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Florida : her crime and punishment

John Stevens Cabot Abbott

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TRUMAN SEYMOUR.

HEROIC DEEDS OF HEROIC MEN.

BY JOHN S. C. ABBOTT.

XV.—FLORIDA. HER CRIME AND HER PUNISHMENT.

Geography of Florida.—Secession.—Treasonable Seizure of Forts.—Scenes at Pensacola.—The Great Bombardment.—The Eastern Shore.—Naval Adventures.—Capture of Fernandina, Florida, St. Augustine.—Indications of Loyalty.—Abandonment of Pensacola.—The Conflagration.—St. Johns Bluffs.—The Blockading Squadron.—Apalachicola.—Burning of Jacksonville.—Destroying the Salt-Works.—Bold Adventures.—The Disaster at Olustee.—Florida Rescued.

WHEN the Spanish adventurer, Ponce de Leon, in the spring of 1513, came in sight of the verdant valleys and flowery savannas of the southeastern extremity of the North American Continent, he gave to the blooming region the beautiful name of "Florida." The coun-

try, as it opened before him, presented the aspect of a vast undulating prairie, with fragrant, evergreen trees, scattered at such distances from each other as to allow a luxuriant growth of grass and flowers all the year round. Its climate, sunny, serene, salubrious, seemed like that of Paradise. Though subsequent explorations revealed extensive swamps and wide-spread barrens, yet there were vast regions of fertility and loveliness, presenting attractions such as can scarcely elsewhere be found upon this globe.

After many vicissitudes of ownership Florida was ceded to the United States in 1819. It was a grand accession to the National Government, and essential to our security and power.

Harper's

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FLORIDA: HER CRIME
AND HER PUNISHMENT

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VENICE.

GRAND were the old barbaric days
When in her regal splendor throned
She ruled—a light-efulging sphere,
By tributary kingdoms zoned;
The Cleopatra of the earth
She reveled then, while on her breast
The wealth of all the Orient glowed
And blinded the adoring West.

Oh! saddest spectacle of earth—
That queenly brow the common scorn,
Its grandeur wholly passed away,
Its beauty utterly forlorn!
A desolation as of death
Has stricken to that royal heart—
What but a memory is her fame?
Where in the present is her part?

And for the future? years will die,
And years on years, revolving moons
Will gild her lion's shadowy wings,
And tremble in her still lagoons.
But never will the hour return
That yields her back her ancient reign,
And never will the nations bend
In homage at her feet again.

The past is past. No second prime,
No second summer beauty knows,
And she, the fallen, the forlorn,
Has but her memories and her woes;
No gleams of freedom stir her heart,
No visions of recovered power—
Only her beauty can not die,
And it and sorrow are her dower.

The State is 285 miles long, and from 50 to 250 miles wide, containing 56,000 square miles, being just about the size of England, excluding Scotland and Wales. With great energy the National Government commenced improving its new possession, surveying the region, removing obstructions from rivers and harbors, rearing fortresses, liquidating Indian titles, and carrying on a long and bloody war with the Seminoles. In these ways it is estimated that nearly fifty millions of dollars have been expended, besides thousands of lives.

When the frenzy of Secession swept over the South, Florida had about 80,000 white inhabitants. On the 4th of January, 1861, two months before the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln, the *Charleston* (South Carolina) *Mercury* made an earnest appeal to the people of Florida to seize the United States forts. In this appeal it was stated that there were no forts belonging to the National Government more important than those in Florida; that these forts commanded the whole Gulf trade; and that if the people of Florida, in imitation of the treasonable example of Georgia and Alabama, would seize these forts, then "*the commerce of the North will fall an easy prey to our bold privateers; and California gold will pay all such little expenses on our part.*"

On the 11th of January sixty-two men, in the State Convention, passed an ordinance that Florida did not belong to the Government of the United States. It was, according to their vote, entirely an independent realm, to remain independent, or to be surrendered, at their option, to any other power. The next day an armed mob seized the Navy-yard, at Pensacola, and Fort Barrancas. The commandant had no means of resistance, and was compelled to surrender and allow his flag to be hauled down. The Navy-yard contained 156,000 dollars' worth of ordnance stores. The United States schooner *Dana* was then in those waters, engaged in the Coast Survey. On the 15th that was seized by the rebels. Soon after, a law was enacted by the Florida Legislature that, should there be any collision between the National Government and these insurgents in Florida, any person who should consent to hold office under the United States Government should be declared guilty of treason and punished with death.

Fortunately Fort Pickens, at the mouth of Pensacola Harbor, on the eastern extremity of the Island of Santa Rosa, was so situated that, though held by a feeble garrison, the rebels, who had no navy, could not capture it. But they had collected an army of 8000 men under General Bragg on the adjacent shores, and had reared such formidable batteries that our blockading squadron riding in the offing could not approach the fort with reinforcements or supplies. On Friday night, the 12th of April, the night before the fire was opened upon Fort Sumter, taking advantage of the darkness, a number of boats, loaded with men and military stores, under command of Lieutenant Albert N. Smith,

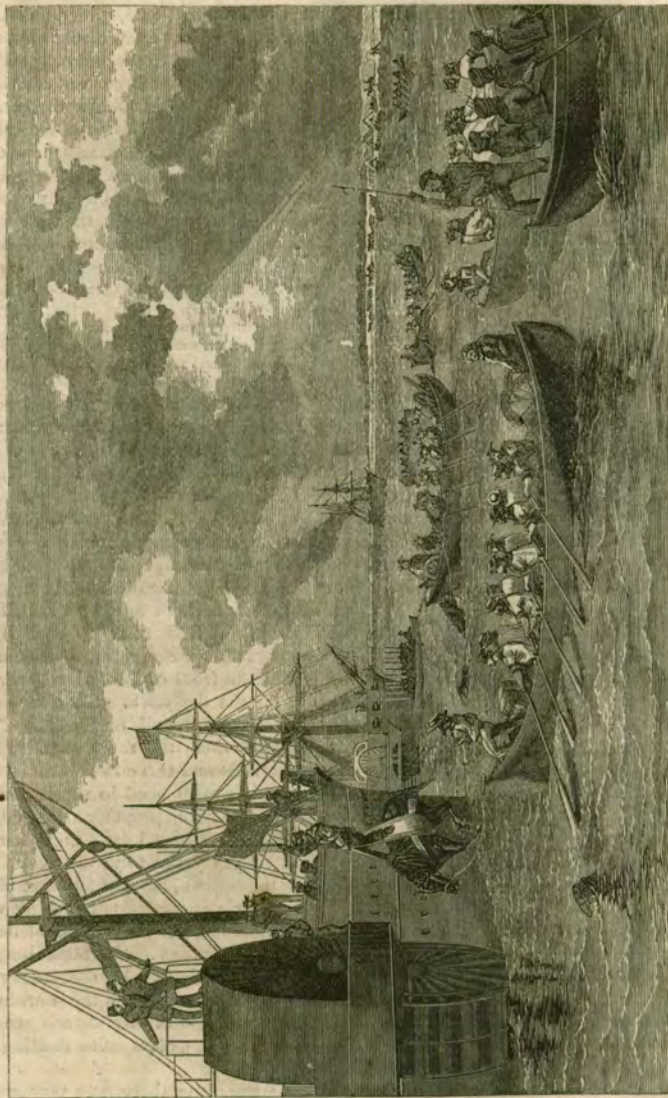
of Massachusetts, left the fleet, and, with hushed voices and muffled oars, glided past those rebel batteries, which, by a few discharges, could have blown their boats to fragments, and succeeded in landing such reinforcements as to place the fort beyond all immediate danger. A few nights after, on the 15th, the experiment was repeated, adding a thousand troops to the garrison. The rebels were exceedingly anxious to get possession of Fort Pickens. Among the various plans suggested, the following novel one was proposed by a writer in the *Mobile Register*:

"By mixing red pepper and veratrum with the powder with which the shells are filled, or by filling large shells of extraordinary capacity with poisonous gases, and throwing them very rapidly into the fort, every living soul would have to leave in double-quick time. It would be impossible to breathe there."

