

THE MONITOR MERRIMAC.

STORY OF THE BRILLIANT CAREER OF THE NOTED CONFEDERATE IRONCLAD.

[J. B. Eggleston in Philadelphia Times.]

When the Federals abandoned the navy yard at Norfolk in 1861 they set fire to the vessels lying there in ordinary. Among these was the Merrimac, one of a class of vessels which, when they were built, were considered the finest specimens of naval architecture afloat. On the occasion in question the Merrimac was burnt to the water line. Her machinery remained intact and it was determined by the Confederate authorities to make of what remained of her an ironclad ram that would give some trouble to the enemy's vessels lying in the waters of Virginia. A structure of oak, sloping like the roof of a house, was built upon the old hull, and this woodwork was covered with plates of wrought iron, two inches thick. The ends of these plates, where they rested on the edge of the hull, extended about a foot under water. Below that line the vessel was vulnerable as she had ever been. The rudder chains, too, were perfectly unprotected, lying exposed on the "fantail," or that portion of the hull which extended out abaft the shield. The wheel was under the forward part of the shield and the pilot was protected by a huge hollow cone of cast iron, perforated with holes for him to see through. The battery of the Merrimac consisted of ten Dahlgren guns, one 11-inch, pointing forward, and another pointing aft, and eight 9-inch guns on the sides.

At last there is a sign of life on board the two frigates. Their swinging booms go alongside; their boats are run to the davits, the Congress pipes down wash clothes, and now we hear the long roll of our own drum and life calling us to quarters! There is no longer a doubt of our captain's intentions. He soon appears on the gun deck, making a stirring appeal to the crew and then takes his station near the wheel.

I commanded the third division of guns and was stationed amidst the shield. From that station my view of what was going on outside the vessel was restricted to the gun-port, and that was nearly filled by the gun. For a time I could see only the rim of the horizon on the distant shore. But suddenly the side of a great ship close aboard, came in view. I saw her but a moment, for the smoke from her broadside of twenty-five guns, promptly answered by our own, soon enveloped her and us. A few moments of the thunder of battle, of sulphurous smoke, of the passing below of the wounded, and then there is a thud as if the vessel had suddenly run aground. There is cheering forward, and soon Flag-Lieutenant Minor passes aft and cries out:

"We've sunk the Cumberland!"

The next time I saw the Congress she was aground with some of her sails set. We had taken up a raking position under the stern and a few shots from our broadside guns brought down her flag. Lieutenant Minor was sent in a ship's cutter to receive her surrender, and at the same time two tugs that had been improvised as gunboats ran alongside to take off prisoners. The tugs were driven off by sharpshooters on shore, and Minor and one of his boat's crew were wounded by musket balls fired out of the gun deck ports of the Congress. Buchanan, then on the upper deck, on top of the shield, shouted down the hatchway:

"Destroy that d---d ship! They are killing our men under a flag of truce!"

Sadly we proceeded to obey the order, for we believed that the firing on Minor was done without the knowledge of the officers of the Congress. Nevertheless we resumed our firing, while officers on the poop deck of the doomed vessel were waving their white handkerchiefs. But we did not keep it up long, for it was apparent that the Congress had already been set on fire by our hot shot. About this time Buchanan was borne below, wounded by a sharpshooter on shore.

"We have done a very good day's work," I remarked to Catesby Jones, as sometime during the afternoon he passed at my division.

"Yes," he replied, "but it isn't over. The Minnesota and St. Lawrence are coming up from Fortress Monroe."

Our crew was made up in a great measure of green countrymen detailed from the different volunteer regiments stationed about Norfolk, but there were some trained seamen among them. From the time of taking them in hand till the day of going into action, an interval of about two weeks, we drilled them incessantly at the guns of the receiving ship, the old frigate United States.

On the forenoon of the 8th day of March, 1862, the Merrimac, or, as she was afterward christened, the Virginia, cast off from the wharf at the navy yard and started on her trial trip. We steamed straight for Hampton Roads. Whatever was the design of our captain Franklin J. Buchanan he kept it to himself. Years afterwards I learned from Catesby, one of our executive officers, that he had been taken into the captain's confidence, but I am quite certain that no one else had. We all thought that we were making an ordinary trial trip. And yet we were rapidly approaching the enemy's vessels—the Cumberland and Congress frigates—that lay at anchor off Newport's News. As a midshipman I had served in both vessels, the Cumberland, in which I had

served briefly, being the first vessel I had ever boarded, while the Congress had been my floating home for nearly three years. How natural they looked—their boats at the swinging booms, the Congress with her wash clothes between the main and mizzen rigging. How many of the poor fellows who scrubbed their blue shirts on the deck that morning ever had need again for shirts after that day!

