specific event by names and figures. The ever present difficulty of the historian in finding a working alliance between the topical and the chronological has not been satisfactorily resolved. Chapter seven, for example, entitled "Campaign For Senator, 1890-1896" is succeeded by one on almost the same years entitled "Cincinnati Lawyer, 1890-1897." A chapter on "Imperialist Senator, 1897-1900" is logically followed by "The Foraker Act, 1900," but then the reader is directed backward to "Repairing Political Fences, 1897-1901."

Perhaps the fault lies in part in the subject rather than the author. Conservatives, especially ones as unreconstructed as Foraker, do not make as lively topics as do the rebels. That this is at least partly true is readily apparent when one comes to the more dramatic and interesting chapter on Foraker's defense of the Negroes and break with Theodore Roosevelt in the Brownsville Affair. The style is clear but would have profited by variation.

Let it be emphasized, however, that this biography has more merits than defects. The above criticisms are probings rather than blanket indictments.

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If one were to write only a single-page account of the Civil War, he would have some words of praise for the gunboats in the West—unless he were a soldier completely without conscience. The editors of *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* did not fail to take good account of the gunboats, the mortars, and the rams; and the four well-known volumes contain adequate coverage in articles from the pens of distinguished participants. The increasing literature of the war has, however, lacked a unified treatment of the whole important theme, one which would not only bring out new facts, but would reappraise the entire inland naval operations from a present-day standpoint. Such a work could evidently be written only by a naval officer versed in naval lore and himself fresh from guns and ships. Lieutenant Commander Gos-
nell was well qualified to produce exactly the work that was
needed, and he can speak easily of "smooth water," "narrow
waters," and "fleet action" in a way that is convincing; still
he can refer to gunboats tied up to trees (though he gets that
nautical monstrosity into a quotation from another writer).

Very properly the book begins with a description of the
boats and their modes of fighting. Here technical questions
enter; marine engines, guns and gunnery, the boats them-
selves, and the protection—if any—given to them. The Civil
War occurred when boilers and engines, as well as ordnance,
were in a critical state of development. Gosnell makes this
clear, although he gives fundamentals, he remembers that
general readers do not want too much on technical matters,
and in some instances he tells that information on important
matters is wanting—especially in the case of the Confederate
craft.

The first Union gunboats described are the "Tyler," "Lex-
ington," and the "Conestoga." The reader familiar with the
Battle of Belmont knows that the first two convoyed Grant's
three thousand men to that place and brought the expedition
back to Cairo; and one who has studied the activities of the
Brigadier General C. F. Smith at Paduach during the fall
of 1861, remembers that "Conestoga" was the "Lincoln gun-
boat" that made frequent expeditions up the Tennessee and
Cumberland to see what the Confederates were doing at Forts
Henry and Donelson. These three vessels were converted
freight-passenger boats. They were strengthened by oak bul-
kwarks but being protected by no armor, their sides would
keep out nothing except musket shots and stones thrown in
anger. "Conestoga" had four 32-pounders to fight with while
the other boats had in addition some eight-inch smoothbore
("Lexington," 4; "Tyler," 6).

Good descriptions with some plans are given of the nine
ironclads, seven of which were "sisters." The arrangement
of guns and the manner in which the twin stern wheels were
given protection by being recessed are shown. Two and a
half inches of iron protected front and sides of the casemate,
the plating in front being backed by twenty inches of oak.
The armament consisted of 32-pounders, 42-pounders, and 64-
pounders (8-inch Dahlgrens); speed in still water was six
to seven knots. Gosnell states that James B. Eads "did a
splendid job in building these seven craft." Something might
well have been said about the difficulties encountered and pertinent dates given. The boats were built in a hundred days—as Gosnell says—though the contract had called for only sixty. Delivered and accepted on January 15, 1862, they were commissioned the next day. But so bad was the condition of the national treasury that months passed before Eads was paid, and it was only his own private means and assistance of friends that kept the work in progress.

While the seven Union sisters, with thirteen pieces each, were well gunned, the eight Confederate boats described can be called "gunboats" by little more than courtesy, for Gosnell says that "at a rough guess" each carried only two guns—one forward, one aft. They were intended rather as rams. For this purpose speed was essential, and all the vessels were transformed river boats with powerful engines that could drive them with speeds of nearly twelve knots. In case a boat had one-fourth inch of iron, she was a "tinclad"; otherwise she would be a "cotton-clad" or "hay-plated," depending upon the sort of bales placed upon her decks. The Confederate craft must have been more comfortable than their opposite numbers, and one of them had so much draft that it was driven by a screw propeller. The others were side-wheelers, and so they not only were faster but had greater maneuverability than the Northern iron-clads, although these had two stern wheels, each with its separate engine, in order to increase rapidity of turning.

