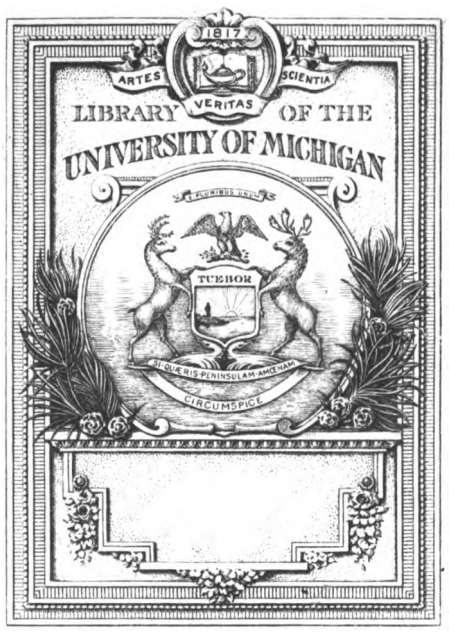
Three years on the blockade

Israel Everett Vail



THREE YEARS

ON THE

BLOCKADE

A NAVAL EXPERIENCE

BY

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CONTENTS.

THREE YEARS ON THE BLOCKADE.

CHAPTER I.

UNDER SEALED ORDERS.

WHEN President Lincoln issued his first call for troops, in April, 1861, I was living at my home in Massachusetts. My two older brothers had responded to that call, and had gone in the old Massachusetts Fourth Regiment to Fortress Monroe. I was just at an age to become thoroughly filled with the enthusiasm and excitement produced by the preparations for war which were constantly presented; and yet, I was also at just such an age as prevented the consent of my parents to my joining the troops which were being constantly mustered in, and among whom many of my companions were included. A year or two more added to my age would have left no opportunity for parental argument upon that point, and a year or two less would have carried the conviction to my own breast that I was not sufficiently matured to engage in the active and trying pursuits of military life.

By the middle of May, the events which were

transpiring had filled me with a determination to act some part in the scene, even if it could not be that of a soldier, and I was assisted in this decision in the person of a very kind and sympathizing neighbor, who suggested that I should take a position in the naval service which he proposed to procure for me, having been in that branch of the service himself as a purser many years before, and having quite an extensive acquaintance with the older officers.

I was exceedingly gratified to find that the application my friend had made for me had met with success, and that my immediate preparation for sea would become necessary. I had always possessed a fondness for the ocean, my boyhood having been passed within sight of the Atlantic as it breaks upon the rugged New England coast, and the stories of the old sea captains returning to their homes after long and perilous voyages had inspired me with a desire to at least in some degree experience similar adventures, although I realized that it would be a physical impossibility for me to attain to such an enviable distinction through the ordinary methods of seafaring men.

While I felt awed in the presence of whaling captains, and was thrilled with excitement at the narration of their perilous adventures in many oceans, I had never yet seen a naval officer, and my only knowledge of their daring deeds, was such as I had gained in the perusal of the early history of my country.

All literature pertaining to the sea, both in history and fiction, possessed a charm for me, but the record of the naval battles in our wars with Great Britain

seemed to carry the conviction to my mind that the summit of heroism was reached in those gallant but awful encounters upon the ocean; so that the prospect of entering a service with so grand and brilliant a history, was hailed with enthusiasm and delight.

Up to the time of my entering the Naval service, my fondness for the ocean had only been gratified so far as actual experience in sailing upon it was concerned, by short voyages in coasting vessels, and while the romance attending these cruises had not been fully up to my dreams, yet I had experienced no regret for having made them, and felt that in so far, I had the advantage of my companions whose lives had passed without even that mild excitement.

On the 23d of May, 1861, little more than a month after the firing on Fort Sumter, I received an appointment as Paymaster's Clerk on board the U. S. Steamer "Massachusetts," then lying at the Charlestown Navy Yard and fitting for sea.

My friend, through whose influence I had received this appointment, had in a general way given me some idea of the duties which I should be expected to perform, and as they were to be wholly of a clerical nature except in time of battle, I felt that I should be capable of performing them fairly well, but as to what would be expected of me in the event of an engagement with the enemy I had received no intimation, and was at liberty to surmise what I might deem a proper disposition of me during such an encounter.

Immediately upon receiving my appointment I began my preparations for entering upon my duties.

I found that I should be required to furnish myself with a uniform, which by the regulation was not a remarkably impressive one, but the cap of which, presented a sufficient quantity of gold lace, together with the peaceful insignia of my office, to inspire me with the full importance of my position.

The war had commenced in earnest, and the importance of placing an effective blockade upon the ports of those states which had left the Union was realized by the government, and every effort was being put forth to accomplish this result.

The regular Navy being at that time upon a peace footing and wholly inadequate for a service covering hundreds of miles of coast, it became necessary to purchase from the merchant service, such vessels as it would be possible to convert in the emergency into men-of-war, at least so far as their ability to sustain a blockade would admit of their assuming that character, and the various Navy Yards were taxed to their utmost night and day in making these transformations and despatching the ships to the several stations to which they were assigned upon the blockade.

The "Massachusetts" was one of the many steamers so purchased, having been one of the line plying between Boston and Charleston, S. C. She was an iron ship of about twelve hundred tons, and well adapted to the requirements of the service in which she had been engaged, but did not in any respect resemble a regular man-of-war even after having assumed as formidable an appearance as it was possible for the Navy Department to bestow upon her, neither did

she possess that most desirable quality of speed which it would seem quite important she should have in order to perform the peculiar duty to which she was destined to be assigned; but, as has been said, it was utterly impossible at such a time to discriminate very carefully in the selection of ships, and it is hardly probable that any ships were purchased which possessed in any considerable degree the desirable qualities for such a service except as a temporary expedient in a war which was rapidly assuming an enormous magnitude and called for rapid preparation on the part of the North.

However, in comparison with many other ships which had been adopted into this service, the "Massachusetts" was a most desirable ship to which to be attached, and in view of this fact I felt that I had cause for self congratulation in having been assigned to a ship so much superior to many others which were to be her companions on the blockade.

The battery consisted of four 8-inch smooth bore guns on the gun-deck, and one 30-pounder rifle on the forecastle.

This battery was regarded at the time as quite a formidable one, and to me I must confess it had that appearance, and undoubtedly it so impressed my fellow officers whose familiarity with the engines of war was as limited as my own; but in the last years of the war when we had become accustomed to the frequent view and effect of really powerful armament, I am confident that we should have looked upon the battery of the "Massachusetts" as of comparatively

little value, and should have felt no degree of safety behind it, or confidence in its ability to sustain the cause in which we were engaged.

The ship was commanded by Commander Melancthon Smith of the regular Navy, with Lieutenant William Selden as Executive Officer, also of the regular Navy. The other officers were all volunteers.

As it became necessary to purchase ships from the merchant service, so it also became necessary to appoint acting officers from civil life, the regular force being altogether insufficient to supply the demands; but it was the policy of the Navy Department to assign as far as possible a sufficient number of regular officers to the new Navy to take command and instruct the officers from civil life in the regulations and discipline of a man-of-war. As the war progressed, of course the supply of regulars became exhausted, and it became necessary to appoint to commands, those officers of the volunteer corps who had become proficient, and familiar with the regulations and discipline, which, however, had to some extent been modified so as to meet the demands of the emergency.

Having received instructions in the various parts which we were to perform, and opportunity being offered for experience in the same previous to sailing, we felt quite proficient.

I found the officers with whom I was to be associated a very agreeable set of gentlemen, and was convinced from this fact, that we should have a most amicable mess.

The Acting Assistant Paymaster, from whom my

appointment had come, and under whose immediate orders I was to be, was a very courteous officer, and a mutual verdancy in the affairs of a man-of-war tended to somewhat modify the distinction in our rank, and I was gratified to find that I should be under no special restraint in this respect.

In a regular man-of-war my rank would have compelled me to join the Steerage Mess, but by the invitation of the Ward Room officers I was given a place in their mess, and as I was the youngest officer in the ship I felt exceedingly complimented by this unusual honor.

I was assigned to a very handsome and commodious state room which I was to occupy alone, and felt very grateful for the unusual privileges which had been accorded me.

A caterer was appointed for the mess, as is customary on a man-of-war. An officer is chosen who acts in that capacity for a given length of time, when he is relieved by another officer of the mess. The duties of the caterer are to purchase the provisions and furnishings of the table and to keep an account of the same, and to a certain extent control the bill of fare each day with the assistance of the steward, who is under the immediate orders of the caterer in all matters of that sort. The first duty of the caterer in starting on a voyage, is to make an assessment on each officer sufficient to provide for the mess during the voyage.

This assessment is equally divided among the mess regardless of the officer's pay, and as I paid my own

I was impressed with the seeming extravagance of the caterer, as it consumed the balance of my two month's advance, after paying for my uniform.

A crew of about one hundred men was sent on board from the receiving-ship "Ohio." Many of them were old men-of-war's men, and were consequently posted in the duties, and were very valuable assistants in the instruction of the green hands, of whom there was quite a large number. Many of this latter class were young men from my own town, whose patriotism had called them from their avocations in the commercial lines to take the risk and venture of a life before the mast. They were young men of intelligence and education, whose choice had led them to assume the duties of a sailor, rather than those of a soldier, as being in many respects preferable.

At this time all was bustle and confusion on board, owing to the hurried preparations for departure. Visitors were constantly coming and going, packages and bundles were being brought, and every one seemed to be in the greatest state of activity and excitement.

At last, everything being in readiness for our departure, on the 27th of May we cast off our lines from the dock, and moved gently out into the harbor, amid the mingled cheers and sobs of our friends, standing upon the shore. The separation of friends for an indefinite period always carries with it an uncontrollable feeling of sadness and grief, which takes possession of even the most stoical nature; but under

circumstances such as ours, in view of the dangers of a stormy ocean, combined with the hazards of sentinel duty upon a remote and hostile coast, the parting was one of special sadness, and many a silent tear dropped upon that deck as the last signal from those we had left behind faded from our sight. However, grief cannot always last, and the scenes by which we were surrounded soon dispelled the clouds of sorrow and filled us with the thoughts of our immediate duties and stations. As we sailed slowly down the harbor, we were greeted on every side by cheers from the passing vessels, and from the people gathered on the shore at various points. We found very soon that we were sailing under sealed orders, and consequently we were completely in the dark as to our destination; and, in fact, we had been unable previous to our departure to get any satisfactory information on that point. This fact lent an air of mystery to our voyage which we were naturally impatient to solve, but which offered no key to its solution; yet, the satisfaction of the knowledge that the captain himself was as far from any definite information as the other officers in the matter was, to some extent, consoling. We were at least quite well satisfied that our duty would be that of a blockader, but where we were to perform that duty was as yet unrevealed. Such being the case, we were at liberty to locate our destination at any point on the coast which might seem in any degree probable, or might strike the fancy of either of us as being a suitable or agreeable station, and

covered a range from Hampton Roads to the mouth of the Rio Grande.

Night was approaching as we headed out to sea from the lower bay, and lights were beginning to appear in the numerous lighthouses along the coast. The excitement of our departure was rapidly subsiding as we sailed away from the scenes which had produced it, and faced only the open sea.

The decks were being gradually deserted by those officers whose duties did not require their presence there, and the more cheerful and inviting scenes in the ward-room below, were attracting these officers to that locality, where the pioneer toasts to wives and sweethearts were being merrily offered, and preparations were in progress for our first meal at sea, which many of us were compelled to confess was much more heartily relished than those of the following day or two.

Midnight found us off the bleak and sandy coast of Cape Cod with its warning lights at frequent intervals. These lights as they sank one by one from view behind us, must have brought many saddening thoughts to those of our officers and crew whose homes were within the radius of their beams, and have prompted longings to once more look upon their families before hazarding the uncertainties of war.

The wind had been dead ahead since leaving port, and off Cape Cod it had freshened to quite a gale, so that our ship was pitching into the head seas with a force which made pedestrianism at least extremely disagreeable, if not unsafe, for landsmen; and such

other effects were beginning to be felt by those of us who had never been much at sea, as to convince us that the privacy of our state rooms would perhaps be more conducive to our comfort, and at the same time spare us the possible humiliation which would follow the derision of those whose sea experiences had rendered them callous to the inevitable malady which overtakes the landsman on such occasions.

The possibility of being able to respond to the call for breakfast on the following morning was a subject for our contemplation during the night, for as the gale seemed to have increased rather than abated, I had concluded that in my own case, any attempt to perform any of my official duties, or in any way respond to the discipline of the ship on the following morning, would certainly result in ignominious failure.

My physical condition at this time was extremely humiliating to me, for I had supposed that as I had sustained no serious inconvenience from previous voyages, though of short duration, I should be proof against a more turbulent sea, and was much mortified to find myself so early incapacitated to perform the duties for which I had been appointed, and which demanded my attention.

The attempts which I made to answer duty's call seemed to only aggravate my disorder, and I was compelled to ignominiously surrender and abandon myself to what seemed a horrible fate. I presume many of my readers have experienced the sensations of sea-sickness, and I can only add that they must

be experienced to be fully understood and appreciated, and I feel that I confine myself within the bounds of veracity when I state that I am confident that I experienced to their fullest capacity the horrors of that fearful malady. However, I recovered in course of time sufficiently to risk myself on deck and ascertain if any of my fellow-officers had survived the affliction by which I had been wrecked. To my comfort I found that I was one of the pioneers in that undertaking, and this knowledge lent a ray of pleasure to my melancholy features. The surgeon, a fat, jolly fellow, from New Bedford, whose beaming countenance and entertaining yarns had delighted us the day before, was one of the early victims to the scourge, and I learned, upon making inquiry on deck, that he was still in his berth, with a discouraging prospect of his ever being able to leave it again. Numerous calls had been made upon him in a professional way, but he was found to be beyond the possibility of any official duties, and any attempt to approach him upon the subject of prescriptions was met by a groan sufficient to produce nightmare in the unfortunate applicant for weeks to come. The mess-table was deserted, except by those officers whose sea service had rendered them callous to its torments, and a desolate and dreary air pervaded the wardroom.

As soon as I began to feel sufficient confidence in myself to investigate the condition of affairs in other parts of the ship, I concluded to visit the gun-deck, for the purpose of ascertaining how matters were in that locality, and, if possible, to attend to some of my

official duties there, which had been neglected during my humiliating confinement to my berth. The sea was still rough, and I realized that I was running considerable risk in making the attempt, but was, nevertheless, determined to take the chances.

Upon arriving there I was confronted by a scene which well nigh drove me back to my state-room in despair; but by force of will I maintained my ground, although I viewed the scene from a distance of safety. A large quantity of the provisions of the ship had been hurriedly placed upon this deck just before our departure, and in the haste and bustle of sailing the men had neglected to secure them properly, and during the gale their services having been required constantly on the upper deck, these provisions had been overlooked; but in course of time they had made themselves very conspicuously known, and just as I arrived the performance was at its height. The barrels and boxes had a short time before broken loose from their fastenings, and were now promenading back and forth across the deck, to the peril of those whose duties called them there. The men were standing at a safe distance and taking advantage of occasional spells of comparative steadiness of the ship, to rush out and lasso some convenient barrel or box. Although there was a great degree of danger connected with this operation, still, the whole scene was one of extreme amusement, and under circumstances of ordinary strength and confidence I should have been convulsed with laughter at this extraordinary performance.

A barrel of molasses having evidently become disgusted with the aimless rolling back and forth, had split itself open against the breech of one of the guns, and its example had very soon been followed by a barrel of flour, accompanied by a barrel of vinegar, and several of sugar. The minor parts were filled in by broken boxes of tea and coffee, together with several of tobacco and soap.

The contents of these various packages were finally reduced to one indescribable mass, through which the packages themselves were sliding back and forth, like boys upon a frozen mill-pond.

In my weakened condition I felt that this scene was too much for me, and so fled, with regret that I was unable to remain longer. How that wreck was eventually cleared away I have never learned.

All the night previous to this grand climax upon the gun-deck, I had been tortured by the sound of rattling crockery in the ward-room pantry, and the sliding back and forth of chairs, table leaves, and other articles of furniture, and I had decided that the revelations in the morning in that department, would be something startling.

I had reasoned very accurately, for the morning revealed a scene of destruction which was discouraging to the last degree to those of us whose two month's advance had been largely invested in the articles which constituted the wreck.

We contended with head winds and sea for about eight days, when we reached the friendly port of Key West. The voyage had been to say the least,

an extremely rough one, and the strain upon the watch officers and crew had been a very severe one.

The uncertainty as to our destination had been cleared up previous to our reaching Key West, so that all speculation upon that subject had been quieted. We were to take up our station at Chandelieur Island, at the entrance to Mississippi Sound, but before proceeding there we were to stop at Key West for coal and any necessary repairs.

Key West under ordinary circumstances would not have been regarded by us as a specially attractive port, but in view of our recent experience in reaching there, we felt that it possessed many charms which would not have been recognized by the ordinary traveler.

The ship having been hauled up to the dock and the preparations completed for coaling, such officers as could be spared were allowed to go on shore. As I was among this number, I joyfully availed myself of the privilege, and in company with one or two other officers made the tour of the town. It was a very delightful feeling to be able to stand on terra firma again and to know that it was not necessary to hold on to something to keep on one's feet, although, in the case of some of the officers I saw there, that act could not be entirely dispensed with after a few visits to the Russell House. Key West at that time might be considered a very desirable place to reach after eight days of storm, which might perhaps be said of almost any place except a cannibal island; but as a place of residence I should never have selected it.

It is a low, sandy island, with but little shade, and is occasionally visited by yellow fever. There were, however, a few residences which seemed quite comfortable and attractive as they nestled among the cocoanut-trees. The Russell House was quite a fine hotel, and contained many of the modern improvements. This was the favorite lounging-place and a sort of headquarters for the officers of the various ships lying in the port, and its cool and spacious piazzas were very inviting after a walk through the burning and dazzling sand of the streets.

There was also a very respectable billiard-room connected with the hotel, which was very extensively patronized by the officers, and offered some diversion from the general monotony of the town. There is one of the largest forts on the coast here, Fort Taylor, and at this time it was well garrisoned. We visited it and made the acquaintance of many of the officers stationed there, some of whom had their wives with them and seemed to be very comfortably situated. Key West was at this time, as well as during the whole period of the war, a rendezvous for all government vessels coming from the North and destined to the Gulf Squadron. Here they were supplied with coal and provisions, large quantities of which were constantly arriving in vessels of all descriptions chartered by the government. It was also the seat of a prize court, which passed judgment upon all prizes captured in the Gulf of Mexico, so that, upon the whole, the place presented quite a lively appearance in the neighborhood of the docks. At the time

of our arrival here there were a number of ships of war lying at anchor in the harbor, and our ship was immediately visited by an eager crowd of officers impatient to hear the latest news from the North and to receive their mail, of which we had brought quite a large bagful.

In addition to the naval fleet there were two very celebrated slavers lying here, which had been captured but a short time before and appropriated to the uses of the navy. One of these was the celebrated yacht "Wanderer," and the other the clipper-ship "Nightingale." They were elegant specimens of naval architecture, and were the delight of the eyes of every sea-faring man who looked upon them. With their beautiful hulls and sharp bows, together with tall and rakish masts, they presented a splendid picture as they rose and fell so gracefully in the long ground-swell at their moorings just off Fort Taylor. In looking at these vessels the beholder is not only impressed with their singular beauty, but his mind is wont to dwell with horror upon the enormity of the crime of the traffic in which they had been but so recently engaged, and upon the scenes of suffering endured between those whitened decks.

The process of coaling ship having been completed, the crew were allowed a half day's leave on shore as a reward for the faithful and prompt manner in which they had performed their duties in that regard. As the island presented but few attractions in the way of sight seeing these were soon disposed of by the crew, and then resort was had to the few places of spiritual

refreshment to be found there. The result of a half-day spent within the influences of these establishments was very demoralizing to many of the crew, and must have been anything but satisfactory, for on coming on board after the brief vacation, they were either ignominiously sent below in irons to pass the night in confusing memories of their recent short lived liberty, or subjected to some milder form of discipline calculated to impress them with the importance of a reasonable degree of sobriety upon future vacations.

The natives of Key West are engaged principally in the traffic in green turtles, which are caught here in large numbers and shipped to our northern cities for consumption, where they find ready sale and command high prices.

After capture they are confined in large pens built in the water, giving them plenty of room to swim about, and are there fed and fattened until ready for shipment.

Many of them grow to enormous size, and some idea of the same may be had from the fact that by order of our captain one of these turtles was purchased for a dinner for the officers and crew, and one hundred and fifty men were served plentifully, with meat to spare.

These turtles although so formidable in size and appearance, are very inoffensive and avoid the approach of man. We subsequently passed numbers of them on our voyage across the Gulf, and after a few ineffectual and awkward attempts to keep ahead of the ship they would dive and disappear.

At last everything being in readiness for our departure, we bade adieu to Key West with its green turtles and green cocoanuts, and directed our course to Pensacola, where we were to report to the flag officer.

On the following day a ship was sighted in the distance, which seemed to have a suspicious appearance, and as the slightest semblance of any irregularity or improper purpose on the part of passing ships was sufficient to subject them to examination by a man-of-war, our captain immediately upon the discovery of this ship, ordered our course to be changed, and we steamed in the direction of the stranger, which, being a sailing ship and with but a slight breeze, we were able to overhaul in a short time.

As we drew near to her, we found that she was a large full-rigged ship carrying the British ensign at her peak. As we came up with her she was hailed by the officer of the deck and commanded to lay to until a boat was sent to board her. The boat was immediately lowered, and an officer sent on board to examine her papers and cargo.

Visions of enormous amounts of prize-money now began to dance through the brains of the excited officers and crew as they gathered at the rail of the ship, watching the movements and waiting for the return of the boarding officer and the report of his investigation.

The examination seemed, under the circumstances, to occupy a very long time, and I have no doubt that the boarding officer sustained to the last a hope that

he might get hold of some evidence which would place the ship in our hands and thereby make him one of the recipients of the proceeds of the capture.

He returned at last, and reported to the captain that she was the British ship "Perthshire," from Mobile, and bound to Liverpool, with a cargo of cotton; but, to our unutterable disappointment and disgust, she was found to have cleared from port before the blockade was declared, and consequently was released by the flag-officer and permitted to pursue her course to Liverpool unmolested. She would have been a capital prize with such a cargo, and we all regretted exceedingly that her sailing could not have been delayed a short time in order to have accommodated us.

A number of ships were sighted on our voyage from Boston to Key West, but none of them were regarded with sufficient suspicion to warrant a chase, and even if they had, it is quite improbable that our ship would have been able to overtake them or board them in the gale which continued during the whole voyage. As we felt that it was possible, that for these reasons, we may have been deprived of opportunities of securing vast amounts of prize-money, we were exceedingly grateful when it was discovered that Providence had placed directly within our reach, a large British ship, richly loaded, and with no wind, but when our boarding officer returned and made the discouraging report mentioned, the disappointment which was depicted upon our countenances was pitiful.

