

William J. Bray, Jr. THE CAREER OF THE CSS RAPPAHANNOCK. (Under the direction of Dr. William N. Still, Jr.) Department of History, July 1975.

The purpose of this study is to give a comprehensive coverage of the multi-faceted career of the CSS Rappahannock. The Rappahannock has been either ignored or only given brief mention by most Civil War historians and this neglect is undeserved. Although playing a role that was more diplomatic than military, in her day she occupied a place of importance equal to the Alabama or the Shenandoah. She represented a real threat to Federal maritime mercantile interests, and the efforts to prevent her from leaving Calais, France, were as great as those to capture or sink any other commerce raider. Her value as a subject of study lies primarily in the field of diplomacy and her whole Confederate career is representative of the change of attitude within Great Britain and France towards the Confederate war effort.

Originally a British gun-vessel named the HBMS Victor, the Rappahannock was purchased secretly by the Confederacy through a British merchant firm. Shortly after her purchase, the Admiralty and the Federal government found sufficient evidence of her Confederate connections to have her detained. However, the vessel escaped in the middle of the night, before the writ of detention was served, and entered the French port of Calais, where she was allowed to be repaired. Upon completion of repairs, the vessel was detained on a technicality by the French government and remained in Calais for the remainder of the war, a subject of bitter diplomatic controversy between the two belligerents and the French

government. Her only military value as a result of the detention was to serve as a floating personnel depot and to occupy several Federal cruisers which could have served other duties elsewhere.

With the end of the war, the controversy over the Rappahannock was far from over. The United States government brought suit for possession in British Admiralty Court against a British ship merchant who had brought the Rappahannock from Calais to Liverpool. When it looked like the United States was going to win the suit by default, the two men who originally purchased the ship for the Confederacy entered suits against the United States to prevent that government from gaining possession of the ship. After eighteen months of expensive and exhausting court battles the United States did gain possession of the Rappahannock. Shortly after this she was sold at a public auction and disappeared into obscurity, thus bringing to an end the controversial career of the CSS Rappahannock.

THE CAREER OF  
THE CSS RAPPAHANNOCK

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of History  
East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in History

by

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July 1975

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Professor William N. Still, Jr. of the Department of History at East Carolina University for his constant encouragement and untiring efforts in directing this thesis. His guidance and constructive suggestions have given me a clearer understanding and a fuller appreciation for historical research and method without which the completion of this thesis would not have been possible.

Acknowledgment is also made to Professor Charles L. Price for his untiring efforts and helpful suggestions in refining this thesis to its final form.

TO  
MARY PAT  
AND  
MY PARENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

On February 20, 1861, the Navy Department of the Confederate States of America, was formally established by act of the Confederate Congress, meeting in session at the state legislature building at Montgomery Alabama. The next day, President Jefferson Davis selected men for his cabinet posts, and he chose Stephen R. Mallory as Secretary of the Navy. Mallory was one of the few cabinet members who brought any related experience to his cabinet position. While a member of the United States Congress, he had served as chairman of the committee on naval affairs. This gave him valuable knowledge of the inner workings of naval procurement, supply and innovations. This knowledge would hold him in good stead with the enormous task of creating from scratch, a working, viable naval defense force.<sup>1</sup>

Mallory and the Confederate Navy Department had many obstacles to overcome. No Federal vessels of war fell into Confederate hands at the outbreak of hostilities. Although naval officers of Southern leanings planning to resign their commissions in the Federal navy had been asked to bring their ships South prior to resigning, none did. Thus, for the first months of the war the Confederate navy consisted of letters of marque privateers and converted merchant steamers.

Mallory's biggest job was organizing the system of ordnance and supply. Cannon had to be cast, shot, shell and powder produced, and

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<sup>1</sup>Civil War Naval Chronology (Washington D.C., 1967), compiled by the Naval History Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Part I, 5, hereinafter cited as CWNC; Philip Van Doren Stern, The Confederate Navy: A Pictorial History (Garden City, New York, 1962), 15, hereinafter cited as Stern, The Confederate Navy; William N. Still, Jr., Confederate Shipbuilding (Athens, Georgia, 1969), 3.

all the other various and sundry articles necessary to equip vessels of war had to be purchased or constructed. Facilities to provide these articles and munitions of war were few. Norfolk naval yard, Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond, and the Selma Iron Works were some of the few operating facilities within Southern control capable of supplying ordnance material for the Confederate navy.

Due to the superiority of the Federal navy, the Confederacy had to go on a crash construction program. Most of the Southern ports such as Norfolk, Pensacola and New Orleans, which were capable of large scale construction of vessels of war, were captured early in the war. As a result, much of the construction was done in the various rivers in the South and was by nature designed for defense. Ironclads, armored rams, floating batteries, and other means of naval defense were constructed to keep the Federal fleets from using Southern rivers as staging areas for striking into the interior of the Confederacy. This method of defense was fairly successful and the ironclads and rams held their own against the wooden vessels of the Federal fleets until the Federals built similar vessels of their own.

Although the vessels built in the Confederacy were adequate for defense, the South had no chance of raising the Federal blockade because they did not have the capability of constructing a force equal to the task. The only offensive punch the Confederate navy could put into effect against the United States, would be to have a few small, fast, steam cruisers, lightly armed, existing for the sole purpose of destroying Federal maritime interests. These vessels would be under orders to go into every ocean of the world and to capture, burn or bond, every mer-

chant vessel under United States registry that they could overtake in international waters. They also hoped that by harrassing Federal mercantile interests, they would draw off Federal warships from the blockade to search for the raiders and thus weaken the blockade's effectiveness. Thus the romantic saga of the Confederate commerce raiders was born.

These raiders were a special class of warship. They used combined steam and sail power to make them among the fastest vessels afloat. They were lightly armed, generally carrying five to ten cannon of various make and bore. Their purpose was to prey upon unarmed merchant vessels and to avoid a direct confrontation with any armed vessels of the Federal navy. Usually the commerce raiders were able to outrun their bigger, more heavily armed opponents in the Federal navy. By destroying Federal commerce on the oceans, Mallory hoped that Yankee merchants would add their voices and influence to the anti-war sentiments within the Northern states, and thus possibly end the war early.

By the nature of the naval construction programs within the South, which were geared towards defensive vessels not requiring great mobility and speed, Mallory realized that the commerce raiders would have to be obtained outside the Confederacy. "The Confederates knew that their best chance of getting first-rate naval vessels was in Europe, and they concentrated their efforts there."<sup>2</sup>

Men familiar with ships and naval construction, were sent abroad to contract for vessels to be used as commerce raiders. Their efforts were highly successful at first as two vessels, the Florida and

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<sup>2</sup>Stern, The Confederate Navy, 17.

the Alabama, were constructed in Great Britain. Both of these warships made highly successful cruises, destroying Federal merchant vessels and taking millions of dollars in prizes. However, the success of their cruises ruined the hopes of future ship construction within Great Britain.

The delicate question of neutral obligations in wartime was severely tested by the Confederate raiders. Although none of the ships left Great Britain in an armed state, the armament and munitions of war being transferred at sea by steam tenders, their purpose was no great secret and the Federal government held Great Britain responsible for damages done to Federal merchant shipping. Great Britain scoffed at this, but the Federal representatives in London put so much diplomatic pressure upon Lord Russell and other British leaders, that measures were taken to prevent any further ships under construction from falling into Confederate hands. With but few exceptions, this policy held and the Confederates were unable to obtain additional newly constructed vessels.

Mallory now faced the problem of how to acquire warships abroad. The obvious answer was to purchase vessels already in use, either as merchant ships or decommissioned Royal Navy vessels, and convert them to armed raiders. For this purpose, Commander Matthew Fontaine Maury left the Confederacy on October 12, 1862, to journey to Great Britain.<sup>3</sup>

Maury was a world renowned scientist and oceanographer. His inventions, discoveries and theories had caused marine science and technology to take great strides forward. However, Maury's abilities as

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<sup>3</sup>CWNC, Part II, 102.

a Confederate naval purchasing agent in Great Britain, left much to be desired. During his first year in Great Britain, he purchased two vessels for conversion into cruisers. The first, the CSS Georgia, was an iron-hulled vessel which had minimal success as a commerce raider. Her weak engines combined with the condition of her iron hull after only a brief time at sea, made her worthless as a cruiser and she was soon sold out of service. The second vessel Maury purchased was the CSS Rappahannock.

The Rappahannock was formerly HBMS Victor, built in the Thames River in 1855-56. Due to faulty construction and experimental design, she had been deemed unfit as a Royal navy vessel and had been decommissioned and sold out of service in 1863. Maury's agents purchased the vessel, and she was under repair when possible British detention forced her to leave England. She then entered the port of Calais, France, where she would remain for the rest of the war, detained by the French government and the subject of a diplomatic struggle between France, the United States and the Confederacy.

The history of the Rappahannock's Confederate service is neither glamorous nor heroic. The entire affair was a comedy of errors from the very beginning. She never had the mystique or success of an Alabama or a Shenandoah, but in her time she caused as big an international stir as either of those ships. She was manned by obscure Southern lieutenants and unruly British seamen. The closest she came to a naval engagement was not with a Federal warship, but rather involved a collision with a French merchant vessel, appropriately named the Nil. Her battles were fought and lost at the diplomat's table as the inexperienced Confederates tried to match wits with the heads of a nation steeped in

diplomatic tradition and mastery. This thesis will try to show the many aspects of the whole affair and to give a general overview of the Rappahannock's place and significance within the war effort of the Confederate navy.

## CHAPTER II

### HBMS VICTOR, ALIAS SCYLLA, ALIAS CSS RAPPAHANNOCK

HBMS Victor was built for the Royal service in 1855-56 on the Thames River. The hull was of wooden construction and in order to retard the natural process of deterioration and to prevent leakage, it was sheathed in copper. She was a tri-masted vessel, bark-rigged, with no superstructure above decks. Two telescopic steam funnels were the only structures on the main deck and these could be raised or lowered on deck by means of winches and pulleys. Her machinery was powered by two sets of direct-acting reciprocating steam engines developing 350 h.p. at approximately ten and a half to eleven knots. These engines were driven by six tube boilers, two of which were designated as her fighting boilers. The Victor was approximately 857 tons weight, slightly over 200 feet between the perpendiculars and carried a maximum draft of twelve and a half feet. While in Confederate service the ship was painted black with a white figurehead of a woman on her prow, and was equipped with four long-boats, two to a side, positioned in the stern of the ship.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest reference found concerning the Victor was in the London Times, dated Wednesday March 19, 1856, when the vessel was men-

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<sup>1</sup>Dictionary of American Fighting Ships (Washington D.C., 1963), II, 560; Winslow to Welles, December 3, 1863, enclosure William L. Dayton, Jr. to Winslow, November 30, 1863, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion (Washington D.C.), Ser. I, Vol. II, 511; Vendroux to Winslow, February 29, 1864, Ser. I, Vol. II, 621, hereinafter cited as ORN; London Times, March 19, 1856; Anthony Preston, "The Raider That Never Made It", United States Naval Institute Proceedings, XCVIII, (March, 1968), 140-41.

tioned as fitting out in the Sheerness Naval basin. From this we can assume that the Victor's keel was laid down sometime in mid or late 1855. It can also be assumed that the Victor was part of the large buildup of small fighting craft of the gunboat and gun-vessel class as a result of Great Britain's involvement in the Crimean War, 1855-56. The vessel was designated as a screw, steam despatch gun-vessel and was to be used as a despatch and escort vessel. Of the twenty-six ships of the gun-vessel class built in the period from 1848 to 1858, twenty were built during the Crimean War.<sup>2</sup> However, the war was concluded by the time the Victor was completed so she never saw action in that conflict.

The Victor's armament was small, consisting of six guns. Like other vessels of her class and similar to other minor fighting vessels of the period, she carried her main armament on center-line carriages that could be traversed on curved racers to fire from broadside pivots. This arrangement allowed the Victor to fire her two 68-pounder (eight inch) shell guns on either broadside. She also carried four truck-mounted 24-pounder (5.5 inch) howitzers on her quarterdeck.<sup>3</sup>

On March 19, 1856, the Victor lay in the basin at Sheerness harbor, fitting out for her first trial trip. On that day she successfully tried out her new machinery, obtaining fifty-one revolutions per minute of the screw shaft. A second successful test was made on the

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<sup>2</sup>London Times, March 19, 24, 1856; Hans Busk, The Navies of the World (London, 1859), 40, hereinafter cited as Busk, The Navies of the World.

<sup>3</sup>Preston, "The Raider That Never Made It", 141.

following Saturday(22nd).<sup>4</sup> On Monday, March 24, 1856, the Victor steamed out of the fitting basin and was ordered to complete her coaling, adjust her compasses, take in stores, ammunition, and other articles, and proceed to Portsmouth.<sup>5</sup>

Shortly after this the Victor sailed to Portsmouth, England, under the command of Commander Algernon F.R. de Horsey, later in his career to become a Fleet Admiral in command of the British South American Squadron. On April 23, 1856, while stationed at Portsmouth(and at Spithead across the harbor), the Victor participated in the Great Naval Review of 1856, which was attended by the Queen, her family, other nobles, officials and the upper strata of English society. As later events would show, this gala public review would be the high point of the Victor's career.<sup>6</sup>

On June 2, 1856, the Victor and five other new despatch gunvessels accompanied the fifty-one gun ship of the line Imperieuse, to test their respective merits in cruising. This small force cruised from Portsmouth to Falmouth and on June 10th put into Plymouth in order to replenish their coal supplies. All during their week at sea they had tested their abilities in sailing, steaming, gunnery, and various other exercises. While at Plymouth they received final orders and on Friday, June 13th, a day which would seem symbolic of this vessel's mis-

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<sup>4</sup>London Times, March 19, 24, 1856.

<sup>5</sup>London Times, March 25, 1856.

<sup>6</sup>Fred T. Jane, The British Battle Fleet(London, 1915), 322; London Times, April 23, 1856.

fortune throughout her career, the Victor and the others turned southward. The Victor was destined on her maiden transatlantic cruise to be stationed in the British North America and West India Station and would take the traditional route of sailing south to the Madeiras and sailing west from there.<sup>7</sup>

The Victor arrived at Carlisle Bay, Bridgetown, on Barbados (the easternmost of the Lesser Antilles in the Caribbean), on July 12, 1856, and would remain on duty in the West India Station for almost a year. While on duty there, the Victor began to be plagued by problems related to faulty construction and she was forced to return home in May, 1857. She reached Spithead on June 20th after having used sail power most of the way, and proceeded to Sheerness to be paid off.<sup>8</sup> There the Admiralty learned of the numerous defects which had manifested themselves during the year of service;

"During her passage home she experienced very heavy weather. In consequence of the defects of her decks, waterways, topsides, etc., from leakage, there has not been either a man or officer whose hammock or cot has not been perfectly saturated with water either by sea or rain."<sup>9</sup>

These, plus other defects that could not be corrected, would be the cause of the Victor being sold six years later.

Fortunately, as the year of service had proven, the machinery and engines were quite powerful with no defects. Had there been, in all likelihood the cruise would have been considerably shorter than it was.

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<sup>7</sup>London Times, June 2, 7, 11, 17, 1856.

<sup>8</sup>London Times, August 4, 1856; June 22, 1857.

<sup>9</sup>London Times, June 24, 1857.

Eighteen pounds boiler pressure brought eighty revolutions of the propeller shaft per minute, and under steam alone the Victor could manage ten and a half to eleven knots. With combined sail and easy steam power she was a swift twelve and a half knots. Full steam combined with sail would put her over thirteen knots. While the Victor was one of the fastest steamers in the Royal Navy, she was unfortunately one of the poorest constructed.<sup>10</sup>

She was paid off at Sheerness and was docked for repairs. After completion of repairs the Victor was "placed on the 2nd division of the steam squadron of reserve" located at Sheerness and at Chatham across the harbor. She was still in the Reserve Squadron two years later and as near as can be determined, the Victor never left the reserve or made any other long voyages. When the Confederates purchased her through their agents, she was lying in ordinary which is where the Admiralty placed worn out hulls to be decommissioned and either sold out of service or broken up. After only seven years the Victor was useless to the Admiralty for further service due to her original defects combined with the usual deterioration of a vessel which had been laid up and not been in use for a prolonged period of time. It was in this condition that we find the Victor when the Confederate agents bid on her at a public auction held by the Admiralty in September, 1863.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>London Times, June 24, 26, 1857.

<sup>11</sup>London Times, June 26, 1857; Busk, The Navies of the World, 40; Adams to Seward, December 17, 1863, enclosure, United States State Department, Despatches From United States Ministers to Great Britain, 1791-1906, National Archives, Washington D.C., Microcopy M-30, Roll 80, hereinafter cited as M-30 followed by roll number.

Due to the success of the Alabama and the similar successes of the Florida, Georgia, and others, in damaging Federal commercial interests by bonding or burning captured merchant vessels, the Confederate government attempted to purchase or have constructed more cruisers. By the end of 1863 it was becoming apparent that Confederate losses in the field combined with Federal diplomatic pressures being exerted upon Great Britain and France, were making the construction of cruisers in the naval yards of those nations very difficult.

Although the Alabama and the Florida were successful as commerce raiders, the manner in which they had been secretly constructed solely for the purpose of being sold to the Confederacy was a violation of British and international neutrality laws. The Federals were quick to protest these violations and by late 1863 their efforts were rewarded by stricter controls in Great Britain. Thorough checks in all dockyards on vessels under construction became commonplace in order to determine the future destination and purpose of those vessels. Where there was suspicion of a vessel, extra precautions were taken to prevent that vessel from falling into Confederate hands. A few ships did manage to escape detection, but on the main, Confederate shipbuilding in Great Britain was effectively stifled.

It became apparent that the only way that the Confederacy could enlarge its navy would be to obtain vessels already constructed which were in use either as merchant ships or were decommissioned vessels up for sale. It was for this purpose that in September, 1863, Commander Maury began to work with his agents to locate a few small, fast ships to

be converted into cruisers.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, they checked out the ships lying in ordinary at Sheerness and found several gun-vessels that the Admiralty was trying to dispose of. Among these was the Victor.

On September 14, 1863, the Admiralty auctioned off at public sale the decommissioned, worn out Victor to the London merchant firm, Gordon, Coleman and Company. Mr. Zachery Pearson, brother-in-law to Coleman, represented Gordon, Coleman and Company in this business transaction entirely. The breaking up price of £9,375 was the winning bid, but the purchasers had no intention of breaking up the vessel. Rather they intended to refit the ship and sell it for a profit.<sup>13</sup> Title to the vessel was not immediately turned over to the purchasers because the sale price was not paid at one time.

The question of how Gordon, Coleman and Company are related to the Confederates is difficult to answer. It was mentioned earlier that Maury was the one who made contact with agents about the purchase. His own diary indicates that as early as mid-August, 1863, he had had his eye on the Victor and was seeking a means to obtain her. One of his closest associates was Thomas Bold, a Birkenhead merchant, who had been instrumental in the purchase of the steamer Japan, which became the cruiser Georgia. Zachery Pearson, who handled the transaction for the purchasers of the Victor, was a ship merchant from Hull who had had pre-

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<sup>12</sup>James D. Bulloch, The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe (New York, 1957), II, 265-66.

<sup>13</sup>Frank J. Merli, Great Britain and the Confederate Navy, 1861-1865 (Bloomington, Indiana, 1965), 219, hereinafter cited as Merli, Great Britain and the Confederate Navy; London Times, February 6, 1865; Adams to Seward, December 17, 1863, M-30, Roll 80.

vious contact with Confederate naval agents. It is highly probable that Bold was acquainted with Pearson as they were both ship merchants and had dealt extensively with the Confederates. For this reason he probably was the one who contacted Pearson to purchase the Victor. Being a bankrupt, and thus unable to finance the deal himself, Pearson then must have turned to his brother-in-law to purchase the Victor as a favor.<sup>14</sup>

Bold's connection with Gordon, Coleman and Company then is a matter of conjecture as indicated above. However, there is no doubt of his part in the purchase. From Maury's diary we learn that Bold was given one-hundred cotton certificates by Maury as a first instalment to be given to the purchasers.<sup>15</sup> Also to corroborate Bold's part is an excerpt from the diary of Douglas F. Forrest, paymaster of the vessel when it was in Confederate hands. Bold is mentioned as the "merchant who has acted as our agent in the purchase of the Rappahannock."<sup>16</sup> Forrest, however, raises several questions in the reader's mind with a later entry in his diary.

In discussing a conversation he had with Bold in January, 1864, next to Bold's name Forrest wrote ("alias Gordon.")<sup>17</sup> The first

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<sup>14</sup>Matthew Fontaine Maury, Diary, August 18, 1863, Manuscript in the Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers, Library of Congress, Division of Manuscripts, Washington D.C., hereinafter cited as Maury, Diary; Douglas F. Forrest, Diary, December 10, 1863, Manuscript in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia, hereinafter cited as Forrest, Diary. A typed copy is in the hands of Dr. William N. Still, Jr., Greenville, North Carolina.

<sup>15</sup>Maury, Diary, October 6, 1863.

<sup>16</sup>Forrest, Diary, December 10, 1863.

<sup>17</sup>Forrest, Diary, February 5, 1864.

question is whether Bold was operating under the assumed name of Gordon. Assuming that he was, the next question obviously is whether Bold was the Gordon of Gordon, Coleman and Company. It can be assumed that many individuals participating in clandestine mercantile ventures, assume a false name to avoid or hinder prosecution. If Bold was indeed Gordon, then the connection between him and the purchasers would be quite clear. This seems even more likely because in postwar legal action between the United States and several private citizens in Great Britain over custody of the vessel, Gordon never made an appearance and seemed not to exist at all. However, no positive proof has been turned up to substantiate the claim that Bold was the Gordon of Gordon, Coleman and Company. Enough evidence does exist to clearly show that Bold was the middle-man between Maury and the purchasers, and to provide the basic circumstances of the purchase of the Victor by the Confederates.

The purchasers submitted a written requisition, dated, September 17, 1863, to the Admiralty which stated: "We beg you will give permission to place in dry dock the vessel we have purchased ... for the purpose of examining her, with a view to taking her away under steam, it being done at our expense."<sup>18</sup> This would indicate that the purchasers did not have prior knowledge of the true condition of the vessel. They received an answer on September 27th which stated: "My Lords approve of the Victor, purchased by Messrs. Coleman, being docked on the 10th of October, for the purpose of inspecting her bottom at the purchaser's expense."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>London Times, December 6, 1864.

<sup>19</sup>London Times, December 6, 1864.

On October 8, 1863, the Victor, now renamed the Scylla, was taken from the Medway River and was put into dry-dock at Sheerness. Her sides and bottom were examined but no repairs were made and on October 18th she was taken from the dry-dock and put into the basin at Sheerness. On November 2nd the Scylla was taken out into the river and due to a lack of anchors was tied to a government buoy. She remained there until November 10th when the vessel was released by the Admiralty and turned over to Gordon, Coleman and Company in the care of Pearson.<sup>20</sup>

Pearson and his associates must have been shocked when they saw the Scylla. As was customary for the times, the Admiralty had claimed all the stores, ammunition, supplies, armament, masts and gun-plates, so that all that was left was her machinery, boilers and a totally stripped hull. The Scylla was moved from her moorings in the river to the public basin at Sheerness dock-yard, and there work began to re-  
 it the stripped vessel. Workers took ten days to caulk the Scylla from bow to stern with the exception of her lower deck. Her boilers were examined and found to be in poor repair, but just how bad they did not immediately ascertain. They did, however, begin to replace some of the worn plates and copper tubes which were defective.<sup>21</sup>

On November 21, 1863,<sup>22</sup>

"The vessel was masted with the aid of Captain [W.K.]

