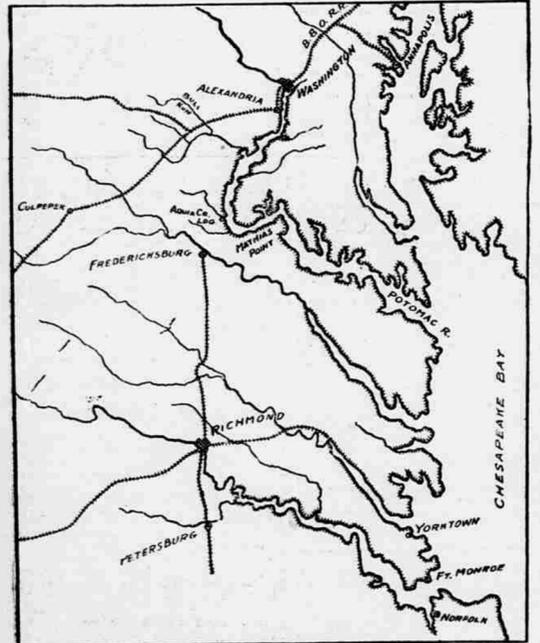


By JOHN McELROY.

CHAPTER II. THE LINE OF THE POTOMAC.

The Navy Preparing for the Gigantic Struggle as Well as the Army—First Days to Close the Potomac—Death of Commander Ward—McClellan Plans a Great Army—Difficulty of Obtaining Arms—McClellan's Estimate of Generals.

While the War Department was making colossal efforts to organize and equip the army, the Navy Department was similarly straining its administrative energies to provide for the blockade which the President had proclaimed. It had been settled in international law that a paper blockade need not be respected. To be valid a blockade must be enforced by vessels numerous enough and strong enough



THE CHESAPEAKE BAY AND TRIBUTARIES.

To make any evasion hazardous. The blockade proclaimed by the President of more than 2,000 miles of coast line on the Atlantic and the Gulf, unusually well supplied with entrances, was a task of greater magnitude than had ever been before in the history of any navy, no matter how great. The attempt of Great Britain to blockade the Continent against Napoleon was a task of far less magnitude.

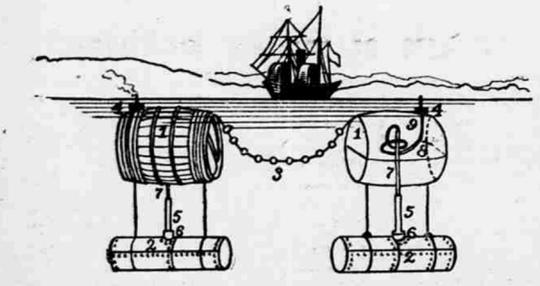
Upon his entrance into office Secretary Wells of the Navy had found only 44 war vessels at his disposal, and many of these efficient class. The Department itself had suffered, hardly to the same extent as the War Department, from the defection of its Southern members. Isaac Toucey, of Connecticut, the Secretary of the Navy under Buchanan, was that worst type of a pro-slavery man—the New Englander.

"There is no Turk like a renegade," and no pro-slavery like a Yankee. Toucey co-operated with Secretary Flood in the War Department in devising all the possible could to help the South prepare for secession, and although the shameful abandonment and destruction of the Norfolk Navy Yard did not occur during his term, yet it undoubtedly was due to preparatory conditions under him.

Within a few days after the firing on Fort Sumter, 12 out of the 78 Captains on the active list resigned or were dismissed; 39 of the 114 Commanders, and 73 of the 321 Lieutenants. Between March 4 and July 1, 259 officers of the Navy had resigned or been dismissed, besides those who had resigned when their States went out.

March 4 there were only 12 vessels in the Home Squadron, of which but four were in Northern ports. Two of these were small steamers, and one a sailing storeship. The squadron on the coast of Africa was so far away that the first of the vessels did not reach home until September 15. Immediately upon Mr. Lincoln's inauguration and the event to all parts of the world for the ships to hurry home, and during the Summer they were coming in from the remote seas.

