

CHAPTER IX.

REDUCTION OF NEWBERN—THE ALBEMARLE.

ROWAN left Hatteras Inlet with the flotilla under his command, at 7.30 A.M. of the 12th of March, 1862, accompanied by the army transports carrying twelve thousand troops intended to be employed against the works of the enemy. At sunset of the same day the flotilla anchored off Slocum's Neck, fifteen miles distant and within sight of the city of Newbern.

The following vessels composed the attacking force; Delaware, Lieutenant-Commanding L. P. Quackenbush, and flag-ship of Commander S. C. Rowan; Stars and Stripes, Lieutenant-Commanding Reed Werden; Louisiana, Lieutenant-Commanding Alexander Murray; Hetzel, Lieutenant-Commanding H. K. Davenport; Commodore Perry, Lieutenant-Commanding C. W. Flusser; Valley City, Lieutenant-Commanding J. C. Chaplin; Underwriter, Lieutenant-Commanding A. Hopkins; Commodore Barney, Lieutenant-Commanding R. T. Renshaw; Hunchback, Lieutenant-Commanding E. R. Colhoun; Southfield, Lieutenant-Commanding C. F. Behm; Morse, Acting-Master Peter Hayes; Brincker, Acting-Master J. E. Giddings; and Lockwood, Acting-Master G. W. Graves.¹

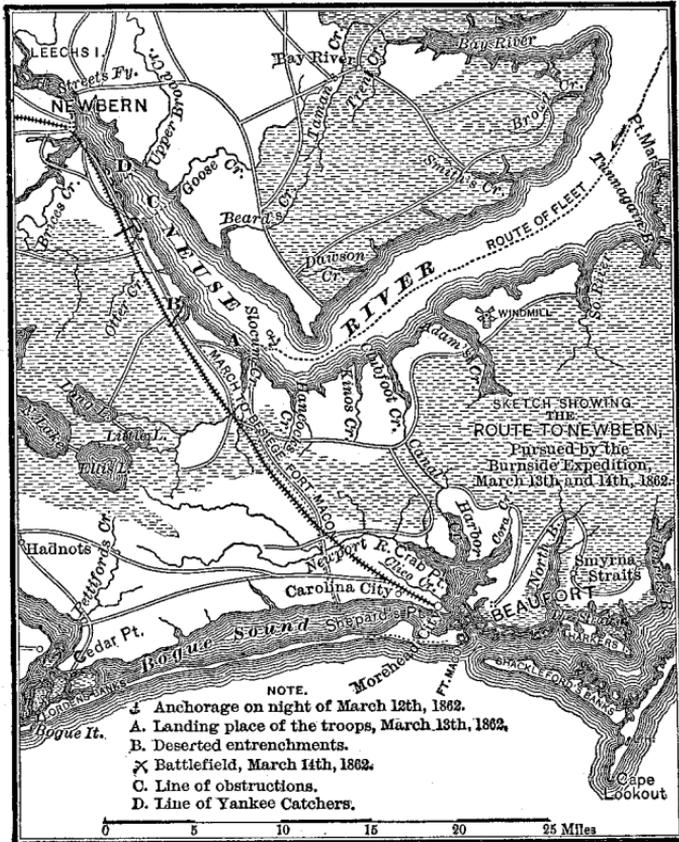
¹ The reader will find the armaments of these vessels in the Appendix, and has doubtless already perceived that they are generally the same vessels that five weeks earlier had acted so effectively in the capture of Roanoke Island.

At 8.30 A.M. on the 13th the vessels shelled the woods near the proposed place of landing, under cover of which part of the troops were disembarked and moved up the beach at 11.30 A.M., and in the meantime the remainder were landed as rapidly as possible. Six navy howitzers with crews, under command of Lieutenant R. S. McCook, were also landed. As the troops marched the gunboats moved parallel, throwing shells into the woods in advance of them. No Confederate force opposed the troops during the day. At 4.15 P.M. the first of the enemy's batteries opened fire at long range on the leading vessels of the flotilla, which was returned. At sundown the firing was discontinued and the vessels anchored in position to protect the flanks of the land force.

At daylight of the 14th the report of a field piece was heard. The fog was too dense to make signal; the Delaware, Hunchback, and Lockwood were got under way, the latter ordered to follow the land down and order up the vessels that had been stationed along the shore. The Delaware, Hunchback, and Southfield moved up to open fire on Fort Dixie. They were soon joined by the heavier vessels from below. Receiving no response from the fort, a boat was sent on shore and the American flag hoisted over it. The force then passed up and opened on Fort Ellis, which was returned until the magazine was blown up. At this time the troops were pressing on the rear intrenchments of Fort Thompson. Signal was made to the vessels to advance in line abreast; the force closed up to the barriers, and opened fire on that work. General Burnside informed Commander Rowan that his shells were falling to the left and near our own troops.

Fort Thompson having ceased to return the fire, signal was made to follow the motions of the flag-ship, and that vessel passed through the obstructions, followed by the

others in "line ahead." As the vessels were passing through, the co-operating troops appeared on the ramparts



of Fort Thompson, waving the Union flag. Shells were then thrown into Fort Lane, next above, without response. The Valley City was directed to hoist the flag over the re-

maining forts and the flotilla passed rapidly up the river. On opening the Trent River two deserted batteries, mounting two guns each, were seen on the wharves in front of the city.

The vessels passed up the Neuse River, the Delaware opening fire on steamboats that were attempting to escape up the river, one of them having a schooner in tow. One of the steamers was run on shore and burned, and two others were captured, together with a schooner laden with commissary stores.

At noon the Delaware went alongside the wharf and the inhabitants were informed that it was not intended to injure the town. At this time fires broke out in several parts of the city, probably caused by a similar action to that of Lieutenant Scroggs of the "Wise Legion" at Elizabeth City. A floating raft in the Trent River that had been prepared to send down on the fleet was also set on fire, and drifting against the railroad bridge, destroyed it.

The Louisiana and the Barney were sent to the Trent side of the town to secure such public property as might be found there. Several hundred stand of arms, other munitions of war, a large amount of naval stores, and a three-masted schooner fell into their hands. At 2 P.M., our victorious troops appearing on the opposite side of the Trent, the work of transportation commenced, and at sundown the army was in full occupancy of the city.¹

Commander Rowan describes the obstructions passed through as "formidable, and had evidently been prepared with great care." The lower barrier was composed of a series of piling driven securely into the bottom and cut off below the water; added to this was another row of pointed

¹ Rowan's Report.

and iron-capped piles, inclined to an angle of about forty-five degrees down stream. Near these was a row of thirty torpedoes, containing about two hundred pounds of powder each, and fitted with metal fuses connected with spring percussion locks, with trigger-lines attached to the pointed piles. The second barrier was quite as formidable, about one mile above the first, and abreast of Fort Thompson. It consisted of a line of sunken vessels closely massed and of chevaux de frise, leaving a very narrow passage close to the battery. The Perry in passing through carried away a head of iron on the piling; the Barney had a hole cut in her, and the Stars and Stripes was also injured; but fortunately the torpedoes failed to serve the enemy's purpose.¹

The forts, six in number, exclusive of those on Trent River, were well constructed earthworks, varying in distance apart from half a mile to a mile and a half, and mounting in all thirty-two guns, ranging from 32-pounders to 80-pounders, rifled, all *en barbette*, with the exception of one casemated fort, mounting two guns.

It may well excite surprise that not a single casualty occurred on board of the flotilla. Of the navy force on shore with six howitzers, under Lieutenant McCook, 2 men were killed, 11 wounded, and one howitzer disabled.

The force of the enemy was about equal in number to the Union troops. Only 200 were captured, but a very large amount of army equipage and supplies were found at Newbern. Our casualties were 88 killed and 352 wounded. Those of the Confederates are not known.

On the 25th of April the Union troops then in Beaufort, N. C., with breaching batteries, which they had established, opened fire on Fort Macon; before sunset the fort surren-

¹ Rowan's Report.

dered. Lockwood in command of the Daylight, Armstrong in the Georgia, Bryson in the Chippewa, and Cavendy in the Gemsbok, took part in the bombardment for several hours, when the sea grew too rough to manage their guns.

In order to secure the forces on the sounds from an attack from Norfolk, Flusser was directed to block additionally the Chesapeake and Albemarle Canal. For this purpose he left Elizabeth City, on the 23d of April, with the Whitehead, Lockwood, and Putnam, and at the mouth of the river met the Shawsheen with a schooner in tow filled with sand. The vessel was sunk near the entrance of the canal, and some fifty yards in length was filled in with trunks of trees, stumps, and brushwood. On his return he assisted Colonel Hawkins in destroying Confederate commissary stores on the Chowan, which was effected on the 7th of May.

Lieutenant William B. Cushing had been given command of the steamer Ellis and was employed in blockading New River Inlet, which he entered on the 23d of November, 1862, with the object of going to Jacksonville, destroying any salt works found, and capturing such vessels as he might find. Five miles up he sighted a vessel with a cargo of cotton and turpentine, which was on fire and abandoned by the enemy. At 1 P.M. he reached the town, thirty-five miles from the mouth of the river, where twenty-five stand of arms, a large mail, and two schooners were captured. At 2.30 P.M. the Ellis started down the river; at five an encampment was seen near the banks and thoroughly shelled. At the point where the vessel was burned as he ascended the enemy opened fire with rifles, but was soon silenced. The two pilots on board agreed that high water and daylight were essential to take the Ellis out of the inlet. She was anchored, the prizes brought alongside, and preparation made to repel attack. At daylight the Ellis was got under way, and at the worst

part of the channel was opened upon by two field pieces. In an hour the enemy was driven from his guns and from the bluff, and the vessel passed within one hundred yards of it without molestation. Five hundred yards farther down the pilots mistook the channel and the *Ellis* got hard and fast aground; it was found, moreover, that she was in a pocket with shoaler water all around.

A party was sent on shore to carry off the abandoned artillery, but in the meantime the enemy had removed it. At dark one of the prize schooners was taken alongside and everything taken out of the *Ellis* except the pivot gun, some ammunition, two tons of coal, and a few small arms. But steam and anchor planted to haul her off were ineffective. It was quite certain that the Confederates would come in overwhelming numbers and capture the vessel; therefore Cushing called all hands to muster, and told the crew that they could go aboard the schooner. Six volunteers were asked to remain on board and fight the remaining gun.

The officer in charge of the schooner was directed to drop down the channel out of range from the bluffs and await results. At daylight the enemy opened on the *Ellis* from four points with rifled guns. It was a destructive cross-fire; the engine was soon disabled and the vessel much cut up; in the meantime the pivot gun was used with as much effect as possible. The contest was hopeless; the *Ellis* was set on fire in five places, and Cushing and his six comrades took to their small boat and pulled for the schooner, at anchor a mile and a half below. On reaching the schooner sail was made and the vessel forced over the bar, although she struck several times. The magazine of the *Ellis* blew up soon after the schooner had crossed the bar.

