

# AT VICKSBURG.

## Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Great Campaign.

### CONFEDERATE GIBRALTAR.

#### Farragut, Porter, Sherman and Grant Try Their Hand.

First Federal Attempt to Capture Vicksburg Made in May, 1862—Attempt Renewed in June, and Again in December. From January, 1863, till March, Grant's Soldiers Fight Mud, Malaria and Misadventures at the Canal Below Vicksburg—Yazoo Pass and Steele's Bayou.

With the surrender of Vicksburg and the battle of Gettysburg, Gen. Sherman says the civil war was practically ended in favor of the north. All that followed was simply carrying the war into "the last ditch."

The importance of the possession of Vicksburg to the Union cause was early recognized. Immediately after the capture of New Orleans, Admiral Farragut proceeded up the river with a little fleet of mortar boats.

But the necessity of keeping Vicksburg had been quite as well understood by the south. It was called the "Gibraltar of the Southern Confederacy." In April, 1862, New Orleans had been captured by the north. Memphis, Island 10, and the chief points on the Mississippi above Vicksburg were already in the hands of the United States. With Vicksburg, the Confederacy would lose its last hold on the great river. The southern authorities therefore held to their Gibraltar with a death grip.

#### FARRAGUT'S ATTACK ON VICKSBURG

Vicksburg, Miss., is built on a bluff rising abruptly 300 feet from the Mississippi river. Back of the town are similar hills. On these eminences the Confederates planted their guns, 150 feet apart. Below, at the river's edge, the shore fairly bristled with "water batteries," so called. Farragut's little fleet passed up the river June 28, 1862.



DAVID G. FARRAGUT.

He had three wooden ships, seven gunboats and sixteen mortar boats. The last named carried each a 13-inch mortar. In May a fruitless demonstration had been made against Vicksburg with a small fleet and 1,500 land troops under Gen. Williams. The Confederates meantime were working with might and main finishing the earthworks, bomb proof casemates and batteries that had begun above Vicksburg in April, 1862. In May Gen. Williams had deemed them too formidable for him to attack. By the last of June, therefore, they had assumed really stupendous proportions. Troops and supplies poured into the town by rail. Commodore C. H. Davis was at that time flag officer of the Mississippi squadron above Vicksburg. He had captured Memphis from the Confederates. In June, 1862, he was ordered to proceed down the Mississippi with his fleet to Vicksburg, and there make a junction with Admiral Farragut, who was to come up the river from New Orleans.

June 28, in the early morning, Farragut passed the Vicksburg batteries. Shots were exchanged for two hours, neither side doing much damage. Then Farragut passed on up out of range. July 1, Commodore Davis joined him with the Upper Mississippi fleet at Young's Point, a few miles above Vicksburg, but on the Louisiana shore opposite.



FROM MEMPHIS TO VICKSBURG.

For some time the two fleets lay there, having not much to do but gaze in wonder at the defenses of Vicksburg. They extended a mile and a half back from the river. The Union fleet occasionally did some shelling at the town.

June 25, three days before Farragut passed Vicksburg with his mortar flotilla, the large vessels of his fleet had landed on the Louisiana shore, opposite Vicksburg, Brig. Gen. Thomas Williams and 3,000 troops. They had with them two batteries.

On the map it will be observed that at Vicksburg there is a very deep bend or curve in the Mississippi. The river makes a loop and almost doubles over upon itself. Between the ends of this loop the space is very narrow. Here Gen. Williams began digging a canal, the line of which is shown on the accompanying map, employing 1,300 negroes. This canal, when finished, would have made the space within the horseshoe an island, and would have enabled the Union troops to cross easily to the Mississippi side. Vicksburg would thus have been cut off from the river, which would have been shortened by so much.

So all three parties kept "pegging away," in President Lincoln's homely phrase, for some weeks. At length the Confederate fortifications reached Grand Gulf, fifteen miles below Vicksburg.

#### THE CONFEDERATE RAM ARKANSAS.

Admiral Farragut had heard rumors that the Confederates were building an iron clad ram at Yazoo City, a little distance up the Yazoo river. He did not, however, believe that a very formidable naval vessel could be built in the swamps of Mississippi, so paid little attention to the rumor. Coal was scarce, and the Union gunboats, in order to save fuel, had even let their fires go down, when on the morning of July 15, 1862, word

was brought that the Confederate ram Arkansas was coming down the Yazoo.

