It was obviously impossible at that time for the Federal Government to enforce a blockade of the Southern coast, measuring 3,549 miles and containing 189 harbors, besides almost innumerable inlets and sounds through which small craft might easily elude the four United States warships then available for service, the remaining 38 ships of war in commission being on distant stations.

Measures were, therefore, taken by the Navy Department to close the entrances of the most important Southern ports, notably those of Charleston and Savannah, by sinking vessels loaded with stone across the main channels or bars. Preparations were also made on a more extensive plan to destroy the natural roadsteads of other Southern ports and harbors along the coast by the same means; but, although twenty-five vessels were sunk in the smaller inlets, it does not appear that this novel method of blockade was generally adopted.

In the meantime, urgent orders had been sent recalling from foreign stations every available ship of war; and by December of the same year the Secretary of the Navy had purchased and armed 264 ships, which, with their 2,557 guns and 22,000 men, rendered the "paper blockade" comparatively effective. A sorry looking fleet it was as compared with our modern navies; ships, barks, schooners, sloops, tugs, passenger boats—anything that would carry a gun, from the hoary type of Noah's Ark to the double-end ferry boat still conspicuous in New York waters.

"The blockading fleet," says Judge Advocate Cowley, "was divided into two squadrons; the Atlantic Blockading Squadron of 22 vessels, carrying 296 guns and 3,300 men, and the Gulf Blockading Squadron of 21 vessels, carrying 282 guns and 3,500 men." This force was constantly increased as the two hundred specially designed ships of war were built by the Navy Department. The squadron reached its highest degree of efficiency during the fourth year of the war by the acquisition of many prizes, which were quickly converted into light draft cruisers and rendered effective naval service, frequently under their original names.

The Blockaders.

The first blockader placed upon the Cape Fear Station was one bearing the misnomer *Daylight,* which appeared July 20, 1861. Others soon followed, until the number of the blockaders

off New Inlet and the Main, or Western, Bar of the river was increased thirty or more; these formed a cordon every night in the shape of a crescent, the horns of which were so close in shore that it was almost impossible for a small boat to pass without discovery. Armed picket barges also patrolled the bars and sometimes crept close in upon the forts. For a year or more the fleet was largely kept upon the blockading stations; then a second cordon was placed across the track of the blockade runners near the ports of Nassau and the Bermudas, the cruisers of which sometimes violated the international distance restriction of one league—three geographical miles—from neutral land. At last a third cordon was drawn on the edge of the Gulf Stream, to which the hunted and harassed blockade runner often became an easy prey in the early morning after a hard night's run in the darkness, during which no lights were visible to friend or foe, even the binnacle lamp being carefully screened, leaving only a small peephole by which the ship was steered.

The Cruisers.

Some of the later cruisers were faster than the blockade runners and were more dreaded than the blockading squadron, not only because of their greater speed, but chiefly because of the proximity of their consorts, which kept them always in sight, often to the discomfiture of their unhappy quarry, headed off and opposed in every direction. The prospective division of big prize money, running into millions of dollars, was, of course, the most exciting feature of the service on the Federal side. Occasionally there was comparatively trifling compensation, but great enjoyment in the capture of some small-fry blockade runners, consisting of pilot boats or large yawls laden with two or three bales of cotton and a crew of three or four youths, that sometimes came to grief in a most humiliating way. These small craft, upon one of which the writer was at sea for two weeks, were too frail for the risk of the longer voyages, and were usually projected from the small inlets, or sounds, farther South, which gave them a short run of about a hundred miles to the outer Bahama Keys, through whose dangerous waters they would warily make their way to Nassau. A boat of this description sailed over a Florida bar on a dark night under a favorable wind; but, failing to get out of sight of land before morning dawned, was overhauled at sunrise by a