



FORT JOHNSON.

IRON-CLAD BATTERY, CUMMING'S POINT.

FORT SUMTER.

FORT MOULTRIE.

BURSTING OF THE SIGNAL-SHELL FROM FORT JOHNSON OVER FORT SUMTER.

THE FIRST STEP IN THE WAR.

BY STEPHEN D. LEE, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL, C. S. A.

IN the month of December, 1860, the South itself had no more realizing sense than the North of the magnitude of events about to be entered into so lightly. Even the Southern leaders did not realize that there could be any obstacle to "peaceable secession." Many at the North were willing to "let the wayward sisters depart in peace." Only a few on either side expected that blood would be shed. When, in the first Confederate Congress at Montgomery, one prudent debater exclaimed, "What if we really have a war?" the general response was, "There will be no war." "But," he persisted, "if there *is* a war, what are our resources?" and when one man in reply expressed his conviction that if the worst came, the South could put fifty thousand men into the field, he was looked upon as an enthusiast. The expectation of "peaceable secession" was the delusion that precipitated matters in the South; and it was on this expectation, when the crisis came, that South Carolina seceded. Her first step was to organize troops and assert the sovereignty in which she believed, by the occupation of her territory.

After the evacuation of Fort Moultrie, although Major Anderson was not permitted by the South Carolina authorities to receive any large supply of provisions, yet he received a daily mail, and fresh beef and vegetables from the city of Charleston, and was unmolested at Fort Sumter. He continued industriously to strengthen the fort. The military authorities of South Carolina, and afterward of the Confederate States, took possession of Fort Moultrie, Castle Pinckney, the arsenal, and other United States property in the vicinity. They also remounted the guns at Fort Moultrie, and constructed batteries on Sullivan's, Morris, and James islands, and at other places, looking to the reduction of Fort Sumter if it should become necessary; meantime leaving no stone unturned to secure from the authorities at Washington a quiet evacuation of the fort. Several arrangements to accomplish this purpose were almost reached, but failed. Two attempts were made to reënforce and supply the garrison: one by the steamer *Star of the West*, which tried to reach the fort, January 9th, 1861, and was driven back by a battery on Morris Island, manned by South Carolina troops; the other just

before the bombardment of Sumter, April 12th. The feeling of the Confederate authorities was that a peaceful issue would finally be arrived at; but they had a fixed determination to use force, if necessary, to occupy the fort. They did not desire or intend to take the initiative, if it could be avoided. So soon, however, as it was clearly understood that the authorities at Washington had abandoned peaceful views, and would assert the power of the United States to supply Fort Sumter, General Beauregard, the commander of the Confederate forces at Charleston, in obedience to the command of his Government at Montgomery, proceeded to reduce the fort. His arrangements were about complete, and on April 11th he demanded of Major Anderson the evacuation of Fort Sumter. He offered to transport Major Anderson and his command to any port in the United States; and to allow him to move out of the fort with company arms and property, and all private property, and to salute his flag in lowering it. This demand was delivered to Major Anderson at 3:45 p. m., by two aides of General Beauregard, James Chesnut, Jr., and myself. At 4:30 p. m. he handed us his reply, refusing to accede to the demand; but added, "Gentlemen, if you do not batter the fort to pieces about us, we shall be starved out in a few days."

The reply of Major Anderson was put in General Beauregard's hands at 5:15 p. m., and he was also told of this informal remark. Anderson's reply and remark were communicated to the Confederate authorities at Montgomery. The Secretary of War, L. P. Walker, replied to Beauregard as follows:

"Do not desire needlessly to bombard Fort Sumter. If Major Anderson will state the time at which, as indicated by him, he will evacuate, and agree that in the meantime he will not use his guns against us, unless ours should be employed against Fort Sumter, you are authorized thus to avoid the effusion of blood. If this, or its equivalent, be refused, reduce the fort as your judgment decides to be most practicable."

