

## CHAPTER XVIII.

ORDERED TO THE NAVAL ACADEMY—SECESSION OF THE COTTON STATES—OCCUPATION OF ANNAPOLIS BY TROOPS UNDER GENERAL BUTLER—SECESSION OF VIRGINIA—RESIGN MY COMMISSION IN THE U. S. NAVY AND ENTER THE CONFEDERATE NAVY—GOVERNOR HICKS AND THE STATE OF MARYLAND—SECESSION OF THE BORDER STATES—THE NORTHERN DEMOCRATS—HARPER'S FERRY—GENERAL HARNEY—THE APPEARANCE OF RICHMOND AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR—THE "PAWNEE" WAR—ARRIVAL OF TROOPS—A NAVAL HOWITZER BATTERY—EVACUATION OF NORFOLK—CAPTAIN A. B. FAIRFAX—THE "PATRICK HENRY"—LIEUTENANT POWELL—OUR FIRST IRON-CLAD—THE BATTLE OF MANASSAS—AFFAIR AT AQUIA CREEK.

In the summer of 1860 I was ordered to the Naval Academy for the second time, and in September reported for duty as an instructor of seamanship and naval tactics, and entered upon my duties. Captain George S. Blake was at this time Superintendent of the Academy, and Lieutenant C. R. P. Rodgers the Commandant of Midshipmen.

Instructors in the strictly professional branches at the Academy at the present time, with text-books, models and apparatus at their command, can scarcely understand how extremely arduous we found our duties in 1860. There were no books on seamanship or naval tactics exactly adapted to the wants of the Midshipmen, so that the instructor had to do a good deal of compiling and translating. I wrote the Seamanship used by the senior class, and translated Chopart's Naval Tactics for them also; and as the class had to copy the manuscript it gave them much additional labor.

My book on Naval Light Artillery being adopted as a text-book, I was put in charge of that branch in addition to my other duties, and found I had my hands full.

The secession of South Carolina in December, quickly fol-

lowed by that of Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas, convinced all reflecting minds that a civil war was impending; indeed I had long been of that opinion myself. I was satisfied in 1857 that the subjects in dispute between the Northern and Southern states would finally be decided by an appeal to arms. I have my opinion as to the cause of the war—and a pretty decided one it is—but it is not my intention in this book, which is simply a memoir of what I saw myself of the war, to obtrude it. At some future time I may bring up some points which have not yet been considered—contenting myself with saying that the men who suffered most by the war (the Southern army and navy officers *inasmuch as they lost a profession*) had less to do with bringing it about than any other class of citizens.

It may well be imagined that the constant state of excitement in which we were kept was not conducive to hard study; yet so good was the discipline that everything went on as usual, and the midshipmen were kept closely to their duties. As the states seceded, the students appointed from them generally resigned with the consent of their parents; but their departures were very quietly taken, and the friendships they had contracted at the school remained unimpaired. Affairs remained in this state until the bombardment of Fort Sumter, April 11-13; but after that, as war was now certain, the scholastic duties were discontinued and the place assumed more the appearance of a garrison.

I resigned my commission on the 19th of April, 1861, upon hearing of the secession of Virginia. On the afternoon of that day a collision occurred in Baltimore between a Massachusetts regiment and a mob, and the railroads in the vicinity of the city were torn up to interrupt travel. Troops were sent to Annapolis on their way to Washington which was supposed to be threatened by the Confederates. The first troops to arrive were the New York 7th regiment, a Rhode Island regiment and battery, and a Massachusetts regiment all under the command of General B. F. Butler.

The authorities of the Academy were under the impression that an attack upon the school and the frigate *Constitution* was projected by the secessionists in the neighborhood; but I think there never was any serious foundation for their fears. While waiting to hear of the acceptance of my resignation I remained on duty, and was one night placed in a most unpleasant position. An alarm was given that the secessionists were coming up the river to attack us; the long roll was beaten, and all hands were sent to their stations. I was in charge of the howitzer battery, and like many of the midshipmen manning it who had resigned and were waiting to hear from Washington, had either to refuse to do duty or fire on our friends.

