

THE TEXAS IN THE WATER

SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH OF THE ARMORED BATTLE SHIP.

THE LARGEST WAR SHIP EVER CONSTRUCTED IN THIS COUNTRY—CHRISTENED BY A DAUGHTER OF THE LONE STAR STATE.

NORFOLK, Va., June 28.—At 11:17 o'clock this morning Miss Madge Houston Williams of Texas at a signal from Naval Constructor Francis T. Bowles broke the bottle of wine on the bow of the finest armored battle ship ever launched in the United States, and in a clear, firm voice cried:

"I christen thee Texas."

Immediately the hurrahs from thousands of throats and the screeching of steam whistles announced the fact that the new ship had started for the plunge in her native element.

The weather was very bad, but, notwithstanding this, about 15,000 people braved it, and the sight was well worth their effort. It was conceded to be one of the prettiest launchings ever witnessed. Not a hitch or flaw occurred, and as the massive structure of iron and steel rode the waves of the Elizabeth like a swan and was moored to the dock a lusty hurrah again arose.

Constructor Bowles had arranged to have the ship sent off the ways as near to 11 o'clock as possible, and as that hour approached the thousands in the yard had been increased by the landing of steamers, all gayly dressed with bunting, and the wedging up of the blocks and removal of shores under the ship kept everybody in an excited state of mind.

A platform was erected above the main launching platform, and seated there was Miss Williams, a petite blonde, dressed in navy-blue yachting cloth, trimmed with white, and wearing a jaunty yachting cap, in the centre of which was the lone star of Texas. Attached to a staff with silken cords hung the bottle of wine wrapped in a many-colored silk net.

On the stand were Gen. Meredith, Chief of the Bureau of Printing and Engraving; Lieut. W. S. Cowles, secretary to Secretary of the Navy B. F. Tracy and Commander in Chief of the Naval Reserves of the United States; Special Examiners of the Treasury Department Martin and Campbell, Pay Director Luca, Pay Director Eldridge, Commodore A. W. Weaver, Lieut. H. J. Jones, Passed Assistant Engineer Kenneth McAlpine, and Assistant Surgeon Hope. Among the civilians were ex-Congressman George E. Bowden and many of the officials and prominent citizens of Norfolk and Portsmouth.

Gov. Brown of Maryland was expected, but could not come. He was represented by the following members of his staff: Gen. H. Douglas, Gen. William Lee, Gen. Alexander Brown, Col. Sherlock Swann, Col. Charles H. Carter, and Col. John C. Legg, who came down on Gov. Brown's steam yacht Valmena.

Secretary Tracy did not come, but was represented by Lieut. Cowles. The commanding and other officers of the Brazilian man-of-war Almirante Borroso were present and received special attention. After the launch a delightful lunch was served at Commodore Weaver's. Among those present were Miss Williams, her mother, Lieut. Commander Cowles, the officers of the Almirante Borroso, who were, metaphorically speaking, chained to Miss Williams's triumphal chariot, and had eyes and ears for her and Miss Weaver alone; the representative of the *News and Courier*, Ensign Decker, and Lieut. Jones.

Health to the Texas and its fair sponsor was the toast honored by all. The construction department banquet was an elegant affair. The spread was made in Building No. 32, and flags and bunting walled the immense hall. The tables were set in the form of an anchor and draped with red, white, and blue. In the head of the stock was a model of the Texas on the ways in beautiful flowers. Superb as were the decorations, even finer was the menu, which was magnificent.

The Texas is by 2,600 tons the largest ship ever launched in this country, and her successful launch demonstrates the ability of the heads which have planned and directed her building. Constructor Bowles is a proud man to-day, even more so than at the Raleigh's launch, for he has had a perfect triumph.

by the Richmond Locomotive and Machine Works of Richmond, Va. They will be placed on board at the Norfolk Navy Yard.