Building New Vessels. Secretary Gideon Wells set the navy yards of the country at work to build additional vessels with all possible haste. In the design of these the line was followed which had given the American navy so much of its aston-



FLOATING MINE PICKED UP BY THE PAWNEE.

ishing success in the past—that is, to give each individual vessel the highest speed, the handiest manœuvre, and the heaviest battery possible. It was this policy which had enabled the old "Constitution," rated as a 44-gun frigate, to knock out in an astonishingly short time any British 44-gun frigate that she encountered. It will be remembered that the "Guerrriere" only lasted 15 minutes before the "Constitution." The first order was for 23 small gunboats of about 500 tons burden, which were to be as long as the frigates of 1812, but only half as broad. These were intended to outrun anything then afloat, and their armament was one 11-inch pivot gun, two 24-pound howitzers, and one 20-pound mortar. It was expected that their swiftness would en-

To encounter these such small vessels could be spared for the service were organized into the Potomac Flotilla, May 18, and placed under the command of Commander James H. Ward, whose early and heroic death meant as much to the Navy as Gen. Nathaniel Lyon's to the Army.

Commander Ward. James Harman Ward, born in 1806, was the son of Col. James Ward, of Hartford, Conn., and educated at the Vermont Military Academy. In 1823 he was appointed a Midshipman on the Constitution, commanded by Commodore McDonough, of Lake Champlain fame, rose to the rank of Lieutenant, and gained reputation by his services on professional subjects. He became a professor in the Naval Academy, and was one of the progressive officers who welcomed the advent of steam power into the Navy. At the outbreak of the war he was summoned to Washington to give the Government the benefit of his unusual professional knowledge.

Next, a class of steamers of the Keokuk type, about 1,000 tons burden, with a length of 200 feet and a breadth of only 32, were constructed as pirate catchers. They were expected to run down and destroy the privateers which Jeff Davis would send out. They also carried an exceedingly heavy armament for their size, having two 11-inch guns, one 50-pound rifle, and four 32-pounders. Next were ordered 12 side-wheel steamers for use in the narrow rivers of the coast. These in turn were followed by 27 side-wheel steamers called "double-enders," since they were built to run either backward or forward at a speed of about 14 knots an hour. Still another class was that of the

able them to choose their own position, only to engage their adversary while their smashing 11-inch guns would give them a speedy victory. Next, a class of steamers of the Keokuk type, about 1,000 tons burden, with a length of 200 feet and a breadth of only 32, were constructed as pirate catchers. They were expected to run down and destroy the privateers which Jeff Davis would send out. They also carried an exceedingly heavy armament for their size, having two 11-inch guns, one 50-pound rifle, and four 32-pounders.

He actually started in to cut the timber and brush down at many places, so as to expose their lurking places. He found also that while the vessels were molting during the day, it would be repaired in the night. He was actively employed at this work during May and June, while the Potomac Flotilla was holding 50,000 men idly around Washington, giving him no assistance. If they had been as much in earnest as he, the Virginia as far as the Rappahannock would have been cleaned out in a few weeks, and no necessity for the battle of Bull Run. May 31, with three little boats, the Pawnee, Resolute, and Aquila Creek, and silenced three of them, only retiring when his ammunition was exhausted. The next day, having brot down the Pawnee, a sloop-of-war, carrying eight 9-inch pivot guns and two 12-pound rifles, he resumed the attack, silencing the battery and driving the enemy behind the shelter of the bluffs.

He received more than 1,000 shots on board and immediately around his boats, expending 1,700 pounds of powder. Without the assistance of the army his work was in vain, however, and he had the mortification of finding new batteries rising all along the river. Meanwhile he kept his men busily employed in boat expeditions, breaking up the enemy's communications with the Maryland shore, destroying their boats in the creeks, and disturbing their efforts to concentrate against him.

Finding that the enemy were preparing to erect a dangerous battery at Mathias Point, below Aquia Creek, Ward formed the daring plan of taking possession of it by the bayonet. He commanded Mathias Point, and erecting a battery. The Confederate General Bonham had there some 15 companies, under the command of Col. Daniel Ruggles.