The alarm was a false one; I do not hesitate to say, however, that had we been attacked I should have stood by my guns and performed my duty by the school. I was still an officer of the navy; and, moreover, Maryland had not seceded, and if it had, war had not been declared.

It was now determined to remove the school to Newport, R. I., and preparations were made accordingly. About the 23d of the month (April) I received private information from a friend in Baltimore that a steamboat would be at the wharf that night at 9 o'clock to take Governor Hicks to Baltimore, and was advised to seize the opportunity to leave. I did so, and many of my brother officers were at the boat to see me off. As we approached Baltimore the boat sheered in to a wharf near Fell's Point, landed the Governor and his friends, and then went on to her usual wharf. This was done to prevent the secessionists from getting hold of the governor. Not very long before, they had done so in Baltimore, and he had on that occasion made a very good secession speech. The object of Governor Hicks was to get to Frederick where he had called the Legislature to assemble, and where those members professing southern sympathies were arrested and cast into prison a short time after. Thus was the State of Maryland seized by the throat by the United States government before the beginning of hostilities.

The State of Virginia seceded on the 17th of April, and was soon followed by Arkansas, North Carolina and Tennessee. This action was precipitated by President Lincoln's call for 75,000 troops on the 15th of April. I confess I could never see the philosophy of it. The Union men of these States by their persistently voting against secession, in convention and otherwise, induced President Lincoln and his advisers to believe that they would not consent to it under any circumstances, and they strengthened his hands to that extent. In a measure they *invited* him to issue his call for 75,000 men! After, as I say, voting against secession and thus preventing their States from making preparations for war they suddenly turned round and voted *for* it when the U. S. government had taken the action their attitude had seemed to approve! This inconsistency was rivalled by the action of the northern Democrats. They had generally supported the attitude of the seceding States, and were patting them on the back with the advice "to go in and win;" but as soon as the "flag was fired on" (to use the expression of the day) they jumped over the fence. Why? The South had only done what the northern Democrats had encouraged it to do! Did they not see that everything was tending to an appeal to arms, and that they were inciting the South to it? or did they suppose that "war" meant throwing oyster shells at each other? I think I could give a pretty good reason for *their* action if this were the place for it! I suspect that at the meeting of the northern governors the manner in which the war was to be precipitated was all arranged. Not the only thing of the kind concocted by "the party," both before and *after the war*, if I am not mistaken.

Whatever our wise statesmen may say, I thought then, as I think now, that after the action of the six extreme Southern States and the formation by them of a Southern Confederacy, the Border States—if they held the ground that a State could not be lawfully coerced,—and if, also, they were opposed to the abolition of slavery—*had no choice* but to join their sister States; and true statesmanship should have shown them this,

and their action should have been united and prompt. It *might* have averted the civil war.

To return to my narrative. Upon my arrival in Baltimore I found it would not be prudent to attempt to reach Norfolk by the Bay Line, and I decided to go to Richmond via Harper's Ferry, which was then occupied by the confederates. As we approached the bridge at the Ferry the cars were stopped and several confederate officers walked through the cars and gravely inspected the passengers. I am sure I do not know what for, nor did they probably. In fact the whole proceedings at this time—in Virginia at least—seemed so like a comedy that were it not for the fearful tragedy which followed one would be tempted to indulge in a hearty laugh over them. I stopped at Harper's Ferry and took the cars for Winchester; they were crowded with colonels and majors, but few privates were to be seen. I learned to my surprise that they were either going off on leave or were "bearers of dispatches." The carrying of dispatches—no matter of how little importance—seemed to attach a certain dignity to the carrier. Accustomed as I had been all my life to order and discipline I was somewhat depressed at the absence of it, as well as by the total ignorance of military affairs everywhere observed while on my way to Richmond. How little could I foresee that these men were to fight and gain battles which were to be immortalized in history! I found in the cars next day General Harney of the army, who had been made prisoner at Harper's Ferry, while on his way to Washington. There was of course no reason in this, as war had not been proclaimed, and he was promptly released upon his arrival in Richmond. We stopped a night at Manassas Junction and here, as in every other town through which we passed, we saw the people drilling—in companies, however. At this time the State had not one organized regiment. Where we had companies, the North had regiments.

