IMPROVED SHIPS AND NOTABLE COMMANDERS.

The last year of the war evolved a superior type of blockade runner of great speed, many of which were commanded by celebrated men of nerve and experience. Of these may be mentioned at random and from memory: the *Lilian,* Captain Maffitt; the *Little Hattie,* Captain Libby; the *Florie,* named for Captain Maffitt's daughter; the *Agnes E. Fry,* commanded by that noble but unfortunate naval officer, Capt. Joseph Fry; the *Chicora,* still running in Canadian waters; the *Let Her Rip*; the *Let Her Be;* also the fleet of three-funnel boats, one of which, the *Condor,* was commanded by the famous Admiral Hewitt, of the British Navy, who won the Victoria Cross in the Crimea, and who was knighted by Queen Victoria for his distinguished services as special envoy to King John of Abyssinia. The *Falcon,* another, was commanded for one voyage by Hobart Pasha; the *Flamingo,* the *Ptarmigan,* and the *Vulture,* were also of the three-funnel type.

Another notable British officer who ran the blockade was the gallant Burgoyne, who was lost in the iron-clad *Captain* in the Bay of Biscay, which vessel he commanded on that unfortunate voyage.

Captain Carter was a notable naval officer of the Confederacy; he commanded the blockade runner *Coquette.*

Capt. Thomas Lockwood, a North Carolinian, was, perhaps, the most noted of the commercial class. His last command was the celebrated steamer *Colonel Lamb,* named for the defender of Fort Fisher. This was the largest, the finest, and the fastest of all the ships on either side during the war. She was a paddle-steamer, built of steel, 281 feet long, 36 feet beam, and 15 feet depth of hold. Her tonnage was 1,788 tons. At the time she was built, 1864, she was the fastest vessel afloat, having attained on her trial a speed of sixteen and three-fourth knots, or about nineteen miles an hour. Captain Lockwood made several successful runs in this fine ship, and escaped to England at the close of the war. The *Colonel Lamb* was sold to the Greek Government, and subseqently, under another name, was blown up while in the Mersey loaded with war supplies. Other fast boats were the *Owl, Bat, Fox, Dream, Stag, Edith, Atalanta, Virginia, Charlotte, Banshee* and *Night Hawk.*

Another merchant commander of distinction was Captain

Halpin, who was very skillful and successful. He afterwards commanded the famous leviathan, *Great Eastern,* while she was engaged in laying the Atlantic cable.

It is a remarkable fact that, although speed was regarded the first essential to success, some of the slowest vessels engaged in the traffic were the most fortunate. The *Pet,* for example, was a very slow steamer, yet she made the runs, over forty of them, through the blockade with the regularity of a mail boat. I think this was due to the superior skill of her commander, who exercised great caution and never became excited in a tight place. The *Antonica* was another slow, lumbering boat, but it was said of her that when she was fairly set on her course between Nassau and Wilmington they could simply lash her wheel and she would go in or out "by herself." The *Scotia,* the *Greyhound,* and others were equally slow coaches, but had for a time, it seemed, a charmed life.

The loss of the *Merrimac* was, like that of the *Bat,* as related by Pilot Craig, a notable example of cowardice on the part of the captain. This fine, large steamer, which had successfully run into Wilmington, was ordered to be sold in this port, and she was bought by a number of prominent citizens and merchants, one of whom was Mr. Edward Kidder. She was laden with a very valuable cargo of cotton and tobacco and put to sea for Nassau. On the second day out she was chased, as they thought, by a cruiser which steadily gained on her, and when the stranger fired a small gun, the captain of the *Merrimac* ignominiously surrendered to an *unarmed passenger steamer,* whose little popgun, containing a blank cartridge used for signals in those days, would not have harmed a fly. This incident caused much merriment on board the passenger steamer, which profited largely in the prize money.

THE NORTH CAROLINA BLOCKADE RUNNER "ADVANCE."

The following communication, prepared for me by the late Col. James G. Burr, of Wilmington, will be read with interest:

"In the month of August, 1862, Zebulon B. Vance, then colonel of a North Carolina regiment serving in the Army of Northern Virginia, and quite a young man, was elected governor of the State by a large majority. He did not seek the