

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE NASHVILLE BY THE IRON-CLAD MONITOR MONTAUK.

## CHAPTER VI.

## NAVAL OPERATIONS.

The Blockade of Southern Ports.—Naval Superiority of the North.—The New England Fisheries.—Condition of the United States Navy at the beginning of the War.—The Proclamation of the Blockade by President Lincoln.—Vessels recalled from Service in Foreign Waters.—Blockading Squadrons.—Jefferson Davis grants Letters of Marque.—Confederate Privateers.—Fortress Monroe.—The Hatteras and Port Royal Expeditions.—Confederate Attack on Santa Rosa.—Bombardment of Fort McRea.—Hollins's Confederate Fleet on the Mississippi.

IN a war whose successful termination depended upon the exhaustion of the South, the blockade of the Southern ports constituted of necessity an important feature. Herein it was that the naval superiority of the North was chiefly available. There were undoubtedly certain disadvantages arising out of the commercial character of the Northern people. Nor were these slight in a war like that waged between the North and the South, where it was precisely the case of an elaborate network of civilization, as vulnerable as it was complex and extensive, liable to be deranged by the minutest fluctuations even of a peaceful time, and much more by the violent changes incident to a period of civil strife, pitted against a feudal status of social life, the very atmosphere of which is martial aspiration. Yet these disadvantages were more than compensated for by our power to cut the Southern States almost entirely off from all foreign supply and re-enforcement. At the first outbreak of hostilities, however, the successful blockade of a coast measuring more than three thousand miles in length seemed utterly out of the reach of the national government, and was, doubtless, not even calculated upon by the Southern leaders as a possible event, since the cotton states, dependent upon their exports for their very wealth, were financially ruined the moment the gates of the sea were closed against them. Knowing this, they would never have ventured the chances of a war on such unfavorable conditions; and, indeed, it seemed a task, requiring some miracle to be performed in order to its accomplishment, for a nation which on the 1st of January, 1861, had but a single war-steamer available for the defense of its entire Atlantic coast, to proclaim a blockade whose regulations extended over the coast of half a continent. But this aspect of the case was essentially a delusive view. The inlets and harbors of our coast were not crowded with fleets, it is true; but the essential basis of a navy consists not in ships, but in trained seamen. The basis of a substantial navy had been firmly established for the North, not only through the ordinary channels of commerce, but more especially through the extensive New England fisheries.

The first commercial link connecting America with the Old World was established by means of the fisheries off Newfoundland. Not long afterward the Cape Cod fisheries came into prominence, and formed the basis of New England commerce. As in the case of ancient Attica, New England, on account of the sterility of her soil, impelled her sons, by the pressure of necessity, to devote a great measure of their activity to fisheries and commerce. About the middle of the seventeenth century it was the habit of Virginia planters to speak of the sterility of New England and of her fisheries with ridicule; it was sometimes even hinted that the Puritans would have shown a larger wisdom in settling the Bahamas than in sticking so closely to Plymouth Rock. Strangely enough, just two centuries later we find New England, in spite of her sterility, in advance of her more fruitful

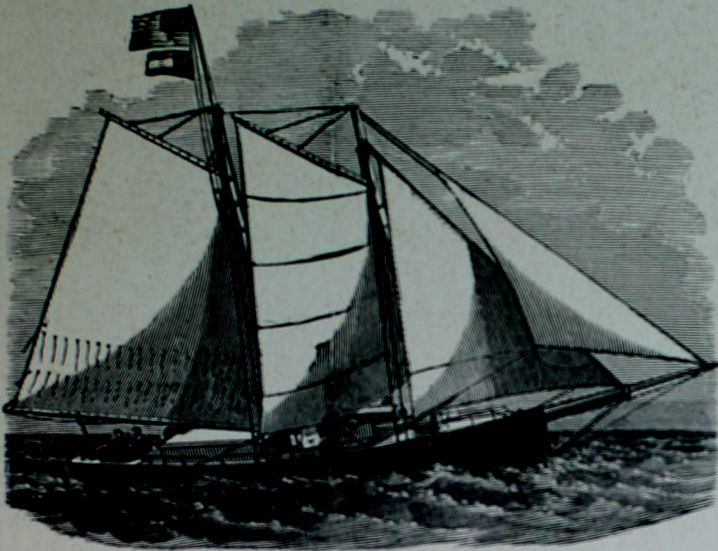
sisters of the South in all material as well as moral prosperity, and able, through her naval power, to blockade the entire Southern coast; and this naval power, which, though chiefly resident in New England, is, through her steadfast loyalty, a national possession, is due mainly to her fisheries. The only season of the year in which the fisheries can be carried on with success is that which of all others is the most tempestuous, and only the most courageous and hardy men could face its dangers and endure its hardships. It is from men trained in this school that the navies of great nations are nourished. The naval service, while it demands and exhausts hardy seamen, is incapable of producing them; and both France and England have always looked to their fisheries to supply the demand for fresh material. The great Italian cities, at the height of their commercial prosperity, acknowledged their obligation to fishermen, and at Venice there was a yearly festival established to commemorate this obligation. In view of the national importance of our fisheries, the measures relating to them, and which formed a part of the Reciprocity Treaty between the United States and Great Britain, were held to be of momentous interest. These articles of the treaty allowed the citizens of either nation, under certain specified restrictions, to carry on fisheries in the waters of the other, thus extending for each nation its field for the training of seamen.

