

Virginia. Moreover, a great city is in itself a serious loss to one belligerent and a capital prize to the other.

As soon as it became evident that war was being waged against the United States in dead earnest, and that it was likely to be prolonged, these considerations presented themselves to the Government, and a plan was matured for capture of the largest city in the territory of the insurgents.

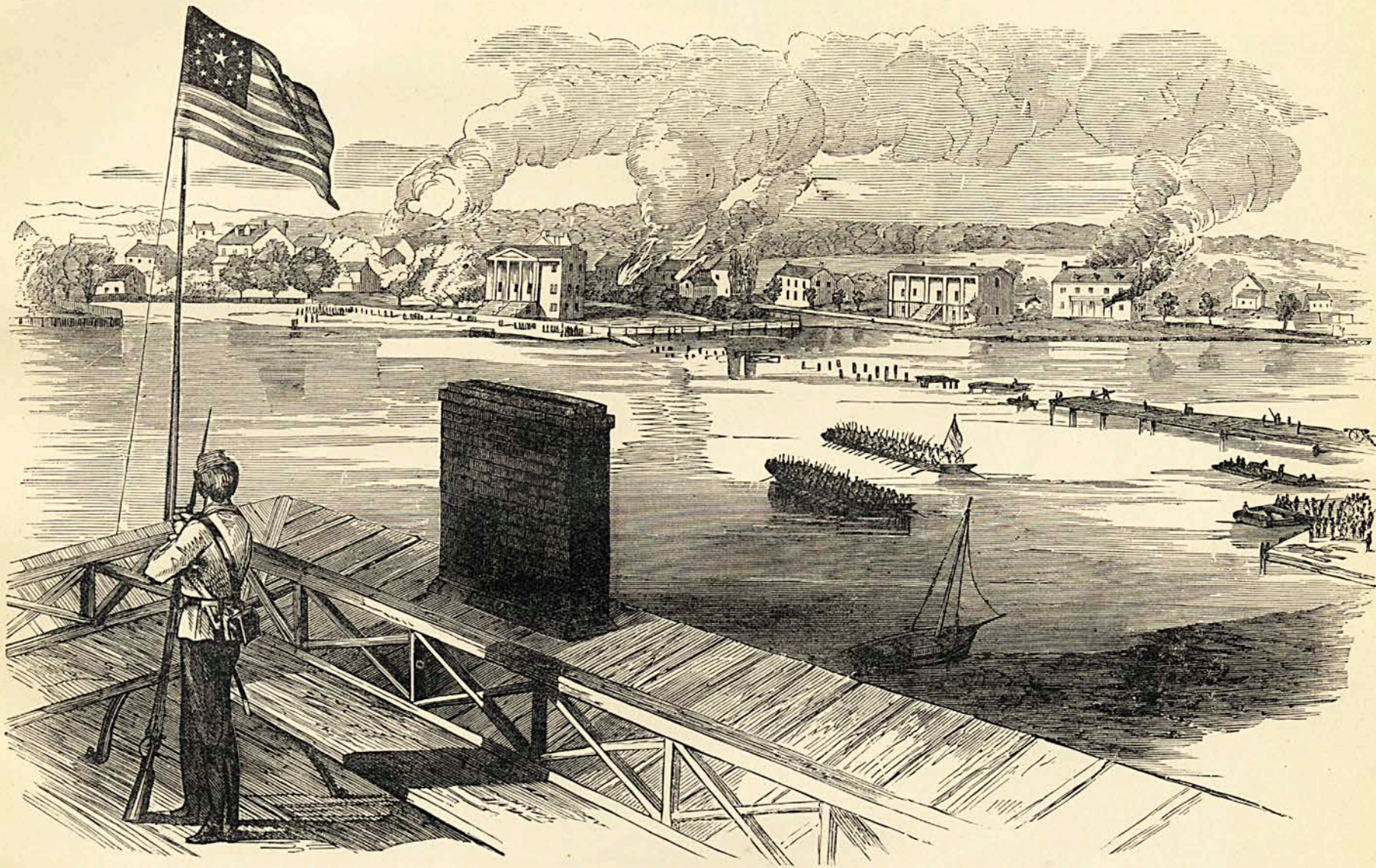
The defences consisted of two forts, on either side of the stream, 30 miles above the head of the five great passes, through which it flows to the Gulf. The smaller, Fort St. Philip, on the left bank, was of earth and brick, with flanking batteries, and all its guns were *en barbette*—on the top, in plain sight. These numbered about 40. Fort Jackson, on the right bank, mounted 75 guns, 14 of which were in bomb-proof casemates. Both of these works had been built by the United States Government. They were now garrisoned by about 1500 Confederate soldiers, commanded by General Johnson K. Duncan. Above them lay a Confederate fleet of 15 vessels, including an iron-clad ram and a large floating battery that