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<sup>20</sup>London Times, December 6, 1864.

<sup>21</sup>London Times, December 6, 1864; Adams to Seward, December 17, 1863, enclosure, M-30, Roll 80.

<sup>22</sup>Adams to Seward, December 17, 1863, enclosure, M-30, Roll 80.

Hall, of Her Majesty's ship the Cumberland, a ship which had apparatus for masting vessels, and the use of which was applied for to assist in masting her; and ... that Captain Hall, wishing to try the new apparatus for the purpose, consented to allow it to be used."<sup>23</sup>

The Cumberland had been put into dry-dock on September 17th, and "stripped of her rigging, in order to be fitted with a pair of masting shears, for masting small vessels on the plan proposed to the Admiralty by Capt. Hall,..."<sup>24</sup> It is apparent that the use of those shears on the Cumberland to mast the Scylla was the first opportunity Captain Hall had had to try his new project, so he readily gave his consent without first getting official clearance from his superiors. This use of the Cumberland would be a subject of protest by the Federals as will be shown later. After the masts were put in place, the Scylla was moved to a point in the harbor called Westminster which was more convenient and accessible for the dock-yard workers.<sup>25</sup>

Repairs progressed daily after November 12, 1863, and the condition of the ship was improving. Government dock-yard workers were engaged after their regular hours to work on the Scylla. Carpenters, boiler-makers, painters and riggers were moonlighting on the Scylla and this was brought to the attention of Federal agents. Some had been on board working prior to her being turned over to the purchasers.

Freeman H. Morse, United States Consul to London, had several men in his employ who were stationed at various points up and down

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<sup>23</sup>London Times, December 6, 1864.

<sup>24</sup>London Times, September 17, 1863.

<sup>25</sup>Adams to Seward, December 17, 1863, enclosure, M-30, Roll 80.

the Thames in order to supply him with information on the activities in the various dock-yards. Morse's chief river man, Thomas Hayter Chase, spent part of the week prior to November 20, 1863, at Sheerness "looking after a suspicious vessel, a gun boat or rather a despatch boat sold out of the government service and fitting out under suspicious circumstances."<sup>26</sup> Under orders from Morse, Chase spent a full week watching the Scylla and with Morse's approval, he put a man on board the Scylla as a worker to gain information on the vessel's true character and intended destination. Morse, through these men, found that the Scylla "was preparing for use with as much dispatch and entire secrecy and quiet [as] would permit,... and that her repairs were being made & her fittings got ready by workmen the most of whom were sent from the Sheerness dock-yard."<sup>27</sup>

Adams in the meantime, received a note from an unnamed individual at Sheerness informing him that the Scylla was probably intended for an illegal purpose. The increased activity around the Scylla and the manner in which it was carried out in seeming haste and secrecy, was too suspicious to the Federals, but not having any concrete evidence of illegal intentions, no formal request through Adams to have the vessel detained could be made. Increased surveillance by the Federal spies at Sheerness lead to the discovery that several officers of the Royal Navy were involved in the equipment and engagement of a crew for the Scylla. The use of the Cumberland's masting shears to mast the Scylla was dis-

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<sup>26</sup>Freeman H. Morse to Seward, November 20, 1863, United States State Department, Despatches From United States Consuls in London, 1790-1906, National Archives, Washington D.C., Microcopy T-168, Roll 32, hereinafter cited as T-168 followed by roll number.

<sup>27</sup>Morse to Seward, November 28, 1863, T-168, Roll 32.

covered as well and the Federals' case for detaining the vessel was strengthened. However, events occurred which put the Scylla out of reach of British authority and which confirmed the Federals' worst fears; another commerce raider had escaped from a British port.

As repairs progressed on the Scylla, the time for a trial trip drew near. On the day that the masts were put in place it was announced that the ship would leave on November 25th on a trial trip in the Channel. British authorities became suspicious when on several different occasions it was reported to them that articles from the government storehouse had been supplied to the Scylla to aid in the refitting of the vessel. The result was that several searches were made in each case but no contraband was found. A final search was ordered and officials under the command of Captain Wise, Captain-Superintendent of Sheerness Dock-yard, came on board the Scylla on November 24th. Present at this search was William Rumble, Chief Inspector of Machinery Afloat at Sheerness, and soon to be the center of a storm of controversy as a result of his efforts to refit the Scylla. However, no government property was found during the search.<sup>28</sup>

British authorities were not satisfied that the Scylla was clear of any clandestine operations. Her announced purpose of being for the China opium trade did not ring true with the manner and speed with which the vessel was being refitted. A mere merchant vessel would not be the center of so much activity. The obvious presence of Federal spies in Sheerness made the British authorities nervous and indignant.

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<sup>28</sup>Morse to Seward, November 28, 1863, T-168, Roll 32.

Under all these circumstances a written detention order was prepared and was scheduled to be served on Gordon, Coleman and Company on the morning of November 25th. It was never delivered because just scant hours before, in the early hours of the morning of the 25th, the Scylla secretly departed from Sheerness and headed for the Channel.<sup>29</sup>

The increasing government surveillance of the Scylla and the presence of Federal agents in the dock-yard had alarmed the owners and the Confederates. Sensing that time was running out and that hesitation might allow either the Federals or British authorities to build a case against the Scylla, the vessel was ordered to depart on the night of November 24th. For several days prior to this, supplies had been shipped down from London in river barques in preparation for the proposed trial trip scheduled on the 25th. One hundred and fifty tons of coal had been loaded in her coal bunkers, and provisions, water casks, hammocks in bales, and sundry other supplies were also brought on board. Pearson came down from London and boarded the Scylla early in the evening of the 24th. Prior to his arrival, the search by Captain Wise had been made and this had further heightened the fears of the Confederates. John F. Ramsey, the 'captain' of the Scylla, ordered the ship to prepare to leave about midnight. The government pilot for Sheerness Harbor came on board the Scylla at 7:30 P.M. and took command in preparation for guiding the vessel down the river. At about midnight, the steam-tug Bull Dog took the Scylla in tow for the Nore Lighthouse at the mouth of

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<sup>29</sup>Merli, Great Britain and the Confederate Navy, footnotes to pages 220-222; Adams to Seward, December 17, 1863, enclosure number 2; December 24, 1863, enclosure number 5, M-30, Roll 80.

the Thames. On board were several officials from Sheerness, including Rumble, Mr. Rees, the Master Rigger, and Mr. Greathead, Chief Engineer R.N. These men would shortly be under investigation to determine their part in the matter. The Scylla anchored just below the Nore and the above mentioned officials boarded the tug to return to Sheerness.<sup>30</sup> The Scylla remained at anchor until daylight when she weighed anchor and began to cruise about in the English Channel in the vicinity of Dover.

The condition of the vessel when she left was one of utter chaos. As the masts had been stepped only four days prior to departure, there had not been enough time to complete the rigging. Riggers were at work as the Scylla moved from the harbor into the river and they continued working until the vessel docked in Calais, France, on the morning of November 26th. Supplies and provisions were scattered about the decks and nothing had been stored away. Bad fortune haunted the Scylla as well. When she departed from Sheerness, five of her six boilers were functional, the sixth having been taken apart to be fitted with new plates and copper tubes. While passing down the Thames, the brasses (copper tubes) within two of the boilers were too weak to withstand the internal pressure and they ruptured. This cut the ship back to three functional boilers and thus to only one-half power. This untimely accident to her machinery combined with the incomplete state of the rigging, severely impaired the mobility of the Scylla. The fact that the ship was not manned by a full crew and that those that were aboard were

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<sup>30</sup> Adams to Seward, December 11, 1863, enclosure number 5; December 17, 1863, enclosure number 2; December 24, 1863, enclosure number 6, M-30, Roll 80.

workers, artisans and craftsmen rather than regular seamen, did not help in maneuvering the vessel. However, the Scylla had enough power to cross the Channel and anchor in the roadstead of Calais harbor at 6:00 o'clock on the evening of the 25th. During the crossing, the name Scylla was painted out and she was christened the CSS Rappahannock.<sup>31</sup>

The cloak-and-dagger aspect of the next sequence of events had an amusing and embarrassing end for the Confederates. Sometime after the arrival of the ship, Lieutenant William P.A. Campbell, C.S.N., the Rappahannock's new captain, came on board to take charge. Campbell, along with about fifteen other young Southern officers, had been in Calais for about two months waiting for their vessel to come so they could ship on board. Campbell left his officers behind when he boarded the Rappahannock because it was felt that so large a number of Confederate officers openly moving about at one time in daylight would draw too much attention. They planned to join the ship during the night, feeling it safer and less likely to arouse suspicion. They were soon to learn different.

Late that evening (25th) these men approached the 'patron' of a private fishing vessel, the 309, for the use of that vessel for a 'fishing trip' with Boulogne as the port of destination. The patron got their names and applied for the proper papers from the Bureau of the Commissaire of Marine. They were listed as American nationals without passports "having left England on the same footing as Englishmen." They were cleared for Boulogne at about one o'clock in the morning of

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<sup>31</sup>Adams to Seward, December 17, 1863, enclosure number 2, M-30, Roll 80.

the 26th.<sup>32</sup>

The contract for the boat said they could fish anywhere in the Channel as long as they entered Boulogne within twenty-four hours. The patron and his helmsman were drinking heavily so the Confederates thought it would be easy to persuade them to do as they wished. As they left the harbor, a dark ship resting at anchor to the right of them began sending up flares. It was the Rappahannock and the flares were the agreed upon signal with Campbell. Fortunately, a favorable tide carried the fishing vessel in the general direction of the Rappahannock. The officers pretended to light their cigars by using a lantern but passed it from man to man "and made to describe arcs and circles innumerable," as a return signal to the Rappahannock.<sup>33</sup>

As the distance between the vessels closed, another man lit a flambeau and feigning drunkenness, ran about the 309 waving it about foolishly, but in reality was signaling the Rappahannock. The patron, being drunk, took the flambeau and unwittingly aided the Confederates by imitating the young American to the howls of all aboard. Their mirth was short lasted, however. When the two vessels were very near, the Confederates tried to get the patron to sail around the Rappahannock; but, in his drunkenness, he stubbornly refused, perhaps sensing there was something behind his passengers wanting to see the dark steamer up close. Realizing that the patron intended to pass by the Rappahannock and being within hailing distance, the officers shouted to those on the Rappahan-

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<sup>32</sup>Forrest, Diary, November 25, 1863.

<sup>33</sup>Forrest, Diary, November 25, 1863.

nock and informed them of their predicament. Campbell promptly put a boat over the side and was rowed to the fishing boat which he boarded.<sup>34</sup>

A vehement argument followed concerning whether the Confederates should be allowed to transfer to the Rappahannock. As the argument raged on, a few of the Confederates went to the aft of the 309 and lowered the anchor so they would not drift any further from the Rappahannock. This action incensed the patron whose loud cries brought two fishing boats lying nearby to his rescue which came alongside and made fast to either quarter. With their aid and escort, the 309 turned back to Calais, Campbell insisting that they return there rather than proceeding to Boulogne.<sup>35</sup>

Upon docking in Calais, the 'gendarmes' were sent for and the Confederates found themselves under arrest. In vain they tried to get from the police the reason for their arrest but received no answer. They were allowed to return to their former quarters in Calais under guard until morning. Campbell managed to telegraph to Confederate authorities in Paris to have them obtain their release or to receive permission for the Rappahannock to enter Calais. The latter was stressed by Campbell because he was unsure of how long he would be under arrest. The French authorities agreed and the Rappahannock entered Calais early in the morning of the 26th. At that time the Confederates learned that the trouble with the patron of the 309 stemmed from the fact that he had cleared for Boulogne with a certain passenger list and

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<sup>34</sup>Forrest, Diary, November 25, 1863.

<sup>35</sup>Forrest, Diary, November 25, 1863.

that he would have been fined had he not produced those passengers upon arrival at Boulogne. The Confederates were released and use of the port facilities to make repairs was allowed them by orders from Paris.<sup>36</sup>

The populace of Calais turned out later that day to see the ship and the men who had caused such a stir the night before. Rumors flew around about the 'pirates' who had brandished pistols and knives upon clearing the harbor. The Southerners were under the scrutiny of everyone, even the priests and school children who came to the wharf to see the 'treize Americaines.' The populace was confused about the nationality of the vessel because the Confederate flag being flown was a make-shift thing and not easily recognizable. The haphazard appearance of the deck, which was strewn with ropes, blocks, iron boiler plates and other paraphernalia, plus the lack of weapons in the gunports, also made the nature of the vessel hard to determine by the onlookers. The official reception by the port authorities quickly stilled the rumors, but for quite some time afterward the ship was a curiosity to the townspeople.<sup>37</sup>

The Rappahannock was in serious disrepair, primarily because she had to prematurely leave Sheerness. Even as she lay at anchor that first morning in Calais, many of the workers who had come over from Sheerness were still at work repairing the ship. Although Campbell's original intentions were probably to pick up his officers and proceed to

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<sup>36</sup>Forrest, Diary, November 25, 1863; undated, rough draft of a letter to Samuel Barron. Drafted by Forrest and Lt. William P.A. Campbell, CSN, Commander of the Rappahannock, in Forrest Diary.

<sup>37</sup>Forrest, Diary, November 26, 1863.

a rendezvous with another vessel to receive weapons, supplies, and a crew, his untimely arrest and the unseaworthy character of the Rappahannock left him no alternative but to seek a berth in the Calais dock-yard to repair his vessel. He officially applied to the authorities to allow him to dock the Rappahannock, claiming 'stress of weather.' Under international maritime laws, a vessel of a belligerent nation could enter a neutral port to make repairs if refusal of such hospitality by the neutral would endanger the lives of the crew of the belligerent vessel. Repairs would be limited to those making the vessel seaworthy and any others such as shipment of munitions, arms or other articles and implements of war, would be grounds for confiscation or detainment. The Rappahannock was granted the stress of weather claim and was allowed the facilities of the port to make her repairs in order to return to sea in a fit state.<sup>38</sup> Although unarmed, the Rappahannock was accorded man-of-war status.

The government riggers previously mentioned, had a leave of absence from the Sheerness dock-yard and they remained on the job for ten days after their arrival until the rigging was completed and was rattled down. Eight boiler-makers under orders from the "Chief of the Boiler-makers Afloat" at Sheerness were sent to Calais to repair the defective boilers. They arrived December 1, 1863, and set to work to replace approximately 1,400 tubes, the old ones having been withdrawn prior to their arrival. Due to a lack of tools, they estimated that it would

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<sup>38</sup>Forrest, Diary, undated, rough draft of a letter to Samuel Barron; Barron to Slidell, February 25, 1864, enclosure Campbell to Barron, February 24, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1037.

take them two months or six weeks at the absolute minimum to complete the work. They immediately began "cutting rivits & taking out defective plates & putting in new ones."<sup>39</sup> However, after fourteen days Campbell felt that the work was progressing too slowly and the government boiler-makers were released. Those unfortunate souls returned to Sheerness to find that their leave was not considered official, and that they had been fired for being AWOL from their duties in the government dock-yard. The work on the Rappahannock's boilers was assumed by men "from Mr. Rennies Yard, London, [who] took the job out of the hands of the Dockyard men."<sup>40</sup> These men completed the job by January 13, 1864.<sup>41</sup>

Not all of the ship was in disrepair, as Forrest tells us in his diary: "The cabin is a perfect gem, with a charming little round table with a gay cloth cover, a swinging lamp of elegant shape & style, oil cloth, delightful chairs, a nice stove, etc."<sup>42</sup> Forrest also describes the wardroom as being quite comfortable. The Captain and other senior officers would at least dine and lounge in comfort while aboard ship. The magazine and shell rooms were also satisfactory as they were some of the first compartments repaired after the sale of the vessel and

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<sup>39</sup>Morse to Seward, December 11, 1863, T-168, Roll 32.

<sup>40</sup>Adams to Seward, December 24, 1863, enclosure number 9, M-30, Roll 80.

<sup>41</sup>Adams to Seward, December 11, 1863, enclosure number 5; December 24, 1863, enclosures number 7, 9, M-30, Roll 80; Morse to Seward, December 11, 1863, T-168, Roll 32.

<sup>42</sup>Forrest, Diary, December 1, 1863.

prior to its escape to Calais.<sup>43</sup>

Equipment and supplies were being brought on board daily.

On December 10, 1863,

"there ... arrived by the English steamer Rainbow, doing the regular service between London and Calais, <sup>143</sup> different packages, kitchen utensils, water casks, cordage, sails, gallipols, detached pieces of machinery, signal rockets, blankets, cloth for wearing apparel and a screw, all addressed to a gentleman J.F. Ramsay, stranger at Calais,..."<sup>44</sup>

This particular shipment would later result in a diplomatic protest by the Federal government.

The Rappahannock was moved on December 12th from the wharf where she had been since her arrival, to the basin in Calais. She had been taking up valuable space at the wharf needed for merchant vessels and repairs could be carried out more easily in the basin. The basin's gate could be opened at low tide to let water out, which would make the task of putting in a new screw much easier. However, the shallow water froze over shortly after the ship was moved to the basin, preventing repairs on the screw and shaft from being made until mid-January.<sup>45</sup>

The problems of getting the Rappahannock in a seaworthy state was only one of the problems the Confederates had to face while in

<sup>43</sup>Adams to Seward, December 17, 1863, enclosure number 2, M-30, Roll 80.

<sup>44</sup>William L. Dayton to Seward, December 11, 1863, enclosure, Vendroux to Dayton, United States State Department, Despatches From United States Minister to France, 1789-1906, National Archives, Washington D.C., Microcopy M-34, Roll 57, hereinafter cited as M-34 followed by roll number.

<sup>45</sup>Forrest, Diary, December 12, 1863, January 12, 1864; Morse to Seward, January 8, 1864, T-168, Roll 33.

Calais. A second, and perhaps graver problem, was recruiting and keeping a crew. The men who were on board when the vessel left Sheerness were mostly artisans and craftsmen, plus the government riggers. All or most had previous experience at sea and had applied for work on the ship (prior to her escape) without the knowledge of her true destination and character being given them.

When Campbell came on board at Calais, these men were called aft and informed that the ship was a Confederate man-of-war and that they would all receive a £10 bounty if they signed articles for twelve months. They were told that the same rules would be followed as on any other man-of-war, but that no lash as punishment would be used. Charles Newton, seaman and helmsman from Sheerness to Calais, related that "we were all told ... that we should receive prize money as soon as we had taken the prizes. The Captain said we were to fight for money and he was going to fight for his country and his home."<sup>46</sup> Some of the men agreed to sign articles, but many balked at the idea and refused to serve on her. They did not relish the thought for any amount of bounty and prize money of "going privateering, the same as the Alabama and the Florida."<sup>47</sup> Most of them, being merchant seamen, did not like the idea of attacking and destroying unarmed merchant vessels. It can also be assumed that these men would dislike the idea of serving in any navy of a foreign power involved in a war. The moral question of serving a na-

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<sup>46</sup>Adams to Seward, December 24, 1863, enclosure number 6, M-30, Roll 80.

<sup>47</sup>Adams to Seward, December 11, 1863, enclosure number 4, M-30, Roll 80.

tion which condoned slavery also must have had some part in the decision of most of these men not to sign articles. All of the discontented craftsmen and seamen who refused to sign articles, were allowed to return to England.

On November 27th, forty men were sent to Calais from London. They arrived there on November 28th and upon boarding the Rappahannock were called aft and asked to sign articles. The majority refused to sign, and of these, twenty returned to England immediately as they were fortunate to have enough money to pay their way. From the original forty, less than ten stayed aboard. In order to keep these, the Confederates refused them shore leave along with the few that had remained on board from the original group of artisans and craftsmen.<sup>48</sup>

Refusal of shore leave was bad enough, but the seamen in most cases were even refused permission to leave the ship for any reason for fear that they would run away. By December 3rd, the men remaining on board were in a mutinous mood, and it was only by threats that the Confederate officers kept matters under control. One individual, in a sworn statement at a later date, claimed that he was prevented from leaving the ship by the first and second officers, who, brandishing pistols which they pointed at his head, threatened to shoot him on the spot. As punishment for his escape attempt, he and another man were locked up in a water closet for five days and were given their meals there. He stayed on the ship five weeks and when he was finally granted leave, he

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<sup>48</sup>Adams to Seward, December 11, 1863, enclosure number 4, M-30, Roll 80.

escaped to England.<sup>49</sup>

One sailor tried legal means to make good an escape. Somehow he got in touch with the British Consul, who in turn made formal complaint to the French authorities. The "Minister of Marine of France, demanded through the Calais Commissaire, the debarcation of William Freud."<sup>50</sup> On December 27th the Commissaire came on board, "and ascertained through evidence supplied by Campbell that Freud had signed articles regularly and thus had no basis of complaint."<sup>51</sup> The matter was then closed by the Commissaire, and for his troubles Freud found himself put in irons and fed on bread and water.<sup>52</sup> Men in small groups continued to be sent by shipping masters in London and Liverpool to Calais to serve on board the Rappahannock, but most refused to serve. Those that did sign on soon became discontented and many deserted at the first opportunity. This was a continuous problem facing the Confederate vessel. Also, Federal efforts to prevent the Rappahannock from keeping a crew through the use of paid spies, played a great part in the desertion problem.

Federal diplomatic officials in both Great Britain and France were doing all within their power to prevent the Rappahannock

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<sup>49</sup>Adams to Seward, December 24, 1863, enclosure number 8, M-30, Roll 80; January 8, 1864, enclosure number 5, M-30, Roll 81; Forrest, Diary, December 4, 1863.

<sup>50</sup>Forrest, Diary, December 26, 1863.

<sup>51</sup>Forrest, Diary, December 26, 1863.

<sup>52</sup>Forrest, Diary, December 27, 1863; Adams to Seward, January 8, 1864, enclosure number 4, M-30, Roll 81.

from leaving Calais. They also wanted to pressure the British government into prosecuting the officials and ship merchants responsible for the purchase, equipment, crew recruitment and escape of the vessel.

Charles Francis Adams, as mentioned earlier, had received disturbing reports of the secretive activity surrounding the Scylla while at Sheerness. Upon learning from Consul Freeman Morse that the Scylla had escaped and was in France under the name of the Rappahannock and declared a Confederate man-of-war, Adams gathered what information Morse had supplied him and made a formal protest to Lord Russell, the British Foreign Secretary. Lord Russell replied to Adams on November 30, 1863, that the matter was under investigation.<sup>53</sup>

Alarm prompted Adams and Morse to act quickly. Several Confederate cruisers had already come from British dock-yards (i.e. the Alabama, Florida and Georgia) and they had extensively damaged Federal commerce. It seemed to them that once again, Confederate sympathizers in Great Britain had succeeded in aiding a commerce raider to escape that would soon be preying on unarmed merchant vessels. Adams and Morse were determined to prove that several naval officers and ship merchants had violated British neutrality laws in this matter, and they saw this as an opportunity to pressure the British government into a stricter enforcement of neutrality. To this end, Morse began investigations of his own to provide Adams and Lord Russell with damning evidence which would show the complicity of several Sheerness Dock-yard officials with the Rappahannock affair.

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<sup>53</sup>Adams to Seward, December 3, 1863; enclosures 2-3, M-30, Roll 80.

