young lady. He hammered and hammered at the door; couldn't get any response; didn't understand it. Anybody else would have regarded that as an indication of some kind or other and would have drawn inferences and gone home. But Orion didn't draw inferences, he merely hammered and hammered, and finally the father of the girl appeared at the door in a dressing gown. He had a candle in his hand, and the dressing gown was all the clothing he had on—except an expression of unwelcome which was so thick and so large that it extended all down his front to his instep and nearly obliterated the dressing gown. But Orion didn't notice that this was an unpleasant expression. He merely walked in.

The old gentleman took him into the parlor, set the candle on a table, and stood. Orion made the usual remarks about the weather, and sat down—sat down and talked and talked and went on talking, that old man looking at him vindictively and waiting for his chance—waiting treacherously and malignantly for his chance. Orion had not asked for the young lady. It was not customary. It was understood that a young fellow came to see the girl of the house, not the founder of it. At last Orion got up and made some remark to the effect that probably the young lady was busy and he would go now and call again. That was the old man's chance, and he said with fervency:

"Why, good land! aren't you going to stop to breakfast?"

In the Old Apprenticeship Days

ORION did not come to Hannibal until two or three years after my father's death. Meantime he remained in St. Louis. He was a journeyman printer, and earning wages. Out of his wage he supported my mother and my brother Henry, who was two years younger than I. My sister Pamela helped in this support by taking piano pupils. Thus we got along; but it was pretty hard sledding. I was not one of the burdens, because I was taken from school at once, upon my father's death, and placed in the office of "The Hannibal Courier," as printer's apprentice, and Mr. S., the editor and proprietor of the paper, allowed me the usual emolument of the office of apprentice—that is to say, board and clothes, but no money. The clothes consisted of two suits a year; but one of the suits always failed to materialize and the other suit was not purchased so long as Mr. S.'s old clothes held out. I was only about half as big as Mr. S., consequently his shirts gave me the uncomfortable sense of living in a circus tent, and I had to turn up his pants to my ears to make them short enough.

There were two other apprentices. One was Steve Wilkins, seventeen or eighteen years old and a giant. When he was in Mr. S.'s clothes they fitted him as the candle mold fits the candle; thus he was generally in a suffocated condition, particularly in the summer time. He was a reckless, hilarious, admirable creature; he had no principles, and was delightful company. At first we three apprentices had to feed in the kitchen with the old slave cook and her very handsome and bright and well behaved young mulatto daughter. For his own amusement,—for he was not generally laboring for other people's amusement,—Steve was constantly and persistently and loudly and elaborately making love to that mulatto girl, and distressing the life out of her, and worrying the old mother to death.

She would say, "Now, Marse Steve, Marse Steve! can't you behave yourself?"

With encouragement like that, Steve would naturally renew his attentions and emphasize them. It was killingly funny to Ralph and me. And, to speak truly, the old mother's distress about it was merely a pretense. She quite well understood that by the customs of slaveholding communities it was Steve's right to make love to that girl if he wanted to. But the girl's distress was very real. She had a refined nature, and took all Steve's extravagant love making in resentful earnest.

We got but little variety in the way of food at that kitchen table, and there wasn't enough of it anyway. So we apprentices used to keep alive by arts of our own; that is to say, we crept into the cellar nearly every night, by a private entrance which we had discovered, and robbed the cellar of potatoes and onions and such things, and carried them down town to the printing office, where we slept on pallets on the floor, and cooked them at the stove, and had very good times.

As I have indicated, Mr. S.'s economies were of a pretty close and rigid kind. By and by, when we apprentices were promoted from the basement to the ground floor and allowed to sit at the family table, along with the one journeyman, Harry H., the economies continued. Mrs. S. was a bride. She had attained to that distinction very recently, after waiting a good part of a lifetime for it; and she was the right woman in the right place, according to the economics of the place, for she did not trust the sugar bowl to us, but sweetened our coffee herself. That is, she went through the motions. She didn't really sweeten it. She seemed to put one heaping teaspoonful of brown sugar into each cup; but, according to Steve, that was a deceit. He said she dipped the spoon in the coffee first to make the sugar stick, and then scooped the sugar out of the bowl with the spoon upside down, so that the effect to the eye was a heaped-up spoon, whereas the sugar on it was nothing but a layer. This all seems perfectly true to me; and yet that thing would be so difficult to perform that I suppose it really didn't happen, but was one of Steve's lies.