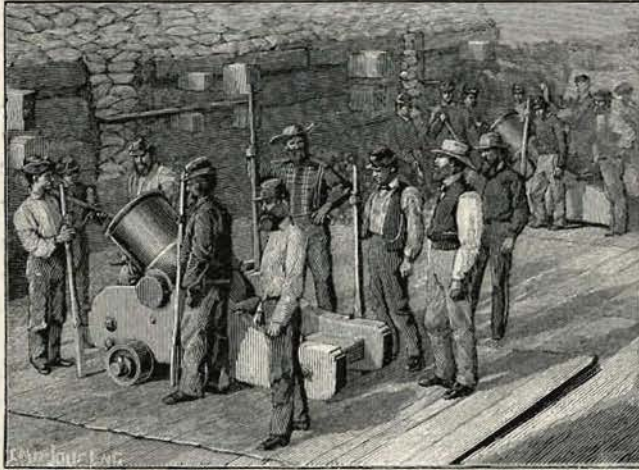


FRANCIS W. PICKENS, GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1861. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

The same aides bore a second communication to Major Anderson, based on the above instructions, which was placed in his hands at 12:45 a. m., April 12th. His reply indicated that he would evacuate the fort on the 15th, provided he did not in the meantime receive contradictory instructions from his Government, or additional supplies, but he declined to agree not to open his guns upon the Confederate troops, in the event of any hostile demonstration on their part against his flag. Major Anderson made every possible effort to retain the aides till daylight, making one excuse and then another for not replying. Finally, at 3:15 a. m., he delivered his reply. In accordance with their instructions, the aides read it and, finding it unsatisfactory, gave Major Anderson this notification:

"FORT SUMTER, S. C., April 12, 1861, 3:20 A. M.—SIR: By authority of Brigadier-General Beauregard, commanding the Provisional Forces of the Confederate States, we have the honor to notify you that he will open the fire of his batteries on Fort Sumter in one hour from this time. We have the honor to be very respectfully, Your obedient servants, JAMES CHESNUT, JR., *Aide-de-camp*. STEPHEN D. LEE, *Captain C. S. Army, Aide-de-camp*."

The above note was written in one of the casemates of the fort, and in the presence of Major Anderson and several of his officers. On receiving it,



CONFEDERATE MORTAR-BATTERY ON MORRIS ISLAND, COMMANDED BY LIEUTENANT C. R. HOLMES. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

he was much affected. He seemed to realize the full import of the consequences, and the great responsibility of his position. Escorting us to the boat at the wharf, he cordially pressed our hands in farewell, remarking, "If we never meet in this world again, God grant that we may meet in the next."

The boat containing the two aides and also Roger A. Pryor, of Virginia, and A. R. Chisolm, of South Carolina, who were also

members of General Beauregard's staff, went immediately to Fort Johnson on James Island, and the order to fire the signal gun was given to Captain George S. James, commanding the battery at that point. It was then 4 A. M. Captain James at once aroused his command, and arranged to carry out the order. He was a great admirer of Roger A. Pryor, and said to him, "You are the only man to whom I would give up the honor of firing the first gun of the war"; and he offered to allow him to fire it. Pryor, on receiving the offer, was very much agitated. With a husky voice he said, "I could not fire the first gun of the war." His manner was almost similar to that of Major Anderson as we left him a few moments before on the wharf at Fort Sumter. Captain James would allow no one else but himself to fire the gun.☆

The boat with the aides of General Beauregard left Fort Johnson before arrangements were complete for the firing of the gun, and laid on its oars, about one-third the distance between the fort and Sumter, there to witness the firing of "the first gun of the war" between the States. It was fired from a ten-inch mortar at 4:30 A. M., April 12th, 1861. Captain James was a skillful officer, and the firing of the shell was a success. It burst immediately over the fort, apparently about one hundred feet above. The firing of the

