

A CONFEDERATE RAID

Being a Faithful Historical Narrative, Derived from Original Sources

(Drawings by Warren Sheppard)

Winfield M. Thompson

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DURING the autumn of 1862 there lay in the harbor of Mobile a British-built steamer of 700 tons from whose mizzen peak flew the Stars and Bars of the Confederacy. Her straight black hull, high bulwarks pierced with ports, and generally rakish appearance indicated the character of work for which she was being fitted by the large crew of machinists and other mechanics employed on board.

She was the commerce-destroyer Florida, destined for a cruise against the shipping of the North.

Commanding her was Lieutenant John N. Maffitt, a naval officer of many years experience. He had been successful in bringing the ship into a Confederate port to fit out only through the exercise of great bravery, unflinching zeal and indomitable will, and the fame of his exploits rang throughout the South. Crowds gathered on the shores to gaze at the ship in patriotic admiration, and sailors of all grades of ability and all standings in society, from the Southern gentleman and officer, whose loyalty had led him to resign his post in the United States Navy to cast his lot with the cause of his kin, down to the expatriated beachcomber and fo'castle tramp of the New Orleans levees, offered themselves as candidates for a berth in her complement.

Lieutenant Maffitt found the work of fitting out exasperatingly slow—such undertakings were new to the South, and materials came to hand only after most discouraging delays—and he found also that the work of recruiting his ship's company was filled with a thousand vexations. Out of the human drift of the Southern ports it was comparatively easy to select common seamen suited to the character of the work in hand; to get competent engineers, gunners, and officers, was another matter. In the case of the latter, political and social considerations entered the balance held by the members of the provisional navy department of Confederacy, and weighed with them in making assignments. The result was the quartering on Commander Maffitt of several young incompetents whose qualifications, and ideas on discipline and labor on shipboard, caused him to groan within. Last to arrive, however, of the officers assigned to duty on the vessel, was a young man whose record, as represented to Lieutenant Maffitt, gave promise of a different sort of sailor than those who had already reported to him. This young

man was Charles W. Read, whose commission as a 2nd lieutenant in the Confederate Navy bore date of October 23, 1862. As he greeted this young officer, the harassed commander of the Florida saw that here he had a subordinate who would one day prove of value to him. "He is the best they have sent me," thought Commander Maffitt, as he looked upon the slim, boyish figure and into the thin face and brown eyes of the young officer.*

Though but 23 years old, Lieutenant Read had already earned a place of honor among his brother officers in the Confederate service. Graduated from the Naval Academy in 1860—at the bottom of his class of 25 men, for dreaming and scheming and reading the stories of old sea rovers had pleased him better than the routine of study—Read, in his first year of service afloat, had been compelled, by events, like every other officer in the navy, to make a declaration of his allegiance. Although others of his class, from border states, had cast their lot with the North—Winfield Scott Schley, of Maryland, and John C. Watson, of Kentucky, whose names are now on the list of rear-admirals, were among them—Read, whose home was in Mississippi, never hesitated a moment in surrendering his rank of midshipman as soon as the first gun was fired in the great contest, and enlisting in the naval arm of the Confederate service.

Read boarded the Florida with more than a year of active service to his credit—service that had sent him more than once, on the Mississippi, through a hell of fire—but he had not yet tasted the delights of sea roving. He yearned for an opportunity to prey on merchantmen owned in the North, and secure reprisal, in a measure, for the losses his family had sustained in the path of war in Mississippi. His views of war were in accord with such a method. His ideal of a sailor had always been the free fighter of the glorious old days of the sail. More than once he had pored over the romantic adventures of Paul Jones. The struggles and achievements of that heroic adventurer were an inspiration to him. He felt such deeds were not entirely things of the past, and often in his conversations with intimates he had talked of raids against the enemy that should be as full of dash, danger and the possibilities of success as those of Jones in the waters of the British Isles.

When, therefore, Read stood on the deck of the Florida, he felt he had at last arrived at a goal of his ambition. From his commanding officer, and others on board, he heard with a thrill of excitement the story of the Florida's brief but stirring career since her departure

* Journal of Commander John N. Maffitt, C. S. N.—*Naval Records*.



