

teras is an earthwork, but so admirably situated as to prove an almost impassable barrier to anything but ironclads. Beyond and around the fort on the land or sand side, were a few buildings used for quarters for the garrison and for the ordnance stores. Anchored in the Sound, near by, were supply ships, transports, and old hulks; while here and there rows of disconsolate timbers, lifting their dripping heads above the tide, told the fate of many a noble ship of the glorious Expedition of Gen. Burnside. We "hove to" after entering the Sound to deliver the mails for the Fort; and the change from the violent rolling, tossing and pitching was such as to inspire even my friend the 'colonel' with something of the spirit he was wont to display ere old Neptune changed his tune. After taking a look at the Fort and its surroundings, I turned my eyes to the opposite shore of the inlet, when lo, there stretched out in an almost straight line from the point into the Sound a troop or flock of—what? There was the puzzle to my mind. Were they huge gulls or windbags, cormorants or cranes, devils or dogfish? Fowl, flesh, or fish? I watched them with close attention while asking myself these questions; but ere my cogitations were finished they separated, spread their wings and took flight, apparently, but it seemed strange they did not rise from the surface of the water. They neared us presently, and I made them out to be, instead of birds, small sail-boats. "Love launched a fairy boat," &c. No love for us there, I guess, was my mental comment. "Pilots," I heard some one say. They came fluking towards us, their comparatively large sprit-sails hurrying them along at no contemptible rate of speed. There were about fifteen of them, and it seemed evident

all could not get a job from our bazy skipper. "That's Jeff's navy," remarked one.

"Hooray for the boat that's ahead!" sang out the 'colonel'.

"Bully for the little fellow with the big sail!" exclaimed another.

"I'll bet on the cross-gaffed, giraffe-colored one!"

"Bully for the rip-staving roarer that wins!"

"Aint she a-ripping up the old salt water canvas, skearing the sharks and astonishing the sea serpents?"

"I'll bet Jeff's in that boat, and he's coming to ask us to dine with him in Richmond!"

"Beauregard's in the second one!"

"No, sir, that's Stonewall Jackson!"

"D— Stonewall Jackson, or any other man!" and remarks of a like character attested the interest felt in the novel contest by others as well as myself. The boats were pelting away in fine style, each having a loose rein. Then hurrah, my hearties! the lucky man wins, and "first come first served!" Two of the number were distinctly ahead of all the rest, and one of these slightly ahead of the other.

"But Cutty Sark, before the rest, Hard upon noble Maggie prest—"

so that when they came up it was difficult to say which was first, and both came aboard to dispute the point, while the remaining unsuccessful ones kept on, as if philosophically resigned to a fate they could not overcome. Our bazy skipper, who was not very particular about expenses when Uncle Sam had to foot the bills, and to end all disputes, took both pilots—a piece of diplomacy I hardly expected his thick head capable of conceiving. The anchor was hoisted, and away we sped over the dark, swampy waters of Pamlico Sound. Roanoke Island lay to our right, and ever and anon we caught glimpses of the low, swampy