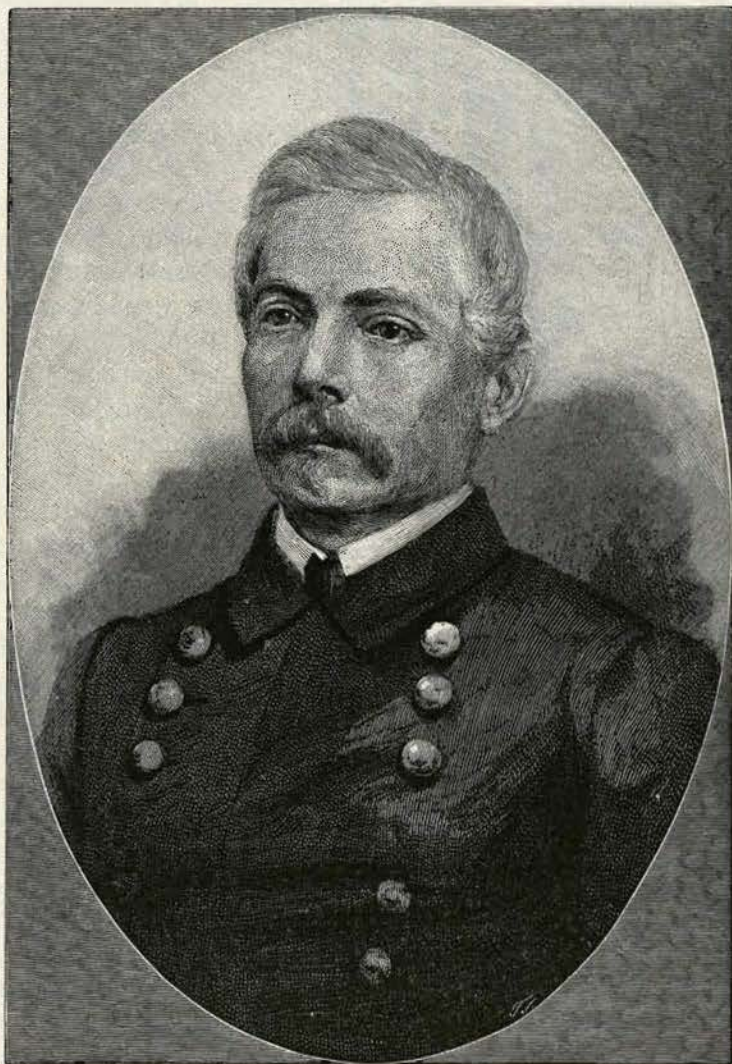
☆ When the *Star of the West* arrived, on the 9th of January, the first shot, aimed across her bow, was fired by G. E. Haynsworth, and the second, aimed directly at her, by Cadet Horlbeck. It is claimed that before this date a hostile shot

from a 4-pounder had been fired from Vicksburg by Horace Miller at a passing United States vessel, supposed to be carrying a supply of arms and ammunition to New Orleans. (See also pp. 27 and 47.)—EDITORS.

mortar woke the echoes from every nook and corner of the harbor, and in this the dead hour of night, before dawn, that shot was a sound of alarm that brought every soldier in the harbor to his feet, and every man, woman, and child in the city of Charleston from their beds. A thrill went through the whole city. It was felt that the Rubicon was passed. No one thought of going home; unused as their ears were to the appalling sounds, or the vivid flashes from the batteries, they stood for hours fascinated with horror. After the second shell the different batteries opened their fire on Fort Sumter, and by 4:45 A. M. the firing was general and regular. It was a hazy, foggy morning. About daylight, the boat with the aides reached Charleston, and they reported to General Beauregard.

Fort Sumter did not respond with her guns till 7:30 A. M. The firing from this fort, during the entire bombardment, was slow and deliberate, and marked with little

accuracy. The firing continued without intermission during the 12th, and more slowly during the night of the 12th and 13th. No material change was noticed till 8 A. M. on the 13th, when the barracks in Fort Sumter were set on fire by hot shot from the guns of Fort Moultrie. As soon as



G. J. Beauregard

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1863.



SECESSION HALL, CHARLESTON, SCENE OF THE PASSAGE
OF THE ORDINANCE OF SECESSION.
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

this was discovered, the Confederate batteries redoubled their efforts, to prevent the fire being extinguished. Fort Sumter fired at little longer intervals, to enable the garrison to fight the flames. This brave action, under such a trying ordeal, aroused great sympathy and admiration on the part of the Confederates for Major Anderson and his gallant garrison; this feeling was shown by cheers whenever a gun was fired from Sumter. It was shown also by loud reflections on the "men-of-war" outside the harbor.‡

About 12:30 the flag-staff of Fort Sumter was shot down, but it was soon replaced. As soon as General Beauregard heard that the flag was no longer flying, he sent three of his aides, William Porcher Miles, Roger A. Pryor, and myself, to offer, and also to see if Major Anderson would receive or needed, assistance, in sub-

ducing the flames inside the fort. Before we reached it, we saw the United States flag again floating over it, and began to return to the city. Before going far, however, we saw the Stars and Stripes replaced by a white flag. We turned about at once and rowed rapidly to the fort. We were directed, from an embrasure, not to go to the wharf, as it was mined, and the fire was near it. We were assisted through an embrasure and conducted to Major Anderson. Our mission being made known to him, he replied, "Present my compliments to General Beauregard, and say to him I thank him for his kindness, but need no assistance." He further remarked that he hoped the worst was over, that the fire had settled over the magazine, and, as it had not exploded, he thought the real danger was about over. Continuing, he said, "Gentlemen, do I understand you come direct from General Beauregard?" The reply was in the affirmative. He then said, "Why! Colonel Wigfall has just been here as an aide too, and by authority of General Beauregard, and