The National Government had constructed at Pensacola a very fine dry dock, which had cost a million and a half of dollars. The rebels had towed this out into the channel and partially sunk it to prevent the passage of vessels into the Bay. They were preparing to remove it to another spot where it would effectually bar the passage of any of our gun-boats. The night of the 2d of September, succeeding a day of storm and rain, was still, but cloudy and dark. A little after 9 o'clock Lieutenant Shipley, with a picked crew of eleven men, left the beach in front of the fort and rowed noiselessly for the dry dock. To their surprise no sentinels were found on board. They had taken with them the most effective combustible materials and three large Columbiad shells. The shells were placed in the boilers, and the combustibles being properly arranged, the torch was applied. The boat's crew had scarcely pulled twenty yards from the vessel when the flames burst forth, and the shells exploded, filling the air with fragments. The whole bay was illumined with the billows of flame which shot up into the sky. All night long the conflagration raged fiercely, consuming the vast mass of timber, and when the morning dawned nothing was left of the superb structure but smouldering, shapeless ruins floating upon the water.

For some time there was now an apparent cessation of hostilities. But both parties were alike vigilant; each watching for an opportunity to strike the other a blow. The following brilliant affair, which occurred at this time, deserves special record:

There was a schooner at the Pensacola Navy-yard fitted out for a privateer. Flag-officer William Mervine, of the *Colorado*, resolved to destroy it. He prepared an expedition of four boats manned by 100 officers and men. Captain Bailey, of the *Colorado*, matured the plan and arranged all its details. Lieutenant Russell had charge of the expedition. There were a thousand rebels encamped in the Navy-yard, and a strong guard on board the schooner. At half past 3 o'clock in the morning of the 14th of September the boats left the fleet for their



REINFORCEMENT OF FORT PICKENS.

daring adventure. The event is thus described by a Confederate officer:

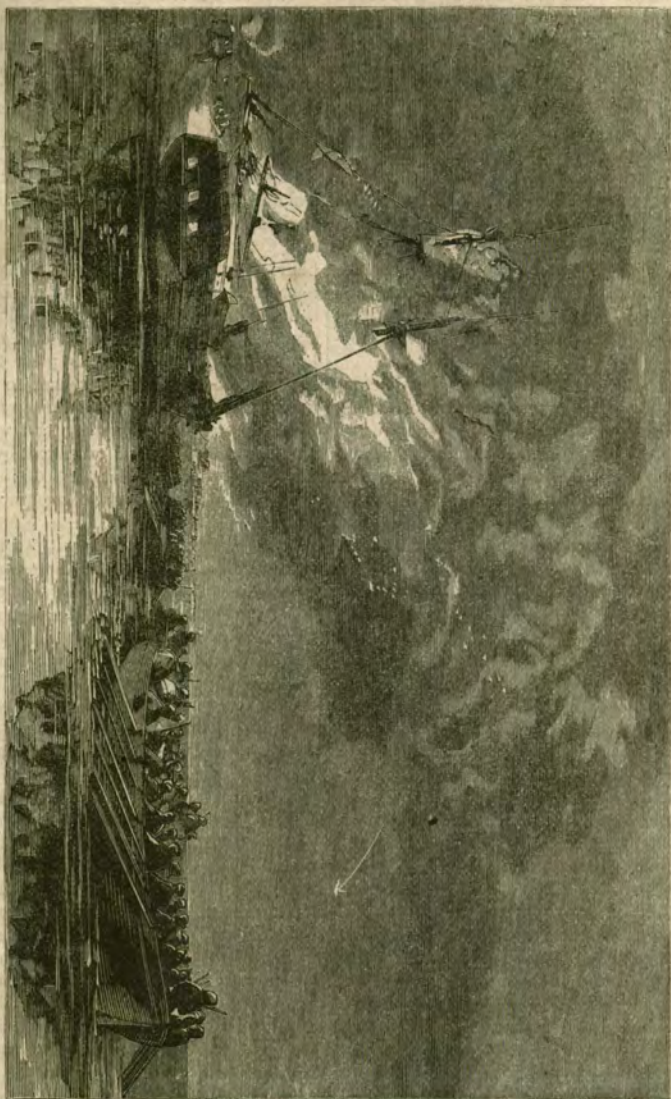
"The enemy executed last night the most brilliant and daring act which has yet marked the history of the war. About 3 o'clock in the morning five launches, containing about thirty-five men each, pulled across from Santa Rosa Island to the Navy-yard, a distance of about two miles. Each launch had in it a small brass howitzer on a pivot. Their main object seems to have been to burn the largest schooner of our harbor police, which was anchored near the wharf. They were led by an officer with the courage of forty Numidian lions, and their success was perfect.

"Under cover of the darkness, silently, with muffled oars, they approached the wharf, and were not discovered until very near it. They then pulled rapidly to the schooner and grappled to her, when their daring leader shouted, 'Board her!' leading the way himself, with a cutlass in one hand and a blazing fire-ball in the other. He

threw the flambeau into the hold of the schooner, and feeling sure that she was on fire, ordered his men to take to their launches and pull for life, as he said that a shower of grape would soon be rattling after them. They pulled off a short distance; but before going they sent back a shower of grape from their howitzers, directed upon our men as they were forming. The schooner burned rapidly, and we had to cut her loose from the wharf to save it from destruction. She floated off in the tide, emitting a brilliant flood of light over the surrounding darkness of the scene."

Though the above narrative is not minutely accurate, it shows the impression the bold adventure produced upon the minds of the rebels. In fact, the vessel was found with her crew on board, moored to the wharf, under protection of a battery and field-piece. As our boats approached the crew poured into them a volley

BURNING OF THE SCHOONER.



of musketry. The boatmen, cutlass in hand, sprang on board, and, after a short but desperate fight, drove the crew on to the wharf, where, joined by the guard, they rallied, and kept up a continued fire upon our men. In the mean time a small party landed to spike a great gun. This was accomplished by Lieutenant Sproston and gunner Horton. In fifteen minutes the whole work was accomplished, the gun spiked and the schooner fired. As our boats pulled back, when a few yards from the shore they rallied, and from their howitzers fired six charges of canister into the yard. Several of our men were killed or wounded in this brilliant adventure. The loss of the rebels is not known.

In a few weeks the rebels attempted to retaliate. For some months they had been surrounding Fort Pickens with batteries, and arming them with their heaviest guns. It was their design, by a simultaneous concentric fire, to batter down its walls as Sumter had been reduced.

The night of the 9th of October was intensely dark. In the darkness 1500 rebels landed on the eastern end of Santa Rosa Island, and attacked Fort Pickens in the rear, hoping to carry it by surprise. The midnight storm of battle was terrible, with its vivid lightnings and its pealing thunders. The assailants were repulsed, driven back with serious slaughter to their boats, and breathless, bleeding, and smit-

ten with consternation with difficulty succeeded in reaching the shelter of their batteries.

On the morning of the 22d Colonel Harvey Brown, who was in command of Fort Pickens, opened fire upon the batteries of the foe. The fleet, under command of Flag-officer McKean, co-operated. There instantly arose such a tempest of war as has rarely been witnessed in this or any other land. The rebels had two forts—M'Rae and Barrancas—and fourteen separate batteries, armed with 10-inch Columbiads and 13-inch sea-coast mortars. All day long the terrific roar of battle shook the hills. For a few hours during the night there was silence, but not much repose, as both parties were preparing to resume the strife on the morrow.

