ashore spars, boats, rigging, and sails; everything that was not at present needed. The chronometers of the fleet were sent on board the Colorado. The larger ships snaked down the rigging, while the gunboats came up their lower rigging, carrying it in and securing it close to the mast. The flag-ship being now at the Head of the Passes remained there, the flag-officer shifting his flag from one small vessel to another as the requirements of the squadron called him to different points. A detachment of lighter vessels, one of the corvettes and a couple of gunboats, occupied an advance station at the "Jump," a bayou entering the river on the west side, eight miles above the Head of the Passes; the enemy's gunboats were thus unable to push their reconnoissances down in sight of the main fleet while the latter were occupied with their preparations. The logs of the squadron show constant bustle and movement, accompanied by frequent accidents, owing to the swift current of the river, which was this year exceptionally high, even for the season. A hospital for the fleet was established in good houses at Pilot Town, but the flag-officer had to complain of the entire insufficiency of medical equipment, as well as a lack of most essentials for carrying on the work. Ammunition of various kinds was very deficient, and the squadron was at one time threatened with failure of fuel, the coal vessels arriving barely in time.

The first and at that time the only serious obstacle to the

upward progress of the fleet was at the Plaquemine Bend, twenty miles from the Head of the Passes, and ninety below New Orleans. At this point the river, which has been running in a southeasterly direction, makes a sharp bend, the last before reaching the sea, runs northeast for a mile and three-quarters, and then resumes its southeast course. Two permanent fortifications existed at this point, one on the left, or north bank of the stream, called Fort St. Philip, the other on the right bank, called Fort Jackson. Jackson is a little below St. Philip, with reference to the direction of the river through the short reach on which they are placed, but having regard to the general southeast course, may be said to be lower down by 800 yards; the width of the river actually separating the faces of the two works. At the time the fleet arrived, the woods on the west bank had been cleared away below Jackson almost to the extreme range of its guns, thus affording no shelter from observation; the east bank was nearly treeless. Extending across the river from below Jackson, and under the guns of both works, was a line of obstructions which will be described further on.

The works of St. Philip consisted of the fort proper, a structure of brick and earth mounting in barbette four VIII-inch columbiads and one 24-pounder; and two water batteries on either side of the main work, the upper mounting sixteen 24-pounders, the lower, one VIII-inch columbiad, one VII-inch rifle, six 42-pounders, nine 32s, and four 24s. There were here, then, forty-two guns commanding the river below the bend, up which the ships must come, as well as the course of the stream in their front. Besides these there were one VIII-inch and one X-inch mortar in the fort; one XIII-inch mortar, whose position does not appear; and a battery of four X-inch sea-coast mortars, situated below and to the northeast of the lower water battery. These last pieces for

vertical shell-firing had no influence upon the ensuing contest; the XIII-inch mortar became disabled at the thirteenth fire by its own discharge, and the X-inch, though 142 shell were fired from them, are not so much as mentioned in the reports of the fleet.

Fort Jackson, on the southern bank of the bend, was a pentagonal casemated work, built of brick. In the casemates were fourteen 24-pounder smooth-bore guns, and ten flanking howitzers of the same calibre. Above these, in barbette, were two X-inch and three VIII-inch columbiads, one VII-inch rifle, six 42-pounders, fifteen 32s, and eleven 24s; total in the fort, sixty-two. Just outside of and below the main work, covering the approach to it, was a water battery carrying one X-inch and two VIII-inch columbiads, and two rifled 32-pounders.[1] Of the guns in Jackson, the flanking howitzers and half a dozen of the 24- and 32-pounders could, from their position, have had little or no share in the battle with the fleet.

The number and calibre of the guns have been thus minutely stated because it can scarcely fail to cause surprise that so many of them were so small. Of 109 in the two works, 56 were 24-pounders. The truth is that the Confederacy was very badly off for cannon, and the authorities in Richmond had their minds firmly made up that the great and dangerous attack was to come from above. General Lovell, commanding the department, begged hard for heavy cannon, but to no avail; not only were all available sent north, but constant drafts were made upon the supplies he himself had. New Orleans, the central point which he was called on to defend, was approachable, not only by the Mississippi, but through a dozen bayous which, from Pearl

[1] These threw projectiles weighing from sixty to eighty pounds.

River on the east to the Atchafalaya Bayou on the west, gave access to firm ground above Forts St. Philip and Jackson, and even above the city. Works already existing to cover these approaches had to be armed, and new works in some cases erected, constituting, in connection with St. Philip and Jackson, an exterior line intended to block approach from the sea. A second, or interior, line of works extended from the river, about four miles below New Orleans, to the swamps on either hand, and was carried on the east side round to Lake Ponchartrain in rear of the city. These were for defence from a land attack by troops that might have penetrated through any of the water approaches; and a similar line was constructed above the city. The interior works below the city, where they touched the river on the right bank, were known as the McGehee, and on the left bank as the Chalmette line of batteries. The latter was the scene of Jackson's defeat of the English in 1815. All these works needed guns. All could not be supplied; but the necessity of providing as many as possible taxed the general's resources. In March, 1862, when it was determined to abandon Pensacola, he asked for some of the X-inch columbiads that were there, but all that could be spared from the north were sent to Mobile, where the commanding officer refused to give them up. In addition to other calls, Lovell had to spare some guns for the vessels purchased for the navy on Lake Ponchartrain and for the River Defence Fleet.

General Duncan had general charge of all the works of the exterior line, and was of course present at Plaquemine Bend during the attack. Colonel Higgins was in command of both the forts, with headquarters at Jackson, Captain Squires being in immediate command of St. Philip.

Auxiliary to the forts there were four vessels of the Confederate Navy, two belonging to the State of Louisiana, and

six of the River Defence Fleet. The latter were commanded by a Captain Stephenson, who entirely refused to obey the orders of Commander Mitchell, the senior naval officer, while professing a willingness to co-operate. The constitution of this force has already been described. There were also above, or near, the forts five unarmed steamers and tugs, only one of which, the tug Mosher, needs to be named.

The naval vessels were the Louisiana, sixteen guns; McRae, seven guns, six light 32-pounders and one IX-inch shell-gun; Jackson, two 32-pounders; and the ram Manassas, now carrying one 32-pounder carronade firing right ahead. Since her exploit at the Head of the Passes in the previous October, the Manassas had been bought by the Confederate Government, docked and repaired. She now had no prow, the iron of the hull only being carried round the stem. Her engines and speed were as poor as before. Lieutenant Warley was still in command. The State vessels were the Governor Moore and General Quitman, the former carrying two rifled 32s, and the latter two smooth-bores of the same calibre; these were sea-going steamers, whose bows were shod with iron like those of the River Defence Fleet and their engines protected with cotton. The Moore was commanded by Beverley Kennon, a trained naval officer, but not then in the Confederate Navy; the Quitman's captain, Grant, was of the same class as the commanders of the River Defence Fleet. The Manassas had some power as a ram, and the Moore, by her admirable handling, showed how much an able man can do with poor instruments, but the only one of the above that might really have endangered the success of the Union fleet was the Louisiana. This was an iron-clad vessel of type resembling the Benton, with armor strong enough to resist two XI-inch shells of the fleet that struck her at

short range. Her armament was two VII-inch rifles, three IX-inch and four VIII-inch shell-guns, and seven VI-inch rifles. With this heavy battery she might have been very dangerous, but Farragut's movements had been pushed on with such rapidity that the Confederates had not been able to finish her. At the last moment she was shoved off from the city on Sunday afternoon, four days before the fight, with workmen still on board. When her great centre stern wheel revolved, the water came in through the seams of the planking, flooding the battery deck, but her engines were not powerful enough to manage her, and she had to be towed down by two tugs to a berth just above Fort St. Philip, where she remained without power of movement till after the fight.

When ready, the fleet began moving slowly up the river, under the pilotage of members of the Coast Survey, who, already partly familiar with the ground, were to push their triangulation up to the forts themselves and establish the position of the mortars with mathematical precision; a service they performed with courage and accuracy. The work of the surveyors was carried on under the guns of the forts and exposed to the fire of riflemen lurking in the bushes, who were not wholly, though they were mostly, kept in check by the gunboats patrolling the river. On the 16th the fleet anchored just below the intended position of the mortar-boats on the west bank of the stream. The day following was spent in perfecting the arrangements, and by the morning of the 18th two divisions of mortar-boats were anchored in line ahead, under cover of the wood on the right bank, each one dressed up and down her masts with bushes, which blended indistinguishably with the foliage of the trees. Light lines were run as springs from the inshore bows and quarters; the exact bearing and distance of Fort

Jackson was furnished to each commander, and at 10 A.M. the bombardment began. The van of the fourteen schooners was at this moment 2,950 yards, the rear 3,980 yards from Fort Jackson, to which the mortar attack was confined; an occasional shell only being sent into St. Philip.

The remaining six schooners, called the second division, from the seniority of its commanding officer, were anchored on the opposite side, 3,900 yards below Jackson. Here they were able to see how their shell were falling, an advantage not possessed by those on the other shore; but there were no trees to cover them. An attempt to disguise them was made by covering their hulls with reeds and willows, but was only partly successful; and as the enemy's fire, which began in reply as soon as the mortars opened, had become very rapid and accurate, the gunboats of the main squadron moved up to support those of the flotilla and draw off part of it. Before noon two of the leading schooners in this division were struck by heavy shot and were dropped down 300 yards. The whole flotilla continued firing until 6 P.M., when they ceased by signal. That night the second division was moved across the river and took position with the others.

Until five o'clock the firing was sustained and rapid from both forts. At that time the citadel and out-houses of Jackson were in flames, and the magazine in great danger; so the enemy's fire ceased.

All the mortars opened again on the morning of the 19th and continued until noon, after which the firing was maintained by divisions, two resting while the third worked. Thus, about 168 shell were fired every four hours, or nearly one a minute. At 10 A.M. of the 19th one schooner was struck by a shot, which passed out through her bottom, sinking her. This was the only vessel of the flotilla thus destroyed.