The seamen that deserted from the Rappahannock provided Morse with one source of valuable information. Morse began to round up these men to sign depositions in order to show "her connection with the dockyards, the use made of the ship Cumberland, [and] that officers employed in the yard had acted as agents for the vessel to engage laborers & crew ..."<sup>54</sup> From December, 1863, through mid-January, 1864, Morse and his agents obtained sworn statements from the deserters and these were sent to Lord Russell through Adams. From this evidence the Federals were able to press their case with the British government.

Adam's first formal complaint was that the Scylla had been allowed to remain at government moorings after she was sold to Gordon, Coleman and Company, and that government workers at the Chatham and Sheerness dock-yards had been permitted to work on the vessel. The second complaint concerned the use of the Cumberland, a Royal Naval vessel, to mast the Scylla. In light of the vessel's subsequent Confederate connections, the Federals claimed that this use of the Cumberland was a direct violation of British neutrality. Federal diplomats also complained that several naval officers in high positions of authority at Sheerness had actively engaged in procuring a crew for the vessel even after the Rappahannock's true character became public knowledge.

The British government, which had had its own suspicions of the Scylla while she was at Sheerness but had been unable to prevent her departure, was put in an embarrassing situation. Evidence was overwhelming that many private citizens throughout Great Britain were ac-

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<sup>54</sup>Morse to Seward, November 28, 1863, T-168, Roll 32.

tively engaged in aiding the Confederates in direct violation of British neutrality. However, public sentiment favorable to the Confederacy was beginning to fade, and the British government saw in the Scylla's escape an opportunity to enforce stricter controls against those citizens engaged in neutrality violations. Thus, the investigation by the Admiralty was sure to be a thorough one, as the government had been embarrassed by the escape of the Rappahannock. Any parties guilty of open complicity in the matter were destined to suffer the wrath of an indignant government.

The following is the result of the investigation with regards to the first point of complaint;

"The investigation ordered by the Lords of the Admiralty into the whole of the circumstances connected with the equipment, fitting out and departure from Sheerness of the Confederate privateer Rappahannock,... was completed a few days since, and the result of the protracted inquiry, which had been conducted by the Government throughout in the most rigid and searching manner, was announced at Chatham yesterday [January 15, 1864]. It is satisfactory to find that none of the officials connected with the Chatham Dock-yard were in the remotest degree connected with the illegal proceedings, and were in no respect implicated with the movements of that vessel after she had ceased to be a Government ship."<sup>55</sup>

The above clearly shows that no naval officers or officials at Chatham had been involved in the affair.

Captain William K. Hall's action in using the masting shears of the Cumberland to mast the Scylla, was seen as an irresponsible act, due to his not having gained permission of his superiors to perform that task. He was cleared of any knowledgeable wrongdoing as the true char-

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<sup>55</sup>London Times, January 16, 1864.

acter of the Scylla was unknown to him, it being generally understood prior to her escape that the Scylla was bound for the China opium trade. The report suggested that Hall's action was a result of his natural eagerness to test the new masting shears of the Cumberland (which were designed by him), and the Scylla offered him the first opportunity to do so. No action was therefore brought against Captain Hall.<sup>56</sup>

The Admiralty investigations apparently satisfied the British government that their neutrality had not been broken with regards to the first two complaints. However, the Federals viewed with some relief that their efforts were going to be successful on the third point of protest.

The depositions supplied to Lord Russell by Morse through Adams, presented overwhelming evidence that high officials at Shoerness had violated British neutrality. The following is the result of the investigation on this point.

"Accordingly, Mr. Knight, of the firm of Essell, Knight & Arnold, solicitors, Rochester, the agents of the Solicitor to the Treasury, yesterday applied to the magistrates for a warrant for the apprehension of Mr. William Rumble, principle engineer and inspector of machinery afloat, who is charged with a violation of the Foreign Enlistment Act (50 George III., cap. 60) in hiring and attempting to hire certain seamen for the Confederate steamship Rappahannock and also for assisting and aiding in equipping that vessel. The Warrants were granted and at once executed, the accused being taken into custody, but afterwards liberated on heavy bail."<sup>57</sup>

Rumble found himself in deep trouble because of his efforts on behalf of

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<sup>56</sup>London Times, December 6, 1864; September 17, 1863.

<sup>57</sup>London Times, January 16, 1864; December 6, 1864.

the Confederates. However, it took almost a year before his trial came before the court, as there were many postponements in order to track down witnesses and for each side to solidify its case.

The trial began on December 5, 1864, before the Court of Queen's Bench. During the first day's proceedings, witnesses testified, that although Rumble had engaged men from the government service to work on the Scylla, the work was done after regular working hours. It was also emphasized that Rumble was on board every day supervising repairs and seeing that tools and equipment for the ship were provided. The trial was postponed the following day until a witness serving in the Mediterranean could be brought back to testify.<sup>58</sup>

On February 2, 1865, the trial resumed and evidence was produced showing that Rumble had been engaged in procuring a crew for the vessel. The trial continued until February 6th, with much evidence being shown to prove that Rumble was present in Calais supervising repairs on the vessel. Testimony was given that he was also engaged in procuring a crew after the vessel had departed from Sheerness and her true character as a Confederate vessel had been exposed. However, much of the testimony of seamen called as witnesses lost its value when it was learned that Federal agents had been constantly supplying them with beer and money. In any event, the jury acquitted Rumble of the charges.<sup>59</sup>

The British government was outraged, as were Adams and Morse. Even an editorial in the London Times showed surprise at the

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<sup>58</sup>London Times, December 6, 1864.

<sup>59</sup>London Times, February 3, 7, 1865.

jury's verdict, and provided a very accurate and impartial summary of the trial and the evidence:

"It was not denied that from the time of the sale to that of the departure for Calais, while the Scylla was the property of a private firm, he was constantly on board, and provided her with men, who were afterwards solicited to enlist under the Confederate flag. Without relying too much on the details of conversations as reported by witnesses of very doubtful credit, it is abundantly evident that he gave active assistance to the owners in hiring a crew. Not only so, but he certainly used expressions implying that they might look for larger profits than could be expected in the ordinary merchant marine.

... It is also fair to point out that, whatever Mr. Rumble's impressions or suspicions may have been, almost everyone else really believed that the vessel was going to China, and that the engagements actually made by him were merely temporary. In fact it was contended by his counsel that the voyage to Calais was nothing more, at least as far as he was aware, 'a trial trip,' and that he had no idea of abetting a scheme for placing her beyond the reach of English law, where the Foreign Enlistment Act might safely be defied. ... Though Mr. Rumble's conduct at Calais might be conclusive proof that he had then a guilty knowledge of the vessel's true character, and an intention to assist the Confederate agents, it could only be used indirectly and retrospectively to show what his only purpose was in engaging men at Sheerness.

... the system of 'nursing' witnesses, plying them with unlimited refreshment and amusement and supplies of money, which was found to have been carried on by Federal agents, weakened the credit which would otherwise have been due their statements."<sup>60</sup>

The Federals' own zealous efforts in the matter of the Rappahannock were used against them and a highly partisan jury did the Federal and British governments a grave injustice.

Lord Russell and the Admiralty were highly dissatisfied with the results of the trial. The Admiralty appointed a court of inquiry to look into the matter. This court concluded, that although Rumble had been acquitted by a jury, his actions in Calais after the true

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<sup>60</sup>London Times, February 7, 1865.

character of the vessel was public knowledge, "were just grounds for the accusation that an officer employed in her Majesty's service had aided and abetted these parties, who ... were concerned in fitting out the Scylla as a vessel of war."<sup>61</sup> As an act of good faith towards the United States government, the Admiralty relieved Rumble of active service and placed him on half-pay.<sup>62</sup> It had taken sixteen months since the Rappahannock escaped Sheerness for the Federal government to be vindicated in the matter by the British government. Other individuals were brought before British magistrates for their part in attempting to recruit British subjects to serve on the Rappahannock. All were given suspended sentences and a small fine.<sup>63</sup> However, there had been one earlier concession by the British government.

Shortly after the escape of the vessel, Lord Russell had angrily gone to the Crown's Law Officers to see what legal means could be taken to ensure that such an action by the Confederates would not happen again. He received a written reply stating:

"... that if the Confederate government should refuse to disavow the act, the British government should close all of its ports to any Confederate ship which had been outfitted in England; and they further advised that should any vessel repeat the Rappahannock's offense, then British naval vessels should 'pursue and capture such vessel on the high seas.'"<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Adams to Seward, March 9, 1865, enclosure Lord Russell to Adams, March 5, 1865, M-30, Roll 84.

<sup>62</sup>Adams to Seward, March 9, 1865, enclosure Lord Russell to Adams, March 5, 1865, M-30, Roll 84.

<sup>63</sup>Adams to Seward, July 7, 1864; August 18, 1864, M-30, Roll 83.

<sup>64</sup>Lynn M. Case and Warren F. Spencer, The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy (Philadelphia, 1970), 680.

The Rappahannock affair clearly had some influence in the gradual shift of attitude within Great Britain from the Confederacy to the United States. The Rumble trial was one of several court cases brought by the British government against violators of the Foreign Enlistment Act early in 1864. Prior to this time the British government had been lenient towards Confederate sympathizers in Great Britain, but Federal pressure had increased to the point where the British government finally started to enforce its own laws. The Rappahannock affair occurred at the time when the crack down began and it became one of the first instances of Federal pressure paying off in regards to Confederate commerce raiders.

In France, Federal concern in the Rappahannock took a different direction. Whereas all protests in Great Britain were after the fact and were of a nature to prevent similar events from happening again, the Federal Minister to France, William L. Dayton, was faced with the task of pressuring the French government into preventing the Rappahannock from leaving Calais.

The Rappahannock had entered Calais claiming stress of weather. As mentioned earlier, stress of weather can be claimed by any vessel of a belligerent nation if, due to that vessel's condition, it could not safely remain at sea. The Rappahannock was obviously unseaworthy. Her rigging was incomplete and her machinery damaged so that she was unable to operate in any but calm waters. At that time of the year (early winter) the Atlantic Ocean and the English Channel were not calm or safe, so the French government and Louis Napoleon granted the Rappahannock shelter in Calais and the use of the facilities there to

make the vessel seaworthy.<sup>65</sup>

The Imperial government directed the authorities at Calais to allow the Rappahannock to sail at will. This news alarmed the Federals. It seemed apparent that the French government had already decided to let the vessel go in spite of the knowledge that she was intended to be a man-of-war. Dayton immediately protested to Drouyn de Lhuys, the French Foreign Minister, who in turn communicated with the French Minister of Marine on the particulars of the Rappahannock being allowed to enter Calais and to use the facilities there. The French Foreign Minister replied that the Rappahannock had been allowed a stress of weather claim, but that in accordance with French neutrality, no armament or ammunition would be permitted on board. She would thus leave port unarmed and in the same status as any merchant vessel which entered Calais.<sup>66</sup> It was also understood that she would not be permitted to increase her crew. This last point would become a bitterly contested controversy between the Confederate and French authorities.

In the meantime, Federal authorities set out to prove that the Rappahannock had not entered involuntarily due to weather, and also to convince the French government that the ship should be detained. In a letter to de Lhuys, Dayton discussed the circumstances of the departure of the vessel from Sheerness and the ruse of her officers in using a

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<sup>65</sup>Dayton to Seward, January 4, 1864, enclosure number 2, M-34, Roll 57; Forrest, Diary, November 26, 1863.

<sup>66</sup>Winslow to Welles, December 3, 1863, enclosure William L. Dayton, Jr. to Winslow, November 30, 1863, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 510-11; Dayton to Winslow, January 20, 1864, Ser. I, Vol. II, 589; Dayton to Seward, December 4, 1863, enclosure number 1, M-34, Roll 57.

fishing-boat to attempt to board her. Dayton claimed that the latter was evidence that the vessel did not come to Calais due to stress of weather.

"This vessel," he wrote, "occupies a position which differs from either the Florida or the Georgia. She has left her port on the other side of the Channel voluntarily without papers, and run directly across to a neighboring port within which she hopes to be protected until her equipment is completed and her officers and crew are ready."<sup>67</sup>

De Lhuys agreed with Dayton that the circumstances surrounding the Rappahannock were peculiar, but as the Emperor had shown hospitality in allowing the vessel to enter and refit, evidence of a more positive nature would be needed for France to take any steps to prevent her departure. Dayton began supplying de Lhuys with depositions obtained from Morse in an effort to show that the Confederates were outfitting the vessel as a warship.<sup>68</sup>

When it was learned that the Rappahannock was receiving a crew, Dayton stated,

"that this vessel at least could not claim as the Florida did, a right to renew her crew while lying in a neutral port, for in point of fact she brought no crew in. She was ... brought over by mechanics, Engineers and firemen who were on board of her temporarily only."<sup>69</sup>

The French, however, continued to drag their feet in the matter and virtually no steps were taken during the first two and a half months after

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<sup>67</sup>Dayton to Seward, December 4, 1863, enclosure Dayton to de Lhuys, undated, M-34, Roll 57.

<sup>68</sup>Dayton to Seward, December 4, 1863; December 23, 1863, M-34, Roll 57.

<sup>69</sup>Dayton to Seward, January 8, 1864, M-34, Roll 57.

the Rappahannock's arrival to placate the Federals. They did clamp down in one instance, however.

Dayton was informed by the Federal Consul at Calais, M. Vendroux, that a shipment of one hundred and forty-three packages for the Rappahannock, which had been sent from London via the Dover packet-boat, had arrived at Calais. Dayton protested against this shipment being allowed and the protest carried. On January 2, 1864, Captain Campbell was informed by the Commissaire of Marine at Calais that,

"... it being in the mind of the Government only to allow the Confederates to make such repairs etc. as are indispensable to make the ship seaworthy, and not to permit her to be equipped, it is forbidden the Captain to continue such shipments under pain of being forbidden to leave the port."<sup>70</sup>

No real harm was done to the Confederates by this demand from the French government as they had gotten most of their equipment and necessary articles, such as the new screw and the replacement boiler tubes and plates, prior to January 2nd.

Running up against the problem of an uncooperative French government, the Federals had to seek another means of preventing the Rappahannock from leaving Calais. The first and most obvious means of doing this would be to station Federal warships in the Channel in a position that they could chase and capture the Rappahannock immediately upon her departure from Calais. To this end, the steam warship Kearsarge was stationed in the Channel in late December, and joined a month later by the steam warship Sacramento and the Sloop-of-war, St. Louis. As the Florida was at this time repairing in Brest, France, this force

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<sup>70</sup>Forrest, Diary, January 2, 1864.

of ships was not sufficient to watch both Confederate vessels and prevent their escape.<sup>71</sup> It was decided that further measures would have to be taken.

Freeman Morse decided that paid spies should be sent to Calais to try and induce the crew of the Rappahannock to desert. They were also to obtain written testimony as evidence against the ship and against Rumble. "The persons sent were ... instructed to create as much discontent & trouble among the crew as possible that they might leave the ship."<sup>72</sup> Among these spies were William O'Kelly, an important witness in the Rumble trial and a shipping master from London, and William Wynn, a sailors' Boarding-House keeper from London. Both of these men gained valuable testimony which aided the Federal effort against the Rappahannock on both sides of the Channel. They managed to bribe a number of seamen into leaving the ship. Their activities alarmed the Confederates, who continued to protest against the spies being allowed to stay in Calais.<sup>73</sup> Their efforts at reducing the crew were very successful. As a result, the Confederates were unable to obtain a full crew until early February and were prevented from leaving after repairs had been completed several weeks before. By that time, events occurred which made the departure of the Rappahannock impossible.

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<sup>71</sup>Preble to Welles, January 23, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 590; Winslow to Welles, December 11, 1863; enclosure Winslow to Dayton, December 4, 1863, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 562-63; Dayton to Winslow, January 20, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 589.

<sup>72</sup>Morse to Seward, #142, undated, T-168, Roll 33.

<sup>73</sup>Morse to Seward, #142, undated, T-168, Roll 33; Forrest, Diary, February 18, 1864.

### CHAPTER III

#### DETENTION IN CALAIS, FRANCE

By mid-January of 1864, work on the Rappahannock was nearing completion and the future of the vessel seemed bright. The Confederates thought that they would soon be able to leave Calais, arm the vessel somewhere at sea, and proceed to follow in the footsteps of their sister ships, the Alabama, Florida and Georgia, as a commerce raider. The efforts of the Federal spies had taken their toll on the numbers of the crew, but the Rappahannock was receiving seamen almost daily and she would soon reach a sufficient number to safely sail. All their troubles seemed worth it as the time for departure grew near.

For one full month the Confederates had delayed installing a new screw. The vessel had a bronze double-screw propeller, but this arrangement combined with the state of the engines, caused the rear of the vessel to vibrate. An English manufacturer proposed to Campbell to take the double-screw in exchange for a single screw in cast iron and Campbell agreed. The delay in installing the new screw was in part due to the frozen condition of the basin where the Rappahannock was tied up. Also, as the French government showed no outward concern as to the length of the Rappahannock's visit, the repairs were not under any deadline and thus were not completed as swiftly as they could have been. Finally, there could be no trial of the engines until the boiler tubes and plates were all in and the boilers were ready.<sup>1</sup>

On January 11, 1864, the Confederates asked for and received

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<sup>1</sup>Dayton to Seward, January 15, 1864, enclosure number 2, M-34, Roll 57.

permission to take in their new screw and the next day they cut through the ice, which had melted considerably during a stretch of mild weather. Upon cutting away the ice, "the ship was warped to the other side of the basin," and there the old double-screw was hauled out and the new one begun to be fitted. The workers toiled into the evening by lantern-light to make the new screw similar in size to the old one. By the next morning the ship was returned to its old berth, "only reversed & the new screw in position." On January 13, 1864, the tubes were all in and the next day the Confederates got up steam to try out the machinery and the propeller. This was stopped by a port official until permission was obtained from the Captain of the Port, but the machinery and screw were found to be functional. The vessel was almost ready for sea.<sup>2</sup>

One of the major concerns of the Confederates from the outset with regards to the Rappahannock had been the matter of her armament. Originally it had probably been their intention upon leaving Sheerness to sail to a point off Africa and await shipment of guns and ammunition from a merchant firm in Great Britain. The Federals suspected this immediately, naming two steamers owned by the Confederates, the Agrippina and the Harriet Pinckney, as the probable carriers of the arms and ammunition for the Rappahannock.<sup>3</sup> The probability of this increases when we learn that both of the above named steamers had returned to Plymouth and unloaded their cargoes of guns and ammunition early in December.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Forrest, Diary, January 11-14, 1864.

<sup>3</sup>Winslow to Welles, December 3, 1863, enclosure William L. Dayton, Jr. to Winslow, November 30, 1863, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 510.

<sup>4</sup>Winslow to Welles, December 11, 1863, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 562.

Upon realizing that they would have to use the facilities of Calais to make the Rappahannock seaworthy, the Confederates found that the matter of arming the vessel was temporarily a dead issue. They could not have the guns, gun carriages and ammunition shipped to France because it would arouse Federal suspicions. Even if they smuggled arms to France, any shipment of them on board the Rappahannock would be a violation of French neutrality and would be grounds for detainment of the vessel. Any armament would have to wait until the Rappahannock was repaired and in international waters. The Federals and the British government, which was embarrassed after having allowed the vessel to escape, did not trust the Confederates, and both maintained a watchfulness in British ports to prevent the Rappahannock from being armed from that nation. In keeping with this policy, British customs officials caused the cargo of the steamer Prince Albert to be unloaded as it was reported that several cases "Contained Cannon & Carriages for a Confederate Man-of-war now laying scemewhere in France not yet ready to receive her Guns but as soon as she was ready the Prince Albert was to sail & convey them on board."<sup>5</sup>

Being temporarily thwarted in their efforts to procure a battery in Great Britain, the Confederates turned to another alternative, that of transferring a battery to the Rappahannock from a vessel already in commission. The vessel chosen was the CSS Georgia.

The Georgia had been purchased in Scotland in March, 1863, as the merchant steamer Japan. The vessel had left Greenock, Scotland,

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<sup>5</sup>Morse to Seward, December 18, 1863, enclosure Chase to Morse, December 18, 1863, T-168, Roll 32.

on April 1, 1863, and on April 9th she was commissioned at sea as a Confederate man-of-war. From April 9th to October 28th she cruised in the Atlantic Ocean between the coasts of Africa and South America taking nine prizes during her cruise. However, she was forced to dock at Cherbourg, France, for extensive repairs to her hull. These repairs stemmed from her iron hull. "Being an iron hull, she was clearly unsuited to long cruises without dry docking during a period when antifouling under-body coatings were yet unknown."<sup>6</sup> She was condemned as a vessel of war by Confederate authorities because of her hull problems as well as a short allowance of space for provisions, and weak engines. They also decided to transfer her battery to the Rappahannock and to sell her in Liverpool for the highest price they could get.<sup>7</sup>

Lieutenant William E. Evans, commanding officer of the Georgia, and Lieutenant Campbell of the Rappahannock, were informed of this decision and it was left to them to decide the details of the transfer and agree to the approximate time of rendezvous off the coast of Morocco. Campbell was also given instructions regarding the proposed cruising grounds of the Rappahannock.

"... you are recommended to cover a large field of action, in the beginning to sight the Western Islands, looking after whalers that may be there, thence making for the equator, crossing it between longitude 20° and 29°, with the hope of intercepting vessels on their homeward passage from the East Indies and California. About the month of April it would be advisable, if circumstances permit, for you to make a dash at the enemy's commerce on the New England coast, taking care not to be caught too close inshore with a short allowance of fuel.

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<sup>6</sup>Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, II, 527.

<sup>7</sup>Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, II, 526-27.

Since the sailing of the Sumter on her very successful cruise, Federal owners of ships and cargoes have adopted the practice of placing them under British protection, and this may at times cause you embarrassment. The strictest regard for the rights of neutrals can not be too sedulously observed, nor should any opportunity be lost in cultivating friendly relations with their naval and merchant services and of placing the character of the contest in which we are engaged in its proper light.

You will not hesitate to assume responsibility whenever the interests of your country demand it, and should your judgement ever hesitate in seeking the solution of any difficulty, it may be aided by the reflection that you are to do the enemy's property the greatest injury in the shortest time."<sup>8</sup>

The Georgia sailed on February 16, 1864, and she arrived off the coast of Morocco as planned. There she had six days of uninterrupted good weather in a fine out-of-the-way harbor, totally secure from the notice of all Europeans. However, due to circumstances which will be explained later in the chapter, the Rappahannock was prevented from leaving Calais and thus never made the rendezvous as planned. The Georgia waited six days and finally departed, realizing that the Rappahannock was not coming. She remained at sea until late March when she docked again for repairs at Bordeaux to have her hull scraped.<sup>9</sup>

Evans and Campbell once again made plans for a rendezvous, contingent upon the Rappahannock being released by the French government at about the same time as the Georgia's departure. Sometime in late April, the Georgia departed, fully aware that the Rappahannock, in all probability, would not make the rendezvous. On May 2, 1864, the Georgia

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<sup>8</sup>Barron to Campbell, January 28, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 819.

