

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



launch for service in Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds, and when ready to take her to Cape Hatteras and leave her. The three entrances into Pamlico Sound,—Oregon, Hatteras and Ocracoke inlets,—were guarded by fortifications and garrisoned by North Carolina troops. Hatteras, being the principal entrance, was especially well fortified. I had the launch well fitted out with sails and a howitzer and when ready to start, began to consider how I was to get to Hatteras, as I had no men. About the 24th of August we heard that a squadron under Flag Officer Stringham, with troops under General Butler, had appeared off the place; and the 3d Georgia regiment, which up to this time had been stationed at Norfolk, was ordered to reinforce the garrison there. Captain Thomas Hunter of the navy was put in command of the expedition. The 3d Georgia was a remarkably fine regiment, commanded by Colonel Wright, and was afterwards highly distinguished. Up to this time it had never been in action, and the men were very eager for one.

Captain Hunter offered to tow me down, and I gladly accepted his offer. We had one small steamer for the officers, and the men were towed in canal boats. We left Norfolk about the 27th of August, and went through the Chesapeake and Albemarle canal. We stopped at several places along the canal, and at landings on the Croatan river, but got no news. I think it was on the afternoon of the 30th that, as we were making the best of our way down Albemarle Sound, we met a schooner under full sail for Edenton. Upon hailing her, we were told that Hatteras had fallen the day before, and all but a few of the garrison were prisoners. There were a few officers on board who had escaped in small boats. I never knew much about this affair; but it seems that after the ships had bombarded the two forts for a day or two, a force was landed. Our men abandoned the upper fort, and retreated to the lower one, seeing which the enemy took possession of it. Commodore Barron who arrived at this time landed with his Flag Lieutenant William Sharpe, and Lieutenant W. H. Murdaugh,

and was earnestly solicited by Colonel Martin, who commanded the fort, to assume the supreme command. This he unwisely did, in his great desire to render all the aid and assistance in his power. The Federals in the upper fort now opened a fire with their rifles in addition to the fire from the ships, and on the 29th the place surrendered. The steamers *Winslow* and *Ellis* got away, the former to Newbern and the latter to Washington on the Pamlico river, after taking off the garrison at Ocracoke inlet.

Lieutenant Murdaugh was badly wounded while serving a gun by the explosion of a shell; but was gotten off to the *Winslow* and escaped being made prisoner. The officer who gave us the information spoke of his gallantry in the highest terms as well as of that of Commodore Barron. Murdaugh who resembled Somers, inasmuch as he "had no more dodge in him than the mainmast," suffered for some months from his wound; but he did gallant service to the end of the war. He as well as Powell were midshipmen with me in the old *Potomac*. Our papers were loud in their remarks about the Hatteras affair (of course) and Commodore Barron's action was the subject of much unkind and unjust criticism. The fact is the gallant commodore in his desire (as I have said) to do all he could for the cause, acted as nine out of ten men of spirit would have done under the circumstances. I have spoken of it as unwise for the reason that his command was afloat; and it was a thankless task to have the command ashore forced upon him at the eleventh hour. The commodore had the satisfaction of knowing that Colonel Martin and his men highly appreciated his services and the department approved his action. If the attack on Hatteras had been made a few months later in the war, when our men had learned how little damage the fire of ships does to earthworks, the fort would not have fallen—witness the defence of Fort McAllister March, 1863.

Upon our receiving the news of the fall of Hatteras we landed the Georgians on Roanoke island and proceeded in the small steamer to Oregon Inlet, which was still held by its garrison.



Upon our arrival, a council was held and it was resolved to evacuate the place and remove the guns, &c. to Roanoke Island; this was done, and Alexander in the *Raleigh* rendered great assistance in it. There was really a strong and very well constructed fortification at Oregon Inlet, and some objection was made to evacuating it—among others the engineer who constructed it was very loth to abandon it—but after the fall of Hatteras it became of absolutely no importance. The principal entrance to the sound being open what earthly reason could there be for holding the other two? I do not think the Federals occupied the forts at either Oregon or Ocracoke Inlets during the war—they had no occasion to! I returned to Roanoke Island with Captain Hunter and was sent by him to Norfolk with dispatches to Commodore Forrest. The launch, I left in charge of Boatswain Hasker—afterward Lieutenant Hasker, an energetic, valuable officer—to be used in landing stores for the troops on the island. Upon my reporting to the commodore he insisted upon my going immediately by rail to Newbern and taking charge of the *Beaufort*, which I proceeded to do. Upon my arrival there I found the *Beaufort* at the wharf with a few officers on board, but no crew. She had been commanded by Captain Duval while in the State service, and he and his officers and men had left. The *Beaufort* was a small iron propeller, built for service on the canal. She was 94 feet long and 17 feet broad; her iron was one-fourth of an inch in thickness. Her deck had been strengthened and shored up, and forward she carried a long 32 pounder which was soon afterwards exchanged for a banded and rifled 57 cwt. 32 pounder. Her magazine was just forward of the boiler, and both magazine and boiler were above the water line and exposed to shot. She carried 35 officers and men.

