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RECOLLECTIONS

OF

A SAILOR BOY

—OR THE—

Cruise of the Gunboat Louisiana.

BY

STEPHEN F. BLANDING,

ACTING CARPENTER'S MATE OF THE U. S. S. LOUISIANA IN THE  
WAR OF THE REBELLION.

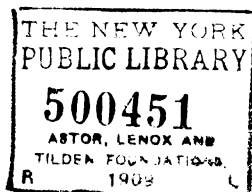
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## PREFACE.

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**M**Y OBJECT in writing this book was simply to bring more forcibly to the minds of the rising generation in America a tithe of the perils and the sufferings their fathers endured while battling for the Union. Also to depict to them some of the more pleasurable and exciting incidents connected with life on board of a "Man-of-War," and "Liberty days" on shore.

If I have succeeded in accomplishing this in the following pages I shall think that I have not written in vain.

JANUARY 1, 1885.

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# RECOLLECTIONS OF A SAILOR BOY.

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## CHAPTER I.

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### THE ENLISTMENT.

**T**HE war of the rebellion opened a large field for writers, and gave them a theme upon which to work, that will not grow cold for a generation to come. The half can never be written of the sufferings entailed upon those who fought, bled and died that their country might live. Thousands of thrilling stories might yet be related and written by thousands of men, still living, who went through the war, and were eye witnesses to many episodes which never have yet found their way into print, but which have been rehearsed time and time again at the regular meetings of the different posts throughout the United States. It pleases the rising generation to read of the part their fathers took in the war, and I consider it to be the duty of every returned soldier, while memory lasts, to write his experience, that the "Grand Army of the Republic"

may leave a record behind them for the future generations to peruse, of which none will be ashamed and the world appreciate. I could go on for hours and state reasons why these things should be done, but it is not for that I took my pen in hand. It was, rather, to relate a story of the war in such plain language, that the boys of the United States could easily read and fathom.

The scene opens in Providence, Rhode Island.

Three boys, ranging from fifteen to seventeen years of age, are sitting in the yard of their home, off one of the principal streets, in the early part of June, 1862. They seemed to be in a state of excitement about something; perhaps it is the sound of the drum and fife borne to their ears, as a regiment of soldiers are marching by the house, and the steady tramp, tramp, tramp of their feet can be distinctly heard on the dusty pavements. They are off for the front. Perhaps it is the news from the seat of war,—how the boys went into the fight; of the terrible slaughter; of the list of the dead and wounded, and the missing ones, with all of which the newspaper columns are teeming.

It was partly owing to all this news from the front, that caused the boys' excitement; but the main object of their meeting was to talk about enlistment in the army. The call of Uncle Sam for more troops, to help put down the rebellion, had stirred the boys up

at last, to that pitch, that they determined to enlist that very day. The different branches of the service were discussed pro and con, but they could not seem to agree upon any particular branch of it. "Either would do to get killed in," ventured Tom, a remark which caused a general laugh.

"What say you boys to our taking a cruise?"

"What do you mean by taking a cruise, Steve?" chorused both Tom and Phil interrupting me and jumping off the log they were sitting on at the time the above question was propounded.

"Well, I will try to convey to you, as well as I can, my meaning."

"Drive ahead," said Tom.

"Yes, drive ahead," echoed Phil.

"If you will both listen to me now I will endeavor to impart to you my meaning. You are aware that there is a war in progress—hold on, do not interrupt me now at your peril," as both Phil and Tom sprang up from the log whereon they had seated themselves again—"between the North and South," continued I, while Phil and Tom nodded assent. "Well, to be brief, let's enlist in the navy, we three, for a term of service, or during the war."

"Well, what have you to say to it, boys? Is the idea a good one or not?" continued I.

"I have this to say" exclaimed Tom, jumping up,



“your sudden announcement has almost taken my breath away, but you can count me in, nevertheless, every time.”

“Hooray! That’s the ticket,” exclaimed Phil, rolling off the log in his excitement. “Hooray!” he again sang out, “you’ve hit the nail on the head this time, Steve, and no mistake,” and he began marching round the yard to the tune of an imaginary fife with a piece of wood he had picked up in the yard to his lips.

Tom in the meanwhile began singing,

“We’ll be off to the wars again.

My peaceful home has now no charms for me

The battlefield no pain.”

“Well, now, fellows, if you have had enough of that kind of music perhaps you will listen to what I am about to say.”

“Yes,” said Tom, “we are now ready and willing to listen to you, and perhaps accede to all your demands.”

“In the first place, then, I have this question to propose to Phil.”

“Me?” said Phil.

“Silence in the ranks, and answer only when you are spoken to. Phil,” continued I, “has been marching round the yard, throwing his cap high in the air in his excitement, but he has not said right out that he would join us in our cruise.”

“Well, I—” commenced Phil.

“Silence,” said I. “Now attention; all you in favor of joining with me and enlisting in the United States navy for three years, or during the war, will please make it manifest by raising your right hands. One, two,” said I, counting the upraised hands and some imaginary ones. “Contrary minds—ah, I see no hands up. The ayes have it, and we are all to enlist.”

“Now then, listen attentively to what I have to say to you. We have made up our minds to enlist for the war. Have you thought over the probable consequences of such an act? Hardly, I think. In the first place, we have to ask our parents consent, or inform them when it will be too late for them to act in the matter. In the second place, have you thought over the home comforts we must sacrifice, and the perils and exposures we must endure when we join the navy? Do you think of the heart aches we shall cause to the loved ones at home, when we break the news of our determination to them. If so, then we are prepared to take the first step, which is enlistment.”

Silence reigned for a moment, and then both boys cried: “Yes, yes. We are willing to do all you have said, and,” said Tom, “I am willing to do more: I am willing to face death to help our brave boys in the field to put down this rebellion.”

“I am with you heart and hand in all your plans,” said Phil, “so now, let us shake hands upon it, and then make for the rendezvous; and,” he added, “there is one thing I should like to mention before we start. I made up my mind while you were regaling us with your speech, that—that—I shall not go home, neither before, nor after our enlistment, until our term of service expires.”

“Nor I,” said Tom.

“Why, how is this? Do you not want to see your parents and bid them good-bye before we leave, perhaps never to return again?” said I.

“Well, I do hate a scene, and I know just how it will be, if we go home and tell them what we intend doing; mother will cry and picture to us the dangers we shall have to encounter, and strive to have us put off going, and in the end we shall accede to her entreaties; then we shall have to go through a lot of speech making again, at some future time, to prepare for another start.”

“Well, what do you propose doing then? Run off in the night, as if we were ashamed of what we are about to do? For my part, I think that our parents will see that we are determined to go, and will be proud to think that they have sons who are ready and willing to fight the battles of their country; of course they will feel badly, and will endeavor to keep us at home a

little longer, it would not be natural in them if they did not. But in the end, they will accept the inevitable and allow us to go with their prayers and blessings following us. Don't you both think that it would be better for us to inform them of our purpose? If not, then unfold your plans and I will see if they meet with my approval; for my part I cannot see any other way out of it. What if there is a scene? It is soon over, and we can then go away with the happy feeling that we have done our duty."

"It's all very well, Steve, what you have said, and I honor you all the more for having said it," said Tom, "but nevertheless, I still continue to say as before, I shan't go home, and the first intimation they will have of my enlistment will be when I write to them, which I shall do in the course of a day or two."

"Now let me tell you boys the best way out of this difficulty, for I have made up my mind not to go home and stand a scene," said Phil.

"Well, what is your plan," said I, "perhaps we can arrange it so that you and Tom can go home and not have a scene, as you call it."

"My plan is this," said Phil, "Steve must go home and tell father and mother after we have enlisted, you know you can do it, Steve, and explain it all, so that they will look differently upon our going, than if we both went home. Say, will you agree to it?"

Seeing that it was useless to urge them more I agreed to accept the alternative, and we started for the recruiting office, which was situated at the corner of Canal street and Market square. We stole silently out of the yard, for fear our parents would discover us, and find work for us to do, and thus prevent our enlistment on that day. To tell the truth, I felt like a culprit, sneaking out of my own yard in such a manner, and I told Phil and Tom so.

“Pooh,” said Tom, “it will be all right sometime.”

“Yes,” said Phil, “It will be all right as Tom says, and when we return, if we don’t get shot, we will not sneak into the yard as you say we are sneaking out.”

But little more was said by either of us on our way to the recruiting station, which we reached in due season, mounting the flight of steps which led from the street to the room above where Captain Salisbury had his office, and where all recruits for the navy were enlisted. As we entered the room, I observed some sailors, or men in seamen’s garb, sitting round the room on benches ranged alongside the wall. One of them got up upon our entrance, and came towards us and I saw that he was intoxicated. As he tried to approach, one of his friends took hold of him and forced him down into his seat again. Crossing the room, we sauntered up to a desk where sat a man in the uniform of the United States navy.

“Well, young men,” said he, in a gruff tone of voice, “what do you want?”

“We want to enlist in the navy,” answered I.

Upon the utterance of those words, the man who was intoxicated rose to his feet, and staggered toward us, and in a thick guttural tone said, “Whar ye-hic-say? Want to list? Well, shiver my timbers; what ’en-hic-h—ll is the-hic-navy comin’ to when they take-hic-such whipper-snappers as you are to fight the battles of our-hic-country-hic;” and he reeled against Tom as he finished speaking and leered into his face. Tom sidled away from the drunken sailor, and at the same time said, “I suppose you call yourself a specimen of the men Uncle Sam hires to do the fighting, if so, then all I’ve got to say is God help our country.”

“Look here now,” said the sailor blustering up to Tom, “you had better-hic-belay that jaw tackle of yours and keep a-hic-civil tongue in your head when your betters are talking to ye-hic.”

“My betters,” said Tom, “well that’s good, aint it Steve?” turning and addressing me. Then turning towards the sailor, who was steadying himself against the partition, he said, “now look here my man, we did not come here to have any trouble, we came here to enlist and we are going to do so, if the captain,” pointing to Captain Salisbury, who was sitting behind the desk writing, “don’t want us, and can’t keep such

fellows as you from insulting decent people, why we will go somewhere else and join."

"Oh, no! my little bantam, I'll larn ye who ye are-hic-talking to, and I'll give ye a lesson now to remember me by when ye get aboard the ship," and the fellow who had become somewhat sobered off during the hot flow of words, stepped towards Tom and commenced rolling up his sleeves. At this juncture, Captain Salisbury came briskly from behind the desk and interposed his person between Tom and the belligerent sailor and addressing him said, "My man, this has gone far enough, I'll have no fighting here in my office. You will have all the chance to fight you want, when you get to the front; and besides, this is nothing but a mere boy," turning towards Tom and patting him on the shoulder. "Why, you ought to be ashamed to want to fight a boy."

"D— him, I'll thrash him," said the irate sailor, as he made for Tom. Phil and I had in the meantime ranged up alongside Tom, and thinking it about time for me to interfere, although I knew that he was able to take care of himself, I stepped up to the angry seaman and told him to keep his hands off or it would be the worse for him; adding, "you cannot whip any one here, and I'm sure that you cannot scare us." At this interruption, the man broke away from those who were holding him, and made a rush for Tom again. Now it was

against my principles to fight, but I made up my mind that if the sailor was getting the better of him I would interfere. Tom stood coolly awaiting his antagonist, and when he got within clinching distance he stepped aside, tripped him up, and the seaman went sprawling on the floor. A loud laugh at the mishap from a half dozen men in the room only served to make the sailor more angry, and as he had now become partially sobered by reason of his exertions, he might be too much for Tom to handle. As the fellow rose to his feet, Tom, whose anger now began to kindle at the unprovoked assault, warned him to keep away. "I don't want to fight, although that's what I came to enlist for," said Tom; but the thoroughly maddened man sprang at him and tried to close in, but Tom, by backing around the room and dodging this way and that, managed to elude the grasp of his antagonist. Finally, as the fellow made a more desperate onslaught, Tom stepped on one side, and dealt his opponent a stunning blow under the ear, and the man went down like a felled ox.

Cries of "Good," "Plucky fellow," "He's enough for him," followed the downfall of the burly tar. I now informed Captain Salisbury that he must interfere and take the man away; whereupon the captain and two others of the seamen present, at least they wore the garb of Uncle Sam, clinched the infuriated "jack tar"



and bore him away into another room, despite his struggles and imprecations.

While they were absent, one of the sailors, a middle aged man, approached and questioned us in regard to ourselves. "You are a plucky young fellow," he said addressing Tom, after we had furnished him with all the information he required, "and I only hope I shall be lucky enough to get drafted into the same ship with ye all; I'll bet my last dollar on either one of ye, and I'll give ye a little advice, so be it ye will take it kindly." Tom said he would be very glad to except any advice from him and thought he could also speak for his friends. We assured the kindly disposed sailor that we would be thankful for advice from a man older than ourselves, and one who looked as if he had done service. "You may be sure of that my boy," holding out a pair of rough horny hands to our gaze. "They are rough looking now, aint they?"

They assuredly were rough looking, and one could almost imagine seeing barnacles on them. "These hands are rough," continued he, still holding them towards us, "but they never did a dishonest deed, and God helping me, they never will as long as I live. Now my advice to ye boys is just this: you are just the age to run into temptation, and ye'll find it in the army and navy, mark my words for that; learn to say no to all that tends to evil; look up to your

superior officers ; be quick and prompt to obey their orders, and when duty calls spring to your work like men, nor count the danger ; don't stop to think in fighting or charging the enemy, your superiors will do the thinking and you will do the work ; be orderly and neat at all times ; that is the quickest way to gain the good will of your superiors, and when they see that you are earnest in your endeavors to learn, my word for it, boys, they'll give ye the chance to work your way up. They despise a shirk, and the lot of one is not a happy life on board ship. Now, if what I've said will help ye any in your term of service ye are welcome to it," and the old sailor, giving a hitch to his pants, and rolling his quid over in his mouth, proceeded to seat himself on one of the benches in the room, while I stepped up to the captain's desk, (the captain having entered his office again while we were listening to the old sailor,) followed by Tom and Phil. "Now then, young men," said the captain, "just sign your names in this book and then you will be ready to go to Boston this afternoon, and if you pass the medical examination there, you will be prepared to go on board the recruiting ship "Ohio" to-night and take your first meal aboard ship." Without more ado, Tom and Phil signed their names on the enlistment book. When it came my turn to sign, I took up the pen

and looking at the captain said, "Captain, I am going to sign my name to this book upon conditions."

"Upon conditions, hey?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, what are your conditions?" said the captain.

"That I may be allowed to visit my home and report here for duty at any time Monday morning that you may chose to name."

The captain thought a moment and looked intently in my eyes, then said, "All right, my lad, I'll give you a week if you want it."

"I do not wish so long a time as a week."

"Well then," said the captain, "report here at ten o'clock Monday morning, so as to be in readiness to take the eleven o'clock train for Boston on that day."

"Very well, sir, under these conditions I will sign my name," and with a flourish I wrote my name in the book under Tom and Phil's chirography. Turning to the boys, I held out a hand to each, and bidding them good-bye, told them I would break it as easily as I could to father and mother, and meet them on board the ship Monday afternoon, or perhaps in time to take dinner with them, when I would recount to them my success as peace-maker; "So good-bye, Phil, good-bye, Tom," and I hurried out of the door and descended the steps into the street. I stood awhile on the sidewalk musing on the events just happened and

considering whether it would be best to go right home and tell our parents what we had done, or wait until later. After pondering over it awhile, I came to the conclusion to go immediately home and have it off my mind. So facing in that direction, I arrived at home after a brisk walk of twenty minutes or more, and entering the sitting room found mother and the girls seated around the room engaged in sewing. Mother looked up as I entered and took a seat, and noticing something unusual in my looks and manner, gently inquired if I was well. I answered her in the affirmative.

“Where’s Philip? Have you been with him today?” asked Julia, looking up from her sewing and eyeing me inquisitively. I arose and walked restlessly across the room, then returned and seated myself again in the chair that I had just vacated. My sister Emeline stopped in the middle of her crocheting at this question from Julia, looked attentively at me for a moment, then crossed the room and came to my chair. Placing her hand upon my shoulder, and looking soberly in my face she said, “I’ll tell you what the difficulty is; you do not need to utter one word; you have enlisted to go to the war.”

Half the battle was won, and my courage rose to the emergency.

“You are silent ; does that mean that Em is right ?” inquired Abby.

“Speak, my son, let me know the worst ;” said mother, looking at me sorrowfully and brushing a tear off her cheek that had fallen there during my silence.

“Yes, mother ; Phil and I have enlisted in the navy, and so has Tom Durand. Phil and Tom are already on their way to Boston navy yard, and to-night they will sleep on board the recruiting ship “Ohio.” Monday I shall be on my way to the same rendezvous.”

I will pass over the scene that followed and the exciting debate with my father later in the day. Suffice it to say that although many tears were shed, one and all became reconciled to our enlistment and departure, and tried hard to look upon the bright side. It was late Sunday night when I retired to rest, but not to sleep, for I tossed about on my pillow all night, and do what I might, I could not “woo the drowsy god.” When I arose in the morning, I did not feel very much refreshed. Very little was said by any of the family as we all gathered around the breakfast table, perhaps, thought I, for the last time. The morning was bright and pleasant, and I was forced to fly around to get ready to report at ten o’clock, as I had promised to. The girls hurried about to assist me in getting ready so that I should not be late. In due time, I was ready, and after standing a volley of kisses, and shaking

hands with my father, who wished us a speedy journey and a safe return, I was off down the front steps, two at a time. At the gate I halted, and turning to the group assembled on the door steps, waved my hand, and Julia, taking off one of her slippers, threw it after me for luck.

Ten minutes of ten o'clock, I stood in front of Captain Salisbury's desk and reported myself "Returned, sir."

"Very well," said the captain looking up from the *Providence Journal* he was perusing, "you can take a seat on the bench over there. I have a number of recruits to go down to-day at eleven o'clock, and you can go with them."

Time passed slowly away while waiting for eleven o'clock, and I improved it by watching others coming in to enlist, and taking note of those already enlisted, some of them, perhaps, to be my companions aboard the same ship. There were some that already wore the garb of seamen and had probably seen service, although there were many more, like myself, who had the art of seamanship to learn, and, also, all the trials and vexations to undergo as a new man aboard ship. Just before eleven o'clock, we were ordered to fall in and were marched to the Providence and Boston depot, where we took the train for the "Hub."

We arrived in Boston in due time, and were conducted to the office of the medical examiner, near North street, where we were to undergo a preliminary examination. Arriving there I was ushered, when it came my turn, into the examining room, where sat a gray-headed old man busily engaged in writing. Without turning his head at my entrance, he said, *sotto voce*, "Pick up that book." Now I had always prided myself on my quickness of hearing and ready perception, and supposing the words were intended for me, as I had not noticed any other person in the room except the doctor upon my entrance, I readily stepped forward and picked up the book. The doctor looked up and said, "I see your hearing is good. Now stand off a little way and read the title of this book," holding one at arm's length from him in the opposite direction from where I stood, with the back turned towards me. I easily distinguished the title and read, "United States Coast Survey, 18— - 18—."

"So, so," added he, "that's good. Now shut your right eye and read this title," holding up another book to my view and about four feet from my person. Unhesitatingly, I read, "Report of the Secretary of the Navy."

"Very good," said the doctor; "now close the left eye and read this," holding up a smaller book to my gaze

with the title towards me as before. "Surgeon General's Report."

"That will do," said the doctor, interrupting me as I was about to continue; then getting up off his chair, he told me to throw out my chest, which I did. He then examined my lungs. "Physically you are sound," said he; "that is all, you may retire." As I went out another passed in to be examined. After all had been through the examination, those who had passed were ordered to fall in and we were marched to the shipping office of—Hatch, on North street, where we were supplied with an outfit, consisting of the following named articles: one tin quart pot, a pewter spoon, a table knife and fork, one tin pan, one tin plate, a large jack-knife with a hole in the handle and a white cord through it, for the purpose of hanging it about the neck, while the knife was concealed in a pocket at our waist, one hair comb and brush, and last but not least, a fine tooth comb, which I thought at the time was rather suggestive. As I put the comb aside, some one at my back spoke up in quite a familiar way, "I say, old fellow, you'll have occasion to use that before many days elapse." Ere the words had left the person's mouth, I knew from whom they proceeded, and turning quickly in the direction of the voice I grasped Tom by the hand. "How is it, Tom, you are not aboard ship? Where is Phil? Is he here?"



“No, he went on board Saturday night; you see there were so many recruits that the doctors were unable to examine all, and those that were not, I among the rest, were put up at a sailor’s boarding-house Saturday and Sunday nights, and this morning I passed the doctor all right, and here I am, eager to proceed on board the recruiting ship and commence my duties let them be what they may.”

“And I am glad of your company on board, Tom.”

All being supplied with the articles necessary to complete our outfit, we received orders to turn our steps in the direction of Charlestown Navy Yard. Arriving there, we were transferred to the recruiting ship “Ohio” lying at anchor in the stream. We were transported from the shore to the ship by means of a scow, plying back and forth between the vessel and the wharf, propelled by an endless chain on two pulleys, while to turn the crank on each side were two men detailed from the recruiting ship who were relieved every two hours. The scow was used to convey the officers on shore and return them again at any time they chose to hail the ship. It was also used to transport provisions and convey visitors, who came to see their friends, on board. I was the last to leave the scow when she touched the side of the vessel. I glanced back as I was ascending the first step on the ladder leading up on the shore side of the ship, and gave the sailor who had

pulled us over, what I meant for a friendly smile, but which he chose to interpret in another way. He probably thought I was poking fun at him; in fact, he informed me afterwards that he thought I was putting on airs.

“You need not grin,” said he, “you will get in here soon enough,” and he performed gyrations with his fingers to his nose.

## CHAPTER II.

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### ON BOARD THE GUARDO.

**A**S WE stepped on board, what a scene met our eyes. Eight hundred men and boys, at least, were walking here and there about the spar deck, and the murmur of many voices was borne to our ears, sounding for all the world like a hive of bees swarming. Crossing the deck to the fore hatchway, we followed our conductor down the ladder that led to the gun deck, and from there down another ladder to the berth deck, then aft to the doctor's quarters where we were to undergo another examination by two physicians. It being near dinner time, we were told to wait; so seating ourselves on the deck, we waited. Soon the boatswain's whistle was heard summoning the crew to dinner.

“I wonder if they will allow us any dinner,” said Tom, as the crowd of men and boys came rushing down from the gun and spar decks and seated themselves around the mess tables.

I was so intent upon watching for Phil in the crowd, that I paid no attention to Tom's remark.

“What are you looking at so intently,” at length said Tom.

“Why, I am watching to see Phil; he must be in this crowd somewhere.”

“Gracious,” said Tom, (by the way, “gracious” was a favorite expression of Tom’s,) “I had forgotten all about Phil in this infernal din.”

In a moment or two, a young man dressed in a navy suit came towards us.

“It’s Phil, sure as I’m alive,” exclaimed Tom.

“Yes, it is he, but I should hardly recognize him in those clothes.”

In a moment more we were shaking hands with him.

“Jiminie! fellows, I’m glad to see you,” vociferated Phil, “how’s father and mother? What did they say when they found out I’d gone off without coming home? Did Lizzie cry?” and a volley of other questions.

I told him in a few words of all that had transpired since he left us in Providence. “Of course, Phil, mother and father and the girls felt sorry to have you go off the way you did, but they are reconciled now, and will wait anxiously for a letter from us.”

“I wrote one this morning and mailed it home,” said Phil.

“Did you go and see my mother?” said Tom.

“Yes, I saw her and she was grieved to think her boy should leave in the manner he did, stealing off as if he had done a wrong, I am telling you just as she told me, Tom. She said, ‘Tell Thomas I shall pray for

his safe return, but if his life is laid down upon the altar of his country, I shall bow submissive to the Lord's will. Tell him to write to me often, and if there is anything he wants I will send it to him."

"Well, let's change the subject," said Phil; "Tom can write and explain how nicely fixed we are, then she will not feel so badly."

Just then one of the sailors approached us and asked us if we were not hungry. I answered him in the affirmative, and informed him that I was speaking for the whole crowd—there were about a dozen others who came on board with us.

"Well, come along out here; don't leave your pots and pans," he added, as we laid them down upon the deck preparatory to following him.

"Why not?"

"Because you won't find 'em there when you come back," said he.

So we gathered up our pots and pans and followed our new friend. He led us about midway of the deck on the starboard side to a large table and bade us be seated. We had no more than taken our seats around the table, when we were supplied with an abundance of food, such as it was, and I thought of a very indifferent sort; but thinking that we would be obliged to get used to such rations, we "pitched in" and were soon engaged in masticating the far-famed "hard tack," that we had heard

so much about but had never eaten before. Our dinner consisted of hard tack, salt beef, pine-apple cheese and cold water to wash it down. All went merry with us and we soon had a crowd of the ship's company around us who cracked their jokes at our expense, and asked us many questions about what was transpiring outside of their little world. During a lull in the fire of words between us and the ship's company, one young fellow who had seated himself on the edge of the table near Tom, said, "I say, chum why don't you break open your hard tack and look inside before you gobble it down the way you do?" and he winked at one of his shipmates standing near, at which they both laughed.

I had been so intent upon watching what was going on around me, that I had been rather indifferent as to the quality of the bread we were eating, bent only for the time being upon satiating my hunger. But the words sounded suggestive, and both Tom and I at once instituted an examination, but did not find anything inside to cause us any apprehension or uneasiness; so we went on eating as before, and paid no more attention to what was said about the hard tack, although the ship's boys warned us that there were worms inside of some of it, and only for this being an exceptionally good lot, one said we should have found out the truth of the remark long ago.

"Well, we can stand it if the worms can," said I.

“Oh, let them alone; they ain’t had nothin’ to eat since they left their mummies,” exclaimed a bushy-headed boy in the crowd whose hair was fiery red. This remark caused a general titter to run through the crowd of seamen and ship’s boys gathered round.

Tom looked up with his mouth full and eyed the speaker for a second or two, then said, “Put him on shore, fellows, he’ll set the ship on fire.”

“Ha-ha-ha,” laughed the others, and a tall, good-looking man observed, “He had you there, Reddy.”

“Reddy,” as he was called by the others, was a nickname given to him when he first appeared over the side of the ship, by some of the ship’s boys.

Now Reddy, as we will continue to call him, did not like this illusion to the color of his hair, and retorted by asking Tom if old Hatch had supplied him with a hayseed comb? He evidently thought Tom was from the country.

“It is plain to be seen,” answered Tom, “that you need some other kind of comb, a fine tooth rake for instance would do to begin with.”

“Go in, Country.”

“Up and at him Reddy,” and the like expressions, quickly followed each other from the now fast gathering throng, attracted to the spot by the loud laughter of those gathered around the table, and the desire for any kind of excitement to help to pass the time away.

Now to have a new man on board and to get the best of him in bandiage, was just what Bill, or Reddy, evidently did not like, so in a blustering way he approached Tom and said, "Look ye here, now, you'd better keep a civil tongue in yer head and don't sass yer betters."

"I'll take your advice when I arrive where they are," retorted Tom, with a sly twinkle in one corner of his eye which I knew boded mischief, to Reddy if he advanced to the attack.

"Oh, you think you're smart, don't ye now?" and he put his fist close to Tom's face.

Tom knocked Reddy's fist on one side, and arose from the table. The excitement was at its height now and the prospects of a fight drew nearly every man on the berth deck.

I thought it about time now to interfere, for a little spark quickly kindles a flame among a thousand men and boys confined on shipboard, and we being in the right, I was determined not to let the bully back Tom down, but meant to avoid a fight if possible; so stepping between Tom and Reddy I said to the latter, "Look here now, this has gone far enough, you commenced this trouble, and because Tom here got the best of it, you get mad and want to fight. Now there is not going to be any fighting done here, unless I take a hand in it, so if you feel inclined, why, just pitch in



that's all," and I rolled up my sleeves. I don't know what might have happened, but just then some one in the crowd gave a signal that all seemed to understand, except us, who were new men, crowning it with the expression, "Jimmy Legs," and the crowd disappeared like mist, and in its place stood a tall, gaunt, broad-shouldered, hard-featured man, but with kindly eyes that beamed on us with a benevolent expression while he inquired what the trouble was. He proved to be the master-at-arms.

In a few words I explained to him the wrangle between Tom and Reddy.

"I thought so," said the man in a gruff tone of voice, "that boy is always making trouble. I shall be glad when he is drafted from this ship. But I see you are new men; have you been examined by the ship's surgeon yet?"

"No, sir."

"Well, follow me and I will lead you to the 'sick bay' where the surgeons now are; once pass the ship's doctors," added he, as we walked aft towards the sick bay, "and get your sailors' rig on, you will not have much trouble, if you only keep your mouth closed and don't let everybody know that you are new men on board ship, although the ship's boys will give you some little trouble, yet keep your weather eye open, and don't ask questions until you get aboard your own

ship, and my word for it, you'll get along. I've been through it all boys, and I know what I am talking about."

Upon reaching the sick bay we found the surgeons in readiness to commence the examination. The sick bay is where the sick and disabled are cared for, being a room perhaps fifteen feet square, where the sick were put into hammocks, swung on one side of the room and close to the floor. In fact, all kinds of surgery were carried on in the "bay," even to the extracting of teeth.

Tom was the last but one to be examined, and that one was myself. I felt rather anxious about the examination, as two or three had been discarded as not being perfectly sound; nevertheless I assumed a bold front, and as I went in passed Tom coming out.

"It's all right, Steve, if anything is the matter with you, those fellows," jerking his thumb in the direction whence he had come, "will be sure to find it out."

Immediately upon entering the room I was told to strip, which I did with alacrity, and then the way the doctors examined my make-up was astonishing, to say the least of it. Every bone in my body was fumbled over and manipulated; I was made to run, jump, strike out with my arms, cough and make many other seemingly useless actions; last of all my molars were thoroughly inspected, the doctor forcing his thumb and forefinger into my mouth, causing me to open it to its

utmost extent, while he felt each and every tooth in my head to see if any were loose. I do not think I should like to be subjected to the same again, for being the last in the party to undergo the doctor's scrutiny, I could not help thinking that he neglected to wash his hands during the investigation. Satisfied that my teeth were all right, the doctor said I would do. Next, we were marched aft to draw our clothes. Each man was furnished with a black bag in which to put his clothes; one pair of white duck pants, one white shirt with blue collar, one pair of blue pants, one blue shirt with wide collar and a white star worked on each corner; two pairs of woolen stockings, undershirts and drawers, one canvass hammock, two single, or one double blanket, for all of which we were obliged to sign a book; then a blank form was filled out and given to each man, being a plain statement of what he owed the ship, the same to be taken out of his pay at the end of his term of service. Looking the paper over I found that I was in debt to the ship three months' pay, or as Tom expressed it, we had got to work for a dead horse for three months, or perhaps four, before we could be allowed to draw cash, and in all that time perhaps, could not set foot on shore. The next thing in order was to rig our hammocks.

We were supplied with the necessary ropes and rings, but were left to ourselves to put them together.

Tom and I were more fortunate than the others, having Phil to show us how it was done, he having learned the "modus operandi" in the two days he had been on board. With the help of some good-natured "vets," the other recruits were instructed in the mysteries of knotting and reeving the ropes through the rings and hammocks, and in lashing them up, preparatory to putting them in the netting, and in a short time our work was done. My hammock number was 42, my bag number 90. We were then put in charge again of the master of arms, who showed us where to stow our bags and hammocks. He also instructed us how to find them when the hammocks were piped down in the evening. We were next informed that we could go down on the deck and make ourselves at home, and when we were wanted we should be either called by name or be mustered with the whole ship's company.

So we distributed ourselves about the decks, Tom, Phil and myself keeping together. Phil had "learned the ropes," so he showed us the principal points of interest aboard ship. We took a stroll upon the berth deck, and he pointed out the hooks on the deck rafters, where the hammocks were swung at night. The boatswain's shrill whistle was heard at intervals, and all loud talking was hushed while we listened to his orders. Just before we were piped down to supper, the whole ship's company was summoned by the boat-

swain's call to "muster aft on the quarter deck." Immediately, there was a rush and a trampling of feet as the crew thronged aft and fell in lines of three or four deep. As soon as the men were all in their places and quiet reigned, the executive officer, Lieutenant ——, said: "There is to be a draft made from this ship of one hundred and fifty men; now as fast as your names are called, you will step out of the line and fall in outside of the fife-rail upon the spar deck, and there await further orders." As he began to call the names, I listened eagerly for mine, but I was not down on the list, and neither was Tom. But Phil was unfortunate—I say unfortunate, because we had hoped to go together—to have his name called to make one of the draft. After the men whose names had been called had fallen in outside the fife-rail, the lieutenant addressed them as follows: "My men, you are drafted for the mortar fleet, some of which vessels are now on the Potomac River, where you will join them in a few days. You will be required now to do your duty faithfully and fearlessly, and all will be well with you. You must have your bags and hammocks ready immediately after breakfast to-morrow morning, and then await the boatswain's mate's call. That is all; the line is dismissed and you can go forward."

The men on the quarter deck were also dismissed,

and Tom and I went forward to find Phil. It took some time to hunt him up among so many, but at last we found him. He was engaged in the same task as ourselves; he was hunting for us.

As the sun sank to rest in the western horizon, the sunset gun on the forecastle deck, with a sullen roar, sent forth the tidings, and in a moment more the shrill whistle piped, and the order "Down all hammocks," was borne to us from the powerful lungs of the boatswain's mate. In a twinkling the deck was thronged with the hurrying crew, each man contending with his fellows and eagerly intent upon getting his hammock first. When Tom and I arrived at the hammock netting, we found the cloth thrown off, and two men inside the box busily engaged in throwing them out upon the deck. As fast as each man secured his number, he grabbed his hammock and rushing down upon the spar deck, disappeared through the hatchway on to the berth deck, each being eager to get his hammock swung in its place first. We had no trouble in finding our numbers, Tom and I, and seizing our hammocks we followed in the footsteps of the others of the crew, and soon were upon the berth deck with them, anxiously seeking for a "hook to let." I was fortunate enough to secure a good swinging place through the kindness of a good natured seaman who made the remark, "You look like as though we

could agree ; just slip your ring over this 'ere hook, my lad." In a moment more I had slung my hammock, unlashd it, and stowed away my hammock rope under my blankets at the head, my new friend giving me all the necessary instruction. Phil and Tom swung theirs just below mine, there being some vacant hooks there, Phil giving up his place of the two previous nights, for the sake of being near Tom and me, thereby making us close communists. After seeing that our hammocks were ship-shape and in readiness for us to turn into, we hastened up upon the spar deck, to witness a little of life aboard ship in the twilight. There was no regular watch set on the ship by the seamen, but we were guarded all round on ship and shore by marines. Locking arms with Tom, while Phil brought up the rear, we promenaded the deck fore and aft talking of our future prospects, and at times bandying words with some ship-mate who, in a spirit of fun, had jostled us in passing. I noticed quite a number reading by the dim light of the ship's lanterns ; others were drawn together in little knots of twenty or more, listening while some old "vet" regaled their ears with tales of adventure on sea and shore. Becoming tired, we sat down beside a group, in the center of which, sat a man about thirty years of age.

"Come Bill, give us a song ; ye will have just time enough before taps," said a robust fine-looking jack-tar

near the center of the group, "and I say Bill, let's have 'Black-eyed Susan.'" "

"Yes, yes, 'Black-eyed Susan,'" clamored the crowd.

"Go in, Bill," "Inflate your bellows," and the like remarks followed each other from the hilarious sailors gathered round.

"Well, well," exclaimed the man called Bill, "just clap a stopper on your jaw tackle, will ye, long enough for me to get the pints of the compass, my hearties, then I'll heave ahead."

After clearing his throat he proceeded to render, in a clear and modulated tone, the song called for, and during its rendition silence fell upon all. At its completion, a storm of applause greeted the singer, well calculated to make him feel proud of his efforts to please.

Resuming our walk for a short time, we at length concluded to turn in, so seeking our hammocks, we disrobed, and bidding each other good night, pulled the blankets around us just as the drum commenced to beat "taps," nine o'clock.

I lay in a dreamy doze in my hammock, thinking of the events of the day, and wondering what they, at home, were all doing. The gruff hail of the marines could be heard at intervals as they stopped in their rounds, crying the hour, and "All's well, all's well," and in listening to their long drawn out hail, I fell asleep and did not awaken until the gun fired at sunrise next morning,



right over my head, on the deck above. In another moment the boatswain's whistle was sounded, and the order followed: "Up all hammocks." I rolled out of mine to witness a busy scene. All around me were men and boys engaged in dressing, lashing their hammocks, etc. Speedily dressing myself I lashed up mine as I had been taught, and following my ship-mates, deposited it in the netting with the others.

After the decks had been washed down, and we had eaten our breakfast of coffee and hard tack, the draft called for on the previous day, were mustered aft with their bags and hammocks, containing all their effects. I only had just time to speak a word to Phil, as he hurried past, with his bag under one arm and his hammock under the other, and wishing him bon voyage, reached out my hand. Phil dropped his bag, clasped my outstretched hand in his own, gave it a hearty wring, then picked up his bag, walked away and was soon lost in the crowd.

I turned to look for Tom, whom I soon found, and together we went into the "main chains," to watch the little steam tug fast disappearing in the distance, and taking Phil from us. As the boat disappeared among the shipping, in the harbor, Tom said:—

"Steve, it makes me feel lonesome to see that boat bearing Phil off; the Lord only knows where; I do

hope that you and I will be left together on the same ship."

"So do I, Tom, and it causes me to feel a kind of—I don't know as one could call it home-sickness—but it comes so nigh it that there isn't any fun in it. You see now, if we had waited and enlisted together, Monday instead of Saturday, perhaps it would have been different, and Phil would have stood a better opportunity to go on the same ship with us."

"I don't know about that," said Tom, "perhaps we would have been separated some other way."

As we sat in the chains, Tom read a daily newspaper that he found lying on the deck, while I looked out on the wide waste of waters and watched the ships come and go, my thoughts straying over the forty-two miles of space between me and my beloved home. O, how I wished that I could look in upon them if only for a moment, to let them know we were so well cared for and to kiss darling little Lizzie once more. Lizzie was the youngest of the family, a tender, delicate child, who for many years had not been able to walk without the aid of crutches. Dear little Lizzie! her form seemed to rise up before me as I mused, and I remembered the morning I left home, when she came painfully down to the front gate to see me off, and gave me a last parting kiss, saying, "Be a good boy, and write home often," which I promised to do; then giving

me another kiss for Phil, she covered her face in her apron while I hurried down the street. We, Phil and I, never saw her again. She passed away during our absence, and I have no doubt she has joined the angel band, and that her voice mingles with others in singing God's praise.

My reverie was soon dispelled by the boatswain's whistle calling the crew to muster. Tom threw down his paper, and clambered in through the port-hole upon the spar deck, while I speedily followed in his wake, and we joined in the general rush towards the quarter deck. After all had become silent, six hundred men were called off and the remainder dismissed. Tom and I were included in the six hundred drafted, and we were all ordered to get our bags and hammocks from the netting and fall in again on the quarter deck. You better believe there was a rush made by the "six hundred," excluding Tom and me, for we could get our effects just as quickly after a few hundred had been served, and have time enough to spare, thus avoiding getting trod upon in the tumult. Such a tumbling, rushing heap of humanity has never been my fortune to witness since, pushing and clawing at each other, all being determined to be served first, yet, there was a pleasant feeling manifested withal, and many were the jokes cracked at the expense of the men, when they grabbed their bags and hammocks as their numbers

turned up to view. After securing our hammocks, a second rush was made for the bag-room, and there the same scene was enacted as at the netting. In a very short time our bags and hammocks were laid by us in a pile, one upon another on the deck, and we were then ordered over the side into the scow, in details of fifty or more, and transported to the dock, where omnibuses, hacks, furniture, and express wagons were brought into requisition to convey us to the Old Colony Depot. After all had been seated aboard the vehicles, the procession moved off, amid cheers from the sailors on board the *Guardo*. To depict the scenes that followed on our way to the depot, would be simply impossible. Some of the vets, despite the efforts of the marines to prevent them, leaped from the carriages, and when they reached the vehicles again, their arms would be loaded with bundles of every description. The officers and marines tried hard to keep the men under control but were only partially successful. Arriving at the depot we were immediately marched on board the cars, and a guard of marines stationed at each door.

An almost indescribable scene followed our entrance into the cars. Cakes, pies, doughnuts and white bread, procured on shore, were thrown at each other—being first wet in water and made into balls—until the inside of the cars presented a sorry plight. At length order

was restored, and the train moved slowly out of the depot amid the hoots and cheers of the multitude gathered outside.

We were greeted with cheers whenever the train was forced to stop at a station, and were also treated to many dainties, bought at the lunch stands in the depots by the citizens. We arrived in Providence in due time, where we were forced to wait half an hour for another train due from the opposite direction. We amused ourselves at cracking jokes with the crowd assembled outside, and in fruitless endeavors to pass our guards. I did not expect so soon to see my native city again, and would have given anything, almost, to have stepped my foot on the platform in the depot. After what seemed to me an endless period of time, we were under way again. Upon our arrival in New York, we were divided up. Three hundred of the party were ordered to the "North Carolina" receiving ship, in Brooklyn navy yard. Tom and I were counted in with that party. The other three hundred were sent to the receiving ship "Alleghany," in Baltimore, Maryland.

We were marched to the nearest pier from the depot, where we found a tug boat in readiness to convey us to the Guardo. Our bags and hammocks were first put on board and piled athwart ship, and then we

occupied all the remaining standing room on the deck. We were literally packed, and when all had come on board it was impossible to stir a foot either one way or the other. The moment the last man had come on board, the hawser was cast loose from the pier and we steamed down the river towards our destination.

