

**THE C. S. S. ALABAMA'S ENGAGEMENT
WITH THE U. S. S. KEARSARGE**

OFFICIAL CONFEDERATE REPORTS

**Extracts from the
Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies
in the War of the Rebellion,
Series I, vol. 3, pp. 647-664.**

Letter from the C. S. commissioner to France to Captain Semmes, C. S. Navy, commanding C. S. S. Alabama, regarding permission to enter the port of Cherbourg for repairs to that vessel.

19 RUE DE MARIGNAN,
Paris, June 12, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR: I wrote you a few lines last evening in reply to your dispatch announcing arrival of the Alabama.

I have received to day from Mr. Bonfils a dispatch* requesting me to apply to the Government for authority to enter the port of Cherbourg for repairs I have consulted a friend at the ministry of foreign affairs on this subject, and he agrees with me that it is not necessary, for the present at least, that I should make the application, and that to do so would imply a doubt of the same facilities being afforded to the Alabama as were extended to the Georgia and Florida. I did so apply in the case of the Florida, and on the first arrival of the Georgia, but did not when the Georgia returned to Bordeaux, where she was very cordially received without any intervention of mine. I do not expect any difficulty in your case, but should any arise I will then act. I at this moment have an unpleasant correspondence about the Rappahannock, detained at Calais, but I hope to see the matter satisfactorily arranged in a few days. This is an additional reason why I do not wish to take any superfluous action in your case.

I have informed Flag-Officer S. Barron of your arrival at Cherbourg. He is the senior officer of our Navy in Europe, to whom I suppose that it will be proper for you to report, His address is No. 30 Rue Drouot, Paris.

Be pleased to inform Mr. Bonfils of the substance of this letter.

Very truly, yours,
JOHN SLIDELL.

Captain R. SEMMES, C. S. Navy,
Cherbourg.

*Not Found

(Official Records, Series I, vol. 3, pp. 647)

Letter from Captain Semmes, C. S. Navy, commanding C. S. S. Alabama, to the C. S. commissioner to France, regarding person for repairs to that vessel in the port of Cherbourg.

C. S. S. ALABAMA,
Cherbourg, June 13, 1864.

DEAR SIR: I have had the honor to receive your two notes of the 11th and 12th instant. I think you are quite right in taking no steps in regard to the repairs of the Alabama, unless objection be first made by the Government, which I do not anticipate. Mr. Bonfils telegraphed you on his own responsibility, without my knowing anything of the matter.

Though our right to the use of docks and other facilities for necessary repairs (that is, for putting a ship in statu quo, without strengthening or otherwise putting her in a better condition for the purposes of war than she was originally) is unquestionable under the rules of neutrality, yet I think there is some disposition on the part of the authorities to object to the marked preference which our ships have shown of late [for] the ports of France. Indeed, the admiral expressed as much to me this morning in an interview I had with him. He laid some stress, too, upon the fact that Cherbourg was exclusively a naval station, all the docks of which belonged to the Government, intimating that it would have been better if I had gone to Havre or Bordeaux. I combated these objections by telling him that, so far at least as the Alabama was concerned, no unpleasant preference had been shown for French ports, as this was the first one at which I had asked for repairs, having almost constantly frequented English ports; and that the uniform practice of nations was to admit ships of war into public docks where there were no private docks available. I was received very courteously, however, and our conversation was of a very friendly nature. He ended by informing me that the matter had been referred to the minister of marine, who just now was out of Paris, and hence the delay. I do not apprehend any difficulty. I think the case too plain.

I was gratified to learn that Flag-Officer Barron was in Paris, and I have officially reported to him my arrival. I hope that Mrs. Slidell and the young ladies are well, and that your sojourn in Paris is at least personally agreeable to you. But you have no doubt long since learned, like myself, that there is a great deal of wisdom in the lesson taught us in the Good Book, "Put not your trust in princes."

I am, very truly and respectfully, yours,
R. FEMMES.

[Hon. JOHN SLIDELL.]

(Official Records, Series I, vol. 3, pp. 647-648)

Letter from Captain Semmes, C. S. Navy, commanding C. S. S. Alabama, to Ad. Bonfils, esq., conveying challenge to U. S. S. Kearsarge.

C. S. S. ALABAMA,
Cherbourg, June 14, 1864.

SIR: I hear that you were informed by the U. S. consul that the Kearsarge was to come to this port solely for the prisoners landed by me, and that he was to depart in twenty-four hours. I desire to say to the U. S. consul that my intention is to fight the Kearsarge as soon as I can make the necessary arrangements. I hope these will not detain me more than until to-morrow evening, or after the morrow morning at furthest. I beg she will not depart before I am ready to go out.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
R. SEMMES,
Captain.

Ad. BONFILS, Esq.,
Cherbourg.

(Official Records, Series I, vol. 3, pp. 648)

Report of Flag-Officer Barron, C. S. Navy, transmitting official report of Captain Semmes, C. S. Navy, commanding C. S. S. Alabama, of the engagement of that vessel with U. S. S. Kearsarge, off Cherbourg, June 19, 1864.

PARIS, June 27, 1864.

Hon. S. R. MALLORY,
Secretary of the Navy, Richmond, Va.

SIR: I have the honor to forward herewith a copy of Captain Semmes official report of the fight between the Alabama and the U. S. S. Kearsarge. I also enclose copies of letters received by me from Captain Semmes since his arrival in Cherbourg, which may not be uninteresting in this connection. It is true that we have lost our ship; the ubiquitous, gallant Alabama is no more, but we have lost no honor, and have gained many friends and admirers. The ship's going down in full sight of the thousands of spectators in Cherbourg, who had assembled for the purpose of witnessing this naval engagement, has lifted up the proverbial spirit of enthusiastic devotion in the French nation to chivalrous conduct to a high pitch of excitement, and Semmes is far more a hero now than before his gallant resolve to meet his heavier opponent.

