money received in the way of ransoms went to the peasants. For a loaf of bread, weighing 8½ pounds, costing in the towns from three
pence to sixpence, the brigands paid a ducat—
three shillings and fourpence—and in like proportion for every thing. The peasants act the part of "fences," and, like other fences, get nearly
all the gains of the actual perpetrators of a
robbery. This profitable business is indeed a
risky one; for Mr. Moens was informed that
during the time he was with the brigands more
than 1800 peasants were arrested and impris-
oned on suspicion of complicity with the bri-
gands in only two provinces, and he was in fear
after his release that some of the relatives of
these persons would assassinate him in revenge;
for it seems that it was in consequence of the
notoriety given to his seizure that the Govern-
ment was stirred up and the peasants a
vigilance.

Complicity with the brigands is, however, by
no means confined to the peasants, for among
those arrested on this charge we find three
priests, a baron, two syndics, a doctor, and a
score entitled to style themselves "Don" and
"Signor." What hope is there for a people
among whom brigandage and begging are the
most notable institutions?

The measures deliberately recommended by
Mr. Moens and others for the suppression of
brigandage, may be studied with benefit by
those Europeans whose delicate sensibilities
were shocked by some of the stringent orders
respecting "bridge-burners" and "guerrillas"
purposed by the during the late rebellion. Thus,
it would "levy the sum paid as ransom for
any captive upon the district haunted by the
band." And, in addition to this, a court-
martial held on the spot on any one found with
more bread upon his person than a specified
amount—say sufficient for his midday meal;
and if, after a speedy trial, any one thus proved
to have any dealings whatsoever with the bri-
gands, were hanged, excepting always any persons
who may be rescuing one of their families from
the brigands' hands, it would cause a great state of
fear among the peasants." And "when any
of the inhabitants of the villages and the sur-
rounding country were absent at night, they
should be made to account for being abroad.
This would speedily prevent all carrying of
food during the night. In fact, a Curfew Act,
such as that which existed not so very long
ago in Ireland, would soon produce the desired
effect."

HEROIC DEEDS OF HEROIC MEN.

BY JOHN S. C. ABBOTT.

XII.—OPENING THE MISSISSIPPI.

Object of the Rebels.—Seizing the Mississipi.—Bombard-
ment of Forts Jackson and Phillip.—Capture of New
Orleans.—Ascending the River.—Sweeping away Ob-
structions.—Capture of Baton Rouge.—Capture of Nash-
ville.—The approach to Vicksburg.—Running the Bat-
terries.—The Rebels in the Swamp.—Bold achievement of
the Arkansans.—Sickstreet.—Withdrawal of the Fleet.
—Battle of Baton Rouge.—Heroism of the Union Troops.
—Death of General Williams.— Destruction of the Ar-
ka

It is well known that at the commencement
of the rebellion the rebels had no thought of
a serious dismemberment of the nation.
Their plan was, through secession, to effect a
revolution which would nationalize slavery by
giving it the support of the General Govern-
ment, extending it through all the Territories,
securing the privilege of holding slaves in the
Northern States, and thus securing to the South
the political pre-eminence which it had so long
adroitly maintained. It was thought that there
was a large party at the North in cordial symp-
athy with slavery, and that that party was
sufficiently powerful to prevent the North from
venturing upon a war. The South, by retir-
ing temporarily from the General Government,
could frame a Constitution in entire accordance
with its views. The Northern States would
then, they supposed, one after another join the
new Confederacy, leaving, perhaps, New Eng-
land, whose love of liberty could not be bribed,
"out in the cold."

Hon. Jacob Thompson, Secretary of the In-
terior, under the National Government, was
sent as commissioner from Mississippi to Mary-
land to urge that State to unite with the seced-
ing States of the South. On the 19th of De-
ember, 1860, he addressed a large meeting in
Baltimore, in which he is reported to have said:

"Secession is not intended to break up the present Gov-
ernment, but to perpetuate it. We do not propose to go
out by way of breaking up or destroying the Union, as our
fathers gave it to us, but we go out for the purpose of get-
ing further guarantees and security for our rights. Our
plan is for the Southern States to withdraw from the Union
for the present, to allow amendments to the Constitution
to be made, guaranteeing our just rights. The question of
slavery must be settled now or never."

The majestic and unexpected rising of the
North dispelled these illusions. The Southern
leaders, having opened fire upon Sumter, had
advanced too far to recede. Nothing was then
left for them but to plunge headlong into the
desperate struggle for the establishment of a
Southern Confederacy. It was essential to the
success of this enterprise that the rebels should
secure possession of the Mississippi River. Al-
most instantaneously their batteries rose upon
every bluff from Cairo to the Batiee.

The city of New Orleans, which McCallough
describes as the third in commercial impor-
tance and the fourth in population in the United
States, is situated on the left bank of the Miss-
issippi, about one hundred miles from its
mouth. The importance of this city caused it
to be defended by the rebels with the highest resources of modern military art. Its capture by the mortar fleet under Commodore Porter, and the gun-boat fleet under Commodore Farragut, may be safely pronounced as unparalleled in the annals of naval warfare. Sixty miles below the city there were two strong works, Fort Philip on the left and Fort Jackson on the right of the river. Their united armament consisted of one hundred and twenty-six guns, many of them of the largest calibre. The river here is seven hundred yards wide. A chain cable of massive links of iron was stretched across the river, supported by a raft of enormous logs, and eleven hulks securely moored.

Above the raft there were thirteen rebel gun-boats, including the iron-clad battery Louisiana, and the iron-clad ram Manassas. This formidable fleet was sheltered under cover of the guns of the forts. Between New Orleans and these forts, at various important points along the river, water batteries were constructed to sweep the channel. The city was held by a large and well-disciplined military force under General Lovell. Commodore G. N. Hollins commanded the naval armament.