In the North there were also men who thought the handsomest way to deal with an enemy craft was to smash boldly into it at a brisk speed and have the affair finished with one big crash instead of tediously and noisily shooting at it. Gosnell gives a good treatment of the Ellet ram fleet. There were a confusing number of Ellets, brothers, sons, nephews; but the man who "sold" his idea to Secretary of War Stanton was Charles Ellet, Jr., an engineer. Though himself a former navy officer, Gosnell does not hesitate to state that it was entirely possible that the ideas Ellet entertained as to the best way to fight in narrow waters would not have been well received by navy men; so it was probably as well that he did his experimenting with a colonel's commission, a copious number of eager and brave relatives, and adventure loving rivermen, supplemented by ten to twenty soldiers for each boat, who could shoot unwary Confederates
with their rifles and furnish a little prelude to the impending smash. The Ellet rams were converted river boats. In order that they could engage with impunity in a life of bumping their enemies, each was given three bulkheads running the entire length of the boat. These were from twelve to sixteen inches thick, which was "very, very thick for such small boats, or for any vessels." A shield of twenty-four inches of oak surrounded the power plants, and the pilothouses were made proof against musketry. At first there were no cannons, but some were later added, an acknowledgement that fondness for guns was not just a matter of navy tradition. Four of the boats were side-wheelers, three were driven from the stern. Ellet had hoped for a still-water speed of fifteen knots and probably achieved thirteen.

Gosnell points out faults of command arrangements but is not severely critical, for he is aware of the difficulties of working out combined operations, especially when there are so many novel situations. Though the Union gunboats were commanded by naval officers, they were under the command of army officers in the field. No serious trouble arose and Gosnell says, "This was because of the happy circumstance that, in the real fighting, Navy officers like Porter and Foote were dealing with Army officers like Grant." Going further he states, "The top Army offices in Washington appear not to have interfered very much with these gunboats directly." (The War Department certainly had a proprietary right in them, and it was to Quartermaster General Meigs that Foote sent his appeals for money and his reports on construction difficulties: Official Records, ser. 1, vol. 8, pp. 367-369, and elsewhere.) General John Pope also worked very satisfactorily with Foote in the difficult operation at Island No. 10, though he was impatient before two gunboats ran the heavily gunned forts. There was confusion, however, over command of the ram fleet and an act of Congress failed to straighten it out, for it transferred to the Navy the "Western Gunboat Fleet constructed by the War Department." Thus the rams—the real bone of contention—were not explicitly covered. Lincoln straightened the matter out by directing that the rams also be put under the department which initially would probably have refused to have anything to do with them.

If some objections can be raised to the command of the Federal craft, the story of the Confederate boats is worse,
and Gosnell writes: "The organization of this fleet was of a most amazing character. All of the ships' companies were civilians from beginning to end! President Jefferson Davis appointed two river steamboatermen to start the ball rolling. They appointed others to the commands of the remainder of the boats, making a total of fourteen at first, and the appointments were approved. 'Commodore' Montgomery and his outfit reported theoretically to the general commanding the area." Gosnell quotes Montgomery as saying that "fourteen Mississippi captain and pilots would never agree about anything after they had once gotten under way."

The story of operations on the Western Waters begins with a description of the contest for the "Head of the Passes"—the name given to the important place below New Orleans where the Mississippi divides, to empty into the gulf from several mouths, of which at least four were important. Early in October, 1861, four Union vessels under the command of Captain John Pope took station at the point. Presently a surprise attack was launched against them by Confederate Commodore Hollins, whose command included the "Manassas," a craft to achieve considerable renown and which had been given an underwater ram. In a chapter entitled "The Story of Pope's Run," Gosnell gives an informative account of what took place, characterized by fairness to both sides, and in which he reveals his competency as a critic of naval matters. The Federal actions give little to be praised, and Gosnell says, "The Southerners had really done an extremely creditable job when they drove all the blockading ships entirely out of the river, because they did it with a greatly inferior force." New Orleans armchair strategists criticized Hollins for not doing more than he did; but months were to pass before the Federals secured a lasting hold on the Head of the Passes.