He saw and calmly and intelligently considered and weighed all the elements of superiority in the enemy, within his knowledge and belief, before going out, and it is proper for me to say that I entirely acquiesced in his determination to meet the Kearsarge, believing as I then did that the general greater force of the enemy in number of men and weight of metal was not sufficient to discourage the confident expectation of victory entertained by the officers and crew of the Alabama. Until after the battle neither he nor I knew anything of the complete protection given to her vital sections by the chain armor which she wore. I had heard of an iron sheathing of 1 inches thickness about her machinery. The wounded who were landed in Cherbourg are in the naval hospital, well cared for and kindly treated. The rest of the men were paroled, and have since been paid off and discharged. Captain Semmes is now in Southampton with the remainder of the crew, who are to be paid off and discharged as soon as the paymaster shall have reached that place. Dr. Llewellyn was drowned, and Carpenter William Robinson died of his wounds on board the Kearsarge. The rest of the officers are safe.

Lieutenant J. D. Wilson, First Assistant Engineer M. J. Freeman, Third Assistant Engineer J. Pundt, and Boatswain Benjamin P. McCaskey are on the Kearsarge, not paroled, and are to be taken to the United States in the Kearsarge, as I hear.

I send a complete list of the officers, and also the names of the crew who were killed or drowned.

Whenever Semmes and his officers are sufficiently recruited to return to the Confederacy I shall direct them to report to you.

I have just received the letters from the crew of the Rappahannock and Lieutenant Commanding Fauntleroy, copies of which I send, as they so handsomely express the sympathy and zeal felt for our holy cause by all those who engaged in it.

I shall write again next week, via Bermuda. All the officers who belonged to the Georgia will return by that route.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
S. BARRON,
Flag-Officer.

[Enclosures.]

SOUTHAMPTON, June 21, 1864.

Flag-Officer SAMUEL BARRON, C. S. S. Navy,
Paris.

SIR: I have the honor to inform you, in accordance with my intention as previously announced to you, I steamed out of the harbor of Cherbourg between 9 and 10 o'clock on the morning of June 19 for the purpose of engaging the enemy's steamer Kearsarge, which had been lying off and on the port for several days previously. After clearing the harbor we descried the enemy, with his head offshore, at a distance of about 9 miles. We were three-quarters of an

hour in coming up with him. I had previously pivoted my guns to starboard, and made all my preparations for engaging the enemy on that side. When within about a mile and a quarter of the enemy he suddenly wheeled, and bringing his head inshore presented his starboard battery to me. By this time we were distant about I mile from each other, when I opened on him with solid shot, to which he replied in a few minutes, and the engagement became active on both sides. The enemy now pressed his ship under a full head of steam, and to prevent our passing each other too speedily, and to keep our respective broadsides bearing, it became necessary to fight in a circle, the two ships steaming around a common center and preserving a distance from each other of from a quarter to half a mile. When we got within good shell range, we opened upon him with shell. Some ten or fifteen minutes after the commencement of the action our spanker gaff was shot away and our ensign came down by the run. This was immediately replaced by another at the mizzenmast, head. The firing now became very hot, and the enemy's shot and shell soon began to tell upon our hull, knocking down, killing, and disabling a number of men in different parts of the ship. Perceiving that our shell, though apparently exploding against the enemy's sides, were doing but little damage, I returned to solid shot firing, and from this time onward alternated with shot and shell. After the lapse of about one hour and ten minutes our ship was ascertained to be in a sinking condition, the enemy's shell having exploded in our sides and between decks, opening large apertures, through which the water rushed with great rapidity. For some few minutes I had hopes of being able to reach the French coast, for which purpose I gave the ship all steam and set such of the fore-and-aft sails as were available. The ship filled so rapidly, however, that before we had made much progress the fires were extinguished in the furnaces, and we were evidently on the point of sinking. I now hauled down my colors to prevent the further destruction of life, and dispatched a boat to inform the enemy of our condition. Although we were now but 400 yards from each other, the enemy fired upon me five times after my colors had been struck, dangerously wounding several of my men. It is charitable to suppose that a ship of war of a Christian nation could not have done this intentionally. We now turned all our exertions toward the wounded and such of the boys as were unable to swim. These were dispatched in my quarter boats, the only boats remaining to me, the waist boats having been torn to pieces.

Some twenty minutes after my furnace fires had been extinguished, and the ship being on the point of settling, every man, in obedience to a previous order which had been given to the crew, jumped overboard and endeavored to save himself. There was no appearance of any boat coming to me from the enemy until after the ship went down. Fortunately, however, the steam yacht Deerhound, owned by a gentleman of Lancashire, England (Mr. John Lancaster), who was himself on board, steamed up in the midst of my drowning men and rescued a number of both officers and men from the water. I was fortunate enough myself thus to escape to the shelter of the neutral flag, together with about forty others, all told. About this time the Kearsarge sent one and then, tardily, another boat.

Accompanying you will find lists of the killed and wounded, and of those who were picked up by the Deerhound. The remainder there is reason to hope were picked up by the enemy and by a couple of French pilot boats, which were also fortunately near the scene of action. At the end of the engagement it was discovered by those of our officers who went alongside the enemy's ship with the wounded that her midship section on both sides was thoroughly iron-coated, this having been done with chains constructed for the purpose, placed perpendicularly from the rail to the water's edge, the whole covered over by a thin outer planking, which gave no indication of the armor beneath. This planking had been ripped off in every direction by our shot and shell, the chain broken and indented in many places, and forced partly into the ship's side. She was most effectually guarded, however, in this section from penetration. The enemy was much damaged in other parts, but to what extent it is now impossible to tell. It is believed he was badly crippled.

My officers and men behaved steadily and gallantly, and though they have lost their ship they have not lost honor. We here all behaved so well it would be invidious to particularize; but I can not deny myself the pleasure of saying that Mr. Kell, my first lieutenant, deserves great credit for the fine condition in which the ship went into action, with regard to her battery, magazine, and shell rooms; also that he rendered me great assistance by his coolness and judgment as the fight proceeded.

The enemy was heavier than myself, both in ship, battery, and crew; but I did not know until the action was over that she was also ironclad. Our total loss in killed and wounded is 30, to wit, 9 killed and 21 wounded.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
R. SEMMES,
Captain.

C. S. S. ALABAMA,
Cherbourg, June 13, 1864.

Flag-Officer SAMUEL BARRON, C. S. Navy,
Paris.

