

here a moment after the tug is ready to return. There is no money in the world which would justify me in risking my life here; and you have no duty here to perform, as I have, which requires you to risk yours. You *must not stay*," emphasizing the words very distinctly! "You must return, both you and Mr. Washburne, as soon as the tug is ready to go."

I felt somewhat disappointed at this, for I had fully expected to spend a day at least on board the *Benton*, and to visit the other vessels of the fleet, with many of the officers of which I was well acquainted. I did not believe there was much danger in remaining, for the shells of the enemy seemed to fall short; but within fifteen minutes after this, one of these interesting missiles struck the water fifty or a hundred feet from the side of the *Benton*. This satisfied me that Foote was right, and I did not insist on staying.

The Admiral was a great sufferer from sick headache. I remember visiting him in his room at the Planters' House in St. Louis, a day or two after the battle of Belmont, when he was suffering very severely from one of these attacks, which lasted two days. He was one of the most fascinating men in company

that I ever have met, being full of anecdote, and having a graceful, easy flow of language. He was likewise, ordinarily, one of the most amiable-looking of men; but when angered, as I once saw him, his face impressed me as being most savage and demoniacal, and I can imagine that at the head of a column or in an attack he would have been invincible. Some idea of the moral influence that he possessed over men may be gained from the fact that, long before the war, when commanding the United States fleet of three vessels in Chinese waters, he converted every officer and man in the fleet to the principles of temperance, and had every one of them sign the pledge. I believe that this was the beginning of the reform movement in the navy which led to the disuse of the rations of grog which used to be served to the sailors on shipboard at stated hours every day.

From my knowledge of Foote, I think that there is no doubt that if his health had not given way so early in the war, he would have gained laurels like those so gallantly won by Farragut. And, aside from his martial character, no officer ever surpassed him in those evidences of genuine refinement and delicacy which mark the true gentleman.

James B. Eads.

OPERATIONS OF THE WESTERN FLOTILLA.

INCLUDING ENGAGEMENTS AT BELMONT, FORT HENRY, FORT DONELSON, ISLAND NO. 10, FORT PILLOW, AND MEMPHIS.



FOOTE IN THE WHEEL-HOUSE.

AT the beginning of the War, the army and navy were mostly employed in protecting the loyal people who resided on the borders of the disaffected States, and in reconciling

for the defenses of Washington being scarce, five hundred of these sailors, with a battalion of marines (for guard duty), were sent to occupy the forts on Shuter's Hill, near Alexandria. The *Pensacola* and the Potomac flotilla and the seaboard navy yards required nearly all of the remaining unemployed seamen.

While Foote was improvising a flotilla for the Western rivers he was making urgent appeals to the Government for seamen. Finally some one at the Navy Department thought of the five hundred tars stranded on Shuter's Hill, and obtained an order for their transfer to Cairo, where they were placed on the receiving ship *Maria Denning*. There they met fresh-water sailors from our great lakes, and steam-boat hands from the Western rivers. Of the seamen from the East, there were Maine lumbermen, New Bedford whalers, New York liners, and Philadelphia sea-lawyers. The foreigners enlisted were mostly Irish, with a few English and Scotch, French,

those whose sympathies were opposed. But the defeat at Manassas and other reverses convinced the Government of the serious character of the contest, and of the necessity of more vigorous and extensive preparations for war. Our navy yards were soon filled with workmen; recruiting stations for unemployed seamen were established, and we soon had more sailors than were required for the ships that could be fitted for service. Artillerymen

Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes. The Northmen, considered the hardiest race in the world, melted away in the Southern sun with surprising rapidity.

On the gun-boat *Carondelet* were more young men perhaps than on any other vessel in the fleet. Philadelphians were in the majority; Bostonians came next, with a sprinkling from other cities, and just enough men-o'-war's men to leaven the lump with naval discipline. The *St. Louis* had more than its

ment was launched at Carondelet, near St. Louis. She was named the *St. Louis* by Admiral Foote; but there being another vessel of that name in the navy, she was afterward called the *De Kalb*. The other iron-clads, the *Cincinnati*, *Carondelet*, *Louisville*, *Mound City*, *Cairo*, and *Pittsburgh*, were launched soon after the *St. Louis*, Mr. Eads having pushed forward the work with most commendable zeal and energy. Two of these were built at Mound City, Ill. To the fleet of iron-clads above named were added the *Benton* (the largest and best vessel of the Western flotilla), the *Essex*, and a few smaller and partly armored gun-boats.

Flag-Officer Foote arrived at St. Louis on September 6th, and assumed command of the Western flotilla. He had been my fellow-midshipman in 1827, on board the United States ship *Natchez*, of the West India squadron, and was then a promising young officer. At Pensacola, in the fall of 1828, the ship was visited with yellow fever; and we had to go ashore and encamp on Santa Rosa Island, clean out and disinfect the ship, and sail to New York to escape the pestilence. From the *Natchez* Foote was transferred to the *Hornet*, of the same squadron, and was appointed her sailing-master. After he left the *Natchez*, we never met again until February, 1861, at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where he was the executive officer. Foote, Schenck, and myself were then the only survivors of the midshipmen of the *Natchez*, in her cruise of 1827, and now I am the only officer left.

During the cruise of 1827, while pacing the deck at night, on the lonely seas, and talking with a pious shipmate, Foote became convinced of the truth of the Christian religion, of which he was an earnest professor to the last. He rendered important service while in command of the brig *Perry*, on the coast of Africa, in 1849, in suppressing the slave-trade, and he greatly distinguished himself by his skill and gallantry in the attack upon the Barrier Forts, near Canton (1856), which he breached and carried by assault, leading the assailing column in person. He was slow and cautious in arriving at conclusions, but firm and tenacious of purpose. He has been called "the Stonewall Jackson of the Navy." He often preached to his crew on Sundays, and was always desirous of doing good. He was not a man of striking personal appearance, but there was a sailor-like heartiness and frankness about him that made his company very desirable.

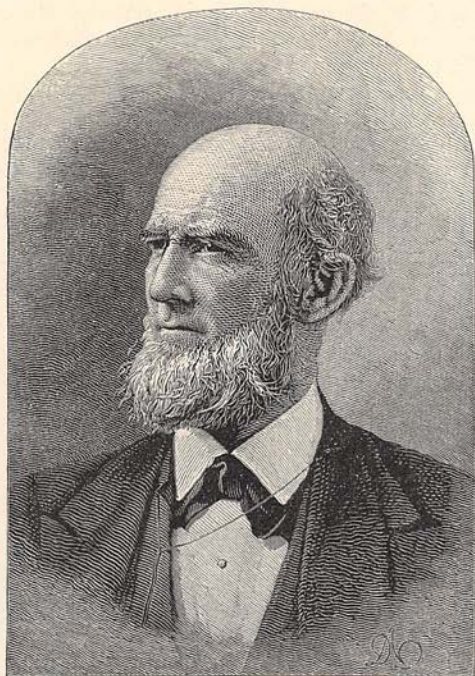
Flag-Officer Foote arrived at Cairo September 12th, and relieved Commander John Rodgers of the command of the station. The first operations of the Western flotilla con-



REGION OF FOOTE'S OPERATIONS.

share of men-o'-war's men, Lieutenant-Commander Paulding having had the first choice of a full crew, and having secured all the frigate *Sabine's* reenlisted men who had been sent West.

During the spring and summer of 1861, Commanders Rodgers, Stemple, Phelps, and Mr. James B. Eads had purchased, equipped, and manned, for immediate service on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, three wooden gun-boats—the *Taylor*, of six eight-inch shell-guns and one thirty-two pounder; the *Lexington*, of four eight-inch shell-guns and one thirty-two pounder, and the *Conestoga*, of three thirty-two pounder guns. This nucleus of the Mississippi flotilla (like the fleets of Perry, Macdonough, and Chauncey in the war of 1812) was completed with great skill and dispatch; they soon had full possession of the Western rivers above Columbus, Kentucky, and rendered more important service than as many regiments could have done. On October 12, 1861, the first of the seven iron-clad gun-boats ordered of Mr. Eads by the Govern-



Gen. B. Eads

sisted chiefly of reconnaissances on the Mississippi, Ohio, Cumberland, and Tennessee rivers. At this time it was under the control of the War Department, and acting in coöperation with the army under General Grant, whose headquarters were at Cairo.

THE BATTLE OF BELMONT.

ON the evening of the 6th of November, 1861, I received instructions from General Grant to proceed down the Mississippi with the wooden gun-boats *Taylor* and *Lexington* on a reconnaissance, and as convoy to some half-dozen transport steamers; but I did not know the character of the service expected of me until I anchored for the night, seven or eight miles below Cairo. Early the next morning, while the troops were being landed near Belmont, Missouri, opposite Columbus, Kentucky, I attacked the Confederate batteries, at the request of General Grant, as a diversion, which was done with some effect. But the superiority of the enemy's batteries on the bluffs at Columbus, both in the number and the quality of his guns, was so great that it would have been too hazardous to have remained long under his fire with such frail vessels as the *Tay-*

lor and *Lexington*, which were only expected to protect the land forces in case of a repulse. Having accomplished the object of the attack, the gun-boats withdrew, but returned twice during the day and renewed the contest. During the last of these engagements a cannon-ball passed obliquely through the side, deck, and scantling of the *Taylor*, killing one man and wounding others. This convinced me of the necessity of withdrawing my vessels, which had been moving in a circle to confuse the enemy's gunners. We fired a few more broadsides, therefore, and, perceiving that the firing had ceased at Belmont, an ominous circumstance, I returned to the landing, to protect the army and transports. In fact, the destruction of the gun-boats would have involved the loss of our army and our depot at Cairo, the most important one in the West.

Soon after we returned to the landing-place our troops began to appear, and the officers of the gun-boats were warned by General McClelland of the approach of the enemy. The Confederates came *en masse* through a corn-field, and opened with musketry and light artillery upon the transports, which were filled or being filled with our retreating soldiers. A well-directed fire from the

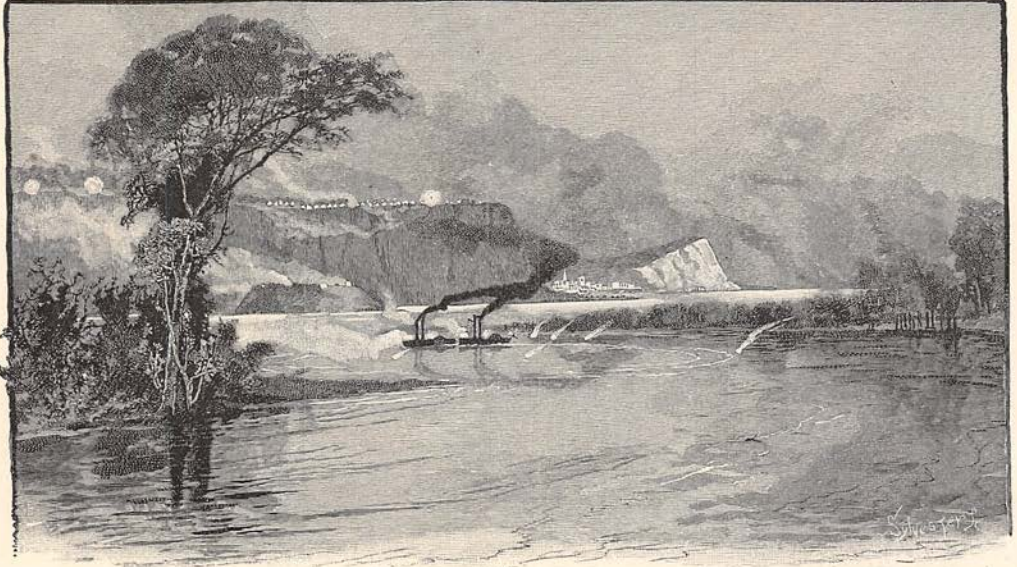
gun-boats made the enemy fly in the greatest confusion.*

Admiral Foote was at St. Louis when the battle of Belmont was fought, and, it appears, made no report to the Secretary of the Navy of the part which the gun-boats took in the action. Neither did he send my official report to the Navy Department. The officers of the vessels were highly complimented by

to inform the flag-officer of the General's intentions, which were kept perfectly secret.

THE BATTLE OF FORT HENRY.

