

LONGING.

WHEN I am gone—
Say! will the glad wind wander, wander on;
Stooping with tenderest touches, yet
With frolic care beset,
Lifting the long gray rushes, where the Stream
And I so idly dream?

I feel its soft caress;
The toying of its wild-wood tenderness
On brow and lip and eyes and hair,
As if through love aware
That days must come when no fond wind shall creep
Down where my heart's asleep!

Hast thou a sympathy,
A soul, O wandering Wind, that thou dost sigh?
Or is't the heart within us still
That aches for good or ill,
And deems that Nature whispers, when alone
Our inner Self makes moan?

William M. Briggs.

RECOLLECTIONS OF FOOTE AND THE GUN-BOATS.

SOON after the surrender of Fort Sumter, while in St. Louis I received a letter from Attorney-General Bates, dated Washington, April 17th, in which he said: "Be not surprised if you are called here suddenly by telegram. If called, come instantly. In a certain contingency it will be necessary to have the aid of the most thorough knowledge of our Western rivers and the use of steam on them, and in that event I have advised that you should be consulted." The call by telegraph followed close upon the letter. I hurried to Washington, where I was introduced to the Secretary of the Navy, the Hon. Gideon Welles, and to the Assistant Secretary, Captain Fox. In the August following I was to construct seven gun-boats, which, according to contract, were to draw six feet

of water, carry thirteen heavy guns each, be plated with two-and-a-half-inch iron, and have a speed of nine miles an hour. The *De Kalb* (at first called the *St. Louis*) was the type of the other six, named the *Carondelet*, *Cincinnati*, *Louisville*, *Mound City*, *Cairo*, and *Pittsburgh*. They were 175 feet long, 51½ feet beam; the flat sides sloped at an angle of about thirty-five degrees, and the front and rear casemates corresponded with the sides, the stern-wheel being entirely covered by the rear casemate. Each gun-boat was pierced for three bow guns, eight broadside guns (four on a side), and two stern guns. Before these seven gun-boats were completed, I engaged to convert the snag-boat *Benton* into an armored vessel of still larger dimensions.*

After completing the seven and dispatch-

* Of the services of Captain Eads to the Western flotilla, Mr. Boynton says, in the "History of the Navy": "During the month of July, 1861, the Quartermaster-General advertised for proposals to construct a number of iron-clad gun-boats for service on the Mississippi River. The bids were opened on the 5th of August, and Mr. Eads was found to be the best bidder for the whole number, both in regard to the time of completion and price. . . . On the 7th of August, 1861, Mr. Eads signed a contract with Quartermaster-General Meigs to construct these seven vessels ready for their crews and armaments in sixty-five days. At this early period the people in the border States, especially in the slave States, had not yet learned to accommodate themselves to a state of war. The pursuits of peace were interrupted; but the energy and enterprise which were to provide the vast material required for an energetic prosecution of the war had not then been aroused. None could foresee the result, and a spirit of doubt and distrust pervaded financial and commercial circles. It was at this time that the contractor returned to St. Louis with an obligation to perform what, under ordinary circumstances, would have been deemed by most men an impossibility. Rolling-mills, machine-shops, foundries, forges, and saw-mills were all idle. The demands of peace had ceased for months before, and the working-men were enlisting, or seeking in States more quiet their accustomed employment. The engines that were to drive this our first iron-clad fleet were yet to be built. The timber to form their hulls was uncut in the forests, and the huge rollers and machinery that were to form their iron armor were not yet constructed. The rapidity with which all these various parts were to be supplied forbade depending alone on any two or three establishments in the country, no matter how great were their resources. The signatures were scarcely dry on this important contract before persons in different parts of the country were employed upon the work through telegraphic orders issued from Washington. Special agents were dispatched in every direction, and saw-mills were simultaneously occupied in cutting

ing them down the Mississippi to Cairo, I was requested by Admiral Foote (who then went by the title of "flag-officer," the title of admiral not being recognized at that time in our navy), as a special favor to him, to accompany the *Benton*, the eighth one of the fleet, in her passage down to Cairo. It was in December, and the water was falling rapidly.