The next morning the desperate battle commenced anew. The combatants were hurling enormous and deadly missiles at each other from a distance of between two and three thousand yards. Fort M'Rae and several batteries of the rebels were silenced the day before. The fire from the Union fort, batteries, and ships became increasingly deliberate and effective. About noon nearly the whole of Warrenton was in flames, and a large part of the Navy-yard. The conflict continued all day until dark, and then, until 2 o'clock in the morning, shells were occasionally thrown into the works of the foe. The scene presented in the night by the conflagration was grand in the extreme. Fort Pickens, though it had been struck by a great many shot and shell, was as efficient for action at the close as at the commencement of the combat. One gun was dismounted, one man killed, and four wounded. The rebel loss in life and limb was also small, as the gunners were so well protected. The rebel batteries were much knocked to pieces, and their loss by the conflagration severe.

The first of January, 1862, was ushered in with another artillery battle in Pensacola Bay, from forts and batteries, which was continued far into the night. The combatants stood at such a distance from each other that though they made a tremendous noise, and hurled at each other the most ponderous missiles, no decisive results were gained. The spectacle at night was magnificent. Several buildings in the Navy-yard and a large part of the town of Woolsey were in flames. The graceful curve of every shell through the air could be traced from the time it left the gun until it exploded. The illumination was so brilliant that it was seen by our ships forty miles at sea. Nothing effective was accomplished by these bombardments.

On the 28th of February Commodore Du Pont sailed from Hilton Head with quite a fleet of transports and gun-boats to take possession of important posts along the eastern shore of Florida. In the extreme northeastern corner of Florida is situated the little town of Fernandina, on Amelia Island, which is separated from the main land by a narrow sound. At

Fernandina is found one of the best harbors on the Atlantic coast south of Chesapeake Bay. It was all-important to close this port against blockade-runners. Commodore Du Pont's squadron consisted of twenty-six vessels, including gun-boats and transports, and conveyed a battalion of marines under Major Reynolds, and a brigade under General Wright. As they drew near Fernandina they learned from a contraband that the rebels had been informed of their approach, and were evacuating the forts and flying from the island in terror. As the heavier gun-boats could not easily thread the narrow channel Commander P. Drayton was sent forward in the steam-sloop Pawnee, with six light-draught gun-boats and three armed launches, with orders "to push through the sound with the utmost speed, to save public and private property from threatened destruction; to prevent poisoning the wells, and to put a stop to all those outrages, by the perpetration of which the leaders of this nefarious war hope to deceive and exasperate the people of the South."

On the northern extremity of the island is situated Fort Clinch. This was so manifestly abandoned that Commander Drayton without delay merely sent an armed boat on shore to raise the American flag, and pushed on. As they came in sight of Fernandina a train of cars, laden with soldiers and military stores, was seen just starting to run down the island four miles, and then, crossing by a bridge, to escape to the main land. The road ran along for some distance on the shore of the sound. Southern locomotives are proverbially slow of foot. There ensued, perhaps, an unprecedented race between the steamboat and the railroad train. The Ottawa pelted the fugitive cars with her 11-inch shells, until the conductor, having cut off some of the rear cars and put on extra steam, succeeded in effecting his escape.

In the mean time a rebel steamer was discovered, heavily laden, also endeavoring to escape down the narrow sound. The boat was filled with women and children, flying in terror from the outrages they had been told the Yankee soldiery would perpetrate. The rebel authorities had compelled all the citizens to leave the town. As the Ottawa hurled her terrific missiles at the rebel steamer, a mile distant, the women and children with shrieks, and upon their knees, entreated the commander to surrender. Their heart-rending supplications could not move him. He owned the boat and a large number of negroes on board, and he was willing to peril the lives of his helpless passengers for the chance of escaping with his property.

The rebel steamer was overtaken and captured. Jacob Brock, of Vermont, was the captain. He had resided in Florida twenty-three years, and owned a plantation and about a hundred negroes. The Ottawa, C. R. P. Rogers commanding, after the capture, steamed about ten miles north to the little town of St. Mary,

on the Georgia border, where it was supposed that the armament from Fort Clinch had been taken, and then ascended the river several miles on a reconnaissance. As they were returning, when passing a bend in the stream, where the channel brought them near to the shore, a Mississippi regiment concealed in the bushes poured upon the deck a storm of bullets. Commander Rogers was all prepared for this. His guns, heavily charged with grape, were immediately brought to bear upon the foe in ambush. The effect of one discharge, as our steamer swept along, was truly appalling. "The shrieks of the wounded and the groans of the dying could be distinctly heard, while the sailors at the mast-head could see the men falling." But five on board the *Ottawa* were wounded, though many had their clothes torn by bullets. The punishment inflicted upon the rebels, as they were left groaning, mangled, bleeding, dying, was dreadful.

As Commodore Du Pont examined the works at Fernandina he was surprised that they should have been surrendered without a struggle. There were forts and batteries, armed with the heaviest guns, which commanded all the turnings of the channel. The batteries were concealed and so protected by sand-hills as to afford perfect shelter for the men. Many of the guns were 38-pounders. There were several 8-inch guns, and also one 80 and one 120 pounder rifled gun. "We captured Port Royal," says Commodore Du Pont, "but Fernandina and Fort Clinch have been given to us."

A railroad ran directly across the neck of the Florida Peninsula, from Fernandina to Cedar Keys, on the Mexican Gulf. As Cedar Keys had been captured by a Union force on the 16th of January, both termini of the railroad were now in our possession. The inhabitants at Fernandina stated that the rebels intended to abandon all the sea-port towns, and make a desperate stand in the interior.

On the 12th of March four of the gun-boats, the *Ottawa* leading, entered the mouth of the St. Johns River to take possession of the beautiful town of Jacksonville, which contained some three thousand inhabitants, and was situated on the north bank of the stream about twenty-five miles from its mouth. Lieutenant Stevens, in the *Ottawa*, led this expedition. It was late in the evening before all the gun-boats had crossed the bar. The western horizon was then brightly illumined by the flames of the mills, houses, and other property belonging to Northern men who were suspected of Union sympathies. The rebel commander, General Trapier, is said to have issued this barbaric order. As the vessels ascended the romantic stream, rich in lovely scenery, they were surprised and delighted to find such decisive indications of Union sentiments. Many Northern families had emigrated to Florida, and not a few of them retained their loyalty to the National flag.

Men, women, and children, and groups of

ever-friendly slaves, stood upon the banks greeting the passing boats with cheers and waving of handkerchiefs. Ladies stood upon verandas waving white flags. But as the little fleet drew nearer Jacksonville smouldering ruins alone presented themselves on each side of the river. "Nothing but the massive columns of dark pitch-pine smoke, smothered flames, and blackened piles remained of the huge saw-mills that had existed twenty-four hours previously. Such Vandalism we have never witnessed. Eight immense mills, and hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of valuable lumber, destroyed in a single night by these ruthless villains—guerillas recognized by that lovely Government, the Southern Confederacy. The principal sufferers by these incendiaries are Northern men."

At noon of the 12th the *Ottawa*, with her 11-inch Dahlgrens frowning menacingly upon the town, dropped anchor about one hundred yards from the wharf. If there were any loyalty in the place, it was overawed by the barbaric terrors of secessionism. Groups of men and boys were collected on the wharf, silent if not sullen. After some little conference Lieutenant Stevens commenced landing the Fourth New Hampshire Regiment to take possession of the town. In less than two hours the regiment was landed, and the Stars and Stripes floated in security over Jacksonville. It subsequently appeared that many of the most intelligent of the inhabitants were eagerly waiting for the protection of the National flag. But an inexorable reign of terror, threatening to lay the buildings of every loyalist in ashes, and to lead their occupants to the scaffold, had silenced all such utterances.