Upon my arrival in Richmond I reported to Governor Letcher, and was immediately commissioned a lieutenant in the

Virginia State Navy; and I may as well say here that as soon as the State was regularly entered into the Confederacy I was commissioned a Lieutenant in the Confederate Navy. Richmond at this time was in a state difficult to describe. The hotels were thronged, troops were coming in, messengers were riding to and fro, and everybody *was in motion*. I particularly noticed this fact: even at the hotels the seats were not occupied; no one could sit still. I suppose the great excitement accounted for this. The dispatches coming in hourly, the reports spread from mouth to mouth, the *news* contained in the daily papers even, were enough to drive a *reasonable* man crazy. We heard the most wonderful rumors; nothing was too absurd or ridiculous for belief, and men's time seemed to be taken up in spreading stories that would have put Gulliver to shame and made Munchausen hide his diminished head. The emanations from the brain of a maniac were logical in comparison!

Only the Sunday before my arrival there had been what was afterwards called the "Pawnee War." The steamer *Pawnee* was reported to be coming up the river, and all Richmond went to arms. What they thought the *Pawnee* with her few guns and men could do with the city of Richmond, or what *they* expected to do by arming themselves with shot-guns, horse-pistols and broad-swords and going down to Rockett's wharf to meet her, I could never discover. No doubt they only regretted that they could not arm themselves, in addition, with a few *culverines*, *falconets* and *sakers* (whatever they may be)! Hector's arming at the siege of Troy was nothing in comparison. But the *Pawnee* did not come up the river and the good citizens returned to their homes to lay aside their arms and anxiously await new "reports."

The companies coming in from the country were dressed in the most extraordinary uniforms the eye ever rested on; but they were full of fight. As they arrived they were sent to a camp near the city to be drilled. It is useless to say they stood in need of it. "What," said a drill-master to a captain

who was speaking of his ignorance of the company drill, "What, then, do you propose to do with your men in time of battle?" "Just turn them loose," was his reply, and this appeared to be the general idea as to how the impending war was to be fought. Men insisted upon carrying a bowie-knife and revolver in addition to a musket, in the belief that a battle was a *scrimmage*; but they soon knew better, and after the first campaign our generals could say with Molière's mock doctor, *nous avons changé tout cela*.

I was ordered to organize a battery of howitzers, to be manned by sailors to serve with the army, and as I had to have the guns cast at the Tredegar works, the carriages made, etc., I was kept in Richmond some months, and had an opportunity of seeing all that was going on.

Soon after Virginia seceded the Southern troops commenced coming in, and were sent to the front as they arrived. I recollect that when the first regiment arrived from South Carolina the men announced that they "had come to fight the battles of old Virginia;" and the city papers inculcated about the same idea. One would have supposed that South Carolina was not at war with the United States and had had nothing to do with bringing it about! Nothing was said about "old Virginia" bearing the brunt of it, as she was about to do! There was no use in trying to combat the nonsensical ideas that were put in circulation; the fact is that about this time one half of the people were crazy and the other half *non compos mentis*, both north and south.

The evacuation of Norfolk by the Federals was a most fortunate thing for the Confederates. Why the Federal authorities did this was always beyond my comprehension. They had the place, and with the force at their command could not have been driven out. No batteries could have been put up by the Confederates in the face of the broadsides of their ships, and it being only twelve miles from Fortress Monroe (Old Point Comfort) it could have been reinforced to any extent. But they did give it up, and had hardly done

so when they commenced making preparations to retake it. The navy-yard contained a large number of heavy cannon, and these guns were used not only to fortify Norfolk and the batteries on the York, Potomac, James, and Rappahannock rivers; but were sent to North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. They were to be found at Roanoke Island, Wilmington, Charleston, Mobile, New Orleans, Vicksburg, and many other places.