At daylight on February 23d, at the western entrance to Cape Fear River, a blockade-runner was seen from the

Dacotah, one of the blockading vessels. It was supposed that the blockader was aground, but when the Monticello and Dacotah went in and opened on her she moved up the river. The vessels were opened on from Fort Caswell, mortally wounding Master's Mate Henry Baker on board of the Monticello.

At daylight on the morning of March 14th a large Confederate force attacked Fort Anderson (opposite Newbern, N. C.), on the river Neuse. It was an unfinished work, garrisoned by 300 men. Its defence was aided by the gunboats Hetzel and Hunchback, and some guns on a schooner. The enemy evidently was informed as to the contents of a telegram, and counted upon a literal compliance with the request of General Foster, made four days previously, "to send *all* the light gunboats to aid the expedition to Hyde County." The enemy supposed all had gone and made his first attack here.¹ He opened on the fort from a two-gun battery on the south bank, and on the Hunchback and the schooner. Those vessels commanded the point and its approach, and the Hetzel enfiladed from below. The latter vessel, as well as the Shawsheen, were undergoing repairs and had to be towed into position.

At six o'clock the firing ceased, "when signals from the fort said that the enemy gave them thirty minutes in which to surrender." This demand was made, it was supposed, to get fourteen pieces of artillery into position. At 6.30 this battery, within two hundred and fifty yards of the fort, opened upon it again, and the two-gun battery on the opposite shore fired on the Hunchback and the schooner. The action was very fierce for thirty minutes, when the Hetzel in tow of a tug got into position "and threw IX-inch shells

¹ Murray's Report.

among the enemy, causing him to withdraw immediately, leaving one disabled 30-pounder Parrott gun on the field."

At 10.08 the Hunchback, which had previously grounded, was again afloat. An hour later, the revenue cutter Agassiz, the Shawsheen towed by a tug, and the Ceres were in position, but the enemy had withdrawn beyond the reach of the guns. Two light-draught gunboats followed the enemy ten miles up the river, picking up stragglers who wished to desert.

Colonel Belknap, Eighty-fifth New York, wrote to the senior naval officer present as follows: "When, on the 14th of March, General Pettigrew, with eighteen pieces of artillery and more than 3,000 men, made his furious assault upon Fort Anderson, an unfinished earthwork, garrisoned by 300 men of my command, the capture or destruction of the brave little band seemed inevitable. But the gunboats under your command—the pride of loyal men and the terror of traitors—came promptly to the rescue. Your well-directed fire drove the enemy from the field, covered the landing of the Eighty-fifth New York, sent to the relief of the garrison, and the repulse of the rebel army was complete."

The Confederate forces invested Washington, N. C., on the 30th of March, and maintained the siege eighteen days, re-occupying their old works seven miles below. On March 31st they opened fire from Rodman's Point, a mile and three-quarters below, on the Commodore Hull, which had been stationed there to prevent the occupation of the point. After a spirited action of an hour and a half, the vessel grounded in an endeavor to change position, and remained so until 8 P.M., exposed to a continuous and accurate fire, cutting up but not vitally injuring her.

On the morning of the 15th Major-General Foster passed Hill's Point battery in the Escort, returning from Washington.

The next night the enemy withdrew. Few casualties resulted from this lengthy siege.

Lieutenant-Commanding Cushing, who lost the steamer *Ellis* in November, was soon after assigned to the command of the steamer *Shokokon*, and, ever active, made a reconnoissance of New Topsail Inlet in a boat on the 12th of August, but was driven out by four pieces of artillery. He had seen within the inlet a schooner which he determined to destroy. With this view, on the evening of the 22d, the *Shokokon* was anchored close to the beach, five miles south of the inlet, and two boats were sent on shore. The men shouldered the dingy (smallest boat carried by a vessel of war) and carried it through the thickets across the neck of land, half a mile in width, which divides the sea from the sound.

The boat being launched in the inland waters, Ensign Cony "started with orders to capture or destroy anything that might be of use to the enemy."

A Confederate 12-pound howitzer was stationed near that locality, and Captain Adams, in charge, had come down to the schooner with it, having seen the smoke-stack of the *Shokokon* over the thicket. A lookout at the masthead of the schooner was peering toward the sea entrance, while the *Shokokon's* boat came in the opposite direction. The men landed within fifty yards of the vessel without being discovered; one of the dingy's crew crawled into the camp, counted the men, and returning, made his report. "A charge was ordered and our seven men bore down on the enemy with a shout." Ten prisoners were secured, among whom were Captains Adams and Latham, one 12-pounder army howitzer, eighteen horses, one schooner, and the salt works. Two men were thrown out as pickets, two detailed to guard the prisoners, and with the aid of the other two men Ensign Cony burned the vessel and salt works.

The object of the expedition accomplished, the ensign was unable to distinguish the officers from the privates, and as his boat would only carry three additional persons, he took those who seemed most intelligent and good-looking, *who turned out to be privates*. Cushing reports, "The manner in which my orders were carried out is highly creditable to Mr. Cony, who is, I beg leave to state, a good officer, seaman, artillerist, and navigator." The schooner destroyed had cleared from New York for Port Royal, and was once towed outside the line of blockade by a gunboat.

Owing to extraordinary army operations on or near James River, and a co-operation where practicable of naval forces which were withdrawn from North Carolina, an unwonted quiet prevailed for months within the sounds and on the coasts of that State, broken only by very frequent captures of blockade-runners.

An account of a "Confederate victory" was published in the newspapers, the report of Colonel Griffin, commanding. It was as follows: "January 30, 1864, engaged the enemy with a force of 200 men and a mounted rifle piece. After a fight of two hours, in which we engaged 1,200 of the enemy and three pieces of artillery, the Yankees were driven from Windsor, N. C., to their boats. We lost six men; the loss of the enemy is not known."

In relation to this, Flusser says: "The report is false from beginning to conclusion. I planned the affair, and we would have captured the entire party had we been ten minutes earlier.

"I had 40 sailors and one 12-pounder howitzer, and there were about 350 infantry. We marched about sixteen miles. There was no fight and nothing worth reporting; the rebels ran. I fired three or four times at them at long range. We held the town of Windsor several hours, and marched

back eight miles to our boats without a single shot from the enemy."

This will remind the older reader of the very many "victories" of like import that came daily, and filled the columns of the newspapers, taxing credulity to the utmost. It is only fair to say that the narrators were quite as frequently of the National as of the Confederate forces.

Cushing, commanding the *Monticello*, blockading the western entrance to Cape Fear River, on the night of the 29th of February visited Smithville with two boats manned by twenty men. His object was to capture the commanding officer, and to carry out any vessel that might be at anchor near by. He landed directly in front of the hotel, captured some negroes to gain information, after which, accompanied by Ensign Jones, Mate Howarth, and one seaman, proceeded to General Herbert's headquarters, across the street from the barracks, supposed to contain a thousand men. Cushing says: "The party captured the chief-engineer of these defences, but found the general had gone to Wilmington the same day. The adjutant-general escaped from the door after severely wounding his hand; but thinking that a mutiny was in progress, took to the woods with a great scarcity of clothing and neglected to turn out the garrison." The boats were within fifty yards of the fort, and within the same distance of a sentinel. Cushing brought off his prisoner and was abreast of Fort Caswell before signal was made that boats were in the harbor.

On April 18, 1864, in command of the *Miami*, at Plymouth, N. C., Flusser reported as follows: "We have been fighting here all day. About sunset the enemy made a general advance along our whole line. They have been repulsed. . . . The ram [*Albemarle*] will be down to-night or to-morrow. I fear for the protection of the town. I shall

have to abandon my plan of fighting the ram, lashed to the Southfield. The army ought to be reinforced at once. I think I have force enough to whip the ram, but not sufficient to assist in holding the town as I should like. . . . If we whip the ram the [Confederate] land force may retire."

Flusser died bravely in action, fighting his formidable antagonist, at 4 A.M. the day following.

On the morning of the 18th, between three and five, the enemy tried to carry Fort Gary by storm, but were repulsed. In the afternoon heavy artillery opened fire upon the town and breastworks. Then the fight became general. Up to this time the gunboats Southfield and Miami were chained together in preparation to encounter the ram. They were then separated. The Southfield, moving up the river, opened fire over the town. The Miami, moving down the river, opened a cross-fire upon the enemy, who were charging upon Fort Williams. The firing being very exact caused the enemy to fall back. After three attempts to storm the fort, at nine o'clock the firing ceased from the enemy, they having withdrawn from range.¹

General Wessels, who commanded the troops, said of this naval co-operation: "The fire from the naval vessels was very satisfactory and effective—so much so that the advancing columns of the enemy broke and retreated." He desired that the Miami might be kept below the town to prevent a flank movement by the enemy. At 10.30 P.M. the Southfield came down and anchored near. At 12.20 A.M. April 19th the Southfield came alongside to rechain the two steamers, as speedily as possible, the ram having been seen by Captain Barrett, of the Whitehead, and reported by him as com-

¹ Report of Wells, commanding the Miami.

ing down the river. At 3.45 the gunboat Ceres came down, passing near, stating that the ram was close upon her.

Commander Flusser was informed of this fact, immediately came on deck, and ordered both vessels (which were lashed together) to steam as fast as possible to run the ram down. The order was instantly obeyed; the chain was slipped, and "bells rung to go ahead fast." The vessels were moving up the river to meet the ram, and it was making for the vessels.

Within two minutes the ram struck the Miami on the port-bow without serious injury. At the same time the Southfield was pierced nearly to her boilers and sank rapidly. As soon as the batteries of the two vessels could be brought to bear on the ram, they opened on her with 100-pounder rifles and IX-inch guns. The guns had been loaded with shells. "Flusser fired the first shots personally from the Miami, the third being a 10-second Dahlgren shell. It was directly after that fire that he was killed by pieces of shell."¹

Several of the guns' crews were wounded at the same time; the bow-hawser had parted, and the Miami swung around to starboard. The after-hawser was then either cut or parted, and the Southfield sank directly, while the engines of the Miami had to be reversed to keep her off the bank. The ram again made for the Miami, and the officer then in command, says in his report: "From the fatal effects of her prow upon the Southfield, and of our sustaining injury, I deemed it useless to sacrifice the Miami in the same way." Certainly he was not wrong in keeping out of the way of the ram, at least until he determined how to attack her effectively.

When running into the two vessels the ram had made use

¹ Wells' Report.

of small arms, but not her heavy guns. It was only after the Miami moved off that two shells were fired at her.

The writer is at a loss to understand the *rationale* of lashing two vessels together, and then running bows on to a vessel of such construction as the Albemarle, by which name she will be called hereafter. Had Flusser reserved his attack until daylight the result might have been different.