The presence of the National flag, however, somewhat emboldened those who in heart execrated the rebellion. Though aware that should our forces be withdrawn they would be exposed to the brutalities of the most unscrupulous men the civilized world has ever seen, they ventured to organize a meeting of loyal citizens at Jacksonville on the 20th of March, in which they passed a series of resolutions declaring that no State has a constitutional right to separate itself from the United States; that the Ordinance of Secession is void, as both unconstitutional and never having been submitted to the people for ratification; that thousands of the people of Florida would hail with joy the restoration of the National authority, and remonstrating against the system of tyranny which had deprived them of freedom of speech, robbed them of their money, driven them by the terrors of an inexorable conscription into the ranks of rebellion, thus demanding the abandonment of homes and property, and the exposure of wives and children to sickness, destitution, gaunt famine, and innumerable and untold miseries and sorrows. It required more courage on the part of these loyal men to pass these resolves than to face bullets and shells on the battle-field.

The rebels were building a large gun-boat

at Jacksonville, to be fitted out with a strong armament as a privateer. It was nearly completed, and would soon have been preying upon our commerce. Upon the approach of our fleet the torch was applied, and in a few hours the vessel was in ashes.

In the mean time Commodore Du Pont steamed down the coast with several vessels of the squadron toward St. Augustine. This ancient Spanish city was situated about thirty miles south of the mouth of the St. Johns River, and two miles within the bar of the bay upon whose northern shores it was built. The town was defended by a strong fort, with walls twenty feet high and twelve feet thick. Arriving off the harbor he sent Commander Rogers, in the Wabash, to the city with a flag of truce. The Mayor stated that the city had been evacuated the preceding night by the troops, and that he cheerfully surrendered it to Commodore Du Pont. The National banner was immediately displayed from the flag-staff of the fort, and all the cannon and munitions of war were turned over to our fleet.

But about fifteen hundred people remained in St. Augustine, the remainder, some three hundred and fifty, having fled. The women here, as in most other parts of the South, were found more virulent and unrelenting in their rebellion than the men. Commander Rogers, in his report to Flag-officer Du Pont, says:

"I believe that there are many citizens who are earnestly attached to the Union, a large number who are silently opposed to it, and a still larger number who care very little about the matter. There is much violent and pestilent feeling among the women. They seem to mistake treason for courage, and have a theatrical desire to figure as heroines. On the night before our arrival a party of women assembled in front of the barracks and cut down the flag-staff in order that it might not be used to support the old flag."

The rebels in their flight had taken several guns from the fort, but we obtained three fine 32-pounders and two 8-inch howitzers. About fifty miles south of St. Augustine was Mosquito Inlet, where the British blockade-runners from Nassau were conveying, by vessels of light draught, arms and other munitions of war to aid the rebels. Two gun-boats, the Penguin, under Lieutenant T. A. Budd, and the Henry Andrew, under Acting-Master S. W. Mather, were sent to this place to establish an inside blockade, capture any vessels which might be there, and guard from incendiarism a large quantity of live-oak timber belonging to the Government, which had been cut and was ready for shipment. The two steamers reached the Inlet on the 22d of March; and an expedition, consisting of five light boats conveying forty-five men, was fitted out to explore the long and narrow bay. They cruised along in a southerly direction, passing the little hamlet of New Smyrna, some eighteen miles, and, meeting with no incident, commenced their return.

When within sight of one of the steamers the advance boat at some distance from the

rest landed, and the two commanding officers of the expedition, Lieutenant Budd and Acting-Master Mather, proceeded to examine some old abandoned earth-works, covered with dense forest and underbrush. Suddenly they were fired upon by a party of rebel soldiers in ambush. Both of the officers were instantly killed, and three of the five men composing the boat's crew. The other two were wounded and made prisoners. As the other boats came up they also were fired into and sustained more or less loss. The Henry Andrew the next morning was hauled up close to the scene of attack, but no foe could be found. "The commanding officer," writes Commodore Du Pont, "a Captain Bird, who had come from a camp at a distance, made some show of courtesy by returning papers and a watch as if ashamed of this mode of warfare; for these were the very troops that, with sufficient force, means, and material for a respectable defense, had ingloriously fled from St. Augustine on our approach." By these operations on the Florida coast the blockade was rendered much more effective, and the rebels were deprived of much of their power of doing harm.

At the mouth of the Apalachicola River, on the Florida coast in the Gulf of Mexico, is the thriving town of Apalachicola, from whose commodious harbor very considerable commerce was carried on. The stream was navigable for small vessels seventy miles above its mouth, and for boats four hundred miles. It was reported that there were quite a number of blockade-runners at or above the city. The latter part of March Commander Stellwagen, with two gun-boats, appeared off the place and organized an armed boat expedition to ascend the river and capture or destroy any rebel vessels which might be found there. They found the place almost entirely abandoned by its male inhabitants, the fort dismantled, and the guns removed. The inhabitants who remained welcomed the expedition and promptly raised the United States flag. The boat expedition captured quite a number of vessels, some of which they burned, and others they took with them down the river. The oath of allegiance was administered to some of the inhabitants, and formal possession was taken of the town.

It is very evident that at Pensacola, notwithstanding it was in rebel hands, there were some decisive indications of Union feeling; for on the 30th of March Colonel T. M. Jones, then commanding the rebel force there, issued the following characteristic proclamation:

"For the information of all concerned. There are certain lounging, worthless people, white as well as colored, who frequent Pensacola and vicinity, who have no observable occupation. Their intentions may be honest, but the Colonel commanding does not believe it; and as he has no use for their presence, they are warned to leave or the consequences must rest on their own heads. The gallows is erected in Pensacola, and will be in constant use on and after the 3d of April, 1862. The town is under complete martial law."

A little before midnight on the 9th of May

the garrison at Fort Pickens were aroused by an unusual firing of musketry in the direction of the rebel forts. Signal lights were seen blazing upon the shore, and there were other indications of some strange commotion. Suddenly, and almost simultaneously, crackling, roaring flames, in huge billows, burst forth from forts and water-batteries and the light-house, from the Marine Hospital and the Navy-yard, and from Pensacola and the villages of Warrenton and Woolsey, and all other buildings along a line nearly ten miles in extent. It was manifest that the rebels had decided to evacuate the region, and that they had resolved to leave nothing but ashes behind them.

The rebels had carefully arranged their combustibles, which had been prepared in great quantities, and by the light of the conflagration they could be distinctly seen running about, like demons of destruction, applying the torch. The long roll was immediately beat in Fort Pickens, and a tremendous cannonade opened upon the incendiaries, which was kept up incessantly for five hours, and which so disturbed the rebels in their operations that not a little property, which would otherwise have been destroyed, was preserved.

The guns of the rebel forts M'Rae and Barancas, which had commanded the harbor, were now powerless, and the blockading schooner, Maria J. Wood, steamed into the bay and demanded the unconditional surrender of the place. As the flag of truce landed the officers were met by about one hundred and fifty people, who, with a single exception, manifested great joy in prospect of the restoration of the National authority. The negroes gathered in great numbers, shouting, exuberantly, "Dey is come at last; dey is come at last!"

Captain Jackson, with his flag, proceeded through the grass-grown streets to the house of Mayor Bobee. To the demand for surrender Bobee replied:

"The Confederates have so long held sway here, and usurped the power which rightfully belongs to the municipal authorities, that I do not know really how much authority I have left."