‡ These vessels, part of the second expedition for the relief of Fort Sumter, were the *Baltic* (no guns), the *Pawnee* (8 9-inch guns), and the *Harriet Lane* (1 8-inch gun and 4 32-pounders). The *Pocahontas* did not arrive till the afternoon of the 13th. The expedition was in charge of Captain Gustavus V. Fox (afterward Assistant Secretary of the Navy), who had visited the fort on the 21st of March. It had been understood between Secretary Welles and Captain Fox that the movement should be supported by the *Powhatan* (1 11-inch

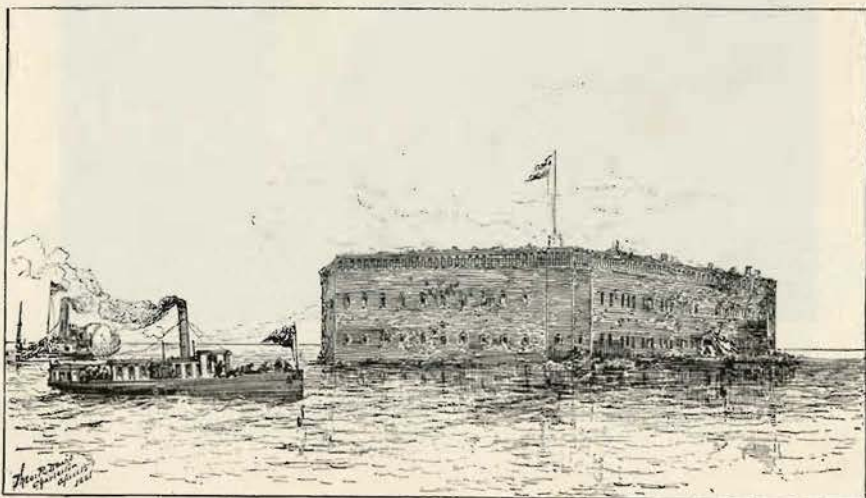
and 10 9-inch guns); but, unknown to Mr. Welles, and perhaps without full understanding of this plan, President Lincoln had consented to the dispatch of the ship to the relief of Fort Pickens, for which destination it had sailed from New York, April 6th, under command of Lieutenant David D. Porter. This conflict of plans deprived Captain Fox of the ship which he calls the "fighting portion" of his fleet; and to this circumstance he attributed the failure of the expedition.

proposed the same terms of evacuation offered on the 11th instant." We informed the major that we were not authorized to offer terms; that we were direct from General Beauregard, and that Colonel Wigfall, although an aide-de-camp to the general, had been detached, and had not seen the general for several days. Major Anderson at once stated, "There is a misunderstanding on my part, and I will at once run up my flag and open fire again." After consultation, we requested him not to do so, until the matter was explained to General Beauregard, and requested Major Anderson to reduce to writing his understanding with Colonel Wigfall, which he did. However, before we left the fort, a boat arrived from Charleston, bearing Major D. R. Jones, assistant adjutant-general on General Beauregard's staff, who offered substantially the same terms to Major Anderson as those offered on the 11th, and also by Colonel Wigfall, and which were now accepted.