The rebel authorities at Richmond professed, and probably honestly, not to feel the slightest solicitude in reference to the safety of New Orleans. English and French naval officers
who had examined the defenses pronounced them impregnable. The citizens of New Orleans laughed to scorn the idea that any Yankee fleet could surmount the obstructions with which they had barred the approaches to the city. One of the New Orleans journals stated, on the 5th of April, 1862:

"Our only fear is that the Northern invaders may not appear. We have made such extensive preparations to receive them that it was vexatious if their invincible armada escape the fate we have in store for it."

To reduce these defenses Commodore Farragut was provided with a gun-boat and mortar fleet of forty-six vessels, with an aggregate armament of about three hundred guns and mortars. There were no iron-clads in the fleet. Commander Porter had charge of the mortar fleet, which consisted of twenty vessels, each mounting one large mortar and two small guns. The bombardment of the two forts was opened on the 18th of April. For six days it was continued with almost unmitigated fury. The roar of this awful cannonade fell heavily upon the ear of the inhabitants of New Orleans by day and by night though sixty miles distant.

At 2 o'clock on the morning of the 24th of April signal was given for the gun-boat squadron to move up the river and endeavor to cut through the rafts and chains and run by the forts, while the mortar fleet kept up the bombardment. In the darkness of the night of the 20th Commander Bell had ascended the river with two gun-boats, while the attention of the enemy was distracted by a terrific bombardment, with the hope of blowing up the boom by means of petards. Failing in this Lieutenant Caldwell boarded one of the hulks and contrived to slip the chain so as to make a sufficient opening for the steamers to pass through. Pollard, in his Southern History, apparently unwilling to give the patriots credit for so heroic a deed, says, "Unfortunately a violent storm had made a large chasm in the raft which could not be closed in time."

The boats ascended in two columns. Immediately upon passing through the chasm in the raft the right column was to attack Fort St. Philip, and the left Fort Jackson. The midnight conflict which ensued no description can portray. The gloom of night, the dark flow of the river, the flash of the guns, the incessant and deafening roar, the fierce blaze of the fire-rafts, swept down by the swift current, the signal-rockets piercing the black skies, neither pen nor pencil can adequately picture.

As soon as the gun-boats had passed through the barrier, and while exposed to the fire of both of the forts, the rebel squadron came rushing down the river and plunged desperately into the thick of the fight. Within two hours this fleet was utterly destroyed. Flag-Officer Farragut, in his account of this fearful scene, says:

"Just as the scene appeared to be closing the ram Manassas was seen coming under full speed to attack us. I directed Captain Smith, in the Mississippi, to turn and run her down. The order was instantly obeyed by the Mississippi turning and going at her full speed. Just as we expected to see the ram annihilated, when within fifty yards of each other, she put her helm hard a-port, dodged the Mississippi, and ran astern. The Mississippi poured two broadsides into her, and sent her drifting down the river a total wreck."

Commander Porter's mortar flotilla was moored nearly a mile and a half down the river, throwing in majestic curves through the air their enormous shells into the fort. The rebel ram was swept down the stream by the rapid current till she came within sight of Porter's flotilla. Several guns immediately opened fire upon her. Commander Porter writes in his report:

"I soon discovered that the Manassas could harm no one again, and I ordered the vessels to save their shot. She was beginning to emit smoke from her ports or holes, and was discovered to be on fire and sinking. She had evidently been used up by the squadron as they passed along. I tried to save her as a curiosity, by getting a bawser around her and towing her to the bank, but after doing so she hastily exploded. Her only gun went off, and omitting flames through her bow port, like some huge animal, she gave a plunge and disappeared under the water."

Twelve gun-boats had now passed the forts, and, casting anchor beyond the range of the guns, prepared for further operations. The appalling tidings had been flashed along the wires to New Orleans, creating there a scene of indescribable consternation.

The citizens of New Orleans were awakened from their dream of security by the tolling of the alarm bells announcing the approach of the foe. It was 9 o'clock on the morning of the 24th when the intelligence was received. The scene of tumult and consternation which ensued no pen can describe. The whole population, men, women, and children, rushed into the streets. As the tidings were repeated from lip to lip: "The Yankee fleet has passed the forts and is approaching the city!" the populace became almost frantic in the madness of their terror.

General Lovell, who was in command of the rebel troops stationed in New Orleans, had been down to the forts, which, as we have stated, were sixty miles below the city, to watch the movements there. Appalled by the unexpected achievement of the National fleet, he put spurs to his horse, and following along the levee at the utmost possible speed, reached the city at 2 o'clock P.M. Here, in a hurried conference with the city authorities, it was decided immediately to withdraw the military force that the city might be saved from bombardment. The troops were accordingly ordered to rendezvous at Camp Moore, about seventy miles above New Orleans, on the Jackson Railroad. Lovell's army, it is said, had been weakened to strengthen the rebel force at Corinth, and he had then under his command but about twenty-eight hundred men.

With ten vessels Flag-Officer Farragut was now steam ing up the river toward the city. He had still apparently severe obstacles to en-
counter. At Chalmette, a few miles below the
city, there were two very formidable water-
batteries, mounting on one side of the river
five 32-pounders, and on the other, nine guns
of the same calibre. Could he, without delay,
pass these obstructions, and send a frigate ten
miles above New Orleans, he could effectually
cut off the retreat of General Lovell and capture
his whole army. The only retreat for the reb-
els was by the narrow strip of land between the
river and the swamp. At a place called Kin-
ner's plantation this strip was but one mile wide.
Through this narrow neck, which a frigate could
command, the railroad passed. The nervous
excitement under which General Lovell pressed
the evacuation of the city may consequently be
imagined.