DURING the winter of 1861-2 an expedition was planned by Flag-Officer Foote and Generals Grant and McClelland against Fort Henry, situated on the eastern bank of the

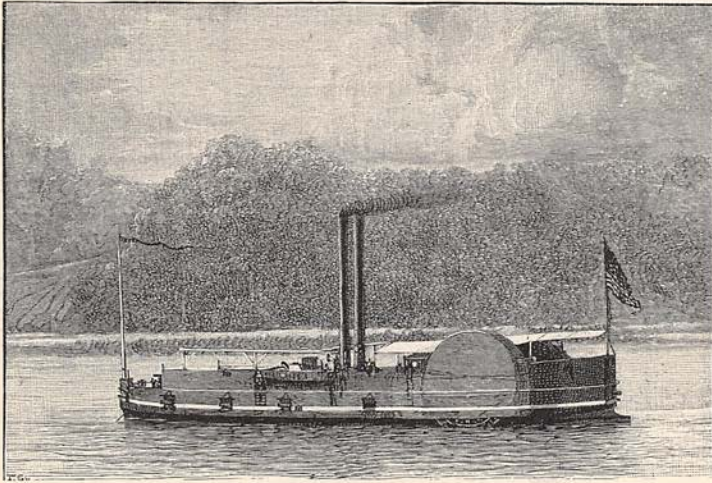


GUN-BOATS "TAYLOR" AND "LEXINGTON" ENGAGING THE CONFEDERATE BATTERIES OF COLUMBUS, KY., DURING THE BATTLE OF BELMONT. (DRAWN BY HARRY FENN, AFTER A CONTEMPORARY SKETCH BY ADMIRAL WALKER.)

General Grant for the important aid they rendered in this battle; and in his second official report of the action he made references to my report. It was impossible for me

Tennessee River, a short distance south of the line between Kentucky and Tennessee. In January the iron-clads were brought down to Cairo, and great efforts were made to prepare

* The Federal forces at Belmont numbered between 3500 and 4000. During the first half of the battle the Confederate force was probably less. General Polk in his report says that after the Confederate camp had been captured he sent over from Columbus six regiments under Pillow and Cheatham, which were directly engaged in recovering the lost ground, and two regiments, which, under his own direction, supported the flank movement. The loss on each side in killed, wounded, and missing was between 500 and 600. General Grant directed the movements on the field, and both he and his chief lieutenant, General McClelland, had horses shot under them. The following is part of a private letter from General Grant to his father, written on the night of the 8th: ". . . When all ready, we proceeded about one mile toward Belmont, opposite Columbus, when I formed the troops into line, and ordered two companies from each regiment to deploy as skirmishers and push on through the woods and discover the position of the enemy. They had gone but a little way when they were fired upon, and the ball may be said to have fairly opened. The whole command, with the exception of a small reserve, was then deployed in like manner and ordered forward. The order was obeyed with great alacrity, the men all showing great courage. . . . From here we fought our way from tree to tree through the woods to Belmont, about two and a half miles, the enemy contesting every foot of ground. Here the enemy had strengthened their position by felling the trees for two or three hundred yards, and sharpening their limbs, making a sort of abatis. Our men charged through, making the victory complete, giving us possession of their camp and garrison equipage, artillery, and everything else. We got a great many prisoners. The majority, however, succeeded in getting aboard their steamers and pushing across the river. We burned everything possible and started back, having accomplished all that we went for and even more. Belmont is entirely covered by the batteries from Columbus, and is worth nothing as a military position — cannot be held without Columbus. The object of the expedition was to prevent the enemy from sending a force into Missouri to cut off troops I had sent there for a special purpose, and to prevent reëncamping Price. Besides being well fortified at Columbus, their number far exceeded ours, and it would have been folly to have attacked them. We found the Confederates well armed and brave. On our return, stragglers that had been left in our rear (now front) fired into us, and more recrossed the river, and gave us battle for a full mile, and afterward at the boats when we were embarking. There was no hasty retreating or running away. Taking into account the object of the expedition, the victory was complete."— Ed.



UNITED STATES GUN-BOAT "TAYLOR." (DRAWN BY ADMIRAL WALKE.)

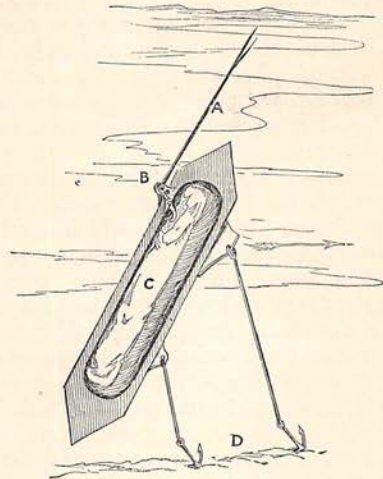
them for immediate service, but only four of the iron-clads could be made ready as soon as required. They were the *Essex*, Captain Wm. D. Porter, mounting four nine-inch guns; the *Cincinnati*, flag-steamer, Commander Stemble; the *Carondelet*, Commander Walke; and the *St. Louis*, Lieutenant-Commander Paulding. Each of the last three carried four seven-inch rifled, three eight-inch shell, and six thirty-two-pound guns.

On the morning of the 2d of February the flag-officer left Cairo with the four armored vessels above named, and the wooden gun-boats *Taylor*, *Lexington*, and *Conestoga*, and in the evening reached the Tennessee River. On the 4th the fleet anchored six miles below Fort Henry. The next day, while reconnoitering, the *Essex* received a shot which passed through the pantry and the officers' quarters and visited the steering. On the 5th the flag-officer inspected the officers and crew at quarters, addressed them, and offered a prayer.

Heavy rains had been falling, and the river had risen rapidly to an unusual height; the swift current brought down an immense quantity of heavy drift-wood, lumber, fences, and large trees, and it required all the steam-power of the *Carondelet*, with both anchors down, and the most strenuous exertions of the officers and crew, working day and night, to prevent the boat from being dragged down-stream. This adversity appeared to dampen the ardor of our crew, but when the next morning they saw a large number of white objects, which through the fog looked like polar bears, coming down the stream, and ascertained that they were the enemy's torpedoes forced from their moorings by the powerful current, they took heart, regarding the freshet as providential

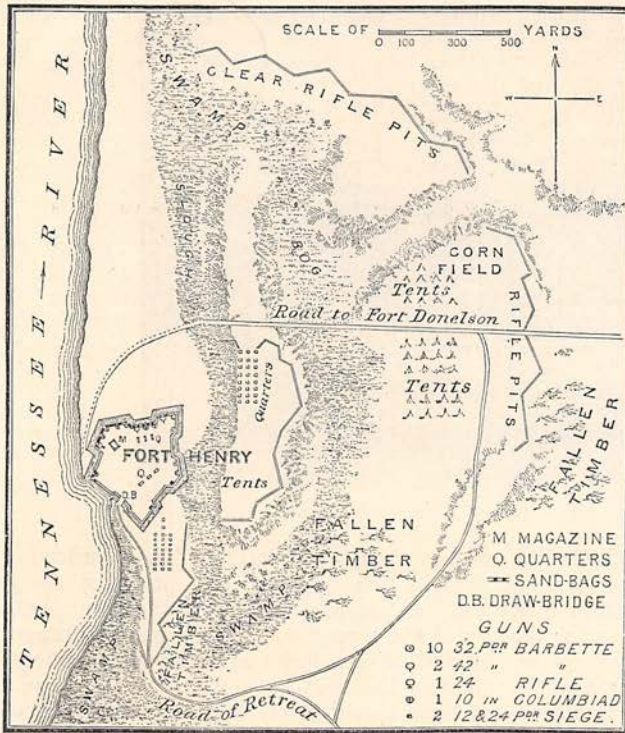
and as a presage of victory. The overflowing river, which opposed our progress, swept away in broad daylight this hidden peril; for if the torpedoes had not been disturbed, or had broken loose at night while we were shoving the drift-wood from our bows, some of them would surely have exploded near or under our vessels.

The 6th dawned mild and cheering, with a light breeze, sufficient to clear away the smoke. At 10:20 the flag-officer made the signal to



CROSS-SECTION OF A CONFEDERATE TORPEDO FOUND IN THE TENNESSEE RIVER.

A, iron rod armed with prongs to fasten upon the bottom of boats going up-stream and act upon B, a lever connecting with trigger to explode a cap and ignite the powder. C, canvas bag containing 70 lbs. powder. D, anchors to hold torpedo in place. This torpedo consisted of a stout sheet-iron cylinder, pointed at both ends, about 5½ feet long and 1 foot in diameter. The iron lever was 3½ feet long, and armed with prongs to catch in the bottom of a boat. This lever was constructed to move the iron rod on inside of cylinder, thus acting upon the trigger of the lock to explode the cap and fire the powder. The machine was anchored, presenting the prongs in such a way that boats going down-stream should slide over them, but those coming up should catch.



prepare for battle, and at 10:50 came the order to get under way and steam up to Panther Island, about two miles below Fort Henry. At 11:35, having passed the foot of the island, we formed in line and approached the fort four abreast,—the *Essex* on the right, then the *Cincinnati*, *Carondelet*, and *St. Louis*. The last two, for want of room, were interlocked, and remained in that position during the fight.

As we slowly passed up this narrow stream, not a sound could be heard or a moving object seen in the dense woods which overhung the dark swollen river. The gun-crews of the *Carondelet* stood silent at their posts, impressed with the serious and important character of the service before them. About noon the fort and the Confederate flag came suddenly into view, the barracks, the new earthworks, and the great guns well manned. The captains of our guns were men-of-war's men, good shots, and had their men well drilled.

The flag-steamer, the *Cincinnati*, fired the first shot as the signal for the others to begin. At once the fort responded from her eleven heavy guns, and was ablaze with the flame of cannon. The wild whistle of their rifle-shells was heard on every side of us. On the *Carondelet* not a word was spoken more than at ordinary drill, except when Matthew Arthur, captain of the starboard bow-gun, asked per-

mission to fire at one or two of the enemy's retreating vessels, as he could not at that time bring his gun to bear on the fort. He fired one shot, which passed through the upper cabin of a hospital-boat, whose flag was not seen, but injured no one. The *Carondelet* was struck in about thirty places by the enemy's heavy shot and shell. Eight struck within two feet of the bow-ports, leading to the boilers, around which barricades had been built—a precaution which I always took before going into action, and which on several occasions prevented an explosion. The *Carondelet* fired one hundred and seven shell and solid shot; none of her officers or crew was killed or wounded.

The firing from the armored vessels was rapid and well sustained from the beginning of the attack, and seemingly accurate, as we could occasionally see the earth thrown in great heaps over the enemy's guns.

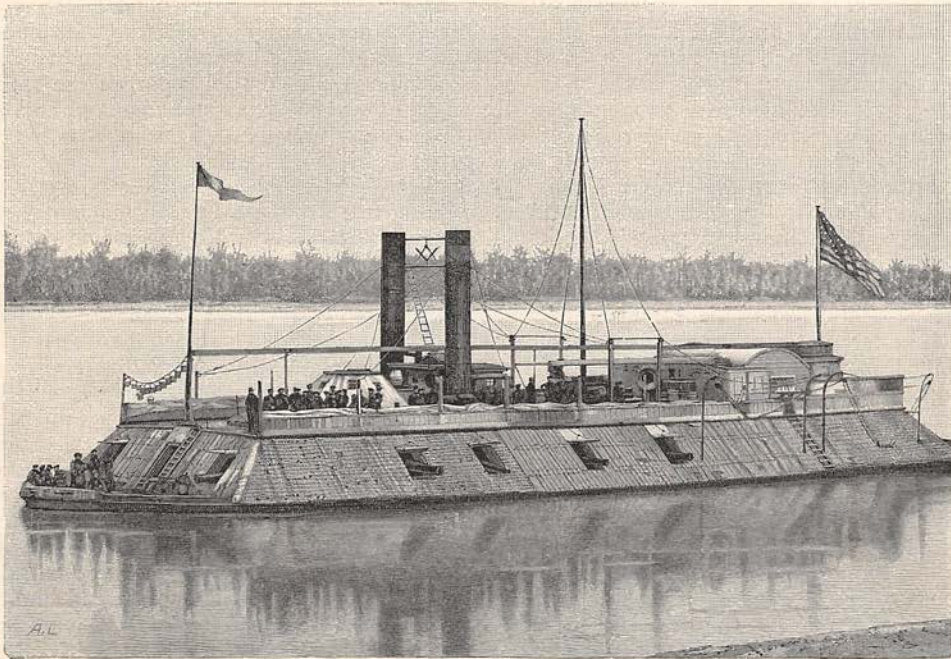
Nor was the fire of the Confederates to be despised; their heavy shot broke and scattered our iron-plating as if it had been putty, and often passed completely through the casemates. But our old men-of-war's men, captains of the guns, proud to show their worth in battle, infused life and courage into their young comrades. And when these experienced gunners saw a shot coming toward a port, they had the coolness and discretion to order their men to bow down, to save their heads.

