thirty-five blockaders anchored there the afternoon before, counted from Fort Caswell.) But, I said that we had four hundred tons of meat for starving soldiers and I intended to make a run for it, and if any of them were unwilling to take the risk, they were at liberty to take the small boats and try to reach the beach. To their credit, be it said, not one man availed himself of the privilege. When I said to Mr. Thompson, our fearless pilot, 'Tom, I am going to make the attempt, what do you think of it?' his answer was, 'I am ready, sir, whenever you are'; and not another word was said except the necessary orders for the management of the ship.

"Slowly approaching the vessel I supposed to be the flagship, which we used as a point of departure to find the inlet, there being no lights or other marks to find the entrance, I was notified by the engineer that he could not hold his steam, and that we must either go faster or he would be obliged to open his safety valve, something never allowed when the enemy was within hearing. I told him to hold on a few moments and he would have a chance to work his steam off. We could distinctly see the ships in the beautiful moonlight, and they were so many that we had to steer directly for and through them. As we neared the big flagship she fired a blank cartridge and then a solid shot across our bows; and when near enough to hail us, her officer ordered us in very emphatic language to stop that ship or he'd blow us out of the water.

" 'Hold on,' I said, 'until I speak to the engineer,' which I did through the speaking tube; but instead of stopping the engines, he threw her wide open and she almost flew from under our feet. Our neighbors soon found that we were not doing very much stopping and attempted to do the stopping themselves; but, fortunately for us, they failed to do so.

"My chief officer, a Virginian named Charles Nelson (and well named), was ordered by me to ascertain the depth of the water, as our ship was approaching shoal water very rapidly. In his deliberate manner he went to the leadsman, found out, and reported so slowly that I reproached him for it. Said I, 'Can not even a shell make you move faster?' (Two of them had exploded between us in the meantime.) His answer was, 'What is the use, sir? I might go just fast enough to get in the way of one of them.' This man was afterwards in command of the *Armstrong,* bound from Wilmington to Bermuda, about the middle of November, 1864, when, after successfully

eluding the vigilance of the blockaders around the inlet, she was sighted at 7 o'clock in the morning and then began—in my opinion—the most memorable chase in the war. She was first seen by the *R. R. Cuyler,* which was soon joined by two other ships; and the *Armstrong* was soon in the position of the little hare and three large hounds in pursuit. The *Cuyler* was a large screw steamer built for the passenger trade between Savannah and New York. She was named after a former president of the Central Railroad, and before the war was considered the fastest steamer out of New York. At 10 a. m., the first shot was fired from the *Cuyler,* and for seven long hours Nelson walked the bridge, cool and collected, not more excited, in fact, than if the *Armstrong* were moored to a dock in a safe harbor. The *Cuyler* alone fired 195 shot and shell. The top of the paddle-box was shot away; Nelson, covered up with the wreck, shook himself clear. An exploding shell set fire to the cabin; the hose was let down, the pumps turned on, and the fire put out with less excitement than would be seen at a fire in any city in time of peace. The anchors and chains were thrown overboard, and the masts were cut away. More than 400 bales of cotton were dumped into the sea, and everything possible was done to lighten the ship and increase her speed; but of no avail, the sea was too rough for the little fugitive to compete with the large ships that were chasing her.

"At 5 p. m. the captain of the *Cuyler* hailed Nelson and ordered him to stop the ship or he would blow them out of the water, which seemed to be a favorite way the blockaders had of expressing themselves. Just about that time the *Armstrong's* engine-frame broke in two and she was a prize.

"The first boat that boarded her had in it a lieutenant and a surgeon; the latter, before leaving his boat to go on board the *Armstrong,* asked: 'How many killed and wounded?' and, strange to say, not a man was scratched. It seemed miraculous when we consider that all hands, about forty men, were on deck engaged in throwing the cargo overboard. One of her crew afterwards told me that he could have filled a peck measure with the grapeshot that were gathered up about the decks, and that the pieces of shell were shoveled overboard. An officer of the *Cuyler* said to one of the prisoners, 'We have captured twenty-two blockade runners, and I think I know whereof I speak when I say your captain is the bravest man that runs the blockade.' The *Armstrong* made a trip to Savannah from New York after the war and was called the *Savannah.*