On the day following our painful separation from

our English friend, who had continued his peaceful voyage to Liverpool, we arrived off the harbor of Pensacola and reported to the flag-officer for duty at Chandelieur Island.

We found quite a number of men-of-war lying there waiting for orders, and our arrival with the mails created great excitement and delight among the officers and crews of the various ships, who commenced at once to board us, and extend the same joyful greetings that we had received at Key West shortly before.

I cannot say with the strictest veracity that we reached Pensacola harbor, for it was at that time impossible to do so, as the entrance thereto was guarded on one side by a large and powerful rebel fort called Fort Barrancas, and from the staff of which we could plainly see the rebel flag floating, while on the other side, and near which we were anchored, was Fort Pickens with the Union ensign flying. The town of Pensacola could be seen in the distance, as well as Warrenton, where the navy-yard was located, which was now in the possession of the rebels.

We did not remain long at Pensacola, but soon received our orders, and steamed away for Chandelieur. Upon our arrival at the island, we found it to be a long, low, sandy, and almost barren spot, with a small growth of timber upon the end farthest from our anchorage. Upon going ashore, the only living occupants were found to be the light-house keeper and his family, whose occupation seemed to have ceased, as his oil was consumed, and his provisions nearly so.

His sympathies were evidently with the Confederacy, for he availed himself of the first opportunity to escape to the mainland with his family, without leaving any expressions of regret at his separation from our society.

After taking up our position for blockade duty where our ship could effectually control the channel, we found nothing in the view of this desolate island to inspire us with hilarity, and at last settled down with heroic fortitude to the conviction that we might as well make the best of what seemed at the time a rather cheerless prospect.

Frequent excursions were made to the island as a means of diversion from the monotony of shipboard, but these visits usually failed to grant the pleasure that was anticipated, as there was an absolute impossibility of finding any species of amusement, and the visitor was compelled to occupy himself constantly during his stay, in brushing away the mosquitoes with which the place was infested whenever there was a lull in the breeze; so that, it was a great relief to again be onboard the ship.

A constant watch was kept for blockade-runners, and the occasional call of the lookout at the masthead of "Sail Ho" would produce excitement among all hands. As yet, our vigilance had not been rewarded even in the slightest degree, and the prospects seemed discouraging for our making any special record as a blockader, until, on the 17th of June after considerable demonstration and excitement we succeeded in capturing a small schooner named

"Achilles," and I have no doubt that the ancient warrior for whom she was named would have been very proud of her could he have seen her. Our previous disappointment in the case of the Englishman, had taught us not to be too hopeful, and to suppress any emotions of joy until the whole truth in this case had been ascertained. This resolution on our part was a most wise and fortunate one, for the boarding officer in this case returned with the information that the "Achilles" was loaded with ballast.

As there was no demand for ballast in the North at that time, and as we could make no use of it ourselves, our captain ordered her to Key West with her precious cargo, which probably gave the Court no special trouble in determining its pro-rata of division among the captors and the squadron.

Our injured feelings were to some degree soothed on the following day, by the announcement that we were to make a trip to the mouth of the Mississippi, and on the day following our arrival there we succeeded in company with the U. S. sloop-of-war "Brooklyn," in capturing an unfortunate brig called the "Nahum Stetson." The cargo of this brig proved to be of some value at last, but the pecuniary gain, as well as the honor, had to be divided with the Brooklyn.

We remained a day or two longer, with nothing of importance happening, and then returned to our dismal anchorage at Chandelieur. While the trip had not resulted in any brilliant action, yet we appreciated the change of scene and temporary relief

from the monotony at the island, and hoped that there might be frequent occasions of the same sort.

We had hardly settled ourselves down for another period of inactivity, when five unsuspecting small schooners came within our grasp and were at once taken possession of.

The cargoes of the whole five of these schooners combined, would hardly have made one man comfortably off, and our calculations as to our own probable receipts from the proceeds of the sale, reduced the individual amounts to a sum hardly equal to a day's expenditures on a quiet vacation on shore. However, the number of vessels taken at one time, we decided would at least convince the Navy Department of our faithful efforts, regardless of the value of the cargoes.

While we had consoled ourselves with this conviction, still we congratulated ourselves that we had made a capture which, while the returns would not be large, they would be at least acceptable.

But here again we were doomed to bitter disappointment. The five schooners were brought into position near our ship, and prize crews were selected from among our best men, giving from four to five men to each schooner, and the prize fleet was placed under the command of Lieutenant Selden, our executive officer, with orders to proceed with the captured vessels to Key West, and for all hands to return in the first ship coming back.

The orders were very simple, and the fulfillment of them would have been highly satisfactory to those of us who remained behind, and who had interests at

stake in the way of prize-money. But this beautiful programme was destined never to be executed. The crews went on board, and sufficient provisions were sent with them to provide against any reasonable detention on the voyage. The anchors were weighed, the sails hoisted, and the little fleet moved slowly away, and before night had disappeared from view.

After a sufficient time had elapsed for the men and officer to have returned from Key West under ordinary circumstances and they had not arrived, we began to feel somewhat concerned as to their safety, and various surmises were offered as to the cause of their failure to return, and the conclusion was reached at last that they must be waiting for a ship bound towards our station. At last a vessel arrived, and brought back the crews of but two of the prizes, from whom we learned that upon the voyage to Key West the two schooners upon which they sailed had become separated from the other three, although they were still in sight; when sailing along the coast of Florida the three schooners had stood too close in shore, and the weather being calm they had been seen from Cedar Keys, and a small rebel steamer was immediately sent out in chase, and soon captured them, while the other two schooners barely escaped a similar fate, their greater distance from the shore giving them time to sail out of reach during the time consumed in getting possession of their comrades.

Lieutenant Selden was unfortunately on board one of the captured prizes, and he, together with the crews, were taken prisoners. We listened to the

recital of this story with dejected countenances and depressed spirits. We were, of course, only too glad, after hearing of the narrow escape of our returned men, to see them back again in health and safety and to congratulate them on their fortune in being able to reach us again; but still, we were disposed to lament for a long time after, the adverse fortune which had so far seemed to attend our efforts in the way of captures.

This unfortunate circumstance impressed upon our minds most forcibly the truth of the saying, that "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." The loss of our officer and men was, of course, the most serious one, as the men were among the best of our crew, and had been picked for this voyage as being capable and trustworthy sailors and skillful seamen, and would be a serious loss in any emergency which might arise requiring the services of such men. This was not the only feeling we had concerning them, for we also felt that they would probably be subjected to the trials of a long imprisonment in the rebel prisons, and possibly might never survive the confinement.

The intelligence brought to us by the ship which had reached us from Key West, was also spread among the ships of the squadron, and a report of the humiliating disaster was made to the flag-officer.

All the evidence obtainable, seemed to establish the fact that the vessels had not been lost through any negligence of the lieutenant in charge of them, or of the men who were serving under him, but that a failure of wind, and the drifting of the vessels, had

carried them inshore and brought them within view of the Confederate soldiers at whose mercy they were soon placed.

Up to the time of this unfortunate circumstance, while we had taken no special pride in the class of vessels we had captured, including those whose fate has been shown, and had felt that the pecuniary gains from the same would hardly be sufficient to warrant any very desperate efforts to continue in the search of others of the same description, yet we were conscious of having done as far as possible the duty which we presumed the government required of us, and the very insignificance of our prizes so far was regarded by us as evidence of a vigilance which made no distinction as to the value, or size, of any vessel which we pursued.

We had now reached the middle of summer, but as yet we had not suffered with the heat, even though we were in a southern latitude. The conditions would probably have been quite different on shore, but as we were a long distance from the mainland, we found that ordinarily there was a good breeze during the day, and the nights were quite comfortable; but the monotony of blockade life upon a station so utterly uninviting and uninteresting as ours, with only a barren and mosquito infested island to offer any relief to the life on ship, and with no other ship to share our misery with us, was beginning to be something of a burden to us.

Our vigorous pursuit and capture of the vessels mentioned, had so far intimidated the commerce of

that immediate coast, that a vessel was but scarcely seen, and those which had the hardihood to venture out at all, hugged the shore as closely as possible to avoid the possibility of capture, so that the excitement of the chase and capture was seldom offered us, and we were compelled to resort to other methods for our amusement and entertainment.

Under circumstances such as these, time drags very slowly, and the utter absence from day to day of any variety in life, forces upon us at last the alternative of seeking amusement in such simple games and pastimes as we had abandoned upon reaching maturity, but which fortunately remain in the memory, for use at such a time as that in which we found ourselves.

The games of childhood are entered into with as much avidity as when indulged in at the age for which they were intended.

There is mercifully provided however, for all those who find themselves in circumstances such as ours, one unfailing and unending pastime, which, while innocent and harmless, seems to have no adequate reward for the devotion which it receives. I refer to fishing. When all else fails, fishing seems to offer the refuge from despair; and the quiet contemplation of the bob, in constant expectation of its disappearance beneath the surface, or the thrilling anticipation of the jerk, in absence of the bob, seem to bring rest and contentment to the unhappy mind. With a knowledge of this happy fact, fishing was carried on from morning until night over the sides of the ship.

The regular discipline of the ship was carried on from day to day, and this helped to consume much of the time. Those officers of an inactive disposition, would recline in easy chairs under the awnings, and smoke or read between the meals.

The evenings were spent principally on deck in promenading, although occasionally games of cards were indulged in below, in the ward-room.

Many weeks were thus passed, with no friendly ship coming to bring us tidings from the North.

A great war was going on, and yet we were as ignorant of its progress as if we had been on the coast of Africa, and the anxiety with regard to our friends who were in the Army, and from whom we could get no intelligence, was of course very great.

A lookout was always stationed at the mast-head, whose duty it was to report any and all sails he might discover, or anything else he might see that would be worthy of attention.

Occasionally this lookout would sight a sail far down on the horizon, which he would announce by the cry of "Sail ho," when every one on board would at once become excited and gaze in the direction indicated by the lookout, in the hope of being able to welcome the long expected visitor from the North, bringing news of the war and letters from home; but many times we were doomed to disappointment when such far off sails would disappear below the horizon, and leave us again to our cheerless meditations.

At a distance of about ten miles from our station was another island, similar in character to the one

where we were lying, called "Ship Island." It was but little known to any of us at this time, but it was destined to become famous in the later history of the war.

We had made occasional trips to it, merely to see if it was in any way being occupied, or utilized by the Confederates. These trips were hailed with considerable joy, and while the view of the island presented no more attractive scenes than Chandelieur, yet the mere fact of being under weigh, and going back and forth was very much in the nature of a picnic for us.

It had been decided that the blockade of Ship Island channel was of more importance than that of Chandelieur, and in August we changed our station to the former channel.

We observed no special change in our surroundings or circumstances, as there was no evident choice as to the islands in the matter of visits to them. Still, it was a change, and as such we were glad to welcome it, with the possibility also, of surprising some unsuspecting craft and capturing him, which would give us something to talk about at least, even if there should not be any other result.

This hope was realized in a few days after our arrival, and the result was of no more value than the low estimate we had decided to place upon it as a last resort. The craft which had fallen into our rapacious hands, was a small sloop loaded with fish. This cargo was equally discouraging with the one of ballast, which we had previously become the possessors of.

The highly indignant crew who regarded us as above such small business, were transferred to our ship, and the cargo was appropriated to our own consumption, so that any judicial proceedings as to the amount of prize money to be distributed from the sale of these fish, would have to be abandoned. I think the full complement of this sloop, consisted of the captain and one other man, but as we suspected that they might be imbued with the spirit of secession, we concluded to offer them the hospitalities of our own government, which were much superior to the entertainment offered by their unfortunate sloop.

We hoped that the capture of the sloop was but the nucleus of a new series of conquests, and our anticipations were greatly revived.

The outlook for recreation on shore was not much more encouraging here, than at the inhospitable island we had recently left, but still, there was some pleasure in the anticipation of a first exploration, with the possibility of the discovery of something unsuspected.

Before leaving Chandelieur Island, our captain had deemed it best, as a matter of safety to vessels which might be coming from the North, to re-establish the light. Accordingly, one of our quartermasters was selected to perform the duties of light-keeper. He had been chosen as a man in all respects well qualified to perform such duty, being a skillful and brave fellow, and one who would be depended upon in any emergency which might arise. The position was one of extreme loneliness, as he would be the only human

being upon the island, and one which would not be coveted under most circumstances. However, he seemed to be in no way depressed by the knowledge that he would be utterly alone, but, on the contrary, entered into the preparations for his departure from the ship with cheerful spirits and evident enjoyment. The dwelling-house, which was of peculiar construction, and stood upon iron posts which raised it some eight feet above the ground, was put in order for his occupation, and a good supply of the ship's provisions were given him for his subsistence. He was also supplied with everything which could be of service to him in the way of arms and ammunition, as well as cooking utensils and flags for signals. After seeing him comfortably fixed in his new position we steamed away and left him monarch of all he surveyed, and to meditate upon the adventures of his famous predecessor in similar condition, Robinson Crusoe.

We soon had occasion to again visit the passes at the mouth of the Mississippi to make reports to the commanding officer there, under whose immediate orders we were. While there a suspicious looking vessel was discovered far up the pass. She was evidently an ocean-going ship, as she carried spars, and to all appearances was waiting for a favorable opportunity to run the blockade and go to sea. After a sufficient inspection of her through the glass, our captain became convinced that such was without doubt her intention, and at once asked permission of Captain Poor, of the "Brooklyn," to steam up the

river and interview the stranger; but the request was not granted, and soon after our departure the famous "Sumter" had run the blockade, ineffectually pursued by the "Brooklyn." The reason why the request of our captain was not granted I have never yet ascertained; but the result of the "Sumter's" escape is a matter of history, and her track upon the ocean we know was marked with fire and destruction. Upon our return to Ship Island we steered for our regular anchorage, but before reaching there we were utterly astounded to find ourselves greeted with a shot from the fort, and to discover that during our temporary absence the place had been taken possession of by the rebels. It was not the intention of Captain Smith to quietly withdraw in their favor, so the ship was cleared for action and we proceeded to engage the fort; but it was soon found that our ship was not equal to the contest alone; and discretion having been regarded as the better part of valor, by our captain, the ship was withdrawn from the battle and we proceeded to take up our old station in disgust, at Chandelieur.

A previous brief contest with the fort in July, had also tended to convince us of our inferiority as compared with the armament of the fort.

We had almost reached the conclusion that the government intended us to remain here alone until the close of the war, when much to our delight we were joined by one or two other vessels on the station.

The weary monotony of our existence was at last

broken, and social intercourse was at once established between the ships. Boats were coming and going frequently, and calls were being exchanged. We were delighted to once more look upon other faces than those of our own people, and it seemed as if they must have arrived from some unknown world.

We were also gratified to get information concerning a war in which we were taking an humble part, but of the progress of which we had no idea beyond our own acts, which could not have been regarded as offering a very speedy conclusion to the question at issue.

Our reception by the fort at Ship Island had been a matter of some excitement, but not of sufficient importance to leave any very marked impression upon our minds; but an event was in course of preparation, which was destined to afford us a very unusual amount of agitation.

On the evening of September 16th a bright light was discovered at Ship Island by the lookout at the masthead, who at once reported that fact to the officer of the deck. It was no unusual thing to see lights in that direction, but they were seldom of sufficient magnitude to attract special attention. We were well aware that the Confederates were there in considerable force, and it would have been remarkable if lights had not been seen often; but the light which was reported to the officer at this time, seemed to be significant of some unusual proceeding on the part of the Confederates, and in consequence we were con-

siderably curious and excited about it, as we were quite certain that it indicated some important move, or possibly, the celebration of some great victory by the Confederate army, of which we had not as yet heard.

In a very short time the light had increased to such proportions that it could be readily seen from the deck, and as it continued to grow the whole sky became illumined by it. Our captain became convinced that some very important action was being taken by the Confederates, and so the order was given to all hands "Up anchor," and we were very soon steaming at our greatest speed, toward the scene of the conflagration. The anxiety of all hands to ascertain the cause of this unusual demonstration, resulted in our having gotten under weigh in a remarkably short time, quite in contrast with the ordinary methods of accomplishing that end.

As we approached the island we discovered that it was being evacuated by the soldiers, and that they were burning such material as could not be taken with them on their hurried departure.

We saw that this would be a most favorable opportunity to pay off some old scores, and when our ship had approached sufficiently near, we opened our battery upon them, and I have no doubt that this proceeding hastened very much their departure and probably gave them a very unwelcome surprise. It may not perhaps be a special act of bravery to fire upon a reteating enemy, but it is certainly one of great satisfaction, when the aforesaid enemy has had the

previous pleasure of seeing you in the same unfortunate position.

Of course the effect of our shots could not be seen in the general conflagration, but we hoped that at least our efforts to remind the retreating soldiers of our presence had been to some extent appreciated.

Upon visiting the island in the morning, a scene of ruin and desolation was presented. The fleeing army had fired the barracks as well as everything else that it was impossible for them to carry away with them, and had even destroyed the light-house, by shattering the glass and burning out the whole inside of the structure. Everything which it had been impossible to carry away, had been burned or destroyed.

This event, coming after a long and uneventful period of blockade duty at Chandelieur, seemed a most dramatic conclusion of our slight acquaintance with our Confederate neighbors. However, we felt no regret at their departure, and only hoped that we should not have a renewal of our acquaintance with them soon.

It was quite evident that the order for them to evacuate the island must have been a very sudden and unexpected one, for the reason that we found the fort itself in comparatively good order, and susceptible of being placed in defensive condition without much loss of time, or any very extensive amount of labor, from the fact that the materials of which it was constructed were such as could not be carried away on so short a notice, and could not be destroyed by fire.

This condition of things in respect to the fort was very gratifying, and we felt assured of being able to utilize it at short notice if it should become necessary at any time.

There were thousand of bags of sand left untouched, and which only needed to be placed in position to render the fort almost impregnable. Eight of the casemates of the fort were in condition to receive guns and unharmed. There were also about a dozen small shanties, which probably had been used for soldiers' quarters, which had been spared by the flames, and what was better than all, we found thirty-six head of cattle. This last-mentioned discovery was indeed a valuable one, for we had been without fresh beef for many weeks, and the prospect for indulgence in that luxury was very delightful, and we all felt extremely grateful to the rebel government for this pleasant surprise.

As the officer in command of the fort had not had the pleasure of sinking our ship with his guns, which, I presume, he anticipated doing when we first arrived from the Mississippi, he was compelled to resort to the pen with which to express his warlike propensities. This article has been said to be mightier than the sword; but in this instance I am convinced that the sword would have done much greater execution. The sentiments of this officer toward our captain were found nailed to the bulletin of the fort, and were expressed in the following language:

"To the Commander of the 'Massachusetts,' United States Ship of War, now lying off Ship Island.

"By order of my government I have this day evacuated Ship Island. This my brave soldiers under my command do with much reluctance and regret. For three long months your good ship has been our constant companion. We have not exactly lived and loved together, but we have been intimately acquainted, having exchanged *cards* on the 9th day of July last. In leaving you to-day we beg you to accept our best wishes for your health and happiness while sojourning on this pleasant, hospitable shore. That we may have another exchange of courtesies before the war closes, and that we may meet face to face in close quarters, is the urgent prayer of,

"Very truly, your obedient servant,

"H. W. Allen,

"Lieutenant-Colonel, Commanding Ship Island.

"D. C. Jenkins,

"Lieutenant and Post Adjutant.

"Fort Twiggs, Ship Island, September 17, 1861."

CHAPTER II.

MANY STRANGE EXPERIENCES.

THE satisfaction which the Confederate officer felt after leaving the affectionate farewell letter to Capt. Smith, must have been immense; and if his fighting qualities were equal to his sarcasm, I have no doubt he must have greatly hindered the Union cause, and been the means of prolonging a war which would have closed much sooner, had his presence in the Confederate Army not prevented it.

I doubt if the Navy Department has ever received any information as to whether his wish to meet Capt. Smith in close quarters was ever gratified, but from the fact that Capt. Smith survived the war by more than thirty years, I conclude that if he did meet him, he was humane enough to spare him annihilation.

The effect upon our captain upon perusing the document was decidedly amusing, and probably not such a one as desired by its author.

As our captain subsequently commanded the frigate "Mississippi" at the capture of New Orleans by Farragut, and also at the siege of Port Hudson, it is barely possible that some friends of the author of the letter may have been hurt by him.

We decided that when the events which had tran-

spired at Ship Island should be known at the North, our station would be regarded as of sufficient importance to arouse at least a feeble public interest, and we hoped that it would lead to the necessity of sending us some companions to assist in holding on to such spoils as had so unexpectedly fallen into our hands.

Our hopes were soon realized, for we were cheered by the arrival of the old sloops-of-war "Marion" and "Preble," and our fleet was beginning to assume quite respectable proportions.

The two ships which had joined us were of the old Navy sailing-ships, and were not of much use except in guarding channels, where it would not be necessary for them to get under weigh, which operation in their cases would have required considerable delay, and as in many cases which came under my observation the delay would have been fatal to the project.

On the night of September 18 the lookout aloft reported five steamers in sight in Mississippi Sound, and the ship was immediately got under way, followed by the "Marion" and "Preble," and we stood into the Ship Island passage, where we could guard the island and prevent any landing of the enemy, as it was evident that they were intending to recapture such property as they had left when they took their departure so suddenly. In the meantime we had received information as to the position of a certain submarine cable which was being used by the rebels, the destruction of which would very seriously damage them and retard their movements. An expedition was formed

for the purpose of undertaking that work, and the crews for two launches were picked from our own and the "Preble's" men, and were all well armed, besides having howitzers upon the bows of the launches.

This expedition was placed under the command of one of our master's mates, named Ryder; he had volunteered to take charge of the boats, and he was deemed to be just the man for such an undertaking, as he had been a sea-captain and was accustomed to commanding men, besides being a daring and courageous man himself, who it was certain would accomplish his purpose if it were possible.

Everything having been arranged, the launches were brought alongside the ship after dark, and the men went quietly into them, and with muffled oars they rowed away, and were very soon lost from our view in the darkness. We waited anxiously to learn the result of this adventure. In due time the boats returned, bringing back with them some sixty feet of the cable, and making a grand success of the project. They ran a great deal of risk, however, as the boats were at one time so near the rebels as to see their lights on shore and to hear their voices. After the boats returned they were dropped astern of the ship to be towed, and we got under way to return to our anchorage, where the "Preble" was still lying, and waiting for the report of the expedition. There was quite a fresh breeze blowing as we started, and a man was placed in each of the launches to steer them. The ship was steaming along at a good rate of speed, and

there was quite a little chop-sea, which, together with the force of the water astern from the ship's propeller, made quite rough towing for the launches, and I had myself noticed that they were frequently shipping water over their bows, but still, they had not been considered to be in any danger.