From Hatteras the Federals could advance on Norfolk by the way of Albemarle Sound, attack Newbern on the Neuse, or Washington on the Pamlico river. The entrance to Albemarle Sound was defended by batteries on Roanoke Island, then being hastily constructed. Newbern was defended by a

small fort on the river, a few miles below, and Washington in the same manner. The enemy made a great mistake in not taking possession of the sounds immediately after capturing Hatteras; there was nothing to prevent it but two small gunboats carrying one gun each. Two of the small steamers under Flag Officer Stringham should have swept the sounds, and a force should have occupied Roanoke island. This at least could have been done had the Federals seized their opportunity; but, as is so often the case in war, they failed to make use of it. A striking instance of this occurred when General Butler landed at Bermuda Hundred, on the James river, in the summer of 1864: he advanced cautiously in the direction of Howletts. Had he advanced promptly and boldly he could have taken Drury's Bluff (Fort Darling), and even Richmond itself. But, as the soldier said: "our hind sights are better than our fore sights!"

While I was getting the *Beaufort* ready, Commodore W. F. Lynch, who was appointed to succeed Commodore Barron (then a prisoner) in the command, arrived at Newbern; and, as great anxiety was felt concerning Fort Macon which it was thought would soon be attacked, General Gatlin, who commanded the department, and the Governor of the State met him for consultation. I had gone to my room and was about retiring when a rap at the door announced Lieutenant Pat M. who said the Commodore desired to see me immediately. "What does he want?" said I. "Well," said M., "he wants you to go into Fort Macon as chief ordnance officer." "Why does he send *me*," growled I, "when he knows I'm fitting out my vessel, and there are plenty of other officers about, doing nothing?" "Well," said M., "we talked it over, and decided *you* were the man for the place." Now be it known that after Commodore Barron's experience at Cape Hatteras we of the Navy had no particular desire to follow his example; but there was no appeal: so when I presented myself before the council and was told by Commodore Lynch that he had offered my services to General Gatlin, I thanked him for the



honor and said how extremely happy I should be to render any service, etc., etc. It was arranged that I should go down in a special train next morning at daylight, and I made my preparations; growling to myself all the time like a quarter gunner, and then turned in for a few hours' sleep.

Upon reaching the depot the next morning, I found Commodore Lynch and all the naval officers there, with the crew of the *Winslow*, the only vessel in port. I learned to my great satisfaction that the Commodore had determined to go into the fort with his entire force; information having been received during the night that it would probably be attacked that day. This pleased me very much; for though I strongly objected to "going it alone," being inclined rather "to pass," I had no objection to being "ordered up" with the entire party.

Most of the naval officers present, objected to going though, of course, not in the commodore's hearing; it was not that they would not gladly have gone in their ships (had they had any), but the impression made by the harsh reflections upon Commodore Barron was too strong to be removed. Just as the cars were about to start, Pat M—— made his appearance—his face as red as fire, a carbine over his shoulder, and a jug of *pelos cochos* in his hand—and said he had been ordered to remain in Newbern to take charge of the few men left behind. He growled about it so much that one of the officers (upon what we all considered good grounds) offered to take his place and let him go. "No," says M——, "I'll obey orders." "Well give us your jug" said the officer, and off we went.

Upon our arrival at Fort Macon we were received with great joy by Colonel Bridges, the officer in command. The colonel had distinguished himself at the battle of Bethel as a captain, had been promoted, and placed in command of Fort Macon. As he said himself he knew nothing about heavy artillery or the defence of fortified places. "I only know," said he, "that that flag must not come down" and no one who knew this gallant man could doubt that it would only be

lowered after a desperate defence, if at all. The colonel received me as the ordnance officer most cordially. "Now," he remarked, "my mind is at rest;" and I am sure that as soon as he felt that his men had been properly instructed and that his ammunition was all right, he would have welcomed the presence of an attacking force.

We found in Fort Macon Mr. Ruffin, who had fired the first gun at Fort Sumter. He was an old man, an Englishman by birth, and I thought, was very much out of place.

The first thing I did upon assuming my duties was to send a few crews to their guns and direct them to fire at a target which had been already placed. I had previously made up my mind not to openly correct any small mistakes, fearing to discourage the garrison on the eve of an engagement; but I was glad to see that the men did their work very well, and made some fair shots. I expressed myself to the colonel as very well pleased, but my pleasure was nothing compared to that exhibited by the other naval officers. Their delight, surprise and admiration were loudly expressed; they said that the sailors were not wanted, that they could not do as well as the soldiers, and in fact, that they might as well return to Newbern. So by the afternoon train the whole "kit and boodle" of them (so to speak) left, and I was alone in my glory.