At half past 10 o'clock the next morning,
the 25th, the fleet came in sight of the Chal-
mette batteries. The Hartford led, followed
by the Brooklyn, the Richmond, the Pensacola,
and six gun-boats. The Cayuga had been lead-
ing, and being quite in the advance, and not
having noticed the signal for close order, Cap-
tain Bailey had sustained, for nearly twenty
minutes, a cross-fire with the batteries, when
the Hartford ranged ahead and opened so ter-
rific a broadside of shells, shrapnel, and grape,
that the rebels on the right bank of the river
were driven from their guns. In quick succes-

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sion the remaining vessels of the fleet came up, and in less than twenty minutes both batteries were silenced, and the rebels were seen scampering from their works in all directions.

There were now no further obstacles to be encountered save the fire rafts and burning vessels, with which the river seemed to be filled. The rebels in the wantonness of their frenzy applied the torch to everything. All the cotton in the city was brought out and set on fire. The mob could scarcely be restrained from applying the torch to all the public buildings and even the private dwellings. Scarcely any scenes in the French Revolution could exceed the horrors of the spectacle now displayed in New Orleans. Flag-Officer Farragut, in his Report to the Secretary of the Navy, writes:

"I must say I never witnessed such Vandalism in my life. The destruction of property; all the shipping, steamboats, etc., were set on fire and consumed."

The special artist of Harper's Weekly, who accompanied the squadron, thus graphically describes the scene, as it was presented to his eyes when the victorious fleet anchored in front of New Orleans:

"The view from our decks was one such as will never in all human probability be witnessed again. A large city lay at our mercy. Its streets were crowded by an excited mob. The smoke of the ruins of millions worth of cotton and shipping at times half concealed the people. While men were hasteing up the levees, firing ships and river craft as fast as possible, the people were rushing to and fro, some of them cheered for the Union, when they were fired upon by the crowd. Men, women, and children were armed with pistols, knives, and all manner of weapons. Some cheered for Jeff Davis, Beauregard, etc., and used the most vile and obscene language toward us and the good old flag. Pandemonium was here a living picture. Order was with them a thing of the past, and forgotten, and the air was rent with yells of defiance."

After rather a protracted correspondence with Monroe, the Mayor of the city, New Orleans was surrendered to the National forces, and again the United States flag floated proudly over its towers. The two forts which had endured so terrific a bombardment, cut off from all communication with the rebel fleet or army, were compelled to capitulate; and thus the majestic Mississippi, from its mouth to New Orleans, was again restored to its rightful owner, the people of the United States.

But the armed rebels had fled up the river, and were again concentrating at various points upon its banks. They were to be pursued. It was the voice of the people that our great national river, the Mississippi, cost what it might, was to be cleared of every rebel obstruction from Cairo to the Gulf. General Butler's land-force, having disembarked on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain, took possession of the city, and Flag-Officer Farragut, leaving a few ships in the stream to overawe the rebellious populace, again commenced the ascent of the river. He learned that eight miles above the city, at Carrolton, there were two forts quite heavily armed, one on each side of the stream. But the rebels had no longer any heart to brave with their water batteries the broadsides of our fleet.

As the squadron with defiant flag pushed boldly up they found the guns spiked, the carriages in flames, and the garrison dispersed. One of the batteries contained twenty-nine guns, the other six. Having completed the destruction of these works, they continued their ascent against the swift current of the stream. About a mile farther up they encountered other earth-works, which had also been abandoned.

"We discovered here," writes Flag-Officer Farragut, "settled to the right bank of the river, one of the most Heroclist labors I have ever seen—a raft and chain to extend across the river to prevent Judge Poe's gun-boats from descending. It is formed by placing three immense logs, of not less than three or four feet in diameter, and some thirty feet long. To the centre one a 2-inch chain is attached, running the length of the raft. The three logs and chain are then frapped together by chains from 4 to 1 inch, three or four layers; and there are ninety-six of these lengths composing the raft. It is at least three-quarters of a mile long."

Seven vessels were now sent up the river under the command of Captain Craven to keep up the panic. Several of these, under Commander E. Lee, were ordered to proceed as far as Vicksburg. On the 7th of May the Iroquois, under Commander James S. Palmer, appeared off Baton Rouge, one hundred and twenty miles above New Orleans, and demanded the immediate surrender of the town with all the munitions of war which the rebels had collected there, and the raising of the United States flag over the arsenal. A small force was landed, under the guns of the boats, and took possession of the place without any conflict.

Commander Palmer then, with the Iroquois and several gun-boats, ascended the river one hundred and seventy miles farther, and passing Port Hudson, where no batteries had then been erected, on the 12th of May anchored before Natchez. The city attempted no resistance to the National fleet, and as it had never been occupied as a military position by the rebels, it was not formally taken possession of.

The little squadron then pushed on to Vicksburg, four hundred miles above New Orleans. Here they found formidable batteries frowning upon the bluffs which lined the eastern banks of the river. Commander S. P. Lee, with the advance of the squadron reached this point on the 18th of May. To his demand for the surrender of the place a defiant refusal was returned. Not deeming it expedient to commence a bombardment with the small force he had he delayed operations for a few days until the arrival of Flag-Officer Farragut, who brought with him a column of troops under General Williams.

The rebel batteries were so strongly posted and so well manned, that, before attempting to reduce them, it was found necessary to send for

* Commander Palmer, in his Report, writes: "Here is a capital of a State, with 2000 inhabitants, acknowledging itself defenseless, and yet assuming an arrogant tone trusting to our forbearance. I was determined to submit to no such nonsense, and accordingly weighed anchor, and steamed up abreast the arsenal, barracks, and other public property of the United States, and hoisted over it our flag."
additional naval and military force. Commander Porter's mortar flotilla was also towed up to assist in shelling out the heights. It was not until the evening of the 27th of June that all things were ready for the bombardment.