The Florida and Clarence Part Company

as a merchantman from England—of her arrival at Nassau, her arrest and release there; of the man-killing labor of putting aboard her guns and stores in the intense heat of midsummer at Green Cay; of the horrors of yellow fever, with which the crew were stricken as they worked, and the terrible labors of Lieutenant Maffitt, to succor the dying, there being no doctor on board; of the escape to Cardenas, where the ship lay for days helpless off the town, when scarce a man could raise his head, and even the commander was delirious from the fever; of the escape from watchful Federal gunboats, the arrival at Havana, the escape from there at night in the shadow of the wooded shore below the Morro, and of the dash past the blockaders into Mobile Bay, which was reached with the Florida's sails, rigging, spars and funnels in fragments and tatters, and her hull peppered with shot.

In the breast of Read the fire of adventurous ardor was fanned to a clear flame by this recital. He was in a fever to get to sea. The slow work of making repairs, of mounting guns, of fitting out for a long cruise, seemed to him interminable. The late autumn passed slowly without a move being made to depart. The Federal blockaders were off the bar in force. Risk was great, and it must be reduced to a minimum, for the Confederacy had then but one ship at sea, the Alabama, and the Florida, no less than she, was considered priceless to the cause of

the South. Once free of the watchdogs at the bar, her commander believed she could show her heels to the Federals.

Anxiously all hands watched the weather as the month of December, 1862, dragged along its dismal days, for a dark and stormy night was necessary to escape. But still orders did not arrive for the vessel to sail. In all the ship's company no one was so impatient at the delay as Read. On every dark night, and in every passing squall, he saw an opportunity to get away.*

At last, on the night of the 16th of January, 1863, the nervous tension of all on board reached its height, for orders were given to get the vessel underway, and make for the bar. There had been a storm with rain and a strong Westerly wind, but about two in the morning the clouds cleared away and a few stars came out. A light mist hung over Mobile Bay, and the wind was puffy, when the Florida, with all lights out and not a sound coming from her decks, made for the bar, under sail and steam. The innermost blockading vessel, anchored in the channel, was passed at 2:40 without a hail coming from her. So was a second, but before the dark hull of the Florida had passed a third, a spurt of flame from one of her funnels betrayed her. Rockets went up from all

* Journal of Commander Maffitt—*Naval Records*.

of the nine vessels in the blockading squadron, and in a few minutes shot and shell were flying through the sails and rigging of the fleeing Confederate. Slipping their cables, the blockaders gave chase, though too late. The Florida, under all sail and steam, with a half gale to help her, was making $14\frac{1}{2}$ knots when she passed the blockaders, and secured a lead they could not overcome. The chase lasted all day, and at night the Confederate had run all her pursuers hull down but two. By changing her course when darkness fell, she shook off these two. Next morning she was alone, with nothing in sight but foaming seas and black flying clouds.*

Thus was her cruise against the shipping of the North begun—a cruise destined to be second only in its far-reaching effects to that of the Alabama.

The young officers of the Florida were not long in getting their first taste of adventure at sea. Prizes were taken the following day, and rich prizes, too. This put them in high spirits, and in the breast of one of their number, Lieutenant Read, it acted on an appetite of personal ambition like blood on a tiger. All the dreams of his youth, all the schemes he had devised for the Confederacy, seemed possible of fruition in such a sphere of action as this. With a command of his own, he felt he could bring distinction to himself and strike a hard blow for the cause in which he was enlisted.

In the many informal conversations which he was enabled to hold, as the cruise advanced, with his commanding officer, Read unfolded various plans for further raids on the enemy's shipping, to all of which Lieutenant Maffitt lent a sympathetic ear. The plan that was nearest his heart, and which most appealed to the Florida's commander, contemplated the employment by Lieutenant Read of a merchantman prize, to be manned by a picked crew, for the purpose of entering a Northern port and cutting out a fast steamer, or firing shipping. Commander Maffitt cherished a hope of going to the North himself, in the Florida, as he believed much damage could be done in a short time on the New England coast; but he could not see his way clear to abandon at that time his successful Southern cruise, even "to give the coast of New England a small appreciation of war troubles," as he says in his journal. To send a subordinate was then the best thing he could do to further his plan, and Lieutenant Read, he believed, could make such a mission a success if any man could.