Fort Macon was garrisoned by six companies of North Carolina troops, recruited in the neighborhood; and a more orderly, obedient, well-behaved set of men I did not fall in with during the war. Lieutenant Colonel Sloan was the second in command, and Lieutenant Coleman was the ordnance officer. I only wish I could recall the names of more of the officers, the adjutant's especially, for their hospitality to me was unbounded. The spirit of the colonel was reflected by the men. All hands were full of enterprise and pluck; and I had been with them but a few days when I felt ready to go into an engagement with them with pleasure. Fort Macon at that time would not have fallen without a brave defence.



The fort is on a strip of sand lying about two miles off the main land, and is reached from Beaufort and Morehead City by boat. On the beach below the fort was encamped a regiment commanded by Colonel Zebulon Vance, afterwards Governor of the State, and at present U. S. Senator. I recall a very pleasant day sailing over to his camp from Morehead City, in company with Commodore Lynch, of the Dead Sea Expedition, Colonel Vance, and Mr. Burgwyn, of North Carolina, all brilliant conversationalists. Mr. Burgwyn's son was the Lieutenant-Colonel of Vance's regiment—he was killed at Gettysburg, while in command of it.

I could never account for the feeling of confinement I used to experience in the fort. It is true I had never lived in casemates before; but I had passed years in small vessels, in apartments ten feet square. Yet when the gates were closed at night I always had a "shut up" feeling—I could not seem to breathe freely—and as soon as they were thrown open in the morning I was the first man out, and many were the long walks I took with Colonel Bridges on the beach.

On one occasion I had to pass some days alone at the tavern in Morehead City. I do not recollect now why I was there, but I not only had no companions, but no books. Not a book was to be had on the premises. One afternoon after walking wearily about the village looking in vain for reading matter I went to my room, and my eye happening to rest on my trunk I observed that it was lined with newspapers; it was what is known as a "shoe trunk." I took out the clothing, held the trunk up in a good light, and read everything I could get at without twisting my head off! This was not the only time during the war when, if I did not regret knowing how to read, I did regret being fond of it. I have always held the opinion that it is of more importance to a man who has to make a living by making boots, (for example), to know how to make a good one than to know how to read and write; and it would be well if our wisacres in their howl for more public-school education would pause to reflect

whether the country is not feeling the want of skilled labor, and our streets are not being filled with idle young men—whether, in fact, the public schools are not teaching the working classes everything but how to make an honest living! It is not all of education to know how to read and write. I have seen many a man-of-war's man who could do neither, and yet be quick of apprehension, prompt to execute, truthful, brave and self-denying; and as far superior to the city hoodlum or country bumpkin in all the qualities that go to make a *man*, as it is possible for one man to excel another.

During the dreary time I was watching the movements of the enemy at Hatteras in the *Beaufort* whilst I was bored to death for the want of something to read—there being little else to do after the morning exercise—my pilot, who had passed his life on these waters, managed to pass his time very pleasantly, every bird that flew overhead, or fish that swam alongside gave him some occupation or food for thought. He was a philosopher, inasmuch as he had learned to live in the present. It is a mistake to say that education (understood in its ordinary sense) cannot injure a man. It depends upon his manner of living, and in many cases it renders his life unhappy, and to that extent injures him. "Oh," said the keeper of a lock on the canal when I remarked upon the loneliness of the place: "I don't know, sometimes we have as many as five or six boats passing in a day!" So after all every man looks upon life from a different standpoint and all happiness is comparative.

But all this philosophizing has nothing to do with Fort Macon! During my two weeks' stay the U. S. steamer *Susquehanna* arrived to blockade the port. She anchored out of gunshot of the fort, though near enough to the beach to have shelled Vance's regiment if Captain Lardner had felt so inclined. Beaufort which is 25 miles from Newbern has an excellent harbor, and I wonder that more blockade runners did not use it the first year of the war. The *Nashville*, Captain Pegram, was the only one I knew to go there. The fort was



taken and the town occupied by the Federals in April, 1862.

Upon the arrival of an army officer to relieve me I left the fort and returned to Newbern to resume the fitting out of the *Beaufort*. I made up a crew principally of men who had been in the prizes captured by the *Winslow*. I had but one American in the crew—a green hand who shipped as a coal heaver. My officers at this time were midshipmen Charles K. Mallory and Virginius Newton, pilot James Hopkins, engineer Hanks, and captain's clerk Richard Byrd.