At two o'clock on the morning of the 28th the fleet got under way, and each vessel steamed to its appointed position. At four o'clock the mortars opened fire. The range of rebel batteries extended along the river three miles in length. The Iroquois, Captain J. S. Palmer; the Oenasa, Captain S. P. Lee; and the Richmond, Captain James Alden, took the lead. These were followed by the Wissahiccon, Captain John D. Camp; the Scioota, Captain Edward Donaldson; the Hartford, Captain R. Wainwright; the Winona, Captain E. T. Nichols; the Pinola, Captain Pierce Crosby; each one pouring in successively its tremendous fire. Commander Porter followed with the Octora, Westfield, Clifton, Jackson, Harriet Lane, and Oswasco.

By the time the fleet came within range of the forts it was daylight, and a severe fire of solid shot was immediately opened upon the ships from the batteries. The guns appeared to be principally Columbiads, and the flag-ship was the object of their most deadly aim. All the rebel guns were protected, some by earthworks and others by solid rocks. The vessels were so near the banks that the gunners could be seen working the guns and waving their hats in defiance. When the fire of any of the ships was directed to any particular battery the rebels would abandon their guns, returning to them again as the ship passed on. Flag-Officer Farragut writes in his report:

"The Hartford received but little injury from the batteries in or below the town; but several shots from the batteries above the town did us considerable damage. They were 50-pounder rifle and 5-inch solid shot. The first passed through the shell-room and lodged in the hold, but did no other harm. The 5-inch passed through the cabin, but hurt no one. When we reached the upper battery we soon silenced it, and it was reported to me that its flag was struck. We therefore gave three cheers. But when we had passed about three-quarters of a mile above the repaired fire with two heavy guns. Although their shots were well directed they either had too much or too little elevation, and only cut our rigging to pieces without injuring any one seriously; which was strange, as the Iroquois, Winona, and Pinola were on our quarter. The department will perceive from this report that the forts can be passed, and we have done it, and can do it again as often as may be required of us. It will not, however, be an easy matter for us to do more than silence the batteries for a time as long as the enemy has a large force behind the hills to prevent our landing and holding the place."

The conflict in passing batteries so formidable with wooden vessels was very severe. The mortars took a position about twenty-five hundred yards from the main battery and hurled their enormous missiles upon the foe with fearful effect. As the Hartford and the gun-boats opened their batteries with grape, canister, and shrapnel, the air seemed to be filled with projectiles. Gradually the lower batteries which were within range of the mortars were silenced. But as the gun-boats came abreast of the upper batteries, which were beyond the range of the mortars, the fire upon them became very severe. Several of the mortar fleet were very roughly handled. The Jackson, Captain Woodworth, was struck by a shell which exploded in the wheel-house, disabling the steering apparatus, and cutting off a leg of the man at the wheel. The Clifton, Captain Baldwin, hastened to the assistance of the crippled boat, when a shot passed through the Clifton's boiler. The catastrophe was awful in its effects. The scalding steam enveloped the boat. It was a foe whom no energy could resist and no courage could brave. Six men were scalded to death; others were severely burned. Ten men leaned overboard, of whom one was drowned. The Jackson now in turn came to the help of the more severely wounded Clifton. In the midst of a murderous fire she attempted to rescue the scalded and drowning men. The Westfield hurried to the rescue when she was struck by a heavy rifle-shot, which fortunately did not cause any serious injury. The Octora now came and towed the Clifton to a place of safety. The Jackson also drifted out of range. Commander David R. Porter in his Report says:

"It is to be regretted that a combined attack of army and navy had not been made, by which something more substantial might have been accomplished. Such an attack, if it had been made, would soon have given the city. Ships and mortar-vessels can keep possession of the river and places near the water's edge, but they can not crowd up hills three hundred feet high; and it is that part of Vicksburg which must be taken which is the primary object. It was intended merely to pass the batteries at Vicksburg and make a junction with the fleet of Flag-Officer Davis, the navy did most gallantly and fearlessly. It was as handsome a thing as has been done during the war; for the batteries would have extended full three miles, with a three-knot current against ships that could not, at the best, make eight knots under the most favorable circumstances."

The mortar-vessels were moved below Vicksburg, along the levee, amply protected, it was supposed, from land-attack, by an impassable swamp. The rebel general Van Dorn, who was in command, it is said, of eighteen thousand men, conceived the idea that he could work his way through the morass, and by a grand stroke seize the boats. He accordingly marched a brigade from his encampment through the dense woods and over the miry, quaking bog, until they came within about two hundred yards of the forest-fringed levee. Here our pickets were encountered. They precipitately retreated, firing as they ran from the overpowering force, which was struggling along, many of them waist deep in mire. But Commander Porter was not the man to be caught napping. Instantly all the guns of the mortar-vessels and flotilla-steamer opened a terrific fire upon the woods, of grape, shrapnel,
canister, shell, and round shot. The mortars, with small charges, pitched into the midst of the invisible foe for their massive thunder-bolts. Fifty guns, spread along the levee for about a mile, and which could throw their shells and shot back into the swamp, a distance of two miles, poured their deadly discharges into the forest. No mortal could withstand its fury. As no foe was visible, imagination only could paint the consternation into which the rebel troops were plunged, as struggling through the gloomy bog they were assailed by this storm of mutilation and death.

After continuing the thorough shelling of the woods for some time, pickets were cautiously sent in to ascertain the result. They found three rebel soldiers hopelessly stuck in the mud. These men were extricated and brought to the boats. They stated that two regiments, one from Tennessee, the other from Mississippi, endeavored to pass through the swamp to attack the boats. They found it almost impossible to struggle along through the thick mud which impeded every step, when suddenly our guns opened upon them their terrible fire. There was no escape for them but in instantaneous and frantic flight. They threw away guns, knapsacks, cartridge-boxes, every thing that would impede their progress. It must have been indeed a wild scene of terror, as stumbling over roots, flashing aside branches of trees, and plunging through the miry pools, they endeavored to escape from those shrieking messengers of death which were hurled around them. Commander Porter writes, in his Report:

14 In going over the ground afterward our men found evidences of a general stampede throughout the woods. Among other things they picked up from the mud the heavy boots of a general officer, with silver spurs on. There was evidence in the marks that the enemy had been rapidly bogged or sunk in the mud. Our prisoners informed us that we had gone into the woods at that moment with two hundred men we could have captured the two regiments, as they were at the time perfectly helpless, having thrown away their arms. It was upon this march I depended for safety when I placed the schooners in position; for without such a natural defense we should have been at the mercy of concealed riflemen.