The Florida's commander, therefore, assented to Lieutenant Read's plan, and the seizure of a prize suited to their purpose was awaited. The Florida was now cruising near the coast of Brazil, standing back and forth off Cape St. Roque in the path of shipping. On the morning of May 6, 1863, a clear, hot day, common to that latitude, with a smart trade wind blowing, her lookout sighted a brig to leeward, standing North. After a short chase the Florida slowed down, showed her colors, and hailed the brig, which proved to be the Clarence, of Baltimore, from Rio for her home port with coffee.

Lieutenant Read with a boat's crew boarded the Clarence. Her captain lost no time in giving assurances of surrender. He feared being sent to bottom by the guns he knew were concealed behind the black bulwarks of the steamer rolling easily in the long swell less than half a mile to weather of him. Lieutenant Read examined the brig's papers, found them regular, and then looked over the vessel, with an eye to her requirements for the raid on which he was now impatient to be off. The

Clarence was about 250 tons burden, and stoutly built, though her lines gave more than a hint that her sailing qualities were doubtful. She had little, if any shear, and a half elliptical stern. Her rig was that of an hermaphrodite, and small. Her bowsprit was short, she had no royals, and she carried no canvas above the main topmast staysail. The end of her main boom did not extend beyond the taffrail. Her deck arrangement included a house forward of the foremast and an after house, the top of which came just above the rail, and had an iron railing around it. She was painted black, with a white stripe around the bulwarks.* Inspection below, and a sounding of the pumps, convinced Lieutenant Read that the little coffee carrier would suit his purpose admirably, and with the captain and crew as prisoners, a prize crew being left in charge of the Clarence, he returned to the Florida, and informed Lieutenant Maffitt that the brig could be made to do for his cruise.

Now that the plan was to be put to the touch, the proposal of Lieutenant Read, and his commanding officer's assent to it, were submitted to writing, in the following form:

C. S. S., FLORIDA, AT SEA, MAY 6, 1863.

SIR:—I propose to take the brig we have just captured, and with a crew of 20 men, to proceed to Hampton Roads and cut out a gunboat or steamer of the enemy.

As I would be in possession of the brig's papers, and as the crew would not be large enough to excite suspicion, there can be no doubt of my passing Fortress Monroe successfully. Once in the Roads I would be prepared to avail myself of any circumstances which might present for gaining the deck of an enemy's vessel. If it was found impossible to board a gunboat or merchant steamer, it would be possible to fire the shipping at Baltimore.

If you think proper to accede to my proposal, I beg you will allow me to take Mr. E. H. Brown, and one of the firemen with me. Mr. Brown might be spared from this ship as his health is bad, and you could obtain another engineer at Pernambuco.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

C. W. READ,

2ND LIEUTENANT, C. S. NAVY.

To Lieutenant Commanding John N. Maffitt.

To this communication the following reply was made:

MAY 6, 1863.

SIR:—Your proposition of this date has been duly considered, under such advisement as the gravity of the case demands.

The conclusion come to is that you may meet with success by centering your views upon Hampton Roads. The Sumpter (a Cromwell steamer) is now a kind of flagship anchored off Hampton bar, and at midnight might be carried by boarding. If you find that impracticable, the large quantity of shipping at the Fort, or in Norfolk, could be fired, and you and crew escape to Burwell's Bay, thence making your way in safety to the Confederate lines.

The proposition evinces on your part patriotic devotion to the cause of your country, and this is certainly the time when all our best exertions should be made to harm the common enemy and confuse them with attacks from all unexpected quarters. I agree to your request, and will not hamper you with instructions.

Act for the best, and God speed you. If success attends the effort, you will deserve the fullest consideration of the department, and it will be my pleasure to urge a just recognition of the same.

Under all circumstances you will receive from me the fullest justice for the intent and public spirit that influences the proposal.

I give you a howitzer and ammunition, that you may have the means of capture if an opportunity offers en route.

Wishing you success and a full reward for the same,

I am, yours truly,

J. N. MAFFITT,

†LIEUTENANT COMMANDING, C. S. NAVY.

To Lieutenant Read.

* *Naval Records*—Series I, Vol. 2.

†John N. Maffitt attained the rank of Commodore on April 14, 1863, but the official notice of his promotion bears the very date on which this letter was written, and did not reach him until some months later.

