

THE CRUISE AND CAPTURES OF THE ALABAMA.



"That's from the 'queen of England'!"

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CONFEDERATE STATES STEAMER ALABAMA.

CRUISE AND CAPTURES
OF THE
ALABAMA

BY ALBERT M. GOODRICH

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PREFACE.

The publication of the naval records of the Rebellion, both Union and Confederate, makes it possible to take a comprehensive view of the career of the famous cruiser. In addition to these, Captain Semmes kept a diary, which after the close of the war he expanded into a very full memoir. Various officers of the vessel also kept diaries, and wrote accounts of their adventures, The long report of the Geneva Tribunal of Arbitration, and various consular reports contain a great deal of information in regard to the Alabama's inception and operations. All this voluminous material has been gone over with care in the preparation of this volume, and the facts are set forth in a trustworthy, and it is hoped also, in a readable form.



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CRUISE AND CAPTURES OF THE ALABAMA.

CHAPTER I.

ENGLAND AND THE BLOCKADE.

IN the decade preceding the Civil War in America the carrying trade of the United States had grown into a vast industry. The hardy seamen of New England had flung out the stars and stripes to every breeze, and cast anchor in the most remote regions where a paying cargo might be found. Up to October, 1862, they hardly felt that they had more at stake in the war of the Rebellion than any other loyal citizens. But in that month the news swept along the seaboard that the Alabama lay within a few days' sail of their harbors, dealing out swift vengeance upon all Northern vessels which came in her way.

Whether or not the decline of American shipping is principally due to unwise legislation, certain it is that its downfall dates from the appearance in the mid-Atlantic of this awful scourge of the seas. Northern newspapers called the craft a pirate, and no other word seemed to the New England sea captains adequate to describe the ruthless destroyer. Although regularly commissioned by the Confederate government, she never entered a Confederate port from the time she left the stocks until she tried conclusions with the Kearsarge off the coast of France; and this, together with the further fact that her crew was chiefly of European origin—largely English—was used as an argument that she could not be considered as a legitimate vessel of war. None of the great nations of the world adopted this view, however, and she was everywhere accorded the same treatment that was extended to war vessels of the United States.

Early in 1861 there sprang up in England a thriving trade in arms and munitions of war. While the cotton spinners of Lancashire were suffering from the loss of their usual supply of raw material, owing to the blockade of the ports of the Confederacy, the merchants of Liverpool were turning their attention to supplying the belligerents with the equipment necessary for the continuance of the conflict. Sales were made directly or indirectly to the Federal government, but the higher prices offered in the South tempted many to engage in the more hazardous traffic with the government at Richmond.

As the blockade gradually became more efficient, insurance companies refused

longer to take the risk of loss on Southern commerce. But it still went on. The owners of a blockade runner were certain of enormous profits if they could succeed in getting through the lines, but, if captured, both vessel and cargo were confiscated by the Federal prize courts. The sleepy little village of Nassau in the Bahama islands awoke to find itself a great commercial emporium, and immense quantities of goods were soon collected there, awaiting transshipment within the Confederate lines.

According to the law of nations, vessels of neutral countries were not subject to seizure, unless actually attempting to run the blockade. Consequently, ocean steamers could land their cargoes at the English port of Nassau without danger, while smaller vessels, having less draught than the Federal war ships, could make the short run to the coast with better chances of escape. Liverpool was the principal European depot for this traffic, as Nassau was its principal depot on this side of the Atlantic.

In the spring of 1862 Confederate agents in England were still talking about the “paper blockade,” but English merchants whose goods were piled up at Nassau found the blockade much more real than it had been represented to be. Their anxiety was somewhat lessened by the circulation of rumors that the blockade was shortly to be raised. Confederate vessels of war were to make an opening in the encircling fleets, and the blockade was to become so lax that it would no longer be recognized by European governments. Eventually these prophecies became tangible enough to connect themselves with a certain mysterious vessel which was at that very time lying in the Mersey awaiting her masts and rigging.

Charles Francis Adams was the United States minister to England, residing at London. The suspected character of the vessel was communicated to him by Thomas H. Dudley, the United States consul at Liverpool, and a strict watch was kept upon her.

Any avowed agent of the United States government had great difficulty in acquiring information of a compromising character. Public opinion in England among the wealthy and influential was strongly in favor of the South. For this there were two reasons—one political, the other commercial. People of rank and those of considerable worldly possessions saw with growing apprehension the rising tide of democracy, not only in England but throughout the world. The feeling of disdain with which the idle rich had so long looked upon those who were “in trade” was beginning to lose its sting, and something like an answering scorn of those who never contributed anything toward the struggle for human

subsistence began to be felt. The existence side by side of vast wealth and degrading poverty were more often referred to, and the innate perfection of institutions hoary with antiquity was more often called in question. The dread of an uprising of the “lower classes,” peaceful or otherwise, was strong. The success of Napoleon III. in overturning the second republic of France was greeted with delight and construed to mean the triumph of the privileged classes.

And at last had come that long-deferred failure of republican institutions, which aristocracy and aristocracy’s ancestors had been so confidently predicting—the breaking up of the American republic. The refusal of President Lincoln and the people of the North to acquiesce in the dismemberment of the Union was received at first with surprise and then with indignation. British commerce was seriously interfered with by the blockade. Spindles were idle all through the manufacturing districts in the west of England. And all because a blind and headstrong people persisted in an utterly hopeless war of conquest.

Abhorrence of chattel slavery was well nigh universal among the English people of all classes. Indeed, the existence of that institution in America was one of the principal indictments which aristocracy had been fond of bringing against her. The assertion that the North was waging a war for the extinguishment of slavery was laughed to scorn. Aristocracy pointed to the assertion of Lincoln in his inaugural address, that he had no intention or lawful right to interfere with slavery where it already existed and to similar statements of Republican leaders. The general opinion among the well-to-do classes was that the war was being fought on the part of the North for territory—for empire—or from motives of pride.

On the other hand, the mechanics and artizans were inclined to believe that the war was really a war against slavery, and that in the cause of the North was somehow bound up the cause of the poor and downtrodden generally. So it came about that associations of working men passed resolutions of sympathy with President Lincoln, and the craftsmen of Lancashire, who were the principal sufferers from the cotton famine, kept as their representative in parliament the free trade champion, Richard Cobden, an outspoken friend of the North.



CHAPTER II.

ESCAPE OF THE "290."

IN March, 1862, a steamer just in from an ocean voyage ran up the Mersey, and as she passed the suspected craft the flag of the latter was dipped to her. The new comer was the *Annie Childs*, and she had run the blockade. But there was more important freight on board than the cargo of cotton which she brought. Consul Dudley gained an interview with some of her crew, and learned that it was understood at Wilmington, South Carolina, whence they had come, that a number of war vessels for the use of the South were building in England, and that several officers for the *Oreto*, the name by which the suspected vessel was now known, had been passengers in the *Annie Childs*. These officers had come on board at Smithville, some twenty miles down the river from Wilmington. On the steamer they had talked of their future positions on the *Oreto*, of which Captain Bulloch was to have the command.

The information thus obtained was hastily transmitted to Mr. Adams, but on the same day, March 22, 1862, the *Oreto* sailed, bound, so her clearance papers certified, for Palermo *and Jamaica*. She was next heard from at Nassau, where she had been seized by the British authorities, but she was subsequently released. She afterward ran into the port of Mobile and reappeared as the Confederate war ship *Florida*.

The complications arising in the case of this vessel warned the Confederate agents to be more guarded in their operations. The British Foreign Enlistment Act provided a penalty of fine and imprisonment and forfeiture of ship and cargo for any person who should "equip, furnish, fit out or arm" any vessel to be employed by any persons or real or assumed government against any other government at peace with Great Britain. This prohibition was generally understood not to extend to the construction of the vessel, no matter for what purpose she might be intended; and the existing state of public opinion was such that it required strong evidence to induce officials to act in a given case and a very well fortified cause of action to induce a jury to convict an owner of breaking the law.

Scarcely was the Oreto beyond English jurisdiction before Mr. Dudley's attention was occupied with another and more formidable vessel, which was suspected of being intended for the use of the Confederate government. She had been launched from the yard of Laird Brothers at Birkenhead, near Liverpool. The vessel had not yet even received a name, and was still known by her yard number, 290.

On June 29th, 1862, Mr. Adams called the attention of Lord John Russell, who was at the head of the British department of foreign affairs, to the suspicious character of the "290," and an investigation was ordered. The report of the custom house officers, made July 1, was to the effect that the "290" was still lying at Birkenhead, that she had on board several canisters of powder, but as yet neither guns nor carriages, and added that there was no attempt to disguise the fact that she was intended for a ship of war, and built for a foreign government, but that Laird Brothers did "not appear disposed to reply to any questions respecting the destination of the vessel after she leaves Liverpool." Having agreed to keep watch of the vessel, British officialdom concluded that it had done its entire duty in the premises, and the matter was dropped. Meanwhile Mr. Adams, who had all along been expecting exactly this result, had been in telegraphic communication with Cadiz, Spain, where the United States steamer Tuscarora had touched, and that war ship was now on her way to Southampton.

RAPHAEL SEMMES, COMMANDER OF THE ALABAMA.

Mr. Adams had also caused a number of affidavits to be prepared, embodying as much evidence as to the character of the "290" as could be obtained. The affidavit of William Passmore was to the effect that he was a seaman and had served on board the English ship *Terrible* during the Crimean war. Hearing that hands were wanted for a fighting-vessel at Birkenhead, he applied to Captain Butcher for a berth in her.

"Captain Butcher asked me," the affidavit continued, "if I knew where the vessel was going, in reply to which I told him I did not rightly understand about it. He

then told me the vessel was going out to the government of the Confederate States of America. I asked him if there would be any fighting, to which he replied, yes, they were going to fight for the Southern government. I told him I had been used to fighting-vessels and showed him my papers.”

Captain Butcher then engaged him as an able seaman at £4 10s. per month, and it was arranged that he should go on board the following Monday, which he did, and worked there several weeks. During that time Captain Butcher and Captain Bulloch, both having the reputation of being Confederate agents, were on board almost every day.

This affidavit with five others was laid before the customs officers, but the evidence was adjudged to be insufficient to warrant the detention of the vessel. Determined not to neglect any possible chance of stopping the “290” from getting to sea, the energetic United States minister placed copies of the affidavits before an eminent English lawyer, Mr. R. P. Collier, who arrived at a very different conclusion in regard to them. He said:

“It appears difficult to make out a stronger case of infringement of the foreign enlistment act, which, if not enforced on this occasion, is little better than a dead letter.”

Armed with this opinion, Mr. Adams lost no time in laying it before Lord Russell, together with the affidavits upon which it was based. His success was an agreeable surprise. An official opinion was at last obtained to the effect that the “290” might lawfully be detained, and an order was issued in accordance therewith.

The Confederate agents were well aware of the efforts of Mr. Adams and his assistants, and suspected the nature of the errand of the Tuscarora. Friends of the builders and others were invited to participate in a trial trip of “No. 290” on July 29th. Her armament was not yet on board. The still unfinished deck was decorated with flags, and occupied by a gay party of pleasure seekers, including a number of ladies, and several British custom house officials. The vessel dropped down the Mersey, and the revellers partook of luncheon in the cabin. Then a tug steamed alongside, and the surprised guests were requested to step on board. Bunting and luncheon were hastily hustled out of the way, and holiday ease instantly gave way to the work of getting to sea. Anchor was dropped in Moelfre Bay on the coast of Wales, and preparations for a voyage were rapidly pushed forward. A tug brought out about twenty-five more men, and the crew

signed shipping articles for Nassau.

At two o'clock on the morning of July 31st "No. 290" turned her prow toward the Irish sea. On the same morning came the British officials with the order for her detention. Information of the proposed seizure had leaked out through the medium of Confederate spies, and the bird had flown.

Meanwhile the Federal agents had discovered the location of "No. 290" at Moelfre Bay, and the Tuscarora proceeded to Queenstown and thence up St. George's Channel in quest of her. Mr. Adams telegraphed Captain Craven:

At latest yesterday she was off Point Lynas; you must catch her if you can, and, if necessary, follow her across the Atlantic.

But the fleeing steamer passed through the North Channel, around the north coast of Ireland and vanished in the broad ocean. The Tuscarora at once abandoned the chase.



CHAPTER III.

ARMING AT THE AZORES.

CAPTAIN BULLOCH had gone ashore with the pilot at the Giant's Causeway, in the north of Ireland, and the vessel was under the command of Captain Butcher. During the next nine days the "290" struggled with strong head winds and a heavy sea, shaping her course toward the southwest. The speed at which she was driven was attended with some damage to the vessel and considerable discomfort to her crew, but immediate armament was a pressing necessity, and haste was made the first consideration.

On the 10th of August the welcome words "Land ho!" were wafted down from the foremasthead, and the "290" or "Enrica," as she had been christened in the shipping articles, came to an anchor—not at Nassau, but in the secluded bay of Praya in the little-frequented island of Terceira, one of the Azores. As an excuse for anchoring in their bay Captain Butcher represented to the Portuguese authorities that his engines had broken down. This being accepted as sufficient, the crew set to work ostensibly to repair them, but really to prepare the vessel for the reception of her guns. Three days were spent in quarantine. The inhabitants treated the new comers very civilly, and they were regaled with fruits and vegetables. Water was scarce, and meat had to be brought from Angra, on the other side of the island. On the 13th a United States whaling schooner arrived, and one of the crew of the "Enrica" was indiscreet enough to make known the real character of his vessel, whereupon the whaler hastily departed.

At last, on the 18th of August, the anxiety of Captain Butcher was relieved by the arrival of the bark Agrippina from London, under command of Captain McQueen, with a cargo of ammunition, coal, stores of various kinds, and the necessary guns for the steamer's armament. In response to the inquiries of the harbor officials her commander stated that she had sprung a leak, which would necessitate repairs before she could resume her voyage.

The next day Captain Butcher ran alongside the bark, and having erected a pair of large shears, proceeded to transfer her cargo to the deck of the "Enrica." This brought off the Portuguese officials, furious that he should presume to

communicate with a vessel which had two more days of quarantine to run. They were told that the Agrippina was in a sinking condition, and a removal of her cargo was absolutely necessary in order to repair the leak. Finally, Captain Butcher, feigning a passion in his turn, protested angrily that he was only performing a service of humanity, and was doing no more for the captain of the bark than any Englishman would do for another in distress.

The Portuguese withdrew, and the transshipment proceeded without further protest. Two days later (August 20th) when this work was nearly completed, the smoke of a steamer was discovered on the horizon. After a period of anxious suspense on board the two vessels, she was made out from signals to be the English steamer Bahama, from Liverpool, commanded by Captain Tessier. She had on board the future officers of the "Enrica," about thirty more seamen, \$50,000 in English sovereigns and \$50,000 in bank bills, together with some less important stores. Captain Bulloch was also a passenger in her.

The Bahama took the Agrippina in tow, and the three vessels proceeded around to Angra. Here there was more trouble with the authorities. The latter could hardly help knowing the warlike character of the stores which were being transferred, and notwithstanding the fact that the British flag was flying from all three of the vessels, they suspected some connection between them and the war in America. In common with other European governments, Portugal had issued a proclamation of neutrality, and all her subjects had been warned to conform to the international law governing neutrals.

Captain Bulloch flitted from vessel to vessel, accompanied sometimes by a small man with a gray mustache and wearing citizen's clothes, whom the officers of the "Enrica" greeted as Captain Semmes, late commander of the Confederate States steamer Sumter. Captain Butcher was still nominally in command, and communications from the shore came addressed to him. An English consul was stationed at Angra, and he sent word that the authorities insisted that the vessels should go to East Angra, as West Angra was not a port of entry. Captain Butcher replied that he wished to take in coal from the bark, and that he would go outside the marine league for that purpose. The three vessels stood along the coast. Gun carriages were hoisted out and as many guns mounted as possible. At night the "Enrica" and the bark returned to Angra. The Bahama kept outside. The next morning the English consul came on board with several custom house officials, and the ships having been regularly entered on the custom house books, Portuguese dignity was satisfied, and peace once more reigned supreme.

Late on Saturday evening, August 23d, the coaling was finished, and six of the eight guns on the "Enrica" were ready for use. The next day the vessels steered for the open sea, and the officers of the newly armed steamer, having made certain beyond the possibility of dispute that they were outside of Portuguese jurisdiction, the seamen were called aft, and Captain Semmes, in full Confederate uniform, stepped upon the quarter deck and read his commission from Jefferson Davis. A starboard gun emphasized the chameleon change, as the British flag dropped to the deck and was replaced by the stars and bars.

The new-made warship now had a commander, but she still had no crew. It was an anxious moment for Captain Semmes. The success of his enterprise lay in the hands of the motley group of sailors before him, representing nearly every country of western Europe, and gathered up in the sailors' boarding houses of Liverpool. Under written instructions from Captain Bulloch, Clarence R. Yonge, who was to be paymaster, had fraternized with the crew on the outward voyage and done what was possible to impress them with the justice of the Southern cause, and what was probably more to the purpose, told them what might be looked for in the way of pay and prize money. Other emissaries had been equally active among the thirty men who came out in the Bahama. But none of these men had signed anything by which they could be bound, and who could say what notions might be in their heads?

The small band played "Dixie," and as the last strains died away Captain Semmes began his speech to the crew. He briefly explained the causes of the war as viewed from the Southern standpoint, and said that he felt sure that Providence would bless their efforts to rid the South of the Yankees. The mission of the vessel, he said, was to cripple the commerce of the United States, but he should not refuse battle under proper conditions. There were only four or five Northern vessels which were more than a match for them, and in an English built heart of oak like this and surrounded as he saw himself by British hearts of oak, he would not strike his flag for any one of them.

"Let me once see you proficient in the use of your weapons," he said, "and trust me for very soon giving you an opportunity to show the world of what metal you are made."

The cruise would be one of excitement and adventure. They would visit many parts of the world, where they would have "liberty" given them on proper occasions. They would receive about double the ordinary wages, and payment would be made in gold. In addition to this, the Confederate government would

vote them prize money for every vessel and cargo destroyed.

When the boatswain's call announced the close of the meeting eighty men out of the two crews signed the new articles. Those who refused to sign were given free passage to England in the Bahama. Captain Bulloch took a fraternal leave of Captain Semmes, the Bahama and the Agrippina set sail for British waters, and the Confederate States sloop-of-war Alabama went forth on her mission of destruction.



CHAPTER IV.

SEMMES AND HIS OFFICERS.

CAPTAIN RAPHAEL SEMMES was a typical representative of Southern chivalry. He was an ardent admirer of the South and a firm believer in her peculiar "institution." His memoirs, written after the war, breathe secession in every line. He was born in Charles county, Maryland, Sept. 27, 1809. At the age of seventeen he received an appointment as midshipman, but did not enter active service until six years later, meanwhile adding the study of law to his naval studies. In 1834, at the end of his first cruise, he was admitted to the bar. In 1837 he was made a lieutenant, and commanded the United States brig Somers, which assisted in blockading the Mexican coast during the war with that country. While in chase of another vessel a terrific gale arose. The Somers was foundered and most of her crew were drowned. A court martial acquitted Semmes of any fault in this matter, and in 1855 was promoted to the rank of commander. In February, 1861, he was a member of the Lighthouse Board, of which body he had been secretary for several years.

The provisional government of the Confederacy was not yet a fortnight old when he was summoned to Montgomery. Hastily resigning his Federal commission, he met Jefferson Davis in that city, and was soon speeding northward on an important mission. Mr. Davis had not yet fully made up his cabinet, had not even a private secretary apparently, for Semmes' instructions were in Davis' own handwriting. The funds for the trip were borrowed from a private banker. Semmes visited the arsenals at Richmond and Washington, and the principal workshops in New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts, in search of information and supplies. In New York he procured a large quantity of percussion caps, and shipped them to Montgomery. Thousands of pounds of gunpowder were also shipped southward by him before any hindrance was placed in the way of such operations.

Semmes entered the Confederate navy with the rank of commander, the same which he had held in the Federal service. He was promoted to captain about the time he took command of the Alabama, and near the close of the war was again promoted to rear admiral. April 18th, 1861, he was ordered to take command of

the steamer Sumter, at New Orleans. More than a month was spent in converting the innocent packet steamer into a war vessel, and before he could get to sea the mouths of the Mississippi were blockaded by a Federal fleet. The propeller of the Sumter could not be raised, and when she was under sail alone, the propeller dragged through the water, greatly retarding her speed.

On the 30th of June Semmes succeeded in running the blockade, and within a week he had captured eight merchant vessels, six of which he took into the port of Cienfuegos, Cuba. The captain general of Cuba ordered the prizes to be detained until the subject of their disposition could be referred to the Spanish government. Ultimately most governments refused to permit war vessels with prizes of either the United States or the Confederate States to enter their ports. The vessels which were taken into Cienfuegos were turned over to their former owners.