SIR: I have just been informed by the Hon. Mr. Slidell of your presence in Paris. I have the honor to report to you the arrival of this ship at this place in want of repairs. She will require to be recoppered, refastened in some places, and to have her boilers pretty extensively repaired, all of which will probably detain her a couple of months. I shall have sufficient funds at my command to pay off officers and crew, but will require money for repairs. As soon as I receive permission from the admiral here to go into dock I propose to give my men leave for an extended run on shore, many of them being in indifferent health, in consequence of their long detention on shipboard and on salt diet. The officers also will expect a similar indulgence.

As for myself, my health has suffered so much from a constant and harassing service of three years, almost continuously at sea, that I shall have to ask for relief.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
R. SEMMES,
Captain.

C. S. S. ALABAMA,
Cherbourg, June 14, 1864.

Flag-Officer S. BARRON.

DEAR BARRON: The Kearsarge is off the port, which I understand, of course, as a challenge. As we are about equally matched, I shall go out to engage her as soon as I can make the necessary preparations, which will probably be to-morrow. As the issue of combats is always uncertain, I have deposited 4 sacks of sovereigns, containing about 4,700, and the paymaster's last pay roll with Mr. Ad. Bonfils, of Cherbourg, a gentleman known to Mr. Slidell.

I have also deposited a package of ransom bonds (sealed), all of which please bear in mind in case of accident.

Yours, truly, etc.,
R. SEMMES.

C S. S. ALABAMA,
Cherbourg, June 14, 1864.

Flag-Officer S. BARRON,
Paris.

DEAR BARRON: I have received your note of the 12th instant and am much obliged to you for the kind expressions it contains. I was truly glad to learn that you were in Paris, as we have long felt the want of some superior officer to give direction to naval affairs on this side of the water. I was glad to hear, too, that you had a good supply of officers with you, as the Alabama's are pretty well fagged out. I should of course have reported to you in the first instance if I had known you were in Europe. I wrote to you officially yesterday. Up to this moment I have received no intelligence from the authorities here as to my being permitted to go into dock. I saw the admiral yesterday. He received me very courteously, and was kind enough to say some agreeable things; but I suppose this is French. He seemed to think, however, that our cruisers were beginning to show rather too much partiality for French ports and French docks, while they avoided the ports of England and other nations. I told him that I had almost uniformly frequented English ports heretofore (in several of which I had effected repairs) and that this was the first French port in which the Alabama, at least, had asked for repairs. He then spoke of Cherbourg being exclusively a

naval station, all the docks of which belonged to the Government, and that we would seem to be making use of the public docks and arsenals of France to refit our ships to continue their war upon the enemy. In reply to this last remark I stated that it was the uniform practice of nations, in war as well as in peace, to give the use of public docks where there were no private ones available. He finally informed me that the matter had been referred to the Government at Paris, and as all the Latin races are proverbially slow in their movements, I suppose we must have a little patience. I apprehend no difficulty; but should the Emperor make the objection urged by the admiral, of the public dock question, I am ready at any moment to proceed elsewhere, say to Havre.

I hope you find Paris an agreeable change from Fort Warren, where the Yankees incarcerated you so long.

Yours, truly, etc.,
R. SEMMES.

C. S. S. ALABAMA,
Cherbourg, June 16, 1864.

Flag-Officer SAML. BARRON, C. S. Navy,
Paris.

SIR: I have received your letter of the 14th instant, in reply to mine of the 13th. The position of the Alabama here has been somewhat changed since I wrote you. The enemy's steamer, the Kearsarge, having appeared off this port, and being but very little heavier, if any, in her armament than myself, I have deemed it my duty to go out and engage her. I have therefore withdrawn for the present my application to go into dock, and am engaged in coaling ship. I hope to be ready to go out to-morrow or the next day.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
R. SEMMES,
Captain.

SOUTHAMPTON, June 21, 1864.

Flag-Officer SAMUEL BARRON, C. S. Navy.

SIR: Paymaster Galt was captured by the enemy. I think it likely he will be released on parole. If so, do me the favor to order him immediately to Cherbourg, to regain possession of his money, pay roll, and ransom bonds, and dispatch him to this place to pay off the officers and crew. Should Paymaster Galt not be released, please detail as promptly as convenient another paymaster to perform this duty. The funds having been deposited to the order of Dr. Galt, some difficulty may be experienced in getting the money out of the banker's hands without the doctor's draft. But I presume that this can be easily arranged by yourself and Mr. Slidell by explaining the matter to the banker, and by giving him a bond, if necessary, to save him harmless from any future claim on the part of Dr. Galt.

I have billeted the men about the town, and expedition in the matter will save expense.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
R. SEMMES,
Captain.

(Official Records, Series I, vol. 3, pp. 648-653)

Report of Lieutenant Armstrong, C. S. Navy, late C. S. S. Alabama, of his rescue from drowning after the engagement off Cherbourg.

CHERBOURG, June 21, 1864.

Flag-Officer SAML. BARRON, C. S. Navy,
Paris.

SIR: I have the honor to report for your information the circumstances attending my rescue from drowning by a French pilot boat after the Alabama went down. I was wounded in the side by a part of a shell early in the action, and suffered so much pain in the water that had it not been for the exertions of the Alabama's crew I would certainly have gone down. One of the Kearsarge's boats was very near me, but laid on its oars and made no exertion whatever that I could see to save me, the officer apparently looking for some particular person. I made great exertions to reach the French boat, and was finally pulled into her so benumbed by cold and suffering so much from my bruised side that I could not stand, and for two hours was as helpless as a child. I had on, while near the Kearsarge's boat, my uniform cap, which the Federal officer could certainly have seen.

The officers who were saved with me were Second Assistant Engineer William P. Brooks and Acting Sailmaker Henry Alcott. What time they got on board of the boat I can not say. I found when my faculties returned the following men on board with me:

Charles Godwin, captain after guard; James Welsh, captain top; George Edgerton, ordinary seaman; Thomas Murphy, fireman; William Robinson, seaman, and Morris Britt, boy.