After nearly an hour's hard fighting, the captain of the *Essex*, going below, addressed the officers and crew, complimented the first division for their splendid execution, and asked them if they did not want to rest and give three cheers, which were given with a will. But the feelings of joy and the bright anticipations of victory on board the *Essex* were suddenly changed by a terrible calamity, which I cannot better describe than by quoting from a letter to me from James Laning, second master of the *Essex*. He says:

"A shot from the enemy pierced the casemate just above the port-hole on the port side, then through the middle boiler, killing in its flight Acting Master's Mate S. B. Brittan, Jr., and opening a chasm for the escape of the scalding steam and water. The scene which followed was almost indescribable. The writer, who had gone aft in obedience to orders only a few moments before (and was thus providentially saved), was met by Fourth Master Walker, followed by a crowd

of men rushing aft. Walker called to me to go back; that a shot from the enemy had carried away the steam-pipe. I at once ran to the stern of the vessel, and looking out of the stern-port, saw a number of our brave fellows struggling in the water. The steam and hot water in the forward gun-deck had driven all who were able to get out of the ports overboard, except a few who were fortunate enough to cling to the casemate outside. When the explosion took place Captain Porter was standing directly in front of the boilers, with his aide, Mr. Brittan, at his side. He at

seaman named James Coffey, who was shot-man to the No. 2 gun, was on his knees, in the act of taking a shell from the box to be passed to the loader. The escaping steam and hot water had struck him square in the face, and he met death in that position. When I told Captain Porter that we were victorious, he immediately rallied, and, raising himself on his elbow, called for three cheers, and gave two himself, falling exhausted on the mattress in his effort to give the third. A seaman named Jasper P. Breas, who was badly scalded, sprang to his feet, exclaiming: 'Sur-



UNITED STATES GUN-BOAT "ST. LOUIS." (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.)

once rushed for the port-hole on the starboard side, and threw himself out, expecting to go into the river. A seaman, John Walker, seeing his danger, caught him around the waist, and supporting him with one hand, clung to the vessel with the other, until, with the assistance of another seaman, who came to the rescue, they succeeded in getting the captain upon a narrow guard or projection, which ran around the vessel, and thus enabled him to make his way outside to the after-port, where I met him. Upon speaking to him, he told me he was badly hurt, and that I must hunt for Mr. Riley, the First Master, and if he was disabled I must take command of the vessel, and man the battery again. Mr. Riley was unharmed, and already in the discharge of his duties as Captain Porter's successor. In a very few minutes after the explosion our gallant ship (which, in the language of Flag-Officer Foote, had fought most effectually through two-thirds of the engagement) was drifting slowly away from the scene of action; her commander badly wounded, a number of her officers and crew dead at their post, while many others were writhing in their last agony. As soon as the scalding steam would admit, the forward gun-deck was explored. The pilots, who were both in the pilot-house, were scalded to death. Marshall Ford, who was steering when the explosion took place, was found at his post at the wheel, standing erect, his left hand holding the spoke and his right hand grasping the signal-bell rope. A

rendered! I must see that with my own eyes before I die.' Before any one could interfere, he clambered up two short flights of stairs to the spar-deck. He shouted 'Glory to God!' and sank exhausted on the deck. Poor Jasper died that night."

The *Essex* before the accident had fired seventy shots from her two nine-inch guns. A powder boy, Job Phillips, fourteen years of age, coolly marked down upon the casemate every shot his gun had fired, and his account was confirmed by the gunner in the magazine. Her loss in killed, wounded, and missing was thirty-two.

The *St. Louis* was struck seven times. She fired one hundred and seven shots during the action. No one on board the vessel was killed or wounded.

Flag-Officer Foote during the action was in the pilot-house of the *Cincinnati*, which received thirty-two shots. Her chimneys, after-cabin, and boats were completely riddled. Two of her guns were disabled. The only fatal shot she received passed through the

larboard front, killing one man and wounding several others. I happened to be looking at the flag-steamer when one of the enemy's heavy shot struck her. It had the effect, apparently, of a thunder-bolt, ripping her side-timbers and scattering the splinters over the vessel. She did not slacken her speed, but moved on as though nothing unexpected had happened.

From the number of times the gun-boats were struck, it would appear that the Confederate artillery practice, at first, at least, was as good, if not better, than ours. This, however, was what might have been expected, as the Confederate gunners had the advantage of practicing on the ranges the gun-boats would probably occupy as they approached the fort. The officers of the gun-boats, on the contrary, with guns of different caliber and unknown range, and without practice, could not point their guns with as much accuracy. To counterbalance this advantage of the enemy, the gun-boats were much better protected by their casemates for distant firing than the fort by its fresh earthworks. The Confederate soldiers fought as valiantly and as skillfully as the Union sailors. Only after a most determined resistance, and after all his heavy guns had been silenced, did General Tilghman lower his flag. The Confederate loss, as reported, was six killed and nine or ten wounded. The prisoners, including the general and his staff, numbered about eighty, the remainder of the garrison, about 3100 men, having escaped to Fort Donelson.

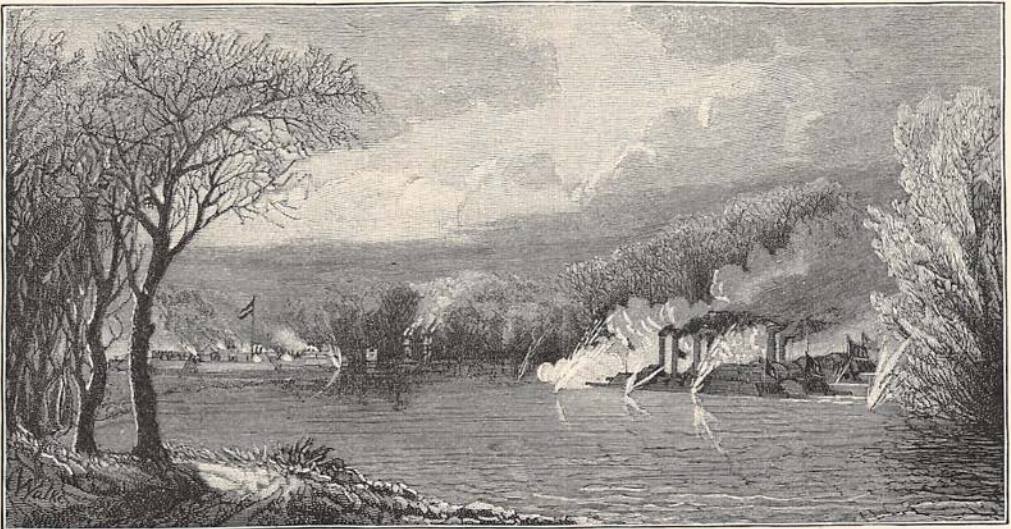
Our gun-boats continued to approach the

fort until General Tilghman, with two or three of his staff, came off in a small boat to the *Cincinnati* and surrendered the fort to Flag-Officer Foote, who sent for me, introduced me to General Tilghman, and gave me orders to take command of the fort and hold it until the arrival of General Grant.

General Tilghman was a soldierly-looking man, a little above medium height, with piercing black eyes and a resolute, intelligent expression of countenance. He was dignified and courteous, and won the respect and sympathy of all who became acquainted with him. In his official report of the battle he said that his officers and men fought with the greatest bravery until 1:50 P. M., when seven of his eleven guns were disabled; and, finding it impossible to defend the fort, and wishing to spare the lives of his gallant men, after consultation with his officers he surrendered the fort.

It was reported at the time that, in surrendering to Flag-Officer Foote, the Confederate general said, "I am glad to surrender to so gallant an officer," and that Foote replied, "You do perfectly right, sir, in surrendering, but you should have blown my boat out of the water before I would have surrendered to you." I was with Foote soon after the surrender, and I cannot believe that such a reply was made by him. He was too much of a gentleman to say anything calculated to wound the feelings of an officer who had defended his post with signal courage and fidelity, and whose spirits were clouded by the adverse fortunes of war.

When I took possession of the fort the



BATTLE OF FORT HENRY. GUN-BOATS "ST. LOUIS," "CARONDELET," "ESSEX," AND "CINCINNATI."
(DRAWN BY ADMIRAL WALKE.)

Confederate surgeon was laboring with his coat off to relieve and save the wounded; and although the officers and crews of the gun-boats gave three hearty cheers when the Confederate flag was hauled down, the first inside view of the fort sufficed to suppress every feeling of exultation and to excite our deepest pity. On every side the blood of the dead and wounded was intermingled with the earth and their implements of war. Their largest gun, a 128-pounder, was dismantled and filled with earth by the bursting of one of our shells near its muzzle; the carriage of another was broken to pieces, and two dead men lay near it, almost covered with heaps of earth; a rifled gun had burst, throwing its mangled gunners into the water. But few of the garrison escaped unhurt.

General Grant, with his staff, rode into the fort about three o'clock on the same day, and relieved me of the command. The general and staff then accompanied me on board the *Carondelet* (anchored near the fort), where he complimented the officers of the flotilla in the highest terms for the gallant manner in which they had captured Fort Henry. He had expected his troops to take part in a land attack, but the heavy rains had made the direct roads to the fort almost impassable.

The wooden gun-boats *Conestoga*, Commander S. L. Phelps, *Taylor*, Lieutenant-Commander William Gwin, and *Lexington*, Lieutenant J. W. Shirk, engaged the enemy at long range in the rear of the iron-clads. After the battle they pursued the enemy's transports up the river, and the *Conestoga* captured the steamer *Eastport*. The news of the capture of Fort Henry was received with great rejoicing all over the North.

On the 7th I received on board the *Carondelet* Colonels Webster, Rawlins, and McPherson, with a company of troops, and under instructions from General Grant proceeded up the Tennessee River, and completed the



GENERAL LLOYD TILGHMAN, CONFEDERATE COMMANDER AT FORT HENRY. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.)

destruction of the bridge of the Memphis and Bowling Green Railroad.

THE GUN-BOATS AT FORT DONELSON.

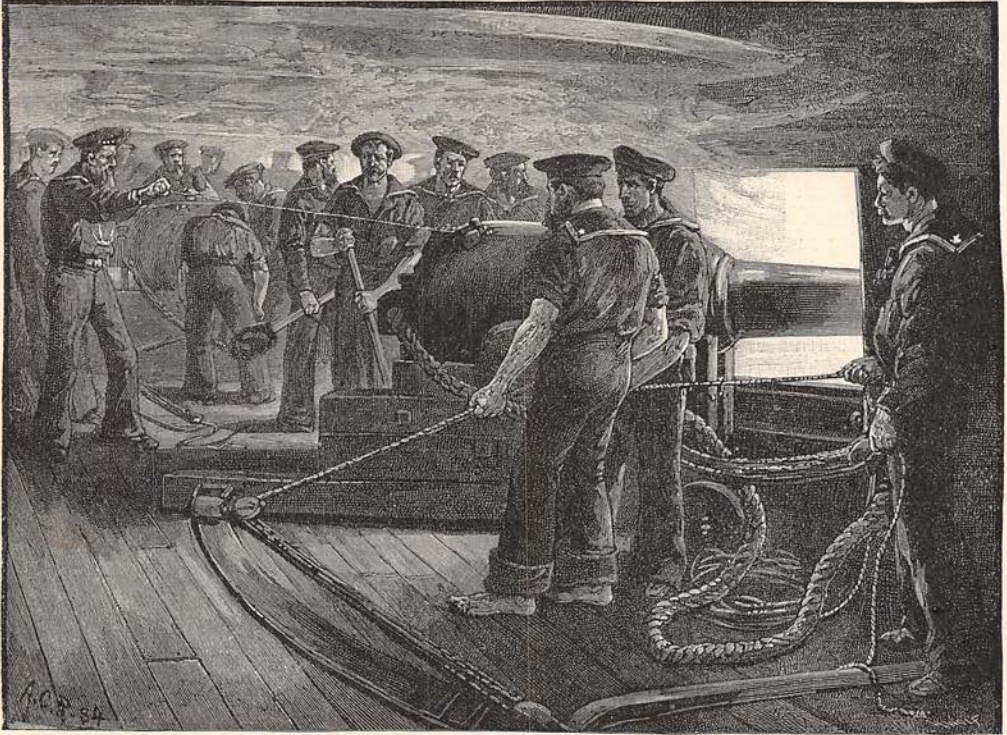
ON returning from my expedition up the Tennessee River, General Grant requested me to hasten to Fort Donelson with the *Carondelet*, *Taylor*, and *Lexington*, and announce my arrival by firing signal guns. The object of this movement was to take possession of the river as soon as possible, and to engage the enemy's attention by making formidable demonstrations before the fort, and prevent it from being reinforced. On February 10th the *Carondelet* alone (towed by the transport *Alps*) proceeded up the Cumberland River, and on the 12th arrived a few miles below the fort.