As it was impossible to get into a Confederate port with his prizes, Captain Semmes was forced either to destroy or to release those which he took. After capturing ten more vessels, most of which were burned, the boilers of the Sumter gave out, and she was blockaded by Federal cruisers in the port of Gibraltar. In March, 1862, further efforts to utilize her as a war vessel were abandoned, and her officers made their way to England, where many of them were subsequently assigned to positions in the Alabama. Captain Semmes proceeded to Nassau, where he found a communication from Stephen R. Mallory, the Confederate secretary of the navy, directing him to assume command of the Alabama. In reply he wrote a letter, of which the following is an extract:

Upon my arrival in London I found that the Oreto had been dispatched some weeks before to this place; and Commander Bulloch having informed me that he had your order assigning him to the command of the second ship he was building [the Alabama]. I had no alternative but to return to the Confederate States for orders. It is due to Commander Bulloch to say, however, that he offered to place himself entirely under my instructions, and even to relinquish to me the command of the new ship; but I did not feel at liberty to interfere with your orders.

While in London I ascertained that a number of steamers were being prepared to run the blockade, with arms and other supplies for the Confederate States, and, instead of dispatching my officers at once for these states, I left them to take charge of the ships mentioned, as they should be gotten ready for sea, and run them in to their several destinations—deeming this the best service they could

render the government, under the circumstances. I came hither myself, accompanied by my first lieutenant and surgeon—Kell and Gait—a passenger in the British steamer *Melita*, whose cargo of arms and supplies is also destined for the Confederate States. It is fortunate that I made this arrangement, as many of my officers still remain in London, and I shall return thither in time to take most of them with me to the *Alabama*.

In obedience to your order assigning me to the command of this ship, I will return by the first conveyance to England, where the joint efforts of Commander Bulloch and myself will be directed to the preparation of the ship for sea. I will take with me Lieutenant Kell, Surgeon Gait and First Lieutenant of Marines Howell—Mr. Howell and Lieutenant Stribling [Stribling had been second lieutenant of the *Sumter*] having reached Nassau a few days before me, in the British steamer *Bahama*, laden with arms, clothing and stores for the Confederacy. At the earnest entreaty of Lieutenant-Commanding Maffit, I have consented to permit Lieutenant Stribling to remain with him, as his first lieutenant on board the *Oreto* (Florida),—the officers detailed for that vessel not yet having arrived. Mr. Stribling's place on board the *Alabama* will be supplied by Midshipman Armstrong, promoted, whom I will recall from Gibraltar, where I left him in charge of the *Sumter*. It will, doubtless, be a matter of some delicacy and tact to get the *Alabama* safely out of British waters without suspicion, as Mr. Adams, the Northern envoy, and his numerous satellites in the shape of consuls and paid agents, are exceedingly vigilant in their espionage.

We cannot, of course, think of arming her in a British port, this must be done at some concerted rendezvous, to which her battery, and a large portion of her crew must be sent in a neutral merchant vessel. The *Alabama* will be a fine ship, quite equal to encounter any of the enemy's steam sloops, of the class of the *Iroquois*, *Tuscarora* and *Dakotah*, and I shall feel much more independent in her upon the high seas than I did in the little *Sumter*.

I think well of your suggestion of the East Indies as a cruising ground, and I hope to be in the track of the enemy's commerce in those seas as early as October or November next: when I shall, doubtless, be able to lay other rich "burnt offerings" upon the altar of our country's liberties.

John McIntosh Kell, the first lieutenant of the *Alabama*, had occupied the same position in the *Sumter*. He had served twenty years in the United States navy, had been in the war with Mexico, and had seen a great deal of active service. The second lieutenant, R. F. Armstrong, and the third lieutenant, Joseph D.

Wilson, also came from the Sumter, and were fresh from the instructions of the United States naval academy at Annapolis. The fourth lieutenant was John Low, an Englishman, and a master of seamanship. The fifth lieutenant, Arthur Sinclair, came of a family which had furnished two captains to the United States navy. The acting master, I. D. Bulloch, was a younger brother of Commander Bulloch. Dr. E. L. Gait, from the Sumter, and the ill-fated Dr. D. H. Llewelyn, of Wiltshire, England, occupied the positions of surgeon and assistant surgeon respectively. Lieutenant of Marines B. K. Howell was a brother-in-law of Jefferson Davis, and Midshipman E. A. Maffit was a son of the commander of the Oreto, soon to be known as the Florida. Other officers were Chief Engineer Miles J. Freeman and three assistants, who were excellent machinists and able to make any repairs which could be made with the appliances on board, Midshipman E. M. Anderson and Master's Mates G. T. Fullam and James Evans.

FIRST LIEUTENANT J. MCINTOSH KELL.

The Alabama was 220 feet long, 32 feet in breadth of beam, and 18 feet from deck to keel. She carried two horizontal engines of 300 horse power each, and had bunkers for 350 tons of coal, sufficient for eighteen days' continuous steaming. Captain Semmes was, however, very economical with his coal supply and only used the engines for emergencies. The Alabama proved to be a good sailor under canvas, and the greater number of her prizes were taken simply under sail. This enabled the vessel to keep at sea three or four months at a time, and to strike Northern commerce at the most unexpected places, while only once did a Federal war vessel succeed in getting a glimpse of her against the will of her commander.

The engines were provided with a condensing apparatus, which supplied the crew with water. The Alabama was barkentine rigged, her standing gear being entirely of wire rope. Her propeller was so built as to be readily detached from the shaft, and in fifteen minutes could be lifted out of the water in a well constructed for the purpose, and so would not impede the speed of the vessel when under sail. On the main deck the vessel was pierced for twelve guns, but

carried only eight; one Blakely hundred-pounder rifled gun, pivoted forward, one eight-inch solid-shot gun, pivoted abaft the mainmast, and three thirty-two pounders on each side.

The semicircular cabin at the stern, with its horse-hair sofa and horse-shoe shaped table, was appropriated to the use of Captain Semmes, and became the center of attraction for hero-worshippers when the vessel was in port. A little forward of the mizzen mast was the steering apparatus, a double wheel inscribed with the French motto:

“Aide-toi et Dieu t’aidera.”[\[1\]](#)



CHAPTER V.

DESTRUCTION OF THE WHALERS.

THE Confederate flag was first hoisted on the Alabama, Sunday, August 24th, 1862. When once the shipping articles had been signed coaxing and persuasion were at an end, and the man with the gray mustache had become a dictator, to disobey whom meant severe or even capital punishment. Semmes says:

The democratic part of the proceedings closed as soon as the articles were signed. The "public meeting" just described was the first and last ever held on board the Alabama, and no other stump speech was ever made to the crew. When I wanted a man to do anything after this, I did not talk to him about "nationalities" or "liberties" or "double wages," but I gave him a rather sharp order, and if the order was not obeyed in "double-quick," the delinquent found himself in limbo. Democracies may do very well for the land, but monarchies, and pretty absolute monarchies at that, are the only successful governments for the sea.

The hasty transfer of stores to the deck of the vessel, a large part of which had been accomplished in a rolling sea, had not been favorable to an orderly bestowal. A gale sprang up, and the boxes and chests on deck went tumbling about. The hot sun of the Azores had opened seams in the deck and upper works, and the clank of the pumps, so familiar to those who had been in the Sumter during the latter part of her cruise, once more disturbed their dreams.

It was the purpose of Captain Semmes to strike at the American whaling vessels which he knew would be at work in the vicinity of the Azores. The season would close about the first of October, after which time the whales would seek other feeding waters. The following week was spent in getting the pivot guns mounted and in putting the ship in order. The captain was not at once successful in locating the whaling fleet. On Friday, August 29th, a blank shot was fired at a brig which had been pursued all day, but the latter refused to heave to or show her colors, and not having the look of an American craft, the chase was abandoned. Another week was spent in the search, and several vessels were

overhauled, but all showed neutral colors. September 5th the Alabama was in chase of a brig which showed very fast sailing qualities, and came unexpectedly upon a ship lying to in mid-ocean with her foretopsail to the mast. Excitement grew apace as a nearer approach justified the opinion that the motionless stranger was a Yankee whaler. The English flag was hoisted on the Alabama, and all doubt was set at rest when the ship responded with the stars and stripes. The chase of the brig was forthwith abandoned. The master of the whaler made no effort to get under way. He had struck a fine large sperm whale, which was now alongside and partly hoisted out of the water by the yard tackles, and his crew were hard at work, cutting it up and getting the blubber aboard. A boat was sent from the Alabama, and as the boarding officer gained the whaler's deck, the cruiser dropped her false colors, and ran up the Confederate flag.

The astonishment and consternation of Captain Abraham Osborn when he realized that he was a prisoner and that his ship and cargo were subject to confiscation, can only be imagined. International law, which is so careful of property rights on land, affords no protection whatever at sea in the presence of a hostile force. The ship was the Ocmulgee, of Edgartown, Massachusetts. Captain and crew were removed to the deck of the Alabama and placed in irons. Some beef, pork and other stores were also transferred, and the ship left, anchored to the whale, as Captain Semmes did not wish to burn her during the night, for fear of alarming other whaling masters, who were probably not far away. Next morning the torch was applied, and the most of the Alabama's crew saw for the first time a burning ship.

Sunday, September 7th, the Alabama approached the south shore of the island of Flores, one of the westernmost of the Azore group, and the crew of the Ocmulgee were permitted to pull ashore in their own whaleboats. At four o'clock p. m. the Alabama filled away to head off a schooner which appeared to be running in for the island, and hoisted the English flag. The schooner failed to respond, and a gun was fired, but she still held her course. A shot was fired across her bow, but even this failed to stop her. Then a shot whistled between her fore and main masts, and the futility of attempting to escape being apparent, she rounded to and hoisted the United States flag. Her master, a young man not over twenty-eight, was well aware of the fate which had befallen him. His vessel was the Starlight, from Boston, and he was homeward bound from the Azores, having on board a number of passengers to be landed at Flores, including several ladies. He also had dispatches from the American consul at Fayal to Secretary Seward, narrating the proceedings of the Alabama at Terceira. The captain and

the six seamen who constituted his crew, were placed in irons. Next day the cruiser proceeded again to the island of Flores, and sent the prisoners on shore in a boat.

CAPTURES NEAR THE AZORES.

The obliging governor of the island paid the Alabama a visit, and offered her officers the hospitalities of the place. In the afternoon (Sept. 8th) the whaling bark Ocean Rover, of New Bedford, Massachusetts, was captured. She had been out over three years, had sent home one or two cargoes of oil, and now had about 1,100 barrels of oil on board. The captain and crew were permitted to pull ashore in their six whale boats, into which they had conveyed a considerable quantity of their personal effects.

Before daylight the next morning Captain Semmes was aroused and notified that a large bark was close by. She proved to be the Alert, of New London, Connecticut, sixteen days out. Her crew pulled ashore in their boats. During the day the three prizes (Starlight, Ocean Rover and Alert) were burned. While the hulks were still smoking the schooner Weathergauge, of Provincetown, Massachusetts, was captured. This vessel and the Alert brought plenty of Northern newspapers, and those on board the cruiser were thus informed of the progress of the war. The whaler Eschol, of New Bedford, came near enough to make out the burning vessels with a glass, but her master kept her close to the shore, determined to run her upon the beach rather than permit her to be captured, and she escaped without being seen.

On September 13th the brig Altamaha, of New Bedford, fell a prey to the spoiler, and during the night the Benjamin Tucker, of the same town met a like fate. The boarding officer on this occasion was Master's Mate G. T. Fullam, an Englishman, whose home was at Hull. He wrote in his diary:

Darkness prevented us knowing who she was, so I went on board to examine her papers, which, if Yankee, I was to signal it and heave to until daylight. What I did on boarding this vessel was the course usually adopted in taking prizes. Pulling under the stern, I saw it was the whaling ship Benjamin Tucker, of and from New Bedford. Gaining the quarter deck, I was welcomed with outstretched hands.

The unsuspecting master answered all questions promptly touching the character of his ship and cargo, and was then told that the vessel was a prize to the

Confederate States steamer Alabama. This ship had 340 barrels of oil and made a brilliant bonfire. One of the crew, a Hollander, shipped on the Alabama. Early the next morning (Sept. 16th) the whaling schooner Courser, of Provincetown, Massachusetts, was captured. The Alabama then ran in toward Flores, and to the rapidly increasing colony of shipless mariners on that island were added the sixty-eight seamen forming the crews of the last three prizes. The Courser was used as a target until dark and then burned.

The forenoon of the next day was taken up with the chase of another whaler, the Virginia, of New Bedford. She was overhauled at noon and burned. The next day (Sept. 18th), with the wind blowing half a gale, the Alabama chased the Elisha Dunbar, also a New Bedford whaler. Both vessels carried their topgallant sails, although the masts bent and threatened to go over the side. In three hours the Alabama had drawn within gunshot, and her master judged it best to obey the summons conveyed by a blank cartridge. Sails were hastily taken in on both vessels. Captain Semmes hesitated somewhat about launching boats in so rough a sea, but he was fearful that the gale would increase and that the prize would escape during the night. The Alabama reached a position to windward of her victim, so that the boats' crews might pull with the wind and waves, and two of the best boats were launched, gaining the Dunbar's deck in safety. The Alabama then dropped round to the leeward of the prize, so that the boats might return in the same manner, with the wind. The Dunbar's master and crew were ordered into the boats, and hastily applying the torch, the boarding officer gained the lee of the Alabama where a rope was thrown to him, and the boats' crews with their prisoners got on board the cruiser without accident. The fire quickly gathered volume, and the flames streamed heavenward as the doomed ship drove before the blast. The storm burst and thunder and lightning added their magnificence to the sublime scene. The fire was blazing too fiercely to be affected by the rain. Now and then a flaming sail would tear loose from its fastenings and go flying far out over the sea. At last the masts crashed overboard, and only the hull was left to rock to and fro until nearly full of water, and then dive deep into the ocean. This was the only ship burned by Captain Semmes without examining her papers, but as the Elisha Dunbar was a whaler there was little danger of burning any goods belonging to a neutral owner.

In thirteen days the Alabama had destroyed property to the amount of \$230,000. Captain Tilton, of the Virginia, had remonstrated with his captor and asked to be released, and Captain Semmes had replied:

"You Northerners are destroying our property, and sending stone fleets to block

up our harbors. New Bedford people are holding war meetings and offering \$200 bounty for volunteers, and now we are going to retaliate.”

Captain Tilton resented the indignity of being put in irons and was told that this was a measure of retaliation for the treatment which had been meted out to the paymaster of the Sumter, Henry Myers, who was arrested in Morocco by order of the United States consul, put in irons, and sent to New York. During the time Captain Tilton remained on the Alabama (nearly three weeks) he was never permitted to have more than one of his irons off at a time. Captain Gifford and crew, of the Elisha Dunbar, were treated in like manner.



CHAPTER VI.

BURNING THE GRAIN FLEET.

A WEEK of tempestuous weather followed. The prisoners from the last two prizes occupied the open deck, with no other shelter than an improvised tent made from a sail. They were frequently drenched by driving rain or by the waves which washed over the deck, and often awoke at night with their bodies half under water. The seamen of the Alabama, who bunked below, were not much better off, for the main deck above them leaked like a sieve. A few days of pleasant weather were occupied in calking the decks.

The ship was now far to the westward of Flores and at no great distance from the banks of Newfoundland. On the morning of October 3d two sails were seen. The wind was light; both the strangers approached with all sails set, and apparently without the slightest suspicion of any danger. When within a few hundred yards the Alabama fired a gun and ran up the Confederate flag. There was nothing to be done but to surrender. The prizes proved to be the Brilliant and the Emily Farnum, both conveying cargoes of grain and flour from New York to England. The boarding officer clambered up the side of the Brilliant and ordered Captain Hagar to go on board the Alabama with his ship's papers. Having been shown into the cabin of the cruiser, the master was subjected to a sharp cross-examination, in the course of which he said that part of his cargo was on English account.

"Do you take me for a d—d fool?" demanded Captain Semmes. "Where are the proofs that part of your cargo is on English account?"

The papers not having any consular certificates attached, were not accepted as proof of foreign ownership. The beautiful vessel, containing all the worldly wealth of her captain, who owned a one-third interest in her, was doomed to destruction.

The master of the Emily Farnum was more fortunate. His ship's papers showed conclusively that the cargo was owned in England, and was therefore not subject to seizure. He was ordered to take on board his vessel the crew of the Brilliant

and also the suffering prisoners on the Alabama and proceed on his voyage. The Brilliant was then set on fire. Fullam wrote in his diary:

It seemed a fearful thing to burn such a cargo as the Brilliant had, when I thought how the Lancashire operatives would have danced for joy had they it shared among them. I never saw a vessel burn with such brilliancy, the flames completely enveloping the masts, hull and rigging in a few minutes, making a sight as grand as it was appalling.

The Alabama was now in the principal highway of commerce between America and Europe. English, French, Prussian, Hamburg and other flags were displayed at her summons upon the passing merchant vessels. If any doubt arose as to the nationality of any vessel, she was boarded and her master compelled to produce his papers. Masters' Mate Evans was an adept in determining the nationality of merchant ships. Captain Semmes soon learned that if Evans reported after a look through the glass, "She's Yankee, sir," he was absolutely sure of a prize if he could get within gunshot; and conversely, when Evans said, "Not Yankee, sir; think she's English, sir," (or French or Spanish as the case might be), it was a waste of time to continue in pursuit, for to whatever nation she might prove to belong, she was invariably a neutral of some kind.

MASTER'S MATE G. T. FULLAM.

On October 7th the bark Wave Crest, with grain for Cardiff, Wales, ran into the Alabama's net. She was used as a target, and in the evening was burned. The deceptive glare proved a decoy for the brigantine Dunkirk, also grain laden, bound for Lisbon, and she, too, was fired. One of the crew of the Dunkirk was recognized as George Forest, who had deserted from the Sumter when she lay at Cadiz some ten months previously. He was duly tried by court-martial and sentenced to serve without pay. This was found later to be a grievous mistake. Forest was a born mutineer, was a glib talker, and acquired great influence among the crew. Had he possessed the added qualification of being able to hold

his tongue, the career of the Alabama might some day have been suddenly cut short. But having already had his pay sacrificed, and so, as he said, having nothing to lose, he was often openly defiant, and was constantly undergoing punishment of one sort or another.

The next capture was that of the fine packet ship Tonawanda, bound from Philadelphia to Liverpool with a large cargo of grain and about seventy-five passengers, nearly half of whom were women and children. Captain Semmes was in a dilemma. The Alabama was already crowded with prisoners. But he was reluctant to release so valuable a vessel. A prize crew was put on board, in the hope that the passengers and crew might be transferred to some ship having a neutral cargo, or one of less value than the Tonawanda. Her captain was sent aboard the Alabama as a precautionary measure, and the prisoners of the Wave Crest and Dunkirk transferred to the prize.

The next victim was the fine large ship Manchester. A bond for \$80,000 was now exacted from the captain of the Tonawanda, and having added the crew of the Manchester to the crowds on his ship, he was suffered to proceed on his way, much to the delight of his passengers. The Manchester was given to the flames. October 15th the Lamplighter, with tobacco for Gibraltar, was captured and burned. The weather was rough and boarding somewhat dangerous, but the capture and burning were effected without accident.



The newspapers found on the prizes kept Captain Semmes informed in regard to the events of the war and often gave the whereabouts of the Northern cruisers which he wished to avoid. The escape of the "290" was known in New York, but that she would develop in so short a time into the pest of the Atlantic was not thought of. The tactics of Captain Semmes were always the same. A false flag was invariably used until the victim got within striking distance, and then hauled down, to be replaced by the stars and bars. For this purpose flags of various nations were used—French, Spanish, Portuguese and the like, and often that of the United States; but the one most frequently employed was that of Great Britain.

The crew of the Alabama taken as a whole were a turbulent lot. Boarding officers had little or no control over their boats' crews. Knowing that the guns of the Alabama would answer for their safety, they would rush below like a gang of

pirates, staving open chests and boxes and carrying off anything that took their fancy. The clothing and personal effects of sailors were often heartlessly destroyed. After being transferred to the Alabama, however, the prisoners were comparatively free from this sort of persecution; and with the exception of being placed in irons, their treatment seems to have been as good as circumstances permitted. As all private looting was contrary to the captain's orders, the sailors belonging to the boarding crews did not often venture to carry anything on board their own ship which could not readily be concealed. Whisky they frequently did find, and occasionally one of them had to be hoisted over the Alabama's side, very much the worse for his explorations among the liquid refreshments.

Although directly in the path of American commerce and only a few hundred miles from New York, the United States flag now began to be a rarity. From the 16th to the 20th of October nine vessels were chased and boarded and their papers examined, but all of them were neutrals. The reason is not far to seek. The captain of the Emily Farnum had promised Captain Semmes as one of the conditions of his release, that he would continue his voyage to Liverpool; but the moment he was out of sight, he put his ship about and ran into Boston and gave the alarm. The American shipping interests throughout the seaboard were thrown into an uproar of terror. The experience of Captain Tilton in trying to escape in the Virginia had led him to believe that the Alabama was considerably swifter than she really was, and extravagant estimates of her speed were accepted as true.