As I got on board of the pilot boat I saw Michael Mars (seaman) plunge from the Kearsarge's boat and swim to the boat which I was in. The Federal officer said nothing, attempted nothing, appearing perfectly stupefied by the bold action of this brave man.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
R. F. ARMSTRONG,
Second Lieutenant, C. S. Navy

(Official Records, Series I, vol. 3, pp. 648-653)

List of officers on board the C. S. S. Alabama, June 19, 1864

Raphael Semmes, captain.	Miles J. Freeman, chief engineer.
John McIntosh Kell, first lieutenant.	William P. Brooks, second assistant engineer
R. F. Armstrong, second lieutenant.	Matthew O'Brien, third assistant engineer
Joseph D. Wilson, third lieutenant.	John Pundt, third assistant engineer
Arthur Sinclair, jr., master.	William Robertson, third assistant engineer
George T. Fulham, master's mate.	B. K. Howell, lieutenant marines.
James Evans, master's mate.	W. Breedlove Smith, captain's clerk.
Max Von Meulnier, master's mate.	Benjamin P. McCaskey, boatswain.
Julius Schroeder, master's mate.	Thomas C. Cuddy, gunner.
Irvine S. Bulloch, midshipman.	William Robinson, carpenter
Eugene A. Maffitt, midshipman.	Henry Alcott, sailmaker.
E. M. Anderson, midshipman.	
Francis L. Galt, surgeon.	
D. Herbert Llewellyn, acting surgeon.	

[Officers, 25; crew, 120.]

(Official Records, Series I, vol. 3, pp. 654)

Letter from the C. S. commissioner to France to Captain Semmes, C. S. Navy, late commanding C.S. S. Alabama, expressing approval of his course in engaging the U. S. S. Kearsarge.

PARIS, June 21, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR: Allow me to congratulate you on your safe arrival in England with the larger portion of your gallant officers. At the same time I desire to say that your course in going to meet the Kearsarge commands my most unqualified admiration. It may perhaps seem to you that this declaration is uncalled for but I am induced to make it because I learn that too many of our Confederates in Paris entertain and express a different opinion, although I have no doubt that had the combat resulted in the capture of the enemy they would have been the loudest in extolling, not only your courage, but your gallantry and judgment. I wish you also to know that our estimable friend and agent at Cherbourg, Mr. Bonfils, animated by the kindest and best motives, wrote to urge me to exert any influence that I might possess to dissuade you from the encounter. This I declined to do in a letter which I hope soon to have the pleasure of showing you here. It is now pretended that permission had been given for the entry of the Alabama into the military port for repairs. This I know not to have been the case, but I would be very much obliged to have from you a full statement of all that passed on that subject. The authorities here feel that they have incurred a very grave responsibility by the course pursued toward you, and are naturally anxious to escape from it. This is more especially the case with the minister of foreign affairs, as I learn from the gentleman at the foreign affairs through whom I applied yesterday for an audience. I received also immediately a visit from him, saying that the minister would be most happy to see me to-day at 1:30 p. m. As that hour has almost arrived, I write in haste.

Yours, truly, JOHN SLIDELL.

Captain R. SEMMES, C. S. Navy.

(Official Records, Series I, vol. 3, pp. 654)

Unofficial report of Flag-Officer Barron, C. S. Navy, commanding naval force in Europe, of the engagement between C. S. S. Alabama and U. S. S. Kearsarge.

PARIS, June 22, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR: Long ere this reaches Richmond you will doubtless have heard of the fate of our gallant Alabama. I have not as yet heard anything official or direct from Semmes, but the facts which I shall give you I am assured in the main are correct. The copies of Captain Semmes's several letters to me, which I enclose herewith, will inform you of the march of events as they occurred up to the morning of Sunday, the 19th, when the Alabama left the harbor of Cherbourg for the purpose of engaging the Kearsarge. The newspaper slips which I enclose give a generally correct account of the battle. The Alabama went down in 10 fathoms water, the 11-inch shells having alone done the work of destruction. They passed through the coal bunkers on both sides (making nearly 15 feet of coal), through the engine room, and passing out on the opposite side. The confidence of the officers and crew of victory, barring the accidents of all naval combats, was complete. These accidental shots, such as breaking the sternpost, hitting the rudder, entering the boilers or magazines, an 11-inch shell exploding in the sides at or near the water line etc., were all considered calmly and intelligently, and properly appreciated. There is an element of defense, however, in the Kearsarge of which we were all ignorant; that is, the complete armature of iron chains slung along the ship's sides in the wake of her machinery, and which resisted all our shot and shell, 110 further harm having been done than the breaking of a link of chain here and there. The officers and men who were on board the Kearsarge as prisoners report that her people say that those chains were all that saved them. The gunnery on both sides seems to have been most excellent. I am pleased to say that the courtesy and kindness of the officers and crew of the K[earsarge] to ours while on board as prisoners was all that could be desired. Captain Winslow has paroled all our men (sixty-three in number), but I regret to say that Mr. Dayton has ordered the officers (only four in number) not to be paroled, but sent to the United States in the Kearsarge. Those four officers are allowed to go on shore in Cherbourg as much as they desire on a parole to report daily and return on board when called to do so. Lieutenant Armstrong, two other officers (sailmaker and gunner, I believe), and six men are in Cherbourg, having escaped from the wreck in a French pilot boat. Forty-two persons, including Semmes, Kell, and eleven other officers, have arrived in England, S[emmes] slightly wounded in the right hand. Total number of persons on board, 143; 110 known to be safe, 30 missing, 13 of the number known to have been killed outright. The assistant surgeon was certainly drowned; the residue supposed to have gone down with the ship. I have directed all the crew in Cherbourg to be paid off and discharged. The sick in the hospital will be kept on the books and paid until they are cured. The wounded are received into the Government hospitals at Cherbourg, and every kindness and professional attendance has been shown by the authorities at that place. Indeed, the sympathy for the Alabama seems to be very nearly universal, L'Opinion Nationale being the only journal that has said a harsh or unkind word. This paper is known to be the mouthpiece of Dayton. I shall order the officers to return to the Confederacy when they are ready to do so. Two of our surgeons were immediately directed to repair to Cherbourg when we heard of the landing of our wounded. One of them will remain with them. From all accounts that have reached me, there never was a finer, more resolute, and determined set of fellows on board of a ship than the men composing the crew of this ship—perfectly well drilled and disciplined, and enthusiastically attached to their ship and officers. I hope to have it in my power to write you officially or more fully by the Nassau mail next week. This I hope to get off by the A. D. Vance. As you see, this is written in haste and doubtless somewhat incoherently.

I am ordering the Georgia's officers home by the first opportunity, and perhaps others will soon follow.

