Lookout. It would be more perilous to run out to sea than to continue on our course, for we had passed through the off-shore line of blockaders, and the sky had become perfectly clear. I determined to personate a transport bound to Beaufort, a port which was in possession of the United States forces and the coaling station of the fleet blockading Wilmington. The risk of detection was not very great, for many of the captured blockade runners were used as transports and dispatch vessels. Shaping our course for Beaufort, and slowing down, as if we were in no haste to get there, we passed several vessels, showing United States colors to them all. Just as we were crossing the ripple of shallow water off the 'tail' of the shoals, we dipped our colors to a sloop-of-war which passed three or four miles to the south of us. The courtesy met prompt response; but I have no doubt her captain thought me a lubberly and careless seaman to shave the shoals so closely. We stopped the engines when no vessels were in sight; and I was relieved from a heavy burden of anxiety as the sun sank below the horizon, and our course was shaped at full speed for Masonboro Inlet.

"The staid old town of Wilmington was turned 'topsy-turvy' during the war. Here resorted speculators from all parts of the South to attend the weekly auctions of imported cargoes; and the town was infested with rogues and desperadoes, who made a livelihood by robbery and murder. It was unsafe to venture into the suburbs at night, and even in daylight there were frequent conflicts in the public streets between the crews of steamers in port and the soldiers stationed in the town, in which knives and pistols would be freely used; and not infrequently a dead body with marks of violence upon it would rise to the surface of the water in one of the docks. The civil authorities were powerless to prevent crime. *'Inter arma silent leges'!* The agents and employees of different blockade-running companies lived in magnificent style, paying a king's ransom (in Confederate money) for their household expenses, and nearly monopolizing the supplies in the country market. Towards the end of the war, indeed, fresh provisions were almost beyond the reach of every one. Our family servant, newly arrived from the country in Virginia, would sometimes return from market with an empty basket, having flatly refused to pay what he called 'such nonsense prices' for a bit of fresh beef or a handful of vegetables. A quarter of lamb, at the time of which I now write, sold for $100; a pound of tea, for $500. Confederate