Fortunately the Harriet Lane, with Commodore Porter of the mortar flotilla on board, was that night running down the coast from Mobile. Seeing the whole eastern horizon illumined with the blaze of the immense conflagration, Captain Wainwright steamed directly for Pensacola harbor. The arrival in the morning of this powerful steamer was very opportune. She was immediately employed in transporting troops, with their necessary armament, from Fort Pickens and the Island of Santa Rosa to the main land. About twelve hundred troops, with artillery, siege-guns, ammunition, horses, and camp equipage, were soon on shore, with defenses thrown up around them to guard against any surprise. The Stars and Stripes were raised over the smouldering forts. But scarcely any thing met the eye excepting fire, ashes, and desolation.

There was a magnificent naval hospital at Pensacola, one of the finest structures of the kind in the United States. The Vandals, in their indiscriminating rage, had set that on fire, and it was speedily reduced to smouldering cinders. "It was," writes the correspondent of the *Boston Journal*, "behind this hospital that Bragg had a heavy mortar battery during the first bombardment; and shielded from the fire of Pickens by the humane folds of the yellow flag, which floated over the hospital, he kept up an incessant fire upon the Federal garrison."

This was the last foothold of any importance which the rebels held in Florida. The whole State thus virtually fell back into the possession of the National arms, though it continued to be the scene of many wild adventures. The necessities of the Confederate Government had become so pressing that the authorities at Richmond had decided to withdraw nearly all their forces from the State, and most of the troops had been sent to Tennessee. Still enough were left behind to keep up a sort of guerrilla warfare, which, with the torch and the halter, might prevent the development of any Union sympathies among the people. As the rebel troops were mainly withdrawn there seemed to be no reason why we should leave regiments there encamped in idleness. Jacksonville was evacuated, and the rebels returned, wreaking sore vengeance upon all who had ventured to express any sympathy for the National authority. The recital of the barbarities they inflicted caused the ear of the nation to tingle.

About three miles above the mouth of the River St. Johns there were some renowned bluffs, which had caught the military eye of the old Spanish adventurers as an impregnable position. The bluffs commanded the river, and in the rear could be only approached through a single ravine, which could be swept by artillery. The narrowness of the channel and the elevation of the bluffs rendered the approach by gun-boats both difficult and dangerous. The rebels seized this Gibraltar, placed upon it a heavy and effective armament of nine guns, two of them Columbiads, and stationed a garrison there, infantry and cavalry, of one thousand two hundred men. Blockade-runners, having ascended the river beyond this point, were safe from any pursuit by our gun-boats.

General Mitchell, then the energetic commander at Port Royal, late in September fitted out an expedition to clear the river of these obstructions. A land-force of 1573 men, consisting of the Forty-seventh Pennsylvania, under Colonel T. H. Good, the Seventh Connecticut, under Colonel Joseph Hawley, and a section of First Connecticut light battery, left Hilton Head in four transports on the afternoon of the 30th of September. Early the next morning they arrived off the bar of St. Johns River. Here they were joined by six gun-boats commanded by Captain Charles Steedman of the United States Navy. The

land-force was intrusted to Brigadier-General J. M. Brannon. The fleet immediately crossed the bar and anchored in the mouth of the river opposite a small "timber village" called Mayport, situated on a bluff. About two miles farther up the river they saw the rebel flag, indicating the position of their batteries. Three gun-boats were sent up to draw the fire of the guns, that their number and the weight of their metal might be ascertained.

A few shells, with very accurate aim, were pitched directly into the rebel batteries. The return fire of their guns revealed that which we wished to know and did us no harm. As it seemed evident that the rebels were disposed for a fight, the landing of the troops was at once commenced, under the protection of the gun-boats, which, from the nature of the locality, proved a very tedious and difficult operation. It was their plan to work around into the rear, so as to cut off the retreat of the rebels. The rain was now falling in torrents. But through the discomfort of the storm and the gloom the troops, horses, and artillery were got safely ashore, including three 12-pound howitzers, worked by marines.

As soon as the landing was effected, and the troops were prepared to move for the attack, the gun-boats were again sent forward. As they opened their fire, shelling the batteries, they found, to their great surprise, that the rebels had abandoned every thing and fled. Lieutenant Snell sent a boat ashore and raised the American flag. The land-forces pressed forward and took possession of the batteries. The position was found to be one of very great strength, the works carefully constructed and heavily armed. Had the rebels displayed any of that courage which they certainly on most occasions evinced, it is not improbable that they might have resisted even a much larger force than that which we had sent against them.

The guns, nine heavy Columbiads, the small-arms, and the ammunition, were removed to the gun-boats, the magazines blown up, and the entire works on the bluff destroyed. Captain Steedman, with a portion of the fleet, steamed directly for Jacksonville, to destroy the rebel boats there, and to intercept the escape of the rebel garrison across the river. A body of infantry soon followed. Jacksonville was found deserted by nearly all its inhabitants excepting a few old men, women, and children. One of the steamers, the *Darlington*, in charge of Captain Yard, with one hundred men of the Forty-seventh Pennsylvania Volunteers, boldly ran up the river two hundred and thirty miles, and seized a rebel steamer, the *Governor Milton*. Our gun-boats now retained the entire possession of the river, and the expedition returned to Hilton Head without the loss of a man and crowned with victory.

Apalachicola was now simply guarded by the blockading fleet, there being no Union garrison on shore. It was reported that several miles

up the river there was a sloop laden with cotton watching for a dark night to run the blockade. On the morning of the 15th of October two boats were sent from the gun-boats *Sagamore* and *Fort Henry*, each armed with a 12-pound howitzer and rifles for the crew and officers. They started before the dawn of day and, rowing up the river about four miles, discovered the sloop in a small bay on the eastern shore of the stream. But the rebels had detected the enterprise. As the boats approached the sloop they saw a squadron of cavalry riding down the banks. They were thus obliged to move back, out into the river, and to send for reinforcements.

Four boats were promptly forwarded to their aid. As soon as they were all assembled two boats were sent to capture the sloop, while the rest held themselves in readiness to meet any emergency. The rebels, in ambush, threw in upon the advancing boats a volley of bullets, wounding three men. The fire was instantly returned by a shower of canister and shrapnell, sweeping the thicket and speedily scattering the band who, in Indian fashion, were lurking there. The rebel sailors fled from the sloop as the boats' crew boarded it. The victors cut their prize from her moorings, and all the boats towed her down the river.

It was necessary to pass by the wharves in Apalachicola. The rebel guerrillas, who had been driven from their ambush, hastened to the city and secreted themselves behind an embankment and in the store-houses. As our boats came within close musket-range, the men laboriously pulling at their oars, towing the sloop, the rebels again, from their concealment, opened fire, with volley after volley, wounding several, but killing none. Little were they prepared for the retribution which instantly visited them. The howitzers were turned upon their lurking-places. Shells, shrapnell, canister pursued them as with a divine vengeance. Limb was torn from limb, buildings set on fire, houses blown to pieces. Not another gun could be fired at our troops. To pick up the wounded and to extinguish the flames, which threatened the destruction of the city, engrossed all the energies of the foe. Scarcely had the boats returned to the fleet with their prize, having eighty bales of cotton on board, when a flag of truce was sent to the fleet from Apalachicola, imploring that our naval surgeons might be sent to the town to dress the stumps of the unhappy men whose limbs had been blown off by the fragments of our shells. Doctors Stevens, Seofield, and Draper volunteered their services on this mission of mercy to our enemies. The rebels were also informed that were our boats again fired upon from Apalachicola the city should be laid in ashes.

The secessionists in the vicinity of Apalachicola were largely supplying the rebel army with beef packed in salt. To facilitate this operation immense salt-works were erected all along the bays on the Gulf coast of Florida. Our

gun-boats swept the coast and laid them nearly all in ruins.