This adventure was on the first of July. The next day some of the rebel riflemen crept into the woods, and succeeded in getting so near as to wound two of our pickets, and to throw a few balls upon the decks of the boats. Five field-pieces, which were placed near the edge of the woods, were turned upon the assailants. They were speedily put to flight, leaving behind them five dead bodies and other indications of the severity of the punishment which they had received.

To guard against further annoyances of this kind five howitzers were landed, earth-works were thrown up, and fifty marines were posted as pickets. A large bell was also slung in the woods, with lines leading to it from different points, so that the pickets might give immediate alarm. "After which," says Commander Porter, "the mortar flotilla went to their re- pose with great confidence."

The importance which the rebels attached to the possession of Vicksburg may be inferred from the following extracts from a speech which Jefferson Davis addressed to the Legislature of Mississippi on the 26th of December, 1862:

"There are now two prominent objects in the programme of the enemy. One is to get possession of the Mississippi River and open it to navigation to the Delta, and the other to operate on the West, and to utilize the capture of New Orleans, which has thus far rendered them no service. Vicksburg and Port Hudson have been strengthened, and now we can concentrate at either of them a force sufficient for their protection. Vicksburg will stand, and Port Hudson will stand. But let every man who can be spared from other vocations hasten to defend them, and thus hold the Mississippi River, that great artery of the Confederacy, preserve our communications with the Trans-Mississippi Department, and thwart the enemy's scheme of forcing navigation through to New Orleans. By holding that section of the river between Port Hudson and Vicksburg, we hope to be able to hold the West, cut off from New Orleans, to be driven to the East to seek a market for their products, and will be compelled to pay so much in the way of freights that those products will be rendered almost valueless."

While Flag-Officer Farragut had been forcing his way up the river from its mouth, sweeping away every obstacle before him, Commodore Foote's gun-boat fleet, under the command of Flag-Officer Davis, had descended the river from Cairo, a distance of nearly a thousand miles, winning astounding victories at Island No. 10, Memphis, and other points by the way. The two fleets had now met at Vicksburg; the one above the three miles of batteries which frowned along the bluffs, and the other below. Flag-Officer Farragut had, with his gun-boats, run these batteries and joined the fleet of Flag-Officer C. H. Davis. He was now separated by these three miles of batteries from his mortar fleet. The batteries were increasing in number and strength every day. There was no land-force with the squadron sufficient even to attempt to take them. Thus the rebels held the river.

There was a small division of infantry which accompanied the expedition under General T. Williams. His force consisted of the Thirteenth Massachusetts, the Ninth Connecticut, the Seventh Vermont, the Fourth Wisconsin, and Nims's Battery, with two sections of Everett's. The only strategical value of Vicksburg to the rebels was its power from its commanding bluffs to blockade the river. The idea was conceived of isolating Vicksburg by cutting a new channel for the river through a neck of land opposite the city, which would leave Vicksburg a town some six miles inland. This idea was considered quite feasible, since the channel of this most tortuous of rivers had been not unfrequently changed by merely running a plow across a neck of land, thus converting a peninsula into an island.

While the fleet bombarded the city the troops were embarked in this enterprise. On the 25th of June they commenced surveying the line, and ground was broken on the morning of the
29th. Nearly twelve hundred negroes, gathered from the adjoining plantations, engaged gleefully in the work, cutting down trees, grubbing up the roots, and excavating the soil. The two fleets awaited the result of this experiment with the deepest interest. The canal was not completed until the 22d of July, when the water of the river was too low to run through it. The plan was revived in the final siege of Vicksburg, but proved a failure.

About twelve miles north of Vicksburg is the mouth of the Yazoo River. The river is three hundred feet wide at its mouth, and is navigable for boats for fifty miles at high stages of the water. Several miles up this river the rebels had established a navy-yard, where they were building a powerful iron-clad ram named the Arkansas. To prevent our squadron from passing up to disturb their operations they had reared powerful batteries upon a commanding elevation called Haines Bluff. The most of our fleet was now moored near the mouth of the Yazoo, while Porter's mortar fleet was nearly fifteen miles down the river. The Vicksburg batteries prevented any communication between the fleets except by running the fear-
ful gauntlet of their guns, or by sending couriers down through the swamp on the western banks. Not a little solicitude was felt respecting this iron-clad monster, of whose speed, armament, and ponderous metal appalling stories were told.

Several of our vessels were performing picket duty as far up the Yazoo as the rebel batteries would permit them to go. About seven o'clock in the morning of the 15th of July, when General Williams's troops and the contrabands were hard at work upon the canal, and the fleet was impatiently awaiting its completion, heavy firing was heard up the Yazoo. Two deserters the evening before had come on board the Essex, and had reported that the Arkansas was ready to come down. The gunboats Carondelet and Tyler, with the steam-ram Queen of the West, had accordingly been sent up the Yazoo to watch proceedings. The fleet was lying at anchor with fires banked but no steam on. As they had no means of replenishing their coal it was needful to practice the utmost economy in the use of their fuel.

The sound of the firing drew rapidly nearer. The whole fleet was on the stir. Soon two of our boats were seen rushing down the river at full speed, pursued by the monster ram. The retreating vessels were firing vigorously with their stern guns, and were as vigorously replied to by the bows guns of the invincible foe. The Carondelet had been driven ashore, and the Arkansas was now in a cost of mail which could laugh to scorn all ordinary shot, impetuously chasing and pelting the Tyler and the Queen of the West. The rebel ram was but about three hundred yards in the rear of the ships it was pursuing. It was an appalling hour.

