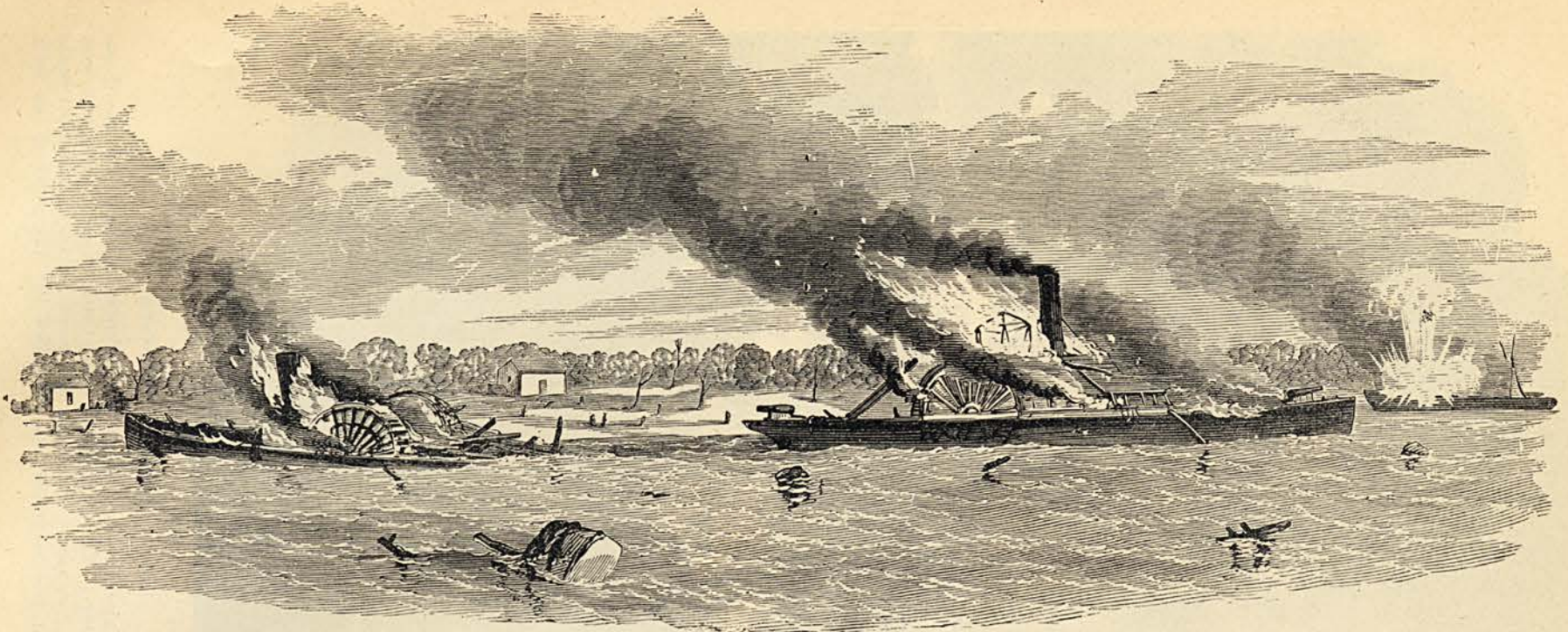
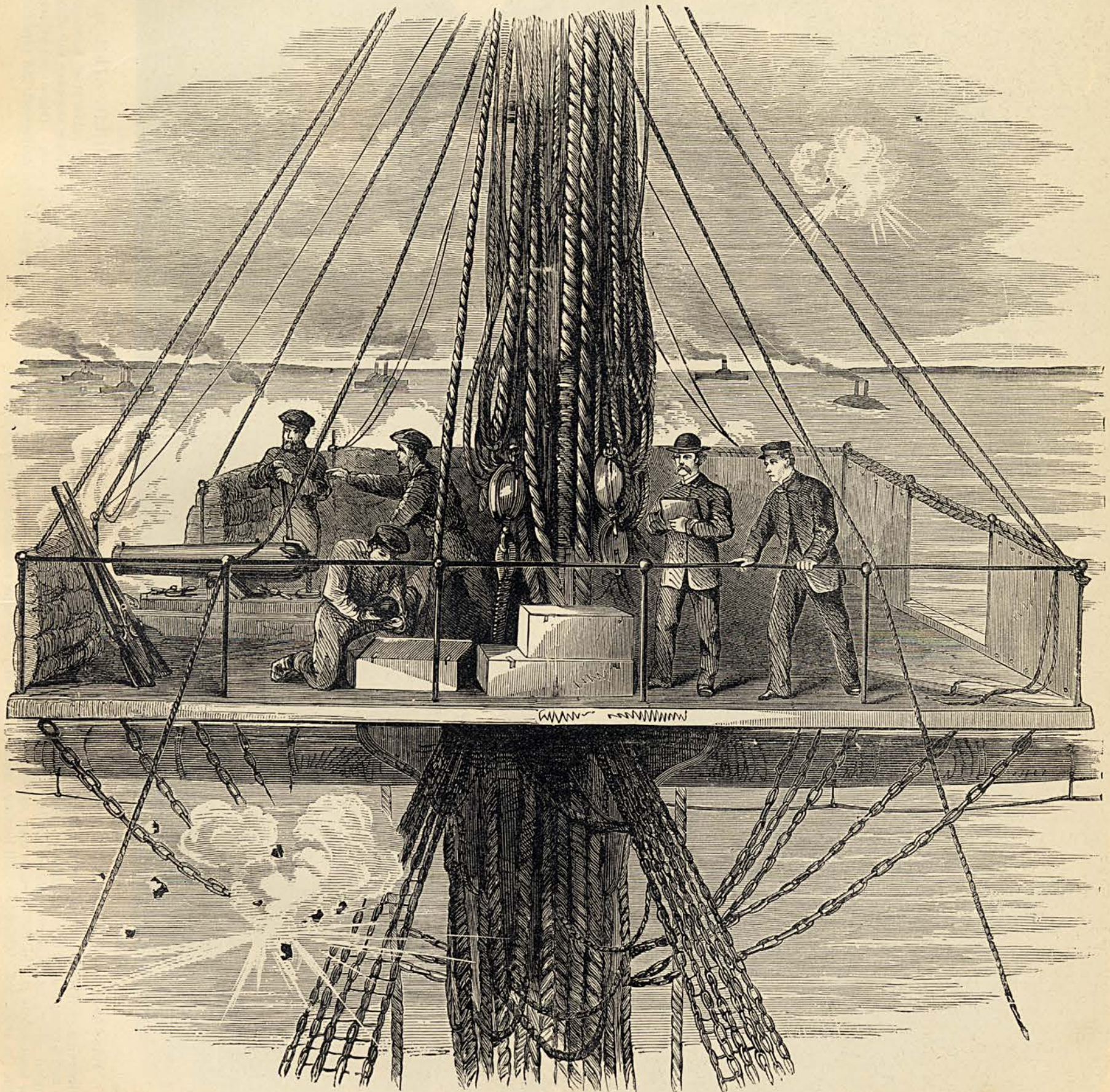




BURNING OF CONFEDERATE GUNBOATS, RAMS AND VESSELS, AT NEW ORLEANS AND ALGIERS, ON THE APPROACH OF THE FEDERAL FLEET.



THE ARTIST, WILLIAM WAUD, SKETCHING THE NAVAL ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN THE FEDERAL FLEET AND THE CONFEDERATE FORTS, RAMS AND GUNBOATS, ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER, FROM THE FORETOP OF THE U. S. WAR STEAMER "MISSISSIPPI."

The extreme importance of the possession of the Mississippi River, dividing the Confederacy in half, seems to have been apparent to the Southern sooner than to the Northern commanders. At any rate early opportunities to seize upon the mouths of the river and the great port of New Orleans were disregarded, and the Confederates gained time to make its defences so perfect that they were overcome only at tremendous expense of time and money, if not of life. A few miles above the mouth there were two very formidable forts and other batteries, and many iron-clads and gunboats farther up. These were bombarded by the Union navy in April, 1862, and on the 24th the fleet ran by the forts during a long day's engagement, which is one of the most remarkable on record. The public was eager for news of it, and rejoiced that artists were found brave enough to dare the perils for the sake of making accurate pictures.