But, notwithstanding that there were about 20,000 men directly engaged in our fisheries, besides the great number of seamen engaged in commerce available for naval use, there were still great impediments to be removed before an actual navy could grow out of the resources at hand. The naval establishment of the United States at the beginning of the war, in regard to the number of vessels and the quantity of ordnance at its disposal, was exceedingly weak. This nation had always pursued a policy in regard to foreign powers which, while securing herself against attack from abroad, made it unnecessary to maintain an army and navy establishment proportioned to her comparative power. In March, 1861, the number of vessels of all classes belonging to the navy was only ninety, of which not more than forty-two were in commission, these latter mounting between five and six hundred guns. Nearly all of those in commission were on foreign stations, the Home Squadron consisting only of twelve vessels, mounting one hundred and eighty-seven guns; and only four of these were in Northern ports, the remainder being for the most part in the Gulf of Mexico. The complement of these vessels was about 2000 men. The number of naval officers disaffected to the government was very large. In the four months from March 4th to July 4th there were on this account two hundred and fifty-nine resignations. The destruction of the Norfolk Navy Yard had been chiefly injurious on account of the large amount of ordnance sacrificed, a large quantity of which fell into the hands of the enemy. The *Cumberland*, which was the only vessel of the yard in commission, fortunately escaped.

Such was the inadequate force at the disposal of the government when the war began. But the President promptly issued his proclamation, laying an embargo on the ports of the seven states then belonging to the Confederacy. This was on the 19th of April. On the 27th he included within the limits of his proclamation the ports of Virginia and North Carolina. To carry into effect these two proclamations, Flag-officer Pendergrast, in command of the Home Squadron, was sent, with all the ships available for the

purpose, to establish non-intercourse, and to notify foreigners of the embargo, giving them fifteen days in which to complete their preparations for departure. Seventeen more vessels were put in commission, and the commandants of the navy yards in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia were directed to purchase and equip suitable steamers, in order to render the blockade as effective as possible. In the mean while vessels were continually arriving from foreign waters. The *Niagara* reached Boston from Japan on the 24th, and was immediately dispatched to Charleston Harbor. Shortly afterward she was removed to the Gulf, to intercept shipments of arms and munitions of war said to be on their way to Mobile and New Orleans. The East India, Mediterranean, Brazil, and African Squadrons were recalled, adding to the navy a force of 200 guns and 2500 men. Twelve steamers were purchased by the government, and nine more were chartered; and several small vessels which had been captured were taken into the service.

Thus, before July 4th, the blockade had been rendered so effective that foreign nations could not evade it, and were obliged to recognize its legality. The duties of the blockade were divided between two squadrons—the Atlantic Squadron, under the command of Flag-officer S. H. Stringham, and the Squadron of the Gulf, under Flag-officer Mervine: the former consisted of 22 vessels, 296 guns, and 8300 men; the latter of 21 vessels, 282 guns, and 3500 men. There were, in addition to these, the Potomac Squadron, under Commander Ward, the squadron in the Pacific, under Flag-officer John B. Montgomery, consisting of 6 vessels, 82 guns, and 1000 men, and the West India Squadron, which was assigned to Pendergrast.



THE SAVANNAH.

It was understood that transports secured on the spur of the moment could be of only temporary use, and accordingly, to secure vessels available in all weathers and for all sorts of service, the Navy Department contracted for the building of twenty-three gun-boats of about five hundred tons burden. The eight sloops-of-war which had been ordered by Congress in its previous session were being built as rapidly as the demand for vessels immediately needed would allow. Arrangements were also being made for the construction of larger and fleetier vessels, to be used not only on blockade, but also for the pursuit and destruction of privateers.

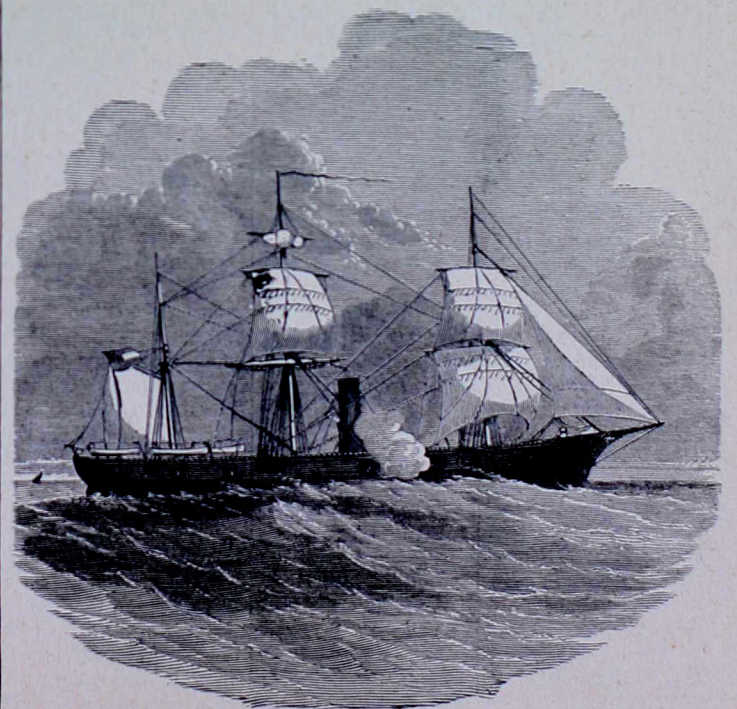
It was only through privateering that the Confederacy had the means of carrying on the war upon the seas. As soon as the President's proclamation calling out the militia was made known at the Confederate capital, Davis issued a proclamation inviting applications for letters of marque and reprisal, those applying to make a written statement, being required to give a suitable description of the character, force, and tonnage of the vessel to be employed, and the number of its proposed crew. Before receiving their commissions, all applicants were compelled to give bonds to the amount of \$5000 or \$10,000 that the laws of the Confederate States should be observed, that all damages done contrary to those laws should be satisfied, and that the commission should be surrendered when revoked by the President. Early in May this measure of President Davis was sanctioned by the Confederate Congress, and it was farther provided that prizes should be distributed among the owners, officers, and crews of the capturing vessels; but that these must first be carried into some port of the Confederacy, or of some friendly state, to be condemned by a competent tribunal. A bounty of \$20 was offered for each person on board any armed ship belonging to the United States which should be burnt, sunk, or destroyed, and one of \$25 for each person captured and brought into port.

