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THE ATTACK ON CHARLESTON.

WASHINGTON, April 12.—The steamer *Flambeau* arrived here this afternoon with Lieut. Commander Rhind as bearer of dispatches from Admiral Dupont to the government.

The reports from the several commanders had not been received up to the time of the departure of the *Flambeau*, namely Wednesday night.

From other than official sources, it is ascertained that the vessels composing the fleet under Admiral Dupont advanced upon Charleston on the 7th, in the following manner:

Weehauken, Capt. John Rodgers; Passaic, Capt. Dayton; Montauk, Capt. Worden; Patapsco, Captain Ammen; Ironsides (the flag ship), Commander Turner, with Admiral Dupont and his staff on board. Next followed the *Catskill*, Capt. George Rodgers; *Nantucket*, Capt. Fairfax; *Nahant*, Capt. Downes, and the *Keokuk*, Capt. Rhind. In this order they proceeded up the main channel. Arriving within 1,700 yards of the main forts, the *Ironsides* became unmanageable, owing to the tide and the narrowness of the channel, and she was therefore obliged to drop anchor to prevent drifting ashore. Owing to these circumstances she signalled her consorts to disregard her motions.

The remainder of the squadron continued in its course, and soon came within easy range of the Confederate fire from all points.

The obstructions of the channel from Fort Sumter to Fort Moultrie interfered with the progress of the ships, and in consequence of this and the position of the *Ironsides*, as above stated, the plan of operations or battle was deranged, and the space for manoeuvring being only from five hundred to a thousand yards, the vessels were obliged to prepare and at once engage the forts and the adjacent batteries.—The signal had been made for action at half past three o'clock in the afternoon by the *Ironsides*, but the Confederates had previously opened fire upon the leading vessels.

The contest is represented to have been in the highest degree exciting, presenting a fearful scene of fire belching from all points. On the water and on land there was a continuous roar of cannon. In the course of thirty or forty minutes the *Keokuk* was in a sinking condition, and was obliged to withdraw from the fire and seek an anchorage below the range of the enemy's guns.

A few minutes afterwards, all the vessels withdrew out of range, on receiving a signal from the flag-ship, it being deemed impracticable to continue hostilities further.

The *Keokuk* was within five or six hundred yards of Sumter, and was completely riddled. She was struck from all the batteries within range at least ninety times in thirty minutes. The shot was from rifled cannon of the heaviest calibre.

Capt. Rhind, her commander, received a contusion on the leg from a flying fragment of his vessel, which, however, only slightly lamed him. Twelve of his men were wounded, together with Acting Ensign Mackintosh, who had charge of one of the guns. His injuries are supposed to be fatal.

The next morning, finding it impossible to save the vessel, Captain Rhind called a tug, which took all his men on board, and in a few minutes thereafter the *Keokuk* sunk. Those belonging to the ship lost all their private effects.

On Wednesday the squadron remained at anchor in the main ship channel.

The injuries to the vessels, excluding the *Keokuk*, are represented to be of such a character as will require but a short time for repairs. The casualties were remarkably few, including one killed and three wounded on the *Nahant*.

The advantage of the fleet being in possession of the main ship channel, narrows the circuit of blockade two-thirds of the former distance.

None of the batteries fired upon the vessels until the latter reached the vicinity of the main forts.

The latest Confederate accounts are dated Thursday, and corroborate their previous dispatches, and also state that the nondescript machine known as the "Devil," sent out to be used in removing the obstructions, had floated ashore. At the date of the dispatch, there were no indications of a renewal of the conflict.

Since the above was written, a dispatch was received from New York, announcing the arrival of a vessel from Hilton Head and off Charleston on the 9th inst. The *Nahant* had arrived at Hilton Head, and was undergoing repairs. When off Charleston, in answer to an inquiry, the captain received the reply that "Gen. Hunter was up the bay."