From every ship we passed, as well as from the shore, we were greeted with the cries: "Look out, boys, she'll dump ye," "Stand still, boys, she'll dump ye;" and it *was* rather ticklish on board. The least movement on our part to either port or starboard side, caused the little tug to dip, and only for our being wedged in, she surely would have dumped some of us overboard. Our safety lay in being stowed so closely. Every steamer and ferry boat that crossed our path, or passed us, left a wake behind, in which our little boat wallowed, and the waves made by the paddles of the different steamers came in over the gunwales and wet our feet. I was not sorry when we came in sight of the "North Carolina," for I really feared a ducking, or the loss of some of our effects from the constant dipping of our vessel. As we rapidly approached the floating rendezvous, crowds of men could be seen passing and repassing the open port-holes, and as our boat touched the ship, I looked up her lofty side and arrived at the conclusion, that we were not going to better our

condition, but only to jump out of the frying pan into the fire. A few more moments, and we stood upon the quarter deck of the Guardo in line, while our bags and hammocks quickly followed us, and the tug steamed off up the river.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE RECEIVING SHIPS.

**D**URING the Rebellion, the government maintained three receiving ships, commonly called Guardos by the sailors; one at the Charlestown navy yard, the "Ohio"; one at the Brooklyn navy yard, the old "North Carolina"; and a third in Baltimore, the "Alleghany." All these were line of battle ships, four deckers, and capable of receiving a thousand or more men. The first, or upper deck is called the spar deck; the next the gun deck; below that the berth deck, and below all the orlop deck. On this deck all prisoners, deserters, and refractory men were confined. They were locked up in a large, dark compartment, commonly called the "brig." There they were kept until a ship was found going directly to sea, or a draft was made for the Charlestown blockading squadron, when they would be sent off, without giving them a chance to set their feet on land. The Carolina, when we arrived on board, had about seven hundred men, which before we left were increased to thirteen hundred. We were immediately mustered aft on the quarter deck, (how tired I had become of being mustered aft on the quar-



ter deck, no one can tell,) and forced to listen to a long harangue by the captain, in which he told us he had heard all about our conduct while being transferred through the streets of Boston, from the recruiting ship to the depot. He made it very much worse than it really was, and did not seem to consider that our party had been confined on board ship so long that they were like young colts in a pasture, that cannot be restrained till they have had their run out. He gave us the pleasant satisfaction of knowing that he would take some of the life out of us before we left the "Carolina." He expected obedience, and men who were sent aboard his ship must work. "We don't want any shirks," he said, "and do not intend to have any." At last he became tired, or was at a loss for something else to say fitting to the occasion. However, he ordered us below, and the drill master took us in charge and acquainted us with our duties, which were numerous, you may be sure. The next morning, after the decks had been washed down, some of the new recruits were sent down to white-wash the roof of the lower deck. I did not go, and was secretly congratulating myself upon the very easy manner in which I had escaped that work, when who should come along but "Paddy D'yle," the drill master. He handed me a swab, and said I could busy myself in drying up the berth deck, as it had just been washed down. Well, I was in for it; but I took the swab in

my hand and went down to the berth deck to work. I was using the old swab in rather a gingerly way, when it was suddenly jerked from my hand by some one behind me. I looked around and was confronted by Paddy D'yle.

“Well, now,” he said, “is that the way ye were larnt to swab a deck? Arrah! bad ’cess to ye for a lazy lubber! Look ye here now, it’s meself will show yez how it’s done,” and he proceeded to give me a practical illustration of the way it should be done, by thrashing the old swab here and there about the deck, like a man trying to put out a bush fire. I liked his style of handling the swab very much, though I did not make it manifest to him; I secretly hoped that he would keep it up till the deck was dry; but he had no intention of so doing, however, for throwing the swab at my feet, he told me to finish the work. I should have laughed, if I had dared, he looked so comical. I swabbed away right and left lively enough while he was standing over me, and would have liked to have drawn the wet swab over his pumps that he had blacked so nicely that morning. Eventually, he left me to look after other things in a different part of the ship, and as soon as he had disappeared up the companion-way, I watched my opportunity, and the first landsman that came my way, I put the swab in his hands, telling him to hurry up and get the deck dry, and before he could

recover from his astonishment, I was on the spar deck, mixing with the crowd, where even Paddy D'yle could not find me unless he mustered the whole ship's company. The men in the "North Carolina" comprised able seamen, ordinary seamen, firemen, coal-heavers, landsmen and "greenhorns," who had never been to sea, some of whom never having seen salt water before.

When all hammocks were piped down at night then came the fun. The old vets would have their hammocks swung in a jiffy and then circulate about the deck to watch Greeny put up his little bed. The hanging part comes easy enough, but getting in, is quite different, unless one has had experience. Greeny watches the old vet and it looks easy enough. "Pooh! what's the use of making such a fuss about it," exclaims some one, almost in his hammock. At last Greeny opens his hammock, takes a jump upwards and lights upon it, but only to roll off on the other side and fall sprawling on the deck. A derisive laugh greets the mishap from those in the immediate vicinity. He approaches the hammock again as if it was a kicking horse, and tries a second time. He sits down on the edge of it, the hammock tilts and he is again thrown to the deck, this time, face downwards. Finally some good-natured vet shows him how it is done, and the would-be sailor turns in to sleep. But he little knows what awaits him. He is just dosing off comfortably, when he comes

down by the run, and is landed on the deck ; some one has cut his hammock lashing, and it is lucky for him that it was not cut at the head, but at the foot of the hammock. I have known serious accidents to happen from this dangerous game. Some one, in a stage whisper, intimates that Paddy D'yle is about, and in an instant all is quiet, every man is in his hammock and evidently fast asleep. Pretty soon we hear 'a stealthy tread under us ; and some one, 'way forward sings out, "Paddy D'yle." Paddy makes a rush in the direction from whence comes the sound, but all is quiet, some of the men are even snoring. From away aft, comes the cry, "Paddy D'yle," and out of all patience, he makes a rush in that direction, and seizing some innocent wight, pulls him out of his hammock, makes the shivering wretch put on his clothes, then marches him away in charge of a marine toward the "brig," on the orlop deck. Such scenes were enacted every night while I was on board the Guardo. I have known men to be marched away under guard and locked up, to come back a few minutes afterwards all serene, and be allowed to turn into his hammock again. Why, do you ask ? Because he happened to be one of the New York recruits enlisted in Brooklyn, and not one of the Boston draft.

Throwing shoes at Paddy, when it was known that he was sneaking under our hammocks, was almost a night-

ly occurrence, until he got it into his thick head, that it would be a fine joke to gather up the shoes, and lay for the culprit in the early morning, when the hammocks were called up, and the men would have to pass before him in line, shoeless. Acting upon this suggestion of others—I never thought it originated in his brain—he descended one night to the berth deck, and making his presence known, it was not long before the shoes and other missiles began to fly around him in a lively manner. What did he do but quietly pick up a half-dozen pairs and silently disappear up the hatch-way. After he had gone, the boys jumped out of their hammocks and began an eager search for their shoes, some were lucky enough to find them, while others not finding theirs readily, by the dim light of the lanterns on the berth deck, postponed the search till daylight. In answer to the call of the boatswain's whistle, the next morning, the crew sprang from their warm nests, dressed and proceeded to the netting with their hammocks. The only laggards were those, who unfortunately could not find shoes for their feet. They had searched the berth deck in vain and at last despairingly made their way to the deck shoeless. In the meantime we had begun to smell a large "mouse" from the fact, that not only had the men's and boys' shoes disappeared, but Paddy was watching every man that passed him with an ugly look on his features, a look that boded harm to some

one or more of us. Quite a number had dropped to the little game Paddy D'yle had played with every appearance of success, so we tried to devise some way whereby we could help the boys out of the scrape, but there was no way, unless we lent them our shoes, which we could readily have done, but only at the expense of placing ourselves in the same predicament. So we came to the conclusion that it was a bad job any way, and the only thing remaining for the boys to do was to face the music.

As I hurried to get back on the spar deck I met Tom coming down. In a few words I told him of the fix the boys were in, and asked him to come with me and see the sport. We made our way straight to where Paddy had stationed himself, and saw three of the boys under guard of the marines. They looked chop-fallen enough. A marine stood at the hatchway and forced the boys to pass Paddy in single file, giving him an opportunity to make a close inspection. Presently, while we were near, he reached out his hand and grabbed another man. He had four now, but looked in vain for others to come. The end of the line, and the last man had passed, but all wore shoes. Paddy had to be satisfied with the four caught and forthwith marched them to the brig. I found out in the course of the day how the rest escaped punishment. Some of

the men had two pairs of shoes in their hammocks laid by for extra occasions. With the poorest of these they supplied the 'others' wants, who in this way escaped being caught in the trap laid for them by Paddy D'yle. How many were thus supplied I never knew, but there were quite a number. The ship's boys were the pests of the Guardo. They were up to all kinds of mischief, backed up by the old vets. A ship's boy would stand at the foot of the ladder leading to the spar deck, and when a landsman attempted to pass up the hatchway, and his breeches were drawn to their full tension, he would give the luckless wight a rope's end upon the posterior. Great Scott! how it did smart! The first thing Greeny did was to clap both hands behind his back, probably to ascertain if he had lost anything, then, writhing in pain, he glared around in search of the offender, whom, in the meanwhile, had been hustled out of the way by the crowd of sailors, who were always about at such times to take part in the fun. Yes! Jolly fun for the observers, but something quite different for the landsman who was unfortunate enough to be caught. Note how carefully that landsman sits at the mess table; it almost appears as if he had one of Job's comforters! When he ascends the ladder to the spar deck, he looks carefully around to see if any of the ship's boys are about. One dose is enough; he is not caught again.

Some of the men were in a state of uncleanness. We were all dirty enough, but most of us did try to keep clean whenever an opportunity presented itself, and that was very seldom. Others were entirely regardless of their personal appearance. But where there were so many recruits it was almost impossible to keep entirely clean. Just imagine for a moment, thirteen hundred men confined on board ship, with but very few washing days—only Wednesdays were set apart for washing purposes. To keep from being overrun by vermin, we had to make a diligent examination of our clothes at every opportunity. What I am about to relate may sound a little exaggerated, perhaps, but it is nevertheless true. One of the sailors had trained a cockroach. The idea of training such a thing! Ugh! It makes me shudder even now to think of them. The cockroach was so well trained that it seemed to know the man's voice, and would come out from behind the mess chest, where it made its home, at the call of its master, would eat from his hand, and even follow him a little about the deck. It disappeared, however, one day, and neither we nor his master ever saw it again, nor did we know what became of it, but supposed that it was eaten by the other more numerous vermin, or perhaps was crushed to death by the holy-stone used when washing the deck. In any



case it disappeared, and it would have been a blessing if the rest of the vermin had gone with it.

The decks were holy-stoned three times a week, and I will now describe the method as well as I can. Holy-stoning the deck is accomplished by attaching a strong rope to both sides of a stone, usually a grind stone, of coarse grit, about twelve by sixteen inches, and about eight inches thick. Five or six men, or even more, then take hold of the rope at each end, and while one side pulls, the other slackens, then the opposite side pulls while the others slacken, and so on. Canvas and sand are used to scrub where the holy-stone cannot be used. Small hand stones are also made use of to scrub the hatches and the wood-work; for the brass work, pumice stone is used. Everything is made clean for the time being, and of course looks finely. But thirteen hundred men on board ship almost preclude the possibility of keeping things clean for any great length of time; there is a constant movement among the men; some are drilling at the guns, some reading, some sewing, others tying or learning to tie fancy knots; gangs working at swabbing or drying up the berth and gun decks; some whitewashing overhead, or drying up the orlop deck by swinging pans filled with charcoal to and fro close to the deck. As soon as one place becomes dry as far as the swing reaches, the men take up other places, and so on

till the whole deck is dried. Some of the men engage in mending their clothes, others fill up the tanks with water ; everything is in motion. In the afternoon it is quieter, for, with the exception of the boatswain's mate's shrill piping, and his hoarse calls ordering the boats away, tricing up awnings, coiling ropes away that are out of place, and his calls for men who are drafted, there is not much to do but read and write, and, well—search your clothes ! A “draft” means that a certain number of men have been chosen from the list on the ship's books to make up the complement of some vessel in want of men. These men are mustered at quarters, and are given to understand that they are drafted for some particular ship, or gun-boat, as the case may be. Preference is sometimes given to those men who have been longest on board the *Guardo*. For instance, a gun-boat or ship of war is about to put to sea. After the crew have eaten their breakfast, the boatswain blows his whistle, a signal known as “piping,” and calls the whole ship's company together. Then, with stentorian lungs, speaks somewhat in this wise : “Do you hear ? All you men drafted for the ‘*Canandaigua*’ lay aft in the quarter deck with your bags and hammocks.”

In this way, it went on day after day, men coming and men going in a never ending stream. I have known a man's name to be called over three days in succession, and

then only be found by mustering the whole ship's crew. Grog was served out twice a day, in the morning before breakfast, and again at night before piping down to supper. When the boatswain piped for grog time, the crew fell into line and marched in single file, before the ship's steward, who dealt out each his share as he came up. Each man received one gill in a small round measure. The boys often tried to trick the steward by falling into line again and thereby getting a double ration, but they were not always successful in this, for the steward, the master-at-arms, and a marine stood by to see that each man got his ration and that no-man was served twice. Those who did not drink their ration of whiskey, were paid its value in cash, at the end of their term of enlistment, at the rate of ten cents a day. I could not understand why grog was served at all to the men; they surely did not need it on board the *Guardo*, where there was no bone labor performed, nor fighting to be done requiring Dutch courage, but it was custom, and "custom makes law," hence its continuance. I think it was in the month of October, 1862, that Congress passed a law abolishing grog in the army and navy, thereby saving the United States a great many dollars which before had been uselessly expended.

I well remember the day we received the news that grog was abolished. I was on board the *Guardo* at the time. Curses not so loud, but deep, were indulged

in by the old tars, some of whom, had seen years of service, and who, by custom, had become so habituated to their allowance of grog, that the very expectation of it was accompanied by a feeling of pleasure. It was a long time before the men forgot the action of congress, and in fact, they never ceased to talk about it. As far as they were concerned, I really felt sorry for them, knowing how hard it must have been to them, to be so suddenly deprived of that which they looked forward to with as much certainty as anything in the world. I talked with some of the old sailors on this matter afterwards. They said it was impossible not to think of it; they felt a ceaseless longing for something, as if they had forgotten some important duty of the day, and as the grog hour drew near, the longing became almost irresistible, and they would involuntarily walk to the place where the old grog tub stood for their long accustomed drink.

Many different modes of punishment were resorted to by the officers on the *Guardo*, for those who would not obey orders. One mode was to send the man to the mast head for three hours. This was considered a light punishment by the majority. Another was to send the men up the ratlins on the under side, in board, and cause them to hang there for two hours. In undergoing this punishment, there was a heavy strain on the muscles and sinews of the legs and arms, the effects of which could be felt for days after—at least, so I was told

by some of those who had suffered. If a man was caught in the act of spitting upon the deck, after it had been washed and dried, he was forced to carry a spittoon about the deck for the men to expectorate into. The spittoons were made by sawing off the bottom of a keg, leaving a portion about four inches deep; the size of course would vary according to the size of the keg sawn. Three holes were then bored near the top on each side, opposite each other, a lanyard attached long enough to go around the man's neck, and with the tub carried in front of him he was made to parade the deck fore and aft, till he caught some other unlucky youth spitting on the deck, when the tub would be transferred to him. The boys, it seemed to me, always expectorated the most when some unfortunate fellow was bearing about the offensive tub.

Wednesday was visiting day on board, and friends, from far and near, came to see husbands, brothers, sons, or sweethearts, as the case might be. Tom and I were in our glory on visiting days watching the people come and go. Old and young, the fair, the fat, and the forty, came in over the port side into the quarter deck and after friendly greetings with their relations took a stroll with them over the ship, examining the heavy guns and other points of interest. Only those who came to see friends and relatives were allowed to come on board. Many of the crew promenaded the

deck with fair maidens upon their arms, while others would climb up the ratlins to show their parents, and sweethearts how agile they had become since joining the ship. Still others would form little groups by themselves—as far as they were able to—on the quarter deck, while their friends unloaded from their pockets the goodies they had brought from home; and amid it all, the band discoursed sweet music, the whole producing a babel of sounds. When the visitors came over the side they were requested to name the person they desired to see, then the boatswain would blow his whistle, as a preliminary that something or somebody was wanted. This being done, he would then call out the name of the man sought. Sometimes it would happen that two boatswains would be calling out the names of two different persons at the same time, the result being no little confusion. As soon as the persons were found they would march forward, greet their friends, and walk away with them; the boatswain then called another name, and so on till three o'clock, when the visits ceased. We had been on board the *Guardo* about a week when it became my duty to go in the scow and ferry the people back and forth to and from the ship. Upon going below, I found that Tom had been detailed for the same purpose. This was fun for a little while, but we soon tired of it, and began to look anxiously for our release.

“Good gracious !” exclaimed Tom, after we had been working hard for an hour ferrying the busy throng from shore to ship, and from ship to dock-yard again ; “good gracious ! I don’t admire this job ; do you, Steve ?”

“Well,” I replied, “I have seen work that I liked a great deal better than turning this old crank. But, then,” I added, “it does very well for a change, and I don’t know of anyone that needs a change more than you and I do.”

“Yes, a change of clothing, you mean, don’t you ?”

Not heeding Tom’s interruption I continued, “We get rid of Paddy D’yle’s importunities for a little while at least.”

“Yes, there is some comfort in that,” said Tom ; “but goodness gracious, Steve, how long do you think they are going to keep us on that old hulk, anyway ; for my part I am tired of the sight of her.”

“So am I, Tom, but at the rate they are sending recruits off, it must soon come our turn to be drafted on board a gun-boat or ship destined for some southern port.”

This desultory conversation we carried on while waiting for the visitors at the dock-yard or at the Guardo. We were treated, while in the scow, to numerous dainties by the lady visitors, for which we thanked them heartily. They were a delightful change from our coarse fare on board.

“Ugh,” exclaimed Tom, it don’t seem to me, after eating all these nice things, that I can make up my mind to eat any more fat pork and salt horse.”

“But nevertheless, Tom,” said I, “you won’t be the last at the table when the boatswain pipes for grub to-night.”

“Why, goodness gracious, what are you going to do? A feller has got to fill up with something.”

“I wish you would drop the expression ‘Goodness gracious;’ I am tired of hearing it used, and the fellows will get on to it by and by, and possibly you won’t hear the last of it while we remain on board the Guardo.”

“Well, good——what shall I say?” he asked, looking at me fiercely.

“Say d—m it, and have done with it,” said the marine who was on guard with us in the scow.

A general laugh followed this sally, and Tom looked as if he did not know whether to get mad or laugh at the joke, but good counsel prevailed, and at length he told the marine that if he was caught using that exclamation again to give him a prod with his bayonet. “In any case,” he added, “I shall not substitute the other expression.”

Our two hours’ detail soon slipped away, and others being appointed to take our places, we went aboard.

When I first went on board the “North Carolina” Guardo I was very particular to examine my food



for worms, for I assure my readers that there were many of them. Break open a hard-tack and perhaps two or three would lie imbedded in the—well, cracker. But after being on board some time I could munch them equal to the vets, without examining the interior. The worms were similar to the chestnut worms. Some of my readers, perhaps, have possibly bitten into a seemingly healthy chestnut at some period in their life, and have noticed a cloud of white dust rise from the interior, and at the same time a nice, fat, white worm with a black head has fallen at their feet; yum, yum—well, these were the kind that we found in our hard-tack.

One thing I never could get used to, and that was finding cockroaches in my coffee, although after picking a few out of my tin cup I would manage to worry the liquid down. To eat with our hard tack, cheese as hard as flint was provided, with a skipper now and then inside. How many voyages to sea that hard-tack and cheese had made we never could tell. Our salt junk we used to call "old horse." After partaking of this commodity for the first time, I became aware why the doctors in their examination of us paid such particular attention to our molars, for without good, strong jaws and teeth it was next to impossible for us to satisfy our hunger on salt junk day. Our food differed from day to day. There was duff day, when flour was boiled in

bags, and usually so hard that it could be thrown across the deck without breaking it. This was served up with molasses. Then we had pea soup day, bean day, hard-tack and cheese day, and soup day. And here let me say that the soup was excellent; plenty of vegetables were put in to make it palatable, and each man had enough given to him.

One day, the ship's company were all mustered, for a draft was about to be made, and when in a line, thirty men were called off from the ship's books. Tom's and mine were among that number. What amazed me most in this was that most of the men were Massachusetts men. What could it mean? Had they become tired of us on board, or had Paddy D'yle come to the conclusion that we could not be worked up? We did not look as though we had been worked very hard—most of us were rugged, good-looking chaps. After being ordered to be in readiness for a call, the line was dismissed. The next day, in the afternoon, the boatswain's whistle sounded again, and then from his mouth came the words, "Do you hear? All you men drafted for the gun-boat 'Louisiana' lay aft on the quarter deck with your bags and hammocks." My mind was set at rest on hearing these words, for I had begun to entertain the idea that we were to be drafted back and forth from Guardo to Guardo, and not to be settled in any ship we could call

our own. At the words, "drafted for the 'Louisiana,'" all my fears were dispelled. We made a rush for our belongings, and obtaining them, we mustered aft on the quarter deck bearing them with us. The "Thames," a screw propeller, ran up alongside and we descended to her deck. When all were on board, she steamed out into the stream a half a mile below the Guardo and there came to anchor. The weather was coming in thick and stormy, so the captain concluded not to put to sea that night. One of our company was the lucky possessor of a violin, and that was forthwith brought into requisition, and we danced quadrilles and contra dances until late in the night. At last our guard put a stop to the music, consequently, our dancing had to stop also, but by that time we had become tired enough to cease and were glad to obey the order. A number of us had already swung our hammocks in the most convenient places we could find, while others who could not find a place to swing theirs, spread them down upon the deck, and very soon all were in the arms of Morpheus.

## CHAPTER IV.

### GOOD-BY TO THE GUARDO.

“And we sailed away at close of day,  
Nor thought it very hard’o,  
To leave behind in Wallabout Bay,  
Paddy D’yle and the old Guardo.

**W**HEN I awoke in the morning I could hardly realize where I was, it seemed so strange not to hear the boatswain’s hoarse cry, “Up all hammocks.” I rubbed my eyes and thought that I must be dreaming. Raising myself up in my hammock and looking about, I was greeted with a “Ha, ha.” Turning over on my right side I discovered Tom engaged in lashing his hammock. At the same time, I became conscious of a swinging motion in mine.

“What’s the matter, Steve? What makes you look so funny?” asked Tom.

“Oh, nothing, only I was lost just for a moment,” I replied, and jumping out of my hammock, in an instant more was on the deck.

“We are under way, Steve; don’t you feel the motion of the vessel?”

I was now wide awake and in a moment more I had dressed, and proceeded to lash my hammock.

The boys around us had now begun to stir, and by-and-by, came creeping from under their blankets, and in a few minutes all were preparing to go on deck. I left my hammock hanging in its place and followed the rest. As I passed the engineer's room I noticed that the clock gave the hour of five. Upon reaching the deck, I passed forward and accosted the watch on the forecastle, with the enquiry as to the length of time we had been under way. He gave me the desired information, by saying that we were two hours out from the Brooklyn navy yard. As he did not seem inclined to be talkative, I left him and engaged myself in a search after Tom. I soon discovered him resting on a rail amidship, breakfasting on hard-tack and hot coffee. As soon as he discerned me he sang out, "get your pot, Steve, and go to the cook-room for your rations."

I was not slow to follow this injunction, and in a few minutes more I was seated beside Tom on the rail, inhaling the delicious aroma arising from the steaming beverage. The weather was beautiful and pleasant overhead, and as our little steamer pitched into the foamy waves and threw the salt spray over the bow, with merry song and jest our little party passed the time away. Our rations were much the same as we had been treated to on the Guardo. After finishing our first meal on board the "Thames," Tom and I walk about the deck to enjoy the scene. We passed many

vessels as we steamed along, and all had the stars and stripes floating at the masthead. Our glorious old "star spangled banner," no other flag under God's heaven has received so many tributes. In every country and every clime, it shakes out its proud folds and assures protection to all who stand by it. The Thames carried one gun forward, a twelve pound howitzer, with which we amused ourselves. The old vets—there were several in our party—picked out a gun's crew from the thirty recruits on board and put us through the evolutions of working the gun and the manner of loading and firing it. Besides the gun's crew, we were told off into watches, and with what handspikes we could pick up, and others that we improvised from pieces of wood, we stood ready to repel an imaginary enemy. Fun ran riot all day, and the regular crew of the "Thames" were only too glad when the hour of rest came. We did not know our destination, and some did not care, seeing that we were released from the Guardo; that alone was pleasure enough to last for a season, but in the course of the next day it leaked out, as all secrets do, sooner or later, that we were bound to Chesapeake Bay.

We arrived off Fortress Monroe in the forenoon of the next day, and ran up alongside an old hulk, which looked as if it had been built a hundred years or more. She had short stumpy masts, and

there was a certain air of decay about her that did by no means meet with our approval. As soon as the "Thames" had been made fast to her, we were ordered on board together with our effects, while the "Thames" steamed down the Chesapeake. In a little while we found out that we were on board the far-famed "Brandywine." Her top hamper had been removed; the stumps alone were left of what were once tall and comely masts. She was used as a store ship during the rebellion, and lay quietly under the guns of the fort, playing a somewhat insignificant part, to be sure, but then she had grown old and nearly worn out in the service, and it was time for her to retire and give way to the younger and more modern vessels. We were ordered to fall into line on the port side of the vessel, and the lieutenant called the roll to see if all were on board. Thirty men answered to their names, and we were then turned over to the master-at-arms, who showed us where to stow our bags and hammocks. Our next piece of instruction was to be shown where to swing our hammocks at night, following which were some general instructions as to what would be required of us while we remained on board.

"To-morrow," he told us, "is wash day, and any of you who choose may wash your clothes and hang them out on the line to dry with those of the

crew. You will be expected to turn to and work with the rest while you remain on board; you will not be expected to stand watch, as we have our full complement of men; you will be divided among the different messes of men at meal times and draw rations in the same proportions as they." Having told us all this, he said we might go on deck and get acquainted with the crew.

Arriving on deck, we were overwhelmed with questions from the "Brandywine" men, who were all eager to hear news from home, but we being all New England men, could only tell them of our homes so recently left, and as none of the crew of the "Brandywine" came from Massachusetts or Rhode Island, our news was of but little interest to them. They in turn rehearsed to our listening ears nearly all that had transpired to them since they had joined the store ship, as I suppose I must call it now. They told us of the jolly times they spent on shore whenever they got an opportunity, and spoke of the gun-boats that came down the James River once in a while on a reconnoissance of our force. They pointed out to us a Spanish and a French frigate lying in the harbor to protect their country's interests; in fact so loquacious were they in explaining everything pertaining to the ship and her surroundings, that by dinner time we were perfectly at home on board. Dinner over,



occupied myself in being useful, and so well did I succeed that I was commended by one of the officers as being a handy man on board ship. As the other members of the draft were equally useful I did not allow the officer's flattery to make me vain towards my fellows. Just before the sunset gun was fired from the "Minnesota," which was lying just above us in the harbor, the crews of the French and Spanish frigates, before spoken of, mounted into the rigging, and in a moment the yards were black with men, or white rather, as the crew of both frigates were dressed in white shirts and duck pants. At the signal of a gun, fired from each vessel at nearly the same instant, the yards were hauled aslant and they descended to the deck as by magic. This was called sending down the yards, and was practiced by all foreign vessels at that time. The yards are sent below and stored over night, and in the morning, at the report of the sunrise gun, they are sent up and trimmed. The Spanish and French tars had a way of rowing in their small boats unlike anything I had ever witnessed before. They pulled with a long, steady stroke, with a second's halt as the oar emerges out of and before it descends into the water again. Ours was also a long stroke, but with no halt between the intervals, and I am free to confess that I decidedly preferred the way in which our tars handled their oars to the foreign mode.

We had now been cooped up on board ship for nearly two months, and I was determined, so I told Tom as we turned in that night, that I would go ashore the very next day, if there was any virtue in asking. He fell in with the proposition and we agreed to ask to go together. The regular crew of the "Brandywine" were allowed, so they told us, a portion of them each day to go on shore and enjoy themselves from nine in the morning to four in the afternoon. The next morning came in bright and pleasant, and bade fair for a splendid day. After the morning's work was over, a few of the crew who wanted liberty to go on shore, approached the executive officer aft in the cabin, and obtained permission from him to spend a day on land. With a beating heart and after much persuasion, I approached the cabin, followed by Tom, and looked in. The lieutenant sat with his back to the open door. I gave a gentle tap with my knuckles to attract his attention, on which he turned round in his seat. I doffed my cap to him and said, "Can I have permission to go on shore, sir?" He smiled on me pleasantly, and asked me if I belonged to the draft lately come on board.

I hesitated a moment, then said, "Yes, sir, I do."

"Well, my boy," said he, "it's not the rule to let new recruits visit the shore until they are out of debt with the ship. But," he continued, "as there are only a few recruits on board at the present time, perhaps it

would be as well to allow them to mix in with the older sailors for a day of liberty."

This was said in a musing tone of voice, as if he were speaking to himself rather than to Tom and me; then looking at us, he said, "Yes, you may go." Seeing Tom in the background, he added, "You may go with him." We walked forward, after saluting him, and acquainted our messmates with the good news. At nine o'clock, the launch was ordered alongside, and the liberty men stepped into it. The boys on the store ship looked wistfully at us as we moved away, and I felt sorry that they could not accompany us, but I consoled myself with the thought that they would probably have opportunity enough to visit land before our final departure from the "Brandywine." In a short time after leaving the ship's side our boat's keel grated on the hard sand right under the guns of the fortress, and we all sprang ashore. Tom and I strolled off by ourselves so as to fully enjoy the day, and bent our steps in the direction of the fortress. Fortress Monroe is situated at old Point Virginia on the Hampton roads. The fort encloses eighty acres of land, and must have cost the government thousands of dollars in its construction. There is at the present time a United States arsenal of artillery, and an arsenal, etc. About four miles south of Fortress Monroe I could discern Sewell Point. We spent three hours in the fortress viewing the heavy guns

and looking through the soldiers' quarters; nice, cozy quarters they were, too. The soldiers were very sociable, and entertained us in a highly creditable manner. They informed us that a ram called the "Merrimac" was building at Norfolk by the rebels, and as soon as finished would come down and endeavor to burn and sink all the Union vessels in the harbor. History relates how nearly this object was accomplished. Just outside the fort, on a point of land, we were shown a monster gun that was expected to do wonders in the way of destroying all craft that the rebels had the daring to pit against them. Had it not been for the little "Monitor," when on that eventful day the "Merrimac" came down the river and attacked and sunk the "Cumberland," history would have had a more sorrowful tale to relate than the sinking of that ill-fated ship, butchering of two-thirds of her crew, and the wounding of the "Congress." As I looked out over the placid bay at the vessels lying quietly at anchor in the harbor, I could hardly realize that they were waiting, armed and equipped, to do battle for the Union. We had seen nought of cruel warfare; it was more like a journey of pleasure to us as yet, and but for the rig that we wore, I could hardly have imagined that it was otherwise. Outside the fort it was different. Soldiers were moving back and forth, some with their knapsacks slung, and their haversacks and canteens at their sides, break-

ing camp and preparing to go and meet the enemy. Some there were with sun-blackened and bronzed faces that already told of service in the field at the front.

The day was only too short to see all the stirring scenes around us, and four o'clock came before I was hardly aware of it. As the hour drew near, Tom and I made our way to the landing to be in readiness for the launch to take us back to the "Brandywine. We were nearly the first to arrive at the boat, though not long afterwards the rest of the liberty men came straggling down. Stepping into the boat, we pushed off, and in a few moments we were on board the ship again. Tom and I were very fortunate in obtaining liberty that day, for in the evening, before we slung our hammocks, we were informed that we were to leave in a steamer that was expected to come in the morning. That was news indeed to us, and when we turned in that night, I, for one, did not sleep till after eight bells (twelve o'clock) had struck. The next morning we were called at the usual time by the boatswain, and hastily dressing, were soon on deck helping the crew to wash down. After breakfast I lent a hand to the crew to put the "Brandywine" in ship-shape fashion.

I had received but one letter from home since leaving the Guardo, and did not expect to receive any more until I reached the "Louisiana." I missed them very much, and could I have received just one to tell me

how they all were there, I should have been as happy as possible under the circumstances. We cast many anxious glances seaward for the expected steamer which was to bear us to the seat of war, but she delayed in coming. Dinner was served and eaten, yet there were no signs of the vessel that we were so anxiously waiting for. The sun was sinking in the western horizon, and the shadows of the stub masts of the "Brandywine" lengthened; we were on the tip-toe of expectation, when a cry, "Sail, O!" from the lookout forward, attracted the attention of all on board.

"Where away?" said the quartermaster.

"Off the port bow. It's a steamer, sir; I can just make out the smoke from her stack."

The quartermaster adjusted his glass and took a long look in the direction indicated by the lookout. The lieutenant, who was pacing the deck, stopped as the quartermaster removed the glass from his eyes. "Well, what do you make her out to be, quartermaster?"

"A gunboat, sir, as near as I can determine."

"Can you make out her nationality?" next enquired the lieutenant.

The quartermaster looked again, and after what seemed a long time to us, said, "It's a United States gunboat, sir; I can see the stars and stripes now, floating from her peak."

The lieutenant took the glass, and looked long at her

as she was rapidly approaching us, and so near that we could discern her with the naked eye. Satisfying himself, he returned the glass to the quartermaster, saying, "she has the appearance of being the gunboat 'Delaware,' and if it proves to be her, she is coming for the recruits. Are they all on board?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well, then I will have them on deck," and turning to the boatswain he ordered him to muster all the recruits destined for the gunboat "Louisiana." The boatswain sounded his whistle, and called for the recruits to muster on deck with bags and hammocks—would we never cease to hear that order of "muster on deck, with your bags and hammocks?" By the time we were all assembled, the gunboat, for it was the "Delaware," was alongside, and its lieutenant stepped on board the "Brandywine," and handed to our executive officer a folded document. The lieutenant invited his guest to accompany him into the cabin while he examined the papers. They were absent quite a while. In the meantime we amused ourselves by asking questions of the "Delaware's" crew in regard to the whereabouts of the "Louisiana," and answering their inquiries about home, as well as we were able to. It was quite dark before the lieutenant of the "Delaware" made his appearance on deck with our executive, who turned to the boatswain, and gave him an order, which in turn

he gave to us. "Bear a hand, my men," said he, "with your duds, and get aboard the "Deleware." The order was not repeated twice, for over the side went our dunnage in a promiscuous heap on the gunboat's deck and we eagerly followed after. As soon as we were all on board, the fastenings were cast loose and the "Dealware" steamed off into the darkness.

I passed an almost sleepless night on board, for the sea was very rough, and having no place in which to swing our hammocks, we were compelled to spread them out on the deck. Tom and I lay rolled up in our blankets with our clothes on. The place we chose for our sleeping quarters was beside a gun carriage, with a thirty-two pound gun mounted upon it. When the steamer rolled to port, the muzzle of the gun would touch the water on that side ; when she righted and rolled to starboard, the gun-chocks became loosened and the gun-carriage rolled inboard as far as the breeching would allow it, then it would bring up with a jerk, and I was afraid that the gun chocks would be knocked on one side and that the carriage and gun would roll to port or starboard and disappear in the angry seething sea around us. At last, finding it useless to essay to sleep, I announced to Tom my intention to get up and walk the deck awhile.

This roused Tom up a little and looking in my direction, he said—



“Oh, pilot, 'tis a fearful night,  
There's danger on the deep;  
I'll come and pace the deck with thee,  
I do not dare to sleep.”

“Go down, go down, the sailor said,”—

I did not wait for him to finish, but made my way forward to where the lookout was stationed. I crouched down under the bulwarks to get out of the wind which was blowing a gale, I thought, and so said to the sailor on watch, who looking at me replied:—

“Pooh, this is only a good fresh breeze.”

“Did you ever witness a gale?” I inquired looking up innocently.

He laughed and said, “We sailors are apt to call a heavy blow a fresh breeze.”

“About where are we now, can you make out?”

“Why, yes, we are off Cape Henry. Get on your feet and you can see Cape Henry light. There,” he said, pointing to a light just abaft our starboard gangway that seemed to rise and fall as the steamer rose on the crest of a wave or sank into its trough.

“Wher's your pea jacket?” enquired the sailor, “you ought to have it on such a night as this.

“In my bag alongside the thirty-two gun,” I replied, “I will go and fetch it.”

I returned to the gun staggering all the way like a drunken man, and two or three times came near pitch-

ing headlong. I had no trouble in finding my bag, and in a minute more had my jacket on my back. I returned the bag to its place beside the gun, then stooped down to see if Tom was asleep, as he had not spoken while I was fumbling around after my clothes. I spoke to him, but receiving no reply, I concluded he was asleep, and retraced my steps forward again half envying him his peaceful slumber. I soon regained my place beside the lookout, and we engaged in a nice chat. I acquainted him with nearly all that had transpired to me since my enlistment, and at the mention of Paddy D'yle's name he laughed outright.

“You have got him down fine, my lad,” said he, “I have been on the old ‘North Carolina’ since the war. I was drafted from her to the ‘Deleware.’ There was some tough boys among the recruits then, and a number of them had ‘sailed the ocean blue,’ and were up to all the tricks practiced in the navy, and we just made it hot for Paddy D'yle, for that's the name he went by while I was on board the Guardo.”

“Strike seven bells,” said the quartermaster.

The lookout obeyed the order, then returned to my side.

“Let's see, where was I? Oh, we were talking about Paddy D'yle. Well, we gave the old duffer such a scare one night that he didn't dare to come creeping under our hammocks any more. You see it happened

in this way. One Wednesday night, after we had all turned into our hammocks on the berth deck, some of the boys' friends, who had been visiting them, had smuggled some liquor aboard, although the guard were very careful to search all persons coming over the side; yet by hook or by crook, they passed the guard with a bottle or two of prime old Otard, and the consequence was that the boys were feeling pretty good by bed time and up to all manner of tricks. The 'haymakers,' as the new recruits were called, had to suffer that night, and those of them who kicked were very roughly handled by our fellows. I kept out of the way as I did not wish to be mixed up in the row. Well, when all was ready, one man was stationed at the foot of the ladder on the berth deck to give warning of the approach of Paddy D'yle, and then all began to holler; some would imitate a cat-call, some the neighing of a horse, or the crowing of a rooster, in fact every imaginable call for a living animal. Such an uproar no one could conceive of unless he was present. You may be sure that Paddy D'yle was not long in being posted as to the state of affairs upon the berth deck. Not many minutes had elapsed before he made his appearance among us. In the meantime a lot of swabs had been collected by the men and thoroughly soaked with water. There was a tall six-footer among the recruits on the Guardo named Jonas Farella, who was considered a

tough customer in a rough and tumble—none of the boys ever had the inclination to tackle him. He sprang out of his hammock as Paddy D'yle approached, and before he had a chance to see who hit him, whack went the swab into his face propelled with tremendous force by Farella's strong arm. At once commenced a scene of the utmost confusion. Fifty men with water-saturated swabs went for the miserable wretch and he was kicked and buffeted about the deck to the entire satisfaction of all the occupants of the berth deck. The rumpus made and Paddy D'yle's cries reached the ears of the officer of the deck, who, suspecting trouble, sent for a file of marines and hastened himself to the scene of the trouble. Before he had reached the place, however, Paddy D'yle had managed to crawl up the ladder to the spar deck, a thoroughly battered and discomfited being, while the men all returned to their hammocks and everything was as still as death on the berth deck. As well might the officers and the marines hunt for a needle dropped on the deck as to find the culprit or culprits who had been foremost in the row. Some of the crew were ordered out of their hammocks and were questioned by the officer of the deck, but failing to find out any thing to throw light upon the matter, he threatened them with the brig and bread and water until the leaders in the scrimmage were pointed out, but without avail, and in a surly tone of voice he

ordered the men back to their berths, and stationed a marine at the foot of the ladder to keep order the rest of the night. On the following morning, several of the boys were arrested on suspicion and brought up before the old man, but as they were all true blue he did not make anything out by questioning and cross-questioning them, so he finally let them go forward with the rest of the crew. That afternoon we were all mustered on the the quarter deck, and the old man delivered a lecture for our benefit as long as the yard arm. Then we were dismissed with a warning that if any man was brought up before him for disorderly conduct, he should be punished with the brig for twenty days with bread and water. You can bet your bottom dollar that we were kept at work while we remained on the Guardo."

"Strike eight bells," said the quartermaster.

The lookout obeyed and hardly had the sound from the last stroke died out than he was relieved from watch and could turn in.

"Look here, boy," said he, "I guess I can fix it all right with my mate here so that you can turn into his hammock below and get some sleep."

He then left me but soon returned with the glad tidings that I could occupy his hammock while he was on watch two hours. It is needless to say that I gladly accepted the offer. I turned into the warm nest, and

was soon in the land of dreams. It did not seem to me that I had been asleep for more than five minutes when I was aroused by the owner of the hammock, whose time on watch had expired. Reluctantly I turned out of my snug quarters and made my way upon deck. The wind had nearly subsided, and the "Delaware" rolled along easily with the long ground swell undulating beneath us. I now sought my first resting-place beside the thirty-two gun. Tom was sound asleep and snoring loudly. Rolling myself up in my blanket I soon fell asleep and was not aroused again till the hammocks were piped up in the morning. Tom was first to awake, and he gave me a punch in the side that caused me to start quickly up in time to hear the last long drawn notes of the boatswain's mate's pipe.

"How do you feel, Steve!" said Tom.

"Oh, all right." "I wonder where we are," said Tom, "off what land?"

I inquired of one of the sailors as to our whereabouts.

"We are off Hatteras, and will soon be in the still waters of Pamlico Sound," was the reply.