The remainder of the fleet, as finally made up, consisted of six sloops of war, sixteen gunboats, and five other vessels, besides transports carrying 15,000 troops commanded by General B. F. Butler. The whole number of guns was over 200. The flag-ship "Hartford" was a wooden steam sloop of war, 1000 tons burden, with a length of 225 feet, and a breadth of 44 feet. She carried 22 nine-inch guns, two twenty-pounder Parrott guns, and a rifled gun on the fore-castle, while her fore and main tops were furnished with howitzers and surrounded with boiler iron. The "Brooklyn," "Richmond," "Pensacola," "Portsmouth," and "Oneida," were similar to the "Hartford." The "Colorado" was larger. The "Mississippi" was a large side-wheel steamer.

This was the most powerful expedition that had ever sailed under the American flag, and the man that was chosen to command it, Captain David G. Farragut, was as unknown to the public as Ulysses S. Grant had been. Farragut was now 60 years of age, being one of the oldest men that took part in the war, and he had been

over with her keel plowing a furrow a foot deep in the river bottom, and the "Colorado" could not be taken over at all.

The masts of the mortar schooners were dressed off with bushes, to render them indistinguishable from the trees on shore. The schooners were then towed up to a point within range, and moored where the woods hid them, so that they could not be seen from the forts. Lieutenant F. H. Gerdes, of the Coast Survey, had made a careful map of that part of the river and its banks, and elaborate calculations by which the mortars were to be fired with a computed aim, none of the gunners being able to see what they fired at. They opened fire on April 18, and in a bombardment of six days and nights, 6000 enormous shells—800 tons of iron—were thrown high into the air, and fell in and around the forts. For nearly a week the garrison saw one of Porter's aerolites dropping upon them every minute and a half. They demolished buildings, they tore up the ground, they cut the levee and let in water, and they killed and mangled men; but they did not render the forts untenable nor



EVACUATION OF THE VILLAGE OF HAMPTON, VA., ON THE JAMES RIVER, BY THE FEDERAL TROOPS UNDER GENERAL BUTLER, IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ADVANCE OF THE CONFEDERATES IN FORCE.

was covered with railroad iron. Below the forts a heavy chain was stretched across the river, at first supported by a row of enormous logs, which was swept away by a freshet. The logs were then replaced by hulks anchored at intervals across the stream, and the chain ran over their decks, while its ends were fastened to great trees. Sharpshooters patrolled the banks between the forts and the head of the passes.

The idea at Washington was that the forts could be reduced by raining into them a shower of enormous shells, to be thrown high into the air, come down almost perpendicularly, and explode on striking. Accordingly, the first care was to make the mortars and shells, and provide the craft to carry them. Twenty-one mortars were cast, mounted on as many schooners. They threw shells 13 inches in diameter, weighing 285 pounds, and when one of them was discharged, the concussion was so great that no man could stand close by without being deafened. Platforms projecting beyond the decks were therefore provided, for the gunners to step out upon just before firing.

in the navy half a century. He sailed the Pacific with Commodore Porter years before Grant and Sherman were born, and participated in the bloody encounter of the "Essex" and "Phœbe" in the harbor of Valparaiso. He was especially familiar with the Gulf of Mexico.

But it was not till January, 1862, that he was appointed to command the New Orleans expedition. He sailed from Hampton Roads, February 2, in the flag-ship "Hartford." He had no faith in the mortars, and would rather have gone without them; but they had been ordered before he was consulted, and were under the command of his personal friend Porter.

A considerable portion of March was gone before enough of the fleet had reached the rendezvous to begin operations. The first difficulty was to get into the river. The mortar schooners went in by Pass à l'Outre without difficulty; but to get the "Brooklyn," "Mississippi," and "Pensacola" over the bar at Southwest Pass required immense labor and occupied two or three weeks. The "Mississippi" was dragged

silence their guns. The return fire sank one of the mortar boats and disabled a steamer. Within the forts about 50 men were killed or wounded—one for every 16 tons of iron thrown.

The Confederates had prepared flat-boats loaded with dry wood smeared with tar and turpentine; and they now set fire to them one after another, and let them float down the stream. But Farragut sent out boats' crews, who grappled them with hooks and either towed them ashore or conducted them past the fleet and let them float out to sea.

In his General Orders Farragut gave so many minute directions that it would seem as if he must have anticipated every possible contingency, and in addition to his own suggestions he called upon his men to exercise their wits for the occasion, and the crews originated many wise precautions. Farragut's plan was to run by the forts, damaging them as much as possible by a rapid fire as he passed, then destroy or capture the Confederate fleet, and proceed up the river and lay the city under his guns.