badly and he dare not stop his engines, as they had to be kept going in order to work the pumps. We brought her into the harbor, and having beached her and afterwards made all necessary repairs on the slipway, I decided to take a trip in her.

"As soon as the nights were sufficiently dark we made a start for Wilmington, unfortunately meeting very bad weather and strong head winds, which delayed us; the result was that instead of making out the blockading fleet about midnight, as we had intended, when dawn was breaking there were still no signs of them. Capper, the chief engineer, and I then held a hurried consultation as to what we had better do. Capper was for going to sea again, and if necessary returning to Nassau; the weather was still threatening, our coal supply running short, and, with a leaky ship beneath us, the engineer and I decided that the lesser risk would be to make a dash for it. 'All right,' said Capper, 'We'll go on, but you'll get d—d well peppered!'

"We steamed cautiously on, making as little smoke as possible, whilst I went to the masthead to take a look around; no land was in sight, but I could make out in the dull morning light the heavy spars of the blockading flagship right ahead of us, and soon after several other masts became visible on each side of her. Picking out what appeared to me to be the widest space between these, I signaled to the deck how to steer, and we went steadily on, determined when we found we were perceived to make a rush for it. No doubt our very audacity helped us through, as for some time they took no notice, evidently thinking we were one of their own chasers returning from sea to take up her station for the day.

"At last, to my great relief, I saw Fort Fisher just appearing above the horizon, although we knew that the perilous passage between these blockaders must be made before we could come under the friendly protection of its guns. Suddenly we became aware that our enemy had found us out; we saw two cruisers steaming towards one another from either side of us, so as to intercept us at a given point before we could get on the land side of them. It now became simply a question of speed and immunity from being sunk by shot. Our little vessel quivered under the tremendous pressure with which she was being driven through the water.

"An exciting time followed, as we and our two enemies rapidly converged upon one point, other ships in the distance also hurrying up to assist them. We were now near enough to

be within range, and the cruiser on our port side opened fire; his first shot carried away our flagstaff aft, on which our ensign had just been hoisted; his second tore through our forehold, bulging out a plate on the opposite side. Bedding and blankets to stop the leak were at once requisitioned, and we steamed on, full speed, under a heavy fire from both quarters. Suddenly, puffs of smoke from the fort showed us that Colonel Lamb, the commandant, was aware of what was going on and was firing to protect us; a welcome proof that we were drawing within range of his guns and on the landside of our pursuers, who, after giving us a few more parting shots, hauled off and steamed away from within reach of the shells, which we were rejoiced to see falling thickly around them.

"We had passed through a most thrilling experience; at one time the cruiser on our port side was only a hundred yards away from us, with her consort a hundred and fifty on the starboard, and it seemed a miracle that their double fire did not completely sink us. It certainly required all one's nerve to stand upon the paddle-box, looking without flinching almost into the muzzles of the guns which were being fired at us; and proud we were of our crew, not a man of whom showed the white feather. Our pilot, who showed no lack of courage at the time, became, however, terribly excited as we neared the bar, and, whether it was that the ship steered badly, owing to being submerged forward, or from some mistake, he ran her ashore whilst going at full speed. The result was a most frightful shaking, which of course materially increased the leaks, and we feared the ship would become a total wreck; fortunately, the tide was rising, and, through lightening her by throwing some of the cargo overboard, we succeeded in getting her off and steamed up the river to Wilmington, where we placed her on the mud.

"After repairing the shot holes and other damage, we were under the impression that no further harm from running ashore had come to her, as all leaks were apparently stopped and the ship was quite tight. The result proved us to be sadly wrong on this point. After loading our usual cargo we started down the river all right, and waited for nightfall in order to cross the bar and run through the fleet. No sooner had we crossed it and found ourselves surrounded by cruisers, than the chief engineer rushed on the bridge, saying the water was already over the stoke-hole plates, and he feared that the ship was sinking. At the same moment a quantity of firewood which was stowed