Secretary Welles hastily dispatched all the available warships in search of the Alabama, but he put too much trust in the report of her probable future movements, which had been brought in innocently enough by Captain Hagar, and much valuable time was lost beating up and down the banks of Newfoundland and the coast of Nova Scotia, while the Alabama had shifted her position to a point much nearer New York, and thence southward. The sober second thought of the navy department, that with the advent of cold weather the Alabama would seek a field of operations farther south—probably in the West Indies—proved to be correct. But the West Indies was a very large haystack and the Alabama, comparatively, a very small needle.

The Northern newspapers found on the prizes were carefully scanned by the captain and his secretary for valuable information, after which they were passed on to the other officers in the ward room and steerage and thence into the hands of the crew. These teemed with denunciation of the "pirates," and the members of the crew were described as consisting of "the scum of England," an

expression which rankled in the sailor's heart and for which he took ample vengeance when his opportunity came.

The name of Captain Semmes became a synonym of heartless cruelty. Captain Tilton said he treated his prisoners and crew like dogs, and Captain Hagar said that it was his custom to burn his prizes at night, so that he might gather round him fresh victims among those who sailed toward the burning ships in order to save human life. The British premier, Lord Palmerston, and his minister of foreign affairs, Lord John Russell, were denounced for letting loose such a fire-brand.

The officers and crew were almost universally referred to as pirates. Indeed, the newspapers had some official warrant for this appellation. In his proclamation calling for 75,000 volunteers after the capture of Fort Sumter, President Lincoln had declared "that if any person, under the pretended authority of said states or under any other pretence shall molest a vessel of the United States, or the persons or cargo on board of her, such persons will be held amenable to the laws of the United States for the prevention and punishment of piracy."

This proclamation may have served the purpose of frightening off a horde of privateers until the blockading fleets could get into place, but the position taken was clearly untenable when the Confederacy was recognized as a beligerant.

Few United States vessels could get cargoes after the presence of the Alabama off the coast became known. This was true on both sides of the Atlantic. Ship captains on the coast of Portugal offered in vain to transport salt free of charge as ballast. American craft which ventured out took care to have their cargoes well covered with consular certificates of foreign ownership.

On October 16th several days of bad weather culminated in a cyclone, and the Alabama was probably saved from foundering by the prompt action of Lieutenant Low, who was in charge of the deck, and who took the responsibility of wearing ship without waiting to call the captain. The main yard was broken and the main topsail torn to shreds.

CHAPTER VII.

SETTLING A “YANKEE HASH.”

ON October 21st, 1862, a large ship was seen carrying a cloud of canvas, and running with great speed before the wind. The reefs of the Alabama's topsails were shaken out and preparations made to set the topgallant sails in case it should be necessary, and the cruiser ran down diagonally toward the stranger's path. She was pronounced “Yankee” long before she came within gunshot, and as she drew near a blank cartridge brought her to the wind. The admirable seamanship displayed in bringing her to a speedy halt called forth the praise of even the Alabama's captain, and one can only wonder that some of her master's skill was not expended in avoiding this suspicious steamer idling in mid-ocean. The British flag she wore could hardly deceive anybody, after the tales which were told by the captains who were taken into Boston on the Emily Farnum. But doubtless Captain Saunders relied upon the fact that his cargo was well covered with consular certificates, remembering that the Farnum had escaped by having a cargo which was owned abroad.

The prize proved to be the Lafayette, from New York, laden with grain for Belfast, Ireland. Captain Saunders readily obeyed the order of the boarding officer to go on board the Alabama with his ship's papers. He was shown into the presence of Captain Semmes, and produced his British consular certificate, with the remark that he supposed that was sufficient protection. After a hasty examination, Semmes said:

“New Yorkers are getting smart, but it won't save it. It's a d—d hatched up mess.”

The Lafayette was burned.

The decree of the “Confederate Prize Court,” which seems to have comprehended neither more nor less than the Alabama's commander, was in this case as follows:

CASE OF THE LAFAYETTE.

The ship being under the enemy's flag and register, is condemned. With reference to the cargo, there are certificates, prepared in due form and sworn to before the British consul, that it was purchased, and shipped on neutral account. These *ex parte* statements are precisely such as every unscrupulous merchant would prepare, to deceive his enemy and save his property from capture. There are two shipping houses in the case; that of Craig & Nicoll and that of Montgomery Bros. Messrs. Craig & Nicoll say that the grain shipped by them belongs to Messrs. Shaw & Finlay and to Messrs. Hamilton, Megault & Thompson, all of Belfast, in Ireland, to which port the ship is bound, but the grain is not consigned to them, and they could not demand possession of it under the bill of lading. It is, on the contrary, consigned to the order of the shippers; thus leaving the possession and control of the property in the hands of the shippers. Farther: The shippers, instead of sending this grain to the pretended owners in a general ship consigned to them, they paying freight as usual, have chartered the whole ship, and stipulated themselves for the payment of all the freights. If this property had been, *bona fide*, the property of the parties in Belfast, named in the depositions, it would undoubtedly have gone consigned to them in a bill of lading authorizing them to demand possession of it; and the agreement with the ship would have been that the consignees and owners of the property should pay the freight upon delivery. But even if this property were purchased, as pretended, by Messrs. Craig & Nicoll for the parties named, still, their not consigning it to them and delivering them the proper bill of lading, passing the possession, left the property in the possession and under the dominion of Craig & Nicoll, and as such liable to capture. See 3 Phillimore on International Law, 610, 612, to the effect that if the goods are going on account of the shipper or subject to his order or control, they are good prize. They cannot even be sold and transferred to a neutral *in transitu*. They must abide by their condition at the time of the sailing of the ship.

The property attempted to be covered by the Messrs. Montgomery Bros, is shipped by Montgomery Bros., of New York, and consigned to Montgomery Bros., in Belfast. Here the consignment is all right. The possession of the property has legally passed to the Belfast house. But when there are two houses of trade doing business as partners, and one of them resides in the enemy's country, the other house, though resident in a neutral country, becomes also enemy, *quoad* the trade of the house in the enemy's country, and its share in any property belonging to the joint concern is subject to capture, equally with the share of the house in the enemy's country. To this point see 3 Phillimore, 605. Cargo condemned.

The next batch of prizes consisted of the Crenshaw, captured on the 26th of October, the Laurretta captured on the 28th, and the Baron de Castine on the 29th. The Crenshaw brought New York papers containing resolutions denouncing the “pirates,” which had been introduced in the New York Chamber of Commerce by a Mr. Low, who was a member of that body, and had lost considerable property on account of the depredations of the Alabama. The cargoes of the Crenshaw and Laurretta were covered by certificates of foreign ownership, but these were bunglingly gotten up, and evidently made only for the purpose of avoiding condemnation, and Captain Semmes, being well versed in international law, was able to pick flaws in all of them. The Baron de Castine was an old and not very valuable vessel, bound with lumber from the coast of Maine to Cuba. She was released on a ransom bond, and carried the crews of the Lafayette, Crenshaw, and Laurretta, together with the derisive compliments of Captain Semmes to Mr. Low, into the port of New York, then distant only two hundred miles. The other prizes were burned.

The advent of the Baron de Castine carried fresh dismay to the shipping interests along the Atlantic coast. The news that a foreign consular certificate could not be relied upon to furnish protection seemed to sound the death knell of trade carried on in American ships. The representatives of the foreign governments whose seals had been defied were appealed to for assistance in putting an end to the career of the “pirate.” The New York Commercial Advertiser published the following article:

Some important facts have just been developed in relation to the operations of the rebel privateer Alabama, and the present and prospective action of the British and other foreign governments, whose citizens have lost property by the piracies of her commander. The depredations of the vessel involve the rights of no less than three European governments—England, Italy and Portugal—and are likely to become a subject of special interest to all maritime nations.

DESTROYING THE GRAIN FLEET.

Already the capture and burning of the ship Lafayette, which contained an English cargo, has been the occasion of a correspondence between the British consul at this port, Mr. Archibald, and Rear Admiral Milne, commanding the British squadron on the American coast; and it is stated (but we cannot vouch for the truth of the statement) that the admiral has dispatched three war vessels in pursuit of the pirate. The consul has also, we understand, communicated the facts of the case to the British government and Her Majesty's minister at Washington. What action will be taken by the British government remains to be seen.

The Lafayette sailed from this port with a cargo of grain for Belfast, Ireland. The grain was owned by two English firms of this city, and the facts were properly certified on the bills of lading under the British seal. * * *

But another case (that of the bark Lauretta) is about to be submitted for the consideration of the British authorities, as well as those of Italy and Portugal. The facts establish a clear case of piracy. The Lauretta, which had on board a cargo consisting principally of flour and staves, was burned by Semmes on the 28th of October. She was bound from this port for the island of Madeira and the port of Messina, Italy. Nearly a thousand barrels of flour and also a large number of staves were shipped by Mr. H. J. Burden, a British subject residing in this city, to a relative in Funchal, Madeira. The bill of lading bore the British seal affixed by the consul, to whom the shipper was personally known. The other part of the cargo was shipped by Chamberlain, Phelps & Co. to the order of parties in Messina, and this property was also covered by the Italian consular certificates.

The Portuguese consul at this port also sent a package under seal to the authorities at Maderia, besides giving a right to enter the port and sending an open bill of lading.

Captain Wells' account of the manner in which Semmes disposed of these documents, and which he has verified under oath, is not only interesting, but gives an excellent idea of the piratical intentions of the commander of the Alabama.

The papers of the bark were, at the command of Semmes, taken by Captain Wells on board the Alabama. There was no American cargo and therefore no American papers, except those of the vessel. These, of course, were not inquired into. Semmes took first the packet which bore the Portuguese seal, and with an air which showed that he did not regard it as of the slightest consequence, ripped

it open, and threw it upon the floor, with the remark that he “did not care a d—n for the Portuguese.” The Italian bill of lading was treated in a similar manner, except that he considered it unworthy even of a remark.

Taking up the British bill of lading and looking at the seal, Semmes called upon Captain Wells, with an oath, to explain. It was evidently the only one of the three he thought it worth his while to respect.

“Who is this Burden?” he inquired sneeringly. “Have you ever seen him?”

“I am not acquainted with him, but I have seen him once, when he came on board my vessel,” replied Captain Wells.

“Is he an Englishman—does he look like an Englishman?”

“Yes,” rejoined the captain.

“I’ll tell you what,” exclaimed the pirate, “this is a d—d pretty business—it’s a d—d Yankee hash, and I’ll settle it,”—whereupon he proceeded to rob the vessel of whatever he wanted, including Captain Wells’ property to a considerable amount; put the crew in irons; removed them to the Alabama; and concluded by burning the vessel.

These facts will at once be brought before the British consul. The preliminary steps have been taken. The facts will also be furnished the Portuguese consul, who announces his intention of placing them before his government; and besides whatever action the Italian consul here may choose to take, the parties in Messina, to whom the property lost on the Lauretta was consigned, will of course do what they can to maintain their own rights. The case is likely to attract more attention than all the previous outrages of the Alabama, inasmuch as property rights of the subjects of other nations are involved, and the real character of Semmes and his crew becomes manifest.

Captain Semmes makes this sarcastic comment upon the foregoing article:

I was not quite sure when I burned the Lafayette that her cargo belonged to the shippers, British merchants resident in New York. The shippers swore that it did not belong to them, but to other parties resident in Ireland, on whose account they had shipped it. I thought they swore falsely, but, as I have said, I was not quite certain. The Advertiser sets the matter at rest. It says that I was right. And it claims, with the most charming simplicity, that I was guilty of

an act of piracy, in capturing and destroying the property of neutral merchants, domiciled in the enemy's country, and assisting him to conduct his trade!

The alleged destruction of British property on board American ships attracted much less attention in England than in the United States. The Liverpool Chamber of Commerce caused a letter to be addressed to the British foreign office asking for information in regard to the matter, to which the following reply was made:

Sir; I am directed by Earl Russell to reply to your letters of the 6th inst., respecting the destruction by the Confederate steamer Alabama of British property embarked in American vessels and burned by that steamer. Earl Russell desires me to state to you that British property on board a vessel belonging to one of the belligerents must be subject to all the risks and contingencies of war, so far as the capture of the vessel is concerned. The owners of any British property, not being contraband of war, on board a Federal vessel captured and destroyed by a Confederate vessel of war, may claim in a Confederate Prize Court compensation for the destruction of such property.

As the "Confederate prize court" which condemned the Alabama's prizes habitually walked about under her commander's hat, and as there was considerable doubt as to where a court competent and willing to review the decisions made, might be located, there was not much comfort in this letter for American ship owners or their prospective customers.

But the shippers of merchandise were not the only persons to whom the Baron de Castine's news brought fear and anxiety. The inhabitants of unprotected or but slightly protected towns along the coast already saw in imagination the Alabama steaming in upon them, demanding ransom, and leaving their homes in ashes. Captain Semmes loved to threaten New York, and one of the masters last released seems to have gone ashore with the belief that the Alabama's next move would be to throw a few shells into that city. But a descent upon the coast would have put Secretary Welles in possession of a knowledge of her whereabouts, whereas at sea her commander could usually calculate the time when the news of her movements would reach the nearest telegraph office, and shift her position just before the time when a powerful enemy would be likely to arrive.

CHAPTER VIII.

OFF DUTY AMUSEMENTS.

WHEN off duty the sailors amused themselves by spinning yarns and singing songs. Sometimes they got up a sparring match, and occasionally hazing of the duller or less active of the crew was indulged in. It is related that one sailor was nicknamed “Top-robbin” because he usually began his stories with the introduction, “When I sailed in the Taprobane, East Ingyman.” Once he was induced to attempt a song, and began in a voice in which a hoarse bass struggled with a squeaky treble:

Jerry Lee was hung at sea
For stabbing of his messmate true.
And his body did swing, a horrible thing,
At the sport of the wild sea mew!

The whole watch shouted for him to stop, and he was warned:

“If you ever sing again in this ’ere watch while we’re off soundings, we’ll fire you through a lee port. Such a voice as that would raise a harrycane.”

“Top-robbin’s” yarns, however, were treated with more tolerance. He had a lively imagination and a very impressive delivery. His themes were of the ghostly sort—of phantom ships sailing against wind and tide, and women in white gliding on board in the midst of storms.

Curiously enough, Captain Semmes, who was constantly called a pirate and whose name was associated in the minds of New England people with that of Captain Kidd, had gained the reputation in the forecastle of his own ship of being a sort of preacher, the impression doubtless dating from that introductory speech of his off Terceira, in which he predicted the blessings of Providence upon the Alabama’s efforts to rid the South of the Yankees. One of the forecastle songs is said to have run thus:

Oh, our captain said, “When my fortune’s made,
I’ll buy a church to preach in,

And fill it full of toots and horns,
And have a jolly Methodee screechin’.

“And I’ll pray the Lord both night and morn
To weather old Yankee Doodle—
And I’ll run a hinfant Sunday School
With some of the Yankee’s boodle.”

One sailor who claimed to have been an officer in the British navy had an excellent tenor voice, and delighted not only his messmates, but frequently the officers as well, with his rendering of popular songs. Even the captain used occasionally to stroll out on the bridge and listen with pleasure to the entertainment furnished with voice or violin. The following song, said to have been improvised by one of the crew, was sung on the night before the fight with the Kearsarge:

We’re homeward bound, we’re homeward bound,
We soon shall stand on English ground;
But ere that English land we see,
We first must lick the Kersar-gee.

At the Cape of Good Hope fourteen of the Alabama’s crew deserted. Captain Semmes records in his journal the fact that the Irish fiddler was one of the number, and calls this “one of our greatest losses.” When the desirability of keeping the crew in a state of subordination and contentment was taken into consideration, there is no doubt that a petty officer or two could have been better spared.

The engineer now reported only four days’ coal in the bunkers, and Captain Semmes determined to shape his course for Martinique, in the West Indies, to which point Captain Bulloch had arranged to dispatch a fresh supply in a sailing vessel.

Early on the morning of Nov. 2d, a sail was discovered and the Alabama immediately gave chase. The master of the fleeing stranger was not even reassured by the United States flag which flew from his pursuers’ mast head, and made all haste to get out of the dangerous vicinity. He was overhauled about noon and a hint from the “Persuader,” as the Blakely rifle had come to be called, induced him to heave to. The boarding officer found himself on the deck of the Levi Starbuck, a whaler expecting to spend two and a half years in the Pacific,

and consequently supplied with an abundance of provisions, considerable quantities of which were transferred to the Alabama. New Bedford papers on board were only four days old, and contained the latest war news.

On the morning of November 8th two sails were in sight, one of them a very large vessel. Master's Mate Evans, the oracle of the ship in the matter of the nationality of vessels, pronounced both of them Yankee. In this dilemma the chase of the smaller vessel, which had gone on during the greater part of the night, was abandoned, and attention concentrated upon the big ship. She made no effort to escape, evidently placing all faith in the lying United States flag which the Alabama showed her. Her master was dumbfounded when on nearer approach the stars and stripes dropped to the deck and were replaced by the colors of the Confederacy.

The prize was an East India trader, the T. B. Wales, of Boston, homeward bound from Calcutta, with a cargo consisting principally of jute, linseed and 1,700 bags of saltpetre, the latter destined for the Northern powder mills. The ship had been five months on her voyage and her master had never heard of the Alabama. He had his wife on board and also an ex-United States consul returning homeward with his family consisting of his wife and three little daughters.

The Wales was one of the most useful of the Alabama's captures. She yielded spars and rigging of the best quality. Her main yard proved to be of almost the exact length of the one which the cruiser had broken in the cyclone, and was taken aboard and afterward transferred to the place of the old one, which had been temporarily repaired. Eight able seamen were secured from her for the Alabama's crew, bringing the number up to 110 within half a score of a full complement.

Semmes was on his good behavior, and evidently anxious to disprove the appellation of "pirate" which had been so constantly flung at him of late. Southern chivalry was at its best in the polite consideration with which he treated the ladies. Several of the officers were turned out of their staterooms to make room for them, a proceeding to which they submitted with apparent good grace. The Wales was burned.

The Alabama now entered the calm belt about the tropic of Cancer, across which she proceeded by slow stages and dropped anchor in the harbor of Fort de France, in the French island of Martinique, on November 18th, 1862.



CHAPTER IX.

DODGING THE SAN JACINTO.

TO his surprise Captain Semmes found the whole town expecting him, although this was the first port he had entered since leaving Terceira two months previous. The Agrippina had been in this port a week, and her master, Captain McQueen, had not been able to resist the temptation to boast of his connection with the Alabama, and aver that his cargo of coal was intended for her bunkers. It had, moreover, been whispered about that the Agrippina had guns and ammunition under the coal, which were intended for the Confederate cruiser, and also that Captain McQueen had stated that he expected to receive some further instructions as to his movements from the British consul, Mr. Lawless. Diplomatic relations between Great Britain and the United States were very much strained at this time, and the consul was much incensed because his name had been connected with the Alabama in this public manner. When cross-questioned by the consul, McQueen became frightened and denied that his cargo was for the Alabama, but admitted that he had said that he took a cargo to Terceira for her, and also that he expected to receive a letter from the owners of the Agrippina in care of the consul. Mr. Lawless warned him against engaging in such illegal traffic under the British flag, and having satisfied himself that the Agrippina's cargo was really intended for the Confederate cruiser and that the Alabama might soon be expected in port, he laid the whole matter before the governor of the island. That official did not seem at all surprised, took the matter very coolly, and stated that if the Alabama came in she would receive the ordinary courtesies accorded to belligerent cruisers in French ports.

When the Alabama did come in and Captain Semmes became acquainted with the real state of affairs, Captain McQueen spent a bad quarter of an hour in his presence, and the same day the Agrippina hastily got up her anchor and went to sea. Seven days was long enough for McQueen's chatter to be wafted many a league even without the aid of the telegraph, and the United States consul, Mr. John Campbell, had not been idle.

Captain Semmes applied to the governor for permission to land his prisoners, consisting of Captain Lincoln and family, of the T. B. Wales, ex-Consul Fairfield

and family, Captain Mellen, of the Levi Starbuck, and forty-three seamen belonging to the two vessels. No objection being offered, the prisoners went ashore and sought the friendly offices of the United States consul to assist them in reaching their own country.

It was just a year since Captain Semmes, then in command of the Sumter, had been blockaded in this very port by the United States gunboat Iroquois, and had adroitly given the latter the slip. Now, in a much better vessel than the Sumter, he felt able to defy foes like the Iroquois.

But a surprise was brewing for him between decks.

After dark George Forrest swam ashore and bribed a boatman to put him aboard his vessel again with five gallons of a vile brand of whisky. His fellow conspirators pulled him and his purchase in through a berth deck port, and the crew proceeded to hold high carnival. When the watch below was called the boatswain was knocked down with a belaying pin and an officer who tried to quell the disturbance was saluted with oaths and every kind of missile within reach.

The captain was immediately notified, and ordered a beat to quarters. The officers appeared armed and charged forward, assisted by the sober portion of the crew, and after a sharp fight succeeded in securing the worst of the mutineers. Captain Semmes had the drunken sailors drenched with buckets of cold water until they begged for mercy. Forrest was identified by a guard from the shore as the man who bought the liquor, and he was placed in double irons and under guard.

Captain Semmes had said to people on shore that the Alabama would go to sea during the night. But she did not go, and early the next morning the stars and stripes were floating outside the harbor at the masthead of the steam sloop San Jacinto, mounting fourteen guns.