The *Benton* had been converted from the U. S. snag-boat *Benton* into the most powerful iron-clad of the fleet. She was built with two hulls about twenty feet apart, very strongly braced together. She had been purchased by General Fremont while he was commandant of the Department of the Missouri, and had been sent to my ship-yard for alteration into a gun-boat. I had the space between the two hulls planked, so that a continuous bottom extended from the outer side of one hull to the outer side of the other. The upper side was decked over in the same manner; and by extending the outer sides of the two hulls forward until they joined each other at a new stem, which received them, the twin boats became one wide, strong, and substantial hull. The new bottom did not extend to the stern of the hull, but was brought up to the deck fifty feet forward of the stern, so as to leave a space for a central wheel, with which the boat was to be propelled. This wheel was turned by the original engines of the snag-boat, each of the engines having formerly turned an independent wheel on the outside of the twin boat. In this manner the *Benton* became a war vessel of about seventy-five feet beam, a greater breadth, perhaps, than that of any war vessel then afloat. She was about two hundred feet long. A slanting casemate, covered with iron plates, was placed on her sides and across her bow and stern; and the wheel was protected in a similar manner. The casemate on the sides and bow was covered with iron three

and a half inches thick; the wheel-house and stern with lighter plates, like the first seven boats built by me. She carried thirteen guns,—three in the bow casemate, four on each side, and two astern.

The wish of Admiral Foote to have me see this boat safely to Cairo was prompted by his knowledge that I had had experience in the management of steam-boats upon the river, and his fear that she would be detained by grounding. Ice had just begun to float in the Mississippi when the *Benton* put out from my ship-yard at Carondelet for the south. Some thirty or forty miles below St. Louis she grounded. Under the direction of Captain Winslow, who commanded the vessel, Lieutenant Bishop, executive officer of the ship, an intelligent and energetic young man, set the crew at work. An anchor was put out for the purpose of hauling her off. My advice was not asked with reference to this first proceeding, and although I had been requested by Admiral Foote to accompany the vessel, he had not instructed the captain, so far as I knew, to be guided by my advice in case of difficulty. After they had been working all night to get the boat afloat, she was harder on than ever; moreover, the water had fallen about six inches. I then volunteered the opinion to Captain Winslow that if he would run hawsers ashore in a certain direction, directly opposite to that in which he had been trying to move the boat, she could be got off. He replied, very promptly, "Mr. Eads, if you will undertake to get her off, I shall be very willing to place the entire crew under your direction." I at once accepted the offer; and Lieutenant Bishop was called up and instructed to obey my directions. Several very large hawsers had been put on board of the boat for the fleet at Cairo. One of the largest was got out and secured to a large tree on the shore, and

the timber required in the construction of the vessels, in Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Minnesota, and Missouri; and railroads, steam-boats, and barges were engaged for its immediate transportation. Nearly all of the largest machine-shops and foundries in St. Louis, and many small ones, were at once set at work day and night, and the telegraph lines between St. Louis and Pittsburgh and Cincinnati were occupied frequently for hours in transmitting instructions to similar establishments in those cities for the construction of the twenty-one steam-engines and the five-and-thirty steam-boilers that were to propel the fleet. . . . Within two weeks not less than four thousand men were engaged in the various details of its construction. Neither the sanctity of the Sabbath nor the darkness of night was permitted to interrupt it. The workmen on the hulls were promised a handsome bonus in money for each one who stood steadfastly at the work until it was completed, and many thousands of dollars were thus gratuitously paid by Mr. Eads when it was finished. On the 12th of October, 1861, the first United States iron-clad, with her boilers and engines on board, was launched in Carondelet, Missouri, in forty-five days from the laying of her keel. She was named the *St. Louis*, by Rear-Admiral Foote, in honor of the city. When the fleet was transferred from the War Department to the Navy, this name was changed to *Baron de Kalb*, there being at that time a vessel commissioned in the navy called the *St. Louis*. In ten days after the *De Kalb* the *Carondelet* was launched, and the *Cincinnati*, *Louisville*, *Mound City*, *Cairo*, and *Pittsburgh* followed in rapid succession. An eighth vessel (the *Benton*), larger, more powerful, and superior in every respect, was also undertaken before the hulls of the first seven had fairly assumed shape. . . . Thus just one individual put in construction and pushed to completion within one hundred days a powerful squadron of eight steamers, aggregating five thousand tons, capable of steaming at nine knots per hour, each heavily armored, fully equipped, and all ready for their armament of one hundred and seven large guns. The fact that such a work was done is nobler praise than any that can be bestowed by words. It is to be regretted, however, that the promptness and energy of the man who thus created an iron-clad navy on the Mississippi were not met on the part of the Government with an equal degree of faithfulness in performing its part of the contract. On one pretext or another, the stipulated payments for the work were delayed by the War Department until the default assumed such magnitude that nothing but the assistance rendered by patriotic and confiding friends enabled the contractor, after exhausting his own ample means, to complete the fleet. Besides the honorable reputation which flows from success in such a work, he has the satisfaction of reflecting that it was with vessels at the time his own property that the brilliant capture of Fort Henry was accomplished, and the conquest of Donelson and Island Number Ten achieved. The ever-memorable midnight passage of Island Number Ten by the *Pittsburgh* and *Carondelet*, which compelled the surrender of that powerful stronghold, was performed by vessels furnished four or five months previous by the same contractor, and at the time unpaid for."—Ed.