Three bells were struck (half past five) as Tom and I went forward in order to have a better look at the country. We were now entering Hatteras inlet. It was very rough water and the old "Delaware" cut up

antics similar to those in the night. We passed Fort Hatteras, plainly discernable on the right of the inlet, and in a few minutes more we were in the still waters of Pamlico sound. The captain of the "Delaware" concluded to come to an anchor while the crew washed the deck and ate their breakfast. Tom and I, and the rest of the draft, helped the crew to wash down and coil the ropes about the guns; then at the call of the boatswain for breakfast we sat down to a hearty meal, consisting of canned meats, souse, (potatoes and hard-tack served up together with butter) good hot coffee, and the first new brittle, hard-tack that it had been my fortune to see since my enlistment. The coffee was excellent, too, and I felt refreshed after the repast, and went on deck with the feelings of a boy able to do a man's duties. As I gained the deck the sun was just peeping forth in all its glory, lighting up the heavens in the southern and eastern horizon with a lurid glare changing to an orange and gold color, then to a lovely pink, which, at last, as the day broke, faded out in the blue ether. At eight bells, the boatswain's mate piped all hands to up anchor, the new draft lending a hand with the regular crew, and very soon after the order had been given, the anchor was catted, and we were steaming along up Pamlico Sound toward New Berne. There was not much of interest to attract our attention. The land looked barren with the excep-

tion of a low wooded shore occasionally to relieve the eyes; but there was nothing for Tom and me to do but view the landscape from our perch upon the fore-castle deck. The "Delaware" was quite a fast boat and she glided along with an easy motion that was truly delightful, especially after being pitched about upon the rough sea outside Hatteras. We came in sight of New Berne about eight bells (four o'clock) in the afternoon, and in half an hour or more entered the harbor. Several gun-boats were lying at anchor off the town, and to the smallest of these the "Delaware" ran up alongside. She proved to be the gun-boat "Hetzal." After an exchange of civilities between the captain of the "Delaware" and Commodore Rowan, who was on board the "Hetzal," (the "Hetzal" was the commodore's flagship,) we were ordered on board of her. So once more we took up our beds and baggage and walked.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Tom, upon going aboard the "Hetzal," and seeing what a wee little gun-boat she was, "we'll have to swing our hammocks over the side, sure, this time; there ain't room enough under the deck of this craft for all of us to swing in. Goodness gracious!" he continued, "ain't we ever going to get to the 'Louisiana?' I don't believe there is any such boat as the 'Louisiana'; all they wanted on board the Guardo was to get rid of us. Goodness gra——"

Before he had time to finish the sentence we were



ordered to fall in line on the deck. The executive officer of the "Hetzel" informed us that we were to stay on board a few days, until a steamer left New Berne, which would convey us to Little Washington, where he said the "Louisiana" lay. He explained to us that we should have to contrive the best way we could for the few days we were compelled to remain on board; our rations would be the same as were issued to the crew of the "Hetzel," but as regarded the sleeping quarters, we should have to spread our hammocks upon the deck, as there was no room to swing them. After we were dismissed we mingled with the crew, and sat up late in the evening, smoking and telling yarns. The next day after our arrival on board, Tom and I obtained permission to visit the town; so with some dozen or more of others who had obtained permission to go, we were rowed on shore by the crew of the "Hetzel," some of whom had secured a day of liberty, and who offered to show us around the town. After landing, we started up the street to a hotel called the Gaston House, a large, substantial, wooden structure. A wide pair of steps on the main street led up to a spacious hall-way, giving ready access to the building. A similar wide stair-way on the opposite side led down to another street. One of the boys related a story connected with this house which I will give in his own words. "When New Berne was first occupied by our forces," said our informant,

“a prominent officer of the army rode up the steps from the main street on horseback, drove his horse through the long hall-way and rode out by the steps leading to the other street, ‘*a la* Putnam.’ The rebs in their hurry to evacuate, left everything in place, and among other things, a number of baskets of champagne were left intact. When the officer rode down into the street, he bore in front of him on the saddle, a basket of champagne. It is needless to add that it was found very acceptable to his brother officers on their arrival in camp.”

We visited all the forts, and the Fifth Rhode Island regiment. The boys of the “Fifth” were very glad to see Tom and me, as we were from their own state and could give them all the news about Providence and the vicinity. I hunted up Charlie Snow of the “Fifth.” He was formerly a shopmate of mine, before the war. He insisted that Tom and I should dine with him; it however did not require much persuasion to make us do that. While eating we regaled the boys with our trials since leaving home, and when we were through Charlie said, “If you continue in the way you have started, your time will be out before you have a chance to do any fighting.” Dinner over, we spent the remaining time at our disposal in roaming the town.

New Berne is quite a large place situated on the right bank of the Neuse river, at the mouth of the Trent, on the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad, about

ninety miles from Wilmington. The Neuse river is nearly two miles wide and is navigable for steamboats. Lumber, tar, and turpentine are some of the chief products of the place. We found a court house, several churches, two banks and the New Berne academy. The surrounding country is flat and has a sandy soil. It had a population of about 5,000 before the war.

We arrived at the landing about four o'clock, and when all our companions had come we signalled the "Hetzel" to send a boat for our conveyance to the vessel. After such a day spent on shore, when we boarded the steamer again our appetites were sharpened, and we did full justice to the hard-tack and salt junk spread out before us at supper time. When we turned in that night I was tired. I had no remembrance of awakening during the night, and I dreamed a pleasant dream of home in which I had served my time out and had arrived in Providence. I was just entering the yard at home when I was awakened by the shrill pipe of the boatswain's mate, calling up all hands. My dream seemed so real that I could hardly realize my whereabouts, for a moment or two. But the boatswain's order, up all hammocks, speedily brought me to the realizing sense that I still belonged to Uncle Sam. The day was wash day, and we had a chance to clean all our underwear, that we had thrust into our bags, in anticipation of just such a day. Time hung heavily

on our hands now, while we were waiting for transportation. At last, when we had almost given up hope of being sent to Washington, the boatswain's mate piped the "new draft" to muster, and shortly after a steamer was discerned in the distance. This proved to be the "Eagle," a double ender, used before the war in the capacity of a ferry boat in New York harbor. She with the steamer "Curlew" were fitted out with two guns each and sent to New Berne, where they acted in the capacity of mail boats, alternating between New Berne, Elizabeth City, Plymouth, etc. We were speedily transferred to her, and judging from the looks of the commodore, he was glad to see us go over the side.

She started about eleven o'clock in the forenoon for Washington, but had not proceeded more than ten miles when she burst a flue, and in consequence of that had to put back to New Berne, and once more we ran alongside the "Hetzal." The commodore ordered the captain of the "Eagle" to transport us to the "Curlew," which boat happened to be in port. Slowly the old "Eagle" wore round and stood for the "Curlew" which was lying at one of the wharves.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Tom, as he threw his bag and hammock down on the deck of the "Curlew," "I have heard of the 'wandering Jew,' but what

will they call this crowd, if we keep on in the way we have begun?"

"When you write a book about it, Tom," said I, "entitle it 'The Trials and Tribulations of the New Draft.'"

"Call it 'Sudden Changes of the New Draft,'" suggested Tom.

"Or 'The Curlew's Bell,'" said Howes Crowell, as the man forward struck four bells.

At this juncture we were told to hush up by an officer who evidently wanted to show his authority. And—well, we hushed up; it did seem as if fate were against us. Here we had been knocking about since our enlistment, transported from one boat to another, and it did seem to me that we were never to reach our abiding place on board the "Louisiana;" but the "Curlew" got under way at last, and we all looked forward to our safe arrival at Little Washington, where the gun-boat awaited her expected recruits. Nothing worthy of note occurred on our journey up Pamlico Sound, and about nine o'clock in the evening we were steaming up Tar River. We were hailed on our near approach by the gun-boat "Commodore Hull," which was lying off the lower end of the town. We were ordered to heave to and send a boat on board, which was done at once by our captain. Upon understanding our captain's mission, we were allowed to proceed. The

shore was lit up with the camp fires of our soldiers, and tended to give the place a weird and unearthly appearance as we steamed up the river. The stern realities of war were now more deeply impressed upon me than ever before. Upon nearing our destination, and when only a few fathoms off, we were hailed again and ordered to keep off. Our captain answered the hail and informed the officer that it was the "Curlew," with recruits on board for the "Louisiana," upon hearing which we were ordered to come up alongside. Upon going on board the "Louisiana," by the lights of the ship's lanterns, the gun-boat presented a sight to our uninitiated eyes of extreme disorder. Sponges, rammers, hand-spikes and hand-ropes belonging to the guns were lying promiscuously about the deck, all seeming out of place; but instead, to the eyes of the initiated, everything was handy to the touch and placed in a position for use with the utmost regularity. We made our way over all to the starboard side of the deck of the "Louisiana," where we were drawn up in line and answered to our names as the lieutenant called them from the roll, I hoped for the last time. The sound of escaping steam from the "Curlew," the fitful light of the battle lanterns shining on the faces of the "Louisiana's" crew, who were crowded in between the guns on the port and starboard side of the deck, the picket fires on the shore, and the hoarse, gruff voice of

the lieutenant as he called the names, made it altogether a most impressive scene, and for the first time since leaving the states I felt homesick, and when my name was called I did not answer with the energy expected ; consequently it was called again in a quicker and sharper tone than before. I answered with a resounding "Here, sir." I was admonished by the officer to keep my ears open in the future, as he said he was not in the habit of repeating names when calling the roll. I felt the rebuke, and although I did not like his censuring me in the line before nearly the whole ship's company, yet it taught me a lesson, and I did not have to be reprimanded again for the same offence.

Satisfied that we were all accounted for, the lieutenant turned us over to the master-at-arms, who instructed us where to swing our hammocks, and in a short time after I was fast asleep aboard the much-talked-of "Louisiana."

## CHAPTER V.

### HISTORY OF THE LOUISIANA.

**T**HROUGH the kindness of George Hollis of Boston, formerly master's mate of the "Louisiana," I have been enabled to gather information to form this chapter and give the cruise of the gun-boat from the time she went into commission, up to the time of our joining her.

The "Louisiana" before the rebellion was employed in the line between New Orleans and Galveston and went into commission a few days after the first battle of Bull Run. She carried more officers than were afterwards allowed for such a craft. She was officered as follows: Commander, Alexander Murray; lieutenant, Alfred H. Hopkins; acting masters, Hooker, Furness, and Van Slyck; master's mates, McKeever, and George H. Hollis; acting paymaster, Williams; chief engineer, Lay; assistant engineers, McCartney, Daniels, and Huxley; surgeon, Bradley; gunner, McDonald; carpenter, Mills. Hooker was a resident of Providence.

The "Louisiana" put out to sea in the latter part of July, 1861, or early in August, and proceeded directly



to Fortress Munroe, to support the frigate "Savannah." She spent most of the summer there, doing occasional scouting and picket duty, and looking sharply after the ram "Merrimac," which was known to be fitting out at Norfolk. There, the "Louisiana" had her first brush with the rebel steamer "Yorktown," which came down the river one day and opened fire from rifled guns on the "Savannah," whose guns were not able to cope with those of her adversary's, being all smooth bores. As soon as she was discerned coming down the river, the boatswain's mate piped all hands to general quarters, and the "Louisiana" steamed towards the "Yorktown," to give her battle. When within easy distance the "Louisiana" engaged her pretty sharply with her little Dahlgren howitzer, which was mounted on the forecastle deck. The captain of this particular gun was regarded as one of the crack shots in the navy, if not the best at the time.

An amusing scene occurred during the advance toward the enemy. Only one gun being engaged, Mr. Hollis proposed to the other officers, that they should all form in a line on the hurricane deck to see if they could stand the enemy's shot and shell without dodging or ducking. The old "Yorktown" was sending the shot and shell pretty lively, and although some fell short, as she closed in they came over the deck in close proximity, but not a man ducked. Suddenly a shell burst

close under the port bow, and deluged the gun's crew with a perfect shower bath. This caused one of the officers to jump down, on the main deck, and hasten towards the gun, being now rapidly handled, and it was allowed by all that he had ducked. But there was no more time for that kind of fooling however, and they engaged the enemy with all the guns that could be brought to bear. The "Louisiana" exchanged a number of shots with the "Yorktown," striking her hull several times when, finally, the latter hauled out of range.

After doing some police duty in the various rivers in the neighborhood and looking sharp after any stray craft that might be fitting out for fight, or for plunder, she was ordered to Chincateague sound. They encountered heavy weather during the passage, but arrived safe without any incident whatever.

Just off the mouth of the sound, about a mile away, was espied a suspicious looking schooner bearing directly for the inlet to the sound, and Commander Murray immediately gave chase to her. She had every rag set that could draw, and kept as close in shore as she possibly could without running aground. The "Louisiana" was gaining on her very fast, and the commander ordered the pivot gun cleared away for action on the forecastle deck. The gun was trained on the schooner, and a shot was fired across her bows for her to heave

to. But she kept on, and paid no attention to it, and her speed seemed to increase. "Give it to her, boys," said the commander, and they opened fire on her with the long thirty-two pounder. So eager was the captain to wing her that he ran too closely in shore, and the next he knew the "Louisiana" was hard and fast aground, and the prize so nearly in his grasp, as he thought, sailed saucily away, while the Louisiana remained for several days stuck in the mud. The captain was eventually compelled to send to Baltimore for wreckers to come down with tackle and get them out of their scrape. While in this situation Commander Murray ordered out a boat expedition to chase, and if possible to destroy the vessel they had been in pursuit of. She lay four or five miles away from their position, having come to an anchor pretty near the shore, which was bounded by a rail fence, lined with bushes and reeds. The attacking party were ordered to divide, one portion to go outside, and the other between the vessel and the shore. The boats lay alongside, fully manned, and only waiting for orders from the officer in command. Soon the order came, "Give way, men," and the oars flashed in in the sunlight as they emerged from the water under the sharp, quick strokes of the crew. The inshore party had the lead, and were nearing the schooner at every stroke of their oars, when suddenly, from the bushes and reeds lining the shore, came a volley of

musketry, followed by another from the rebs lying in ambush. "Oars," came the command. "Toss," was the next order, and the crew quickly laid in their oars, grasped their arms, and gave the rebs an answering volley from their Sharpe's rifles. The firing became hot on both sides, and the schooner also opened fire on the other boat with grape and canister from a smooth bore that had before been hidden from view by the bunt of the mainsail. The rebs had the advantage, however, and after some sharp fighting on both sides, the boats sullenly backed water, firing as they retreated from the dangerous ambush. Hooker, one of the officers in command of the inshore party, was the only one seriously wounded, a shot passing through his lungs, making a hole right through him.

After exchanging a few more shots, the boats all hauled out of range and returned to the gun-boat, and the vessel escaped up the river shortly afterwards. On the return to the gun-boat, master's mate Hollis extended a hand to help Mr. Hooker up the side, when he exclaimed: "Oh, help some one that needs it more than I do; I'm all right." Mr. Hooker recovered from his injury and returned to the "Louisiana" a few months after. It was several days after the arrival of the wreckers before the "Louisiana" was extricated from her situation in the mud. As soon as she was, she steamed up to the island and came to an anchor. The

island was overrun with bushwhackers, but in a few days after the steamer arrived, Commander Murray had things put in order, and gave permission to open trade. When the first vessel arrived from Philadelphia she brought some barrels of rum for Mrs. Adams, who kept the only public house at that time on the island, and it was not long before the population became aware of the arrival of the spirits, for in a day or two they came into town with all sorts of vessels to hold the liquor. From the position held by the "Louisiana" all that took place at the landing could be distinctly observed by the officers and crew. A jolly time began when the first barrel was tapped, but it was not long before all who had partaken of the contents were to be seen with their hands on their stomachs vomiting and retching dreadfully. Word went forth that the Yankees had poisoned the rum. The scene on shore was indescribably funny. Mr. Bradley, the "Louisiana's" surgeon, was sent for in hot haste. Upon investigating the matter it turned out that the crew of the schooner, during her passage from Philadelphia, had rifled the barrel of half its contents and made the deficiency good, or rather, bad, by additions of salt water, hence the trouble.

In a few days orders came for the "Louisiana" to proceed to Baltimore to refit for the Burnside expedition. Arriving there, she took in a heavier battery, then

steamed for Fortress Monroe, where she joined the fleet destined for the expedition. They encountered a heavy storm off Hatteras Inlet, and the scene there beggars description. There were about one hundred vessels at the rendezvous in the inlet, some of which were lying at anchor over the bar. Steamers ran afoul of each other for want of room; others dragged their anchors and were at the mercy of the winds and waves. The "Eastern Queen" was driven on shore by the fury of the gale. The elegant steamer "New York" stranded on the beach and went to pieces. The gunboat "Zouvae" went down and was a total loss. The "Pocahontas" was beached some miles north of Hatteras light. The soldiers and sailors suffered greatly for want of fresh water and food. But all through this mighty war of the elements, General Burnside, the leader of the seemingly doomed expedition, was outwardly calm, though there must have been a terrible storm raging within the bosom of that brave man as his quick eye took in the terrible situation of his followers and the apparently doomed vessels. It is said that he seemed to be in all places where most needed, and his sharp, quick orders to the officers brought safety out of what seemed utter chaos. It is only necessary now to say that the "Louisiana" followed the fortunes of the ex-

pedition and took part in the battles of New Berne, Roanoke and Elizabeth City.

At the battle of Roanoke Island she received a ninety-pound shot from the enemy's battery, which struck her port bow just above the water line, crushing its way through her half-inch iron sides into the chain locker, cutting and twisting into all manner of shapes a coil of chain cable which was coiled up in the locker, then continuing its course through the bulkhead, cut off two large stanchions, traversed the length of the berth deck through the bulkhead, aft, passed over the magazine, cutting away two more stanchions, and finally lodged and burst in the coal-bunker aft. The hatches were battened down at the time, the steamer being in fighting trim, though not taking any active part in the engagement. Several of the crew were sitting on the hatches when the shell burst in the bunker. It forced the hatches off and spilled the men in all directions upon the deck. For a moment the magazine was thought to have been blown up, but as the startled seamen came to their senses and discovered the cause, their fears were turned to laughter, so accustomed does one become to danger at such times.

A detailed account of the part that the "Louisiana" took in the capture of Elizabeth City, may be of interest to the reader. The Sunday morning preceding the attack, Commodore Lynch, the flag-officer of the rebel

fleet, left his steamer, leaving word that if he did not return, his men were to fight as long as possible, and in the event of probable capture, destroy the steamer so it should not fall into the hands of the Union forces. Nothing being seen of him after that, it was supposed that he went up the canal in a steamer which left that evening, and the rebel prisoners were loud in their denunciation of him. His naval cocked hat, trimmed with much gold lace, Mr. Hollis says, he saw aboard the gun-boat "Lockwood," and the crew were taking particular pains in drying and pressing it—for it had by some chance got wet—in anticipation of his calling for it at some future day. Monday morning at about seven o'clock, the "Louisiana" got under way with the rest of the steamers of various kinds, and soon came in sight of the fleet, consisting of a dozen of other steamers, but could distinguish no batteries up the river. A schooner was observed on the right hand shore, but no attention was paid to her at the time. About 8.30 o'clock the rebel steamers opened fire on the Yankee fleet, and in a few minutes after, a battery of four guns, on the left bank, heretofore concealed, opened on our fleet, as also did the schooner just referred to. She mounted four guns and used them right smartly. The battery was erected on a small point of land, and was hidden from view by a clump of trees until the fleet was within range, when suddenly,



they opened a scathing fire on them. Shot and shell were making music around, and the chances appeared that the fleet were to experience a much warmer reception than was anticipated, but they went right ahead. The Union vessels were so crowded together that it was not only a difficult matter for them to fire clear of each other, but in addition, the crowding made them an excellent target for the rebel gunners. Their firing was none of the best, however, and although many of their shots and shells passed over and around, the "Louisiana" was not struck. The river at the point before mentioned, was not more than three hundred or four hundred yards wide, and one may easily imagine what a jam the fleet was in; indeed, so mixed were the Union forces with the rebel fleet that one could hardly distinguish friend from foe. Fifteen minutes after the first gun was fired, the action became general. Wherever a rebel steamer showed up out of the smoke, that hung like a pall over all alike, there our gunners sent in their compliments of shot, grape, and cannister. In less than one hour this heated contest was over, leaving our forces master of the river. The schooner on the right, that had proved herself no mean contestant, was fired by her crew, before abandoning her, as was also the steamer "Fanny." The "Forrest," and the steamer "Ellis" were captured. The "Appomattox," the "Raleigh,"

and the "Beaufort" escaped by the canal. After the engagement, some of our gun-boats steamed up to the city, which was situated only a short distance up the river, and those who went on shore were much pleased with its appearance. Several substantial edifices and three churches met their gaze on landing. The town was found to be nearly deserted by all its population, they having fled upon the near approach of the Union forces. But one white man came down to the wharf to meet the commodore, and he claimed that he was a minister and a loyal man. The contrabands were around as usual, and came forth from every conceivable hiding place, as the "Louisiana" made fast to the wharf, and greeted the officers and crew with frequent ejaculations, as they landed.

"De Yanks am come ; bress de Lord," one old negro exclaimed ; "git right down on yer knees, bred'ren, and bress de Almighty dat hab sent dese yer Yanks to deliber us out ob de bonds ob slabery." "Amen ! bress de Lord," came the response from his sable brethren. Then they danced and shouted and cut up all manner of antics, to the unbounded delight of the crew of the "Louisiana," who entered into the spirit of the occasion and joined fervently in the "amen."

From street to street, through the lanes and the by-ways, the soldiers and sailors hurried in quest of forage, while the contrabands were only too eager to put

them on the right track to plunder that which had been hidden by their late masters before their flight. In this way many articles of value, without doubt found their way into the pockets of those seeking for such. Quantities of fresh beef, pork and flour, which the rebels had left in their flight, were found. It was an amusing sight to see the crew come over the side of the gun-boat on their return, some with huge bags of flour on their shoulders. At the close of their labors each might have been very appropriately called "The flour of the navy." It was sad to contemplate the many families leaving their homes, to suffer privation, starvation, and possibly even death in some instances, in their infatuation to follow the fortunes of the confederacy, rather than to remain and be under any restraint from the hated Yankees. A rebel midshipman who was wounded during the action died on board one of our steamers and was buried on shore. A flag of truce came down the river a short time afterwards, the bearers of which came in search of his remains. A rebel captain was also killed, and another rebel was literally blown to pieces by the premature discharge of one of the guns.

February 13, the "Louisiana" steamed up the sound in company with the gun-boats "Underwriter," "Lockwood," and "Perry." During the night they captured a schooner laden with corn; then continuing their course they arrived early in the morning at Edenton,

a beautiful place containing very many fine houses with the grounds tastefully laid out. At first only the contrabands came down to the wharf to greet them, but soon quite a number of the white population came and received them kindly. A vessel intended for a gun-boat was on the ways in the ship yard, left by the rebels, and she was destroyed. The crew soon started a lively trade in eggs and poultry, exchanging in barter, tobacco and cast-off blue flannel shirts. One gentleman, whose former residence was in Philadelphia, was very anxious to get north, and Mr. Hollis agreed to take him in his mess, with the consent of the captain, which was easily obtained, and for the time being he became one of the family.

The contrabands came around in their canoes in swarms, and in every imaginable way manifested their joy at the arrival of the Yankees among them. There was not much pleasure in strolling about the town, for only deserted houses and ruins of pleasant homes met the eyes.

The contrabands had taken possession of many of the houses in the absence of their masters, and already some of the most intelligent ones had begun to put on airs at their surroundings. Such is life.

Edenton is the capital of Chowan County, North Carolina. It is on an inlet or bay that opens into Albemarle Sound, and had a population of about one thou-

sand before the war. The water of the sound is of a tawny yellow, and has a very peculiar appearance in the light of the sun. The water at Elizabeth City was of a fine claret color. It is known as the famous juniper water, which flows from the Dismal Swamp, and is said to be the finest water in the world. Many whaling ships, and other vessels starting upon long voyages, are glad to procure this water, and come long distances in order to obtain it, as it will keep an indefinite time and retain its sweetness.

After a short stay in Edenton, the "Louisiana," in company with the other gun-boats, steamed away, direct for Little Washington, and arrived there without any incident worthy of mention. The rebs evacuated the town on the approach of our forces, thereby saving much bloodshed. The gun-boats bobbed over the piles driven into the bed of the river by the rebs, (the tops of these piles were about three feet under the surface of the water, and were intended to impede the progress of the Union fleet up the river,) and then steamed up abreast of the town. The "Louisiana" moored with her bow fast to the long bridge, extending from the town side to the woods opposite. The contrabands flocked in crowds to the wharf opposite the gun-boats, and with exclamations of delight warmly greeted the officers and crews. Clapping hands, they danced and whirled each other round and round on the

wharf, keeping time all the while to half a hundred musical but untrained voices as they sang their negro melodies. It appeared as if they would go wild with joy; they could not contain their feelings apparently. At times, several of them would dart out from the main throng and rush down to the edge of the wharf and shout themselves hoarse, uttering all manner of expressions, most prominent of which would be heard "Bress yer out dar! Glory to God! We's free, amen!" Then after gesticulating wildly for a few moments they would rush excitedly back and join again in the dance.

Meanwhile on board the "Louisiana," despite the discipline of the ship, the crew left off work and crowded to the rail on the port side and mingled their ejaculations with those of the contrabands. Altogether it was an indescribably funny scene, and baffles any power of description. A few whites could be seen mixed among the contrabands, and more were seen in the main street of the town. Calling away the gig and the second cutter, also the launch, with a crew to man her, Commander Murray proceeded to land at one of the wharves. He was met with every expression of pleasure, while tears flowed down the cheeks of the dusky sons and daughters of Ham in the fulness of their joy. A few of the whites came forward and shook hands with Mr. Murray, and expressed themselves as being very happy to witness

the old flag once again waving in Washington, and vowed themselves true Union men. Commander Murray led the way to the main street, followed by the negroes and what few whites there were. In the meantime other boats had arrived, and the soldiers landed and took formal possession of the place. Thus Little Washington was once again wearing the appearance of being inhabited by a lively and thrifty people. Upon evacuating the town, the rebels had set fire to and destroyed some few buildings which contained stores. They also destroyed a great quantity of tar and turpentine. The town showed evidence of the rebels' hasty departure, for numerous articles lay around, all of which the contrabands had not gathered in, but upon seeing the soldiers and sailors picking them up, they too went to work, and very soon not so much as even an old shoe could be found. Fires were still smouldering in different parts of the town and among the tar barrels on the whaves. The rebels had endeavored to destroy the bridge by placing barrels of tar the whole length of the structure and setting them on fire, but in their extreme haste to leave the place they were not particular enough in touching the torch, consequently they were too far apart and did not readily ignite one with the other. They were all extinguished by the loyal North Carolina men assisted by the contrabands. The smoke from the burning tar and pitch penetrated

every nook and corner, and the odor from the same impregnated every open house in the town. Dr. Bradly observed that the smell of tar was very healthful and was used sometimes in fumigating hospitals. One of the officers replied that they ought to be a very healthy lot then for the next six months from the amount of tar smoke they had all inhaled.

A number of prominent rebels' houses were visited, but everything of value had been taken away, and what remained had been so nearly destroyed as to be unfit for the Yankees to use, even had they wished to do so. The day was nearly used up in looking over the town and putting things to rights. The following day and many others were devoted to removing the obstructions in the river, consisting of schooners, etc., laden with stones and sunk in a row across the channel. Ah, me, useless work on the part of the Johnnies, for who ever knew of a blockade of any description that could for any great length of time impede our enterprising Yankees? For thorough go-aheads they are more than the equal of any nation upon the face of the globe.



## CHAPTER VI.

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### OUR FIRST DAY ON THE LOUISIANA.

I AWOKE next morning before it was time for the boatswain's mate to pipe the crew on deck, and lying in my hammock, viewed the situation. The hammocks were hung very closely together, so closely in fact, that when one occupant in the middle, or between two other hammocks, got out, the hammock would close up like a jack knife, from the pressure of the neighboring hammocks. Away forward I could distinguish the daylight shining down the open hatchway. On the port and starboard sides the mess chest and hard-tack bags were placed, with intervals between. I appeared to be the only one awake on the berth deck. All was quiet except the tread of the man on the look-out, on the upper deck, and the hard breathing, with snoring at times from the crew around me. I felt a delicious sense of relief pervade my system as I lay in the hammock. I thought of my home, so far away, and called to mind the familiar faces as I last saw them on my departure, and hoped in my heart that I should be spared to meet them all again. My thoughts were

rudely intruded upon by the shrill whistle of the boatswain's mate, piping the crew with their hammocks on deck. In a twinkling the berth deck was alive with a hundred human beings, all busily intent upon dressing and lashing up their hammocks, preparatory to conveying them on the hurricane deck, to stow them in the netting. At the first note of the pipe I worked myself out of the hammock, for as I have said before, they were swung very near together, and hastily dressing myself, I showed my new mess-mates that I was no greenhorn, as far as lashing a hammock was concerned, and I noticed that Tom was not far behind, either. Tom and I were not the last to get our hammocks in the netting, by a long shot.

The morning was beautiful, and the sky was clear, the rays of the sun were just showing in the eastern horizon, and we all turned to, to take in the boarding netting, which was put up every night to impede the enemy, in case they attacked us while we slept. After stowing the netting, we were kept busy for another hour washing the decks, coiling the ropes beside the guns, replacing sponges, rammers and handspikes, and otherwise making the gun-boat look orderly and respectable. I soon got the hang of things on board, and before the breakfast call, I was up in all but drilling. As for the different calls I understood them quite as well as some of the older hands on board.

Partaking of our first breakfast on board the "Louisiana" we necessarily had to undergo considerable chaffing from the crew, they thinking, no doubt, that because we were fresh from home, they could use us with impunity, and chaff us to their hearts content, without any retaliation on our part; but they found out their mistake, for they could not hold a candle to some of the new draft, who were up to all the tricks, and had seen more life aboard ship, than usually falls to the lot of new recruits but three months out. Breakfast being over we were called to muster—the new draft—on the deck with our clothes bags. Arriving there we were ordered to form in line on the starboard side of the gunboat and loosen the mouths of the bags so that the contents could be examined by an officer going the rounds for that purpose. Of course our clothes were not in the neatest condition, but then they would compare favorably with those of the "Louisiana's" crew, and but few of us needed new. Those who did were informed by the officer that they could draw on the ship for what they needed. Finally our bags were set on one side, and we were assigned our places on the ship and at the guns. This being done, I told Tom that I considered myself out of the draft, and instead, one of the regular crew of the United States gun-boat "Louisiana."

That the reader may have some idea of what the

duties are on board a gun-boat, I will give them a general synopsis of the duties and stations, leaving out what the reader already knows. In the first place each gun is manned by a double set of men ; nine men in all. There are a first and second captain, two men at the sponge and rammer on the heaviest guns, first and second shotman, first and second hand-spikeman, and last, but not least, the powder-monkey. Then there is the fire drill ; each man has his appointed station ; the pumpman, breakman, hoseman, bellman and men with fire buckets. There is a captain of the top, a captain of the hold, and a captain of the gig, coxswain, etc. Besides the drill at the heavy guns, we were made to drill with small arms, Sharpe's rifles, the cutlass drill, and drill at short sticks. Men were told off to board and repel an imaginary enemy. During this interesting drill, the crew are called to quarters armed with cutlasses, boarding pikes and hand grenades. The boarding netting is let down and made fast to the gunwale of the boat completely encircling the ship with a net-work of ropes nearly six feet high ; behind this netting the crew dispose themselves with cutlasses and pikes. With these weapons they make thrusts at the imaginary enemy, who is supposed to be trying to climb over the side of the ship. For the first week after our arrival we were kept busy at these different drills twice each day, or until we had become proficient

in all. After that we drilled twice a week, and sometimes only once a week were we called upon to drill.

We had been on board the "Louisiana" now two weeks. I had written several letters home and to my friends, and was anxiously expecting a reply to some of them. What with drilling and sewing—yes, sewing, for I had bought some blue flannel, running into debt to the ship for it, of course, and Mr. Quinn, the boatswain, instructed me how to cut and make up a sailor's shirt—there was a deal of work for our men on shore. Several of our crew could use carpenters' tools with advantage, and these with the carpenter's mate, Mr. Kelley, went on shore every day to work. Mr. Mills, the carpenter, had the oversight of all work being done in that line. I was expecting him to put me in the gang, as it was known on board that I was a wheel-wright. We received news from Chesapeake Bay of the attack on the "Cumberland," the "Minnesota," and the "Congress," and the sinking of the first-mentioned vessel, with the loss of part of her crew, with sorrow, and regret that we could not have been present to take a part in the action. But when it came to the little "Monitor" coming up the river and whipping the "Merrimac," I could hardly restrain myself from giving vent to my feelings in cheers. The army of the Potomac, too, was dealing death-blows to the confederacy, and musingly I thought we were playing a rather insignifi-

cant part in the great drama, and spoke my thoughts freely to Tom, who was busily engaged in learning to tie a bowline while seated on the deck beside me.

“Just you hold on, Steve; we will see fighting enough yet. Why! didn’t Commander Renshaw say only the other day, that we must prepare for an attack either by land or water, which was likely to take place any day? And didn’t he say that they were building a ram up at Greenville! I shouldn’t wonder if we were sent up the river soon on a reconnoissance.”

“Well, Tom, I want to be counted in that expedition, if Renshaw concludes to send one, and sees the necessity for so doing.”

“And I am with ye, Steve, for I do want to see some fun, let it be fighting, or otherwise,” said Tom, and he threw his ropes on one side on the deck, and spread himself for a nap.

I was buisily sewing away on my garment, a few minutes after this conversation, when there came a cry from forward that made my heart leap into my throat, so to speak: “The mail boat! the mail boat!” Quickly putting my work on one side, I sprang to my feet, and rushed forward to see for myself. Yes, there she was sure enough, just off Rodman point, at the lower end of the town. We watched her as she slowly steamed towards us and the wharf, and I thought

of the precious sealed envelopes in her mail bags, that were to lighten many hearts on the "Louisiana," and I counted myself in for a share of the news concealed therein. In few minutes she was up with the wharf and was making fast. Tom, who had now joined the throng of sailors on the forecastle deck, seemed to be the most excited individual in the crowd, although I could hardly restrain my own feelings, as Tom shouted out, "Hurrah, boys! here she comes walking right up to the wharf as if she were a living creature. If I don't have a letter this time, I shall burst, I know I shall."

We all laughed at Tom's funny speech, and more funny sayings, for it had come to be pretty well understood on board by the crew, that when they wanted a little harmless fun all they had to do was to get Tom started, and from the quietest of sailor boys, we became in a few moments the most uproarious ones, and only ceased our sport when the officer of the deck sent an order for us to, "Cease that racket forward." We chose the time for such fun when Commander Renshaw, and our executive officer, Mr. Westervelt, were on shore, and the master's mate, McKeever, or some other officer was in command, as the officers, as a general thing, liked to see a little fun going on among us, as it tended to relieve the monotony of life on board ship, and they would wink at it, until we became so noisy that it was necessary for man-of-

war discipline to put a stop to it, which would be most effectually done by a few soft notes from the boatswain's silver whistle.

Just before the mail boat made fast to the wharf with her stern line, the boatswain's mate piped the dingy to go and fetch the mail, if any, and as we heard the welcome sound, "Away the dingy, away!" we resumed our sewing contentedly on the main deck, while waiting for the return of the dingy with the mail. We had not more than seated ourselves at our work, when the cry of "Fire, fire!" rang out across the water, bringing to his feet every man on the deck of the "Louisiana," and a rush was made for the side to see from whence the cry arose. The mail-boat was on fire, and the boatswain's mate piped away the first and second cutters. The crews sprang to their stations and the boats were soon under way to render what assistance they could. We bent to our oars with a will and soon ran alongside of the burning steamer, and boarded her. The fire was in the forward part of the mail-boat, and her crew were already at work getting out what they could. Some of the "Louisiana's" men rushed down into the cabin to assist them, while others, who remained on deck, took the articles or packages handed to them, and passed them over the side to the soldiers and contrabands on the wharf. Things were getting hot below when some one sang out, "Here



you go," and began passing up bottles of whiskey. The bottles were so hot that it was impossible to hold them more than a second without changing them from hand to hand. The boys would grab the bottles, pass them from one hand to the other and try to get a drink. When they did get a drink, it was so hot they would just spit it out again and pass the bottle to the next man, and so to the soldiers on the wharf where it would instantly disappear, probably under some soldier's coat to get cool. I managed to get hold of one bottle. Great Christopher! how hot it was. But I was bound to sample it, and I did. It was the hottest whiskey straight that I ever put into my mouth. The steamer was on fire inside, and so was I for a few minutes. I managed to pass a couple of bottles to a soldier on the the wharf, who promised to keep them—and he did. At such times even your friends go back on you.

The fire was soon extinguished in the cabin. It was intensely hot on deck, and there was danger of the two cannons on the forward deck becoming heated, and the Lord only knew which way they were pointing. There were about one hundred soldiers gathered on the wharf and some fifty contrabands, and the noise they made almost drowned the roaring and crackling of the flames and the orders of our officers on the burning steamer. In the meantime, some one had procured augers from

the ship yard close by and were boring holes into her to flood her.

“Lively, boys, lively ; get out what you can handy, and leave the rest. Follow me, some of you, we must try to get those guns on shore,” said the lieutenant.

Tom and I, with several others, made a rush forward after the lieutenant, but we had not gone but a few steps in the direction of the guns when we were driven back by the fierce flames and the suffocating smoke.

“No use, boys, we cannot save anything forward.” As the lieutenant uttered these words, bang, bang ! went the two cannons, and the shell with which they were loaded burst in close proximity to the gun-boat “Louisiana.” Suddenly there came a cry from the soldiers and contrabands on the wharf: “She has ammunition on board,” whereupon we all made a rush for the wharf. Ben Gibson and Joe Reynolds clambered down the side into the boats alongside and shoved them clear from the burning steamer, then bent to the oars with a will to put distance between themselves and the burning boat. The rest of us, soldiers and sailors, rushed to the side and sprang on to the wharf ; then soldiers, sailors and contrabands joined in a race to see who could reach first the main street and the cover of the intervening buildings before the expected explosion took place. But the men with the augers had performed their work faithfully in the little

time at their disposal, and the steamer when we ran from her had already begun to settle, and by the time we reached cover and looked back, she, with a last effort, threw up a myriad of sparks in a dense, dark smoke; then with a hissing and sputtering she sank to her gunwales, thereby precluding any possibility of an explosion. It had been very exciting, and I did not realize how tired I was until the steamer's hull had disappeared beneath the water. I did not forget the event for many a day, and it is impressed on my memory to this hour, especially the hot whiskey. The mail bags were saved and that was a cause of great rejoicing among us.

Mr. Westervelt waited until our mail was sorted from the rest, then all proceeded to the wharf, where we found Gibson, Reynolds and Jimmy Wilkinson with the boats. We stepped in, shoved off, and in a few moments were on board the gun-boat, and the crew were called aft to receive their letters. I listened for my name to be called, but name after name was read over and yet mine was omitted. Hope sank within me in the same proportion as the pile of letters in the lieutenant's hands dwindled.

Tom's name was called, and he stepped forward to receive his letter. As he passed me on his return he said, "From home, Steve; see the Providence

postmark," holding the letter. At last, when but two letters remained in the hands of the lieutenant, he held them up in a tantalizing way before our faces, and then with a cheery smile called out my name. I quickly squeezed through the crowd to obtain them. After this I went directly over to the starboard side and seated myself on the long thirty-two gun and opened them. One was from home; the other from Swansea, Mass., from a friend there. Disposing of the one from my Swansea friend first, I then turned my attention to the one from home.

The very first line made me reel and feel sick: "Lizzie passed quietly away on the ——. She spoke of you and Phil before she died, and hoped to meet you both in heaven." Dear little Lizzie; I never more should see her radiant face on earth. Tom told the boys of my sorrow, and they respected it by letting me alone until I could command my feelings. I could hardly bring myself to realize that she was dead. I could only think of her as I saw her last. The sad news unsettled me for a number of days. But time heals all wounds, and though I have never forgotten Lizzie, I can think of her only as being absent at some future time to return. So hard is it to realize the death of a loved one, especially when one is absent from the family circle. Thinking of it I did not get

any sleep that night until long after eight bells had struck in the midnight watch, but finally tired nature succumbed and I sank into a troubled sort of sleep.

## CHAPTER VII.

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### OUR FIRST LIBERTY DAY IN LITTLE WASHINGTON.

**W**E had been so busily employed since our arrival on board the "Louisiana," that we had not had a day's liberty on shore, and I, for one, was just longing for a walk on dry land once more, to take in the town, and also become acquainted with the Buffaloes' daughters, as the boys had informed us that there were some fine-looking girls in the town, and that a man could travel a day and not find elsewhere such handsome forms and faces. So when we turned out, the morning after the fire, I made the proposition to Tom that we should ask the lieutenant for a day's liberty. "I agree," said Tom; "and we will ask some of the crew to go along with us," he added.

After the decks had been washed down, and our breakfast had been disposed of, Tom and I proceeded aft to seek permission to go on shore. We found Mr. Westervelt, the executive officer, pacing the deck athwart ship just inside the fire-rail. Commander Richard Renshaw and Lieutenant Westervelt had taken

the places of Commander Murray and Furness just before we joined the vessel. I approached him and touching my cap, asked if we could be allowed a day on shore. The lieutenant stopped a moment; then turning towards us, smilingly gave his consent, but immediately added, "You had better have one or two of the older hands that are acquainted in the town go along and show you how to get round; and perhaps," he added, "to keep you out of mischief."

"Aye, aye, sir," I answered, "Joe Reynolds and Ben Gibson are going to-day."

"Well, they will probably show you all there is worth seeing," said the lieutenant, as he resumed his walk, while Tom and I went forward to dress in our best suits, duck pants and white shirts.

At two bells (nine o'clock) the dingy was hauled alongside and the liberty men boarded her and were rowed by the dingy man, the man whose turn it was in the boat, to the wharf opposite the "Louisiana." Upon landing we proceeded up the hill to Main street. Then we stopped to take our bearings, and to consult which way it was best to steer first.