The Fight at Mathias Point. Ward, with parties from the Pawnee, Resolute, Aquila Creek, and the other boats, landed on the river bank, under cover of the vessels' guns, and erect the battery. The ground was swept with a heavy fire of grape and canister and the enemy driven back. The work was begun, with considerable progress made, when the enemy appeared in such force that Ward was compelled to order a retreat, and sent aboard the Resolute to direct the fire, holding the vessels close the shore.

The retirement was made under a terrific musketry fire, with the sailors displaying the greatest gallantry. John Williams, captain of the Maston of the Pawnee, who was commanding a boat, told his men that every one of them must die upon his feet rather than leave any wounded men ashore. His flag was shot away, and Williams wounded in the thigh, but he snatched up the flag from the water and planted it on the shore, and finished his work and returned to the ship with its load of wounded. Lieut. Chapin was left in command of the men when Commander Ward returned to the Resolute, and managed the retreat. They had all gotten off but one enlisted man, who could not swim, when Chapin took him and his musket on his back and swam with him to the boat. Commander Ward saw the gunner of his low gun shot down, and he himself sprang to the piece to shoot the fire. As he was sighting it a mine bullet struck him in the abdomen, inflicting a mortal wound. He fell into the arms of the boatswain, Mate Harns of the Norfolk Navy Yard had given the Chesapeake to the Chesapeake.

The point of greatest importance was held to be the mouth of Aquia Creek, about 45 miles below Washington. This was where the railroad running to Fredericksburg and Richmond connected with the steamers running to Washington.

It was also a point of great strategic importance, since the Potomac makes a sweeping loop to the southwest which brings it to within a few miles of the Rappahannock, and within less than 50 miles, in an air line, from Richmond. The McClellan never showed any recognition of the great strategic importance of Aquia Creek as the door to Richmond. Lee saw it at once, garrisoned it, and began batteries there in his first preparations for defending the State.

From Alexandria to Aquia Creek the Potomac generally skirts along close to the Virginia bluffs, and the river is very narrow there, further down, so that batteries planted along the bluffs could close the navigation of the river to any but armed vessels. The capture of the Norfolk Navy Yard had given the Confederates a full supply of the best high-power guns of that day, and they made their first effective use of these in batteries along the bluffs of the Potomac.

An Infernal Machine. The Pawnee with her heavy, long-range guns was the principal source of irritation to the Confederates, and they devised many schemes to get rid of her. One of these was the beginning of the system of floating mines which later played such an important part in naval operations. The first one sent against the Pawnee was picked up by her on the evening of May 27, 1862, and was the official description of it.

"1. Oil cask, serving for buoy. 2. Iron tubes, four feet six inches long and 1 1/2 inches in diameter, charged with gunpowder. 3. A three-inch rope,

naturally only secure such arms in Germany and Austro-Hungary as had been captured by the newer and more improved weapons. These, however, were sold in great quantities at from \$5 to \$30 apiece, and served for months to arm the new levies until they could be supplied by the improved arms of the Springfield musket. Such of the foreign guns as could be made over into something like the Springfield musket were so transformed, but the best of these guns were in a few months sent to the junk pile after they had made a long history of tribulations for the unlucky regiments which had entered the field with them. Many a regiment did not get the improved arms until they captured them from their enemies upon the field of battle. It will be readily seen that the task of arming 500,000 men with superior weapons was one of the greatest magnitude, and it is one of the greatest credit of the Administration that with our moderate establishment this was so soon accomplished.

The Light Artillery. As we saw in the late struggle with the Boers, a people entering a war almost unprepared to do anything of importance upon artillery. The English were confident that they were going to quickly blow the Boers out of existence with 15-calibre shells just as we thought to win our war with Spain. The French were going to destroy the Germans by their machine-guns, and the British by their dynamite sloop Vesuvius was going to win our war with Spain. The French were going to destroy the Germans by their machine-guns, and the British by their dynamite sloop Vesuvius was going to win our war with Spain. The French were going to destroy the Germans by their machine-guns, and the British by their dynamite sloop Vesuvius was going to win our war with Spain.