As many of the boats as could bring their guns to bear upon the foe immediately opened their fire. All the boats were now straining hurriedly to get up steam, and a strange scene of commotion ensued. As the Arkansas rushed along the Essex discharged seven guns at her, striking her three times. One of the shot, as it was thought, penetrated her armor. As she approached the Richmond the rebel received a terrible broadside from her guns. For a moment both vessels were enveloped in smoke. As the smoke lifted the iron-clad monster was seen still careering on her way unharmed. When passing the Hartford she received another broadside which she did not condescend to notice. An eye-witness on board the Hartford writes:

"A shot took effect in the boiler of the ram Lancaster, of Commodore Davis's fleet, and several persons were killed and wounded. It is not certain whether this shot came from one of our guns or from the Arkansas, as the vessels were much crowded and in no position for such an encounter. As the Arkansas got past the Hartford she fired two rifle-shots which passed harmlessly over our heads. The Benton had got under way this time, and started out to meet her; but she did not seem to like the looks of her antagonist, and steamed rapidly down the river, firing her guns at intervals. The Benton followed her under the guns of the batteries on the bluffs, which opened on her, and she retired, leaving the Arkansas to run down to Vicksburg.""}

The Arkansas, which thus boldly ran through our whole fleet, was truly a formidable vessel. Her armored sides were at an angle of forty-five degrees, not running to a point like the Merrimac, but flat on the top with a single smooth plate of iron. She was armed with heavy guns, and the thick iron plates which completely cased her sides seemed to resist nearly all the shots which were fired at her. The rebel general Van Dorn, in his official report of the action, says:

"Our loss was ten men killed and fifteen wounded. Captain Brown, her commander and hero, was slightly wounded in the head. The smoke-stack of the Arkansas was riddled. Otherwise she is not materially damaged and can soon be repaired."
Being answered in the negative, he requested General Williams to send some artillery officers on board the stranded schooner, that the boats might be so scientifically blown up as to throw the mortars into deep water. He then approached within hailing distance of the schooner, and gave orders that all preparations should be made for blowing her up, but that the torch must not be applied until the signal was given, or the Arkansas was seen actually coming down.

The scene at this moment presented to the eye was one of wonderful beauty; the broad majestic flood of the Mississippi, smooth as a mirror, gliding silently beneath the rays of a July sun to its goal in the Gulf; the steamer Westfield, with Commander Renshaw upon the deck, breasting the current as he hailed the party on the shore; the brilliant cavalcade of General Williams and his staff on the levee; the tall and gloomy forest rising from the almost boundless and impenetrable swamp in the rear; up the river the spires of Vicksburg, the batteries belching forth their tremendous discharges; the Arkansas running to seek the protection of their guns; the pursuing fleet pelting the foe with shot and shell, while arrested in the chase by the batteries; the bilowy volumes of smoke; the stranded mortar-schooner, and a short distance down the river the majestic Brooklyn, with the mortar-schooners huddled in her rear for protection—all this, with the accompanying thunder-peals from innumerable cannon of the heaviest calibre, must have presented a scene which it would have taxed the energies of a Horace Vernet to transfer to canvas.

Commander Renshaw then proceeded up the river somewhat further, and threw two rifle shots at the ram; then running below to communicate the result of his observations he received an order from Flag-Officer Farragut to bring his mortars immediately into position to bombard the rebel batteries, as Farragut was coming down with his fleet to attempt to destroy the ram. Commander Porter had gone down the river with most of the steamers of the flotilla towing twelve of the mortar-schooners. The schooners were expeditiously brought into position, but while the movement was being made, through some unfortunate misunderstanding of orders, the torch was applied to the magazine of the S. C. Jones, and the vessel was blown in fragments into the air.

At half past three o'clock in the afternoon Commander Renshaw had all his mortar-boats in position to open their fire. In consequence of the absence of so many of the steamers it took some time to tow the schooners to their appointed stations along the western banks of the river. The Vicksburg batteries immediately opened upon them a brisk cannonade. Three of the schooners were in position at half past one o'clock. The roar of battle was now opened in good earnest. The schooners were at a distance of about 4000 yards from the batteries.* General Williams brought up a field battery on the western banks opposite Vicksburg, and took efficient part in the fray. With a smothering storm of 9-inch grape a swarm of rebel rifle-men on the Vicksburg side, who were concealed in the woods, annoying the mortars with their unerring aim, were speedily dispersed.

Hour after hour this thundering bombardment was continued. The firing from the mortars was rapid and accurate. The enormous shells could be seen falling within the batteries, perceptibly diminishing the regularity of their fire. In reference to this conflict Commander Ronshaw says, in his Report:

"To the Report of Lieutenant-Commanding Breese, commanding the Second Division of mortar-schooners, I have the honor to refer you for particulars of the mortar practice and conduct of their officers and men. The services of this fleet, I am aware, have already been brought to your notice by the very able and gallant commander of the flotilla, Captain Porter. And I have only to add the expression of my very high appreciation of his official ability and gallantry, and my thanks for his zealous assistance during the past day—an assistance which was marked the fact that, from the hour of half past one until nearly eight in the evening, the mortar-schooners were lying in position comparatively unprotected, within two and a half miles of this ram, which had successfully run the blockade of our fleet, not knowing at what moment her repairs might be completed and she again ready for action."

About half past seven o'clock in the evening the mortar-boats were signaled that the gunboat fleet was getting under way to run the gauntlet of the batteries. This was the signal for them all to open fire with redoubled rapidity. Flag-Officer Farragut was attempting the passage of the batteries with his New Orleans fleet, having the double purpose in view of joining his squadron below, and hoping also to destroy the rebel ram in passing. The fleet accomplished its wonderful achievement of running, with but little loss, those formidable batteries frowning along the bluffs for a distance of three miles. This was attributed to the rapid and well-directed fire from the ships, which often drove the rebels from their guns. In the deepening twilight the tempest of war, with its flash and thunder-peal and crashing bolts, raged with all the fury with which human passion could inspire it.