<sup>9</sup>Winslow to Welles, February 20, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 607; Barron to Mallory, January 22, 1864, Ser. II, Vol. II, 575; Barron to Mallory, May 4, 1864, Ser. II, Vol. II, 650.

arrived in Liverpool where she was laid up and eventually sold to a merchant firm. Her guns and munitions, over which so much planning and effort to get them aboard the Rappahannock had been made, were sold as well.<sup>10</sup>

After the initial failure to meet with the Georgia, Thomas Bold, Commodore Barron and Commander Bulloch began to consider again obtaining the Rappahannock's battery from Great Britain. Barron requested that Campbell submit a requisition for the required armament which would then be procured in England. Campbell complied and requested two 70 pounder Whitworth guns and carriages; two 32 pounder Whitworth guns and carriages; two 12 pounder Armstrong guns and carriages, and all of the proper fitments and tackles for the above. He also requested small arms, rifles and ammunition, and cutlasses. This requisition was then given to Commander James H. North, the Confederate purchasing agent in Great Britain.<sup>11</sup>

The plan which the Confederates agreed upon was for North to purchase guns, carriages, tackles and ammunition, and store them in Liverpool. When word was received that the Rappahannock would be released, Bulloch would hire a small steamer, load the guns, carriages, tackles and ammunition on board and have the steamer meet the Rappahannock at a pre-arranged rendezvous. This whole undertaking would require fine timing because both vessels would have to leave at approximately the same time

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<sup>10</sup>Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, II, 527.

<sup>11</sup>Campbell to Barron, March 14, 1864, in the William C. Whittle Papers, Norfolk Museum of Arts and Sciences, Norfolk, Virginia, hereinafter cited as Whittle Papers.

for the transfer of arms to be made safely. The Confederates believed that they would be given twenty-four to forty-eight hours delay after being informed of the Rappahannock's release to get the ship's coal and provisions loaded. This delay would allow Bulloch to get the chartered steamer out of Liverpool with the armament to meet the Rappahannock. However, this plan was never executed either, and the Rappahannock was never armed.<sup>12</sup>

Since the arrival of the Rappahannock in Calais, the French government, and in particular the French foreign minister, Drouyn de Lhuys, had been under constant pressure from the Federal minister to France, William L. Dayton, to have the Rappahannock detained. A large number of depositions sent to Dayton from Charles F. Adams in Great Britain, showed convincing evidence that the Rappahannock's presence in Calais was not an accident. Dayton claimed that she definitely compromised France's neutrality by being allowed to repair in Calais. Even in the face of mounting Federal pressure, the French government ignored the Rappahannock's obvious intentions as a commerce raider and allowed the repairs to continue. However, the port officials were instructed to warn the captain of the Rappahannock not to prolong her stay once her repairs were completed. Federal pressure was beginning to take effect.

In several communications and conversations with de Lhuys, Dayton had inferred that the Federal government would hold the Emperor's government responsible for any damages done to Federal shipping by the Rappahannock. De Lhuys agreed that the case of the Rappahannock was

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<sup>12</sup>Bulloch to Barron, March 14, 16, 1864, in Whittle Papers.

different from any other Confederate vessels in French ports, and he felt "it is desirable to avoid giving an equitable base for future reclamations;..."<sup>13</sup> However, de Lhuys made no immediate effort to prevent the vessel from leaving.

The situation rapidly changed when Dayton learned that the Rappahannock was ready for sea. On February 2, 1864, he gave formal notice that "reclamation will be made in due time for all damages which shall be done by the Rappahannock to our commerce in case she shall be permitted ... to go to sea."<sup>14</sup> De Lhuys and the French government could not ignore an official statement of the Federal minister, and the wheel of fortune swung in the Federals' favor as orders went through for the Rappahannock to depart or stay at her own risk. Time was running out for the Rappahannock.

On February 4, 1864, the Commissaire of Marine at Celais communicated to Captain Campbell the following:

"I have just received from his Excellency, the Secretary of the Navy and of the Colonies a dispatch containing exact and formal orders, in that which concerns your ship, and the notification that I must make to you is, I beg you to believe, very painful to me, nevertheless the communication I had the honor to make to you the 11th of last month, and in following which you declared to me you could be in complete readiness to put to sea in about a week from that date, while giving you to perceive the possibility of the measures which have come about to-day, should have entirely prepared you to face them.

I regret, therefore, sir, to inform you that the Government of his Majesty the Emperor has decided that I shall give legal notice of 'the order to the Rappahannock

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<sup>13</sup>Dayton to Seward, December 23, 1863, enclosure de Lhuys to Dayton, December 23, 1863; Dayton to Seward, January 15, 1864, enclosure de Lhuys to Dayton, January 13, 1864, M-34, Roll 57.

<sup>14</sup>Dayton to Seward, February 3, 1864, enclosure Dayton to de Lhuys, February 2, 1864, M-34, Roll 57.

to leave the port of Calais on the tide which follows the reception of this letter,' and that failing to comply with this injunction you will no longer be permitted to leave this port until the end of hostilities between the United States and the Confederacy.

The long stay of your ship at Calais, and above all the time that has elapsed since the above mentioned order, make me hope, sir, that it will be possible for you between now and midnight to hasten your last preparation in such wise that the decision of which I have had the honor to inform you will be executed."<sup>15</sup>

The Confederates were astounded at this sudden change of events and Captain Campbell had to inform the Commissaire of Marine that he did not have sufficient coal on board to proceed to sea in time to comply with the order of the French government. When this was learned, the French government stationed the man-of-war Galilee outside the basin to watch the Rappahannock. On February 9th, Campbell informed the Commissaire of Marine that he would be ready to proceed to sea upon receipt of his coal. The next day the Commissaire replied:

"The Government of his Majesty the Emperor, directs me to retain your vessel in the dock until a new order, and that you can not go out of the port until I shall have received new instructions on the subject. The same instructions have been given to the commandant of the Galilee."<sup>16</sup>

Campbell interpreted the above dispatch as meaning he would remain at Calais until he was ready for sea. He went ahead with the shipment of coal aboard the Rappahannock in preparation for the planned rendezvous with the Georgia.

On February 14, 1864, two British merchant vessels entered

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<sup>15</sup>Barron to Slidell, enclosure/translation, M. Gosselin to Campbell, February 4, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1038-39.

<sup>16</sup>Gosselin to Campbell, February 10, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1039.

Calais and began to unload two hundred tons of coal for the Rappahannock.<sup>17</sup> By February 17th the coal was all aboard and Captain Campbell indicated to the Commissaire of Marine that his vessel was ready for sea. He was told that he could not leave until a new order was received from the government. Campbell immediately informed his superiors of this order by the French minister of marine to see if they could effect the release of the Rappahannock.<sup>18</sup>

John Slidell, Confederate Minister to France, called on the French foreign minister on February 19th, to see what were the reasons for permission being refused the Rappahannock to depart Calais. De Lhuys told Slidell that the matter had been referred to him by the Minister of Marine, M. Chasseloup-Laubat, but that the papers had not reached him yet. Slidell said he hoped that upon examination of the facts, the order preventing the vessel's departure would be revoked. De Lhuys said that as soon as the papers reached him they would be turned over to the "Directeur des Affaires Politiques," where Slidell could inspect them. Shortly after this the Director of Political Affairs showed Slidell the papers on the case. Slidell agreed that all of the particulars of the vessel's entry and repair, as reported by the Calais port authorities, were correct except as concerned the number of crewmen on board. The reports had that number set at considerably more than were actually on board. The crew numbered about forty, twenty-five of whom would be in the engine and boiler compartments, the remainder being above decks and

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<sup>17</sup>Dayton to Winslow, February 18, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 605.

<sup>18</sup>Slidell to Mocquard, March 15, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1055.

hardly sufficient a number to run a vessel of the Rappahannock's size.

Slidell waited until February 26th for action in the matter to be taken. When there was silence on the part of the foreign minister, Slidell decided to present the official viewpoint of his government on why the detention was unjustified. His letter is given in almost its entirety because it gives in clear and concise terms the Confederate position followed throughout the whole period of the detention controversy.

"Having been informed by your Excellency that the order for the detention of the Rappahannock had been on account of an alleged violation of the / French / declaration of neutrality issued 10th June, 1861, the undersigned can not find in the report addressed to the minister of marine any fact which could even approach to a violation of any article of that declaration.

The first two apply only to cases where a vessel captured by either of the belligerents shall enter a port of France and of course have no application to the case of the Rappahannock.

The third article is equally inapplicable for it is not pretended that any Frenchman has received a commission to arm the Rappahannock as a vessel of war or accepted letters of marque for her as a privateer, and it is shown by the report of the minister of marine that everything that has been done in the way of equipment has been with the full knowledge and approbation of the naval authorities at Calais. It is not pretended that any addition had been made to the armament of the Rappahannock or indeed that any armament exists on board of that vessel.

It is not alleged that the fourth article of the declaration has been violated by the recruiting or enrollment of any French citizens by the officers of the Rappahannock.

The fifth article applies exclusively to French citizens, but as has been remarked in relation to the third article, every agency of French citizens in the repairs or equipment of the Rappahannock has been with the full knowledge and approbation of the authorities of Calais.

The undersigned has the honor to submit herewith the declaration of the commandant and two other officers of the Rappahannock and of the officer of the Confederate Navy highest rank of those now in Europe by which it is conclusively established -

First. That when the Rappahannock left the jurisdic-

tion of Great Britain it was not with the intention or expectation of entering a French port; that she called off Calais for the sole purpose of receiving on board the officers who had been there for some time awaiting her appearance and that it was only in consequence of injury to her machinery, occurring while at sea, reducing her to a state of unseaworthiness as a steamer, that she sought refuge in the port of Calais.

Second. That no repairs have been made at Calais other than those necessary to restore the efficiency of the motive power.

Third. That no changes have been made in the vessel tending to increase her capacity or aptitude for warlike purposes.

Fourth. That no addition has been made to the armament of the vessel; in fact she has not on board of her at this moment a single cannon, musket, or sabre, the officers only having the side arms which constitute a part of their uniforms, and further that not only no attempt has been made, but that no purpose exists or has existed to make such an addition.

Fifth. That no Frenchman has been enrolled to serve on board of the Rappahannock, nor has any attempt been made to engage any Frenchman for such service.

Sixth. That the number of the crew of the Rappahannock has not been increased, but that on the contrary she has now on board fewer men than when she entered the port of Calais.

Seventh. That if the Rappahannock be permitted to go to sea in her present state she will be utterly unfit for any warlike service and indeed incapable of defense against any Federal cruiser even of the smallest class.

All of these points are sustained by the concurrent declaration of four Confederate officers, who pledge their words of honor to the truth of their statements. It is not supposed that any stronger pledge can be required of them, but they are ready if needs be to confirm these declarations by their oaths.

The undersigned invites the attention of your Excellency ... to the letter of the [Commissaire of Marine at Calais]... dated 4th instant, directing ... [Captain Campbell]... to proceed at once to sea, and respectively submits that said letter contains an implied sanction of everything that had been done by the Officers of the Rappahannock up to that date, and that she can not now be detained unless for some offense against the laws of the empire or of nations which had been committed since that date or which has come to the knowledge of the Government of the Emperor. This order was not complied with because the ship had not on board a necessary supply of coal. The undersigned freely admits that in this respect the command-

er of the Rappahannock had been guilty of gross negligence, but he respectfully submits that this negligence does not justify the detention of the vessel as a punishment for his remissness.

The undersigned, in conclusion, begs that the case of the Rappahannock may receive the prompt attention of your Excellency, with the full conviction that after due examination nothing will be found to justify her continued detention."<sup>19</sup>

The Confederate minister received no reply from de Lhuys and the affair was left up in the air for the next several weeks.

The Confederates did not press vigorously their case even though there was no official statement forthcoming giving the reason for the Rappahannock's detention. Because of the friendly manner in which the Rappahannock had been treated during the winter, it was felt best to exercise patience in the matter and not risk straining relations.<sup>20</sup>

Captain Campbell found himself in a bad position. His failure to have the coal on board prior to February 4th, was seen as "gross negligence" by his superiors. He also had problems with the crew. From February 4th, to the 17th, he had kept the crew in readiness for sea, allowing no one, including most of his officers to go on shore. Upon receipt of the order preventing his departure from Calais, Campbell became deeply concerned about the crew. He expressed this concern to Commodore Barron:

"I think," he wrote, "that if it [detention] should become known to the men they will desert and it becomes a question of vital importance whether I can procure their arrest and what means I sh<sup>d</sup> employ to that end. In fact,

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<sup>19</sup>Slidell to de Lhuys, February 26, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1040-42.

<sup>20</sup>Slidell to Benjamin, March 16, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1064.

I consider it my duty to inform you that if I am not permitted to take the most stringent measures to stop desertion, the crew will become demoralized. This owing to the fact that the Yankees through their spies in this place are using every possible means to create disaffection among the men and to induce them to desert. I have given an order that none of them shall be allowed to have any communication with the shore and will have no difficulty in maintaining discipline aboard if we ever get to sea."<sup>21</sup>

Shortly after this three Engineers deserted. Nothing the Confederates could do to keep men was successful if the sailors really wanted to leave, and the lack of liberty was the reason for the increasing numbers of desertions.

For more than a month the ship was kept in constant readiness for departure and the crew kept on board. Campbell finally agreed to let the men have leave, and the date was set for Saturday, March 19th. However, Campbell subsequently received notification of his removal from command, and he changed his mind. The crew had accepted their confinement with equanimity at first, but had been becoming increasingly restless the longer the vessel remained in Calais. Paymaster Forrest comments in his diary on refusal of the promised liberty:

"In this he acts unwisely and I fear that the effect of the withdrawal of the permission he had given them will operate unhappily on the crew. They have borne their long detention aboard very well, and fully expected the promised liberty this evening. The Captain in view of the frequent desertions even of appointed officers is unwilling to give an opportunity to the men to do likewise."<sup>22</sup>

The problem of desertion would continue for several more months, but

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<sup>21</sup>Forrest, Diary, undated between February 17th and 26th, rough draft of a letter, Campbell to Barron.

<sup>22</sup>Forrest, Diary, March 19, 1864.

Campbell would not be the one burdened by this problem. On the day prior to his refusal of liberty to the crew, he was informed of his removal from command of the Rappahannock.<sup>23</sup>

There can be little doubt that Campbell's shortsightedness in coaling the vessel was responsible for his loss of command. Slidell, in communications with de Lhuys and with Confederate Secretary of State, Judah P. Benjamin, had called Campbell's failure "gross negligence," and put full blame on Campbell for the Rappahannock's failure to get to sea. Secretary Benjamin communicated this information to Confederate Secretary of the Navy, Stephen Mallory. Mallory wrote to Commodore Barron on April 25, 1864, stating that, "If this vessel only failed to get to sea for the want of coal which Mr. Campbell could and should have had on board, the question of placing another officer in command will at once suggest itself for your consideration."<sup>24</sup> Little did he know that Barron had already taken such steps more than a month before. On March 20, 1864, Lieutenant Charles M. Fauntleroy, USN, came on board the Rappahannock and on the following day he officially took over command from Lieutenant Campbell. Campbell was ordered to return to the Confederacy at the first opportunity.

Fauntleroy found himself in command of a vessel beset by numerous problems. The crew was discontented from their forced detention on board for so long. The vessel itself was in grave danger. Since March 7, 1864, she had been grounded twice daily. This was due

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<sup>23</sup>Campbell to Barron, March 18, 1864, in Whittle Papers.

<sup>24</sup>Mallory to Barron, April 25, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. II, 630.

to the basin gates being opened and the water in the basin rising and falling with the tides. Twelve out of every twenty-four hours the vessel was grounded. Because of her great length and the weight of her coal, stores and provisions, she was slightly "hogged", and her sides were visibly opening up and stretching out. The majority of the coal and provisions were landed to reduce the weight strain on the ship, and they were stored on the dock until the vessel was cleared to leave. She needed caulking badly as a result of being hogged.<sup>25</sup>

Fauntleroy was disappointed with his new command and he expressed his doubts about the Rappahannock to Commodore Barron. He described what he felt were the obvious reasons why the British Admiralty had disposed of the vessel: "It is fully explained by the vast amount of space occupied by her machinery, to the detriment of her storage, both for provisions, coal and crew."<sup>26</sup> The magazine was almost the largest single compartment in the ship. This left little space for the crew or the provisions. At the time of Fauntleroy's first inspection, she was filled with bread and other stores and a large amount of wet provisions were on deck. Obviously, when the guns and ordnance stores were later taken on board, many of the provisions and stores would have to go into the sea to make room. The interior arrangements were described as being experimental.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, March 22, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 820; Fauntleroy to Barron, March 21, 1864, in Whittle Papers; Forrest, Diary, March 6-9, 1864.

<sup>26</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, March 22, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 820.

<sup>27</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, March 22, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 820.

Fauntleroy calculated that the Rappahannock could carry enough provisions for only twenty-five to thirty days at sea. Because of her short coal allowance, she would have to bank her fires and use sail power most of the time, using her steam power only to give chase to merchant vessels. Fauntleroy felt that her sailing capacity would be small, "as her masts are very low and no great spread to the sails."<sup>28</sup> He complained of her lack of spare sails and spars, but conceded that there would be no place to put them even if they did have them. Her small sailing capacity and short allowance for fuel and provisions meant that she would constantly have to enter ports wherever she was, to re-fuel and reprovision. The frequent stops in those ports would increase the possibility of her capture by a Federal warship. Fauntleroy felt that the Rappahannock was doomed to failure as a cruiser.<sup>29</sup>

Fauntleroy further complained about the number of officers on board. There was almost one officer for every crewman. He felt that there were too many idlers, and he indicated that many would be removed when the ship with an armament and replacements was met at sea. The chief engineer had not had previous experience with the type of machinery the vessel had, and this was viewed as being detrimental to the efficiency of the ship.<sup>30</sup> The new commanding officer had nothing good to say about his vessel, and his communications to his superiors continued to have a negative tone regarding the Rappahannock's chances

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<sup>28</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, March 22, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 820.

<sup>29</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, March 22, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 820.

<sup>30</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, March 21, 1864, in Whittle Papers.

for success.

Throughout the remainder of March, and to the end of April, Fauntleroy and his superiors waited in vain for de Lhuys and the French government to give a satisfactory reason for the Rappahannock's detainment. When it was evident that no communication from the French foreign minister was forthcoming, Commodore Barron, Commander Bulloch and Commissioner Slidell concurred in their beliefs that more stringent measures would have to be taken.

In a communication with Confederate Secretary of State, Benjamin, Slidell indicated that he had neglected to state in a recent letter to de Lhuys, "that if the permission to sail were longer withheld and the grounds of her detention were not specifically stated, I would advise her commander to strike his flag, and leave the ship at the disposition of the authorities of Calais."<sup>31</sup> A month later, in late April, Fauntleroy was directed to draw up a declaration of his intentions to abandon the Rappahannock if the French authorities refused to answer why the vessel was detained. A copy was to be sent to Barron and the declaration was to be delivered at a later date to be named by Barron.<sup>32</sup>

On April 21, 1864, Slidell informed M. Mocquard, a friend of his who was an intimate of Emperor Louis Napoleon, that it was the intention of the Confederates to abandon the Rappahannock into the hands of the Calais port authorities. Mocquard was asked to convey this intelligence to the Emperor to see what reaction there would be. Napoleon in-

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<sup>31</sup>Slidell to Benjamin, March 16, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1064.

<sup>32</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, April 26, 1864, in Whittle Papers.

formed Mocquard that the Rappahannock had been the subject of a recent special conversation he had held with his foreign minister and that any statements or questions on the matter by Slidell should be addressed to de Lhuys. Slidell refused to do this, feeling that he had done everything he could where de Lhuys was concerned judging from that individual's previous inclination to ignore the commissioner's communications on the matter. Slidell kept his silence and ordered Barron to set the date for the notice of abandonment.<sup>33</sup>

On May 1, 1864, Fauntleroy informed the Commissaire of Marine at Calais,

"... that if on the 16th of May the injunction upon this ship's departure be not removed and no explanation for her detention be given, I shall proceed to take an inventory of the effects on board, at which any authorized agent of the French Government, designated by yourself, can be present, discharge my crew, withdraw the officers, haul down the flag, and deliver over the vessel to the authorities of the French Government at this place."<sup>34</sup>

Drouyn de Lhuys was an able diplomat who found himself caught in a three-way trap. His government had knowingly allowed the Rappahannock to enter Calais to make repairs. His Emperor had shown favor towards this vessel in allowing these repairs. He was faced by a Federal minister who demanded the vessel's permanent detention. Ordinarily he would have ignored this demand, but at that time Napoleon was involved in his grand scheme of setting the Austrian Archduke Maximilian upon the Mexican throne as a French puppet dictator, and he was dependant

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<sup>33</sup>Slidell to Benjamin, May 5, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 687-688.

<sup>34</sup>Fauntleroy to Gosselin, May 1, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 687-688.

upon the good will of the United States government to achieve this. This is not to say that Napoleon was afraid of the Monroe Doctrine, which in a sense he would be violating, or of United States military power, especially as that government was already involved in a military conflict of its own. Rather, Napoleon was afraid of the British reaction to such a move, because the Monroe Doctrine depended on British seapower to make it effective. If the United States government should break relations with France for any reason, Napoleon's Mexican venture could fall through as a result of possible British intervention. Thus it was absolutely necessary to humor the Federal government until Maximilian was safely established on the Mexican throne.<sup>35</sup>

As a result of this, de Lhuys ordered the Rappahannock detained in order to satisfy the Federal government. He refused to answer any communications to him on the matter, to put off the Confederates as long as possible. However, de Lhuys was violating his nation's neutrality in taking this action. He had no legal right to hold the vessel even if she had overstayed her welcome after completing repairs. Perhaps he sensed the Confederates' mind on the subject and realized that they would not press him too hard for fear of straining relations. While they hesitated, de Lhuys managed to find a way to further placate the Federals and to further delay the vessel from leaving Calais. Like a true politician, he shuffled the responsibility for making a decision in the matter to a commission of lawyers under the leadership of M. Ray-

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<sup>35</sup>Forrest MacDonald, et. al., The Last Best Hope: A History of the United States (Reading, Massachusetts, 1972), I, 516, 524; Encyclopedia Britannica (London, 1929), ed. XIV, XV, 392-93.

mond Theodore Troplong, President of the French Senate. However, de Lhuys requested that the commission delay its decision until after the Legislature adjourned so that the opposition leadership, headed by M. Jules Favre, would be unable to influence the decision.<sup>36</sup> This meant a delay until late July.

On April 9, 1864, Ferdinand Maximilian accepted Louis Napoleon's offer of the Mexican throne after renouncing his Austrian rights of succession. He arrived in Mexico on May 28th and entered Mexico City on June 12th.<sup>37</sup> The Confederates had been fully aware of the French dilemma concerning Mexico and had patiently waited until Maximilian was safely established in Mexico. This obstacle removed, the Confederates began to press the commission and de Lhuys for a quick and early decision, and to discover, if they could, which direction the commission was leaning. They still could not speed up the decision.

All during the period from mid-January to early May, the Federal authorities had been in an awkward position. They could plainly see that the Rappahannock's repairs were completed and that she was ready for sea. In January, rumors reached them that the Florida, Georgia and Rappahannock, would join forces after the Rappahannock had secured a battery, and they would make a combined attack on the Kearsarge. Captain John Winslow of the Kearsarge was kept informed of all the movements of the Confederate vessels by Dayton and by Federal spies in the various ports where the cruisers were docked. Such a combined effort

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<sup>36</sup> Slidell to Benjamin, May 5, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1114; Slidell to Benjamin, May 21, 1864, 1118.