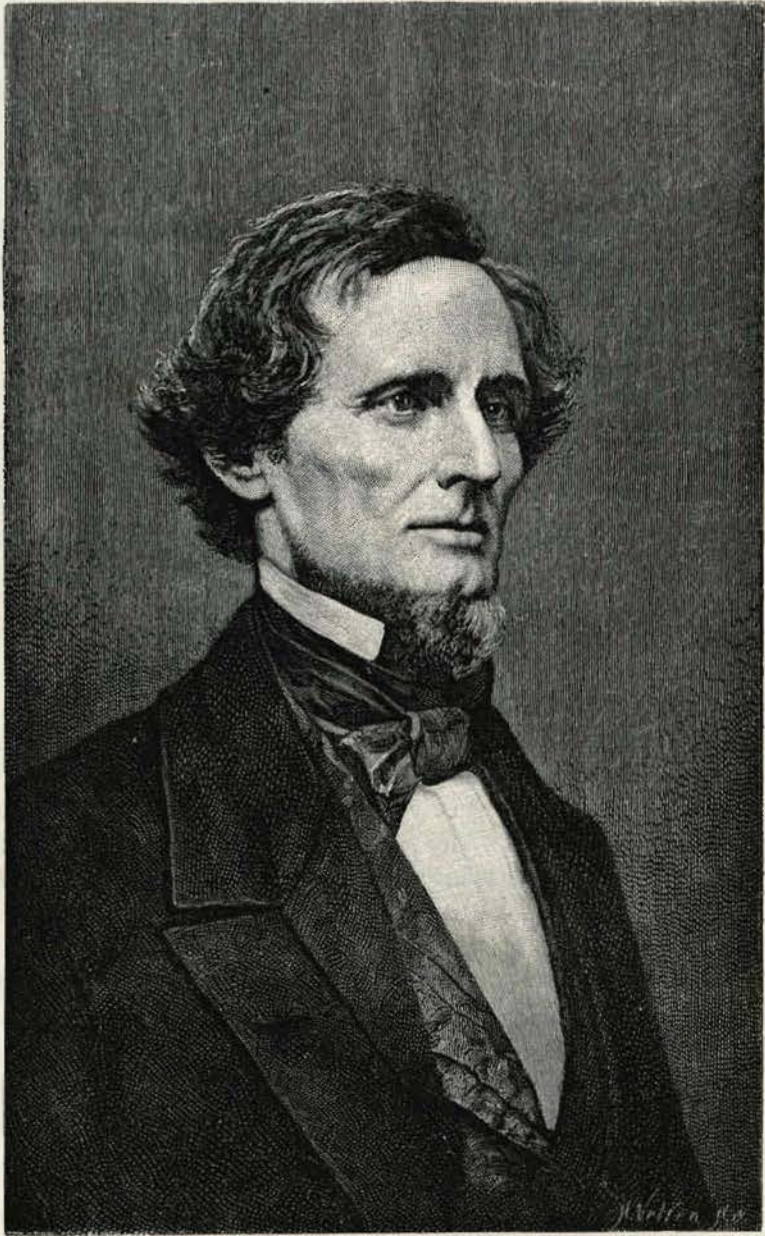
Thus fell Fort Sumter, April 13th, 1861. At this time fire was still raging in the barracks, and settling steadily over the magazine. All egress was cut off except through the lower embrasures. Many shells from the Confederate batteries, which had fallen in the fort and had not exploded, as well as the hand-grenades used for defense, were exploding as they were reached by the fire. The wind was driving the heat and smoke down into the fort and into the casemates, almost causing suffocation. Major Anderson, his officers, and men were blackened by smoke and cinders, and showed signs of fatigue and exhaustion, from the trying ordeal through which they had passed.

It was soon discovered, by conversation, that it was a bloodless battle; not a man had been killed or seriously wounded on either side during the entire bombardment of nearly forty hours. Congratulations were exchanged on so happy a result. Major Anderson stated that he had instructed his officers only to fire on the batteries and forts, and not to fire on private property.

The terms of evacuation offered by General Beauregard were generous, and were appreciated by Major Anderson. The garrison was to embark on the 14th, after running up and saluting the United States flag, and to be carried



FORT SUMTER AFTER THE BOMBARDMENT, FROM A SKETCH MADE IN APRIL, 1861.



JEFFERSON DAVIS, PRESIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA.
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

to the United States fleet. A soldier killed during the salute was buried inside the fort, the new Confederate garrison uncovering during the impressive ceremonies. Major Anderson and his command left the harbor, bearing with them the respect and admiration of the Confederate soldiers. † It was conceded that he had done his duty as a soldier holding a most delicate trust.