as heavy a strain was put upon it as the cable would be likely to bear. As the water was still falling, I ordered out a second one, and a third, and a fourth, until five or six eleven-inch hawsers were heavily strained in the effort to drag the broad-bottomed vessel off the bar. There were three steam capstans on the bow of the vessel, and these were used in tightening the strain by luffs upon the hawsers. One of the hawsers was led through a snatch-block fastened by a large chain to a ring-bolt in the side of the vessel. I was on the upper deck of the vessel near Captain Winslow when the chain which held this block broke. It was made of iron one and one-eighth inches in diameter, and the link separated into three pieces. The largest, being one-half of the link, was found on the shore at a distance of at least five hundred feet. Half of the remainder struck the iron plating on the bow of the boat, making an indentation half the thickness of one's finger in depth. The third piece struck Captain Winslow on the fleshy part of the arm, cutting through his coat and the muscles of his arm. The wound was a very painful one, but he bore it as might be expected. The iron had probably cut an inch and a half into the arm between the shoulder and the elbow. In the course of the day the *Benton* was floated, and proceeded on her voyage down the river without further delay. Captain Winslow soon after departed for his home on leave of absence. On his recovery he was placed in command of the *Kearsarge*, and to that accident he owed, perhaps, the fame of being the captor of the *Alabama*.

When the *Benton* arrived at Cairo she was visited by all the officers of the army and navy stationed there, and was taken, on that or the following day, on a trial trip a few miles down the river. The *Essex*, in command of Captain William Porter, was lying four or five miles below the mouth of the Ohio on the Kentucky shore. As the *Benton* passed along up, on her return from this little expedition, Captain Porter offered his congratulations to Foote on the apparent excellence of the boat.

"Yes," replied Foote, "but she is almost too slow."

"Plenty fast enough to fight with," was Porter's rejoinder.

Very soon after this (early in the spring of 1862) I was called to Washington, with the request to prepare plans for still lighter iron-clad vessels, the draught of those which I had then completed being only about six feet. The later plans were for vessels that should be capable of going up the Tennessee and the Cumberland. As rapidly as possible I pre-

pared and presented for the inspection of Secretary Welles and his able assistant, Captain Fox, plans of vessels drawing five feet. They were not acceptable to Captain Fox, who said:

"We want vessels much lighter than that."

"But you want them to carry a certain thickness of iron?" I replied.

"Yes, we want them to be proof against heavy cannon-shot—plated and heavily plated, but they must be of much lighter draught."

After the interview I returned with the plans to my hotel, and commenced a revision of them; and in the course of a few days I presented the plans for the *Osage* and the *Neosho*. These vessels, according to my recollection, were about forty-five feet beam on deck, their sides slanting outward, and the tops of the gunwales rising only about six inches above the surface of the water, so as to leave very little space to be covered with the plating, which extended two and a half feet down under water on these slanting sides. The deck of the vessel, rising from six inches above water, curved upward about four feet higher at center; and this was covered all over with iron an inch thick. The plating on the sides was two and a half inches thick. Each vessel had a rotating turret, carrying two eleven-inch guns, the turret being either six or eight inches thick (I forget which), but extending only a few feet above the deck of the vessel. I was very anxious to construct these turrets after a plan which I had devised, quite different from the Ericsson or Coles systems, and in which the guns should be operated by steam. But, within a month after the engagement at Fort Donelson, the memorable contest between the *Merrimac* and the *Monitor* occurred, whereupon the Navy Department insisted on Ericsson turrets being placed upon these two vessels.

