

Acclaim

The chapter titled "Acclaim" delves into the events surrounding the bombardment and fall of Fort Sumter on April 14-15, a pivotal moment in American history. The protagonist, a journalist named Russell, realizes the enormity of the situation only on that Sunday as he reflects on the preceding night spent aboard the steamer *Georgiana*. Restless and unable to sleep due to distractions and mosquitoes, he laments his experience and watches passengers indulge in cocktails early in the morning, noting the hospitality of Americans.

Upon arriving at Norfolk, he is greeted by jubilant voices celebrating the news of the Union's retreat from Fort Sumter. However, he also observes some individuals whose expressions contrast sharply with the prevailing cheers—indicative of deeper societal divisions. Disembarking, Russell finds Norfolk to have a decayed ambiance, contrasting with the exuberant celebrations. He describes the Atlantic Hotel as an unkempt place plagued by mosquitoes, filled with slack and careless waiters, who were slaves.

Russell is taken to a local newspaper office where he encounters the celebratory tone surrounding the Union defeat. A telegraphic bulletin exclaims that "The Yankees are whipped," yet Russell feels detached from the excitement, foreseeing the conflict ahead. Despite feeling out of place, he resolves to continue his journey southward.

As he nears Charleston, the fervor escalates, exposing visceral expressions of animosity towards the North and a fervent defense of Southern values, particularly the right to enslave. He notes the emergence of the Confederate flag, the "Stars and Bars," signifying a newly forged identity. Russell depicts scenes of exuberance and revolutionary zeal along his journey, encapsulated by the loud music and chaotic atmosphere he encounters at each stop. He reflects on the broader implications of the conflict, likening Fort Sumter to historical turning points like the Bastille. His journey culminates as he boards a train for the final, most illuminating leg toward Charleston, where he anticipates the direct ramifications of the unfolding war.