In reporting the death of Commander Flusser, Admiral Lee says: "This brave officer was a native of Maryland and a citizen of Kentucky. His patriotic and distinguished services had won for him the respect and esteem of the navy and the country. He was generous, good, and gallant, and his untimely death is a real and great loss to the public service." In appearance, so fine a specimen of physical, intelligent manhood is rarely seen; he had too all the requisite qualities to have made him distinguished as an officer.

The Ceres, on picket duty above the town, on the 17th had been fired on by the field batteries of the enemy, by which 2 men were killed and 4 officers wounded.

The army force under General Wessels had no longer the support of the vessels, and overwhelmed by numbers surrendered on the 20th, the Albemarle thereafter occupying the river until her destruction the October following.

On the 21st of April, Rear-Admiral Lee sent instructions to Commander Davenport as to a plan of attack on the ram. He expresses the opinion that the Albemarle must be weak, and quite slow. "The great point is to get and hold position on each side of the ram. Have stout lines with small heaving lines thereto, to throw across the ends of the ram, and so secure her between two of our vessels. Her plating will loosen and bolts fly like canister, and the concussion will knock down and demoralize her crew if they keep their ports down, as in the late attack."

After the *Albemarle* had come down an inquiry was made as to why she had not been destroyed when under construction at Edwards Ferry, forty miles above Rainbow Bluffs on the Roanoke River.

On the 8th of the preceding June Lieutenant-Commander Flusser had sent a sketch of her cross-section. He stated further that "she was built on the plan of the *Merrimac*." On the 8th of the following August Admiral Lee reported to the Department that the ironclad building at Edwards Ferry was considered by Flusser "as a formidable affair, though of light draught." The information elicited was to the effect that the depth of water would not permit the gunboats to ascend to Edwards Ferry in shoal and narrow channels, in the face of several formidable batteries, and the army did not attach enough importance to her construction to send a sufficient force to destroy her.

The Navy Department ordered Captain Melancton Smith, an officer of ability and experience, to the sounds of North Carolina to destroy the "ram" at all hazards, if possible.

Admiral Lee, in an official letter to Captain Smith, alludes to his former instructions and adds: "Entrusted by the Department with the performance of this signal service, I leave (with the expression of my views) to you the manner of executing it" (the destruction of the ram).

Some of the vessels assigned were still without the sounds, but the full moon gave promise of high tides, and we soon find them ready for operating.

Captain Melancton Smith hoisted his flag on board of the "double-ender" *Mattabesett*, Commander Febiger, and on the 2d of May had arranged his order of battle: "The steamers will advance in the third order of steaming, the *Miami* leading the second line of steamers. The *Mattabesett*, *Sassacus*, *Wyalusing*, and *Whitehead* formed the

right column, and the Miami, Ceres, Commodore Hull, and Seymour the left.

“The proposed plan of attack will be for the large vessels to pass as close as possible to the ram, without endangering their wheels, delivering their fire and rounding to immediately for a second discharge.

“The steamer Miami will attack the ram and endeavor to explode her torpedo at any moment she may have the advantage, or a favorable opportunity. Ramming may be resorted to, but the peculiar construction of the sterns of the double-enders will render this a matter of serious consideration with their commanders, who may be at liberty to use their judgment as to the propriety of this course when a chance shall present itself.”

On May 5th at 1 P.M. the Miami, Commodore Hull, Ceres, and army transport Trumpeter left their picket station off Edenton Bay for the mouth of Roanoke River to lay several torpedoes within it.

When near the buoy at the mouth of the river, the Albemarle was seen coming out with the Cotton Plant, having troops on board, and towing a number of launches or scows, and the Bombshell, as afterward known, laden with provisions and coal, and having on board thirty-three persons including the crew; the Bombshell had received injuries from shells above Plymouth on the 18th, and reaching that place had sunk. After the enemy took the town on the 20th she was raised and put into service by the Confederates.

The report of the senior officer on picket duty, who commanded the Miami, states that he despatched the Trumpeter in haste to inform the squadron of the approach of the Albemarle. No mention is made of that vessel by Captain Smith, or in the several reports of the different commanding officers. The Miami, Hull, and Ceres followed the

Trumpeter and kept out of the range of the guns of the Albemarle.

It appears that as soon as the commanding officer of the Albemarle became aware of the force with which he had to contend, he despatched the Cotton Plant to a place of refuge, with her scows in tow, and made a face of advance for a time with the Bombshell. At 3.10 the squadron was fairly under way, and in position in two columns, line ahead, or the column of small vessels was soon after completed, as the squadron advanced to meet the Albemarle. At 4.20 the Miami, then heading the line of the port (left) column, advancing, made signal "Enemy is retreating." No other report mentions the fact that the Albemarle was in retreat when the vessels were advancing to make the attack.

The attacking vessels by their superior speed were coming up with the Albemarle. At 4.40 that vessel opened fire on the Mattabesett, leading the right column. The shell wounded several of a gun's crew and destroyed the launch. This was soon followed by another, doing less damage. The Albemarle had the general construction described in the ram Atlanta, and was armed with two 100-pounder rifles, one a Brooke, the other a Whitworth. These guns could pivot on either side, or ahead and astern.

The Mattabesett and vessels in line continued their advance; the Albemarle then put her helm apart, "with an evident intention to ram the Mattabesett;" that vessel put her helm astarboard to avoid being run into, and that threw the antagonists farther apart than intended by the last named. At 4.45, when a little abaft the port beam of the Albemarle, the Mattabesett delivered her broadside of two rifled guns and four IX-inch guns at a distance of one hundred and fifty yards from the Albemarle. At about the same time the

Sassacus had sheered to starboard, and when nearly abeam delivered her port broadside into the Albemarle, and keeping her helm hard aport to avoid being rammed, described a circle, and passing the stern of the Albemarle, was again in line following the Mattabesett. That vessel passing ahead, had fired her forward rifle and howitzers into the Bombshell, when she surrendered, and was ordered to follow in the wake; the Sassacus coming up, fired a broadside into the Bombshell also, in the belief that she had not surrendered, and when informed of the fact, directed her to pass astern and anchor; the Wyalusing then coming up, was on the point of running her down, not knowing that she had surrendered (as was afterward seen), and backed barely in time to prevent injury. The Mattabesett, followed by the Sassacus and the Wyalusing, passed ahead of the Albemarle, delivering their fire as they could, and found themselves in the line of fire of the left column and of the Whitehead; that vessel, owing to inferior speed, had reached the Albemarle when the Bombshell had fallen back to anchor as ordered.

Here the three forward vessels of the right line reversed their engines to keep out of the fire of the other vessels, and as the Albemarle drew ahead the Mattabesett was on her starboard quarter, the Sassacus on her beam, and the Wyalusing on her bow. The Sassacus pointed fair, and at a distance of from two to three hundred yards, with open throttles, thirty pounds steam pressure, and making twenty-two revolutions when striking, ran head on to the Albemarle, striking her nearly at right angles, just abaft the casemate on the starboard side, at a speed estimated by her commanding officer of ten knots, and by Captain Smith on board of the Mattabesett at half that velocity. On being struck, the Albemarle heeled considerably, the water washing over the

deck on the starboard side abaft the casemate. The *Sassacus* steamed heavily, in the hope of forcing the vessel under. As the *Sassacus* came in contact, the *Albemarle* fired a rifle shell, which passed through both sides near the bow of the *Sassacus*. While in that position three solid shot from a 100-pounder rifle were fired into the *Albemarle* and were shattered, coming back in fragments on the deck of the *Sassacus*. At the moment of the third discharge the vessel had swung so as to permit the after gun of the *Albemarle* to bear from a broadside port, and a shell was sent into the *Sassacus* which passed longitudinally through her starboard boiler. The vessel was then filled with steam and dropped astern. The report of her commanding officer says: "In the meantime the engine was going, as no one could do anything below; some sixteen men being scalded. I then put the helm hard aport, headed up the sound, and around to the land, in order to clear the field for the other boats." After the explosion of the boiler the signal-books were thrown overboard, but no reason is given therefor. While dropping out of action the guns continued to play on the *Albemarle*.

The flag of the *Albemarle* was shot away about the time the *Sassacus* was disabled, and it was not hoisted again during the action. As her firing was interrupted from some cause it was thought she had surrendered, and until she resumed the use of her guns she was spared the fire from her adversaries.

The attacking force at that time (5.15 P.M.) was in great confusion; the vessels so surrounded the *Albemarle* as in a great degree to prevent any effective fire against her. "Our attention was turned to getting them [the vessels] into line. At 5.20 signal was made to the *Miami* to pass within hail, and when she did so she was ordered to "go ahead and try

her torpedo."¹ At 5.30 signal was made to "keep in line," and fifteen minutes later it was repeated. At 5.55 signal was made to the Wyalusing to "cease firing," that vessel being still on the starboard bow of the Albemarle. At that time "the remainder of the vessels (with the exception of the Sassacus) were taking position on the port quarter of the enemy." At 6.05 signal for "close order" was made, and again at 6.45 "signal to the Wyalusing to cease firing, she at the time coming round to take position. Soon after, hailing her with an order to go ahead of the line and pass close to the Albemarle, in reply she reported herself sinking, and at 6.55 made signal 'sinking,' but still going ahead, finally took position."²

Finding that the line was gradually edging off, the Mattabesett steamed ahead inside, delivering her fire as rapidly as possible when on the quarter and abeam of the enemy, and after passing ahead attempted to lay a seine in the course of the Albemarle for the purpose of fouling her propeller, but it was torn and lost before getting into the desired position. The Mattabesett was then rounded to port, and the port battery used; when nearly abeam of the Albemarle a VI-inch rifle-shot from that vessel fatally wounded two men and did considerable damage to the vessel. At 7.30, growing quite dark, signal was made to cease firing, and to anchor, with the exception of the Commodore Hull and the Ceres, those vessels being directed to follow and watch the movements of the enemy.

The commanding officer of the Whitehead states: "The rebel steamer Cotton Plant, with a number of launches in tow, having succeeded in making her escape, my attention was directed to the ram, upon which I opened fire with the

¹ Febiger's Report.

² Report of commander of the Mattabesett.

100-pounder rifle, using solid shot, first at a distance of one thousand, but soon lessened it to four hundred yards." No other mention is made of the Cotton Plant having launches in tow, or of that vessel, except by the Miami, when on picket duty, that the Cotton Plant came out.

Josselyn, commanding the Hull, reported his part in the engagement, and states that the Hull crossed the bows of the Albemarle and "paid out a large seine for the purpose of fouling her propeller, but though encompassing the ram, it did not have the desired effect."

The batteries, expenditures of ammunition, and casualties of the different vessels engaged will be found in the Appendix.

No accounts whatever are found among the Confederate archives in Washington of this engagement, of injuries sustained, or of the purposes for which the Albemarle and her two consorts went out. Captain Smith reports the appearance of the vessel again on the 24th of May, near the mouth of the Roanoke River, with a row-boat dragging for torpedoes. The Whitehead fired a shell which fell near, and the Albemarle steamed up the river. Refugees and others from Plymouth stated that the plating of the Albemarle had been much injured, four of the shot had penetrated the armor, and during the engagement the concussion was so great as to put out lights burning in the casemate. One of the two guns with which the vessel was armed was rendered useless by the muzzle being broken off.