At the same time the department was anxious to have four larger vessels for operations on the lower Mississippi River, which should have two turrets each, and it consented that I should place one of my turrets on each of two of these vessels (the *Chickasaw* and the *Milwaukee*) at my own risk, to be replaced with Ericsson's in case of failure. These were the first turrets in which the guns were manipulated by steam, and they were fired every forty-five seconds. The *Osage* and *Neosho*, with their armaments, stores, and everything on board, drew only three and a half feet of water, and steamed about nine miles an hour. While perfecting those plans, I prepared the designs for the larger vessels (the *Chickasaw*, *Milwaukee*, *Winnebago*, and *Kickapoo*), and when these were approved by Captain Fox and the officers of the navy

to whom they were submitted at Washington, Mr. Welles expressed the wish that I should confer with Admiral Foote about them before proceeding to build them, inasmuch as the experience which he had had at Forts Henry and Donelson and elsewhere would be of great value, and might enable him to suggest improvements in them. I therefore hastened from Washington to Island Number Ten, a hundred miles below Cairo, on the Mississippi River, where Foote's flotilla was then engaged.

In the railway train a gentleman who sat in front of me, learning that I had constructed Foote's vessels, introduced himself as Judge Foote, of Cleveland, a brother of the Admiral. Among other interesting matters, he related an anecdote of one of his little daughters who was just learning to read. After the capture of Fort Henry the squadron was brought back to Cairo for repairs, and, on the Sunday following, the crews, with their gallant flag-officer, attended one of the churches in Cairo. Admiral Foote was a thorough Christian gentleman and excellent impromptu speaker. Upon this occasion, after the congregation had assembled, some one whispered to him that the minister was ill and would be unable to officiate; whereupon the Admiral went up into the pulpit himself, and after the usual prayer and hymn, he selected as the text John xiv. 1, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." Upon this text he delivered what was declared to be an excellent sermon, or exhortation, after which he dismissed the congregation. An account of the sermon was widely published in the papers at the time, and came into the hands of the little niece just referred to. After she had read it, she exclaimed to her father:

"Uncle Foote did not say that right."

"Say what right?" asked the father.

"Why, when he preached."

"What did he say?"

"He said, 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.'"

"Well, what should he have said?" inquired the father.

"Why, he ought to have said, 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in the gun-boats.'"

On arriving at Cairo, I found Representative Elihu B. Washburne, afterward our minister to France, waiting for an opportunity to visit the army, then in Missouri, in the neighborhood of Island Number Ten, coöperating with Admiral Foote in the reduction of that stronghold. We embarked together on a small tug-boat, which carried the mail down

to the fleet. We arrived and landed alongside the flag-ship *Benton*, and were cordially greeted by Admiral Foote. I presented a letter which I had brought from the Secretary of the Navy. We withdrew to his cabin to consider the plans of the four new gun-boats. Mr. Washburne was sent to the Missouri shore. After discussing the plans of the new boats for fifteen or twenty minutes, we returned to the deck.

At the time we landed, the *Benton* and the other boats of the fleet were anchored between two and three miles above the Confederate forts, and were then throwing their shells into the enemy's works. When we boarded the *Benton* Admiral Foote had his lorgnette in his hand, and through it was watching the flight of each shell discharged from the guns of his ship. He resumed this occupation when we came up on deck, until, after a shot or two had been fired, one of his officers approached and handed him a dozen or more letters which had been brought down in the mail. While still conversing with me, his eye glanced over them as he held them in his hand, and he selected one which he proceeded to open. Before reading probably four lines, he turned to me with great calmness and composure, and said, "Mr. Eads, I must ask you to excuse me for a few minutes while I go down to my cabin. This letter brings me the news of the death of my son, about thirteen years old, who I had hoped would live to be the stay and support of his mother."

Without further remark, and without giving the slightest evidence of his feelings to any one, he left me and went to his cabin. I was, of course, deeply grieved; and when he returned, after an absence of not more than fifteen minutes, still perfectly composed, I endeavored to divert his mind from his affliction by referring to the plans and to my interview with his brother. I told him also the anecdote of his little niece which his brother had related, and this served to clothe his face with a temporary smile. I then asked him if he would be kind enough to assign me some place where I could sleep on the *Benton* that night. It was then probably three o'clock in the day. He replied that I must not stay on board. I said that I had come down for that very purpose, since I wanted to see how the *Benton* and the other boats worked under fire. I was not particular where I slept; any place would do for me; I did not want to turn any of the officers out of their rooms.

With a look of great gravity and decision, he replied:

"Mr. Eads, I cannot permit you to stay

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