* Journal of Commander Maffitt—*Naval Records*.

The day was an exciting one on the Florida. All hands were alive to the importance of the undertaking on which Lieutenant Read was about to embark. Some of his fellow officers envied him the opportunity. Others said it came from favoritism, a charge often heard on shipboard. Read's call for volunteers produced more men than he could take. A selection was made from among the most daring in the Florida's crew. No man among them but felt in his veins the excitement of adventure, and faced the danger before him with pleasure. Among the seamen selected were a few who had been with the Florida from the first. One of them, J. W. Billups, quartermaster, was her helmsman when she entered the bay of Mobile. Others were of the same stamp, as daring a band of rovers as ever stepped foot on the deck of a prize. To supply Lieutenant Read with officers, Billups, N. B. Pryde, a gunner, and J. W. Matherson, bo's'n's mate, were made master's mates by Commander Maffitt. Brown, who was the Florida's 3rd assistant engineer, was rated as "second officer" of the Clarence. The ship's company, all told, numbered 22.

The Clarence was officially named "Confederate States Corvette Florida No. 2."

While the recruiting was going on the lookout of the Florida reported a sail to windward. Leaving the Clarence to jog along, the Florida gave chase. The chase did not prove a prize, and in the afternoon the Confederate cruiser again came into company with the Clarence and slowed down. The work of transferring the small gun—a boat howitzer, 6-pounder—its ammunition, the men's effects, and such stores as were needed, to the Clarence, did not take long, and after a final conference between Commander Maffitt and Lieutenant Read, a boat from the Clarence took the young lieutenant to his new command. When the boat had been stowed, and sail made on the Clarence, Read stood on the quarter-deck of the little brig and took a farewell look at the Florida, already underway, headed South. As the steamer passed the brig, now filling away on a Northerly course, her crew lined the side, and waving their caps, gave three cheers for the little band on the Clarence. The cheers were returned, and the two vessels parted company, the Florida standing to the Southward and Westward under steam and all sail.* In less than an hour the Florida was hull down, and Lieutenant Read had time to indulge in some sober thoughts on the enterprise on which he was embarked, and on the requirements of his role as a peaceful merchantman.

Laying a course from the position in which he left the Florida—latitude 5° 35' South, longitude 34° 23' West—so as to give the West Indies a fair berth, Read pushed his little tub of a brig along at her best pace, fretting as the hot days dragged their slow length along, and finding the moderate gait of his vessel a trying contrast to the smart pace of the Florida. The Clarence's crew found the management of the vessel a source of interest and instruction, for many of them had never been on a square-rigger before. To prepare for their campaign they made a fine battery of Quaker guns from some spare spars, and painted them, with many jocose quips, to represent the gray muzzles of heavy ordnance. These guns were kept concealed behind the bulwarks, to be mounted when needed. So also was the little brass howitzer.

Off the Windward Islands the Clarence fell in with several sail of merchantmen, one after another. Chase

* Log of the Florida—*Naval Records*.

was given to some, but so dull was the little brig at sailing that the quarry got away in every instance. When well up with the American coast the Clarence made her first capture, Southeast of Hatteras, in latitude 33° 39' N., longitude 71° 29' W., just one month after parting from the Florida. It proved to be the bark Whistling Wind, from Philadelphia, for New Orleans with coal for the government. Her papers and nautical instruments were taken, and her crew made prisoners. She was then burned. Next day, June 7, the schooner Alfred H. Partridge, from New York, with a Confederate cargo of arms and clothing for Texas, was boarded. Her captain gave a bond for \$5,000, to deliver her cargo "to loyal citizens of the Confederate States." On June 9, in latitude 32° 52' N., longitude 74° 6' W., the brig Mary Alvina, Boston to New Orleans with army stores, was captured and burned.* From prisoners and papers taken in the Whistling Wind and Mary Alvina, Lieutenant Read gleaned information of a state of affairs at Hampton Roads that would put a quietus on his plans to cut out a steamer there. No vessel was allowed to enter except those with stores for the government. There was a strong guard of gunboats above Fortress Munroe, and sentries on the wharf. Outside the fort were two boarding steamers. Baltimore also was guarded by gunboats in the bay. He was powerless, even in his pacific disguise, and some change of plan was necessary. He decided therefore to cruise along the coast, and capture a vessel suited to a raid into New England waters, where Commander Maffitt had promised to meet him about June 20, if circumstances permitted.