On the night of May 7, 1864, an armor-plated vessel, known as the ram North Carolina, came out of New Inlet at the mouth of Wilmington River, and exchanged shots with the steamers Mount Vernon, Kansas, Howqua, Nansemond, and Britannia. She did no serious damage to any of the vessels, but put a rifled shell of large size through the smoke-

stack of the Howqua at an estimated distance of a mile and a half. She never made her appearance again; her consort, the Raleigh, was found, later on, "wrecked" below Wilmington, from what cause is unknown.

In June Lieutenant William B. Cushing had received permission to attempt the destruction of the Raleigh in Wilmington River. He was then in command of the Monticello, aiding in the blockade. He thought it prudent to make a thorough reconnoissance to determine the position of the Raleigh.

On the night of the 23d he left his command in a ship's boat, taking with him Ensign Jones, Master's Mate Howarth, and 15 men, crossed the west bar, passed the forts, then the town and batteries of Smithville, and pulled swiftly up the river undiscovered. He was within the river some two days, visited the wreck of the Raleigh, and coming out effected his escape with his usual gallantry and cleverness.

As auxiliary again to proposed army operations, Commander Macomb, on July 28th, accompanied the army transports Collyer and Massasoit up the Chowan. The objects of the expedition were attained, and at Gatesville the Confederate steamer Arrow was captured.

On October 30th, Lieutenant Cushing wrote as follows: "I have the honor to report that the rebel ironclad Albemarle is at the bottom of Roanoke River." The means by which this was accomplished were a steam launch and a torpedo on the end of a pole, fastened to the bow. On the night of the 27th, he proceeded up the Roanoke River toward Plymouth, where the ram was made fast to a wharf, and for her protection against torpedoes "booms" were secured twenty or thirty feet from her broadside. The newspapers had gratuitously furnished the enemy with information for weeks before of the daily progress of Cushing with

his launch, from New York to the sounds, as well as the avowed object of destroying the Albemarle. The reader may well imagine the increased difficulty of effecting the object.

The party consisted of 15 officers and men in the launch, and 2 officers and 11 men in the cutter which was in tow. The distance from the mouth of the river to the object of attack was eight miles, the average width of river two hundred yards, and shores picketed. In case of being hailed in passing the Southfield, a mile below the Albemarle, on which a gun was supposed to be mounted, to command the bend, the cutter was to cast off and attack the men on the sunken steamer.

The launch and cutter passed along within twenty yards of the Southfield without discovery, indeed, until hailed by the lookouts on the ram. "The cutter was then cast off and ordered below, while the launch made for the enemy under a full head of steam. The enemy sprung rattles, rang the bell, and commenced firing, and at the same time repeating their hail; the light of a fire ashore showed me the ironclad, made fast to the wharf, with a pen of logs around her about thirty feet from her side." Passing close to the Albemarle in order to ensure coming squarely on the logs to press them in, the launch performed nearly a circle, running at first directly from her intended prey. "By this time the enemy's fire was very severe, but a dose of canister, at short range, served to moderate their zeal and disturb their aim." At this time coming head on to the Albemarle, Paymaster Swan, by Cushing's side, was wounded, "but," he says, "how many more I know not. Three bullets struck my clothing, and the air seemed full of them. In a moment we had struck the logs just abreast of the quarter port, breasting them in some feet, and our bows resting on them. The torpedo boom was then lowered, and by a vigorous pull I succeeded

in driving the torpedo under the overhang, and exploded it at the same time that the Albemarle's gun was fired. A shot seemed to go crashing through my boat, and a dense mass of water rushed in from the torpedo, filling the launch and completely disabling her."

The enemy within a few yards continued their fire at the men and demanded their surrender. Cushing ordered them to "save themselves," divested himself of shoes and coat and swam with others into the middle of the stream. "Master's Mate Woodman I met in the water half a mile below the town, and assisted him as best I could, but failed to get him ashore."¹

Cushing reached the shore "completely exhausted, too weak to crawl out of the water until just at daylight," when he went into the swamp near the fort for the night and a part of the following day. Exhausted as he was, he walked miles through swamps, and at length found a boat in which, by eleven o'clock the next night, he found his way to the Valley City. He says: "Master's Mate Howarth showed as usual conspicuous gallantry," and he expresses the hope that Howarth and Engineer Stolesbury will be promoted when exchanged.

A more heroic picture can hardly be conceived than Cushing, standing in the bows of his launch, running head on to the Albemarle, the glare of the fire on shore throwing its lights and shadows on the doomed ram, and illuminating the man, who pushed on, placed the torpedo by his own hand where he desired, exploded it, and received at the same time, at the cannon's mouth, the blast of a 100-pounder rifle. He was at that time twenty-one years of age.

The reader may be interested in the personal appearance

¹ The quotation marks are in Cushing's words.

of Cushing. He was perhaps six feet in height, and slender, resembling greatly an engraving of the poet Schiller when he was young. The attentive reader will not fail to see in his despatches a poetic vein, at times of great humor. He will see, too, that within his sphere of action he was a man of consummate plan and courage.

The cutter that was in tow and cast off when the launch was hailed, proceeded to the wreck of the Southfield and secured four prisoners. No gun was mounted as supposed.

On the 8th of December, 1864, the army asked a co-operative movement on the part of the navy for the purpose of reducing Confederate batteries at Rainbow Bluffs, on the Roanoke River, some sixty miles above Plymouth. As agreed upon, Commander Macomb left Plymouth in the Wyalusing, followed by the Otsego, Valley City, tugs Belle and Bazley, and picket boat No. 5. At 10 p.m. the force had arrived at a sharp bend just below Jameston, at which point they were to meet an army force. The vessels were about anchoring when the Otsego exploded a submerged torpedo under her port side forward, and almost immediately another under the forward pivot gun, which was thrown over. The vessel settled on the bottom at once, making a depth of three feet of water over the spar-deck. In a torpedo net which the vessel carried as a protection were found two others. The following morning the tug Bazley, in making preliminary preparations to execute orders, was also blown up in the same manner, and sank at once, two men having been killed by the explosion.

The 10th and 11th were spent in dragging for torpedoes, and six were found. No army force appeared. Commander Macomb asked instructions of the admiral as to further action, and as then the preparations for an attack on Fort Fisher was the engrossing object, nothing further is to be

found in the published official papers of this "co-operative movement."

For a long period the only ports or inlets that remained to the Confederates admitting a vessel of twelve feet draught were Charleston and Wilmington; the latter, however, had two entrances far apart, which made practically a double blockading force necessary. It was of the greatest importance to prevent the arrival of supplies, and however many blockade-runners were destroyed, it was not to be denied that many vessels arrived at and departed from those ports, and would continue to do so until the National forces actually held the entrances.

The usual blockade force off Charleston numbered twenty vessels. Preceding the bombardments of Fort Fisher, thirty to forty vessels blockaded the two entrances to Wilmington, yet, with the utmost vigilance on their part, a great number of vessels got in and out. Hence the great anxiety of the Navy Department to gain possession of the entrances to those harbors. An official letter to Rear-Admiral Farragut, dated September 5, 1864, appointing him to the command of a naval force designed to attack the defences of Cape Fear River, states that since the winter of 1862 the Navy Department had endeavored "to get the consent of the War Department to a joint attack upon the defences of Cape Fear River, but they had decided that no troops could be spared for the operation. Lieutenant-General Grant had, however, recently given the subject his attention, and thought an army force would be ready to co-operate on the 1st of October."

For strategic purposes the force was to assemble at Port Royal, and in addition to the force to assemble through the direct order of the Department, the admiral was authorized to bring with him all such vessels and officers as could be

spared from the West Gulf Squadron without impairing its necessary efficiency.

The condition of the health of Admiral Farragut did not permit his acceptance of the command, and on the 22d of the same month Rear-Admiral D. D. Porter was detached from the command of the Mississippi Squadron, and directed to proceed to Beaufort, N. C., and relieve Acting Rear-Admiral S. P. Lee in command of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

On the 28th of October the Secretary of the Navy sent to President Lincoln a memorandum of the following import: The President was aware that because of the shoal water at the mouth of Cape Fear River, a purely naval attack could not be made against Wilmington. Two months prior, an attack had been arranged to be made on October 1st, postponed to the 15th; the naval force was ready, and at the time of writing, "one hundred and fifty vessels of war now form the North Atlantic Squadron. . . . The detention of so many vessels from blockade and cruising duty is a most serious injury to the public service; and if the expedition cannot go forward for want of troops, I desire to be notified, so that the ships may be relieved and dispersed for other service."

The tone of the above indicates potential influences, either to further delay the expedition or cause its abandonment. The vessels, for the most part of the largest size and heaviest batteries, were yet north of Cape Hatteras; those that could enter Beaufort Harbor were there, and the smaller ones actually in face of the entrances, blockading. They all, however, found their way to the outer anchorage off Beaufort, and there remained awaiting a detachment of troops to co-operate in the taking of Fort Fisher.

In composition the force was as extraordinary as was ever

assembled. The Ironsides, a fair specimen of an early iron-clad ship, a double-turreted monitor, and three monitors of single turrets, old steam frigates, "double-enders," merchant-ships converted into vessels of war, and vessels of war proper, but the force was not embarrassed by a sailing vessel.

On the 10th of December Rear-Admiral Porter issued a General Order "with chart plan of the proposed attack on the batteries at New Inlet." He says: "It is first proposed to endeavor to paralyze the garrison by an explosion, all the vessels remaining twelve miles out from the bar, and the troops in transports twelve miles down the coast, ready to steam up and be prepared to take the works by assault in case the latter are disabled. At a given signal all the bar vessels will run off shore twelve miles, when the vessel with powder will go in under the forts. When the explosion takes place all the vessels will stand in shore in the order marked on the plan."

The New Ironsides was to bring the flag-staff on Fort Fisher southwest by west half west, and anchor in three and a half fathoms of water, and open fire without delay; the monitors to anchor astern one length apart, directly in line along the shore.

"The large ships to anchor in five fathoms of water, in line of battle to the eastward of the ironclads, and heading parallel with the land (south half west). The Minnesota, leading this line, on signal to take position will go ahead slowly and anchor about one mile from Fort Fisher, opening fire when she passes the Ironsides, and anchoring when her after guns firing on Fisher will clear the range of the Ironsides; the Mohican, next in line, will then anchor ahead of the Minnesota, Colorado next ahead of her, and all of the line thus when anchored in reverse of order of sailing."

"The Seneca, Shenandoah, and six other vessels will take

their positions between and outside the different vessels as marked on the plan.

“After the vessels above designated have got into position, the Nyaack, Unadilla, Huron, and Pequot will take up position outside and between the monitors, keeping up a rapid fire when the monitors are loading.