"Let's go down town first," said Joe.

"What do you say to it, boys?" said Gibson, turning and addressing Tom and me.

"Oh, it is immaterial to me which way we proceed

first, so long as we take in all the places that are of interest," said I.

"Where-away is the fort situated?" asked Tom.

"Oh, that's at the upper end of the town. We go straight up this street and then turn to the right to get there. It's only a short distance, just on the outskirts of the town," said Joe. "If it's agreed we'll go there first."

As there did not seem to be any dissenting voice, we turned our steps towards the fort.

Little Washington is the capital of Beaufort county. It is on the north bank of the Tar or Pamlico river, about twenty-five miles south-west of Jamesville, and about forty miles north of New Berne. It is about one hundred and thirty miles distant from Raleigh. Tar river, in the channel to Little Washington, accommodates vessels drawing eight feet of water. There is one court house, several churches, and a newspaper office in the town, and before the war it had a population of about 2,000 inhabitants. On each side of the streets rows of elm trees flourish, the tops of which twine and intertwine with each other, forming an arch overhead, so that when one is coming up the river, it is difficult to distinguish houses on account of their density. Especially is this the case in the summer when the trees are loaded with foliage. Passing up the main street, we encountered quite a number of



soldiers, and sailors from the different gun-boats in the harbor, all seemingly intent on enjoying themselves. We stopped at the bridge leading across Tar river to the opposite shore, where one company of loyal North Carolinians was stationed to guard the bridge on the town side. They were called Buffaloes by the boys, but just why, they could not satisfactorily explain to me. They were a fine looking body of men, and as brave as they looked, Joe informed us. Gibson and Reynolds seemed to be on the best of terms with some of them, and introduced Tom and me. If there was to be a reconnoissance at any time into the enemy's lines, these men, Reynolds informed us, were always chosen to accompany the expedition, as they were well acquainted with the country round about, and were always reliable informants. They were very sociable and inclined to talk. Most of them had families, some of whom resided in the town. There were a few unmarried men also in the company, and I noticed several who appeared to be mere boys, carrying muskets. They were brave little fellows, and their courage, as well as that of the older ones, had been tested many times, and they were never found wanting where danger threatened. Many of these brave men had families residing outside the lines, yet they faced every danger, and some were even killed in their attempts to visit them. When they wished to see their wives and

children, two or more of them would apply at headquarters for a furlough, wait until night set in, then start outside the lines and make their way across the country in the direction of their homes. When they arrived at the house of one of their number, he would go inside, and stay with his family a day or two, while the others would keep watch on the outside. If danger threatened, they would silently warn the man inside and then separate and reconnoitre. If there were too many of the rebs for them to risk an encounter, they would creep away for a short distance from the house, and lie in wait until the rebs took their departure, when they would stealthily return to the house and the soldier would be in the bosom of his family again. But on the other hand, if there were only a half-a-dozen of the rebs, or bushwackers, lurking around, there would be one or two less guerrillas in that section of the country, if the Buffaloes could by any means bring it about, by either capturing or killing them. The farmer bushwackers were in the habit of visiting the houses of these loyal men in the hopes of catching them napping, and if they did their furlough would be a long one. After a day or two spent thus with their families, they would take up their line of march and proceed to the home of the next one in the party residing nearest, where the same operation would be repeated, and so on, till they had all paid a visit to their homes.

Great danger attended them in these visits, and they were very careful not to leave any trace behind them to enable it to become known to the rebels, because of the danger and the persecution to their families, if the latter became aware that the loyal men had been harbored by them. I questioned one of them as to why he did not move his family into the town where they would be assured of the protection of Uncle Sam.

“God bless ye,” said he, “we uns ain’t got no horses and wagons to tote our belongings, and besides, if we leave our families where they are, they can, in a measure, protect our homes, and save the houses over their heads, if nothing more. The rebs ain’t hard on the wimmen folks only where they spe’cs them of hiding we uns. A good many of these same rebels were near neighbors once, and were peaceful and quiet ones, but they think we uns have deserted our country, as they call it, meaning the south, and are fighting on the wrong side when we open for the Union, hence their hatred of us and all our belongings.”

“You never had any doubt, I suppose, of the final ending of this war, in regard to which side will eventually win?” I asked.

“Never, sir, never; and if I thought the rebels would win, which I think they cannot, I would fight for the Union all the same. That flag up there,” pointing to the glorious old stars and stripes that were plainly dis-

cernible from where we stood, floating out on the flag-staff in the fort, "must never be trailed in the dust to give place to that rag the rebels call the stars and bars."

I endorsed his sentiments, and told him I was with him hand and heart for the Union and our country inseparable. After chatting awhile with others of the company, we resumed our walk up Main street. At the corner of Main and the street leading up to the fort, we fell in with some of the crew of the "Commodore Hull," and upon our invitation they joined us, for as Tom said, the more the merrier. Arriving at the fort, we found a soldier on guard at the gate, who told us to pass in and look around. The fort was a very large earth-work built at the right hand side of the road, and commanding all the approaches. A block house was standing just beyond the fort, and it looked funny enough, set up on piles about six feet high, with a flight of steps leading up to it. We spent an hour or two inside the fort; then, upon the proposal of Joe Reynolds, we set out to visit the Third New York Cavalry. We passed a number of the feminine gender on our way, some of whom were quite pretty and lady-like, and who also did not hesitate to return a smile or nod to a salutation from Joe, or Ben Gibson, while there were others who had a decided preference for the middle of the street, thereby giving us a most decided cut, but not to our chagrin, however, for we were perfectly will-

ing they should have the middle of the street if they chose. The sidewalk was good enough for us. Tom and the rest of us watched the girls describe a circle, in order to come out some distance above, and when they were right abreast of us, Tom uttered one of his funny sayings, while watching them daintily picking their way in the muddy street.

“Goodness gracious, boys! do you know what that makes me think of?”

“No; what does it make you think of, Tom?” asked Joe Reynolds.

“Why, it makes me think of an old maid I knew at home, who always walked on tiptoe around to the furthest corner of the room, if by chance she was left alone with a real live man,” and he gave us an imitation of how she did it, taking hold of his pants and edging on tiptoe around us.

“Ha! ha! ha!” we all laughed at the funny figure cut by Tom, and as he sidled up and down by us again, the girls found their tongues and berated us soundly in language not over choice nor very polite. I was shocked at their profanity, which I thought would ill besit a man. But Joe only poohed, and said I would soon get used to it. I vowed to myself I never should, and I was very careful after that not to provoke, by any act of mine, that which would tend to make any lady think ill of me or forget her sex so much in pass-

ing me on the street as to utter unkind or vituperous words. We reached the camp of the Third New York without any incident worthy of mention, except that Tom wanted to stop at one of the occupied houses and ask for a drink of water so that he could see the interior, as it was so long, he said, since he had seen the inside of a house that he had almost forgotten how one looked. So we waited on the street for him while he obtained the desired information. When he returned to us he said he was well treated at the house; they gave him a drink of water, "And only think," he added, "in a glass tumbler, too! and the lady of the house invited me to call again. You bet I accepted the invitation, and the very next time I come on shore on liberty I am going there to see her."

There were three companies of the Third New York Cavalry on detached service at Little Washington, and many were the raids made by them outside the town and lines. They were as fine a body of men as one could wish to see, and on liberty days we always made it a point to pay them a visit, for we were always welcome visitors at their camp fires, and we made it another point always to be stored with plenty of "navy plug" when visiting the shore. This was such tobacco as the soldiers could not get for money except through our management. The Third had nearly all the picket

duty to perform, but they were never known to grumble. Very often they were driven in by a larger force of Johnnies than their own, but they always made a stand and succeeded in leaving their marks behind them in the shape of sabre cuts or bullet holes from their carbines. This day they had just returned from a reconnaissance across the bridge, where they had encountered the rebel cavalry. The Third charged on them, putting them to flight and capturing five prisoners and fifteen horses. Belonging to one company of the Third was a boy only fifteen years of age. On horseback he was in his element, but on foot he was so short that he was unable to wield his sabre without its point coming in contact with the ground. The little fellow was in the habit of coming down to the wharf to practice the sabre drill, and it was very amusing to see him go through with it. He would climb upon one of the piles on the wharf, draw his sabre, and execute all the different cuts, guards and thrusts, while we on the "Louisiana" would applaud him. Like the lightning's flash the sabre, wielded by the little fellow's stout right arm, would describe a circle around the boy's head, and then coming to a present, he would return the sabre to its scabbard, jump down from off the pile, and walk proudly away with it clanging and dragging behind him.

We had a jolly good time with the boys, smoking,

playing euchre and telling stories, in which our experience with Paddy D'yle on the Guardo, and our subsequent trials in reaching Little Washington were related by Tom and myself with such gusto that the boys were highly pleased. Finally, we took our departure, promising to call again at the first opportunity.

"I say, boys, I'll tell you what we'll do now, if so be it that you'll agree to it," said Ben Gibson.

"What? what?"

"Let's hear."

"Drive ahead, Ben," and many other expressions followed.

"Well, some of you, of course," continued Ben, "know old Farmer John, or 'Guerrilla John,' as the crew of the 'Louisiana' persist in calling him, who lives just outside the lines beyond the fort?"

"Yes, yes," chorused several of the party.

"Well, we will pay him a visit and help ourselves to a chicken or two, for I am sure he can spare them as well as not. Then we will take them down to old Aunt Phebe, and get her to cook them for us, and we'll have a jolly feast."

"Yes, the chicken part is all good enough, but how are we to get them if 'Guerrilla John' is at home?" asked Joe. "You know," he continued, "there has been so many complaints made by him to Renshaw



about us, and to General Foster about the soldiers stealing, as he calls it—I call it foraging—his fowls, that there have been strict orders issued in regard to it, and if we get caught, why good day to liberty for three long months.”

“Well, but we are not going to be caught,” said Ben; “if we find the old duffer at home, we’ll buy a chicken or two of him. On the other hand, if he is off spying for the rebels to inform them how things are going on in the town—and I don’t think a bit better of him for it—why, we’ll help ourselves in spite of the old-old-why, his wife I mean, the old she guerrilla.”

“Ha! ha! ha!” We all laughed merrily at Ben’s way of putting it. After our merriment had somewhat subsided, we took notes and found that every man and boy in the party was ready for the adventure, and eager to set out; so choosing Ben Gibson for our leader, we turned in the direction of Guerrilla John’s plantation. We arrived there in due time, and stealing silently round to the rear of the house were just in time to see John disappear in the woods on the opposite side.

“Hist!” said Ben, who was in advance of us, “there goes the old cuss; he is off to commit some mischief, I’ll be bound.”

“Where is he?” whispered Tom, half rising from his stooping posture to get a sight of him.

“S-h-! let him get well away,” said Ben; “then

we'll over the fence and get some chickens in a twinkling."

We were all crouching down in the grass, among the underbrush, on the opposite side of the fence from the house, while the above consultation was carried on, but arose to our feet and made a rush for the fence at the word from Ben that it was all right, and said he, "What we do, we must do mighty quick, for if the old she critter comes out of the house there will be some tall shrieking, you bet."

In a moment we all stood in the yard; in the next made a rush for the hen-house, and in almost a shorter time than it takes to write it, we had secured half-a-dozen of the best looking chickens that were in the coop. Stopping their wind, we made hasty strides for the fence, which upon reaching we clambered over, and with Ben and Joe leading, we hurried away for Aunt Phebe's domain, hiding the chickens under our jackets to prevent them from being seen by any chance passer-by. We chose the most unfrequented road to reach Aunt Phebe's, and as good luck crowned our efforts, we met but two persons on our way thither; one an old lady and the other a contraband, neither of whom suspected what we were carrying under our jackets.

I shall never forget old Aunt Phebe, nor the pot-stews she so used to delight in making for us when it was our liberty day on shore. Let me endeavor to give

you a description of her as she appeared at that time. She was about as broad as long, short and dumppy, and had thick, fat hands, a broad face, large eyes, an extremely broad and flat nose, but withal a pleasant countenance, that was always wreathed in smiles; thick, woolly hair, which she wore in stubby curls all over her head. Her dress was short and made of tow cloth, and most of the time she was barefoot. There you have her as I saw her twenty-two years ago. Aunt Phebe's was our general rendezvous when on shore, where we were sure of getting something to supply the inner man, if it was not quite as palatable as we had been accustomed to get at home; yet we used to think then that her pot-stews were about the right thing. The Lord only knows what kind of meat she used at times, but once in a while a good fat chicken, that we were sure was fresh and good, found its way into the pot.

I can remember her standing in the doorway of her little tumble down shanty on that day, with her arms akimbo, watching us as we came through the little alley leading to her door, a broad grin illuminating her features; then her exclamation:

“Hi! hi! whar you git dem dar chicken's, honey?” as we passed by her, went in and threw the chickens upon the table; “Specs you been ober dar,” pointing with her stubby forefinger towards the line. We assured her we had been “ober dar,” and that we were

awfully hungry. She then began to bustle around to prepare us our dinner and we engaged to help her. We brought in the water and wood, and stumbled around the kitchen in everybody's way, and especially in Aunt Phebe's. One of the boys was carrying a pail of water when he bumped against her, and away went the water all over the kitchen floor, nearly knocking him over while he scarcely moved her. It was like striking a solid mass of India rubber to butt against old Aunt Phebe. She grabbed an old broom and made at us while we ducked and dodged about the room. Aunt Phebe could not stand much violent exercise, and we soon tired her out, when she threw herself down in one of the rickety old chairs in the room, and commenced fanning herself with her apron. As soon as she recovered her breath, she said :

“Now, look hyer, honeys, yer jest goes right off, and luff ole aunty 'lone, she can do heap better dan when she hab you 'roun' wid yer foolin'. Now, go g'long an come back when de dinner am done put on de table. Reckon ye feel kind 'o chicken-fied den ! Yah ! yah !” And the good old soul shook her fat sides, and got up and waddled away to attend to our dinner. We then made our way out into the main street to watch the fashions.

Old men, old women, yes, and some young women

were passing up and down the street. We stood on the corner of — and Main streets, near the Lafayette hotel, when a bevy of handsome girls passed along. One of them wore a poke bonnet, and all carried their noses at an elevation of forty-five degrees in the air. Tom remarked, as they were passing us, that they were the best looking lot that he had seen since leaving home. The one in the poke bonnet resented this remark, and deliberately turned back and confronted the audacious Tom, who suddenly put down his head towards her and it disappeared within the opening of the poke bonnet. A shout of laughter greeted him as he withdrew his head, in which some of the girls could not help joining. But Miss Poke, didn't she give Tom a dressing down? Guess she did, but I will not use the words here.

“Come, let's get out of this,” said Tom, “I'm satisfied,” and he beat a hasty retreat, while the rest of the party followed him more slowly. As it was getting along towards dinner time, we wended our way back to Aunt Phebe's, and upon arriving there, found her all ready for us. Without any compliments, we took seats at the table, and soon the chicken stew grew beautifully less, while we cracked many a joke at the expense of Tom and the poke bonnet.

The longest day has an ending and at four o'clock in

the afternoon we went down to the wharf, hailed the dingy boat to come for us, and take us on board the "Louisiana," tired, but feeling as if we had put in a good liberty day.

## CHAPTER VIII.

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### REBEL RAID ON LITTLE WASHINGTON.

**T**HE sixth day of September, 1862, dawned on Little Washington with a dense fog, so thick that the shore was not discernible from the deck of the "Louisiana." The current sluggishly rippled at the bow; all seemed quiet, with the exception of the quartermaster's tread on the upper deck; the crew were asleep below; not a sound could be heard from the shore to mar the stillness of the hour. The gun-boat "Picket" lay anchored above the bridge in the river, and, with the exception of the sentry's tread on shore, and outposts on picket, the soldiers were quietly sleeping. All nature seemed hushed, when suddenly, just at the break of day, and with hardly a moment's notice came the indescribable yell of the rebels mingled with the reports of musketry on shore. From peace and quiet the scene was changed in a moment to one of deadly strife. The soldiers grasped their arms and quickly formed in line of battle to meet they knew not what. The boatswain's mate's shrill whistle, as he piped all hands to general quarters, awoke the sailors

from their peaceful sleep, and soon all was bustle and preparation.

Into the town poured the rebels, and their demoniac yells as they charged up and down the main street could be heard far and near. The gun-boat "Picket" was the first to open fire as soon as her commander realized that the rebels were in the town, holding, as it seemed, undisputed sway, so suddenly and unexpectedly did they make their charge. The clashing of sabres, the sharp, quick reports of the muskets, and the trampling of the rebel horses could be heard distinctly by the crew of the "Louisiana," who were waiting patiently at their guns eager to join in the fray. The fog gradually lifted, and soon objects could be discerned on shore. Two or three companies of Massachusetts troops were in the barracks at the bridge. They could be seen pouring out of the doors to engage the foe. The Third New York Cavalry and the Buffaloes were fighting and charging the rebels, but with what effect we could not determine. The crew of the gun-boat "Picket" were serving their guns as fast as they could load and fire, when from some unexplained reason the boat suddenly blew up, and the mangled crew, such as were not killed outright, thrown into the river. A scene of dire confusion existed for a moment, then the order came from our captain to lower away the boats. The boatswain's mate piped the first and second cutters



away, and the crew sprang to their stations and put out from the "Louisiana" to pick up the survivors who were struggling in the water. As soon as all were taken up, the boats were rowed back to the gun-boat and the rescued men were taken on board and carried to the berth deck, where their wounds were attended to by our surgeon. The Johnnies had got the impression that it was the "Louisiana" which had blown up, and commenced shouting, "Little Washington is ours, Little Washington is ours; the 'Louisiana' has gone up." From behind trees and tree boxes our soldiers loaded and fired with a will. Charge after charge was made by the rebels to dislodge them. Twice they charged on one company, who had made a brave stand behind an old building on the wharf, formerly occupied by them as barracks, but they were repulsed every time with loss. As the fog lifted a little more we could distinguish friend from foe. The order now came from Commander Renshaw to commence firing. We opened fire at short range, from four guns loaded with grape and canister, and then the rebels realized their mistake in regard to the "Louisiana's" being blown up, while our shots made sad havoc in their ranks. Volley after volley the rebs poured in across our decks, and the "zip, zip" of the bullets were strange sounds to some of us. The "Louisiana" lay broadside on and commanded a full sweep of the street leading up from the

wharf to the main street, and when the rebels were dashing across this street we peppered them. The "Louisiana's" deck on the starboard and port sides was protected with cotton bales, so that the crew while serving their guns would be in a measure secure from the rebel bullets.

The rebels continued to charge up and down the main street, and when they came to the head of the street leading to the wharf, they would wheel and give us a volley, and at every charge made by them across this street we thinned their ranks with our grape and canister. The land force was too small to make much of a show against the rebel cavalry, but although few in number, they made a brave stand and also made it very warm for the Johnnies. The North Carolina troops fought like tigers. One, a boy only thirteen years of age, was seen behind a large elm tree to load and fire several times, and a squad of rebels charged on him to dislodge him from his position. The little fellow jumped down a steep embankment and ran down the street leading to the wharf, to get under cover of the "Louisiana's" guns. He had gone but a little way, when the enemy galloped up, wheeled across the head of the street and fired a volley at him. None of their shots, however, seemed to take effect, and in a moment more the brave lad was safe behind the brick store-house on the wharf. The "Louisiana"

fired a broadside into their ranks, which caused them to make a hasty retreat, and as they retired they were well served with grape and canister.

The rebels were now becoming sick of Little Washington, and their only endeavor was to get out of the town, in which they had received such a hot reception, but they found it was easier to come in when we were all asleep than it was to get out when every man and boy was wide awake and full of fight. Their retreat became a stampede. Everything that had a tendency to impede their movements was thrown aside in their hasty flight. They were compelled to cross a cornfield on the outskirts of the town, in doing which the guns from the fort harassed them severely. Mr. McKeever, the master's mate, was ordered to the masthead to give the direction taken by the rebels, and also to give the captains of the guns the elevation, and the "Louisiana" dropped the shell from her heavy guns into the very midst of the retreating foe, causing them to howl with dismay. They dashed across the cornfield, out into the open country beyond, and were soon out of range. Soon the order to cease firing came from our commander, and the tired men rested at their guns, after the boatswain's mate had repeated the order. It had been hot work for the boys on the ships, and the soldiers on the shore, but heroically they faced the rebel music. The rebels suffered severely in the

engagement, although it was but of short duration. The "Louisiana" expended about eighty rounds of ammunition with telling effect upon the Johnnies. On account of the explosion of the gun-boat "Picket" the loss on our side was severe, but the rebels suffered the most, and left a number of dead and wounded behind them in their retreat. Only those who have taken a part in, or witnessed an engagement, can realize its awful grandeur. Shells bursting in the air, over, and among the soldiers, the roll of musketry, the groans of the dying, the shrieks of the wounded, the trampling of the host over the dead and the dying, are indeed appalling beyond measure, and one cannot analyze or describe his feelings at such a time. The old soldier as well as the new, dreads a battle; the suspense before it is truly awful. In a few minutes after the command to cease firing, the order was given to man the boats, and the first and second cutters were piped away. Our troops had in the fight, been fired at by some of the inmates of the houses in the town, and the lieutenant in charge of the boats was ordered to search the houses for arms. It was nothing strange to hear that some of the inhabitants had shown their true colors by firing from ambush on our soldiers.

"Look alive now, boys," said the lieutenant, as the boat struck the wharf and the crew had landed; "fall in by twos," he added; forward, march. Keep close

together, men." Silently now the men marched up the hill and into the main street. Here was seen evidence of the sanguinary conflict that had so recently taken place. The dead and the wounded had not as yet been cared for. Our troops were scattered about the town, and two companies of North Carolina troops were just coming in from beyond the fort, where they had followed the rebel raiders in their hasty flight from the town. Everywhere, on the tree-boxes, store-houses, and trees, could be seen the marks of the destructive grape and canister shot from the "Louisiana's" guns. The missiles had ploughed and furrowed everything that had chanced to be in the way of the iron hail-storm. Now commenced the work of searching. As we came to the first house on the line of our march, we met with no opposition, as the pretended Union men did not dare utter any remonstrance. Not a man but avowed that he was for the Union. The only explanation entered into by any of them was that the rebel cavalry men had taken refuge in their houses, and that it was by them that the shots were fired. Of course the lieutenant had to be satisfied with this explanation from the inmates.

To prosecute the search, the lieutenant had procured a mule-team from a contraband living in the town, and the arms, as fast as collected, were put into the wagon and carted to the fort. Guns of every description were found; single-barreled shot-guns, double-barreled shot-

guns, squirrel rifles with a bore no larger than a small pea, but nevertheless a deadly weapon; muskets of all descriptions, some with locks, others without, some with only the stock, others with only the barrel. Most of the muskets found were of the old Queen Anne pattern, although there were many with percussion locks; old horse pistols, swords, and in fact, all kinds of weapons were confiscated by us and loaded on the cart.

One old woman in a house visited, had a squirrel rifle, which she said belonged to her husband. She declared he *did* fire it, but not at our forces. "When the rebels fled from the town," said she, "my husband fired after them;" then leaving the gun in the house had gone to help the Yanks. Assured of the truthfulness of the woman's story, the lieutenant allowed her to retain the rifle, and we proceeded on our way to finish the search. In due time we had visited all the houses where the lieutenant had reason to suspect weapons were concealed, and after completing our search, the heterogeneous mass of arms was carted to the fort, thrown into a pile and fire set to them. The heat twisted and bent them into all imaginable shapes, totally unfitting them for use as fire-arms again. The boys gathered many trophies, which the rebels had left behind them in their flight, among which were several canteens, some of them nearly full of whiskey and gunpowder,

showing very evidently the intention of making a desperate fight. It was a bold dash of their leaders, but just what the object of their raid was, puzzled our commanders. They could not possibly hold the town while the gun-boats were lying in the river, and the capture of the place was the only thing of importance for them except that of the fort, in which at the time there were not many soldiers.

In our search for arms we visited Aunt Phebe. Several of the boys rushed into the house while others were engaged on the opposite side of the street, and demanded of her to bring out all the fire-arms she had concealed in her rooms. The astonishment depicted on her countenance as the demand was made, to say the least, was sublimely ridiculous. "Come," exclaimed Bob Titcomb, "we can't wait all day; trot out your arms, Aunt Phebe."

"Trot out de yarms? What you uns take me fo'? Ise got no yarms in dis yere house, dat you know bery well. Aunt Phebe hab no yarms in de house 'cept dese yere," she said, holding out her two arms towards us, either one of them as large and round at the shoulder as a common water pail.

"O, come now, that won't go down with us, Aunt Phebe," exclaimed Tom Jencks; "we have it from a trustworthy source that shots were fired from your house, or some other, at our soldiers while passing."

“Bress yer heart! What dat yer saying? Me shooting at de Yanks? ’Clare fo’ it, boys, ye’ll brake ole Aunty’s heart if you done gone an’ mean dat.”

The boys could not help laughing at Aunt Phebe’s gestures and exclamations while delivering herself of the above.

“Come, are you inclined to obey our commands or not?” said Tom Jencks.

“O, g’long wid yer, round foolin’ all de time! How you spec’s a pusson hab any respect fo’ yer? Golly! how dem rebels done hollered. ’Clare to goodness dey most take my breff away. Ole Aunty hidin’ in de cellar dar,” pointing with her finger at the open cellar door. “I wan’t do’en no shootin’, no indeed I wan’t. If Aunty done want to shoot, she couldn’t do dat, ’cause dere am no shootin’ i’ns yere, dat am de bressed truth. De Lord bress yer, boys, I’se powerful glad to see yer looking so chireck dis arternoon arter de fight. Ole Aunty tought dat yer was guine up when dat ar ’slosion come. Fore de Lord, ole Aunty git right down on her knees and prayed fo’ her boys on de gum-boats, dat de good Lord would gib dem de proper strength to bar dem fro de fite; an’ here yer is tryin’ to fool ole Aunty! g’long.”

“Come, bear a hand there, and don’t stay all day talking,” cried out the lieutenant, and so hastily assuring Aunt Phebe that the boys were all right, and that



we would come off and tell her all about it in a few days, we hastened to catch up with the rest who had forged ahead some distance in advance while we were chaffing Aunt Phebe.

After destroying all the arms captured, we turned our footsteps in the direction of the wharf. Arriving there, the lieutenant hailed the "Louisiana" and the launch was sent to take us aboard. I was completely fagged out after the events of the day, and was not the last one to seek my hammock when they were piped down that night.

A few days after the events detailed in this chapter, the soldiers built an abattis across all the principal streets in the town to guard against another such raid from the rebels.

## CHAPTER IX.



### EXPEDITION UP BLOUNT'S CREEK.

IN the latter part of November, we were all mustered aft and thirty men were chosen to accompany an expedition that was to be made up Blount's creek. As usual it was my good fortune to be chosen. Our cavalry were on a raid through the country round about Edward's Mill and vicinity, and were expected back in a day or two. They were to come to Blount's creek and take steamer from there to New Berne. They had made quite a commotion in their raid through North Carolina and stirred up the rebels from all parts. As the expedition was not to start till three o'clock in the afternoon, we had plenty of time to prepare ourselves for it. I laid in a store of tobacco, and did not forget the salt. Tom was also choosen to accompany the expedition. Mr. Kelley, the carpenter's mate, was still so sick that he could not act in that capacity, and I was rather taken aback, when about nine o'clock in the morning, Lieutenant Westervelt called me aft and informed me that he had concluded, in the absence of Mr. Kelley, to appoint me acting carpenter's mate, and

as there was still plenty of work on shore, such as fitting up the schooner left unfinished on the ways by the rebels, and the building of the blockade above the bridge in Tar river, he said I might go ashore with the others that morning and take charge of the gang. I thanked him for his kind offer, and told him I would do my best to finish the work so well begun by Mr. Kelley, under the superintendency of Mr. Mills the carpenter.

“Oh, I have no doubt that you will get on finely and accomplish all that’s laid out for you to perform,” said the lieutenant.

After being dismissed from his presence, I went forward to impart to Tom my good luck. I should now have plenty of time on shore, and it would help to relieve the monotony of life on board ship, I thought.

When the boat went ashore that morning I went in her. The carpenter, Mr. Mills, also accompanied us to give me instruction about the work. Arriving at the place where the blockade was building, Mr. Mills gave all the necessary instructions regarding the work in progress and then strolled off to the town. As it is necessary that I inform my readers why this blockade was being constructed, I will now try to explain it. Rumors came from up the river that a ram was in process of construction by the rebels and would be likely to float down and pay us a visit at almost any unseason-

able hour. With a crew to man a launch and a twelve pound howitzer on a pivot at the bow, we had made many journeys up the small creeks in the vicinity of Little Washington, in quest of logs to build our blockade. We were fortunate enough to find all we needed at Johnson's and Edward's Mills, on Blount's creek. These logs had no doubt been cut by the rebels for the same purpose as that for which we now intended to use them. Our mode of operation was this: when we came to a place where logs were plentiful, a working party was sent on shore, a picket or two thrown out, and the launch, with men enough to man the gun anchored a little way from the shore, that in the event of an attack by the rebels, the working party would be covered by the howitzer. But generally speaking, we had things nearly our own way, for there were but few farmer guerrillas living in the vicinity, and they kept their distance. Now the next thing was to get the logs to the bank of the creek, which was done by part of the workers, who rolled them to the water's edge, where another gang would roll them into the water and pin them together with wooden pins, made expressly for the purpose, on board the "Louisiana." In this manner, log on top of log, we were enabled to raft a large number of them at one time to their destination above the bridge, in the Tar river, while the contrabands enlivened the passage with many a jest and song.

“Way down on de ole Tar ribber,  
Dere’s where I was born ;  
Ole massa make me work berry hard  
A shuckin’ ob de corn.

De Yankees come, old Massa run,  
And lebe dese darkies here ;  
I spec’s him neber come back home,  
For de Yankees he do fear.

De turpentine am berry thick,  
Along Tar ribber shore :  
De Yankees dey did burn um up,  
Dat make old massa swar.”

The logs were now put out lengthwise into the river from the town side. First two logs were spiked together with long iron spikes or iron pins, then a rope with a large stone attached to serve as an anchor was made fast to the outer end of the logs and the anchor thrown out up the river to keep them in place. To the end of these two logs were now fastened two more, and so on until they stretched across within fifty feet or more of the opposite shore in shoal water. We had a pile driver which the rebels had neglected to destroy, and it was in complete working order. With this we drove the piles into the river-bed on both sides of the logs which were horizontally laid, thereby strengthening the blockade. I had four men from the “Louisiana” to help me in the work : Jones, Holmes, Bartlett, and another whose name I cannot now remember. Besides

these I had twelve contrabands from the shore, most of them quite good ship carpenters.

Mr. Mills came once in a while to inspect the work and see how it progressed, but as a general thing it was conducted under my direction, although I think the blockade was planned by the chief engineer, Mr. Lay. It only wanted a few more fine days to complete it, as I found upon my arrival on the spot. It was quite cold, but there was a negro hut situated on the bank of the river, occupied by one of our contrabands, his wife and two children, and when it became too cold we were in the habit of resorting to this cabin, Holmes and I, to warm ourselves. We heaped the chimney place high up with wood, and after thoroughly heating the room, threw off our pea-jackets and enjoyed ourselves baking hoe cakes on a board before the hot coals. When the cake was baked we divided it, and spreading our salt pork upon the hot surface, made a good, substantial, undyspeptic meal.

One morning, while engaged in driving piles well towards the other shore, the rebels came down and fired at us from the bushes lining the bank. Luckily none of us were hit, and our arms being in the cabin, we made a hasty retreat towards our base, peppered by the rebs from their ambush. Some of our party kept to the logs, but others jumped overboard and with only their heads out of the water, made their way, hand over

hand, by means of the logs, towards the town side. Lieutenant Westervelt, on board the "Louisiana," becoming aware of our peril, trained the long thirty-two pounder on the rebel position, and with a few well directed shots sent them flying for safety into the woods.

We were not troubled after that although as a precaution we kept the launch with the howitzer on deck, alongside the pile-driver, while prosecuting the work.

At twelve o'clock, the signal flag was hoisted in token of the dinner hour, and after storing our tools in the hut on shore, we manned the launch and rowed to the "Louisiana." The thoughts of the expedition up Blount's creek after dinner, and the knowledge that I was to be one of the party, kept my mind busy, and when we arrived on board I had almost forgotten the little incident of the morning, but Tom brought it to my memory again by asking about it. I told him just how it happened.

"Goodness gracious! did the bullets whistle any? Just my luck not to be there. The boys say, Steve, that you didn't seem to be in much of a hurry to get on shore out of the way, but took it cool as a cucumber."

"Pretty good reason why," I replied; "the path, you know, was pretty narrow, only two logs abreast, and every one of the party except those who jumped overboard, were strung out towards the town side, and as I was the last in the rear, I could not go any

faster than those ahead of me, and as for throwing myself into the water, I never thought of such a thing. I have a particular aversion to taking to the water, especially when I have my clothes on. It kind o' made my flesh crawl, though, when the bullets were zipping around, and to tell the truth, Tom, I expected any moment that I should be hit, and I did not exactly relish the idea of bearing a scar which I wouldn't be proud to show the fellows if I survived the war.

“No scars for me, Steve, thank you, I shall be just as proud without them, and I can tell the boys at home how it might have been. I can tell them, you know, that I was present once in a while when the rebels were real busy, and that my chances were just as good as any of you to stop a bullet. Still they are liable to mar my beauty yet before the cruise is up.”

“I hope not, Tom, as you cannot spare much of your beauty, as you call it, without suffering in the estimation of the fair sex.”

The boatswain's whistle put an end to our conversation, and we hastened below to our dinner. After having fortified ourselves with salt junk and cold coffee, we ascended to the main deck to watch for the steamer that was to take us to Blount's creek. About three o'clock, she was descried coming up the river and then the bustle of preparation commenced. We were all ready to embark when she steamed up alongside the



“Louisiana.” She proved to be a stern-wheeler, and in a short time after making fast to us, we were on board of her. Our boat howitzer was taken from the forcastle deck of the “Louisiana” and mounted on wheels and located on the forward deck. In a few minutes after, the order came to cast off, and we steamed away down Tar river. With the crew of the steamer we mustered forty men.

It was dark when we arrived off the mouth of the creek, but we pushed on some distance before coming to an anchor, which we at last did several miles from the mouth of the creek and Pamlico sound. Soon after dropping our anchor, all hands were called to supper. Pork, hard-tack and tea, as usual, constituted our meal, after which a watch was set and the rest of the crew enjoyed themselves smoking and telling yarns till bed-time. At daybreak, we hove our anchor short and continued our way up the creek. A small house was noticed situated back from the stream and about a half mile away. The steamer was stopped, a boat was manned and sent on shore to ascertain whether there were any rebs about. There were four of us in the boat. When we reached the land, Tom was left in charge of it while the rest of us proceeded towards the house. Upon arriving there, we could see no signs of life, and the master’s mate, Mr. McKeever, who was in charge of the expedition, knocked at the

door, lifted the latch, and walked in. A rusty stove met our gaze on entering, and, as there was every appearance of a fire having recently been burning in it, we knew that the house had been lately occupied. Our next work was to look for the late occupants. We called aloud for them to come out and show themselves, but not a sound reached our ears. I pushed open a door leading from the apartment we had just entered, and discovered a woman and three children cowering in one corner of the room. Mr. McKeever spoke to them in a kindly tone, and assured the woman that she had nothing to fear, as we never harmed women. She then arose from her crouching position and timidly approached us. "Oh, sirs," she said, "you will not harm my children?"

"Harm your children! Bless your soul! I have children of my own," said one of the seamen, "we are looking for rebels. Have you seen any about here, lately?"

"Yes, only yesterday ten rebel calvary-men were here," she answered, "they ate up everything they could find in the house, and only for some bacon that I had buried in the garden my children would have been without anything to eat now."

"Where is your husband?"

"He is in the Confederate army."

“Oh, indeed,” said Mr. McKeever, “what regiment, pray?”

“He is in the Thirty-second North Carolina volunteers, company K,” said the woman.

“I am sorry he is not fighting in a better cause,” said Mr. McKeever, “but we will not discuss that matter now. By your looks, madam, and your surroundings, I should say that you have experienced hard times since the war began.”

“Indeed, I have sir; we, myself and children, have gone supperless to bed many times since the beginning of this terrible war. Your people at home little know what we uns have to suffer for the bare necessaries of life, when armies of both friend and foe ride rough shod through the land.”

“It’s very hard for you, madam, but let me assure you, that we, by our presence here to-day, will not cause you or your children any unnecessary trouble or inconvenience.”

The children were pretty little midgets, the oldest not more than eight years of age, while the youngest could not have seen more than three summers. All were dressed in the plainest of garments and the worried look upon their countenances bespoke the fear and trials that they had undergone.

Bidding the woman be of good cheer, Mr. McKeever gave the order for the return to the steamer.

Arriving on board, Mr. McKeever reported what he had seen and heard at the house, and as we had an ample supply of hard-tack on board, he obtained permission to take a portion of it to the woman, and it was a pleasure for me, who accompanied him, to see the children eat the bread, to say nothing of the gratitude of their mother for our liberal supply. I also carried them some coffee, tea and salt, and if this ever meets the eye of the officer in command I hope he will forgive me for foraging the coffee and tea, as we ran short of these articles before our return to Little Washington, and no reason was assigned for the leakage, for apparently we started with enough and to spare of that commodity. After we had arrived on board again, we steamed up the creek to Edward's Mill, where we ran inshore and made fast. We then ran our howitzer ashore, and started up the road leading from the landing. Our object was to thoroughly reconnoitre the country about Edward's Mill, to ascertain whether there were any rebels about, and also to give people in that vicinity to understand that they were watched. We marched silently along, fifteen men in all, the remainder of our number being left on board the steamer with orders to haul out into the stream, anchor and await our return. Houses were quite plentifully distributed along our line of march, and we paid them a visit occasionally. Women and children alone were to be

seen and they were very polite to us. Some of the women expressed a hope to see the stars and stripes wave in North Carolina, and the good old times revive again.

About five miles from Edward's Mill we stopped at a house where lived a noted rebel. We explored the premises, but found no one at home, with the exception of two old negroes. We helped ourselves to some chickens running around loose, but disturbed nothing in the house. The contrabands told us that a squad of rebel cavalry-men had visited the house in the early morning, and had gone up the road, promising when they left to return again very soon. So we took up our line of march for the creek again. We stopped on our return at the house of another rebel, and found it occupied by three women. We were in want of a few more chickens, so Mr. McKeever offered them one dollar for six, an offer that was refused with great indignation. Our only alternative then was to help ourselves, which we accordingly did, the women in the meantime calling us everything but the right names. With a cutlass in one hand, and two hens and a rooster in the other, I was passing before the door where stood the aforesaid women, when one of them in a sarcastic tone of voice said :

“*You're a Yankee, I know!*”

“Yes, and I am proud of it, too,” I replied, “and

there's your pay for the chickens," I continued, throwing down a one dollar bill and pushing a stone on it with my foot to keep the wind from blowing it away.

There was a well of water in one corner of the yard, and as we were pretty thirsty after our long tramp and our chase after the poultry, we prepared to help ourselves to a draught of it. As we drew up a bucketful one of the women exclaimed :

“Oh, how I wish that that water was poisoned !”

“Perhaps it is,” said Tom.

“Well, here's a go, any way,” said Jimmy Wilkinson, an Englishman ; “you all wait five minutes after I have finished drinking, and if it don't fix me, then you go ahead and drink your fill.”

Even the women, who were watching us from the house, could not suppress a smile at this, and when the five minutes had expired, we each and all took a good draft from the old oaken bucket.

Again we took up our line of march, and as we started out the women cried after us : “Your masters will be after you soon ;” but as we had become tired of waiting for them, we kept on the even tenor of our way. We arrived in due time at the ferry and signaled the steamer to come inshore and were soon on board again. We then steamed down the creek and across to the other shore, where we expected to find the

cavalry. We ran in close to the land and can anchor. During the night we heard firing in the creek, but were not called out. The next day twenty men were sent on shore, but were not allowed to go out of sight of the steamer. We enjoyed ourselves during the day looking around, and cooked our chickens in every way that was suggested by the boys. Some time in the night the cavalry arrived with a number of captured horses and rebel prisoners. The soldiers and their steeds were completely fagged out. Throwing themselves from their horses' backs they lay right down on the wet ground to enjoy a little sleep, while the poor animals stood about with drooping heads and dejected mien, occasionally moving about among the sleeping men, but very carefully, so as not to disturb their slumbers. The prisoners were confined in a log cabin near the bank of the creek, and the seamen stood guard over them until daylight, when the cavalry-men were rafted off to a steamer that had arrived some time during the night to convey them to New Berne. We then boarded the little stern-wheeler, the anchor was weighed, and we proceeded on our way to Little Washington. On our return passage, we skirted the bank of the right hand side of Blount's creek, keeping so close to it at times that one could with but little effort have jumped on shore, which in the main looked

enough to have made it a reasonable excuse in the long. When about three miles from the mouth of the creek, a schooner was discovered lying in another small stream, an offshoot from Blount's creek, close in shore and nearly hidden by the bushes lining the bank. Our officer in command gave directions to the pilot to steer for the vessel, which he did at the mouth of the creek mentioned. The lead was ordered to be thrown and marked six feet. "Stop her," rang the pilot from the pilot house. "We can go no further in the steamer, sir," said he.