There were two difficulties in the way of successfully carrying out this scheme. One was the blockade, which, in the first instance, impeded the egress of privateers, and after their escape prevented their return with captured vessels to Confederate ports; the other was the refusal of neutral powers to allow these armed vessels to bring prizes into any of their ports. Unless, therefore, privateers should be able to elude the blockade, both in their egress from Confederate ports and in their return to the same, the entire value of the prizes captured would be lost to the captors. It was inevitable, however, that some of these cruisers would get out to sea; and this once accomplished, it became absolutely impossible for the Federal government to maintain so effective a police as to secure our commerce against the threatened danger. There was an advantage gained by that government

even in this, inasmuch as the partial annihilation of our commerce diverted the activity and capital hitherto directed into that channel to the development of our naval resources against the Confederacy.

At the beginning of May, 1861, the Confederacy had purchased two vessels—*Sumter* and *McRae*—which were then being rapidly prepared for sea at New Orleans. The first privateer which eluded the blockade was the *Savannah*, which was also the first to be captured. This vessel was by no means a formidable one, her burden being only fifty tons, and at a little distance could not have been distinguished from an ordinary pilot-boat. She was fitted out at Charleston, where she took in a crew of twenty men, and carried an 18-pounder, mounted on a swivel amidships. She escaped on Sunday, the 2d of June, while the United States frigate *Minnesota*, on duty off Charleston, was in pursuit of a suspicious craft cruising to the southward. The next day she captured the brig *Joseph*, with a cargo of sugar, from Cuba. The same day, about 5 P.M., the brig *Perry* came in sight, and the *Savannah* gave chase, expecting to take another prize. Unfortunately for the privateer, the brig *Perry* was a United States man-of-war, and she caught a Tartar! The tables were turned; the chase was reversed, and at 11 o'clock the next morning the *Savannah*, with her officers and crew, were captured and brought to the port of New York.

A month later, the *Sumter*, mounting five guns, escaped from New Orleans, with a crew of sixty-five men and twenty marines, under the command of Raphael Semmes. This vessel was the old *Marques de la Habana*, which had been captured by the United States fleet off Vera Cruz in 1860, and taken as a prize to New Orleans. After her escape, which she effected while the *Brooklyn* was pursuing an English vessel attempting to run the blockade, the *Sumter* captured several brigs, which she carried as prizes to Cienfuegos, Cuba, where they were released by the Spanish government and sent to New York. On the 26th of July the *Sumter* was at Venezuela, having captured on her way from Cuba the *Abby Bradford*, which was sent to New Orleans with Semmes's first dispatch. After having captured and burned several valuable vessels, the *Sumter* reached Cadiz early in February, 1862. Here her career was virtually ended, as the *Tuscarora*, lying off Gibraltar, kept her under embargo, until Semmes finally, after waiting two months to effect an escape, discharged his crew and sold the ship. The career of the *Jeff. Davis*, which escaped from Charleston about the same time that the *Sumter* ran out from New Orleans, was far less fortunate than that of the latter vessel. She captured and burned a number of American vessels, but about the middle of August was wrecked near St. Augustine, Florida. In October, 1861, the *Nashville*, commanded by Lieutenant Pegram, escaped from Charleston. The next January she was at Southampton, England, which port she was ordered to quit on the 4th of February. At this time she was closely blockaded by the *Tuscarora*; but the latter was not permitted to pursue until after the expiration of twenty-four hours, which gave the privateer every chance of escape. The *Nashville* ran the blockade at Beaufort, and anchored safely in a Confederate port on the 1st of March, bringing with her \$3,000,000 worth of stores, but no arms. Just one year from her arrival at Beaufort she was destroyed by the Federal iron-clads in the Great Ogeechee River, and under the guns of Fort McAllister. The *Montauk* (Captain Worden) led in the attack. She had grounded in that part of the river known as the Seven Miles' Reach, when the fleet approached to within twelve hundred yards, and opened fire both on the ship and the battery. The *Nashville* soon caught fire, and her magazine exploded. The attempts made by the Confederacy to build up its navy in foreign ship-yards will be considered in some future chapter.



THE SUMTER.

Apart from the measures taken to secure an effective blockade, the naval arm of the service, like the military, during the year 1861 was engaged only



THE BURNING OF HAMPTON BY MAGRUDER.

in detached operations. Two important expeditions were planned and carried out, having for their object the seizure of points on the Southern coast, and a diversion of the enemy's forces from Virginia, in view of a possible advance by McClellan's army in the autumn. Besides the Hatteras and Port Royal Expeditions, our occupation of Ship Island in September, and the attack made by the rebels on Santa Rosa Island in October, were the only events of interest worthy of note in the record of naval operations for the year.

Nothing of any importance occurred in General Butler's department during the month of July; but the Confederate General Magruder still had a large force on the Peninsula, which, shortly after the battle of Bull Run, signaled itself by burning the little village of Hampton. On the 7th of August Magruder had posted a force of seven thousand men, with eight pieces of artillery, on Black River, three miles from the village, with the intention of forcing an engagement upon our soldiers at Newport News or at Hampton, or at least of destroying the latter place, and thus preventing its being used by Butler's men for winter quarters. But these men already, as will presently appear, had their eye upon a sunnier clime, and would, therefore, hardly realize the injury which had been intended. The circumstances incident to the conflagration were every way disgraceful to the Confederate commander. No warning was given, and helpless non-combatants were aroused from their beds at midnight to look upon the destruction of their homes. Nothing, however, was accomplished by the enemy beyond this conflagration, as our forces were prepared to meet him, and with the chances of victory on their side.