But suddenly one of the launches shipped a large quantity of water as she pitched into a sea, and the weight of this, together with the howitzer upon her bow, sent her completely under water as she pitched the next time, and her line was snapped apart, and she drifted astern in a sinking condition with the sailor in her calling for help. The ship was immediately stopped, and boats were lowered as quickly as possible and sent in search of the unfortunate man, but as darkness had now closed in upon us, nothing could be seen or heard of him in any direction. The boats searched long and faithfully, but were at last compelled to abandon the search and return to the ship.

An event of this nature, under such circumstances, is peculiarly distressing, and there was a very general expression of grief at the loss of this brave man. He was one of the best skilled seamen of the ship, and a general favorite among his shipmates.

After a council of the captains of our fleet it was decided to place the fort on Ship Island in as good a condition of defense as possible, and in order to accomplish this, a force of sailors and marines was detailed to go ashore and prosecute the work. From the fact that the Confederates had left it in comparatively good condition, there was no special skill re-

quired to restore it to its original state of defense of which we had had several occasions to judge, and which we had regarded from our point of view as quite complete.

The men were quite elated at the prospect of going ashore and engaging in the work, as it offered a pleasant change from the life on board ship, and gave them a chance to move about once more on terra firma, and have the opportunity of making expeditions and discoveries in other parts of the island when not on duty. The zest with which the men entered into the work, and the manner in which it was performed, would have convinced any one that sailors and marines are not by any means incapable of doing work except such as pertains to the decks of a ship. The result of their labor was such that in a very few days from its commencement the fort was in condition to resist a siege, should it become necessary to do so.

The cattle which have been mentioned as having been left by the fleeing Confederates, were at the other extremity of the island, where there was some scanty grazing and quite a growth of timber. This timber was at a distance of about two miles from the fort, and the journey there had to be made either by a march through the hot sand, or along the shore in boats. Frequent excursions were made there in search of fresh beef, and these trips were usually made in boats, as they were used to transport the beef after its capture.

Whatever the natural disposition of the cattle may

have been, or their conduct during their ownership by the Confederacy, it was at the time of their discovery by our men, quite certain that their capture by them was not going to be any child's-play, and that it would require considerable of the daring and skill of the cow-boy to bring them even within gun-shot range. While our men did not lack in courage in battle,or in any of the ordinary affairs of life requiring the possession of that quality, they did feel some hesitancy in pursuing wild cattle through timber, with the possibility of the cattle turning on them at any minute, leaving no chance of escape from their rage, except that of climbing a tree, in case there should be time tc accomplish that feat. However, the men after careful consideration of the subject, decided that the most probable success would result from a bold charge of bayonets, each man selecting his own cow and pursuing her to the death, either of the cow or himself. This line of policy was adopted finally, and after a cautious approach to the unsuspecting cattle, the order was given to charge bayonets.

To those of us who witnessed this scene from a safe distance, it was ludicrous in the extreme. The absurdity of sailors and marines being engaged in such an unheard of performance, so utterly foreign to any occupation for which they were supposed to be only fitted, the methods employed for the accomplishment of their designs, and the general character of the whole undertaking, presented a comedy beyond the wildest imagination of even a modern dramatist. When the opening charge of bayonets was made, it

was accompanied by a discordant yell which stampeded the cattle in every direction through the timber, thus giving each sailor an opportunity to select his private victim.

Whenever a seeming favorable opportunity was presented for firing a shot, the party observing it would fire, without any regard whatever to the position of his fellow hunters, thus rendering it extremely dangerous to be anywhere within gun-shot distance of this extraordinary scene.

The innocent spectators perceived this danger very early in the game, and hastily withdrew to places of safety, or took to the boats and rowed away from that part of the island until the strange combat was finished.

Whatever comments may be made upon this style of securing meat, it never failed to bring the desired result, and we were always pleased to applaud the victors as they returned from the sanguinary field, laden with their spoils.

The beef secured by this process was usually largely perforated, and bore other evidences of hotly contested struggles; still, we were quite willing to overlook any unintentional acts of cruelty, and found our Confederate beef to be a delightful change from the salt meats we had been compelled to live upon for some months.

Our station by the first of October had begun to assume something of a national importance, and quite a number of vessels had arrived, bringing coal, and supplies of all kinds.

The government had established a regular line of supply steamers from the North, so that we were visited by one of these welcome steamers about once every two or three weeks, and from which we were enabled to receive fresh meat and vegetables as well to purchase luxuries for our mess. This regular line of steamers just then established, was continued during the whole war and was one of the wisest and best acts of the government for the comfort and care of the men who were risking their lives for its preservation. Not only did we receive the necessities and luxuries for our physical comfort and delight, but these steamers brought us also the letters from our homes, which were more eagerly sought for than anything else.

I know of no signal ever made from a man-of-war during my service, which carried more delight to the hearts of those for whom it was intended, than the one to "Send boat for mail," and I have never seen a signal more promptly obeyed.

We had no longer any occasion to complain of loneliness or solitude, for Ship Island had now assumed an importance far beyond any hope we had indulged for it upon taking possession of it.

So many vessels of every description were now lying at anchor here, and so many were coming and going every day, that we began to feel a sort of insignificance, and to realize that we were now only one of a very considerable fleet, and that our companions had forgotten or ignored the fact, that we were the pioneers upon the station, and for that rea-

son were entitled to more homage than we seemed to be getting. But the pleasure of having the society of so many other ships, was superior to any feeling of jealously at their being there.

The population of the island had largely increased through the arrival of so many people upon the station, and what we had so recently looked upon as a desolate and uninviting spot, began to present many attractions, and frequent visits were made to the shore, where pleasant acquaintances were formed, and calls were exchanged each day.

It was extremely aggravating at this time to see each day numbers of steamers passing between New Orleans and Mobile, by the way of Mississippi Sound, and not be able to reach them with our guns. The "Massachusetts" was of such draught of water as not to permit her to approach within shot of these steamers, and thus we were subjected to the torture of seeing them pass within view day after day, and as we gazed upon them, to make mental calculations as to the vast sums of prize-money that were slipping through our fingers.

These steamers were frequently convoyed by rebel gun-boats, with which we would occasionally exchang shots, but which always gave us plenty of distance upon our attempts to approach them for close range. We had longed for a light-draught gunboat to join us in this business, and had hoped that such an one would be sent to the station, as this condition of affairs had been represented to the flag-officer.

At last our hopes were realized by the arrival of the

"New London," commanded by Lieutenant Reed, of the regular navy. She was just such a steamer as we had desired, and was well calculated for the business in hand. Most fortunately, she arrived in the night, and consequently the rebels had no knowledge or intimation of her arrival, and were of course unprepared for the surprise which awaited them.

Lieutenant Reed came on board our ship as soon as he arrived, and after a consultation he was ordered by Captain Smith to proceed with his steamer into Mississippi Sound, and to take up a position under cover of the island and wait for the developments of daylight.

We retired that night with an inward consciousness that we should get some satisfaction by daylight for the bold effrontery that had been displayed for several weeks by those rebel steamers, and I am happy to be able to state that our confidence in the success of the undertaking had not been misplaced; for at early daylight on the following morning I was awakened by the puffing of a high-pressure steamer close alongside of our ship, which, upon getting out of my berth, I discovered to be the rebel steamer "Anna" being towed by the "New London." We gave her a very cordial reception, and laughed at the neat way in which our rebel friends had been taken in.

This game was now beginning to be decidedly interesting, and the officers and crew of the "New London" were greatly delighted with the programme, and were impatient to make another raid. The "Anna" was loaded with turpentine and resin, which were very

valuable at this time. Her cargo was taken out and landed upon Ship Island, and she was appropriated to our own uses as a sort of tender. As the first night's adventure had been crowned with so much success, the "New London" was again sent in on the following night. We did not really anticipate as good results from the second night's raid, for the reason that the loss of the "Anna" would put the rebels on their guard, and as a consequence they would use every endeavor to avoid being caught again in the same trap.

But they did not seem to profit by their unfortunate experience, and had omitted to use the precaution which we presumed they regarded necessary, for on the second morning at about the same hour, the "New London" again appeared, towing a much larger steamer than the "Anna." This last capture was loaded with sugar and molasses, of which she had about twelve hundred barrels. The name of this steamer was the "Henry Lewis." The cargo of this steamer was also piled up on Ship Island, and the "Henry Lewis" was at once converted into a U. S. transport.

The capture of this steamer had not been so easily accomplished as that of the "Anna," but it had been made under much more exciting circumstances, and was in consequence regarded by the officers and crew of the "New London," as something to be more proud of than their first adventure.

When the "Henry Lewis" first discovered the Federal gunboat, she changed her course at once and

crowded on all steam, in the hope of making her escape, while in the meantime her crew were hurriedly throwing the cargo overboard in order to lighten her. They had succeeded in throwing over some three hundred barrels, and she was being hotly pursued by the "New London," but with the probability of escaping, when she suddenly ran aground, and being unarmed, fell an easy prey to the gunboat, which simply took her in tow and brought her to our station.

These two steamers were very useful to us, and considering the slight expense they had been to the government in their capture, were considered decided bargains. They were of very light draught and could approach very close to the shore, thus rendering it possible by the use of light howitzers which were placed on board of them, to terrify the inhabitants of the adjacent coast, as well as the small craft which had been navigating peacefully along the shore.

These steamers were of the style known as high pressure river boats, and the exhaust of the steam through their high funnels, made a most terrifying noise to those who were unaccustomed to such craft. There was probably no style of boat ever constructed, less adapted to the service required of a man-of-war, but as a boat for merely peaceful pursuits in smooth water, they possessed many advantages and even luxuries. There were several state rooms in each of them, besides officers' quarters, so that the men who were assigned to duty on board of them fared sumptuously every day. It was quite important in the employment of these boats, that they should not

be exposed to any attack by the enemy, for their construction was of such a frail nature, that one well directed shot from a small piece of artillery, would either send them at once to the bottom, or by piercing the boilers, blow them to splinters.

Upon the capture of the "Henry Lewis," it seemed to occur to those parties who were engaged in that branch of commerce, that it would perhaps be well to suspend it for a while at least, as the stockholders could hardly look for full dividends if the "New London" persisted in that sort of amusement every night, and they did not care to supply the Yankees with any more sugar and molasses, or resin and turpentine, at that price.

The crews were taken on board of the "Massachusetts" and compelled to mingle with the Yankee sailors. There were also several passengers who had taken passage from New Orleans to Mobile, and purchased tickets accordingly, and these people were highly indignant and intensely disgusted, to find that their tickets were good for New York instead of Mobile. They had little dreamed upon leaving their homes, that their passage would end in New York instead of Mobile, and I have no doubt that this change of programme interfered seriously with their business arrangements and domestic plans.

We had had an apprehension for some time, that as we were having things all our own way, the Confederates would bye and bye wake up to this fact, and make some effort to correct things. This suspicion had given rise to some doubt as to our being able

to resist any very formidable adversary, as our ship was not adapted to any prolonged attack, being constructed of only single plates of iron such as are used in building merchant steamers, and our battery being of rather ancient design, did not cover any very extensive range. However, we had determined that in the event of any such attack we would endeavor to impress upon the enemy our superiority, in such a way as to possibly convince him of its truth.

Our suspicions were finally realized, by the appearance on October 19th, of a strange craft coming from the direction of Mobile, and her mission was considered as undoubtedly one of revenge, for the liberties we had taken with their commerce in those waters. She approached slowly, until when within about five miles of us she fired a gun from her side opposite the one presented to us. There was no longer any doubt of her business, as the firing of the gun was a challenge for an engagement, and as such, it was immediately accepted by our captain, and the anchor was weighed and the ship cleared for action.

Our enemy was a low, black, ugly looking craft, and seemed to be well armed and iron plated, and had evidently been constructed for the express purpose of annihilating the "Massachusetts." I think the general opinion was, on board of our ship, that our friend had largely the advantage of us, and would not hesitate to demonstrate the fact. This thought was anything but a comforting one, but still, as we had been sent out there to sustain the cause in which we were engaged as far as possible, we were certain

that our captain would proceed to do so at the first invitation.

As we steamed in towards her, the men stood at the guns ready for orders; but it was observed that as we approached her she gradually moved off from us, thus at no time allowing us to approach within less than a mile and three-quarters; the object evidently being to draw us as far as possible in towards the mainland, and as far as possible from Ship Island also. After proceeding as close as our draught of water would permit, we opened fire upon her with all the guns that could be brought to bear on her at once; and as soon as she returned our fire we discovered that she had a battery very much superior to our own in point of range and effectiveness, which gave a decidedly interesting aspect to the affair, and tended to confirm our previous suspicions on that point.

Our guns were elevated to their extreme limit, and even then the majority of our shots fell short of their mark, while the shots from her rifle-gun were passing between our topmasts. This condition of affairs was anything but encouraging, and left but little doubt in our minds as to what the result would be when our enemy should get his range on our hull. However, Captain Smith was not a man to retreat upon the anticipated consequencese of such an engagement, and only determined to use all the more exertion to turn the tide of battle or lose his ship in the attempt.

To this end the guns were loaded and fired as rapidly as possible; the din and excitement of battle were at the highest pitch, men were rushing here and

there executing the orders of the officers, the ship was enveloped in a cloud of smoke, and the shells from the enemy's ship were whistling and bursting in the air.

As yet our ship had not been hit, although several shells had struck very close to us, and we knew that we could not much longer escape, as the rebel gunboat was fast getting the range of our hull. The effect of our own shots could not be always seen, owing to the cloud of smoke which hung about us. They had at last got our range, and as evidence of this they sent a shell into our starboard side abaft the engine, and about five feet above the water-line, which cut away eighteen planks of the main deck in the wardroom, destroyed the sofas, and cut off about twenty sections of the steam-pipe used for heating, carried away the greater part of the dining-table, passed through the bulkheads on the opposite side, struck the ship on the port side in the state-rooms, where its force having become expended, it dropped and exploded, blowing four state-rooms into one.

One of the heavy fragments of the shell struck a timber, breaking all the outside planking from the main to the spar-deck.

The explosion had set the ship on fire, and the men were called from the guns to fire-quarters. Although the scene was one of the greatest excitement, everything was done in strict obedience to the discipline of the ship, and the fire was extinguished before any serious damage had been done by it.

We were quite convinced, now that our enemy had

gotten his range on our hull, that if he should follow up that advantage, our time would probably be quite brief; and we had no reason to suppose that he would relent just at this period.

Our fire had been so rapid and continuous, that the serious and alarming fact was staring us in the face, that our ammunition was nearly exhausted, and that we should not be able to defend ourselves much longer, and we should probably very soon be forced to a humiliating surrender, or the necessity of retreat, pursued by our ugly looking enemy. We had just about reached this dismal and distressing conclusion, when to our utter astonishment and intense relief, our enemy ceased firing, just at a time when we supposed his best efforts would be put forth to effect our capture, and steamed rapidly away in the direction of Pass Christian, on the coast of Mississippi.

So far as we were able to judge, there seemed to be no reasonable explanation for this unexpected and sudden turn in affairs, and we were very loth to attribute it to the effect of our own fire, for the reason that our shots seemed to be falling short, so far as we were able to see, which was only at intervals, as we were enveloped in smoke much of the time, and in view of this fact, we concluded that it could only be accounted for as an act of Providence in our behalf, and for which, I am sure we felt extremely grateful.

We were left in the dark as to our enemy's sudden departure from what appeared to be a field of glory for him, and were of the opinion that some accident had occurred which necessitated his temporary with-

drawal, but that he would without doubt return to the scene, as soon as he had repaired the damage, and proceed to deposit more shells in our ship. While laboring under this. depressing suspicion, we were disinclined to regard the situation as a victory for us, as we might be subjected soon to the humiliation of a defeat.

Upon the mysterious retreat of our enemy, our ship was withdrawn from the scene, and we proceeded to our station to repair damages, and present theories as to the unanticipated result of our first real naval battle.

No evidence of the return of our enemy had been seen, and we retired that night in comparative serenity, to await the developments of the following day.

At daylight on the following morning a small boat was seen approaching our ship from the direction of the coast, and it was soon discovered that it was loaded to the water's edge with a motley collection of fleeing contrabands, who had spent the entire night in escaping to our ship.

They were taken on board, and from them we learned the cause of our late enemy's sudden departure from the scene of our furious conflict the previous day, and the mystery was most happily cleared up.

They informed us that the name of the mysterious stranger was the "Florida," and that she carried a battery of six broadside guns, and a large rifle pivot amidships. From the pieces of the shell which she

presented to us, gathered up after the battle, it was found to be a 68 pounder.

The cause of her retreat being more eagerly demanded of the contrabands than any other information, we were told by them, that her rifle gun, which was her main dependence (and of which we had ourselves been convinced), had been dismounted by a shot from our ship, and six men had been killed. In addition to this, she was in a sinking condition when she was forced to retire. Our utter atonishment at the recital of this report, can only be faintly conceived, and our innocent contrabands were overwhelmed with demonstrations of affection and joy for having imparted to us this glittering information. Our old smooth bore and antiquated battery became an object of reverence at once, and seemed to swell more at the breech in pride, and to silently reproach us for our former ridicule, as if to say that they knew their business better than we did.

The result of this previously unsuspected victory for us, was shown in the continuous hilarity of our officers, who were seen to frequently pass down to the ward-room and remind each other of the fact.

The most remarkable feature of our engagement was, that no one was injured on board our ship. It could not often occur that a shell could enter a man-of-war and explode, and no one be hurt.

My own position in time of action was in charge of the forward shell magazine, and was one which at such a time was not calculated to establish a consciousness of perfect safety by any means. It might

be inferred from the character of my appointment, that I should be exempt from any active participation in any battles in which our ship might become engaged; but such was not the case, and the peaceful title of my position did not in any way indicate my exemption from duties of a sanguinary nature whenever the enemy compelled me to assume them.

A view after the battle of what was once my stateroom, was to the last degree discouraging, and in fact it was with difficulty that I could locate its former position, as it was one of the unfortunate rooms which had come within the course of the rebel shell.

My wardrobe, limited as it was, was merely a mass of charred and soaking rags, and my nightshirt which had been innocently suspended from the side of my berth during the action, seemed to have come in contact with a barbed wire fence, and as I viewed it in sorrow, I still congratulated myself that it was not adorning my person at the time of its disaster.

When the "Florida" left us so unexpectedly, steering for Pass Christian, it was the last time we ever had the pleasure of seeing her, and I think there were few regrets that she should have concluded not to resume our acquaintance.

The contrabands who came off to our ship, and who brought us the intelligence with regard to the "Florida," arrived very early in the morning, and came in a rather dilapidated skiff. They brought with them a number of valuable articles which they had appropriated from their master's personal property,

such as clothing, watches, etc.; and also, among other things, a violin; so that we were entertained in the evenings by the genuine plantation songs and dances upon the deck.

Several weeks passed after our naval combat with nothing of interest to break the monotony of inaction. Frequent trips were made to the island, but these were for the most part unsatisfactory. Fish could be caught over the side of the ship, and this sport was considerably indulged in by all hands. We were unmercifully tormented on calm nights by the swarms of mosquitoes which came off from the island, and which rendered sleep impossible, either below or on deck. Many nights we were all compelled to pace the deck nearly all night, brushing the mosquitoes away from our faces with our handkerchiefs. We had mosquito-nets, but were not able to sleep under them in our state-rooms on such nights, owing to the oppressive heat. In despair, we would take our blankets up on deck and endeavor to sleep there; but this plan had to be also abandoned, as offering no relief to the tortures below. I have frequently myself sought refuge at the mast-head, where I always found relief from the mosquitoes, but which place I was obliged to desert upon experiencing the first symptoms of sleepiness, as the position was one of extreme danger for a person in such a condition.

I have often seen the sailors sleeping aloft on such nights, stretched out on the bunt of the sail; and they could only be awakened with safety by sending a man up to take hold of them, and thus securing them

from a fall to the deck below, before rousing them up. Captain Smith was in the habit upon such nights of putting on his high-top boots, and with a handkerchief about his neck and face, and a pair of gloves on his hands, deserting his cabin entirely, and sitting in his easy-chair on deck, with occasional naps coming to his relief.

As the other extreme to this condition of things we were occasionally visited by those fierce and chilling gales called "Northers," which are so common in the Gulf of Mexico, as well as on the plains of Texas. These gales, although very refreshing at their commencement, after a protracted season of heat and mosquitoes, would often become quite alarming by the time they reached the full height of their strength, and on one or two occasions it was with much difficulty that we could maintain our position at our anchorage, with both anchors out and the propeller in motion.

The middle of winter had arrived before we had realized any hope of a change in our surroundings and circumstances, when one day the lookout aloft reported a steamer in sight, heading in for the island, which he described as being a large side-wheel steamer with the Union ensign flying. At this announcement all hands at once came on deck and watched with much interest and curiosity, her approach to the island.

As she drew nearer, we could see that her decks were crowded with people, and it was discovered by one of the officers who had been gazing silently and

attentively through the spy-glass for a long time, that there were ladies on board of her.

This announcement by the officer, caused an intense excitement among all hands, and as it at first appeared to be an improbable statement, we did not credit it, but regarded it as an intended joke on the part of the officer who made it. But when he resented our expressions of doubt, and repeated the statement with a serious and injured air, we were forced to accept it as truth, and were only too glad to find it to be so. The spy-glass was hurriedly passed from one to the other, and round the second time, until there was no longer the shadow of a doubt of their being females.

The sight of a woman had been denied us for eight long months, and we had only dim recollections of how they looked, and the sudden appearance of several of that sex upon our station, nearly prostrated us with astonishment and delight; and a general effort was noticed among all hands, to appear as attractive as possible in case the ship came near enough for the ladies to observe us. The officers hastened below to put on their best uniforms and arrange themselves generally for a conquest.

The strange steamer proved to be the Pacific Mail Company's immense new steamer "Constitution," with two thousand troops of Butler's army on board, and the ladies were the wives of some of the officers who had come out with the troops.

The soldiers were landed on Ship Island, and all the equipment for such an army was transferred with

them to the shore, presenting a scene of activity never witnessed before in that portion of the Gulf of Mexico. Before coming to anchor however, the "Constitution" approached cautiously our own position, and when her anchor dropped at the close of her long voyage, she was cheered enthusiastically by our officers and men. At the close of this demonstration, the military band on board of her struck up some patriotic airs, which added to the general excitement and rejoicing.

The arrival of the "Constitution" had dispelled the feeling of monotony and impatience at our circumstances, and had substituted a feeling of comparative contentment with our condition. The troops were disembarked, and as the white tents began to spring up in every direction on the island, and numbers of soldiers and officers were seen scattered about making preparations for the occupation of the island, the scene was a very striking contrast to the desolate aspect it had presented for the last eight months. The selection of Ship Island as the base of operations and preparations for the march on New Orleans was not known to us until the arrival of these troops.

In the evening of the same day of the arrival of the "Constitution" a boat came alongside our ship, bringing a number of the military officers and their wives, and the evening was passed in the most delightful manner, until the climax of the entertainment was reached by the arrival of the band, which gave us a most charming serenade from their boat as it floated gently a short distance from our ship. The airs were

mostly of a patriotic nature, which so filled us with valor that I am not sure but that we would have been willing to meet the "Florida" again with pleasure.

