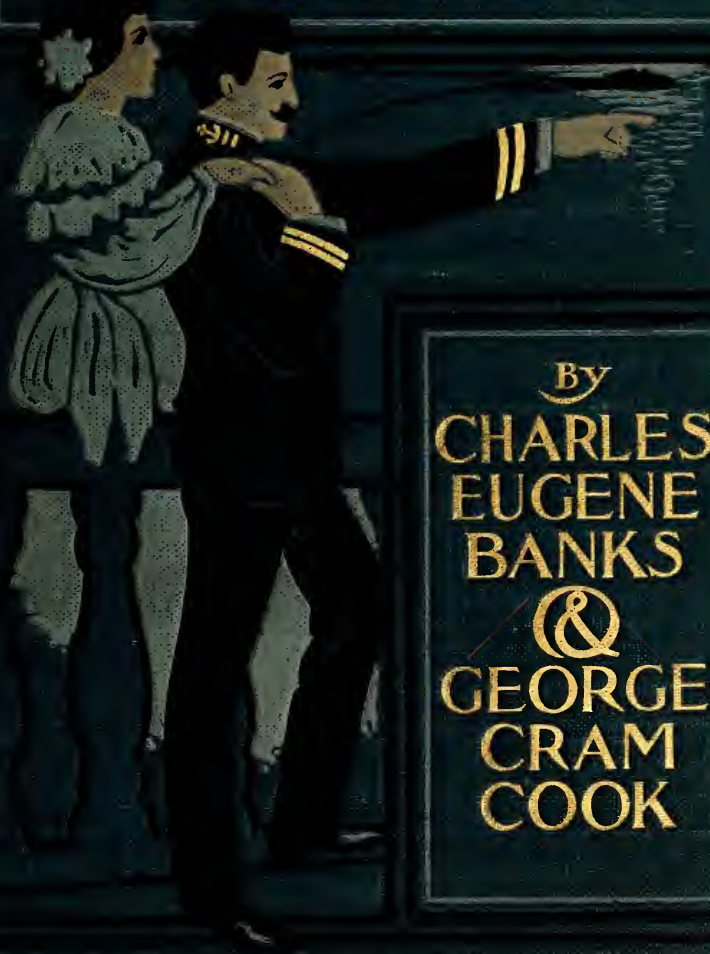


IN
HAMPTON
ROADS



By
CHARLES
EUGENE
BANKS
&
GEORGE
CRAM
COOK


IN HAMPTON ROADS

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
South and North,

* * * * *

Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise, and sin !
Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest !
Love is best.

— *Browning.*



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Waverley Mansion.

IN
HAMPTON
ROADS

A
DRAMATIC ROMANCE

BY

CHARLES EUGENE BANKS

AND

GEORGE CRAM COOK

CHICAGO AND NEW YORK:
RAND, McNALLY & COMPANY,
PUBLISHERS.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PROLOGUE — THE BIRTH OF IRONCLADS, . . .	7
CHAPTER I — WAVERLEY PLANTATION, . . .	11
II — WATERLOO WILLIS,	25
III — SURPRISES,	46
IV — A RESCUE,	57
V — VON BENZINGER,	68
VI — HAMILTON,	75
VII — THE MERRIMAC,	85
VIII — THE MASK,	95
IX — THE PILOTS,	105
X — THE WHITE SLAVE,	124
XI — THE REVELATION,	139
XII — SHUT IN,	157
XIII — THE FATAL SHOT,	163
XIV — THE COURTMARTIAL,	177
XV — THE MONITOR,	192
XVI — THE 'DUEL OF IRONCLADS,	219
XVII — THE DEATH WARRANT,	238
XVIII — MARTIAL LAW,	247
XIX — JUSTICE,	259
XX — SECRET SERVICE,	273
EPILOGUE — UNION,	286

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LIEUTENANT EARL HAMILTON, U. S. N., *stationed on the Frigate Minnesota.*

GEN. HUGO VON BENZINGER, U. S. A., *in command of a brigade stationed near Hampton Roads.*