On the 18th of August General Butler turned over his command at Fortress Monroe to General Wool, having been at the head of the department of Virginia for nearly three months. Assigned to no other post, he reported to General Wool for orders, and received quietly the command of the volunteer forces outside the fortress, viz., at Camps Butler and Hamilton, serving as a subordinate where he had, almost from the beginning of the war, been accustomed to the supreme command. But it was not long before work of great moment was intrusted to him for execution. The resources of the fortress had up to this time been used chiefly with a view to secure it from the possibility of capture; that security had now been fully gained, and henceforth Fortress Monroe was to become the centre from which the naval strength of the nation might be hurled against the trembling and almost defenseless coasts of the Southern Atlantic. In a single day the full importance of the possession of the fortress to our government flashed like an illumination upon the popular mind; it was the day when the expedition to Hatteras Inlet was brought to light as an accomplished result.

The Confederacy had not been without its serious apprehensions as to the vulnerability of its coast defenses; indeed, it was the sorest of anticipated evils, and the more the boasting in relation to heroic defenses against these daily-expected raids upon their coast, the greater their apprehension of ruin which must inevitably result from them. Within but a day or two of the

landing of our forces at Hatteras, the *Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel* gave the following reasons for immediately organizing a coast defense:

"1. Because there are many places where the enemy might commit raids and do us damage before we could organize and drive them off. Beaufort District, opposite to Savannah, has several fine ports and inlets, navigable for large vessels, wholly unprotected. This district has five black to one white inhabitant. Several inlets on our coast, which our enemies know like a book, from surveys in their possession, are equally unprotected.

"2. In two months more they will not fear our climate. By that time they might be ready to make a sudden descent and find us unprepared.

"3. A small force might eject them if ready to go at once; when, if we have to wait, a much larger one will be necessary.

"4. By organizing and drilling infantry and guerrillas at home, there will be no need to call upon the President for troops, and a feint from the enemy would not injure our Virginia operations."

Hardly had this note of alarm been sounded before the blow was struck and the danger illustrated. The point of attack was not that which would have been conjectured by the enemy; apparently no position along the coast, with the exception of cities, was better protected than Hatteras Inlet. This point was chosen by Butler himself, who both originated and planned the expedition, aided, however, in the execution of his scheme by Commodore S. H. Stringham, of the Navy. The first suggestion leading to this undertaking was furnished by a Union man who had been wrecked and detained as a prisoner at the Inlet, and who brought home the important information that through that opening in the sand-reef which lines the North Carolina coast, blockade runners were continually gaining access to the main land. This was before Butler had been relieved of his command; and when General Wool arrived at the fortress, he found that preparations were already being made, by order of General Scott, for an expedition whose object should be to block up the Inlet and reduce the forts in the vicinity. There were two of these fortifications—Forts Hatteras and Clark—which the Confederates had for the last three months been erecting upon the point north of the Inlet, one of them mounting ten and the other seven guns. These earthworks were constructed of sand, turfed over; were twenty-five feet in thickness, and contained bomb-proofs. The position of Fort Hatteras was one of great strength, being nearly surrounded by water, and accessible only by a circuitous march of five hundred yards over a neck of sand, and then over a narrow causeway commanded by two 32-pounders. Its bomb-proof sheltered four hundred men. Fort Clark, seven hundred yards farther north, was smaller, and less formidable in its armament.

General Butler volunteered to command the expedition, which started out from Hampton Roads a little after noon on Monday, August 26th, and which consisted of two frigates—the *Minnesota* and *Wabash*, the sloop-of-war *Pawnee*, and three war steamers—the *Monticello*, *Harriet Lane*, and *Quaker City*, together with two transport steamers—the *George Peabody* and the *Adelaide*, and the steam-tug *Fanny*, besides some surf-boats, and an



A. R. STRONGHAM.

old schooner which it was proposed to sink in the bulk-head. The Cumberland and the Susquehanna were expected to be on hand in time to join in the attack. Nine hundred troops made up the small military detachment of the expedition.

By two o'clock on Tuesday the fleet arrived off Hatteras, and the Monticello was dispatched to reconnoitre the position and to look out a suitable landing-place. The next morning the troops were landed two and a half miles north of the forts, under cover of the gun-boats. Upon the voyage, every thing had gone on pleasantly; but just now there was a heavy sea, and it was with great difficulty that a small portion of the force was landed, and all farther attempts at disembarkation were given up. In the mean time the fleet opened fire upon the forts, particularly upon Fort Clark. The return fire fell short, amid the contemptuous laughter of our blue-jackets. This was the first instance in the war of an assault by gun-boats, and the excitement was intense. Every soldier was promptly at his post. One of the spongers, dropping his sponge overboard, jumped over after it and recovered his place before there was time even to reprimand him for his offense. After a heavy bombardment, lasting from nine o'clock in the morning until night, Fort Clark was evacuated; the flag on Fort Hatteras also was hauled down, and our victory seemed secure. The Monticello steamed into the Inlet to within six hundred yards of the fort, when suddenly the heavy guns of the latter opened upon her with such terrible effect that she was in danger of sinking. But she escaped, though considerably injured; and the other boats reopened the attack, which was continued until dark, apparently with little effect. Things began to look despondently, and there was among the men a dim conjecture of failure; and, to complete the discouragement, the weather threatened serious work ahead. The vessels stationed near the shore to protect our troops were compelled during the night, for their own safety, to retire. The number of men landed were insufficient to resist attack, and, fortunately, no attack was made by the enemy.