In a few days the "Constitution" left for the North, but each day now vessels of all sorts and descriptions were arriving, loaded with guns, ammunition, horses, and supplies of all kinds necessary for the maintenance of an army, so that there was a large fleet constantly coming and going, and we were forced to the conclusion that our own ship had sunk into comparative insignificance surrounded with such a fleet, many of the ships and steamers of which were much superior to ours in point of size and beauty, and we also felt that they failed to recognize the important fact that we were the original occupants of the island which was now familiar to the whole country. Ship Island presented a scene of activity at this time which the wildest imagination could never have predicted for it a year before, and which will probably never again be its fortune.

A trip to the island now was a very decided pleasure and privilege, as it seemed almost like visiting a busy city. Dress parades were of frequent occurrence, at which time the band would perform, and the place would present many attractions for us. There was also the inevitable sutler, who furnished us with almost forgotten luxuries at the usual sutler prices. We also took much pleasure in relating to the newly-arrived occupants of the island the stories of the miseries endured during our long and solitary picket duty upon this station before their arrival.

Thus the time passed very pleasantly with us until the middle of February, 1862, having been nearly nine months upon the blockade of this channel, when a circumstance occurred which filled our cup of happiness to overflowing. It had seemed to us that we were doomed to remain here during the entire war, and there seemed to be no prospect of our return North for any purpose whatever. We had often expressed a wish that something might occur necessitating such a course, provided it was not of such a nature as to affect the happiness of any one, or to impair the effectiveness of the naval force, when the chief engineer reported to Captain Smith that such repairs were necessary to the engine and boilers as could not be done on board ship, and could only be made at the North.

This fact having reached our ears we overwhelmed the engineer with expressions of the deepest gratitude, and treated him with most marked politeness, for fear that by any other conduct towards him he might possibly conclude after all that the work could be done where we were.

Captain Smith was not long in presenting to the flag-officer the condition of the machinery as reported by the chief engineer, and in due course of time the order came from the commodore which determined our passage North, and after the necessary preparations for the voyage had been made, and we had taken our final leave of the friends on the island, the order was sent from the captain to the officer of the deck to "Up anchor for home." The order sent a thrill of

joy and excitement through the entire ship's company, and to say that the order was promptly obeyed would be but a very feeble expression of the manner in which it was responded to. The men sprang to the windlass shouting as if the evil one were pursuing them, and those men who usually endeavored to avoid a promenade around the windlass were now fiercely struggling with each other to get a position on the bars, and were exhibiting a degree of agility in their movements which must have astonished themselves upon a calm review of the performance afterwards. I venture to say that no anchor of equal weight and dimensions, and with the same sort of appliances for raising it, ever came up from the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico within the same space of time as ours did on that occasion.

The signal was given to the engineer to go ahead, and we started on our long voyage to New York, which we ascertained was to be our destination. Our ship had never been regarded as fast, even in her palmiest days, and it was very certain that a period of nine months in the waters of the Gulf without having been cleaned, or any repairs made to the machinery, had in no way improved her speed, and we anticipated a long, slow voyage home. Before many hours had passed Ship Island and Chandelieur had both disappeared below the horizon, and as they faded from our view, so also the anxieties and troubles connected with them, were forgotten in our delight at being homeward bound.

However much we may have secretly wished for

weeks before our departure, that something would happen to the engine to compel our return North, our constant hope and prayer now was, that nothing of such a nature should happen before we reached New York. There was nothing of special interest in the voyage across the Gulf. The log of the ship was watched with great interest, but its reports were not very encouraging. Still, we knew that each hour was bringing us nearer home, and the days had much more interest for us than those we had been spending at Ship Island. The navigating officer was besieged each day as he took his observations, by the other officers, inquiring where we were, and where we would probably be the next day at the same time and the distance to Key West, as well as to New York.

The distance having been ascertained each day, the calculations as to the time of arrival were comparatively simple, provided no unforeseen accident should occur, and the average run of the ship was the same.

The ship was provided with sufficient coal and supplies to last us to New York, and as no repairs were to be made until our arrival, we did not stop at Key West, but gave it a wide berth and shaped our course for Sandy Hook, taking the Gulf Stream to assist us in our progress.

We had a head wind, which blowing contrary to the course of the Gulf Stream, kicked up a heavy sea, into which we were pitching with all the force and discomfort which had been our experience on our southward trip many months before. But the circum-

stances were quite different now, and we were reconciled to many things which would have previously annoyed us beyond measure, and besides, we were all better sailors than when we first left Boston in our verdancy. Cape Hatteras, that dread of all coasting vessels, was passed in safety, and as we reached northward, familiar lights were seen at night, which seemed like old familiar friends greeting us home.

We had been accustomed to wearing thin clothing on our southern station, and as we came into the wintry weather of our northern coast the change was very keenly felt.

Ten days after leaving Ship Island we reached New York in safety. The officers were all given leaves of absence, and hastened off to catch the first trains for their respective homes.

The crew was transferred to the receiving ship "North Carolina," and the old "Massachusetts" was put out of commission temporarily.

I remained with the paymaster until this final act in our drama was finished, when my connection with the old ship which had been my home for so many months, and with which so many pleasant associations were connected, was ended, as was my connection with the Naval service for the time being. I returned to my home in Massachusetts, where I was warmly welcomed, and was often obliged to narrate my adventures upon the blockade. Farragut's expedition against New Orleans was just forming upon our return, and Capt. Smith was ordered to command the "Mississippi" in that expedition, where he signally

distinguished himself, as well as subsequently at Port Hudson, where his ship was destroyed by fire caused by shells from the Confederate batteries. He was a brave and gallant officer in battle, and a vigilant and untiring sentinel on blockade duty. The separation of the officers at the close of the voyage was like the breaking up of a family.

CHAPTER III.

MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS.

My career in the "Massachusetts" having ended, and being now out of the Naval service, I concluded to spend the Spring and Summer at my home, and thus take plenty of time in which to consider any further action. This I did, and the Summer of 1862 was passed in the quiet New England town from which I had departed the previous year. My service had, however, created in me a restlessness, and desire to return to more exciting scenes than those of the inactive life of a peaceful town; and notwithstanding the long and monotonous siege of blockade duty through which I had but recently passed, there was a sort of fascination in the service which I was unable to explain, and which attracted me to it. The war had now reached its most exciting and serious period. Regiments were being formed in all the states of the North and hurried to the field. Nearly every village in New England had its recruiting office, and men responded willingly and heartily to the call for troops.

In response to these calls, a company was being formed in my own town for immediate service, and the ranks were being rapidly filled, when it occurred

to me to join this company, and try the Army for a change. I finally resolved to do so, and signed the rolls, and was given a place in the ranks. We were drilled each day and became very proficient in our tactics, but I did not feel at home in that sort of thing, and did not take the interest in it that I perhaps ought to have done. I felt possibly as a sailor does on horseback; I was out of place, and meditated on the events of my naval service with pleasure.

The contrast was great, and it seemed to me that every advantage was in favor of the Navy.

We were at last ordered to camp near a neighboring village, where the regiment was to form and be mustered in.

As we marched several miles to the camp, I must confess that I did not feel the enthusiasm of my comrades, and began to reflect as to whether my choice had been a wise one altogether.

Upon our arrival at the camp I viewed the quarters in which we were to be placed, and I was not at all impressed with the comfort of them, and my quarters on the "Massachusetts" loomed up in my mind and almost decided me at once to go back to salt water. However, as there would remain a few hours before the mustering officer would make his appearance and muster us in, I concluded to reflect on the subject until that time. I realized that if I was once mustered in I should be compelled to go, or be a deserter.

I felt a great satisfaction in the fact that I still had the opportunity to withdraw if I should so decide, and as the mustering officer was already on his way to our

company, I finally gave the preference to the Navy, and bade my comrades good bye. I had not long to wait for an opportunity to re-enter the service in my old capacity, and in September, 1862, I received another appointment on board the U. S. Gunboat "Wissahickon" which had just been launched at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, or rather was lying at that yard when I joined her. She was one of a class of Gunboats known as the ninety day gunboats, from the fact that a number of them were contracted for to be built in ninety days.

The "Wissahickon" was of about 600 tons burden, and carried a battery of two 12 pounder howitzers, one 30-pounder rifle Parrott gun on the forecastle, and a 100-pounder Parrott rifle amidships. She had more of the appearance of a man-of-war than the "Massachusetts," in which I had previously served, although not more than half as large. The officers' quarters were of course very much cramped, and the opportunities for promenading on deck were very limited. My quarters on board this ship were in the steerage, with the master's mates, the assistant engineers, and the captain's clerk, and presented a very striking contrast to my former quarters on the "Massachusetts," and where my style of living had caused me to regard my present quarters with considerable contempt.

The ship was some two weeks in preparing for sea after my arrival, so that I was obliged to remain in Philadelphia and accept the hospitalities of her boarding-houses until the ship was ready to sail. In the

meantime I had made the acquaintance of all the officers who had been assigned to the ship, and found them to be very agreeable and companionable men; all of whom, except the officer who was to command the vessel, were volunteer naval officers.

The officer in command was a young graduate of the naval school, Lieutenant Silas Casey (now a Rear Admiral), who was to take the ship out to her destination, when she would be joined by Lieutenant-Commander John L. Davis, who was to assume the command, with Lieutenant Casey as executive-officer. The volunteer line-officers were all men of long experience in the merchant and whaling service, and one or two had been in command of ships in those lines.

At last the ship was put in commission, and we were ready for sea. We sailed in the latter part of September, bound for Charleston Bar, where we were to find our commanding officer on board one of the ships stationed there. The passage down the Delaware was very delightful, and we enjoyed the beautiful scenery of that river exceedingly. Upon our arrival at the Capes we were met by head winds and a rough sea, which caused the "Wissahickon" to exhibit her rolling qualities to the greatest advantage.

She was built long and narrow and of light draught; and these points in her construction, together with her heavy pivot-gun on deck, rendered her capable of feats in rolling which could not be approached by any other vessel I had even seen.

It was almost impossible to get along the deck at all, and it could only be accompanied by clinging to

anything that could be reached which was stationary, and waiting for a favorable opportunity to jump for something else that might lie in the line of travel; and any attempt to go below, or come on deck, was taking chances which might appal a moderately judicious man.

Some of the engineers were sea-sick, and the countenance of one in particular, who I distinctly remember, presented the most perfect picture of despair that I have ever seen, and he was utterly indifferent as to his own fate or that of the ship. I was not overcome by this malady as I had been on my voyage on the "Massachusetts," but yet I must acknowledge that I had seen a great many happier days than I spent on this voyage to Charleston Bar.

The process of eating at any regularly set table during this passage was an impossibility, and that operation had to be performed in any way that the person requiring it was willing to select, and at the best was attended with innumerable difficulties and hazards.

At last the ship rolled herself down to our destination, and was reported to Admiral Dupont, then in command of the squadron. Soon after, Lieutenant-Commander Davis came on board and took command of the ship, and Lieutenant Casey became the executive-officer. Captain Davis was introduced to all the officers, and we were well pleased with his manner and appearance.

We received our orders to proceed to Port Royal, and before long were on our way to that place, where

we took in a supply of coal and made such repairs as were necessary, and spent several days quite pleasantly.

On October 21 an expedition was formed by the army and naval forces at Port Royal for the purpose of destroying the railroad bridges near Pocotaligo, on the Broad River. The land forces were under the command of General Brannon, and the naval portion of the expedition was commanded by Commander Steedman.

The "Wissahickon" was included in the latter. At sunset the naval force proceeded up the bay to the mouth of Broad River, and came to anchor there in the order of their line, so as to be ready to move without interruption when the order should be given to do so. It was suggested by General Brannon that a small force be sent up ahead, for the purpose of surprising the enemy's pickets. Acordingly, there were three launches from the "Wabash" and one from the "Paul Jones," filled with soldiers from General Terry's command to the number of about one hundred. These launches were then taken in tow by a tug-boat, and proceeded up the river in the night to the point where they were to be landed and march upon the enemy's pickets.

Owing to the ignorance of the contraband guide in the "Wabash" launches that party failed in their undertaking; but those in the launch from the "Paul Jones" were successful. At about midnight the vessels all got under way and proceeded up the river as cautiously as possible, and being very careful that no

lights were shown. Soon after daylight we arrived at a place called Mackey's Point, where the troops disembarked and marched for their destination. At about five o'clock of the same evening the army fell back, and were again embarked. The expedition had not met with the success that had been anticipated, and on the following day we all returned to Port Royal, and the troops were landed at Hilton Head.

Three of the men from the "Wabash" were wounded, two of them seriously. The "Wissahickon" took no part in the action, being unable, on account of her draught of water, to proceed to the scene of the engagement, and in consequence could only act as a rear-guard to the boats of the expedition. As it was, our ship was left nearly high and dry at ebb tide.

Port Royal at that time was regarded as the most desirable station of the South Atlantic Squadron. It was the headquarters of the Admiral of the squadron, as well as of the military forces in that division of the army, and consequently presented many attractions that were not to be found at smaller stations. It is one of the finest and best protected harbors on our coast, and during the war was a scene of great activity at all times. The Navy officers were always glad of an opportunity to visit Port Royal, and the change from the monotony of weeks of rolling off Charleston bar, or of some lonely river station, was like going to a city from some barren desert.

There was also quite a good deal of society, as many ladies had accompanied their husbands in the

Army to this place. All supplies for the squadron were received and distributed here, and transports were arriving each day bringing fresh provisions, as well as the mails. There were also shops for making repairs of all kinds to vessels, so that it seldom became necessary to send a ship to the North for that purpose.

On the south side of the harbor, was Hilton Head; a name which became very familiar during the war, as being the chief military station on the southern coast, and from which many important expeditions were made. Hilton Head was very strongly protected, on the bay side, by a powerful earth-work mounted with the best ordnance of the time. This fort had been surrendered to Admiral Dupont upon his capture of Port Royal.

Hilton Head had quite the appearance of a bustling town; its few streets were, to be sure, lacking in many of the modern improvements, but they were quite attractive, and the little shops offered great variety of staple as well as fancy goods of all descriptions, so that we were able to replenish our mess with such things as were required, without the necessity of waiting for ships from the North to bring them. When an officer went off watch, he at once asked permission to go ashore; and as this applied to every ship in the harbor, of which there was always a large number, the Navy was at all hours of the day and evening largely represented at Hilton Head.

On the North side of the harbor, opposite Hilton Head, was Bay Point. This place was in strong con-

trast with Hilton Head, and was a decidedly unromantic spot, its few inhabitants being principally negroes and mosquitoes (the latter not few, however).

While Bay Point had nothing to offer in the way of town attractions or advantages, still it possessed a beautiful sand beach where we were fond of bathing, which sport was indulged in very frequently.

At Port Royal, we were almost every day receiving news of the progress of the war, and were well supplied with the newspapers from the North, so that we were able to keep close up on the current events of the day.

In view of the many advantages and social pleasures which were offered us here, we were naturally considerably depressed upon receiving orders to proceed to Ossabaw Sound, on the coast of Georgia, and take up our position at the mouth of the Great Ogeechee River, which empties into this sound.

I think there were very few among our officers who had ever known of the existence of such a sound or river, and we were obliged to search the map to locate them. There is an inland passage leading from Savannah into this sound, and it was regarded as very important that this passage, as well as Ogeechee River should be guarded against any attempt by vessels to run the blockade by either of them.

We had received information of such a character as to impress upon us the necessity of a vigilant watch at this place. The Confederate steamer "Nashville," after committing some depredations upon our mer-

chant ships off the coast of England, had steamed across the ocean and succeeded in running the blockade, and was, at the time of our being ordered from Port Royal, lying safely far up the Ogeechee River, beyond the possibility of pursuit, as a powerful fort was between her and the blockading fleet; this fort presented us with one of its *cards* soon after our arrival, while prospecting the river.

The "Nashville" had been several weeks up the river, and we were informed that she was loaded with cotton, and only awaiting a favorable opportunity to escape, which attempt would be made probably some dark night very soon; and it was a part of our duty to see that this beautiful programme was not carried out if it was possible for us to prevent it. She was a splendid, large side-wheel steamer, very few of which are seen in these present days, and capable of carrying a large cargo of cotton, with which, if she escaped, the returns would have made her owners rich. She was also very fast, which was a most desirable quality in a blockade runner, and it had already been proven to be in her case.

With a full knowledge of her speed, we were fully convinced that if she ever got past us, pursuit would be utterly useless, so far as the "Wissahickon" had ever developed any of that quality, and the responsibility was greatly increased by this fact.

Capt. Davis felt the importance of great vigilance in this case, and had determined, before leaving Port Royal, that in the event of the "Nashville's" escape while his ship was on guard, the fault would not be

his. We all felt as well, the necessity of great precaution, and were more than willing to exert ourselves in any direction which should tend to prevent her escape. We also had a mercenary motive in seeing that the "Nashville" should not get past us, for the reason that if we could capture her with her cargo, the benefits in the way of prize money would be very substantial. When I myself, thought of the possibilites in that line, my mind reverted to the worthless little schooners which had fallen a prey to the "Massachusetts" in the Gulf of Mexico the previous year, and I had the hope that in the capture of the "Nashville" all my disappointments of the previous year would be compensated for many times over. Having this reward before our eyes, we were rather anxious that the "Nashville" should make the attempt to escape, and yet, we had no confidence of ever securing her in case she once got beyond the reach of our guns.

In addition to the information we had received regarding the "Nashville," we had also received intelligence of a nature such as to cause us to consider our position at this part of the blockade, in a very serious light, and one which was not specially comforting to men in a small gunboat such as our own.

We had learned, from quite reliable sources, that a large and powerful iron-clad ram was in course of construction at Savannah, which, it was contemplated, would be brought through the inland passage mentioned, for the purpose of annihilating the 'Wissahickon," or any other small craft which happened to be

in the way, and thus open up a passage to the ocean for the "Nashville's" escape.

Upon the receipt of this information, a very vivid picture was at once presented to our minds' eye, of the then but recent visit of the Confederate ram "Merrimac" to the water of Hampton Roads, and the fate of the unfortunate "Congress" and "Cumberland."

This picture was not calculated to tranquilize our minds, or reconcile us to the duty on which we were to enter, notwithstanding the possibilities of acquiring fame and riches in the capture of the "Nashville," and I think we would have preferred on the whole, that the Admiral had selected some other ship for the duty.

Upon our arrival at Ossabaw Sound we found the Gunboat "Dawn" stationed there, and also found that she was the only vessel on the blockade at that point.

The "Dawn" was a small propeller of light draught, and with a battery adapted to her size. She was well adapted, however, to river service, being quite fast, and very easily handled. She had been purchased from the merchant service, and like most of our Navy at that time on such service as hers, had not much resemblance to a man-of-war. We were very much pleased to find that we were to have company on the station, and her officers and men were also delighted at our coming, as they had been entirely alone for a long time, and not only were they glad to welcome us in a social way, but were also particularly glad to

have some one with whom to divide the responsibility, which was growing greater each day.

Captain Davis of the "Wissahickon" being the senior officer on this station, our ship became the flag-ship of this large and powerful squadron, and I am certain that we of the "Wissahickon" fully realized the dignity and importance of our position with regard to the "Dawn."

The prospects of blockade-life at Ossabaw were not so dismal as those I had experienced the year before at Ship Island on board the "Massachusetts," and I felt that in regard to the diversity of scenery and activity in service my condition was considerably improved. We found Ossabaw Sound to be a most comfortable anchorage, as we were sheltered from the heavy winds on nearly every side, and we were so far inside the bar as to be in no way disturbed by the seas. At a sharp bend in the Ogeechee River, some five miles above its mouth, the rebels had constructed a large and heavily-armed earth-work called Fort McAllister, which completely guarded the river against any ascent of the same beyond that point by the Federal gunboats. This fort, although not regarded by us upon our arrival in the sound as extremely formidable in an attack by a well-armed fleet, was, nevertheless, destined to figure most conspicuously a few months later as one of the strongest and most impregnable works of the enemy on the coast, and will be recorded in naval history as the scene of the most determined and successful resistance to one of the most powerful fleets of the world.

At some distance above this fort the "Nashville" was loading with cotton, and was as secure in her berth from any attack by the naval forces as if she were lying at the wharf of a neutral port. Soon after our arrival at Ossabaw, Captain Davis, of our ship, decided to move up the river and test the strength of Fort McAllister; and, accompanied by the "Dawn," we steamed up within range and opened fire on the enemy. Our fire was returned promptly, and we had quite a spirited engagement, and of considerable duration, but were compelled to withdraw from the fire, as we discovered that we were not equal to the contest, and so dropped back to our anchorage to wait for another trial at an early date.

The experiment was tried again before a great while had elapsed, and with the same result; and on several occasions, at short intervals, the attack was renewed, but with no better prospect of final success with only the two vessels engaged.

During one of the engagements with this fort our ship was struck by a solid shot about four feet below the water-line, which knocked a hole in her side and caused her to leak very badly. The pumps were manned immediately, and were worked vigorously to keep the water from gaining. One of the master's mates—a man who had served many years at sea as a Cape Cod whaler, and was quick and ready to act, and knew the necessities in such emergencies—fastened a rope about his waist and was lowered into the water at the place where the ship was struck, and inserted one of the large wooden plugs such as are

carried on board of naval vessels for this purpose. But even then it was found that the leak could not be stopped owing to the shattered condition of the timbers, and the ship was withdrawn from the fire and dropped down-stream to a sand-bar, where at ebb-tide, the side of the ship being exposed, the repairs were made, which placed her in as good order as before the fight. We were fully convinced, after repeated trials, that a larger force would be necessary in order to reduce Fort McAllister; but still it was not thought that a very great increase in the naval fleet would be positively required for that result, and we waited for the arrival of other vessels to assist in this undertaking.

Ossabaw Sound, together with Great and Little Ogeechee Rivers, presented many attractions to a blockader, and we found many ways of amusing ourselves which could be offered at but few of the blockaded ports. The fishing was very good indeed from off the ship, and the hunting was excellent, though rather limited as to the variety of game. These sports were very extensively indulged in, and served to make our stay here very endurable, to say the least. We had an excellent pilot, who had made his escape from the rebels, and had taken refuge on board the "Dawn," and who was transferred to our ship when we came upon the station. He was thoroughly familiar with all the rivers and inland passages emptying into the sound, and was invaluable as a pilot to our fleet, as well as being a jolly and companionable fellow. He had brought his shot-gun

with him when he escaped, and was posted in all particulars regarding the game to be found in that country, and was always ready and pleased to give us all the information upon those points that he possessed, and to take us to the most desirable places for shooting.