I have reason to believe that the commission appointed to investigate the case of the Rajppahannock has unanimously decided that there is no cause for detention. When this decision will be made known to us is matter of doubt. We have hopes that we may arm her on this side of the Atlantic.

With respect and esteem, very truly, yours,

[S. BARRON.]

Hon. S. It. MALLORY,
Richmond, Va.

(Official Records, Series I, vol. 3, pp. 654-656)

Letter from the C. S. commissioner to England to John Lancaster, esq., expressing thanks for the rescue by the yacht Deerhound of the crew of the C. S. S. Alabama.

24 UPPER SEYMOUR STREET, PORTMAN SQUARE,
London, June 21, 1864.

DEAR SIR: I received from Captain Semmes at Southampton, where I had the pleasure to see you yesterday, a full report of the efficient service rendered under your orders by the officers and crew of your - yacht, the Deerhound, in rescuing him, with thirteen of his officers and twenty-seven of his crew, from their impending fate after the loss of his ship.

Captain Semmes reports that, finding the Alabama actually sinking, he had barely time to dispatch his wounded in his own boats to the enemy's ship, when the Alabama went down; that nothing was left to those who remained on board but to throw themselves into the sea; their own boats absent, there seemed no prospect of relief when your yacht arrived in their midst and your boats were launched; and he impressively told me that to this timely and generous succor he, with most of his officers and a portion of his crew, were indebted for their safety. He further told me that on their arrival on board the yacht every care and kindness was extended to them which their exhausted condition required, even to supplying all with dry clothing.

I am fully aware of the noble and disinterested spirit which prompted you to go to the rescue of the gallant crew of the Alabama, and that I can add nothing to the recompense already received by you and those acting under you in the consciousness of having "done as you would be done by;" yet you will permit me to thank you, and through you the captain, officers, and crew of the Deerhound, for this signal service, and to say that in doing so I but anticipate the grateful sentiment of my country and of the Government of the Confederate States.

I have the honor to be, dear sir, most respectfully and truly, your obedient servant,

[J. M. MASON.]

JOHN LANCASTER, Esq.,
Hindley Hall, Wigan [England].

(Official Records, Series I, vol. 3, p. 656)

Letter from John Lancaster, esq., to the C. S. commissioner to England, acknowledging his letter of thanks for the rescue of the crew of the C. S. S Alabama.

HINDLEY HALL,
Near Wigan [England], June 24, 1864.

DEAR SIR: I am in due receipt of your esteemed favor of the 21st instant, and am gratified to find that the timely aid we rendered with the yacht Deerhound to the gallant captain and officers and crew of the Alabama has met with your approval. I shall always look back to that event with satisfaction, however much we may regret the result which necessitated interference. Yours, very respectfully,
JOHN LANCASTER.

Hon. J. M. MASON.

(Official Records, Series I, vol. 3, pp. 656-657)

Letter from Captain Semmes, C. S. Navy, late commanding C. S. S. Alabama, regarding rescued crew of the C. S. S. Alabama.

THE MANOR HOUSE, MILLBROOK,
Near Southampton, June 28, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to inform you that before I can get a reply to this I will have finished paying off the officers and crew of the late C. S. S. Alabama, and request that you will instruct me if I am empowered to grant leave to the officers to return to the Confederate States, and what amount I shall allow for their passage money, and also whether the acting appointments made by myself, including that of my clerk, continue until their return home or terminate with the loss of the ship. There may be some of the officers who may desire to remain and run the chances of getting on board of another ship. Will they be permitted to do so? If so, I will order them to report to you by letter. I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. SEMMES,
Captain, C. S. Navy.

Flag-Officer S. BARRON.

P.S.—Can you give me any information of Lieutenant Kell's promotion; and if so, the date of such promotion ?

(Official Records, Series I, vol. 3, p. 657)

Letter from Flag-Officer Barron, C. S. Navy, commanding naval force in Europe, to Captain Semmes, C. S. Navy, late commanding C. S. S. Alabama, responding to his communication regarding the crew of the C. S. S. Alabama,

30 RUE DROUOT,
Paris, June 30, 1864.

SIR: Your letter of the 28th is received. You are authorized to order the officers lately belonging to the Alabama, under your command, to return to the Confederacy. Four hundred dollars is considered sufficient. Please direct the officers to return any amount of gold they may have on hand after getting to the South to the Navy Department. There will be no service in Europe for any of the officers of the A[labama]. The officers of the ~eorgia are to return in the next steamer, via Bermuda.

The acting appointments made by you I incline to believe hold good until their return to the Confederacy.

I regret to say that I have no information of Mr. Kell's promotion, though his brother officers here speak of it with confidence in the belief.

[S. BARRON.]

[R. SEMMES,
Captain.]

(Official Records, Series I, vol. 3, p. 657)

Report of the C. S. commissioner to France to the Confederate Secretary of State, regarding interviews with French officials in the matter of the C. S. steamers Alabama and Rappahannock.

PARIS, June 30, 1364.

Sir: On the 17th instant I informed you of the arrival of the Alabama, and before you can receive this dispatch the Northern papers will have informed you of the unfortunate but heroic close of [her] brilliant and eventful history. As several newspapers have attributed to me a direct and controlling agency in this matter, I think it proper to inform you what it has been, and I can not, perhaps, better do so than by sending you copies of a letter from Mr. Bonfils, a gent of the Alabama at Cherbourg, my response thereto, and a paragraph* [* Not found] from the Constitutional of 24th instant, inserted at my request. My letter to Mr. Bonfils was written with the view that its substance might be made known to the naval authorities at Cherbourg, as I supposed it probably would be, and thus reach the Government.

As I desired to see Mr. Mocquard, I went on the morning of the 19th to Fontainebleau, where the Emperor has been staying for some time past. I took the occasion to inform him, Mr. de Persigny, and the Prince Murat of what was probably then going on near Cherbourg, and my apprehension of the result of a contest which had been in a great degree forced upon Captain Semmes by the manner in which he had been received there. I informed them that the admiral prefect, while personally most courteous to Captain Semmes, had, prompted no doubt by instructions from Paris, hinted that the frequent visits of our ships to French ports, and especially to those devoted to the military marine, were not agreeable to the Government, and suggested that the repairs of the Alabama could be more conveniently made at Havre or at Bordeaux, and that the minister of foreign affairs had sent me a message very much to the same effect by Bishop Lynch.