“We paid no sort of attention to the arrival of this old wagon of a ship,” writes Semmes in his memoirs. Nevertheless, it must be recorded that he beat to quarters and kept the Alabama close under the guns of the French fort in the harbor.^[2] He might be able to outsail the San Jacinto, but he knew very well that one or two of her broadsides would be very apt to send the Alabama to the bottom, in case Captain Ronckendorff should take it into his head to violate the neutrality of a French port. Moreover, his crew were hardly in a condition either of mind or body to meet a determined enemy.

The captain of the San Jacinto refused to receive a pilot or come to an anchor, because his vessel would then come within the twenty-four hour rule, and the Alabama would be permitted that length of time to get out of reach when she chose to depart, before the San Jacinto, according to international law governing neutral ports, would be permitted to follow her. During the day Governor Candé sent a letter to Captain Ronckendorff warning him that he must either come to anchor and submit to the twenty-four hour rule, or keep three miles outside the points which formed the entrance to the harbor. Being well aware that the governor had correctly stated the law governing the case, Captain Ronckendorff readily promised acquiescence.

Public sentiment in Martinique among the white population was almost unanimously favorable to the South, and while the law was thus enforced to the letter as against the Federals, practically every white person in the port stood ready to give Captain Semmes any assistance which might enable him to escape from his ponderous adversary. The crew of the Alabama spent the 19th of November in various stages of recovery from the debauch and fight of the previous night, and repairing and painting occupied the time of some of them. In the afternoon a French naval officer went on board and furnished Captain Semmes with an accurate chart of the harbor. Towards night the captain of the Hampden, an American merchant ship lying in the harbor near the Alabama, in company with Captain Mellen, were rowed out to the San Jacinto, bearing a letter from the United States consul to Captain Ronckendorff, informing him in regard to the situation ashore. The news of their departure was not long in reaching the Alabama. Suspecting that some code of signals was being arranged, Captain Semmes determined to take time by the forelock. He asked for a government pilot, who was promptly furnished, and just at dusk the Alabama hoisted anchor and steamed toward the inner harbor. The evening was cloudy. Darkness came on early, and rain began to fall. All lights on board were extinguished or covered, and having passed out of sight of the Hampden, the course was altered and the Alabama ran out through the most southerly channel.

When the captain of the Hampden returned to his vessel a little after eight o'clock he immediately sent up three rockets in the direction in which the Alabama was supposed to have gone. The San Jacinto at once ran under a full head of steam to the south side of the harbor, and searched up and down with her crew at quarters until after midnight. At daybreak two of her boats were taken on board, one of which had spent the night in the southern side of the harbor and the other in the northern side. Nobody had seen anything of the Alabama.

People on shore solemnly assured the San Jacinto's officers that the Alabama had not escaped, but was hiding in some obscure part of the bay, to await the departure of her enemy. The whole harbor was therefore explored by the San Jacinto's boats, establishing the fact that beyond a doubt the Alabama was gone.

In a postscript to his report to the navy department Captain Ronckendorff says: "I could find out nothing of the future movements of the Alabama." Nor could anybody else. That was a secret which was kept locked in the breast of her commander. It was very rarely that the lieutenants in her own ward room knew where the vessel would be twenty-four hours ahead.



CHAPTER X.

CAPTURE OF THE ARIEL.

THE next afternoon the Alabama ran down to the solitary little island of Blanquilla, near the coast of Venezuela, whither the Agrippina had preceded her. At the anchorage Captain Semmes was somewhat surprised to find an American whaling schooner. Some boilers had been set up on the island, and her crew were busily engaged in trying out oil from the carcass of a whale which had recently been captured. As the Alabama floated the United States flag, the captain of the whaler rowed out to her and volunteered to pilot the new comer in, and expressed much satisfaction that the United States navy department had shown such a commendable determination to protect commerce in the Carribean Sea. After an inspection of the Alabama's armament, he expressed the opinion that she was "just the ship to give the pirate Semmes fits." When he was finally informed into whose hands he had fallen, his consternation was really pitiable. Semmes, however, was not disposed to stir up a quarrel with even so weak a government as that of Venezuela, and magnanimously informed the young skipper that he should consider the island as a Venezuelan possession, notwithstanding the slight evidences of occupation, and that the marine league surrounding the island would be respected as Venezuelan waters. The Yankee master was detained on board the Alabama during her stay as a precautionary measure. Some of the junior officers took delight in tantalizing the enforced guest in the interim. A midshipman asked him with great earnestness if "the old man" told him that he would not burn his ship.

"Why to be sure he did," was the response.

And then followed doleful waggings of the head and the comforting remark that it all looked very much like one of Semmes' grim jokes.

In the end the whaler was released and her master warned to get into a Federal port at the earliest opportunity, and not permit himself to be caught on the high seas, as he might not fare so well a second time.

The Alabama spent five days here coaling from the Agrippina. The crew were

allowed shore liberty in quarter watches, but as there were no rum shops or dance houses on the island, the privilege was not greatly appreciated by a large part of the rough sailors. Several of the boats were rigged with sails and the officers went fishing. Gunning for pelicans, plovers, gulls and sand-snipes was also a favorite pastime. Flocks of flamingoes waded in the lagoons around the island in search of food, or stood in line like soldiers on the beach.

A few settlers from the main land had taken up their residence on the island, and were cultivating bananas. The sailors helped themselves bountifully to this fruit, and complaint having been made to Captain Semmes, he squared the account with ship's rations.

A court martial was appointed to consider the case of the incorrigible George Forrest, and he was condemned to be put ashore and left on this island.

November 26th the Alabama left her anchorage at Blanquilla, and on the 29th was coasting along the shore of Porto Rico. It was the hope of Captain Semmes that he might capture a treasure steamer on her way north with gold from California. In the Mona passage a Spanish schooner was boarded, which contained late Boston papers giving long accounts of the extensive preparations which were being made for a campaign in Texas, the conduct of which was to be placed in the hands of General Banks. Captain Semmes had already heard of this proposed transfer of a northern army to the Texan coast, and had laid his plans to be in the Gulf of Mexico about the time it should arrive, which it was expected would be early in January. In the meantime he had something over a month to devote to other matters. The Spaniards were told that the Alabama was the United States steamer Iroquois. A few hours later another sail was sighted, and the Alabama having drawn nearer, it needed not the skill of Evans to pronounce her "Yankee." The stamp of New England was in her tapering royal and sky-sail masts and her snowy canvas. Newspapers were hastily put aside and attention concentrated on the chase. Almost within sight of her destination the bark was overhauled and proved to be the Parker Cooke, of Boston, bound for San Domingo with provisions. Large quantities of butter, salt meats, crackers and dried fruits were transferred to the Alabama, and at dusk the torch was applied to the prize.

That night the Alabama's officers had a bad scare, and the men were ordered to their guns. A large ship of war came suddenly upon them, and as the cruiser had her propeller up and no steam in her boilers, she would have been completely at the mercy of so powerful an adversary. The stranger, however, was evidently not

Federal, and passed quickly by without paying the slightest attention to the Alabama, which was in plain view. Next day three vessels were boarded, but one showed Dutch papers and the others Spanish.

December 2d the Alabama chased and overhauled a French bark, and her master's ignorance of international law came near costing him dearly. He paid no attention to a blank cartridge, and it was not until a solid shot was thrown between his masts and at no great distance above his people's heads, that he consented to round to. When asked by the boarding officer why he had not stopped at the first summons, he replied that he was a Frenchman, and that France was not at war with anybody!

On the 5th the Union, of Baltimore, was captured, but she had a neutral cargo, and her captain having given a ransom bond and consented to receive on board the prisoners from the Parker Cooke, she was suffered to proceed on her voyage.

A sharp lookout was now kept for a steamer which it was expected would be on her way from the Isthmus of Panama to New York with a million dollars or upward of California gold. This money, if captured, would be lawful prize, and the portion of it which would go to officers and crew would be a welcome addition to the pay received from the Confederate government. The Alabama held her post in the passage between Cuba and San Domingo from December 3d to December 7th, but no steamer approached from the south. Many vessels were overhauled, but all were neutrals except the Union, which ran into the Alabama's arms without the necessity of a chase. The 7th was Sunday, and while the Captain was at breakfast and the crew preparing for the usual Sunday muster, the lookout raised his shout of "Sail-ho!"

"Where-away?" demanded the officer of the deck.

"Broad on the port bow, sir!" was the reply.

"What does she look like?"

"She is a large steamer, brig-rigged, sir."

Here was a steamer at last, but not in the expected quarter. This one was south bound, and visions of California gold vanished into air. Nevertheless, she might prove a good prize.

"All hands work ship," called the boatswain, and Lieutenant Kell, seizing his trumpet, directed the furling of sails and the lowering of the propeller. The

firemen worked like beavers, and in twenty minutes a sailing vessel had been transformed into a steamer. At a distance of three or four miles the United States flag was run up, and the stranger responded with the same ensign. The rapidity with which the latter approached showed that she was swift, but it was soon ascertained that she carried no guns. The Alabama ran down across her path as if to speak her, but the stranger kept away a little and swept by within a stone's throw. The great packet-steamer had all her awnings set, and under these was a crowd of passengers of both sexes. Groups of soldiers were also seen and several officers in uniform. Many passengers with opera glasses could be seen curiously studying the construction and appointments of the false Union war ship. As the Alabama passed the wake of the packet, she wheeled in pursuit, ran up the Confederate flag, and fired a blank cartridge. Instantly the state of amused curiosity on the stranger's deck gave way to panic. Ladies ran screaming below, and male passengers were by no means slow in keeping them company. Great clouds of black smoke poured from the smoke stacks of the fleeing monster, and her huge walking beam responded still more rapidly to the strain of her engines. A run of less than a mile convinced Captain Semmes that the stranger had the speed of him, and that if he wished to capture her he must resort to heroic measures. The "Persuader," was cleared away. The Alabama was yawed a little to enable the gunner to take accurate aim, and a hundred-pound shell splintered the foremast of the fugitive ten feet above the deck. Her master declined to expose his passengers to a second shot, and the stranger's engines were stopped, and she soon lay motionless awaiting the approach of her captor.

The prize proved to be the California mail-steamer Ariel, Captain Jones, bound to the Isthmus of Panama with five hundred and thirty-two passengers, mostly women and children, on board, a battallion of one hundred and forty-five United States marines, and a number of naval officers, including Commander Sartori, who was on his way to the Pacific to take command of the United States sailing sloop St. Marys. The boarding officer reported great consternation among the passengers. Many of them were hastily secreting articles of value, and the ladies were inclined to hysterics, not knowing to what indignities they might be subjected by the "pirates." At this juncture Lieutenant Armstrong was ordered to take the captain's gig and a boat's crew rigged out in white duck, and proceed on board arrayed in his best uniform and brightest smile, and endeavor to restore a feeling of security. The young lieutenant found the most serious obstacle to the success of his mission in the person of the commander of the marines, who strenuously objected to having his men considered as prisoners of war and put on parole. But the lieutenant had a clinching argument in the muzzles of the

Alabama's guns, then distant but a few yards, and the marines finally stacked their arms and took the oath not to bear arms against the Confederacy until exchanged. \$8,000 in United States treasury notes and \$1,500 in silver were found in the safe, which Captain Jones admitted to be the property of the vessel's owner, and this was turned over to Captain Semmes. The boats' crews behaved very well, and none of the personal effects of the prisoners were seized.

SECOND LIEUTENANT R. F. ARMSTRONG

The captain and engineers of the Ariel were sent on board the Alabama, and a number of the Alabama's engineers took possession of the Ariel's engines. Lieutenant Armstrong and Midshipman Sinclair, who acted as his executive officer, were not long in ingratiating themselves with the ladies, and when they finally left the prize two days later, nearly all the buttons on their coats had been given away as mementoes. They occupied respectively the head and foot of the long dining table. When champagne was brought in they proposed the health of Jefferson Davis, which they requested should be drunk standing. Their request was complied with amid considerable merriment, and then the Yankee girls retaliated by proposing the health of President Lincoln, which was drunk with a storm of hurrahs.

The next day after the capture of the Ariel the prize crew was hastily withdrawn from her, bringing away certain small fixtures from the engines, which rendered them temporarily useless. The reason for this move was the appearance of another steamer on the horizon, which it was hoped would prove to be the treasure steamer for which the Alabama had been waiting for a week past. Captain Semmes was doomed to another disappointment, however, for she was neutral. About eight o'clock the next evening, while in chase of a brig, which was afterward found to be from one of the German states, a valve casting broke in one of the Alabama's engines, and the chief engineer reported that it would take at least twenty-four hours to repair the damage. Captain Semmes had been extremely loth to release the Ariel. To get her into a Confederate port was, of course, impossible, and the Alabama could not possibly accommodate such an immense number of passengers, even for the short time necessary to run into the nearest neutral port. He was debating in his own mind whether it might not be possible to get his prize into Kingston, Jamaica, long enough to get his prisoners ashore, when the accident happened to the engine, and a boat sent to board the German brig brought back the information that there was yellow fever at Kingston. A bond for the value of the prize and her cargo was therefore exacted from Captain Jones, and the Ariel was suffered to proceed on her voyage.



CHAPTER XI.

RECREATION AT ARCAS KEYS.

THE Alabama coasted along the secluded north shore of Jamaica for the next forty-eight hours, while the engine was undergoing repair. It was now the 12th day of December, and Captain Semmes proceeded to carry out his plan of getting into the Gulf of Mexico without being seen. On the 13th he writes in his journal:

Weather fine. Passed the west end of Jamaica about noon. Ship-cleaning day. Nothing in sight, and I desire to see nothing (unless it be a homeward bound California Steamer) at present, as it is important I should make the run I contemplate without being traced. I should like to touch at the Caymans for fruits and vegetables for the crew, but forbear on this account.

And on the 15th he makes this entry:

Fresh trade; ship running along under topsails. This running down, down, before the ever constant trade wind, to run up against it by and by under steam is not pleasant. Still, God willing, I hope to strike a blow of some importance and make my retreat safely out of the gulf.

U. S. STEAMSHIP WACHUSETT.

Have a care, Captain Semmes! Rear Admiral Wilkes, with the Wachusett and the Sonoma, is hot on your trail, and his scent is improving. He is only three days behind the Agrippina at the Grand Cayman, where thrifty Captain McQueen has touched to do a little trading on his own account.

December 17th to 19th the Alabama struggled with a three days' gale about midway between the westerly end of Cuba and the coast of Honduras. In this gale the Wachusett burst her boiler tubes and the Sonoma rolled away her smokestack, but this fortunately did not go overboard, and when the weather cleared it was put in place again. On the 20th the Alabama's lookout sighted the

islands near the north-east point of Yucatan, and the same night Captain Semmes groped his way through the Yucatan Channel by means of the lead, finding himself next morning in the Gulf of Mexico, without having seen a human being by whom the whereabouts of his vessel could be reported. On the 23d the Agrippina was overhauled, and the two vessels ran together to the Arcas Keys.

These little islands are of coral formation, and are three in number, forming a triangle. The Alabama and her consort found very good anchorage inside the triangle, with no danger from gales unless they should blow from the southeast, which Captain Semmes decided would be unlikely at this time of the year. Here he made his preparations to pounce upon the Banks transport fleet. The remainder of the coal which had been left in the Agrippina's hold at Blanquilla, was now transferred to the Alabama's bunkers, and Captain McQueen was directed to proceed to England for another supply. The next rendezvous was never reached by the Agrippina, however, and from this time forward Captain Semmes had to supply himself with coal as best he could. The Alabama was careened and her bottom scrubbed as well as possible under the circumstances, and various repairs were made to the sails and about decks.

The water was very transparent, and the anchor could be plainly seen at seven fathoms depth. Fish and turtles were observed swimming about, and all the wonders of coral architecture were visible below. There was no vegetation on the islands except sea kale and a few stunted bushes and cactus. Birds were in abundance, and the whole surface of the island was covered with their nests, containing eggs and young birds in all stages of growth. The older birds were very tame and usually refused to leave the nests until pushed off.

Two days after the arrival of the Alabama was Christmas day, and the crew were given shore liberty. Captain Semmes makes this entry in his journal:

Christmas day, the second Christmas since we left our homes in the Sumter. Last year we were buffetting the storms of the North Atlantic near the Azores. Now we are snugly anchored in the Arcas; and how many eventful periods have passed in the interval. Our poor people have been terribly pressed in this wicked and ruthless war, and they have borne privations and sufferings which nothing but an intense patriotism could have sustained. They will live in history as a people worthy to be free, and future generations will be astonished at the folly and fanaticism, want of principle and wickedness, developed by this war among the Puritan population of the North;

and in this class nine-tenths of the native population of the northern states may be placed, to such an extent has the "Plymouth Rock" leaven "leavened the whole loaf." A people so devoid of Christian charity, and wanting in so many of the essentials of honesty, cannot but be abandoned to their own folly by a just and benevolent God. Our crew is keeping Christmas by a run on shore, which they all seem to enjoy exceedingly. It is indeed very grateful to the senses to ramble about over even so confined a space as the Arcas, after tossing about at sea in a continual state of excitement for months. Yesterday was the first time I touched the shore since I left Liverpool on the 13th of August last, and I was only one week in Liverpool after a voyage of three weeks from the Bahamas, so that I have in fact been but one week on shore in five months. My thoughts naturally turn on this quiet Christmas day, in this lonely island, to my dear family. I can only hope, and trust them to the protection of a merciful Providence. The only sign of a holiday on board tonight is the usual "splicing of the main brace," *anglice*, giving Jack an extra allowance of grog.

Meanwhile "Jack's" thoughts were taking quite a different turn, if reports are to be trusted. Shore leave with no opportunity for a drunken carousal, was to him like the play of Hamlet with the principal character altogether omitted.

"Liberty on Christmas, the old pirate!" cried one of the crew, kicking up the carpet of sea kale. "Well, here goes for a quiet life. I can lick any man in the starboard watch."

His challenge was immediately accepted, and the net result was a number of broken heads and several men nearly incapacitated for duty.

The largest island contained a salt water lake, which was connected by an outlet with the sea at high tide, and at other times had a depth of about two and one-half feet of water. This pond was alive with fish, and on one occasion a group of junior and petty officers were fishing here in one of the small boats, when a shark was discovered swimming leisurely along with a fin exposed and evidently gorged with fish. The chief engineer, Miles J. Freeman, was bathing, and had waded about a hundred yards from the shore, when his attention was called to the man eater by the party in the boat. The shark had no intention of attacking him, but the engineer did not stop to investigate the state of his sharkship's appetite, and struck out lustily for the shore. Not feeling that he was making

satisfactory progress, he got on his feet and tried to wade. The water was just at that depth where no method of locomotion seems best, and so he floundered along, sometimes swimming, sometimes trying to run, until he finally reached the shore and threw himself on the sand utterly exhausted, while the party in the boat held their sides and screamed with laughter.

An Irishman named Michael Mars pushed the boat toward the shark, and jumping into the water, plunged his sheath knife into the belly of the big fish. The shark snapped his great jaws and slapped the water with his tail, but, disregarding all orders to get into the boat and let the shark alone, Mars kept up the fight until his enemy was vanquished, and the body was towed ashore in triumph.

After some days the sojourners discovered that by driving off the birds from a certain area and breaking all the stale eggs, the nests were soon supplied with fresh ones by these prolific layers, and a palatable addition to ship fare was the result.

Meanwhile Admiral Wilkes was cruising off the westerly end of Cuba, thinking the Alabama would probably be there, trying to intercept the homeward bound California steamer. Doubtless she would have been there, had it not seemed to her commander that a more important duty called him to the gulf. Admiral Wilkes reasoned that the Agrippina could never have reached an easterly port against the heavy gale, and decided to look into the harbor of Mugerres Island in the narrowest part of Yucatan Channel, in the hope of finding her. Here he discovered a vessel which was at first thought to be the Alabama, but which proved to be the Virginia, formerly the Noe-Daquy, which was being fitted up to run the blockade. A Mexican officer had seized her, on the ground that she was engaged in the slave trade, and was not disposed to permit her being sent before a prize court at Key West. The complications arising in the case of this vessel kept Admiral Wilkes at Mugerres Island until January 18th, except that he made one trip to Havana for coal. Two days' sail to the westward would have brought him to the Arcas Keys, but he had no means of knowing that the Alabama had passed into the gulf.



CHAPTER XII.

FIGHT WITH THE HATTERAS.

ON the 5th of January, 1863, the Alabama left the Arcas Keys for her cruise to the northward. Full descriptions of the Banks expedition and its destination had appeared in the northern newspapers, and Captain Semmes was well supplied with information as to the character of the transport fleet and the time when it might be expected to arrive off Galveston. It was not likely that the transports would be accompanied by a great number of war vessels, as the Confederacy had no fleet in the gulf, and the northern papers had reported the Alabama as well on her way to the coast of Brazil. As there was only twelve feet of water on the bar, most of the transports would be obliged to anchor outside. A night attack—a quick dash—firebrands flung from deck to deck—and the fleet might be half destroyed before the gunboats could get up steam to pursue.