The Union gunboats Carondelet and Taylor, with the steam ram, Queen of the West, were sent up the Yazoo to reconnoiter. Six miles up the stream they met the Arkansas steaming down to meet them. She was commanded by an ex-United States naval officer, Lieut. Brown, who thoroughly understood what he was about. The ram was an iron clad, well equipped with rifled guns, and with a long, sword-like iron nose that could pierce the side of any wooden ship sent against her.

As she advanced the three Union vessels retreated, firing back at the Arkansas as they went. The ram pursued them, sending shot into them from her heavy bow guns and doing some damage.

The ram soon came upon the Carondelet, a slow vessel, with the evident intention of ramming her, but she kept clear of the ram's long nose, and fired as fast as possible. Then the Arkansas passed on down stream, in turn firing at the Carondelet. The wheel ropes of the Carondelet were shot away, and she drifted in shore. The Carondelet was badly damaged, and thirty of her crew and men were lost.

The Carondelet was commanded by Rear Admiral Walke, a brave and accomplished officer, belonging to the generation that had fought the war with Mexico.

In the fight between the Arkansas and the Carondelet the Union gunboat Taylor, Lieut. Gwin commander, assisted the Carondelet as best she could until that vessel drifted ashore. Then, with all steam on, she hastened toward Farragut's fleet. There only one vessel, the ram Gen. Bragg, had steam up. The whole Union fleet was obliged to watch the Arkansas slipping safe past them down toward Vicksburg. The ram Bragg could indeed have pursued, but her commander waited for special orders before doing so, and thus the bold Confederate vessel escaped.

The fleet poured a broadside fire into her as she passed and did considerable injury. But she reached Vicksburg in safety. The Union gunboat, Essex, Commander William D. Porter, followed her as soon as steam could be raised, but did no additional harm to her.

July 16, next day after the Arkansas had run the fleet, Admiral Farragut went down the river with his fleet to protect the troops and transports below Vicksburg. The affair of the Arkansas occasioned him deep mortification.

There was another interchange of shots between the Vicksburg batteries and the admiral as he steamed down past them, but very little damage was done, Farragut having five men killed and sixteen wounded. The Arkansas lay safe under the Vicksburg batteries as the Union fleet passed.

Admiral Farragut had already given it as his opinion that Vicksburg could not be taken except by a large combined land and naval force, and a long and steady effort. July 20 he received orders from Washington to return to New Orleans. A few days later, July 27, the two Union fleets parted company, that of Commodore Davis going back up the river to Cairo, that of Farragut down the river to the gulf. Gen. Williams likewise abandoned his canal, his troops were loaded onto the transports and conveyed down to Baton Rouge, where they and their general were left for the time, under protection on the waterside of a few gunboats.

So ended the attack on Vicksburg of June, 1862.

Aug. 5 a Confederate force under Gen. Breckinridge attacked Gen. Williams' brigade at Baton Rouge. After a hot battle that lasted six hours the Confederates were driven off with heavy loss, among their killed and wounded being Gen. Clark and Helm.

The Union commander, Gen. Williams, was killed while giving orders at the head of his command.

The dreaded ram Arkansas also ended her short but adventurous career about this time. The plan had been for her to assist in the Confederate attack on Baton Rouge and attack the Union gunboats. She failed to come to time, however, being disabled up the river. Aug. 6, the morning after the battle, Commander W. D. Porter, with his vessel, the Essex, and some other boats, steamed up the river and opened fire on the Arkansas. Both her engines were disabled, one of them by the fire from the Essex. The commander of the Arkansas ran ashore and landed his crew, who took to the woods. Then he set fire to the ram and turned her adrift. She floated down the river a short distance and blew up.

#### SECOND ATTACK ON VICKSBURG.

Nothing more was done against Vicksburg for many months. The Confederates had the Mississippi, between Baton Rouge and Vicksburg, entirely in their own hands. They improved the interval by strengthening the batteries at Port Hudson, below Vicksburg, and elsewhere along the river.