CAPTAIN GEARY,
LIEUTENANT EDWARDS, } *of his staff.*

WATERLOO WILLIS, *of the Secret Service.*

CAPTAIN LAFE HARLAN, C. S. A., *commanding a company of guerrillas.*

SQUIRE HENDERSON, *a planter, in reduced circumstances.*

LITTLE JOE, *a dumb negro boy, property of the Squire.*

SETH, *an old negro servant of the Eggleston household.*

LIEUTENANT WORDEN, *commanding the Monitor.*

LIEUTENANT GREENE,
MR. STIMERS,
MR. WEBBER, } *of the Monitor.*

CAPTAIN BUCHANAN, *commanding the Merrimac.*

MAJOR CUTHBERTSON, *Brigade Surgeon, U. S. A.*

COLONEL MIDDLETON, U. S. A., *commanding a regiment at Camp Butler.*

CAPTAIN STANHOPE, U. S. A., *of Colonel Middleton's command.*

VIRGINIA EGGLESTON, *daughter of Judge Eggleston, of Waverley Plantation.*

MRS. CORA POYNTER, *her foster sister, of Washington, D. C.*

ESTELLE, *a white slave.*

BLACK MAMMIE, *of the Eggleston household.*

Soldiers, sailors, civilians, negroes, etc.

SCENES:—Waverley Plantation, overlooking Hampton Roads—Destruction of the Union fleet in Hampton Roads—On board the Monitor—Interior of Waverley.

TIME—March 8 and 9, 1862.

IN HAMPTON ROADS.

PROLOGUE.

THE BIRTH OF IRONCLADS.

Sumter had fallen. North and South had sprung to arms. In Dixie and in Yankeeland thousands had enlisted; regiment after regiment had been massed, camped, clothed, drilled, equipped, organized and marched away. The unexhausted South was pouring out her undiminished wealth. High hope of victory sat on her banners, which shone now with the luster of Manassas. For both sides, however, war had changed from a romantic opportunity for glory to a grim and shattering reality. Grant on the Mississippi was hammering at the back door of the Confederacy. McClellan was making a real army out of the disorganized and routed thousands, who, in the previous June, had blocked the roads to Washington. He had already

formed in his mind the idea of the peninsular campaign, which looked for its base of operations to Hampton Roads. Here, at the mouth of the James, seventy miles below Richmond, was Fort Monroe—the cork of the Confederate bottle.

The Union troops, under Major General Wool, held the fort itself, the quaint old town of Hampton, and a strip of coast eight or ten miles long, extending across the southern extremity of the peninsula from the mouth of the York River to the mouth of the James, where, at Newport News Point, Federal batteries commanded the river. Eight miles northwest of the fort, as the crow flies, were the Confederate outposts, whose main force, commanded by Magruder, lay from ten to twenty miles back in Yorktown and Williamsburg. Confederate intrenchments and batteries at Big Bethel, Lee's Mill, Howard's Bridge, Warwick Courthouse and Ship's Point commanded every coigne of vantage on the northbound roads—the roads to Richmond. The southeastern shore of Hampton Roads, the south bank of the James, the country lying all about Norfolk, was in the hands of the Confederates. Their lines were unbroken from Richmond to the Sewall's Point batteries, which fronted, across three miles of blue water, the guns of Fort Monroe. The waters of the great roadstead, where the warships lie, be-

came in the early part of '62 the focus of the war, the point where the destinies of the widespread, mighty continent were to be decided.

This was the situation on Saturday morning, March eighth, eighteen hundred and sixty-two. The sun rose on an unclouded sky and shot arrows of silver along the peaceful waters of the great harbor, tipped with gold the masts of the Union frigates lying under the protecting guns of the fort, cast long shadows across the James River from the oaks that lined its banks, and between which lay the ships of the Confederate fleet waiting an opportunity to slip out to sea, and fell mellow and warm along the gently sloping hills of Old Virginia. Mating birds sang or chirruped in the crabapple trees, rich with blossoms and fragrant with perfume.

Back from the shore, upon the rising ground, groups of negroes armed with hoes moved lazily afield, chanting their musical, melancholy rhymes. Over toward Norfolk, fishermen dipped their oars in the placid waters, or drifted idly with the tide.

The morning was perfect. The ear of the listener heard no harsher sounds than those recounted; the eye saw no more disturbing sights. Occasionally the mellow notes of a distant bugle in routine call, the neighing of an impatient steed, or

the droning cry of a weary sentinel suggested the nearness of armed and hostile forces—that was all. On this eventful morning the most important point of vantage to the arms of both the Federal and Confederate forces was as peaceful and serene as though the men in blue and the men in butternut, lying on their arms along each side of Hampton Roads, had been comrades in one cause as well as brothers in blood.

The same sun was to look down at noon upon this pastoral vale and quiet sea wrapped in the smoke of carnage and resounding with the roar of half a hundred batteries. It was to set upon a scene of desolation and death, of wreck-strewn waves dyed red with the blood of brave Americans, of sunken ships which carried with them into troubled waters the hopes of half the people of the most Christian nation of the earth.