Semmes determined to run in by daylight far enough to get the bearings of the fleet, and then draw off and wait for darkness. He had permitted enough of his plan to leak through the ward room to the forecabin to put his people on their mettle, and the entire crew were eager for the fray. On January 11th the man at the masthead was instructed to keep a lookout for a large fleet anchored near a lighthouse. His “sail ho! land ho!” came almost simultaneously, and the captain began to feel certain of his game. But later questioning brought the answer that there was no fleet of transports—only five steamers, which looked like vessels of war. Soon after a shell thrown by one of the steamers was distinctly seen to burst over the city. It could not be that the Federals would be firing upon a city which was in their own possession, and Semmes immediately came to the correct conclusion that Galveston had been recaptured by the Confederates. That the Banks expedition had been diverted to New Orleans, and would proceed toward Texas by way of the Red River he could not know, but that it had not reached Galveston was sufficiently apparent.

The Alabama’s prow was turned off shore again, and presently the lookout called down that one of the steamers was in pursuit. Commodore Bell, of the Federal fleet had discovered the strange actions of the sail in the offing, and had suspected an intention of running the blockade. The gunboat Hatteras was

therefore signalled to go in chase of the intruder. The Alabama flew away under sail, but not so fast as to discourage her pursuer. The propeller was finally let down, and about twenty miles out she turned to meet the Hatteras. The engines on both vessels stopped at a distance of about a hundred yards, and the Federal hailed.

“What ship is that?”

“This is Her Britannic Majesty’s ship Petrel,” shouted Lieutenant Kell.

He then demanded the name of the pursuer. The first answer was not clearly heard. A second summons brought the reply:

“This is the United States ship—”

Again those on the Alabama failed to catch the name, and the people on the Hatteras seemed to be in a like predicament, for her officer shouted:

“I don’t understand you.”

“I don’t understand *you*,” rejoined Kell.

After a few moments’ delay the Hatteras hailed again.

“If you please, I will send a boat on board of you.”

“Certainly,” was the reply, “we shall be happy to receive your boat.”

Word was passed to the gunners that the signal to fire would be the word “Alabama.” The creaking of the tackle as the boat was lowered was distinctly heard. Meanwhile the Alabama’s engines were started and she was deftly maneuvered to get her into position for a raking fire. But Lieutenant Blake, of the Hatteras, was not to be caught napping, and as the boat cleared her side, the engines of the Hatteras were again started, giving her headway enough so that she could again present her port broadside. Seeing that further concealment was useless, Lieutenant Kell, at a word from his captain, placed the trumpet to his lips and shouted with all his lungs:

“This is the Confederate States steamer Alabama!”

Almost at the same instant the whole starboard broadside was fired. At fifty yards there was little chance to miss, and the sharp clang of shot and shell against the Hatteras’ iron plates added to the din. The fire was immediately

returned by the Hatteras, and both vessels sprang forward at full speed, leaving Master L. H. Partridge and his boat's crew making vain endeavors to regain their own deck.

Although the Hatteras was built of iron, she was not iron clad. Her plates had been made merely to resist the sea, not cannon shot, and the terrific pounding which the Alabama's guns gave her was effective from the first.

Her walking beam was shot away, and great gaps appeared in her sides. Gunners on the Alabama revelled in the chance to revenge the long suffered newspaper abuse.

"That's from 'the scum of England'!" "That stops your wind!" "That's a British pill for you to swallow!" were some of the expressions hurled at the Hatteras along with the shot and shell.

"THAT'S FROM THE 'SCUM OF ENGLAND'!"

Meanwhile the Alabama was not escaping punishment entirely, although none of her wounds were of a serious nature. One shot through the stern passed through the lamp room, smashing everything within it. A shell striking a few feet abaft the foremast, ripped up the deck and lodged in the port bulwarks without exploding. A shot a few feet forward of the bridge tore up the deck. Two shells cut the main rigging and dropped into the coal bunkers, and one of these in exploding made a hole through the side. A shot demolished one of the boats and went completely through the smoke stack, making the iron splinters fly like hail. Another shot struck the muzzle of a 32-pounder gun and caused the truck to run back over a man's foot. There was no damage below the water line.

The Hatteras was on fire in two places, and a shell broke the cylinder of her engine, thus making it impossible either to handle the vessel or to put out the fire. Finding his craft a helpless wreck, Lieutenant Blake ordered the magazine flooded to prevent an explosion and fired a lee gun in token of surrender.

To the inquiry from the Alabama whether he needed assistance Lieutenant Blake gave an affirmative reply, and the Alabama lowered her boats. But they were hastily hoisted again when it was reported that a steamer was coming from Galveston. In this emergency the commander of the Hatteras ordered her port battery thrown overboard, and this proceeding doubtless kept her afloat during the few minutes needed for the Alabama's boats to be again lowered and reach her side. Every man was taken off, and ten minutes later she went down bow foremost. The action lasted less than fifteen minutes.

Partridge and his boat's crew drew near as the battle closed, but the officer having satisfied himself that the Hatteras had been defeated, ordered his men to pull for Galveston. He was without a compass, but the night was clear and starlit, and the tired crew succeeded in reaching a Federal vessel near the city at daybreak.

Meanwhile Commodore Bell had heard the noise of the conflict, and had started out with two of his remaining ships to give assistance to the Hatteras. An all-night search revealed nothing, and returning next day, he discovered the tops of the masts of his unlucky consort projecting a few feet above the water.



CHAPTER XIII.

ESCAPE FROM THE GULF OF MEXICO.

TO get out of the gulf before the exits could be guarded was now the all-important thing for the Alabama. Had Captain Semmes known that the Sonoma was off the north shore of Yucatan, that the Wachusett was at Mugerres Island still keeping watch over the Virginia, and that the Santiago de Cuba, another steamer of Admiral Wilkes' fleet, was cruising off the west end of Cuba, he might have had some hesitation in steering for the Yucatan Channel. But, luckily for the Alabama, Admiral Wilkes and his captains were as ignorant of Captain Semmes' presence in the gulf as he was of theirs in the channel. For five days the Alabama battled with contrary winds, overhauling the Agrippina, which had not yet succeeded in getting out of the gulf, and on the 16th reached the Yucatan bank, along which she worked her way until 11:30 o'clock that night, when she slid off into the channel, and before daylight was beyond the reach of any hostile glass which might be leveled at her from the Yucatan coast or Mugerres Island. An observation on the 17th showed the Alabama's position in the middle of the channel, where she was slowly making her way southward against wind and current. Nothing was seen of the Santiago de Cuba. The next day the R. R. Cuyler, of Admiral Farragut's squadron, arrived in the channel in hot pursuit of the Florida, which had just made her escape from Mobile Bay. The Cuyler and the Santiago de Cuba proceeded together across the Channel to Mugerres Island in a vain search for the Florida, but by this time the Alabama was out of the channel and well on her way to Jamaica. The Florida had run into Havana.

On the afternoon of January 21st, 1863, the Alabama was off Port Royal, Jamaica, and anchored in the harbor as it grew dark. If Captain Semmes had any misgivings as to the reception which would be accorded him in an English port, his fears were soon set at rest. He writes:

We were boarded by a lieutenant from the English flag-ship, immediately upon anchoring, and the news spread like wildfire through all Port Royal that the Alabama had arrived, with the officers and crew of a Federal gunboat, which she had sunk in battle, on board as prisoners. Night as it was, we were soon swarmed with

visitors, come off to welcome us to the port, and tender their congratulations. The next morning I called on Commodore Dunlap, who commanded a squadron of Admiral Milne's fleet, and was the commanding naval officer present. This was the first English port I had entered since the Alabama had been commissioned, and no question whatever as to the antecedents of my ship was raised. I had, in fact, brought in pretty substantial credentials that I was a ship of war—130 of the officers and men of one of the enemy's sunken ships. * * * I forwarded, through Commodore Dunlap, an official report of my arrival to the governor of the island, with a request to be permitted to land my prisoners, and put some slight repairs upon my ship, both of which requests were promptly granted.

With three British men-of-war in the harbor, the Alabama was safe from any hostile movement even by the most reckless of Federal commanders, and Captain Semmes accepted the invitation of an English gentleman to visit his country home, where he took a much needed rest. His officers had their hands full in his absence. The ship's bunkers were refilled with coal, a proceeding which barred the Alabama from again receiving the same courtesy in any British port for three months. Crowds of curious visitors had to be entertained, and a constant watch must be kept to prevent liquor from being smuggled to the men, at least until the arduous labor of coaling ship was over. When shore leave was finally granted, the majority of the crew celebrated the occasion as usual by getting uproarously drunk, and many of them might be seen assisting their late adversaries of the Hatteras to get into a like condition.

The Alabama's paymaster, Clarence R. Yonge, hitherto a trusted officer, was accused of drunkenness, and also with traitorous intercourse with the United States consul. Lieutenant Kell had him arrested, and when the captain returned he was dismissed from the Confederate service.

Returning to Kingston from his tour of recreation on January 24th, Captain Semmes found himself the hero of the hour, and felt obliged to comply with the general request for a speech to the people of the town.

The task of getting the crew on board the Alabama proved to be a formidable one. Few could be persuaded to abandon their debauch by any persuasion or threat of punishment. Most of them were arrested by the police and delivered to the Alabama's officers in all stages of intoxication. Two of them even attempted to escape after getting on board, by jumping into a shore boat. Captain Semmes

gives the following account of this occurrence:

A couple of them, not liking the appearance of things on board, jumped into a dug-out alongside, and seizing the paddles from the negroes, shoved off in great haste, and put out for the shore. It was night, and there was a bright moon lighting up the bay. A cutter was manned as speedily as possible, and sent in pursuit of the fugitives. Jack had grog and Moll ahead of him, and irons and a court-martial behind him, and he paddled like a good fellow. He had gotten a good start before the cutter was well under way, but still the cutter, with her long sweeping oars, was rather too much for the dug-out, especially as there were five oars to two paddles. She gained and gained, coming nearer and nearer, when presently the officer of the cutter heard one of the sailors in the dug-out say to the other:

“I’ll tell you what it is, Bill, there’s too much cargo in this here d—d craft, and I’m going to lighten ship a little.”

And at the same instant he saw the two men lay in their paddles, seize one of the negroes, and pitch him head foremost overboard! They then seized their paddles again, and away darted the dug-out with renewed speed.

Port Royal Bay is a large sheet of water, and is, besides, as every reader of Marryatt’s incomparable tales knows, full of ravenous sharks. It would not do, of course, for the cutter to permit the negro either to drown or to be eaten by the sharks, and so, as she came up with him, sputtering and floundering for his life, she was obliged to “back of all” and take him in. The sailor who grabbed at him first missed him, and the boat shot ahead of him, which rendered it necessary for her to turn and pull back a short distance before she could rescue him. This done, he was flung into the bottom of the cutter, and the pursuit renewed. By this time the dug-out had gotten even a better start than she had had at first, and the two fugitive sailors, encouraged by the prospect of escape, were paddling more vigorously than ever. Fast flew the dugout, but faster flew the cutter. Both parties now had their blood up, and a more beautiful and exciting moonlight race has not often been seen. We had watched it from the Alabama, until in the gloaming of the night it had passed out of sight. We had seen the first manœuvre of the halting, and pulling back of the cutter, but did not know what to make of it. The cutter began now to come up again with the chase. She had no musket on board, or in imitation of the Alabama, she might have “hove the chase to” with a blank cartridge or a ball. When she had gotten within a few yards of her a second time, in went the paddles again, and overboard went the other negro! and away went

the dugout! A similar delay on the part of the cutter ensued as before, and a similar advantage was gained by the dug-out! But all things come to an end, and so did this race. The cutter finally captured the dug-out, and brought back Tom Bowse and Bill Bower to their admiring shipmates on board the Alabama. This was the only violation of neutrality I was guilty of in Port Royal—chasing and capturing a neutral craft in neutral waters.

The recalcitrant sailors protested that they had no intention of deserting the ship or of drowning the negroes; they only wanted to say goodbye to their feminine acquaintances ashore—and so got off with a reprimand and a night spent in irons.



CHAPTER XIV.

IN AMBUSH ON THE HIGHWAY.

THE next field of the Alabama's operations was to be the great highway of commerce off the coast of Brazil, and the mid-Atlantic to the northward. Hardly a day out from Port Royal she fell in with the Golden Rule, and made a bonfire of her. This vessel had on board an outfit of masts and rigging for a United States gun boat, which had been dismantled in a gale. The flames from the bark were distinctly visible on the islands of Jamaica and San Domingo. The next night the torch was applied to the Chastelaine near the Dominican coast. The prisoners from these two vessels were landed at San Domingo.

February 2d there was an alarm of fire on board, caused by the carelessness of one of the petty officers, who had carried a lighted candle into the spirit room, producing an explosion. No great damage was done, however. The Alabama shaped her course northward from San Domingo and crossed the Tropic of Cancer with a good breeze, a rather unusual experience. Early on the morning of February 3d the Alabama gave chase to the schooner Palmetto, but the latter made good use of a favorable breeze, and was not overhauled until one o'clock in the afternoon. The cargo of the prize consisted largely of provisions, of which the Alabama appropriated a goodly supply, and then the torch was applied.

The Alabama was now working her way eastward on the thirtieth parallel of latitude, and had got well into the middle of the Atlantic. The Azores, where she had begun her adventurous career, were only a few degrees to the north and east. On February 21st a light breeze was blowing from the southeast when the lookout reported a sail in sight and then another and then a third and a fourth. The Alabama gave chase to the one first announced, but she ran away before the wind, and, fearing that the others would escape, Captain Semmes gave his attention to two which had every appearance of being Union, and which had been in close company. In order to distract the cruiser's attention, the two ships fled in opposite directions, but, the wind continuing light, the Alabama soon overhauled the one which sailed eastward; and, putting Master's Mate Fullam with a prize crew on board, with orders to follow, gave chase to the other, then some fifteen miles distant. The cruiser came up with the second ship about three

o'clock p. m. She was the Olive Jane, of New York, homeward bound from Bordeaux with a cargo of French wines and brandies, sardines, olives and other delicacies. Her master was ordered on board the Alabama with his ship's papers, and soon stood in the presence of Captain Semmes. No certificates of foreign ownership were found, and the verbal assurance of the master that the French owner of certain casks of wine had pointed out his property before the ship sailed, counted for nothing. Fifth Lieutenant Sinclair was ordered with a boat's crew to proceed on board the prize and secure a quantity of the provisions, and then to set fire to her, but on no account to permit any intoxicants to be brought away. The young lieutenant assumed the task with many misgivings. To take such a susceptible boat's crew into a hold filled with wines and brandies and forbid them to touch a drop would be to invite a riot. Having reached the deck of the prize Sinclair took his coxswain aside and explained to him the nature of the cargo and the scheme which he had in mind. The boat's crew were invited to lunch at the cabin table on the viands prepared for New York's aristocracy, with sundry bottles of brandy, burgundy and claret added thereto, and then appealed to not to get their officer into trouble by becoming intoxicated. The sailors being thus put upon their honor, not a single cask of wine was broken open nor a bottle conveyed to the Alabama. As the work of securing the provisions proceeded, numerous temporary adjournments to the cabin took place, but when the time came for applying the torch, the crew returned to their ship, feeling a little gay perhaps, but amply able to clamber up the cruiser's side without assistance.

The Olive Jane, having been seen to be well on fire, the Alabama made her way back to the first prize, which, in charge of the prize crew, was doing her best to follow. This vessel was the Golden Eagle. She had sailed in ballast from San Francisco, had taken on a cargo of guano on a small island in the Pacific Ocean, rounded Cape Horn, crossed the equator and the calm belt, and was just catching the breezes which were expected to waft her to her destination at Cork, Ireland, when she fell in with the merciless destroyer, and was condemned to be burned.

The Alabama was now approaching a locality where active operation might be looked for. Says Captain Semmes:

We were now in latitude 30° and longitude 40°, and * * * on the charmed "crossing," leading to the coast of Brazil. By "crossing" is meant the point at which the ship's course crosses a given parallel of latitude. We must not, for instance, cross the thirtieth parallel, going southward, until we have reached a certain meridian—say that of forty degrees west. If we do, the north-east trade wind will pinch us,

and perhaps prevent us from weathering Cape St. Roque. And when we reach the equator there is another crossing recommended to the mariner, as being most appropriate to his purpose. Thus it is that the roads upon the sea have been blazed out, as it were—the blazes not being exactly cut upon the forest trees, but upon parallels and meridians.

The Alabama was now kept exceedingly busy examining flags and papers of the passers by, to make sure that no Yankee should get past her unawares. February 27th the Washington fell into the Alabama's net, but she had a cargo of guano belonging to the Peruvian government; and her master having given a ransom bond of \$50,000 and taken the Alabama's prisoners on board, was suffered to proceed on his voyage. March 1st the Bethia Thayer, with more Peruvian guano, was also released on bond. The next victim was the John A. Parks, of Hallowell, Maine, with a cargo of lumber for ports in Argentine or Uruguay. The cargo was certified in proper form to be English property, but some tell-tale letters in the mail bag showed that these certificates had been obtained for the sole purpose of preventing confiscation in case of capture, and ship and cargo were consigned to the flames.

The Alabama now ran southward to the equator. In the vicinity of the line she was seldom out of sight of vessels, and frequently there were a half dozen or more within sight at one time. United States vessels were apt to avoid the "crossings," however, and had taken to the fields and back alleys, as it were. In some cases they sailed hundreds of miles out of their way in order to keep out of the ordinary track of commerce, where it was suspected that a Confederate cruiser might be lying in wait.

HAVOC IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC.

About midnight on March 15th the sky being cloudy, the lookout called, "Sail ho! close aboard," and a large ship passed by running on the opposite tack. The Alabama wheeled to follow, and succeeded in getting within range just before

daybreak. A gunshot induced the chase to heave to. She proved to be the *Punjaub*, of Boston, on her way from Calcutta to London with a cargo of jute and linseed, which was properly certified as British property. She was released on a ransom bond, and took with her the last batch of prisoners, consisting of the crew of the *John A. Parks*. On the morning of March 23d the *Morning Star* was captured. She also was on her way from India to England with a neutral cargo, and not being able to find any flaw in her papers, Captain Semmes released her on a ransom bond. On the afternoon of the same day the *Kingfisher*, a whaling schooner, of Fairhaven, Massachusetts, was captured and burned. Two days later two large ships were seen approaching in close company. At the sight of the *Alabama* they separated and made more sail, but were both overhauled and proved to be American. The *Charles Hill* was bound from Liverpool to Argentine with salt. The *Nora*, also laden with salt, was bound from Liverpool to Calcutta. Probably both cargoes were actually owned by English citizens, but no proper proof of that fact being found among their papers, both vessels were condemned. The whole night and most of the following day were consumed in getting about forty tons of coal out of the prizes, after which they were burned. Nine men from these two ships enlisted on the *Alabama*.

On April 4th the *Alabama* chased a fine large ship all day, and, the wind having failed, sent a boarding crew in a whale boat to her at five o'clock p. m., although she was still two miles distant. Just before dark the ship was seen to turn her head toward the *Alabama*, and in a few hours she was alongside. The prize was the *Louisa Hatch*, of Rockland, Maine, with a cargo of coal, and bound from Cardiff, Wales, to the island of Ceylon. There was a certificate of foreign ownership among her papers, but not being sworn to, it was treated as so much waste paper. Coal on the coast of Brazil was worth seventeen dollars per ton. The *Alabama's* supply of that necessary article was running low, but the *Agrippina* was expected soon, and the appointed rendezvous was close at hand. The character of the *Agrippina*, however, as a supply ship to the *Alabama* was becoming pretty well known, and it was stated that at least one Union captain had threatened to treat her as a hostile craft, notwithstanding her English flag. It was therefore quite possible that she might not be able to reach the place designated by Captain Semmes for the transfer of her cargo. On the other hand, Captain Semmes knew from experience that to transfer coal from the *Louisa Hatch* to the *Alabama* in the open sea would be a slow and difficult process in the best weather, and impossible in even a moderate wind.

Under the circumstances he determined to take the prize in tow and enter the

port of Fernando de Noronha, an island belonging to Brazil, and used as a penal colony by that government, and run the risk of official interference. It was fortunate for the Alabama that the Louisa Hatch was not destroyed. The Agrippina was several weeks behind the appointed time in reaching the coast of Brazil. Besides her cargo of coal she had on board two more guns for the Alabama's armament. Those guns were never delivered, and the Alabama went into her final combat with her original eight guns only.

Captain Semmes ran boldly into the harbor of Fernando de Noronha in the afternoon of April 10th, 1863, followed by the Louisa Hatch, and after dark began taking coal from the prize. The next day he visited the governor of the island, and found that official disposed to be very friendly. He took the Confederate captain on a tour of inspection about the island, and invited him to dine with the aristocracy of the place, consisting chiefly of gentlemanly forgers and other polite convicts, together with a few army officers from the battalion under his command. To the mind of the gentleman of Southern breeding the climax of incongruity was reached when he was introduced to the governor's mulatto wife. The opinion of Captain Semmes in regard to the black and mixed inhabitants of Brazil may be gathered from the following excerpt from his memoirs:

The effete Portuguese race has been ingrafted upon a stupid, stolid Indian stock in that country. The freed negro is, besides, the equal of the white man, and as there seems to be no repugnance on the part of the white race—so called—to mix with the black race, and with the Indian, amalgamation will go on in that country, until a mongrel set of curs will cover the whole land. This might be a suitable field enough for the New England school-ma'am and carpet-bagger, but no Southern gentleman should think of mixing his blood or casting his lot with such a race of people.