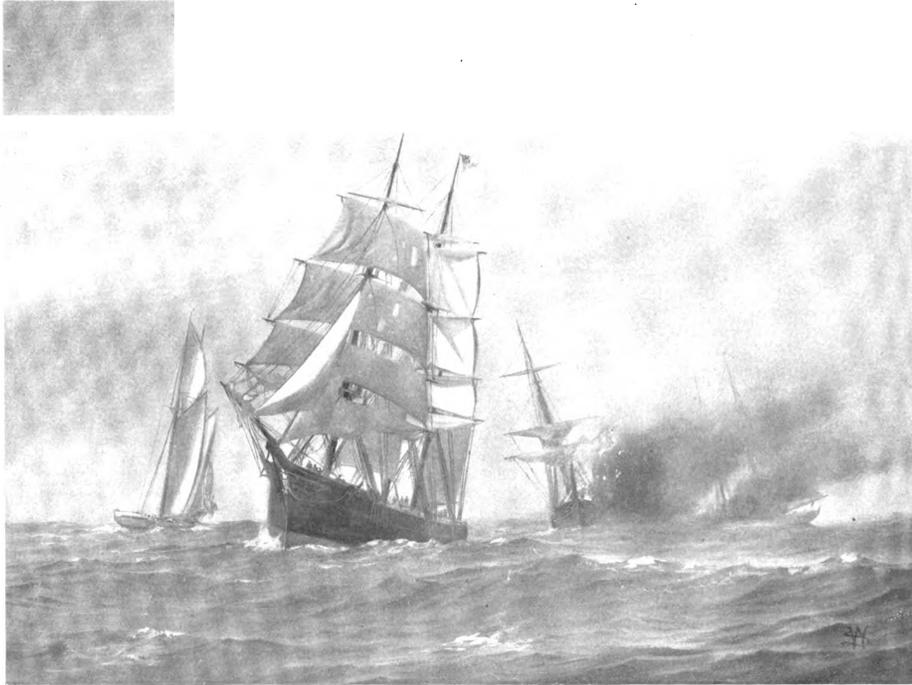
The Clarence, now foul from her long voyage, and slow at best, was not the proper vessel for such an undertaking. Read determined to transfer his crew to the first prize better suited to his work, and so informed his men. They were heartily tired of the Clarence, and eager to make a change.

On the morning of June 12 the Clarence, when off Cape Charles about 40 miles—her position was latitude 37° N., longitude 75° 30' W.—sighted a bark in ballast, also standing North, and overtaking her in the light Southerly wind. The Clarence shortly luffed, and brought the bark into the wind with a shot from the howitzer, a hail and a display of her Quaker battery. Lieutenant Read marked her well as she backed her topsails and lay close aboard, awaiting a visit from the Clarence's boat. She seemed to be about 400 tons, and was in ballast, her copper showing below the load line, as well as a gap in her cut water below the bobstays. She was a full-rigged bark, painted black, and having the appearance of being a fairly able vessel, though out of repair, and with a rusty suit of sails. She appeared to have but a single deck, with a deep waist, and the poop extending to the main hatchway, with a netting around it. Her to'gallant fo'castle was open, and the forward house was built around the foremast. She carried one quarter-boat, and a long boat stowed amidships, bottom up.

The bark was the Tacony, of Egg Island Harbor, from Port Royal for Philadelphia. Armed with revolvers and cutlasses, a boarding crew from the Clarence clambered over her side in a few minutes, led by Lieutenant Read. None of the party wore uniforms. After examining the bark's papers, Lieutenant Read made

* Report of Lieutenant Read—*Naval Records*.

† Description in *New York Herald*, June, 1863, by the captain of the Brig Umpire.



Burning the Clarence after Capture of the Tacony

prisoners of Captain Munday of the Tacony and his crew.

While this capture was going on a schooner bore down on the two vessels. She came close, to see what the trouble was between the brig and bark, and was brought under the Clarence's Quaker battery.