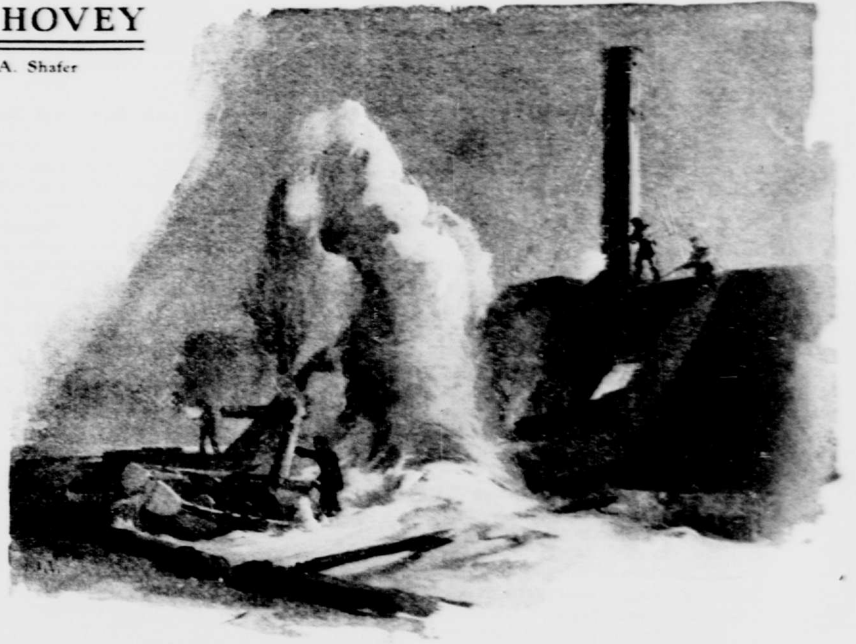
To be continued January 19

LITTLE STORIES OF BRAVERY

Sinking of the Albemarle: The Navy's Boldest Exploit

By CARL HOVEY

Drawing by L. A. Shafer



CHIEF among the thrilling exploits of the navy in the Civil War stands the night attack upon the Confederate ram Albemarle. The enterprise of one man, who carried it through with skill and precision in the face of appalling dangers, this incident shines out with peculiar brilliance in the multitude of raids and adventures.

All summer in 1864 the Federal gunboats inside of Hatteras Bar were at the mercy of the Rebel ironclad, which was vastly more formidable than any vessel the Government could send to these waters. Built like a monstrous scow, carrying a battery of heavy guns protected by a sloping bulwark of oak, which was armor clad, and with a ponderous iron ram, the Albemarle was launched in the Roanoke River, at the mouth of which lay the Union fleet. The work of destruction was soon begun. The town of Plymouth was captured, with its forts; in one day seven of our steamers were sunk or crippled by the invulnerable ram.

When one disaster followed another the anxiety of the authorities at Washington was greatly sharpened by a feeling of humiliation, since they were powerless to succor the fleet. The order had been given to construct a Federal ram to send against the Albemarle; but this required a long time, and daily the situation became more harassing. By September the Navy Department was ready to accept and aid any scheme, however rash and precarious, which might bring relief.

Such a plan was now proposed by a young officer, Lieutenant W. B. Cushing, famous for his raid in Cape Fear River, and brother of the hero of Gettysburg. Because he was known as a brave and most determined man, Cushing was granted the necessary support for his undertaking, though few believed that he possibly could be successful. He then brought from New York an open launch, fitted with a gun and an attachment for bearing a torpedo, by means of a boom suspended over the bow, and, joining the gunboats at the mouth of the Roanoke, waited for a favorable night.