In October, 1862, Rear Admiral D. D. Porter was appointed to the command of the Mississippi squadron. He was to cooperate with the land forces along the Mississippi, but was directly responsible only to the secretary of the navy.



SINKING OF THE CAIRO.

Gen. Grant was by this time in command of the Army of the Mississippi, which was known as the Thirtieth Army corps. Grant and Porter met at Cairo. In an interview, which the admiral in his naval history tells us "lasted just half an hour," these two soldiers and patriots planned the campaign which, after weary months, was to result in the downfall of the Gibraltar of the Confederacy. But ere that downfall was accomplished

many plans were to be tried and were to fail. The scheme Grant and Porter formed in their brief interview was this: Grant would march from Holly Springs, Miss., to Grenada, Miss., in the rear of Vicksburg, with an army of 60,000. Gen. John C. Pemberton was the Confederate commander at Vicksburg. He would naturally march out from his citadel to stop the march of Grant at Grenada. The being the march from Vicksburg, Sherman and Porter, coming down the Mississippi by water, while Grant attacked Grenada, would be able to attack and gain possession of Vicksburg.

Such was the plan. The first part of December, 1862, Sherman and Porter set out on their combined expedition against Vicksburg. Memphis was the starting point.

Part of the squadron went first, under supervision of Commander Walke, of the Carondelet. Their destination was the mouth of the Yazoo river, above Vicksburg. They ascended this river some twenty miles, clearing it of torpedoes. In performing this difficult and dangerous task one of the gunboats, the Cairo, Lieut. Commander T. O. Selfridge, was blown up. The shores and the bed of the Yazoo were literally lined with torpedoes. Many of these in the water were connected with galvanic batteries. One of these electrically connected engines was struck by the gunboat on her ascent. The result was two explosions, which "almost seemed to lift the vessel out of the water."

The Cairo sank immediately, but her crew were all saved. Dec. 26, 1862, Sherman conveyed his troops up the Yazoo river from the Mississippi, and landed them opposite the mouth of Steele's Bayou. Facing toward Vicksburg, Sherman then had Chickasaw Bayou on his left. All around him were swamps and bays. Two and a half miles from his front, and between him and Vicksburg were the bluffs known as Walnut Hill.

The fighting at Chickasaw Bayou occurred Dec. 27, 28 and 29. On the 28th there was only slight skirmishing as Sherman's men advanced in four columns. As the troops formed in line, Steele's division went to the left, Morgan's came next, on Steele's right, M. L. Smith on Morgan's right. On the extreme right, and considerably nearer Vicksburg than the rest, was Brig. Gen. A. J. Smith's division. Between A. J. Smith and the others was a body of water called the lake. It was an old bed of the Yazoo river. The reader will see the situation from the map. "The Lake" was near the foot of the hills, which are here sometimes called Chickasaw Bluffs.



CHICKASAW BAYOU FIGHT.

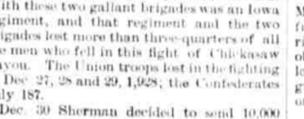
So the columns advanced on Dec. 28, in the teeth of Confederate batteries so numerous and skillfully planted that they sometimes enfiladed with a deadly fire the advancing Union lines. On this day Brig. Gen. Morgan L. Smith was severely wounded in the hip and was carried off the field. Steele's division had at first advanced on the left of Chickasaw Bayou. It was subjected to so deadly a fire that Steele was ordered to go back to the Yazoo and return with his division to the fight on the right of Chickasaw Bayou, somewhat in the rear of Morgan's division. This movement he completed late on the night of Dec. 28.

Dec. 29 a general assault was ordered from the Union line. Sherman's force was at the foot of the high bluffs. These fairly swarmed with Confederate batteries thoroughly manned. The Confederate defenses were in charge of Brig. Gen. Martin L. Smith. To take Vicksburg it was necessary to storm these heights and capture them. It seemed a forlorn undertaking, on the face of it. Sherman had hoped to surprise Vicksburg. But spies all along the Mississippi, even in Memphis and St. Louis, kept the Confederate generals informed of every Union movement.