On Thursday morning the assault upon Fort Hatteras was renewed, and, after a few hours of rapid firing, the white flag was displayed above the fort, and the Confederate flag-officer, Commodore Barron, offered to surrender the position to General Butler if the garrison might be permitted to retire with all the honors of war, stating, moreover, that he had in the fort seven hundred men, and fifteen hundred within call. Butler returned his compliments, and assured the Confederate commander that no terms were admissible save those of an unconditional surrender—terms which Barron was compelled to accept; and, giving himself up as prisoner, he had the additional humiliation of having to pass directly under the guns of the Wabash, which, six months before, he had himself commanded with honor.

At the very moment when the terms of capitulation were under consideration by the enemy, the Adelaide and the Harriet Lane were grounded in attempting to pass the bar, and both of them were under the guns of the fort. What if Barron, seeing his advantage, should renew the attack? It was a critical moment; but the terms were accepted, and the object of the expedition was accomplished. Instead, however, of destroying the port, as originally proposed, Butler thought it of great importance that it should be retained, and, in order to present this view of the case to General Scott, returned to Washington. The government, convinced of the wisdom of his proposition, determined to hold the place, and immediately provisioned the garrison for that purpose. The importance of this particular victory, considered alone and by itself, was no doubt extravagantly overrated by the people; but it must be remembered that it was preceded by a summer of disaster, and furnished the first glimpse of the possibilities for victory that

were involved in our naval resources; and it lifted from Butler's shoulders the heavy burden of the reverse at Great Bethel.

These events were soon followed by the occupation of Ship Island in the Mississippi Sound. The Confederates evacuated the island September 16th, and our forces, under Commander Smith, immediately took possession.

The importance of Hatteras Inlet to the government was in a very short time fully illustrated: first, by the great number of prizes taken—five schooners having been captured in a single day—and, secondly, by the opportunities offered for aggressive action in the immediate vicinity, an instance of which occurred within three weeks of the capture of Fort Hatteras, in the expedition against Fort Ocracoke, situated off an inlet of the same name, on the seaward face of Beacon Island. The expedition proceeded under the leadership of Lieutenants Maxwell and Eastman, and was a complete success, resulting in the destruction of the fort, which was deserted, and the capture of twenty-two guns. At Portsmouth, on the opposite side, there had been a camp, which the Confederate troops abandoned at the approach of the Fanny, to whom was intrusted the execution of the enterprise.

The success which attended General Butler in his descent upon the coast of North Carolina, gaining for our government not merely the key to the entire coast of that state, but also such a foothold on the main land as to furnish a nucleus for future movements in the interior as time should prepare the way for them, encouraged the Naval Department to fit out a second expedition, on a larger scale, to operate in waters farther south. The expedition, under the joint command of General Sherman and Commodore Dupont, and consisting of fifty vessels including transports, sailed from Fortress Monroe on Tuesday, the 29th of October, under sealed orders, the specific object of attack being left, in great measure, to the discretion of the officers commanding. The time that transpired between the sailing of the expedition and its arrival at its destination was a period of great suspense to the whole country—to the curiosity of the North and to the apprehension of the South. The entire uncertainty as to where the uplifted arm of the national power was to fall completely bewildered the states along the sea-board; every probable point of attack was fortified; Charleston, in particular, waited anxiously, expecting daily to see the menacing fleet across the bar of her harbor. The tenor of General Sherman's orders, of which some report in a Northern newspaper fell into the hands of the Confederates, indicating that considerable resistance might be expected on the part of the enemy, led the South to suppose that some strong point was to be assailed—Charleston, for instance, or Savannah, or New Orleans. But this was not the case. The leaders of the expedition, after careful deliberation, determined to take possession of Port Royal Harbor, on the coast of South Carolina. It was supposed that in five days the voyage would be completed; but on Friday, the 1st of November, rough weather set in, with a high south-easter, so that the fleet was dispersed and placed in a perilous situation. One of the ships had to throw a powerful battery overboard in order to save her crew, and some transports were lost. On the fourth of November the fleet arrived at Port Royal bar.

It was originally intended that the military forces should co-operate with the naval; but this, upon a consideration of the distance—which was five or six miles—over which the troops would have to be conveyed to the nearest point of landing, and by reason of a considerable loss, in the recent storm, of a greater portion of the means of disembarkment, was found to be a plan quite impossible of execution, and therefore the navy alone was involved in the engagement. The bar of Port Royal is ten miles seaward. After crossing this, the channel leads between St. Philip's Island and Hilton Head into the harbor. Upon each side of the channel, or Broad River, were situated batteries of considerable strength, viz., on Hilton Head, Fort Walker, mounting twenty-three guns; and on St. Philip's Island, Fort Beauregard, mounting fifteen guns; and at the left of the latter, a battery of four guns behind earthworks. Fort Walker was a formidable strong-hold, but those on the opposite side were less elaborate. There was no protection afforded by either of the forts from shells or bombs, as they had been hastily erected to meet a possible emergency of this nature. The Confederate forces on Hilton Head were under the command of General Drayton.