Although Jackson was invisible from the decks of the

mortar-boats and the direction given by sights fixed to the mastheads, the firing was so accurate and annoying as to attract a constant angry return from the fort. To draw off and divide this one of the corvettes and two or three of the gunboats took daily guard duty at the head of the line, from 9 A.M. one day to the same hour the next. The small vessels advancing under cover of the trees on the west bank would emerge suddenly, fire one or two shots drifting in the stream, and then retire; the constant motion rendering the aim of the fort uncertain. Nevertheless some ugly hits were received by different ships.

Every night the enemy sent down fire-rafts, but these, though occasioning annoyance to the fleet, were productive of no serious damage beyond collisions arising from them. They were generally awkwardly started, and the special mistake was made of sending only one at a time, instead of a number, to increase the confusion and embarrassment of the ships. The crews in their boats towed them ashore, or the light steamers ran alongside and put them out with their hose.

Mortar-firing, however good, would not reduce the forts, nor lay New Orleans at the mercy of the fleet. It was necessary to pass above. Neither the flag-officer on the one hand, nor the leaders of the enemy on the other had any serious doubt that the ships could go by if there were no obstructions; but the obstructions were there. As originally laid these had been most formidable. Cypress trees, forty feet long and four to five feet in diameter, were laid longitudinally in the river, about three feet apart to allow a water-way. Suspended from the lower side of these logs by heavy iron staples were two 2½-inch iron cables, stretching from one side of the river to the other. To give the framework of trunks greater rigidity, large timbers, six by four inches, were

pinned down on the upper sides. The cables were secured on the left bank to trees; on the right bank, where there were no trees, to great anchors buried in the ground. Between the two ends the raft was held up against the current by twenty-five or thirty 3,000-pound anchors, with sixty fathoms of chain on each. This raft, placed early in the winter, showed signs of giving in February, when the spring-floods came sweeping enormous masses of drift upon it, and by the 10th of March the cables had snapped, leaving about a third of the river open. Colonel Higgins was then directed to restore it. He found it had broken from both sides, and attempted to replace it by sections, but the current, then running four knots an hour, made it impossible to hold so heavy a structure in a depth of one hundred and thirty feet and in a bottom of shifting sand, which gave no sufficient holding ground for the anchors. Seven or eight heavily built schooners, of about two hundred tons, were then seized and placed in a line across the river in the position of the raft. Each schooner lay with two anchors down and sixty fathoms of cable on each; the masts were unstepped and, with the rigging, allowed to drift astern to foul the screws of vessels attempting to pass. Two or three 1-inch chains were stretched across from schooner to schooner, and from them to sections of the old raft remaining near either shore.

Such was the general character of the obstructions before the fleet. The current, and collisions with their own vessels, had somewhat disarranged the apparatus, but it was essentially in this condition when the bombardment began. It was formidable, not on account of its intrinsic strength, but because of the swift current down and the slowness of the ships below, which, together, would prevent them from striking it a blow of sufficient power to break through. If they failed

thus to force their way they would be held under the fire of the forts, powerless to advance.

It is believed that, in a discussion about removing the obstructions, Lieutenant Caldwell, commanding the Itasca, volunteered to attempt it with another vessel, and suggested taking out the masts of the two. The Itasca and the Pinola, Lieutenant-Commanding Crosby, were assigned to the duty, and Fleet-Captain Bell given command of both; a rather unnecessary step, considering the age and character of the commanders of the vessels. To handle two vessels in such an enterprise, necessarily undertaken on a dark night, is not easy, and it is a hardship to a commander to be virtually superseded in his own ship at such a time. This was also felt in assigning divisional commanders for the night attack only, when they could not possibly manage more than one ship and simply overshadowed the captain of the vessel.

On the afternoon of the 20th, the Itasca and Pinola each went alongside one of the sloops, where their lower masts were taken out, and, with the rigging, sent ashore. At 10 P.M. Captain Bell went aboard both and addressed the officers and crews about the importance of the duty before them. He remained on board the Pinola and the two vessels then got underway, the Pinola leading. All the mortar-boats now opened together, having at times nine shells in the air at once, to keep down the fire of Jackson in case of discovery, although the two gunboats showed for little, being very deep in the water.

As they drew near the obstructions two rockets were thrown up by the enemy, whose fire opened briskly; but the masts being out, it was not easy to distinguish the vessels from the hulks. The Pinola struck the third from the eastern shore and her men jumped on board. The intention was to explode two charges of powder with a slow match over the

chains, and a torpedo by electricity under the bows of the hulk, a petard operator being on board. The charges were placed, and the Pinola cast off. The operator claims that he asked Bell to drop astern by a hawser, but that instead of so doing, he let go and backed the engines. Be this as it may, the ship went rapidly astern, the operator did not or could not reel off rapidly enough, and the wires broke. This hulk therefore remained in place, for the timed fuzes did not act.

The Itasca ran alongside the second hulk from the east shore and threw a grapnel on board, which caught firmly in the rail; but through the strength of the current the rail gave way and the Itasca, taking a sheer to starboard, drifted astern with her head toward the bank. As quickly as possible she turned round, steamed up again and boarded the hulk nearest the east shore on its port, or off-shore side, and this time held on, keeping the engine turning slowly and the helm aport to ease the strain on the grapnel. Captain Caldwell, Acting-Masters Amos Johnson and Edmund Jones, with parties of seamen, jumped on board with powder-cans and fuzes; but, as they were looking for the chains, it was found that they were secured at the bows, by lashing or otherwise, to the hulk's anchor chain, the end of the latter being led in through the hawse-pipe, around the windlass and bitted. When its windings had been followed up and understood, Captain Caldwell was told that the chain could be slipped. He then contemplated firing the hulk, but while the materials for doing so were sought for, the chain was slipped without orders. The vessels went adrift, and, as the Itasca's helm was to port and the engines going ahead, they turned inshore and grounded hard and fast a short distance below, within easy range of both forts.

A boat was at once sent to the Pinola, which was steaming up to try again, and she came to her consort's assistance.

Two lines were successfully run to the Itasca, but she had grounded so hard that both parted, though the second was an 11-inch hawser. The Pinola now drifted so far down, and was so long in returning, that the Itasca thought herself deserted; and the executive officer, Lieutenant George B. Bacon, was despatched to the Hartford for a more powerful vessel. The hour for the moon to rise was also fast approaching and the fate of the Itasca seemed very doubtful.

The Pinola, however, came back, having in her absence broken out a 13-inch hawser, the end of which was passed to the grounded vessel. The third trial was happy and the Pinola dragged the Itasca off, at the same time swinging her head up the river. Lieutenant Caldwell, who was on the bridge, when he saw his ship afloat, instead of returning at once, steadied her head up stream and went ahead fast with the engines. The Itasca moved on, not indeed swiftly, but firmly toward and above the line of hulks, hugging the eastern bank. When well above Caldwell gave the order, "Starboard;" the little vessel whirled quickly round and steered straight for the chains. Carrying the full force of the current with her and going at the top of her own speed, she passed between the third hulk, which the Pinola had grappled, and the fourth. As her stem met the chain she slid bodily up, rising three or four feet from the water, and dragging down the anchors of the hulks on either side; then the chains snapped, the Itasca went through, and the channel of the river was free.

The following morning the hulks were found to be greatly shifted from their previous positions. The second from the east shore remained in place, but the third had dragged down and was now astern of the second, as though hanging to it. The hulk nearest the west shore was also unmoved, but the other three had dragged down and were lying more

or less below, apparently in a quartering direction from the first. A broad open space intervened between the two groups. The value of Caldwell's work was well summed up by General M. L. Smith, the Confederate Engineer of the Department: "The forts, in my judgment, were impregnable so long as they were in free and open communication with the city. This communication was not endangered while the obstruction existed. The conclusion, then, is briefly this: While the obstruction existed the city was safe; when it was swept away, as the defences then existed, it was in the enemy's power."

The bombardment continued on the 21st, 22d, and 23d with undiminished vigor, but without noteworthy incident in the fleet. The testimony of the Confederate officers, alike in the forts and afloat, is unanimous as to the singular accuracy of the mortar fire. A large proportion of the shells fell within the walls of Jackson. The damage done to the masonry was not irreparable, but the quarters and citadel, as already stated, were burned down and the magazine endangered. The garrison were compelled to live in the casemates, which were partially flooded from the high state of the river and the cutting of the levee by shells. Much of the bedding and clothing were lost by the fire, thus adding to the privations and discomfort. On the 21st Jackson was in need of extensive repairs almost everywhere, and the officers in command hoped that the Louisiana, which had come down the night before, would be able to keep down the mortar fire, at least in part. When it was found she had no motive power they asked that she should take position below the obstructions on the St. Philip side, where she would be under the guns of the forts, but able to reach the schooners. If she could not be a ship of war, at least let her be a floating battery. Mitchell declined for several reasons. If a mortar-

shell fell vertically on the decks of the Louisiana it would go through her bottom and sink her; the mechanics were still busy on board and could not work to advantage under fire; the ports were too small to give elevation to the guns, and so they could not reach the mortars. If this last were correct no other reason was needed; but as the nearest schooner was but 3,000 yards from Jackson, it seems likely he deceived himself, as he certainly did in believing "on credible information" that a rifled gun on the parapet of Jackson, of the same calibre as that of the Louisiana, had not been able to reach. Three schooners had been struck, one at the distance of 4,000 yards, during the first two days of the bombardment, not only by rifled, but by VIII- and X-inch spherical projectiles; and the second division had been compelled to shift its position. Looking only to the Louisiana, the decision of the naval officers was natural enough; but considering that time pressed, that after five days' bombardment the fleet must soon attack, that it was improbable, if New Orleans fell, that the Louisiana's engines could be made efficient and she herself anything but a movable battery, the refusal to make the desired effort looks like caring for a part, at the sacrifice of the whole, of the defence. On the last day Mitchell had repeated warnings that the attack would soon come off, and was again asked to take a position to enfilade the schooners, so that the cannoneers of Jackson might be able to stand to their guns. Mitchell sent back word that he hoped to move in twenty-four hours, and received from Higgins, himself an old seaman and naval officer, the ominous rejoinder: "Tell Captain Mitchell that there will be no to-morrow for New Orleans, unless he immediately takes up the position assigned to him with the Louisiana."[1]

[1] Mitchell's conduct was approved by a Naval Court of Inquiry. Higgins, who was most emphatic in his condemnation, could not appear as a witness, the War

That same day, all arrangements of the fleet being completed, the orders to be ready to attack the following night were issued. Every preparation that had occurred to the minds of the officers as tending to increase the chance of passing uninjured had been made. The chain cables of the sheet anchors had been secured up and down the sides of the vessels, abreast the engines, to resist the impact of projectiles. This was general throughout the squadron, though the Mississippi, on account of her side-wheels, had to place them inside instead of out; and each commander further protected those vital parts from shots coming in forward or aft, with hammocks, bags of coal, or sand, or ashes, or whatever else came to hand. The outside paint was daubed over with the yellow Mississippi mud, as being less easily seen at night; while, on the other hand, the gun-carriages and decks were whitewashed, throwing into plainer view the dark color of their equipment lying around. On some ships splinter nettings were rigged inside the bulwarks, and found of advantage in stopping the flight of larger fragments struck out by shot. Three more of the gunboats, following the example of the Pinola and Itasca, had their lower masts removed and moored to the shore. Of the four that kept them in three had their masts wounded in the fight, proving the advantage of this precaution. Thus prepared, and stripped of every spare spar, rope, and boat, in the lightest fighting trim, the ships stood ready for the night's work.

