

DARING SEA ROVER

An Audacious Commerce Raider
of the Days of 1863.

READ'S CAMPAIGN OF TERROR.

For a Time This Clever Young Confederate Naval Officer, by the Havoc He Wrought, Had the Shipping Trade of the North in a State of Panic.

The daring and romantic exploits of the roving commerce destroying cruisers in the great European war recall the deeds of a very brave and clever officer who acted as a commerce destroyer in the service of the Confederacy. Lieutenant Charles W. Read, a Mississippian in his early twenties, who had been in the United States navy, joined the Confederate cruiser Florida on Nov. 4, 1862, while she lay at Mobile undergoing repairs. Read had already seen gunboat service in the fighting at New Orleans.

On May 6, 1863, off the coast of Brazil the Florida captured the brig Clarence, bound from Rio de Janeiro to Baltimore with a cargo of coffee. Lieutenant Read suggested that he be permitted to take the captive, with her cargo and papers intact, and, proceeding to Hampton roads, gain entrance there and either cut out a gunboat or burn the shipping gathered in the roads. Captain Maffit gave him a howitzer and detailed an assistant engineer and twenty men for the enterprise.

A month later, off the South Carolina coast, the Clarence captured and burned the bark Whistling Wind, from Philadelphia to New Orleans with coal. The next day it picked up the schooner Alfred H. Partridge, and Read put her captain under a \$5,000 bond to deliver the cargo of arms and clothing to the Confederates. On June 9 he took the brig Mary Alvina, Boston to New Orleans with commissary stores.

From his prisoners Read came to the conclusion that an attempt to enter Hampton Roads would meet with certain failure, and he turned his attention entirely to destroying Federal commerce. On June 12, within eight miles of Cape Henry, he made four captures—the bark Tacony, the schooner M. A. Shindler, the schooner Kate Stewart and the brig Arabella. Since the Clarence was a poor saller, the

young commander transferred his crew and howitzer to the Tacony. The Clarence and the M. A. Shindler he burned. The Arabella he bonded for \$30,000 and the Kate Stewart for \$7,000, and he used the latter to take ashore some fifty prisoners.

Those captures stirred the shipowners, and the shipowners promptly stirred up the secretary of the navy. The naval commanders at Newport News, Philadelphia and New York were ordered to send out vessels to chase the raider, which they did.

Meanwhile the Tacony, under her new colors, captured the brig Umpire, which, with her cargo of sugar and molasses, was burned on June 15. Five days later the Tacony seized the packet ship Isaac Webb, Liverpool to New York with 750 passengers on board, and Read bonded her for \$40,000. The same day he destroyed the fishing schooner Micawber. The clipper ship Byzantium and the bark Goodspeed, both bound for New York, were sunk on the next day, which was June 21.

By that time there were more than twenty Federal vessels pursuing the Tacony, and the shipping interests of New York were almost in a state of panic.

Read now sailed northward and off the coast of Massachusetts captured four fishing schooners on June 22. The

following day he took two more. On June 24 he held up the ship *Shatemuc*, from Liverpool to Boston, carrying a large number of immigrants, and bonded her for \$150,000. That night he captured the fishing schooner *Archer*.

As the ammunition for the howitzer had become exhausted, Read transferred his crew to the *Archer* and burned the *Tacony*. On the morning of June 26 he picked up Portland light. Two fishermen, who mistook the schooner for a pleasure party, piloted her into Portland harbor.

The following morning at half past 1 o'clock Read and his men boarded the revenue cutter *Caleb Cushing*. She was captured without an alarm being given, but the tide was running in before her new masters could get her under way, and the wind had dropped.

They did escape from the harbor, but about twenty miles outside two large steamers bearing soldiers and armed civilians overhauled the cutter. Read had not been able to find the vessel's stock of ammunition, and after firing a few rounds at the pursuing steamers he put off his prisoners, set the cutter on fire and, with his crew, took to the boats. He surrendered to the commander of the steamer *Forest City*.

Lieutenant Read made a brief report of his cruise on July 30 from Fort Warren and a more detailed one the following year under a Richmond date.

So far as the records show, no lives were taken in the course of the raid.—
Youth's Companion.

The Drama.

"Young man, you attend lectures regularly, but you don't apply yourself. I don't think you'll do very much in medicine."

"I don't expect to go in for medicine, professor. I'm just gathering material for a clinical play."—Pittsburgh Post.

Justice consists in doing no injury to men; decency, in giving them no offense.—Cicero.