blockader and ordered to come alongside, where, with their own hands, these miniature blockade runners were obliged to hook on to the falls of the Federal davits, by which they were ignominiously hoisted—boat, cargo and crew, to the captor's deck.

The desertion of negro slaves from tidewater plantations and their subsequent rescue as "Intelligent Contrabands" by the coasting cruisers formed an occasional incident in the records of their official logs; but it is a noteworthy fact, deserving honorable mention, that comparatively few of the trusted negroes upon whom the soldiers in the Confederate Army relied for the protection and support of their families at home were thus found wanting. A pathetic and fatal instance is recalled in the case of a misguided negro family which put off from the shore in the darkness, hoping that they would be picked up by a chance gunboat in the morning. They were hailed by a cruiser at daylight, but in attempting to board her their frail boat was swamped, and the father alone was rescued, the mother and all the children perishing.

A Port of Refuge.

The natural advantages of Wilmington at the time of the War between the States made it an ideal port for blockade runners, there being two entrances to the river, New Inlet on the north, and the Western, or Main, Bar, on the south of Cape Fear.

For miles the slope of our beach is very gradual to deep water. The soundings along the coast are regular, and the floor of the ocean is remarkably even. A steamer hard pressed by the enemy could run along the outer edge of the breakers without great risk of grounding; the pursuer, being usually of deeper draft, was obliged to keep further off shore. The Confederate steamer *Lilian,* of which I was then purser, was chased for nearly a hundred miles from Cape Lookout by the United States steamer *Shenandoah,* which sailed a parallel course within half a mile of her and forced the *Lilian* at times into the breakers. This was probably the narrowest escape ever made by a blockade runner in a chase. The *Shenandoah* began firing her broadside guns at three o'clock in the afternoon, her gunners and the commanding officers of the batteries being distinctly visible to the *Lilian's* crew. A heavy sea was running which deflected the aim of the man-of-war, and this alone

saved the *Lilian* from destruction. A furious bombardment by the *Shenandoah,* aggravated by the display of the *Lilian's* Confederate flag, was continued until nightfall, when, by a clever ruse, the *Lilian,* guided by the flash of her pursuer's guns, stopped for a few minutes; then, putting her helm hard over ran across the wake of the warship straight out to sea, and on the following morning, passed the fleet off Fort Fisher in such a crippled condition that several weeks were spent in Wilmington for repairs.

THE CHASE.[1]

[After Homeward Bound.]

Freed from the lingering chase, in devious ways
Upon the swelling tides
Swiftly the *Lilian* glides
Through hostile shells and eager foemen past;
The lynx-eyed pilot gazing through the haze,
And engines straining, "far hope dawns at last."

Now falls in billows deep the welcome night
Upon white sands below;
While signal lamps aglow
Seek out Fort Fisher's distant answering gleams,
The blockade runner's keen, supreme delight,—
Dear Dixie Land, the haven of our dreams!

James Sprunt.

CAPE FEAR PILOTS.

The four years of blockade running, from 1861 to 1865, were so crowded with incidents and adventures of an extraordinary and startling nature that each day brought a new and novel experience.

I recall my first day under fire, the trembling knees, the terrifying scream of the approaching shells, the dread of instant death. Again, the notable storm at sea in which our ship was buffeted and lashed by the waves until the straining steel plates cut the rivets, the fireroom was flooded and the engines stopped, while the tempest tossed us helpless upon the mountainous waves, and all hope of saving our lives was gone until we were mercifully cast upon a reef which extends about

[1]First published in the *North Carolina Booklet.*