The flag-officer had at first intended to advance to the attack in two columns abreast, each engaging the fort on its own side and that only. On second thought, considering

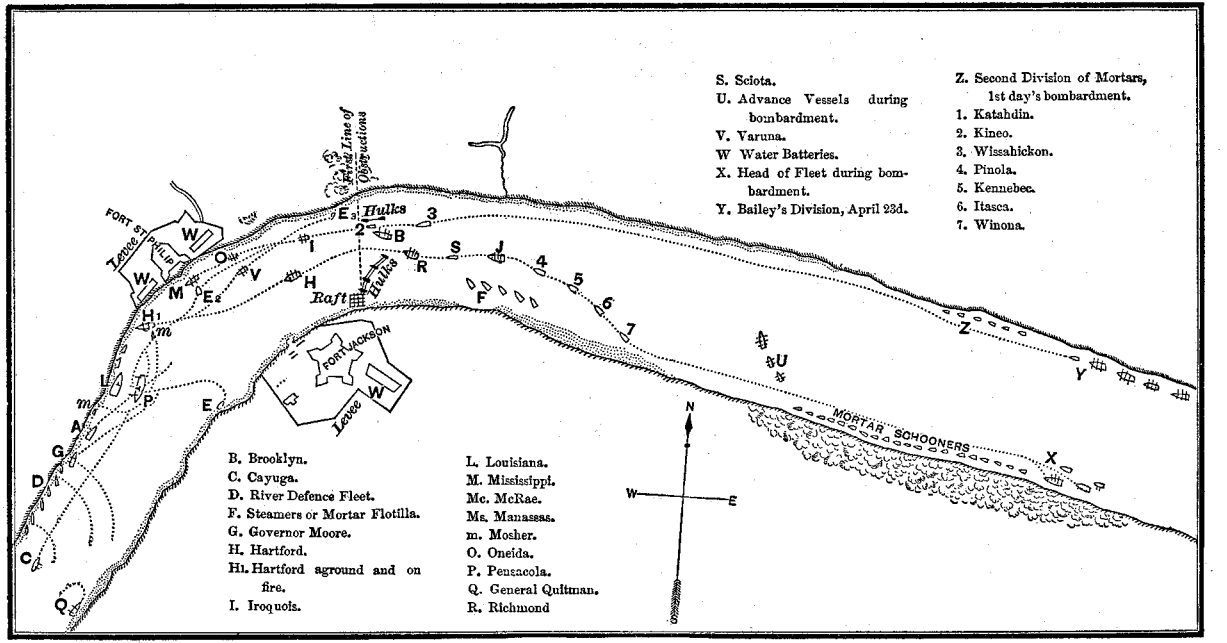
Department not being willing to spare him from his duties. The difference was one of judgment and, perhaps, of temperament. From Higgins's character it is likely that, had he commanded the naval forces, the Louisiana would either have done more work or come to a different end. As the old proverb says, "He would have made a spoon or spoiled the horn."

that in the darkness and smoke vessels in parallel columns would be more likely to foul the hulks on either side, or else each other, and that the fleet might so be thrown into confusion, he changed his plan and directed that the starboard column should advance first, its rear vessel to be followed by the leader of the port column; thus bringing the whole fleet into single line ahead. To help this formation, after dark on the 23d, the eight vessels of the starboard column moved over from the west bank and anchored in line ahead on the other side, the Cayuga, bearing the divisional flag of Captain Theodorus Bailey, in advance. Their orders remained to engage St. Philip on the right hand, and not to use their port batteries. The signal to weigh was to be two vertical red lights.

Meanwhile, during the days that had gone by since breaking the line of hulks, some officers of the fleet had thought they could see the water rippling over a chain between the two groups; and, although the flag-officer himself could not make it out, the success of the attack so depended upon having a clear thoroughfare, that he decided to have a second examination. Lieutenant Caldwell asked to do this in person, as his work was in question. Toward nightfall of the 23d, the Hartford sent a fast twelve-oared boat to the Itasca. Caldwell and Acting-Master Edmund Jones went in the boat, which was manned from the Itasca's crew, and after holding on by the leading mortar-schooner till dark, the party started ahead. Fearing that pickets and sharpshooters on either shore might stop them, they had to pull up in the middle of the river against the heavy current, without availing themselves of the inshore eddy. Before they came up with the chain, a fire was kindled on the eastern bank throwing a broad belt of light athwart the stream. To pull across this in plain view seemed madness, so the

boat was headed to the opposite side and crawled up to within a hundred yards of the hulks. Then holding on to the bushes, out of the glare of the fire, and hearing the voices of the enemy in the water battery, the party surveyed the situation. Though tangled chains hung from the bows of the outer and lower hulk it seemed perfectly plain that none reached across the river, but, after some hesitation about running the risk merely to clear up a point as to which he had himself no doubt, the necessity of satisfying others determined Caldwell; and by his orders the cutter struck boldly out and into the light. Crossing it unobserved, or else taken for a Confederate boat by any who may have seen, the party reached the outer hulk on the west side. Pausing for a moment under its shelter they then pulled up stream, abreast the inshore hulk, and Jones dropped from the bow a deep-sea lead with ten fathoms of line. The boat was then allowed to drift with the current, and the line held in the hand gave no sign of fouling anything. Then they pulled up a second time and again dropped down close to the hulk on the east shore with like favorable result; showing conclusively that, to a depth of sixty feet, nothing existed to bar the passage of the fleet. The cutter then flew on her return with a favoring current, signalling all clear at 11 P.M.

At 2 A.M. the flag-ship hoisted the appointed signal and the starboard column weighed, the heavy vessels taking a long while to purchase their anchors, owing to the force of the current. At 3.30 the Cayuga, leading, passed through the booms, the enemy waiting for the ships to come fairly into his power. In regular order followed the Pensacola, Mississippi, Oneida, Varuna, Katahdin, Kineo, Wissahickon, the Confederate fire beginning as the Pensacola passed through the breach. The Varuna, Cayuga, and Katahdin



Battle of New Orleans.

steamed rapidly on, the one heavy gun of the gunboats being ill-adapted to cope with those in the works; but the heavy ships, keeping line inside the gunboats, moved slowly by, fighting deliberately and stopping from time to time to deliver their broadsides with greater effect.

The Pensacola, following the Cayuga closely and keeping a little on her starboard quarter, stopped when near Fort St. Philip, pouring in her heavy broadside, before which the gunners of its barbette battery could not stand but fled to cover; then as the big ship moved slowly on, the enemy returned to their guns and again opened fire. The Pensacola again stopped, and again drove the cannoneers from their pieces, the crew of the ship and the gunners in the fort cursing each other back and forth in the close encounter. As the ship drew away and turned toward the mid-river, so that her guns no longer bore, the enemy manned theirs again and riddled her with a quartering fire as she moved off. At about this time the ram Manassas charged her, but, by a skilful movement of the helm, Lieutenant Roe, who was conning the Pensacola, avoided the thrust. The ram received the ship's starboard broadside and then continued down, running the gauntlet of the Union fleet, whose shot penetrated her sides as though they were pasteboard.

The Mississippi, following the Pensacola and disdaining to pass behind her guns, was reduced to a very low rate of speed. As she came up with and engaged Fort St. Philip, the Manassas charged at her, striking on the port side a little forward of the mizzen-mast, at the same time firing her one gun. The effect on the ship at the time was to list her about one degree and cause a jar like that of taking the ground, but the blow, glancing, only gave a wound seven feet long and four inches deep, cutting off the heads of fifty copper bolts as clean as though done in a machine. Soon

after, moving slowly along the face of the fort, the current of the river caught the Mississippi on her starboard bow and carried her over to the Fort Jackson side.

The Oneida, having shifted her port guns to the starboard side, followed the Mississippi. She shared in the delay caused by the Pensacola's deliberate passage until the Mississippi's sheer gave her the chance to move ahead. She then steamed quickly up, hugging the east bank, where the eddy current favored her advance. As she passed close under the muzzles of St. Philip's guns she fired rapidly canister and shrapnel, the fire from the fort passing for the most part harmlessly over the ship and the heads of her crew.

The two rear gunboats, the Kineo and Wissahickon, were both delayed in passing; the Kineo by a collision with the Brooklyn, the two vessels meeting between the hulks, and the Wissahickon by fouling the obstructions. The difficulty of finding the breach was already felt, and became more and more puzzling as the vessels were nearer the rear. The Wissahickon was one of the last that succeeded in getting through.