All these gentlemen were much pained by these statements, and promised to communicate them to the Emperor.

This passed on the race course, where the Emperor had not made his appearance. Soon after his arrival Prince Murat sought me out to let me know of the loss of the Alabama, which had just been communicated to the Emperor by telegraph, and at which he was, as the prince said, deeply grieved. He had repeated to the Emperor what I had said about the withholding the permission to enter the military port, where alone the required repairs could be effected. The Emperor said that I was mistaken, as the permission had been granted. I told the prince that I hoped that such would prove to be the case, but the agent of the ship, writing the evening previous, spoke of his confidence that the permission would be granted, thus negating the idea that it had already been accorded. I asked the prince if he were sure not to have misunderstood the Emperor about the permission. He said that he was quite sure, but that he would recur to the subject and let me know. In a few moments he returned and said that the Emperor had repeated his assurance that the permission had been given. The next day I called on my friend at the foreign affairs to ask an interview with the minister, and told him that I made the request for the purpose of having a categorical answer about the Rappahannock; that I attributed the loss of the Alabama to her unfriendly reception by the authorities of Cherbourg, acting under instructions from Paris, and that it was time that I should know definitively on what footing the Confederate flag was to be hereafter received.

I very soon after had a visit from my friend, who said that the minister sincerely regretted the loss of the Alabama; that he was sorry to hear that I considered his attitude toward my Government unfriendly; that he had great respect for me personally, etc., and that he would be most happy to see me the next day, when he would be prepared to make all needful explanations about the Rappahannock. I accordingly called on him, He commenced the conversation by saying that not only he, but every one connected with the Government, was profoundly affected at the loss of the Alabama; that he was not indulging in sentimentalities ("qu'il ne faisait pas de sentiment"), but sincerely felt all that he expressed. I said that candor compelled me to declare that I thought either his department or that of the minister of marine was mainly responsible for the loss of life and property which had occurred, for if the permission to enter the military port had been accorded the point of honor which had induced Captain Semmes to encounter a superior foe would not have been raised.

He said that the permission had been given. I replied that I was differently informed, and that the message which he had sent me by Bishop Lynch and the conversations of Captain Semmes with the admiral prefect, in which the latter had hinted that the Alabama could be more conveniently repaired at Havre or Bordeaux, had authorized the belief either that the permission would not be granted at all or reluctantly, after delays which would be humiliating. The minister said that he would ask the minister of marine for copies of all the correspondence and orders in relation to the Alabama, and would communicate them to me. I said that I regretted to be obliged to say that I had observed for some months past a growing disposition to treat my Government with scant courtesy, and that even the neutrality

which the Emperor had proclaimed was not observed towards us. The minister, with some appearance of temper, here interposed and said that was a question which he would not permit himself to discuss; the Government had desired to observe the strictest neutrality, and believed that they had done so, but that the best evidence of the fact was the constant complaints of Mr. Dayton of the partiality shown towards the Confederacy; that while the Emperor had the warmest sympathies with the Confederate cause, sympathies which were freely avowed, he was determined not to be drawn by indirection into conflict with the Northern Government; that if such conflict were to come it must be in pursuance of a policy openly declared, and when no fault could justly be attributed to him.

I said that I was quite willing to abandon a subject which was as disagreeable to me as to him; that I had not come to speak of the Alabama~ that topic had been introduced by him; that I had asked an interview for the purpose of knowing distinctly what was to be done with the Rappahannock; that she had been detained without cause assigned for more than four months, and that I could not obtain a written response to my various communications on that subject. I hoped now to have a verbal one. He said that he had not replied to my communications because he was not prepared to give a conclusive answer; that he had written the day previous to the president of the senate, asking for an early report, and so soon as that should be received he would decide what should be done and would inform me of his decision.

This matter disposed of, I said that I was about to ask a question, and that if he found it indiscreet it should be considered as not made. Had the sentiments of the Emperor become from any cause less kindly (mons bienveillant) towards the Confederacy? That I was quite at a loss to imagine any such cause, but that in relation to the ships we had been induced to build by his suggestions, and for which we had expended large sums of money, raised with great inconvenience and sacrifice, we had been treated with extreme harshness; it was difficult to account for such a sudden change of policy if there were no corresponding change of feeling. He said with a significant smile: "That is a matter of which I am of course ignorant; but I can assure you that the feeling of the Emperor is unchanged; he is, as he always has been, prepared to recognize your Government; but he will not act alone." I asked what effect the decisive failure of Grant's campaign against Richmond, of which I hoped soon to have intelligence, would have on the question of recognition. He said he supposed it would lead to direct and earnest official appeals to the British Government for common action in the matter, but whether they would be more effectual than previous overtures he could not tell; but he could not well see how in such a case any ministry, whether Whig or Conservative, could refuse its adherence.

I do not recollect anything else, material that was said. The minister, on my leaving, repeated his regrets at the catastrophe of the Alabama, disclaiming all affectation of sentiment, expressed the hope that we should soon hear of a decisive defeat of Grant, and promised an early decision in the case of the Rappahannock.

From what I have said in previous dispatches you will form your own judgment of the value of any declarations of Mr. [Drouyn] de Lhuys. I have obtained from a confidential source a copy of the dispositive of the report of the consultative committee in the case of the Rappahannock. It runs thus:

The committee is of the opinion that it is only under the condition of reducing the force of the crew to the number of men who were on the ship on the day she put into harbor, and after the accomplishment of this condition, that the Government of the Emperor will raise the interdiction to go to sea which has been pronounced against the Confederate ship Rappahannock.

I annex a copy of a letter addressed by me to the Duke de Persigny on the subject of the Rappahannock, written at his suggestion, that he might lay it before the Emperor, which he has done.

I called on the 27th instant on the minister of marine to make, at the instance of Mr. Bonfils, enquiry whether the admiral prefect was instructed to demand the release of four officers of the Alabama paroled to return when required on board the Kearsarge, when they should so have returned. I did this because Mr. Bonfils and other officers were very confident that such instructions had been given, although quite certain that they were misinformed, as proved to be the case. I had a very long conversation with the minister upon our affairs generally, in which he seemed to take a deep and friendly interest. He confirmed what I hear from all quarters, that the affair of the Alabama had awakened the warmest sympathy throughout the country, and was producing the most beneficial effect upon public opinion; that while we had lost some valuable lives and a ship that had proved capable of good service, we were compensated a hundredfold by the prestige which everywhere, but above all in France, attaches to chivalrous daring and the jealous observation of the point of honor, and that the material loss could not be weighed against the moral gain.