Fort Donelson occupied one of the best defensive positions on the river. It was built on a bold bluff about one hundred and twenty feet in height, on the west side of the river, where it

makes a slight bend to the eastward. It had three batteries, mounting in all sixteen guns; the lower battery, about twenty feet above the water, had eight 32-pounders, and one 128-pounder; the second, about fifty feet above the water, was of about equal strength; the third, on the summit, had three or four heavy field-guns, or siege-guns, as they appeared to us from a distance.

When the *Carondelet*, her tow being cast off, came in sight of the fort and proceeded

about three miles and anchored. But the sound of her guns aroused our soldiers on the southern side of the fort into action; one report says that when they heard the guns of the *avant courier* of the fleet, they gave cheer upon cheer, and rather than permit the sailors to get ahead of them again, they engaged in skirmishes with the enemy, and began the terrible battle of the three days following.* On the *Carondelet* we were isolated and beset with dangers from the enemy's lurking sharpshooters.



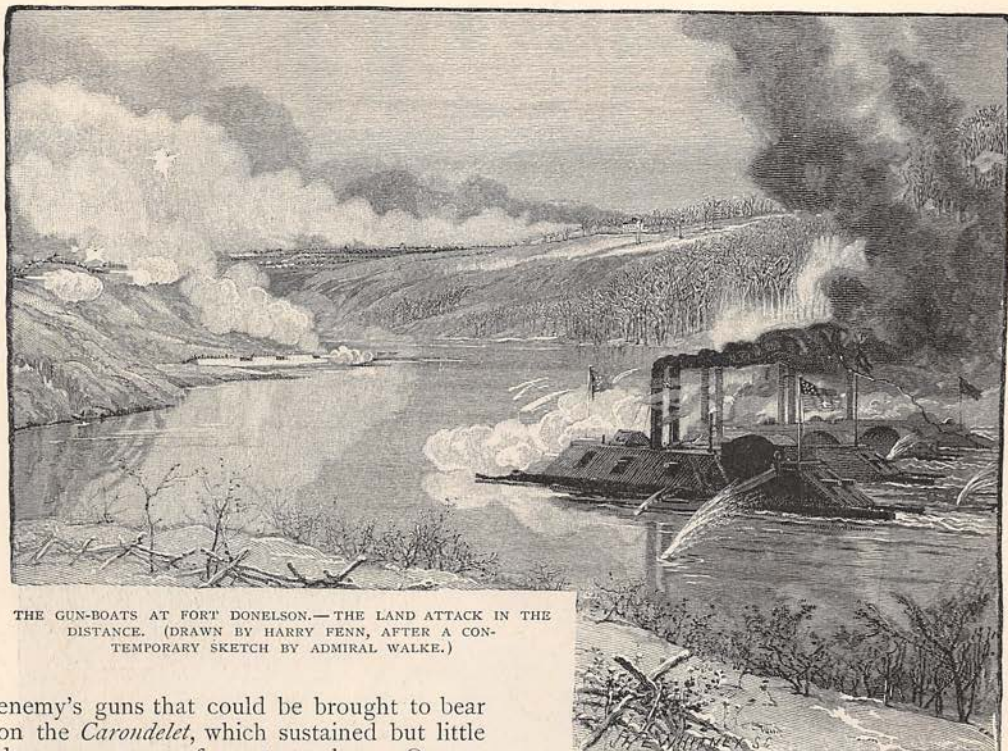
BETWEEN DECKS—SERVING THE GUNS. (DRAWN BY ALLEN C. REDWOOD, AFTER A CONTEMPORARY SKETCH BY ADMIRAL WALLE.)

up to within long range of the batteries, not a living creature could be seen. The hills and woods on the west side of the river hid part of the enemy's formidable defenses, which were lightly covered with snow; but the black rows of heavy guns, pointing down on us, reminded me of the dismal-looking sepulchers cut in the rocky cliffs near Jerusalem, but far more repulsive. At 12:50 P. M., to unmask the silent enemy, and to announce my arrival to General Grant, I ordered the bow-guns to be fired at the fort. Only one shell fell short. There was no response except the echo from the hills. The fort appeared to have been evacuated. After firing ten shells into it the *Carondelet* dropped down the river

On the 13th a dispatch was received from General Grant, informing me that he had arrived the day before, and had succeeded in getting his army in position, almost entirely investing the enemy's works. "Most of our batteries," he said, "are established, and the remainder soon will be. If you will advance with your gun-boat at ten o'clock in the morning, we will be ready to take advantage of any diversion in our favor."

I immediately complied with these instructions, and at 9:05, with the *Carondelet* alone and under cover of a heavily wooded point, fired one hundred and thirty-nine seventy-pound and sixty-four-pound shells at the fort. We received in return the fire of all the

* For a description of the capture of Fort Donelson by the army under General Grant, see the paper by General Lew Wallace in *THE CENTURY* for December, 1884.



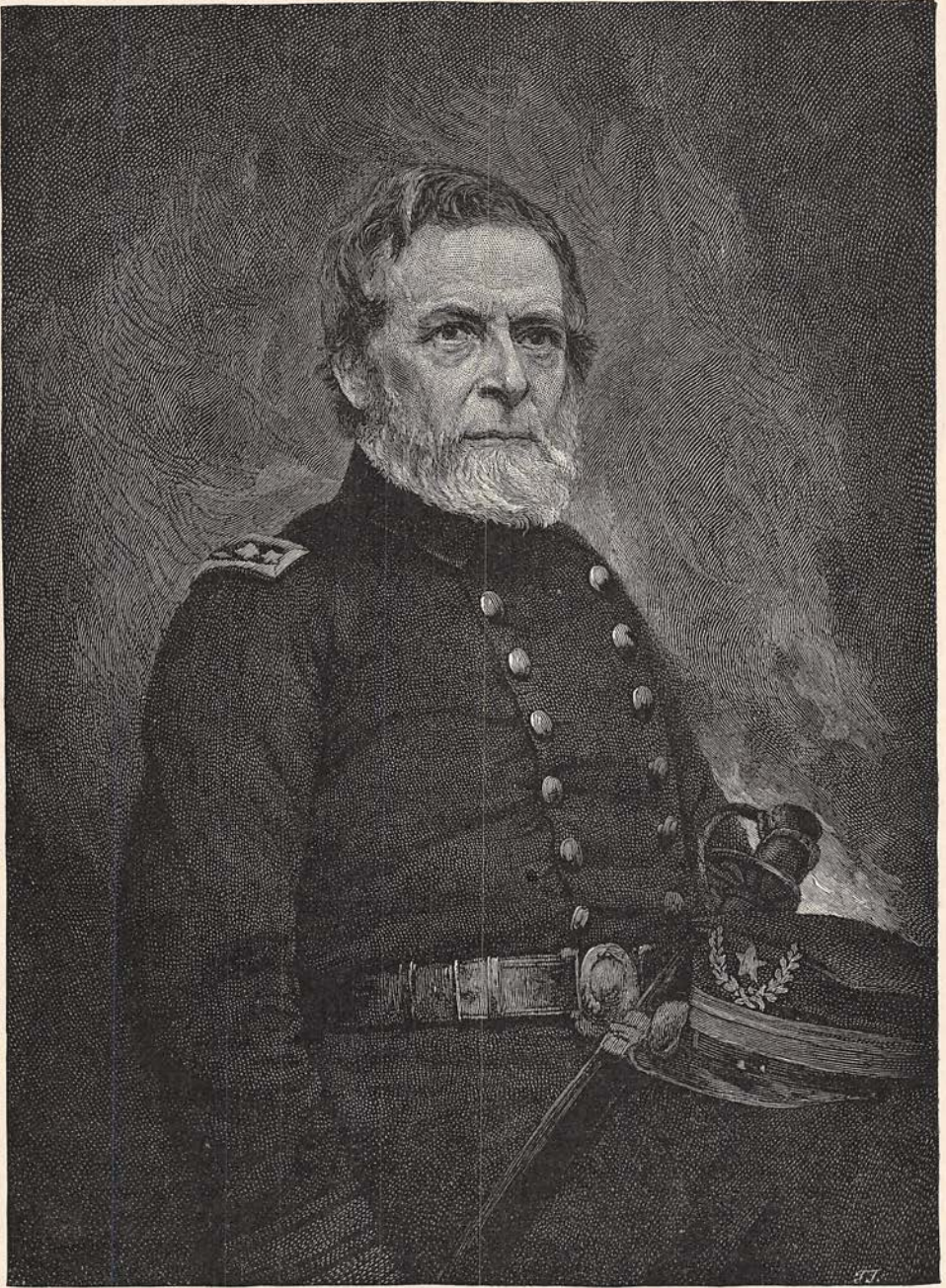
THE GUN-BOATS AT FORT DONELSON.—THE LAND ATTACK IN THE DISTANCE. (DRAWN BY HARRY FENN, AFTER A CONTEMPORARY SKETCH BY ADMIRAL WALKER.)

enemy's guns that could be brought to bear on the *Carondelet*, which sustained but little damage, except from two shots. One, a 128-pound solid, at 11:30 struck the corner of our port broadside casemate, passed through it, and in its progress toward the center of our boilers glanced over the temporary barricade in front of the boilers. It then passed over the steam-drum, struck the beams of the upper deck, carried away the railing around the engine-room and burst the steam-heater, and, glancing back into the engine-room, "seemed to bound after the men," as one of the engineers said, "like a wild beast pursuing its prey." I have preserved this ball as a souvenir of the fight at Fort Donelson. When it burst through the side of the *Carondelet*, it knocked down and wounded a dozen men, seven of them severely. An immense quantity of splinters was blown through the vessel. Some of them, as fine as needles, shot through the clothes of the men like arrows. Several of the wounded were so much excited by the suddenness of the event and the sufferings of their comrades that they were not aware that they themselves had been struck until they felt the blood running into their shoes. Upon receiving this shot we ceased firing for a while.

After dinner we sent the wounded on board the *Alps*, repaired damages, and, not expecting any assistance, at 12:15 we resumed, in accordance with General Grant's request, and bombarded the fort until dusk, when nearly

all our ten-inch and fifteen-inch shells were expended. The firing from the shore having ceased, we retired. We could not ascertain the amount of damage inflicted on the fort, but were told by its officers, and by correspondents who visited it after the capture, that we disabled three guns and killed an engineer. The whole number of the killed and wounded could not be ascertained. The commander of the Confederate batteries acknowledged that the casualties were greater and the damage to the guns more serious on the day of the *Carondelet's* attack than on the following day, when the whole fleet was engaged. The practice of the gunners of the *Carondelet*, being much more deliberate on the first day of the battle (owing to ample time and a partly sheltered position), must have been far superior to the practice of the gunners of the fleet on the second day, under the excitement and hurry of an attack at close quarters, with the enemy's heavy shot constantly striking and crashing through the sides of their vessels.

At 11:30 on the night of the 13th Flag-Officer Foote arrived below Fort Donelson with the iron-clads *St. Louis*, *Louisville*, and *Pittsburgh*, and the wooden gun-boats *Taylor* and *Conestoga*. On the 14th all the hard materials in the vessels, such as chains, lum-



ANDREW HULL FOOTE, REAR-ADMIRAL U. S. N. (DIED JUNE 26, 1863.)

(FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY E. AND H. T. ANTHONY.)

ber, and bags of coal, were laid on the upper decks to protect them from the plunging shots of the enemy. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon our fleet advanced to attack the fort, the *Louisville* being on the west side of the river, the *St. Louis* (flag-steamer) next, then the *Pittsburgh* and *Carondelet* on the east side of the river. The wooden gun-boats were about a thousand yards in the rear. When we started in line abreast, at a moderate speed, the *Louisville* and *Pittsburgh*, not keeping up to their positions, were hailed from the flag-steamer to "steam up." At 3:30, when about a mile and a half from the fort, two shots were fired at us, both falling short. When within a mile of the fort the *St. Louis* opened fire, and the other iron-clads followed, slowly and deliberately at first, but more rapidly as the fleet advanced. The flag-officer hailed the *Carondelet*, and ordered us not to fire so fast. Some of our shells went over the fort, and almost into our camp beyond. As we drew nearer, the enemy's fire greatly increased in force and effect. But, the officers and crew of the *Carondelet* having recently been long under fire, and having become practiced in fighting, her gunners were as cool and composed as old veterans. We heard the deafening crack of the bursting shells, the crash of the solid shot, and the whizzing of fragments of shell and wood as they sped through the vessel. Soon a 128-pounder struck our anchor, smashed it into flying bolts, and bounded over the vessel, taking away a part of our smoke-stack; then another cut away the iron boat-davits as if they were pipe-stems, whereupon the boat dropped into the water. Another ripped up the iron plating and glanced over; another went through the plating and lodged in the heavy casemate; another struck the pilot-house, knocked the plating to pieces, and sent fragments of iron and splinters into the pilots, one of whom fell mortally wounded, and was taken below; another shot took away the remaining boat-davits and the boat with them; and still they came, harder and faster, taking flag-staffs and smoke-stacks, and tearing off the side armor as lightning tears the bark from a tree. Our men fought desperately, but, under the excitement of the occasion, loaded too hastily, and the port rifled gun exploded. One of the crew, in his account of the explosion soon after it occurred, said: "I was serving the gun with shell. When it exploded it knocked us all down, killing none, but wounding over a dozen men, and spreading dismay and confusion among us. For about two minutes I was stunned, and at least five minutes elapsed before I could tell what was the matter. When I found out that

I was more scared than hurt, although suffering from the gunpowder which I had inhaled, I looked forward and saw our gun lying on the deck, split in three pieces. Then the cry ran through the boat that we were on fire, and my duty as pump-man called me to the pumps. While I was there, two shots entered our bow-ports and killed four men and wounded several others. They were borne past me, three with their heads off. The sight almost sickened me, and I turned my head away. Our master's mate came soon after and ordered us to our quarters at the gun. I told him the gun had burst, and that we had caught fire on the upper deck from the enemy's shell. He then said: 'Never mind the fire; go to your quarters.' Then I took a station at the starboard tackle of another rifled bow-gun and remained there until the close of the fight." The carpenter and his men extinguished the flames.

When within four hundred yards of the fort, and while the Confederates were running from their lower battery, our pilot-house was struck again and another pilot wounded, our wheel was broken, and shells from the rear boats were bursting over us. All four of our boats were shot away and dragging in the water. On looking out to bring our broad-side guns to bear, we saw that the other gun-boats were rapidly falling back out of line. The *Pittsburgh* in her haste to turn struck the stern of the *Carondelet*, and broke our starboard rudder, so that we were obliged to go ahead to clear the *Pittsburgh* and the point of rocks below. The pilot of the *St. Louis* was killed and the pilot of the *Louisville* was wounded. Both vessels had their wheel-ropes shot away, and the men were prevented from steering the *Louisville* with the tiller-ropes at the stern by the shells from the rear boats bursting over them. The *St. Louis* and *Louisville*, becoming unmanageable, were compelled to drop out of battle, and the *Pittsburgh* followed; all had suffered severely from the enemy's fire. Flag-Officer Foote was wounded while standing by the pilot of the *St. Louis* when he was killed. We were then about 350 yards from the fort.

There was no alternative for the *Carondelet* in that narrow stream but to keep her head to the enemy and fire into the fort with her two bow-guns, to prevent it, if possible, from returning her fire effectively. The enemy saw that she was in a manner left to his mercy, and concentrated the fire of all his batteries upon her. In return, the *Carondelet's* guns were well served to the last shot. Our new acting gunner, John Hall, was just the man for the occasion. He came forward, offered his



EXPLOSION OF A GUN ON BOARD THE "CARONDELET" DURING THE ATTACK ON FORT DONELSON.
(DRAWN BY M. J. BURNS, AFTER A CONTEMPORARY SKETCH BY ADMIRAL WALKER.)

services, and with my sanction took charge of the starboard-bow rifled gun. He instructed the men to obey his warnings and follow his motions, and he told them that when he saw a shot coming he would call out "Down" and stoop behind the breech of the gun as he did so; at the same instant the men were to stand away from the bow-ports. Nearly every shot from the fort struck the bows of the *Carondelet*. Most of them were fired on the ricochet level, and could be plainly seen skipping on the water before they struck. The enemy's object was to sink the gun-boat by striking her just below the water-line. They soon succeeded in planting two thirty-two-pound shots in her bow, between wind and water, which made her leak badly, but her compartments kept her from sinking until we could plug up the shot-holes. Three shots struck the starboard casemating; four struck the port casemating forward of the rifle-gun; one struck on the starboard side, between the water-line and plank-sheer, cutting through the planking; six shots struck the pilot-house, shattering one section into pieces and cutting through the iron casing. The smoke-stacks were riddled.

Our gunners kept up a constant firing while we were falling back; and the warning words, "Look out!" "Down!" were often heard, and heeded by nearly all the gun-crews. On one occasion, while the men were at the muzzle of the middle bow-gun, loading it, the warning came just in time for them to jump inside as a thirty-two-pounder struck the lower sill, and glancing up struck the upper sill, then, falling on the inner edge of the lower sill, bounded on deck and spun around like a top, but hurt no one. It was very evident that if the men who were loading had not obeyed the order to drop, several of them would have been killed. So I repeated the instructions and warned the men at the guns and the crew generally to bow or stand off from the ports when a shot was seen coming. But some of the young men, from a spirit of bravado or from a belief in the doctrine of fatalism, disregarded the instructions, saying it was useless to attempt to dodge a cannon-ball, and they would trust to luck. The warning words, "Look out!" "Down!" were again soon heard; down went the gunner and his men, as the whizzing shot glanced on the gun, taking off the gunner's cap and the heads of two of the young men who trusted to luck, and in defiance of the order were standing up or passing behind him. This shot killed another man also, who was at the last gun of the starboard side, and disabled the gun. It came in with a hissing sound; three sharp spats and a heavy bang told the sad fate of

three brave comrades. Before the decks were well sanded, there was so much blood on them that our men could not work the guns without slipping.

We kept firing at the enemy so long as he was within range, to prevent him, if possible, from seeing us through the smoke. The *Carondelet* was the first in and the last out of the fight at Fort Donelson, and was more damaged than any of the other gun-boats, as the boat-carpenters who repaired them subsequently informed me. She was much longer under fire than any other vessel of the flotilla; and, according to the report of the Secretary of the Navy, her loss in killed and wounded was twice as great as that of all the other gun-boats together. She fired more shot and shell into Fort Donelson than any other gun-boat, and was struck fifty-four times. These particulars are given because a disposition was shown by correspondents and naval historians to ignore the services of the *Carondelet* on this and other occasions.

In the action of the 14th all of the armored vessels were fought with the greatest energy, skill, and courage, until disabled by the enemy's heavy shot. In his official report of the battle the flag-officer said: "The officers and men in this hotly contested but unequal fight behaved with the greatest gallantry and determination." The casualties on board the boats were ten killed and forty-four wounded.

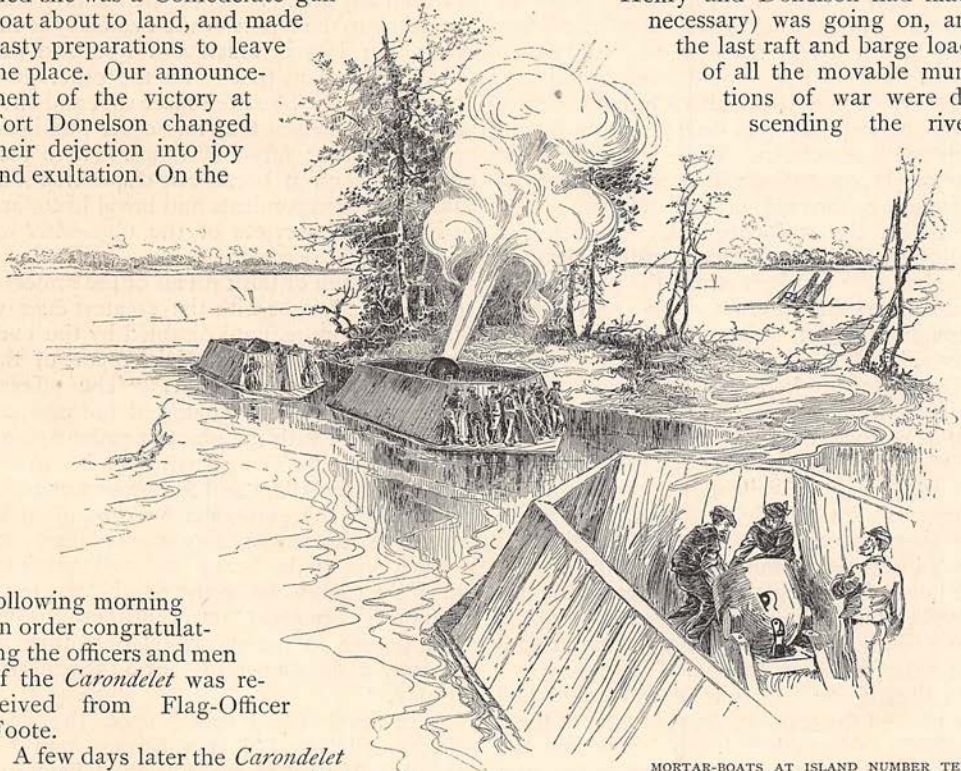
Although the gun-boats were repulsed in this action, the demoralizing effect of their cannonade, and of the heavy and well-sustained fire of the *Carondelet* on the day before, must have been very great, and contributed in no small degree to the successful operations of the army under General Grant on the following day.

After the battle I called upon the flag-officer, and found him suffering from his wounds. He asked me if I could have run past the fort, something I should not have ventured upon without permission.

The 15th was employed in the burial of our slain comrades. I read the Episcopal service on board the *Carondelet*, under our flag at half-mast; and the sailors bore their late companions to a lonely field within the shadows of the hills. When they were about to lower the first coffin, a Roman Catholic priest appeared, and his services being accepted, he read the prayers for the dead, and in the course of his remarks said: "Although the deceased did not die like Christians, they died like heroes, in defense of their country and flag." As the last service was ended, the sound of the battle being waged by General Grant, like the rumbling of distant thunder, was the only requiem for our departed shipmates.

On Sunday, the 16th, at dawn, Fort Donelson surrendered and the gun-boats steamed up to Dover. After religious services, the *Carondelet* proceeded to Cairo, and arrived there on the morning of the 17th, in such a dense fog that she passed below the town unnoticed, and had great difficulty in finding the landing. There had been a report that the enemy was coming from Columbus to attack Cairo during the absence of its defenders; and while the *Carondelet* was cautiously feeling her way back and blowing her whistle, some people imagined she was a Confederate gun-boat about to land, and made hasty preparations to leave the place. Our announcement of the victory at Fort Donelson changed their dejection into joy and exultation. On the

On the morning of the 23d the flag-officer made a reconnaissance to Columbus, Kentucky, with four gun-boats and two mortar-boats, accompanied by the wooden gun-boat *Conestoga*, convoying five transports. The fortifications looked more formidable than ever. The enemy fired two guns, and sent up a transport with the pretext, it was said, of effecting an exchange of prisoners. But at that time, as we learned afterward from a credible source, the evacuation of the fort (which General Grant's successes at Forts Henry and Donelson had made necessary) was going on, and the last raft and barge loads of all the movable munitions of war were descending the river,



MORTAR-BOATS AT ISLAND NUMBER TEN.

following morning an order congratulating the officers and men of the *Carondelet* was received from Flag-Officer Foote.

