McLean was now placed at the wheel. It was a close race for hours, neither apparently gaining or losing a foot; but Providence again befriended us. As the day advanced, the breeze, which was very light from the northward at daylight, continued to freshen from that quarter. We soon set all of our canvas, and so did the chaser, but as the latter was square-rigged, and we carried fore and aft sails, our sheets were hauled flat aft, and the *Chameleon* was kept close to the wind by the steady old helmsman. I do not doubt that we would have been overhauled but for this favorable contingency. Head to wind, our pursuers would certainly have overtaken us, and off the wind her chances would have been almost equally good. But she began to drop gradually to leeward as the wind continued steady, and by two o'clock in the afternoon she was five or six miles distant on our lee quarter. Although we had not increased the distance between us much, if any, since the commencement of the chase, we had weathered upon the chaser until her sails had become useless about twelve o'clock, when she furled them. As the snowy cloud of canvas was rolled up like magic, and the tall, tapering spars were seen in its place, I supposed the cruiser was about to retire from the contest; but she still followed with the tenacity of a bloodhound. Apparently to no purpose, however, till about two o'clock, when the chief engineer, Mr. Schroeder, appeared on the bridge with the report that the journals were heated, and it was absolutely necessary to stop in order to ease the bearings. This was a predicament, indeed, but when I looked down into the hold and saw the clouds of vapor rising from the overheated journals, as a stream of water was being pumped upon them, I saw that Schroeder was right in the assertion that unless the bearings were instantly eased the machinery would give way. I had implicit confidence in Schroeder, and it had been justly earned, for he had served long under my command, and had always displayed, under trying circumstances, great coolness, presence of mind, and ability. He made every preparation for the work before him, taking off his coat, and when everything was in readiness, the order to stop the engines was given. In a few moments we lay like a log upon the water, and the chaser was rapidly lessening the distance between us. The suspense became almost intolerable. Our fate was hanging by a thread; but in ten minutes the journals had been cooled off, the bearings eased, and the *Chameleon* again sprang ahead with renewed speed. The steamer in chase had approached nearly

within cannon shot—probably within long range—but in the course of the next hour we had gained so rapidly in the race that the pursuit was abandoned as hopeless; and as the stranger wore around, to resume her station under easy steam, we followed in her wake till dark, when we evaded her without difficulty and continued on our course toward Charleston.

But another precious day had been lost, and subsequent unfavorable weather still further retarding our progress, we did not reach the coast near Charleston Bar till the fifth night after our departure from Nassau. The blockading fleet had been reinforced by all the light cruisers from the approaches to the Cape Fear River; and, as we drew in to the land, we were so frequently compelled to alter the course of the *Chameleon* in order to evade the blockaders, that we did not reach the bar till long after midnight, and after the tide had commenced to fall. I was tempted to force the pilot to make the attempt, but finally yielded to the assurances that access was impossible under the circumstances. As this was the last night during that moon, when the bar could be crossed during the dark hours, the course of the *Chameleon* was again, for the last time, shaped for Nassau. As we turned away from the land, our hearts sank within us, while the conviction forced itself upon us that the cause for which so much blood had been shed, so many miseries bravely endured, and so many sacrifices cheerfully made, was about to perish at last.

The closing scenes of blockade running are described by Colonel Scharf in his *History of the Confederate States Navy* as follows:

"The military and naval expeditions against Wilmington in December, 1864, and in January, 1865, resulted in the capture of the forts and the closing of the port. Eight vessels left the port of Nassau between the 12th and 16th of January, one of which took four one-hundred-pounder Armstrong guns; and at the time of their sailing there were over two and a half million pounds of bacon stored at Nassau awaiting transportation. The confidence reposed in the defense of Wilmington continued unabated on the part of the blockade runners, and the *Charlotte*, the *Blenheim*, and the *Stag*, all British steamers, ran in after the fall of Fort Fisher, and were captured by the Federal cruisers in the river. The blockade runner *Owl*, Capt. John N. Maffitt, C. S. N., in command, succeeded in passing over the bar