When, therefore, Sherman, with 32,000 men left Memphis, Dec. 20, to attack Vicksburg, the Confederates understood his movement almost as well as he did himself. They hurried reinforcements in large numbers into the trenches and upon the heights a little below Vicksburg. So well fortified were the bluffs that one man might easily keep ten at bay.

Sherman's general assault began at noon, Dec. 29. Each division of the Union army had a particular task assigned to it, but, as always happens, some failed to execute their orders. Two brigades, De Courcy's from Morgan's division, and Blair's from Steele's division, on the left, crossed the lake in front of them, and advanced gallantly to the Confederate works under a deadly fire. They had obeyed orders. Reaching the heights they looked back and saw no supporting columns. Cross fire and front fire were poured into them from the terrible heights, and they finally fed back. With these two gallant brigades was an Iowa regiment, and that regiment and the two brigades lost more than three-quarters of all the men who fell in this fight of Chickasaw Bayou. The Union troops left in the fighting of Dec. 27, 28 and 29, 1862, the Confederates only 187.

Dec. 30 Sherman decided to send 10,000 men up the Yazoo river to Haines' Bluff to try an attack there. He himself meanwhile was to keep the position he had gained between the Yazoo river and Walnut Hill. Admiral Porter agreed to assist in the Haines' Bluff movement. It was to be made the night of Dec. 31. The 10,000 troops were placed on the transports that night ready to go. Sherman, at the foot of the bluffs, was to wait until he heard firing from the direct



GEN. SHERMAN.

tion of Haines' Bluff, then he was to renew his attack against the heights with all possible vigor. That nature herself seemed to decide against Union success. The rain had been pouring in torrents till a general flood of the lowlands, where Sherman was encamped, was threatened. On the river the fog was so dense that the boats could not move as appointed. The movement to Haines' Bluff had to be put off till the next night, Jan. 1, 1863. The night promised to be clear on that behalf. New Year's day of mud and swamp, but on that day Admiral Porter happened to remember that the moon would show brightly all night, and that the movement could only be made in darkness.

To wait in the lowlands and run the risk of being drowned like rats in a hole was not a pleasant prospect for Sherman and his men.

The whole movement was given up. Jan. 2, 1863, the Union troops were re-embarked, and returned to the mouth of the Yazoo river. So ended the second attempt on Vicksburg. Grant had been unable to carry out his part of the programme at Grenada, because Confederate raids, under Forrest and Van Dorn, had broken his communications and destroyed his supplies. Sherman did not receive information of this in time.

During the Chickasaw Bayou fight the gunboats in the Yazoo sheltered the Vicksburg heights, and received in turn a hot fire. A fifty pound shot killed Lieut. Commander William Gwinn, of the Benton, as he stood on the upper deck of his vessel giving orders. Before the attack on Vicksburg A. J. Smith's division had performed an extra service on the Louisiana side of the river. As Sherman's expedition came down the Mississippi A. J. Smith's division was dropped off on the Louisiana shore at Milliken's Bend. They were landed in order to proceed into the interior of the state a short distance and destroy the railroad, that brought supplies to Vicksburg from the west and across the river. They rejoined the main force Dec. 27.

"FLANKING PROJECTS." In January the Union troops at the mouth of the Yazoo were sent on an expedition against Arkansas Post, up White river, to keep their spirits up. They captured the post, and returned to the siege of Vicksburg. Jan. 1, Gen. John A. McClernand arrived from Memphis, at the mouth of the Yazoo, and superseded Sherman in command of the troops. Jan. 7, 1863, Gen. Grant was ordered by Halleck, at Washington, to go in person to Vicksburg and take command. He did so, taking charge of the troops Jan. 30. Grant's command was now organized into four corps, Thirtieth, Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth. The corps commanders were respectively McClernand, Sherman, Hurlbut and McPherson. All of the corps at Hurlbut's were already either at Vicksburg or were immediately sent there. Hurlbut's corps operated in the interior.

Gen. John C. Pemberton, the Confederate commander at Vicksburg during the siege, was a northern man, born in Pennsylvania in 1817. He was a graduate of West Point in 1837. He was in the Mexican and Seminole wars. In 1861 he resigned his commission in the United States army, entered the Confederate service and was on Gen. Johnston's staff until an independent command was given to him. He commanded at Vicksburg all through the siege. After the war Gen. Pemberton became a farmer in Virginia, remaining there till his death in 1881.