As in all battle ships, speed in the Texas has been sacrificed to armor and armament. The recently-launched cruisers of the American Navy are much swifter, but the battle ship has far greater endurance and can take the risk of receiving the fire of heavy guns, knowing that the vitals are protected by armor, which a cruiser could not. The battle ship bears the nearest resemblance to the monitor type, but differs from that class of vessel in carrying her guns high above the water, so that they can be used in all ordinary weather at sea. Like the monitors, battle ships are expected to take part in hotly-contested engagements, where hard blows are given and received.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TEXAS.

THE DESIGN THAT WON THE \$15,000 PRIZE OF THE NAVY DEPARTMENT.

The Texas holds a prominent position in the development of the new navy by reason of being the first of the battle ships to be launched. Prior to the laying of her keel, the majority of the ships authorized were but modified reproductions of foreign cruisers. When the building of this battle ship was decided upon, the Secretary of the Navy offered a prize of \$15,000 for the best design, competition being thrown open to the world, as it was desired to secure the best plans wherever found. Although numerous designs were submitted, that of William John, an English naval architect of high reputation, was unanimously selected by a board of naval experts to be the best, and upon their recommendation the prize was awarded to him.

The first keel plate was laid on June 11, 1889. At that time the Norfolk Navy Yard was entirely lacking in mechanical appliances and other necessary facilities of a modern shipbuilding plant. The manufacture of steel for shipbuilding purposes was then but partially developed, and the output of steelmakers could not supply the demand. The construction of the vessel was necessarily slow. Even at the present time none of the armor has been received.

The Texas is a twin-screw battle ship of 6,335 tons displacement. She measures 290 feet between perpendiculars, and has an extreme breadth of 64 feet 1 inch. She will have a mean draught of 22 feet 6 inches. She will have a bunker capacity of 500 tons of coal, with which amount she can steam 1,110 miles at her estimated highest speed of seventeen knots per hour, or 8,500 miles at ten knots per hour.

The main armament will consist of two 12-inch breech-loading rifles, each weighing forty-six and one-half tons. They are mounted in separate turrets, one being placed on the starboard side aft, the other on the port side forward. The guns are mounted en echelon, and have a complete broadside range on their respective sides. Six 6-inch rifles complete the main battery. One of these will be mounted forward on the upper deck and one aft. The others are mounted in sponsons on the main deck.

The secondary armament consists of four six-pounder and four three-pounder rapid-fire guns and a number of Gatling and machine guns. There are six torpedo tubes; one in the bow, one in the stern, and two on each side. A strong ram bow adds to the vessel's offensive powers.

The turrets are armored with twelve inches of steel. Their bases are inclosed in a twelve-inch belt of steel, which affords protection to the hydraulic machinery used for working the guns. A belt of steel armor twelve inches in thickness extends two feet above the water line and four and one-half feet below it, giving protection to the boilers and engines. In addition to all there is a protective deck of two-inch steel plates inclining at a sharp angle toward the extremities and sides. This armor is three inches thick on the slopes. At the ends of the belt are diagonal armored bulkheads of six inches of steel. Their oblique surfaces afford additional protection against the fire of small-calibre ordnance.

The hull is of steel throughout, and is built on the cellular system. The double bottom, which extends under the engines, boilers, and magazines, is divided both longitudinally and transversely by numerous water-tight compartments. The space between the double bottom and protective deck is subdivided into many water-tight compartments, whose numerous bulkheads greatly add to the strength of the hull. There are 129 of these compartments. By an extensive but simple drainage system they are all connected to steam and hand pumps, thus minimizing the disastrous effects of the ram and torpedo.

The boats will be stowed on a flying deck above the turrets. This deck will be used by the officers engaged in navigating the ship. Two second-class torpedo boats will be carried, in addition to the usual complement of torpedo boats.

The ship will be lighted throughout by electricity, and will carry two powerful search lights and two of smaller power for boat use. The vessel will be fitted as a flagship, and will carry a complement of 368 officers and men. Her spacious decks will afford ample accommodation for the large number of men that will form her crew.

Two sets of triple-expansion engines are expected to give the ship a maximum speed of seventeen knots per hour. They occupy two separate water-tight compartments, each set having three cylinders of 36, 57, and 78 inches in diameter. Steam will be supplied from four double-ended steel boilers, 14 feet in diameter and 17 feet long. The engines are being built