The port column was under way in time to follow close in the wake of its predecessor; indeed, it seems certain that, in impatience to be off, or from some other reason, the leading ships of this division doubled on the rear ships of the van. By the report of the captain of the Hartford, which led, that ship was engaged only twenty minutes after the enemy opened on the leading vessels of the starboard column. She steered in near to Jackson, but a fire raft coming down on her caused her to sheer across the river, where she took the ground close under St. Philip; the raft lying on her port quarter, against which it was pushed by the tug Mosher,[1] a

[1] As this feat has been usually ascribed to the Manassas, it may be well to say that the statement in the text rests on the testimony of the commander of the ram, as well as other evidence.

small affair of thirty-five tons, unarmed, with a crew of half a dozen men commanded by a man named Sherman. On that eventful night, when so many hundreds of brave men, each busy in his own sphere, were plying their work of death, surely no one deed of more desperate courage was done than that of this little band. The assault threatened the very life of the big ship, and was made in the bright light of the fire under the muzzles of her guns. These were turned on the puny foe, which received a shot in her boilers and sunk. It is believed that the crew lost their lives, but the Hartford had caught fire and was ablaze, the flames darting up the rigging and bursting through the ports; but the discipline of her crew prevailed over the fury of the element, while they were still receiving and returning the blows of their human antagonists in both forts; then working herself clear, the Hartford passed from under their fire.

The Brooklyn and Richmond followed the Hartford, and behind them the gunboat division Sciota, Iroquois, Pinola, Kennebec, Itasca, and Winona, Fleet-Captain Bell having his divisional flag flying on board the Sciota. By this the enemy had better range, and at the same time the smoke of the battle was settling down upon the face of the river. The good fortune which carried through all the vessels of the leading column therefore failed the rear. The Brooklyn lost sight of her next ahead and, as she was passing through the hulks, using both broadsides as they would bear, came violently into collision with the Kineo, next to the last ship of the starboard column—another indication that the two columns were lapping. The gunboat heeled violently over and nearly drove ashore; but the two vessels then went clear, the Brooklyn fouling the booms of the eastern hulks, breaking through them but losing her way. This caused her to fall off broadside to the stream, in which position she re-

ceived a heavy fire from St. Philip. Getting clear and her head once more up river, the Manassas, which had been lying unseen close to the east bank, came butting into the starboard gangway. The blow was delivered with slight momentum against the chain armor, and appeared at the time to have done little damage; but subsequent examination showed that the Brooklyn's side was stove in about six feet below the water-line, the prow having entered between the frames and crushed both inner and outer planking. A little more would have sunk her, and, as it was, a covering of heavy plank had to be bolted over the wound for a length of twenty-five feet before she was allowed to go outside. At the same time that the Manassas rammed she fired her single gun, the shot lodging in the sand bags protecting the steam-drum. Groping on by the flash of the guns and the light of the burning rafts, the Brooklyn, just clearing a thirteen-foot shoal, found herself close under St. Philip, from whose exposed barbette guns the gunners fled at her withering fire, as they had from that of the Pensacola.

The Richmond, a slow ship at all times, was detained by her boilers foaming, and was much separated from her leaders. Still she engaged Fort Jackson and passed through the fire with small loss. The little Sciota followed with equal good fortune, having but two men wounded.

The Pinola, which had taken her place next to the Iroquois, was not so fortunate. She engaged first Fort Jackson, from whose fire she received little injury. Then she passed over to the other side within one hundred and fifty yards of St. Philip, from which she at first escaped with equal impunity; but coming then within the light of the fire-rafts, and the greater part of the squadron having passed, the enemy were able to play upon her with little to mar their aim. She was struck fourteen times, and lost three killed and

eight wounded, the heaviest list of casualties among the gunboats.

The Iroquois, which was on picket duty, fell into her station behind the Sciota as the fleet went by. After passing through the obstructions, and when already some distance up the stream, as the current round the bend was throwing her bow off and setting her over on the east bank, the order "starboard" was given to the wheel. As too often happens, this was understood as "stop her," and the engines were stopped while the wheel was not moved. In consequence of this mistake the Iroquois, then a very fast ship, shot over to the east (at this point more precisely the north) bank, past the guns of St. Philip, and brought up against the ironclad steamer Louisiana that was lying against the levee a short distance above the fort. This powerful, though immovable, vessel at once opened her ports and gave the Iroquois every gun that would bear, and at the same time a number of her people ran on deck as though to repel what seemed to be an attempt to board. This gave the Iroquois an opportunity of returning the murderous fire she had received, which she did with effect. Some of the guns of the Louisiana had been double-shotted, the second shot being in two cases found sticking in the hole made by the first. This unfortunate collision made the loss of the Iroquois amount to 8 killed and 24 wounded, in proportion to her complement the heaviest of the whole fleet. It was as she slowly drew away that Commander Porter noted her as "lingering," standing out in full relief against the light of the burning rafts; then she went her way, the last to pass, and the fight was won.

The three gunboats at the rear of the second column failed to get by. The Itasca, on coming abreast of Fort Jackson, was pierced by several shot, one of them entering the boiler. The steam issuing in a dense cloud drove every one

up from below, and the vessel deprived of her motive power, drifted helplessly down the stream. The Winona following her, fouled the obstructions, and before she could get clear the Itasca backed on board of her. After a half hour's delay she proceeded under a heavy fire, at first from Jackson. Thinking the burning raft, in whose light the Pinola suffered, to be on that side of the river, she tried to pass on the St. Philip side, receiving the fire of the latter fort at less than point-blank range. Shooting over to the other side again, so thick was the smoke that the ship got close to shore, and her head had to be turned down stream to avoid running on it. By this time day had broken, and the Winona, standing out against the morning sky, under the fire of both forts, and with no other vessel to distract their attention, was forced to retire. The Kennebec also fouled the rafts and was unable to get by before the day dawned.

The steamers of the mortar flotilla, and the sailing sloop Portsmouth, as soon as the flag-ship had lifted her anchor, moved up into the station which had been assigned them to cover the passage of the fleet, about five hundred yards from Jackson, in position to enfilade the water battery commanding the approach to the fort. The vessels kept their place, firing shrapnel and shell, until the last of the fleet was seen to pass the forts. They then retired, the mortar-schooners at the same time ceasing from the shelling, which had been carried on throughout the engagement.

An hour and a quarter had elapsed from the time that the Cayuga passed the obstructions. The fleet, arriving above the forts, fell in with the Confederate flotilla, but in the absence of the Louisiana the other Confederate steamers were no match for their antagonists. The Cayuga indeed, dashing forward at a rate which left her but fifteen minutes under the fire of the forts, found herself when above them in hot

quarters; and in a not unequal match rendered a good account of three assailants. The Varuna, passing with yet greater rapidity, steamed through with her guns trained as far ahead as they could be, and delivered her fire as opportunity offered. She soon passed beyond them, unsupported, and continued up the river, coming close upon a steamer called the Doubloon, in which were General Lovell and some of his staff, who narrowly escaped being captured. After the Varuna came the Governor Moore, which had been down among the Union fleet, receiving there the fire of the Oneida and Pinola. Finding the berth too hot for him, and catching sight of the Varuna thus separated from her fleet, Kennon hoisted the same lights as the latter vessel and followed on up. The lights deceived the Varuna and also the Confederate steamer Jackson, which had been up the river on duty and was at quarantine as the two others drew near. Taking them for enemies the Jackson opened a long-range fire on the two impartially, one of her shots wounding the fore-mast of the Moore; she then steamed hastily away to New Orleans, where she was destroyed by her commander. The only other vessel in sight was the Stonewall Jackson[1] of the River Defence Fleet, carrying one gun. She was behind the two, trying to escape unseen to New Orleans. Kennon now opened fire, hoping that the Jackson, undeceived, would turn back to help him, but she kept on her upward course; the Varuna, however, was no longer in ignorance. Finding that the height of the Moore's forecastle out of water and the position of the bow gun would not let it be depressed enough to fire with effect, Kennon resorted to the old-time heroic treatment for such defects; loading the gun with percussion shell he fired it through the bows of his own ship, and used the hole

[1] There were two Jacksons, the naval steamer Jackson and the River Defence boat Stonewall Jackson.

thus made for a port. The next shot raked the Varuna's deck, killing three and wounding nine of the crew. Boggs then put his helm hard aport, bringing his starboard battery to bear and doubtless expecting that the enemy would follow his motion to avoid being raked, but Kennon knew too well his own broadside weakness, and keeping straight on ran into the Varuna before her head could be gotten off again. The powerful battery of the Union vessel, sweeping from stem to stern, killed or wounded a large part of the enemy's crew; but her own fate was sealed, her frame being too light for such an encounter. The Moore having rammed again then hauled off, believing the Varuna to be in a sinking condition, and tried to continue up stream, but with difficulty, having lost her wheel-ropes. The Stonewall Jackson, now coming up, turned also upon the Varuna and rammed her on the port side, receiving a broadside in return. The Union vessel then shoved her bow into the east bank and sank to her top-gallant forecastle.

The Varuna's advance had been so rapid that there seems to have been some uncertainty in the minds of Captains Bailey and Lee of the Cayuga and Oneida as to where she was. It being yet dark they were very properly inclined to wait for the rest of the fleet to come up. In a few moments, however, the Oneida moved slowly ahead as far as quarantine, whence the Varuna and her enemies were made out. The Oneida then went ahead at full speed. When she came up the Varuna was already ashore, her two opponents trying to escape, but in vain. The Stonewall Jackson ran ashore without offering resistance, on the right bank nearly opposite the Varuna; the Moore on the left bank, some distance above, where her captain set her on fire, but received the broadsides of the Oneida and Pensacola with his colors still flying, and so was taken.

The Cayuga followed the Oneida, but more slowly, and about five miles above the fort came upon a Confederate camp upon the right bank of the river. She opened with canister, and in a few moments the troops, a part of the Chalmette regiment, surrendered.

After ramming the Brooklyn, the Manassas had quietly followed the Union fleet, but when she came near them the Mississippi turned upon her. It was impossible to oppose her three hundred and eighty-four tons to the big enemy coming down upon her, so her commander dodged the blow and ran her ashore, the crew escaping over the bows, while the Mississippi poured in two of her broadsides, leaving her a wreck. Soon after, she slipped off the bank and drifted down past the forts in flames. At 8 A.M. she passed the mortar-fleet and an effort was made to secure her, but before it could be done she faintly exploded and sank.