Soon after our occupation of the Yard Commander Archibald B. Fairfax was put in charge of the ordnance department, and he immediately turned his attention to the banding and rifling of the 32-pounders of 57 and 63 cwt. I do not know who invented the machine for rifling the guns (the *banding* was taken from the Parrott gun probably), but the work was done under the supervision of Captain Fairfax, and was, in my opinion, the most important improvement made in our ordnance during the war. I well remember that when the first gun was finished he mounted it on the small steamer *Harmony* and experimented with it on a frigate lying off Newport's News: taking a position outside the range of her guns, he succeeded in hitting her several times. Large numbers of these banded and rifled guns were prepared for the ships and batteries. I never heard of any of them bursting, though I saw them fired many times; the charge was eight pounds, and the projectile weighed about 70 pounds. After the battles of Roanoke island and Elizabeth City, Admiral Louis Goldsborough, U. S. N., in his report to the Secretary of the Navy, says: "His (the confederate's) favorite gun is the 32-pounder of 57 and 63 cwt., beautifully fortified at the breech-end by a long and massive wrought-iron cylindrical ring, and so rifled in the bore as to admit of the use of round shot and grape as well as shells by the simple interposition of a junk wad between the charge of powder and the shot or stand of grape. His ordnance arrangements throughout exhibit great skill and ingenuity." Our vessels in these battles were fitted out by Captain Fairfax. I am glad to

render him this tribute as he never received the credit due him.

Whilst I was organizing my battery the steamer *Patrick Henry* was fitting out at Richmond for a cruise on the coast; she had been called the *Yorktown*, and belonged to the Old Dominion line running between New York and Richmond. She was not at all fitted for a man-of-war, but we had to take what we could get, and by taking off her upper cabins, strengthening her decks, etc., made her answer pretty well. She carried a bow and stern pivot, and ten guns in broadside, 32 and 64-pounders. Lieutenant William Llewellyn Powell was her executive officer. He was, from the very beginning of the war, impressed with the necessity of having iron-clad vessels. I had many conversations with him on this subject. He was certainly the first man I met in the Confederate navy who saw that all navies must eventually come to it. He communicated his views to the Secretary of the Navy and got permission to try iron on the *Patrick Henry*. She was our first iron clad!

Powell put one-inch iron on her hull abreast the boilers—it extended a foot or so below the water line, and ran a few feet forward and abaft her engines and boilers. One inch was not much protection, but it was all she would bear. On the spar deck he put iron shields, in the form of a V, forward and abaft her engines. These shields were of heavy timber and covered with one or two inches of iron. In fighting head or stern on, they afforded good protection against a raking shot, and it must be remembered that as the *Patrick Henry* was a side-wheel boat with a walking-beam engine this protection was very important to her. It must not be understood by the non-professional reader that the use of iron to protect ships was original with either the Federals or Confederates. The French had iron-clad gunboats or batteries in the Crimean war, 1854; and at the beginning of our civil war they had the powerful iron-clad frigate *Gloire*, and the English had the *Warrior*. For the matter of that, Haydn in his dictionary of dates, says: “The *Santa Anna*, the property of the knights of St. John, of

about 1700 tons, *sheathed with lead*, was built at Nice about 1530. It was literally a floating fortress, and aided Charles V in taking Tunis in 1535. It contained a crew of 300 men and 50 pieces of artillery.”

Lieutenant Powell seeing no chance of distinction in the navy resigned to enter the army. He was made a brigadier general and ordered to command Fort Morgan at Mobile. Here he put everything in a good state of defence; but he died of fever before the place was attacked by the fleet under Farragut. He was one of the purest of men and a most reliable and accomplished officer.