Action is resumed eleven hundred miles upriver, and in his description of the gunboat operations in connection with Forts Henry and Donelson, Gosnell begins his practice of long quotations from important participants and eyewitnesses, confining himself largely to connecting narrative, critical comments, and analysis. The account of the "Carondelet's" brilliant running of the batteries at Island Number 10 on April 4, 1862, is composed of quotations from reporters for the St. Louis Democrat and the New York Times. The gunboat "Pittsburg" repeated the achievement two nights later,
and Gosnell concludes that "the midnight dash of the Carondelet made possible an absolutely complete victory." This surely is not putting the case too strongly, for on April 7, the important island surrendered to General Pope.

Foote now had to retire because of his Donelson wound, and before Captain Charles H. Davis fairly had his hands on his new command there occurred "The Affair at Plum Point Bend"—just above Fort Pillow on the east bank of the Mississippi—in which the Confederates were successful in a "tip-and-run" attack. Gosnell states that the battle "was one of the very few affairs of the entire war that can properly be called a 'fleet action.'" He adds that "the only fight in which the Confederates attacked was the only fleet fight the Confederates won." The account was soon evened in the Battle of Memphis, and a surprise dash by some of Ellet's rams finished things temporarily for the Confederates, Gosnell saying, "The effort of the River Defense Fleet was glorious but the failure was fatal and complete."

The Southerners, however, did not stay off of the waters long, for keeping open a passage for supplies from west of the Mississippi, as well as for munitions imported into un-blockaded Texas harbors, or ports in Mexico, was vital to their success. Two chapters of the work under review are devoted to "The Arkansas Saga." This vessel was built under the greatest difficulties at Greenwood, Mississippi, on the Yazoo River. "Her career," says Gosnell, "lasted only twenty-three days, but what a career! It included so much action that there probably never was another vessel that averaged anything like so much fighting per day as did the Arkansas." There must indeed be great merit to a case that can draw such praise as that from a naval officer in the year 1949.

The rest of the book deals with matters probably better known to students of the Civil War, the gunboats at Vicksburg, at Port Hudson, and on the Red River. The chapter "Guns on the Suwanee River" is likely to give one his first knowledge of operations on the stream that empties into the west coast of Florida, and "The Cracker Line" furnishes some interesting appraisals and narrative about operations on the Tennessee River in the fall of 1863, that helps round out the gunboat story.

The concluding paragraph of the book begins, "Too great a proportion of the interest and study of the Civil War has
been lavished upon the slogging to and fro on the martial highway between Washington and Richmond." For unique thrills the adventures of the little gunboats on western bayous or eastern sloughs cannot, according to Gosnell, be approached by anything in the war. Thrills there certainly were, and plenty of danger too, for when a boiler was exploded by a shell—which sometimes happened—loss of life from scalding and drowning was appalling, while casualties from gunfire were also high at times. Readers may say either yes or no to Gosnell's general contention, but certain it is that he has helped fill a gap long needing to be filled. And no one will believe Gosnell guilty of overstatement in his parting salute to the river vessels: "West and east, those on both sides behaved splendidly."

Only a person with good naval knowledge would safely venture to take issue with judgments expressed in the book. But it hurts a mathematician a little to read that "force is proportional to . . ." when the correct word is "energy," and to see an essential one-half omitted from a formula (p. 21). Those familiar with the generals of the war will note that William T. Sherman is incorrectly given credit for coastal operations in November, 1861. It was in fact General Thomas W. Sherman who carried on the successful operation with Flag Officer S. F. DuPont. The better known of the two generals was at the time in Louisville in a state of discouragement about Northern prospects. The other Sherman, kept from his just due by a mere permutation in letters (any editor might change T. W. Sherman to W. T. Sherman), had a very creditable career. (He lost a leg in the attack on Port Hudson on May 27, 1863, but returned to duty after some weeks of absence.)

Twenty-eight illustrations are a goodly number for a book with less than three hundred pages, and they add interest and value to it. But the two maps are poor, due to the fact that lettering was put on by typewriter and the drafting was apparently done with poor ink. The book also lacks an index, which lessens somewhat its value as a work of reference. These are minor flaws in a very readable and informative work, and Guns on the Western Waters is to be recommended for everyone's shelf of books upon the Civil War.

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