About this time a guerrilla band at Cedar Keys, with savage cunning, enticed a boat on shore from the steamer Somerset, by displaying three white flags from the houses. Just as the boat's crew were landing they were fired upon from the windows of a house, and eight of the men were wounded, some of them very severely. The retributions of war are terrible. The wounded men succeeded in working their way back to the ship. An avenging force was sent to the shore to administer the merited punishment. In a few hours the whole town was in ashes.

Twice the Union forces had now taken Jacksonville. Twice they had abandoned it as not worth holding. Slowly, and with great opposition, the Government had been led to adopt the measure of employing colored troops. The rebels had run large numbers of slaves into the interior of Florida, as a place of security. It was deemed wise to occupy Jacksonville as a base of operations for collecting and arming the negroes. On the 6th of March, 1863, a secret expedition, whose destination was known to but few, left Beaufort, South Carolina. It consisted of the First and Second Regiments of South Carolina Colored Volunteers, under Colonel T. W. Higginson and Colonel James Montgomery. They were conveyed in three transports.

On the 7th the vessels reached Fernandina, and, after a short delay, proceeded to the mouth of the St. Johns, where they dropped anchor on the morning of the 9th. Here a couple of gun-boats joined them, the Norwich and the Uncas. The next day the expedition steamed up the river. Passing the ruined batteries on St. Johns bluff, which the rebels had made no attempt to repair, they ran alongside of the wharf in Jacksonville, and, under protection of the guns of the Uncas, the colored troops, glowing with enthusiasm, eagerly jumped on shore. The rebels had simply a picket established in the town, while a considerable force was encamped three miles distant. The well-disciplined troops immediately formed in marching order, and so suddenly had they arrived and landed that almost the first intimation the inhabitants had of their presence was in witnessing the solid column of black faces marching through their streets.

Colonel Montgomery, at the head of two companies, pushed out into the woods, where his colored soldiers, with bravery which elicited great admiration, attacked a company of rebel cavalry and handsomely routed them. Colonel Higginson, in the mean time, stationed pickets throughout the town, and adopted other precautions against surprise. It was now night, and our troops were in secure possession of the place, with the loss of but one man killed and two wounded.

It was supposed that the National flag was now established permanently here, and the

loyal men felt very great relief. This sense of security was increased as, after a few days, the Sixth Connecticut and the Eighth Maine were sent to reinforce the little army. But to the astonishment of all, and the consternation of every loyal man, scarcely had these latter troops debarked ere the inexplicable order came not only for their immediate return, but for the recall of all the colored troops and the abandonment of the place for the third time. Though there was nothing to be done but promptly to obey these orders, the murmurings were loud and deep.

There probably never was an army composed of such fine materials as the Union army in this great conflict. In every regiment there might be found many men of the highest intellectual and religious character. But whenever there is war all the lovers of violence and crime rush to the field. Thus there will be found in every army many men utterly reckless, and who shrink at no crime. Some of these men, notwithstanding the indignation of their comrades and the utmost exertions of their officers, taking advantage of a high wind and the combustible nature of the buildings, set fire to the town. Jacksonville was soon in ruins. The beautiful city, which had been the pride of the State, and for many years the favorite resort for invalids from the North, was wrapped in flames and consumed to ashes. Scarcely a mansion, store-house, or negro cabin was left to tell where Jacksonville once stood. Long lines of magnificent oaks, with their green foliage and graceful drapery of Spanish moss, ornamented the streets. Orange groves perfumed the air with their perpetual blossoms mingling with the golden fruit. The yards and gardens were embellished with shrubbery and flowers blooming in the profusion of tropical luxuriance.

The relentless flames swept over the loveliness of the Eden, and it emerged from the ordeal as if scathed by the curse of God. An eye-witness on board the steam transport Boston writes:

"From this upper-deck the scene presented to the spectator is one of the most fearful magnificence. On every side, from every quarter of the city, dense clouds of black smoke and flames are bursting through the mansions and warehouses. A fresh south wind is blowing immense blazing cinders into the heart of the city. The beautiful Spanish moss, drooping so gracefully from the long avenues of the splendid old oaks, has caught fire, and, as far as the eye can reach, through these once pleasant streets nothing but sheets of flame can be seen, running up with the rapidity of lightning to the tops of the trees, and then darting off to the smallest branches. The whole city—mansions, warehouses, trees, shrubbery, and orange groves—all that refined taste and art through many years have made beautiful and attractive, are being lapped up, and by the howling, fiery blast."

Fifty families, most of them professing Union sentiments, with their homes and their furniture in ashes, in the extreme of penury, and debarred of all means of support, were huddled on board the transports, and were conveyed to Beaufort. Most of them had saved nothing

but the few clothes they wore. There they stood, fathers, mothers, daughters, torn from their once happy and beautiful homes and plunged into life-long woe, many of them the innocent victims of dreadful war. It is a slight solace to one's agonized feelings to reflect that probably many of these women were among the most determined and malignant instigators of the conflict. It is one of the mysteries of God's providential government that the innocent must suffer with the guilty.

On the 1st of April the fleet, after a fine run of fourteen hours from the mouth of the St. Johns, returned to Beaufort. General Saxton set apart some houses for the temporary accommodation of these war-stricken refugees, and they were fed upon the rations of the commissary department.

The achievements of our blockading squadron have never been suitably commemorated. And yet they performed many of the most arduous and daring exploits of the war, and contributed far more than is generally supposed to the glorious final result. It was one great object of the National Government to render it as difficult as possible for the rebels to feed their armies. Vast herds of cattle roamed over the prairies of Florida. These were killed, packed in salt, and sent in great abundance, by the internal railroads, to the several encampments. There were innumerable bays and inlets penetrating the Gulf coast of Florida, along whose silent and secluded shores salt-works were reared. The destruction of these works cut off those supplies of meat which were essential to the existence of an army.

About one hundred miles east of Pensacola there was an immense body of water jutting in from the Gulf, called St. Andrews Bay. The shores of this inland sea spread out through uncounted leagues in every conceivable irregularity of outline. Here there was a gloomy forest and there a frowning bluff. At one point the open prairie spread far away until it was lost in the distant horizon, and again the encroaching hillocks, crowned with dark evergreens and hoary, moss-draped oaks, obstructed the view. From time immemorial the wigwam of the Indian had dotted these shores, and his fragile canoe had glanced over these waves. The Indian had now disappeared. The country generally retained its pristine wildness, and naught but the cry of the water-fowl was heard to disturb the silence of its lonely waters.

Not far within the entrance of this majestic bay there was the little town of St. Andrews, an exceedingly convenient resort for blockade-runners. There was a small blockading force guarding the coast there, under the command of Acting-Master William R. Browne. Learning that there were some pretty extensive salt-works in operation far up this bay, in regions where they could not be reached by our gun-boats, and being fully convinced that in their wilderness seclusion they would not be protected by any military force, Mr. Browne fitted

out a single boat's crew of bold men, and sent them on an exploring adventure up the bay under the command of Acting-Ensign James J. Russel. It was the 2d of December, a very delightful season of the year in that sunny region.

They rowed along, in a westerly direction about twenty miles, through a varied scene of wildness, desolation, and beauty, and then landing, marched through the wilderness country five miles until they reached a large sheet of salt-water, called Lake Ocala. Here they came suddenly upon Kent's salt-works. There were thirteen huge tanks or kettles in full blast, each holding two hundred gallons. It seemed as though they had fallen upon some realm of Pluto, as they saw the immense fires blazing, negroes running to and fro feeding them with the resinous fuel, and the air filled with smoke and vapor. They were producing one hundred and thirty gallons of salt daily. Our boat's crew, who certainly deserve the title of intrepid, broke the boilers to pieces, utterly demolished the works, and threw into the lake all the salt which they had accumulated. Two large flat-boats and six ox-carts were destroyed, and seventeen prisoners taken and paroled.