These vessels fired on us at long range as with the approach of night we steamed over to Sewell's Point to send on shore our dead and wounded.

With early dawn the next morning we saw the St. Lawrence back under the guns of Fortress Monroe, the Minnesota apparently aground near the scene of yesterday's battle, and a curious-looking craft which proved to be the Monitor, lying near her. We steamed over towards the Minnesota and the Monitor, lying near her. We steamed over towards the Minnesota, and the Monitor boldly set forth to meet us half way. For hours and hours we bombarded each other without any apparent injury to either vessel. Seeing that every projectile that struck our strange enemy was shattered into fragments against her turret, I ordered my division to cease firing. Calling Catesby Jones' attention to my idle guns, he said: "Well, we're just about to try another plan. We are going to ram her." And we did.

But for a misconception of what the momentum of the Merrimac could accomplish it would have been all over with the Monitor. As it was, our engines were stopped just before it struck her. If they had not been we would undoubtedly have run her under. As it was, after that gentle push she never fired another shot at the Merrimac. Withdrawing entirely out of her range, she was a silent spectator for fully an hour of our practice at long range, with the Minnesota for a target.

When we finally ceased firing and returned to Norfolk it was for the following reasons, as stated by Capt. Jones to each of his division officers: "We can't get nearer the Minnesota than we are, for our draft is the same as hers, and we'll get aground if we try to get nearer. She is now apparently reduced to a mere wreck and I don't think she will ever get afloat again. We have done all that we can do, for the enemy's ironclad keeps out of our range. Our ship is leaking, probably from the loss of her prow when she rammed the Cumberland, and our crew are tired out from working their guns for nearly two days. I think we have fulfilled the mission on which we came and had better return," which accordingly we did, and the next day went in dock to get ready for another raid.

We had met and silenced upwards of 150 guns afloat, to say nothing of the shore batteries. It is safe to say that never before had ten guns successfully encountered such odds. If what I have said be true the Northern version of our encounter with the Monitor is utterly false. And I am sustained not only by all who served on board the Merrimac and the wooden vessels of our little squadron and the thousands who viewed the battle from the neighboring shores, but also by the captain of the Minnesota. In his report to the department he says in effect that, seeing the Monitor silenced and withdrawn from the battle and his own vessel at the mercy of the Merrimac, he had nearly completed his preparations for abandonment and burning the Minnesota, when, much to his joy, the Merrimac returned to Norfolk. It may be as well to add that in her encounter with the Monitor the Merrimac did not sustain any material injury, while I think an inquiry into the reason for the withdrawal of the Monitor will show that her turret would not turn after she had been rammed by the Merrimac.

The last demonstration by the Merrimac was against a Federal fleet of eight or ten vessels, the Monitor among them. They were bombarding Sewell's Point, under the eye, as we heard, of Mr. Lincoln himself, then on a visit to Fortress Monroe. We steamed down from Norfolk and offered battle, when the whole fleet made haste to huddle under the guns of the fortress. We sent in and cut out two transport brigs under their very noses, but the Monitor let slip the splendid opportunity of driving us back to Norfolk a second time.

We are much blamed by our people for destroying the Merrimac when we did. After the evacuation of Norfolk by our land forces no other course remained to us. We could not go to sea or up the James river. Unless the vessel had been destroyed her surrender would have been a mere question of time. With the enemy in possession of Norfolk we would have been speedily starved into submission.

The Mansfield Democrat wants De Soto parish to give \$15,000 and the right of way to Col. Bremond's proposed Shreveport and Logansport railroad across the Sabine. The Democrat complains that Shreveport should have given the \$40,000 asked by Col. Bremond, in lieu of the offer of \$20,000 which was made him.

We regret to state that R. H. Burke, Esq., one of our zealous and able city councilmen, has been lying ill for several days. He is much better to-day, and we hope soon to see him up and doing.