<sup>37</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica, XV, 115.

was viewed as being unlikely, but Winslow remained alert.<sup>38</sup>

In February, Dayton made his official claim of reclamation against France for any damage done by the Rappahannock to Federal merchant shipping. On February 5, 1864, the French government issued a declaration regulating the use of French ports by the belligerents. This declaration was similar to the one already adopted by the British government whereby belligerent vessels had to observe a twenty-four hour rule regarding the time allotted for a vessel's stay in a French port. Also a belligerent vessel could not enter any French port again for three months, except to refuel. Within a very short time after this, the Florida and the Georgia left France, leaving the Rappahannock as the only Confederate vessel in a French port. The Georgia sailed to Morocco for the abortive meeting with the Rappahannock and from there she sailed on a month long raiding cruise. The Florida sailed to South America with the USS St. Louis in pursuit. This left the Kearsarge with the sole responsibility of watching the Rappahannock.<sup>39</sup>

On February 29, 1864, Federal Consul Vendroux informed Captain Winslow that Campbell was not showing any haste to leave Calais. This clearly indicates that the Federals had no knowledge that the desired detainment had taken place, and thus they continued their efforts to observe the Rappahannock and prevent her escape. Spies were recruited to spread dissention among the ship's crew. However, the Confederates

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<sup>38</sup>Putnam to Winslow, January 9, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 583.

<sup>39</sup>Winslow to Welles, February 18, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 604; February 20, 1864, 607; enclosure in Winslow to Welles, February 20, 1864, 607-609.

objected to the French authorities, and these activities were curtailed in late March under orders from Paris.<sup>40</sup> They would return later but the Federals temporarily lost one means of keeping a close watch on the vessel.

Winslow soon received instructions from Minister Adams in England, to investigate the possibility of hiring a small merchant steamer to assist the Kearsarge in watching the Rappahannock. The Kearsarge had continuously maintained a constant watch outside the harbor mouth of Calais. Winslow suspected that the Rappahannock would attempt to escape at high tide after dark, so the Kearsarge kept silent vigil with her lights out every night. However, due to the foggy weather in the English Channel, Winslow felt that the Rappahannock could still escape, notwithstanding his watchfulness, by following the same course of keeping her lights out. The idea of hiring a steamer was immediately seized upon and carried out.<sup>41</sup>

Winslow chartered the Annette, a small steamer under British registry, at \$10 per day for a fortnight to watch the Rappahannock and report all information discovered about her. Winslow then put an officer on board the chartered steamer in civilian's dress "as a friend of the Captain of the boat & [who] will not be known except to the captain as having any authority."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Vendroux to Winslow, February 29, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 621; Forrest, Diary, April 1, 1864.

<sup>41</sup>Winslow to Welles, March 21, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 632-633.

<sup>42</sup>Winslow to Welles, March 21, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. II, 632-633; Morse to Seward, undated late March, 1864, T-168, Roll 33.

Soon after this, Winslow was informed by the French authorities that the Kearsarge would not be allowed to lay outside of any French port for a period longer than twenty-four hours. This, combined with a similar British restriction, forced the Kearsarge to operate from Ostende in the Netherlands. The use of the Annette became ever more valuable when the Federal agents were forced to cease tampering with the Rappahannock's crew and to leave Calais. The Annette became one of the few means of keeping informed about the Rappahannock.<sup>43</sup> In one instance "she proceeded to Dunkirk and Ostende, [where she] relieved some thirteen American ships which were shut up from fear of the Rappahannock."<sup>44</sup>

Shortly after this, Dayton learned that the Rappahannock had been detained by the French government and he relayed this information to Winslow. Winslow then decided that the Annette was no longer needed. Consul Morse disagreed, however, believing that the French were untrustworthy and that the Rappahannock would still sail. For two more weeks he maintained the Annette for the State Department. Then he tried to convince Winslow that the Navy Department should assume this responsibility. Because of the French detention, Winslow declined. He felt that Dayton would receive word soon enough prior to the Rappahannock's release that the Annette could be rehired if necessary. She was then released by Morse from Federal service.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Winslow to Welles, April 7, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 7.

<sup>44</sup> Winslow to Welles, April 7, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 7.

<sup>45</sup> Winslow to Welles, April 7, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 7; Morse to Seward, April 17, 1864, 13; Winslow to Morse, April 23, 1864, 18-19.

For the remainder of the war, the Federal warships would continue observing the Rappahannock, but the detention allowed the constant surveillance of her by paid spies, Federal sympathisers in France and by other means, to be relaxed. Only once more would activity surrounding the Rappahannock cause increased surveillance by the Federals. This would be in the early months of 1865.

From the beginning of the detention, the Confederates suffered what they considered to be numerous insults. As previously mentioned, a French warship had been stationed in the basin shortly after the Rappahannock failed to depart on February 4th. The Confederates realized that the Galilee was there to prevent the Rappahannock from making any attempt to escape. Whenever the Rappahannock got up steam to try her engines and test her boilers, the Galilee also got up steam. This was humiliating to the Confederates because the French government was in effect saying that they could not be trusted to remain in Calais until further orders came releasing the ship. However, in light of the vessel's escape from Sheerness the previous November, the French probably were justified in taking this measure to insure against a similar occurrence. This seems even more to be the case when Campbell applied to French naval officials for permission to take the Rappahannock on a "trial trip" or to "lie near the mouth of the port pending repairs on the dock,..."<sup>46</sup> The requests were denied, and it can be assumed that the French officials believed that if either were granted, the temptation would be too great for the Confederates and there would be no way to

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<sup>46</sup>Forrest, Diary, March 6, 1864.

prevent their permanent departure.<sup>47</sup>

When the basin gates were opened to let the water out for repairs on the basin, the French took another step to prevent an escape, which was viewed as an affront by the Confederates. At the narrow mouth to the basin, on top of the gates was a gangway which connected each side and which enabled people to cross from one side to the other rather than having to walk completely around the basin. On March 17, 1864, a heavy chain-link cable was drawn across the mouth of the basin on the inside of the gates ostensibly "as a precaution against damages to the gangway by vessels breaking adrift."<sup>48</sup> In reality the chain was meant to prevent the Rappahannock from breaking out.<sup>49</sup> The foregoing affronts were dwarfed in comparison to the one suffered at the hands of a French merchant vessel's captain and the Commerce Tribunal of Calais.

At seven o'clock on the quiet spring evening of April 26, 1864, Lieutenant George S. Shryock, CSN, first officer of the Rappahannock, was on deck where he observed two men approaching his vessel who shortly boarded her. One of them told him in broken English that the other was the captain of the French merchant vessel Nil lying just ahead of the Rappahannock. They had come to request that the Rappahannock be moved so the Nil could lie alongside the dock and stated that this move was ordered by the Captain of the Port.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Forrest, Diary, February 5, 1864; March 17, 1864.

<sup>48</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, March 21, 1864, in Whittle Papers.

<sup>49</sup>Forrest, Diary, March 17, 1864.

<sup>50</sup>Shryock to Fauntleroy, April 27, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 689.

Lieutenant Shryock declined to accede to this request whereupon the captain of the Nil angrily departed leaving the interpreter behind. A few minutes later Shryock observed that the vessels astern of the Rappahannock had moved four or five fathoms from her as if to give her room to move. Shryock commented on this movement of the merchant vessels to the interpreter, who explained to him that the distance the other ships had moved would be all the Rappahannock would have to move for the Nil to come alongside the dock. Shryock then agreed to have the Rappahannock move as a courtesy without first getting permission from the Captain of the Port. He went to Fauntleroy to get his permission and asked the interpreter to bring the Nil's captain back on board while he checked with Fauntleroy. Upon receiving permission from Fauntleroy, Shryock went back on deck to find that the interpreter had returned alone, the captain of the Nil having refused to come.<sup>51</sup>

A few moments later the quiet of the evening was shattered as the officer of the deck reported that the Nil was hauling into the Rappahannock and was threatening the head rigging. Shryock ran to the bow to determine the danger to the ship and immediately saw that the fore-topgallent mast and jib boom were in peril of being carried away by the jibs, spars and guys of the Nil which pressed heavily against them. The confusion and cursing on the Rappahannock can well be imagined as crewmen were sent swiftly aloft to cut the Nil's jib and flying-jib guys to save their own fore-topgallent mast. Even after this was accomplished the Nil continued to advance another fathom before coming to a dead

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<sup>51</sup>Shryock to Fauntleroy, April 27, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 689.

stop. It can also be well imagined that French cursing must have filled the night air when the Nil's captain learned that his guy lines had been cut by the Confederates. After the excitement died down, the Confederates were ready to dismiss the incident only as a deliberate insult on the part of an insolent French merchant captain who had moved his vessel without a port official being present. The Nil's captain, however, was not willing to forget the cutting of his guys.<sup>52</sup>

The next day (27th) the Captain of the Port came on board to learn the particulars of the incident the night before. On April 29th, Fauntleroy learned that the Tribunal of Commerce of Calais had a case on its docket brought by the captain of the Nil against Fauntleroy for damages done to the Nil's rigging. Fauntleroy immediately had Lieutenant Shryock appear before the Tribunal to protest against the proceedings.<sup>53</sup>

Shryock appeared on the 30th and made claim for Fauntleroy, that a court of arbitration such as this Tribunal, which functioned as a civil court dealing with mercantile matters, had no legal right or precedent by which to judge a case against a national vessel of a foreign power. Thus, Fauntleroy refused to accept any judgment in the matter upon the grounds that the court had no jurisdiction over his vessel. Shryock was instructed to offer any proof or witnesses necessary to show the Nil's captain to have been in the wrong, but also to stress that this would not be an indication of submission to the jurisdiction of the court. How-

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<sup>52</sup> Shryock to Fauntleroy, April 27, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 689.

<sup>53</sup> Forrest, Diary, April 27, 1864; Fauntleroy to Barron, May 2, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 686-87; Shryock to Fauntleroy, July 11, 1864, 696.

ever, the court refused to summon witnesses, and judgment was given solely upon the testimony of the captain and crew of the Nil. Fauntleroy was ordered to pay two-hundred francs for damages committed against the Nil plus court costs. He ignored this judgment and wrote to Commodore Barron concerning the matter.<sup>54</sup>

In his letter to Barron, Fauntleroy discussed what he felt were the reasons behind the court's decision against him. As it was the beginning of the busy season for merchant shipping, the basin was the center of a beehive of activity. Almost daily, the Rappahannock was required upon some pretext or another to be moved backward and forward for the merchant vessels to carry on their business of loading and unloading cargo. It was felt that the court's decision was a result of "vexation at our taking up the room which we do in this little basin, and because they have never been told by the Paris authorities to respect the ship as a national vessel."<sup>55</sup> The whole refusal to pay hinged on one principle; and that is, the vessel was either to be formally considered a Confederate warship, and thus outside the jurisdiction of a court of commerce, or it was to be considered a merchant vessel and subject to the court's decision.<sup>56</sup> Paying the decision plus costs, would be an admission that the vessel was a ship of commerce rather than a warship and would enable the French government to detain the vessel on that pretext.

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<sup>54</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, May 2, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 687; Shryock to Fauntleroy, July 11, 1864, 696.

<sup>55</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, May 2, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 687.

<sup>56</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, May 2, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 687; Fauntleroy to Barron, July 11, 1864, in Whittle Papers.

Barron concurred with Fauntleroy's opinions and his method of handling the matter, but he expressed regret that Shryock had not gone to Fauntleroy before refusing the request of the Nil's captain. Had he done so, the whole incident would have been avoided. The Confederates then decided to ignore the court and soon forgot the matter, feeling certain of the vessel's rights as a national vessel. The court, however, did not forget, although it delayed taking action for a week to see if payment would be made.<sup>57</sup>

On May 7, 1864, the Tribunal of Commerce resolved to enforce its judgment. An official of the court was sent to the ship to secure the Confederates' submission to the judgment, but without success. On May 10th, Fauntleroy was informed that if the damages to the Nil, as judged by the court, were not made good, then the ship would be seized by the port authorities and sold to meet the demands of the Nil's owners. Fauntleroy continued to ignore these threats and nothing further was said by either the court or the Confederates for well over a month.<sup>58</sup>

The court at Calais was not inactive during that month. When it was evident that the Confederates were not going to comply with the ruling concerning the Nil, the court passed the case to a higher court, the Civil Tribunal of Boulogne-sur-mer. This court, after almost a two months delay, ruled that the vessel was to be sold to pay the damages. The lower court at Calais had already tried to have this done on June 23rd when a bailiff came on board the Rappahannock with a decree of

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<sup>57</sup>Barron to Fauntleroy, May 3, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 691.

<sup>58</sup>Forrest, Diary, May 7, 16, 1864.

sale. He tried to serve this on Fauntleroy but found himself and the paper decree unceremoniously removed from the ship and dumped on the quay.<sup>59</sup>

Shortly after this the higher court ruled on the matter and the authorities in Calais tried to carry out its decision. On July 8th, a bailiff came alongside the ship with a public crier. As the crier beat his drum and announced the prospected sale of the ship, the bailiff once again attempted to serve a bill of sale on Fauntleroy, and was treated the same way as before. However, an old bill-poster who arrived a little later, was not easily discouraged by the treatment given the bailiff. He slipped over the side using a ladder, and, equipped with paste and brush, tried to affix a bill of sale on the mainmast. The officer of the day had him unceremoniously dumped over the side. An ugly crowd began to gather on the dock as the irrate bill-poster waited for reinforcement. The officers quickly brought their swords and pistols to hand and a sword was placed on the capstan in plain view of the crowd. This had a calming effect on the crowd and a short while later they were dispersed by the police at the request of Fauntleroy.<sup>60</sup>

Two days after this incident, Fauntleroy received a communication from Commodore Barron, informing him of the details of a conversation with Slidell. The Commissioner had learned of the incident of the 8th from the French Minister of Marine, as well as the details of the Nil controversy. To avoid any possible effect on the decision of the

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<sup>59</sup>Forrest, Diary, June 22, 1864.

<sup>60</sup>Forrest, Diary, July 8, 1864; Fauntleroy to Barron, July 8, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 694-95.

commission of lawyers on the detention issue, Slidell recommended that the payment of damages should be paid under protest, thus leaving the matter open to future action. Fauntleroy was so ordered.<sup>61</sup>

Fauntleroy was extremely angered at this order as he felt that payment of the fine after having successfully defended his command from just such an action, would discredit him and his position as the commander of a national vessel. However, he submitted to the order, and under directions from Barron, he hired a lawyer to tell him the proper procedure of putting the payment under protest prior to making it. On July 22, 1864, Fauntleroy paid the sum of 730. francs, two hundred being the price of the damages and the remainder being the charges and expenses of the court and the cost of advertising the sale of the vessel. One more event in the unfortunate history of the Rappahannock's Confederate service, came to a sad and unsatisfactory end.<sup>62</sup>

When the problem concerning the Nil was concluded, the Confederates awaited with great anxiety the final decision of the commission of lawyers responsible for the Rappahannock's ultimate fate. As previously mentioned, the French foreign minister, Drouyn de Lhuys, had avoided making a decision on the matter of the Rappahannock's detainment by putting the responsibility for the decision right in the lap of a specially appointed commission of lawyers, former diplomats and French senators. This commission was under the guidance of M. Raymond Theodore Troplong, President of the French Senate, and one of the ablest French politicians

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<sup>61</sup>Barron to Fauntleroy, July 10, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 695-96.

<sup>62</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, July 22, 1864, in Whittle Papers.

of the period.<sup>63</sup>

The first result of the decision to have a commission of lawyers decide the detainment issue was that on May 13, 1864, Commodore Barron, in agreement with Commander Bulloch, ordered Fauntleroy not to carry out the proposed abandonment of the vessel on the 16th. The reason for this was that the Confederates felt that the commission would decide the detainment issue favorably towards the Confederacy. Fauntleroy, however, saw that this action would discredit him as commander of the Rappahannock, as it would put him in the position of having made a threat to abandon the vessel, but being without the power to carry it out. He protested that the retraction of the threat by him would outwardly seem to be totally his decision and he stated that, "It will appear in the future history of the ship, that I alone am responsible for the course pursued - whereas, it had been contrary to my own judgement from the beginning to the end."<sup>64</sup> Fauntleroy carried out his orders when Barron informed him that the decision not to abandon the vessel was the entire responsibility of the Commodore.<sup>65</sup>

Slidell had an interview with M. Troplong to discover what the commission's preliminary feelings were on the detainment question. In this interview, Slidell was told that the commission would have made a prompt report on the Rappahannock, "but that the 'dossier' had been accompanied by an intimation from Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys that he would pre-

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<sup>63</sup>Slidell to Benjamin, May 21, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1118.

<sup>64</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, May 15, 1864, in Whittle Papers.

<sup>65</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, May 15, 1864, in Whittle Papers.

fer not to receive a report until after the adjournment of the Corps Legislatif, as he feared it might be made a matter of attack from [the leader of the opposition in the French Senate] M. Jules Favre."<sup>66</sup> This was the first that Slidell had heard on this tactic by de Lhuys to delay a decision on the Rappahannock. The Confederates would have no choice but to wait, and ultimately would not receive an answer for two more months.<sup>67</sup>

Slidell learned from M. Troplong that that jurist had not read the papers referred to him by the foreign minister, but had followed the normal procedure of sending all information to a member of the commission who would examine the material and then report in detail to the commission at a later meeting. The commission would then make its recommendations and come to a decision on the issue. This member of the commission was M. Marchand and Slidell was told to direct any further questions he had to M. Marchand.<sup>68</sup>

Shortly after this Slidell did see M. Marchand, who was a celebrated jurisconsult and a leading member of the "conseil d'etat." M. Marchand gave Slidell a summary of all the papers in the 'dossier' on the Rappahannock, but there was nothing in them that was not already familiar. M. Marchand avoided committing himself as to the character of his report to be given the commission. However, from what he said, Slidell inferred that Marchand did not consider the case as presenting much

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<sup>66</sup> Slidell to Benjamin, May 21, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1118.

<sup>67</sup> Slidell to Benjamin, May 21, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1118.

<sup>68</sup> Slidell to Benjamin, May 21, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1118.

difficulty. The only point that could cause trouble was the size of the crew. Slidell believed that this was no problem because everything that had been done concerning taking on a larger crew had been done with the knowledge and approbation of Chasseloup-Laubat, the minister of marine.<sup>69</sup> The Confederate commissioner would soon learn differently.

The Confederates waited a month, until late June, when Slidell tried to see what his friend, the Duke de Persigny could do to speed the decision. Persigny soon after sent a copy of a note to Slidell which Louis Napoleon had sent him concerning the Rappahannock which said: "My dear Persigny: I have given orders for the Rappahannock to leave the French port, but the American minister must not know it."<sup>70</sup> This information, combined with the further unofficial intelligence that the commission of lawyers had decided unanimously that there was no sufficient cause for the detention of the Rappahannock, persuaded the Confederates that the Rappahannock would soon be allowed to depart. Hurried preparations were begun to have her ready when the order came. However, the Confederates had not received full knowledge of the content of the commission's report or they would not have been in such a great haste to prepare the ship for departure.<sup>71</sup>

Upon receipt from Persigny of the Emperor's note, Slidell communicated with de Lhuys to find out if any decision had been made in the affair, but made no mention of the Emperor's note. The foreign

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<sup>69</sup>Slidell to Benjamin, May 21, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1119.

<sup>70</sup>Slidell to Benjamin, July 11, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1170.

<sup>71</sup>Slidell to Benjamin, July 11, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1170; Barron to Mallory, July 13, 1864, Ser. II, Vol. II, 685.

minister gave a negative reply saying that he still awaited the commission's report. Slidell did not believe this, but he went to the minister of marine to see if he had received word of the Emperor's order. Chasseloup-Laubat showed great surprise when he saw the note for he had not (he said) received any order from the Emperor to release the Rappahannock. He also was surprised at the discrepancy between Napoleon's note and the foreign minister's declaration. Slidell then decided to increase pressure on the foreign minister as he believed that individual was deliberately trying to prevent the order from Napoleon from being carried out.<sup>72</sup>

On July 20, 1864, Slidell was called into the minister of marine's office. There he was read a letter from Drouyn de Lhuys in which de Lhuys conveyed Louis Napoleon's order permitting the Rappahannock to depart from Calais as determined by the commission of lawyers, with the same number of men on board as when she came in. This number was stated by the commission as being a maximum of thirty-five crewmen and officers combined. Slidell expressed shock and dismay at this and argued that the number of crewmen had been much greater than thirty-five. He had been under the impression that the number had been more like seventy and that Captain Campbell had reported the number at one hundred on the customs house manifest upon entering Calais. Slidell also stated that the minister of marine's own acquiescence in allowing the Confederates to increase the crew seemed to indicate official acceptance of such

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<sup>72</sup>Slidell to Benjamin, August 1, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1182.

an increase.<sup>73</sup>

The minister of marine replied to Slidell that the number stated in de Lhuys's letter was in compliance with the report of the commission of lawyers and it was fully confirmed by the records made at the time of the vessel's arrival in Calais. He presented as evidence several extracts contained within the 'dossier' on the Rappahannock. Also,

"He replied that it was true that he had acquiesced in the increase and that the ship could have gone to sea without difficulty if anything approaching reasonable diligence had been used by the commander: that he had again and again urged dispatch, anticipating difficulty, but that no attention was paid to his messages, which were intended as friendly hints, and that the order to go to sea given on the 4th February had the same motive."<sup>74</sup>

Slidell told the minister of marine that thirty-five men and officers would be an insufficient number to take the Rappahannock to sea safely. He continued to press this point until the minister of marine agreed to see de Lhuys and try to get the foreign minister to relax his orders and restrictions on the number. Slidell was told to come back to the minister of marine's office on July 24th and he would have a final answer.<sup>75</sup>

The discrepancy between the Confederate and French numbers is easily explained. As previously discussed, the Rappahannock had been brought to Calais by artisans and craftsmen. The number was not specified, but subsequent depositions of men who had either refused to serve on her or who later deserted, seemed to suggest that there was an extreme-

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<sup>73</sup>Slidell to Benjamin, August 1, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1182.

<sup>74</sup>Slidell to Benjamin, August 1, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1182.

<sup>75</sup>Slidell to Benjamin, August 1, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1183.

ly small number on board when she entered Calais. The Confederates themselves admitted to less than a hundred. Fauntleroy, in a dispatch to Barron, wrote that "Campbell regarded some of his officers and crew as merely detached until ordered to report on board after the ship should reach port."<sup>76</sup> These "detached" officers and crewmen were recruited until late February bringing the ship's compliment up to nearly one-hundred. However, the French government viewed the detached officers and crew differently and the decision concerning the number of the crew to be allowed was made on the ones physically present when the Rappahannock entered Calais. That number had been recorded as thirty-five.<sup>77</sup>

On July 24th, Slidell returned to Chasseloup-Laubat's office and discovered that the minister of marine had not yet talked to Drouyn de Lhuys about increasing the allowable number of crewmen. He told Slidell that he would contact the Confederate emmissary as soon as he received word from de Lhuys. On July 28th, Slidell was summoned to the minister of marine's office where he learned "that the question had been discussed in cabinet council, the Express presiding, on the previous day and that it was decided not to change the instructions."<sup>78</sup> The vessel could only leave with thirty-five crewmen and officers.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, July 23, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 699.

<sup>77</sup>Slidell to Benjamin, August 1, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1182-83.

<sup>78</sup>Slidell to Benjamin, August 1, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1183.

<sup>79</sup>Slidell to Benjamin, August 1, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1183.