“The following vessels will then take their positions as marked on the plan: Fort Jackson, Santiago de Cuba, Tacony, Osceola, Chippewa, Sassacus, Maratanza, Rhode Island, Monticello, Mount Vernon, Montgomery, Cuyler, Quaker City, and Iosco, anchoring in reverse as before.

“It is not desirable that the vessels should be seen by the enemy prior to the time of attack. A rendezvous, twenty-five miles east of New Inlet, is given. Commanders of divisions will get their divisions in line and keep them so. When signal is made to form line of battle, every vessel will take her position, the first division forming first.

“As low steam will suffice in going into action, those vessels that can move and work handily with half-boiler power will do so, having full boilers without steam next the enemy. Slow deliberate firing will be made.”

In accordance with this programme, the Louisiana, an old vessel designed for “a torpedo on a large scale,” was towed from Norfolk by the Sassacus to a remote part of Beaufort Harbor, there anchored and filled with powder, with carefully studied arrangements for firing many centres at the same moment. The vessel was disguised as a blockade-runner, and her preparation for service was assigned to Commander Rhind, aided by Lieutenant Preston, Second Assistant-Engineer Mullan, and Master's Mate Boyden, with seven men.

CHAPTER X.

FORT FISHER.

PREPARATIONS having been completed, at noon on the 18th of December the largest fleet that had ever sailed under the Union flag formed lines in accordance with instructions, and proceeded to the rendezvous, twenty-five miles east of Fort Fisher, a distance of fifty miles from Beaufort Roads. There was a good deal of awkwardness in forming lines with vessels that had never acted together, and there were several officers in command not well versed in the matter, simple enough, had the leading vessels steamed slowly on their course and thus permitted their followers to fall into the positions assigned in line. The appearance was not promising; there was much room for improvement; but when under the fire of the enemy the vessels took up their positions with less disorder and more celerity than in forming the first order of sailing, or "line ahead," at distances of two ships' lengths apart. The fleet reached the rendezvous and anchored after a run of ten hours, and found the transports at anchor, having on board the command of General Butler. The weather was not regarded as favorable for landing troops, and the vessels remained at anchor. On the 20th a heavy southwest gale set in, and the army transports being short of water, and many of them not well adapted to ride out a gale at anchor, a number of them made for Beaufort. The depth of water where the vessels anchored was seventeen fathoms with sandy bot-

tom; the seas rolled in unbroken by land for hundreds of miles. Many of the vessels dragged for miles, and some occasions were presented where seamanship was necessary to prevent them fouling each other. When the gale was over the fleet was widely scattered, but as soon as the weather moderated vessels that had dragged steamed into line again and anchored.

After the gale the wind changed to the westward, off the land, the sea became smooth, and as it was necessary to avail himself of the good weather, although the transports with the troops had not returned, the admiral determined to go in and attack the batteries. Mr. Bradford, of the Coast Survey, had previously made a night examination of the depth of water near Fort Fisher, and found that a vessel of seven feet draught could be placed right on the edge of the beach. At 10.30 p.m. of the 23d, the powder-boat Louisiana, Commander Rhind and the officers before mentioned, was taken in tow by the Wilderness, Master Arey in command, and Lieutenant Lamson, commanding the Gettysburg, on board to take her into position.

The Louisiana, though having steam, was towed in and piloted by the Wilderness to near her station, when she was cast off. Lieutenant Lamson, Mr. Bradford, of the Coast Survey, and Mr. Bowen, bar-pilot, were of the "greatest service in perfecting arrangements and carrying out the plan successfully." The officers and crew of the Wilderness "shared whatever of risk or danger attended the enterprise." At 11.30 the Wilderness cast off her tow, and the powder-boat (Louisiana) steamed in until she reached a point east by north, half north, from Fort Fisher, within three hundred yards of the beach. There was a light wind off shore; the anchor was let go, the fires hauled, the men put in the boat, and Commander Rhind and Lieutenant

Preston proceeded to light the fuses and the fires; the latter had been arranged by Engineer Mullan. The officers then got in the boat, and they reached the Wilderness precisely at midnight; her anchor was slipped, and she steamed at full speed a distance of twelve miles, and then hove to. At 1.40 the powder-boat blew up; the shock was hardly felt, and four distinct reports were heard. The fuses were set by the clocks to one hour and a half, and the explosion did not occur until twenty-two minutes later. Commander Rhind says: "The zeal, patience, and endurance of officers and men were unsurpassed, and I believe no officer could have been better supported."

At the anchorage, twenty-five miles from the powder-boat, there was the appearance of distant lightning on the horizon; then came, after a lapse of time, a dull sound, and after a couple of hours a dense powder-smoke that shut out the view and was an hour in passing.

At daylight the different divisions of the fleet stood in at low speed. At 11.30 A.M. the signal was made to engage the forts, the Ironsides leading, and the Monadnock, Canonicus, and Mahopac following. The Ironsides took her position in the most beautiful and seamanlike manner, got her spring out, and opened deliberate fire on the fort, which was firing at her with all available guns.

The Minnesota then took her position in handsome style, closely followed by the Mohican, which ranged ahead and anchored; a few shells gave the range, and then they opened fire rapidly and with precision *on the guns in the fort*, receiving at the same time their fire. There was a considerable gap in the line, and some fifteen minutes elapsed before the Colorado passed in and ahead, anchored, opened on the fort, and was followed by the other vessels of the line. The other lines then got into position with a moderate degree of suc-

cess, and the works of the enemy were alive with the bursting shells. The fort maintained an indifferent fire from the more distant guns, and but little, if any, from the parts of the work within range of the shell-guns of the fleet.

At signal made by the admiral to "fire slowly," the firing from the vessels became veritable target practice at particular guns of the fort, with officers in the tops to mark the ranges; from the inner line and from the ironclads and gunboats near them the firing was also accurate. The outer lines were somewhat too distant, and many shells from them were observed to fall short.

Two service magazine explosions occurred in the forts, and several buildings were set on fire and burned. The admiral's report says: "Finding that the batteries were silenced completely, I directed the ships to keep up a moderate fire, in the hopes of attracting the attention of the transports and bringing them in. At sunset General Butler came in, in his flag-ship, with a few transports, the rest not having arrived from Beaufort. Being too late to do anything more, I signaled the fleet to retire for the night for a safe anchorage, which they did without being molested by the enemy." With the exception of a boiler explosion on board the Mackinaw by a shell, the casualties were entirely from the bursting of 100-pounder Parrott rifled guns, and they were serious. These occurred on board of the Ticonderoga, 8 killed, 11 wounded; Yantic, 2 killed, 3 wounded; Juniata, 5 killed, 8 wounded; Mackinaw, 1 killed and 1 wounded, and Quaker City.

Some of the fleet were somewhat damaged by shells. The Osceola received "a shell near her magazine, and at one time was in a sinking condition; but her efficient commander stopped up the leak, while the Mackinaw fought out the battle notwithstanding the damage she received."

On the 25th the transports generally had arrived, and General Weitzel, chief-of-staff, went on board of the flag-ship "to arrange the programme for the day. It was decided that the fleet should attack the forts again, while the army landed and assaulted them, if possible, under our heavy fire."¹ Seventeen gunboats, under command of Captain O. S. Glisson, were sent to cover the landing, and assist with their boats; it was perceived that the smaller vessels kept too far from the beach, and the Brooklyn was despatched to set them an example. An addition of perhaps twenty vessels was sent to aid in the debarkation of the troops, the aggregate number of their boats being one hundred; the army had boats probably better adapted to the purpose than those belonging to the ships.

The admiral made signal for commanders of vessels to go on board the flag-ship, and determined to form his lines as near the forts as a close examination of the depth of water by boats sounding in advance would permit. The Minnesota was held off until the soundings were made, and then took up position, and the main line was soon in very effective position, and previously "the Ironsides took position in her usual handsome style, the monitors following close after her, all the vessels followed according to order, and took position without a shot being fired at them, excepting a few shots fired at the four last vessels that got into line."

The firing was slow at intervals, and was directed actually at the guns as at target practice; the parapets and the traverses of huge proportions were dug into and so changed in appearance by the craters made from heavy shells that these enormous piles seemed likely to be relegated to fellowship with the neighboring "dunes" or natural sand-hillocks.

¹ Admiral Porter's Report.

The admiral in his report says: "I suppose about 3,000 men had landed, when I was notified they were re-embarking. I could see our soldiers near the forts reconnoitring and sharpshooting, and was in hopes an assault was deemed practicable. General Weitzel in person was making observations about six hundred yards off, and the troops were in and around the works. One gallant officer, whose name I do not know, went on the parapet and brought away the rebel flag we had knocked down. A soldier went into the works and led out a horse, killing the orderly who was mounted on him and taking the despatches from his body. Another soldier fired his musket into the bomb-proof among the rebels, and eight or ten others who had ventured near the forts were wounded by our shells. As the ammunition gave out the vessels retired from action, and the ironclads and Minnesota, Colorado, and Susquehanna were ordered to open rapidly, which they did with such effect that it seemed to tear the works to pieces. We drew off at sunset, leaving the ironclads to fire through the night, expecting the troops would attack in the morning, when we would commence again. I received word from General Weitzel, informing me that it was impracticable to assault."¹

The bombardment of this day was of about seven hours' duration. A few guns near the Mound battery kept up a fire on the vessels, and at intervals there was some firing from

¹ Extract of letter of General Butler to Admiral Porter, dated December 25, 1864: "Admiral—Upon landing the troops and making a thorough reconnoissance of Fort Fisher, both General Weitzel and myself are fully of the opinion that the place could not be carried by assault, as it was left substantially uninjured as a defensive work by the navy fire. We found seventeen guns protected by traverses, two only of which were dismantled, bearing up the beach, and covering a strip of land, the only practicable route, not more than wide enough for a thousand men in line of battle. . . . I shall therefore sail for Hampton Roads as soon as the transport fleet can be got in order. My engineers and officers report Fort Fisher to me as substantially uninjured as a defensive work."

guns nearer the ironclads and line of frigates. "Everything was coolly and systematically done," and the admiral adds, "I witnessed some fine practice."

The weather had grown threatening and a heavy swell rolled in, which toward night put an end to the re-embarkation of the troops. In relation to this the admiral states in his report: "Seven hundred men were left on the beach by General Butler when he departed for Fortress Monroe, and we had no difficulty in protecting them from the rebel army said to be in the background, which was a very small army after all." The men were not re-embarked until the noon of the 27th, owing to the surf, when the transports left for Fortress Monroe.

In an official letter of December 31, 1864, commenting upon the letter of General Butler, Admiral Porter says: "General Butler mentions in his letter to me that he had captured Flag-pond battery with sixty-five men, and Half Moon battery with two hundred and eighteen men and seven officers. This is making capital out of very small material.