July 21, 1861, the battle of Bull Run or Manassas was fought. We in Richmond knew very little of it until the next day; but when the news *did* come we had the most marvelous accounts of it. The regiments *decimated* were innumerable, and the meaning of this word was as little understood then as it is now. The men-of-war (?) on the James river at this time were the *Patrick Henry*, *Jamestown* and *Teaser*. The *Jamestown* was a sister ship to the *Patrick Henry*, but not so strong. She mounted two 32 pounder rifled guns. She was christened the *Thomas Jefferson* by the Confederate government; but she was always known by her old name of *Jamestown*. The *Teaser* was a tug boat mounting one gun. It was found impossible to ship crews for these vessels; there was a great scarcity of sailors at the South, and the landmen naturally preferred the army. About the time I had my guns ready and the men enlisted, they were taken for the *Patrick Henry*, and Commodore Samuel Barron who had been put in command of the squadron destined to operate in the waters of North Carolina offered me the command of the gunboat *Beaufort*. I gladly accepted the offer as I had given up all hope of getting my howitzers into action with the army after the battle of Manassas. I saw soon after I commenced drilling the men, that guns drawn by hand cannot operate with troops to advantage unless very near their base of supplies. It was wise in the Secretary to send my men back to their legiti-

mate sphere, and I cheerfully consented to it. They were a fine set of fellows, and Captain Tucker stationed them together at the bow gun of the *Patrick Henry* where they never failed to give a good account of themselves afterwards.

The first hostile shot I saw fired in the war was at Acquia Creek, where I went in June or July simply to see what was going on. Upon arriving there I found several small steamers bombarding our Fort at Cockpit Point. Captain William F. Lynch commanded the battery, and General Ruggles the department. He had quite a force assembled to resist an invasion; but I thought any one might have seen that the enemy had no idea of landing troops—indeed there were no transports in sight. The bombardment was, I suspect, only for the purpose of drawing our fire, that they might see the strength of the battery. It was carried on at long range and there was nobody hurt. Upon my return to Richmond the next day I met at a “turnout” a train conveying the 1st Arkansas regiment to the seat of war. The men were greatly excited and eager for the fray. I gave them the news as the trains stopped side by side. When their train moved off every man who could get his arm out at a window did so, and the flourishing of bowie-knives made it look like a steel-clad!

The result of the battle of Manassas which filled our people with joy and gladness was, I confess, a disappointment to me, and though it may seem a strange thing to say I lost hope of our final success at the time of our first great victory. I do not care to enter into my reasons for this impression; but that such was the case a few of my most intimate friends know. I trust I did not exhibit this feeling in my after career, but the results of our after victories only tended to confirm it.  
*Ay de mi, Alhama!*

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE NAVY—I JOIN THE REINFORCEMENT FOR HATTERAS—CAPTURE OF CAPE HATTERAS—COMMODORE SAMUEL BARRON—LIEUTENANT WM. H. MURDAUGH—ROANOKE ISLAND—OREGON INLET—I ASSUME COMMAND OF THE “BEAUFORT”—FORT MACON—COLONEL BRIDGES AND HIS COMMAND—A PLEASANT DAY—READING UNDER DIFFICULTIES—PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION—THE “BEAUFORT’S” CREW—MY CABIN BOY—THE NEUSE RIVER—TEACH, THE PIRATE—A PILOT’S YAEN—VISIT TO JACKSONVILLE—A FALSE ALARM—WASHINGTON, N. C.—A CRUISE ON A CANAL—ARRIVAL AT NORFOLK.

The Governor of North Carolina had, before the state regularly joined the Confederacy, been going it on his own hook, as it were. He fitted out privateers, sent out blockade-runners, etc., and got in so many stores, that it was observed at the beginning of the war that the North Carolina troops were the best armed, and best clothed men that passed through Richmond. The steamer *Winslow*, a small side-wheel boat, under Captain Thomas M. Crossan, formerly of the Navy, was very active in cruising outside of Cape Hatteras as a privateer, and captured some valuable prizes. The men found in them were generally foreigners and many of them entered our service, as I have reason to know. When the State became one of the Confederate States, her vessels were all turned over to the navy and became men-of-war, and not privateers. The vessels thus turned over were: the *Winslow*, Commander Arthur Sinclair; the *Ellis*, Commander W. B. Muse; the *Raleigh*, Lieutenant commanding Alexander; and the *Beaufort*. The *Winslow* and *Ellis* were at Hatteras; the *Raleigh* at Oregon Inlet, and the *Beaufort* at Newbern.

Commodore Barron being in Norfolk, I went there early in August to report. He directed me to remain and fit out a