money which in September, 1861, was nearly equal to specie in value, had declined in September, 1862, to 225; in the same month, 1863, to 400, and before September, 1864, to 2,000.

"Many of the permanent residents of the town had gone into the country, letting their houses at enormous prices; those who were compelled to remain kept themselves much secluded, the ladies rarely being seen upon the more public streets. Many of the fast young officers belonging to the army would get an occasional leave to come to Wilmington, and would live at free quarters on board the blockade runners or at one of the numerous bachelor halls ashore.

"The convalescent soldiers from the Virginia hospitals were sent by the route through Wilmington to their homes in the South. The ladies of the town were organized by Mrs. DeRosset into a society for the purpose of ministering to the wants of these poor sufferers, the trains which carried them stopping an hour or two at the station that their wounds might be dressed and food and medicine supplied to them. These self-sacrificing, heroic women patiently and faithfully performed the offices of hospital nurses.

"Liberal contributions to this society were made by both companies and individuals, and the long tables at the station were spread with delicacies for the sick to be found nowhere else in the Confederacy. The remains of the meals were carried by the ladies to a camp of mere boys—home guards—outside of the town. Some of these children were scarcely able to carry a musket, and were altogether unable to endure the exposure and fatigue of field service; and they suffered fearfully from measles and typhoid fever. General Grant used a strong figure of speech when he asserted that 'the cradle and the grave were robbed to recruit the Confederate armies.' The fact of a fearful drain upon the population was not exaggerated. Both shared the hardships and dangers of war with equal self-devotion to the cause. It is true that a class of heartless speculators infested the country, who profited by the scarcity of all sorts of supplies; but this fact makes the self-sacrifice of the mass of the Southern people more conspicuous; and no State made more liberal voluntary contributions to the armies, or furnished better soldiers, than North Carolina.

"On the opposite side of the river from Wilmington, on a low, marshy flat, were erected the steam cotton presses, and there the blockade runners took in their cargoes. Sentries were

posted on the wharves, day and night, to prevent deserters from getting on board and stowing themselves away; and the additional precaution of fumigating the outward-bound steamers at Smithville was adopted; but, in spite of this vigilance, many persons succeeded in getting a free passage abroad. These deserters, or 'stowaways,' were, in most instances, sheltered by one or more of the crew; in which event they kept their places of concealment until the steamer had arrived at her port of destination, when they would profit by the first opportunity to leave the vessel undiscovered. A small bribe would tempt the average blockade-running sailor to connive at this means of escape. The 'impecunious' deserter fared worse, and would usually be forced by hunger and thirst to emerge from his hiding place while the steamer was on the outward voyage. A cruel device employed by one of the captains effectually put a stop, I believe—certainly a check—to this class of 'stowaways.' He turned three or four of them adrift in the Gulf Stream, in an open boat, with a pair of oars, and a few days' allowance of bread and water."

Captain M. P. Usina.

During my intercourse with officers of celebrated blockade-running ships in the years 1863 and 1864, I met a mariner named M. P. Usina, from ~~Charleston~~ Savannah, familiarly known as Mike Usina, whose skill and daring made him famous in Nassau and Bermuda and in all of the Atlantic States. The American consul at Nassau, Mr. Whiting, eager for his capture by the cruisers which hovered near the British islands, bought Usina's portraits from a local photographer, and sent them broadcast among the Federal commanders in order to identify him when captured, as many Southerners escaped long confinement by claiming to be Englishmen. Captain Usina seemed to have a charmed life, but he was in reality so cool under fire and so resourceful in a tight place or situation, that he slipped through their fingers frequently when his capture seemed certain.

I remember some of the incidents connected with his blockade experience which stirred my blood long years ago and which I still recall with something of the old-time enthusiasm. In a speech before the Confederate Veterans' Association of Savannah, July 4, 1893, which I have carefully preserved, Captain Usina told a number of thrilling stories of his career which deserve honorable mention in the history of the strenuous times which he most graphically described. On that occasion he said: