



Confederate Steamers. Fire-raft. Chaparral. Fort Jackson. "Mississippi." Fort St. Philip. "Westfield." "Harriet Lane." "Kineo." "Iroquois." "Oneida." "Hartford." "Cayuga." "Pensacola." Mortar Flotilla.

FIRST DAY'S (APRIL 24, 1862) BOMBARDMENT OF FORTS JACKSON AND ST. PHILIP.—FIRST DIVISION OF THE FEDERAL SQUADRON PREPARING FOR ACTION.—SKETCHED BY WM. WAUD.

New Orleans was defended by two very strong forts, Jackson and St. Philip, near the mouth of the Mississippi River. A great fleet, under Admiral Farragut, assembled in April, 1862, to attack them. It consisted of the frigates, etc., named under the accompanying illustration, together with other smaller ones, and transports carrying the troops of General B. F. Butler, who subsequently garrisoned the city and its neighborhood. The fleet also included a novel feature in 21 schooners, each bearing on its deck a mortar of 13 inches calibre, throwing a shell weighing 285 pounds. These were commanded by their inventor, Commander David D. Porter. Many days were spent in getting the big ships over the bar, and in placing the mortar-schooners accurately in position hidden behind a wooded point below Fort Jackson, but on April 18 the fleet mortars opened fire, and for six days and nights dropped the great shells almost unceasingly upon the fort until it was half destroyed (though few guns were dismounted) and its defenders were worn out and demoralized. Fort St. Philip, however, was little bombarded or harried. In addition to these forts the rebels had a formidable floating battery, the "Louisiana," tied to the bank, a powerful ram, the "Manassas," several gunboats and troop-ships in the river at and above the forts, and many fire-rafts ready to be sent down against invaders; while a great chain was stretched across the river supported upon hulks. Upon the night of the sixth day of the bombardment it was decided to attempt to run by the forts with the Union men-of-war. A daring advance-guard went up and cut the chain under fire, and at 3 a. m., on April 24, the ships advanced, the "Cayuga" leading.