The minister introduced the question of the Rappahannock, to which I had intended to make no allusion. He said that it was altogether a very unfortunate affair; that if it had not occurred there would have been no hesitation in admitting the Alabama or any other of our vessels into the imperial dockyards; that it had led to a more rigorous

course in regard to the vessel building at Bordeaux and Kantes; that the question had long since passed from him to the minister of foreign affairs; that he was in no degree responsible for the delays that had occurred in disposing of it, and that as regarded all this matter he was entirely under the control of the minister of foreign affairs.

Considering it of the greatest importance that we should continue to harass and destroy the commerce of the enemy, I have advised Captain Bulloch to use every exertion to put to sea at as early a date as possible several cruisers to supply the place of the Alabama, and as we can not rely upon having vessels expressly constructed for the purpose, to make use of the fittest instruments that he can command. In this I had but recommended a purpose that he had anticipated, and which will be carried out, and to which Commodore Barron gives his hearty concurrence. Mr. Auguste [Ad.] Bonfils and his sons have been devoted and indefatigable in their attentions to our wounded and prisoners at Cherbonrg. I had promised Mr.B[onfils] nearly eighteen months since to recommend in due season his appointment as consul at that port, and I take pleasure in now performing the promise then made. I also beg leave to recom- mend Mr. Gaetano Cabella for the consulate at Genoa. He has been very active for the last two years in the advocacy of our cause, having published at his own expense a pamphlet urging our recognition, besides frequent favorable articles in the Commercio de Genova. He is a gentleman of high respectability and intelligence. In the meanwhile he would be pleased to receive a commission as commercial agent, unpaid of course. If it should not be inconsistent with some general rule which you have established, I would be gratified to see him appointed. Bishop Lynch left for Rome a few days since. While here he had an audience with the Emperor and two interviews with the minister of foreign affairs, of which he informs me that he has given you full details.

Since my No. 61, of 5th May, I have canceled £86,600 of 7 per cent cotton loan bonds, which have been presented to me for conversion.

I have the honor to remain, with great respect, your most obedient servant,

JOHN SLIDELL.

Hon. J. P. BENJAMIN,
Secretary of State.

[Enclosures.]

CHERBOURG, June 18, 1864.

SIR: I consider it my duty to keep you informed of what my sons and I have believed it our duty to do for the Confederate corvette Alabama and for the honorable Commander Semmes since the 13th instant, date of the last letter that I had the honor to write to you.

We had asked for authority to repair the Alabama in the Government wet docks of the military port, and we were certain of obtaining it when, unfortunately, the Federal ship of war Kearsarge appeared outside the harbor of Cherbourg under the pretext of obtaining permission to embark on board of her the thirty-eight prisoners landed by Captain Semmes.

Captain Semmes considered the presence of the Kearsarge from another point of view, and thought it his duty to go to meet the Kearsarge. Consequently, he has asked of us about 150 tons of coal, which the prefect at first refused to allow to be taken on board, but at our urgent request he has, however, consented, and at the same time he has given orders that the thirty-eight prisoners landed by the Alabama shall not be taken on board the Federal ship.

This is, then, the state of things this morning: The 150 tons of coal are aboard and Captain Semmes is without doubt ready to leave.

If you share the unanimous feeling of the port authorities, and you deem it of greater service to the noble cause of your nation that the brave Captain Semmes and his officers do not thus expose themselves against superior force, and reserve their energies and their valor to continue the work followed by them up to this period with such stupendous success that no instance of similar acts is remembered—if, as I say, seeing the gravity of this matter, you think that it would be preferable from every point of view for the interests which you defend with so much zeal that the Alabama remain at anchor in our harbor (Captain Semmes intending, we believe, to go out to-morrow), you can send us a telegram immediately after having read these lines, and we will immediately communicate with the commander, who will receive it in ample time.

Mr. Semmes has intrusted to me many important papers, with regard to which I will carry out his instructions.

Admiral Dupouy is very desirous that some solution may be found, and I should be happy if your dispatch to Captain ~mines, which I hope to receive tomorrow, induces and determines him to remain and enter our

magnificent docks rather than risk an entirely unequal combat.

I will receive with pleasure a reply to these communications, and renew to you my most respectful considerations.

AD. BONFILS

Hon. Mr. SLIDELL,
Paris.

19 RUE DE MARIGNAN,
Paris, June 19, 1864.

DEAR SIR: I have your esteemed favor of yesterday, and hasten to reply, because I wish to anticipate the knowledge of the result of the sailing of the Alabama from Cherbourg, whatever that result may be, and that what I say may not hereafter be suspected of having been dictated or modified by such knowledge.

I can not give to Captain Semmes the advice which you recommend. I have the most entire confidence in his judgment, his skill, and his cool courage. I believe that he would not proceed to the encounter of the Kearsarge unless he thought that he had a reasonable chance of capturing her. He knows that his opponent is vastly superior to him in size, weight of metal, and number of crew, but he relies upon the superior morale of his officers and crew to counterbalance his material inferiority. It has not been the habit of our people during this war to scan too closely the number and position of their adversaries. The officers and men of the Alabama in this respect are animated by the same instincts and impulses as have led our soldiers to victory on many a field against enormous odds. So it will be in the case of the Alabama. She may succumb in the contest, but the honor of her flag will be maintained. And now I come to the main object of this letter: It is to make a timely protest against the ungenerous and partial policy of this Government, which has forced Captain Semmes to take the course he has.

You tell me that permission would have been given to the Alabama to enter the military port and repair. How can you know whether the permission would have been given at all; and if at all, when ~ I have recently had occasion, in the case of the Rappahannock, detained without cause since the 17th February, to know how long an unfriendly minister may delay the decision of the plainest case. But, supposing that the permission would have been granted, we want no favors reluctantly bestowed, and reject a hospitality extorted by patient expectation. Captain Semmes, acting on the advice given by me to his superior officer, would have proceeded to Bordeaux to make, in a mercantile shipyard, the required repairs of the Alabama, and would have thus avoided incurring obligations which would have been gratefully acknowledged had they been cheerfully conferred, but which would have weighed painfully on all of us knowing that they were not the free offerings of good will.