This decision by the French government confronted the Confederates with the decision of whether to risk taking the Rappahannock out with such a small number of men. On July 31, 1864, Fauntleroy, Barron and Bulloch met aboard the Rappahannock and agreed that this number was totally insufficient to operate the vessel. It was also decided that it would be impossible to coordinate any combined movement of the Rappahannock and a hired steamer with a battery and a full crew to join the raider. Fauntleroy was to wait until he received official notice of the government's decision at which time he would restate the Confederate stand on the issue of the number of crewmen to be allowed and then to pay off his crew and lay up the ship. On August 1, 1864, the captain of the French warship Avergne, stationed in Calais watching the Rappahannock, informed Fauntleroy that he could leave port whenever ready but that he could only depart with thirty-five men including officers. Fauntleroy refused and the next day proceeded to pay off his crew and detach his officers. This marked the end of the Rappahannock's chances of ever serving the Confederacy as a commerce raider.<sup>80</sup> It did not end her service to the Confederacy, however. She would become important as a floating personnel depot for other Confederate vessels.

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<sup>80</sup> Forrest, Diary, August 1, 1864; Barron to Mallory, August 2, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. II, 696.

## CHAPTER IV

### LIFE ABOARD SHIP

No study of an individual vessel, such as the Rappahannock, is complete without including a section about life aboard ship for the officers and crew. The Rappahannock affair gives an ample amount of information for any social commentary because of the vessel's long stay in the French provincial port of Calais.

Life for Confederate officials in Europe, both civilian and military, was far different than for their people back home. They had roofs over their heads, plenty of the finest foods and beverages to satisfy their physical needs, companionship with the upper crust of English and French society, and rarely had to face the hardships faced by the people of the Confederacy every day. These naval officials and officers rarely faced the dangers that officers in the field faced on the battle fronts of the South. There were only a few engagements, of which the Alabama - Kearsarge battle was most notable, involving Confederate vessels in European waters. Theirs was generally a comfortable, if not a soft life. By the very nature of the mission of Confederate officials in Europe, it was important for them to live in a high manner and to cultivate the friendship of influential people who could possibly effect their governments to side openly with and aid the Confederate cause.

The majority of the officers sent to Europe were bright, young men of the upper class of Southern society. Most were men of substance, i.e., educationally, culturally and financially. Most of the senior officers, including many lieutenants, given positions of command had served in the old Navy and were experienced, capable men.

Lieutenants William P. A. Campbell and Charles M. Fauntleroy were among those who were former United States naval officers and both served in various capacities for the Confederate navy prior to being sent to Europe. Both were fine examples as representatives of the South and as Confederate officers and were culturally and socially suited to represent their government while in Calais.<sup>1</sup>

As previously mentioned, several of the Rappahannock's officers had been in Calais as much as two months prior to her entry into that port. In that two months period the Confederates had made acquaintances with several of the leading citizens of Calais and were often guests at meals, parties, and dances in private homes. When their ship finally arrived on November 26, 1863, they suddenly had something to do other than socialize with the Calaisians.<sup>2</sup>

Life for the officers aboard the Rappahannock during the first several weeks, was spent in the assigning of duties and then supervising the enormous amount of work to get the vessel seaworthy and ready for a cruise. Campbell found himself busy with the Calais port officials trying to obtain the facilities necessary for his ship's repairs. Lieutenant John F. Ramsay was sent back and forth from Calais to England to recruit a crew for the vessel. Paymaster Forrest was constantly at work keeping the ship's books updated and in writing notes for payment of debts on materials acquired for the vessel. First officer, Lieutenant

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<sup>1</sup>Register of Officers of the Confederate States Navy, 1861-1865 (Washington D.C., 1931), 29, 58.

<sup>2</sup>Maury, Diary, August 14, 22, 1863; Forrest's Diary in the early pages indicates that he and a few other officers were acquainted with several people in Calais.

Graves, found himself in charge of many of the details of repairing the vessel and the rest of the officers were performing similar tasks.<sup>3</sup>

As repairs progressed, the officers began to have more free time to socialize and form the accustomed daily habits they would have for the duration of their stay in Calais. For the first time the officers appeared dressed out in full uniform. The townspeople were easily impressed by the snappy grey uniforms and gold braid which were paraded about the deck in proud display. The crew was dressed smartly in new blue uniforms and all aboard presented a colorful picture to the people of Calais. Some of the officers even had pistols holstered at their sides to add a further dignity and touch to their position as officers of the Confederacy. It soon became a matter of social importance to the Calaisians to invite the dashing young Southern gentlemen to social affairs.<sup>4</sup>

Paymaster Forrest relates in his diary of the preparations and events experienced on Monday, December 14, 1863, at one of these social gatherings:

"... In the evening made 'grande toilette' i.e. appeared for the first time with sword and uncovered caps. The occasion being the Soiree musical at the hall of the Philharmonic Society. ... A great many insisted we were Russians - some few comprehended that we were their old guests the Americans disguised in 'soldiers clothes.' We excited a great deal of attention at the Concert, and nearly all the officers of the 94th came up during the evening and conversed with us. This Society is very

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<sup>3</sup>Forrest, Diary, November 26 - December 10, 1863.

<sup>4</sup>Forrest, Diary, December 13, 1863; Adams to Seward, enclosure number 5 in January 8, 1864 (the presence of pistols can be assumed because the sworn statement of the deponent, William Hewson, states that pistols were used to threaten him), M-30, Roll 80.

exclusive and the audience were almost without exception, the Elite.

After the concert the room was cleared for a dance; but we were compelled to leave in order to accept an invitation from the Philharmonic of St. Pierre whose Ball we had promised to attend."<sup>5</sup>

This was the first of many such evenings for the officers as time and again they attended concerts and balls, some given in their honor. On one such occasion the officers were invited to attend a masquerade ball. They all went dressed in many different disguises. Forrest and Paymaster's Clerk, Thomas A. Miller, decided to borrow some crew members' clothes and go as ordinary seamen. It was with great amusement that from behind their masks they observed the scorn and disgust on the faces of their fellow officers when they entered. They were also amused at the reaction they received when they acted in a familiar way towards the other officers. Forrest approached Dr. James Herty from behind and put a hand on his shoulder in a familiar way and received a dark scowl from the ship's surgeon in return. It was all in good fun and the officers were all well received at the many balls and concerts they attended.<sup>6</sup>

The officers amused themselves in many other ways as well. Because most of them were "gentlemen" and therefore cultured to some degree, they were quite familiar with the game of chess and with many card games popular to the times. From Campbell on down the list of officers, they all enjoyed playing chess and many idle hours were spent in deep concentration over a chessboard. The forerunner of our modern game of bridge, called 'whist' was a favorite card game played among

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<sup>5</sup>Forrest, Diary, December 14, 1863.

<sup>6</sup>Forrest, Diary, February 8, 1864.

the officers and at private parties in the homes of citizens of Calais. Other card games included 'Old Maid' and 'Bezique', the latter resembling the game of pinochle, but using a double, triple or quadruple deck of all the cards above the six.<sup>7</sup>

A popular outdoor game was 'quoits' similar to our game of horseshoes only it is played with a metal or wooden ring which is tossed towards a peg in the ground. Occasionally the officers would amuse themselves by tossing a ball with the pretty young ladies of the town. Another favorite pastime, which was enjoyed by most of the officers nearly every day, was strolling or 'promenading' in the town square, called the 'Place'. This was a chance for them to display their best military manner and appearance, to get exercise, to make conversation, and best of all, to see the upper strata of Calais society, which also enjoyed daily 'promenading'. It was also a convenient means for the officers to meet the pretty daughters of the elite and enabled them to converse with the influential people of Calais.<sup>8</sup>

Another means of whiling away the idle hours was reading. Books and novels, newspapers, journals, and letters, were the sources for this pastime. The books and novels read depended on the number of languages the individual officer knew. Some, such as Forrest, had a knowledge of French and were able to read French novels. A sample of the books Forrest read are, Alexandre Dumas' The Musketeers; Frederick

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<sup>7</sup>Forrest, Diary, January 4, 12, 1864; May 9, 1864(chess); January 16, 1864(whist); February 23, 1865(Old Maid and Bezique).

<sup>8</sup>Forrest, Diary, June 23, 1864, July 6, 1864, December 30, 1864, January 9, 1865(Quoits); June 1, 1864(playing ball); December 20, 1863, January 13, 25, 1864(promenading).

Marryats', The Pirate; Mort de Roland; and several novels by George Sand, including Antonia and les Beaux Massieus. Many fine novels written in English were also the source of entertainment for the officers who could not read French. The Bible also was a source of comfort.<sup>9</sup>

Newspapers and letters were especially welcomed by the young Southerners because they brought news of home. Like all seafaring people far away from home, these young officers craved news of their families and the way the war was going for their homeland. The English newspapers such as the London Times, the Standard, and the Liverpool Daily Post, constantly had news of the war. The articles from Southern correspondants were fewer than those of the Northern because they were harder to get out. News of a battle would reach Europe two or three weeks after it occurred. Southern newspapers and letters had to go through the blockade, then go to Bermuda, and from there to England. Usually the officers in Calais got letters from their families and friends more than a month after they were written, and sometimes as much as two or three months later. The increasing surveillance and success of the Federal blockade as the war neared its end, meant fewer letters and less news could get through to the Confederates in Europe.

When yellow fever raged in Bermuda, ships bound for the Confederacy and vice versa, had to take other, longer, roundabout means of reaching their destination to avoid the plagued island. This meant further delays in letters reaching the receiver. The sad aspect of this delay is that in many cases a Confederate in Europe would lose a relative

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<sup>9</sup>Forrest, Diary, December 18, 1863; January 11, 1864; December 15, 1864; January 22, 24, 30, 1865.

or friend at home, either by battle or natural causes, and would still think of that person as living for the month or more it took for the news to reach Europe. Even though there was this sad possibility, one of the highlights of any day came when the Dover-Calais packet boat arrived with mail from home.<sup>10</sup>

Similar to the above was the constant writing of letters to families and friends at home in the South. Some of the officers, as was the habit of many naval officers of the period, probably kept diaries in which they recorded significant events and their own innermost thoughts. Forrest's diary is in letter or story form and is an excellent example from that period, of an educated man's writing ability. Although no evidence is available on whether other officers of the Rappahannock kept a diary; it can be assumed that some must have, as diaries were quite common as a means of keeping one's mind occupied in a constructive manner.<sup>11</sup>

While the officers were in Calais, the town had it's annual fair in the 'Place'. This was an event that drew visitors from all the neighboring communities and it was a delight to the officers to spend their idle time enjoying this gala event. Forrest describes in his diary what the Fair looked like;

"Adown its length are three avenues of booths, well lighted and filled with every species of small ware. The ... colors, the frequent lights, the cries of the vendors,

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<sup>10</sup>Forrest, Diary, February 11, 1864 and February 7, 1865 are two instances of Forrest receiving letters mailed to him two months prior; February 1, 1865; September 27, 1864.

<sup>11</sup>Forrest, Diary, February 19, 1864; April 25, 1864; October 18, 1864; November 25, 1864.

different in discord, the beating of drums, the ringing of bells, the winding of horns, hand organs & bands of varying size and extraordinarily little merit. Great pictures of fat women & hell, of lions, & alligators, & St. Autoria's pig, and so forth & the countless multitude of French of every degree (except the highest) who jostle & laugh & smirk & flirt & intrigue & throw balls at puppets for bonbons..."<sup>12</sup>

It must have seemed to them very much like a county fair at home except with a decidedly French air about it. Some of the officers must have viewed the whole spectacle with amusement because of the throngs of coarse, common people who came to enjoy one of the happier moments in a peasant's life. Others were perhaps wistful and reminded of home.<sup>13</sup>

Along with the fair, there were other things to enjoy in Calais. Among these was an occasional outdoor concert given by the regimental band of the 94th infantry stationed at Calais. These concerts were evidently quite good and lasted as long as an hour and a half. Occasionally the officers found themselves on the outskirts of a crowd, watching a parade in honor of some dignitary, either foreign or domestic. Because of the close proximity of Calais to Dover, Calais was a main thoroughfare between England and Europe. Many foreign princes and dignitaries found Calais as their port of destination in order to make the shortest boat trip possible across the English Channel. When it was known that such a person was going to pass through, much ado was made about it in the form of parades and speeches to honor the dignitary.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps the most meaningful and gratifying occasions exper-

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<sup>12</sup>Forrest, Diary, January 23, 1864.

<sup>13</sup>Forrest, Diary, January 23, 1864.

<sup>14</sup>Forrest, Diary, April 24, 1864.

ienced by the officers, occurred when they were invited into the homes of the leading citizens of Calais. Campbell, Forrest and others were constantly the guests of M. Magniac, his wife and his two lovely daughters, Henriette and Louise. This family invited Campbell and Forrest to share many meals with them, and after a time Forrest became very much impressed and delighted by the two Magniac girls. Although never allowing himself to fall in love with them, he was quite fond of both, especially Henriette, and many a pleasant evening was spent in their company. Dancing, singing, listening to the girls play the piano, and good conversation made the long detention in Calais quite bearable for Forrest. Other officers received similar treatment in other French homes.<sup>15</sup>

Many of the parties held in private homes attended by the officers of the Rappahannock, were truly extravagant affairs. Christmas dinner in the home of M. Eyre was a feast beyond belief.

"The table was well furnished with excellently prepared dishes & served in silver and french china. In the middle of the table an epergne and in the midst a plum cake garnished with flags, the principle one being a Confederate banner with 'a Merry Christmas & a happy new year to all Confederates' inscribed upon it - a very pretty compliment. There was soup, bouillon & vegetable, goose & apple sauce, sausages, cold meats, salad, pate de fai gras [goose-liver paste], mince pies, almonds & raisins, different kinds of cakes, oranges, pears, apples, bon-bons, port, sherry, madeira, hock, claret, ordinary Bordeaux, champagnes, brandy & ales, cigars - an elegant entertainment hospitably dispensed. Afterwards singing, dancing, cards, etc. ..." <sup>16</sup>

This meal was not an every day affair, of course, but even on board ship,

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<sup>15</sup>Forrest, Diary, July 11, 1864. Forrest's entire diary mentions his almost daily presence at the Magniac home or in their company elsewhere in Calais.

<sup>16</sup>Forrest, Diary, December 25, 1863.

the senior officers ate extremely well.

"Dined very comfortably aboard. Finest linen, exquisite china & plate, arranged sweetly on our cosy little round table, in our little gem of a cabin. Very nice soup, sweetbread, roast mutton, current jelly, potatoes, Brussel Sprouts, salad, delicious English cheese, peach marmalade, tart apples, oranges, filberts, almonds, raisins & coffee. This for Captain [Campbell], [Paymaster's clerk] Miller & myself and our mess bill will not probably cost us more than fifteen dollars a month, at farthest twenty."<sup>17</sup>

It is a wonder that they did not have a twinge of conscience when these meals are contrasted with the ones partaken of in Southern homes at that time. Few people in the Confederacy could afford, much less obtain, the different foodstuffs which were every day fare for the Confederate officers in Calais. Officers in the field rarely ever ate as well. The officers of the Rappahannock were extremely well off.

As the detention issue began to drag on, the officers began to know several of the young women of Calais very well. When the weather was warm, picnics were quite common with the young ladies and their families. Great open horse drawn carriages or omnibuses were hired by the officers or other members of the party and they would drive miles out into the country until they found a site that struck their fancy. There they would stop and have a joyous time under a warm sun and soft sea breezes. This was quite a contrast to the hot, dusty battlefields that other Southerners faced in far off Virginia.<sup>18</sup>

The spiritual needs of the officers and the crew were supplied by several different churches in Calais. Shipboard services were oft-

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<sup>17</sup>Forrest, Diary, January 2, 1864.

<sup>18</sup>Forrest, Diary, June 30, 1864; July 12, 16, 20, 1864.

en conducted by ministers. The Reverend Mr. Newham, chaplain of the British Consulate in Calais, delivered a rousing sermon to the ship's company on February 22nd, the Confederate national anniversary. He lectured and preached that the Southern cause was righteous and just. At other times, Forrest had the crew erect a small canopy on the quarterdeck and he functioned as ship's chaplain. Crew and officers regularly attended divine services conducted by Forrest and this experience eventually contributed to his becoming a minister after the war.<sup>19</sup>

When the detention controversy came to an end, the Rappahannock's officers found themselves with increasing amounts of idle time. The crew was paid off and the officers were detached for reassignment to other ships. Many were ordered home. However, yellow fever was raging in Bermuda, so that those who had been ordered home were temporarily re-assigned to the Rappahannock. Through late summer, into autumn and early winter, these officers had an abundance of time and little or nothing to do. Opinion had soured where the French government was concerned, so that little intercourse of any sorts was held with officers in the French navy or army stationed at Calais. Parties, concerts and balls became tiresome after having been in Calais for so long, and few officers attended very many. Amusements were few and the officers were desperate for something to do. Visits to the train and packet-boat depots were commonplace.

"You may imagine how threadbare our life has become when I tell you that these visits to the depot constitute the principle, almost the only, excitement we have. We

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<sup>19</sup>Forrest, Diary, February 7, 22, 1864; April 22, 1864; October 18, 1864; January 1, 1865.

there inspect and comment upon the arrivals, speculate upon their nationality, admire pretty faces, are diverted by grotesque ones - more occupied in ridiculing than admiring. Stare at Yankees, converse with Southerners, meet a friend once in a while, and always find the hour thus spent a short one."<sup>20</sup>

As winter approached, several of the officers began to consider other means of amusement.<sup>21</sup>

One of the natural inclinations of people when they have an excess of free time or days with nothing to do, is to take a vacation and travel. The officers of the Rappahannock were no different. Europe was rich in history, culture and art of varying degrees of excellence. The many nations, so close by rail and water, beckoned to those young men, whose ancestors had come from that continent. Many realized that such a chance for extensive travel in the Old World might never present itself again during their lifetimes, so they eagerly jumped at the chance for such an experience.

To some, England and Scotland beckoned and they visited the mother of nations; for others, the villages of Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy. Frequently, the great cathedrals of those nations were the motivating force for travel.

Paymaster Forrest gave a truly masterful account of his journey through France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy. The descriptions in his diary of the places, events, and people he saw, are very detailed and offer excellent reading. Lieutenant Shryock and Passed Assistant Surgeon Herty, travelled together to tour Germany, and many

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<sup>20</sup>Forrest, Diary, August 13, 1864.

<sup>21</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, August 8, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 701; Forrest, Diary, September 27, 1864.

other officers availed themselves of the opportunity to enrich their own lives by seeing firsthand other cultures and peoples.<sup>22</sup>

For Captain Fauntleroy, his journey to Italy had a temporary happiness and then a lasting, painful memory. Sometime during his period of service in Europe, Fauntleroy had met and fallen in love with a Miss Sallie Soultter. The young lady and her family went to Rome and Fauntleroy followed them there where she consented to marriage. This took place on January 16, 1865, and they went to Naples and from there to Paris to honeymoon. There the new Mrs. Fauntleroy contracted typhoid fever and died a month later. After the funeral, Fauntleroy returned brokenhearted to a lonely and deserted ship in Calais harbor. Soon afterwards the ship was abandoned and left to Commander Bulloch to dispose of. Fauntleroy's tragedy seems to sum up the total frustrations suffered by Southern officers connected with the Rappahannock during her Confederate service.<sup>23</sup>

The common seamen (mostly English and some Dutch) aboard the Rappahannock did not have as comfortable a life as did their officers. However, those seamen who stayed with the Rappahannock were quite well off if they behaved themselves. Apparently the crew was generally happy and content (it must be remembered that these men chose of their own free will to serve on her and were not forced to stay except in a few cases). The sailors were not as free to come and go as the officers, but they

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<sup>22</sup>Forrest, Diary, September 7, 1864; October 4 - November 17, 1864.

<sup>23</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, December 17, 1864, and Bulloch to Barron, February 10, 15, 1865, in Whittle Papers; Forrest, Diary, February 4, 17, 24, 1865.

were granted regular leave once Fauntleroy became captain. Every month or so they would receive their pay, and like all true sailors, would go on a spree. Occasionally they would disappear for a few days without permission and then return when least expected in an inebriated condition.<sup>24</sup>

Most of the crew's time was spent in keeping the ship in good condition. Due to the vessel's daily grounding, the crew was constantly below decks, caulking the hull and trying to prevent water from seeping through. Occasionally the upper deck would be buried in an inch of sand and water and the process of 'holystoning' the ship was commenced. According to Forrest the ship was kept attractive and clean through constant scrubbing and painting.<sup>25</sup>

The crew was well provided for as far as their physical needs were concerned. Forrest, as paymaster, would often go to the shops in Calais and purchase necessary supplies for the crew:

"Purchased a melange for the crew - oilskin clothes, mittens, comforters, scarfs, socks, stockings, pens, ink, paper, pencils, slate, flute, towels, cotton and flannel shirts, soap, pins, thread, silk, chalk, oranges, apples, and a host of things."<sup>26</sup>

The meals eaten by the crew were not as fine and varied as the officers' mess, but they ate well and were well taken care of. Christmas, 1864, found the crew enjoying a fine meal aboard ship with the wine being sup-

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<sup>24</sup>Forrest, Diary, January 25, 1864; February 11, 1864; March 28, 1864; May 26, 28, 1864; June 12, 1864.

<sup>25</sup>Forrest, Diary, March 10, 15, 1864; April 5, 22, 1864; May 26, 28, 1864.

<sup>26</sup>Forrest, Diary, March 3, 1864.

plied them by the officers. Being mostly Englishmen, the crew ate typical English fare; peas, bread, mutton, salt pork, beans, various kinds of vegetables and water or rum to drink.<sup>27</sup>

The crew amused themselves in many ways. Boxing, dancing, and singing made up many an evening's entertainment. Evidently they were extremely good at the latter two and the officers, upon occasion, would invite young ladies and their families to come aboard and observe the crew's entertainment. Invariably, while on a spree in town, the crew would get involved in a free-for-all with French sailors who also were imbibing on their evening's liberty. Sometimes the crew would have their fun at the officers' expense. "Dr. Herty climbed into the main top and was made to pay his footing by some of the sailors. Newton too, was lashed to a yard and only released upon the same terms."<sup>28</sup> The officers paid for their release as it was all in fun and they had trespassed on the crew's territory.<sup>29</sup>

During the summer, boat races became a source of amusement for the crew.

"We had a short boat race with the Avergne,... six of our crew manning a gig ... pulled against the same number of the Avergne's crew in a boat they have caused to be built for the Regatta which comes off on Sunday. ... It only beat us by a boat's length. The Captain of the Avergne invited our men aboard and treated them to wine, etc."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Adams to Seward, April 28, 1864, enclosure, M-30, Roll 82.

<sup>28</sup>Forrest, Diary, February 28, 1864.

<sup>29</sup>Forrest, Diary, February 28, 1864; June 7, 1864; December 7, 1864.

<sup>30</sup>Forrest, Diary, July 7, 1864

The return match the following Saturday was an even better race.