The Attack

AT last it came, thick and rainy, one of those gusty autumn nights when winter seems to have assumed sway in advance of the usual season. The ram was moored at Plymouth, eight miles away; and shortly after midnight Lieutenant Cushing, with a small party of men, started in the launch up the river. The stream fortunately was broad enough to afford a chance of passing the Rebel pickets and fortifications without discovery, except in one place where the wreck of a Federal gunboat lay directly in the path. Here the Confederates kept a sentinel posted, with instructions to send up warning rockets at the first sign of an attack. Under the cloak of the foul weather, however, the launch was neither seen nor heard; the Lieutenant passed close by and rapidly approached the Confederate ram.

Rounding a point of land, he came suddenly upon her, riding in the stream, yet not so far out from the shore but that the whole of her huge bulk was brightly illuminated by the blaze of a camp fire in the swamp. Her broad expanse of planking, pierced by the protruding guns, shone in the strange light; and with her vague and massive shape, the Albemarle bore out in her appearance her frightful reputation.

Some one called out from the deck. An exclamation was heard; then a second shrill shout. This caused the Lieutenant to turn the launch directly toward the vessel. He intended to dart swiftly under her quarter, release the torpedo, and speed away; but in the next instant he discovered a floating chain of logs, which evidently encircled the ram completely. It was an obstacle which Cushing had not considered, and he was forced to turn sharply. As he did so a volley of musket balls struck the launch, wounding some of the men, and missing the leader so narrowly that the back of his coat and the sole of his shoe were torn by bullets.

After running back a short distance, the Lieutenant turned the bow of the launch toward the ram once more, and, ordering the engineer to put on all possible speed, steered straight for the vessel, which was now shooting out jets of flame more and more rapidly. In this brief and exciting time Cushing had made up his mind that the logs composing the barrier were slippery enough, if indeed they were not actually covered with watery slime, to allow the launch to slide over them with the headway now obtained. Once over, it would not be possible to return; but to this consideration he attached no importance.

Tied to his wrists and ankles as he stood in the bow were the lines of rope by which he controlled the movements of the boat and also the mechanism of the torpedo. What amazing coolness was required of him! To guide the boat into a certain position, to lower the torpedo at the exact moment, to wait a few seconds for it to rise under the vessel's quarter before pulling the trigger line to explode it, were difficult operations in themselves. But now, when the launch struck and rose and slid over the log barrier, and glided into the still pool beside the Albemarle, the fire of a hundred men was directed upon it with frantic energy. The thing must be done while a rifle gun was aiming not a dozen feet away. Those in the launch could hear the orders and the movement to depress the muzzle before firing.

They bent low, save the Lieutenant, who stood erect, and slowly sank the torpedo in the water. At last, after a horrible interval, they saw him touch the line of rope made fast to his wrist.

The explosion followed instantly, and at the same moment a bubbling wave rose higher and higher above the launch, then fell heavily inboard, sending the riddled shell of the little boat straight to the bottom. As the boat went down Cushing shouted to his men to save themselves. Some called out, "We surrender!" but were not heard in the din and uproar of firing; some sank in the river; while others attempted to escape by swimming toward the darkness away from the shore.

Cushing's Escape

THE leader, having rid himself of his sword and pistols, adopted the latter course, and, being a strong swimmer, rapidly increased the distance between him and the enemy. They were out in boats; for he could hear their voices and the sound of the oars; but after a time these sounds died away, and he turned and swam in the direction he supposed the land to be. He swam mechanically, feeling strangely little interest in the danger of his situation. The incessant, choking waves, the unknown expanse of water, the peril of capture,—all were nothing beside the thought which beset him. Had he succeeded? "Perhaps," he thought, "the torpedo was not in the right place after all; perhaps I exploded it too soon." The doubt was so distressing that he felt a strong inclination to swim back to the ram, to see with his own eyes whether she had sunk or not, or at least to hear what they were saying.

But where he was, or the ram, or the bank of the

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