"Don't shoot! Don't shoot!" shouted her captain, as he caught sight of the wooden guns. "I'll surrender, if you give me time. I'll surrender!"*

He did, forthwith. The schooner was the M. A. Shindler, in ballast, from Port Royal to Philadelphia, a cargo carrier, like the Tacony, to Admiral Du Pont's South Atlantic blockading fleet.

After making this prize Lieutenant Read inspected the Tacony, and satisfied himself that she was a better vessel for his purpose than the Clarence. Returning to the latter he ordered his men to transfer their effects to the Tacony, together with the howitzer and wooden guns.

While the transfer was taking place another schooner was discovered coming down the wind. She stood near the Clarence and her two prizes, and also fell a victim to the brig's Quaker battery, not yet entirely dismounted. This schooner was the Kate Stewart, from Key West for Philadelphia.

* Journal of one of Lieutenant Read's men.

As Lieutenant Read now had 75 prisoners from his five prizes to date, he decided to place them on the Stewart, and liberate her on a bond for \$7,000, payable to the president of the Confederate States 30 days after the signing of a treaty of peace.

The seizures, and transfer of prisoners, took several hours, and it was noon before the Stewart got underway. She headed directly for the Capes of the Delaware, and Lieutenant Read was well aware that before 24 hours had passed Washington would know the facts of the seizures, and vessels would be dispatched to hunt him down. This thought did not delay for a moment the work in hand. As soon as their effects were on board the Tacony the Confederates fired the Clarence and the Shindler, and leaving them enshrouded in smoke and flame, crowded all sail on the Tacony, and stood off Northeastward, breaking out at their peak the colors of the Confederacy, and naming their new ship Florida No. 2.

The first chase of the Tacony was overhauled that afternoon. She was the brig Arabella, Aspinwall for New York, with a neutral cargo. She was bonded for \$30,000.

Heading for the track of westbound shipping South of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, Lieutenant Read, on June 15, in latitude 30° 40' N., longitude 69° 20' W..

captured and burned the brig *Umpire*, Cardenas for Boston, with molasses and sugar. On the 20th, in 40° 50' N., 69° 20' W., he captured the packet ship *Isaac Webb*, from Liverpool to New York, with 750 passengers, and bonded her for \$40,000. The same day he burned the fishing schooner *Micawber*. On June 21, in 41° N., 69° 10' W., he captured and burned the fine clipper ship *Byzantium*, from London for New York, with coal. Later in the day he burned the bark *Goodspeed*, from Londonderry to New York, in ballast.

And all this with one six-pounder and a battery of Quaker guns!

Appearing next on Georges banks, where the New England fishing fleet lay at anchor, the *Tacony* came among the fishermen like a dog among sheep. The weather was now foggy, and this in a measure helped the commander of the *Tacony* in striking his blow at the fishing industry. During the 22nd, in intervals when the fog bank lifted and revealed the positions of the fishermen, the *Tacony* sailed up to one after another, and demanded their surrender. In all five vessels were taken this day. They were the schooners *Marengo*, *Florence*, *Elizabeth Ann*, *Rufus Choate* and *Ripple*. The first was burned on being taken, but the others were taken in tow of the bark for a time. Other vessels, seeing the rusty square-rigger looming out of the fog with four fishermen in tow, slipped their cables and escaped into the friendly obscurity of the white veil that shut down from time to time, to their salvation. In some instances they were obliged to get out their dories ahead, as the wind was light. As 76 prisoners had been taken among the fishermen, Lieutenant Read decided to put them on board the *Florence*, the oldest of the schooners, which was bonded, and allowed to sail for Gloucester. The other vessels were then searched and burned. The next day the schooners *Ada* and *Wandlerer* shared the same fate.

That night, which was very dark, with the fog banked up to the Southward and the sky overcast, the *Tacony* was standing along slowly to the Northward and Eastward in a light Southeasterly breeze, when she encountered one of the numerous Federal vessels that by this time were scouring the sea for her.* The incident may be best described in the following abstract from a paper by Robert Hunt, one of Lieutenant Read's crew, read at a meeting of the Confederate Veterans' Association at Savannah in the fall of 1894:

"About six bells of the first watch, our lookout reported a steamer ahead. Our commander came on deck, and after scanning the steamer with his glasses pronounced her a Yankee gunboat.