"Very well," said Mr. McKeever, "man the boats," and the crews of the two boats clambered down the side of the steamer into them, and in a few moments we were rowing up the creek towards the schooner. Upon arriving where she lay, we climbed on board and found her deserted. She was imbedded in the mud, with a hole stove in her port bow. Upon examination of her it was deemed useless by our officers to undertake to raise her. She had evidently been run in where we found her some dark night, her cargo, whatever it might have consisted of, transported from her hold to the shore, a hole stove in her bow, and she left to her fate. Mr. McKeever finished the work begun by the rebels, by setting fire to her, and as the last man left her deck, the flames shot their fiery tongues greedily up



through the open hatchways, communicating with the rigging and the schooner was soon in a sheet of flame, while the smoke rolled off to leeward like a murky cloud, obscuring the sun's rays, and altogether making the scene an impressive one. It seemed too bad to be obliged to destroy so fine a vessel, but then we had not the time or the means to raise her, even if it had been possible to do so. We regained our steamer and boarding her were soon under way for Little Washington.

As we rounded the point on the opposite shore, I gave one last look back, and saw the tall masts go by the board, while a myriad of sparks shot up into the air, and it reminded me of the last of some great, set piece of fireworks I had seen on the cove promenade on Fourth of July night at home. It was quite dark when we reached the mouth of Blount's creek and entered Pamlico Sound. The old steamer crawled along, the smoke from her stack blowing to leeward, while the old stern-wheel pounding the water, left a foamy wake behind us that was discernible quite a distance in the gathering darkness. Cold chicken, left over from yesterday's cooking, was the order of the evening, and we enjoyed ourselves hugely while the old craft ploughed along towards our destination. Eight bells, midnight, struck on the "Louisiana" as we glided up alongside of her, though it was a good two hours afterwards before

I saw a chance to turn into my hammock, and then I lay another hour thinking of the exciting scenes we had passed through. While the watch was striking six bells, and before the last clang died out, I fell asleep.

## CHAPTER X.

### LAUNCH OF THE SCHOONER RENSHAW.

THE blockade being finished we turned our attention to the schooner on the ways. The rebels when they evacuated Little Washington, left behind them on the stocks in the ship yard, the hull of a schooner, new and partly built. Commander Renshaw decided to have the vessel completed, so one day he ordered the carpenter ashore to examine her condition and determine whether it would be practicable to go on with the work. Mr. Mills, acting upon the suggestion, proceeded to the shore and made a thorough examination of the hull of the schooner and upon his return, pronounced her all right and received orders to go on and finish her. This was some days before the blockade was commenced, and the carpenter with the gang had nearly completed her, when he was ordered to knock off work on the vessel, and put the whole gang to work building the blockade. I had seen the hull of the schooner several times, when on shore on liberty days, but had never been on board of her until the morning we all set out for the ship yard. Arriving

there, Mr. Mills instructed me in regard to my duties and then left me in charge. The work progressed finely, while day after day saw the schooner assume shape and proportions. Mr. Mills, whenever he visited the ship yard, seemed delighted with the progress made and complimented the workers for their industry. One morning soon after we had commenced our work on the schooner, Tom, who was on shore on liberty, came into the ship yard with a letter in his hand, for me. He handed the letter up to me on the staging. I invited him to come on board and hear it read. He at once clambered up the ladder on to the staging, and we both climbed over the side of the schooner upon the deck and seated ourselves on two blocks of wood, while I examined the inscription on the envelope.

“Phil’s writing, Tom,” I said.

“Well, open it Steve, and let’s find out where he is, and what he is about,” replied Tom, “I’m glad it’s from him, for to tell the truth, Steve, I had begun to feel worried about him.”

“So had I, Tom, but I took good care not to mention it to you.”

Opening the letter I read it aloud very much to Tom’s satisfaction, judging by his frequent ejaculations. When I had nearly finished the reading, Tom jumped from the block and executed a pigeon wing on the deck and then the sailor’s hornpipe, very much to the edifi-

cation of the darkies, who all stopped in their labors and with mouth and eyes wide open, and many a loud guffaw, manifested their appreciation. After all had resumed work, and Tom was once more seated beside me, I finished the reading of the epistle, and as it was a very interesting letter I will let my readers know the contents too.

Phil wrote from the Potomac where he was stationed for the present, he said, in the schooner "Racer" of the mortar fleet :

"We are having lively times with smugglers, obliged to be out in small boats sometimes all night, on the watch for them. Oftentimes they are captured by us or some other boat's crew, and their stock of tea, coffee, salt and the numerous other commodities with which their boats are laden, and with which they expected to tickle the palates of the Johnnie rebs, are confiscated by the government. I missed you and Tom very much at first, but have recovered from that now, have chosen a chum for the time being, and am as happy as can be expected under the circumstances. We had an all-night job on the 21st inst. lying in wait for a boat that was expected to attempt to cross the Potomac that night, freighted with tobacco, cigars, whiskey, cotton-cloth, and salt. Our captain was informed of this by a man of great reliability. The boat was to be manned by Jews, he said. All night we lay on our

oars secreted in a little cove near the bank of the Potomac, where they were expected to land. It was nearly break of day, but still very dark; one could scarcely see a fathom either way he looked. It must have been nearly three o'clock when we heard a slight noise like the dipping of oars in the water. It was of the faintest kind, but our ears were trained to catch the slightest sound. 'The dip of oars it certainly is,' said Mr. Brady, our master's mate, who was in command of the boat. Again was heard the same kind of sound. Mr. Brady now cautioned us in a hoarse whisper to get ready and be very careful not to make any unnecessary noise. Their oars could now be heard plainly in the water on our port quarter and not more than two or three fathoms away. At this juncture, Mr. Brady, in a low tone of voice, gave the command, 'Oars;' then 'Give way, my men,' and with a few well-directed sweeps of our oars, we shot out into the river and discerned the smuggler's boat close aboard of us. So close were we, in fact, that we barely escaped a collision with them. Realizing that they had fallen into a trap, the smugglers bent to their oars, heading their boat down stream, but without avail, for we were so near them that our bowman dropped his oar inboard; then seizing the boat-hook grappled on to the thwart of the stern sheets of the smugglers' boat, and in a moment more we were alongside. Opening the slides of our dark

lanterns, which showed them up plainly by the light they threw, at the same time we brandished our cutlasses in their faces. Mr. Brady, in a voice of thunder, ordered them to surrender, which at first they did not seem inclined to do.

“ ‘Shoot the first man that offers resistance,’ shouted Mr. Brady, and at the same time he sprang into the smuggler’s boat and struck down a man who seemed to be the leader, and who made a pass at him with a huge knife. We covered them with our rifles now and threatened to shoot the first man that raised a hand. Seeing it was useless on their part to prolong the contest with the odds so largely against them, they reluctantly laid town their arms, which were at once transferred to our boat.

“ ‘Never was a surprise more complete. If they had had an even chance, and had not been taken by surprise, it is doubtful in my mind whether I should have been living now to write about it. Putting two of our fellows in the stern sheets of the smugglers’ boat, with the light of our lanterns shining in their faces, we took them in tow, and rowed with a will for our schooner up the river, a distance of about two miles. The smugglers kept a sullen silence during our row back to the schooner, which we reached after hard pulling. Upon overhauling the prize, we found that we had secured quite a cargo of cigars, tobacco, salt and numerous other arti-

cles, which the rebs would have been overjoyed to get. The smugglers were ordered out of their boat to the schooner, and then confined in the hole, and the next day they were sent on shore under a strong guard and delivered to the proper authorities. This has taken up so much space in my letter that I shall have to conclude now by wishing you a safe return home after the expiration of your term of service.

“Well and hearty,

“P. M. BLANDING,

“On board the U. S. Schooner ‘Racer,’ Potomac Flotilla, Washington, D. C.

“February 29, 1863.”

“Well,” said Tom, “Phil writes a good letter and I shall be glad to hear from him again. He must have some pretty exciting times down there as well as ourselves. Do you know, Steve,” he continued, “that I was thinking when I came into the yard that you were quite a young man to be put in boss over so many older men, and I thought I should consider it a big compliment bestowed upon me if I was in your place.”

“Well, Tom, I am proud to think that the lieutenant should choose me, out of so many on the ‘Louisiana’ to superintend this job. I appreciate his kindness to me, and try hard not only to please him in what I do, but endeavor to have the others please him, too.”



“There’s one thing about it, Steve, you don’t put on any airs over the boys because you happen to get rated above them, and they respect you the more for that. I have heard but one man or boy say any thing against you, and you know whom I mean.”

“Well, I can guess pretty nigh, Tom, who that one is. The first two letters of his name are Bill Lang.”

“Ha! ha!” laughed Tom, and then he added, “Yes, that’s the sneak, Steve, and it’s a wonder to me and the other boys that you have not had a fight with him ere this. He’s a big sneak, and he knows you won’t fight him, and that’s the reason he takes advantage of you to insult you the way he does behind your back, and to your face for that matter.”

“Well, Tom, I don’t mean to disgrace myself in the eyes of Mr. Westervelt if I can possibly help it, by entering into a quarrel with such a fellow as Bill Lang. I have tried hard to make him see that I am ready to help him in anything that’s right, but I have about come to the conclusion that it is no use for me to waste any more time on him. I do not pretend to be one of your goody goodies that never do wrong; some time in the future, if patience ceases to be a virtue with me, why, then let Bill Lang look out for himself, that’s all. But it will be something besides his hateful words that will cause me to forget myself so much as to give him what he deserves—a thrashing. Ever since I

thwarted him in his villainous scheme of robbing old Hoxie, out at Red hill, of his gold watch, he has had it in for me."

"How is it, Steve, that you have kept the secret so close about the affair at Red hill, and not even told me about it? When I have questioned you about it you have turned me off with some evasive answer."

"I will tell you all about it now, Tom, as I have plenty of time, and it is not a very long story. You see it happened in this way: Old Hoxie lives, as you know, at Red hill just outside the lines. He is a good Union man, keeps our officers posted as to the movements of the rebels, and comes into town every day to gossip with his many friends, and tell and hear the latest news. He was in town one day when Bill and I happened to be on shore on liberty. I was just thinking of some excuse to get rid of Lang, when along came old Hoxie. Bill stopped him and asked him the time of day. Hoxie obligingly pulled out his watch, an old-fashioned, but very valuable one, and told us. When the old man had gone some distance from us Bill said, 'We can have that old duffer's watch just as easy as rolling off a log.' I turned and looked at Bill in astonishment. I knew him to be a sneak and a coward, but did not think him capable of committing a robbery. Perhaps he did not mean anything, at any rate I meant to find out his drift, and so

turning to him I said, 'What do you mean by that Bill? Are you going to buy it? Perhaps he will not sell it, as it is a very valuable one.'

" 'Well, you can bet your bottom dollar, Steve, that it's worth lots of money. Why, that 'ere watch cost at least \$400. Am I going for to buy it, did yer say?' and Bill stuck his tongue in his left cheek, cocked one eye, and leered into my face with what he probably thought a very comical grimace; then straightening out his face again, he said, 'Look here, Steve, you know that I ain't got no money for to buy that watch.'

" 'How are you going to get it then, if you have no money? Do you mean to steal it?'

" 'Well, now come, that's putting it too hard, Steve; there ain't no stealing about it. I'll tell yer how it can be done. All's fair in love and war; least ways so goes the old saying, and I think old Hoxie a d—m rebel spy, and there ain't captains enough in the American navy to make me believe otherwise. They allow him to mix in, and the officers laugh at his funny talk, and all the time the d——d old cuss is pulling the wool over our eyes. Now, you'll see sometime if it ain't so.'

" 'Well,' said I, 'why don't you come to the point at once and tell me how you are to get the watch, and don't beat about the bush any longer?'

" 'That's the most sensible thing that I have heard you say yet,' said Bill.

“I could have knocked him down with a good grace as he uttered the last remark, but then I could not have found out his plans, so I merely said ‘Well.’

“ ‘Its just here,’ he continued ; ‘you know when the old fellow’s at work—and he’s pretty busy just now with his ploughing—he don’t have the ticker along with him, you bet ; now it’s the easiest thing in the world for us to go out there some fine day. We can tuck our collars down our backs and otherwise disguise ourselves, and if the old man happens to be out in the field at work, we can enter the house and ask for a drink of apple-jack. That’ll send the old gal, that’s his wife, down cellar to get it for us ; then all we’ve got to do is to lock her down there, go through the house and get the watch, and I think the old fellow has money, and if so, we can soon find out where it is hid. We’ll take it, if we find it, and whack it up between us and make for the ship, get on board, and hide the swag away till the storm blows over. Then we can borrow a little at a time when we want to go on shore, and live like fighting cocks.’

“ ‘Why, Tom, the audacity of the villain almost took my breath away as he rolled off the plan to me. To encourage him to proceed, I said to him, ‘What will you do with the watch ? There are no pawnshops in Little Washington.’

“ ‘Oh, we’ll hide that till such times as some of

the boy's term of service has expired, then we'll strike up a bargain with some one of them, and sell him the watch for a good price. What say you? Will ye jine me? Do ye catch on?'

'I hated even for one moment to lend myself to the villainous plot so glibly set forth by the rascal, but I was bound to frustrate his design, so I seemed to fall in with all his plans, and before I got rid of him, Tom, a day was set to carry them into effect. When I returned to the 'Louisiana,' that afternoon, I managed to elude the vigilance of Bill long enough to gain an audience with one of my superior officers, and to him I unfolded the whole plot. He pricked up his ears as I came to the interesting part where he was to lock the old man's wife in the cellar. When I finished the story, he told me to enter into all his plans, meet him on the day set for the robbery, and go with him out there, and in the meantime he would acquaint Mr. Hoxie of the plot, so that he would be away on the day in question. He would also inform Hoxie's wife and let her into the secret so that there need be no trouble about her entering the cellar in quest of the apple jack, and the officer said that he would be on hand in one of the rooms with a couple of men he knew that he could rely upon and trust to keep the secret. And then I was to let Lang go ahead and do all the searching, in which he was an adept, as I soon found

out, and when he got fairly at work, and had the coveted watch in his hand—the watch was laid purposely in the top bureau drawer—the officer would step out and capture us both, so that Bill would have no suspicion that I gave the job away.

“To make a long story short, Tom, when the day arrived, Bill and I obtained permission to visit the shore and when we landed we set out immediately for Hoxie’s place. I did not relish the job, for we were in danger of meeting some lurking guerrillas outside the lines, and they would make it warm for us, I thought, if we were not captured or killed, but I relied upon the word of the officer that he would be on hand with his men to protect me, in the event of anything turning up further than we were acquainted with. Upon our arrival at Hoxie’s house, Bill left me to reconnoitre, and in a few moments returned to say that it was all right so we walked up to the door together. The door was open, on account of the weather, Bill knocked upon it, whereupon Mrs. Hoxie came, welcomed us with a smile and bade us enter and make ourselves at home. Upon our entrance, into what I supposed to be the kitchen, she offered such chairs as the room afforded, and requested us to be seated, which request we at once complied with, while she proceeded to the cupboard and procured a large gourd, and in a moment more

re-appeared with it in her hand, telling us to make ourselves comfortable. She then opened the cellar door and descended the stairs. As she stepped off the last step, on the cellar bottom, Bill got up, closed the door and shoved the iron bolt into its place. He then turned towards me and hurriedly told me to follow him in search of the gold watch.

“ ‘Quick’s the word, now, Steve. What we do, must be done in short meter, as the minister said to the choir,’ and he chuckled to himself as he dashed into a bed room leading off the kitchen. The room that we entered was scantily furnished, there being only an old four-post beadstead, a chair or two and an old fashioned bureau. Bill began to work on the last mentioned article by pulling out the top drawer, which was unlocked, and there, in plain sight lay the watch. Bill snatched it and held it up to my view, exclaiming in an undertone, ‘Ain’t she a beauty. It’s d—d lucky, Steve, we came into this room fust, as it saves so much time; now here goes for ‘spondulicks,’ if there are any we’ll have them, then cut our lucky.’ So saying, he opened the next drawer below, but at this juncture a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder. He looked up with an affrighted gaze, and his looks encountered those of the officer fixed sternly on him. He was placed under arrest, as also was I, but this was done as a blind to Bill.

“‘You are a nice one, you are,’ said the officer to Bill, who was squirming to get free from his grasp, as he had a strong hold on his collar. But it was useless for him to struggle; his hands were quickly tied behind him, and he settled down into a chair in sullen silence. My hands were also tied, but in such a way as not to cause me pain. The officer now turned his attention to unlocking the cellar door, and as he threw it open the smiling face of Mrs. Hoxie appeared in the doorway. Stepping into the room she advanced toward the officer, thanked him for his kindness, and then turning towards us gave us a lecture. She kept her eyes all the time on Bill, though, never turning towards me once. Bill during the lecture twisted uneasily about in his chair and writhed under the good woman’s severe but well-merited rebukes. I shall have to cut it short now Tom, as I see Mr. Mills coming into the yard. Bill was marched ahead to the ship, where as you know, he was confined in the chain locker four weeks, and lived on very poor fare, and all his liberty days stopped during his term of service, which I am very thankful, is very nearly out. I was kept in the background that day until Bill was confined, then I was allowed my liberty and received the thanks of Mr. Hoxie and his wife for the part I had acted, and was complimented by the officer for carrying it out so well. Lang has not spoken to me



since his release from durance vile, and I am of the opinion that he was informed of the part I played that day, by one of the men accompanying the officer."

Just then Mr. Mills was seen coming over the side of the schooner, and thus precluded the chances of Tom and I having any further conversation, so I left him to his reflections, while I turned my attention to Mr. Mills who advanced to where I was standing.

"Well," he said, "the work seems to be going on finely. I would like you to call the men together, as I have a few words to say to them."

I called the men from their labors, and after they had gathered around, Mr. Mills addressed them as follows :

"Boys, you have worked hard to bring this vessel to completion, and I am more than thankful to you all, and especially so to my mate here," turning to me, "for his diligence and energy in pushing the work along. Owing to the rebels destroying so much of the valuable material that was designed for this craft, it has been uncommonly hard work on my part and Blanding's to get together the necessary essentials in order to finish the vessel as it should be. But, as I said before, the vessel is nearly completed, and a day or two only will be sufficient to get her ready for launching. Now, boys, last month I sent to New Berne and got a gallon of whiskey." The men's eyes snapped at this announcement and they listened the more attentively for what

was to follow. Mr. Mills, noticing the effect, went on to say : "I know, boys, if Commander Renshaw knew it he would not sanction it, but as I see no harm in it for once in the way, I shall therefore run the risk, trusting to your good judgment to keep it quiet. I have made arrangements with Mr. Donzleberg, the honest old Dutchman who keeps the grocery store next the ship yard, to take the demijohn and deal the spirits out to you when you go to work in the morning, and again before going to dinner, then at four o'clock at the close of your day's labor. I am sure as I have arranged it, it can do you no harm, and I do not want any man to use it who has not been in the habit of using it. That's all; you may go back to work."

As the men dispersed, they indulged in many antics to show their appreciation of the carpenter's kindness. They worked with a will all the rest of that day, and at four o'clock we returned to the "Louisiana," while the contrabands proceeded to their homes or lodging places, for many of them were alone and depended upon those who were fortunate enough to have their families with them inside the lines.

The next day at nine o'clock we went to the ship yard and resumed our labor upon the vessel. Although there was not much to do to finish our task, yet there was enough to keep us fluttering around all day, so as to

get every thing ready for the launch, which was to take place the next day. One of the contrabands, Jeff by name, was an inveterate talker, and had many a story to tell about the rebs, one of which I will relate :

After the capture of New Berne by our forces, and when the fleet, some days after, was coming up the sound to shell Little Washington, although they did not have to fight for the possession of the town, as the rebels evacuated that place, Jeff was at work in the ship yard, when the Yankee fleet appeared coming up the river. "Old massa," he said, "you uns better git out yere ; de d—— Yankees coming now for sure ; soon dey be up to de wharf. Specs dey am de same dat kill all de little chil'n in New Berne when dey take dat town. Gadder all de shavens roun' and put dem under de vessel, and set de d—— thing on fire. De Yanks neber hab dis yer vessel. Bang ! goes one ob de ole boats down de river, and I say to de massa, 'Hi ! massa, here dey comes, sure nuff.' Bang ! bang ! dey am feeling ob de rebs. Ole massa scratch a match ; he neber burn ; him scratch anoder one ; no burn. 'D—— de matches ! gib me de whole bunch ; dey neber will light ; dem matches just like so dey been in de water.' Well, ye see honey, dem matches bin done soaked in de water-pail ; course dey wouldn't light, but I want guine to tell massa dat fac'. Him scratch dere all day ; de matches neber light. Bang ! dat gun went. Ole massa

neber stop for to burn ship; him run as if de debil arter him. Specs dat him runnin' yet."

I was in no hurry to see Mr. Mills, but the boys were casting anxious looks around in expectation of his appearance in the ship yard. To tell the truth, I did not really like the programme, for some of the boys were easily excited, and neither he nor I could tell what might happen when they were under the influence, of liquor, however little it might be. We had been engaged in working about an hour, when Mr. Mills entered the yard, and coming to my side, said, "You can let the men come two at a time to the store for their ration of grog; and, by the way, you had better go with me first and get a nip."

I thanked him but declined to accompany him for that purpose. I then told George Jones and Hammond that they could go to the store, and after being served to come immediately back. They soon returned and then I sent two more, and upon their return I sent the contrabands. All went well until after dinner. I had noticed Hammond slyly talking with Jones and two of the contrabands at different times during the forenoon, but when I approached they sidled off. I did not think much of it at the time. The rations of grog were served out to the men at noon, and after seeing them busily at work cleaning the deck, I took a stroll up as far as the Lafayette Hotel. I returned about three o'clock, and

when I entered the ship yard one of the contrabands came running towards me, exclaiming, "Massa mate ! massa mate ! de men done clar'd out ; dey say dey guine to hab high ole time."

"What do you mean, you black piece of ebony?" I asked, interrupting him ; "speak out now, so that I can understand you."

"Well, de men done gone off an' got drunk on Massa Mills' whiskey ; ole Dunnyboger's luff dem hab de dem'john."

"All of them gone, did you say?"

"No, massa, de brack men dey ober dar side de ship, 'cept Abe and Jeff ; dey done gone 'long wid Jones an' de rest."

My worst fears were realized ; the men were not satisfied, as I knew they would not be, with three drinks, when by some simple artifice they could get more. Now I knew that Jones and the others had been concocting some plot when my back was turned. I hastened now to find Mr. Mills to inform him of the result of his liberality. I found him at the hotel just spoken of, and upon learning my business with him, he accompanied me to Donzleberg's store at once. The carpenter felt pretty well cut up about the matter, and questioned me as we went along as to how they managed to get the liquor, and even went so far as to blame me for

leaving the ship yard, something I had been in the habit of doing whenever the mood suited me.

Arriving at the store we found the old fellow in, and seemingly glad to see us too. I knew by the old man's manner that he was aware that something had happened.

"Vell, dis vash a goot day Mr. Pills," coming forward to meet us, "unt I an glat to meet mit you anydime, Mr. Planding, in mine shop," turning and addressing me; "you don't come round sometimes so ofen," and Donzleberg held out his hand to me, which I was forced to shake. The fact was I did not like the old fellow very well, and so steered clear of his old rattle-trap store, and only went in there when I could not get my wants supplied any where else.

"Look here, Donzleberg," said the excited Mills, "what kind of a trick is this that you have been putting up on me, now?"

"Treek! vat you mean by dot?" said the Dutchman, rubbing his hands together, and grinning up into the carpenter's face.

"Why, here I leave that whiskey with you for safe keeping, and no sooner is my back turned than you let the boys have it, without an order from me, and they have gone off and got drunk, I suppose, and the devil will be to pay if the old man finds it out," said

Mr. Mills, addressing the latter part of his conversation to me.

“Yaw! Mr. Pills, I give dot whiskey to de poys unt your order, mit your name ont.”

“My name on the order! Ten thousand devils! I have given no order to any one to draw upon you for anything.”

“Py tarn! vat you call dot? Ish dot von orter? Ish dot your writin’, hey?” and the old Dutchman thrust a dirty slip of paper up under the carpenter’s nose. Mr. Mills took the paper from him and read it aloud:

“Deliver to the bearer the demijohn under the counter, in your shop, containing the whiskey. The bearer is all right.

MR. PILLS.”

As the carpenter finished reading, I laughed outright, although I was aware the next instant by doing so I was laying myself liable to punishment, but he was so worked up about the affair that he only said:

“It’s no laughing matter; if those fellows get drunk they will give the whole business away, and I shall stand a chance of getting cashiered.”

“Ish dot orter no goot? You laff at dot, hey? Yaw, I lets de poys haf dot whiskey mit your name there ‘Pills.’ You see dot, hey? By jimminy!” and the Dutchman laughed out, “ha! ha! dem poys blays a schoke on you, Mr. Pills, hey?”

“Plays—a—joke—on—me, why you thick, blunder-headed old Dutchman—by—it’s too bad. I’ll—here—can’t you read? That’s not my name, *Pills*. Mills, *Mills*, is my name,” and the carpenter glared at the Dutchman, who only said :

“Yaw, *Pills*; don’t I say dot. What for I let de poys hab dot demijohn if I see not your name *Pills* on dot, hey?”

“Oh, it’s no use, we cannot make anything by stopping here any longer talking with this blunder-headed old sour-cROUT,” said the excited Mr. Mills, “come on, Blanding, and help me to find them,” and he turned and left the store and I followed him. After a long search we found them at the camp of the Third New York Cavalry. They had drunk up all the whiskey and were inclined not to obey when Mr. Mills told them to return to the ship yard. As they hesitated, Mr. Mills told them they could take their choice, go back to the ship yard quietly and go to work, or go on board the “Louisiana” under arrest. After some saucy remarks from Jones, who was the worse for liquor, of the alternatives they chose to return to the yard, and so sullenly followed Mr. Mills in that direction while I brought up the rear. Nothing was seen of Abe and Jeff, the two contrabands, neither did we look for them. Arriving at the ship yard the men set to work to help the contrabands finish cleaning up



the litter around the vessel. Mr. Mills kept me company the rest of the afternoon and all went well, although Jones threatened to become obstreperous several times during the afternoon, but with a little moral suasion we managed to keep him in the harness.

Four o'clock came and we returned to the gun-boat as usual. I was afraid Jones' condition would be noticed by our lynx-eyed executive officer, Mr. Westervelt, for he had not worn off the effect of his potations and showed that something unusual was the matter with him. By good luck the lieutenant was not on the quarter deck when we went over the side, and I hurried Jones forward out of sight of any of the other officers, and when all was safe, I drew a long breath, mentally hoping the carpenter was too well satisfied with the results of his first setting them up to ever want to try it again.

The schooner was all ready now to launch, and next day Mr. Mills invited the officers on shore to witness her float away, at the ship yard. The officers boarded the schooner and took their seats on the deck, while the carpenter stood ready to break a bottle of whiskey over the stern. "All-ready," sang out the carpenter, and the chocks were knocked out from under the vessel and she glided gracefully into the water. We gave three cheers as she floated in the middle of Tar river, where she was sent by the impetus given by slid-

ing from the greased ways. The whiskey was spilled over her stern, and she was named, "Renshaw." Her future occupation a store ship, and she made a good one. The carpenter was put in command, much to his satisfaction.

## CHAPTER XI.

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### EXPEDITION TO GREENVILLE.

**A**S we were now well prepared for the rebels below, the next thing was to find out what was above us in the river, or on the shores to Greenville. One morning after we had holy-stoned the decks until they fairly shone, and had partaken of our breakfast, the boatswain's mate's shrill whistle was heard to pipe all hands, and with stentorian lungs he called the men to quarters.

“Do you hear! All hands to quarters; all hands muster aft on the quarter deck.”

When we had all assembled on the deck, lieutenant Westervelt said he had called us together to inform us that an expedition was to start about dusk to go up Tar river on a reconnoissance, and he wanted volunteers. Every man in line raised his hand signifying his willingness to go. But the lieutenant only wanted twenty. The result was he had to pick his men. Tom and I were of the fortunate twenty chosen. I had many offers from the less fortunate to go in my place, but I refused them all, for, sink or swim, I was bound to go up Tar river. That day a stern wheel steamboat arrived in Little

Washington and coming up alongside made fast to the "Louisiana," and we were soon made aware of the fact, that she was intended for our use. Being flat bottomed, she could run in a foot and a half of water and consequently was just fitted for our purpose. We intended to start about five o'clock, and in the meantime prepared everything for our journey. The boat howitzer was hoisted from its position on the fore-castle deck and mounted on wheels, which were stowed in the chain-locker for such an expedition as we were now entering upon. Drag ropes were attached, and powder, shot and shell were put in cassion boxes on the axle tree each side of the gun. When all was ready the gun was run on board the stern wheeler and four days' rations were issued to the crew. On the steamer was a twenty-four pound gun mounted on the forward deck, which was intended to be left on board with a gun's crew, while we went on shore with the other. Everything being now in readiness, forty soldiers of the North Carolina men were marched on board, and we were ready to leave. As we were putting off, some of the boys cried out to Blucher, one of our number, "I say Blucher, what's the number of your bag and hammock? You won't need them any more; and say, Durand, we'll write to your mother," and much more to the same effect; and all the time they looked as if they were attending a funeral.

On the port and starboard sides of the boat, hay bales were placed to protect us from sharp shooters on the shore as we steamed along. Pretty soon came the order, "Cast off," and we steamed up the river. Nothing worthy of note happened on our passage up, however. A few miles from the starting point, the river became so narrow that we could almost jump on shore from either side of the boat. We steamed ahead now very cautiously for it was just the place for an ambush. The river grew narrower, and the limbs of the trees on the banks grazed the steamer's sides as we passed along. The lead was thrown and we found that we had three feet of water. A little further, we had two feet and the engine was stopped, for Mr. Lay, our chief engineer, who was in command of the expedition, concluded, in consequence of the river being so narrow, and the water so shoal, to make the remainder of the journey to Greenville by land. But as it was now quite dark, and Greenville was yet some distance up the river, he determined to tie up to the trees on the banks and wait for daylight before exploring any further, for we were now as far as we could go in the steamer, and to all appearances the river was now unnavigable even for a launch. So the steamer was made fast bow and stern to the trees on both sides of the river. Pickets were placed at some distance in the woods on either side, and watches were set on board. The men

then turned in to sleep. I had the first watch on deck from nine until eleven. About ten o'clock I heard the sound of the blows of an axe, as though some one was felling trees. I immediately notified Mr. Lay, who at once came on deck. He listened attentively for a few minutes, then said, "Boys, they are felling trees across the river below us, to prevent our return in the steamer. At any rate we can do nothing to-night, but we will run down in the morning as far as we can, and if need be force our way through. Keep a sharp lookout now, and call me at once if anything unusual happens." As he spoke, the noise of the chopping suddenly ceased, and there came the crash of a falling tree.

"That don't sound in the direction of the river," said Mr. Lay. "What do you think, Blanding?"

"My opinion is, sir, that the tree was felled inshore some way from the bank, for I have listened to the sound of the axe for some time, and when the wind blows it drives the sound down the river, and when it is calm it sounds inshore."

"Well, I hope you are right; if the chopping continues let me know it, and I will reconnoitre in that direction," and bidding us keep our eyes open he turned in again.

Nothing more was heard to cause me to arouse Mr. Lay again, and at eleven o'clock I was relieved and

turned in, perchance to dream of home. The rest of the night passed quietly, nothing transpiring to cause a second alarm, and in the morning all hands were called to breakfast which consisted of hard-tack and pork, washed down with a pint of coffee apiece. The pickets were then called in, the lines cast off from the shore, and we backed down the river nearly half a mile before we were able to come about. A bright lookout was kept on either side for signs of rebs, and we were expecting to see, at any moment, trees felled across the river to check our further progress. Yet we steamed along and the river grew wider and wider. Mr. Lay then gave an order to stop her, for he had now come to the conclusion that the chopping we had heard in the night was made by some woodsman near his house back from the river. At any rate it could not be accounted for, and as we were not blockaded we did not care to account for it. The old steamer was now headed up the river again, and we pounded along until we neared our former anchorage, when Mr. Lay concluded to make fast, and traverse the rest of the distance to Greenville by land. We knew that there was nothing, as far as we had gone, either in the shape of a ram or scow, that could endanger our forces below, and if anything was being constructed at Greenville, it would have to be drawn to the river bank first, and then launched, and we were now confident that nothing of any magnitude

could be above us in the river. Forty men were chosen to go to Greenville, twenty on each side of the river. They were mostly North Carolina men, who knew every foot of the ground from Little Washington to Greenville. They set out in fine spirits, nevertheless keeping a sharp lookout for bushwhackers, for we were in the enemy's country and therefore it behooved us to be careful, for danger lurked in every crook and turn of the river. It was about nine o'clock in the forenoon when they set out, and their return was not looked for until late in the afternoon, so all we could do was to amuse ourselves until their arrival. We were surrounded by dense woods, in consequence of which ten seamen did picket duty on land, five on each side of the steamer. The remainder lay about the deck and smoked their pipes, deriving solid comfort from that source. Everything seemed quiet, although the farmer bushwhackers could not but know that we were up the river, as we passed two houses on the bluff, and a man was seen to dodge around the corner of one of them as we hove in sight. Three o'clock had passed; the time began to drag, and we wished for the return of our land force. Between three and four o'clock we heard firing in the direction taken by the troops, and the conclusion arrived at on board the steamer, was that the boys had found the Johnnies at or near Greenville.



The firing was very indistinct although we were within a few miles of Greenville.

We listened intently for some time but the firing had ceased. Mr. Lay now began to make preparations for sending ten men of our crew to reinforce them, when a voice from one of the out-posts reached us, "Halt! Who comes there?" "Friends, with the countersign." "Advance, one, and give the countersign."

In a few moments our friends made their appearance tired and bedraggled with mud. We eagerly gathered round them to hear the news. It seemed that their progress was not impeded at all, except by the thick brush and briars that lined the banks of the river, until they reached Greenville, which they found to be occupied by a few women and children, and a number of old men. There were no signs of anything built, or building that could in any way affect us at Little Washington. The Buffaloes had endured many insults from the women, who called them traitors and bade them come and protect their homes against the hated vandals. As they turned their backs on Greenville, a squad of rebel cavalry appeared on the bridge leading from Greenville to the woods on the opposite side, and fired a volley at our boys, which was returned with interest, but the distance was too great for either side to do any harm with their leaden messengers, and the rebels dis-

appeared in the woods again. No other incident worthy of remark happened to them on their return down the river.

After hearing the report, Mr. Lay concluded to cast the lines from the shore, run down where the river was considerably wider and anchor for the night, in the middle of the stream, for it was coming in thick and foggy, and we could, if attacked, defend ourselves much better there than at our old anchorage; besides all this, we should be all together on board, and with a gun on the port side and another on the starboard side loaded with grape and canister, be prepared for almost any emergency. We then cast off our lines and steamed down the river until we came to a place where the banks of the river side were quite low, where we dropped our anchor. The night was passed in much the same manner as the previous one; watches were set, and we turned in to obtain what rest we could, for in the morning Mr. Lay said we should steam down the river to a landing, where he proposed to take the howitzer on wheels, and leaving only a gun's crew on board the stern wheeler, land, and march back into the interior some eight or nine miles on a reconnoissance. We turned out at four o'clock—eight bells—next morning, and immediately after breakfast got up our anchor and ran down the river until a high luff was discerned, upon

which was seen a board cabin and a man standing on the outside, apparently watching us.

The prow of the steamer was turned inshore, and in a few moments more we ran up alongside the bank and made fast. Our few preparations to land were soon made. Mr. Lay hailed the man and asked him if there were any Johnnies about. He replied that there were about fifty rebel cavalrymen just below the bend in the river, concealed on a high bluff waiting for us to come down, when their intention was to fire a volley into our craft as she passed the spot where they were hidden. Mr. Lay thanked the man for his information, and went on with his preparations to land. We found it hard work to drag the howitzer up the steep incline, but it was finally accomplished. Some of our North Carolina men knew the man with whom Mr. Lay had just been speaking, and said he was a Union man, and that his word could be relied upon.

Mr. Lay intended to give the rebels a reception.

We found upon landing, a road that led down from the old man's house, which was about a half mile from the river, and the place where four roads centered. At the side of one of these roads was an old log cabin, which commanded an unobstructed view of the road leading to the river where the rebels were believed to be hiding. The soldiers were given a position in the cabin, and through the chinks of the logs they com-

man a view of the road spoken of. The howitzer was run in behind the cabin, and the trail-ropes led out towards the road. Pickets were then placed down the road, in the woods, within sight of the cabin, with orders from Mr. Lay that as soon as they saw any rebels, to step out to the edge of the road, keeping out of sight of the rebels all the while, and hold up their hands, then make a detour and return by our rear. In the meantime, the captain of the steamer had orders that as soon as one of our boys made his appearance on the bank of the river and raised his hand, to steam down the river near enough to the bluffs where the Johnnies were lying in wait, open fire upon them with the twenty-four pounder and drive them out. The supposition was, that when they were forced to leave their ambush, they would retreat up the road towards us and we could bag them. But things turned out differently from what Mr. Lay expected.

We soon heard the gun from the steamer, as fire was opened upon the confederates' hiding place, and our excitement became intense. We lay extended upon the ground, ready at a moment's warning to grasp the trail-ropes and run the howitzer out to the center where the roads forked. After waiting for what seemed to me to be half an hour, the order came, "Ready, run her out." We all grasped the trail-ropes, stood erect, and swung the cannon out into the center of the road,

expecting to encounter the enemy in force. Fancy our surprise, when instead of seeing the enemy in front of us, on turning our heads we saw about twenty of the rebel cavalry riding leisurely up the road towards us. On perceiving us they came to a sudden halt, and seemed too much surprised to realize their danger. That second or two, however, while they stood dismayed, was just enough for us. The order came promptly, "Ready, aim, fire." Bang! went a charge of grape shot, hustling towards them, with what effect we could not really make out. Part of them wheeled their horses and jumped the fence on the right hand side of the road, and then urged them to a gallop across an old cornfield. Two of them must have been hit by our fire, for they reeled in their saddles as their horses bore them away. The remainder split up, and a part of them drove their horses at a break-neck speed into the woods on the left, while others galloped down the road. All this happened in a few seconds of time. We had a point blank range on the Johnnies galloping down the road, and the next time we fired, it made the dust fly and obscured them, but still they rode on, apparently unharmed by the grape shot, and turning to the left, disappeared in the woods.

Pretty soon, "Zip," came a ball, "Zip, zip, zip," they continued to come. We fired a few rounds into the woods, across one corner of the cornfield, from

whence the shots seemed to proceed. In a few moments the rebels appeared on the edge of the woods, and in sight from the log cabin. No sooner had they made their appearance than the loyal Buffaloes gave them a volley. Ostensibly this was another surprise to them, as their intention, I think, was to charge upon us, thinking we had only the gun's crew and no support. We had however, twenty men of the gun's crew, ten of them armed with Sharpe's rifles, cutlasses and navy revolvers. All the seamen were armed with cutlasses and revolvers. The enemy were now seen to deploy their forces through the woods, so as to get into a position where they would be able to pick off the men at the howitzer. We loaded and fired at this juncture without waiting for orders, turning our gun as though it hung on a pivot, and describing a circle, discharging it as fast as we could ram the charges home. Adam Blucher, of Philadelphia, was sponging the gun and in the excitement of the moment, neglected to sponge sufficiently, leaving fire in the chamber. When we rammed the next charge home, before Blucher had withdrawn his rammer, and while the shot-man was standing ready with a charge of grape shot to put into the mouth of the cannon, there came a premature explosion. All was excitement now for a few moments; our rammer and sponge were gone, torn from the blood stained hands of Blucher, and hurled into the woods in the

direction of the rebels, who were blazing away again as we ceased firing. Blucher was thrown in a bleeding and unconscious state to one corner of the Virginia rail fence where he lay as one dead. I grabbed a hand-spike or trail bar and jerked it from its place to serve as a rammer. The boys seeing my object tore off their blue shirts, and with two of them, we improvised a sponge, making it more secure by binding our silk handkerchiefs around it. The rebs in the mean time had come nearer to us and their bullets were falling uncomfortably close. When all was ready, Mr. Lay ordered us to open fire, and commanded the force in the log cabin to keep up a hot fire on the rebs. This was done, but with what effect we were unable to determine. We were now ordered to make a retreat towards the river, for this fighting unseen enemies we were not accustomed to. But the bushwackers were right in their element. Slowly we retreated towards the road leading to the river, where our steamer lay awaiting us, the rebels following us at a respectful distance and sending in a volley once in awhile, causing no severe casualties amongst us. Blucher was carried on a litter to the steamer. As we neared the river the firing from the enemy ceased, and we hastened our steps to get to the boat, which we soon reached, finding her close inshore. The crew were on the lookout for us, and were very anxious on our account.

The howitzer was let down the steep bank with our trail-ropes, while the crew on the steamer kept up a steady fire of shot and shell over our heads, the howitzer having been mounted on the hurricane deck before our appearance, so that the proper elevation could be attained to throw the shot over the bluff. It showed the quick perception of the gunner—I wish I could remember his name—and his fitness for the position of captain of the gun.

In fifteen minutes' time we had the howitzer on board the steamer, and the crew quickly followed. The fasts were cast off from the shore, and Mr. Lay headed her for the middle of the river, which having been attained, we opened fire with both guns and gave the rebels a few farewell shots; then headed the steamer down the river for Little Washington. Blucher was badly wounded, his right arm being broken in three places, and part of his left hand shot away, while he was blinded by the explosion of powder in his face. The rebels did not follow us to the bank of the river; at any rate we did not see or hear from them again during our passage down. We passed the bluff where they had been lying in ambush for us, and without anything worthy of mention arrived at Little Washington, where we ran up alongside the "Louisiana." As soon as we were all safe on board, poor Blucher's wounds were attended to by Surgeon Bradly, and he was subsequently taken to



the hospital. With the exception of a shattered thumb on my left hand, Blucher's injuries were the only ones inflicted upon us by the rebels. The firing had been heard in Little Washington, and Commander Renshaw was very anxious about the matter. The excitement did not abate on board the "Louisiana" till we made our appearance.

We accomplished all we had been sent to do, and so ended our expedition up Tar river, which nearly became being so disastrous to those who took part in it.