Great importance had been attached to the canal across the loop in the Mississippi river at Vicksburg. Diggers were again set to work early in January. Instead, however, of following exactly the line of the Williams canal, which went directly across the bend, they began at a point above so as to make the canal shut across, and thus take advantage of the assistance of the current. It was hoped that the Mississippi would choose the canal for its bed and leave Vicksburg on dry land. The river did not do so in 1863, however, although it has done so since, cutting a new channel across the bend, or peninsula, in 1876. So that now, twenty-five years after, Vicksburg is high and dry at low water.

In the mud and malaria Grant's soldiers wrought at the canal from January, 1863, till March 7. Grant lost faith in it himself soon after coming to Vicksburg, but kept his men digging still until he could project new plans. His idea now was not to attack in front or on the well fortified heights, but to take Vicksburg by a great flanking move, getting in its rear either above or below the town. Many plans were thought out. Several were tried and abandoned.

One was the Lake Providence scheme. This was a point some miles above Vicksburg on the opposite side of the river. It was thought that a canal might be cut from the Mississippi into Lake Providence. This would let Grant's transports and gunboats into the Tenness river, thence through the Black and Red river they might get into the Mississippi, 150 miles below Vicksburg. The Lake Providence canal, a mile long, was actually dug, then the plan was given up. The canal served one purpose only, that was to flood and destroy thousands of acres of cotton.

The Yazoo Pass route was next tried. A few miles below Helena, Ark., but on the opposite side of the Mississippi, and near that river, was Moon Lake. Yazoo Pass, so called, was a stream running from Moon Lake into the Coldwater river, thence into the Tallahatchie, thence into the Yazoo.

The route was this: Moon Lake, Coldwater, Tallahatchie, Yazoo. It can be traced upon the map. Could not a way be found thus to strike Vicksburg above and behind Haines' Bluff, on the Yazoo?

According to a canal from the Mississippi to Moon Lake was dug. But it was a work of frightful difficulty to get into the Coldwater river through Yazoo Pass. Trees and stumps obstructed the channel, and great branches locked arms overhead, as if to prevent the gunboats from passing. The vessels were only able to make a mile in four hours. The Confederates meantime had caught wind of the plan, and were fortifying with might and main at Fort Pemberton, on the Yazoo. When Grant's gunboats reached that point the Confederates were ready for him.

#### WORK OF THE GUNBOATS.

Admiral Porter meantime had co-operated with the land forces constantly, and had

also managed various expeditions on his own account.

After Sherman had abandoned his attack on Vicksburg in December the Confederates had conveyed down the Yazoo and the Mississippi a steamboat called the City of Vicksburg.

The Federal ram Queen of the West was commanded by Col. Charles B. Ellet, a gallant young officer. Only 30 years old Admiral Porter sent him, Feb. 2, down the river to destroy the City of Vicksburg. The Queen was a wooden steamboat with a long iron bow. Cotton bales were piled around her amidships to protect her machinery from shot.

It had been expected that the Queen of the West would steal down the river at night and attack the City of Vicksburg unawares in the darkness. But she was delayed. At sunrise, in full view of the Confederates' batteries, the Queen passed down the river and made straight at the City of Vicksburg. Shot and shell came thick and fast from the batteries. The wide gunboats of the Vicksburg prevented the Queen from ramming her squarely. Col. Ellet therefore began firing explosive shells at the Vicksburg.

But the shells from the batteries set fire to the protesting cotton bales, and Ellet could do no more. He therefore passed on down the river, leaving Vicksburg and the City of Vicksburg behind him. A large quantity of coal was floated down to him in the night.

Ellet descended the Mississippi to the mouth of Red river. On the way he destroyed three steamboats loaded with supplies for the Confederates at Fort Hudson. Thence the Queen of the West steamed up Red river, spreading panic at her approach. By this time Ellet was out of coal again and returned to Warrenton, just below Vicksburg, to get a supply.



IRON CLAD INDIANOLA.