A few days later the *Carondelet* was taken up on the ways at Cairo for repairs; and a crowd of carpenters worked on her night and day. After the repairs were completed, she was ordered to make the experiment of backing up stream, which proved a laughable failure. She would sheer from one side of the river to the other, and with two anchors astern she could not be held steady enough to fight her bow-guns down stream. She dragged both anchors alternately, until they came together, and the experiment failed completely.

which, with a large quantity previously taken away, could and would have been captured by our fleet if we had received this information in time. On the 4th of March another reconnaissance in force was made with all the gun-boats and eight mortar-boats, and the fortress had still a formidable, life-like appearance, caused by Quaker guns, however, as it had been evacuated two days before.*

On the 5th of March, while we were descending the Mississippi in a dense fog, the

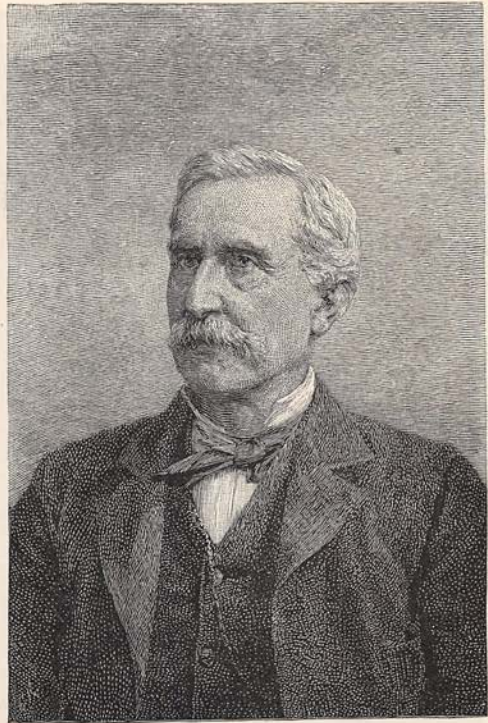
* An incident illustrative of the character of Foote occurred on that day at Columbus on the deck of the flag-steamer, after a consultation which he held with his commanding officers. As well as I can remember, Foote said: "Gentlemen, I expect you to support me, as Aaron and Hur stayed the hands of Moses until the victory was won over Amalek." Turning to me with a look of inquiry, for confirmation, as it were, of the correctness of his scriptural reference, I, concurring, said that, according to my recollection, Aaron and another friend did hold up the hands of Moses during some great battle until the going down of the sun, and until the victory was won. (Exodus xvii. 11, 12, 13.)—H. W.

flag-steamer leading, the Confederate gun-boat *Grampus*, or *Dare-devil Jack*, the sauciest little vessel on the river, suddenly appeared across our track and "close aboard." She stopped her engines and struck her colors, and we all thought she was ours at last. But when the captain of the *Grampus* saw how slowly we moved, and as no gun was fired to bring him to, he started off with astonishing speed and was out of danger before the flag-steamer could fire a gun. She ran before us yawing and flirting about, and blowing her alarm-whistle so as to announce our approach to the enemy who had now retired to Island Number Ten, a strong position sixty miles below Columbus (and of the latitude of Forts Henry and Donelson), where General Beauregard, who was now in general command of our opponents, had determined to contest the possession of the river.

EXPLOITS AT ISLAND NUMBER TEN.

ON March 15th the flotilla and transports continued on their way to Island Number Ten, arriving in its vicinity about nine in the morning. The strong and muddy current of the river had overflowed its banks and carried away every movable thing. Houses, trees, fences, and wrecks of all kinds were being swept rapidly down-stream. The twists and turns of the river near Island Number Ten are certainly remarkable. Within a radius of eight miles from the island it crosses the boundary line of Kentucky and Tennessee three times, running on almost every point of the compass. We were greatly surprised when we arrived above Island Number Ten and saw on the bluffs a chain of forts extending for four miles along the crescent-formed shore, with the white tents of the enemy in the rear. And there lay the island in the lower corner of the crescent, with the side fronting the Missouri shore lined with heavy ordnance, so trained that with the artillery on the opposite shore almost every point on the river between the island and the Missouri bank could be reached at once by all the enemy's batteries.

On the 17th an attack was made on the upper battery by all the iron-clads and mortar-boats. The *Benton* (flag-steamer), lashed between the *Cincinnati* and *St. Louis*, was on the east side of the river; the *Mound City*, *Carondelet*, and *Pittsburgh* were on the west side; the last, however, changed her position to the east side of the river before the firing began. We opened fire on the upper fort at 1:20, and by order of the flag-officer fired one gun a minute. The enemy replied

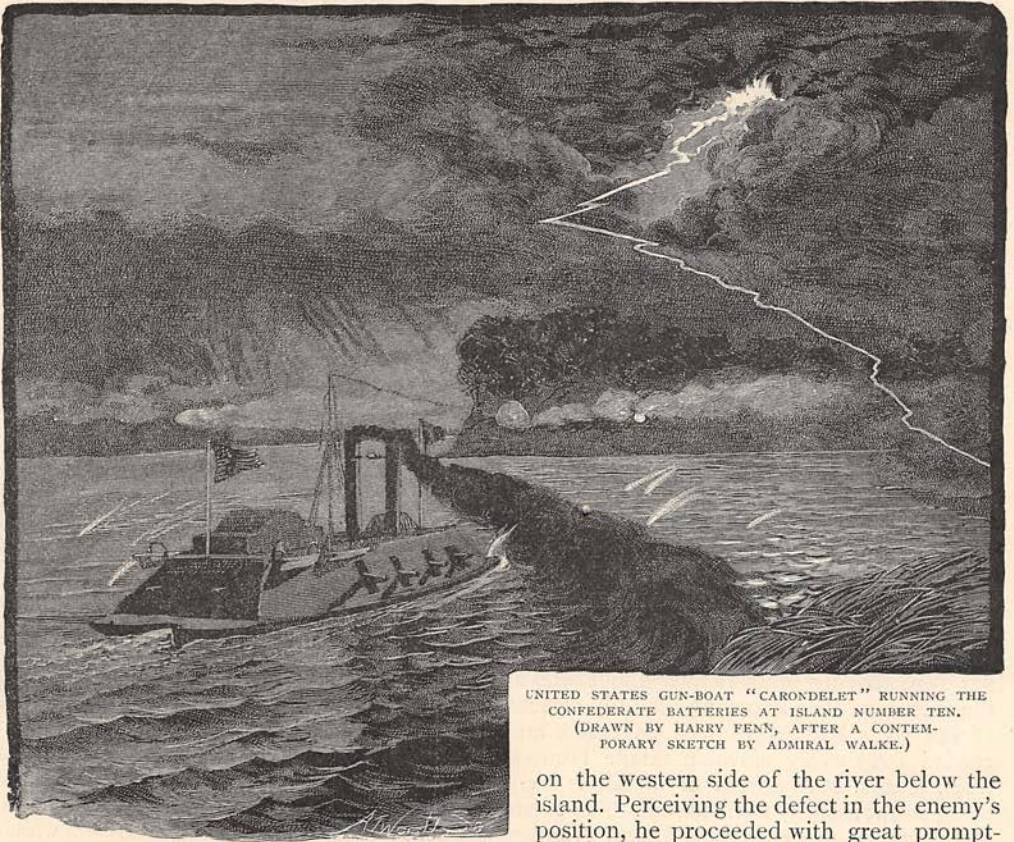


GENERAL W. W. MACKALL, CONFEDERATE COMMANDER AT ISLAND NUMBER TEN. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY G. W. DAVIS.)

promptly, and some of his shot struck the *Benton*, but, owing to the distance from which they were fired, did but little damage. We silenced all the guns in the upper fort except one. During the action one of the rifled guns of the *St. Louis* exploded, killing and wounding several of the gunners; another proof of the truth of the saying that the guns furnished the Western flotilla were less destructive to the enemy than to ourselves.

From March 17th to April 4th but little progress was made in the reduction of the Confederate works—the gun-boats firing a few shot now and then at long range, but doing little damage. The mortar-boats, however, were daily throwing thirteen-inch bombs, and so effectively at times that the Confederates were driven from their batteries and compelled to seek refuge in caves and other places of safety. But it was very evident that the great object of the expedition—the reduction of the works and the capture of the Confederate forces—could not be effected by the gun-boats alone, owing to their mode of structure and to the disadvantage under which they were fought in the strong and rapid current of the Mississippi. This was the opinion not only of naval officers, but also of General Pope and other army officers.

On the 23d of March the monotony of the



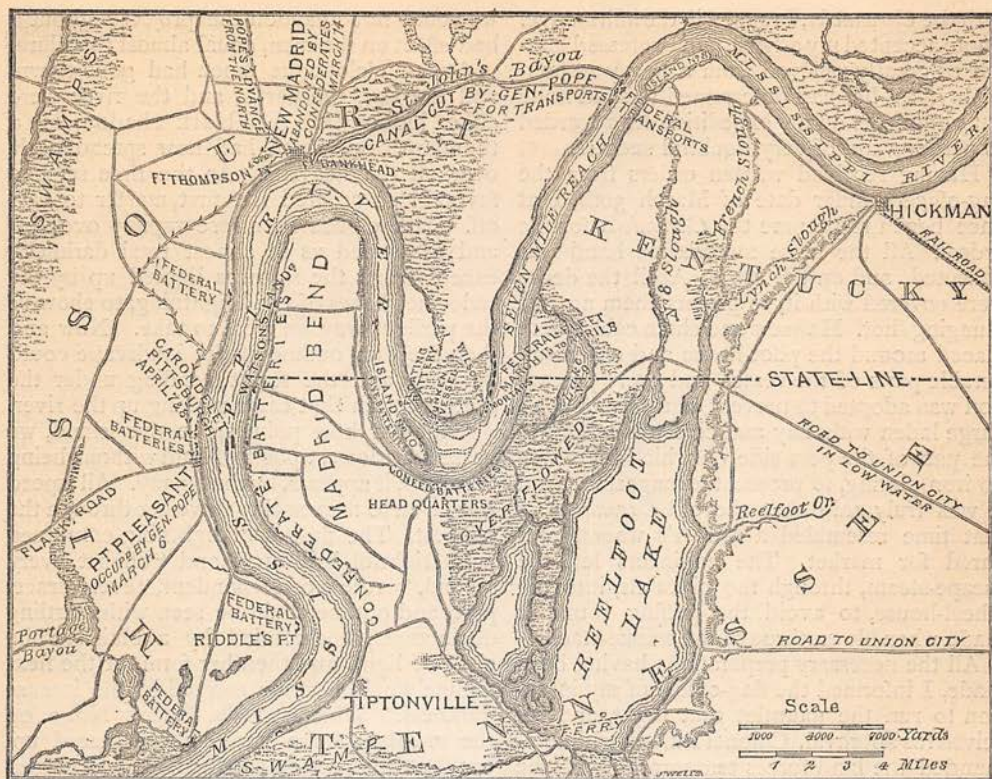
UNITED STATES GUN-BOAT "CARONDELET" RUNNING THE CONFEDERATE BATTERIES AT ISLAND NUMBER TEN. (DRAWN BY HARRY FENN, AFTER A CONTEMPORARY SKETCH BY ADMIRAL WALKER.)

long and tedious investment was unfortunately varied in a very singular manner. The *Carondelet* being moored nearest the enemy's upper fort, under several large cottonwood trees, in order to protect the mortar-boats, suddenly, and without warning, two of the largest of the trees fell across her deck, mortally wounding one of the crew and severely wounding another, and doing great damage to the vessel. This was twelve days before I ran the gauntlet at Island Number Ten with the *Carondelet*.