## CHAPTER XII.

### AT WORK IN THE BURIAL LOT.

**T**HERE were days when the time hung heavy on our hands, and we sat about the deck with little else to do but mend and put our clothes in order and gossip like so many half-grown school boys. Among one hundred men and boys there was always plenty to talk about, and we passed many pleasant days while stretched out beneath the awning that hung from the hurricane deck to the foremast. It was indeed pleasant to listen to the harmless chatter of a score or more of the ship's company seated upon the clean white deck; some arguing in regard to the war's ending, and upon it betting money that none of them possessed or knew where to get. All I could liken the scene to was a country school house in which the scholars were all reciting at once. Frequently, under the influence of the continual buzz, I would doze off, and that which seemed to me so loud at first, would fall upon my ears like the faint, far-off hum of bees around a hive; the sound would seem to recede, and finally die out altogether as I lost myself in sleep. At such times,

only those who have experienced the feeling can in any way describe the delightful sense of abandon one feels, as he lies upon the deck, shut out from the piercing rays of the sun, while cares and troubles waft slowly away, and all thought of the dangers which surround him are lost. He appears to be entirely given up to the enjoyment of his imagination, and all things seem to melt away in a glorious indistinctness, while dreams of home and the loved ones often mingle in his sleep.

It was under some such experience as this, that one day, about six bells, (eleven o'clock) I awoke, and with eyes partly open looked around upon the same busy scene, the same throng of men and boys, many of them under twenty, and it did seem to me that I should never have energy enough to get upon my feet again. Looking aft, I observed Mr. Mills making his way slowly forward. I watched him and saw him making inquiries of some of the crew, who pointed in the direction of where I was reclining. Whatever they meant by pointing in my direction, I felt satisfied that it concerned me, so I arose to my feet as he approached and allowed myself to be seen. Approaching me he said, "Mate, you may take Jones and go ashore this afternoon, and see if you can make the head-boards of the graves of those poor fellows in the grave-yard look a little more respectable. I was up there this morning and it really made me feel ashamed to think that they had

been neglected so long. You had better take some of the new boards and red paint along with you, and I will come around soon and see how you progress with the work."

"Aye, aye, sir; I will go ashore immediately after dinner and make a beginning." Mr. Mills then turned and went aft.

The grave-yard was situated at the south-west end of the town and enclosed about four acres. As soon after dinner as possible I called Jones, and we started for the location, armed with red paint-pots and boards and the necessary tools wherewith to prosecute the work. Reaching the yard, I walked up and down the paths between the graves, which had become overgrown with grass and rank with weeds. After being engaged in our work for some little time, I said to Jones that the next time we came on shore we might bring some hoes and dig the grass and weeds up, also a scythe to mow around the graves, which were almost hid with a most luxuriant growth of tall waving grass. About all that we could do that day was to look around and ascertain what was needed for the next few days that we should be employed there. I found upon examination that we should have quite a number of new boards to erect, as the old ones were so delapidated that several of them had fallen to decay, while the letters on others were almost obliterated. Nearly all that were

buried in this yard were soldiers ; the few that were not soldiers had belonged to our crew, four of whom had died with the chills and the fever. With the exception of these, the head-stone to nearly every grave read after this manner :

No. 50.  
John Doe.  
Reg. Mass. Vol.  
Co. K.  
Aged 16 years.  
Shot on Picket.

When Little Washington was first captured by our forces, the pickets were shot nearly every night by the rebs who crept up to them, picked them off, and then escaped in the darkness. It was certainly a cowardly thing to do, to steal up to a man and kill him in cold blood at his post. There was some excuse for surprising a picket post, now and then, and capturing or even taking life at such times in the encounters. This was done by both sides, but I never heard of an instance in which a Union man crept upon his hands and knees, to stab a solitary, lonely foe in the darkness of night. The farmer guerrillas have a great deal to answer for in this respect, but I will not judge them, for the consciences of those who have survived the war, must surely

trouble them for disposing of their fellow-beings in so murderous a manner.

“Say, Steve, don’t you see that all the soldiers’ grave-boards here, contain a record of the ages of those buried, and that they are all about twenty years old, and some even under?” said Jones to me.

“Yes, I noticed that most of them are boys. Poor fellows ! its too bad that they could not have had an equal chance for their lives with their cruel foes. There are many aching hearts in the homes of the north now, Jones, on account of these poor fellows sleeping here in the North Carolina clay.”

Mr. Mills came round in the course of the afternoon, and upon viewing the graves and the surroundings, said we had better go on board and come the next day better prepared for work. As it was early in the afternoon, I asked permission for Jones and myself to stay ashore until four o’clock, and it was granted us. We strolled about town and visited the fort and the Third New York Cavalry ; then went up to where the Forty-fourth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers were encamped, near the fort. There we found them hurriedly engaged in packing up. Upon inquiry we were informed that the boys’ term of service had expired the day before, and that they were to leave in a transport that night, the boat having arrived while Jones and I

were at the burial ground. With songs and merry jests, the members of the Forty-fourth were flying hither and thither, packing their various articles, strapping them up in their knapsacks, and fastening the latter on their backs, preparatory to making a start. When all was ready, the regiment was drawn up in line, while the band discoursed sweet music, comprising the soul-inspiring national airs, and finally ended with playing "Home Sweet Home" as they marched down the main street. This tune made the boys, whose time had not expired, and who were gathered around, feel homesick. I own up to experiencing such a feeling. Jones and I followed them down to the wharf, and waited there until the transport sailed, which it soon did, after all were on board. As they steamed away, they were greeted with cheers from the crews of the different gun-boats in the harbor, and from all the soldiers gathered together on the wharf. I cannot tell the time when I experienced such a lonesome feeling as came over me while standing there watching their departure. Jones' face, as I looked at him, wore such a woe-begone expression, that despite my own visible emotion, I could not help laughing at him.

"It's all right, Steve, but you would laugh a great deal heartier if you were on that steamer," he said, as he pointed in the direction of the fast disappearing vessel.

“Well, never mind Jones, we will, God willing, be taking in some such trip as that when our time expires, then we can enjoy a laugh at our own expense. Come on, let’s go on board the old “Louisiana” and drown our sorrow in a cup of tea.”

“Well, I guess it’s about time; see the signal is flying for the liberty men to come on board.”

Giving one last look at the steamer, which could be faintly discerned in the distance, as she was rounding Hill’s point, we bent our steps in the direction of the wharf opposite where our gun-boat was anchored. Arriving there, the dingy soon put in an appearance, and stepping into her we were rowed to the gun-boat. In a few moments more we were seated around our mess cloth, on the berth deck, busily engaged chatting with the boys on the events of the day, and chewing our salt horse and hard-tack, washing down the whole with a quaff, now and then, of very strong tea, minus sugar, minus milk.

The next morning at two bells, we were taken on shore in the launch. We had with us a number of new head-boards, and having procured two or three hoes, we started for the burying ground, accompanied by Howes Crowell, Tom, and Jencks, the last mentioned having been detailed at my request, to help in cleaning away the weeds and grass from the path, while Jones swung the scythe. It was tedious work, but in



a day or two, we had the weeds cleared away from the graves, and were ready to commence lettering. We were nearly a week at this task, but when it was done we were more than rewarded by the respectable appearance of the yard, and every head-board could be easily deciphered even while standing at a distance.

Letters came regularly by the mail steamers two or three times each month, sometimes I received, as the boys said, more than my allowance, and well I might, for I corresponded with quite a number in the States trying to keep them posted in our movements.

Upon returning to the ship one day after working on shore, a letter was handed to me by Tom, which he said, had come in the "Curlew" that afternoon. I had noticed the "Curlew" when she came up the river, but hardly expected a letter, for I had received three by the last mail boat. Opening it I found it was from home and it informed me that my father was dead. It was so sudden, coming so soon after Lizzie's death, that I did not seem to realize the sad news. Lizzie the youngest of the family had passed away, and now father, the head of the family, had followed, both in a few months. At this rate, thought I, who would be left to welcome Phil and I home, provided we were spared to return again. My eyes filled with tears that I could not force back; this second sorrow seemed more than I could bear; but hastily brushing aside the tear

drops that were welling up from concealed fountains, and filling my eyes to overflowing, I went forward to the fore-castle deck, and walked back and forth athwart ship, until the mist had partially cleared from before my eyes. Every heart beat went out across the water—which separated us—to those dear ones left to me, who in our absence, had the brunt of the sorrowful burden to bear. Tom joined me on deck while I was wrestling with my feelings and endeavoring to keep pace with me as I walked excitedly back and forth, plied me with questions in regard to my sorrow. I could only reply incoherently, but thrust the open letter into his hand, and motioned him to read it, which he proceeded to do, seating himself on the capstan while he did so. Meanwhile I continued my walk, and the hard feelings which had tried to predominate over the better in my bosom, in spite of all I could do to the contrary, seemingly now took a different turn, and I felt myself becoming more resigned, believing “He doeth all things well.”

Tom jumped down from the capstan as he finished reading the letter and approached me holding out his hand. I took it and shook it till he winced.

“Steve, old fellow, I am truly sorry for you, and I pity Phil, too, poor fellow! I wish I had persuaded him to visit home before enlisting; truly it must be a

comfortable solace to you now, Steve, that you went home before starting on this cruise."

"Yes, Tom, I should always have been reminded that I did not do my duty if I had neglected to have gone home that day before setting out on this perilous voyage. But it's terrible hard to think that I could not have been present at the last sad rites, and looked once more into the dear faces before they were consigned to their last resting place."

"Cheer up," said Tom, as the crew began to gather around and question me in regard to my trouble, "and I pray you may have no more such sombre news during our term of service," he continued, grasping me again by the hand and giving it a hearty wring.

I briefly stated to my shipmates as they gathered on the forecastle the extent of my new sorrow, and I had not a doubt of the genuineness of their sympathy expressed in my behalf. One cannot always bear the marks of a sorrow felt in the face, especially on board ship, and although I strove to put on a calm and even a cheerful exterior, many days elapsed before the rough edge of my sorrow wore away.

One beautiful day in June, a boat's crew from the "Louisiana" was ordered ashore, to go into the woods and back out about two cords of wood that had been cut and corded up by the rebels previous to our occupation of the town. This wood was in a swamp

opposite the gun-boat. On our arrival at the wood-side, we found that we should have to lay a plank walk from the edge of the swamp to the place where the wood was piled up. There were boards in plenty around us, so there was no difficulty in procuring sufficient for our needs. It was a very swampy place, and a large number of lizards were seen crawling about and protruding their heads from almost every bog; slimy, nasty-looking objects they were indeed. The boards did very well to walk on, but they sunk below the surface at every step we took, and as most of us were bare-foot we many times thought that we could feel the slimy creatures at our feet, and when by chance a blade of grass touched the bare legs a kick would be the result and a jump that would nearly land some one into the mire. One of the men, whose name was Reuben, and who hailed from some town in New Hampshire, was as green a specimen of humanity as it has ever been my fortune to come across. Many were the pranks played upon him by his mess-mates, but he never seemed to get mad, and good-naturedly answered back our sallies of wit and chaff. When he left home he brought with him a pair of number eleven boots. Egad! what boots they were. On rainy days he would persist in wearing them, contrary to all orders on board ship. Reuben was with us when we lugged the wood out of the swamp, and he was in

his glory, with his cow-hide boots on and his pants thrust into the legs. For once the boots were doing him some service, as he could go where we durst not follow, so the fun was all on his side apparently.

“Gosh!” he said, as we were coming out of the swamp, each man and boy with a heavy load of wood, “gosh! there’s a thundering big snake,” and he gave a wild shout, and pranced up and down on the plank walk like a Comanche Indian in the war dance.

That was enough for us; at the word snake, down went the wood from our backs, and without stopping to ascertain the extent of the truth in Reuben’s statement, we all bolted for the edge of the woods. One of the men in front stumbled, and those immediately after fell over him and each other, ker-splash into the mire. Regaining our footing, another rush was made for the opening, and we were not particular to keep to the plank walk either. Up to our knees in the mire, away we went, the mud flying in every direction. We were sorry pictures to behold, all covered with slime from head to foot. When we reached the hard ground, we threw ourselves down on the grass, kicking up our heels, and nearly bursting with laughter, as we eyed each other and commented on our appearance. Soon we discerned Reuben coming out of the woods with a load of wood on his back that completely hid the upper portion of his body from our view, but the boots were

plainly visible, and that's the reason we knew it was he ; there was no mistaking the boots. With a bland, and almost child-like smile, he approached us and threw his load down upon the ground.

“Wall, boys,” he said, “I was mistaken about the snake ; it was only a thundering big crooked stick that some of you fellows dropped. But by jimminy ! I was scared some, wa'nt you ?”

Reuben sold us out cheap, and we were forced to own up to the corn, bitter though it was, to be sold by him. We did not hear the last of it for many a day. At this juncture we noticed a signal flying on the mast-head of the gun-boat for our return, so we boarded our boat, and silently rowed to the “Louisiana,” where we were greeted on our arrival, with shouts of laughter, and many a joke at the expense of our delapidated clothing, as we climbed on board. Reuben brought up our rear as usual. I was just about going down the fore hatchway, when the cry of “Man overboard !” came from the port gangway. I ran to the side and looked over, and beheld Reuben under water, his hands and feet going like pumping engines, in his endeavors to regain the surface ; but it was of no avail, his boots were too heavy for him to pump himself to the surface. Just then, some one of the crew ran across the deck, and diving overboard, swam to him and seized him ; Reuben returned the

compliment and lay hold of his savior. Reuben wore his hair very long, and it could be seen just below the surface of the water, resembling a great bunch of seaweed bobbing up and down. A man in the small boat close to the ship's side pushed out an oar to them, which they seized and were pulled to the surface and then hauled into the boat. Reuben was nearly pegged out through his exertions, and was unconscious for upwards of twenty minutes, but we rolled him in hot blankets, forced plenty of stimulants down his throat, and in time he was all right. The boots which had come so near anchoring him to the bottom of Tar river, were his particular aversion ever after, although he vowed that he would keep them and take them home with him when his time expired, and he did.

Fourth of July was in the near prospective, the glorious old Fourth! What shall we do to keep up its observance? was asked by one and all as the time drew near. Certainly a national salute would be fired from each man-of-war vessel in the harbor, but what did that signify? We must have something more than that, and so we set our wits to work, to plan something more lasting than the firing of guns, work that really was nothing new for us to do. It was not until the night before the Fourth that any decision was arrived at. Mr. Westervelt came to our assistance on the morning of the Fourth, and informed the crew that he

had thought the matter over in the night, and had come to the conclusion, that if the captains of the other gun-boats in the harbor, would lend a hand and enter into the spirit of the thing, by allowing a boat's crew from each steamer to attend, "Why," said he, "I propose a regetta, or a race between the three boats' crews."

It was just the thing, and the crew were unanimous in its favor. The lieutenant ordered the second cutter away immediately, and in person, went to the gun-boat "Ceres" to obtain permission, then to the "Commodore Hull," and from the captain of each boat he obtained permission to allow the crew to take part in the proposed race. They were all delighted with the idea and promised to have the men at their stations promptly at 2:30 o'clock.

Upon his return, the lieutenant reported his success, and we all manifested our appreciation of his efforts by a unanimous shaking of hands all round, and the smiling faces of the officers and the men showed how great were the anticipations of the morrow.

The morning of the Fourth dawned bright and fair, and gave every indication of being a pleasant day. The day was ushered in by the firing of cannon both from ship and shore. The men flew around to do their usual morning duties. Mr. Lay, the chief engineer, ordered up from below an infernal machine that he had constructed during his leisure hours, and which he now



thought would be a fitting time to try. The machine was put into the launch, and Mr. Lay, accompanied by two men, got in after it, and pushed out to an old shallop that lay at anchor on the west side of the river. The machine was fastened in the center of the boat. It was of cylindrical shape, and a long, hollow shaft extended right through it, and at one end was fastened a torpedo, so constructed that when the shaft was run out—which was done by turning two cranks worked by a man on each side—the torpedo would drop off and explode at the same time. The feat of blowing up the old vessel was successfully accomplished, and the means employed showed the feasibility of Mr. Lay's plan to destroy a much larger vessel. It was dinner time when Mr. Lay returned to the "Louisiana", and he was heartily congratulated by the other officers, on the success of the machine, to perfect which he had labored so long and faithfully.

Soon after dinner, boats from the "Ceres" and the "Hull" arrived alongside, and the officers and men came on board to arrange the preliminaries. A large number of the officers of the other two boats, and officers from the fort came on board to witness the finish and encourage the men. The arrangements were soon perfected and all was nearly ready when Tom said that there was one thing that had been neglected.

"What is that, boy?" said some one.

“Why, the naming of the boats, to be sure,” said Tom.

“Yes, yes,” shouted out fifty voices at once.

“That’s a good idea, Tom,” said Joe Reynolds, who was coxswain of our boat.

“Well, what name shall we give to our boat, Steve?” he said, turning to me as I was the nearest person to him.

“I think ‘Julia’ would be a good name. I like the sound of the name of ‘Julia,’” sang out Joe. How is it, fellows, shall it be ‘Julia,’ or have some of you a name to suggest?”

There was a difference of opinion as to what name should be adopted, but the crew finally adopted the name “Julia.” In the meantime, the crew of the other boats had been busy selecting names for their respective crafts, and succeeded, after a good deal of chaff had been thrown back and forth among them. The crew of the “Commodore” chose for their boat the name “Betsey Ann,” and the crew of the “Ceres” called theirs “Aunt Phebe,” which name being made known was hailed with acclamation and delight. The coxswain said that Aunt Phebe had not been beaten in any thing yet she had undertaken, and he made his brag that the representative of the name would come in ahead of the others. Prizes were offered by the officers to their various crews to induce them to greater

exertion. A prize of ten pounds of tobacco was offered for the boat that came in first. The second prize was five pounds. The starting point was a buoy right abreast of the "Louisiana," and the track was a mile and a half and return. The boats were arranged in the following order: The "Julia" of the "Louisiana;" the "Betsey Ann" of the "Commodore Hull," and the "Aunt Phebe" of the "Ceres." All being in readiness, the word was given to go, and the Jack tars bent to their oars and fairly made the boats leap out of the water with the impetus of their first strokes. At the start the "Betsey Ann" took the lead and held it part way down the stretch, but the "Julia" was only a half-boat's-length behind her, while the "Aunt Phebe" was two lengths behind, and working hard to make up the gap as they neared the buoy. At Rodman's point the "Julia" was ahead, and the "Aunt Phebe" had taken the second place, while the "Betsey Ann" was half-a-length astern. The boys of the "Louisiana" who were on board that ship climbed up into the rigging and cheered them to greater exertions, although the distance was too great to make ourselves heard, but then we must do something to give our excitement vent. As the "Julia" rounded the buoy she spurted and left the "Aunt Phebe" two lengths behind. The "Betsey Ann's" crew now did their level best, and as they neared the starting point they came up and

took a second place, and with the utmost exertions on their part tried to lessen the distance between them and the "Julia." But it was of no avail. As they came in on the home stretch the crews laid themselves out to win. Cheer after cheer arose from the gun-boats and from the throng of soldiers that had gathered together on the wharf to witness the sport, and who seemed to be as eager as ourselves. The "Julia" still kept the lead and as she rounded the buoy and turned her prow in the direction of the "Louisiana," the crew were greeted with cheer after cheer and we rejoiced with exceeding great joy. At the same time we did not spare our exultation at the defeat of the other two. The "Betsey Ann" came in second, and the "Aunt Phebe" twenty seconds behind the "Betsey Ann." As the latter boat rounded the buoy and laid on their oars, after their severe exertions, they were greeted with cat-calls and sundry other obnoxious expressions from the crew of the "Louisiana," for we had not forgotten their boast before starting. Indeed, before the start, we of the "Louisiana" were extremely doubtful of the result, as the crews of the two rival boats were all picked men. So were ours as far as that is concerned, but we had a number of small-sized men in our crew, while the men in the other boats were all of a large-boned and robust type. But blood will tell, and the bone and

sinews won for us a victory over the heavy weights and picked men of the others.

Other races followed, in which we did not always come out victors, but they were tame beside this one, consequently I shall not mention any of them. It was rather galling for the crews of the beaten boats to have to stand so much chaffing from those they had despised at the beginning, but they were fairly beaten and when they turned the prows of their boats homeward, some good-natured seaman sang out to the crew of the "Aunt Phebe" to change their boat's name the next time, as it was rather suggestive of too much weight; a remark that provoked much mirth among us.

Eight bells struck soon after the departure of the defeated boats, and all turned to at the boatswain's call to supper, to help to demolish the extra canned meats and potatoes with which we were supplied in honor of the day. Then the dessert consisted of several large puddings, which proved to be Indian, and very good too considering the cook's wherewith to manufacture them, and he deserved all the credit we gave him that day for his timely efforts to pamper our tastes as well as cater to our whetted appetites.

## CHAPTER XIII.

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### THE SEIGE OF LITTLE WASHINGTON.

**T**HE first day of April, 1863, opened with the rebel General Hill's compliment to Little Washington in the shape of a fusillade with a force of ten thousand or more men. We were completely surrounded, and every avenue of escape or retreat was cut off. The soldiers in the forts were hemmed in by the rebels in the form of a half-circle, their cannon bearing directly on our works. They had managed to throw up earthworks during the night, and about five or six o'clock in the morning opened fire on the fort. The shot fell thick and fast within the fort, and pierced the flag-staff many times, showing the accuracy of their aim.

Fort Washington was defended by the Twenty-seventh and Forty-fourth Massachusetts regiments, a portion only of these regiments being in the fort; three companies of the loyal North Carolina troops, one company of the Third New York cavalry and about one hundred negroes. The enemy had posted strong batteries at Rodman's point, Hill's and Swan point, thereby

holding the river for a distance of eight miles, and rendering an approach by water with wooden boats an impossibility. They made a complete cordon round the town. At Rodman's point the rebels erected a battery of Whitworth breech-loading guns, and at five o'clock; April 1st, we were awakened by the cry of the boatswain's mate calling all hands to quarters. Every man was out of his hammock in an instant; the roar of the cannon and the screaming of the shells as they fizzed over our deck, could be distinctly heard by us, and not waiting to get my clothes on, I gathered them up in my arms, rushed on deck, and dressed myself at the guns. At Rodman's point, the "Commodore Hull," commanded by William Saltonstall, of Salem, was hotly engaged with the enemy. Above Rodman's point and nearly abreast with the "Hull," in a corn-field, the rebs mounted a long, thirty-two pound gun, and the firing from that into the town and among the shipping was rapid and continuous, the shells bursting and tearing through houses, forcing the inmates to seek shelter in their cellars. On shore the fort could be heard pounding away, and as yet we had received no orders to open fire, but as the shot and shell began to come uncomfortably close, Commander Renshaw gave the order to open fire with the eight-inch shell gun upon the enemy in the corn-field. Every man sprang with alacrity to his place at the guns, and in a few seconds we were

hammering away at the rebs in the corn-field and directed some shots at the battery at Rodman's point. We silenced the gun in the corn-field for a time, but it was not long before they opened fire again. The "Hull" ran in too close at Rodman's point, and got hard and fast aground. The rebs quickly became aware of this fact, and fought their guns like mad. The "Hull" soon expended her ammunition, and Commander Renshaw ordered the boats away and the crews supplied her with the needed material. The supply boats were kept going until night set in, when we were enabled to tow her off and out of range. General Foster in command of the land forces, would not consent for the "Louisiana" to leave her position at the bridge, else Commander Renshaw would have engaged the Rodman's point battery. In the meantime the rebs had built a cotton battery right under our nose in the swamp abreast of us, and the first we knew about it was when they opened fire on the "Louisiana," bursting two shells in quick succession directly over us. Immediately all hands were called to quarters; the enemies' guns were well served, and they dropped the shot and shell in a lively manner around us. We fired a broad-side from the port battery; then ran the guns in, loaded with grape and canister, and trained them on the spot from whence the shots were fired. As they fired, we answered them with a broad-side from the guns double loaded with grape and canis-



ter. The guns were then loaded with five-second shell and in a short-time we set fire to the cotton bales and dismounted their guns. Towards night they came back and tried to get their guns away, but we opened on them with three-second shrapnel shell, and they retreated from the spot in disorder, leaving all behind.

The rebs brought a thirty-two pound Parrott rifle gun to bear on us from the roadside at the end of the bridge. The first shot they fired struck us, carrying away our mizzen gaff. It seemed an age before we got the order to fire, and in the meantime the rebels peppered us well. At last Lieutenant Westervelt, who was reserving his order on account of the ammunition being short, gave us the order to fire. We brought three guns to bear on the rebels in the woods and the ball opened in earnest. We had fired five rounds when we received the order to cease firing. I looked at the lieutenant in amazement; what could he mean by such an order? Here the rebels were sending in their shot and shell as fast as they could load and fire, and the order came to cease firing on our side. It seemed Commander Renshaw was on shore when the fight began at the bridge, conferring with General Foster, but as soon as he could make his hail heard on board, the lieutenant sent a boat ashore for him. He came on board, and, looking round upon the officers and crew, demanded of the lieutenant why he was firing away the ammunition.

“Why, sir,” said the lieutenant, “they will shoot us to pieces.” “I don’t care,” replied Commander Renshaw, “if they shoot your heads off; send the men below; then I shall be sure there will be no more firing for the present on our part. Why, our ammunition is almost expended, and should the rebels make up their minds to charge in over the bridge, what resistance could we make? Boatswain, pipe the men below.” And there we lay on the berth deck, while the rebs sent in their compliments, without the power to return them.

General Spinola, with his brigade, on the fourth or fifth day of the siege, co-operated with our forces, but the attempt failed. Hill’s point and Swan point are nearly opposite each other. The rebel battery of the former was posted upon a high bluff, back from the point, commanding the river up and down. Below Hill’s point, the Union gun-boats and transports laden with troops had gathered and were trying, but in vain, to render us some assistance. The gunboat “Hunchback” engaged the Hill’s point battery, but the bluff was so high that it was extremely difficult for the crew to elevate their pieces at short range to accomplish anything, and at long range the shells would not affect the rebs much. The “Hunchback” had a very heavy battery of hundred pound guns, but she was of wood, and consequently could not fight long at any one time,

but would steam up and send in her compliments, and then retire beyond range.

On the sixth day of the siege, the gunboat "Ceres" ran the blockade with ammunition on board. She came up by the batteries while the enemy did not fire a shot at her. As soon as she had unloaded, two companies of the Twenty-seventh Massachusetts, and some other troops were marched on board, to proceed to and land at Rodman's point, for the conclusion arrived at by our commanders, was that the rebels had retreated. But they found the rebs there, for they commenced a heavy fire from six guns as soon as the "Ceres" was within short range. The "Ceres" returned the fire, and was backing away from the point when she ran aground on the flats within point blank range of the rebel batteries. The soldiers stood so thick on the deck that it was impossible for them to move about. The scene baffles description. The steamer opened fire on the batteries, and kept up a dogged fight, while three boats were manned from our ship, and two from the "Hull" to go to her assistance. Tom and I were both ordered into one of the boats. Arriving there, the soldiers, who were coolly awaiting our arrival, were taken from the "Ceres" and landed on the opposite shore, under fire all the time from the rebel batteries. Three of the soldiers were wounded. In time we succeeded in lightening the boat so that she could get off. The boys were cool

and worked with a will, and after all, the rebels' trick did not work as successfully as they had anticipated.

We were now supplied with ammunition enough to last a few days, and Mr. Mills, the carpenter, two others of the crew, Jones and Holmes, and myself, were sent on shore to construct a powder magazine in one corner of a brick storehouse on the wharf. We built a board partition five feet from the brick wall, on two sides, and a double partition on the other sides, and filled the space between them with earth, while the floor overhead was covered five feet deep with dirt, thereby making it bomb-proof. We worked hard under fire from the rebel batteries all the while, and consequently were in great danger of being blown to atoms. The building was struck a number of times, but we kept right on at our work, and soon accomplished our dangerous task. Our blacksmith work was done at the lower end of the town, where there was a blacksmith shop, and a colored man was the toiler. There the carpenter had the hinges manufactured for the door of the magazine. The contraband blacksmith did not like the work, as the smoke from his forge informed the rebels that something was being made to order, and it drew the fire from the rebel batteries in that direction. I was sent down there one day to give him instructions about the hinges before mentioned, and as I was passing down the street leading

towards the shop, a thirty-two pound shot from the enemy's battery struck an iron fence just in front of me in a glancing way, shattering the fence and hurling the fragments around me like a small hail-storm. I crossed to the other side of the street and kept on my way towards the blacksmith shop, not, however, without a feeling of nervousness at my narrow escape from injury or death from the hurling pieces of iron. Arriving at the shop I went in; the blacksmith had just left his forge for a moment and was engaged working at the vice on the work-bench, when another thirty-two pound solid shot entered from the rear of the shop and passed out over the forge. If the man had been at the forge then it would have taken his head off. This I know by actual measurement.

“Gorra mighty, how dem rebs do frow dar i'n!” exclaimed the astonished contraband.

I hurried him on with the job, and soon had the hinges to suit me. Then I informed the blacksmith that he could close his shop and go up to the fort. The hinges fitted perfectly, and our magazine was secure from harm, as far as the rebels were concerned. The fleet in the meantime was still below the batteries, and there did not seem to be any hope for us in that direction, although numberless experiments were made by their commanders to break through the blockade and come to our assistance, but without avail. Our

commanders did not know the situation below, and there was no possible way of finding out except to run the rebel batteries. At length Master's Mate McKeever informed Commander Renshaw that if he would furnish him with four men he would run the blockade or sink in the attempt. It was a hazardous undertaking, but there was no other way to get dispatches to the fleet below or receive word from them. Our commander hesitated a moment, and then called for volunteers. Half the ship's company responded to the call. Renshaw informed them when in line, of the dangers and perhaps death in the undertaking, and asked them if they were willing to face it.

“Yes, yes,” exclaimed one and all.

“Well, then, I will proceed to pick out the men I want.”

He then selected four able seamen from those drawn up on the port side. I wish I could remember their names, but I can only recall one, and only his last name: Bartlett, from Boston, Mass.

The dispatches destined for the fleet below Hill's point were hastily put in a package and sealed. Mr. Renshaw then shook hands with the brave officer, wished him God-speed, and instructed him in the event of their being taken prisoners by the rebels, to destroy the dispatches, so that they should not fall into the enemies' hands; all of which Mr. McKeever prom-

ised faithfully to do. He, with his chosen men, then proceeded to land. At the lower wharf, they procured a sail-boat, and boarding her, hoisted sail and were soon fairly under way. The wind was blowing fresh down the river, which was just what they desired. They were watched from the vessels in the harbor, and by the soldiers on the shore with eager eyes and fast-beating hearts. As the sail-boat neared the first battery at Rodman's point all noise was hushed on board the "Louisiana." Nearer and nearer the battery the boat went skimming along.

"Why," exclaimed some one of the crew on board of the "Louisiana," "they are not going to fire on them." The boat was now directly off Rodman's point battery; a blue smoke was observed to rise, and bang! bang! thundered the cannon. The shot was seen by us to strike just ahead of the sail-boat and then ricocheted towards the opposite shore. As fast as the rebels could load and fire, they hurled their death messengers at the tiny boat and her brave crew. Not a shot, however, seemed to take effect, although the crew were wet to the skin, so close did the iron hail-storm patter in the water around them. The "Commodore Hull" at the point, kept up a steady fire upon the rebel battery, as also did the "Louisiana," and we did not cease firing until the sail-boat was out of range of the rebel guns. The fire from the two gun-boats seemed

to bother the rebels greatly, and they did not work their pieces so effectually as they would otherwise have done, had we let them alone. At the boatswain's call to cease firing, we threw our sponge and rammers upon the deck, and all rushed forward to watch the boat which was still in sight of us and fast nearing the other or lower battery at Hill's point. The Johnnies were firing rapidly at her, but owing to her swift passage through the water, they were unable to get the range. The only danger from the battery now was from chance shots. Suddenly, when she was nearly off Hill's point she took to the middle of the river, thereby placing her crew in danger of being hit by the rifle men on the opposite shore. This position she maintained although the sharp shooters lining the shore poured volley after volley at the devoted craft and her gallant crew. Faster and faster flew the shot and shell, and still the little craft, like a winged creature, sped on, now right abreast of the battery, and a few moments more beyond, with the fire from the Johnnies in her rear. But not a splinter flew from the little bark. A few moments more and they were out of range, fast nearing the fleet that could be seen with the naked eye below the lower batteries and out of range of them.

Three ringing cheers from the sailors on the ships, and the soldiers on the shore proclaimed the safe arrival among the fleet. In a night or two after-



wards, they returned up by the batteries with muffled oars, eluding the rebel pickets on the river, who were sent out by the rebs to intercept them, and rowed safely into the harbor. They were joyously met on their return to the ship by their mess-mates, and their names were entered on the log-book by our "yeoman," Mr. Ross, as the bravest of the brave. During the siege the Forty-fourth Massachusetts went across the bridge on a reconnoissance. They had a brush with the rebs who were in force and held the road beyond the bridge. The Forty-fourth retired in good order after a sharp interchange of leaden courtesies. One morning a gun's crew was chosen from the "Louisiana" to go on shore and man and fight a twelve-pound howitzer, placed in position outside the fort and protected by sand bags. Percussion shell was used. Tom was one of the crew picked out to join the expedition, and according to his description of the fight or duel, on his return, they did the enemy considerable damage. Finally our provisions ran short, and to starve or surrender seemed our only alternative. Yet we fought on. When the ammunition was all expended and our power to resist exhausted, then, and not until then would our commander entertain the thoughts of surrendering.

On the morning of the thirteenth day of the siege, Commander Renshaw sent word for Master's Mate

McKeever to report to him aft immediately. The officers were on the "qui vive" to learn why he was called aft, and anxiously awaited his re-appearance that they might be able to learn, if possible, from his lips the reason. Visions of a possible surrender, or a trip to Richmond, flitted through my mind, but I put them aside immediately they were entertained. Mr. McKeever was closeted with Renshaw and our executive officer, Mr. Westervelt, for nearly an hour, and the other officers were on the anxious seat during that period; but at last he came forward on the quarter deck, where he was approached by his brother officers. They conversed in low tones for nearly half an hour, and the crew watched them anxiously and listened intently outside the fife-rail, for an inkling of what was in the wind. It was something of importance every one on board knew. You wonder how the crew could know anything about it, I suppose. It is simply impossible to keep any thing secret aboard ship any great length of time. A word let drop by some incautious officer in the presence of one of the ship's boys, a sign from one officer to another, two or more talking together in a knot, meant that something unusual was about to be disclosed. It did not come out, nevertheless, until the afternoon of that day, when the crew were called to quarters, and volunteers were asked for, to run the rebel batteries again. As before, half the

ship's company responded; twenty men were chosen, Tom and I among the rest. Master's Mate McKeever was again put in command of the party. The men were dismissed with the order to hold themselves in readiness for a call. The second cutter was then piped away and manned by the regular crew. Then rowing to the lower wharf, the schooner "J. C. Alores" was secured (she had come up the river before the rebels took possession of the town). Hoisting sail, they returned to the "Louisiana" after making a tack or two. Two guns were then rolled on board; next, rifles, cutlasses and ammunition were put over the side, and the volunteer crew were then ordered aboard. The "Dolphin," one of the ship's boats, was made fast to the stern of the schooner, and the fastenings were cast loose from the "Louisiana" as soon as the darkness warranted our not being seen by the rebels at Rodman's point. Amid the good-byes of our shipmates we sailed away.

The wind was light, but what there was of it, was in our favor. When nearly abreast of the first battery on Rodman's point, a dead calm set in. The crew that was picked out for the "Dolphin" previously to our starting, were ordered to man the boat to tow the schooner, while others on board the schooner did some responsible poling. When right abreast of Rodman's point, the rebels opened fire upon us, building a brush fire on shore to direct their aim. We kept as near the opposite shore

as possible without running aground, and slowly worked our way along. We were struck by the enemies shot several times, but there were no casualties, and we were not hit below the water line. Three shots passed through our sails, and one made the splinters fly from the caboose amidships. Two boats, loaded with the enemy put out from the shore to intercept us, but were driven back by a few well directed shots from our howitzer. The rebels kept up a constant fusillade from their guns, and replenished their fire with more brush to enable them to get a better range. A breeze springing up, we soon left the battery in our rear. The rebels still continued to fire upon us with but indifferent success, and we soon drew ahead out of range. We kept on our course for half an hour and soon neared the lower battery at Hill's point, running head on, as the current in the channel swerved in that direction. We received a warm reception as we came within range. The rebels, warned of our approach, had built a fire on a high bluff on the right of their battery, and it lit up the river in every direction, but did not show our schooner so plainly to them as at the Rodman's point battery. The balls whistled around us in every direction, but most of them passed over us. I thought of a great many places in which I would rather have been in than on that river. Keeping as far as possible from the point where the battery was situated, we

made good headway, and was soon out of range of their fire.

We reached our destination at the mouth of the river on Pamlico sound about midnight. We took aboard what ammunition we could conveniently carry, and some bales of hay to act as breast-works on our return, as the rebs would be on the lookout for any return vessel and be ready to give us a hot reception. We started to return about eight o'clock the next evening. The wind had changed and blew off shore. We made very fine time, for the schooner was a good sailor, and about midnight were off Hill's Point. As yet, seemingly, the rebs had not discovered us. We had nearly passed the battery when a blue light shot up on our port side, between us and the rebels, apparently from a boat out on picket. In an instant a faint light was seen on the bluff, and in a moment more a lurid glare shot up from a pile of brush heaped up near the water's edge, the light from which streamed out towards us, but did not extend quite far enough to make us plainly discernible to the rebs, whom we could see around the fire throwing on brush to increase the blaze. We trained our two guns upon them, to be in readiness to fire as soon as discovered, for Mr. McKeever said that they should not have all the fun to themselves this time in the event of our discovery. The man at the tiller was ordered to keep her off as much as possible,

and we began to think that we should not hear what each and every one on board was anxiously expecting, but dreading, the reports of the rebel guns. As far as musketry was concerned, at this point, we did not feel much alarmed, as we were out of range. Just as all hands were congratulating themselves upon passing the battery so easily, there came a flash, then another, and another, and the sullen boom from three cannon came to us distinctly across the water, and almost the same instant the missiles they were loaded with struck in close proximity to us. Bang! bang! bang! One shot passed through our mainsail, the others evidently went astern. They commenced firing now in earnest, while the helmsman kept her off as far as he dared without getting aground on the flats. At the same time the wind wafted us ahead every moment farther from the battery, and at last out of range. We did not return their fire, as McKeever gave no order to that effect. An occasional shot now and then was fired, which fell far astern.

We prepared the schooner for the next battery at Rodman's point, by reinforcing our hay bales, placing two together for that purpose. All was seemingly quiet up the river; the camp fires of our soldiers could be distinguished in the town, and the lights from the "Commodore Hull" and the "Louisiana" could be seen faintly

shining like dim stars in the distance. All hands were on the lookout, as we rapidly approached the battery, and shortly we discovered a faint light on the bank, and as we approached, it grew into a fierce flame lighting up the path we were to cross, and shooting its rays upon the other shore, or town side.

“We are going to catch it this time,” spoke up our master’s mate, addressing Major Strong who had accompanied us on our return trip. I can’t tell what answer the major made to this remark, for the battery began to fire rapidly as we drew near, and soon the shot was humming around us and occasionally struck the hay bales, knocking some of them over, and making things pretty lively for us. We stood it for awhile, then Mr. McKeever ordered us to stand ready to fire. Soon came the order: “Ready; fire!”

The rebs could also reach us with their musketry, and gave us a few volleys which we returned with our Sharpe’s rifles. They could be seen by us distinctly as they danced around the fire, and it gave us a target for our bullets. The blaze from the brush heap grew fainter, but they still kept firing. We considered ourselves comparatively safe by this time, and ceased to return their fire. We ran up alongside the “Louisiana” about an hour after, and were soon on board, where we were congratulated by our shipmates upon our safe arrival, and the absence of all casualties.

One night, our chief engineer, Mr. Lay, prepared an old scow with empty tar barrels in the center of it to represent a steamer's smoke-stack, and setting fire inside to the bottom barrel, set it adrift in the current that made down by the rebel batteries. The rebs, when it appeared off Rodman's point, opened fire upon it, thinking without doubt, that some boat was endeavoring to run the blockade. They expended some fifty rounds of ammunition on the old scow before they discovered what it really was. The air rang with our shouts of exultation at the success of Mr. Lay's contrivance to entice them to throw away their ammunition. Some funny incidents happened during the time we were besieged, which will be related in another chapter; but one story told by a reliable contraband while the siege was in progress, about his former master, an old "Secesh," I will relate here.

One day when the rebs were uncommonly active and were hurling their shot and iron thick and fast into the town, this man was down on his knees in the attic of his house, engaged in praying: "Rain them down, oh Lord, and send the shot and shell thick and fast; kill and destroy all the Yanks." Just then a shell from the rebel battery struck his house, lodged and burst in the chimney. This caused him to suddenly change his way of praying. "Oh, Lord," he said, "not my house, not my house."



This story convinced us that his prayers were of no avail as far as the Yanks were concerned.

A canoe was observed one day to put off from the town side, and the occupant, who proved to be a contraband, rowed leisurely out into the middle of the river, threw out his lines and pretended to be busily engaged in fishing. There was no particular attention paid to him, and after a while he was forgotten. But about an hour afterwards our attention was called to him again by our lookout forward, who exclaimed, "That contraband, is fishing, away over on the opposite shore, near the enemy." And sure enough, there he was close inshore, pretending to be fishing as before. Lieutenant Westervelt passed the word aft for one of our Sharpe's rifles, and resting it across one of the gun carriages he took deliberate aim at the occupant of the canoe, and pulled the trigger. The ball was seen to strike the water just beyond the boat, and that contraband pulled up his lines in a hurry and made for the town. A boat was ordered and manned, rowed inshore and intercepted him. Upon being taken on board the gun-boat and questioned, he denied all intent of aiding the enemy in any way by word or deed. His person was searched for something that would commit him of holding communication with the rebs, but nothing was found on him to verify our suspicions. He said that he had been in the habit of going over there to fish

before the siege, and thought there was no harm in continuing to do so. He was a thoroughly frightened contraband, and he promised never to go again. A sharp lookout was kept on him after that, but he never went over again during the siege, to our knowledge.