The Iroquois, steaming up through the mêlee, saw a Confederate gunboat lying close in to the east bank. Having slowed down as she drew near the enemy, some one on board the latter shouted, "Don't fire, we surrender." This was doubtless unauthorized, for as the ship passed on, the Confederate, which proved to be the McRae, discharged a broadside of grape-shot and langrage, part of the latter being copper slugs, which were found on the Iroquois's decks in quantities after the action. The fire was promptly returned with XI-inch canister and 32-pounder shot. The McRae's loss was very heavy, among the number being her commander, Thomas B. Huger, who was mortally wounded. This gentleman had been an officer of reputation in the United States Navy, his last service having been as first-lieutenant of the very ship with which he now came into collision. This was but a few months before, under the same commission, the present being, in fact, her first cruise; and

the other officers and crew were, with few exceptions, the same as those previously under his orders. There is no other very particular mention of the McRae, but the Confederate army officers, who were not much pleased with their navy in general, spoke of her fighting gallantly among the Union ships.

As for the General Quitman and the River Defence Fleet, there seems to have been but one opinion among the Confederate officers, both army and navy, as to their bad behavior before and during the fight.[1] They did not escape punishment, for their enemies were among them before they could get away. The Oneida came upon one crossing from the right to the left bank, and rammed her; but it is not possible to recover the adventures and incidents that befell each. Certainly none of them rammed a Union vessel; and it seems not unfair to say that they gave way in disorder, like any other irregular force before a determined onslaught, made a feeble effort to get off, and then ran their boats ashore and fired them. They had but one chance, and that a desperate one, to bear down with reckless speed on the oncoming ships and ram them. Failing to do this, and beginning to falter, the ships came among them like dogs among a flock of sheep, willing enough to spare, had they understood the weakness of their foes, but thinking themselves to

[1] Colonel Lovell of the Confederate army, who was ordnance and disbursing officer of the River Defence Fleet, and had been twelve years an officer in the United States Navy, testified there was no organization, no discipline, and little or no drill of the crews. He offered to employ a naval officer to drill them, but it does not appear that the offer was accepted. He also testified that he had examined the Ellet ram, Queen of the West, and considered most of the River Defence boats better fitted for their work. The night before the fight, one of them, with Grant, captain of the Quitman, went on board the Manassas, and there told Warley that they were under nobody's orders but those of the Secretary of War, and they were there to show naval officers how to fight. There is plenty of evidence to the same effect. It was impossible to do anything with them.

be in conflict with formidable iron-clad rams, an impression the Confederates had carefully fostered.

When the day broke, nine of the enemy's vessels were to be seen destroyed. The Louisiana remained in her berth, while the McRae, and the Defiance of the River Defence Squadron, had taken refuge under the guns of the forts. The two first had lost their commanders by the fire of the fleet. During the three days that followed, their presence was a cause of anxiety to Commander Porter, who was ignorant of the Louisiana's disabled condition.

The Union fleet anchored for the day at quarantine, five miles above the forts. The following morning, leaving the Kineo and Wissahickon to protect, if necessary, the landing of General Butler's troops, they got under way again in the original order of two columns, not, however, very strictly observed, and went on up the river.

As they advanced, burning ships and steamers were passed, evidences of the panic which had seized the city, whose confidence had been undisturbed up to the moment of the successful passage of the forts. Four miles below New Orleans, the Chalmette and McGehee batteries were encountered, mounting five and nine guns. The Cayuga, still leading and steaming too rapidly ahead, underwent their fire for some time unsupported by her consorts, the Hartford approaching at full speed under a raking fire, to which she could only reply with two bow guns. When her broadside came to bear, she slowed down, porting her helm; then having fired, before she could reload, the Brooklyn, compelled to pass or run into her, sheered inside, between her and the works. The successive broadsides of these two heavy ships drove the enemy from their guns. At about the same moment the Pensacola engaged the batteries on the east bank, and the other vessels coming up in rapid succession, the works were quickly silenced.

The attack of the fleet upon the forts and its successful passage has been fitly called the battle of New Orleans, for the fate of the city was there decided. Enclosed between the swamps and the Mississippi, its only outlet by land was by a narrow neck, in parts not over three-quarters of a mile wide, running close by the river, which was at this time full to the tops of the levees, so that the guns of the fleet commanded both the narrow exit and the streets of the city. Even had there been the means of defence, there was not food for more than a few days.

At noon of the 25th, the fleet anchored before the city, where everything was in confusion. Up and down the levee coal, cotton, steamboats, ships, were ablaze, and it was not without trouble that the fleet avoided sharing the calamity. Among the shipping thus destroyed was the Mississippi, an ironclad much more powerful than the Louisiana. She was nearing completion, and had been launched six days, when Farragut came before the city. His rapid movements and the neglect of those in charge to provide tow-boats stopped her from being taken to the Yazoo, where she might yet have been an ugly foe for the fleet. This and the fate of the Louisiana are striking instances of the value of promptness in war. Nor was this the only fruit snatched by Farragut's quickness. There is very strong reason to believe that the fall of New Orleans nipped the purpose of the French emperor, who had held out hopes of recognizing the Confederacy and even of declaring that he would not respect the blockade if the city held out.

Captain Bailey was sent ashore to demand the surrender, and that the United States flag should be hoisted upon the public buildings. The rage and mortification of the excitable Creoles was openly manifested by insult and abuse, and the service was not unattended with danger. The troops,

however, being withdrawn by the military commander, the mayor, with some natural grandiloquence, announced his submission to the inevitable, and Captain Bailey hoisted the flag on the mint. The next day it was hauled down by a party of four citizens; in consequence of which act, the flag-officer, on the 29th, sent ashore a battalion of 250 marines, accompanied by a howitzer battery in charge of two midshipmen, the whole under command of the fleet-captain. By them the flags were rehoisted and the buildings guarded, until General Butler arrived on the evening of May 1st, when the city was turned over to his care.

Meanwhile Commander Porter remained in command below the forts. The morning after the passage of the fleet he sent a demand for their surrender, which was refused. Learning that the Louisiana and some other boats had escaped the general destruction, and not aware of their real condition, he began to take measures for the safety of his mortar-schooners. They were sent down the river to Pilot Town, with the Portsmouth as convoy, and with orders to fit for sea. Six were sent off at once to the rear of Fort Jackson, to blockade the bayous that ramify through that low land; while the Miami and Sachem were sent in the other direction, behind St. Philip, to assist the troops to land.

On the 27th, Porter, having received official information of the fall of the city, notified Colonel Higgins of the fact, and again demanded the surrender, offering favorable conditions. Meanwhile insubordination was rife in the garrison, which found itself hemmed in on all sides. At midnight of the 27th, the troops rose, seized the guard and posterns, reversed the field pieces commanding the gates, and began to spike the guns. Many of them left the fort with their arms; and the rest, except one company of planters, firmly refused to fight any longer. The men were largely foreigners, and with

little interest in the Secession cause; but they also probably saw that continued resistance and hardship could not result in ultimate success. The water-way above and below being in the hands of the hostile navy, all communication was cut off by the nature of the country and the state of the river; there could therefore be but one issue to a prolonged contest. The crime of the men was heinous, but it only hastened the end. To avoid a humiliating disaster, General Duncan accepted the offered terms on the 28th. The officers were permitted to retain their side arms, and the troops composing the garrison to depart, on parole not to serve till exchanged. At 2.30 P.M. the forts were formally delivered to the navy, and the United States flag once more hoisted over them.

The Confederate naval officers were not parties to the capitulation, which was drawn up and signed on board Porter's flag-ship, the Harriet Lane. While the representatives were seated in her cabin, flags of truce flying from her masthead and from the forts, the Louisiana was fired by her commander and came drifting down the river in flames. Her guns discharged themselves as the heat reached their charges, and when she came abreast Fort St. Philip she blew up, killing a Confederate soldier and nearly killing Captain McIntosh, her former commander, who was lying there mortally wounded. This act caused great indignation at the time among the United States officers present. Commander Mitchell afterward gave explanations which were accepted as satisfactory by Mr. Welles, the Secretary of the Navy. He said that the Louisiana was secured to the opposite shore from the fleet, three-quarters of a mile above, and that an attempt had been made to drown the magazine. As proof of good faith he had sent a lieutenant to notify Porter of the probable failure of that attempt. It remains, however, a

curious want of foresight in a naval man not to anticipate that the hempen fasts, which alone secured her, would be destroyed, and that the vessel thus cast loose would drift down with the stream. Conceding fully the mutual independence of army and navy, it is yet objectionable that while one is treating under flag of truce, the other should be sending down burning vessels, whether carelessly or maliciously, upon an unsuspecting enemy.

When taken possession of, Fort Jackson was found to have suffered greatly. The ground inside and out was plowed by the falling shell; the levee had been cut in many places, letting water into the fort; the casemates were shattered, guns dismounted and gun-carriages destroyed; all the buildings within the walls had been burned. Yet it was far from being reduced to an indefensible condition by six days' bombardment, could it have continued to receive supplies and reinforcements. The loss of the garrison had been 14 killed and 39 wounded.

The question of the efficacy of mortar-firing was raised in this as in other instances. Granting its inability to compel the surrender, it remains certain that Fort Jackson, though the stronger work, inflicted much less damage upon the passing fleet than did St. Philip. The direct testimony of Commander De Camp of the Iroquois, and an examination of the injuries received by the ships, when clearly specified, shows this. As both posts had been under one commander, it may be inferred that the difference in execution was due partly to the exhaustion of the garrison, and partly to the constant fire of the mortar flotilla during the time of the passage; both effects of the bombardment.