"We had a very exciting regatta this afternoon between a boat manned by seven of our crew and a much superior one pulled by seven of the Auvergne's men. Notwithstanding the great disparity of the boats and contrary to the confident expectations of the French, who were very much chagrined at the result, we beat them by a boat's length. Our men have invited the Frenchmen to enjoy their hospitality this evening, the wherewithal being in the shape of a purse of one hundred francs we raised on the 'Rap' to be given the winning boat. They are fraternizing now on the forecastle and as our men have asked for and obtained liberty for to-night, I suppose they will have a tremendous spree, perhaps will wind up with a fight - such is the hatred between the French and the English that the spy O'Kelly or Winn who is again here was rushing about on the jittee(sic) crying out with unmistakable genuineness, 'go it Rappahannocks.' 'Give it to Em.' etc."<sup>31</sup>

Although most of the crewmen were of English nationality, they actually developed a sense of loyalty and affection for the Confederate cause and showed this through hostility to anything Federal. On July 11, 1864, the sailors were in Calais on shore leave. Some of them wandered into the 'Place' and saw several United States flags, which were hung on buildings as decorations for a festival being held at that time. One of the men got the bright idea to tear them down and take them back to the ship. Some of the flags were recaptured by the police before they could be taken on board the Rappahannock, but at least one made it and served admirably as a place-mat on the gangway. The crewmen were hostile to Yankee merchant sailors and to Federal navy crewmen as well. One evening, a Federal merchant ship, loaded with lumber from Norway, entered the harbor and tied up not far from the Rappahannock. Several of the crew went down to the merchantman and cursed the Yankee's crew "after

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<sup>31</sup>Forrest, Diary, July 9, 1864.

Jack's fashion," thoroughly frightening them so that the merchant crew feared to come ashore. Such was the life of the crew aboard the Rappahannock. Hard work followed by drunken sprees, fights and a normal sailor's life in port.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Forrest, Diary, July 11, 1864; October 18, 1864.

## CHAPTER V

### END OF CONFEDERATE CAREER AND POSTWAR LEGAL ACTIONS

On August 1, 1864, the captain of the Avergne visited Fauntleroy and informed him of the decision of the committee of lawyers, to allow the Rappahannock to depart at any time from Calais, but only with thirty-five crewmen and officers. Fauntleroy refused to give a definite answer, and pointed out that the ship's manifest at the customs house had one hundred as the number of crewmen on board the Rappahannock when she entered Calais. That afternoon Fauntleroy wrote to Barron informing him that the decision of the lawyers had been officially delivered to him and he requested permission to proceed with paying off the crew. The next day Barron replied:

"You will ... proceed to pay off and discharge your officers and crew, keeping sufficient officers and men to look after the public property, and lay up the ship until we determine upon what course we shall pursue in regard to her."<sup>1</sup>

On August 3, 1864, the order was received and the process of paying off and detaching the crew and officers was started. By August 8th this was completed. The only ones remaining on board were the captain, lieutenants Shryock and Ramsay, Ship's Surgeon Herty and his steward, Paymaster Forrest and his clerk, Chief Engineer William Codd, four firemen, three midshipmen, the boatswain, three master's mates, fifteen deck hands and eight small boys. Most of these would remain on board to help protect the Confederate property.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Barron to Fauntleroy, August 2, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 700.

<sup>2</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, August 1, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 700; Fauntleroy to Barron, August 3, 1864, in Whittle Papers; Fauntleroy to Barron, August 8, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 701.

"Ship very quiet and deserted," Forrest wrote, "The few men we retain do not furnish the decks and everybody misses their mess mates. We have received orders to remain here until the last..."<sup>3</sup> Most of the officers had left for England to be reassigned on other Confederate vessels. Many were ordered home and were in the process of boarding a blockade runner for that purpose when news was received that a yellow fever epidemic had struck Bermuda. This news was received near the end of August, and early in September the detached officers bound for the Confederacy, were reassigned to the Rappahannock. This was the beginning of her service as a floating personnel depot.<sup>4</sup>

For the next two months the vessel was the scene of total inactivity. Her physical condition began to deteriorate as no efforts were made to keep her in readiness for sea.

The ship was not the only thing deteriorating at that time. Confederate and French diplomatic relations were strained almost to the breaking point as a result of the French government's action taken with regards to the Rappahannock as well as several other vessels being built with Confederate money in France. The manner in which all Confederate overtures had been either ignored or coolly received by the French government during the period when Maximilian was being established in Mexico, had continued after he was safely on the Mexican throne. It was quite obvious that the continuous Confederate setbacks on the battlefield, caused Napoleon much concern and he refused to continue the warm relations

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<sup>3</sup>Forrest, Diary, August 12, 1864.

<sup>4</sup>Forrest, Diary, September 1, 1864.

with the Confederacy for fear of backing a loser. Thus the Rappahannock and several other cruisers were lost to the Confederates as France suddenly asserted a new found neutrality.

Confederate Secretary of State Benjamin, and President Jefferson Davis, had kept an eye on the developments in the Rappahannock's detention case and the final decision did not reach them until September 13, 1864, almost two full months after the lawyers had reached their decision. On September 20, 1864, Benjamin, on behalf of President Davis, wrote a long letter to Slidell in Paris, denouncing the two-faced French disposition toward the Confederate cause. He pointed out that the outward verbal expressions of friendship from the French government for the Confederacy, did not coincide with the actual treatment which the Confederate naval and diplomatic endeavors received at the hands of the French government. In this communication, Benjamin listed nine specific instances where French attitudes and actions had been injurious to the Confederate cause. The ninth was the Rappahannock:

"The detention of the Rappahannock is the last and least defensible of the acts of the French Government, and it is in its nature totally irreconcilable with neutral obligation. A Confederate vessel, unarmed, sought and obtained asylum in the port of Calais. She was allowed to complete her repairs and to incur all the cost and expense necessary to enable her to go to sea. She was notified of the desire of the French Government that she should leave the harbor, and while engaged in coaling for that purpose, and still unarmed, the French Government, on the demand of our enemies, ordered her to be detained in port on the unintelligible pretext that she had not obtained her coal in advance. Six months have elapsed, and the Rappahannock is still in a French port. In violation of the right of asylum, we have been deprived of the services of this vessel, while by the use of a system alternating between a studied silence and evasive statements our representations have been eluded and our remonstrances rendered unavailing. After thus delaying

the departure of the vessel until our enemies had had time to perfect arrangements for her capture, a reluctant consent to her departure was finally extorted, but coupled with conditions which would almost insure her falling into the hands of the enemy. The vessel therefore remains in a French port, its use during the war practically confiscated by that Government for the benefit of our adversary under circumstances as inconsistent with neutral obligations as they are injurious to our rights and offensive to our flag.

It is impossible for the President, in view of such action on the part of a foreign Government, to credit its professions of amity, nor can he escape the painful conviction that the Emperor of the French, knowing that the utmost efforts of this people are engrossed in the defense of their homes against an atrocious warfare waged by greatly superior numbers, had thought the occasion opportune for promoting his own purpose, at no greater cost than a violation of his faith and duty toward us."<sup>5</sup>

Slidell was directed to "maintain a reserved demeanor" which would indicate the displeasure of the Confederate government but not cause an outright rupture of diplomatic relations.<sup>6</sup>

The ship continued to rest at her moorings when on October 19, 1864, Fauntleroy was informed that the basin's waters would be drained out and the basin closed for the winter for repairs. This would insure that the Rappahannock would stay at least until January and relieved the Federal cruisers Kearsarge at Dover, Niagara off Ushant, Sacramento at Cherbourg, and Iroquois at Brest, from having to observe the vessel so closely and so often. Coal and provisions were moved ashore with the provisions being put in a storeroom furnished to the Confederates by the Calais Chamber of Commerce. Much of the bread was unfit for use because

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<sup>5</sup> Benjamin to Slidell, September 20, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1214.

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin to Slidell, September 20, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. III, 1212-1215.

leakage, due to the constant grounding every day, had spoiled it. The coal was sold as it was felt it would be ruined by exposure to the weather and that if any was needed it could be obtained cheaply enough.<sup>7</sup>

While the Rappahannock lay in a closed basin for the winter of 1864-1865, Secretary Mallory became increasingly unhappy with the decision of his senior officers in Europe not to use the Rappahannock. He believed she would be more useful to the war effort at sea rather than rotting in Calais basin as a floating personnel depot. French restrictions on the number of men to be allowed, as a reason for non-active use of the vessel, was not acceptable. He stated that "Thirty-five men are amply sufficient for the navigation of the vessel, and once at sea, she could have recruited to any desirable extent."<sup>8</sup> He did acknowledge that the officers were in a better position to make a judgment, but that from information he had at hand, it was felt that their decision had not fully considered that every effort had to be made to injure the enemy as often as possible. The war was going badly for the Confederacy and everyone was expected to do their duty whether failure was likely or not. Mallory left the decision up to Commander Bulloch, who succeeded Commodore Barron when the latter officer was ordered home, as to the final disposition of the Rappahannock. By the time this communication reached Bulloch, the end result of the war was obvious and just a matter of time. Use of a vessel which would almost certainly be captured or destroyed,

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<sup>7</sup>Fauntleroy to Barron, October 19, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 701; Barron to Mallory, August 2, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. II, 696.

<sup>8</sup>Mallory to Bulloch, December 16, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. II, 780.

was viewed as folly and there were other, more powerful vessels that stood a better chance of succeeding (i.e., Stonewall and Shenandoah) against Federal cruisers.<sup>9</sup>

Since the Rappahannock had been laid up early in August, her value had been minimal to the Confederacy. Barron was critical of her worth;

"She is scarcely such a ship as we would be willing to keep during the war in a foreign port at a heavy expense, in order to have her as one of a naval force to be employed during peace; and there is ... doubt as to whether we can sell her at the price she cost us."<sup>10</sup>

However, rather than selling her, it was finally decided that all unattached officers in Europe would be assigned to the Rappahannock until they were reassigned to other vessels. Officers and also enlisted personnel were constantly placed on board of her and then transferred to blockade runners and other cruisers as needed. Former crew members of the Georgia, Sumter, Tallahassee, and Alabama, at one time passed through the Rappahannock. The last and most important vessel to be partially manned by personnel assigned to the Rappahannock was the CSS Stonewall in January of 1865.<sup>11</sup>

Earlier in the winter, the Florida had been in San Salvador, Brazil, to reprovision. While there, the USS Wachusett came into port, but this did not bother the Confederates as they were in a neutral port.

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<sup>9</sup>Mallory to Bulloch, December 16, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. II, 780-81.

<sup>10</sup>Barron to Mallory, August 2, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. II, 696.

<sup>11</sup>Forrest, Diary, August 18, 1864; September 1, 1864; December 9, 1864.

However, they would have been less sanguine had they known the Federal captain's intentions. One night shortly after the arrival of the Wachusett, under the cover of darkness, while most of the Confederates including Captain Charles M. Morris were on shore, a party of marines and sailors from the Wachusett boarded the Florida, killed or captured the night watch and took control of the vessel. The Wachusett left the harbor with the Florida alongside in the hands of a prize crew. An irate Brazilian government soon demanded redress from the Federal government for this flagrant violation of its neutrality. Subsequently, the captain of the Wachusett was courtmartialed, the captured portion of the Florida's crew was released, the Federal government made an apology to the Brazilian government, and the Confederacy was left without the service of one of its most valuable cruisers, as the Florida remained in the custody of the Federal government. The Florida's crew in San Salvador immediately shipped for Great Britain upon their release.<sup>12</sup>

Upon the arrival of the Florida's crew in London, Barron and Bulloch decided to assign them temporarily to the Rappahannock. On December 9th, these men began to arrive in Calais and to report on board the Rappahannock. Once again there was activity aboard the Rappahannock and this drew the Federals' attention. Union warships again made almost daily appearances outside of Calais, and Federal Consul Morse once again hired British detectives to tamper with the crew. This fell into the Confederates' plan perfectly. While the Federals were busy watching the Rappahannock, the real object of Confederate interest and activity was

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<sup>12</sup>Barron to Mallory, December 8, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. II, 777.

preparing for a rendezvous at sea. The iron ram CSS Stonewall, secretly built at Nantes and transferred to the Confederates, was preparing to steam into the Bay of Biscay, where she was to provision, take on arms and receive the balance of her crew. That crew was to be composed of selected officers and seamen temporarily assigned to the Rappahannock in Calais.<sup>13</sup>

At ten thirty on the evening of January 10, 1865, the sleeping crew and officers were roused from their hammocks and bunks and ordered to make final preparations to leave the ship. For the entire day prior to this the officers and crew had been busy buying trunks and work clothes, paying bills, and packing their belongings. The crew knew that departure would be soon but did not know exactly when, so they had 'turned in' as usual. Horse drawn trucks were sent to the quai where the Rappahannock was tied up, and the departing crew and officers' belongings and baggage was loaded on them. From there the men and baggage proceeded to the pier, where the London-Calais packet boat always moored on its daily runs. Most of the baggage and men were hustled on board in an orderly fashion and the steamer proceeded across the English Channel. Later in the evening, the remainder of the baggage and men were loaded on the Dover packet boat and they departed Calais. Both parties proceeded to London where they boarded a hired steamer, the City of Richmond.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Barron to Morris, December 2, 1864, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 642; Morse to Seward, December 15, 1864, T-168, Roll 34; Forrest, Diary, December 7, 1864; January 29, 1865.

<sup>14</sup>Forrest, Diary, January 10, 21, 1865.

The City of Richmond sailed for the Bay of Biscay but was forced into Cherbourg, France, by a terrific winter storm and high seas. Sometime between January 22nd and 29th, the City of Richmond met the Stonewall off Belle Isle and there transferred officers, crew, cannon, and ammunition aboard the newest Confederate cruiser. The Stonewall then put to sea shortly afterward but only to face another winter storm with mountainous seas. Being an iron hulled vessel and terribly heavy, she was unfit for such weather, rolling dangerously and nearly submerged by every wave which struck her. It was miraculous that she managed to find safety in the harbor of Corruna and Ferrol, Spain, without having foundered and losing all hands. Although the Stonewall never played a major role during the closing stages of the war, she did present a real threat and was closely watched by several Federal cruisers.<sup>15</sup>

With the completion of the transfer of men aboard the Rappahannock to the Stonewall, the final service of the Rappahannock to the Confederate war effort was finished. For the remainder of the war, a scant three months, the Rappahannock was totally useless to the Confederacy. Even the Federals realized that she would present no threat and the spies and cruisers were called away to other service. The end of her inglorious career as a vessel of war of the Confederate States Navy, was drawing near.

As the war dragged on through the winter of 1864-1865, Richmond had an ever tightening Federal noose around its neck, and conditions were looking grim for the Confederacy. Several of the senior officers

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<sup>15</sup>Forrest, Diary, January 29, 1865; February 11, 1865.

in positions overseas who had faithfully served their country for several years, were anxious to return home to their families and requested that they be relieved of command. Accordingly, Secretary Mallory decided to relieve Commodore Barron of his duties as chief of Confederate naval operations in Europe, and ordered him home in mid-December. Barron was directed to turn over control of all naval affairs, including the Rappahannock, to Commander Bulloch in Liverpool. Because of the slow mails, due to the Federal stranglehold on Southern ports, neither officer received his orders until early February, 1865.<sup>16</sup>

Bulloch requested a meeting with Barron, before the latter returned home, to discuss the fate of the Rappahannock. Obviously she would not be able to leave Calais during the remainder of the war. Also, she would probably not bring a reasonable sale price to balance the great expenditures already put into her. It was decided to select a commission of officers to examine the vessel and recommend what should be done with her.<sup>17</sup>

On Tuesday, March 7, 1865, Paymaster Forrest wrote in his diary, "Lieuts. Murdaugh, Hamilton and Porter with Acting Chief Engineer Thompson visit the ship - a commission of officers appointed to survey and report upon the Rappahannock with a view to her condemnation."<sup>18</sup> The examination continued the next day; "The survey is going on. The

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<sup>16</sup>Mallory to Bulloch, December 16, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. II, 779-81; Bulloch to Barron, February 10, 15, 1865, in Whittle Papers; Barron to Bulloch, February 28, 1865, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. II, 806.

<sup>17</sup>Bulloch to Barron, February 10, 1865, in Whittle Papers.

<sup>18</sup>Forrest, Diary, March 7, 1865.

ship's timbers are found to be quite sound and her engine is pronounced a capital one."<sup>19</sup> The commission of officers finished their inspection and made their report to Bulloch on the 9th. The ship was basically sound but there was some damage due to leakage and constant grounding. About March 17th, it was decided that she should be decommissioned and either sold or dismantled and abandoned.<sup>20</sup>

The end for the Rappahannock came at the close of March, 1865. Forrest relates the sad details.

"... Our poor ship's life is ended. Her crew were discharged on the 27th and her officers detached. She was put out of commission on the 29th and I am writing this in a cold, deserted cabin. ... The Captain proposes leaving today, and everybody seems anxious to get away from the melancholy wreck."<sup>21</sup>

Fauntleroy, Forrest and the remainder of the officers departed Calais, April 1, 1865, and the deserted vessel, in charge of a master's mate, was left for Bulloch to dispose of.<sup>22</sup>

In late April, the European papers announced the fall of Richmond followed by the April 9th surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia and its general, Robert E. Lee. With this the Confederacy was clearly dying, but there still was a large amount of Confederate property in Europe whose ownership was in doubt. Many individuals sold property under their control and kept the money for themselves. Others converted property to money either to return home or to get to the Con-

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<sup>19</sup>Forrest, Diary, March 8, 1865.

<sup>20</sup>Forrest, Diary, March 19, 1865.

<sup>21</sup>Forrest, Diary, March 29, 1865.

<sup>22</sup>Forrest, Diary, April 1, 1865.

federate forces in the trans-Mississippi region where the last diehards were willing to carry on the war. That hope ended in late May with the surrender of the Army of the Trans-Mississippi Department, although some groups would not surrender until June, and the Shenandoah would not return to England and be laid up until late-Autumn.<sup>23</sup>

Bulloch began to search for a buyer to unload the Rappahannock on for a good price. By June he was getting desperate. Federal dispatches claimed that a German Jew, who had been buying munitions for the Confederacy, had purchased the vessel. However, this information proved to be erroneous. Thomas H. Dudley, Federal Consul in Liverpool, reported Bulloch's continued presence in Liverpool. Dudley received information that certain parties in Liverpool had offered Bulloch four thousand pounds sterling for the Rappahannock but that he demanded eight thousand. Those unnamed individuals refused to pay so large a sum for fear that the vessel would be claimed by the Federal government in the same manner as the Georgia had been in August, 1864. Their fears were well founded because Rear Admiral Louis M. Goldsborough, USN, Commanding U.S. European Squadron, had given orders to vessels under his command to seize any former Confederate vessels, especially the Rappahannock, Shenandoah, and Tallahassee.<sup>24</sup>

Sometime in mid or late June, Bulloch got Henry Lafone, a

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<sup>23</sup>Robert Selph Henry, The Story of the Confederacy(Garden City, New York, 1931), 492-93.

<sup>24</sup>Morse to Seward, June 16, 1865, T-168, Roll 35; Dudley to Seward, May 19, 1865, United States State Department, Despatches From United States Consuls in Liverpool, Microcopy M-141, Roll number T-31, hereinafter cited as M-141, followed by roll number; Goldsborough to Lt. Commander Upshur, June 18, 1865, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 551.

Liverpool ship merchant who had been actively engaged in supplying war materials and ships to the Confederacy during the war, to assume charge of the vessel under a nominal sale. Due to the Confederate defeat, Bulloch could not give legal title to the vessel, and he never received payment from Lafone for the vessel. A crew was hired and sent to Calais to bring the vessel to Liverpool. On July 2, 1865, the Rappahannock, now renamed the Beatrice, left Calais harbor. The Beatrice proceeded to Southampton where she arrived on the 3rd to take on coal. The Federal consul in Southampton wrote to Minister Adams that the Rappahannock was coaling in that port and that she would proceed to Liverpool. This information was relayed by mail to Captain Henry Walke, commanding USS Sacramento, stationed at Kingstown, Ireland. The Beatrice sailed from Southampton on July 5th. Walke received the letter from the Federal legation in London on the 6th, but could not act on the information until the next day because sufficient wood to start his fires could not be immediately obtained. He hoped, however, to reach the coast of Wales before that vessel slipped into Liverpool.<sup>25</sup>

On July 7, 1865, the Sacramento sailed to a point off Wales, called Holyhead, with the intention of intercepting the Beatrice in international waters and making a prize of her. These hopes were soon dashed.

"As we approached Holyhead a bark-rigged steamer was reported to me in sight, steaming and sailing up the coast close to the shore, with English colors flying. I immediately steered for and overtook her about half past 2 o'clock. She was steaming with but one engine and making slow progress, but she kept so close to the coast that I could not

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<sup>25</sup>Walke to Welles, July 10, 1865, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 563-64; Dudley to Seward, July 5, 1865; enclosure number 1 in Dudley to Seward, July 14, 1865, M-141, Roll T-32.

molest her without violating the international laws of protection to all vessels within 3 miles of the coast of any nation now at peace with the United States. After due consultation and a thorough observation of her movements, I was convinced that I could not possibly make a legal prize of the vessel (which from all appearances was the aforesaid Rappahannock) in British waters. She was in a crippled condition, steering for Liverpool, when I left her."<sup>26</sup>

The Beatrice arrived safely in Liverpool late in the evening of July 7, 1865.<sup>27</sup>

Consul Dudley learned the next day of the Sacramento's failure and of the Beatrice's arrival in Liverpool. On July 15th, Dudley was directed by Adams to talk to his lawyers and see if, in their opinion, the United States government had a reasonable chance of successfully claiming the Rappahannock and Tallahassee in British Admiralty Courts. Dudley had already done this on his own initiative, and accordingly asked his counsel to swear out warrants in Admiralty Court for the arrest of the Beatrice and for the pretended owners to make an appearance.<sup>28</sup>

Dr. Travers Twiss and Mr. Robert Lush, counsel for Dudley, both agreed that the Rappahannock was the property of the United States government. Twiss reasoned that when the Confederacy came into existence, it usurped the powers of the Federal government and that it carried on the functions of that government during the war. The war was fought to prove whether a group of states or a region of the country could break away or secede from the rest. When Southern arms were defeated, it was

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<sup>26</sup>Walke to Welles, July 10, 1865, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 563-64.

<sup>27</sup>Dudley to Seward, July 8, 1865, M-141, Roll T-32.

<sup>28</sup>Dudley to Seward, July 8, 14-15; and enclosure number 2, M-141, Roll T-32; Adams to Walke, July 11, 1865; enclosure in Walke to Welles, July 17, 1865, ORN, Ser. I, Vol. III, 565.

proved that no region or state could break away. Thus, in effect the South had never left the Union by virtue of its defeat. Twiss further reasoned that any property obtained by the usurping government, by virtue of that government's demise, would be the property of the Federal government.<sup>29</sup>

On July 19, 1865, the Beatrice was impounded and Henry Lafone was required to appear before the Admiralty Court to answer to a suit of possession brought against him by the United States government. On August 18, 1865, the case was brought before the High Court of Chancery. It was decided that as the long summer vacation was in progress, during which time the defendant could not be forced to file an answer to the Federal petition, the Federals should prepare statements of the facts and a description of the evidence to be used to prove these facts. Copies of all documents material to the case were to be obtained by the time the court resumed. Names of witnesses and their addresses were also to be obtained and given to the court so they could be subpoenaed to appear when the case came up. Actual evidence was not taken at this first day of the preliminary examination and the case was set for a later date. The cases of the Rappahannock, Tallahassee and Sumter, all were commenced at approximately the same time. As test cases they would indicate how far the British government would go in making reparations for damages done to Federal merchant shipping by vessels constructed and/or bought or sold in Great Britain by the insurgent government.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Dudley to Seward, enclosure number 2, July 14, 1865, M-141, Roll T-32.

<sup>30</sup>Dudley to Seward, enclosure number 1, August 18, 1865, M-141, Roll T-32.