To understand fully the importance of that adventure, some explanation of the military situation at and below Island Number Ten seems necessary. After the evacuation of New Madrid, which General Pope had forced by blockading the river twelve miles below, at Point Pleasant, the Confederate forces occupied their fortified positions on Island Number Ten and the eastern shore of the Mississippi, where they were cut off by impassable swamps on the land side. They were in a *cul-de-sac*, and the only way open for them to obtain supplies or to effect a retreat was by the river south of Island Number Ten. General Pope, with an army of twenty thousand men, was

on the western side of the river below the island. Perceiving the defect in the enemy's position, he proceeded with great promptness and ability to take advantage of it. It was his intention to cross the river and attack the enemy from below, but he could not do this without the aid of a gun-boat to silence the enemy's batteries opposite Point Pleasant and protect his army in crossing. He wrote repeatedly to Flag-Officer Foote, urging him to send down a gun-boat past the enemy's batteries on Island Number Ten, and in one of his letters expressed the belief that a boat could pass down at night under cover of the darkness. But the flag-officer invariably declined, saying in one of his letters to General Pope that the attempt "would result in the sacrifice of the boat, her officers and men, which sacrifice I would not be justified in making."

During this correspondence the bombardment still went on, but was attended with such poor results that it became a subject of ridicule among the officers of Pope's army, one of whom (Colonel Gilmore, of Chillicothe, Ohio) is reported to have said that often when they met, and inquiry was made respecting the operations of the flotilla, the answer would generally be: "Oh! it is still bombarding the State of Tennessee at long range." And a Confederate officer said that no casualties resulted and no damage was



MAP OF MILITARY AND NAVAL OPERATIONS ABOUT ISLAND NO. TEN. (BASED ON THE TWO MAPS BY CAPTAIN A. B. GRAY, C. S. A., MADE IN MARCH, 1862, AND ON OFFICIAL REPORTS.)

sustained at Island Number Ten from the fire of the gun-boats.

On March 20th Flag-Officer Foote consulted his commanding officers, through Commander Stemple, as to the practicability of taking a gun-boat past the enemy's forts to New Madrid, and all except myself were opposed to the enterprise, believing with Foote that the attempt to pass the batteries would result in the almost certain destruction of the boat. I did not think so, but believed with General Pope that, under the cover of darkness and other favorable circumstances, a gun-boat might be run past the enemy's batteries, formidable as they were with nearly fifty guns. And although fully aware of the hazardous nature of the enterprise, I knew that the aid of a gun-boat was absolutely necessary to enable General Pope to succeed in his operations against the enemy, and thought the importance of this success justified the risk of running the gauntlet of the batteries on Island Number Ten and the adjacent shores. The

army officers were becoming impatient, and it was well known that the Confederates had a number of small gun-boats below, and were engaged in building several large and powerful vessels, of which the renowned *Arkansas* was one. And there was good reason to apprehend that these gun-boats would ascend the river and pass or silence Pope's batteries, and relieve the Confederate forces on Island Number Ten and the eastern shore of the Mississippi. That Pope and Foote apprehended this, appears clearly from the correspondence between them.*

The flag-officer now called a formal council of war of all his commanding officers. It was held on board the flag-steamer, on the 28th or 29th of March, and all except myself concurred in the opinion formerly expressed that the attempt to pass the batteries was too hazardous and ought not to be made. When I was asked to give my views, I favored the undertaking, and advised compliance with the requests of General Pope. When asked if I was willing to make the attempt

* An interesting and important enterprise in this campaign was the construction under great difficulties of a canal, twelve miles in length, from the Mississippi to New Madrid, as shown in the map. The progress of General Pope's campaign having been retarded by the want of vessels to take the army over the river, it was decided to make a water-way across country, whereby the transports might elude the Confederate batteries. The execution of the work was superintended by Colonel J. W. Bissell, of the U. S. Engineers.—ED.

with the *Carondelet*, I replied in the affirmative. Foote accepted my advice, and expressed himself as greatly relieved from a heavy responsibility, as he had determined to send none but volunteers on an expedition he regarded as perilous and of very doubtful success.

Having received written orders from the flag-officer, under date of March 30th, I at once began to prepare the *Carondelet* for the ordeal. All the loose material at hand was collected, and on the 4th of April the decks were covered with it, to protect them against plunging shot. Hawsers and chain cables were placed around the pilot-house and other vulnerable parts of the vessel, and every precaution was adopted to prevent disaster. A coal-barge laden with hay and coal was lashed to the part of the port side on which there was no iron plating, to protect the magazine. And it was truly said that the old *Carondelet* at that time resembled a farmer's wagon prepared for market. The engineers led the escape-steam, through the pipes aft, into the wheel-house, to avoid the puffing sound it made when blown through the smoke-stacks.

All the necessary preparations having been made, I informed the flag-officer of my intention to run the gauntlet that night, and received his approval. Colonel Buford, who commanded the land forces temporarily with the flotilla, assisted me in preparing for the trip, and on the night of the 4th brought on board Captain Hollenstein, of the Forty-second Illinois, and twenty-three sharpshooters of his command, who volunteered their services, which were gratefully accepted. Colonel Buford remained on board until the last moment to encourage us. I informed the officers and crew of the character of the undertaking, and all expressed a readiness to make the venture. In order to resist boarding parties in case we should be disabled, the sailors were well armed, and pistols, cutlasses, muskets, boarding-pikes, and hand-grenades were within reach. Hose was attached to the boilers for throwing scalding water over any who might attempt to board. If it should be found impossible to save the vessel, it was designed to sink rather than burn her, as the loss of life would probably be greater in the latter case by the explosion of her magazine. During the afternoon there was promise of a clear, moonlight night, and it was determined to wait until the moon was down, and then to make the attempt, whatever the chances. Having gone so far,

we could not abandon the project without a bad effect on the men, equal almost to failure.

At ten o'clock the moon had gone down, and the sky, the earth, and the river were alike hidden in the black shadow of a thunder-storm, which had now spread itself over all the heavens. As the time seemed favorable, I ordered the first master to cast off. Dark clouds now rose rapidly over us, and enveloped us in almost total darkness, except when the sky was lighted up by the welcome flashes of vivid lightning, to show us the perilous way we were to take. Now and then the dim outline of the landscape could be seen, and the forest bending under the roaring storm that came rushing up the river.

With our bow pointing to the island, we passed the lowest point of land without being observed, it appears, by the enemy. All speed was given to the vessel to drive her through the tempest. The flashes of lightning continued with frightful brilliancy, and "almost every second," wrote a correspondent, "every brace, post, and outline could be seen with startling distinctness, enshrouded by a bluish white glare of light, and then her form for the next minute would become merged in the intense darkness." When opposite Battery No. 2, on the mainland,* the smoke-stacks blazed up, but the fire was soon subdued. It was caused by the soot becoming dry, as the escape-steam, which usually kept the stacks wet, had been sent into the wheel-house, as already mentioned, to prevent noise. With such vivid lightning as prevailed during the whole passage, there was no prospect of escaping the vigilance of the enemy, but there was good reason to hope that he would be unable to point his guns accurately. Again the smoke-stacks took fire, and were soon put out; and then the roar of the enemy's guns began, and from Batteries Nos. 2, 3, and 4 came almost incessantly the sharp crack and screaming sound of their rifle-shells, which seemed to unite with the electric batteries of the clouds to annihilate us.

While nearing the island or some shoal point, during a few minutes of total darkness, we were startled by the loud, sharp order, "Hard a-port!" from our brave and skillful pilot, First Master Hoel. We almost grazed the island, and it appears were not observed through the storm until we were close in, and the enemy, having no time to point his guns, fired at random. In fact, we ran so near that the enemy did not, probably could not,

* During the dark and stormy night of April 1st Colonel George W. Roberts, of the 42d Illinois Regiment, executed a brilliant exploit. Forty picked men, in five barges, with muffled oars, left for Battery No. 1 (two miles above Island Number Ten). They proceeded in silence, and were unobserved until within a few rods of the fort, when a vivid flash of lightning discovered them to the sentries. They fired, but our men did not reply, and in an instant they were climbing up the slippery bank, and in three minutes more the six guns were spiked, Colonel Roberts himself spiking a huge eighty-pound pivot-gun. Some of these guns had been previously dismantled by our fleet, and were now rendered doubly useless.—H. W.

depress his guns sufficiently. While close under the lee of the island and during a lull in the storm and in the firing, one of our pilots heard a Confederate officer shout, "Elevate your guns!" "Yes, confound you," said the pilot, in a much lower key, "elevate." It is probable that the muzzles of those guns had been depressed to keep the rain out of them, and the officers, not expecting another night attack in such a storm, and arriving late, ordered the guns elevated just in time to save us from the direct fire of the enemy's heaviest fort; and this, no doubt, was the cause of our remarkable escape. Nearly all the enemy's shot went over us.

Having passed the principal batteries, we were greatly relieved from suspense, patiently endured, however, by the officers and crew. But there was another formidable obstacle in the way—a floating battery, which was the great "war elephant" of the Confederates, built to blockade the Mississippi permanently. As we passed her she fired six or eight shots at us, but without effect. One ball struck the coal-barge and one was found in a bale of hay; we found also one or two musket-bullets. We arrived at New Madrid about midnight with no one hurt, and were most joyfully received by our army. At the suggestion of Paymaster Nixon, all hands "spliced the main brace."

On Sunday, the 6th, after prayers and thanksgiving, the *Carondelet*, with General Granger, Colonel Smith of the Forty-third Ohio, and Captain Marshall, of General Pope's staff on board, made a reconnaissance twenty miles down the Mississippi, nearly to Tiptonville, the enemy's forts firing on her all the way down. We returned their fire, and dropped a few shells into their camps beyond. On the way back, we captured and spiked the guns of a battery of one thirty-two-pounder and one twenty-four-pounder, in about twenty-five minutes, opposite Point Pleasant. Before we landed to spike the guns, a tall Confederate soldier, with cool and deliberate courage, posted himself behind a large cottonwood-tree, and repeatedly fired upon us, until our Illinois sharpshooters got to work on him from behind the hammock nettings. He had two rifles, which he soon dropped, fleeing into the woods with his head down. We were glad he escaped, and were disposed to give him three cheers for his gallantry. The next day he was captured and brought into camp at Tiptonville, with the tip of his nose shot off. He said it was "diamond cut diamond" between the Illinois men and himself, but that they were sharper shooters than he expected to meet with on a gun-boat. After the capture of this battery, the enemy prepared to evacuate his positions on Island Number Ten

and the adjacent shores, and thus, as one of the historians of the civil war says, the *Carondelet* struck the blow that secured the victory at Island Number Ten.

Returning to New Madrid, we were instructed by General Pope to attack the enemy's batteries of six sixty-four-pounders which protected his rear; and besides, another gun-boat was expected. The *Pittsburgh* (Lieutenant-Commander Thompson) ran the gauntlet without injury, during a thunder-storm, at two in the morning of April 7th, and arrived at five o'clock; but she was not ready for service, and the *Carondelet* attacked the principal batteries at Watson's Landing alone and had nearly silenced them when the *Pittsburgh* came up astern and fired nearly over the *Carondelet's* upper deck, after she and the Confederates had ceased firing. I reported to General Pope that we had cleared the opposite shores of the enemy, and were ready to cover the crossing of the river and the landing of the army. Seeing themselves cut off, the garrison at Island Number Ten surrendered to Foote. The other Confederates retreating before Pope's advance, were overtaken and captured at four o'clock on the morning of the 8th; and about the same time, the cavalry under Colonel W. L. Elliott took possession of the enemy's deserted works on the Tennessee shore.

The result of General Pope's operations in connection with the services of the *Carondelet* below Island Number Ten was the capture of three generals (including General W. W. Mackall who, ten days before the surrender, had succeeded General John P. McCown in the immediate command at Madrid Bend), over five thousand men, twenty pieces of heavy artillery, seven thousand stand of arms, and a large quantity of ammunition and provisions, without the loss of a man on our side.

ON the 12th the *Benton* (flag-steamer), with the *Cincinnati*, *Mound City*, *Cairo*, and *St. Louis*, passed Tiptonville and signaled the *Carondelet* and *Pittsburgh* to follow. Five Confederate gun-boats came up the next day and offered battle; but after the exchange of a few shots at long range they retired down the river. We followed them all the way to Craighead Point, where they were under cover of their fortifications at Fort Pillow. I was not aware at the time that we were chasing the squadron of my esteemed shipmate of the U. S. Frigates *Cumberland* and *Merrimack*, Colonel John W. Dunnington, who afterward fought so bravely at Arkansas Post.