The principal game we found here was curlew, which we usually shot while they were feeding upon the shores of the small islands. At times they were quite plentiful and comparatively easy to approach, but were usually rather shy, and difficult to shoot. The meat of these birds is excellent, and we consumed many a curlew-pie in the steerage mess during that winter. In addition to the luxury of game we were abundantly supplied with fresh oysters, though I cannot speak very highly of the quality of this latter luxury. These oysters were a variety called "raccoon oysters," and they were found very plentifully in the bayous and creeks near our anchorage. The process of gathering them was a very simple one indeed, as at low tide they were left entirely out of the water and hanging in bundles at the foot of the banks, and very firmly fastened together. Their name originates from the fact that the raccoons come down from the timber at low tide and eat these oysters, opening them with their sharp claws and teeth.

On the south side of Ossabaw Sound was an island of the same name. This was quite a large island, and contained several farms and cotton plantations, besides a considerable quantity of timber, and it was our principal place of resort when hunting, or

in search of pleasure and recreation. At first we were reluctant to venture far from our boats in our visits to this island, not knowing what danger there might be in doing so; but after a few visits had been made, and there appeared to be no evidence of the enemy anywhere, or any probability of his coming there, nor any signs of habitation so far as we had explored, we became bolder, and penetrated several miles into the interior, always being well armed, however, in order to be prepared for any surprise.

There was great pleasure for us in these trips, after being confined for many days on the ship, and there was just enough of the spice of possible danger, to make them exciting and interesting.

Upon traveling back some distance into the interior, we found several very fine plantations, where the famous sea-island cotton had been raised; and in some cases we found large quantities of the cotton seed stowed away in the barns. All these plantations were deserted by their owners, who it was presumed were serving the Confederacy in the Army. On one of the plantations quite remote from the coast, we discovered three aged negroes living in the slave quarters in one of the little cabins. Nearby was the mansion of the fugitive master, now deserted and empty. We entered the cabin of these poor old abandoned servants, and there found a woman whose age must have been not far from a century, sitting close inside an old fire-place, with her naked feet in the warm ashes.

Her sight had so nearly vanished as to barely admit

of her distinguishing us, as we questioned her with regard to herself and her master.

It was a pitiful sight indeed, and we were deeply impressed with the loneliness and hopelessness of those aged people. We wished to visit the deserted mansion, and asked the old men to accompany us for the purpose of learning something of its history and that of its owner, but they declined to do so, seeming to have a sort of superstitious dread of approaching it, or possibly the memories of its former days came to them with such happiness, that they could not bear to see it in its desolation and ruin, and wished to preserve the recollections of those days, with no shadow of the sorrow which would come to their old hearts if they were to enter its deserted and silent rooms. So we entered the house without their company, and found it to be a very nice and comfortable one, built in the style of Southern houses, with large verandas and spacious rooms.

Everything of value had been carried away when the family left the place, so that we saw only empty rooms and abandoned fire-places.

The general appearance of the place seemed to indicate that the proprietor had been a man of considerable wealth and refinement. An exploration of the cellar revealed his epicurean tendencies, a great number of empty wine bottles being scattered about the floor.

The old negroes seemed to have very vague and indefinite ideas of the world outside of their little island, and we probably seemed to them to be specimens

of those strange and despicable beings known as Yankees, of whom they had heard, but never expected to see.

As I looked upon this strange scene, the deserted mansion, the once flourishing plantation now overrun with weeds, the desolate aspect of what was once perhaps a joyous home, I meditated upon the scenes that must have been enacted here during the days of its prosperity, and my imagination pictured much of romance and luxury as associated with its owner's family in the peaceful days before the war. And yet I was impressed with the ingratitude and wrong that was shown, in abandoning these aged and decrepit servants, whose lives had been those of constant toil and hardship for their master, whose years of labor had made him rich, whose devotion and care had perhaps been the protection of his property and life, to subsist on what their weak and trembling hands could dig from the ground, and perhaps to die, from lack of strength to get their food. I presume many such pictures of the desolating effects of the war were seen in the South, but probably no sadder one than this.

We had not been long at Ossabaw Sound before our ship was discovered by the fugitive slaves along the shores, and she was being frequently boarded by fleeing contrabands. They arrived in such numbers that it began to be a serious question as to what to do with them. We received permission to forward them as often as possible to Hilton Head, where they were employed upon work connected with the army, and thus we were relieved from the responsibility and

burden of their care. A few were selected from among the best men, and were retained on board as a part of the ship's crew, in which duty they became very useful and proficient.

These contrabands were the genuine Southern negroes, with all their peculiarities and passion for music. Nearly every party that arrived brought a violin or two with them among their varied personal effects, and usually made it a special point to steal all the jewelry it was possible to obtain from their masters before leaving home, which they displayed with much pride upon their safe arrival among the Yankees, no doubt thinking they would be highly commended for any acts of that nature.

On pleasant evenings, if there happened to have been a fresh arrival of these people, a regular ministrel entertainment was held upon the deck, much to our edification and amusement.

On one occasion a party of contrabands was discovered far out on the marshy island which lay between our ship and the main land making signals for assistance. The signal was answered from the ship, and a boat was lowered and sent ashore, and the crew went to their relief. A long time elapsed before the crew returned, when they made their appearance alongside the ship, accompanied by four or five of the most frightful specimens of African humanity that ever greeted a Yankee gunboat on a Southern coast. In attempting to reach the ship, they had deserted their boat on reaching this island, and had endeavored to cross the same on foot to a point near the ship,

where they could be easily rescued; and in doing this, they had become mired in the swamp, and had sunk to their waists in the mud, thus being utterly helpless, and with fair prospects of ending their existence in this manner. It was mere accident that they were discovered at all, and when rescued by the crew were nearly perishing with the cold.

There were two women in this party, and as they were taken on board they presented a horrible aspect, being a mass of black and slimy mud from their waists to their feet. The whole party was immediately sent down into the fire-room, where they were warmed and dried, when they were furnished clothing from the paymaster's stores; the women being obliged to assume the male attire, as the Navy Department makes no provision for the female wardrobe.

The fame of the "Monitor" which a few months before had so successfully resisted the attack of that dread of Hampton Roads, the famous "Merrimac," had spread not only over the North, but over the whole civilized world. Her opportune arrival upon the scene of devastation among the ships of our Navy, which the "Merrimac" was fast making probably prevented the destruction of untold millions of property, and the possibility of many of our large cities of the coast, and perhaps the Capital itself, from being placed under ransom. The name and fame of Ericsson had spread far and wide, as the inventor of the most powerful and impregnable vessel of war that had as yet, ever done service for any nation on the Earth.

While a few quite serious defects existed in the

arrangement of the details in regard to her machinery, the principles adopted in her general construction were all that could be desired.

In view of the invaluable service to the country, of the little "Monitor," and of the probable construction by the Confederates of more "Merrimacs," the Navy Department at once ordered the construction of several more of the Monitor class of vessels. The next one completed and fitted for sea, was named the "Montauk." She was commanded by Capt. Worden, the hero of the "Monitor," and sent to Port Royal, to report to Admiral Dupont for service in the South Atlantic Squadron.

On the 24th of January, 1863, the "Montauk" arrived off the bar of Ossabaw Sound, in tow of the steamer "James Edger," having been sent by the Admiral to our station to test her fighting qualities in an encounter with Fort McAllister. As she entered the Sound she passed close to our ship, and we welcomed her with hearty cheers, for we felt that not only now should we be protected from the contemplated attack upon our little fleet by the Confederate ram at Savannah, but we should undoubtedly soon be in possession of Fort McAllister itself, when we could with impunity proceed up the river and help ourselves to the "Nashville." Upon the arrival of the "Montauk," we were rather in hope that our friends at Savannah would conclude to send their annihilator down to our station and give us an opportunity to witness a duplicate of the contest at Hampton Roads; but they had of course heard of the result of that

famous fight, and very wisely decided not to make any further experiments in that line. It was a great relief to us to know that we had such a reliable defender close at hand, and we were no longer disturbed by the appearance of black smoke in the direction of Savannah by day, or suspicious lights at night.

The day following the arrival of the "Montauk" was very foggy, and the fog continued to hang over and about us until night, so that it was impossible to make any movement against the enemy. This was quite a disappointment, for we were anxious to finish up what we were certain would be a comparatively easy job. The following day a council was held by the captain of the several vessels, and a plan arranged for a general attack on the fort the next day. Our fleet had in the meantime been increased by the arrival of two more vessels, the "Seneca," a gunboat of the class of our own ship, and the "C. P. Williams," a mortar-schooner. As soon as it became dark, we all moved quietly up the river to a point just out of the range of the fort, and came to anchor, preparatory to a start early on the following morning. The evening was spent in discussing the probabilities of the engagement on the following day, and there was a unanimity of opinion that the work would be accomplished speedily, as we had perfect confidence in the ability of the "Montauk" to pass the fort. The following morning it was decided best to first destroy the ranges of the enemy's guns, which were placed at a point called Harvey's Cut, and at the same time make a general reconnaissance of the field of intended opera-

tions. This of course could not be done during daylight, so that we were obliged to wait until night to accomplish this design. The fog had cleared, and it was easy by the aid of glasses to locate the various points to be visited at night. At eight o'clock in the evening one boat from our ship, and one from the Seneca proceeded up the river with muffled oars, under the command of Capt. Davis of the "Wissahickon." The expedition of Captain Davis in the boats was successful, so far as finding that there were obstructions in the river a short distance below the fort, and he concluded, after a careful examination, that they were protected by torpedoes.

One the morning of January 27 the fleet got under way, and steamed up to within easy range, and opened fire on the fort, the "Montauk" being in the lead. The enemy replied to our fire in a very vigorous manner, paying special attention, however, to the "Montauk." The fire was kept up on both sides until about 11 o'clock A. M., when the "Montauk," having expended all her shells, and finding her solid shot of but little service, dropped down the stream, and a violent rain-storm setting in, the remainder of the fleet were withdrawn from range.

During this engagement the "Montauk" was struck a great many times by shot and shell, but received no serious damage from them. Her smoke-stack was considerably perforated, to be sure, and a great many indentations were seen upon the turret, but these were the only evidences of rough treatment that she had to show.

It had been presumed that, with the immense guns on the "Montauk," and her ability to get within close range, the fort would not be able to resist such a siege; but we had not counted on the strength of the enemy's works, and were astonished to find them so little affected by the terrible fire. In the result of this attack was shown the superiority of earth-works over all other kinds of forts, and the almost impossibility of reducing a bomb-proof earth-work by naval force alone; and I can only say that if this engagement did not to a great measure demonstrate this fact, it will be more fully shown in the account of a future attack upon this same fort, wherein several ironclads took a part.

However, the result of our engagement not being wholly satisfactory to Captain Worden, it was determined that another attack should be made as soon as it could be arranged; and on the 1st day of February we all moved up the river again, the same fleet going into this action that had been in the first one. At half-past seven in the morning we opened fire again on the fort. The weather was thick, and, as there was no wind stirring, it was with much difficulty that any aim could be had upon the fort, the smoke from the guns hanging about the ship and obstructing the view.

In a short time a breeze sprang up, and, the smoke being cleared away, the firing was continued briskly on both sides. The immense shells from the "Montauk," as they exploded in the sides and on the parapet of the fort, throwing loads of sand and earth high in the air, seemed to be doing most effective work. It

was discovered that the rebels had so arranged their heaviest gun that it could be shifted from one part of the fort to another, which was done frequently, thus destroying any previous range that had been brought upon it by the "Montauk."

Our wooden ships were obliged to remain some distance in the rear, but still within range, as it would not have been possible for us to approach as near as the "Montauk's" position. The mortar-schooner was dropping her mortar shots into the fort with apparently good effect, but still the fort kept up its constant fire, occasionally paying its compliments to the wooden ships, which were annoying them considerably.

At about noon, after a half day's hard fighting we all again withdrew from this second attack, with no better results than the first, and concluding that it was useless to waste any more ammunition with such discouraging prospects ahead, we dropped down to our old anchorage in disgust.

During this fierce attack, the "Montauk" was struck forty-six times, but strange as it may seem, no serious damage resulted, and no one of the officers or crew was killed or injured. The battle was extremely exciting and interesting to those of us who were at a distance favorable for witnessing it, although much of the time the smoke so enveloped the fort and the fleet, that it was impossible to see the effects of the shots.

A visit to the "Montauk" after the battle, was full of interest. She was covered with scars on her turret,

deck, and sides, and yet no shot had penetrated her armor in any of these places. Immense indentations were made in the turret, and these were to be seen long after the war. Her officers were surprised that the effect of her shots had not been more destructive to the fort; but later on they were still more astonished, when it was found that the addition of several more monitors to the siege, produced not much greater effect.

We had decided to wait until a larger force should arrive on the station, and then renew the attack. It was known that several more Monitors were being completed at the North and would probably soon be sent down to join us.

Having reached this decision, there remained nothing for us to do but remain quietly at our anchorage and watch any movements the rebels might conclude to make, and also keep a sharp lookout for the "Nashville," whose commander was probably highly delighted with the result of our efforts to reach his ship.

Although we had failed to subdue the fort, yet we had the satisfaction of knowing that the "Nashville" was safely locked in, and unable to perform any service for the Confederacy or her owners, and we intended that she should remain in this state of inactivity.

Nothing of interest occurred for a few weeks, and we passed the time very agreeably in hunting, and making social calls among the ships, and amusing ourselves by explorations upon the islands, until the 28th of February, when an event wholly unlooked for

occurred, which removed all further anxiety and speculation with regard to the movements of the "Nashville," and rendered Fort McAllister of no further use so far as its protection of the "Nashville" was concerned. While we should all of us have much preferred that the privateer might fall into our hands with her valuable cargo of cotton, yet we were reconciled to the fate which overtook her, and which was as follows.

On the evening of the 27th the "Nashville" had moved down the river and taken her position at a point just above the fort, with the evident intention of making one last desperate effort to escape to sea with her cargo, even if captured in the attempt, which latter act we had hoped to perform.

Her movements were watched by our fleet with intense interest, when it was suddenly discovered that she had come to a stop, and great efforts were being made to start her again, but without success, and we knew at once that she had grounded and was unable to get off. We also knew that if she should remain in that position until daylight the next morning she could be reached by the guns of the fleet, it being too late when the discovery was made to accomplish anything as darkness was fast approaching, and we were not anxious that they should know that we had become aware of the dangerous position she was in. The evening was spent in discussion of this happy event, and orders were given to have the fleet ready for moving at daylight, in case the unfortunate ship had not succeeded in floating again, and moved up

the river. Our hope during this exciting night was, that their efforts to move her would prove fruitless and that daylight would reveal her in the predicament of the previous evening.

At the first gleam of dawn everybody in the fleet was stirring, and as soon as there was sufficient light to see up the river, the joyful news was announced that the "Nashville" was still in the position of the night before.

The orders were immediately given to up anchor and get the ship cleared for action, and before many minutes the whole fleet was under way, steaming up to our old fighting-ground, with the "Montauk" in the lead, as she was to do the principal part of the work; the wooden fleet, of course, being unable to approach so near the fort on account of the terrible fire from there that would have to be undergone, and which they could not have endured long enough to accomplish the work in hand. The "Nashville's" position was at a sharp bend in the river, just above the fort, so that by going as near as possible to the fort, or as far as the obstructions just below it, she could be reached by firing across the neck of land. The "Montauk" took this position, and the wooden fleet remained below, but still within range of the fire of the fort, and also where they could reach the "Nashville" by elevating their guns sufficiently.

The "Montauk" when she stopped was within twelve hundred yards of the "Nashville," and close under the guns of the fort. As she approached a most terrific fire was opened on her from the fort, as

the occasion was one which demanded their best talent in that line, as one of the swiftest and finest cruisers of the rebel navy was in imminent peril, and thousands of dollars' worth of cargo were at stake.

The "Montauk" paid strict attention to the business she had on hand, and had to withstand a fire which would have blown a wooden ship out of water in a very few minutes. We of the wooden fleet, however, were occasionally getting a shot from them, as a sort of reminder that they had not entirely forgotten us. At the same time we were ignoring the fort and paying our addresses wholly to the "Nashville," where we knew our shots would have a more satisfactory effect.

We watched with much interest and excitement the effect of the "Montauk's" fire. Her shells were reaching the "Nashville," and nearly every one was counting, for in a few minutes the "Nashville" was seen to be on fire from stem to stern. At 9.20 A. M a large pivot-gun mounted on her spar-deck exploded from the heat with a loud report. Twenty minutes later her smoke-stack fell overboard, and in about fifteen minutes the closing scene in this grand act occurred, in the explosion of her magazine with fearful violence and blowing her into atoms.

As soon as this grand climax was reached, and before the smoke had cleared away from the wreck, the crews mounted the rigging and spars, and gave such loud and prolonged cheers as must have been very torture to the garrison in the fort. We all dropped down the river again to our various positions

with a feeling of intense gratification at our morning's work. The "Nashville" was a thing of the past, and her loss I have no doubt was sincerely mourned by the Confederacy, as they had none too many of that class of ships.

On the way down the river, after the work was completed and we were satisfied that nothing remained to be done, the wooden fleet was in the advance, with the "Montauk" in the rear, when the latter ran on to a torpedo which exploded under her, but which fortunately did no serious damage. The fort continued to fire at her until she passed out of their range.

At the next ebb tide after the destruction of the "Nashville," great quantities of loose and scorched cotton came floating down the river past the fleet, sticking to fragments of the wreck; and as these silent witnesses of the havoc drifted past us, they seemed to show a determination that if we would not allow the "Nashville" to go to sea as a whole, she was going to run the blockade in pieces.

A great many of these fragments were picked up by the sailors, and during their spare hours they made pretty souvenirs of them.

Of course the principal part of the work of the destruction of the "Nashville" had been done by the "Montauk," so that, Capt. Worden felt some degree of compensation for the labor lost previously on the fort, and yet, we were not satisfied that it should remain to defy what we regarded as a powerful fleet. However, we were obliged to wait in patience until even greater force could be brought to bear on it,

and so settled down to our ordinary quiet life until more Monitors should arrive, as it seemed to be the natural thing to send them down to us as fast as completed, and the rebels did not seem to mind how many we sent up to Fort McAllister. We had not long to wait, for just as we expected, three more Monitors arrived on the scene, named respectively the "Patapsco," "Passaic" and "Nahant." It had been satisfactorily demonstrated that no single Monitor could reduce the fort, but we had no doubt whatever that the united strength of three or four would make a prompt success of it; and so, when these three new Monitors arrived, we were sure that it was merely a question of how soon they would be ready to sail up and take possession. The parties inside the fort would probably have smiled at this idea had they known that we entertained such a one, and subsequent developments proved that their smile would have been warranted. The "Montauk" was compelled to go to Port Royal for repairs, as soon as the three new Monitors arrived on the station.

So far as the necessity of her remaining to take part in the next attack was concerned, we were certain there was none, as three Monitors would of course make very short work of it.

It was arranged that the three new Monitors should engage the fort without the assistance of the wooden fleet. Our wooden fleet did not feel slighted, however, for we knew that our range would be too far for much effect, and this was to be a battle of the

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giants solely; so we quietly reminded at our anchorage and viewed the battle from afar.

The "Passaic" was commanded by Capt. Drayton of the regular Navy, and as he was the senior officer, he became the commanding officer of the fleet, and the "Passaic" became the flag-ship. Capt. Drayton decided to take the lead in the attack on the fort, and the "Passaic" was put at the head of the column. On the 3d of March, everything being in readiness to move, the Monitors steamed cautiously up the river to the nearest point that could be reached without grounding, and at once opened a fearful fire upon the fort with their immense guns. The wooden fleet was within view of the conflict, and we witnessed the battle with the most intense excitement and interest, presuming that we should very shortly have the pleasure of seeing the surrender of the fort.

Any one to have viewed the batteries of these Monitors, could hardly have imagined an earth-work or fort of any description to have been so constructed as to have withstood the fire from them for more than a very few minutes, and it would have been difficult to conceive of such a bomb-proof as would be impregnable to such enormous shells fired at close range. The scene was a grand one as witnessed by us from the wooden ships.

The distance certainly lent enchantement to our view, for our little gunboats would not have lived five minutes under such a fearful fire of shot and shell as was directed against the Monitors in that engage-

ment. The Monitors aimed their enormous shells fairly against the fort at every fire, the explosions of which seemed to fill the air with earth, which would descend again in showers upon the fort.

The fire from the fort was directed mainly against the "Passaic," as she was in the lead and consequently nearer to their guns, the object evidently being also to prevent her passing farther up the river. Probably they had also concluded that if the whole strength of their guns could be brought to bear on her she would be unable to resist such an attack, and would be destroyed or compelled to surrender, when they could repeat the operation upon the next one approaching in her turn, until all three were compelled to submit to the same fate; whereas, if their fire was distributed among them, the results would not be so effective. The other Monitors were, however, not altogether slighted, but were being reminded occasionally that they had not been overlooked.

It did not seem possible judging from our view of the fight, that the fort would be able to hold out long, and yet there was no very perceptible slacking of fire on their part, and we were unable to account for this strange fact.

The engagement lasted for a long time; far longer than we had supposed it possible under the circumstances, and finally we were extremely astonished and humiliated, to see the three Monitors withdraw from the fire and drop down to their anchorage, having failed entirely in their designs.

We all decided at the close of this attack, that it would be impossible to take Fort McAllister from the river front, and so it was; but was finally surrendered to Sherman's Army, a portion of which captured it by charging on it in force.

This having been the initial battle of the three new Monitors, having received no previous scars, it was an easy matter to take an inventory of those received in this engagement, which was done, with the result that the "Passaic" was found to have been struck thirty-four times, while the "Patapsco" was struck but once, and the "Nahant" not at all; thus showing that the fire was almost entirely directed against the "Passaic." The impregnability of properly constructed earth works, was amply illustrated in the case of Fort McAllister, as it was subsequently with others, notably, Fort Wagner, on Morris Island, at the entrance to Charleston harbor.

CHAPTER IV.

MONITOR'S TERRIFIC BATTLE.

Our ship had now been stationed at Ossabaw some six months, and was beginning to need repairs which could not be made on board without the facilities for such work, which we did not possess. The machinery was out of order, and the ship needed a general overhauling. A supply of coal and stores was also required. All these things could be supplied at Port Royal, and our necessities having been made known to the commanding officer, we were ordered to Port Royal as soon as we could get ready.

The time we had spent at Ossabaw had for the most part passed pleasantly, and we had become quite attached to our station, as there were so many opportunities for recreation on shore, which we might not have if ordered somewhere else.

We regarded it as desirable a station as there was on the coast, and in comparison with many others of which we had heard, it was one much to be desired; so that we felt that if we were to leave it, even though our necessities demanded it, it was more than possible that the Admiral would send us to another station, and more than likely to one of those which we wished to avoid. We could only hope that this might not

be so, but that we would be allowed to return to Ossabaw; our hopes in this direction, however, were doomed to be blasted, for, after having completed our repairs and received our supplies, we received the depressing intelligence that we were ordered to Charleston Bar, for duty on the blockade of that port, and were soon under way for that dreaded station.