The success of this expedition incited to other similar movements. It so chanced that the stern-wheel steamer *Bloomer*, under Acting-Ensign Edwin Cressy, arrived. The steamer was of such light draught that she could run almost any where over the shallow waters of the bay. Master Browne put three officers and forty-eight men on board, and sent them to the extreme western extremity of the bay, to a place called West Bay, where they found extensive Government salt-works, which were producing four hundred bushels daily. Here they destroyed twenty-seven buildings, two hundred and twenty-two boilers and kettles, five thousand bushels of salt, and store-houses containing three months' provisions. The estimated value of the property destroyed was half a million of dollars.

This little stern-wheeler, which a sailor said "could run wherever there was a light dew," now steamed down the shore of the bay, penetrating all its secluded inlets, and destroyed a hundred and ninety-eight private salt-making establishments. Seven hundred and sixty boilers and kettles were broken to pieces, and an immense amount of salt thrown into the lake. There was also committed to the flames two hundred buildings, twenty-seven wagons, and five large flat-boats. The entire damage to the enemy was deemed not less than three millions of dollars. Such is war! "War," says Napoleon, "is the science of barbarians, the science of destruction."

By some strange instinct, in these far-away regions, the slaves, with universal acclaim, received the Union soldiers as their deliverers. No frowns of their masters could repress their delight. With joy, which at times passed all bounds, they availed themselves of the oppor-

DISTRIBUTION OF SALT-WORKS.



tunity of escaping from a bondage which their souls loathed. These ever-true friends to the Union cause proved of great service in pointing out the location of salt-works, and the places where kettles had been hastily buried for concealment. Thirty-one of these contrabands accompanied the steamer back.

While these movements were in operation, Acting-Master Browne, learning from deserters that the town of St. Andrews had been for ten months occupied by a rebel military force, steamed up in the bark *Restless* to within a hundred yards of the town. Seeing a body of soldiers he shelled them, and drove them speedily into the woods. Then, selecting some of the weathermost houses for a target, he soon

set them in flames by his shells, and the conflagration rapidly spreading, in a few hours thirty-two houses were reduced to ashes.

A few days after these events a steamer was discovered, on the 20th of December, at the mouth of the Suwannee River, apparently at anchor or aground. This was a considerable stream flowing into the Gulf, about two hundred miles, following the coast line, east from Apalachicola. Though there were but five feet of water on the bar, the stream above presented a depth of fifteen feet for a distance of nearly sixty miles. The blockade schooner *Fox*, under command of Acting-Master George Ashbury, made the discovery. She immediately beat up toward her, until, when within three-

quarters of a mile of the rebel steamer, the schooner ran aground. Fire was then opened upon the rebel craft from a howitzer which drove all the crew ashore. Before escaping they scuttled the vessel. A boat's crew took possession of her. Finding that she could not be removed, and night coming on, the torch was applied. Through the long hours of darkness the gloom of those black forests and lone waters was dispelled by the crackling of flames and the brilliance of the great conflagration.

Four days after this, on the 24th of December, the Fox discovered a vessel trying to run into the Suwannee River. Chase was immediately made, and after the run of two hours the persuasive influence of a few shells induced the schooner to heave to. She proved to be a British blockade-runner from Havana, loaded with lead and salt, and was seized as a prize.

Salt is one of the necessities of life. The rebel armies could not exist without it. They immediately made efforts to repair and defend their ruined works. Early in February, 1864, the rebels had put up at West Bay, upon the site of the ruins which we had left there in December, greatly enlarged works, with a guard of fifty to protect them. There were twenty-six sheet-iron boilers, each one of which held eight hundred and eighty-one gallons, and nineteen kettles averaging two hundred gallons. These boilers and kettles had cost nearly one hundred and forty-seven thousand dollars, and the works covered a space of half a square mile. They had been in operation but ten days when Lieutenant W. R. Browne fitted out a cutter, manned with thirteen men under Acting-Ensign James J. Russel, and sent them up the Gulf coast twenty miles. Here they were to land and march inland seven miles, until they should strike the works on West Bay, thus attacking them in the rear. At the same time Acting-Ensign Henry Edson, with a second cutter, containing ten men, proceeded by the inside passage along the shores of St. Andrews Bay, to attack them in front.

This was, to say the least, a very daring movement—twenty-three men setting out to attack fifty on their own ground. Fortune favored the enterprise. The two parties arrived nearly simultaneously. The rebel guard, surprised by the double attack, and unconscious of the feeble numbers of their assailants, probably supposing that a whole regiment was about to dash upon them, broke and fled in terror. The boilers and kettles were broken to pieces, the chimneys and furnaces torn down, six hundred bushels of salt thrown into the bay, and a general destruction so complete effected as to render the works utterly useless. The two parties returned from their prosperous excursion without any loss.

St. Andrews Inlet enters the bay near the centre, dividing it into two bodies of water, the East and West Bay. Lieutenant Browne now, on the 17th of February, fitted out an expedition to cruise along to the east. A cutter with

eleven men was under the charge of Ensign Henry Edson. Master's-Mate F. Grant took the gig with seven men. The boats left the Restless at 8 o'clock in the evening. As they cruised along these solitary bays, creeks, and inlets they destroyed sixteen independent salt works, some of them being the most extensive the rebel Government had ever erected in Florida. Destruction, to a generous heart, must be a painful duty. But it is ennobled and rendered almost joyous by the conviction that comparatively trivial ruin may rescue a great nation from overthrow.

There were now scarcely any rebel troops left in Florida. The indications were quite decisive that, could the Union men be sure of protection, the whole State might easily be brought back to its allegiance to the National Government. Early in February, 1864, General Gilmore was in command at Hilton Head. With the approval of the War Department he fitted out an expedition to take possession of Florida. Twenty steamers and eight schooners conveyed a force of about six thousand men, consisting of infantry, artillery, and cavalry, under command of General T. Seymour. The fleet arrived off the mouth of the St. Johns about ten o'clock on the morning of the 7th. They were entering a clime of sunshine and flowers in all the beauty of its spring adornment, and every heart beat in unison with the bird-songs which filled the air.

Leaving a couple of gun-boats to guard the mouth of the river, the remainder of the fleet steamed up, with the sloops in tow, to the piers of desolate, blackened, ruined Jacksonville. A squad of rebel infantry, hid behind some trees, fired into one of the steamers, wounding one man. Several companies of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts (colored) sprang ashore, and, on the double-quick, gave chase to the foe, who speedily disappeared in the forest. Pursuing them two miles, they came proudly back, bringing with them five prisoners.

The troops, with all the vast material of war which even so small an army requires, were speedily landed. The next day, Monday, the 8th, at three o'clock in the afternoon, they commenced their march into the interior. They proceeded but about three miles that night, and bivouacked. The next morning, Tuesday, the 9th, with a body of cavalry and artillery in advance, they pressed on, directly west, following the line of the Florida Central Railroad, toward a wretched little hamlet called Baldwin, eighteen miles from Jacksonville. The country was uninviting, almost uninhabited. There was not a hill to cheer the eye, but only a vast plain, with occasional swamps, all covered with a scattered growth of resinous pines. There were here and there depressions where the rain had settled in pools of water, and some dismal swamps.

Colonel Henry, with a body of cavalry and artillery, had pushed on during the night, reconnoitring in advance. The night was so

intensely dark that some of the way the riders could not see the heads of their horses. Still they pressed merrily forward, unwisely despising their foe. They had proceeded but a few miles when they came upon the camp-fire of one of the advance rebel pickets. The few rebels there fled precipitately back to their reserve post. Eagerly our advance urged their horses onward until they came to a body of about one hundred and fifty of the enemy, gathered, evidently in some agitation, around their fires at Camp Finnigan. They were hastily eating their breakfast. Their horses were in harness and the wagons partly loaded, ready for a start. It was dark, and the rebels had no knowledge of our approach, though our horses were within a few rods of their camp.

