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FORT AND FLEET.

The Great Fight in the Sound-The Confederate Ram Albemarle-And Her Attack on a Fleet.

While the fight between the Monitor and Merrimac, Alabama and the Hatteras, Keokauke and the Essex, brought out some terrific fighting and proved that American pluck had lost none of its ardor since the days of Paul Jones, the affair with the Confederate ram Albemarle, on the 19th of May, 1862, may be set down as the bravest and most determined action between vessels afloat in any war for the history of the world.

When the keel of the Albemarle was laid the Confederacy was hard up for money, had lost all hopes of foreign intervention, and the spirits of its soldiers were discouraged. The work of building such a craft at that time was an immense undertaking, and even in semi-official circles it was believed she would never be finished.

First and last 2,000 men were engaged in her construction. Two of those men now reside in Detroit, Michigan, and one or more can be found in almost any city in the South. Whatever faults had been pointed out in other rams were avoided in the Albemarle, and she was built with the Confederacy, and outside of the work of detailed soldiers and men furnished by the contractors, there were employed some of the most skilled mechanics that gold could induce to take hold. Instead of hurrying to get her aloft, the work progressed so slowly that an official investigation was ordered, and the vessel was not launched until the 19th of May, 1862.

The ram was armed with two of the heaviest Brooke guns, so mounted that each one constituted a broadside. The conventional armament of the ram was in addition to gunners and working crew she carried about fifty riflemen, who were so posted that their fire could be trained into the ports of an antagonist. Her screw wheel was sunk so as to be out of reach of shot, and her stem was so stoutly constructed that she would have been able to open a gap in the side of the stoutest iron-clad in the Union Navy.

It was expected of the Albemarle that she would destroy the Federal fleet in the Sound and then proceed to Charleston and raise the blockade. Under such a commander as Semmes she would have accomplished her task, but she did not even fall to carry out the programme planned for her.

Waiting her appearance there was a Federal fleet of six Federal gun-boats in the Sound, and the appearance of the Albemarle was daily looked for long enough before she dove in sight. Descriers had reported that she did not have much steam and power of engines, and every preparation had been made for a terrific fight. Admiral Lee had received general instructions from the Secretary of the Navy, and had issued particular directions to his fleet.

THE MATTABESSETT.

This vessel led the Federal fleet, and was the first to receive a shot. When she had approached within 300 yards the ram gave her a shot which sent her past the smoke-stack without injury, but a second shot struck the gun-boat and wounded six men. This fire was at once returned with solid shot. The massive ball from the ram's gun, hurled with a charge of thirteen pounds of powder, struck the ram with a crash that could be heard two miles away, but bounded off a tall backwater into the water, having scarcely left a dent in the armor of the ram.

Shearing off to avoid the ram, the Mattabesett received the fire of the Bombshell, which had gallantly followed the Albemarle into the fight. The Federal gave her one broadside, and brought down her bows, but from the remainder of the fight, the Mattabesett had all the orders to give by signals, but her report, at the close of the action, showed that she had fired fifty shots, but from the remainder of the ram, and thirty-seven of which struck her fair and square. As to her damage, she was struck six or seven times, and her bows were shattered and six wounded. One solid shot, fired from the ram at close quarters, crashed into the bow of the Mattabesett, and traversed a distance of thirty feet before it rested. This was the shot which killed the two men, and wounded two others. Something of the awful force of such a shot may be gleaned from the estimate made on board the gun-boat that it would have crashed through a barrier of planks six feet thick.

This craft followed the Mattabesett into the fight and delivered her broadside into the ram fairly abreast and not over 200 feet away. One solid shot bounded back a third of the distance, and the others fell into the water. It was as if a bullet had been fired from a revolver at a piece of boiler-plate. In the confusion of the moment the Albemarle fell into the position hoped for by the Sassafras, and this latter vessel took a run of several hundred yards with throttle wide open and her guns firing amidships. The collision knocked down nearly every person on both vessels, but was felt more on the gun-boat than on the ram. It seemed as though the ram, as if by enchantment, had been started, and the jar could have been no worse had she run full tilt at a stone wall.

The ram was now straggling and full of peril. The gun-boat held her bow firmly against the ram and sought to push her under, and she so nearly succeeded that the Albemarle's crew, who were not so well defended by a thickness of at least twelve inches of iron and backing, and at certain points there was an armor eighteen inches thick.

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TO DISABLE THE GUNNERS WHO HAD FIRED THEM.