The attack, on account of unfavorable weather, was postponed until the 7th of November. The day was clear and beautiful, without a cloud, and in every way favorable to the operations of the fleet. A reconnoissance had been made three or four days previously, in which the strength and position of the batteries was ascertained. The attack was made at an early hour of the day. The transports being left in the rear, the most formidable steamers of the fleet, to the number of thirteen, with the Wabash, the flag-ship of Commodore Dupont, in the van, swept in with open ports; and all was silence until the Minnesota came directly opposite Fort Walker, when every gun of the fort fired simultaneously upon the frigate. There was no reply from the fleet. The batteries of Fort Beauregard poured in their fire, but still there was no answer. Then the second steamer in the line came within range, was fired upon from both sides at once, when, from the first three vessels, seventy-five guns delivered their terrible broadsides upon Fort Walker. From this moment the bombardment ceased not for four hours. In single file, as they had commenced, the steamers moved on until nine of them had passed out of range up toward the harbor; then they returned, describing an ellipse, and saluted Fort Beauregard. After sailing around this circle several times, another and far more successful plan was adopted—that of enflading the batteries in either direction with our fire, while an attack was at the same time made from the front. Very soon nearly every gun was dismounted. A little after eleven the batteries on St. Philip's Island

were silenced, Fort Walker maintaining its fire only for two hours longer. The battering of the fort was terrible, the guns were scattered in every direction, surrounded by the dead and the dying. In this extremity it was determined to abandon the fort. Back of this work there was an open space of a mile, over which the defeated troops ran in a panic, subject every moment to the fire of the fleet. They found shelter in the woods, through which they made their way across the peninsula to the main land. The ground over which they fled was covered with their muskets and knapsacks.

Upon the arrival of the fleet the harbor was guarded, in addition to the fortifications, by a squadron of Confederate steamers under Commodore Tatnall; but this miniature navy was of no avail, and at the first onset was driven away. Forty-three guns were captured, and possession was taken of Hilton Head, which has since been an important centre of naval operations. Situated midway between Charleston and Savannah, and commanding easily the railroad connecting those two cities, this military position was of very great value.

Previous to the sailing of the Port Royal expedition occurred the attack on Santa Rosa Island.

The Atlantic and Gulf coasts are almost entirely walled in from the open violence of the sea by long, narrow islands or reefs of sand, between which and the main land are inclosures of water, sometimes large enough to be called bays, that find or make an outlet through the before-mentioned reefs. Santa Rosa Island is a sand-reef of this character opposite Florida, on the Gulf coast, inclosing the Pensacola Harbor, which was the finest in the Gulf. On the Gulf side there are three or four sand-ridges parallel to the coast, running along the island, and on the opposite or harbor side the ground is low and swampy, covered with a few bushes and trees. On the lower or western extremity of the island Fort Pickens is situated, directly opposite Fort McRea. The Confederate authorities were keenly alive to the importance of Fort Pickens. As early as March, 1861, a month previous to the actual commencement of hostilities, Major General Bragg, commanding the Confederate forces at Pensacola, had issued an order prohibiting all traffic or communication with the fort, which was shortly afterward strongly re-enforced, and assumed a threatening attitude, whereupon formidable preparations for its assault began to be made at Pensacola. The coast fronting Fort Pickens takes the form of a semicircle, stretching from the navy yard to Fort McRea, a distance of two and one half miles, along which was constructed an uninterrupted line of redoubts and batteries, together with a water-battery beyond Fort McRea. Bragg had over six thousand men in his command, who, inflamed by the success at Sumter, were eager to repeat it against Pickens, at that time under the command of Lieutenant Slemmer, whose conduct during these eventful days this history has recorded in the proper place. He was succeeded in command by Colonel Harvey Brown. On the 13th of June the celebrated Sixth New York Regiment, Zouaves, commanded by Colonel William Wilson, who was one of the very first to offer his services to the government on the breaking out of the war, took its departure for Santa Rosa Island, where it encamped about a mile eastward from the fort. The island at this point is three fourths of a mile in width.

As a matter of course, there was the usual jealousy and bickering between the regulars in the fort and the volunteer Zouaves. But, so far as the enemy was concerned, "Billy Wilson" was the foremost man on the island; and although the prospect of taking the fort had long been despaired of, yet it

seemed to them to be no unworthy object to break up the Zouave encampment. It was to accomplish this object that on the evening of the 8th of October a force of between twelve hundred and two thousand Confederates, transported by two steamers and a few launches, under the command of Brigadier General Anderson, effected a landing on the island four miles above the camp. Except for a short distance beyond the camp in that direction there was no guard posted, although there was every reason to apprehend an early attack, on account of the strength of Bragg's army on the other side. The camp could hardly have been less favorably situated to repel an assault. Colonel Wilson's regiment had been depleted of quite four fifths of its number, having hardly two hundred men able to take the field.

The enemy, having landed without opposition, marched down the island in three columns, one down the centre of the island, and the other two along either coast. In this order they came upon the picket-guard, which altogether consisted of seventy men variously disposed. Here the attack commenced just as the Confederates came over the back hill of the beach; but the close ranks of the attacking columns received a destructive fire from the squads of men opposed to them, and were even thrown into considerable disorder. So persistently did the pickets hold their ground, retreating only step by step, delivering all the time a continuous fire into the enemy's ranks, that all the results calculated upon through a surprise of the camp were lost, the uninterrupted firing having completely alarmed the Zouaves and brought them promptly into line. There was even time given to send a dispatch to the fort, notifying Colonel Brown of the attack. So many false alarms had been given that this was received incredulously; but the heavy volley-firing, as the engagement became more general, aroused the regulars to an appreciation of the situation. In the mean time, Colonel Wilson and Lieutenant Colonel Creighton encountered the centre column of the enemy; but only a small force was left to receive the attack of this column, the greater number of men having been detached for the purpose of preventing the flank movement which was being effected by the enemy's left column. The main portion of the Confederate force was already in the very midst of the camp, to which they were setting fire, having completely plundered it of clothing, money, and baggage. From the fort a company of about thirty men, under Major Vogdes, marched toward the left of the field, and the major, being in advance of his men, was surrounded and taken prisoner. His men, however, made objections to surrendering, and bravely stood their ground. If the enemy had not become very much dispersed for the purposes of plunder and destruction, and had not thus also given time to the federal troops to gather themselves together for an attack, matters would have assumed a much more serious aspect. Supposing, from the severity of the fire, that the force upon the island was very much larger than they had counted upon, and fearing lest they might be cut off from their transports, the Confederates soon commenced a retreat, and were closely followed by the Zouaves and the force from the fort. This force attacked them as they were re-embarking, and fired upon them with terrible effect. The Confederate loss at this point was great, particularly as the swampy ground very much impeded their operations.