THE SORGHUM VENTURE.

FORLORN HOPE, August 25.

EDITOR CAPTOLIAN—In compliance with my promise, I herewith hand you, for publication, a statement of my first trial of orange cane, of a series for 1881. We commenced early in the season to make several trials at different stages of ripeness in the cane, and for the reason that we did not deem a trial on open kettles fair and just. The results which follow were attained in open kettles at our Hermitage sugar house; the next trial will be by steam train and vacuum pan at Forlorn Hope, when we will endeavor to granulate. After closely examining the material our sugar maker and myself agreed that whilst there was a good showing for syrup and grade sugar, it would be an Herculean undertaking to crystallize it, the stock being too green.

The canes we planted were from the "Orange" variety, planted on April 30, in light, alluvial soil, very rich; rows were six feet apart, and the stalks, after growing to six inches of height, thinned out to about twelve stalks on every square foot of ground. The cane grew rapidly and after one working in sixty days attained its full growth and headed heavily.

At different seasons I noted its saccharine strength and am almost certain that it loses very rapidly in sweetness. When we ground (yesterday) it was sweetest in the centre. We have fifteen acres still for experiment and from time to time will note the stages of sweetness. The all absorbing question in the minds of Louisiana planters is as to whether it will granulate or not. Now their doubts on that point appear to me exceedingly strange when we have the fact staring us in the face, that Western enterprise has extracted grain from corn stalk and Indian corn, and are succeeding so well that they are getting grain for grain, when we reduce it to dollars and cents. Again, I have seen samples made in Minnesota from "Amber cane," a similar variety. But these doubting Thomases, these gentlemen friends of ours in Louisiana, must come to the sugar house, smoke a cigarette, look, doubt, string it up, taste, and finally, with a wonderfully wise countenance, say, "Not so good as cane yet!" *Mirabile dicta!* and who said it was.

"But there is no money in it." Ah, there is the point. Well, my table will tell (and we are prepared to make affidavit to what we say), the product per acre, and I herewith give an estimate of cost of cultivation and manipulation, making the cane into marketable goods to-day:

To 7.5 pounds of seed at 30c.....	\$ 2.25
To preparing and planting.....	5.00
To mowing same twice.....	5.00
To hoeing and thinning.....	3.00
Total cost of cultivation.....	\$14.40
Grinding and hauling 24 miles.....	6.00
To hauling 22 1/2 tons cane.....	9.35
To cutting and loading cane.....	7.00
To labor in sugar house.....	1.50
To pay of sugar maker.....	2.50
To cost of lime.....	35
To cost of sulphur.....	25
To cost of cords of wood.....	10.00

853.37	53.37
Add ten per cent for contingencies.....	53.37
Eight barrels, \$1.25 apiece.....	10.00
608.70	608.70
By 393.7 gal's syrup at 35c per gal.....	137.79
Less freight and commission.....	9.44

Total net proceeds of sales.....	128.35
Total cost.....	68.70
Net profit on investment.....	59.65

Calling the sugar planters' attention to the anomalous juice measurement as shown in table (9-Baume) I would direct their attention to the large proportion of covering around the cane, adhering so tightly as to make it very difficult to pull away. Our manager early in the trial saw the cost it would entail and allowed the cane to go with the sheck. This causes a large quantity of foreign substance in the juice and makes trouble for the sugar maker.

"Orange cane" juice, weighing 9-Baume, cooks to 35°, thermometer at 225.

Sugar cane juice weighing 7 to 8° Baume, cooks to 25° thermometer at 240.

Sugar Cane Juice	Temp. at time of boiling	Density at 60° F.	Baume	° F.	° C.	Temperature as per Fahrenheit
1-81	225	1.038	35	93	33.3	Ordinary Ohio river lime.
1-82	225	1.038	35	93	33.3	Ordinary Ohio river lime.
1-83	225	1.038	35	93	33.3	Ordinary Ohio river lime.

Had I the time I might say something more on this subject, but this much I have satisfied myself of—I am confirmed in my opinion that Mr. LeDuc is correct in asserting that there is money in sorghum. Very truly yours, T. W. NICOL.

THE KANSAS GIRL.