The fiery "Southern gentleman" was, however, able for the time being to accommodate his feelings to the requirements of diplomacy, and his sentiments did not prevent him from making himself agreeable to the handsome mulatto lady and patting the kinky heads of her children. From this time forward the influence of the governor's wife was thrown on the side of an exceedingly liberal interpretation of the law of nations, wherever the Confederate captain was concerned, that lady little imagining the storm which was gathering about her husband's head, as a result of too much official complaisance.

The Alabama remained at this island until April 22d. As the anchorage was nothing but an open roadstead, it was soon found that the swell of the sea was too great to permit the two vessels to lie side by side without damage; and resort was had to the tedious operation of transferring the coal in boats, thus consuming five days. Meanwhile Captain Semmes was enjoying fat turkeys, fruit and bouquets sent him by the governor and his wife, or making agreeable visits to the government house and other places on the island.

April 15th two vessels were discovered to the southward, and soon after two whale boats were seen approaching from that direction. Each was in charge of the captain of one of the vessels in the offing, and they seemed somewhat apprehensive as to the company into which they had fallen. One of them hailed the Louisa Hatch and inquired her name and the port she was from, to which questions correct answers were given by Master's Mate Fullam, the prize officer in charge. The other captain broke in by asking if the steamer in the harbor was not the Alabama.

"Certainly not," was the reply, "she is the United States steamer Iroquois."

"Have you any news of the Alabama?"

"Yes; we have heard of her being in the West Indies, at Jamaica and Costa Rica."

The prize master then engaged them in conversation, with the idea of detaining them until the Alabama could get up steam, which he felt sure would be done with all speed. Considerably reassured, the whaling captains accepted an invitation to go on board the prize, and had approached within a few yards when the officer in the forward boat uttered a cry of alarm.

"Give way, men; give way for your lives," he shouted, and hastily turned the boat's head toward the shore.

To the frantic appeals of the other captain to explain his conduct he would only point to the mizzen rigging of the ship and ejaculate:

"There! there!"

Closer inspection revealed a small Confederate flag which a puff of wind had just displayed. The fears of the excited captain were soon realized. The Alabama steamed out of the anchorage and before dark had fired the bark Lafayette (the second vessel of this name destroyed) and returned with the Kate Cory in tow. Captain Semmes says that these two ships were captured outside the three-mile

limit, but the crews of the captured vessels assert that they were clearly in Brazilian waters. The easy going governor contented himself with a written statement of Captain Semmes that the captures were made outside of the marine league. Fullam wrote in his diary:

Whilst at Bahia I was shown a letter from the master of one of the whaling barks to an agent, in which he wrote that he would spare no money or time to follow to the uttermost ends of the earth, and bring to justice the man who had so cruelly deceived him. This sentence had reference to my denial of the Alabama and the substitution of the U. S. steamer Iroquois for that of C. S. steamer Alabama. The ingratitude of some people!

The prisoners were paroled and sent to Pernambuco in a Brazilian schooner. Captain Semmes waited a week longer for the Agrippina, and then steamed out into the track of commerce once more.



CHAPTER XV.

ADMIRAL WILKES IS MISTAKEN.

AS the Alabama left the anchorage of Fernando de Noronha four whale boats were successively cast adrift, and the islanders made a grand scramble for the possession of them. The successful ones became capitalists in the eyes of their fellows, as the boats were better than any others about the place. The second night at sea, about two hours after midnight a whaling bark was sighted, and after an hour's chase succumbed to a blank cartridge. She was the Nye, of New Bedford, and had spent thirty-one months in the Pacific Ocean. She had sent home one or two cargoes of oil, and was now homeward bound with 425 barrels more. Everything about the ship was saturated with oil, and she made a magnificent bonfire. The sailors were chiefly interested in the store of Virginia tobacco which she brought them.

April 26th the Dorcas Prince, of New York, bound for Shanghai with a cargo of coal, was overhauled. The Alabama had her bunkers full of coal, and consequently this cargo was given to the flames along with the vessel. The master of the Dorcas Prince had his wife with him, and one of the Alabama's lieutenants was turned out of his stateroom to make room for the lady. The lookouts were kept busy reporting sails, but Evans gave little comfort as to nationality.

"Think she's English, sir," was his frequent answer to queries; or "Not Yankee, sir—think she's Austrian."

Hardly a nation with any shipping at all that was not represented in this great ocean roadway. Hanoverian and Uruguayan vessels, both of which were overhauled, were not identified until they showed their flags.

On Sunday, the third day of May, the Union Jack, of Boston, was chased and captured. The prize crew having gained her deck, away went the Alabama in chase of another ship, which was also overhauled in about an hour. She proved to be the Sea Lark, of New York. The Union Jack was bound for the coast of China, and her master was taking his family out to make a temporary home for

them somewhere in the far east so long as his business should require his presence in that part of the world. Rev. Franklin Wright, just appointed United States consul at Foo Chow, was also a passenger. Captain Semmes took possession of the new consul's official documents, intending thus to delay his entering upon his new duties. Before night both prizes were well on fire.

May 11th Captain Semmes ran into Bahia to land his prisoners. The news of the Alabama's exploits had preceded her. Acting under orders from Rio Janeiro, the president of the province of Pernambuco had recalled the governor of Fernando de Noronha and commenced legal proceedings against him. Three war vessels had also been dispatched to the island to prevent further breaches of international law. While the case of the Alabama was undergoing investigation matters were further complicated by the arrival of the Confederate steamer Georgia, which had left British jurisdiction under the name of the Japan, and received her armament off Ushant. News was also received that the Florida had arrived at Pernambuco, so that there was now quite a Confederate fleet in Brazilian ports. The final decision of the Brazilian government was to the effect that the Alabama had violated the neutrality of Brazilian waters, and henceforth should not be permitted to enter any of the ports of the empire. In the meantime Captain Semmes had received all the supplies he needed. He put to sea May 21st. Two weeks later the Agrippina arrived at Bahia, and was blockaded there together with another ship, the Castor, which had supplies for the Georgia, by the United States gunboat Onward. The Castor had succeeded in delivering some coal to the Georgia, but owing to the vigorous protest of the United States Consul, Thomas F. Wilson, who had received information leading him to believe that there was ammunition and also two large rifled cannon on board the Castor, the president of the province had forbidden the two vessels to lie alongside of each other, and the Georgia was obliged to take coal from lighters sent from the shore.

The Georgia put to sea April 23d, but the next day the United States war steamer Mohican arrived, and kept the Castor in port until the arrival of the Onward. The Onward kept watch over the Castor and the Agrippina until their masters gave up the contest and sold and discharged their cargoes, after which they were released from espionage.



In the latter part of January the Vanderbilt, a large and swift side-wheel steamer carrying fifteen guns, was ordered by Secretary Welles to go in search of the

Alabama. The instructions to Lieutenant Baldwin, who was in command of her, were as follows:

Navy Department, January 27, 1863.

Sir: As soon as the U. S. S. Vanderbilt is ready you will proceed with her to sea and resume the search for the steamer Alabama, or 290. You will first visit Havana, where you may obtain information to govern your future movements. You can then visit any of the islands of the West Indies or any part of the Gulf at which you think you would be most likely to overtake the Alabama or procure information of her.

When you are perfectly satisfied that the Alabama has left the Gulf or the West Indies and gone to some other locality, you will proceed along the coast of Brazil to Fernando de Noronha and Rio de Janeiro, making enquiry at such places as you may think advisable. From Rio continue your course to the Cape of Good Hope, thence back to St. Helena, Cape Verde, the Canaries, Madeira, Lisbon, Western Islands, and New York.

If at any point word is obtained of the Alabama, or any other rebel craft, you will pursue her without regard to these instructions; and if the Alabama should be captured by any of our vessels, you will regard these instructions as void, and return at once to New York, unless you are in pursuit of some other rebel craft.

The U. S. bark Ino is cruising in the vicinity of St. Helena, and the U. S. S. Mohican near the Cape Verde. Endeavor to obtain all the information possible at points where the mail steamers touch, and communicate with the department as opportunity offers.

I am respectfully, etc.,

GIDEON WELLES.

Secretary of the Navy.

Acting Lieutenant Chas. H. Baldwin,
Commanding U. S. S. Vanderbilt, Hampton Roads.

It will be noticed that the route thus mapped out for the Vanderbilt corresponded very closely to the one actually taken by the Alabama. The next day the secretary was informed of the Alabama's fight with the Hatteras, and the Florida's escape from Mobile, and telegraphed Lieutenant Baldwin as follows:

* * * proceed with all possible dispatch to Havana, and there be governed by circumstances, but do not leave the West Indies as long

as the Florida or Alabama are there.

United States Steamer Vanderbilt.

Acting Rear Admiral Wilkes, commanding the West India squadron, had come very near plunging his country into a foreign war in November, 1861. He then held the rank of Captain, and was in command of the San Jacinto. He overhauled the British steamer Trent at sea and forcibly removed from her the Confederate commissioners Mason and Slidell. This act would have been perfectly justifiable if the Trent had been attempting to run the blockade, but as she was bound from the neutral port of Havana to an English port, there was no excuse for the seizure, and the act was disavowed and the prisoners released by order of President Lincoln. Nevertheless, Captain Wilkes was advanced to the rank of commodore, and in September, 1862, made an acting rear admiral and assigned to the command of the West India fleet, consisting of the Wachusett, Dacotah, Cimarron, Sonoma, Tioga, Octorara and Santiago de Cuba. Almost from the time of taking command he had been sending frequent requests to Secretary Welles for more and better vessels. He felt sure that the Alabama might soon be captured if his requests were complied with. He complained bitterly because the Dacotah had been sent on an independent cruise, and because the San Jacinto, although cruising in the West Indies, was not placed under his command. He was inclined to make use of any stragglers from other squadrons which came within his reach. The R. R. Cuyler and the Oneida, of Admiral Farragut's squadron, after chasing the Florida out of Mobile, got within the sphere of Admiral Wilkes' influence, and the former did not get back to her station for six weeks. The Oneida did not get back at all while Wilkes retained his command. When the Vanderbilt reached the West Indies Wilkes took possession of her and retained her as his flag ship until the 13th of June. He persisted in the belief that the main object of the Alabama and the Florida would be the capture of the California treasure steamers, although those steamers had long since been furnished with an armed convoy. When the news of the Alabama's depredations on the coast of Brazil reached the United States and the shipping interests began to clamor for protection in that quarter, Secretary Welles at first replied that the Vanderbilt had already gone thither. When later reports showed that she was still retained by Wilkes, the secretary's stock of patience was exhausted, and he relieved Wilkes of his command.



CHAPTER XVI.

STREWING THE SEA WITH VALUABLES.

THE Alabama had now made some fifty captures, and American vessels were taking circuitous routes in order to avoid her. In some cases they had been sold to British owners, and doubtless there were many pretended sales for the purpose of obtaining the protection of the neutral flag. Several vessels were overhauled off the Brazilian coast by the Alabama, where a real or pretended transfer to neutral owners had been made. The papers being regular in each case, Captain Semmes had no alternative but to release them. But woe to any ship or cargo in whose papers any technical flaw could be made to justify him in disregarding them!

In the afternoon of May 25th the Alabama's lookout reported a sail in sight and the cruiser had hardly made ready to pursue before another sail was descried. On nearer approach both were pronounced Yankee, but the Alabama was not able to overhaul them until after sunset. The first ship boarded was the S. Gildersleeve, of New York, with a cargo of coal. The cargo was from London, and was probably owned there, but no proper certificate of that fact being found, ship and cargo were condemned to the flames. The other vessel was the bark Justina, of Baltimore, with a neutral cargo, properly certified. The Justina was released on ransom bond and the crew of the S. Gildersleeve transferred to her. The sea was very rough, and the transfer of the prisoners after dark was no easy task. The light having gone out on one of the boats, it came very near being run down by the Alabama while changing position. At eleven o'clock that night the Gildersleeve was ready for the torch.

The next night about 8:30 the Alabama began a chase by moonlight which lasted all night. With very careful handling the cruiser was able to gain slightly on the chase, which was also well handled and carrying a press of sail. After daylight the next morning the chase obeyed the signal of a blank cartridge and proved to be—a Dutch vessel!

Forty-eight hours later another night chase yielded better results. The vessel overhauled this time was the Jabez Snow, of Rockport, Maine, with a cargo of

coal, and bound from Cardiff, Wales, to Uruguay. A certificate of neutral ownership of the cargo was produced by the master, but not being sworn to, no attention was paid to it, and the ship was burned.

June 2d at half past three o'clock in the morning the Alabama passed a large ship on the opposite tack. The cruiser made sail in pursuit. At daylight the fugitive was still six or seven miles distant, and refused to obey the Alabama's gun. At 10:30 the cruiser had crept up within four miles, and a shot from the "Persuader" brought the chase to a stop. This prize was the Amazonian, of Boston, also bound for the coast of Uruguay. The cargo was an assorted one, and there were two claims of neutral property; but Captain Semmes picked flaws in both of them, and the ship was condemned to be burned. In searching for some boxes of soap and candles which were needed on the Alabama, the ocean was strewn with boxes and bales, many of them containing articles of high value. Pianos, cases of fine shoes, and the like, were dumped like so much rubbish until the coveted soap was brought to light. Having secured what was deemed necessary, the ship was set on fire. The next day an English brigantine was boarded, and by presenting her master with a chronometer, of which there were now a great number on the cruiser, taken from prizes, and a considerable quantity of provisions, Captain Semmes persuaded him to take the Alabama's prisoners, about forty in number, to Rio Janeiro.

June 5th just before daylight the fine clipper ship Talisman ran within gunshot of the Alabama before discovering her presence. She was bound from New York to the coast of China, and had on board four brass twelve-pounder cannon and ammunition for them. Two of these cannon were transferred to the Alabama, with the ammunition and some provisions, and the vessel was then burned.

During the next two weeks no less than three "Yankee" ships were fallen in with, which had been sold to British owners, and an American cargo was found bound for New York in a Bremen ship. The Confederate commander was exultant over these multiplying proofs of the terror which his arms had inspired.

The 20th of June brought a new departure in the Alabama's career. On that day the bark Conrad, of Philadelphia, homeward bound from Buenos Ayres with a cargo of wool, was captured. There were declarations of English ownership, but Captain Semmes pronounced them fraudulent. Instead of burning this prize, however, he determined to fit her out to assist in the work of destroying American commerce. A crew of fifteen men was sent on board under command of Lieutenant Low, with Midshipman William H. Sinclair as his first officer. The

two twelve pounders taken from the Talisman were transferred to her, with a supply of rifles and revolvers, and the vessel was rechristened the Confederate States bark Tuscaloosa.

The Alabama was now south of the tropic of Capricorn and on her way to the Cape of Good Hope. Captain Semmes still hoped to find the Agrippina on the South African coast, but after spending some days on the voyage, the ship's bread was discovered to be nearly destroyed by weevil, and it became necessary to put back to Rio Janeiro for a fresh supply. On the first day of July the Alabama was again nearing the locality where she had parted from the Tuscaloosa. After overhauling no less than eleven neutral ships during the day, chase was given to the twelfth at eleven o'clock p. m. As the day broke the chase developed into a fine tall ship with tapering spars and white canvas. At the summons of a blank cartridge, she showed the United States flag, but her master refused to heave to, and was evidently determined not to permit his ship to be captured until the last resource of seamanship had failed. It was not until the cruiser had crept near enough to throw a shell screaming across her bow, that she shortened sail. The prize proved to be the Anna F. Schmidt, bound from Boston to San Francisco with a valuable assorted cargo. If she had been fitted out as a supply ship for the Alabama she could hardly have met the needs of the hour better. An abundance of bread put an end to the need of another visit to unfriendly Brazil. Trousers and shoes for the sailors, and plenty of warm underclothing, so much needed in the colder region which the cruiser was now approaching, were dug up out of the hold. The whole day was consumed in the looting. Great quantities of crockery and glassware, lamps, clocks, sewing machines, patent medicines and so on, were flung overboard in order that the needed articles might be found, and at night the match was applied to what remained.

As the cruiser stood away from the blazing ship at 9 p. m. she fired a bow gun to bring to a large ship speeding northward. The stranger answered also with a gun. Aha! a man-of-war. But why this haste? Why carry royals in such a gale, unless safety depends upon it. The stranger must be a "Yankee" gun boat and one afraid to meet us, judging from the heels he shows. Or perhaps a valuable merchant ship playing man-of-war in order to deceive. So reasoned Captain Semmes, and pressed on both steam and sail to overhaul the fleeing stranger. At midnight the Alabama was near enough to hail.

"What ship is that?" shouted Lieutenant Kell through his trumpet.

“This is her Britannic Majesty’s ship Diomedé,” was the reply. And so vanished alike the captain’s hope of a rich prize and the sailors’ thoughts of a battle. As ships of war are not expected to obey a summons to heave to and show papers, the Diomedé flew away on her course, and the Alabama shortened sail and banked her fires.

July 6th the Express, of Boston, bound for Antwerp, with a cargo of guano, said to be the property of the government of Peru, was captured. Captain Semmes found flaws in the certificate of neutral ownership, and the vessel was burned.

July 29th the Alabama reached the coast of South Africa and anchored at Saldanha Bay, an excellent but secluded harbor about ninety miles north of Cape Town. Here the Alabama was repaired and painted and word sent to the governor of the colony that the neutrality laws would be carefully respected. The first loss of life since the beginning of the cruise occurred August 3d, when one of the engineers accidentally shot himself while returning from a hunting expedition. Three days later, finding that there were no Union cruisers about the colony, and the Agrippina not having put in an appearance, the Alabama proceeded to Cape Town. On the way she spoke the Tuscaloosa, and Lieutenant Low reported that he had captured the Santee, which ship, having a neutral cargo, he had released on bond.



CHAPTER XVII.

HIDE AND SEEK WITH THE VANDERBILT.

THE fame of the Alabama had preceded her, and her reception at the capital of the colony was an ovation. One of the Cape Town newspapers thus describes her arrival:

On the 27th of July no little excitement was caused in Cape Town on the arrival of the coasting schooner Rover from Walwich Bay, with the news that the Confederate steamer Alabama had actually made her appearance about twenty-five miles off Green Point. * * * Nothing further was heard, and it was thought by some that she had proceeded on to the eastward; but on the afternoon of August 4 public excitement was again aroused on the arrival of the schooner Atlas, Capt. Boyce, from Saldanha Bay, with the intelligence that the Alabama was lying snugly at anchor in that bay repairing. * * * Captain Boyce also informed us that he had boarded the steamer and was told by her commander that it was his intention to visit both Table Bay and Simons Bay, and that he would be up almost as soon as the Atlas. This bit of news put every one on the *qui vive*, and the eagerly looked for arrival was the sole subject of talk. Tuesday passed, but the Alabama had not made her appearance yet.

About noon on the following day (Wednesday) an American bark was signalled as standing into Table Bay from the southwest. Almost immediately after a bark-rigged steamer was made down as standing in from the northeast.

The stoop of the Exchange and the space around the signalman's office behind the Custom House, and all other places from which the signals could be made out, were soon crowded; and when the name of the steamer was made known, the excitement passed all bounds. The news spread through Cape Town like wild fire:

"The Alabama is outside the bay, in chase of an American bark!"

Trading was forgotten—the busiest rushed out of their offices and shops; every cab on the stand loaded regardless of municipal regulations, and vanished up the Kloof road or down Somerset road. Horsemen galloped about the street, and then

spurred their steeds right up the Lion's rump. Men, women and children were seized as with frenzy, and rushed about here, there and everywhere, asking and telling the most contradictory and unheard of things.

"They were firing at each other!—at close quarters!—the smoke and roar of the battle could be quite distinctly heard from the breakwater!"

And the shore from that point round to Camp's bay was, in an incredibly short space of time, lined with no inconsiderable portion of the madly excited citizens of Cape Town. * * * The fine bark Sea Bride, having run the gauntlet of the Confederate fleet on the Atlantic, had deemed her voyage to be approaching a happy end, and, with full sail set, a favoring breeze and the star-spangled banner at her peak, she sped onward like a thing of life and beauty, in full view of the port to which she was bound. Dimly in the north she descried a steamer standing likewise for the bay, and congratulated herself on her good luck in arriving just in time to receive the latest American news of Vicksburg or the Rappahanock by the English mail. Fast as the bark went, the steamer sped faster still, and in a very unaccountable manner seemed to be bearing down upon the Yankee. In less than half an hour the suspicious craft had fairly overhauled her, and, with the dreadful Confederate flag run up at the peak, left little doubt that the Sea Bride was to become the prey of the redoubtable cruiser, the Alabama. But still, as it appeared to us who witnessed the whole scene from Green Point shore, the Northerner determined to strain every nerve to escape his foe and reach the neutral waters within the charmed league from shore.