A journey to Richmond seemed in the near future for us, and preparations were made by Commander Renshaw to blow up the old "Louisiana" if worst came to worst.

On the thirteenth of April, the Fifth Rhode Island ran the blockade and came to our assistance on the steamer "Escort," a large white boat with accommodation for a great number of men. Up by the rebel batteries she came, while shot and shell flew thick and fast about her, and volleys of musketry were poured in upon her from the shore. Off Rodman's Point the rebels had driven piles (before the capture of Little Washington) to impede the progress of the Union forces up the river. All of these had not been removed, but the "Escort" bobbed over them in safety, was soon out of range of the enemy's guns, and passing the "Commodore Hull" landed at the lower wharf. The soldiers and sailors were filled with joy and excitement at their release, for the siege of Little Washington was now virtually ended. As the troops were landed Col. Sisson gave the orders in a very loud tone of voice, "Forward, first brigade! Forward, second

brigade!" giving the rebels the impression that we were re-enforced heavily.

The rebels becoming convinced of the hopelessness of starving us out, and being disinclined to make an assault on account of the determined resistance of the little garrison, and the reinforcements so unexpectedly received by us, reluctantly abandoned the siege on the sixteenth, and retired in the direction of Kingston, towards which place they were hurried by our parting shots.

Pursuit was commenced immediately by the soldiers, and nearly a hundred prisoners, including four commissioned officers, were captured.

The negroes, although lacking in drill and discipline, yet rendered very effective aid, especially in the entrenchments. The enemy were very much chagrined, and withal humiliated at their want of success, having counted not only on the easy capture of the garrison, including the commanding general of the department, and the material of war in the town, but they also calculated upon re-possession of a very large number of fugitive slaves, who had made Washington their home, and who, by boldly coming to the front to assist the beleaguered garrison, had made themselves very obnoxious to the rebels, as had also the loyal North Carolina men, and if the town had been cap-

tured by the rebels, it would have fared hard with the poor contrabands and soldiers spoken of.

The enemy's force was commanded by Major General D. A. Hill, and consisted of Daniel's brigade of infantry, five regiments; Garnett's brigade of infantry, six regiments; Pettigrew's brigade of infantry, six regiments; Robertson's brigade of cavalry, three regiments, with forty pieces of artillery and some independent battalions not brigaded. With these heavy odds against us, we kept them at bay for sixteen days.

The enemy seized on all points of any value, and for a time, effectually cut off all supplies and reinforcements. The bluffs below the town were seized and fortified, commanding the river not a mile wide. The garrison were forced to lie in the trenches night and day strengthening the line of earth-works encircling the town, (one mile and three-fourths in length,) and throwing up traverses to protect themselves from an enfilading fire.

The "Hull" during the engagement with the *Johnnies* at Rodman's Point was pierced through and through. She was struck one hundred and five times, counting the holes and marks made by the rebels' shot on her hull. The rebels burst three of their Whitworth guns at Rodman's Point during the siege, and they also seemed to run short of ammunition, for they hurled old iron, sledge hammers, etc., into the town. It was

many days after the siege before we could get the "Louisiana" into ship-shape order, and then only by dint of much scraping and holy-stoning, but at last she looked trim and neat once more, and the old life revived again on ship and shore.

Visiting Rodman's Point after the rebels had retreated, the soldiers found a dead contraband in the water, alongside an old scow, with a rope about his neck and a note from one of the rebels to this effect :

YANKEES : We leave you, not because we cannot take Washington, but the fact is it is not worth taking ; and besides, the climate is not agreeable. A man must be amphibious to inhabit it. We leave you a few burst guns, some stray solid shots, and a man and brother rescued from the waves, to which some fray among his equals consigned him. But this tribute we pay you : you have acted with much gallantry during this brief siege. We salute the pilot of the "Escort."

CO. K., THIRTY-SECOND N. C. VOL.

The pilot of the "Escort" was killed on the return passage down the river. He raised himself up to look over the hay bales with which the pilot house was surrounded, to see how the steamer headed, and was struck by a minnie bullet in the forehead and instantly killed.

## CHAPTER XIV.

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### POISONED WATER.

THE water we used for drinking purposes we got on shore. Twice a day, the dingy boat was piped away to fetch it. The water was procured from a well near the town house, just off the main street. It was considered very good water by the inhabitants, but the boys found a great deal of fault with it on account of its being very brackish. However, we had it to drink in place of better, and we did very well with it till one day one of our number noticed a peculiar taste to it different from any we had noticed before. An alarm at once spread through the gunboat that the water had been poisoned. We had had similar scares before, and therefore there was not much to cause attention to be paid by the officers to the manifest alarm of the crew. No unusual effects seemed to follow its use, and there seemed to be nothing more about it than the peculiar taste spoken of. Several days passed by, and the water question seemed to have been forgotten by both officers and crew. One very warm day, the crew, after drinking freely of the water, became alarmed at the ap-

pearance of little white spots upon their tongues and the inside of their mouths. Word was sent aft and the lieutenant was not a little alarmed in turn. After he had examined some of their mouths, Dr. Bradley was sent for. He was on shore attending to several cases of chills and fevers that had made their appearance among our crew a few days previous to the poison scare.

He soon came on board, and the crew passed a thorough examination at his hands. He could not readily account for the complaint, but supposed it to be caused by some mineral poison in the well. He gave us a medicine that partially allayed the fever in our mouths, and we were dismissed for the present. The water we already had on board was thrown overboard, and the dingy was sent out for a new supply from another well at the lower end of the town. Without doubt the water had been poisoned, but whether intentionally or not, we never were able to determine. I was very fortunate, and it was well for the crew that I was so. About a month before all this happened, I had sent to me from home, a box in which were numerous articles to delight the eye of a sailor boy. Among other things were a dozen bottles of Perry Davis's pain killer. The thought came to my mind at once to what use to put the pain killer. I filled a cup with water, put some of the contents of a bottle into it, tried it, and found it

good. But didn't it take hold? "Say, boys, here's your medicine," and I had no sooner uttered the words than the crew began to flock around me, and I administered to each man as he came up, a spoonful. They all said it was good for the stomach, and as some of them expressed it, "Rats on the tongue and mouth!" After using the pain killer for a few days, the white spots disappeared, and I regarded our cure as the effect from the use of the killer of pain. Even the officers were glad to receive a present of half-a-dozen bottles, although I used to imagine that they kept a supply, if not of Perry Davis' pain killer, something fully as strong, and not always to be used in case of emergency, either. Perhaps that will account for their not being so easily poisoned as the crew, who were forced to rely upon the water for drinking purposes. What a stranger would have thought upon coming on board at that time would be hard to tell, for the men were lying about the deck, a few who were worse off carrying their tin cups about with them wherever they went on the decks of the vessel, and every little while taking a sip of the pain killer and water. After the men recovered, I put away the medicine and stopped the supply, for it was too precious to waste, and would take perhaps a month, or may be two, to procure a fresh supply. But after all, I was truly glad to see the last of it, except one bottle which I kept for myself in case of emergency, and which I



securely hid from my mess-mates. I will relate why I was glad when it was all gone. Not long after the poisoning scare, one of the crew came to my hammock one night about midnight, and awoke me from a sound sleep.

“Hello, what’s wanted?” I asked.

“Oh, oh! won’t you get up and give me a little of your pain killer, or I’ll be a dead man before morning, there’s such a pain in my stomach. Oh, oh! hurry up, matey, or I’m a goner.”

As quickly as I could, I turned out of my hammock to give the sufferer some of the coveted medicine. I measured out a teaspoonful into a little water, and administered it to him.

“Ah, that goes to the right place,” he said a few moments after swallowing it. I told him to go back to his hammock and cover himself up warmly, and perhaps he would be entirely well in the morning. I did not hear from him again that night, but when we were piped up the next morning, he came around where I was at work taking down boarding netting.

“I say, chum, can’t you let me have a little drop more of that pain reliever? I don’t feel just right here yet,” pointing to the region of his diaphragm.

“Yes, I will be down in a moment and will fix you all right,” I replied.

As soon as the boarding netting was all taken down

and stowed away, I went below and prepared him another dose. I took the bottle from my "ditty box," where I kept it under lock and key. Every sailor has a small box, generally made by the carpenter's mate, out of any kind of boards that can be found suitable for the purpose; and by the way, cyprus makes the best boxes. These boxes we call our "ditty boxes" because thimbles, thread, and all sorts of small articles used in making and mending our clothes were stored away in them. Well, I gave him another dose without mixing much water in it.

"Ah, that's good stuff," he said, while I could see the tears in his eyes.

"You don't want to sell a bottle, do you? A dollar haint no object if you want to part with one."

"No, I do not propose to sell any; if you are sick come to me, and if I can relieve you I shall be glad to do so."

He cast a longing look towards my bottle as it disappeared in my "ditty box," and strolled off hitching up his trowsers. I was called up at all times of the night; every other man seemed to have a pain of some sort or other. I was never sure after getting into my hammock, of resting there all night, for if I was not actually awakened, I was expecting to be at any time. I could almost fancy hearing some one at my side groaning in fancied or real pain, and this and other

causes combined to make me happy when the last bottle was emptied.

Life aboard ship was becoming more and more monotonous, and many were the anxious eyes that were cast seaward as the days came and went, in the hope of seeing a move in that direction. The welcome sound at last came, borne to our ever-listening ears, one pleasant morning after the usual holy-stoning of the decks had been performed, from the boatswain's mate's shrill whistle and the order, "All hands up; anchor ahoy!"

We were completely astonished. Although anticipating such a movement from day to day, yet, somehow we had come to the conclusion that our gunboat had become a fixture, and would not leave her moorings at the bridge until the war was over, and every Northern man had been mustered out of service. But did we not hear the order "Up anchor?" We certainly did, and all hands made a quick movement to execute it too. "Where are we going?" was the one great question we asked of one another. There had been some talk of our going to Baltimore to get a heavier battery; but then we were carrying a heavy battery already, full as much as the old "Louisiana" was capable of floating with and more too, when outside, for she would roll the muzzles of her guns under the water at every lurch she made. We very soon got the cue,

though, and that before we left the harbor. We were bound for New Berne for supplies, and it was about time too, for only a few days previous to our order to sail, our supply of hard-tack was brought up from below, and put in a heap on the deck, where we picked out all the mouldy bread and threw it overboard to the fishes, returning the rest to the lockers.

We had a pleasant sail to New Berne, though nothing worthy of note happened on our way thither. In due season we arrived there. As we steamed up the river, we could not perceive that the place had changed any since our last visit. We passed the gunboats "Hunchback," "Eagle," "Underwriter," and last but not least, the commodore's flagship, the "Hetzell," which lay at anchor in pretty much the same position as when the new draft boarded her some months previous. She appeared insignificant, compared with the "Louisiana," and I could not help wondering why Commodore Rowan did not make her (the "Louisiana,") his flagship instead of the "Hetzell." But there is no accounting for tastes, and if the commodore acted according to his, it was no business of mine. We steamed in, dropped our anchor just above the "Hetzell," and after putting the gun-boat in trim for a visit from the commodore, several of us obtained permission to visit the town. I met Tom at the forehatch as I was descending to the berth deck, and he informed me that he could

not accompany me, as he did not ask permission in time, and the complement of liberty men was already made up. Just as I had finished putting on my best shore rig—white shirt, blue collar, black silk tie, white duck pants and round blue cap with a large star in the centre,—the boatswain piped all hands to muster, and when we were all gathered together, Commander Renshaw told us that Commodore Rowan would soon come on board and inspect the vessel and crew, and he wished to have the men appear in their best attire. The line was dismissed by the executive officer, Mr. Westervelt, and with a “Bear a hand there, and jump into your clothes lively,” from the boatswain, the crew rushed below to dress. We were all on deck again in less than half an hour, dressed in our best bib and tucker; and those who were contemplating a visit to the shore, had a chance to grumble,—sailors grumble sometimes as well as soldiers—at the non-appearance of the commodore. Eventually, however, his boat was seen to leave the “Hetzell” by some of the boys on the lookout on the forecastle deck, the word was passed to the executive officer, and in a moment more the boatswain piped us to muster again. We made a fine appearance as we stood in line on the starboard side of the “Louisiana.” Every man was neatly dressed, and the officers looked spruce in their trimmed and well-fitting uniforms. Every piece of brass work on the deck and on

the fife-rail and hatches had been polished until one could use the metal as a mirror. Even the brass hoops around the spittoons had been highly polished. Ropes were neatly coiled away, and the decks would fairly have made a good house-wife envious. We had not long to wait before the commodore's boat came alongside. Commander Renshaw and the officers under him assisted the commodore and his suite up the gangway ladder to the deck of the "Louisiana," while the boatswain blew shrill but not discordant notes upon his whistle, and the men doffed their hats and remained uncovered until inspected. Altogether it was an impressive scene, to see the two long lines of sailors drawn up on the port and starboard side of the decks, dressed in their very picturesque costumes, and the officers forming a little group by themselves, making a striking contrast with their blue uniforms and gold lace to the white duck pants of the crew. We were told afterwards that the commodore had complimented commander Renshaw very highly on the discipline and fine make-up of his officers and crew, and also spoke in terms of highest adulation in regard to the cleanliness of the gun-boat. The line was dismissed as the commodore disappeared in the commander's cabin. Soon after the boat was called away for the liberty men. We

spent a very pleasant day, visiting the forts and the soldiers.

The next day we weighed anchor, and steamed out of the harbor bound for Hatteras. Arriving there, we anchored inside the inlet and about a quarter of a mile from the main land. There was a fresh breeze blowing outside, and as it came to us across the sea, I imagined it tainted with our northern home. The first thing now was to ask for permission to go in bathing alongside, which was granted, and we were soon jumping and diving from all parts of the boat. The water was about twelve feet deep, and had a green appearance as seen from the deck of the boat. The bottom could be discerned very plainly, and the objects lying upon it were also very plainly visible. When any one of us dived from the deck into the water, we could see him go to the bottom, and observe every motion of his limbs as he tried to force himself to the surface again. Sharks had been seen inside the inlet, but we were not molested, and we disported ourselves to our heart's content.

But there is an end to all things, and our bathing was no exception to the rule, for we were forced to comply with the order of the boatswain's mate to return on board again.

We visited the soldiers at Fort Hatteras, and in the few days we spent at the inlet we enjoyed ourselves

hugely and made many acquaintances. One night, during our stay there, I was rudely awakened about midnight by some one roughly shaking me by the shoulder.

“Hello,” I said, sitting up in my hammock, rubbing my eyes and looking hard in the dim light shed by the ship’s lanterns to make out who it was that had his face so close to mine, and with his hand still upon my arm, gripped it to such a degree, that I fairly winced with the pain it gave me.

“Hist! it’s me, Joe Reynold’s; don’t make any noise, but turn out, jump into your clothes and come forward to the forecastle deck. Two or three of the boys are there; the watch is mum, and we are going on shore. We’ll wait ten minutes for you, and if you don’t come in that time, we shall go without you.”

Before I could utter a word in my astonishment at the audacity of this step, he had stolen towards the forecastle deck.

“So, that’s the racket,” thought I, “and they expect me to go with them.” I at once made up my mind that I would see what they were about, so I turned out of my hammock and quickly dressing, made my way noiselessly forward up the ladder through the open hatchway, and reached the forecastle deck unseen. There I found Joe Reynolds, Tom, and James McVey, the latter named being on watch from ten o’clock until



twelve o'clock. Four bells had struck while I was dressing. McVey had just relieved the forward watch. I had no sooner reached the place than Joe told me in whispered tones what their programme was. It seemed that it had been made up before the first watch was set, and was understood by Howes Crowell, who was to relieve McVey at eight bells, that is at midnight, and at two o'clock, Crowell was to be relieved by another who was in the secret, consequently we had till four o'clock, six hours, to visit the shore if all went well. They had thought of me when laying their plans, but were afraid of broaching them to me, for fear that I should object. There would not have been any objection on my part if they had acquainted us with their secret. I told them that perhaps I could have arranged it so that we should not have to steal away but could have had a boat furnished us. But to my story. The amount of it was, that some of the soldiers had extended an invitation to them to attend a dance on the main land across from the island, which was to be given by the young ladies residing perhaps a half mile inland. The soldiers proffered an invitation to Joe, when he was on shore at the fort the day previous, and requested him to bring others of the boys along with him for company's sake. The consequence was that Joe invited Tom and Ben Gibson, and finally through Tom's suggestion, just as they were about to go on shore, Joe was sent to awaken me. The

whole plan rather startled me when I was made acquainted with it. It was to swim ashore. There was not the least chance of getting a boat as they were all made fast to the guy extended from the port quarter, and within sight of the quarter-master who was pacing the hurricane deck. I told the boys that I was very sorry that they had not acquainted me earlier, but come what may, the dance must be attended, and we were only wasting time. Joe was the first to begin to strip, and we all followed suit. In a few moments we were all ready to descend the bow of the ship into the water. Our clothes were carefully rolled up into the smallest possible bundle, tied, and strapped on our heads. Joe led off by quickly gliding over the port and letting himself down by a rope put there for the purpose. Silently one after the other we followed, and were soon all in the water. I was the last to leave the deck, and as I did so, McVey struck five bells, half-past ten o'clock. As I lowered myself into the water, I came near crying out, it was so cold. Keeping my head well up, I looked about for Joe and the other members of the party. I discovered them close by me, and treading the water. As soon as I made my appearance in the water, Joe struck out toward the shore with long, steady strokes, keeping within the shadow of the gun-boat as long as it lasted. The rest silently followed, each making no more noise than a muskrat would have done.

We had previously been cautioned by Joe not to swim fast until away from the gun-boat. The shore could be discerned looming up in the distance, and after getting well away from the ship we struck out boldly for it. We reached the haven without any mishap, and quickly proceeded to dress ourselves, meanwhile looking around for the friends we expected to meet there. Joe gave a peculiar whistle as he finished tying his black silk neckerchief about his neck. It was almost instantaneously answered by some one not far off. Having finished our toilets, we started in the direction of the sound, and in a few moments were in the company of about a dozen soldiers. After mutual greetings and hand-shakings between Joe and the soldiers, Joe introduced us all one by one to them. This being done, a soldier with stripes upon his arm, whom I took to be a sergeant, said :

“Come boys, it’s getting late ; we cannot stand here, we must improve the time ; follow me.”

With many a joke and brim-full of fun we followed our conductor. We had walked perhaps ten minutes, when a house loomed up only a short distance ahead, and the rays of light shining through the windows stretched out to us as if bidding us welcome to the good time within. The merry forms of the dancers could be seen through the windows as we approached, flitting back and forth, and accompanying these sights the scraping of the violin could be plainly heard. Full of

excitement we increased our pace, and in a few moments more were being welcomed by a bevy of girls, some of whom I thought would compare favorably with our northern girls.

Entering the house, we were hailed with acclamations by all present, and in an agreeably short time I was whirling around with one of the young ladies, through the intricacies of a contra dance. Time flew, and the merry dance went on. Not a single set had I missed. None of us had taken any note of how the time sped, until looking up at the clock on the mantle shelf as I was whirling by, I was completely taken back, for the hour hand rested on the figure three. Excusing myself to my partner for a moment, I sought the boys, and informed them of the lateness of the hour. "It is of no use," I said, "we must make tracks for the beach, and get there as soon as possible." After partaking of some refreshments at the earnest request of the ladies, we prepared to take our departure, despite the earnest solicitations on their part to detain us longer; but no; we all knew that a new man would be on watch at four o'clock, and he might give us away, and that, we also knew, meant confinement in the chain locker with the poorest kind of grub for several days. So, shaking hands with the young ladies, and thanking them for the pleasant time they had provided for us, we stepped out into the night, or rather into the morn-

ing, lit up only by the feeble light from the hallway of the house, and a few solitary stars, and commenced slowly to walk towards the beach.

“Good-bye, boys.”

“Come ashore to-morrow, if possible.”

“Fare thee well.”

“We shall miss thee,” and similar expressions followed us as parting salutations from the girls, in soprano and contralto voices, mingled with the gruff bass voices of the only two male citizens who had been present during the evening, and whom we were introduced to on our arrival, as brothers of the two girls residing there, but whom we believed afterwards to be rebel soldiers, home on a furlough. Shouting back answers to their lively sallies, we made the best of our way to the river bank. Some of the soldiers went with us, as they wanted, they said, to see us take to the water, although they offered to row us to the ship in the boat in which they had come from Hatteras Island. But as that would surely betray us, we respectfully declined the offer, and stated the reason of the refusal. They were now anxious to see us swim, and we did not keep them long in suspense. It only occupied a few moments to get ourselves ready for our aquatic performance, and bidding them good-bye, and inviting them to come on board some time during the day, we waded out a little way, then spread ourselves for the

swim to the "Louisiana." We had not started a bit too soon, for a fog was coming up from the sea, and in less than half an hour, would envelope the old "Louisiana," and consequently destroy our bearings. But twenty minutes or less was enough for us, and we swam steadily on, Joe being some little distance in advance. Gibson came next, followed by Tom, and I, being the slowest swimmer, brought up the rear. We were making good progress, had accomplished more than half the distance, and could plainly see the "Louisiana" as reflected against the sky. I gave up all fears which I might have had of being enveloped in the fog bank, that was slowly but surely approaching; the advance guard, a few fleecy scuds, being already at the entrance of Hatteras inlet, shutting out the fort from view. I swam slowly along, for I was pretty well tired out with dancing and swimming, and I was very sleepy withal. Suddenly I heard a slight splash in the water behind me. A thrill of horror ran through my frame, and I was wide awake in an instant. My hair would have started on end, except that the strap over my head prevented its rising. I turned in the direction of the sound and peered through the darkness in my endeavors to make out the nature of the object behind me. I could just discern a black form of some sort on the top of the water, coming towards me. I heard the splashing of the water again, and in addition

to this, I thought I could hear a noise like the sputtering of some one breathing with the mouth partly submerged under water. My first dread was of a shark, but my reasoning powers were not quite scared out of me, so I dropped that idea as soon as entertained, and with almost superhuman strength, struck out for the gunboat, now close by. I tried to think or imagine what manner of fish or beast was in my wake. Joe, Tom and Gibson had reached the "Louisiana" and disappeared over the side. I was so near the boat that I could see the glimmer and flash of the water on their naked backs as they clambered noiselessly over the taffrail. But closer and closer came that dark object. I would make no alarm, though, till the last moment, when I could see no chance to save myself otherwise. With strength lent me in my desperation, I struck out frantically, as I heard the breathing of the seeming monster close upon me, and seemed to feel its hot breath on my naked shoulders. One more stroke, then another, and I had grasped the rope to the full stretch of my right arm. I pulled myself partly out of the water, while my left hand glided up the rope to sustain the right for another pull. Here, for the second or third time, I cast an anxious glance behind me to see if I could make out what it was that was within six feet of where I was hanging by the rope. I drew a long breath at what I saw, for my fears were now dispelled,

and instead of fear, a sense of the ridiculous came over me, upon seeing that the object of my terror was a large Newfoundland dog. I took another look at him as I clambered over the port side, and saw him paddling back and forth under the rope. Just then Jones (for he was on the watch) came to my side, and in a few whispered words, I made him understand the situation. I told him to draw up the rope, then tole the dog in some way, around to the port gangway, so that the officer of the deck would not have occasion to go forward, and thus perceive the wet decks. He was then to notify him that there was some dark object swimming around the gun-boat. After this I disappeared below. I first went around to see the boys, and acquainted them of the event, and then spread out my clothes to dry, for in my twistings and turnings in the water, to get rid of my pursuer, I had got them very wet. Finally I opened my hammock and turned in to sleep.

On the following morning, I found the dog on board, and it was a matter of surprise to the officers and most of the men how he came to be there. Jones afterwards informed me that immediately after my disappearance below, he had called the officer of the deck and made him acquainted with the fact that a dog, or some such object, was swimming in the water near the vessel. The officer then called the entire watch to the port side



where the boats were made fast to the guy, and unfastening the guy rope, he with one of the men entered it and picked up the dog. Some soldiers visiting the ship during the day recognized him as belonging to the cook at the fort.

The days we spent at Hatteras were full of interest and so pregnant with events as to make that time long to be remembered. The day for our return to Washington came at last, and we hove up our anchor, and steamed up Pamlico Sound bound for our old anchorage. Our trip to Hatteras had enlivened us to that extent, that we did not seem like the same crew, but the knowledge that we were to return to Little Washington again, in preference to some other port, brought back the old look of carelessness that we had assumed before our trip down the sound.

In due time we arrived at our old quarters, and the "Louisiana" was very soon moored bow and stern in her old position. Among the crowd that gathered on the wharf to welcome our return, was the well-known and highly respected Aunt Phebe.

"I'se glad to see yer ; yer looks good out dar ; we'se 'fraid yer nebber cum back any inore," were the greetings with which we were met from this old dame. But we had come back and would no doubt have ample opportunity to sample her pot-stews before we hoisted anchor again.

## CHAPTER XV.

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### INCIDENTS OF THE SIEGE.

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#### A BRAVE OFFICER.

**D**URING a cessation of hostilities between the rebels and our soldiers in the fort one day, an officer in the confederate force was observed to ride slowly and deliberately down in front, to the left of the rebel fortifications, leisurely dismount, throw the bridle rein over his left arm, then take from his socket at the waist, a pair of marine glasses, through which, with the utmost nonchalance, he surveyed our works and surroundings. As soon as he was discovered, the fort opened fire upon him with one of their heavy guns. The shells struck in close proximity to his person, in fact, one of them dropped so near that when it exploded, it threw the dirt upon him, while pieces of the exploded shell must have come uncomfortably close to him. With remarkable sang-froid he merely brushed his clothes where some of the dirt had lodged, and placing the glasses to his eyes again, took another and longer view of our fortifications. At last, seemingly satisfied with the informa-

tion gained, he remounted his horse and cantered out of range of the guns from the fort. I should have felt sorry for him indeed, if he had been injured by our shells, although an enemy to his country. I admire such coolness of nerve.

#### A DARING ACT.

A young sailor, while the fight was in progress between the "Commodore Hull" and the Rodman's point batteries, seized a shell that had been thrown from the enemies' guns, and had fallen on the deck of the "Hull," and threw it overboard. The fuse was nearly an inch long and sputtered and fizzed like a powder-cracker when about to explode. This story was told me by one of the crew of the "Hull" when we supplied them with ammunition, and others on board corroborated the statement.

A solid shot entered the port-hole and dismounted a twenty-four pound gun, knocking the gun-carriage into splinters, yet strange to relate, not one of the gun's crew was injured by the flying splinters. When not engaged in actual fighting, the crew were ordered to distribute themselves about the deck, so as to make as little mark for the enemy as possible. When the crew of the supply boats of the "Louisiana" boarded the "Hull," which was done a number of times, the crew of the "Hull" would congregate around us, to receive

the news of how the siege progressed at the fort. At such times, the boatswain would immediately disperse them and order us to re-enter our boat and return to the "Louisiana."

Perhaps the strangest thing in all the siege, lay in the fact that only two men were wounded, and they but slightly with flying splinters, although the "Hull," which as I have related in a previous chapter, was struck one hundred and five times. There were many narrow escapes both on ship and shore. A shell struck in the ship yard, and buried itself in the ground where it burst, and threw up such quantities of earth that a soldier who happened to be very near, was nearly buried; as it was, he required assistance to help him out of the debris.

#### TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT.

One day while I was employed treading down the earth on the floor of the powder magazine, built on the wharf, I heard a shell coming. It certainly was nothing new to hear such sounds, but this one became louder and louder, and seemed to be coming right into the only aperture there was, a hole perhaps three feet square from which the window had been removed, and about the height of my shoulders from the ground, directly in the center of the magazine, where I was at work, and about six feet from the end of the building. My only

safety I thought was to cast myself down on the ground in the further corner of the small room. Acting upon this first thought, I did so, and if ever I squeezed myself into a small compass, it was then.

Wh-o-o, who-o-o, who-o-o-o-o-o! came the shell; the last who-o-o that I heard before the explosion, was a long drawn out one, and ended in a terrible shriek, so it seemed to my tortured senses, when chug, it struck the corner of the building, making the bricks fly in all directions, and half a second later, bang! it burst on the edge of the wharf close by. I admit that my knees trembled under me when I assumed a standing posture again, and that large beads of perspiration stood upon my brow when I thought of the probable 'consequences to myself, had the shell entered my narrow quarters.

#### DIGGING UP THE ENEMIES' SHOT.

It was comical to watch the soldiers near the wharves, in the door-way of some old store house, when a shot from the rebel batteries struck the earth near them. At such times, all would dodge into the building and wait long enough for an explosion, if the missile was a shell, if not, they at once began to dig it up, and many a solid shot thrown by the Johnnies in this way, was returned to them a few moments after from the mouths of our guns. Not all solid shots either, for some of the

shells fired by them were unloaded, showing conclusively that they were short of powder, and emptied the powder out of their shells into bags to make blank cartridges of. Sometimes the soldiers did not wait long enough to be convinced that it was a solid shot, or otherwise, that had buried itself, but ran out just as the shell burst, and consequently were showered by the flying debris, running a near chance of being maimed or killed by the fragments.

#### SHANDY MC GUIRE.

A shell from a rebel twenty-four pound Parrott gun in a newly located battery situated on Red hill, three-fourths of a mile away, was dropped into the camp of the Forty-fourth Massachusetts one morning just at breakfast time, when as usual, the rebs amused themselves by firing at any group in sight. The boys sought shelter behind a traverse (thrown up to protect them from cross firing), as the shell was heard screaming through the air. The elevation of the gun was not sufficient to throw it into the works. It struck outside with a heavy thud, toppled end over end inside the works, passing through the end of a tent, obliterating the spot, still warm from the head of a comrade that had rested there but a short time previous. Passing on it buried itself in the traverse beyond, but did not burst.

It was shortly after dug up and sent back on its way to the rebs, with the compliments of the regiment. But the soldiers were not the only ones interested in that shell. Snowball, a colored boy, the pet of the sergeants of Company H, was coming from the pump with two pails of water in his hands; he reached the camp about the same time as the shell, and having a natural desire to get behind something, rushed into the tent just as the shell was passing through the back side. Snowball did not stay long in that tent, nor put on his usual style in coming out; he came at once and all in a heap, still clinging to his pails, however, the contents of which he had spilled over himself. His next move was executed with better judgment, as he thought, for he dove head first into the cross traverse trench which was of yellow, sticky clay, black as midnight when he disappeared, yellow when he re-appeared, plastered from his head to his feet with clay. One of the boys facetiously remarked, "Stand in the sun and dry; we can then use you for a statue." But Snowball's eyes were fixed on the hill from whence came the shell, and as he halted on the brink of the trench, bang! came another shell on its way. Straight for the town Snowball made his way. Through ploughed fields he flew, a yellow streak, which no shell could overtake. The soles of his "army whangs," as they turned up in sight, covered his back from view. He did not return to camp again. He run

the blockade with General Foster that night on the "Escort." It is not probable that his presence inspired the gallant general with any more courage in his dangerous undertaking.

The rebs had a trick of using cow bells on the necks of their horses, when reconnoitering our works at night, thinking the sentries would imagine them cows feeding, as they drove in several belonging to the Buffaloes, when first investing Washington ; but the boys soon discovered the trick, and strict orders were given to the sentries to fire at hearing the least noise resembling a bell. In Company H, Forty-fourth Massachusetts was a brave, sturdy Irish lad, grit to the back-bone, called Shandy McGuire. The next night after the order was issued, he was on guard. It is, or is said to be "the darkest just before dawn." It was at this hour that Shandy's attention was attracted by the faint sound of a bell in the distance, apparently slowly coming his way. Alert and silently he waited, determined to do or die. Nearer and nearer came the tinkling bell. Presently a dim outline of something or other was seen through the darkness. "Who goes there?" hailed Shandy. "Moo-oo," said the thing. "I have ye covered ; come in or I'll shoot." "Moo," answered the object. Shandy was bound to obey orders, even if it ended the war ; so taking deliberate aim at the shadowy object, he fired. There was a terrible thrashing in the underbrush for a



moment or two, then a sepulchral moan, and all was quiet. At the report of Shandy's gun, the company turned out lively and manned the works, thinking it was an attack. Shandy, upon being interrogated, said he had shot something and thought it was a rebel or a horse, but he was anxious for more light. When daylight appeared, Shandy's dead rebel turned out to be a fat cow.

"Begorra!" exclaimed he; I thought it was a rebel. A cow is it? Faix, b'ys, a cow is better ating nor a reb or a horse. It's mate ye want." Indeed, the boys were sadly in need of it, and blessings were showered upon Shandy as a benefactor.

But when the cow was opened,  
And the meat began to fry,  
It was so strong with garlic,  
The tears came in each eye.

The boys could not eat Shandy's beef, though they faithfully tried. Short rations had got them in such a condition that they could not stomach beef so strongly impregnated with rebel garlic. These little incidents, trivial as they may appear, served nevertheless to relieve the monotony of camp life, for even to men waiting to get killed it becomes tiresome after a while.

#### OLD NEVER SWEAT.

The long thirty-two pound gun, spoken of in another chapter, as being mounted by the rebs in a corn-field,

created much merriment on board the "Louisiana;" although it was far from being mirthful to the citizens in the town, who were forced, in some instances, to seek protection from its iron missiles in their cellars. The boys named the gun Old Never Sweat. At one stage of the siege, when ammunition was plentiful, we were allowed to play at long tar with the Johnnies, without, however, accomplishing anything more than a waste of ammunition on both sides, although we made it warm for them on several occasions, when we succeeded in dropping our shells in close proximity to their location. Again, when our shells fell short and burst in the mud at the lower slope of the bluff, upon which the gun was situated, the mud could be seen flying in every direction. Old Never Sweat divided his time between the different gun-boats in the harbor, and raining shots into the devoted town. On the day before the rebels left us, they kept up a continual pounding with Old Never Sweat, upon the "Louisiana," without doubt to cover their retreat. It was rumored, however, that a lucky shot from the "Commodore Hull" had dismounted the gun and killed three of the enemy, and that the rebels had sunk it in the mud in the swamp close by. A diligent search by our crew some days after failed to discover any traces of it, although there were found in the corn-field pieces of the truck that evidently Old Never Sweat was mounted on, and the

searching party was convinced that the gun had been disposed of, as rumored.

#### THE LITTLE BROWN MOUSE.

The mice were quite plentiful on board ship, and we improvised traps of every description imaginable, to catch and destroy them. But despite all our efforts, they seemed to increase instead of decrease. They were very tame, and sometimes, when the men were seated around the mess cloth, the little brown fellows would come out of their holes and run among us. Though we all wished to be rid of them, not a man among us would lift his hand to ruthlessly kill one, while the little things were enjoying their dinner, supper or breakfast in that way. It was only when we found our bread in the bags, and hard-tacks nibbled, that we vowed vengeance against the whole race. The monotonous life on board ship put the sailors to their wit's end, every day, to contrive some way to pass the time. Some of them made pets of every live creature that chanced to come in their way. The pets were kept on the berth deck and vigilantly guarded by the men; but woe to them—I mean the pets—if any of them found their way to the spar deck unaccompanied by a protector. The creatures would be seized upon by the officer of the deck, and in a moment more would be food for fishes. One evening while I sat writing a letter home, although

without any very definite idea how the epistle was to reach its destination, as we were blockaded in so by the rebels. However, as I said before, I sat writing the letter on the berth deck, with the mess chest for a table, and a couple of candles stuck on the lid, to give me light. These were fastened by dropping a little of the tallow on the lid, and before it had time to harden, planting the butt-end of the candles firmly in it, when it would stick as long as the candles burned. I was seated thus, when my attention was called to some dark object at the base of one of my dips. Looking closer, I found it was a mouse, and there he sat, as unconcerned as possible, nibbling away at my property. Now, as candles were very scarce, and not to be had for the asking, my first thought was one of indignation, and I made a move to annihilate him, but better thoughts prevailed. I lowered my hand, and sat and watched him nibble at the little mountain of tallow, collected at the base of the candle. He looked very cunning, as he raised himself up on his haunches, and gnawed away quite a large piece of the tallow that he had dislodged from the piece before him. How his little black eyes did sparkle, as he stopped nibbling the greasy stuff, and looked at me very intently. For a second or two, the little creature's countenance expressed a sort of surprise, as if in wonderment as to what part of the earth's kingdom I belonged to. At last, finishing the piece he held

in his fore feet, he dropped on all fours again, and began the work of demolishing what was left of my candle, which by this time had burned well down, not more than half an inch remaining. As I continued to look at my little brown mouse, a strange thing happened by which the little mouse came to grief, and your humble servant was considerably astonished. The mouse gave a vigorous squeak, then another and another; then he commenced to tumble about for a second or two. It was simply impossible for me to say whether he was dancing on his head or his hind feet, but finally, giving a squeak equalling all the other squeaks combined, he disappeared behind the mess chest. I laid myself back and laughed silently at my little visitor, as he performed his funny antics, but at his disappearance, I set myself to work to discover what could possibly have made him act in such a manner. As I cast my eyes upon the candle, the truth dawned upon me at once. As the wick burned down into the candle, I noticed the hot fat rolling down the outside and solidifying at its base. The mystery was solved. My little brown mouse had nibbled into, or had come in contact with the hot grease, as it flowed down, and it had stuck on his nose, and no doubt scalded that member. In the midst of peace we are in danger, I thought, and how did I know that some rebel shot might not be directed through the side of the old "Louisiana," and

knock my fancied security into a cocked hat, even as the little brown mouse had been disturbed, while he thought himself, if he thought at all, safe from danger. But it was time to turn in, so I put out the flickering remains of the candles, and scraping up with my knife the refuse from the tallow dips, quickly divested myself of my outer garments, then swung into my hammock, to await a call, either from the boatswain or the rebels.

#### IN THE FORT UNDER FIRE.

Business called me on shore one fine day, and after transacting the same, I concluded to visit the fort. The rebels on the town side had not made any demonstrations for a number of hours, and I thought it would be a fine thing to pay the boys a visit and see what was being done inside the fort. So I wended my way in that direction. A few minutes walk sufficed to bring me in sight of the fort, and in a short time I was hailed by the sentry, at the double gates. I explained to him that I wished to go inside of the works. Bidding me wait a moment, he called the corporal of the guard, and upon his approach, the sentry imparted to him my wish.

“Well, I d-o-n-t k-n-o-w about it,” drawled the corporal. “The enemy are liable to open fire on us at any moment; I can’t tell the time since the siege began

when the Johnnies have been so quiet. I'll be bound they are up to some mischief, and if they commence to whoop her up, you'll have to stay with us in the fort until they git tired of throwing their blarsted iron."

I assured him that I was willing, and that I would like to go inside under those conditions.

"All right, come in then," he said, "we like to accommodate any of the boys of the 'Louisiana.'"

As we passed through the gateway, he told me confidently, that they couldn't stay a day in that blarsted town if it was not for the "Louisiana." Then turning towards me, after getting inside the fort and putting his hand on my shoulder, he said in a low tone, "The boys in here are all brave fellows and would fight to the last drop of their blood for the cause, but if the old "Louisiana" should leave her post at the bridge how long would it be, think you, before the rebels would concentrate their forces and march across the same bridge and take us all into camp?"

I told him that I was well aware of the fact that we held the post of honor, and had heard one of the New York cavalry men say only a day or two before, that a prisoner captured by them in one of their raids said that he overheard General Hill address one of his staff officers. Saying, that if that infernal gunboat could only be disposed of in some way, he could capture the town in less than twenty-four hours. But as it is, the

“Louisiana” with her heavy guns can sweep the bridge of men as fast as they could be brought forward.

As we entered the fort, General Foster sat tipped back in a chair behind one of the bomb-proofs reading a paper. He seemed to be as unconcerned as if reading in his own parlor at home. Bang, Bang! “Hello! look out for yourself; the rebs are going to dose us again with their blarsted iron,” said the corporal, and he hurriedly left me to attend to his duties at one of the guns. The general stopped reading his paper, looked up, as the reports of the firing were heard, followed immediately after by the who-o-o of the shot and shell. One struck the bomb-proof and buried itself in the earth on the top, doing no more damage than making the dirt and the dust fly. In a few moments the general resumed his reading and appeared as unconcerned as before. I could not help admiring him for his coolness, as I hurried past him to seek a place where I could command a view of the rebels and also put myself in a less conspicuous position, for I did not like the idea of getting hit as long as I was only a visitor and really had no business there at all. But as I was there, I reasoned, I would try to make the most of it and see all the fun, if I may be allowed to term it such. The rebels kept firing at intervals, and between the intervals I raised myself cautiously and looked over the parapet. The fort had not as yet replied to their



fire, but as they were getting ready to do so, I remained where I was, close to one of the guns, to see the effect of a shot among the enemy. Some of the rebels could be seen quite plainly sitting on the top of their earth-works, and when the soldiers in the fort opened fire on them, they tipped back into their retreat for all the world like so many prairie dogs disappearing into their holes on the approach of danger. By this I do not mean to have it understood that the rebels were cowardly, far from it; they were brave enough and fought well during the long siege. Their showing themselves on the top of their works, was only to aggravate the boys in the fort and draw their fire, which, at the distance they were, resulted in almost a waste of ammunition. Ch-o-o, cho-o-oo, chug, bang! came the shell, then a shot from a Whitworth gun; choo, cho-o-o, cho-o, chug; as it buried itself either in the bank of the fort or in the rear on the top of the bomb-proof, or spent its force on the outside after passing clear over the fort. The rebs kept it up for an hour, the fort returning an occasional shot, then both sides, as if by mutual consent, ceased firing, and I was at liberty to leave the fort, if I felt inclined, and I did.