Artillery is always exceedingly impressive and convincing upon the populace, and men listen with greedy eagerness to the boasts of their military chiefs of sweeping away whole companies, battalions and even regiments by single blasts of shrapnel, canister or shell.

In 1861 the artillery enthusiast of the world was Napoleon III, who had invented the gun which bore his name—a light bronze 12-pounder, with about the range of a musket. This was mainly intended for close fighting and using canister at the critical point of the battle instead of musketry volleys.

As Gen. McClellan was planning his great army upon the French system he determined to give it the finest artillery that had ever been in the history of war. Artillery is an exceedingly expensive arm, and no other Nation had ever been able to give its armies such a large outfit of modern guns. McClellan had planned. Wealthy as France and England had been, yet their arsenals and field forces had always been inferior to those of the United States. Even the various caliber which they did not feel they could afford to throw away.

The Army of the Potomac was to start with a reserve artillery corps of 100 guns and a siege train of 50 pieces. The organization of the artillery was put under the direction of Maj. William E. Barksdale, who had been promoted to Brigadier-General. It was carried on with such energy and lavishness that in a few months the field artillery reached the standard of 92 batteries of 32 batteries of 12-pounders, 22 guns served by 2,500 well-drilled, well-disciplined men. The organization of the artillery was a specimen of the grand scale upon which everything connected with the Army of the Potomac was carried on.

Seth Williams the Organizer. Whatever else may be said of McClellan, he rose fully to the requirements of organizing by far the finest army that the world had ever before seen. Large as were those forces mustered by Napoleon, they fell far short in the material enlisted and in the compactness and efficiency of the equipments of the Army of the United States. No monarch in history ever had such a host of first-class men and such vast resources placed at his disposal as McClellan. The disaster at Bull Run had completely aroused the country as to the magnitude of the task before it, and the people were willing to give to the "Young Napoleon" everything that he could possibly ask for to help him on to victory. They wanted victory so badly that they would have offered him any and every last dollar to secure it.

It is claimed by many earnest advocates that much of the high credit to McClellan for his brilliant organization properly belongs to Seth Williams, one of the most accomplished officers of the Old Army, and who wore out his life in the organization and administration. He was born in Augusta, Me., in 1822, and graduated from the Military Academy in 1842, entering the army in 1843. He served in the Mexican War, and was promoted to Major in 1847. He was brevetted a Captain for his brilliant conduct at Cerro Gordo. He was transferred to the Adjutant-General's Department in 1853, and at the beginning of the war was Adjutant-General of the Department of the West, with the rank of Major-General. He was promoted Brigadier-General of Volunteers, and made Adjutant-General for the Army of the Potomac, in which he served till the close of the war, receiving brevets for Gettysburg, Petersburg, Appomattox and for gallant services in the field during the rebellion. His work exhausted him, however, and he died in 1895 of Bright's disease.

McClellan's Idea of the General's. McClellan says in his book that his idea was to organize the Army of the Potomac, from its organization to within a few months of its muster-out, at the close of the war, into two well-known regular positions of Corps Commanders. In this matter there is the tone of complaint which runs thru all of McClellan's book against every body who happened to be in superior official position. He claims that they could not understand him or comprehend his work, and they were continually interfering to his great embarrassment. He is particularly severe on Gen. Scott, who he claims to have been a constant obstruction. Probably there is much truth in this, as Scott, with his age and infirmities, could

hardly be expected to comprehend anything greater than the comparatively modest establishments with which the United States had waged the wars of 1812 and Mexico. Gen. McClellan gives the following sketches of the men whom he had selected as Brigade Commanders. It must be remembered all the time that this was penned after the war, when many of these men had made their records and when McClellan was suffering the natural results of his failure to meet the high expectations at one time entertained of him.

"Of all men whom I have encountered in high position Halleck was, the most hopelessly stupid. It was more difficult to get an idea thru his head than can be conceived by any one who never made the attempt. I do not think he ever had a correct military idea from beginning to end.