Once more he went out to destroy, accompanied by the coal tender DeSoto. Down the river he captured two steamers loaded with Confederate provisions. Further on he destroyed a wagon train. Then he started up Red river. One of the steamers he had captured was the New Era. Ellet took her pilot on board to steer the Queen. He ran her aground under the guns of the Confederate Fort Taylor, on Red river. The fort opened on the plucky little steamer with four heavy cannon. A shot cut her steam pipe, and the scalding vapor poured through the boiler, fatally burning many of the crew. Ellet and the rest of them jumped into the water upon cotton bales and floated down the river. They boarded the New Era, one of Ellet's prizes, and made their escape in haste.

Some months later, after the capture of Vicksburg, Col. Ellet applied for and received permission to go home on sick leave. He died at Bonker Hill, Ills., in October. Admiral Porter says: "Ellet was a gallant young fellow, full of dash and enterprise."

Once more Admiral Porter sent a gunboat down past the Vicksburg batteries. This was the Indianola, a fine new iron clad, with two 11-inch bow guns. She floated down past Vicksburg in the night, just in time to meet the New Era coming up the river with Col. Ellet on board. The New Era was chased by a Confederate ram, the W. H. Webb, from Red river. The Indianola in turn gave chase, but the Webb escaped.

Meantime the Confederates had rapidly repaired the lost Queen of the West and turned her against her own people. Feb. 24 the Indianola, in charge of Lieut. Commander Brown, who had run the batteries with her, was at the mouth of Big Black river, forty miles below Vicksburg. Suddenly the ram Webb, and the now Confederate Queen of the West, came up the river in pursuit of him. With them were two steamers "bottom clad" so called, that is to say they were piled with cotton around the bows and sides. This was a perfect protection against shot, though a very uncertain one against fire.

All four vessels opened on the Indianola, the "cotton clads" attacking with their small guns, the rams endeavoring to run the Indianola down with their iron prows. "Both vessels came together, bows on," said Lieut. Brown, in his report.

The Indianola received seven crushing blows from the rams, and began to sink rapidly. Then Lieut. Brown threw his signal books and his 11-inch guns overboard, disabled his 11-inch bow guns and surrendered. The Indianola was blown up on the night of Feb. 25, "by a Yankee ruse," as Admiral Porter puts it. What that ruse was, however, he does not tell in his naval history, although it is well worth telling.



THE "DUMMY."

The admiral, not learning from the Indianola, felt anxious about her fate. He also desired to provide all the useless fire from the Vicksburg batteries that he could. Accordingly he built a "dummy" gunboat and sent it floating down the river past the batteries. An old coal barge was hoisted up high with slapping sides, in imitation of an ironclad. Mud furnaces were built, and formidable looking smoke stacks were constructed by piling old pork barrels one upon another and nailing them together. Then fires were built in the mud furnaces, and with black smoke leaching from her pork barrel chimneys this sham ironclad was set afloat, just in time to make her appear at Vicksburg at daylight. Round after round of shot from the batteries was poured into her, which naturally went in at one side and out the other. Not a soul was on board. The dummy passed on her way calmly down the river until she grounded a considerable distance below Vicksburg.

This dummy was a joke partially balancing the mortification occasioned by the loss of the Indianola, especially when the consequences to the Confederates came to be noted.

After capturing the Indianola the Queen of the West proceeded on her way up the Mississippi till she reached Warrenton, seven miles below Vicksburg. But at Warrenton she caught sight of the pork barrel monitor.

The officers fancied it was a huge and terrible new kind of engine of war. Dispatches were sent east to Richmond about the appearance in the southern waters of a "turkey monster."

The Queen of the West stayed not on the order of her going, but turned and fled to "Turkey monster." The Indiana was blown up at once.

A short time afterward the Queen of the West was herself blown up in Red river to avoid capture.



STERN WHEEL RAM.

March 4 the Union rams Switzerland and Lancaster made a real attempt to pass the Vicksburg batteries to join Farragut below. The Switzerland got past, though badly injured by the shots, but the Lancaster was sunk.

Gen. Pemberton, the Confederate commander, was eternally vigilant. In and about Vicksburg there were some 40,000 Confederate soldiers. Pemberton's headquarters were at Jackson, a few hours' ride from Vicksburg on the one hand, and Grenada, also in danger of attack from Union troops, on the other. Gen. Joseph Johnston, at Chattanooga, exercised general supervision over Mississippi, but the details were necessarily left to Pemberton.