I beg you to understand that I make no allusions to the admiral prefect. I am sure that could he have consulted his own judgment and inclination the Alabama would have been in dock before the appearance of the Kearsarge. As it is, the responsibility of whatever may occur must rest with the minister of marine or minister of foreign affairs, or with both of them.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN SLIDELL.

Mr. A. BONFILS,
Cherbourg.

[P. S.]—I have written in great haste, as I go to the country at 11 o'clock.

(Official Records, Series I, vol. 3, pp. 658-663)

Letter from Captain Semmes, C. S. Navy, late commanding C. S. S. Alabama, to the C. S. commissioner to France, acknowledging the receipt of the commendatory letter of the latter.

MILLBROOK MANOR HOUSE,
Near Southampton [England], July 1, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR: I am just beginning to use my hand, and the first use I make of it is to thank you most warmly for the very kind note you did me the honor to address me on the 21st ultimo.

Overwhelmed with mortification at the loss of my ship, I can not tell you how much I was soothed and consoled by the knowledge that my conduct in giving combat to the enemy met your approbation. My defeat is due to two circumstances—the very thorough manner in which the enemy's ship was protected by her chain armor and the deterioration, by long keeping and exposure to many varieties of climate, of my powder and fuses. All the powder in my magazine which had been pnt up in barrels had been entirely destroyed, and I was obliged to throw it overboard before my arrival at Cherbourg. Such as had been preserved in copper tanks (and it was with this latter that I fought the engagement), though not presenting any external marks of deterioration, was much reduced in strength, as was evident from the want of penetration of my shot and shell, even in the wooden portions of the enemy's ship.

The authorities at Cherbourg had given me no permission to enter the docks up to the time of my demanding coal. When I made demand for this material, the admiral insisted that as a condition precedent to my receiving it I should withdraw my application to enter the docks, to which, of course, I readily assented. I was treated kindly and course teously, however, by all the French authorities. Tell Mrs. Slidell that she lost a cask of wine from the Cape of Good Hope, which I had intended to forward to her as soon as my ship went into dock.

My kind regards to Mrs. and the Misses Slidell, and believe me, very truly, yours, etc.,

R. SEMMES.

Hon JOHN SLIDELL,
Commissioner Confederate States, Paris.

(Official Records, Series I, vol. 3, pp. 663-664)

Unofficial letter from Captain Semmes, C. S. Navy, late commanding C. S. S. Alabama, to Flag. Officer Barron, C. S. Navy, commanding naval force in Europe, regarding the engagement of that vessel with U. S. S. Kearsarge.

MANOR HOUSE, MILLEROOK,
Near Southampton, July 5, 1864.

MY DEAR BARRON: I owe you many, many thanks for your very kind and considerate note addressed to me soon after my engagement with the Kearsarge. ~Oppressed with mortification for my defeat and sorrow for my lost officers and men, your note came to me with the soothing effect of a balm poured upon a wound. I found an awful dis- parity, my dear friend, between the enemy's guns and my own. Still, I should have handled him very roughly, and perhaps have carried him down With me, but for my bad powder. Unfortunately, my magazine had been placed near the condensing apparatus with which we generated fresh water for the crew, and it was in consequence frequently filled with steam. We were obliged to air it very frequently to keep it at all dry. Previously to my arrival at Cherbourg all the powder which I had in barrels was so much damaged that I was compelled to throw it overboard. I had a good supply, however, put up in cartridges and stowed in copper tanks, and as this did not show any signs of deterioration I concluded that it must be good. I am now convinced from the want of penetrating power of my shot and shells, even in the wooden parts of the enemy's ship, that this was also damaged, perhaps to the extent of one-third its strength. I had carefully renewed all my fuses; but the fuses I put in were many of them also damaged, they, like the powder, having suffered from the same cause, and perhaps also from the many and great changes of climate to which they had been subjected. Well, it is the fortune of war. I am improving in general health, and my wounded hand enables me to write you this note, so that you see that there is nothing much the matter.

Yours, truly,

R. SEMMES

Flag--Officer SAML. BARRON.

(Official Records, Series I, vol. 3, p. 664)

Report of Captain Semmes, C. S. Navy, late commanding C.S.S. Alabama, regarding the settlement of the money matters of that vessel.

MILLBROOK MANOR HOUSE
Near Southampton, July 5, 1864.

SIR: Acting Paymaster Galt has paid off and I have discharged all the crew of the Alabama, except only such as are yet in hospital at Cherbourg. Paymaster Galt has been relieved from his duties, and, in compliance with your instructions, I have given him leave to return to the Confederate States. I enclose a transcript from the pay roll of the names of the men in hospital at Cherbourg, and also of the names of the killed and drowned in the action, in order that you may assign the duty of paying off the former and the representatives of the latter to such disbursing officer under your orders as you may think fit. Paymaster Galt had in his hands a surplus of about \$5,000 after paying off the crew, which I have directed him to turn over to Commander Bulloch upon his arrival in Liverpool; and I would suggest that that place would perhaps be the best for making the remaining payments, as many of the friends of the deceased seamen reside in that vicinity. Between \$3,000 and \$4,000, in addition to the sum turned over to Commander Bulloch, will be sufficient to meet all outstanding demands against my late ship. With reference to the payment of the sums due the deceased seamen, I would suggest that notice be given in the newspapers of the place and time of payment, and that the parties claiming payment be required to take out letters of administration, etc., according to the forms of the English law; otherwise deceptions will be practiced and payments may be made to the wrong persons. It would be well to notify the wounded in hospital also of the place at which they are to be paid off.

I shall proceed to-morrow or the next day to the house of the Rev. Mr. Tremlett, at Belsize Park, London, where communications will reach me.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. SEMMES

Flag-Officer SAML. BARRON.

P. S.—It is ascertained that my loss in the late engagement was greater than at first reported, it being 47, viz, 26 killed and drowned and 21 wounded. R.S.

(Official Records, Series I, vol. 3, pp. 664-665)