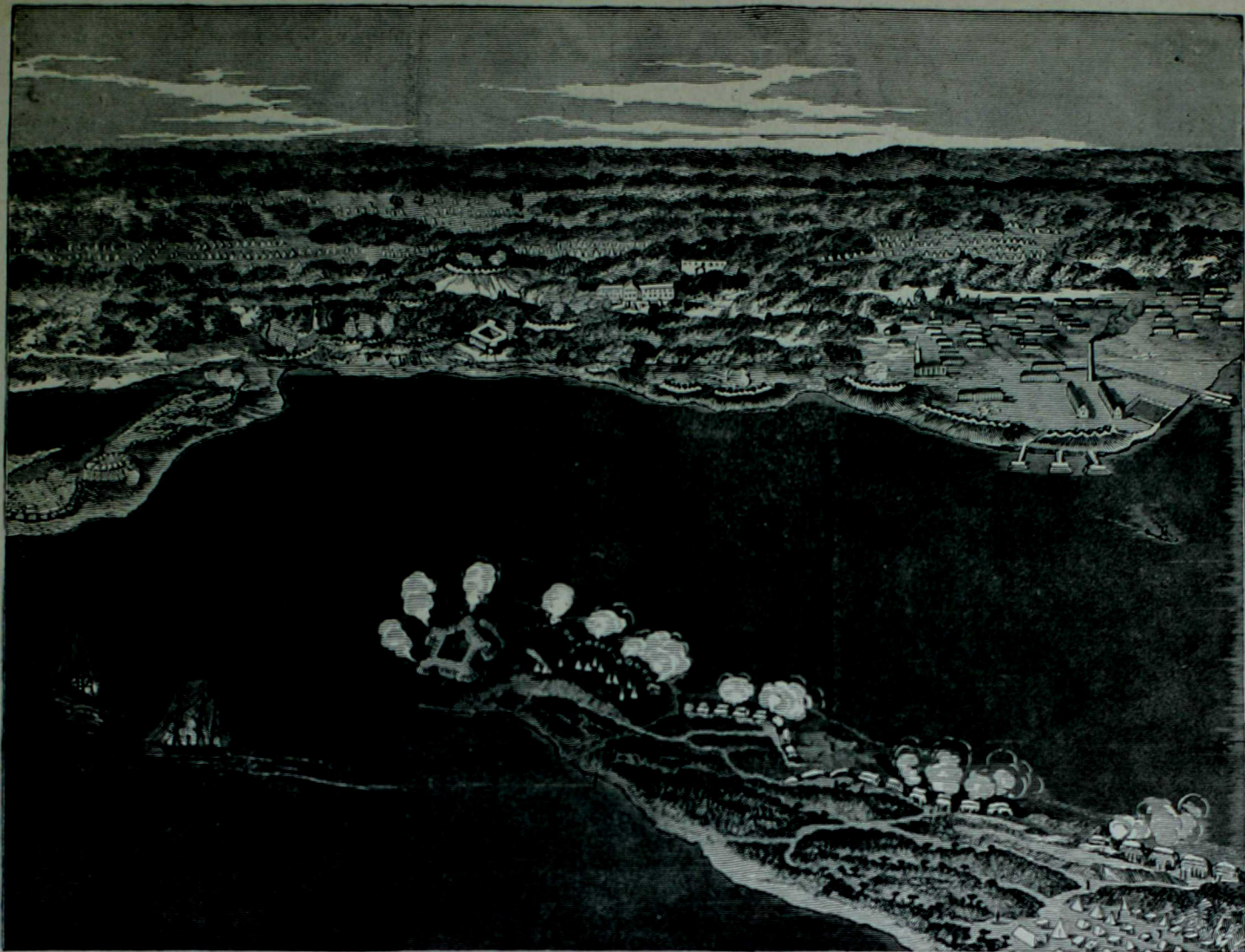
The expedition, though in some measure successful, was far from being thoroughly fortunate. In the first place, it did not accomplish what with so great a force might have been reasonably expected. The darkness of the night, and the dissipation among the men consequent upon their indiscriminate plunder, led to a great deal of confusion, and many of the troops were killed by men in their own ranks. And, again, whatever punishment they inflicted upon our men in the destruction of their camp and in robbing them of their personal effects, certainly in the more serious matter of the fight, namely, the loss of life, they were much the greater sufferers.

As to the conduct of Wilson's Zouaves, it must be remembered that it was their first battle, and that very little precaution had been taken against an attack. The disparity in numbers was terribly against them, and, to complete their embarrassment, Lieutenant Colonel Creighton had, through a mistaken order at an early period in the fight, retired with his men to the fort. The bravery of the guard was almost marvelous, and it was this that saved the regiment from destruction.