"Flag-pond battery was some loose sand thrown up, behind which the rebels used to lie with field pieces and fire at our blockaders when they chased runners ashore. It does not deserve the name of a work. Sixty-five or seventy rebels in it came forward and delivered themselves up to the navy and were taken on board the Santiago de Cuba. The men in Half Moon battery (which is no work at all and exactly like the other) came forward and delivered themselves up to the army. They could easily have escaped had they desired to do so."

The fact that these men were taken prisoners is significant. They could have reached the cover of an adjacent wood and gone toward Wilmington entirely unmolested. This does not comport with the report of Major-General Whiting of

the Confederate service herein quoted, as to the spirit animating the garrison of Fort Fisher, or with the fact that some of our skirmish line carried off a Confederate flag, killed a courier, and carried off his horse actually behind the curtain, and left without injury or molestation save from the shells of the bombarding vessels.

General Whiting paid a visit to Fort Fisher, under the command of Colonel Lamb, reaching the fort just before the close of the first day's bombardment. He says: "The bombardment of the second day commenced at 10.20 A.M., and continued, with no interruption or apparent slackening, with great fury from over fifty ships till dark. During the day the enemy landed a large force, and at 4.30 P.M. advanced a line of skirmishers on the left flank of the sand curtain, the fleet at the same time making a concentrated and tremendous enfilading fire on the curtain.

"The garrison, however, at the proper moment, when the fire slackened to allow the approach of the enemy's land force, drove them off with grape and musketry; at dark the enemy withdrew. A heavy storm set in, and the garrison were much exposed, as they were under arms all night."¹

¹ General Whiting, in answer to inquiries by General Butler, states that the garrison was 667 men on the 18th. On the 23d, 110 veteran artillery, 50 sailors, and 250 junior reserves were added. Total, 1,077. On the 24th the fleet disabled five guns; on the 25th four guns, two of them being on the left, looking up the beach, and nineteen in position, and mines (for explosion) undisturbed. He doubts the success of an assault at that time. In the official report of General Whiting, dated December 30th, is found the fact that the "Junior Reserves" and others had to be coaxed out of the bomb-proofs, one might say, on the 25th, to repel a possible assault. This report concludes as follows: "Whatever the power of resistance of the fort, and it is great, no doubt, the delay due to the heavy weather of Wednesday and Thursday after the arrival of the fleet was its salvation. . . . But we cannot always hope for such aid from weather, or the blunder of the enemy, manifest here for his not landing and occupying the work before the commencement of his bombardment, and I trust the lesson will not be lost." The reader can now form his own conclusion whether General Butler could or could not have taken Fort Fisher.

The vessels not engaged on the blockade were withdrawn to Beaufort, to get a full supply of ammunition and shells, and to await further instructions. The results of the bombardment were not satisfactory to either side, but doubtless more so to the Confederates than to their opponents. It was heralded that this great fleet had been driven off, when in fact surprisingly little injury had been inflicted upon it, save through the bursting of rifled guns.

On December 29th the Secretary of the Navy, in a letter to Lieutenant-General Grant, said: "Ships can approach nearer the enemy's works at New Inlet than was anticipated. Their fire can keep the enemy away from their guns. A landing can easily be effected upon the beach north of Fort Fisher, not only of troops, but all their supplies and artillery. This force can have its flanks protected by gunboats. The navy can assist in the siege of Fort Fisher precisely as it covered the operations which resulted in the capture of Wagner. . . . Rear-Admiral Porter will remain off Fort Fisher, continuing a moderate fire to prevent new works from being erected, and the ironclads have proved that they can maintain themselves in spite of bad weather. Under all these circumstances, I invite you to such a military co-operation as will ensure the fall of Fort Fisher, the importance of which has already received your careful consideration." He added that the telegram was sent at the suggestion of the President.

On the 31st of December the Secretary of the Navy wrote Admiral Porter as follows: "Lieutenant-General Grant will send immediately a competent force, properly commanded, to co-operate in the capture of the defences on Federal Point."

On January 14, 1865, Admiral Porter reports that he had been busily employed since his withdrawal from Fort Fisher in filling the ships with ammunition and coal. The large

vessels had no harbor, and these operations outside were attended by extreme difficulties. It was a season of gales upon which the enemy relied to break up operations against him. "We will see ; we have gone through the worst of it, have held on through gales heavy enough to drive anything to sea, and we have sustained no damage whatever."

In a subsequent report he informs the Department that Major-General Terry arrived at Beaufort, N. C., on the 8th of January, in command of a co-operating army force, and a plan of operations had been agreed upon that had resulted in success.

Heavy weather set in about the time of Terry's arrival, which lasted for forty-eight hours, although the large vessels of war lying off the harbor were exposed to its full force ; with furious seas setting in on a lee shore, they rode out the gales without accident ; some of the heavier transports, with troops, were also lying with them ; ammunition and coal had been taken on board, notwithstanding all of the difficulties, and on the 12th of January the fleet had sailed in three columns, accompanied by the transports.

The Brooklyn led the first line, followed in order by the Mohican, Tacony, Kansas, Yantic, Unadilla, Huron, Maumee, Pequot, Pawtuxet, Seneca, Pontoosuc, and Nereus, thirteen vessels.

The Minnesota led the second line, followed in order by the Colorado, Wabash, Susquehanna, Powhatan, Juniata, Shenandoah, Ticonderoga, Vanderbilt, Mackinaw, and Tuscarora, eleven heavy vessels.

The Santiago de Cuba led the third line, followed in order by the Fort Jackson, Osceola, Sassacus, Chippewa, Cuyler, Maratanza, Rhode Island, Monticello, Alabama, Montgomery, and Iosco, twelve vessels.

The Vance led the reserve division, followed in order by

the *Britannia*, *Tristram Shandy*, *Lillian*, *Fort Donelson*, *Wilderness*, *Aries*, *Buckingham*, *Nansemond*, *Little Ada*, *Eolus*, and *Republic*, the two last being despatch boats, twelve vessels.

The lines above form a total of forty-eight vessels, the ironclads, not yet mentioned, being five in number. The reader will bear in mind the very effective broadside battery of the *Ironsides* (seven XI-inch shell-guns and one VIII-inch rifle), and that the *Monadnock* with her two turrets was equivalent in force to two monitors such as the *Canonicus*, *Saugus*, and *Mahopac*, of more recent construction than the *Passaic* class, and possessed more power of resistance to projectiles.

The fleet, accompanied by numerous army transports, anchored during the night some twelve miles east of Fisher. In the morning, the *Ironsides* and her consorts proceeded at once to get under way toward Fort Fisher, and following in on their former range lines anchored as near that work as the depth of water would permit. This brought the *Ironsides* within one thousand yards, and the nearest monitor within seven hundred yards of the nearest guns, that were vigorously firing upon them as they anchored. The vessels proceeded to get ranges, and then to make effective practice at the guns in the fort, which, however, "replied vigorously until late in the afternoon, when the heavier ships coming into line soon drove them into their bomb-proofs."¹

At daylight lines one, two, and three proceeded also to execute the duties assigned them, and soon after sunrise were anchored in lines near the beach at Half Moon battery, four miles north of Fort Fisher. Boats were at once sent to the transports, and although there was considerable swell,

¹ Belknap's Report.

the work of debarkation went on vigorously and effectively. Preceding this, vessels on line No. 1 had shelled the woods back of the beach, and hundreds of cattle that had doubtless been brought there for the supply of the garrison of Fort Fisher rushed wildly to the beach and delivered themselves over, opportune food for the army.

At 2 P.M. 6,000 men and twelve days' provisions had been landed, and one hour later the whole force was in front of Fort Fisher, or prepared to go. At 3.30 line No. 1 was signalled to get under way and attack Fort Fisher, and half an hour later line No. 2 followed under like instructions; the vessel to lead, Minnesota, was detained for an hour by a hawser fouling the propeller, and joined the line during the bombardment. Line No. 3 remained during the day to debark artillery and whatever might still be afloat, which was fully accomplished the next day.

With the ironclads in position serving as guides, Line No. 1 soon anchored, and at 4.35 P.M. opened fire, and with this line in position, line No. 2, composed of heavier ships, was soon after at anchor, and delivering broadsides which "soon drove the enemy to their bomb-proofs."

As the sun went down, and the shadows fell over the waters, the spectacle was truly grand; the smoke rose and partially drifted off, permitting glimpses now and then of the earthwork, and the fitful yet incessant gleams from the hundreds of shells bursting on or beyond the parapet illuminated, like lightning flashes, the clouds above and the smoke of battle beneath.

At 5.50 it was too dark to fire with precision. All the wooden vessels were signalled to withdraw and anchor in line to seaward, and the ironclads to maintain a slow fire on the works throughout the night.

The admiral observed that the fire had already damaged

some of the guns of the enemy, and he determined that before the army went to the assault there should be no guns within the reach of the fleet to arrest progress; he saw, too, that within, near Mound battery, heavy guns were brought to bear, and therefore changed the plan of bombardment on the next day.

On the 14th, all of the small gunboats carrying XI-inch pivot guns were sent into positions commanding the north face of Fisher to dismount the guns bearing along the intended line of assault by the army; line No. 1 at the same time delivering a rapid fire on the fort to keep the enemy in his bomb-proofs. The vessels were fairly in position at 1 P.M., and all of them actively employed until long after dark, and during the whole night this gunboat fire was added to that of the slower fire of the ironclads. The guns far up in the line of works alone replied to this attack, and in doing so hit the gunboats occasionally, cutting off the mainmast of the *Huron* and doing other damage.

In the evening, General Terry visited the flag-ship *Malvern* to arrange final plans. His troops on the night after landing had effected a lodgment and thrown up defences across the peninsula, some two miles north of Fort Fisher. They had recovered from the effects of the sea voyage and from the drenching received when landing in the surf, and were prepared to make the assault, and gallantly indeed was it done the following afternoon.

It was determined that the entire fleet should go into action at an early hour the following day, and continue a vigorous bombardment until the hour of assault. The admiral "detailed 1,600 sailors and 400 marines to accompany the troops in the assault, the sailors to board the sea face while the troops assaulted the land side." The order sent to commanders of vessels was as follows: "The sailors will be

armed with cutlasses, well sharpened, and with revolvers. When the signal is made to man the boats, the men will get in but not show themselves. When the signal is made to assault, the boats will pull around the stern of the monitors and land right abreast of them, and board the fort on the run in a seamanlike way. The marines will form in the rear and cover the sailors. While the soldiers are going over the parapets in front, the sailors will take the sea face of Fort Fisher." This was more easily said than done, as we shall presently see.

At 9 A.M. on the 15th signal was made for the fleet to bombard as per plan. The last of the vessels got into position by 11 A.M., but the heads of some of the lines were in action very promptly. The reader will bear in mind that the ironclads remained where they had first anchored, and were supplied with ammunition brought alongside during the night. On signal from the flag-ship the vessels sent their quotas of men on shore some time in the early forenoon, for making the assault. At 2 P.M. the admiral was in expectancy of the signal from the general for "vessels change direction of fire." The sailors landed under command of their officers, who had no previous knowledge to whom they should report, or who was to lead them in the assault. Fleet-Captain K. R. Breese, a very gallant and competent officer, had gone to arrange details with General Terry, and he was absent for that purpose. Until his return it was not known to all who was to lead the assault.