There was but one consolation to be derived from this unfortunate order, and the chances for the realization of the hope upon which it was founded were decidedly slim. There was a possibility that we might capture a blockade-runner, and eventually get a little prize money as the reward. Beyond this there semed to be nothing cheering in the prospect. Having reached Charleston Bar, our captain reported to the commanding officer for an assignment to a position for our ship, and we were ordered to take a station on the outer blockade, at a point about four miles from the eastern end of Sullivan's Island, where the rebels had erected a powerful fort.

The position was a most undesirable one as far as comfort was concerned, for we might as well have been out at sea. There was no possible chance for any recreation on shore, as we were several miles from land, and off a coast infested with rebels at every point. There was one advantage, however, in being so far out from the harbor, which was, that in case of a blockade-runner attempting to run in through our channel, we should be the first to receive him. We were exposed in this position to the heavy

east winds and rough seas that came sweeping in from the ocean, with no friendly land to break their force, and our ship was rolled and pitched about incessantly. The spires of the churches in Charleston could be dimly seen on clear days, and old Fort Sumter frowned upon us but a few miles away.

The monotony of this kind of service soon became almost unendurable, confined, as we were, to the limits of one small ship, with each day exactly like the one before it in its tiresome round of rolling and pitching, and we deplored the necessity which ever sent us to Port Royal, from where we feared we should be sent to some such purgatory as we had reached.

Lieutenant-Commander Davis, our captain, was almost untiring in his vigilance, and would frequently spend nearly the whole night on deck, anxiously watching through the darkness for the silghtest indications of the presence of blockade-runners, and nothing escaped his eye to which could be attached the least suspicion as to its nature.

Here we were subjected to the most rigid rules at night. No lights were allowed on deck after dark, the hatches were all covered with tarpaulins, and the sky-lights were also covered, and even the lanterns had covers on them as they were carried about the deck. No noise was allowed which could be heard outside the ship, and every sort of precaution was taken to have our position undiscovered by any ship which might attempt to run in from outside.

Lookouts were posted fore and aft, and ordered to

report anything and everything which they might see to the officer of the deck, and they were required to call out their post every half-hour, so that it would be known whether they were awake or asleep. We were frequently called up suddenly at night and sent to quarters upon the discovery of some inexplicable light. The cable was always kept in readiness to slip at any moment, steam was kept up, and the crew slept by the side of the guns, ready to spring to them in an instant in case of a call.

The officers slept with half their clothes on, and with their side-arms within reach of their berths. Although we were subjected to this severe discipline, and had to endure these many hardships, still there were many very amusing incidents occurring frequently in the midst of our serious duties, caused by the over-vigilance of some ambitious lookout, whose verdancy was in excess of his caution. Such a man as this, feeling the importance and responsibility of his position, and endowed with unlimited privileges in the way of reporting objects or lights, and also feeling that he had it within his power to rouse up a whole ship's company at his pleasure by making some discovery which had been unnoticed by any one else on watch, would call out "Light ho!" with the effect already described, when, after pointing out its location, it would be found to be a rising star coming above the horizon, and which really would, upon first sight, have much the appearance of a ship's light at a long distance.

The edge of the moon, as it would appear on the

eastern horizon, apparently coming up out of the ocean, would excite a green lookout almost to frenzy, and he would assure himself that he had this time made a discovery well calculated to cause alarm, when further developments would convince him of his error, and he would feel proportionately humiliated.

As yet we had received no reward for our extreme vigilance and the deprivations we were obliged to endure, and began to feel that possibly we might have had more comforts and privileges without imperiling the object for which we were here. But at last our patience had its reward, and it was fully demonstrated that our precautions had not been too great, for on the night of the 18th of March a genuine blockade-runner made its appearance in our midst. As darkness came on the usual lookouts were posted, and the regular system of caution was observed. Those officers who were off watch had gone below to turn in, and the decks were deserted by all except those whose duties required them to remain there. The night was intensely dark and a favorable one for blockade-running, and for this reason Captain Davis had remained on deck also, anxiously watching for any evidence of this nature. The men were quietly lying near their guns talking in subdued tones, and there was a general air of quietness throughout the ship.

Nothing had occurred to disturb our serenity up to the mid-watch at twelve o'clock. At this hour the watches were changed, and all had again settled down to quietude, and no sound was heard but the regular

tread of the officer of the deck upon the bridge. Captain Davis was still on deck, when at about half-past twelve firing was heard from the ships outside us, and the rattle was immediately sprung, and in a moment we were all at our quarters ready for action. We were satisfied from the direction of the firing that a blockade-runner was trying to come in, and our large pivot-gun was run out, and the officer stood waiting the command from the captain to fire as soon as the stranger should show himself in our neighborhood. The suspense was not of long duration, for in a few minutes a large steamer was close aboard of us, having successfully passed the other ships.

In an instant, and before she could possibly change her course, our large pivot gun was trained on her and the command given to fire, which was quickly obeyed. The stranger was evidently much surprised at finding such a serious obstacle in the way of his progress toward Charleston, where he expected to arrive with his valuable cargo in a short time. He was evidently very badly frightened, for as soon as our first shot was fired, he showed a light, and an officer hastened to inform us that he surrendered, whereupon the order was given to cease firing on her. Our ship was immediately under-weigh, but as we approached him he changed his course suddenly and took to his heels again, hoping to run in along the beach to the north of us and escape. The night was intensely dark, and it was impossible to follow him directly, but our captain assumed that he would still make the attempt to run in to Charleston, and so we

shaped our course so as to head him off if possible, not knowing his position accurately enough to give him a stern chase, and possibly by that means lose him entirely, so we adopted the plan mentioned as the only possible one, or at least probable one of intercepting him. Our captain did not feel disposed to be specially lenient with him, or to show him any very marked respect, since he had so treacherously and unceremoniously fled after having surrendered, and thereby compelled us to cease firing.

I must say, however, that he showed considerable genius in attempting this trick, and had nearly been successful in it. The plan which Capt. Davis had adopted of heading him off, was a successful one, for he very soon appeared again, and we gave him another pill from our big gun. This last shot had evidently taken effect, for he ran aground at a point about two miles from Breach Inlet, and immediately showed a bright white light.

A boat was immediately lowered from our ship, and Lieutenant Casey was sent to board the stranger, with orders to bring back the prisoners with him, and to ascertain what cargo she had, and get such other information as he could by an examination of her papers. It was past midnight, but we all sat up and waited patiently for the return of the boat, as we were anxious to see the prisoners and hear all the particulars about the ship.

In due time the boat returned bringing the *prisoners*, which consisted of a large Newfoundland dog and a very large Southdown sheep. Lieutenant Casey

had obeyed his instructions to the letter, so far at least as the prisoners were concerned, for the dog and sheep were the only living things to be found on board the vessel, and these amiable animals had met him at the gangway as he stepped on board, and gave him a hearty welcome, at the same time indicating their willingness to surrender, without any words on the subject. The arrival of these unexpected prisoners caused an immense amount of amusement for us, as we all crowded to the rail to see them hoisted on board, and the Lieutenant seemed to be very proud of his peaceful capture. He reported that he had made a thorough examination of the ship in search of officers and crew, whom it was possible might be stowed away somewhere among the cargo, but, that he could find no trace of any living beings except the prisoners mentioned, and so he had concluded that all hands had escaped to the shore in their boats, as soon as the ship had struck the bar. Signals were at once made from our ship for assistance in getting the stranger off the bar, and in a few minutes several boats arrived from the other blockading ships, and preparations were made for hauling her off, which we confidently expected to do.

A hawser was taken from our ship to the steamer, and all the power of our engine was exerted to move her, but to no purpose, as we found that she was so hard aground that it would not be possible to move her with the limited means at hand. She must have been under great headway when she struck, and it probably would have been impossible to move her

without the aid of the most powerful tugs. Boats were now passing frequently between our ship and the steamer, bringing reports with regard to the condition of things on board of her, and all sorts of plans were suggested and discussed, for meeting the difficulties which were presented in trying to save the ship, but there seemed to be no hope of accomplishing this, as one officer who had returned from her, reported that there was no chance of saving her as she was rapidly filling with water, and that they had been unable to keep her free, with the pumps in constant action.

When this condition of things was made known, Captain Davis gave orders to secure as rapidly as possible all the property that could be brought away and set fire to the steamer. At daylight the boats all left her, there being then some fourteen feet of water in the hold and the steamer on fire. There was not much saved from her, as there had not been time enough in which to work before daylight appeared, and then it was no longer safe for the boats to remain there, as they could be reached by the guns from the fort on Sullivan's Island.

There was no manifest of the cargo found, but it was presumed that she was loaded with arms and ammunition, as a portion of the cargo was in sight, and consisted of small rifled cannon and Enfield rifles. There must also have been a considerable quantity of medical stores on board, as quite a number of bottles of quinine were found, as well as several cases of brandy. The quality of the latter article was tested,

and the former was saved for cases of necessity. On the following day we got under way and stood in towards the wreck, and to prevent the rebels from recovering any of the cargo, and also to make sure destruction of the steamer itself, we fired shells into her for two or three hours, in the meantime steaming around, so as to rake her from different points, but yet keeping ourselves out of the range of the heavy guns of the fort before mentioned.

While we were in the act of shelling her the rebels, evidently exasperated at the sight of this performance, and unable to reach us with their guns from the fort, had sent a small field-piece down to the beach opposite us, and opened fire upon us with it. We did not regard that act with any special alarm, and ignored the performance until we had completed the work we had in hand. The shots from the little field-piece all passed over us with spiteful screams, but failed to do us any injury, and having completed our task, we returned to our anchorage.

We found the name of the stranger to be the "Georgiana," a Clyde-built English steamer, of about a thousand tons, a beautiful model, and withal would have made us a rich prize could we have saved her.

There was much disappointment expressed that we had been unable to get her off the bar, and that her position was such that we could not have worked upon her by daylight. However, we had the satisfaction of knowing that the rebels had not profited by her arrival, and that her mission on that coast had proved a failure.

We naturally felt great disappointment in losing such a magnificent prize, but we had to a great degree become accustomed to such disappointments, and had concluded that the "Wissahickon" was destined to be an instrument of destruction, rather than of salvation, so far as blockade-runners were concerned, and I had myself long since decided that any ship on which I sailed, would not pay any very large dividends in the way of prize money. Whether I was the Jonah, or some one of my comrades on each ship, I was not able to determine, but inclined to the belief that I was probably the counterpart of that ancient biblical passenger myself.

Still, although there would be no pecuniary returns from our action, we felt an inward consciousness of having done our duty, and that our efforts would be appreciated by the Navy Department.

We were also somewhat consoled by the fact that what was our loss, would not be the Confederacy's gain, and we certainly shed no tears for the Confederacy's sympathizing Englishmen whose money was invested in the ill-fated steamer.

Not very long after having forced the "Georgiana" to lay her bones on Charleston bar, we were again rewarded for our vigilance; and strange to say, in almost exactly a repetition of many of the features of the programme enacted in the case of the "Georgiana," and with about the same result.

One very dark night, while the regular system of silence and precaution was being observed on our ship, and the lookouts were straining their eyes to

catch some suspicious light, firing was heard from one of the ships not far from us, and as usual we all rushed to quarters in readiness to give a warm reception to any blockade-runner that might conclude to come our way. The cable was slipped and we got under weigh, steaming rapidly in the direction from which the firing had been heard.

We were, however, utterly at a loss to know whether the blockade-runner was attempting to run in to Charleston, or trying to go to sea from that port.

In a few minutes she became dimly visible and a shell was fired at her from our large pivot gun, when she suddenly disappeared in the darkness. Of course we were uncertain as to whether our shell had struck her, and we had no idea as to which direction she had gone after receiving our salutation, so we cruised around for a long time trying to find her, and in doing so we came suddenly and unexpectedly upon the frigate "Powhatan," which was also on blockade duty there.

The "Powhatan's" people having heard the firing, had run out their guns, and were prepared to give the stranger a warm welcome should he happen along that way. The same order of discipline as to night watch on the blockade off Charleston, was observed by all ships on that duty, and a very slight suspicion as to the character of any vessel which might be seen after dark, unless she was able to at once show her signals, was enough to warrant firing on her. As we came up to the "Powhatan" we were hailed by her

deck officer, and at the same time her broadside was trained on us, and the men had the lock strings in their hands ready to pull them at the command to fire; which order they were about to receive when it was discovered who we were, and we escaped by the skin of our teeth from a broadside which would have blown us out of the water. We explained to the captain of the "Powhatan" our sudden appearance in their neighborhood, and in reply to our inquiries as to a supposed blockade-runner of which we were in search he informed us that he had not had the pleasure of seeing anything of that description; and as we could get no satisfactory basis on which to build a theory as to whether she had gone to sea or to Charleston, we returned to our anchorage to await the developments of the morning. We were greatly disappointed that she should have escaped us, but at the same time we were grateful for having escaped that broadside of the "Powhatan."

We thought it possible that the daylight might make some revelations of an encouraging nature, having in view in our minds the case of our friend the "Georgiana." Our hopes were realized, for the first rays of dawn on the following morning showed to the officer of the deck on duty at that hour, a steamer close in under the guns of Fort Moultrie, with only her bows sticking up out of the water, and which we concluded to be our mysterious visitor of the previous night, who had probably received our shot, and was unable to reach Charleston before sinking.

This having been the second blockade-runner destroyed by us since our arrival on the station, we felt that our duty in that line had not been entirely neglected, particularly as we had heard of no results from the vigilance of any of our companions during that time.

It had been contemplated by Admiral Dupont, to make an attack on Fort Sumter, and if possible force an entrance to Charleston. He was only awaiting the completion of several more Monitors which were being built at the North, with which to augment the force already on the station, which had but lately been operating against Fort McAllister in the Ogeechee River. In addition to the Monitors, the powerful iron-clad frigate "New Ironsides" had arrived on the station and was on duty on the inner blockade. It was arranged that this powerful iron-clad fleet should make the attack, and the wooden fleet, of which there was a large number of ships of all sorts and descriptions, should take position out of range, but hold itself ready to assist, should the signal to do so be given after the iron-clads had opened the way.

The new Monitors which were expected from the North finally arrived on the station, and the 7th of April was appointed as the day upon which the attack was to be made.

All the preparations being completed, the iron-clads took up their positions for the start. This ironclad fleet consisted of eight monitors and the "New Iron-

sides," and was undoubtedly at that time the most powerful naval force that ever went into battle since the world began. The wooden ships, among which was the "Wissahickon," took up their positions in the rear. The "New Ironsides" occupied the centre of the fleet, with four monitors ahead of her and four in the rear, and in this order they were to move cautiously up in the direction of Fort Sumter.

The monitor "Weehawken" was placed in the lead, to whose bow was attached a large raft to be pushed ahead of her, for the purpose of catching any torpedoes that might lie in her path, and so remove or explode them before she should reach them herself. The admiral was on board the "New Ironsides," and by her signals the rest of the fleet were to be governed in their movements. As we on board the wooden ships were not to take any active part at first, we had the opportunity of witnessing one of the grandest and most stupendous engagements that ever had been known in the history of any nation, and one which, I am sure, will never be forgotten during the lives of those who saw it.

The iron-clad fleet being in position, and all the details being arranged as far as possible, it only rested for the Admiral to give the signal to start. At noon the signal was hoisted on the flagship "Ironsides" to get under weigh, and in a few minutes the fleet was seen moving slowly and cautiously up toward old Sumter, whose tremendous battery was as yet silent, but which silence was itself ominous, and was but the calm which preceded the awful storm of iron which

was soon to burst with terrific fury upon the Monitors.

As the fleet drew closer to Sumter, a number of buoys were seen floating about, which gave a suspicion of torpedoes in the vicinity; and it was but a few minutes until these suspicions were confirmed by the explosion of one in close proximity to the "Weehawken," but fortunately doing her no damage.

At 2 o'clock the "Weehawken" signaled to the Admiral that there were obstructions ahead of her, and at the same time she approached very close to them. These obstructions extended across the harbor from Sumter to Fort Moultrie. There were several lines of them also, extending from James Island to the middle ot the harbor, all marked by floating casks. At this time the fleet was very close to the forts, but as yet neither side had shown their teeth. The forts appeared to be waiting until the ironclads should reach a certain point, or for a signal to be given to open fire. It was with the most intense interest and anxiety that we watched every movement of the fleet. The little Monitors seemed very insignificant in comparison with the great fort which was frowning down on them, and which would soon wake like a sleeping giant, and pour its fearful hail of shot and shell upon their decks.

The fleet had so far advanced that we felt sure the seeming indifference and silent contempt of the forts would soon come to an end, and then they would enter a protest against this Yankee invasion which would convince them that they were not to have it all

their own way by any means. At about three o'clock the ball was opened by Fort Moultrie, immediately followed by Fort Sumter and all the batteries on Sullivan's and Morris Islands, and from other batteries, which seemed to line the shore from one end of the harbor to the other. The battle had now begun in fearful earnest; the ironclads responded to the fire of the forts with their immense guns, and the roar of artillery was loud and incessant. In a few minutes the whole harbor became filled with smoke, and we were no longer able to see either the forts or the fleet, and our anxiety with regard to the result was almost intolerable. The thundering of the guns continued with increasing violence; occasional gusts of wind would clear the smoke for a few seconds, when we would hurriedly count the monitors to see if they all survived the terrible fire which was now pouring upon them, and each time we were gratified to find them still afloat and doing splendid service.

It soon became evident to us, however, that they had found it impossible to pass through the obstructions, and it being impossible to remain longer under such a destructive fire without serious injury to all of them, they were compelled to retire from the engagement, which they did at 4:30 P. M. And thus the curtain dropped on one of the grandest and most impressive scenes that have ever been witnessed in the wars of the world.

It was the intention of the admiral to have renewed the attack upon the following day, but a consultation of the captains of the several vessels with

him in the evening, with reports from them of serious damages to each and all their vessels from the battle, determined him not to renew the attack, and convinced him of the impossibility of reaching Charleston through the obstructions, and with the artillery that could be brought to bear on his fleet if an attempt should be made to remove them. The last monitor in the line of battle was the "Keokuk," and during the height of the engagement she was the one nearest Sumter, and received such injuries as to cause her to leak very badly, and placed her in a very critical position. She also had a number of her men wounded, and when the monitors left the scene she was almost in a helpless condition.

There were several men wounded in the other monitors, and this had been caused by flying bolts in the turrets principally, which was found to be a great source of danger to the men in charge of the guns there. It was estimated that there were some three hundred guns in service in this battle, and many of them were of the heaviest calibre and most approved pattern. Our ship occupied a position nearly five miles away from the action, and yet she trembled under our feet as if shaken by an earthquake. Some idea may be had of the number of shots fired from the rebel forts during this brief action when it is stated that the "Keokuk" alone received *ninety* of them. The idea of another attack having been abandoned for the present, we were sent back to our old station to watch out for blockade-runners. The success we had met in this line previously had, to be

sure, not been altogether discouraging, so far as its effect upon the Commodore had been concerned. But so far as any pecuniary advantages in the way of prize-money were concerned, we felt that we had not accomplished so much as we should have desired, and that a continuation of the same experience would have no tendency to convince us that it was a highly profitable entertainment, viewed simply in the light of an investment.

However, we had not long to despond upon this question, for in the latter part of this same month it became necessary to have repairs made to the boilers, which fortunately could not be done at Port Royal, but which would necessitate our going North. We were all highly elated at this piece of information, and felt what a blessing it was to have boilers which were capable of producing such a degree of happiness, and an engineer of such careful discernment as to discover at such an opportune time the weak points in the same.

It was not long after the report was made to the admiral as to the dilapidated condition of our boilers that we received our orders to proceed to the Philadelphia Navy-Yard for the necessary repairs. Seven months had elapsed since we left that same navy-yard, and although we had passed through many scenes of danger and exposure, we were permitted to return in health and safety, with the recollections of many grand and impressive scenes which had been presented to us, and the knowledge of unbroken friendship between us.

The passage home was without special incident, and we arrived at the Philadelphia Navy-Yard in due course of time and in safety. The crew were at once transferred to the receiving-ship, and the officers were granted leaves of absence for such time as it was thought would be required in making the repairs to the ship. The large Newfoundland dog which we had captured from the "Georgiana" remained with us until we reached the navy-yard, and there he was transferred also to the receiving-ship with the crew, many of whom had become quite attached to him. His companion, the sheep, which accompanied him on his blockade-running expedition, and which was brought on board at the same time, had long since succumbed to some wasting disease which had been produced by the unnatural life on shipboard, during which it had presented a most melancholy countenance, and its wool had gradually disappeared under the ravages of the disorder until it became an act of mercy to consign it to a watery grave, which fate it finally met.

As soon as we were released from the ship we all started for our homes. I reached my own home the following day, and received the congratulations of my friends upon my having passed through this second siege of blockade duty in safety. In the course of about three weeks the ship had been placed in condition for service again, and the officers were ordered to again join her for sailing. It was presumed that she would be employed upon the same service as before, and probably on the same station.

In my own position, I was at liberty to either remain at home, or join the ship for another cruise, and I found myself upon deliberation, to be influenced by the same feelings which had determined me in my former decision with regard to my first cruise on the "Wissahickon," after the long siege on the "Massachusetts." So, yielding to those influences, I decided to make another cruise in the "Wissahickon," and was on hand at Philadelphia some days previous to her sailing. The preparations for this second cruise having been completed, we left the Navy-Yard in the latter part of May, 1863, bound for the South Atlantic Squadron. It might be supposed that from my experience thus far in the Naval service, I should be content to remain at home and avoid the dangers and troubles of such a life, and I must confess that while undergoing these things, I had felt certain that I should myself be satisfied to do so, and had often wished that I might have the opportunity to prove it; but the same unrest seized hold upon me, and all the unhappy features of my recent experiences were forgotten.

The passage down the Delaware was very delightful, as it was in the Spring, and the scenery on that river at that season of the year is very charming. We made the most of it too, for we thought that in case we should again be doomed to our dismal rolling and pitching off Charleston, we would like to have the memory of this beautiful picture before us.

The voyage was a pleasant one, and much in contrast with our former one. We arrived in due time

off Charleston bar again and reported for orders. We had sustained a hope that in view of our good record previously, we should be rewarded by an assignment to some more attractive station, so that it was with some degree of confidence in the Admiral's appreciation of our work, that we reported to him our arrival; still, we had become so callous to disappointment, that I am not sure but that we should have objected to anything else, and gone meekly to some desolate and abandoned spot as a matter of course. We found that this course of reasoning had coincided with that of the Admiral, for we were ordered to our old station which we had left a month before with so much pleasure. However, we were not compelled to remain there long, and were moved to a position more agreeable, inside the bar, opposite Morris Island. This island was destined to fill a prominent position in the history of the war, although its appearance at this time did not warrant it. While we might have selected a more agreeable position, had the matter been left to our choice, still, we found it so much of an improvement upon the one we had just left, that we were disposed to be thankful for the change.