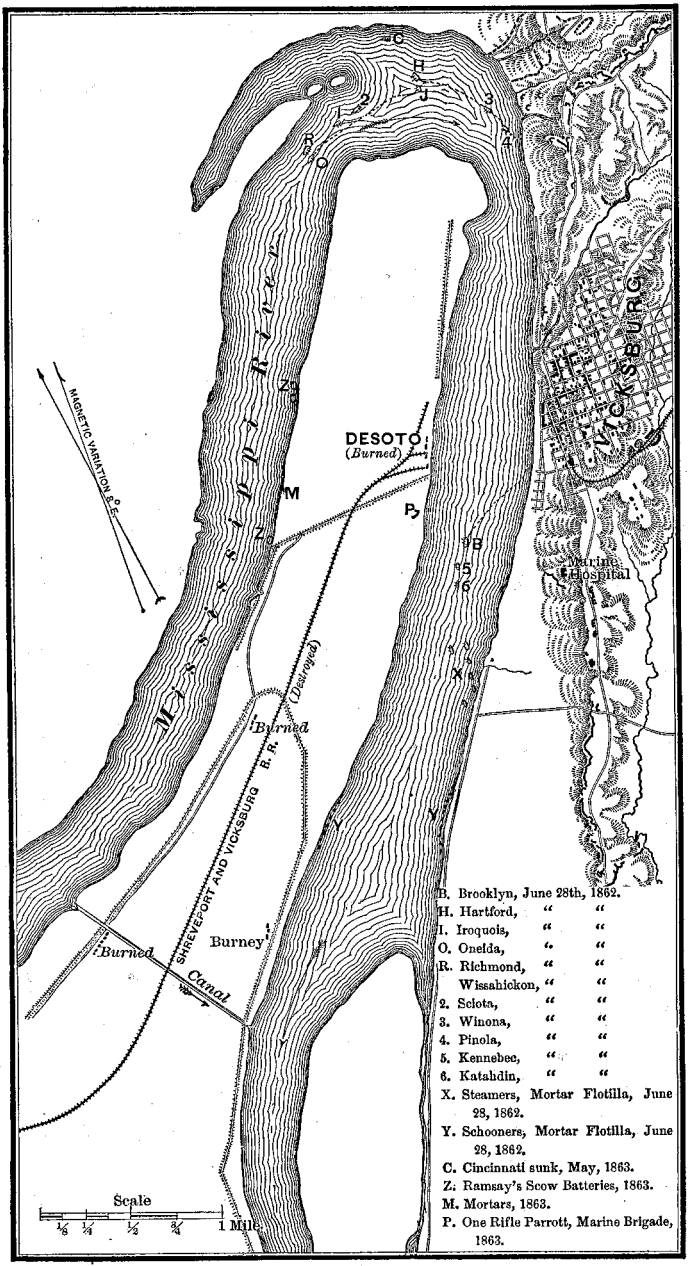
The exterior line of the defences of New Orleans being thus pierced in its central and strongest point, the remaining works —Forts Pike and Macomb guarding the approaches by way of

Lake Pontchartrain, Livingston at Barrataria Bay, Berwick at Berwick Bay, and others of less importance—constituting that line were hastily abandoned. Such guns as could be saved, with others from various quarters, were hurried away to Vicksburg, which had already been selected as the next point for defence, and its fortifications begun. The whole delta of the Mississippi was thus opened to the advance of the Union forces. This was followed a few days later by the evacuation of Pensacola, for which the enemy had been preparing since the end of February, when the disaster at Donelson had made it necessary to strip other points of troops. The heavy guns had been removed, though not to New Orleans. The defenceless condition of the place was partly known to the officer commanding at Fort Pickens, but no one could spare him force enough to test it. At the time of its final abandonment, Commander Porter, who after the surrender of the forts had proceeded to Mobile with the steamers of the mortar flotilla, was lying off that bar. Seeing a brilliant light in the direction of Pensacola at 2 A.M. on the 10th of May, he stood for the entrance, arriving at daylight. The army and navy took possession the same day, and this fine harbor was now again available as a naval station for the United States.

After New Orleans had been occupied by the army, Farragut sent seven vessels, under the command of Captain Craven of the Brooklyn, up the river. Baton Rouge and Natchez surrendered when summoned; but at Vicksburg, on the 22d of May, Commander S. P. Lee was met with a refusal. On the 9th of June the gunboats Wissahickon and Itasca, being sent down to look after some earthworks which the Confederates were reported to be throwing up at Grand Gulf, found there a battery of rifle guns completed, and were pretty roughly handled in the encounter which followed. On the 18th of June the Brooklyn and Richmond anchored below

Vicksburg, and shortly after the flag-officer came in person with the Hartford, accompanied by Commander Porter with the steamers and seventeen schooners of the mortar flotilla. The flag-officer did not think it possible to reduce the place without a land force, but the orders of the Department were peremptory that the Mississippi should be cleared. From Vicksburg to Memphis the high land did not touch the river on the east bank, and Memphis with all above it had now fallen. Vicksburg at that time stood, the sole seriously defended point.

The condition of the fleet was at this time a cause of serious concern to the flag-officer. The hulls had been much injured by the enemy's fire, and by frequent collisions in the lower river, due to the rapid current and the alarms of fire-rafts. The engines, hastily built for the gunboats, and worn in other ships by a cruise now nearing its usual end, were in need of extensive repairs. The maintenance of the coal-supply for a large squadron, five hundred miles up a crooked river in a hostile country, was in itself no small anxiety; involving as it did carriage of the coal against the current, the provision of convoys to protect the supply vessels against guerillas, and the employment of pilots; few of whom were to be found, as they naturally favored the enemy, and had gone away. The river was drawing near the time of lowest water, and the flag-ship herself got aground under very critical circumstances, having had to take out her coal and shot, and had even begun on her guns, two of which were out when she floated off. The term of enlistment of many of the crews had ended and they were clamoring for their discharge, and the unhealthy climate had already caused much illness. It was evident from the very first that Vicksburg could only be taken and held by a land force, but the Government in Washington were urgent and Farragut determined to run by



Battle at Vicksburg.

the batteries. This was the first attempt; but there were afterward so many similar dashes over the same spot, by fleets or single vessels, that the scene demands a brief description.

Vicksburg is four hundred miles above New Orleans, four hundred below Memphis. The river, after pursuing its irregular course for the latter distance through the alluvial bottom lands, turns to the northeast five miles before reaching the Vicksburg bluffs. When it encounters them it sweeps abruptly round, continuing its course southwest, parallel to the first reach; leaving between the two a narrow tongue of low land, from three-quarters to one mile wide. The bluffs at their greatest elevation, just below the point where the river first touches them, are two hundred and sixty feet high; not perpendicular, but sloping down close to the water, their nearness to which continues, with diminishing elevation, for two miles, where the town of Vicksburg is reached. They then gradually recede, their height at the same time decreasing by degrees to one hundred and fifty feet.

The position was by nature the strongest on the river. The height of the banks, with the narrowness and peculiar winding of the stream, placed the batteries on the hill-sides above the reach of guns on shipboard. At the time of Farragut's first attack, though not nearly so strongly and regularly fortified as afterward, there were in position twenty-six[1] guns, viz.: two X-inch, one IX-inch, four VIII-inch, five 42- and two 24-pounder smooth-bores, and seven 32-, two 24-, one 18-, and two 12-pounder rifled guns. Of these, one IX-inch, three VIII-inch, and the 18-pounder rifle were planted at the highest point of the bluffs above the town, in the bend, where they had a raking fire upon the ships before and after

[1] Quarterly Return of the ordnance officer of the post, June 30, 1862.

they passed their front. Just above these the four 24-pounders were placed.[1] Half a mile below the town was a water battery,[2] about fifty feet above the river, mounting two rifled 32s, and four 42s. The eleven other guns were placed along the crest of the hills below the town, scattered over a distance of a mile or more, so that it was hard for the ships to make out their exact position. The distance from end to end of the siege batteries was about three miles, and as the current was running at the rate of three knots, while the speed of the fleet was not over eight, three-quarters of an hour at least was needed for each ship to pass by the front of the works. The upper batteries followed them for at least twenty minutes longer. Besides the siege guns, field batteries in the town, and moving from place to place, took part in the action; and a heavy fire was kept up on the vessels from the rifle-pits near the turn.

On the 26th and 27th of June the schooners were placed in position, nine on the east and eight on the west bank. Bomb practice began on the 26th and was continued through the 27th. On the evening of the latter day Commander Porter notified the admiral that he was ready to cover the passage of the fleet.

At 2 A.M. of the 28th the signal was made, and at three the fleet was under way. The vessels advanced in two columns, the Richmond, Hartford, and Brooklyn in the order named, forming the starboard column, with intervals between them long enough to allow two gunboats to fire through. The port column was composed of the Iroquois, the leading ship, and the Oneida, ahead of the Richmond on her port

[1] The writer is inclined to think these were not ready on June 28th, but were the *new* battery mentioned in Union and Confederate reports of July 15th.

[2] This, known to the fleet as the hospital battery, was commanded by Captain Todd, a brother-in-law of President Lincoln.

bow, the Wissahickon and Sciota between the Richmond and the Hartford, the Winona and Pinola between the flag-ship and the Brooklyn, and in the rear, on the port quarter of the Brooklyn, the Kennebec and the Katahdin. At four o'clock the mortars opened fire, and at the same moment the enemy, the vessels of the fleet replying as their guns bore. As the Hartford passed, the steamers of the mortar flotilla, Octorara, Miami, Jackson, Westfield, Clifton, Harriet Lane, and Owasco, moved up on her starboard quarter, engaging under way the water battery, at a distance of twelve hundred to fifteen hundred yards, and maintaining this position till the fleet had passed. The leading vessels, as far as and including the Pinola, continued on, silencing the batteries when fairly exposed to their broadsides, but suffering more or less severely before and after. The prescribed order was not accurately observed, the lack of good pilots leading the ships to hug the bank on the town side, where the shore was known to be bold, and throwing them into line ahead; the distances also lengthened out somewhat, which lessened the mutual support.

The flag-ship moved slowly, and even stopped for a time to wait for the vessels in the rear; seeing which Captain Palmer, of the Iroquois, who had reached the turn, also stopped his ship, and let her drift down close to the Hartford to draw a part of the enemy's fire, and to reinforce that of the flag-officer. The upper batteries, like all the others, were silent while the ships lay in front of them; but as soon as the Hartford and Iroquois moved up they returned to their guns, and followed the rear of the fleet with a spiteful fire till out of range.