"'Well boys,' he said, 'I guess our frolics are over, but we must try to fool them.'

"She was soon in hailing distance, and as she hauled up her commander hailed us as follows: 'Bark ahoy! What and where bound?' To which Lieutenant Read answered: 'Bark *Mary Jane*, from *Sagua la Grande*, bound to *Portland*.'

"The captain of the gunboat informed us there was a 'rebel privateer' cruising along the coast burning merchantmen, and that we had better keep a sharp lookout. Lieutenant Read thanked him and he steamed away to the Northward.

*The yacht *America* was among the vessels sent out in pursuit of the *Tacony*. See "The Yacht *America* in the Government Service," in *THE RUDDER* for March, 1903.

"What a narrow escape! We were all speechless; for more than a minute not a word was passed. The silence was broken by Read, whose first words were, 'boys, we have had a close call, but we are still on deck. It is getting too hot for us in this latitude; we must change the program.'

"Lieutenant Read then called all hands aft and stated to them his plans.

"'Boys,' he said, 'the game is about up with this vessel. We are being chased by about 20 Yankee vessels,* and some of them will get us if we don't make a change. I propose taking the first fast schooner we can get, and going in her to *Portland*. There is a revenue cutter in *Portland harbor*, and we might be able to cut her out. Two gunboats are building there, and we may destroy them. If we fail in this, we may take the *Boston steamer*, and in her join the *Florida*.'

"The men expressed satisfaction with this program."

Next morning, in 43° 10' N., 67° 43' W., the weather still being thick, with occasional lifting of the fog, a ship was sighted, and on coming up was boarded. She proved to be the *Shatenuc*, Liverpool for Boston, with 350 immigrants and cargo. Lieutenant Read took charge of her, and remained aboard all day, the *Tacony* standing by. The *Shatenuc* carried iron plates (probably for gunboats), and Lieutenant Read for this reason wished to destroy her, if he could secure vessels to take her passengers. None appearing, he bonded the ship for \$150,000,† and toward night left her. Shortly after his return to the *Tacony* the lookout reported a fishing vessel in sight, heading Southeast. The *Tacony* stood toward her, but in the light breeze could make little headway. The quarter boat was lowered, therefore, and sent after the fisherman, which was reached after a pull of three miles. It was the schooner *Archer* of Southport, Captain Robert Snowman. The boarding party from the *Tacony* saluted the captain and his men courteously, and announced they were prisoners to the Confederate States;‡ then, leaving them to cool their heels on deck, the Confederates sat down in the *Archer's* forecabin to a savory supper of fish chowder and tongues and sounds, of which the Southport men were about to partake when interrupted.§ The *Archer* was bound to the Bay de Chaleurs, on a mackerel fishing trip, and had come out of Southport only the day before. She had a full supply of fresh stores on board and being a fast and able vessel,|| she pleased Lieutenant Read, who decided to abandon the *Tacony* and shift his flag to the *Archer*.

After supper the *Archer* took on the other prisoners and stood for the *Shatenuc*, which had not got far, the

* A shrewd estimate. There were in fact about 20 vessels engaged in the pursuit.

† C. S. BARR FLORIDA, No. 2, AT SEA, JUNE 24TH, 1863.

‡ \$150,000. Thirty days after the ratification of a treaty of peace between the Confederate States and the United States of America, I, or we, promise to pay the President of the Confederate States the sum of One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000) for the release of the ship *Shatenuc* and cargo.

(SEAL) JOHN H. OXNARD,
MASTER, SHIP SHATENUC.

‡ Letter to the author from Captain Robert Snowman, of Cape Newagen, Me.

§ Journal of one of Lieutenant Read's men.

|| The *Acher* was about 70 tons. She was one of a fleet owned by William Decker, of Southport. The author's boyhood years were spent at the little cove where the *Archer* was fitted out, Southport being his native place.

wind still being light. All the fishermen were transferred to the ship in the early morning. Provisions from the schooner, including two barrels of flour and some new butter, were also put aboard, and the Archer returned to the Tacony. Having now disposed of all his prisoners, Lieutenant Read gave the order to abandon the bark for the schooner. The gun was hoisted into a boat, and was transferred to the fishing schooner, with such booty as had been taken from the prizes, the men's effects, and some stores. There were several boat loads, and the transfer was not completed until after midnight. The last men to leave the bark gathered such inflammable material as they could get together in her cabin, and fore hold, and set fire to it. As the boat left the bark's side smoke and flame rose from her companionway and forward hatch. The Tacony was passing in her accounts.