This first bombardment of Sumter was but its "baptism of fire." During subsequent attacks by land and water, it was battered by the heaviest Union artillery. Its walls were completely crushed, but the tons of iron projectiles imbedded in its ruins added strength to the inaccessible mass that surrounded it and made it impregnable. It was never taken, but the operations of General Sherman, after his march to the sea, compelled its evacuation, and the Stars and Stripes were again raised over it, April 14th, 1865. ‡

† The officers, under General Beauregard, of the batteries surrounding Fort Sumter were:

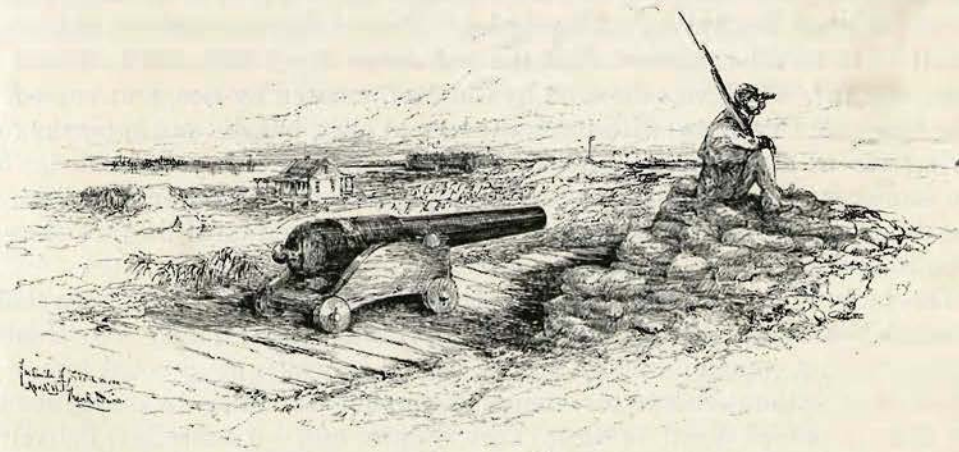
SULLIVAN'S ISLAND, Brigadier-General R. G. M. Dunovant commanding, Lieutenant-Colonel Roswell S. Ripley, commanding the artillery: *Five-gun Battery* (east of Fort Moultrie), Captain S. Y. Tupper; *Maffit Channel Battery* (2 guns) and *Mortar Battery No. 2* (2 10-inch mortars), Captain William Butler, Lieutenant J. A. Huguenin; *Fort Moultrie* (30 guns), Captain W. R. Calhoun: consisting of Channel Battery, Lieutenants Thomas M. Wagner, Preston, and Sitgreaves, Sumter Battery, Lieutenants Alfred Rhett and John Mitchell, and Oblique Battery, Lieutenant C. W. Parker; *Mortar Battery No. 1* (2 10-inch mortars) and *Enfilade Battery* (4 guns), Captain James H. Hallonquist, Lieutenants Flemming, Jacob Valentine, and B. S. Burnet; the *Point Battery* (1 9-inch Dahlgren) and the *Floating Iron-clad Battery* (2 42-pounders and 2 32-pounders), Captain John R. Hamilton and Lieutenant Joseph A. Yates; the *Mount Pleasant Battery* (2 10-inch mortars), Captain Robert Martin, Lieutenant George N. Reynolds.

MORRIS ISLAND, Brigadier-General James Simons commanding, Lieutenant-Colonel Wilmot G. De Saussure, commanding the artillery: Major P. F. Stevens, commanding *Cumming's Point Battery*

(Blakely gun, which arrived from Liverpool April 9th, Captain J. P. Thomas; 2 42-pounders, Lieutenant T. Sumter Brownfield; and 3 10-inch mortars, Lieutenants C. R. Holmes and N. Armstrong) and the *Stevens Iron-clad Battery* (3 8-inch columbiads), Captain George B. Cuthbert, Lieutenant G. L. Buist; *Trapier Battery* (3 10-inch mortars), Captain J. Gadsden King, Lieutenants W. D. H. Kirkwood, J. P. Strohecker, A. M. Huger, and E. L. Parker.

JAMES ISLAND, Major N. G. Evans commanding; *Fort Johnson* (battery of 24-pounders), Captain George S. James; *Mortar Battery*, Lieutenants W. H. Gibbes, H. S. Farley, J. E. McP. Washington, and T. B. Hayne; *Upper Battery* (2 10-inch mortars), *Lower Battery* (2 10-inch mortars), Captain S. C. Thayer.—EDITORS.

‡ Under an order from Secretary Stanton, the same flag that was lowered, April 14th, 1861, was raised again over Sumter, by Major (then General) Anderson, on April 14th, 1865, the day President Lincoln was shot. Of Major Anderson's former officers, Generals Abner Doubleday and Norman J. Hall and Chaplain Matthias Harris were present. The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher delivered an oration, and other prominent anti-slavery men attended the ceremony.—EDITORS.



VIEW OF CUMMING'S POINT. FROM A SKETCH MADE AFTER THE BOMBARDMENT.