Lieutenant-Commander Parker, the executive officer of the Minnesota, commanded the detail, 240 men, from that vessel. He says: "We were huddling there together like a flock of sheep, and pretty soon the enemy got the range with sufficient accuracy to satisfy me that a formation of some kind must be made if we expected to do anything."

He was the senior officer ashore, and therefore directed the commanding officers of detachments from the different ships to report to the senior lieutenant-commander of that division of the fleet to which their respective vessels belonged, and that they should be formed in line of battle, first division in front and second and third following. Cushman was in command of the first division, Parker of the second, and Selfridge of the third.

These preparations were completed when Lieutenant-Commander Breese came in haste from General Terry. He had with him two sailors, one of whom bore the admiral's flag. On meeting Parker, the last named asked who was to command, and Breese produced a letter from the admiral stating that he [Breese] was to represent the admiral in the assault. With praiseworthy zeal Parker assumed the role of an inferior rank, in deference to the admiral's flag, and the columns actually in movement were proceeding by the flank under the shelving beach, which afforded partial protection from the enemy's fire.

In his report, in reference to preliminary arrangements, Fleet-Captain Breese says: "Lieutenant Preston with a detail of men from the vessels, threw up, within six hundred yards of the fort, a well-protected breastwork, and from that gradually advanced to within two hundred yards a succession of rifle-pits, which were most promptly occupied by a line of skirmishers composed of marines under Lieutenant Fagan. The manner in which this was done reflects most creditably upon Lieutenant Preston." He states further that four lines of assault were intended, the first of marines, Captain L. L. Dawson; the second of sailors from the first and fourth divisions of the fleet, under Cushman; the third, sailors from the second division, under Parker; the fourth, the sailors from the third division of the fleet, under Selfridge.

“It was intended that the men should assault in line, the marines acting as sharpshooters, and the different lines were to charge over them ; but from the difficulty I had of informing myself of the time when the army was to assault, which was to guide our movements, that moment found us too far off to move to the attack unless under cover.”¹

“At three o'clock the signal came, the vessels changed their fire to the upper batteries ; all the steam-whistles were blown, and the troops and sailors dashed ahead, nobly vying with each other to reach the top of the parapet. . . . The sailors took to the assault by the flank along the beach, while the troops rushed in at the left [right?], through the palisades that had been knocked away by the fire of our guns.”²

Fifty steam-whistles from the vessels, blown long and loud, and the sound of shells bursting far beyond the near faces of Fort Fisher, upon which assaulting columns were advancing, gave notice within every bomb-proof of a movement. The army force, managed dexterously, had been placed under cover close to the land face of the fort. It advanced rapidly, gained and held the western end of that parapet and between the traverses, but the sailors and marines had nearly half a mile before them, along a line, too, enfiladed by low and more distant guns that swept the ground with grape and shells. The enemy swarmed the bastion and delivered deadly volleys at distances at which the cutlasses and revolvers in the hands of the sailors were quite inoperative, and yet many of the assailants reached, and some of them passed through the line of palisades that remained in part, and now afforded them partial protection, and the only one, from certain death ; others farther away, and

¹ Captain Brees's Report.

² Admiral Porter's Report.

still advancing, seeing that to press on would simply end in measuring their length upon the sand, turned, fled in haste up the beach, and sought the cover of the pits and trench dug some hours before, too distant to enable even the marines with their arms to return an effective fire. A doubt may be ventured whether any troops, however armed, could have effected an advance on this line of assault at that time.

“When it was discovered that the army column was moving to attack, the navy columns were ordered to advance by the flank along the beach, with the hope of forming them for the assault under cover of the marines; but exposed to a galling fire of musketry, only four hundred yards distance, threw a portion of the marines into the first line, and the rest of them did not take position as they should.

“The second and third lines came along and the heads of the three lines joined and formed one compact column, which filing up to the sea face of Fort Fisher, assaulted to within fifty yards of the parapet, which was lined by one dense mass of musketeers, who played sad havoc with our men. Although exposed to a most severe fire from the enemy, the men were rallied three times under the personal encouragement and exposure of their commanding officers, but failed to gain much ground.”¹

Captain Breese mentioned the gallantry of many officers, among whom was his senior, Lieutenant-Commander Parker, who led the third line of assault, if the columns advancing as above described can be called lines of assault.

In fact, the palisades, a shelving sea-beach, the rifle-pits, some small sand-hills, and the trench before mentioned served partially to protect the survivors of the heads of columns from the fire of the small arms on the bastion until the

¹ Captain Breese's Report.

heavy guns of the fleet again opened on that part of the fort, and made it necessary for the Confederates to look to their safety.

In the meantime, the National troops having gained the parapets on their front, had carried seven of the traverses most to the west, without serious loss, attacked the traverses more toward the sea, one after the other, and the vessels farthest in, especially the Ironsides and the monitors, resumed a fire of heavy shells between the traverses in advance of the troops, as they carried traverse after traverse, most obstinately defended as they were by the Confederates. But the odds were against them. They had to face as gallant men pressing onward as the Confederate defenders, who were flanked by a destructive fire of heavy shells; they had, in fact, either to abandon traverse after traverse or be killed where they stood. By nightfall the bastion was carried and some of the traverses on the sea face.

As opportunity offered, officers and men of the navy who had been held fast under their imperfect cover, found their way around the palisades into the army lines or went within them higher up. Lieutenant Cushing, who was wounded, organized the sailors and took charge of a line of breastworks to protect the rear from a Confederate attack from the north along the sandspit, and thus released additional troops, who joined those already within the fort.

But while the battle raged hot in the fort and its defenders looked for relief from Hoke's division along the peninsula, and have upbraided General Bragg because it did not advance, the half dozen gunboats placed close along the beach north of General Terry's lines, defended by General Paine's brigade, about 4 P.M. saw from their mast-heads Hoke's skirmish line advancing, and with shells exerted a restraining influence. Had assaulting columns followed the

skirmish line, they certainly would have reached General Terry's intrenchments in bad plight, and admitting that line had been carried, the Confederates would not have been formidable after a march of two miles toward Fort Fisher on an open sandspit under the fire of gunboats.

Shortly after ten o'clock resistance in Fort Fisher ceased, the Confederates retreating, as is stated by Colonel Lamb, without ammunition, to the innermost point, from whence such of them as had the means of transportation escaped. Lieutenant Chapman and others of the Confederate Navy are known to have done so, but the whole number that fled is not ascertainable. When the sound of fire-arms had ceased, and it was known the enemy had surrendered, the sky was illuminated by hundreds of rockets from the fleet, and the remote works for the defence of the entrances to Cape Fear River were thus incidentally apprised that their defenders had the alternative in prospect to surrender or to precipitately retreat.

In the Appendix will be found the list of the vessels engaged, by whom commanded, the batteries, and the casualties in the fleet.

Among the killed in the assault were Lieutenants Preston and Porter, both of them young officers of great ability and admirable qualities; also Assistant-Surgeon Longshaw and Ensign Wiley, and by the explosion of the magazine, Paymaster Gillett and Ensign Leighton. There were wounded in the assault, Lieutenant-Commander Allen, Lieutenants Bache, Lamson, and Baury; Ensigns Evans, Harris, Chester, Bertwistle, O'Connor, Coffin, and Wood; Acting-Master Louch, and Mates Green, Simms, and Aldridge.

In relation to Flag-Captain Breese, who led the assault, Lieutenant-Commander Parker said in his report: "He led the advance to the palisades, and when he saw the rear de-

laying, endeavored, sword in hand, to bring them forward to our support. Failing to accomplish this, he returned, under a shower of bullets directed at him alone, to the sand-hills at 'C,' and when it seemed no longer useful to remain there coolly followed the retreating mass. How he escaped death is a marvel."

In relation to Lieutenant-Commander Daniels, he says: "He came ashore in command of the party from his vessel. Although fitter for the sick-bed of a hospital than for the field, he persisted in going to the assault. He started with us, marched until his strength gave out, and his weak body was unable to carry his brave heart forward, when, by my orders, he went into the trench thrown up by Lieutenant Preston's party." An interesting letter from Colonel Lamb to Parker is given in the foot-note.¹

In his report, the fleet-captain attributes "the failure of the assault to the absence of the marines from their position, as their fire would have enabled our boarders to use their

¹ NORFOLK, VA., January 15, 1879.

CAPTAIN JAMES PARKER:

Dear Sir—In reply to your recent letter, I would state that I was colonel in command of the Confederate garrison of Fort Fisher, North Carolina, upon the occasion of its assault and capture by the United States forces on this day fourteen years ago. The attacking column of the army was hid and protected by the river bank as it approached the left flank of the work, but the naval column came up the open beach upon our centre. As its success would have been disastrous, I concentrated all available guns upon this column, and met its assault with the larger portion of my men, posting them upon the ramparts so as to fire down upon the sailors and marines. I particularly noticed in the assault an officer who seemed to lead the column, and who was almost recklessly brave, and directed my men to pick him and other officers off, to discourage the assailants. When we afterward met on board the steamship California, at Old Point Comfort (where you had come to see if you could be of service to me in my wounded condition), you can imagine my surprise, after I had described this officer's dress to you, to learn that you were he, and the pleasure it gave me to know that so brave and gallant a foe had escaped.

With best wishes, yours very truly,

WILLIAM LAMB.

cutlasses and pistols most effectively. By this I would imply the lack of proper organization, it being impossible in the short space of time, on account of so many small squads of men from the different vessels in one mass, lacking proper company formations, and wholly unacquainted with each other, to secure such organization. This led to the confusion exhibited, for it was not due to any want of personal valor on the part of the officers or men."

A more thorough organization, and a studied preparation with proper arms in the hands of the sailors instead of cutlasses, would have made the gallantry displayed by many serve a more effective purpose, and, indeed, would probably have transformed putative cowardice into effective endeavor. There are few men so stupid or so sublimated as to march on an enemy when the palpable result is simply to be shot. Had parallel lines of trenches been dug during the night on the line between the ironclads and the northeast bastion, extending them to the sea at such distances from the fort as might have been found practicable, and the sailors been properly armed, that bastion might not have proven so popular a point of defence as it evidently was, as seen from the fleet. No reflection is intended on the defenders of the fort, who certainly in the second attack exhibited throughout the utmost pertinacity and courage.

