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SOUTHERN NEWS.

It appears that while Gen. Foster was with the expedition up the Roanoke, the Confederates in the vicinity made a slight demonstration on the garrison left at Newbern, but were not successful.

Governor Vance replies to Military Governor Stanly's proposal for an interview, that he declines a friendly meeting, will have nothing to do with a conference of commissioners, and writes in a defiant tone that North Carolina will fight to the last drop of blood; and suggests that if Governor Stanly has any propositions to make, he treat directly with the Confederate authorities in Richmond.

A New Orleans paper states that the Southern force in the late engagement at Labadieville numbered only three hundred and thirty men, of whom six were killed, seventeen wounded, and two hundred and eight taken prisoners. The same paper reports the Federal loss at eighteen killed and seventy-four wounded.

A large amount of land in South Carolina was this season planted in corn, and it was reasonable to expect an enormous crop, capable of supplying that species of food in superabundance at a low price. But the season was marred by a drought, and in many parts of the State the corn crop was seriously injured, so that there will be no superabundance, and scarcely more than was produced last year from much less land planted. The production of rice, too, this year, has been curtailed to a considerable extent by the removal of planters from the tide water region. Still, the season for rice has been good.

Chattanooga was visited on Saturday night, 25th ultimo, with a pretty heavy snow storm, which was preceded by sleet, causing the ground to be frozen, so as to retain the snow.

The Atlanta Confederacy dissents from the Richmond Enquirer's recommendation to raise an Irish brigade for John Mitchel, the Irish exile.

The Richmond Enquirer states that a court of inquiry, on the application of Gen. Huger, has been authorized by the President, as soon as the public exigencies will allow, to investigate the military conduct of that officer during the battles near Richmond.

At the "artillery duel at Fayetteville, a little village about five miles southeast of Warrenton, Va., which took place on the 15th, General Sturgis narrowly escaped death. A ricochet shot struck his horse, and passed close to the General's person. The casualties on the Federal side, were the loss of First Lieutenant McIlvaine, of Durck's Battery, who was struck by a shell while directing the working of his guns. He received a wound in the abdomen, and another from the same missile in his arm, and another from the same missile in his arm. Several of the men were slightly wounded, but none seriously. Several horses were killed, and two wagons destroyed by the shells.

AFFAIRS AT HARPER'S FERRY.

[Correspondence of the Baltimore American.]

HARPER'S FERRY, Nov. 17.—We hear but little from Stonewall Jackson to-day. It has been pretty definitely ascertained that the main body of his troops are camped between Winchester and Martinsburg, and that it is only the advance guard that has been seen in the direction of Bath and Hancock. It rained here heavily last night and at intervals during to-day. The river is slowly rising, and when the flow from the mountains comes down will be fordable only at the most favorable points.—With the river in its present condition, and the likelihood of its soon being much higher, it is hardly probable that Jackson will cross into Maryland unless he should get possession of the railroad bridge at North Branch, eight miles below Cumberland.

A small troop of Confederate cavalry, under the command of White, have established a rendezvous in the mountains near Key's Ferry, on the Shenandoah, and display a good deal of enterprise in capturing stragglers, sutlers' wagons, and in making sudden dashes on the Federal pickets. Major Cole's Maryland cavalry is however following them up closely. A day or two ago a squad of this cavalry made a dash into Charlestown. The encountered about fifty Confederates, routed them, and brought off several prisoners.

The vacant houses in Harper's Ferry are occupied by a small army of sutlers, whose extortionate charges are greatly grumbled at by the soldiers. The provost marshal endeavors to expel all but the legitimate sutlers, but they are irrepressible, and when driven out of one house locate in another.

The Washington National Republican, in an article on Virginia, has these remarks:

"The people of that State (we refer of course to that geographical division of it which is rebellious) were not goaded into this war by their politicians. They were unanimously resolved upon it from the first, upon the happening of events which actually transpired. All parties pronounced for war from the beginning, if the national government should resist by force the destruction of the Union by the Gulf States. Some of them affected to be for the Union, and may even have deluded themselves into the idea that they were so, but with the stultifying proviso that they were opposed to coercion, and so much opposed to it, that, rather than permit any resistance to the violence of the conspirators in the extreme South, they would espouse their cause and fight their battles. There never was any Unionism in Eastern Virginia of any better stamp than this worst form of disunionism, and of which the true character was at once unmasked by the attack on Fort Sumter."

The Great Exhibition in London closed without any formal ceremonies. The attendance and total receipts both exceed the Great Exhibition of 1851. Parliament has been further prorogued until the 13th of January.

Police Superintendent Kennedy has published a lame excuse for incarcerating Mrs. Brinsmade, in private, so long,—and in the excuse, are insinuations against her character.

The sloop Belvidere, Johnson—seized at the Washington wharf, loaded with whiskey, for Alexandria last week—has been released, upon the Captain giving bond.

THE WAR IN VIRGINIA.—The latest intelligence from the seat of war in Virginia is up to Sunday, when it is stated, the army under General Burnside was in motion, but no further particulars are given. On Friday last, as the division under Gen. Sturgis was passing from Warrenton Springs to Fayetteville, at a point about four miles from the latter place, a Confederate battery opened upon the column from an elevation on the opposite bank of the river. The attack was sudden, and rapid firing ensued from a 20-pound gun and several of lighter calibre. A Federal battery was placed in position, and replied to the Confederates.—The artillery duel lasted for over two hours, when the Southerners withdrew, and the column continued its march. It is reported that the Confederates evacuated Snicker's Gap on Friday, and now appear before Manassas and Chester Gaps, nineteen and twenty six miles respectively below Snicker's Gap.

We hear from Aquia Creek that that point has been held for some days past by the Yankee, Satellite, and other gunboats lying off there, and that the place has been evacuated by the Confederates.

A rumor having reached Yorktown that two thousand Confederates were above Gloucester Point, on the York river, an expedition has been sent out to reconnoitre.

On Sunday night a squad of the New York Artillery, stationed at Fort Marshall, upon information previously received, went to a point on the North Point road, a short distance below Lower Canton, in search of contraband articles said to be there stored preparatory to shipping to the South. The place was forced and several flour barrels discovered, one of which was opened and found to contain gunpowder. The other barrels contained gunpowder, revolvers, bowie knives and short rifled muskets, the whole valued at \$4,000 or \$5,000. The articles were taken to Fort Marshall, and will be confiscated. Yesterday morning the squad again started out and arrested seven parties said to have been concerned in carrying the articles to the point where they were found.

It is evident, from the accounts given of the trial trips of the new iron-clad steamers, that they are totally unfitted, for want of speed, ever to be useful as naval defences upon the ocean.

The Kimmell House, in Washington, was yesterday searched by order of Col. Doster, and the Leonardtown stage seized. About \$500 worth of medicines were captured, and a large Confederate mail, implicating many parties in the District. The mail carriers were caught.

A handsome statue of Franklin, executed by Powers, at Rome, at a cost of about \$20,000, may now be seen near the Senate chamber, in the Capitol, Washington.

On Saturday last, Col. Beckwith awarded the contract for furnishing 6,000 head of beef cattle, to Mr. P. H. King, of Washington, at \$4.56½ per hundred weight. The cattle are to be delivered to the Commissary in Washington. The bids ranged from \$4.56 to \$4.97½.