The one great advantage which this change would offer us, was, that we should no longer be exposed to the heavy seas, and would be able to lie at our anchorage with some degree of comfort. In addition to this, we should be nearer the flag-ship and in better position for communication with other ships. We should also be able to visit Morris Island occasionally,

where the troops of General Gillmore were stationed, and in general, be more in touch with the military and Naval world.

At the extreme Northern end of this island, the Confederates had a very powerful earth-work called Fort Wagner, which, with Fort Sumter directly opposite to assist, controlled the channel between these forts. General Gillmore was advancing steadily on Fort Wagner, and his movements could be seen distinctly from the fleet, from which they were watched with great interest each day. His plan seemed to be to get possession of Morris Island, and then use his heavy artillery in the reduction of Sumter; but before this could be done it was quite necessary that Fort Wagner should be captured, which operation proved to be an extremely difficult one to perform. This work was first undertaken by the Navy, a system of circle sailing having been inaugurated, in which our ship was to take a part. This system required the ships which were to take a part in it, to follow each other in a circle, each ship firing its battery at the fort, as it came on the side of the circle nearest to it; thus every ship would be constantly in motion, and the position of each would be always changing. In this way the guns of the fort could not be maintained in a steady position, and their aim would consequently be destroyed.

The advantages of this system to us were shown in the fact that during a week of this sort of engagement our ship was not struck once, although the shots from the fort frequently passed between our masts, and

their firing was as continuous as our own. But the success that was hoped for had not been met with, and at the end of the time there seemed to be no material damage done to the fort, which was always ready to respond to any calls which were made upon it. General Gillmore in the meantime had been gradually approaching the fort by a system of trenches, until his advance was within a very short distance of it, when, after a consultation with Admiral Dahlgren, who was now in command of the squadron, these officers decided upon a plan of operations against the fort, which was to be carried into effect on the 18th day of July. On this day the fleet were to siege it with all the guns which could be used against it, and this siege was to be followed by storming by the troops.

At 11.30 on the morning of the 18th the fleet, consisting of six monitors and five wooden ships, among the latter of which was the "Wissahickon," weighed anchor and moved up within range of the fort. At this point the wooden ships halted, while the monitors kept on until within very short range, and also within easy range of Sumter. The battle then commenced, and was kept up with great vigor by both sides. Sumter was paying special attention to the ironclads, though occasionally sending a shot among the wooden ships, to remind them that they had not been altogether forgotten. The engagement was continued at this distance until four o'clock in the afternoon, when the monitors moved up to within three hundred yards of the fort, and poured such a terrific

fire into it as to completely silence it for the rest of the day, and it was presumed that the effect had been so destructive as to admit of its capture by the troops without any great contest.

It was about sunset when the battalions of soldiers could be seen from the fleet advancing along the beach and preparing for the charge, which was to be made as soon as darkness should set in. The ships had ceased firing and had withdrawn from the range, and the rest was to be left to the troops. As darkness closed in upon us, the troops were marching towards the fort, but were lost to our view before reaching there.

We waited in painful suspense to hear the sounds of the charge, and felt but little doubt of the success of our troops. In a few minutes the sky was lighted by the flashes from a thousand muskets, followed by the rattling reports and the discharges of the light artillery, and we knew then that the soldiers were mounting the works to the assault. The firing was now rapid and incessant, and continued until 9.30, when it gradually decreased, and very soon ceased entirely.

From the fact that the firing had lasted so long and been so furious, we presumed that the assault had been fiercely and hotly opposed by the rebels, but were sure that the final result when the firing ceased, must have been favorable to our soldiers, and so waited for the daylight to confirm our convictions; but at dawn we saw the rebel flag still waving over the fort, and learned soon after, that our troops had

been repulsed with terrible loss, after a long and desperate hand to hand fight with the rebels. Of the regiment which made this charge, nearly five hundred men had fallen either dead or wounded, with their Colonel killed at the front. He was a gallant soldier and a brave and noble man, and his death was deeply deplored by the whole Army and Naval force on the station, as was also that of the brave men who fell with him. As soon as the sad result was made known to the Admiral in the morning, he sent a boat ashore with a flag of truce, offering assistance to the rebels in the care of our wounded soldiers who were left on the field. This offer, however, was rejected by the rebels. Notwithstanding the deplorable results of that siege and assault, a naval attack was again made on both Sumter and Fort Wagner, both iron-clads and wooden ships participating. This attack was made on August 17th. As usual, the brunt of the battle was sustained by the Monitors, the wooden fleet remaining at a greater distance.

Not only was there nothing gained by this second attack, in so far as any visible effects upon the fort were concerned, but the Navy lost one of its most gallant line-officers, Captain Rodgers, the fleet Captain, and also Paymaster Woodbury.

Captain Rodgers was on board of the "Catskill," one of the new Monitors, and was struck by a flying bolt, driven through to the inside of the turret by a shot from the fort. Paymaster Woodbury who was standing near him was also killed in the same manner. This dreadful misfortune was most deeply deplored by

every one in the fleet, and the death of these two officers was sincerely mourned.

It was evident that the unexpected danger to which these unfortunate officers had been exposed, existed in all the Monitors to a more or less degree, and a recurrence of such an accident was provided against, by suspending inside of the turrets enormously thick padded screens which encircled the whole inside of the turret.

In the latter part of August our captain, John L. Davis, was transferred to the command of the Monitor "Montauk," and his place was filled by Lieutenant Commander Williams, commonly known in the Navy as "Barney Williams," a most agreeable officer, genial and polite to every one, both officers and crew. This brave, generous hearted man was lost in the "Oneida," in the China Sea, after the war, that ship having been run down in the night by an English steamer, whose villainous captain kept on his course, without waiting to learn the result of the collision, for which dastardly act he should have been hung.

After the second attack on Wagner, with its unfortunate result, we were sent back to our old station off Sullivan's Island, with our new Captain in command, to watch for blockade-runners.

The Monitors kept hammering away each day at Fort Wagner for the purpose of preventing the rebels from strengthening or extending their works, while General Gillmore's wonderful engineering was bringing his soldiers a little nearer each day. The men in the trenches were now so nearly under the very sides

of the fort, that it was almost sure death for a man on either side to show his head for an instant, as he would probably be shot by a sharpshooter.

This left the rebels in a very dangerous position, besieged as they were by land and sea.

General Gillmore was also directing the fire of his heavy artillery against Sumter, and the roar of his guns was incessant from morning until night for many weeks. The effect upon Sumter was apparently very disastrous, as the breach could be seen to widen every day, and the massive walls were gradually crumbling away under the unceasing storm of shot and shell.

Under the indomitable will and perseverance of General Gillmore, combined with the unrelenting persistence of the admiral, the situation of the rebels in Fort Wagner was becoming intolerable, and on the night of the 6th of September they exacuated Fort Wagner and Battery Gregg, which later was in close proximity. The evacuation was accomplished very quietly and almost inperceptibly, and had been well planned and executed. Upon the following day the Union troops were in full possession of Morris Island.

On this same day the monitor "Weehawken" was sent on a sort of exploring expedition in the channel between Sumter and Moultrie, and while engaged in this pursuit she grounded on a bar, and, the tide having ebbed while in this position, left her side exposed below the plating.

Her precarious position was immediately discovered by the rebels at Fort Moultrie, as the exposed

side was presented to them, and they proceeded without delay to take advantage of the same. The heaviest guns were brought to bear upon her, and it seemed as if her doom was sealed. She struggled long and hard to free herself from the bar, but having failed in this, there was nothing left to do but to reply to the guns and fight as long as possible, with the advantages all on the side of the enemy. We watched the movements of the "Weehawken" with great anxiety, and were rejoiced when we found that she was able to use her guns; but our happiness at her first shot was mere indifference in comparison with the effect produced upon us by the second shot, and the effect of this one upon the rebels must have been astonishing to the last degree, to make no mention of its physical effect. This second shot, which, by the way, was a shell, had no sooner reached its destination than a terrific explosion occurred in Fort Moultrie which fairly made our ship tremble, though we were three or four miles distant from it.

The conclusion we reached with regard to this explosion was that the shell from the "Weehawken" had entered the shell-magazine of the fort, where it had exploded and fired the magazine; for no sooner had the immense cloud of smoke ascended to its height than the shells which were carried up in it were heard to explode in every direction, which made for us a very interesting additional feature to the first grand pyrotechnic display.

Upon the conclusion of this grand scene the sailors of the entire fleet manned the rigging and the yards

and filled the harbor with the sounds of their repeated cheers.

After this explosion Fort Moultrie remained silent for a number of hours, and the damage to the fort itself must have been very extensive, while the loss of life could not have been small. At the next flood-tide the "Weehawken" was floated off the bar and came out to join the fleet, having received no serious injury from her misfortune.

CHAPTER V.

TRAGEDY AND COMEDY.

THE condition of Sumter as viewed from the fleet, seemed to be such, that it would be no very difficult task to carry it by storm, with a sufficient force of resolute men. The heavy guns of General Gillmore had been constantly at work upon it for many weeks, and it appeared to be so nearly demolished upon the side nearest to those guns, that it would hardly seem possible to prevent an entrance by any of the ordinary methods of defense; provided the men could once be safely landed.

Admiral Dahlgren having reached this conclusion, a council of the captains of the various ships whose boats it was proposed to send, was held on board the flag-ship, and plans arranged for a night assault upon the fort, by a force of picked sailors and marines. The night of September 8th had been chosen as the one on which to carry this plan into effect, and during the day the greatest activity was visible in the fleet. Boats were passing back and forth between the various ships, arranging plans and receiving orders, and at sunset all was arranged and the plans fully completed, which were to be carried into effect soon after dark.

The boats in which the men were to be taken to the fort were arranged in divisions. Each division was placed in command of an officer from some one of the ships, and the whole force was then placed under the command of a higher officer.

Captain Williams of our ship was put in command of one of these divisions, accompanied by two other officers from our ship, and we also sent two boats with crews of about six men to each boat, picked from among our best sailors. The oars of all the boats were muffled, and no lights were to be shown in any of them.

The greatest precaution was taken to keep the rebels in ignorance of the expedition until they should be surprised by the storming party. The boats were taken in tow by a tug-boat, which left them within about eight hundred yards of the fort, and the men then took to their oars. In a very few minutes they had reached nearly to the landing of the fort, when they were discovered by the sentry on the parapet, who immediately gave the alarm to the garrison; and before a landing had been effected by the sailors, the rebels opened upon the boats with musketry, hand-grenades, lighted shells, and grape and canister. It would seem that the rebels had suspected some such expedition, or had in some way been informed of the plans which it was intended to follow in the attempt to capture the fort, for they were certainly prepared for the attack, and were able to resist it with great success as will be seen. Upon the discovery of the

boats by the sentinel, a signal was given by Sumter, when all the batteries, together with the rebel rams and gunboats, poured their fire into the boats without mercy, and a general panic was the result.

A few of the boats had succeeded in reaching the base of the fort, and quite a number of the officers and men had made a landing, but at once discovered that the walls could not be scaled, and they were left to the mercy of the rebels, who at once made prisoners of those who had not been killed. During the panic which resulted from this murderous fire upon the assaulting party, some of the boats were rowed up into the harbor in the confusion, while others were scattered in various directions, and a few of them were captured. The unfortunate men and officers who had made the landing were thus left utterly helpless, and it was the greatest wonder that any of them were spared.

The result of the expedition soon became known to the fleet, and great anxiety was felt as to the fate of the men engaged in it. A few of the boats found their way back to the fleet that night, and the details of the undertaking were made known.

Of the two boats which left the "Wissahickon" one was missing, the other having returned at daylight the following morning. The entire crew of the missing boat, together with Captain Williams and our executive-officer, were captured. A boat came out from Sumter on the following morning, with a flag of truce, requesting that some of the personal effects of the captured officers might be sent to them. In

response to this a box was filled with such things as we thought would be required for their comfort in the way of clothing, eatables, and pipes and tobacco, and sent back with our regrets at their misfortune and our best wishes for their comfort and speedy release. This expedition had been a most signal failure; but there was certainly reason to have anticipated its success, as the appearance of Sumter, as seen from the fleet, indicated its condition to be such as to be incapable of successful resistance to a storming-party of determined, courageous men.

We regretted exceedingly the result of this undertaking, and we seriously felt the loss of our men and officers. Lieutenant-Commander Williams with the other prisoners was sent to Libby prison, but was released before many months. I met him some three years after the close of the war, and he related to me the story of the capture and his prison-life. I never saw him after this, and before many months the sad news reached our country that he had gone down with his ship in the China Sea, having been struck by an English steamer.

The "Wissahickon" was next commanded by Lieutenant-Commander West, of the regular Navy. Soon after the disastrous expedition against Sumter our ship was ordered to Ossabaw Sound, the scene of our former blockade service. We did not remain there long, however, and were ordered to Port Royal for supplies.

The paymaster, A. Warren Kelsey, whose health had been failing, and who was at this time in a condi-

tion requiring such treatment and care as could not be had on board ship, was ordered home, after a survey by a medical board, and I was left in charge of his department until his successor should arrive, when, in case he should bring his assistant with him, I would also be relieved from duty. In a few weeks the new paymaster arrived, bringing his clerk with him, and I was at liberty to go North at the first opportunity.

I found that the U. S. S. "Flag" was about to sail for New York, and I secured passage on board of her.

We left Port Royal the following day. The passage North was exceedingly rough, but we finally reached New York in safety, and I immediately left for Boston with the books and papers of my late paymaster, whom I found at his home in Belmont, a suburb of Boston, in a very comfortable state of convalescence.

I met him again some fifteen years after the war in Washington, where he had come to collect a small amount of prize-money as his share in the destruction of the "Nashville," and while I had serious doubts as to his being alive, previous to my meeting him as stated, he informed me with a gleeful satisfaction, that he had had the pleasure of burying all the doctors who had attended him during that period. My departure from Port Royal ended my connection with the "Wissahickon," and my delivery of the books and papers to their legal guardian, ended my connection with the Naval service again.

After remaining on shore for about a month, and

seeing no prospect of an end to the war, I again was seized with the same mania for Naval service, and on the first of December, 1863, I received another appointment in my usual capacity, on board the U. S. Gunboat "Shokokon," then lying at Baltimore fitting for service in the North Atlantic Squadron.

The contrast between the "Massachusetts" and the "Wissahickon" I had thought to be very great, so far as my own quarters and general comfort were concerned; but still, those ships each had some resemblance to a man-of-war, and we had no reason to feel ashamed of them in the general assortment of a squadron in those days; but when I saw the "Shokokon," I could hardly reconcile the fact that she was really a man-of-war. The name of this vessel had caused me to suspect that she would be some peculiar sort of craft, and I was convinced of my prophecy when I gazed upon her. The "Shokokon" had formerly been a ferry-boat, plyling between New York and Staten Island, and her construction was consequently based upon the supposition that she would continue in that peaceful avocation during her natural lifetime; the general arrangement of her cabins and decks, was intended to accommodate passengers and teams, and it was of course never contemplated that they should be occupied and employed for purposes of war. But when we ascertained that she was to be used in navigating rivers principally, and many of them very narrow ones, we concluded that beauty of model was not of so much importance as the ability to ascend and descend such rivers, with-

out the necessity of turning around, which operation sometimes caused a fatal delay.

The "Shokokon" was able to accomplish this feat, but we found that the effect was very confusing after having served on board a vessel with two distinct and unchanging ends; for this vessel having neither bow nor stern, we were never sure where our cabin was, and it required a search of several minutes to locate it after going up a river, and then coming down. Our cabins and state-rooms were located in what were formerly the cabins for the passengers, except that these had been reduced in size, and our rooms were considerably cramped. The battery consisted of two 30-pounder rifle Parrott guns, and four 12-pounder brass howitzers. The vessel was commanded by Capt. W. B. Sheldon, an acting Master in the volunteer service, and a former captain in the merchant service. All the other officers were also in the volunteer service. We spent about six weeks in Baltimore, waiting for the vessel to be put in readiness to sail, which was not accomplished until about the middle of January, 1864.

The weather had been intensely cold for several weeks previous to this, so that, when we were ready to sail, the harbor of Baltimore was frozen over to considerable thickness. We were for this reason compelled to cut our way out, which was done by running the vessel against the edge of the ice, then backing off and repeating this operation, until we at last broke a sufficiently large channel to admit of our passage through to clear water.

The voyage down the bay was extremely cold, but was without incident.

The "Shokokon" reached Hampton Roads on the day following her departure from Baltimore, and our captain reported to Rear-Admiral Lee for orders. We soon received our orders to proceed to Newport News, some five miles above Fortress Monroe, and take up our station there. This was the spot where the "Congress" and "Cumberland" were sunk by the rebel ram "Merrimac," and had become in consequence quite an historic place. It is just at the mouth of the James River, and the scenery and surroundings were exceedingly beautiful, and we were very much pleased with our location.

Our anchorage was quite near the shore, where we were allowed to visit as often as we desired, and where we incurred no danger from the enemy. In addition to these advantages, we soon discovered that we were anchored almost directly upon an oyster-bed, which yielded an abundant supply of these delicious fish, which could be had at any time by simply raking them off the bottom; which process we so frequently perfórmed that oysters came to be our principal article of food.

We were in close communication with Fortress Monroe, at which place we could receive our mail daily. Fortress Monroe at this period of the war was a most important point, and it presented quite the appearance of a city. Steamers and vessels of all kinds were coming and going constantly, and the streets and wharves presented a very lively scene at

all hours of the day. Boats from our ship were passing back and forth frequently, and we were in receipt of the daily papers from Baltimore, and could supply ourselves at any time with fresh provisions.

A large number of naval vessels were stationed here, and the Roads were filled with army transports and vessels of all descriptions.

Hampton Roads at this time was by all means the most desirable place to be stationed on the coast, as all the comforts and conveniences to be found in any Northern port could be had here, and we congratulated ourselves upon our fortune in this respect, but dreaded each day lest we should get orders to some lonely and desolate spot where we should be cut off from the luxuries we were now enjoying.

We had been inactive since our arrival here, so far as any demonstrations against the enemy were concerned, until the 1st of February, when we received orders to take two armed launches in tow from the "Minnesota" and proceed with them to Smithfield Creek, where a small battery was to be engaged. Upon arriving at the mouth of the creek it was found to be too shallow to admit of the passage of our gunboat, so the launches were taken in tow by the "Smith Briggs," an army tug-boat carrying a small battery, and they proceeded up the creek. They had not advanced very far before they were opened upon by the rebels, to whom they responded in a very brisk manner.

Upon landing at a wharf near by, the rebels came down from the village in force, and charged upon the

soldiers belonging on board the "Smith Briggs," and capturing the steamer itself. Upon discovering the state of affairs, the launches were immediately turned about, and retreated as rapidly as possible down the creek in the direction of our vessel, followed by a rattling fire of musketry and shots from the guns of the "Smith Briggs," which had been turned on them and fired as they fled.

The launches reached our vessel in course of time, and it was found that one officer and three sailors had been wounded, and our surgeon's services were required to dress their wounds and to assist in the care of them. Soon after the launches had arrived the "Smith Briggs" was seen to be on fire, and in a few minutes a terrific explosion occurred on board of her, which blew her to atoms. The wounded men were comfortably provided for on board our vessel, and we proceeded down the river with them to the flagship, and reported the result of the expedition to the Admiral, after which we resumed our station at Newport News.

Here we remained until the 9th of March, when we were ordered to convoy an army expedition, in company with two other gunboats, to a point near the mouth of the Mattapoony River, where the troops were to disembark and proceed in an attack on King and Queen Court House.

We sailed to Yorktown, where, the troops being in readiness, we soon got under weigh and steamed up the York River. Early in the evening we entered the Mattapoony, and soon arrived at Shepherd's

Landing, where we came to anchor for the night. In the morning the troops were landed, and marched away for their destination. While lying here a refugee came on board our vessel from Richmond, and entertained us with his description of affairs in that city.

He was turned over to the military forces at Yorktown on our return there. Early in the evening of the following day we started down the river, but having been delayed by fog and for other causes, we did not reach Yorktown until late the following morning. From there we returned to our station at Newport News, where we remained inactively until the 28th, when we were ordered in company with two other gunboats of the same construction as our own, to proceed up the James River several miles to a certain bend in the same where there was known to be a large earth-work called "Fort Powhatan," and ascertain if it was occupied by the rebels.

We approached the fort very cautiously, and very soon, much to our joy we found it deserted.

After remaining in the vicinity for about an hour we dropped down the river as far as Jamestown Island, where we anchored for the night, and in the morning returned to Newport News. Here we remained most of the time until the latter part of April, when the concentration of the troops began for the grand expedition to City Point and Bermuda-Hundreds on the James River. This expedition was under the command of General Butler, assisted by the Naval forces under Admiral Lee. The preparations for this expedition were being rapidly made, and the

scenes both on shore and among the fleet, were of the most lively and exciting character. Several iron-clads had arrived at the Roads to act as convoys to the Army transports, in company with a large fleet of gunboats of all sizes and descriptions.

On the 5th of May the orders came for the expedition to move up the river. The iron-clads and gunboats took the lead, followed by an immense fleet of Army transports, loaded with soldiers and supplies, as well as ordnance and army equipments of all descriptions. The scene was a grand and beautiful one, and showed the power and resources of our government in the emergency which was presented. The expedition was in all respects a successful one, and the troops and supplies were landed without encountering any interference by the enemy.

During the landing of the troops the ironclads and gunboats took up position from which they could cover the landing in case the rebels should offer any resistance, after which they were stationed at various points both above and below to guard the river.

The "Shokokon" was sent up the Appomattox River to explore for torpedoes or obstructions, and we were extremely thankful that we found neither of these things, and particularly so in regard to the former. After remaining for some time in the Appomattox, we were sent up the James River to a point called Turkey Bend. A short time previous to our orders to this place a gunboat very similar to our own had been blown up by a torpedo there, and we naturally felt somewhat uncomfortable upon ap-

proaching the place; but we escaped the fate of our predecessor and arrived in safety.

We dropped our anchor opposite the excellent farm of Major-General Pickett, of the Confederate army, but who was absent from home at the time engaged in the "Lost Cause."

Malvern Hill was in plain view, and the scenery was very beautiful on all sides. We found our station here to be in many respects a very desirable one indeed, and our only apprehension was with regard to torpedoes, a number of which had been discovered at points near us. We made trips to the shore frequently, after finding they were attended with no special danger from the rebels, and our visits were of much profit to us in the way of luxuries, which we discovered at the farm of our Confederate friend mentioned above. We discovered an ice-house upon the place, in which we found considerable ice, which enabled us to indulge in the luxury of ice-water, and one which we fully appreciated and enjoyed; being careful, however, not to make our discovery known to any others of the fleet, as the supply would not have been equal to the demand.

A few vegetables were also found, and we were not slow in appropriating these to our use.

We remained at Turkey Bend until the 29th of May, when we received orders to convoy an army expedition up the Pamunkey River to White House. Our passage down the James was delightful, as we passed through some of the most beautiful scenery for which this river is so justly famous. The trees

were in their brightest foliage, and the hills were green with the new and beautiful verdure.