The demand from the steamer to heave to was answered by a defiant pressing on of every stitch of canvas, and a still more jaunty display of the stars and stripes at the mizzen. The chase was then continued for a few seconds longer; but at no time was the issue of it uncertain. The Alabama seemed to cut the waters with prodigious speed, and a blank charge from one of her big guns brought the Sea Bride to a full stop. The Confederate, puffing off her steam in enormous volumes, moved gently round her fated victim, and seemed to gaze upon her with the complacent satisfaction a cat might show after the seizure of a tempting mouse, or a hawk which in swift descent had pounced on its unsuspecting prey. A boat was sent to go on board the bark—a few minutes longer and it was impossible to judge what was happening; until at last the stars and stripes were struck, and the Northern bark Sea Bride was manifestly proclaimed a Confederate prize.

When the Alabama anchored in the bay, she was surrounded by boats, the

occupants all eager to view ship, officers and crew; and the Confederates found themselves the heroes of the hour. The history of their captures and the battle with the Hatteras had to be related over and over again, with various grades of embellishment, according to the veracity or imagination of the narrator. The newspaper account continues:

Next day the excitement in town was if possible still greater. The day was to all intents and purposes a general holiday. The weather was favorable, charming; the bay was as smooth and sparkling as a sheet of glass, and every man, woman and child in Cape Town seemed to have made up their minds to get on board the Alabama in some; way or other. * * * The Alabama took in and discharged a living freight at the rate of about sixty in the minute from eight o'clock in the morning till four or five in the afternoon. * * * The boatmen quarreled, roared and swore, as their eager living cargoes tumbled in and out of large boats into little ones, utterly reckless of their lives in their mad haste to get into the ship. The ladies' crinolines blocked the ladders and gangways. * * * The great center of attraction was Captain Semmes. "Where is he?" "Might we just have a look at him?" "Do let us down," "Do make a little room," begged and prayed ladies and gentlemen all day long at the head of the companion ladder leading down to the cabin.

Captain Semmes seems to have borne his honors with a becoming grace, and to have made a good impression upon his army of visitors. Bartelli, the captain's steward, acted as master of ceremonies, and refused to admit any one until his or her card had first been sent in, and he had very diplomatic ways of getting rid of people who did not impress him as being of the proper social standing. Invitations to make visits on shore were showered upon the officers and some of them were accepted. Quires of paper were consumed in autographs, and the officers posed for their photographs on deck.

The Alabama remained here and at Simons Bay until August 15th under various pretexts of needed repairs. The United States consul made the claim that the Sea Bride had been captured within the marine league, and also that while in charge of the prize crew she had approached within a mile and a half of the shore. On the 8th the Tuscaloosa came into Simons Bay, and the consul protested that her proper name was the Conrad, that she had never been condemned in an admiralty court, that her original cargo of wool was still on board, and that the mere fact that two brass guns and a dozen men had been transferred to her decks

could not deprive her of the character of a prize, which it would be unlawful to bring into a British port. Governor Wodehouse decided both of these cases in favor of the Confederates, but having reported the facts to the British government, his action in the case of the Tuscaloosa was disapproved. Accordingly, when that vessel again appeared in port he caused her to be seized. This proceeding was also disapproved at London, on the ground that having once found an asylum in a British port, she had a right to expect similar treatment in the future. This diplomatic controversy was many months in progress, and before a final decision was arrived at there were no Confederate officers at the Cape to whom she could be delivered. After the war she was transferred to her original owners.

August 9th the Alabama steamed out from Cape Town, bound for Simons Bay. As she passed out of the harbor two American ships were sighted by the signalman on shore. But they were warned of their danger by some boats, and, the weather being foggy, they got inside the marine league without being seen by the Confederates. The same day the Alabama captured the bark Martha Wenzel near the entrance to False Bay, but, having taken his bearings, Captain Semmes decided that the capture had been made in British waters, and accordingly released her, much to the joy of her commander, who had expected to witness her destruction.

August 28th the Alabama arrived at Angra Pequena Bay, on the west coast of Africa, more than a hundred miles north of the northern boundary of the Cape Colony, whither the Tuscaloosa and Sea Bride had preceded her. The harbor was good, but the country was a rainless, sandy, rock-bound desert, without so much as a shrub or a blade of grass; and no nation had as yet set up any claim to it.

At last Captain Semmes had found a port into which he could take a prize. The few naked and half starved Hottentots who appeared made no remonstrance against the violation of neutrality.

The Sea Bride and her cargo were sold to a Cape Town merchant for about one-third of their value, he to take the risk arising from the fact that she had never been condemned in a prize court, and the money was paid and possession given him at this secluded place. Here also was deposited the wool from the Tuscaloosa, to be picked up by another speculator, who was to ship it to Europe and credit the Confederate government with two-thirds of the proceeds. Two months later the Vanderbilt visited Angra Pequena and captured there the British bark Saxon, having a large part of the wool on board, and sent her to a prize

court in the United States.

The United States consul at Cape Town, having heard of the Alabama's little mark down sales, protested against the vending of any of the goods within the colony by the purchasers. After much delay and difficulty the cargo of the Sea Bride was peddled out in Madagascar and elsewhere, and the vessel herself turned adrift—for a consideration—with the understanding that certain persons should pick her up as a derelict.

When the Alabama returned to Simons Town, she found the Vanderbilt had been there, and had, moreover, taken in all the coal which was to be had in the place. The Vanderbilt was an enormous consumer of coal, a fact which interfered considerably with her movements in a quarter of the world where coal was so high in price and so uncertain in supply. Lieutenant Baldwin had fairly turned the tide of popular opinion in his favor by his magnanimous conduct in the case of a Dutch bark, which the Vanderbilt found in a disabled state a hundred miles from the shore, and which she towed safely into a harbor. Lieutenant Baldwin declined to accept any part of the salvage which he might have claimed, and although he was delayed some twenty-four hours in his chase of Confederate cruisers by the incident, the improved feeling toward the United States government in South Africa was of much greater value. The three months rule was so far relaxed that the Vanderbilt coaled three times in British ports within three months, instead of only once, as the rule prescribed. Permission to coal a fourth time was, however, denied.

Not being able to procure any coal at Simons Bay, Captain Semmes had a supply sent around from Cape Town in a merchant vessel. Meanwhile the crew were permitted to have shore liberty, and nearly the entire number, including the petty officers, proceeded to get as drunk as possible. A week was spent in getting the unruly fellows on board and coaling ship. On September 24th, finding himself still fourteen hands short, Captain Semmes shipped eleven new ones at Simons Bay, although this was in direct violation of the British neutrality act. The Vanderbilt was reported not far outside the bay, but the Alabama succeeded in avoiding her, and steamed out to sea the same night in the teeth of a southeast gale.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PALSIED COMMERCE IN THE FAR EAST.

RUNNING southward to the fortieth parallel, the Alabama availed herself of both a trade wind and a current setting eastward. The following month was spent in the eastward trip, which, aside from storms and bad weather, was uneventful. In the latter part of October she approached the East Indies. Passing vessels reported the United States war sloop Wyoming, a vessel of about the same grade as the Alabama, as guarding the Strait of Sunda. The Confederate cruiser hung round the entrance of the strait for two weeks, and then ran through without encountering the Wyoming, which had gone to Batavia for a fresh supply of coal. On November 6th, just before entering the strait, the Alabama gave chase to and captured the United States bark Amanda, laden with sugar and hemp. There was an attempt to cover the cargo with British consular certificates, but these not being sworn to, the vessel was burned. At the other end of the strait the fine clipper Winged Racer was encountered and met a like fate. Here the Alabama obtained a much needed supply of pigs, chickens and fresh vegetables from a fleet of Malay bum boats, and proceeded on her way.

United States Steamer Wyoming.

November 11th the magnificent clipper Contest led the Alabama a desperate chase in the Sea of Java, and although the latter was under both sail and steam, came very near escaping. Captain Semmes ordered some of the forward guns trundled aft and the crew assembled on the quarter deck, by which means the bow of the cruiser was lifted higher in the water; and, the wind dying down, the Alabama got near enough to reach the chase with her guns and compel her to heave to. Her master brought his papers on board the Alabama, which showed both ship and cargo to be American. The beautiful vessel, the pride of master and crew, was consigned to the flames. Her mate was placed in irons after he had knocked down an officer of the Alabama and offered to fight any "pirate" on board.

The American shipping trade in the East Indies was paralyzed. Few United

States vessels ventured to put to sea, and fewer still could get profitable cargoes. At Manila, at Singapore, at Bangkok, and wherever a snug harbor was offered, American ships were lying idly at the docks. The Wyoming had no better success in pursuit of the Alabama than the Vanderbilt, and never once sighted the pestiferous Confederate.

Nine days were spent by the Alabama at Pulo Condore, a small island in the China Sea, then recently seized by the French, making some needed repairs, and giving the men rest and shore liberty without the possibility of their getting drunk or running away. The officers were delighted with the novel opportunity of hunting among the strange animals of this region. One killed an immense vampire bat, and another brought back a lizard over five feet long. The pugilistic seamen had their propensities gratified, it is said, by a fight with large baboons, in which the less human combatants put the invaders to flight. The baboons threw stones and clubs with great force, and some of the men were badly bitten.

REPELLING A CONFEDERATE INVASION.

Captain Semmes put in practice a plan similar to that which he usually adopted in avoiding Federal cruisers. He computed the number of days which would be required for the last ship spoken to carry the news of his presence at Condore to Singapore, and the time the Wyoming would be likely to take in proceeding from Singapore to Condore. The day before the possible arrival of the Wyoming he sailed out of the harbor, and proceeded by a circuitous route—to Singapore!

December 24th a bark was overhauled in the Strait of Malacca, which had every appearance of being American built, but which flew the English flag and had an English register. The boarding officer, Master's Mate Fullam, reported that the name "Martaban" on the stern was freshly painted and the flag perfectly new. The speech of Captain Pike proclaimed him a native of New England, but he claimed the protection of the British flag and stoutly refused to go on board the Alabama to exhibit his papers to the Confederate commander. Under the circumstances Captain Semmes determined to take upon himself for once the

duties of boarding officer, and visited the merchant ship in person.

The master of the bark was now subjected to a sharp cross-examination and his papers given a rigid reinspection, at the conclusion of which Captain Semmes announced that the vessel would be burned. Subsequent admissions of Captain Pike and his crew established the fact that the ship was the Texan Star, that the pretended sale to English parties was a sham to prevent her destruction, and that the name on the stern had been changed since the vessel left port.

Two days later in the same strait the torch was applied to the Sonora and the Highlander, two large ships discovered at anchor near each other.

The Alabama ran westward across the Bay of Bengal and rounded the Island of Ceylon without sighting an American ship. An English vessel was spoken having on board a number of Mohammedan passengers. They had heard in Singapore that the Alabama had a number of black giants chained up in the hold, which were let loose upon the Yankees in time of battle. They did not doubt the truth of the story, but they desired to ask Mr. Fullam whether it was a fact that these giants were fed on Yankee sailors. Fullam assured them with the utmost gravity that this diet had been tried, but that the Yankees were so lean and tough that the giants refused to eat them.

January 14th, 1864, the Emma Jane was captured off the west coast of India, and committed to the flames. A British commercial agent sent this report of the affair to his government:

The ship sailed from Bombay on the 6th instant under English charter to proceed to Moulmein to load a cargo of teak for London, and on the 14th instant at 10 a. m., saw a sail ahead steering for them. At noon, light airs and calm, latitude 8° 6' north, longitude 76° 10' east, the stranger hoisted the United States flag, which flag was also run up to the mizzen peak by the Emma Jane; at 1 p. m. the bark fired a gun across the bows of the ship, when Captain Jordan hove his ship to with the main yard to the mast, believing the bark to be the Wyoming, U. S. N. Sent an armed boat's crew on board, and ordered the ship's papers to be produced. Asked where the ship was from and where bound for. On being furnished with these particulars, Captain Jordan was informed that his ship was a prize to the Alabama; they ordered the flag to be hauled down, which was also done on board the Alabama, she hoisting in its place the Confederate one. Captain Jordan was ordered on board the Alabama, and, on going on deck, Captain Semmes, after examining his papers, said that he must burn his ship; he

questioned him closely as to his accounts, and the sums of money remitted to England, but there was no money on board.

IN THE EAST INDIES.

Captain Jordan was then ordered on board his own ship again, with an allowance of half an hour to put up some clothes, with the intimation that the concealment of any valuables, money, watches, &c., by himself, wife or crew, would be useless, as their effects and persons would be searched as soon as they came on board. Mrs. Jordan concealed her husband's and chief officer's watches in the bosom of her dress, with about thirty rupees in silver.

The captain's chronometer, sextants, nautical instruments and books were appropriated by Captain Semmes, and, after hoisting out the provisions and live stock, they broke up the cabin furniture and piled it in the cabin, making another pile down the fore hatchway smeared with tar; they then set fire to the ship, and left her with all her sails set to sky sails. At 5:30 p. m. they arrived on board the *Alabama*, when the captain and crew were subjected to a personal search. Mrs. Jordan escaped this indignity, but her clothes, together with the others, were all turned out on deck and minutely scrutinized. At 6 p. m. the ship was enveloped in flame to the trucks fore and aft.

From this time Captain Semmes and his officers behaved toward the captives with civility, and on Sunday, the 17th, ran under the land at Anjengo and landed them there, with a cask of pork and bag of bread to carry them to Cochin, Captain Semmes presenting Mrs. Jordan with a little canister of what was shortly before her own biscuits.

The *Alabama* stopped a week at the island of Johanna, off the coast of Africa, near the north end of Madagascar. The population consisted of negroes, with an admixture of Hindoos and Arabs. The sultan sent off his grand vizier to welcome the visitors, with an apology for not coming himself, being busily engaged in erecting a sugar mill—a refreshing instance of royal industry. Most of the inhabitants wore the scantiest clothing, and yet nearly all could read and write,

and the Mohammedan religion seemed to be universally accepted. They had heard of the war in America, and debated upon its merits among themselves. A jet black negro asked Captain Semmes whether he was fighting for the North or the South.

“For the South,” was the answer.

Quick as thought came the reply with a frown of disapproval:

“Then you belong to the side which upholds slavery.”

Through the stormy region about the Cape of Good Hope the Alabama passed once more, and cruised there ten days without sighting a single American vessel. As she left the harbor of Cape Town March 25th, however, she met the United States steamer Quang Tung coming in. Fortunately for the latter, she was already within the marine league; otherwise the experience of the Sea Bride would have been repeated.

April 22d, off the coast of Brazil the Rockingham was captured. This vessel was used as a target and then burned. April 27th the torch was applied for the last time to the Tycoon, of New York. Nineteen other vessels were overhauled between the coast of Brazil and that of France, but none of them were American.



CHAPTER XIX.

A NEW ADVERSARY.

JUNE 11th, 1864, the Alabama entered the port of Cherbourg, France, and Captain Semmes made application for leave to place his vessel in a dock for the purpose of replacing the copper sheathing, which was working loose and retarding the speed of the vessel. The boilers also required to be replaced or repaired. But the only docks at Cherbourg were those belonging to the government, and as the port admiral felt some reluctance in regard to admitting a belligerent vessel to a government dock, the matter was referred to the emperor (Napoleon III).

Sunday, June 12th, was a quiet day in the Netherlands. The shipping in the Scheldt was lying quietly at anchor, and Sabbath stillness had settled down upon the docks and the town. The idlers of Flushing, who were gazing with some curiosity at the United States screw sloop Kearsarge, suddenly became aware of some unusual stir upon her decks. Presently a signal flag appeared at the fore, and the boom of a gun waked the river echoes. This was notice to absent officers and seamen that work was at hand, and that there was to be no more loitering in Holland.

UNITED STATES STEAMER KEARSARGE.

The absentees hurried on board, and as soon as there was a sufficient head of steam the vessel turned her prow toward the North Sea. The crew were

assembled, and Captain Winslow told them of a telegram from Mr. Dayton, the United States minister at Paris, containing the information that the Alabama had run into Cherbourg, and requesting him to run down to that place immediately. The announcement was received with cheers, and every one was in high spirits at the prospect of a battle with the famous cruiser.

Captain Semmes was warned of the approach of the Kearsarge in ample time to enable him to get away, but he made no attempt to do so, and it soon became evident that he intended to fight. Commodore Barron, of the Confederate navy, was in France at this time, impatiently awaiting the completion of the two iron clads then building at Bordeaux, of which he expected to have the command. Captain Semmes communicated to him his desire to engage the Kearsarge, and was advised that he might use his own judgment in the matter.

European partisans of the South could paint the career of the Alabama in the most glowing colors. Captain Semmes was the “gallant,” “noble,” “chivalrous,” “heroic” commander, and officers and crew shared in the honors heaped upon him. But there were not wanting, either in Great Britain or in France, those who were disposed to echo the cry of “pirate!” which went up from the press of New York and Boston. The claim was made that the Alabama waged warfare exclusively upon defenceless merchantmen, and therefore was not entitled to be considered as a vessel of war. Her defenders could only point to that solitary thirteen-minute fight with the Hatteras. A Scotch paper called attention to the fact that although Captain Semmes had “destroyed property to the value of between £3,000,000 and £4,000,000, he has never once attacked or come in the way of a vessel of his own calibre, except under false colors, and with a lie in the mouth of his officials.”

There is no doubt that the Confederate captain chafed under criticisms of this character. On the other hand, American shipping had been all but driven from the ocean, and if the Alabama was to refrain from battles with armed vessels, her usefulness, except as a mere patrol, was at an end. And, again, if the Alabama waited to refit she might have to fight a whole fleet in order to get to sea.

June 14th the Kearsarge steamed into Cherbourg through the east entrance and sent a boat on shore, but kept on and went out at the west entrance without anchoring. This was construed by some as an act of defiance, but the real reason was to avoid coming within the provisions of the twenty-four hour rule. Captain Semmes changed his request for a dock permit to an order for coal, and sent the following note to Mr. Bonfils, the Confederate commercial agent at Cherbourg:

C. S. S. Alabama, Cherbourg, June 14, 1864.

To A. Bonfils, Esq., Cherbourg.

Sir: I hear that you were informed by the U. S. consul that the Kearsarge was to come to this port solely for the prisoners landed by me, and that she was to depart in twenty-four hours. I desire you to say to the U. S. consul that my intention is to fight the Kearsarge as soon as I can make the necessary arrangements. I hope these will not detain me more than until tomorrow evening, or after the morrow morning at furthest. I beg she will not depart before I am ready to go out. I have the honor to be very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. SEMMES,
Captain.

This is the "challenge," in regard to which there was so much subsequent discussion. A copy thereof having been transmitted to Captain Winslow, he replied through the U. S. consul that he came to Cherbourg to fight, and had no intention of leaving.

The Kearsarge was built in Maine in the early part of the war, and cost about \$275,000. The two vessels were very evenly matched in size and armament. The following table shows the measurements:

	<i>Kearsarge.</i>	<i>Alabama.</i>
Length of keel	198½	210
Length over all	232	220
Beam	33	32
Depth	16½	17
Engines (two in each) horse power	400	300
Tonnage	1031	1040

The Alabama carried eight guns: the hundred-pounder rifled Blakely pivoted forward; the eight-inch gun pivoted abaft the mainmast, and six 32-pounders in broadside. The Kearsarge carried seven guns: two eleven-inch smooth bore pivoted guns; one 28-pounder rifle, and four 32-pounders. The officers and men on the Kearsarge numbered one hundred and sixty-three; those on the Alabama about one hundred and fifty.

On Monday the Kearsarge ran into Dover for dispatches, and on Tuesday

appeared off Cherbourg. Permission was obtained for boats to visit the shore, but the ship did not anchor in the harbor. The officers of the Kearsarge were very skeptical as to the desire of Captain Semmes for a battle, and a strict watch was kept at both entrances of the harbor, lest he should give them the slip, as he had the San Jacinto. The possibility of a night attack was also discussed, and preparations made for repelling it in case it should be suddenly thrust upon them.

More than a year previous while at the Azores the spare chain cable had been hung up and down upon the sides of the vessel as an additional protection to the engines when the coal bunkers were not full, and the whole enclosed by a covering of inch deal boards. This was done upon the suggestion of the executive officer, James S. Thornton, who had seen this device used by Admiral Farragut when running past the forts on the Mississippi to reach New Orleans. Captain Semmes says he knew nothing about this chain armor. If he did know about it, he evidently underrated its effectiveness.

The ports of the Kearsarge were let down, guns pivoted to starboard, and the entire battery loaded and made ready for instant service. Thursday, Friday and Saturday passed, but the Alabama failed to show herself outside the breakwater. Communication with the shore had been forbidden, and the only intelligence of events in the harbor other than what could be made out with the glass, came through the French pilots, who reported that the Alabama was taking in a large supply of coal, sending chronometers, specie and other valuables on shore, and that swords, boarding pikes and cutlasses were being sharpened.