Miss Cricket Still, of Beloit, Kansas who is to ride in the \$10,000 championship twenty mile running race at the Western National Fair against Miss Ida Levant, of Sedalia, Missouri, is in the city with her father. Miss Still is a sprightly looking girl of fifteen years of age. She is a blonde and has bright gray eyes. She was born on the Delaware reservation between Lawrence and Leavenworth. She rode a horse before she was a year old, and can remember riding alone when only four years old. She rode first in public at Leavenworth when she was but seven years old. She is of the most independent disposition, and all her riding has been done under her own guidance, and at her own free will. She has practiced hurdle riding and can ride on either side or straddle, or even standing up. She does almost all her riding without a saddle—with nothing upon the horse but sureingle she can let herself drop so as to touch the ground and immediately regain her seat. She is a natural equestrian and takes to a horse's back just as naturally as a duck to water. Her weight is just a hundred pounds by the Journal office scales and she stands exactly five feet one inch high. She is most perfectly adapted in every way to the task she has undertaken, standing as straight as an arrow, she is broad shouldered and excellently proportioned. Her limbs are large and very muscular and every line of her form indicates strength and toughness in the greatest degree. She is all bone and muscle, and she has not a pound of surplus flesh. Her back is very broad and its form and perfect curvature denote the greatest degree of strength. She has the greatest physical endurance and possesses perfect confidence in her ability to win the race which in a contest of this kind goes a great ways. The people of Kansas and the whole west are looking towards this race with the greatest of interest, and while she has a worthy adversary, Kansas prayers and Kansas money say, that Cricket Still, the plucky Kansas girl, will win the race.

COMPELLED TO LICK A GIRL'S SHOES.

Kansas City Times. An incident illustrating the gallantry of frontiersmen toward women, is related on William Porter, better known as Comanche Bill, Gen. Terry's favorite scout. It happened at Wichita a few weeks since. Bill rode into the town dressed in a complete suit of buckskin and with a gang of honest rangers at his back. As he went along he saw a "counter-jumper," as he was pleased to call him, roughly catch a little girl about eighteen years old (Bill's idea of a "little" girl) by the shoulder and sojourn her attention. The girl withdrew her arm angrily, and just then the scene fell under Bill's personal inspection.

"She was a poor girl," says Bill, "and plainly clad in an old dress, but I want going to see her insulted by any durned counter-hopper, under my mountain eyes. I just jumped down from my horse, and I called for that fellow to stop. He didn't seem to want to, but I made him stop. I took up the little girl in my arms and sat her down on a box. I took off her shoes and said to the counter-jumper: 'Now I want you to get down and lick the dust off the soles of that poor girl's feet you have insulted.'"

"And I made him do it. He looked down in the muzzle of a 45-calibre Colt's for just about half a minute and then he came to his milk like a little lamb."

"And I made him lick that girl's feet, though a big crowd gathered around, but I had my men with me and didn't care whether they liked it or not."

THE JIM-JAMS.

A correspondent of the New York World tells all about the sensation produced by the jim-jams. "This is the way he tackled the subject: 'Delirium tremens! Snakes! Jimjams! Yes I've had touches of them. You want to know how it feels? I'll tell you. You have been drunk maybe a week, maybe more. At last liquor ceases to excite, brace up or tranquilize. You drink a half pint of brandy. It has no more effect than so much water. Then you are close on the horrors. Food won't help you; your stomach rejects it. Now your punishment commences. You can't sleep. You are weary. Oh, so weary, but there is no rest. You are tired of thinking, yet the brain will think. You lie down, drop into a doze for a moment and wake up with a shock, as if touched with an electric wire. You are covered with perspiration. You get up and walk the room, streets—walk, walk, and then fling yourself down, praying for a few minutes sleep. All this for days, with people about you, and through nights. But no Chinese torturer employed in keeping some miserable criminal awake until he dies was ever more full of relentless vigilance than your abused nerves. Dreads indescribable seize upon you. Your hands have a sensation of being enormous size. They do not look like they feel it. Your head in like manner feels as if enormously puffed out. Then your breath comes spasmodically; hot flashes strike at the region of the heart; all the blood seems to rush in that direction, and you fight aimlessly for life and expect to fall dead. This is the commencement of the horrors. Now you are fixed for seeing rats and snakes and vermin.'"

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