Fort Pickens, surrounded by a cordon of Confederate batteries, was threatened with the fate of Sumter, beleaguered as it was by a force ten times as large as its own. Partly in retaliation for the night attack on Santa Rosa Island, and partly because some active measures must be adopted to reduce the enemy's fortifications, Colonel Brown, on the morning of the 22d of November, assisted by Flag-officer McKean, with the Niagara, Richmond, and Montgomery, commenced the bombardment of the enemy's batteries, which, as we have said, stretched in a continuous line from Fort McRea on the left to the navy yard on the right. On this line, at the right of Fort McRea, was Fort Barrancas. These forts were mounted with some of the heaviest guns in the country. There were, besides, fourteen batteries, mounting from one to four guns. Conjointly with the attack from Fort Pickens, the fire from three batteries on the island was also directed against the enemy's works. The fire was returned with great accuracy and vigor. It was hardly noon, however, when the guns of Fort McRea were all silenced but one. Pickens was originally intended to resist an attack from the sea, and not from the coast; but sand-bag traverses and similar precautions prevented any serious injury of the works. The fire of Barrancas, and that from the navy yard, was perceptibly reduced during the afternoon. The next day Colonel Brown reopened the bombardment, but, owing to the shallowness of the water, the frigates were obliged to withdraw from the contest. They could, however, have availed nothing against the rifled guns of the enemy. Fort McRea was silent all day, and in the afternoon the village of Warring-



BILLY WILSON.



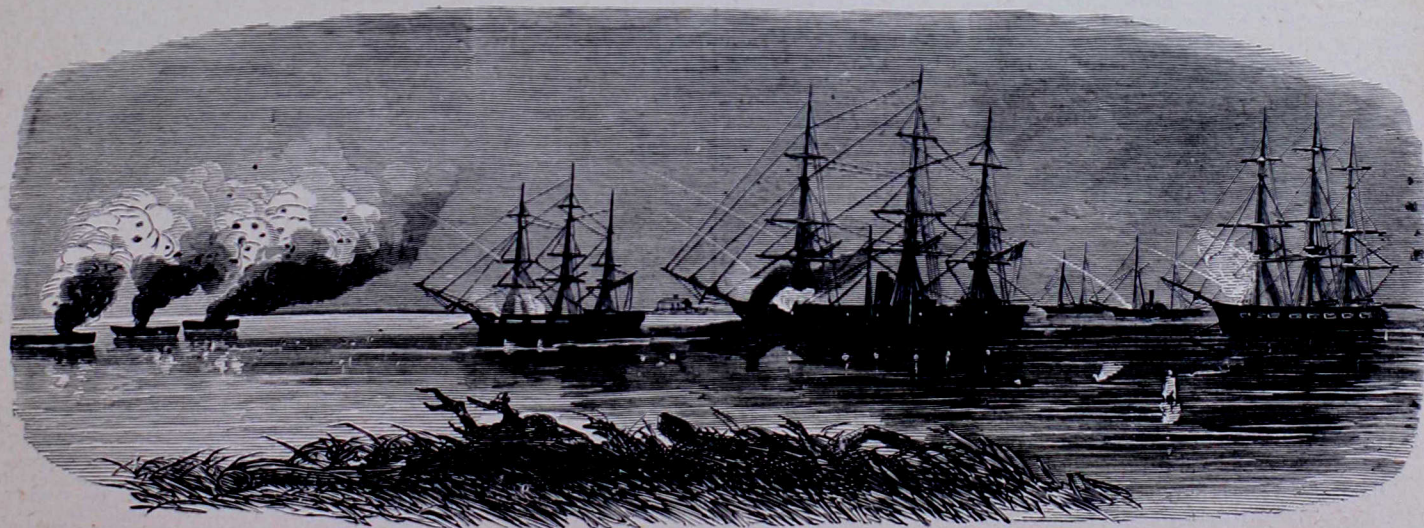
REAR'S-EYE VIEW OF FORT PICKENS DURING THE BOMBARDMENT, NOVEMBER 23, 1861.

ton, in the rear of the Confederate batteries, was set on fire from our shells and almost entirely destroyed. On the 1st of January, 1862, the bombardment was again opened. The firing was continued into the night, and the splendor of the illumination was visible for forty miles out at sea. At midnight the bombardment ceased. No important results were gained on either side, the casualties to either force not exceeding a dozen men killed and wounded. But it was proved that the batteries in the vicinity of Pensacola were harmless against Fort Pickens, and Bragg's mission a useless one.

The next week after the fight on Santa Rosa, our fleet lying at anchor inside the Southwest Pass of the Mississippi, and consisting of the steamers Richmond, Huntsville, Water-witch, and the two sloops-of-war Preble and Vincennes, was suddenly attacked by the Manassas, a Confederate battering-ram, under the command of Captain Hollins. The onset was made on the night of the 12th by a charge of the ram against the sides of the Richmond, knocking a hole in her timbers below water-mark, but doing only a trifling damage, though the steamer was struck with such violence as to be torn from her fastenings. The crew, however, were on their guard, and deliver-

ed a broadside into the Manassas, one of whose engines would no longer work, and by the severity of their fire compelled Hollins to haul off his ram, and to signal for support. At the given signal a new danger became imminent to our vessels, for a row of fire-ships at that moment appeared moving down the river, and threatening complete destruction to the fleet. To avoid this calamity, the fear of which was enhanced by the approach of gun-boats down the river, the Federal ships of war fell down the Pass one after another, but, unfortunately, both the Richmond and the Vincennes got aground in attempting to pass the bar. The former, however, was in a favorable position to give full effect to her heavy guns, having her broadside up the stream, and thus the entire fleet was enabled to escape.

The motive which incited the Confederates to this attack was to break up the blockade, which had ruined the prospects of the Crescent City. For this purpose several gun-boats had been constructed during the summer, and the more formidable Manassas had been built at Algiers, just opposite New Orleans, and armed with a 64-pound Dahlgren. But the long-contemplated assault resulted in little immediate damage, and accomplished absolutely nothing in its attempt to break up the blockade.



HOLLINS'S ATTACK ON THE FEDERAL FLEET IN THE SOUTHWEST PASS.