After a careful reconnaissance the Fortieth Massachusetts mounted infantry was formed in line of battle, with Captain Elder's flying artillery just in their rear. Suddenly two buglers blew their loudest blasts, and the cavalry battalion dashed into the very heart of the hostile camp. The foe dispersed like a covey of partridges when the hunter's dog leaps into their midst. In an instant nearly every rebel disappeared in the gloom of night and of the forest. Four guns and the whole camp equipment fell into the hands of the successful Union troops, whose confidence in their own power and in the impotence of the rebels, already too strong, was thus greatly increased.

Colonel Henry remained at Camp Finnigan until four o'clock in the morning, baiting his horses, while the men amused themselves in examining the trunks, valises, and other treasures which had fallen into their hands. Again, before the dawn of day, the troops were mounted and on the road. At seven o'clock the next morning they dashed into Baldwin, eighteen miles from Jacksonville, which they found to be a southern village of fifteen buildings. No foe was found there. In the dépôt they captured stores to the amount of about half a million of dollars. This was deemed an important strategic point, as here the railroad from Fernandina to Cedar Keys crosses the Florida Central. In the afternoon General Gilmore and General Seymour and his Staff came up from Jacksonville.

At nine o'clock the next morning, Wednesday, the 10th, the little army was again upon the move, still following westward the line of the Central Railroad. The march of a couple of hours brought them to Barber's Station. Just beyond they came to a small stream called the South Fork of the St. Mary's River. Here, on the opposite shore, the enemy, at a plank bridge over what is called Big Creek, having destroyed the bridge, made a slight show of resistance. But our horsemen dashed gallantly through the stream and put the foe to flight. A few were killed and several wounded on both sides. One wounded rebel, as he was sinking away in death, said, sadly, that he had been forced into the service, and that he had done

all he could to prevent the war. We secured about fifty horses, with a considerable amount of small-arms. They found here a wealthy Southern planter, who was reputed to be the richest man in the State. He was said to be the proprietor of twenty-five thousand head of cattle. And yet, with characteristic Southern comfortlessness, he lived in a miserable shanty which would not satisfy the ambition of the humblest Northern day-laborer.

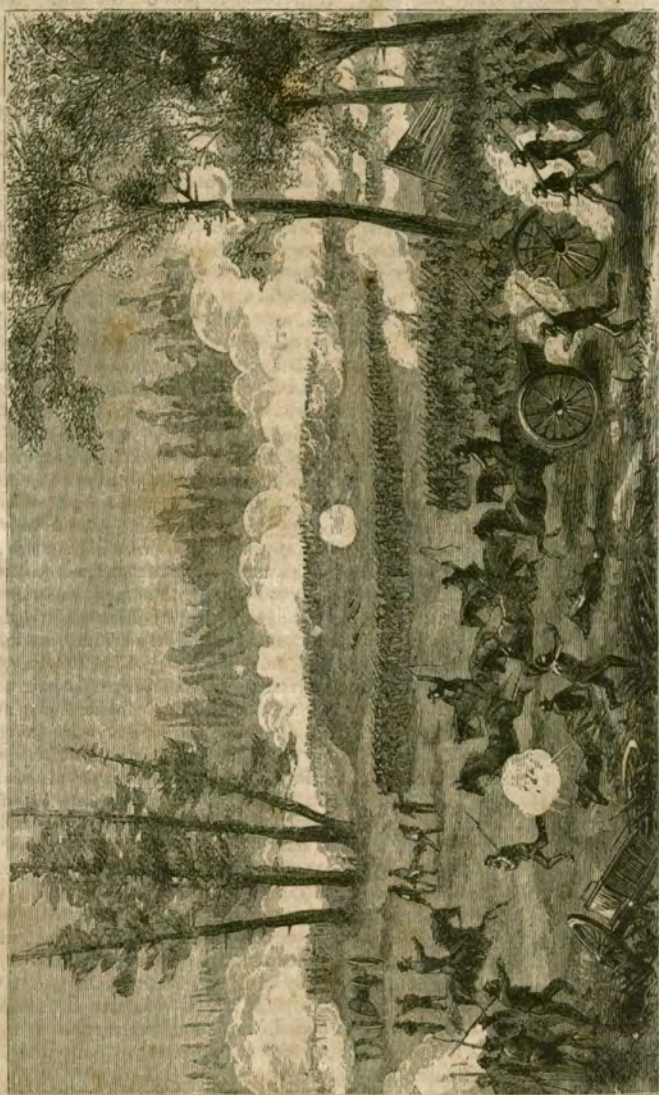
After a short rest at Barber's they pressed on to Sanderson, which was forty miles from Jacksonville. Here they arrived about six o'clock in the evening. Sanderson consists of a railway station a little larger than Baldwin. The rebels had left precipitately fifteen minutes before our troops arrived, and had applied the torch to three buildings containing a large amount of commissary stores. The night was illumined by the great conflagration. At two o'clock the next morning, Thursday, the 11th, the column was again in motion for Lake City, some twenty miles farther west, still following the line of the railroad. At eleven o'clock in the morning they were within a few miles of the city, not having encountered any foe. Here the advance found the enemy in some strength, advantageously posted in the forest. They therefore fell slowly back until the main body could come up.

In the afternoon it began to rain, and a dismal night came on, cold and wet and dark. The men and the horses were jaded out by their long march. Their provisions were also far in their rear. Upon the rain-soaked sods the men bivouacked in the extreme of discomfort. Thus far the expedition had been triumphantly successful. The enemy had not been able to make any stand against us. We had destroyed rebel governmental property to the amount of a million and a half of dollars.

In the mean time for days past the rebels had been hurrying down from their large army in the vicinity of Savannah and Charleston well-armed bands, variously estimated at from ten to fifteen thousand men, to fall stealthily upon our unsuspecting column and destroy it utterly.

They selected their position within a few miles of Lake City, near a railroad station called Olustee. There was a swamp in front of them, earth-works on their left, and a slight elevation covered with forests on the right. They had also chosen the spot where our troops must stand. As the Union troops passed along a narrow neck of land between two swamps they were compelled to deploy to form in line of battle, with the swamps in their rear. They were there exposed to a murderous fire from the well-posted ranks of the foe, and to the unerring aim of sharp-shooters, who in large numbers had climbed into the forest trees. In attempting a retreat the swamps would almost inevitably throw them into dire confusion.

Our leaders, unfortunately, seem to have been inspired on this occasion with the spirit of the



BATTLE OF OLUSTEE

prayer, "Thank God we have none of that sneaking virtue called prudence!" With blind bravery they marched into the jaws of destruction. Many of the guns and muskets were unloaded. No foe was to be seen; no signs of camps any where; no sounds but the tramp of the army and the murmur of the breeze through the pines. The Seventh Connecticut was in the advance. As they passed between the swamps and emerged into the open fields beyond a terrific concentric fire swept their ranks from the almost invisible foe, marshaled in a curved line a mile in length around them. The Seventh New Hampshire, which had already ennobled itself by many brilliant exploits, rushed to the rescue of their comrades. Hamilton's battery

came thundering forward, Elder upon the right, Langdon on the left. The Eighth United States (colored), Colonel Charles W. Fribley, came gallantly at the double-quick into the caldron of death. Our whole force was soon engaged. Never did men fight more desperately. But they were outnumbered three to one. The white man and the black man fought side by side, patriot brothers equal in heroism. The crimson flood from their veins which blended on the sod showed that God had made of "one blood" both races.

For four hours, from two o'clock till six, the battle raged, the Union troops receiving three bullets for every one they could return. Rebel sharp-shooters in the trees could take deliber-