The crew was composed of Englishmen (two of whom were splendid specimens of man-of-war's-men) Danes and Swedes. I never sailed with a better one, and I never knew them to fail in their duty; indeed I used to wonder at their eagerness to go into battle considering the fact that they knew nothing at all about the cause of the war; but a sailor is a sailor all the world over. I found it difficult to ship a cook and steward, and finally took as cabin-boy a youth of 14 years of age who told me he had been "raised in the neighborhood." I did not doubt it, for as captain Simon Suggs says: "You could see the marks on his legs where he had stood in the swamp while gathering berries the previous summer." I remember his appearance well. The first day he came into the cabin to announce dinner he stuck his head suddenly into my very small state room and, as I was sitting in my bunk, this brought his face within six inches of mine; this seemed so to startle him that he could only open his eyes and mouth: "Well!" said I, "what do you want?" "The vittels is up," he gasped and evaporated. That night he deserted, and I saw him no more. My appearance, whatever it was, was too much for him.

During the month of October, 1861, we remained in the *Beaufort* at the mouth of the Neuse river on the lookout for any movement from Hatteras. No enemy appeared, but as I had occasion frequently to go up and down the river I ran some risk from the fort below Newbern. I could never get them to understand my signals. When I passed them at

night they would give me a shot first and then send off a boat to make inquiries! However it did me no harm and it gave them practice. I used to hold long conversations with a pilot I met at the mouth of the Neuse river. He had passed his life on the sound, and was a real old-fashioned fellow, a believer in signs and tokens. He told me of his many attempts to find the money buried by Teach the pirate. Teach frequented Pamlico Sound and used to lie at an island in it from which he could watch Hatteras and Ocracoke Inlets. I visited this island and every square foot of earth on it had had a spade in it in the search for Teach's money. Everybody hereabouts believed that Teach had buried a large amount of money *somewhere* on the shore of the sound. This pilot told me he had sometimes seen lights on the shore, which lights indicated the spot where the money was buried. The great point was to get to the place before the light was extinguished. He said he had several times jumped into a boat and pulled for one, but unfortunately the light always disappeared before he could reach the shore.

"Such was the tale that was told to me  
By that shattered and battered son of the sea."

I went in the *Beaufort* one afternoon to a place called Jacksonville, situated on a creek emptying into Pamlico Sound. I had some doubt about leaving the mouth of the Neuse, but something of importance took me to Jacksonville. I arrived there at sunset and made fast to the wharf. The inhabitants knew nothing of the *Beaufort* and thought it was a gunboat from Hatteras; so every man, woman and child took to the woods. There was not a soul left in the town when I arrived. My pilot went on shore and by throwing out friendly signals at last brought them down, and very soon the vessel was crowded with people. About 10 o'clock that night a report came that the enemy had landed at the mouth of the Neuse river; it was brought by two young men who said they were there and had barely time to jump on their horses and escape.



Here was a "category" as Captain Truck says. The creek was so narrow and intricate that my pilot said he could not take the steamer down before daylight, and by that time the enemy would be well on the way to Newbern. After some delay I persuaded a man to ride back to the river for further information. I do not think I ever suffered more in my life than while awaiting his return. Towards morning my scout returned. It was a false alarm—there was no enemy there. It seems that near the mouth of the river there lived a widow with two pretty daughters who were the belles of the neighborhood. The two Jacksonville young men were paying them a visit when some soldiers on leave from Newbern arrived. The soldiers saw one of the young ladies outside the house, and learning of the presence of the two young men determined to get rid of them; so they put up a joke which the ladies entered into with spirit. They charged up to the house hurraing at the top of their lungs, the ladies cried "Yankees," and our two heroes "vamosed the ranche." The next morning I made the best of my way back to my station, and about the end of October went to Newbern for coal.

Shortly after, Commodore Lynch arrived in the *Seabird* accompanied by the *Raleigh*, *Fanny*, and *Forrest*. The *Fanny* which had been captured near Oregon Inlet by the *Seabird* and *Raleigh* was commanded by Lieutenant Tayloe, and the *Forrest* by Lieutenant Hoole. Each carried a 32 pounder rifled gun. I was sent in the *Beaufort* to Washington to relieve the *Ellis*, Captain Muse. We went up the Pamlico river by night, passed the fort without being seen, and went through the "obstructions" (of which we knew nothing) without difficulty. This "obstruction" consisted of piles driven in the channel, and like all such amounted to "a row of pins." The good people of Washington were much surprised at seeing us quietly at anchor the next morning, and it taught them a lesson.

It being the opinion of the authorities in Richmond that the enemy would soon make an attempt on Roanoke island Commodore Lynch determined to assemble his squadron there.

The *Beaufort* was ordered to Norfolk to have the gun replaced by a rifled 32-pounder. We went through the Chesapeake and Albemarle canal, which was my first experience in that kind of navigation. I believe we kept the mast-head lookout as usual. We had fine weather and a smooth sea in the canal, doubled the locks without difficulty, and arrived at the Norfolk Navy Yard about the middle of December.