around one of the funnels (and which was intended to eke out our somewhat scanty coal supply) caught fire, and flames burst out.

"This placed us in a pretty predicament, as it showed our whereabouts to the two cruisers which were following us, one on each quarter. They at once opened a furious cannonade upon us; however, although shells were bursting all around and shot flying over us, all hands worked with a will, and we soon extinguished the flames, which were acting as a treacherous beacon to our foes. Fortunately, the night was intensely dark and nothing could be seen beyond a radius of thirty or forty yards, so, thanks to this, we were soon enabled, by altering our helm, to give our pursuers the slip, whilst they probably kept on their course.

"We had still the other enemy to deal with; but our chief engineer and his staff had meanwhile been hard at work and had turned on the 'bilge-injection' and 'donkey-pumps.' Still, the leak was gaining upon us, and it became evident that the severe shaking which the ship got when run aground had started the plates in her bottom. The mud had been sucked up when she lay in the river at Wilmington, thus temporarily repairing the damage; but when she got into the seaway the action of the water opened them again. Even the steam pumps now could not prevent the water from gradually increasing; four of our eight furnaces were extinguished, and the firemen were working up to their middles in water.

"It was a critical time when daylight broke, dull and threatening. The captain was at the wheel and I at the masthead (all other hands being employed at the pumps, and even baling), when, not four miles off, I sighted a cruiser broadside on. She turned around as if preparing to give chase, and I thought we were done for, as we could not have got more than three or four knots an hour out of our crippled boat. To my great joy, however, I found our alarm was needless, for she evidently had not seen us, and, instead of heading, turned her stern towards us and disappeared into a thick bank of clouds.

"Still we were far from being out of danger, as the weather became worse and worse and the wind increased in force until it was blowing almost a gale. Things began to look as ugly as they could, and even Capper lost hope. I shall never forget the expression on his face as he came up to me and said, in his gruff voice, 'I say, Mr. Taylor, the beggar's going, the beggar's

going,' pointing vehemently downwards. 'What the devil do you mean!' I exclaimed. 'Why, we are going to lose the ship and our lives, too,' was the answer. It is not possible for any one unacquainted with Capper to appreciate this scene. Sturdy, thickset, nearly as broad as he was long, and with the gruffest manner but kindest heart—a rough diamond, and absolutely without fear. With the exception of Steele, he was the best blockade-running captain we had.

"In order to save the steamer and our lives we decided that desperate remedies must be resorted to, so again the unlucky deck cargo had to be sacrificed. The good effect of this was soon visible; we began to gain on the water, and were able, by degrees, to relight our extinguished fires. But the struggle continued to be a most severe one, for just when we began to obtain a mastery over the water the donkey-engine broke down, and before we could repair it the water increased sensibly, nearly putting out our fires again. So the struggle went on for sixty hours, when we were truly thankful to steam into Nassau Harbor and beach the ship. It was a very narrow escape, for within twenty minutes after stopping her engines the vessel had sunk to the level of the water.

"After this I made a trip in a new boat that had just been sent out to me, the *Wild Dayrell*. And a beauty she was, very strong, a perfect sea-boat, and remarkably well engined.

"Our voyage in was somewhat exciting, as about three o'clock in the afternoon, while making for the Fort Caswell entrance (not Fort Fisher), we were sighted by a Federal cruiser, which immediately gave chase. We soon found, however, that we had the heels of our friend, but it left us the alternative of going out to sea or being chased straight into the jaws of the blockaders off the bar before darkness came on. Under these circumstances what course to take was a delicate point to decide, but we solved the problem by slowing down just sufficiently to keep a few miles ahead of our chaser, hoping that darkness would come on before we made the fleet or they discovered us. Just as twilight was drawing in we made them out; cautiously we crept on, feeling certain that our friend astern was rapidly closing up on us. Every moment we expected to hear the shot whistling around us. So plainly could we see the sleepy blockaders that it seemed almost impossible we should escape their notice. Whether they did not expect a runner to make an attempt so early in the evening, or whether it was sheer good luck on our part, I know