On the 14th General Pope's army landed about six miles above Craighead Point, near Osceola, under the protection of the gun-

boats. While he was preparing to attack Fort Pillow, Foote sent his executive officer twice to me on the *Carondelet* to inquire whether I would undertake, with my vessel and two or three other gun-boats, to pass below the fort to cooperate with General Pope, to which inquiries I replied that I was ready at any time to make the attempt. But Pope and his army (with the exception of fifteen hundred men) were ordered away, and the expedition against Fort Pillow was abandoned. Between the 14th of April and the 10th of May two or three of the mortar-boats were towed down the river and moored near Craighead Point, with a gun-boat to protect them. They were employed in throwing thirteen-inch bombs across the point into Fort Pillow, two miles distant. The enemy returned our bombardment with vigor, but not with much accuracy or effect. Several of their bombs fell close alongside the *Carondelet* and other gun-boats, when we were three miles from the fort.

The Confederate fleet called the "River Defense" having been reinforced, they determined upon capturing the mortar-boats or giving us battle. On the 8th three of their vessels came to the point from which the mortar-boats had thrown their bombs, but, finding none, returned. Foote had given special orders to keep up steam and be ready for battle any moment, day or night. There was so much illness at that time in the flotilla that about a third of the officers and men were under medical treatment, and a great many were unfit for duty. On the 9th of May, at his own request, our distinguished commander-in-chief, Foote, was relieved from his arduous duties. He had become very much enfeebled from the wounds received at Fort Donelson and from illness. He carried with him the heart-felt sympathy and regrets of all his command. He was succeeded by Flag-Officer Davis, a most excellent officer.

FIGHTING THE CONFEDERATE FLEET.

THIS paper would not be complete without some account of the naval battles fought by the flotilla immediately after the retirement of Flag-Officer Foote, under whose supervision and amid the greatest embarrassments it had been built, organized, and equipped. On the morning of the 10th of May a mortar-boat was towed down the river, as usual, at 5 A. M., to bombard Fort Pillow. The *Cincinnati* soon followed to protect her. At 6:35 eight Confederate "rams" came up the river at full speed. The *Carondelet* at once prepared for action, and slipped her hawser to the "bare

end," ready for orders to "go ahead." No officer was on the deck of the *Benton* (flag-steamer) except the pilot, Mr. Birch, who informed the flag-officer of the situation, and passed the order to the *Carondelet* and *Pittsburgh* to proceed without waiting for the flag-steamer. General signal was also made to the fleet to get under way, but it was not visible on account of the light fog.

The *Carondelet* started immediately after the first verbal order; the others, for want of steam or some other cause, were not ready, except the *Mound City*, which put off soon after we were fairly on our way to the rescue of the *Cincinnati*. We had proceeded about a mile before our other gun-boats left their moorings. The rams were advancing rapidly, and we steered for the leading vessel, *General Bragg*, a brig-rigged, side-wheeled steam ram, far in advance of the others, and apparently intent on striking the *Cincinnati*. When about three-quarters of a mile from the *General Bragg*, the *Carondelet* and *Mound City* fired on her with their bow-guns, until she struck the *Cincinnati* on the starboard quarter, making a great hole in the shell-room, through which the water poured with resistless force. The *Cincinnati* then retreated up the river and the *General Bragg* drifted down, evidently disabled. The *General Price*, following the example of her consort, also rammed the *Cincinnati*. We fired our bow-guns into the *General Price*, and she backed off, disabled also. The *Cincinnati* was again struck by one of the enemy's rams, the *General Sumter*. Having pushed on with all speed to the rescue of the *Cincinnati*, the *Carondelet* passed her in a sinking condition, and, rounding to, we fired our bow and starboard broadside guns into the retreating *General Bragg* and the advancing rams, *General Jeff Thompson*, *General Beauregard*, and *Lovell*. Heading up-stream, close to a shoal, the *Carondelet* brought her port broadside guns to bear on the *Sumter* and *Price*, which were dropping down-stream. At this crisis the *Van Dorn* and *Little Rebel* had run above the *Carondelet*; the *General Bragg*, *Jeff Thompson*, *Beauregard*, and *Lovell* were below her. The last three, coming up, fired into the *Carondelet*; she returned their fire with her stern-guns; and, while in this position, I ordered the port rifled fifty-pound Dahlgren gun to be leveled and fired at the center of the *Sumter*. The shot struck the vessel just forward of her wheel-house, and the steam instantly poured out from her ports and all parts of her casemates, and we saw her men running out of them and falling or lying down on her deck. None of our gun-boats had yet come to the assistance of the *Carondelet*.

The *Benton* and *Pittsburgh* had probably gone to aid the *Cincinnati*, and the *St. Louis* to relieve the *Mound City*, which had been badly rammed by the *Van Dorn*. The smoke at this time was so dense that we could hardly distinguish the gun-boats above us. The upper deck of the *Carondelet* was swept with grape-shot and fragments of broken shell; some of the latter were picked up by one of the sharpshooters, who told me they were obliged to lie down under shelter to save themselves from the grape and other shot of the *Pittsburgh* above us, and from the shot and broken shell of the enemy below us. Why some of our gun-boats did not fire into the *Van Dorn* and *Little Rebel* while they were above the *Carondelet*, and prevent their escape, if possible, I never could make out.

As the smoke rose we saw that the enemy was retreating rapidly and in great confusion. The *Carondelet* dropped down to within half a mile above Craighead Point, and kept up a continual fire upon their vessels, which were very much huddled together. When they were nearly, if not quite, beyond gunshot, the *Benton*, having raised sufficient steam, came down and passed the *Carondelet*; but the Confederates were under the protection of Fort Pillow before the *Benton* could reach them. Our fleet returned to Plum Point, except the *Carondelet*, which dropped her anchor on the battle-field, two miles or more below the point, and remained there two days on voluntary guard duty.

This engagement was sharp, but not decisive. From the first to the last shot fired by the *Carondelet*, one hour and ten minutes elapsed. After the battle, long-range firing was kept up until the evacuation of Fort Pillow.

On the 25th Colonel Ellet's seven rams arrived,—a useful acquisition to our fleet. During the afternoon of June 4th heavy clouds of smoke were observed rising from Fort Pillow, followed by explosions, which continued through the night; the last of which, much greater than the others, lit up the heavens and the Chickasaw bluffs with a brilliant light, and convinced us that this was the parting salute of the Confederates before leaving for the lower Mississippi. At dawn next morning the fleet was all astir to take possession of Fort Pillow, the flag-steamer leading. We found the casemates, magazines, and breastworks blown to atoms.

On our way to Memphis the enemy's steamer *Sovereign* was intercepted by one of our tugs. She was run ashore by her crew, who attempted to blow her up, but were foiled in their purpose by a boy of sixteen whom the enemy had pressed into service, who, after the abandonment of the vessel, took the extra weights from the safety-valves, opened

the fire-doors and flue-caps, and put water on the fires; and having procured a sheet, he signaled the tug, which came up and took possession. It may be proper to say that on our way down the river we respected private property, and did not assail or molest any except those who were in arms against us.

The morning of the 6th of June we fought the battle of Memphis, which lasted one hour and ten minutes. It was begun by the enemy (whose vessels were in double line of battle opposite the city) firing upon our fleet, then at a distance of a mile and a half or two miles above the city. Their fire continued for a quarter of an hour, when the attack was promptly met by two of our ram squadron, the *Queen of the West* (Colonel Charles Ellet) leading, and the *Monarch* (Lieutenant-Colonel Ellet, younger brother of the leader). These vessels fearlessly dashed ahead of our gun-boats, ran for the enemy's fleet, and at the first plunge succeeded in sinking one and disabling another. The astonished Confederates received them gallantly and effectively. The *Queen of the West* and *Monarch* were followed in line of battle by the gun-boats, under the lead of Flag-Officer Davis, and all of them opened fire, which was continued from the time we got within good range until the end of the battle—two or three tugs keeping all the while a safe distance astern. The *Queen of the West* was a quarter of a mile in advance of the *Monarch*, and after having rammed one of the enemy's fleet, she was badly rammed by the *Beauregard*, which then, in company with the *General Price*, made a dash at the *Monarch* as she approached them. The *Beauregard*, however, missed the *Monarch* and struck the *General Price* instead in her port side, cutting her down to the water-line, tearing off her wheel instantly, and placing her *hors de combat*. The *Monarch* then rammed the *Beauregard*, which had been several times raked fore and aft by the shot and shell of our ironclads, and she quickly sank in the river opposite Memphis. The *General Lovell*, after having been badly rammed by the *Queen of the West* (or the *Monarch*, as it is claimed), was struck by our shot and shell, and, at about the same time and place as the *Beauregard*, sank to the bottom so suddenly as to take a considerable number of her officers and crew down with her, the remainder being saved by small boats and our tugs. The *General Price*, *Little Rebel* (with a shot-hole through her steam-chest), and our *Queen of the West*, all disabled, were run on the Arkansas shore opposite Memphis; and the *Monarch* afterward ran into the *Little Rebel* just as our fleet were passing her in pursuit of the remainder of the enemy's fleet, then retreating rapidly down the

river. The *Jeff Thompson*, below the point and opposite President's Island, was the next boat disabled by our shot. She was run ashore, burned, and blown up. The Confederate ram *Sumter* was also disabled by our shell and captured. The *Bragg* soon after shared the same fate, and was run ashore, where her officers abandoned her, and disappeared in the forests of Arkansas. All the Confederate rams which had been run on the Arkansas shore were captured. The *Van Dorn*, having a start, alone escaped down the river. The *Monarch* and *Switzerland* were dispatched in pursuit of her and a few transports, but returned without overtaking them, although they captured another steamer.

The scene at this battle was rendered most sublime by the desperate nature of the engagement and the momentous consequences that followed very speedily after the first attack. Thousands of people crowded the high bluffs overlooking the river. The roar of the cannon and shell shook the houses on shore on either side for many miles. First wild yells, shrieks, and clamors, then loud, despairing murmurs, filled the affrighted city. The screaming, plunging shell crashed into the boats, blowing some of them and their crews into fragments, and the rams rushed upon each other like wild beasts in deadly conflict. Blinding smoke hovered about the scene of all this confusion and horror; and, as the battle progressed and the Confederate fleet was destroyed, all the cheering voices on shore were silenced. With each disaster a sympathizing wail went up from the multitude. When the last hope of the Confederates gave way, the lamentations which went up from the spectators were like cries of anguish.

Boats were put off from our vessels to save as many lives as possible. No serious injury was received by any one on board the United States fleet. Colonel Ellet received a pistol-shot in the leg; a shot struck the *Carondelet*

in the bow, broke up her anchor and anchor-stock, and fragments were scattered over her deck among her officers and crew, wounding slightly Acting-Master Gibson and two or three others who were standing at the time on the forward deck with me. The heavy timber which was suspended on the sides of our gun-boats, at the water-line, to protect them from being sunk by the Confederate rams, greatly impeded our progress in battle, and it was therefore cut adrift from the *Carondelet* when that vessel was in chase of the *Bragg* and *Sumter*. The latter had just landed a number of her officers and crew, some of whom were emerging from the bushes along the bank of the river, unaware of the *Carondelet's* proximity, when I hailed them through a trumpet, and ordered them to stop or be shot. They obeyed immediately, and by my orders were taken on board a tug and delivered on the *Benton*.

General Jeff Thompson, notable in partisan or border warfare, having signally failed with those rams at Fort Pillow, now resigned them to their fate. It was said that he stood by his horse watching the effect of this desperate struggle, and seeing at last his rams all gone, captured, sunk, or burned, he exclaimed, philosophically, "They are gone, and I am going," mounted his horse, and disappeared.

An enormous amount of property was captured by our squadron; and in addition to the Confederate fleet, we captured at Memphis six large Mississippi steamers, each marked "C. S. A." We also seized a large quantity of cotton in steamers and on shore, and the property at the Confederate navy-yard, and caused the destruction of a large steam ram on the stocks, which was to have been a sister ship to the renowned *Arkansas*. About one hundred Confederates were killed and wounded and one hundred and fifty captured. Chief of all results of the work of the flotilla was the opening of the Mississippi River once for all from Cairo to Memphis.*

Henry Walke.

* The opening of the lower part of the Mississippi by the fleet under Admiral Farragut will be described in an early number of THE CENTURY, by Admiral Porter.



PRACTICING ON A RIVER PICKET.