#### THE LAND FORCE.

Grant had attempted to move his land forces down to Vicksburg by the route before described as the Yazoo Pass way. The passage was made, as narrated, by some of the gunboats that were stopped at Fort Pemberton. This fort was so admirably located as to command the three rivers, Tallahatchie, Yazouabatchie, and Yazoo. Gen. Leroy had command of the Confederate troops here.

March 11 Rose's division of McClernand's corps appeared before Fort Pemberton, 4,000 men in all. McClernand's corps was ready and waiting to follow them, and Grant hoped from this side to be able at last to get into Vicksburg. But this navigation against nature, as it were, that he had attempted was attended with extraordinary difficulties. No boats could go through the Yazoo Pass and Coldwater, except those of very light draught. Moreover, the country was overflowed and was one swamp, so that there was no resting place or camping place for an army anywhere in the lowlands above Vicksburg.

March 11 the Union gunboats began their bombardment of Fort Pemberton. March 14 the land force erected a battery and fired at Fort Pemberton awhile. Finding it could do no good, the expedition started back up the Tallahatchie. Half way up the river they met Gen. Quincy coming to re-enforce them with a brigade, all the men he could transport through the difficult passage in time. Being the senior officer, he ordered the troops back to Fort Pemberton. They returned. Another fruitless attempt was made on the fort March 23. Quincy was about to build a bridge to move around the east side of Fort Pemberton, when, April 1, he received orders for the whole expedition to return to headquarters.

#### STEELE'S BAYOU EXPEDITION.

A new attempt was to be made to reach Vicksburg by land in another direction, through Steele's Bayou.

Forty miles up the Yazoo river, and emptying into it, was Steele's Bayou. Into it emptied a creek called Black Bayou. This was connected with Deer Creek, and that again with Rolling Fork, which opened into the Sunflower river. The Sunflower was navigable for large boats. Thus Grant hoped to sheer around Fort Pemberton and still get in the rear of Vicksburg.

Grant's headquarters at this time were at Young's Point. The map will show the route taken at this new and last attempt at a "flanking movement."

Once more hundreds of faithful workmen began cutting trees and widening the channels of Black Bayou and Rolling Fork.

March 16, the work began, and the next day, March 17, the Confederates heard of it, and commenced to make ready to receive them at the junction of Rolling Fork and the Sunflower.

Admiral Porter went ahead, with a force of both land and navy, to prepare the channel. The gunboats were so obstructed that they could only advance through Black Bayou at the rate of four miles in twenty-four hours. Sherman also sent a land force forward by another route, from above Milliken's Bend. Sherman himself, after hurrying the rest of his forces onward, followed after Porter on a tug, through the timbered channel.

The history of the Steele's Bayou expedition is that of the Yazoo Pass expedition over again. After plowing through almost superhuman difficulties and reaching within a few hundred yards of the Sunflower and clear sailing, on the 19th of March the workmen saw a puff of smoke from the woods in the direction of that river.

The smoke was followed by stray shells—then more shells, and more. Then hidden sharpshooters began to pick off men by man those on the gunboats, until every one who showed his head dared a certain death. The Confederates were ready for them.

What was worse, the defenders of Vicksburg were already well nigh in the rear of Porter's gunboats and just on the point of obstructing the narrow channel, thus cutting him off from Sherman and the land forces and rendering certain his capture and that of all his men. It was a desperate case.

Porter sent a negro through a byway in the swamp to inform Sherman. Immediately Sherman hurried forward the 800 men with him. He himself went back alone as a canoe to get the rest.

Porter had started to retreat as soon as he saw his critical situation. The gunboats were obliged to return up through Deer Creek stream foremost, the channel being too narrow for them to turn. March 21 he met Sherman's advance of 800.

The same day, March 21, Sherman's second column had a skirmish with the body of Confederates who had come around in Porter's rear to block the channel. The Confederates retreated.

Not till they reached Steele's Bayou did the gunboats find reason to turn around. They had tackled down Deer Creek for thirty miles. It required three days. March 27 the Union troops were back in their old quarters at Young's Point.

One more laborious attempt to flank Vicksburg had ended in failure.