At one stage of the fight the ram fired with 100 feet of the ram for thirteen minutes, and gave her a shot every twelve seconds. She fired 120 shot, all six and nine-inch, the former having filled casks and driven by ten pounds of powder, and yet not one of these solid shot produced the least damage.

The Miami received seven or eight shots from the Albemarle, and had nearly all her bulkheads knocked into kindlings and her decks pretty well cleared of everything which could be damaged by iron shot. Her injuries were inflicted by a shell from one of her own guns, which rebounded from the ram to her deck and there exploded. She was leaning over to starboard when the shot was fired, and the ram's fire was ended, but she had passed through such a fight as would have shaken the nerves of a Nelson. Every missile which struck her was as deadly as the remainder of the fight, the Mattabesett had all the orders to give by signals, but her report, at the close of the action, showed that she had fired fifty shots, but from the remainder of the ram, and thirty-seven of which struck her fair and square.

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BILL ARP'S LETTER.

An Awful Situation—A Haunted House—“O, Solitude where are Thy Charms!”—The Sorrows and Comforts of a “Grass” Widower, etc.

It's an awful thing to be alone. I don't mean alone in a room when you can just step out of it and see the faces and hear the voices you love, but to be alone in great, big house with seven rooms, and every body gone but you. Mrs. Arp and the little chaps are off to Rome on a visit, and the girls have gone to spend the night in town and left me here to take care of the house, and it is an awful situation. The rooms seem mighty big and hollow, and everything is so still and so dim, and I can't help feeling like I was at a funeral. I don't believe in ghosts, but it does seem like there might be one about. The window creaks louder on its hinges than I ever knew it before. It's an awful thing to have no woman in the house, ain't it? Treckon a man can't do much for hisself, but an old bachelor in solitude, by beginning when he is young, but I couldn't do it now. Two days have gone, and I'm getting more and more of a solitary confinement, and I'm getting through the day pretty well if it isn't raining, but the rain makes solitude more gloomy. I went in to see how the girls were, and I was scared and made me look round for something, but I didn't see it. The clock ticks awful loud, and the hamons in the kitchen seem to know me. I wonder how an exile feels when he finds himself alone on a great, big island, no wife, no children, nor kind folks, nor to train the cat, and I'm getting more and more of a solitary confinement, and I'm getting through the day pretty well if it isn't raining, but the rain makes solitude more gloomy.

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A CRUEL JOKE.

A Heartless “Frank” Played Upon an Aspirant for Congress.

When Colonel Singleton was a candidate for Congress from one of the hill districts of Arkansas, he had a rich experience. He soon became the butt of his opponents' jokes, and as he was a true aspirant for the position, his life was exaggerated. Once when the candidates, on horseback, were going to meet an appointment of special order, Singleton fell behind, determining to no longer submit to their rally. The party passed out of sight, leaving the disappointed candidate to his own reflections. A slight rain had fallen, and when the party crossed a broad, shallow creek, one young fellow conceived the idea of a joke. “Suppose,” said he, “that we take off our coats and wait until Singleton comes in sight, when we will put them on, giving him the impression that the creek is deep. We'll not say a word, but we will think that we want him to plunge into the water.”

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INTERNAL REVENUE.

What the Largest Southern Manufacturing House Says.

From a private letter from Messrs. Blackwell & Co., of Durham, we extract the following: During the past twelve years our payment of internal revenue have run into the millions, being perhaps the third or fourth largest contributor to this fund in the United States. Your position is beyond question the soundest that has come under our eyes in connection with the tariff. We hold it a fallacy that all our revenue should be raised entirely under the tariff. We hold that the necessary amount of life so far as our resources are concerned, is necessary that we raise revenue otherwise than by taxation. We hold that the tax upon tobacco is almost a voluntary one, and that tobacco is a luxury, and as long as it is necessary that we raise revenue otherwise than by taxation, we will afford to bear his share of the burden. We hold that it will be a great mistake, and one not easily remedied, if the tariff is not raised, and we will afford to bear his share of the burden. We hold that it will be a great mistake, and one not easily remedied, if the tariff is not raised, and we will afford to bear his share of the burden.

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Peculiar Accidents.

Gathering butternuts on Sunday last, Wm. Laine of Odenburg, aged 15, his life. He fell from a tree.

Frank Latimer, two years of age, of Olean, N. Y., lost his life by falling from a tree. He was playing in a yard when he fell from a tree, and he died instantly.

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Two Silly Corporations Fighting Each Other.

Business Editors—I notice that you are publishing a notice that the State Bank of North Carolina is suing the State Bank of North Carolina for the sum of \$100,000.

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