The designs against the Arkansas, however, proved a failure. She was so concealed under the shore, and so protected by heavy batteries, that she could not be reached in the darkness.

The chagrin which the career of the Arkansas caused the officers of the fleet, as well as the country at large, may be inferred from the following Report of Flag-Officer Farragut:

"It is with deep mortification that I acknowledge to the Department that, notwithstanding my predictions to the contrary, the iron-clad ram Arkansas has at length made her appearance and taken us all by surprise. We had...

* The following schooners were engaged: the John Griffin, Henry Brown Commanding; the Henry Jones, James W. Pennington Commanding; the Oliver H. Lee, Washington Godfrey Commanding; the Orvieto, F. E. Blanchard Commanding; the Sarah Brown, A. Christian Commanding. See W. B. Renshaw's Report.

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heard that she was up at Liverpool, in the Yarow River, and Lieutenant-Lt. Elyt informed me that the river was too narrow for our gun-boats to turn, and was also shallow in places, but suggested that Flag-Officer Davis might send up some of his iron-clad boats, which drew only four or five feet of water.

When this was proposed to Flag-Officer Davis he consented immediately, and General Williams offered to send up a few sharp-shooters. The next morning they went off at daylight, and by six in the morning had fired up the river, but supposed it to be the gun-boats firing at the flying artillery said to be lining the river. In a short time, however, the gun-boats appeared and the ram in pursuit. Although we were all lying with low fire, none of us could see the ram, or could get it up in time to pursue her; but she took the breadth of the whole fleet. It was a bold thing, and she was only saved by our feeling of security. She was very much injured, and was only able to drift down at the lowest speed—say one knot—and with the current she got down to the forts at Vicksburg before any of us had steam up.

I had a consultation with Flag-Officer Davis, and we thought it best to take the evening, when he dropped down to take the fire of the upper battery, and our squadron passed down with the determination of destroying the ram if possible. But by delays of getting in position, etc., it was late by the time we reached the town that nothing could be seen except the flashes of the guns, so that, to my great mortification, I was obliged to go down and anchor with the rest of my fleet, to protect the transports, mortar-boats, etc.

The ram is now repairing damages, for we put many holes through her, though we do not know the extent of damage done to her. Be assured, Sir, however, that I shall leave no stone unturned to destroy her.

It was quite evident that the Arkansas had received pretty severe handling from the fleet, as day after day passed and she did not venture from her moorings beneath the guns of the shore batteries. On the morning of the 22d another attempt was made to destroy the rebel ram. Flag-Officer Davis, about daylight in the morning, attacked with great vehemence the upper batteries with the gun-boats Benton, Cincinnati, and Louisville. Under cover of this fire the Essex and the Queen of the West rushed down the river at their utmost speed, to plunge upon the Arkansas, to endeavor to crush in her sides. The rebel ram was at her place at the levee under the batteries. The Queen of the West struck the Arkansas with sufficient force to do her some injury, but did not succeed in disabling her. The Essex delivered several very effective shots into the ram, but in endeavoring to strike only grazed her side, and ran with great force upon the bank. Here, for ten minutes, until she could be got off, the Essex was exposed to a terrible fire from the shore battery.

The sickly season had now come. The most vigorous men wilted and broke down under the unintermittent and exhausting heat of that pestilential region. Men who were apparently well one day would sink away and die before the close of the next. Of one hundred and thirty men of the mortar fleet one hundred and six were sick and off duty. The crews of the gun-boats were, many of them, reduced to one-half their number. Six hundred men were needed immediately to secure the efficiency of the flotilla.

The rebels suffered even more severely than the patriots. Out of from eighteen to twenty thousand men on his rolls, he could scarcely muster five thousand in his ranks. They suffered far more severely than our men from want of suitable hospital accommodations, medicines, and food.

As it was manifest that the shore batteries could not be carried without the assistance of a far more powerful land-force than we then had, it was judged expedient to abandon the enterprise for the present. Flag-Officer Farragut was therefore instructed to drop down the river with his fleet to New Orleans, while the nation gathered its strength to strike the rebels on the bluffs at Vicksburg an effectual blow. Commander Porter was left below Vicksburg, with the Essex and the Sumter, to watch the movements of the enemy.

On the 28th of July Flag-Officer Farragut returned to New Orleans with most of his fleet. The Kaulabin and Kineo were left at Baton Rouge with a small land-force. On the 5th of August a rebel force of ten regiments, under command of General J. C. Breckinridge, made a vigorous assault upon the small force stationed at Baton Rouge. One of the most severely contested battles of the war ensued, in which General Williams was killed by a rifle-bull through the chest. About two o'clock in the afternoon the 4th some friendly negroes brought the intelligence to the camp that the enemy was approaching. All possible arrangements were made for the menaced attack.

At half past three o'clock the next morning the reveille was beaten, and our little army marched about a mile out of town to meet the foe. The enemy, however, appeared in such force that, after very severe fighting, we were compelled to fall back. Our troops experienced much annoyance from facing the blaze of the rising sun. But in defiance of every difficulty they manfully bore the shock of overwhelming numbers. The Sixth Michigan, with Nim's battery on the right, and the Fourteenth Maine, with Manning's battery on the left, won great renown. They were exposed for some time, in the open field, to the swarming foe who assailed them from the woods. The Thirteenth Massachusetts was sent to the aid of the hotly-pressed Michigan troops, but before they were in position the rebels were driven back.

At the same time the Ninth Connecticut and the Fourth Wisconsin, which had been held in reserve, were ordered to advance to the aid of the left wing, but as they were rushing upon the field the foe suddenly retired.