Standing on the deck of the little schooner, the adventurers watched the bark burn. The fire lighted up the sea for miles around, and cast fantastic shadows on the faces of the men on deck of the Archer. At last, about 2 A. M., when the Tacony had burned to the water's edge, Lieutenant Read gave the order to head the Archer West by North for the land, and going below, retired for a few hours of needed sleep.

Next morning, shortly after daylight, land was made, on the starboard. It was an island, Monhegan, the first land the Confederate crew had seen since looking on the fading shores of the Island of Ferdinand de Noronha off the Brazilian coast, seven weeks before.* Other islands, lying nearer the coast, were soon raised, and skirting them, the vessel was headed along shore toward Portland. Had her captors but known it, the land they were then passing was part of the town from which their prize schooner hailed.

The Confederates found the Archer a lively little ship, after their lumbering bark. One of the crew, posting up his journal† as the schooner ran alongshore, wrote: "Our new vessel sails like the wind, but jumps the devil out of countenance."

The same chronicler dwells on the uncertainty of this venture, but adds "time will tell what will be our fate. As for me, I have

A heart for any fate;
A tear for those who love me;
A smile for those who hate."

Eight miles off the island of Damariscove, a fisherman's boat was sighted, in the schooner's course. It contained two men,‡ and hailing them, Lieutenant Read asked them if they would come on board. This they did, without suspicion. They belonged to Casco Bay, and did not at first recognize the Archer as a Southport vessel. Once on board, it was made clear to them that they must pilot her into Portland harbor, or it would be the worse for them. They reluctantly promised to do so, and with their boat towing astern, they directed the course of the Archer. The island of Seguin was left about a mile and a half to starboard, and a straight course was laid for Portland. The breeze was light, and the

* Journal of one of Lieutenant Read's crew.

† The journals kept by Lieutenant Read and his men were sent from Portland to the Navy Department in June, 1863, but do not appear in the "Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion," referred to in references herewith as the *Naval Records*. The abstracts from the journals used here are from files of the *Portland Advertiser*, for June, 1863, that paper having copied them from the original journals at Port Preble.

‡ Albert J. Bibber and Elbridge Titcomb, of Falmouth.



C. W. Read
Massachusetts

C. W. Read

From Admiral Schley's *Class Book*

afternoon was well spent before the Archer sailed slowly into the harbor, past the forts, and cast anchor in full view of the waterfront.* The two fishermen, having performed the labor for which they were requisitioned, were sent below as prisoners to prevent their giving an alarm.

During the remainder of daylight Lieutenant Read and his officers employed their time in studying the shipping in the harbor and tied up at the wharves. There were a number of vessels in port. The new gunboats, the Agawam and Pontoosuc, lay at Franklin Wharf, receiving their machinery. At her pier lay the steamer Chesapeake, of the New York line, a large propeller.**

* The Archer's position on anchoring was described as "Eastward of Pomeroy's Rock, off Fish Point." This anchorage is off the Eastern end of the city, inside Fort Gorges, which stands isolated in the middle of the harbor. Any good chart shows its location.

** This vessel, a Cromwell liner, of 460 tons, figured later in an interesting war incident. On December 8, 1863, she was captured 20 miles off Cape Cod, while en route from New York to Portland, by 16 of her passengers, who represented themselves as Confederates. The chief engineer was killed and his body thrown overboard and the vessel was headed for St. John, near which the other officers were sent ashore. Proceeding to the Nova Scotia coast, the steamer visited several ports to secure coal. She was retaken on December 17, 1863, in the harbor of Sambro by a Federal cruiser. The Confederacy repudiated the acts of her original captors, claiming they were British subjects, the plot to capture her having been hatched in St. John. The steamer was restored to her owners after being detained some weeks in Nova Scotia. Her capture by a United States vessel in a British port caused some friction, which happily was soon allayed.

(To be Continued.)