bales of cotton sometimes realized a profit of a quarter of a million dollars on the inward and outward run within two weeks. Cotton could be purchased in the Confederacy for three cents per pound in gold, and sold in England at the equivalent of forty-five cents to one dollar a pound, and the profits on some classes of goods brought into the Confederacy were in the same proportion. It is probably within the bounds of truth to say that the blockade-running traffic during the war, including the cost of the ships, amounted to about one hundred and fifty million dollars, gold standard.

The Confederate States steamer *R. E. Lee,* under Captain Wilkinson, ran the blockade at Wilmington twenty-one times and carried abroad nearly seven thousand bales of cotton, worth at that time about two million dollars in gold; and she also took into the Confederacy equally valuable cargoes.

The steamer *Siren,* most successful of all, made sixty-four runs through the blockade, and her profits ran into millions.

Montesquieu has said that it is not the number killed and wounded in a battle that determines its general historical importance, and Creasy, in *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World, from Marathon to Waterloo,* says: "It is not because only a few hundred fell in the battle by which Joan of Arc captured the Tourelles and raised the seige of Orleans that the effect of that crisis is to be judged."

Napoleon said that an army moves upon its belly. The resources of the Confederate Army commissariat, steadily depleted by the incessant drain upon the food producers and by the blockade of the Southern ports, were largely sustained during the war by the successful blockade runners from the West Indies to Wilmington, whence cargoes of increasing value were immediately transported to our starving Confederates in the field; but when the multiplied arms of the new navy, like the deadly tentacles of the octupus, reached into every hiding-place of these fugitives of the sea, they gradually brought to an end, in the capture of Fort Fisher, this wonderful epoch in our naval and commercial history.

New Inlet, since closed by harbor and river improvements, was more frequently used by the blockade runners than the Main Bar, under the guns of Fort Caswell, It was protected for four years by Fort Fisher, which commanded the last gateway between the Confederate States and the outside world. Its capture, with the resulting loss of all the Cape Fear River

defenses and Wilmington, the *entrepôt* of the Confederacy, effectually ended blockade running and compelled the subsequent surrender of the Confederate Army in the field.

It was, therefore, not the valor of the Federal or of the Confederate forces in the contest at Fort Fisher that made it most memorable in the history of the war. It was the fatal blow to the Confederate commissariat, the cutting off of supplies, the starvation of Lee's army, the closure of the last hope of the Confederacy, which gives to the victory of Curtis, the gallant leader of the Union forces at Fort Fisher, its lasting importance as an historical event.

THE PORT OF WILMINGTON DURING THE WAR.

When Beauregard fired that fateful bombshell which burst over Fort Sumter at half past four on the morning of April 12, 1861, it sent a thrill of dismay into every Southern port, and panic-stricken master mariners hurriedly prepared their ships for sea, and welcomed any wind that would blow them away from the impending danger.

In a short time the Cape Fear was deserted, and the occupation of pilots and longshoremen was gone. At that time there were sixty or seventy licensed bar and river pilots and apprentices, who had no thought of the rich harvest of golden sovereigns which Fortune was to pour into their pockets in the strange commerce of the beleaguered city that became the gateway of the Southern Confederacy.

The Blockade.

On the nineteenth of April, 1861, President Lincoln declared by proclamation a military and commercial blockade of our Southern ports, which was supplemented by the proclamation of the 27th of May to embrace the whole Atlantic coast from the capes of Virginia to the mouth of the Rio Grande. This was technically a "constructive," or "paper," blockade, inasmuch as the declaration of the great powers assembled in congress at Paris, in 1856, removed all uncertainty as to the principles upon which the adjudication of prize claims must proceed by declaring that "blockades, in order to be binding, must be effective; that is to say, must be maintained by a force sufficient really to prevent access to the enemy's coast."