The morning following the fall of the defences of New Inlet, as soon as a channel could be found and buoyed, the light-draught gunboats were taken over the outer bar as fast as possible, and as there is a shoaler one within, similar to the "bulkhead" at Hatteras Inlet, it was only on the forenoon of the 20th that all of the gunboats assigned for operations were within the river proper. Commander Truxton, of the *Tacony*, reported as follows: "In Fort Lamb was a galvanic battery in good working order, connecting

with copper wires, which I this morning [19th of January] caused to be under-run, and which I found led directly across the river to the magazine in Fort Fisher. This, I believe, will fully account for the mysterious explosion on the 16th instant, by which over two hundred gallant men lost their lives."

In reply to a letter of General Bragg, published in Vol. X., "Southern Historical Society Papers," Colonel Lamb in the same volume, p. 360, indignantly denies that the troops under his command just after the fall of Fort Fisher were drunk. He says: "I had no liquor for distribution to the garrison, and what remained in the hospital bomb-proof was captured by some sailors from the fleet, who becoming intoxicated with it, entered the reserve magazine the morning after the battle seeking plunder, and caused its explosion, which resulted in the death and wounding of nearly two hundred brave men."

Colonel Lamb seemed at the time to be either indifferent to or ignorant of the report of Truxton. The existence of the insulated wire and galvanic battery could hardly be unknown to him, and would seem a more reasonable explanation of the cause of the explosion of the magazine than drunken sailors, in relation to whom we have no other accounts than the one above given.

Admitting the existence of the appliances establishes the existence of a purpose in an eventuality to blow up the magazine. If executed, as seems altogether probable, by a Confederate, with or without orders, the perpetrator had sooner or later the knowledge that he had destroyed quite as many of his former comrades as his foes. Whatever the cause, the magazine in Fort Fisher was blown up soon after sunrise on the morning of the 16th, the day following the surrender of the fort.

Fort Fisher had a northern or land face of 480 yards and mounted on it 21 guns, and a sea face of 1,300 yards, upon which were mounted 17 guns. The heavy calibres and character of the guns will appear in the Appendix or in the plan of the work. The parapets were 25 feet thick and an average of 20 feet in height; traverses ten feet higher, sloping back on their tops, were 8 to 12 feet thick. The traverses were generally bomb-proofed for men or magazines. Thirty bomb-proofs and magazines had a superficial area of 14,500 feet, not including the main magazine, which was exploded.

In all the works defending the two entrances of Cape Fear River were found one hundred and sixty-nine pieces of artillery, nearly all of which were heavy, and two thousand stand of small arms.

In common with his comrades afloat, the writer would fail in his duty were he to omit an expression of the universal sentiment of admiration of the ability and courage shown by General Terry, his Chief-of-Staff, General Comstock, and of General Ames, who led the assaulting columns, and of their gallant comrades, the living and the dead, who achieved this gallant work. Nothing could exceed the devotion and the courage shown by them.

The army losses in killed and severely wounded in the assault are given as 700. When the work accomplished is considered the losses are light, which show the true merit of the soldier. They met and conquered not less than 2,500 men in the best constructed earthwork known; 112 officers and 1,971 enlisted men were taken prisoners.

The night of the 16th and 17th was lurid with burning forts and barracks on Smith's Island, Fort Caswell, and elsewhere, and from time to time the explosions of powder magazines "vexed the dull ear of night." As soon as possible, after getting into the river, Admiral Porter pressed on

with unabated energy and zeal with the gunboats within the river, which was filled with torpedoes. The work of dragging for them was painfully slow and laborious. The army was pressing onward also on both banks of the river to Wilmington.

The march of General Sherman had been delayed by rains; a considerable force under Bragg opposed the progress of the comparatively small one under General Terry, who could well afford to move cautiously, as the end was inevitable and could not be far off.

For the reduction of Wilmington General Schofield advanced from Smithville on the 17th of February. At the same time Admiral Porter attacked Fort Anderson, situated on the river, nearly half way to Wilmington, the monitor *Montauk* close to the works, and the gunboats *Pawtuxet*, *Lenapee*, *Unadilla*, and *Pequot* at some distance; the river had been previously dragged for torpedoes. The attacking force was limited, by reason of the difficulty of having more vessels in position. The following day (18th), in order to get more batteries to bear, at 8 A.M. the monitor *Montauk* led, followed by the *Mackinaw*, *Huron*, *Sassacus*, *Pontoosuc*, *Maratanza*, *Lenapee*, *Unadilla*, *Pawtuxet*, *Osceola*, *Shawmut*, *Seneca*, *Nyack*, *Chippewa*, and *Little Ada*. They anchored in position and maintained a heavy fire during the day. At 3 P.M. the fort no longer replied, but the fire was maintained by the fleet until after dark, and throughout the night with diminished intensity.

Aware that General Schofield was on the point of cutting off their retreat, the garrison abandoned the work during the night, carrying away six field pieces. Ten heavy guns were found in the fort. The casualties during the day in the attacking force were 3 killed and 4 wounded.

On the 20th and 21st the boats of the fleet were employed

in dragging for torpedoes in the waters over which the gunboats had to pass to attack the batteries higher up. While thus employed a torpedo exploded under the bow of a boat of the Shawmut, killing two men and wounding an officer and one man.

On the 22d Admiral Porter reports that Wilmington had been evacuated and was in possession of the Union troops. On the evacuation of Fort Anderson the gunboats had pushed up as far as the depth of water would permit, an army force pushing up on both sides of the river, on the hard ground, more or less distant from intervening marshes. At Big Island the channel was sounded and buoyed, the gunboats moved up, and fire was opened on Fort Strong, the work commanding the principal obstructions ; the fire soon drove the enemy from the fort. During the engagement a shell struck the *Sassacus* below the water-line, causing her to leak badly ; she received several other shots.

During the night of the 20th, not having further use for them, as they intended to evacuate Wilmington, the enemy sent down two hundred floating torpedoes, which for the most part were sunk by musketry fire ; one that lodged in the wheel of the *Osceola* blew the wheelhouse to pieces and knocked down bulkheads inboard, but did not damage the hull. The following morning fishing-nets were spread across the river above the vessels to intercept torpedoes. The army had also engaged Fort Strong. The admiral closes by saying that he had the pleasure of hoisting the Union flag over it, and that day being the anniversary of the birth of Washington, at noon would fire a national salute. No hostile gun was thereafter fired between Wilmington and the sea, but higher up, where the army of General Sherman was yet to pass, the war was not yet over.

Some of the smaller vessels of the navy ascended the river

as a supporting force as high as Fayetteville, and found sunk, as a channel obstruction, the Confederate privateer Chickamauga. A national salute, reverberating over the navigable waters of Cape Fear River, now restored to national authority, seemed a fitting close to nearly four years of civil war.

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUSIONS.

THE Navy Department had an immense work to perform in the civil war. Except so far as the purchase abroad of vessels of war was concerned, it had the markets of the world to supply its wants without impediment, and it had money without stint. That millions of dollars should have been wasted was a probable, not to say an inevitable result of a lack of preparation, and of empiricism, as shown in the construction of the *Chimo* and her twenty counterparts, known as the "totally submerged class of monitors." The defect of the latter was radical; no professional doctors could cure or even better them; their office was "to lie in cold obstruction and to rot." All that appears in these pages relating to them is given in the language of the Department, without comment.

To build and purchase vessels more or less adapted to war purposes; to fit, arm, officer, man, and provision them, and to keep up their supplies over a coast line of three thousand miles, with hundreds of inlets to blockade, and to provide fleets here and there to bombard, as at Fort Fisher, required great energy on the part of the Navy Department and its subordinates; and these onerous requirements were fulfilled with a reasonable degree of success and with an immense outlay of money.

There are teachings that seem to belong to war exclu-

sively. Officers learned to anchor vessels anywhere off the Southern coast, where they rode out with safety the heaviest gales that swept those waters during four years, and they learned to appreciate the advantage of carrying a heavy keedge on the quarter, ready to let go instantly when operating in narrow waters.

They learned, too, what was new then, the power of rifled guns at long distances against brick or stone forts, and also that wooden vessels armed with heavy spherical shell-guns, aided by a few ironclads, can smother and control the fire from an earthwork when brought within sixteen hundred yards of it, or better at two-thirds that distance; and further, that if vessels attack an earthwork there should be no cessation until the troops advance to the assault.

To the general, as well as the professional reader who has followed the writer through these pages, a few ideas are ventured in connection with the civil war.

Accepting the political conditions as existent facts presented by the late Alexander H. Stephens in his remarkable address at Milledgeville, Ga., on November 14, 1860, the reader is lost in wonder that a sanguinary war of four years' duration could have followed, without other inciting causes than those so fairly and clearly stated by him. Hundreds of thousands of men perished in battle or by disease through exposure; hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children, many of them former slaves, died from violence, exposure, and want. Thousands of millions of dollars were spent in war, by the North and by the South, and when the forces of the latter laid down their arms, they were absolutely without resources; many of the inhabitants in various sections would have suffered greatly, or actually perished, had not the gratuitous private charity of the North supplied shiploads of provisions immediately after the cessation of hostilities.

No one can deny the fact that the South commenced and continued the war with the utmost intensity of purpose, worthy of a sense of the most poignant wrongs. It is most difficult to reconcile this fact with the plain statements of Stephens, which were not, and never can be, fairly controverted.

In view of all this, does it not appear that the civil war was the result of prejudices, of obliquity, and misconceptions, the output of a long-continued material prosperity? Mankind after a time regard this as a normal condition, which is far from the fact. With the Jews of old the image of the Golden Calf seems but the symbol of great material prosperity, bringing in its train woes and repentance in sackcloth and ashes.

Eighteen years have passed since the Confederate forces laid down their arms and returned to their homes unharmed, nor has a human being been held to accountability for all the wretchedness and misery produced by the civil war; and yet we find that prejudices, unfounded and without reason, are still paraded as facts, and as justifications of a long and sanguinary struggle. May we not say, as a rational deduction, that the prejudices of men far outweigh their reason?

These reflections grew out of a conversation with a life-long friend that has lately passed away. He had been a large slave-owner, and a kind and considerate one; the comfortable cabins and the happy faces of the occupants, and the attention given them in sickness and in health could not fail to be observed. The gentleman referred to was opposed to secession, yet when the many around him insisted on war, he took up arms, and bravely did his part. When the war was over he was broken down in fortune and no longer young, but his courage did not forsake him, and he bravely

and honestly struggled to supply the necessities that existence imposes. Sitting in the gloam of the evening, a few years ago, he said: "Had we succeeded in our efforts, our troubles would have but begun. South Carolina on the one side, and Florida on the other, would have seceded from Georgia, and we would have been a dismembered people." In sadness and in toil he had passed many succeeding years, and these were his final reflections. May we not properly—nay, can we do other than give to such men our entire sympathy, and, in all sincerity, extend the hand of fellowship? He was a man of thought, of courage, of action, and of purpose; it is not given to the vulgar to be possessed of such qualities, whether it be the rich or the poor vulgar, whether it be the educated or the uneducated vulgar. With them thought and reason are as nothing; with them appetites, selfishness, and prejudices are everything.