The cannonade of the enemy could at no time have been said to be discontinued along the line. The Brooklyn, with the two gunboats following, stopped when above the mortar-

steamers, and engaged the batteries within range at a great disadvantage; those ahead having a more or less raking fire upon them. The three remained there for two hours and then retired, the remainder of the fleet having passed on beyond and anchored above, at 6 A.M.

Having thus obeyed his orders, the flag-officer reported that the forts had been passed and could be passed again as often as necessary, a pledge frequently redeemed afterward; but he added, "it will not be easy to do more than silence the batteries for a time." The feat had been performed with the steady gallantry that characterized all the similar attempts on the river. Notwithstanding the swift adverse current, the full power of the vessels was not exerted. The loss was 15 killed and 30 wounded, eight of the former being among the crew of the Clifton, which received a shot in her boiler, scalding all but one of the forward powder division. The Confederates reported that none of their guns had been injured, and they mention no casualties.

The action of the three commanders that failed to pass was severely censured by the flag-officer; nor is it surprising that he should have felt annoyed at finding his fleet separated, with the enemy's batteries between them. It seems clear, however, that the smoke was for a time so thick as to prevent the Brooklyn from seeing that the flag-ship had kept on, while the language of the flag-officer's written order governing the engagement was explicit. It read thus: "When the vessels reach the bend of the river, should the enemy continue the action, the ships and Iroquois and Oneida will stop their engines and drop down the river again, keeping up the fire until directed otherwise." In view of these facts, Captain Craven was certainly justified in maintaining his position until he saw that the flag-ship had passed; then it may be doubtful whether the flag-officer's action had not

countermanded his orders. The question will be differently answered by different persons; probably the greater number of officers would reply that the next two hours, spent in a stationary position under the batteries, would have been better employed in running by and rejoining the fleet. The error of judgment, if it was one, was bitterly paid for in the mortification caused to a skilful and gallant officer by the censure of the most distinguished seaman of the war.

Above Vicksburg the flag-officer communicated with one of the rams under Lieutenant-Colonel Ellet, who undertook to forward his communications to Davis and Halleck. The ships were then anchored.

On the 1st of July Davis's fleet arrived. On the 9th an order was received from Washington for Commander Porter to proceed to Hampton Roads with twelve mortar-schooners. The next morning he sailed in the Octorara with the schooners in company. On the way down he not only had experience of the increasing difficulty of navigation from the falling of the water, but also his active mind ascertained the extent of the traffic by way of the Red River, and its worth to the Confederacy; as also the subsidiary value of the Atchafalaya Bayou, which, extending through the delta of the Mississippi from the Red River to the Gulf, was then an open highway for the introduction of foreign supplies, as well as the transport of native products. The object and scope of the next year's campaign are plainly indicated in a letter of his addressed to Farragut during his trip down the river. It was unfortunate that an attempt was not made to hold at once the bluffs below the point where those two highways meet, and blockade them both, instead of wasting time at Vicksburg when there was not then strength enough to hold on.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RECOIL FROM VICKSBURG.

THE position now occupied by the combined fleets of Farragut and Davis was from three to four miles below the mouth of the Yazoo River, near the neck of the long tongue of land opposite Vicksburg. The armed vessels were anchored on the east side, the transports tied up to the opposite bank. It was known that up the Yazoo was an ironclad ram, similar to one that had been building at Memphis when the capture of that city led to its destruction. The one now in the Yazoo, called the Arkansas, had been taken away barely in time to escape the same fate, and, being yet unfinished, had been towed to her present position. She was about 180 feet long by 30 feet beam, of from 800 to 1,000 tons burden, with a casemate resembling that of other river ironclads, excepting that the ends only were inclined, the sides being in continuation of the sides of the vessel. The deck carrying the guns was about six feet above water. The armor was of railroad iron dovetailed together, the rails running up and down on the inclined ends and horizontally along the sides. The iron thus arranged formed nearly a solid mass, about three inches thick, heavily backed with timber; and in the casemate between the ports there was a further backing of compressed cotton bales firmly braced. The cotton was covered within by a light sheathing of wood, as a guard against fire. Her battery of ten guns was disposed as follows: in the bow,

two heavy VIII-inch columbiads; in the stern, two 6.4-inch rifles; and in broadside two 6.4-inch rifles, two 32-pounder smooth-bores and two IX-inch Dahlgren shell-guns. The hull proper was light and poorly built. She had twin screws, but the engines were too light, and were moreover badly constructed, and therefore continually breaking down. Owing to this defect, she sometimes went on shore, and the commanding officer could not feel sure of her obeying his will at any moment. Besides her battery she had a formidable ram under water. She was at this time commanded by Commander Isaac N. Brown, formerly of the United States Navy, and had a complement of trained officers.

Notwithstanding the reports of her power, but little apprehension had been felt in the Union fleet, but still a reconnoissance was ordered for the 15th of July. The vessels sent were the Carondelet, Commander Walke, the Tyler, Lieutenant-Commander Gwin, and the Queen of the West of the ram fleet; they carried with them a number of sharpshooters from the army.

The Yazoo having been entered early in the morning, the Arkansas was met unexpectedly about six miles from the mouth. At this time the ram and the Tyler were over a mile ahead of the Carondelet, the Tyler leading. The latter, having no prow and being unarmored, was wholly unfit to contend with the approaching enemy; she therefore retreated down stream toward the Carondelet.

The latter also turned and began a running fight down stream. The move was not judicious, for she thus exposed her weakest part, the unarmored stern, to the fire of the enemy, and directed her own weakest battery, two 32-pounders, against him. Besides, when two vessels are approaching on parallel courses, the one that wishes to avoid the ram

may perhaps do so by a movement of the helm, as the Pensacola avoided the Manassas at the forts; but when the slower ship, as the Carondelet was, has presented her stern to the enemy, she has thrown up the game, barring some fortunate accident. The aggregate weight of metal discharged by each ironclad from all its guns was nearly the same,[1] but the Arkansas had a decided advantage in penetrative power by her four 6.4-inch rifles. Her sides, and probably her bow, were decidedly stronger than those of her opponent; but whatever the relative advantages or disadvantages under other circumstances, the Carondelet had now to fight her fight with two 32-pounders opposed to two VIII-inch shell-guns, throwing shell of 53 pounds and solid shot of 64, and with her unarmored stern opposed to the armored bow of the ram. The Tyler took and kept her place on the port bow of the Carondelet; as for the Queen of the West, she had fled out of sight. "We had an exceedingly good thing," wrote one of the Arkansas' officers; and for a long time, Walke's report says one hour, they kept it. During that time, however, a shot entered the pilot-house, injuring Commander Brown, mortally wounding one pilot and disabling another. The loss of the latter, who was pilot for the Yazoo, was seriously felt as the Arkansas came up and the order was given to ram; for the Carondelet was hugging the left bank, and as the

[1] The Carondelet, by returns made to the Navy Department in the following month, August, had four VIII-inch guns, six 32-pounders, and three rifles—one 30, one 50, and one 70-pound. Assuming her rifles to have been in the bows, the weight and distribution of battery would have been—

	Carondelet.	Arkansas.
Bow	150	106
Broadside	170	165
Stern	64	120
	384	391

The Arkansas' battery, as given, depends upon independent and agreeing statements of two of her division officers. A third differs very slightly.

enemy was drawing thirteen feet, the water was dangerously shoal. She accordingly abandoned the attempt and sheered off, passing so close that, from the decks of the Tyler, the two seemed to touch. Both fired their broadsides in passing.

After this moment the accounts are not to be reconciled. Captain Walke, of the Carondelet, says that he continued the action broadside to broadside for some minutes, till the Arkansas drew ahead, and then followed her with his bow guns until, his wheel-ropes being cut, he ran into the bank, while the ram continued down the river with her colors shot away. The colors of the Carondelet, he says, waved undisturbed throughout the fight. On the other hand, Captain Brown, of the Arkansas, states explicitly that there were no colors flying on board the Carondelet, that all opposition to his fire had ceased, and was not resumed as the ram pursued the other vessels; the Arkansas' flag-staff was shot away. The loss of the Carondelet was 4 killed and 6 wounded; that of the Arkansas cannot well be separated from her casualties during the same day, but seems to have been confined to the pilot and one other man killed.

The ram now followed the Tyler, which had kept up her fire and remained within range, losing many of her people killed and wounded. The enemy was seen to be pumping a heavy stream of water both in the Yazoo and the Mississippi, and her smoke-stack had been so pierced by shot as to reduce her speed to a little over a knot an hour, at which rate, aided by a favoring current, she passed through the two fleets. Having no faith in her coming down, the vessels were found wholly unprepared to attack; only one, the ram General Bragg, had steam, and her commander unfortunately waited for orders to act in such an emergency. "Every man has one chance," Farragut is reported to have said; "he has had his and lost it." The chance was unique,

for a successful thrust would have spared two admirals the necessity of admitting a disaster caused by over-security. The retreating Tyler was sighted first, and gave definite information of what the firing that had been heard meant, and the Arkansas soon followed. She fought her way boldly through, passing between the vessels of war and the transports, firing and receiving the fire of each as she went by, most of the projectiles bounding harmlessly from her sides; but two XI-inch shells came through, killing many and setting on fire the cotton backing. On the other hand, the Lancaster, of the ram fleet, which made a move toward her, got a shot in the mud-receiver which disabled her, scalding many of her people; two of them fatally. The whole affair with the fleets lasted but a few minutes, and the Arkansas, having passed out of range, found refuge under the Vicksburg batteries.