#### RUNNING THE PICKET LINE.

One of the Buffaloes was on a furlough to visit his family, when the rebels put in an appearance around

Little Washington, and consequently he was in a poor way to return to camp without being detected. His wife urged him to lie in hiding till the town was either captured or the enemy had retreated. But the brave fellow would not listen to her entreaties, and was determined to get inside the line at all hazards. He chose a dark night for his purpose, and bidding his wife and children good-bye, he glided out into the darkness, followed by his wife's prayer for his safety. We will let him tell his own story :

“After leaving the house, I stole softly along, although I was several miles from the camp of the rebs, yet I thought I could not be too careful, as my life was at stake, and I did not know how far back the rebs might have extended their pickets. I had traveled a little more than two-thirds of the way, when I heard the snapping of a twig, then a crackling sound of sticks breaking or crunching under foot, then all was silent again. I crawled slowly towards a clump of trees on my right, and crouched down beside them. Peering into the darkness, I tried to make out what it was that had caused the noise. For a long time all was still ; then I heard the same sound again. Creeping forward a little, I looked again in the direction of the sound, and my heart leaped into my throat, for there, not more than ten feet away, I discovered a rebel picket. Backing out a little way, I rose to my feet, when by an

unlucky mis-step, I caused the breakage of a number of twigs under my feet, and the next instant came the challenge :

“ ‘Halt ! Who comes there ?’ ”

“A moment after he fired. As I turned and ran, there came several reports in rapid succession, and I heard the balls whistle uncomfortably near me. Then silence reigned for a moment, succeeded, however, by shouting in my rear. I ran in an opposite direction for nearly twenty minutes, perhaps ; my hands and face were badly scratched, and my clothes torn by briars and bushes. Then I obliques towards the rebel lines. The first thing I knew I was on the banks of the Tar river, and as near as I could judge, in close proximity to their lines again. If I could only find a boat now, I thought ; so I carefully waded out into the water and began groping around the edge of the bushes that lined the bank. Fortunately my hand came in contact with a canoe partly pulled out of the water into a sort of clearing. Stealthily I began to pull it out, and found it was not fastened. The slight grating noise made by the bottom of the canoe as I pulled it along towards the water, caused me some apprehension, as I was afraid the attention of some rebel might be drawn towards me by it. But happily I succeeded in getting it afloat. Carefully depositing my rifle on the bottom of the canoe, I pushed out, taking care not to splash the water as I

drew my legs out. Feeling around, as the dug-out gradually floated out towards the middle of the stream with the impetus I gave it on the start, I could find only a short piece of scantling, left there by the owner, probably, and with this I managed to paddle slowly to the centre of the river, for my intention was to get into the current. I heard noises in the woods on the side I had just left, and I redoubled my efforts, taking care not to make a noise as I changed my paddle from side to side of my frail craft. But despite all my caution in shifting the piece of wood from side to side, I hit against the gunwale of the boat, making a sharp noise in the still night air, that echoed on the shore. I listened intently, and distinctly heard a voice: 'I say, Bill, did you hear that noise out thar in the river?' Then I heard some one reply further down the river, but I could not catch the words. In another moment, bang! bang! went two muskets, followed by the zip! zip! of the bullets, as they flew over my head. All I could do now was to lie down in the bottom of the boat and keep quiet, for I was being carried along very fast, having struck the current. Bang! bang! bang! Three more shots, but all went astern. The night was terribly dark, and I knew that it must be a wild shot that would hit me. I was secretly congratulating myself on escaping so easily, when a volley was fired from the shore, and some of the bullets passed clear

through the frail sides of my canoe, and one grazed my left temple as I lay partly on my right side. Hastily putting my hand to the place, I found it was only a flesh wound, although it bled freely. I was not so sanguine of success now, as I became aware that they could see my boat, indistinctly to be sure, but distinctly enough to give them something to aim at. Straggling shots were now fired, but as I could hear the zip, only occasionally, of the bullets, I made up my mind that I was nearly out of range; so I sat up in the boat, and soaking my handkerchief in the water, bound it about my temples. The rebels had ceased firing now, so I tried to pierce the darkness and ascertain, if possible, my whereabouts. The current seemed getting inshore. I listened intently for something to guide me, but there was not the slightest sound except the too-hoo! too-hoo! of an owl. I must have floated two miles, or perhaps more, when the canoe fetched up against some obstruction and swung around broadside to the current. Feeling cautiously over the side, I found to my delight that I had brought up against the blockade. I was now safe; all I had to do was to step out and walk the logs to the shore. I was challenged by the sentry, and after what seemed to me an age, I was ordered to come ashore. In a short time after I was in camp. But you see here," putting his hand to his head, "I carry a scar

that will remind me of that fearful night during all my lifetime."

#### OUR POWDER BOY JOHNNY.

Shortly after the capture of New Berne, some of our boys were ashore on liberty, and by chance came across a small boy about fourteen years of age. He had left his home in New York and followed a regiment which had taken part in the Burnside expedition to North Carolina. The poor little fellow had had a hard time of it with the army, not that he was ill-treated by the soldiers, but soldier's fare is hard enough for grown men, let alone little boys. One of the boys had fallen sick and died, and this only made the lot of the survivor harder to bear, and when found by our mess-mates he was bemoaning his sad lot, and longing for his home in the north. Our men took pity on him and their sympathy was aroused by hearing his sad tale. They induced the soldiers to part with him, as he could be made very useful on board ship, and it would be for his interest in the end, if he survived the war. The soldiers were loath to part with Johnny, and it was only after a great deal of persuasion on the part of my mess-mates, who pictured to them the benefits the little fellow would receive by the change, that they concluded it was better to let him go where he would be well taken care of.

Johnny was brought on board the "Louisiana" and assigned to the care of the yeoman, Mr. Ross. Johnny's name was entered on the ship's books, and he was rated as powder boy. His pay was to be five dollars a month and found. Every day we were sure to see him on shore flirting with the ladies, for they took a great fancy to our powder boy, and invited him to visit them at their homes, where they petted him to their heart's content, and he deserved it, for he was a handsome and well-behaved boy. He made friends wherever he went. But Johnny could not be persuaded to stay over night on shore, even if he had been allowed to do so. His wages were sent to his home, and his mother put every cent into the bank, so she wrote him. Johnny was a great favorite with the crew and officers. He was taught to tie all kinds of fancy knots, splice ropes, and many were the yarns that were told him, of fights by sea and land by the good-natured seamen. He was an apt scholar and very soon learned to make himself useful aboard ship. Some of the men clubbed together and made him a suit of blue clothes and another one of white duck.

At the siege of Little Washington Johnny proved himself a hero. From the magazine to the guns, fore and aft, could be seen the little figure, now here, now there. He showed no signs of fear, and when some of the men cautioned him not to expose himself, he said,

“Oh, you see I am so small that the rebs can’t hit me.” All through the days of fighting he bravely stood to his work, and only rested when the order came to cease firing. If living, he is a man grown now, and if by chance this should meet his eye, he will know that by one at least he is still remembered.

#### THE DEAD CONTRABAND.

Bathing was indulged in when the water was warm enough, but up to the time of the siege we had not thought it quite the thing. About the eighth day of the siege, I told Tom that I was bound to try it, if I could obtain permission from the executive officer. Going aft to the quarter deck, I doffed my hat to the lieutenant and stated my errand. He demurred at first, as he thought it dangerous. I might get picked off by the enemy’s sharp-shooters. “Besides,” said he, “the water is hardly of the proper temperature.” I told him I should go in on the town side, and thus I should be out of the sight of any sharp-shooters who might be lurking in the woods on the opposite side; and as for the water, even if it was a little cold, the air was so warm that I thought I could stand the bathing part. Suffice it to say, permission was granted, and I went forward to impart the news to the rest of the men. In an incredibly short time after, I was bounding from the rail into the river. It was a trifle cold, but after the first plunge, I did not mind it.



“Come on boys,” I shouted, “It’s all right.” In a few moments a dozen or more of us were disporting ourselves in the water in high glee. The water was not particularly clear, but nevertheless, we enjoyed our bath. My only objection to bathing in Tar river, was a fish called the garfish, which resembled a sword fish, in that it had a short sword. This kind of fish was always around the gunboat, and many times have I imagined that I felt the touch of his little bill. I had nearly finished my swim, and was thinking of returning on board ship, when I descried some object a short distance from us borne along by the current. I immediately began to swim for it, followed by Tom and several others of the crew. “Who knows,” shouted I, “that the rebs have not sent us an infernal machine.” We all endeavored to reach the floating object first. Swimming up to it cautiously, we were surprised to find that it was a dead contraband. We put distance between the corpse and ourselves, for distance lends enchantment to the view, and hailing the gunboat made them acquainted with our discovery, when a boat was launched from her and the body taken up and towed to the wharf, where it was given in charge of the negroes. It seemed that this man had a wife and family up the river at Greenville, and he had been in the habit of going up there to see them. His journeys were made in a dug-out. He was probably on his return from one of these visits

when he was shot by some person concealed on shore. He had a bullet hole right through his head. This poor contraband ran the rebel pickets at the risk of his life, and had heretofore escaped the farmer bushwhackers.

#### A FUNNY INCIDENT.

Some of the old sailors were allowed to visit the shore for an hour at a time during the seige, to relieve the monotony, but that they abused this privilege, the following will show :

Commander Renshaw issued a stringent order one day that the men coming from shore should be thoroughly searched, as some of the seamen had been noticed after coming on board from such visits to be under the influence of liquor. A party coming off to the ship shortly after the issuing of this order was searched, each man as he stepped through the gangway to the quarter deck. Joe Reynolds was the last man of the party to clamber on board, and he was pretty well under the influence of liquor. The master-at-arms commenced to search him, Joe, meanwhile protesting against the indignity of compelling an able seaman to be so humiliated in the eyes of the whole ship's crew. He positively told the master-at-arms that all his labor would be useless, for he had nothing contraband about him. But the master-at-arms kept right on with his work of searching, and finally putting his hand under

Joe's pea-jacket, pulled forth from a very curiously contrived receptacle a bottle containing a pint of whiskey. After examining it, he held it up that all the officers might see it. The look of astonishment depicted on the face of Joe, was laughable in the extreme, and despite the strict discipline of the quarter deck the officers smiled a large smile.

"How's this," said Lieutenant Westervelt, who had received the bottle from the master-at-arms, "you claim to be free from suspicion, and set yourself up as an example to the rest of the crew, and yet, here is evidence to convict you," at the same time holding the flask up over his head.

Joe touched his hat and said: "I was not aware that I had an enemy in the world, but it seems I have. That bottle must have been slipped under my jacket without my knowledge by some evil disposed person while coming across in the boat, to disgrace me."

The Lieutenant could not suppress a smile at this, but ordered Joe to go forward, and he himself hurriedly left the quarter deck ere his smile could attain the dimensions of a full-fledged laugh. Joe was not punished this time.

#### THE SCOW.

One dark night while on the lookout forward, I observed a black object drifting with the current about

two fathoms above the gun-boat, on the town side. I immediately reported it to the officer of the deck, and he, after looking at it for a moment by the aid of his glass, pronounced it a scow, but could not say whether there was anything in it or not. He ordered me to take the dingy and row up to it, and Tom, standing watch at the port gangway, was ordered to go with me. We entered the boat and sculled rapidly towards the scow, for a scow it proved to be. Tom clambered over the side and was lost to my view. To tell the truth I had my doubts about the scow, and quite expected to find her full of rebels, and when Tom disappeared over the side, I waited anxiously, expecting to hear a struggle of some sort, but in a moment my fears were dispelled by Tom's cheery voice from the furthest corner of the boat.

"It's all right, Steve, she's empty."

"Well, hurry up then, Tom; we are drifting a good ways from the "Louisiana," and we shall have hard work sculling back."

Tom let himself down the side of the scow into the dingy, and I labored at the oar to regain the gun-boat, which we could see in the distance. The current was against us, but I bent to the oar, when I heard a hail proceeding from the "Commodore Hull," which was only a short distance from us.

"Ahoy! what craft is that?"

“Keep sculling, Steve, they are hailing the scow; hope they’ll get an answer.”

“Ahoy! Ahoy!” No answer, of course. The boatswain’s whistle to general quarters, and again to lower the boats away, the rattle of the oars, the “give way, men,” from the officer in command, were the sounds that came in rapid succession to our ears, and we laughed gleefully to think how nicely they were being fooled. Tom relieved me at the oar, while I took my seat at the bow. Twenty minutes after, we were up to the “Louisiana.” Making the dingy fast by the painter to the belaying pin at the starboard gangway, I reported to the officer of the deck, who was on the *qui vive*, and had silently mustered the crew—the result of our expedition. A few moments after our return, the rebs opened fire at Rodman’s Point; they, too, were fooled.

Some of the boys were religiously inclined during the siege, and rather more so the last few days before receiving reinforcements. That was all very well, if they had only been as assiduous before and after in their devotion, but they back-slided, some of them a few days, others a few weeks after the siege. If they had only remained steadfast, they would have set an example for others to follow; but for very shame, they did not dare to throw away their prayer books and their testaments, which some of them always carried during

the days of fighting, and when not at the guns, paced the decks fore and aft, with their eyes glued to the pages. If an oath dropped from the lips of some of the more careless of the crew, they put on such a sanctimonious look, that despite the wish of all not to ridicule men who, for the time being, were trying to be good, at times it was next to impossible not to laugh. Some there were who really were earnest in their belief, and held prayer meetings in the chain locker twice a week, and thereby set a good example to the rest of us. Many times, both before and after the siege, have Tom and I sat and enjoyed the beautiful hymns sung by their manly voices. The leader of this little band of praying men was Jimmy Wilkinson, an Englishman, and a truly good Christian, respected by every man on board. On the other hand, one who had been the very strongest in his devotions—and he belonged to the new draft—was given, upon the expiration of his time, by Mr. Wilkinson, a recommendation to two ministers of the gospel in New Berne. My term of service expired at the same time, and I saw that man on board the transport which we boarded, engaged in playing a game of cards for money.

For one to relate all that happened during the siege, from his own personal standpoint, would be, to say the least, simply impossible, and of that noisy crew—those that still survive I mean—I do not know where to lay

my hand upon but two. They are scattered far and wide, by mountain, stream and sea! Could I but have had their knowledge of events, combined with my own, this book would have been lengthened and the story necessarily strengthened.

But the time had at last arrived which we had so anxiously looked forward to, for on the coming morrow the services of the new draft would expire, and all were happy. And well we might be, for with the exception of a deal of knocking about, we had been very well cared for, and had also been fortunate so far, that not a man out of the thirty, comprising the new draft, had experienced a really sick day during our term of service.

## CHAPTER XVI.

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### HOMeward BOUND.

“ Who can tell the joy we feel  
While o'er the waves our vessel reels?”

WE turned in that night with the satisfaction that the morrow would see us on our way to New Berne, to gain transportation on some vessel bound north, and for home. I slept but little, and that little was disturbed by dreams. It seemed to me as if we were under way, and it required several moments' thought to dispel that delusion when I awoke to consciousness. I worried the night through however, sleeping by fits and starts. Tom came and lay in the hammock next to mine while its occupant was on watch on deck, from two o'clock till four, and we talked in low tones of the coming morrow and what we should do. The return of the owner to his hammock precluded any further conversation on our part, and after Tom had left me, I managed to sleep until the boatswain's whistle sounded.

As it was our last day on the “Louisiana,” we, the discharged men, were excused from all duty for the day.



Inducements were held out to us to re-enlist, but without avail. One of the new draft named Tillotson, who had been promoted to the position of purser, since his enlistment, was as eager as any of us to set his face homeward, and the inducement that he would be continued in that position had no effect upon him while home, sweet home, was so near in the prospective. In the course of the day several of us paid a farewell visit to Aunt Phebe. The good old soul was delighted to see us, as usual, but when we told her that we were about to leave for home, and that it was our farewell visit to her, she seemed to be fairly overcome, although she had heard it talked over a month or more by us when at her house on liberty days.

Liberty days! shall I ever forget them? I ask myself the question as I sit at my desk, lean back in my chair, and take mental note of what I have written. No, never. And as my thoughts wander back to the North Carolina shore, old Aunt Phebe, Tar river, the bridge across it, the blockade, the rebel raid, the "Louisiana," the store ship, pleasant scenes and otherwise, pass before me. And I wonder how many are living now, that were actors in those scenes in the great drama of war. But to return to Aunt Phebe.

"Bress yer boys, and may de good Lord hab yer ebber in keeping, an' old Aunty'll pray to de Lord dat yer may hab a safe journey across de dark waters, an'

dat he may gib yer safe passage to your folks ober dar." And Aunt Phebe flourished her hands in the direction of the sea.

"Truly, Aunt Phebe is growing eloquent," said Tom.

"Yes," said Joe Reynolds, "but the sentiments she uttered just came from her heart all the same."

Joe spoke as though he thought Tom was jesting in what he said, but Tom hastened to set him right in the matter.

"True for you, Joe, and I am the last fellow to make jest of such sentiments as those. Aunt Phebe is untutored, and poor, but her word is just as good as Uncle Sam's bond, and as for her prayers, I had rather have her praying for me than some others that I know of who dress in their broad-cloth and white neckties; and here's one who will ever think of you and your prayers as his bark glides silently down the river of life," he said, as he grasped Aunt Phebe's fat, chunky black hand in his, and gave it such a squeeze that it made the tears come into her eyes, and she rolled them until the whites shone out again, and gave such a grimace, as makes me laugh to this day when I think of it.

"I say, fellows," said Tom, "let's give Aunt Phebe a send-off."

"Hear! hear!" chorused the boys as they gathered around Tom, for we all knew that when he opened his

mouth he was about to say something that was worth listening to.

“What I mean is, that we send round the hat, and scoop in a few dollars to help her to live, that she may be able to get up something nice for the boys we leave behind us when they are ashore on liberty days. Now there is a dozen or more of us present, some there are, that are to be left behind; they, of course, can do as they think, about chipping in; it will be for their benefit as well as Aunt Phebe’s; what do you say to it?”

“I make a motion that we do something of that sort,” said Tom Jencks.

“I second the motion,” said Howes Crowell.

“Motion made and seconded that we all chip in money enough to give Aunt Phebe some substantial present; all those in favor of the motion manifest it by saying aye; contrary minds no. The ayes have it, and it’s so voted,” I said.

It was an entirely informal affair, and the boys seemed satisfied that I had put myself forward as chairman. I suggested that Tillotson of the new draft should pass the hat round, and there being no dissenting voice, Mr. Tillotson proceeded to do so. Each man put his hand into his pocket, and it did not come forth empty. After going the rounds, the purser turned the hat over upon the table, and the contents were eagerly counted. Mr.

Tillotson performed this highly interesting duty, and at the close announced the total as being fifteen dollars.

The boys then chose me to make the presentation speech. Stepping up to the table, I gathered the money in my hand, and turned to Aunt Phebe, who, meanwhile, had been standing open-mouthed in amazement at the turn affairs had taken. Then with all the politeness I could command, requested her attention for a few moments. A broad grin extended diagonally across her face at my opening remarks, and I earnestly proceeded with my speech, lest the grin should expand to her ears, and thereby cause a catastrophe.

“Ahem !” said I, clearing my throat, “ahem ! Aunt Phebe, I have been instructed by the gentlemen who now stand in your venerable presence, to speak for them on a very important matter, and to extend to you, in their behalf, their sincere and heart-felt thanks for the many favors bestowed upon them while ashore on liberty days ; favors that will not readily be forgotten by the crew of the “Louisiana.” For the favors shown to these before you, as their chosen representative, I now present to you the sum of fifteen dollars, in Uncle Sam’s legal currency.” With this I put the money into her horny hand outstretched to receive it. “It is the prayer of your humble servant, that your shadow may never grow less, until the voice calls you to vacate this mundane sphere ; and then, when your earthly pilgrimage

is run, may you fade away and die like a daisy." (Applause.) "I am sure that all present reciprocate these utterances."

"Good for you, Steve," "Well done, my bantam," and the like expressions from the boys, followed each other in rapid succession, while Aunt Phebe stood with her crumpled apron to her eyes, and as Tom expressed it, "too full for utterance." At length she found vent in words.

"Bress yer, boys, bress yer: dat money 'll do ole Aunty a heap o' good, an' she'll neber forgit it ob yer, no neber. Dat money done gone in de pot for sure, an' 'spect I'll git 'nough to git norf sum ob dese days. You'se made ole Aunty's heart glad dis yer many times wid yer heap ob funny tings, an' de ha'mless fun dat seem so to fill yer heads, but dey neber done ole Aunty any ha'm and dey neber lebe any sting behind either, but jest boun' right away, like de water off'm a duck's back. Ole Aunty neber forgit her boys; no neber, as long as she draws a breff ob life; dars for ye now."

At the conclusion of Aunt Phebe's speech, Tom jumped from the rickety chair he had been sitting on, and began to execute a jig. In a moment more the rest of us were engaged in dancing with him. Aunt Phebe, catching the infection, began to shuffle her feet and sway her form, and at last, in her excitement, she could remain still no longer, but began to "bar" down

with the rest. We fairly made her old hut jingle. Our fun over, we prepared to send out for something to cook, as Aunt Phebe was anxious we should have one more square meal beneath her roof; but she would not allow us to, as she said she had all "De fixin's ob a squar' meal in de house, an' all I wants ob yer is to 'ole yer yap, while I done gone an' sarve dem up."

We came to the conclusion to hold our yap, and adjourned to a vacant lot in the rear of the cabin, where we pitched quoits, until Aunt Phebe's gentle voice was heard saying, "De wittles done ready," whereupon we rushed pell-mell into the house and took our seats at the table, which was too small for us all to sit round at once, so some squatted on the floor, while others improvised a table from an old box, and in a remarkably short time, we were all busily engaged in the task of masticating fried hog's liver garnished with fried sweet potatoes and soft-tack, and last but not least, boiled onions. Having satisfied the inner man, we arose to go. After shaking hands all round, we bade her good-bye, she promising to come to the steamboat landing to see us off.

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon when we turned our backs on the little hovel, in which we had spent so many happy hours. Reaching the wharf, we found that we had two good hours before the "Curlew"

would be ready to sail for New Berne. We spent the time pleasantly, "chaffing" with the soldiers, gathered on the wharf to see us off.

At length the order came, "All aboard." "Pull in that gang plank," and in a moment afterwards the "Curlew" steamed out into the channel, and we were homeward bound. The soldiers gave us three cheers as we moved off, and the crew of the "Louisiana" gave us three more and a tiger. Aunt Phebe could be seen prominent in the throng on the wharf, and she was the most disconsolate looking being I ever saw, as she stood near the edge of our late landing place, with her white apron over her head and her black face peering out from its folds. We answered the cheers from the "Louisiana," gave three more for our soldier friends, and ended by shouting to Aunt Phebe to take care of herself, which she answered by unintelligible ejaculations, which, nevertheless, it was easy for us to imagine meant words of good-cheer, and a safe and speedy return to the bosom of our families. As we passed the store-ship, lying at anchor in the stream, we shouted a last farewell to Mr. Mills, who was seated in the stern sheets, smoking, with his feet at an angle of forty-five degrees, resting on the cabin hatch. He merely waved his hand to us, and went on with his smoking. After passing Rodman's Point, I turned and gave one last look at Little Washington, where, be-

sides participating in some pretty severe fighting, we had also enjoyed ourselves in many ways.

Little of interest happened to us on our voyage to New Berne, where we arrived in the middle of the succeeding night. On the following morning we went on shore, and spent a few hours visiting friends and receiving messages from them, to deliver to their friends and families north, upon our arrival. While strolling around, we were told that the steamer which had been engaged for our transportation, was lying at one of the wharves, just below the "Curlew's" landing place. Thither we bent our steps, found her with but little trouble, and proceeded on board. She did not meet our anticipations in the least. She was old and broken-backed, or, to use a sailor's phrase, she had been "hogged" in some gale she had experienced, causing the deck in the center to rise; and it was like walking down a hill, go which way we would from the center. The interior of the transport made me sick at the first glance. She had brought out a load of green hides and discharged them at Baltimore; since then the decks had not been washed down, and the filth was an inch deep in some places in the hold, and the stench arising from it nearly suffocating. "Here is work for us, boys," I said, turning around and addressing Tom and one other of our party, who had followed me below.

"Whew! I should think so," said Tom, "and the



sooner we get at it, the sooner we shall have a decent place to live in."

"Yes, the old craft will sail this afternoon, and we must at once organize a party to help to clean ship." Saying this, I ascended to the upper deck, followed by my messmates. We went aft to find the captain. He was in the cabin. Upon my entrance, he looked up, and I accosted him with, "Are you the captain of this craft?"

"What do you want?"

I sized him up at a glance. He was a man for money, anything for money; coarse, bronze face, bullet-headed, heavy eye-brows, deep set, steel gray eyes, and his general features drawn up in a sneer. Before answering him, the thought occurred to me that we were to have poor transportation, poor grub, and I could not help thinking of the poor fellows—the discharged soldiers—who were expected on board, some of whom were sick, others convalescent. I knew by the looks of things on board, and the cold, hard face of the captain, that they were to see hard times before they reached their homes. Observing him scowling at me, after his question, "What do you want?" I scowled in return, for I had been too much accustomed to man-of-war life to be scared by a down-east captain.

"Well, I want to know if I have your permission to

clean up this old hulk that you claim to be commander of."

"Why, don't the vessel suit ye?"

"No, it does not; it looks more like a hog pen than anything else I can liken it to."

"Perhaps ye want a palace steamer to carry your precious carcasses. If a hog pen, as ye call it, is good 'nuff for me, blarst me! if I don't think it good 'nuff for ye and yer crowd."

"Well," said I, "that's a matter of taste. I don't like it, and if you will not order it cleaned by your crew, or give me permission to side her up, I'll report it to the commander, and have him up here, and we will see if he will allow his men to be put into such a pen, and if he will not have it attended to, we will *purchase* our passage on some other steamer."

The old curmudgeon, becoming aware that he was about to lose a good transportation party, and seeing, too, that I had a crowd at my back, said, with a sneer, "Well, ye can clean her up or not, as ye please," adding, "fresh water sailors ought to carry feather beds with them."

Tom, who was right behind me, and had heard part of the conversation, whispered to me: "Say the word, Steve, and we will bounce the old leather-head over the side, and take the command ourselves."

With a quiet laugh, I told Tom that that wouldn't

do. "Just wait till we get outside, and if the old leather-head, as you call him, does not behave himself, we will soon settle his hash."

All this was said in an undertone, while the captain of the old battered craft glared at us from under his heavy eye-brows, as he sat in his dirty-looking and nasty-smelling cabin. Well,—Mr.—, I do not know your name."

"And — we don't want to know it," interrupted Howes Crowell.

Continuing, I said, "We will get a gang together and give your old scow such an overhauling, as she never had before."

He did not deign to reply, or even to look up at us, as we turned away from his presence.

"I say, fellows, we'll have trouble with that old — leather-head," said Tom who persisted in calling the captain such, "before we reach New York."

"We'll pitch the old duffer overboard, if he puts up to us, and we'll send his crew packing after him to Davy Jones' locker if they interfere," said Tom Jencks.

We were not long in organizing a gang to scrub the ship, as most of the boys had come on board, only a few were strolling about the town. Taking off our shoes and stockings, and putting them in safe places, we rolled up our trowsers legs, and with old brooms and sticks with rags tied to the ends, some of us scrubbed

and others drew water from over the side, and dashed it on the deck. George Bartlett found a nearly new broom in the smoke-begrimmed old galley, despite the struggles of a black-haired old Portuguese to retain it. When he was forced to relinquish his hold upon his end, he gave Bartlett such a fiendish look as fairly made me shudder. I advised him privately afterwards, to keep a sharp lookout on the Portuguese, as he would do him harm if he could.

Bartlett laughed and said, "There's too many of us for him to attempt to play any of his Portuguese tricks, and besides, I shall be ready for him on deck in the night time, if we should chance to meet there," and he showed me his revolver. It took us two long mortal hours to accomplish our task of scouring the hold of the old catamaran, but at length we gave it the last wipe with our improvised swabs, after which, we all went on deck to fix up. About two o'clock, between thirty and forty sick and disabled soldiers came on board, most of them being brought to the wharf in ambulances. They were going home, and I thought as I watched them brought on board, that some of them were booked for their long home before they reached their journey's end. Tears came into my eyes, and my heart ached for the poor fellows, some of whom I was afraid would never gladden their parent's with their earthly presence, although I uttered a prayer in

my innermost heart that they might live to reach their northern homes, if only to die there. But why stand idle, when I could help them? Several of the boys were already at work, assisting them over the side of the steamer. Nice comfortable places were fixed up for them in the hold, and oh, how happy it made me feel to think that I had been instrumental in preparing them such places. The captain, who had been on shore on business, did not come on board till nearly four o'clock. He immediately ordered the engineer to get under way. I should have mentioned before, that the boat was a screw propeller, and it made us all laugh as she steamed from the wharf, for it sounded as if every part of the machinery about her was loose, and her paddles went thump-er-ter-thump at every revolution, while the apology for a steamer just crawled along. Tom and I took our stand in the bow and we could only see the slightest ripple. It seemed to be quite an effort for her to clear the water, whereas had she been a fast steamer, she should have been throwing the spray high on either side of the bow.

“God help us if a storm arises, and we are on the outside of Hatteras inlet; this old “Hooker” will not last long in a blow such as we experienced when coming on in the Delaware,” said Tom.

“We are likely to have a rough night of it any way; the wind is north-east, and we shall find it rough at

Hatteras, but I'll bet the captain will not risk his precious carcase outside the inlet in this craft, in half a sea," I said.

We paced the deck fore and aft for an hour or more, but at last the pangs of hunger began to be felt, and we mutually agreed to go below and take a lunch from our provision bags. Upon leaving New Berne each man had been supplied with four days' rations, supposed to be enough to serve him till we arrived at New York. We turned in early that night, but not to sleep, however, as the steamer made such a racket that it was impossible for us to do so, and especially the soldiers. All that night and the next day, the old "Hooker" pounded the water and we did not arrive at Hatteras inlet until the second night. All the available places on board were taken up by the boys to hang their hammocks in. I gave up my place to a sick soldier, rolled myself in one of my blankets, and stretched myself out on deck. I was awakened early the next morning by the noise of the wind blowing. I listened, whew! how she was piping it up. Crawling from underneath my blanket, I made my way among the still sleeping soldiers to the deck above. Just then a gust of wind struck the steamer and swept the deck; it caught me, and before I could stop myself, it sent me on the run forward. I brought myself to a halt by clinging to the chain extending from the smoke-stack to the deck. I looked

seaward; the wildest scene imaginable met my gaze. The breakers were coming in with their white tops lashed to a foam, and I likened them in my mind to some mighty denizen of the deep seeking whom he may devour. The foam-crested billows broke on either shore of the inlet with a sullen roar, as if in anger that they could not go right through the inlet, and spend their fury on the vessels lying at anchor in the comparatively peaceful waters of Pamlico Sound. Sometimes a breaker larger than the rest would roll in, divide on each shore, while the center part would preserve itself intact and roll defiantly with a seething, hissing sound like some great sea serpent, part way through the inlet; then it would lose its power, waver, tremble for a moment, and with a gasp like a live creature, spread out and mingle with the water in the sound, despite the seeming rebuff given to it by that peaceful body of water. Looking seaward again as far as the eye could reach, there could be seen billows running mountains high, and a ship under bare poles was scudding before the gale. She seemed like a chip, which as a boy I would toss into the running brook, and watch its progress until it struck the chopped-up little waves as they dashed down some rugged, rocky gully. I watched until my eyes ached, the heavy billows and the struggling ship now lost to sight as she descended in the hollow of the sea; anon, she appeared, safely riding some giant wave upon which she

seemed to waver for a moment as if in dread of the fearful plunge, and finally disappeared altogether amid the spray and the thick mist blown before the north-east, howling, shrieking wind.

Soon the boys came on deck, at least such as were able, and viewed with me the awful grandeur of old ocean.

It was with a whetted appetite that I returned below and sought out my provision bag. After satisfying my inner man, I went to take a look at the sick soldiers. I was glad to find them cheerful, except one poor fellow, who looked up in my face as I stood by his side, with a beseeching expression portrayed on his countenance.

“What is it? Can I do anything for you?”

“I would like some coffee, if you could get me some.”

Just then one of his comrades approached, bearing in his hand a tin cup, and holding it out, he said :

“Here’s some coffee ; I’ve been to get it for you ; I could not get around any sooner, there are so many sick ones on board to look after,” addressing the latter remark to me.

For three long days we were kept inside the inlet by the violent gale. Our provisions began to run short, and the captain was forced to seek fresh supplies at Fort Hatteras.



At length the wind chopped around to the north-west, and on the fourth day from our arrival, the anchor was hove short and catted, and the old craft steamed up and proceeded on her journey. When about half way through the inlet, a large breaker came towering in ; it looked to be twenty feet high. My heart leaped into my throat (so to speak), for I had no more idea that the old broken-backed—well, I have in my vocabulary no words fit to name her—would sustain the shock than I had of jumping overboard.

“Hold on, all !” shouted the pilot.

I sprang towards the cabin hatchway, and grasped the combings just in the nick of time. As she struck the breaker, she partly rode and partly wallowed through, to my great astonishment, for I fully expected to see her go to pieces in the first ugly encounter. But I had under-rated her, and ever after that had a degree of respect for her. We did not encounter any more heavy breakers during our passage through the inlet, and were soon outside on the heaving ocean. The north-west wind had raised the deuce with the huge billows, and cut them up into what is called a chopped sea. As far as I could see, the ocean was made up of innumerable hillocks, reminding one of a forty-acre lot sprinkled with hay-cocks, with this difference, that the waves were alive, and tossed our old steamer about like a shuttle-cock.

Tom came staggering towards me, as I stood holding on the combing of the hatchway, and as he came within speaking distance, the steamer gave a sudden lurch to port, shipped a sea, in consequence of which, Tom lost his footing and was pitched headlong into the lee scupper, where he floundered about for a moment or two, unable to regain his feet. At last, as the old "Hooker" righted, he maintained a standing position, and came towards me. I laughed so hard at Tom's misfortune that it made my head ache.

"It's all right, Steve; the only harm I wish you is, that I may see you take a tumble."

I assured him that if I did, I should expect all the crew, man and boy, to laugh, as it is human nature to exult over the fallen.

"But joking aside, Steve, those poor fellows below are in a terrible state; most of them are sea-sick, and I really think that one is dying."

Without waiting to hear more, I went forward and descended into the hole. The sight I saw there nearly caused my stomach to rebel. Soldiers were lying around in filth, too weak to remove themselves from it, and the stench was sickening. With the help of the new draft, as we still called ourselves, I set to work to fix them up. It was hard work, but we at last got them in better trim, although we could do nothing to relieve their sea-sickness. I tried to assure them that the worst

was over, and that if nothing unusual occurred, we should be in New York the next day. Seeing one poor fellow lying alone with closed eyes, I approached him, and found him seemingly in a dying condition.

“Look here, Tom, cannot we get some whiskey from the captain? This poor boy is about gone, it seems, and unless we do something for him quickly he cannot rally.”

“I will try,” Tom said, and started for the cabin on his errand of mercy.

In the mean time I had been trying, with the help of others, to rouse the man from his stupor. He could not have been more than twenty years old, but the ghastly appearance of his countenance made him appear much older. His injuries, though bad enough, were not necessarily of a fatal nature, and if aid had been forthcoming at first, he would probably have been well now. But he had lost so much blood, fever also had set in, and now he was indeed at death's door. All our efforts were of no avail, however, to bring him round, and our last resort was whiskey.

I waited anxiously for Tom's return and at length saw him come down the ladder, aft. When he reached my side he pulled from his pocket a half-pint bottle, and thrust it out to me. I took it, saying at the same time, “So you were successful, I see; I had my doubts about your getting any when I asked you to go.”

“Yes,” he said, “I got the whiskey, but what do you suppose the old leather-head has made me pay for it?”

Before answering Tom’s question, I stooped down and poured a portion of the liquor into the soldier’s mouth.

“Pay! pay, did you say?”

“Yes, pay,” was the reply.

“Why, I thought he would give it to you. Did you not tell him it was for a sick soldier, who was perhaps at death’s door?”

“Why, certainly I did. I explained to him all about it, and told him that if he did not do something at once, he would have some dead men on his hands.”

“What did he say to that?”

“He said he couldn’t help the soldiers being sick, and he hadn’t any surgeon on board, and we should have to shift the best way we could until we arrived at New York. At the same time he handed me the bottle of whiskey which he had poured from a demijohn in his cupboard, with the accompanying remark that it would be five dollars. I felt my face reddening up as I tried to command my feelings, so that I might answer his questions without showing anger, but it was no use I couldn’t help letting fly at him, after paying, so I said to him, ‘You are the meanest man that it was ever

my misfortune to come across since my enlistment.' I thought, I said, that I had seen mean men, but for the pure, double-distilled essence of meanness, he took the turkey and all the fixings, and I did not try to hide my scowls from him, while waiting for a reply. 'Oh, you are welcome to yer opinion of me. I've got yer money, and that's what I'm arter,' and he snapped his fingers in my face. I would have stayed to give him a parting shot, but I knew you were in a hurry for it, so I came away; but I'll have a whack at him, and I'll square the yards with him for that five dollars, before we reach New York, if an opportunity occurs, the old curmudgeon !"

"Bear a hand here, Tom," I said, interrupting him, "and let's get the poor fellow on deck if possible, where he can get some fresh air; pugh! it's enough to kill a well man down here, let alone a sick one."

Tom took the boy by his feet, and I caught hold of him under his arms, and together we carried him on deck. I then gave him a little more whiskey. After a little while he opened his eyes, but there was no expression in them; he did not seem to recognize any one. By and by his lips were seen to move, and I knelt down beside him to catch, if possible, what he might have to say. I moistened his lips again, and forced some of the liquor between his teeth which

seemed to be firmly set together. I was rewarded this time by seeing a look of gratitude on his face.

“Poor fellow, can you speak, and tell me your wishes?”

His lips moved again, and bending my head, with my ear close to his lips, I managed to catch the following words, which came in a faint and trembling whisper :

“I—was—almost—home ; why—did—you—call—me—back?—I—want—want—to—” Here he paused ; I bent my head closer, and heard his last words : “Ah—too—late—my——”

“But of his home and her he loved,  
His sad departing spirit sighed ;  
‘Mother!’ the soldier fondly said,  
And looking to the north, he died.”

His form stiffened in death. Did he wish me to take his last message to his home, to his mother, to his sweetheart? I cannot tell ; God only knows. Gently we composed his limbs, and covered him with a blanket, which was all that we could do for him. My eyes filled with tears ; I could not keep them back, so I turned from the scene, and looking around at my companions, who were gathered there on the deck, I saw traces of tears in the eyes of many of them.

To cap all, our supply of water became exhausted,

another smart trait of the captain, not to have a sufficient supply on board. The donkey engine was started in order to condense the salt water. The sick soldiers were calling for water on all sides.

“Give us water!” was the so oft-repeated cry, that I was forced to seek the deck to shut out the sound. In a little while, however, a sufficient quantity of water had been condensed to serve all around, but it was yet quite warm.

By this time the sea had gone down, and with it the rocking motion of the old “Hooker” nearly subsided, and except a long ground swell undulating beneath us, we were in comparatively smooth water once more. The sun began to shine bright and warm, and nature put aside the terrible frown that she had worn so many days, and smiled once again upon us. My spirits rose correspondingly, as the clouds cleared away, and the sun’s rays spread far and wide, warming our hearts and infusing new life in the tired frames of the soldiers. Those who were able, came on deck and loitered in groups fore and aft, basking in the warm sunlight. When I retired that night, I obtained my first good night’s sleep since leaving New Berne.

We arrived in New York on the following day, at about five o’clock, and each man shouldered his effects, as the steamer was made fast to the pier, and hurried on shore. Tom and I waited awhile on the pier, to say

good-bye to some of the soldiers, and pay a last farewell to our messmates, whose homes were in different directions from ours; then we turned our steps in the direction of the New York and Providence boat.

Arriving there, we left our dunnage on board, and took a stroll up Broadway. We returned again be-times, and on the following morning we arrived safely in Providence, where Tom and I parted, to go to our respective home.

I will pass over the meeting at home; suffice it to say that I was met with very warm greetings from the loved ones there, and had the pleasure of shaking Phil by the hand, he having returned home the day before.

When I sat down to dinner that day, I missed two familiar faces, which dampened the pleasure of my return home somewhat. On the evening of that long-to-be-remembered day, I sat up late and rehearsed the story of our adventures to ready ears, and when I did retire, and crept between the clean white sheets, I thought I never experienced so delightful a sensation before.

A few more words and I close. The "Louisiana," some few months after the new draft's discharge from her, sailed to Baltimore, where her crew were distributed aboard other steamers, and the gun-boat was prepared to fulfil her destiny in Wilmington, North Carolina. On the 23d of December, 1864, one of the



largest fleets in the service of the United States stood towards Fort Fisher bound for its capture or destruction, and among these vessels was the "Louisiana," stored with fifteen tons of powder, every barrel with its head out and its fuse in. How to bring her with her terrible cargo safely under the walls of the fort without having her blown up in advance by the guns of the fort, was the absorbing question of the day. On this point Admiral Porter says: "This, Commander Rhind was enabled to do, owing to a blockade-runner going in right ahead of him, the fort making the blockade-runner signals which they also did to the 'Louisiana.'" Here were one hundred and twenty men-of-war, and transports, their only object being to stop smuggling, and one saucy steamer passing through them all being made the unconscious pilot of the powder laden gunboat, that was to blow the fort out of existence. It is needless to add that the gun-boat blew up, and that the fort did not.

Insignificant as the "Louisiana" was in appearance, she nevertheless did honor to the service, and her final sacrifice at Fort Fisher was only in keeping with her other good deeds performed during the rebellion. Good-bye old "Louisiana," it was done PRO PATRIA.

THE END.

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