It was the morning of the day in which a thought was to be tested; in which a new navy was to be born.

Today the Confederate ram, the Merrimac, the first ironclad ever tried, was to attack the Federal fleet. The sun looked on and made no sign.

CHAPTER I.

WAVERLEY PLANTATION.

Virginia Eggleston, standing on the gallery of Waverley mansion overlooking Hampton Roads on that memorable morning, felt something of the impending tragedy that was to be enacted there. Of the Merrimac she knew no more than others not in the secret of its building. Descriptions of this craft had been so many and conflicting that the imagination, quickened by the sweeping events of the time, could retain no more than their most striking features. These had gradually changed and shifted according to the mind or temperament of the individual, so that both at the North and the South the new ship was as mythical as the ancient dragon—all the more terrible because of the mystery surrounding it. To the Confederates it held out a hope for instant and lasting victory. To the Federals it was an undefined, intangible force, a wild beast, an animal of unknown dimensions, crouching

for a spring. That a single ship could live for a moment in Hampton Roads, under the fire of the guns of the whole Union fleet and of the shore batteries, seemed no more than an idle boast. That such a craft could sink all those great ships and sail away unhurt to attack and burn the cities along the New England coast, or steam up the Potomac to throw shells into the Capitol was not within the range of possibilities. Yet all these things were prophesied, and descriptions of an iron monster, impervious to shot and shell, were so often repeated and told with such an air of knowing secrecy that the Merrimac became to the authorities at Washington a strange, foreboding spirit of evil, an intangible shape that would not be banished and that could not be struck—the Satan of the Civil War.

The Merrimac had been building for nearly a half year when Ericsson began the construction of the Monitor. But Ericsson's plans were more or less familiar and his engine freely discussed. It was known to be little larger than a pleasure steamer; and what could such a toy vessel do against the dragon of the South whose shape and powers had been multiplied by mysterious rumors and whispered warnings until even the lightest mention sent terror to the Federal heart?

"Mammie," said Virginia to the small, compact, gray-headed negro woman who came slowly along the gallery from behind the base of a tower, "Mammie, do you know which ship out there in the Roads is the Minnesota?"

"Don' know nuffin' 'bout de Yankee ships, Miss Virginia," replied the woman, placing a jar of roses upon a small bench in the shadow of the climbing vines, "'ceptin' I hea Marse Harlan say las' evenin' dat de one ovah dar nearest de James is de Cumberlan'. Mus' be one o' de oders I reckon. What yo' want to know 'bout dat pa'ticula' ship fo', chile?" queried the black woman, pushing a stray lock of gray wool out of her eyes and looking quizzically at her mistress.

"The Minnesota is the ship to which Lieutenant Hamilton has been assigned, you know, Mammie."

"'Tenant Hamilton! You mean Earl Hamilton, honey?"

"Yes, Mammie, you know he was in the United States navy and refused to go out with other Southerners at the beginning of the war. He has been stationed at Charleston, but I learned yesterday he had been sent to Hampton Roads and assigned to the Minnesota."

"Dat what yo' anxious 'bout dat pa'ticular ship foh, honey! Huh, huh," said the old negress, bending

down to straighten up a budding rose, "I know jes' how you feel 'bout it, chile, I 'members when yo' an' Earl Hamilton an' Lafe Harlan played togeder in dis ole house day in an' day out—free of de purtiest children dat de sun evah shone fo', an' de happiest, too, I reckon." The old woman came and stood near Virginia, taking hold of her gown with a worshipful touch.

"I'm sure we were, Mammie. But the war has driven us in so many different directions I can hardly realize that this is Waverley or that we are the same beings you loved and chided in those dear old days."

"'Deed it ain't, honey, an' deed yo' ain't. Wif Marse Eggleston off dar in Richmond tellin' Gen'l Lee how ter plan fo' ter feed de soldiers, Lafe Harlan in hidin' foh bein' a spy an I don' know what mo', an' yo' all heah alone wid de cares o' dis plantation on yo' purty shoulders, an' a lot o' lazy good-fo'-nuthin' niggahs worrying yo' life out—'tain't the same nohow. An' you say Earl Hamilton out dar on dat Yankee ship? Huh! One of dese nights dis yeah Yerrimac gwine out f'om Norfolk, an' open its big mouf, wiv its white teef longer'n my arm an' biggah'n de gate post yonner, and bite de Yankee ships in two in de middle, and swallo' ev'ry man on de decks, an' under de decks, an' dem dat