In late November, while waiting for the case against Lafone to come before the High Court of Admiralty, Dudley and his lawyers were shocked to discover that Zachary Pearson had tried to get a quick decision in Admiralty Court against the Beatrice for money owed to him for certain cordage supplied the vessel while it was at Sheerness in 1863. If Dudley's lawyers had not discovered this petition by Pearson in time to protest, the Beatrice would have been lost to them. Fortunately, Pearson's quiet proceedings to supercede the Federal suit to recover the vessel, were discovered and an answer was filed. This meant that the United States would be the defendant in the case brought by Pearson. On December 7, 1865, Pearson gave a sworn affidavit which stated that he had sold cordage to the master of the French vessel Scylla, for the purpose of rigging the ship while it was still at Sheerness. He claimed that the money, amounting to about two hundred pounds, had never been paid to him by the owners of the Scylla, and that the Admiralty Court should condemn the vessel so he could get his money.<sup>31</sup>

On January 18, 1866, Dudley had his lawyers, Rothery & Company, submit the following official petition in Admiralty Court against Henry Lafone, the pretended owner of the vessel:

"Rothery & Co. Proctors for the Plaintiffs, in a cause of possession instituted on behalf of 'The United States of America' ... against Henry Lafone, ... say as follows,

First. In the year 1861 divers persons, being citizens of the United States of America, the Plaintiffs in this cause, rose in insurrection against and usurped the authority of the Plaintiffs' government, and constituted themselves within certain of the States of the Plaintiffs, a pretended government under the style of the Government of

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<sup>31</sup>Dudley to Seward, November 22, 1865, M-141, Roll T-32; December 19, 1865 and enclosure number 1, M-141, Roll T-33.

the Confederate States of America, and assumed the administration of public affairs therein.

Second. The said pretended government, whilst exercising such usurped authority and in exercise thereof, possessed themselves of divers moneys, goods, and treasure, being part of the public revenues and property of the Plaintiffs, and otherwise raised divers moneys for public purposes.

Third. The said pretended government, . . . , applied certain of the said moneys, goods, and treasure in the purchase or acquisition by them of the above named vessel now called the Beatrice.

Fourth. The said pretended government, . . . , in fact purchased or acquired and became possessed of the said vessel.

Fifth. The said vessel was purchased or acquired by the said pretended government for the purpose of being armed, and set forth by them to cruise on the high seas under the insurgent flag of the said pretended government.

Sixth. The said vessel sailed from Sheerness on the 24th day of November, 1863, under the name of the Scylla, for the port of Calais, in the empire of France, off which port she arrived on the following day, and having hoisted the said insurgent flag when off the said port, she entered the same port thereunder and under the name of the Rappahannock.

Seventh. The said vessel, after so entering the said port of Calais, was, by or under order of the government of the said empire of France, prevented from being armed and set forth from the said port, and remained there until on or about the 3rd day of July, 1865, when she sailed for the port of Liverpool.

Eighth. Whilst the said vessel so remained in the said port of Calais she was under the command of a pretended commissioned officer of the said pretended government, and was used as, and was in fact a vessel in the pretended public service of the said government.

Ninth. Whilst the said vessel so remained in the said port of Calais the said insurrection was suppressed and put an end to by the Plaintiffs, and the said pretended government ceased to exist.

Tenth. On the 7th day of July, 1865, the said vessel arrived in the port of Liverpool under the name of the Beatrice.

Eleventh. The said pretended government purchased or acquired and became possessed of the said vessel for and on behalf of the Plaintiffs.

Twelfth. At the time of the suppression of the said insurrection the said pretended government still possessed and held the said vessel for and on behalf of the Plaintiffs.

Thirteenth. By reason of the premises the Plaintiffs are the sole owners of the said vessel, and are entitled to

the possession thereof.

And the said Rothery & Co., pray the Right Honorable the Judge to pronounce the Plaintiffs to be the sole owners of the said vessel Beatrice, otherwise Rappahannock, and to decree possession thereof to the Plaintiffs, and to condemn the Defendant in the costs of these proceedings, and that otherwise right and justice may be administered in the premises."<sup>32</sup>

After filing the petition, Dudley and his counsel waited until May 28, 1866, for the defendant, Henry Lafone, to file his official answer to their petition so the case could go before the Admiralty Court.<sup>33</sup>

Dudley and his chief attorney, E. G. Clarkson, were both vexed with the course followed by the defendant in not filing his answer. Clarkson advised Dudley that the case should be brought before the court without any evidence being presented in their behalf as the defendant had failed to answer. Clarkson saw Lafone's failure as an admission of the validity of the Federal position. The only obstacle that Clarkson saw was that the court costs had to be paid. He advised Dudley to waive costs in the case. In other words, the United States would not demand that Lafone pay the costs but would assume that amount itself. Clarkson pointed out that it was not usual for a sovereign prince or government to ask for costs in the Court of Chancery on the ground that doing so would be beneath their dignity. Dudley agreed to waive costs in the case and had a conclusion filed and requested a hearing as soon as possible to settle the matter.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Dudley to Seward, February 2, 1866, M-141, Roll T-33.

<sup>33</sup>Dudley to Seward, February 2, 1866; and enclosure number 1, M-141, Roll T-33.

<sup>34</sup>Dudley to Seward, June 8, 1866; and enclosure number 1, M-141, Roll T-34.

On June 26, 1866, while waiting for the final hearing to be set, Rothery & Co. were surprised to learn that Robert Coleman, of Gordon, Coleman & Company, had directed his attorneys, Pritchard & Co., to make an appearance on his behalf, naming him as the sole and registered owner of the Beatrice. Clarkson, representing Rothery & Co., and Dudley, opposed this appearance being allowed by the Court. However, the Court approved the application of Pritchard & Co., but condemned Coleman in all costs occasioned by the delay in appearing. Dudley was promptly informed of this new development in the case and realized that he had a real fight on his hands.<sup>35</sup>

Shortly after the Federals learned of Coleman's intentions, a representative of Coleman appeared before Consul Morse in London.

"A man had just called on me from Coleman's to see if you are willing to compromise with Coleman to withdraw his claim on the Rappahannock. He thinks or says 4 or £5,000 would induce them to give up all claim. I know nothing of the ground they have set up but if they have such a claim as to render the case doubtful & you can secure their absolute surrender for 2 or £3,000 it may be worth considering."<sup>36</sup>

Dudley replied to Morse that similar proposals had already been made to him and had been rejected. Dudley felt that any compromise with the very person he was taking to court, would put his government in an unfavorable light.

Coleman delayed his answer to the Federal petition (originally filed against Lafone) until August 2, 1866, at which time he appeared

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<sup>35</sup>Dudley to Seward, June 27, 1866, M-141, Roll T-34.

<sup>36</sup>Dudley to Seward, January 22, 1867, enclosure number 1, M-141, Roll T-35.

and made his claim. In his claim Coleman described his purchase of the vessel in 1863, and the subsequent expenditures upon her to make her seaworthy. Coleman states that he contracted with Viscounte Henry St. Roman of Paris to purchase the vessel, who in turn was supposed to sell the vessel to the Confederate government. The price agreed upon was twenty-thousand pounds, with five thousand for downpayment, and the remainder being paid when the vessel was ready for sea. Coleman further declared that in November, 1863, the vessel was ordered on a trial trip. With an agent [Pearson] of Coleman's in control, the vessel went to sea, crossed the English Channel and anchored outside Calais for the night. The agent returned to London that night leaving strict instructions for the vessel to return to Sheerness the following morning. Coleman then claimed that the vessel had been boarded and taken over by officers of the Confederate navy and taken into Calais against his will and prior to the final payments for the vessel being made. He claimed that the sum of \$4,322.18.4, was owed him and that the court should decree possession to him until he received this sum from the United States government. After this claim was made, there was little to be done until the case finally came before the court.<sup>37</sup>

Early in September, two ship merchants approached Consul Morse in London and asked if the Federals would receive an offer for the Beatrice. They stated that they would take care of Coleman's claim and any other claim that might be brought against the ship. They claimed that their intentions were in earnest and that the ship would be bought

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<sup>37</sup>Dudley to Seward, August 7, 1866, M-141, Roll T-34.

by Englishmen to go under the English flag. Morse promptly wrote Dudley and informed him of the offer. Dudley replied that the case was not yet decided and that until it was, no deals could be made. The two merchants approached Morse again two days later saying that they had provided for the withdrawal of all claims against the vessel and that they would give a bond against all claimants. Morse again wrote Dudley, inquiring whether or not he would be willing to sell the ship if Adams and Montgomery Gibbs, Federal Revenue Agent in England, would endorse his actions with regards to the vessel.<sup>38</sup>

Dudley refused these proposals for several reasons. First, Dudley saw that one of the objects in prosecuting the actions against former Confederate vessels, was to establish the right of the United States government to the vessels as property. The money received from the sale of the vessels, once possession was obtained, was not the only aspect important to the government. The principle or right of possession was what the Federal government was after, not just the money. With regards to the Rappahannock case, Dudley claimed that the vessel either did or did not belong to the Federal government. If it did, then they were bound to obtain possession of her through the courts.<sup>39</sup> The Federal government would not make deals either by selling her to private parties or paying off Coleman or other "of these rascals, who had been engaged in fitting her out to make war upon the United States."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Dudley to Seward, January 22, 1867, enclosures 2-4, M-141, Roll T-35.

<sup>39</sup>Dudley to Seward, January 22, 1867, and enclosures 3, 5, M-141, Roll T-35.

<sup>40</sup>Dudley to Seward, January 22, 1867, M-141, Roll T-35.

In November, Judge Lushington declared that the United States would be required to give security, in the amount of three hundred pounds, before anything further was done by the court in the matter of the Beatrice. This was complied with immediately by Dudley. Prior to this the counsel for Dudley had submitted to the court, that the answers filed by both Coleman and Pearson were defective. Coleman, in stating that he had been partially paid for the vessel prior to her being acquired by the Confederates in Calais, had neglected to state the exact amounts and times of the payments. Coleman's counsel was directed by Judge Lushington to amend his answer to show the exact times and amounts of payment. Lushington, although agreeing to the demand for Coleman's answer to be amended, continued to put every obstacle he could in Dudley's path. The security payment of three hundred pounds, although not an exorbitant amount, was an example of this.<sup>41</sup>

In the case of Pearson's suit against the United States for payment of certain cordage sold to the owners of the vessel, the Federals protested two things. First, Pearson had been allowed by the court to drop the word "necessaries" from his original petition against the United States. This had been done so that Pearson's claim would fall under the 4th Section of the Admiralty Court Act of 1861, and thereby be under the jurisdiction of the Admiralty Court. The Federal counsel protested that supplying cordage was not equipping as claimed under Section 4, but was a supplement to the equipment of the vessel, and fell under the 5th Section of the Admiralty Court Act of 1861. Secondly, Pearson was allowed to

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<sup>41</sup>London Times, November 21, 1866; Dudley to Seward, December 13, 1866, M-141, Roll T-34.

change his statement to whit that the owners of the vessel, while it had been at Sheerness, were certain American citizens and not French as originally stated. Dudley's lawyers saw that it was necessary to Pearson's suit for the vessel to have been in the hands of a foreign power in order for the Admiralty Court to have jurisdiction. The Federal lawyers' defense was that at the time of Pearson's supplying of the cordage, the vessel was registered under British ownership. In order for Pearson to bring his case before the court, Dudley's lawyers demanded that Pearson amend his second statement to name who the American citizens were who owned the vessel. The court agreed with this and ordered Pearson's lawyers to amend their client's petition. Federal counsel also demanded, that due to the contradictory nature of Pearson's original petition and his amended statement, that an order regarding costs against him should be made. The court refused this motion, and the United States remained saddled with the costs.<sup>42</sup>

On December 18, 1866, Dudley's counsel appeared before the court to move that Coleman's amendment, as ordered by the court, was not in compliance with those orders. Instead of stating the exact times and amounts of payments he received, Coleman had amended his statement by setting himself up as the sole owner of the vessel. The court ruled that the amendment was not in compliance with the court's former orders, and Coleman was again ordered to amend his statement with the exact times and amounts of payments he received.<sup>43</sup> Thus the Federal motion was

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<sup>42</sup>Dudley to Seward, December 13, 1866, enclosure number 2, M-141, Roll T-34.

<sup>43</sup>Dudley to Seward, December 21, 1866, M-141, Roll T-34.

granted but once again without costs against the defendant, Coleman. However, the final verdict of the court could not be further delayed after this ruling.

Coleman, after delaying his new amendment for a few weeks, finally submitted information which showed that some of the payments had been made after the vessel went into Confederate hands while it was at Calais. This information showed that there had been no fraud when the Confederates obtained possession and actually confirmed their possession. Thus the United States was justified in claiming the vessel as former Confederate property. Coleman had destroyed his own cause, but only after making the Federals expend much time and money. He promptly defaulted. On January 17, 1867, Dudley directed his counsel to move that Coleman's answer to the Federal petition be struck from the Court's records. This was done and Federal counsel demanded judgment and the final hearing was set for January 22, 1867.<sup>44</sup>

Pearson, like his brother-in-law, delayed in filing a new amendment to his petition. Finally Pearson defaulted on his suit. The reason for this was, that if he had named the particular American citizens who were the owners of the vessel when he supplied it with cordage, then the Confederate government would have to be acknowledged as the owners. This acknowledgement would have destroyed his brother-in-law's case, as Coleman claimed he was the sole owner. The final hearing for this case was also set for January 22, 1867.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Dudley to Seward, January 22, 1867, M-141, Roll T-35.

<sup>45</sup>Dudley to Seward, January 22, 1867, M-141, Roll T-35.

Dudley with his Counsel, Dr. Twiss, Mr. Clarkson and Mr. Brett, appeared before Judge Lushington on the 22nd. Dr. Twiss applied in Coleman's case that possession of the Beatrice be granted to the United States of America, with costs against Coleman for defaulting on the case. He was also instructed by Dudley to make a statement refuting rumors in the press that the case had been "compromised." Lushington granted possession to the United States government. Pearson's case was dismissed as well with the costs being against him for defaulting. After eighteen months of legal actions in British courts, the Beatrice, alias the Rappahannock, was the undisputed possession of the United States government. Dudley's refusal to compromise and his persistence had paid off.<sup>46</sup>

The writ of possession was turned over to Dudley on January 23, 1867, and he took formal possession of her at one o'clock that afternoon. Watchmen were immediately put on board to keep the vessel in safe custody until it was decided what was to be done with her. Dudley cabled to Seward that he had possession and asked if he should sell the vessel. Dudley felt that the vessel's condition would be too dangerous to attempt an Atlantic crossing at that time of the year. After lying untended in a Liverpool dockyard for eighteen months, the Beatrice was in serious disrepair, and Dudley realized she had deteriorated in value as a result. It was for this reason he believed that the government should sell her for the best price they could get at a public auction in Liverpool.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Dudley to Seward, January 22, 1867, M-141, Roll T-35.

<sup>47</sup>Dudley to Seward, January 22, 1867, M-141, Roll T-35.

Seward agreed with Dudley's assessment of the ship's condition. He promptly telegraphed Minister Adams to order Dudley to sell the ship after she was first appraised and valued by a ship broker. Dudley obtained the services of a shipbroker and a shipbuilder to evaluate the Beatrice. Each of them made his evaluation independent of and without the knowledge of the other. Charles Kellock, the shipbroker, valued the vessel at between £3,500 to £4,000. Charles Grayson, the shipbuilder, valued her at £4,500. Both of these figures were below what Dudley believed the Beatrice's value was. He then decided to sell the vessel at a public auction.<sup>48</sup>

On Thursday, February 21, 1867, Dudley had the vessel auctioned off. The auction was held at the Broker's Sale Room at the Wellmer Building, Water Street, Liverpool. C. W. Kellock & Co., acted as the auctioneers and the breaking up price of £5,200 was paid by an unnamed purchaser. With this, the history and career of the Rappahannock comes to an end.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Dudley to Seward, February 14, 1867; and enclosures 1-2, M-141, Roll T-35.

<sup>49</sup>Dudley to Seward, February 28, 1867; and enclosure - a handbill/poster announcing the auction, M-141, Roll T-35.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

Although never achieving the notoriety of the Alabama or Florida, the CSS Rappahannock caused as great a public uproar in her day as any of her predecessors. The multi-faceted history of this unfortunate ship offers something for everybody. She had aspects of mystery, suspense, intrigue, drama and comedy. Topically she had political, legal, military and social aspects. Although of little military value, she is important as a subject of study in diplomatic history and is representative of the changing diplomatic feelings in Europe concerning the American Civil War.

When the Rappahannock was sold by the United States government at public auction in February, 1867, the vessel was almost eleven years old. During that eleven years, the ship had been on active British service only one year and had been passively in service for a year and a half in Confederate hands. The other eight and a half years had been spent idly afloat, serving no purpose and steadily deteriorating in condition and value.

Although handsomely designed, the vessel had defects in her construction. Her experimental inner construction combined with her defects had caused many problems to her British and Confederate owners and made her nearly worthless as a small vessel of war.

The events that comprise the history of the Rappahannock are all directly related to the diplomatic changes in Europe concerning the Civil War. Her very purchase by the Confederacy was necessitated

by the success of Federal diplomatic pressure on the British government to stop all Confederate shipbuilding within Great Britain. Because no newly constructed vessels could be obtained, ships already constructed, which may or may not have been actively in service, were the only ones the Confederacy could purchase to convert to commerce raiders. Thus the Victor became Confederate property, but even then she was purchased through a third party for fear that the vessel would be forcibly detained by the Admiralty if her Confederate connections were openly acknowledged.

Eventually her true character was suspected by the British government and she was forced to flee before completing repairs, to escape detention. At least four British subjects were brought to trial for aiding this vessel to escape and repair. One of these, a naval officer acquitted by a civil court of charges in the matter, was punished by the Admiralty as a gesture of conciliation and cooperation to the Federal government. The Rappahannock affair and related court cases were some of the first outward signs of an official coolness by the British government with regard to the Confederacy that developed in late 1863 and which continued to the end of the war.

The diplomatic controversy with France surrounding the Rappahannock started when she entered the French port of Calais. Internationally, France was involved in the conquest of Mexico, and Napoleon III was planning to set a puppet dictator on the Mexican throne. The French ruler was worried about British and Federal reaction to his policies and intentions for Mexico and diplomatic difficulties needed to be avoided if his plans were to succeed. This meant that pro-Southern

sentiments in France and within the French government had to be reduced and deference had to be shown to the established Federal government rather than to the Confederate government. Into that atmosphere of French international intrigue came the Rappahannock, conveniently claiming "stress of weather" and fully expecting to repair in every aspect with the exception of her armament.

At first she was cordially received by the French government which offered the naval facilities at Calais to make her repairs. However, for reasons unknown, the captain of the vessel was slow in getting the vessel ready for sea, and in so doing, gave the Federals and the French Foreign Minister the time necessary for them to make a good case for detainment. By various pretexts the vessel was held in Calais until she was finally granted her freedom, but only under conditions that would practically insure her falling into Federal hands. Thus finding the vessel a prisoner of French diplomacy, the Confederates were stuck with an expensive and useless warship, which afterwards had as its sole purpose the functions of a personnel depot. The affair of the Rappahannock in France is the first major indication of the changing attitude within France towards the Confederacy and combined with the detention of the Armen Rams, makes the best representation of French diplomatic reaction to the failing Confederate war effort.

An indirect result of the French policy regarding the Rappahannock was the loss of the CSS Alabama. When the Alabama reached Cherbourg after her successful two year cruise, she was sadly in need of repairs. However, the Confederates were hesitant about putting her in a French dry dock without having first gained an absolutely unbreakable

promise that she would be released upon completion of repairs. The French also were unsure of the legality of taking the vessel into dry-dock for repairs as she was a vessel of a belligerent nation. Both sides were sensitive about this because of the Rappahannock's case. Had there been no question of belligerent and neutral rights growing out of the Rappahannock's case, the Alabama probably would have been quickly admitted to the dock for repairs and would thus have been able honorably to avoid the engagement with the Kearsarge. As it was, the hesitation by both sides kept her out of the dock until too late to avoid a fight. She was clearly unfit to face the Kearsarge, and it can reasonably be stated that she had no chance of winning a naval engagement as long as she did not first receive adequate and necessary repairs as well as powder and shot. The presence of the Kearsarge off the coast of France was also the result of the Rappahannock being in Calais, around which port the Federal warship kept a constant vigil. Thus, for two reasons the loss of the Alabama can be indirectly attributed to the Rappahannock. The Alabama's loss, the use of Federal warships to constantly observe her, and her use as a floating personnel depot, were the only military contributions and effects of the Rappahannock during the Civil War.

Even with the end of the war, the controversy over the Rappahannock continued. The Confederates in Europe had managed to find a potential English buyer two months after the war and had given responsibility for the vessel to him. After the vessel was brought to Liverpool, this merchant suddenly found himself the object of a lawsuit by the United States government which claimed legal ownership. This became an important test case by the United States to see how willing the British

government was to make reparations for damages done to Federal shipping by commerce raiders built and/or bought in Great Britain. The extreme length of eighteen months for a simple case of possession is representative of the manner in which Great Britain procrastinated in making any sort of reparations. Public sentiment within Great Britain was against any such payments and the British courts were slow in trying cases concerning possession of former Confederate property. In most of the cases regarding former Confederate cruisers, the United States did gain possession, but only grudgingly on the part of British courts, and only after suffering much legal abuse and delay from the judges and lawyers. The case of the Beatrice, alias Rappahannock, is quite representative of cases involving former Confederate property and shows the difficulties faced by the United States in gaining possession of Confederate property within Great Britain. It was this British procrastination which eventually led to the matter of reparations being settled in 1871 by an international committee of arbitration established for that purpose and commonly known as the Alabama Claims Commission.

Looking at the entire history of the Rappahannock, she seemed to had been an unlucky burden to any person or nation connected with her. The many circumstances surrounding her misfortunes combine to make her history a comedy of errors. A superstitious sailor would say the vessel was a jinx from the very beginning. The following list could be considered proof of the sailor's superstition: Sailing on Friday the 13th on her maiden transatlantic cruise; faulty construction; sold out of service; bought for the "Lost Cause"; forced to flee detention, rupturing her boiler tubes in the process; repaired in time to be detained; colli-

sion with the Nil; final detention; abandonment; eighteen months of expensive court costs; and eight and a half years of idleness. All combined, this set of circumstances sum up one very unlucky and unfortunate ship. Two men whose lives were caught up in the diplomatic web surrounding the Rappahannock perhaps best sum up this vessel in statements they made while still deeply involved with her. John Slidell, in writing a letter to Confederate Secretary of State Benjamin, expressed his bitterness and disappointment over the way matters had developed regarding the Rappahannock and concluded his letter by stating: "... I am sorry to say that the affair of the Rappahannock has been a series of blunders from the very commencement."<sup>1</sup> The second of the Rappahannock's captains, Charles M. Fauntleroy, summed up his feelings on the vessel near the end of his service as her commander when he derisively termed the Rappahannock "The Confederate White-Elephant."<sup>2</sup> This description is perhaps the best because Webster's Dictionary defines "white-elephant" as "something from which little profit or use is derived; especially, such a possession acquired and maintained at much expense."<sup>3</sup> A truer description of the Rappahannock and her career could not be found or expressed.

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<sup>1</sup>Slidell to Benjamin, March 16, 1864, ORN, Ser. II, Vol. II, 1065.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas J. Scharf, History of the Confederate States Navy (New York, 1887), 802.

<sup>3</sup>Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, College Edition (New York, 1968), 1667.

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