The two flag-officers were much mortified at the success of this daring act, due as it was to the unprepared state of the fleets; and Farragut instantly determined to follow her down and attempt to destroy her as he ran by. The execution of the plan was appointed for late in the afternoon, at which time Davis moved down his squadron and engaged the upper batteries as a diversion. Owing to difficulties in taking position, however, it was dark by the time the fleet reached the town, and the ram, anticipating the move, had shifted her berth as soon as the waning light enabled her to do so without being seen. She could not therefore be made out; which was the more unfortunate because, although only pierced twice in the morning, her plating on the exposed side had been much loosened by the battering she received. One XI-inch shot only found her as the fleet went by, and that killed and wounded several of her people. All Farragut's fleet, accompanied by the ram Sumter,[1] detached for this ser-

[1] Commanded by Lieutenant Henry Erben.

vice by Flag-Officer Davis, passed down in safety; the total loss in the action with the Arkansas and in the second passage of the batteries being but 5 killed and 16 wounded. None of this fleet ever returned above Vicksburg again.

The Upper Mississippi flotilla in the same encounter had 13 killed, 34 wounded, and 10 missing. The greater part of this loss fell on the Carondelet and the Tyler in the running fight; the former having 4 killed and 10 wounded, besides two who, when a shot of the enemy caused steam to escape, jumped overboard and were drowned. The Tyler lost 8 killed and 16 wounded. The commanding officer of the Arkansas reported his loss as 10 killed and 15 badly wounded.

The ram now lay at the bend of the river between two forts. On the 22d of July, Flag-Officer Davis sent down to attack her the ironclad Essex, Commander W. D. Porter, with the ram Queen of the West, Lieutenant-Colonel Ellet. They started shortly after dawn, the Benton, Cincinnati, and Louisville covering them by an attack upon the upper batteries. As the Essex neared the Arkansas the bow fasts of the latter were slacked and the starboard screw turned, so that her head swung off, presenting her sharp stem and beak to the broad square bow of the assailant. The latter could not afford to take such an offer, and, being very clumsy, could not recover herself after being foiled in her first aim. She accordingly ran by, grazing the enemy's side, and was carried ashore astern of him, in which critical position she remained for ten minutes under a heavy fire; then, backing and swinging clear, she ran down the river under fire of all the batteries, but was not struck. When Porter saw that he would be unable to ram, he fired into the Arkansas' bows, at fifty yards distance, three solid IX-inch shot, one of which penetrated and raked her decks, killing 7 and wounding 6

of her small crew, which then numbered only 41; the rest having been taken away as she was not fit for immediate service. The Queen of the West rammed, doing some injury, but not of a vital kind. She then turned her head up stream and rejoined the upper fleet, receiving much damage from the batteries as she went back.

Two days later, Farragut's fleet and the troops on the point opposite Vicksburg, under the command of General Williams, went down the river; Farragut going to New Orleans and Williams to Baton Rouge. This move was made necessary by the falling of the river and the increasing sickliness of the climate. Porter, on his passage down a fortnight before, had expressed the opinion, from his experience, that if the heavy ships did not come down soon they would have to remain till next season. But the health of the men, who had now been three months up the river, was the most powerful cause for the change. On the 25th of July forty per cent. of the crews of the upper flotilla were on the sick list. The troops, who being ashore were more exposed, had but 800 fit for duty out of a total of 3,200. Two weeks before the Brooklyn had 68 down out of 300. These were almost all sick with climatic diseases, and the cases were increasing in number and intensity. The Confederates now having possession of the point opposite Vicksburg, Davis moved his fleet to the mouth of the Yazoo, and finally to Helena. The growing boldness of the enemy along the banks of the Mississippi made the river very unsafe, and supply and transport vessels, unless convoyed by an armed steamer, were often attacked. One had been sunk, and the enemy was reported to be establishing batteries along the shores. These could be easily silenced, but to keep them under required a number of gunboats, so that the communications were seriously threatened. The fleet was also very short-

handed, needing five hundred men to fill the existing vacancies. Under these circumstances Flag-Officer Davis decided to withdraw to Helena, between which point and Vicksburg there was no high land on which the enemy could permanently establish himself and give trouble. By these various movements the ironclad Essex and the ram Sumter, now permanently separated from the up-river fleet, remained charged with the care of the river below Vicksburg; their nearest support being the Katahdin and Kineo at Baton Rouge.

On the 5th of August the Confederates under the command of Breckenridge made an attack upon General Williams's forces at Baton Rouge. The Arkansas, with two small gunboats, had left Vicksburg on the 3d to co-operate with the movement. The Union naval force present consisted of the Essex, Sumter, Cayuga, Kineo, and Katahdin. The attack was in superior force, but was gallantly met, the Union forces gradually contracting their lines, while the gunboats Katahdin and Kineo opened fire as soon as General Williams signalled to them that they could do so without injuring their own troops. No Confederate gunboats came, and the attack was repelled; Williams, however, falling at the head of his men.

The Arkansas had been prevented from arriving in time by the failure of her machinery, which kept breaking down. After her last stop, when the order to go ahead was given, one engine obeyed while the other refused. This threw her head into the bank and her stern swung down stream. While in this position the Essex came in sight below. Powerless to move, resistance was useless; and her commander, Lieutenant Stevens, set her on fire as soon as the Essex opened, the crew escaping unhurt to the shore. Shortly afterward she blew up. Though destroyed by her own officers the act was due

to the presence of the vessel that had gallantly attacked her under the guns of Vicksburg, and lain in wait for her ever since. Thus perished the most formidable Confederate ironclad that had yet been equipped on the Mississippi.

By the withdrawal of the upper and lower squadrons, with the troops under General Williams, the Mississippi River, from Vicksburg to Port Hudson, was left in the undisputed control of the Confederates. The latter were not idle during the ensuing months, but by strengthening their works at the two ends of the line, endeavored to assure their control of this section of the river, thus separating the Union forces at either end, maintaining their communication with the Western States, and enjoying the resources of the rich country drained by the Red River, which empties into the Mississippi in this portion of its course. On the 16th of August, ten days after the gallant repulse of the Confederate attack, the garrison was withdrawn from Baton Rouge to New Orleans, thus abandoning the last of the bluffs above the city; the Confederates, however, did not attempt to occupy in force lower than Port Hudson. Above Vicksburg, Helena on the west side was in Union hands, and the lower division of the Mississippi flotilla patrolled the river; but Memphis continued to be the lowest point held on the east bank. The intercourse between the Confederates on the two sides, from Memphis to Vicksburg, though much impaired, could not be looked upon as broken up. Bands of guerillas infested the banks, firing upon unarmed vessels, compelling them to stop and then plundering them. There was cause for suspecting that in some cases the attack was only a pretext for stopping, and that the vessels had been despatched by parties in sympathy with the Confederates, intending that the freight should fall into their hands. Severe retaliatory measures upon guerilla warfare were instituted by the naval vessels.

Flag-Officer Davis and General Curtis also arranged that combined naval and military expeditions should scour the banks of the Mississippi from Helena to Vicksburg, until a healthier season permitted the resumption of more active hostilities. One such left Helena on the 14th of August, composed of the Benton, Mound City, and General Bragg, with the Ellett rams Monarch, Samson, and Lioness, and a land force under Colonel Woods. Lieutenant-Commander Phelps commanded the naval force. The expedition landed at several points, capturing a steamer with a quantity of ammunition and dispersing parties of the enemy, and proceeded as far as the Yazoo River. Entering this, they took a newly erected battery twenty miles from the mouth, bursting the guns and destroying the work. Going on thirty miles farther, the rams were sent twenty miles up the Big Sunflower, one of the principal tributaries of the Yazoo. The expedition returned after an absence of eleven days, having destroyed property to the amount of nearly half a million.

The lull during the autumn months was marked by similar activity on the Tennessee and Cumberland, for which a squadron of light vessels was specially prepared. During the same period the transfer of the flotilla from the army to the navy was made, taking effect on the 1st of October, 1862. From this time the flotilla was officially styled the Mississippi Squadron.

During the rest of the summer and the autumn months Admiral Farragut's attention was mainly devoted to the seaboard of his extensive command. The sickly season, the low stage of the river, and the condition of his squadron, with the impossibility of obtaining decisive results without the co-operation of the army, constrained him to this course. Leaving a small force before New Orleans, he himself went to Pensacola, while the other vessels of the squadron were

dispersed on blockading duty. Pursuing the general policy of the Government, point after point was seized, and the blockade maintained by ships lying in the harbors themselves. On the 15th of October, Farragut reported that Galveston, Corpus Christi, and Sabine Pass, with the adjacent waters, were in possession of the fleet, without bloodshed and almost without firing a shot. Later on, December 4th, he wrote in a private letter that he now held the whole coast except Mobile; but, as so often happens in life, the congratulation had scarcely passed his lips when a reverse followed.

On the 1st of January, 1863, a combined attack was made upon the land and naval forces in Galveston Bay by the Confederate army and some cottonclad steamers filled with sharpshooters, resulting in the capture of the garrison, the destruction of the Westfield by her own officers, and the surrender of the Harriet Lane after her captain and executive officer had been killed at their posts. The other vessels then abandoned the blockade. This affair, which caused great indignation in the admiral, was followed by the capture of the sailing vessels Morning Light and Velocity off Sabine Pass, also by cottonclad steamers which came out on a calm day. Both Sabine Pass and Galveston thenceforth remained in the enemy's hands. An expedition sent to attempt the recovery of the latter failed in its object and lost the Hatteras, an iron side-wheel steamer bought from the merchant service and carrying a light battery. She was sent at night to speak a strange sail, which proved to be the Confederate steamer Alabama, and was sunk in a few moments. The disproportion of force was too great to carry any discredit with this misfortune, but it, combined with the others and with yet greater disasters in other theatres of the war, gave a gloomy coloring to the opening of the year 1863,

whose course in the Gulf and on the Mississippi was to see the great triumphs of the Union arms.

The military department of the Gulf had passed from General Butler to General Banks on the 17th of December, shortly before these events took place. It was by Banks that the troops were sent to Galveston, and under his orders Baton Rouge also was reoccupied at once. These movements were followed toward the middle of January by an expedition up the Bayou Teche, in which the gunboats Calhoun, Estrella, and Kinsman took part. The enterprise was successful in destroying the Confederate steamer Cotton, which was preparing for service; but Lieutenant-Commander Buchanan, senior officer of the gunboats, was killed.