We passed around Old Point Comfort and steamed up to Yorktown, where we joined the fleet, and everything being soon ready for the start, we all got under way and steamed up the York River, and before long we entered the mouth of the Pamunkey and commenced winding our way up that stream for White House. The Pamunkey is by all odds the most crooked river I had ever seen or heard of, and as we passed up it, it seemed as if we went nearly all over the state of Virginia.

Upon looking at a vessel ahead, it is almost impossible to tell whether she is going up or coming down the river, as the direction in which her bow is pointed is no indication as to her destination.

We sailed around bends in this river, some of which were at least five miles around, and across the narrowest parts of which a stone might almost have been thrown. After a vast deal of this circumlocution we finally arrived at White House in safety and the troops were at once landed. Our vessel then moved down the river a few miles to a point called Cumberland, where we came to anchor for the purpose of acting as a rear-guard to the Army, and the transports above us. We remained at this place about three weeks. Frequent excursions were made on shore, though we did not dare to venture very far from the river, the enemy at that time being scattered all about that part of the country. The weather was very hot, and our position was a very uncomfortable

one, and in striking contrast to our cool and pleasant station at Newport News so lately left, and which we had decided while there, was too good to last long. Nothing of interest transpired with us until the 21st of June, when on that day, as one of the transports was passing up the river, at a point a short distance above us she was fired into by a squad of rebel cavalry. The firing was observed from our vessel and we at once got under weigh and steamed up to the spot, and very speedily dispersed the rebels with a dose of grape and canister from our battery. Two days later the army evacuated White House, and the transports all passed down the river, covered by the gunboats in the rear, among which was the "Shokokon." We reached Yorktown on the morning of the second day, where we congratulated ourselves upon being freed from river service, and getting where we could again breathe the air from the ocean.

From Yorktown, we soon returned to Hampton Roads, and in a short time were ordered to Norfolk Navy-Yard for repairs and supplies.

While at Norfolk I decided for various reasons to again quit the service and go North.

I notified the paymaster of my desire, and also the captain, who reluctantly gave their consent, and having received my honorable discharge, I went to Fortress Monroe where I procured transportation from the provost-marshal, and took steamer to Baltimore, and from there to New York, arriving in that city in the early part of July, 1864.

The seven months I had spent on board the

"Shokokon" had not been so full of interest and excitement as my previous service on board the "Wissahickon." The river service seemed more tame, and more adapted to landsmen. The river service in the "Wissahickon" was very limited, and could hardly be called such, as we were really most of the time in a Sound. We were employed principally as convoy to Army transports and duties of that nature so that there was not the independence and freedom of a blockader. In addition to this, the stations upon those rivers were not calculated to improve the health, and the confinement between the banks of a river for weeks at a time in midsummer was to me very irksome and tedious, so that I resolved that if I should again enter the service I should endeavor to connect myself with a sea-going ship if possible.

Accordingly, on the 1st day of August, 1864, I received an appointment on board the U. S. steamer "Kensington," lying at Brooklyn Navy-Yard. The duty to which the "Kensington" was to be assigned I had not yet learned upon joining her, but I was confident that it would not be river service, as she was too large a ship for that, and not adapted to that purpose.

The "Kensington" was a propeller of about twelve hundred tons, and carried a very effective battery. I learned soon after joining her that she was to be employed in the transport service for the several squadrons, carrying men and supplies. I anticipated much pleasure in this sort of service, as we should be frequently in port at the navy-yards, and would also

have the pleasure of visiting the several squadrons and learning the progress of events in each of them as the war advanced.

I found the officers' quarters to be very comfortable indeed, and a great improvement upon those I had lately left on board the "Shokokon," as well as much superior to those on board the "Wissahickon." The ship was to be commanded by Acting Volunteer Lieutenant W. G. Saltonstall, whom I found to be a most efficient officer and a thorough gentleman. The other officers were also very agreeable men, and had all seen much service in the merchant marine. The steerage mess, to which I belonged, was composed of a very pleasant and jolly set of men, and the prospects for comfort and pleasure were very flattering.

It was but a few days after my joining the ship that she was ready for sea, and a crew was sent on board from the receiving-ship "North Carolina," as well as a draft of men to be taken to the South Atlantic squadron. These extra men were quartered on the berth-deck with our own crew, and all taken together made a very large company, and the quarters were somewhat crowded. Having received sailing orders, the mail for the squadron was sent on board, and we soon left the dock. The voyage down the coast was very pleasant indeed, as the cool sea air was at this season of the year very refreshing and invigorating, and an ocean trip was much preferable to life on shore. We reached the flag-ship in due

time, and reported to the admiral, who soon gave directions as to the distribution of the men.

This transfer was soon accomplished, and the mail was also delivered. Our ship was visited by a great many officers from the squadron, anxious to learn the news from the North. I appreciated their feelings fully, and understood readily their anxiety to visit our ship, for the recollection of my own experience in similar circumstances was still vivid in my mind. The making and transfer of the pay rolls occupied considerable time, and when this work was completed, there being nothing more to detain us, we started on the homeward passage, and reached New York in about five days, reporting at the Brooklyn Navy-Yard for orders.

In view of my experiences on the blockade, and up the Virginia rivers, I regarded my present position as far beyond any other I had held in regard to pleasure, comfort, and general conditions.

There was the pleasure of lying in port at the Navy Yards, with liberty to go ashore at almost any time, with all the advantages and privileges of a city life. Our stay in port was usually from one to two weeks, when we would be ordered to one or the other of the squadrons; which under favorable circumstances would give a pleasant change, and an opportunity to observe the progress of events in the blockade service.

Our ship remained at the Brooklyn Navy Yard about two weeks, when we received orders to take a draft of men to the North Atlantic Squadron.

At this period of the war, it was very difficult to procure men for either branch of the service, without resorting to drafts or the offers of very large bounties. The majority of the men who shipped in the Naval service at this time, were tempted to do so by the extravagant bounties which were offered, and it was the intention of many of them to secure the bounty, and if possible, avoid the service for which it was paid. There is no doubt that at all times during the war, there were many honest and patriotic men who were joining the service from far different motives than securing any pecuniary reward, and who did their duty faithfully at all times and under all circumstances and were an honor to the service; but it is also true, that at the period of which I write, the majority of the men who shipped, seemed to be men of very little principle, and whose object in shipping was for the purpose stated only.

It became necessary with this knowledge of affairs, to exercise the most extreme vigilance over the drafts of men we took on board, until they were fairly clear of the land.

The officers of the line were obliged to wear their side-arms as we passed down the harbor, and until we were well out to sea, and on one or two occasions it became necessary to use these arms. We left the Navy Yard as soon as possible after the draft of men came on board, for the reason that we suspected an attempt would be made by some of these men to desert. On the passage down the East River, our suspicions were realized in the case of one desperate

fellow who dropped overboard and struck out boldly for shore. As soon as this was discovered there was quite an excitement on board, and the deck officer's attention being called to it, he saw the situation at once, and also saw the fellow's head, which was the only part of his body out of water and fired at it with his revolver, but without effect, except to hurry his movements considerably.

As it was impossible to stop the ship under the circumstances, a swift tide running, he could not be pursued by a boat, and so escaped with his bounty-money, and was picked up by a man in a small boat, who had evidently been engaged for this purpose some time previously, and who probably shared the bounty for this service.

The paymaster had been compelled by sickness to remain at home during this voyage, and in consequence, his duties devolved upon me.

There were no further exciting incidents on the voyage down to Hampton Roads, and upon our arrival there in due time, we reported to the Admiral the object of our visit, and the men were soon transferred to the various ships as they were needed. We left Hampton Roads early on the following morning, and in due time were again at New York. It had been apprehended that there might possibly be trouble in New York City, at the Presidential election in November, which was close at hand, and precautions were being taken to quell any outbreak which might occur. In view of this possible state of affairs our ship was ordered to be kept under way in the East River

on that day, and to steam along near the docks on the New York side, watching for any riotous demonstrations with orders to use our battery if necessary in the enforcement of order.

In obedience to these orders we got under way on the day of election, and cruised as we had been directed, but fortunately we had no occasion to use any force, and Mr. Lincoln was elected for the second term without any very serious acts of violence having occurred.

After performing the duty to which we had been assigned our ship returned to the navy-yard, where she lay until the latter part of November, when we received the most extraordinary order that I imagine was ever issued to a man-of-war, and I presume the only one of the kind that ever was so issued. This remarkable order was to transport a Thanksgiving dinner from New York to the North Atlantic squadron.

This cargo was a present from some benevolent society in New York, the name of which I have forgotten, and consisted of several tons of dressed turkeys, chickens, ducks, geese, and various sorts of game, nicely packed in boxes. Two or three days were occupied in receiving and stowing away this cargo, which was brought over from New York to the navy-yard in wagons, which were constantly coming and going during that time.

At last we were ready to sail with our Thanksgiving dinner, and we anticipated with much pleasure the astonishment that would be manifested by that squad-

ron upon the announcement of our mission to them upon our arrival.

The passage was a pleasant one, and in due time we reached Hampton Roads and communicated to the admiral the object of our visit in those waters.

The astonished but delighted admiral immediately hoisted a general signal on board the flag-ship for all the ships to send boats to the "Kensington" for a Thanksgiving dinner. Whatever the officers of those various ships may have thought as to the sanity of the admiral upon reading the signal, it was evident that they did not wait long to reflect upon the matter, for in a very few moments boats were seen coming from every direction, the crews and officers of which were struggling to see which should reach us first.

As soon as the boats came alongside the officers came tumbling up over the side of the ship, as if they had been driven frantic by the recollections of Thanksgiving dinners in the past, and were beside themselves in the anticipation of once more realizing the happinesss attending such an occasion. The sailors were also equally astonished at such an unheard-of event in the history of the navy, and were loth to believe the story until they should actually see the cargo. The scene on board our ship after the arrival of all the boats, and upon opening the hatches, disclosing to the view of these ravenous blockaders the immense quantity of turkey and other Thanksgiving refreshments, was ridiculous and amusing beyond expression.

Officers and sailors were pushing and crowding

each other without regard to rank or age; in their frantic efforts to secure the largest and fattest turkeys, while others, preferring the chickens or geese, would snatch them out of the barrels and boxes, as if it was the last meal they ever expected to have in this world. At first, an attempt was made to distribute the cargo in proportion to the size of the ships, but as soon as the tempting cargo was exposed to view, all semblance of order was abandoned, and officers and men alike dropped into the hold and secured their booty, and hurried off to their respective ships with it.

On board our own ship, we had felt ourselves entitled from the start, to help ourselves to as much of the cargo as we should desire, and acting upon this conviction, we had been indulging in turkey three times a day, with turkey lunches between the regular meals, for about ten days, until I must confess, that I became disgusted with the sight of a turkey, and began to long for an old fashioned slice of salt beef.

It seemed absurd enough to sit down to breakfast to an immense roast turkey, but to have this followed up by a dinner and supper of the same kind, and a turkey lunch before retiring, from the remnants, was carrying turkey to an extreme calculated to induce a profound contempt for that innocent bird for all time.

After disposing of all of the cargo, even to the last chicken, we got under weigh and left Hampton Roads for Boston, where we were ordered to go, to take a draft of men from the Charlestown Navy Yard for the South Atlantic and Gulf Squadrons

Before leaving New York for Hampton Roads with our Thanksgiving donation, our captain had been transferred, and the ship was placed under the command of an Acting Master named Rockwell. We all regretted the change exceedingly, as Capt. Saltonstall was a great favorite with all the officers, and an educated and refined gentleman; while on the other hand, we found our new captain to be an overbearing, tyrannical man, with no education or refinement, and utterly out of place in the society of gentlemen. It was this man's delight to be constantly making false charge against his officers to the Navy Department, and he finally was court-martialed himself, when the Department discovered his character.

Having reached Boston, we were soon prepared to receive on board the draft of men we were to take south.

Before taking these men on board, we had been informed as to their character, and it was found that they were for the most part from the scum of the merchant service, and men who had shipped for the sole purpose of securing the large bounties, with no intention of going to sea if they could by any possibility avoid it.

It was also ascertained, that the draft would be a very large one indeed, as two squadrons were to be supplied from it, and there was much doubt as to being able to provide quarters for them, so as to allow any degree of comfort for our own crew, as well as for themselves.

Just before these men left the receiving-ship to

come on board our ship it had been discovered that they had planned a mutiny in case they were compelled to go to sea, and preparations were made for such an event. In view of what had been learned as to the character of these fellows, together with the great number of them which we should be obliged to take out, the anticipation of such an occurrence as was planned was by no means comforting to us on the eve of such a long voyage, and it was exceedingly fortunate for us that the plot was discovered in time to prevent its execution.

Before they had reached our ship all the arms of every description belonging to the ship had been stowed away and locked in the captain's cabin, and even the handspikes and capstan-bars, as well as all the belaying-pins that could be spared, were placed there also. The officers all wore their side-arms, and there was actually nothing to be found on either of the decks that could be used as a weapon, so that we felt comparatively safe in case of an outbreak. At last these fellows came on board with their hammocks and bags, and they were mustered to answer to their names.

They were as villanous looking a set of men as ever trod a ship's deck since the days of Captain Kidd, and the prospect of having their society for a voyage of eighteen hundred miles was anything but a flattering one.

As they were being mustered we discovered among the number a man who had jumped the bounty and deserted from our own ship but a few weeks before,

and who again shipped under a new name and secured a second bounty. Under the circumstances in which we found ourselves it was deemed best not to recognize the fellow at that time, but to take good care that he did not escape again, and to report his case to the admiral of the squadron where he would be transferred; so he was allowed to take his place with the others, and I have no doubt he congratulated himself upon having successfully passed inspection.

They were all sent down to the gun- and berth-decks, and rations were issued to them. As a means of preventing them from going aft on those decks a strong grating had been built across the deck, so that communication with them could only be had through the forward hatchway. The accommodation being inadequate for such a large number of men, our own crew was compelled to suffer the greatest annoyance from these fellows, who insisted upon helping themselves to such places as suited them.

In this condition of affairs we sailed from port. Our first stopping-place was to be Port Royal, where we were to leave a portion of these gentlemen, and then proceed with the remainder of them to Pensacola. We anticipated no pleasure in this voyage, but felt, on the contrary, a certain degree of apprehension as to its result which kept us in a constant state of worriment. The scene below during the day was one of incessant bedlam and confusion, and quarreling and fighting was the principal occupation. At night the place was turned into a den of thieves, and men were being constantly robbed of their bounty-

money by their delightful associates, and the discovery of their losses would lead to a general row, which frequently ended in serious injuries to several of the participants. Men were constantly coming to the officer of the deck to report the loss of their money, or with bleeding noses and blackened eyes, to complain of some villain who had added assault to robbery. Upon summoning the accused, he would in every case assert his innocence and resent the insult to his character, so that it was impossible to grant redress in these cases, as they were of such frequent occurrence, and there was nothing to be done under such circumstances except to let them settle their own quarrels, while we prayed for a speedy arrival at our destination, so that we might be well rid of the party.

We had been favored in respect to the weather, until we arrived off Cape Hatteras. Here we experienced very heavy weather, and as night came on the wind was dead ahead and blowing a gale, while the sea was running high, into which our ship was plunging with fearful violence, throwing the seas over the decks at every plunge, and trembling from stem to stern as she rose on the foaming waves.

The night was intensely dark, and the howling of the gale through the rigging, mingled with the creaking of the bulkheads, and the sound of the drenching seas sweeping across the deck was indeed an occasion of terror; but added to all this were the curses and drunken howlings of a mutinous and desperate gang of men, robbing and threatening the lives of each

other, until our situation became really a very alarming one. During this wild night off Hatteras we came upon a vessel showing signals of distress, and we approached as near as we could with safety and hailed her. She was a brig heavily laden, and was laboring fearfully in the terrible seas. In reply to our officer's call, the answer came that their vessel was leaking badly, and that she could not long survive the fearful gale, and tremendous seas which were breaking over her; and they begged for assistance. It was a piteous call that came to us on the gale, and there was more of despair than hope in it, for they knew that the chance of our saving them was next to impossible.

The sea was running so high and the gale was so furious that it would have been impossible to have lowered a boat, and even if that had been possible, the boat would not have lived in such a sea, and never would have reached the vessel in distress, but would have been swamped with all its crew.

It was indeed hard to be compelled to leave those poor helpless men, piteously begging us to save them from the awful death which they seemed to be rapidly approaching; but it was beyond our power to rescue them, and the greatest caution was necessary to keep their vessel from drifting on to us and thus perhaps causing the loss of all our lives. Thus we were compelled to leave them to the hard fate which awaited them.

We steamed away on our course, and as our ship would rise upon the seas the dim light hanging

in the shrouds of the doomed vessel could be seen swaying wildly back and forth until lost to view in the dark distance. Such an event as this is peculiarly distressing, and the thought of those unfortunate men being doomed to perish almost before our very eyes, and with our help withheld from them by the very forces which were carrying them to destruction, left a feeling of intense pity and grief upon the minds of all the ship's company.

Severe as the storm had been during the night, daylight, however, brought with it some moderation in its force, and we were able to make better progress, and felt that the height of the gale had passed. We weathered it in safety, but the condition of affairs among our bounty-jumpers seemed to in no manner improve, so that we constantly felt under a pressure of anxiety with regard to their actions. The confinement and crowded condition in which they were obliged to live below decks had a tendency to aggravate their rebellious spirit rather than to induce order and contentment among them, so that we felt that unless we should reach our destination before a much longer time should elapse it would be difficult to enforce any sort of discipline.

Fortunately the weather continued favorable, and we at last reached Port Royal in safety, and it was with a sense of relief that we found ourselves under the protection of the fleet at that station. As soon as our business had been made known to the admiral, the order was given to have a large portion of our *friends* transferred to the receiving-ship "Vermont,"

then lying there. The order was very promptly obeyed, and I am sure there were no tears shed at their parting from us, and our only regret was that we could not have left them all there, much as we respected the officers and crew of the "Vermont."

There was a delightful sense of relief, however, in being able to get rid of even a portion of them, and we all breathed easier as their numbers became diminished. After disposing of so many of them the discipline of the remaining ones became more rigid, and they were shown that they would not be allowed the liberty and latitude which they had taken to themselves before the departure of their comrades.

The accommodations for the remainder of these men were now much more comfortable, and all was done to render their quarters as agreeable to them as possible. We soon left Port Royal bound for Pensacola and Mobile Bay. I think we all assumed a more independent and less conciliatory air after leaving Port Royal than we had exhibited on the voyage from Boston to this port. Still we felt that we were not entirely out of the woods yet, and that we should not regard ourselves wholly comfortable until we had seen the last of the bounty-jumpers pass over the side of our ship.

From Port Royal to Pensacola our voyage was a very pleasant one so far as the weather was concerned. We were each day getting farther south, and the temperature was growing more comfortable as we advanced, so that when we reached the Gulf of Mexico we were in a warm and balmy climate, much

in contrast to that we had left at Boston but a short time before.

In due course of time we reached Pensacola, and transferred another batch of our delightful passengers, with the same manifestations of happiness on our part, that we had exhibited at Port Royal, and with an accumulated sense of relief upon their departure.

From Pensacola we went to Mobile Bay, where we had the extreme pleasure of seeing the last one of the would be bounty-jumpers disappear over the side of our ship. While we entertained no feelings of enmity against the squadron, still we preferred that they should have the benefit of the society of our late passengers, and we hoped that a fuller acquaintance with our friends would not bring down the vengeance of the squadron upon our heads for having introduced them; but we were inclined to think that much delay in getting away from there might at least produce a coldness between us on that account.

We had expected to return direct from Mobile Bay to New York, but after disposing of our men we received orders from the Admiral to transport an Army paymaster to New Orleans with a large amount of money with which he was to pay off the Army of the Gulf. It was important that he should be there soon, and as no other safe means of conveyance was at hand, we were pressed into that duty.

The anticipation of this trip was not at all unpleasant to us, but on the contrary, it was very agreeable, for many of us had never been to New Orleans and we were glad of an opportunity to visit that

city, even if for only a few hours; we were also anxious to see the famous forts on the lower Mississippi which had disputed Farragut's passage up the river.

This paymaster had in his possession about four millions of dollars, which were contained in thirteen iron safes. These safes were brought on board and placed in the ward room, where a strong guard of marines was stationed to watch them. Upon the arrival of the paymaster we weighed anchor and started for the mouth of the Mississippi.

As we left the smooth waters of the bay, and got fairly out to sea, the effect of the swell became very perceptible, and the paymaster, who had anticipated considerable pleasure in the trip, was observed to assume a melancholy expression, and before many minutes he had disappeared entirely from the deck and secluded himself in his state-room, where he was shortly indifferent as to his fate or of the disposition of the money under his charge, and did not make his appearance again until we reached smooth water at the mouth of the river.

We reached the mouth of the river late in the afternoon and had some difficulty in getting over the bar, so that it was dark before we got fairly started up the river. My anticipations with regard to viewing the scene of Farragut's engagements with the forts were not to be realized on the upward passage, but I consoled myself with the certainty of that view on the return trip.

Upon arriving at New Orleans the paymaster was

taken on shore with his safes as soon as possible. No one was permitted to go on shore on leave, so that we could only view the city from the river. Here I was again disappointed. We remained only half a day here, and left late in the afternoon, so that we were to pass down the river in the night, and I should again be deprived of the view which I had so pleasantly anticipated upon our return down the river. Thus I could only say that I had been *at* New Orleans, but not in it, and had passed the scene of Farragut's battle, but had not *seen* that spot.

Our passage north was to be made without any stops, so that we had a long voyage ahead before we should reach New York. The passage home was without special incident, and we arrived off Sandy Hook about the middle of January, 1865. The weather was very cold, and we all felt it extremely, having but a few days before been enjoying the warm and balmy atmosphere of the Southern latitudes.

We arrived at the navy-yard at Brooklyn, and our voyage was ended.

This was my last voyage in the naval service. The war was drawing rapidly to its close, and it would have been a matter of but a very few months to have remained in the Navy to have seen it ended. I took my leave of the "Kensington," her officers, and the naval service. After remaining a few weeks in New York, I concluded to accept the advice of that venerable and philosophic agriculturist, Horace Greeley, and go West.

Many years have passed since I first sailed from

Boston a mere boy, but as I review the scenes of the war as imprinted upon my memory, some of which I have endeavored to present in these pages, I feel that those years of my youth were not wholly wasted, but that such humble service as I was permitted to perform may possibly have been of some slight value to the cause in which we were engaged.

Many long and wearisome days were spent in the lonely and monotonous life on the blockade, separated from our homes and friends, exposed to the dangers of the elements and of a desperate foe; but with all the trials and deprivations of such a life, it also had its compensations in many pleasures and attractions.

The recollection of the pleasures of youthful adventure in such a service, and the memory of the many grand and impressive scenes I was permitted to view, leave me no regrets for having passed three years on the blockade.