During the fight a portion of the enemy broke into the camp of the Twenty-first Indians and burned it. But the despoiled regiment took fearful revenge, in pouring into their disordered ranks a volley of balls, which strewed the ground with the wounded, and caused the survivors precipitately to retreat. The rebels also forced an entrance into the camp of the Twentieth Maine, where they encountered a similar fate. The Twenty-first Indians fought
with such desperation of courage that it is said one of the rebel Generals, whose fortune it was to encounter them, remarked:

"But for those accursed Indianians we should have taken Baton Rouge!"

The gun-boats Essex, Sumter, Kineo, and Katahdin took glorious part in this conflict. The two former were placed in position to protect our left. They opened fire into the woods through which the foe was swarming, and with their screaming shells shattered the forest and scattered a storm of iron hail around the assailants. Signal-Officer Davis, of the Kineo, took a position on the tower of the State House, where he had an excellent view of the field of battle, enabling him to signal the gun-boats where to throw their shells. These death-dealing missiles, hurled from the 11-inch guns of the boats, constrained the rebels to keep at a respectful distance. It is said that one shell from the Kineo killed from forty to sixty of the rebels.

When near the close of the engagement, Lieutenant-Colonel Keith, of the Twenty-first Indiana, was taken from the field severely wounded. Colonel Cahill says in his report that no words of his can do him justice. He adds:

"He was everywhere, in every place, working his men through tents, trees, and underbrush like a veteran; and
when seriously wounded and taken from the field, he would not give up, but moved around among his officers and men, counseling and assisting in every thing, to the injury and irritation of his wounds. Colonel Roberts, of the Seventh Vermont, fell mortally wounded, and has since died.

Colonel Nickerson, of the Fourteenth Maine, had his horse shot from under him by a discharge of grape. He sprang from under his dying steed, and waving his sword called upon his men for one more charge. The men sprang forward with three roaring cheers, and drove back the advancing foe.

But we have no space to record the individual acts of heroism. It was near the close of the battle when General Williams fell, mortally wounded. He had just said to the men of the Twenty-first Indiana, as their gallant Colonel was borne wounded from the field, leaving the regiment in command of Captain Griswold:

"Boys, your field-officers are all gone. I will lead you!" The men responded with three cheers. Just at that moment the fatal bullet pierced the bosom of the General and he fell. It is not too much to say, in the words of Colonel Cahill:

"That more undaunted bravery, coolness, and skill has not been displayed in any battle-field than on that of Shiloh Rouge, and that too by officers who never before handled troops in a fight."

As the discomfited rebels retired the gun-boats continued pitching shells into the woods every half hour during the whole night. But the
foc was far away on the rapid retreat. Our small
land-force, weakened by sickness and exhaust-
ed by heat and fatigue, were not in a condition
to pursue.

The Union force engaged numbered less
than two thousand five hundred. The enemy
had at least five thousand, with twelve or four-
teen field-pieces and some cavalry. About
thirty of their number were captured, and they
left seventy wounded men upon the field.**

It was in the plan of attack by the rebels
that while Breckinridge with his overpowering
force fell impetuously upon our little garrison,
the Arkansas was to crush and sink our gun-
boats. Our boats were all ready to receive
her, but the Arkansas did not make her ap-
pearance. It was therefore decided for the
gun-boats to take a trip up the river to ascer-
tain what had become of her. On turning a
bend of the stream the monster ram was seen
close to the bank, evidently disabled. Two
rebel gun-boats, the Webb and the Music,
were hovering around her. Prudently they
retired as soon as our little fleet have in sight.

The Essex led, followed by the Sumter, the
Kineo, and the Kadihin.

* Colonel T. W. Caball's Report. Lieutenant G. Wel-
ser's Report states the rebel force at 6000, ours at 2000.

CROCHET.

WHILE the sun, with parting glances,
On my zephyr web is hemming,
Will you listen to my dreaming?
Would you like to know my fabric?
What hidden meaning lies
In my spinner-like devotion.
To the polished shaft, which flies
In and out with celerity?
How old Walton loved his hook
He hath told us in his book;
If I prize my book as well,
Sure I too my love may tell.

Now the thought of Izaak's angling
Bringeth to my mind the saying
That this crochet is but playing;
That we keep poor fishes dangling
With a wearisome delay.
From our line so soft and pretty.
We are anglers too, they say,
Cruel anglers, void of pity.
Yet we do not hide the hook,
Dont cast it in the brook;
If they catch the fatal link
Are we guilty, do you think?

Now I call me Clotho, spinning
Some one's measure of existence.
With a hero's wise persistence,
Looking back to the beginning,
Never thinking of the end;
For 'tis not my task to sever,
Nor may I from fate defend
When thefarting comes forever.
Thus I spin the slender thread,
Tint it with a rose red,
And, with lingering touch and slow,
Gently check its rapid flow.

But my dreams are shifting ever,
I am striving now to weave me
From the thread which Clotho gave me,
Such a web of pure endeavor
As shall fold me evermore.
In a robe of light and beauty
When my busy life is o'er.
When I've finished all my duty.
But my thread is oh, so fine!
Smallest moments form the line,
And I weave 'mid anxious fears,
For I dread the fatal shears.

Here a knot is in the worsted,
See how carefully I hide it!
Just so carefully I tied it
When to future skill I trusted.
For concealment of the knot.
That's the way with woman's sorrow,
Hidden pain is half forgot
In the bustle of the morrow.
Yet my web is no less fair
For the tangle hidden there,
And our lives seem joyous still,
Though they bury many ill.

So, while twilight shades are falling,
Threads of fancy I am twining
With the rosy wool combining;
Headless of the voices calling
From beyond the garden wall;
Till, at last, the steady motion
Knits up all my zephyr ball.
Here's the spring of my devotion—
This is why I love my book
As the poet loves his book:
Thus its charms my cares appeale,
For I'm dreaming all the while.