The *Baltimore American* says: "The *Devil* was not lost, as stated by the dispatches. When the *Weehawken* returned from the reconnoissance of the obstructions, the scow she had in tow broke loose and grounded on Morris Island. The Confederates, thinking it a dangerous affair, peppered away at it, thinking it was the *Devil* or something worse; but our informant assures us the *Devil* is safe, and will yet be made use of."

CHARLESTON, April 9, A. M.—All quiet this morning. The Monitors are still in sight.

Yesterday evening many pieces of the *Keokuk's* furniture, with a spy-glass, &c., were washed on Morris Island beach.

Many of these articles were covered with clotted blood.

NEW YORK, April 12.—Richmond papers received here have dispatches from Charleston, which state that in the engagement of the 7th, all the Monitors were frequently hit, but the results were unknown. One gun was dismounted in Fort Moultrie, and one man wounded.

The removal of the Winnebago and Sioux tribes of Indians from Minnesota will be commenced immediately under the superintendance of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. They will be removed from Fort Snelling, by river, to a tract of land near Fort Randall, on the Upper Missouri, several hundred miles distant from any considerable white settlement.

A dispatch to the N. Y. Tribune says that Adjutant Gen. Thomas arrived at Helena, Ark., on the 6th, to organize the negroes into regiments and brigades. Those unfit for military duty will be set to work on the abandoned plantations, and the black troops will be used to protect the commerce and navigation of the river against the Confederates, and to protect the crops against the Confederates. They will be under white officers.

So perfect were the Egyptians in their manufacture of perfumes that some of their ancient ointment, preserved in an alabaster vase in the museum at Alwick, England, still retains a very powerful odor, through it must be between 2,000 and 3,000 years old.

The *National Intelligencer* says:—"It is stated that \$40,000 in gold was sent from the secret service fund of the War Department at Washington to Gov. Morton, of Indiana, to enable him to carry on the State Government, for which the State Legislature failed to appropriate funds."

Rev. J. A. Danforth, a Presbyterian minister, attempted to commit suicide in Cincinnati, a few days ago, by cutting his throat. He inflicted a dangerous wound, but will probably recover. It appears he lost his wife and three children in China, where he spent three years as a missionary, and since his return has been laboring under great depression of spirits, caused by continued ill health and his sad bereavement.

From data furnished by the medical statistics of the United States Army, it appears that the largest men are found in Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky; while the smallest men are found in the States of New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

Wm. Thompson, Giles Jackson, Thomas Rust, and W. A. Dennis, members of Mosely's command, arrested within the Federal lines by Major General Stahl, were brought to Washington yesterday, and committed to the Old Capitol prison.

The President, accompanied by Mrs. Lincoln and Attorney General Bates, left Aquia Creek on Friday night for Washington. During his presence in camp he reviewed the whole army of the Potomac, including the cavalry and artillery.

A Washington dispatch reports the resignation of Gen. McClellan.

Ripe strawberries and tomatoes are announced in Philadelphia and New York; they are brought from the vicinity of Norfolk and Hilton Head. The fruiterers ask for the latter fifty cents per quart, for the former somewhere about a quarter of a dollar for a dozen berries.

Besides the bounty of \$50 to be paid to every soldier who re-enlists for a year after the term of his service expires, each soldier is to have thirty days' furlough.

The New York money writers say money is more abundant than ever. Five per cent. is the standard rate for call loans, and six the exception.

The provost guard has taken possession of the Kirby House, in Washington. About one thousand dollars worth of liquors were hauled from the hotel to the corner of Nineteenth and I streets. This house is charged with selling liquors from the bar on Sunday.

There was a large Union meeting in Union Square, New York, on Saturday evening.—Twenty thousand people were present. A large number of speakers addressed the people.—Among them were General Fremont, Postmaster General Blair, Governor Morton, of Indiana, and many others. The meeting was called to celebrate the anniversary of the attack upon Fort Sumter.