A message from Minister Dayton was brought off by his son, who with difficulty obtained permission from the French admiral of the district to visit the Kearsarge. He told Captain Winslow that it was his opinion that Captain Semmes would not fight, but admitted that the general opinion in Cherbourg was contrary to his own. On returning to the shore, Mr. Dayton was informed by the admiral that Captain Semmes would go out to the attack the next morning, and he spent a considerable part of the night endeavoring to communicate this intelligence to Captain Winslow, but the vigilance of the Cherbourg police prevented him from accomplishing his object. He stayed in Cherbourg the next day, witnessed the battle from a convenient height, and telegraphed the result to his father in Paris.

Meanwhile the coaling of the Alabama was completed. Some of the officers were given a banquet by admiring friends in the town on Saturday night, and the party broke up with a promise to meet again in a similar way to celebrate the

victory which none seemed to doubt would soon be theirs.

Sunday morning came. The weather was fine, the air slightly hazy and a light westerly breeze rippled the harbor. Sunday was esteemed the Alabama's lucky day. On Sunday Captain Semmes had assumed the command of her and the Confederate ensign first appeared at her mast head. On Sunday many of her most important captures had been made. On Sunday she halted the mighty Ariel, and on Sunday she sunk the Hatteras. It was inevitable that there should grow up between decks a belief that any important enterprise begun on Sunday had the best chance of success. As a factor in the coming contest, a feeling in the minds of the men who were to do the fighting that a lucky day had been pitched upon for the battle, was not to be despised. And so on Sunday, June 19th, 1864, the Alabama sallied forth to meet the Kearsarge. The French iron clad frigate Couronne accompanied her to the three-mile limit in order to make sure that no fighting should take place in French waters. A private English steam yacht, the Deerhound, followed in the wake of the Couronne and took a position affording a good view of the battle, and several French pilot boats did likewise. The taller buildings, the rigging of vessels, the fortifications, and the heights above the town, were lined with people, many of whom had come from the interior and even from Paris to view the extraordinary spectacle. It is said that more than fifteen thousand people had gathered for this purpose. The great majority sympathised with the Alabama, but there was quite a contingent of Union adherents, among whom were the captains of the Tycoon and the Rockingham, with their families and crews, eager that vengeance at last might fall upon the destroyer.



CHAPTER XX.

BATTLE WITH THE KEARSARGE.

ON board the Kearsarge the long wait had bred doubts of the martial temper of Captain Semmes, and aside from the preparations already made affairs had largely dropped back into the ordinary routine. Soon after ten o'clock the officer of the deck reported a steamer approaching from the city, but this was a frequent occurrence, and no attention was paid to the announcement.

The bell was tolling for religious services when loud shouts apprised the crew that the long-looked-for Alabama was in sight. Captain Winslow hastily laid aside his prayer book and seized his trumpet. The fires were piled high with coal and the prow was turned straight out to sea. The fight must be to the death, and the vanquished was not to be permitted to crawl within the protection of the marine league. Moreover, the French government had expressed a desire that the battle should take place at least six or seven miles from the coast. Ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five minutes passed. The Alabama kept straight on, and the Kearsarge continued her apparent flight.

Finally, at 10:50, when six or seven miles from shore, the Kearsarge wheeled and bore down upon her adversary. At a distance of a little over a mile the Alabama began the fight with her Blakely rifle, and at 10:57 she opened fire with her entire starboard broadside, which cut some of the Kearsarge's rigging but did no material damage. The latter crowded on all steam to get within closer range, but in two minutes a second broadside came hurtling about her. This was quickly followed by a third, and then, deeming the danger from a raking fire too great longer to allow the ship to present her bow to the enemy, Captain Winslow directed his vessel sheared, and fired his starboard battery. He then made an attempt to run under the Alabama's stern, which she frustrated by shearing, and thus the two ships were forced into a circular track round a common center, and the battle went on for an hour, the distance between them varying from a half to a quarter of a mile. During that time the vessels described seven complete circles.

At 11:15 a sixty-eight pounder shell came through the bulwarks of the

Kearsarge, exploding on the quarter deck and badly wounding three of the crew of the after pivot gun. Two shots entered the ports of the thirty-two pounders, but injured no one. A shell exploded in the hammock nettings and set fire to the ship, but those detailed for fire service extinguished it in a short time, and so thorough was the discipline that the cannonade was not even interrupted.

A hundred-pounder shell from the Alabama's Blakely pivot gun entered near the stern and lodged in the stern-post. The vessel trembled from bowsprit to rudder at the shock. The shell failed to explode, however. Had it done so, the effect must have been serious and might have changed the result of the battle. A thirty-two pounder shell entered forward and lodged under the forward pivot gun, tilting it out of range, but did not explode. A rifle shell struck the smoke stack, broke through, and exploded inside, tearing a ragged hole three feet in diameter. Only two of the boats escaped damage.

As the battle progressed, it became evident that the terrible pounding of the two eleven-inch Dahlgrens was having a disastrous effect on the Alabama. The Kearsarge gunners had been instructed to aim the heavy guns somewhat below rather than above the water line, and leave the deck fighting to the lighter weapons. As the awful missiles opened great gaps in the enemy's side or bored her through and through, the deck of the Kearsarge rang with cheers. A seaman named William Gowin, with a badly shattered leg, dragged himself to the forward hatch, refusing to permit his comrades to leave their gun in order to assist him. Here he fainted, but reviving after being lowered to the care of the surgeon, waved his hand and joined feebly in the cheers which reached him from the deck.

"It is all right," he told the surgeon; "I am satisfied, for we are whipping the Alabama."

The situation on the Alabama was indeed getting serious. It is evident that Captain Semmes entered the fight expecting to win. On leaving the harbor the crew were called aft, and, mounting a gun carriage, he addressed them as follows:

Officers and seamen of the Alabama: You have at length another opportunity of meeting the enemy—the first that has been presented to you since you sunk the Hatteras. In the meantime you have been all over the world, and it is not too much to say that you have destroyed and driven for protection under neutral flags one-half of

the enemy's commerce, which, at the beginning of the war, covered every sea. This is an achievement of which you may well be proud; and a grateful country will not be unmindful of it. The name of your ship has become a household word wherever civilization extends. Shall that name be tarnished by defeat? The thing is impossible! Remember that you are in the English Channel, the theatre of so much of the naval glory of our race, and that the eyes of all Europe are at this moment upon you. The flag that floats over you is that of a young Republic, who bids defiance to her enemies, whenever and wherever found. Show the world that you know how to uphold it. Go to your quarters.

As before stated, the "Persuader" began to speak at long range—more than a mile. But it was no peaceful merchantman that she had now to accost; no fleeing Ariel, vomiting black smoke in a vain effort to get beyond her range—no white winged Starlight or Sea Bride, piling sail on sail to reach the shelter of a neutral harbor. The Kearsarge only raced toward her with still greater speed. At the third summons the Kearsarge yawed gracefully to port, and out of those frowning Dahlgrens blazed her answer. The Alabama staggered at the blow, and her creaking yards shook like branches in a tornado. Glass in hand, Captain Semmes stood upon the horseblack abreast the mizzen mast.

"Try solid shot," he shouted; "our shell strike her side and fall into the water."

A little later shells were tried again, and then shot and shell were alternated during the remainder of the battle. But no plan seemed to check the awful regularity of the Kearsarge's after pivot gun. Captain Semmes offered a reward for the silencing of this gun, and at one time his entire battery was turned upon it, but although three of its men were wounded as stated, its fire was not interrupted.

"What is the matter with the Blakely gun?" was asked; "we don't seem to be doing her any harm."

At one time the after pivot gun of the Alabama, commanded by Lieutenant Wilson, had been run out to be fired, when a shell came through the port, mowing down the men and piling up a gastly mass of human flesh. One of the thirty-two pounders had to be abandoned in order to fill up the crew of the gun. The deck was red with blood, and much effort was necessarily expended in getting the wounded below.

“OUT OF THOSE FROWNING DAHLGRENS BLAZED HER ANSWER.”

Water rushed into the Alabama through gaping holes in her sides, and she was visibly lower in the water. There was no concealing the fact that the vessel could not float any great length of time. Captain Semmes made one last attempt to reach the coast—or at least that saving marine league, whose shelter he had denied to so many of his victims. As the vessels were making their seventh circle the foretrysail and two jibs were ordered set. The seaman who executed the order was struck while on the jib boom by a shell or solid shot and disembowelled. Nevertheless, he succeeded in struggling to the spar deck, and ran shrieking to the port gangway, where he fell dead. The guns were pivoted to port, and the battle recommenced, with the Alabama’s head turned toward the shore.

Chart of Battle off Cherbourg.

The effort was a vain one. Again the shells plowed through the Alabama’s hull, and the chief engineer came on deck to say that the water had put out his fires. Lieutenant Kell ran below and soon satisfied himself that the vessel could not float ten minutes. The flag was ordered hauled down and a white flag displayed over the stern. But the gunners were unable to realize that they were whipped. Semmes and Kell were immediately surrounded by excited seamen protesting against surrender. Even a statement of the condition of things below decks failed to convince all of them of the futility of further fighting. It is said that two of the junior officers, swearing that they would never surrender, rushed to the two port guns and reopened fire on the Kearsarge. At this point there is a flat contradiction in the statements of eye witnesses. Lieutenant Kell denies that there was any firing of the Alabama’s guns after the colors had been hauled down, and that her discipline would not have permitted it. Semmes and Kell both aver that the Kearsarge fired five shots into them after their flag had been hauled

down.

When the firing had ceased Master's Mate Fullam was sent to the Kearsarge with a boat's crew and a few of the wounded in the dingey (the only boat entirely unharmed) to say that the Alabama was sinking and to ask for assistance in transferring the wounded. He told Captain Winslow that Captain Semmes had surrendered. But during the interval the Alabama was rapidly filling, and the wounded and boys who could not swim were hastily placed in two of the quarter boats, which were only partially injured, and sent to the Kearsarge in command of F. L. Galt, surgeon of the Alabama, and at that time also acting as paymaster.

The order was then given for every man to jump overboard with a spar and save himself as best he could. The sea was quite smooth, and the active young officers and men found no difficulty in keeping afloat. Captain Semmes had on a life preserver, and Lieutenant Kell supported himself on a grating. Assistant Surgeon Llewelyn, an Englishman, had tied some empty shell boxes around his waist, and although these prevented his body from sinking, he was unable to keep his head above water, never having learned to swim. One of the men swam to him a little later and found him dead.

The Alabama settled at the stern. The water entering the berth deck ports forced the air upward, and the huge hulk sighed like a living creature hunted to its death. The shattered mainmast broke and fell. The great guns and everything movable came thundering aft, increasing the weight at the stern, and, throwing her bow high in the air, she made her final plunge. The end of the jib boom was the last to disappear beneath the waters, and the career of the famous cruiser was ended forever.

The Deerhound having approached at the close of the battle, Captain Winslow hailed her and requested her owner, Mr. John Lancaster, to run down and assist in saving the survivors, which he hastened to do. Steaming in among the men struggling in the water, the boats of the Deerhound were dispatched to their assistance, and ropes were also thrown to them from the decks. Master's Mate Fullam asked permission of Captain Winslow to take his boat and assist in the rescue, which was granted. Two French pilot boats also appeared on the scene and assisted in the work. One of these pilot boats took the men saved by it on board the Kearsarge, but the other, having rescued Second Lieutenant Armstrong and a number of seamen, went ashore. Those taken to the Kearsarge, including the wounded, numbered seventy, among whom were several subordinate officers and Third Lieutenant Joseph D. Wilson. Captain Semmes had been slightly

wounded in the arm and was pulled into one of the Deerhound's boats in a thoroughly exhausted condition. Lieutenant Kell was rescued by the same boat. Fifth Lieutenant Sinclair and a sailor, having been picked up by one of the Kearsarge's boats, quietly dropped overboard and reached one of the Deerhound's boats in safety. The Deerhound, having picked up about forty officers and men, steamed rapidly away and landed them on the coast of England at Southampton.



CHAPTER XXI.

CONCLUSION.

ALTHOUGH the deal covering of the chain armor on the Kearsarge was ripped off in many places and some of the links themselves broken, a close inspection showed that no shot which struck them would have been likely to reach a vital part, had they been absent. The only really dangerous shot which reached the Kearsarge was the shell in the stern-post. Captain Semmes rails at his opponent for adopting unusual methods for the safety of his vessel. He says:

Notwithstanding my enemy went out chivalrously armored to encounter a ship whose wooden sides were entirely without protection, I should have beaten him in the first thirty minutes of the engagement, but for the defect of my ammunition, which had been two years on board, and become much deteriorated by cruising in a variety of climates. I had directed my men to fire low, telling them that it was better to fire too low than too high, as the ricochet in the former case—the water being smooth—would remedy the defect of their aim, whereas it was of no importance to cripple the masts and spars of a steamer. By Captain Winslow's own account, the Kearsarge was struck twenty-eight times; but his ship being armored, of course my shot and shell, except in so far as fragments of the latter may have damaged his spars and rigging, fell harmless into the sea. The Alabama was not mortally wounded, as the reader has seen, until after the Kearsarge had been firing at her an hour and ten minutes. In the meantime, in spite of the armor of the Kearsarge, I had mortally wounded that ship in the first thirty minutes of the engagement. I say "mortally wounded her," because the wound would have proved mortal, but for the defect of my ammunition above spoken of. I lodged a rifled percussion shell near her stern post—where there were no chains—which failed to explode because of the defect of the cap. If the cap had performed its duty, and exploded the shell, I should have been called upon to save Captain Winslow's crew from drowning, instead of his being called upon to

save mine. On so slight an incident—the defect of a percussion cap—did the battle hinge. The enemy were very proud of this shell. It was the only trophy they ever got of the Alabama! We fought her until she would no longer swim, and then we gave her to the waves. This shell, thus imbedded in the hull of the ship, was carefully cut out along with some of the timber, and sent to the Navy Department in Washington, to be exhibited to admiring Yankees. It should call up the blush of shame to the cheek of every northern man who looks upon it. It should remind him of his ship going into action with concealed armor; it should remind him that his ship fired into a beaten antagonist five times, after her colors had been struck and when she was sinking; and it should remind him of the drowning of helpless men, struggling in the water for their lives! Perhaps this latter spectacle was something for a Yankee to gloat upon. The Alabama had been a scourge and a terror to them for two years. She had seized their property! Yankee property! Curse upon the “pirates,” let them drown!

There is scarcely a doubt that Captain Semmes owed his life to the forbearance of Captain Winslow. Had he been captured during the heat of the war, a military court would doubtless have ordered his execution. The commander of the Kearsarge was several times warned by his officers that Semmes and many of his people were on board the Deerhound and likely to escape, but he said the yacht was “simply coming round,” and took no steps to prevent her departure.^[3]

At 3:10 p. m. the Kearsarge again dropped anchor in Cherbourg harbor. The wounded of both vessels were transferred to the French Marine hospital, where the brave seaman, William Gowin, died. The prisoners, with the exception of four officers, were paroled and sent on shore before sunset, a proceeding which Secretary Welles promptly disavowed, as he was resolved to commit no act which could be construed into an acknowledgement that the Alabama was a regular vessel of war. Lieutenant Wilson was, however, released on parole a few weeks later.

The news of the destruction of the Alabama was received with the greatest demonstrations of delight throughout the North and among her friends abroad. Captain Semmes was roundly denounced for making his escape after his vessel had been surrendered. Mr. John Lancaster was likewise assailed for his part in the affair, and stories told by the prisoners to the effect that the Deerhound had been acting as a sort of tender to the Alabama were readily believed in the

United States. Other preposterous inventions, one of which assumes to describe a visit of Captain Semmes to the Kearsarge in disguise before the battle, have not even yet ceased to circulate. The ready pen of Captain Semmes and those of his journalistic friends in England were busily impaling Captain Winslow for two offenses: First, he was guilty of armoring his ship and concealing the fact that he had done so; and, secondly, he had fired upon the Alabama after her colors had been struck.

On the first point it may be said that the existence of the chain armor on the Kearsarge was pretty well known in ports where she had touched, and it would be strange indeed if Captain Semmes should have allowed this fact to escape his notice. Moreover, we have the direct statement of Lieutenant Sinclair, of the Alabama, that Semmes knew all about the chain armor before the battle.^[4]

As to the second point, it was stated by prisoners from the Alabama that the unauthorized firing by junior officers of the Alabama after her flag had been hauled down had provoked the fire complained of. Lieutenant Sinclair admits the clamorous protests of the gunners against surrender. Taken with the positive testimony of the officers of the Kearsarge that such firing actually took place, these statements would appear to be tolerably conclusive.

Notwithstanding the loss of his ship, Captain Semmes was treated as a hero. He was petted and fêted by the London clubs, and the Junior United Service Club presented him with a magnificent sword, artistically engraved with naval and Confederate symbols, to take the place of the sword which he had cast into the sea. Reports flew broadcast that he would very soon be in command of a larger and more powerful "Alabama." English youths and school boys wrote to him by the score, imploring permission to serve under him in his new ship. But the Confederate government took a different view of the matter. Moreover Captain Semmes' health had been impaired by his three years of arduous service. Although at this time the Confederates had strong hopes of getting to sea one or more iron clads, Semmes was not named for the command, and received instructions to return to the southern states.

Not caring to take the chances of running the blockade, which had by this time become well nigh impenetrable, Captain Semmes took passage for Havana and thence to the mouth of the Rio Grande, from which point he made his way overland through Texas and Louisiana, and arrived in Richmond in January, 1865. Here, in consideration of his services to the Confederate cause, he was raised to the rank of rear admiral and ordered to take command of the James

River fleet. When General Lee evacuated Richmond Admiral Semmes set fire to his fleet, seized a railroad train, and transferred his command to Danville. His forces became a part of the army of General Joseph E. Johnston, and were paroled with the rest when that army surrendered to General Sherman.

December 15th, 1865, Semmes was arrested at his home in Mobile, Alabama, and taken to Washington, where he was confined for several months, while the propriety of trying him by court martial was undergoing consideration. No name connected with the Rebellion was more thoroughly detested along the seaboard than that of Raphael Semmes. He was accused of cruelty to his prisoners, and many believed that he often sunk vessels with all on board. His conduct at Cherbourg was considered to be contrary to the rules of war, first in the alleged firing after the vessel had been surrendered, and secondly in escaping and throwing his sword into the sea. Mr. John A. Bolles, the solicitor general, made careful investigation of the charges on behalf of the United States government, and came to the conclusion that prosecution would not be warranted in time of peace, especially considering the fact that greater offenders were escaping prosecution. Captain Semmes' cruelty to prisoners seems to have consisted chiefly of confining many of them in irons, an occasional display of his fiery temper, and certain outbursts of profanity. What the prisoners complained of most was the burning of their ships. But all southern ports being closed by the blockade, this is manifestly the only disposition he could make of them. Escaping after surrendering his ship was doubtless contrary to the usages of war, but considering the fact that he was likely to be treated as a pirate, rather than as a prisoner of war, he could hardly be expected to act differently.

The question of the liability of the English government for the escape of the Alabama, the Florida, the Shenandoah, the Sallie, the Boston, and six other vessels which were converted into Confederate war vessels, was referred to a Tribunal of Arbitration, which assembled at Geneva, Switzerland, December 15th, 1871. One member of the Tribunal was appointed by the president of the United States, one by the queen of England, and one each by the king of Italy, the president of Switzerland, and the emperor of Brazil. This court gave judgment against Great Britain for the value of all the ships and cargoes destroyed by the five vessels named, amounting in all with interest to \$15,500,000. The losses inflicted by the Alabama, according to claims presented by the losers amounted to \$6,547,609.86.

The Kearsarge was repaired at Cherbourg, and continued in the United States service throughout the war. Long after other vessels would have been broken up

as too old for service she continued to receive repairs, once amounting almost to rebuilding. January 30th, 1894, she sailed from Port au Prince, Hayti, for Bluefields, Nicaragua. On the evening of Friday, February 2d, she struck on Roncador Reef in the Carribean Sea. The ship had to be lightened, and accordingly the guns were thrown overboard. She held together during the night, however, and the crew remained on board. The next morning a line was run ashore, and all hands were safely landed on the island, from which place one of the boats was sent to Colon for assistance. A steamer was dispatched to take off the shipwrecked mariners. Every person having been rescued, officers and crew watched the wave-lashed hulk slowly disappear from view, and the wreck of the old Kearsarge was left to the mercy of the sea.

Footnotes:

[1] "Aid thyself and God will aid thee."

[2] Report of Consul Lawless to the British foreign office.

[3] In reviewing an autobiography of Sir George F. Bowen, at one time governor of New Zealand, the London Spectator says (vol. 65, p. 20): "The visit of the United States ship Kearsarge at this time brought to light a bit of history which Sir George Bowen has done well to preserve. The Captain informed his host that after the Alabama was sunk, its commander, Semmes, was seen floating in the sea with the help of a life-belt. He could easily have been captured, but it was thought better to let him be saved by a passing British vessel, since, if taken to America, he would probably have been hanged, and the officers of the Kearsarge wished to save a gallant enemy from such a fate."

[4] Two years on the Alabama, p. 263.

Transcriber's Notes:

Punctuation has been corrected without note.

Other than the corrections noted by hover information, inconsistencies in spelling and hyphenation have been retained from the original.

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