"I left Gen. Hunter in nominal command of his brigade, because he bore an excellent reputation in the Army, and had been wounded; I have never met him personally. He did not assume command of the brigade, for as soon as he recovered from his wound the President appointed him Major-General of Volunteers, that he might go to Illinois, and, in the words of Mr. Halleck, be a sort of father to them out there.

"Heintzelman also received a brigade; he, too, had been wounded at Bull Run and bore a good reputation in the Old Army. He was a very brave man and an excellent officer.

"W. T. Sherman was almost immediately taken from me to accompany Robert Anderson to Genoa, and I had a high opinion of him and parted from him with regret.

"Philip Kearny received a brigade, but, tho he stood high as a remarkably daring man and good cavalry captain in the Mexican war, I had not sufficient confidence in his brains to give him one of the first divisions. He has since sometimes that that I would have done well had I given him command of the cavalry.

E. V. Sumner. "Sumner was in California when I assumed command; he returned not long before we took the field, and at once received a division. He was an old and tried officer; perfectly honest, as brave as a man could be; conscientious and laborious. In many respects he was a model soldier. He was a man for whom I had a very high regard, and for his memory I have the greatest respect. He was a very valuable man, and his solitary example was of the highest value in a new Army. A Nation is fortunate that possesses many such soldiers as was Edwin V. Sumner. "Franklin was one of the best officers I had; very powerful. He was a man not only of excellent judgment, but of a remarkably high order of intellectual ability. He was often badly treated, and seldom received the credit he deserved. His moral character was of the highest, and he was in all respects an admirable corps commander; more than that, he would have commanded an Army well. The only reason why I did not send him to relieve Sherman, instead of Buell, was that I could not spare such a man from the Army of the Potomac.

SHORT TALKS TO SAVINGS BANK DEPOSITORS

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THE FINANCIAL WORLD, 18 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

command of the Germans. Born in Bavaria, it was said that he had served in Greece as a non-commissioned officer, and subsequently as a Colonel or general officer in the revolutionary army at Baden in 1848. He was in many respects an excellent soldier; had his command in excellent drill, was very fond of display, but did not, or could not, always restrain his men from plundering. Had he remained with me I think that he and his division would have done good service, and that they would have been kept under good discipline. It would be difficult to find a more soldierly-looking set of men than he had under his command. Of his subordinate officers the best was Gen. Stahl, a Hungarian, who had served with distinction under General. His real name, I believe, was Count Serbelloni.

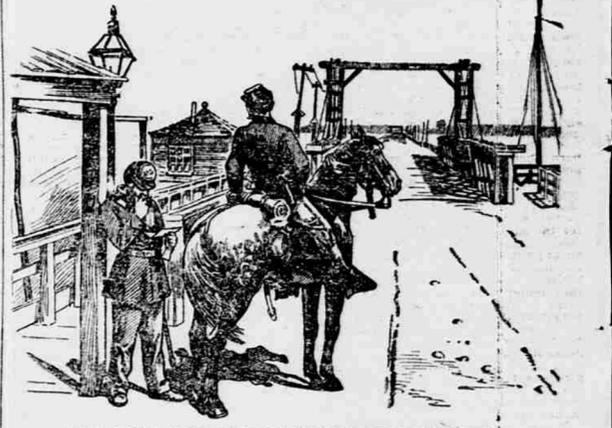
"Richardson was in command of a regiment of Michigan volunteers when I went to Washington; I at once gave him a brigade. He was an officer of the Old Army, "bull-headed," brave, a good disciplinarian. He received his mortal wound at Antietam.

"To Stone I gave a detached brigade on the upper Potomac—ground with which he was familiar. He was a charming and amiable gentleman; honest, brave, a good soldier, the occasionally carried away by his chivalrous ideas. He was very fortunate, and was as far as possible from meriting the sad fate and cruel treatment he met with.

"I found Couch in command of a regiment, and soon gave him a brigade. He was an honest, faithful and laborious man; a brave, modest and valuable officer.

Fitz-John Porter. "Fitz-John Porter was on duty with (Continued on page three.)

SOUVENIR CANE OF OLD LONG BRIDGE.



WAR TIME VIEW OF LONG BRIDGE AT WASHINGTON.

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