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WAR NEWS.

Advices from the army of the Potomac, received in Washington, are to the effect that although no offensive operations of a general character have taken place recently, the cavalry are employed in scouting, reconnoitering and picketing, and have captured a considerable number of prisoners. The execution of the five deserters was postponed from Wednesday till Saturday.

A steamer left Fortress Monroe on Monday night, and moved up the Chickahominy river ten miles. A body of Confederate cavalry were encountered and repulsed by the guns of the boat. Some property was destroyed, and two men captured.

Capt. Hunter of the 13th Virginia regiment and four men of the Confederate topographical corps of engineers, were captured in King George's county, Va., while engaged in making a survey.

A special dispatch to the Louisville Journal, dated Stevenson, Ala., Aug. 23, states that from their lookouts on the mountains, the Federal soldiers could plainly see the rolling stack of the railroad going off southward from Chattanooga. Large fires were plainly seen on the night of the 21st in the rear of the town. All the fords are strongly guarded by infantry and artillery; rifle-pits cover the hillsides in the vicinity of the fords, and the work of crossing the Federal army seemed likely to prove a bloody one.

A Southern paper states that it is estimated that the number of soldiers now in the Confederate army and rapidly organizing for the field, is five hundred and seventy-five thousand, and that this does not reach one half the fighting population.

In the pursuit of Quantrell and his men, in Kansas, it is announced that no prisoners have been taken, and none will be taken. All houses in which goods have been found have been destroyed, as well as all houses of known guerrillas, where the troops have gone. Gen. Ewing intends to destroy the houses of all persons in the border counties outside of the military stations, who do not remove by the 9th of September, in obedience to a general order.

The Port Royal New South, has a paragraph stating that the steamer Everglade, with a cargo of cotton, and a large number of passengers, including a full complement of officers for the new Confederate craft at Nassau, has been lying for several weeks up the Savannah river. On the night of the 21st instant she attempted to run out but was overhauled and sunk near Tybee Island. Twenty-two of her passengers and crew were captured; the remainder escaped.

Capt. Thomas F. Craven has been promoted to the grade of Commodore, to rank from the 10th July, 1862.

THE SIEGE OF CHARLESTON.

NEW YORK, August 27.—The steamer Arago, from Charleston bar on the 25th inst., has arrived here.

OFF MORRIS ISLAND, August 24, Noon.—On Saturday at midnight Admiral Dahlgren, with five monitors, advanced in the darkness on Fort Sumter, opening fire at three o'clock and keeping it up until six o'clock. A dense fog then arose, which shut out the fort from view. The fort during the five hours' fire upon it was struck over a hundred times, the balls tearing through the sea-wall and doubling the number of port-holes. The whole parapet was also carried away.

No signals were given until the whole fleet opened, and the fire was of the most terrific description. Sumter fired one gun in response five times, but Moultrie, Gregg, and Beauregard for three hours rained shell on the monitors, failing to do any harm. The monitors were struck seven or eight times. No one was injured to-day.

The grand naval and army attack on Forts Wagner and Gregg will soon be opened, it being now ascertained that Sumter is defunct.—The Confederates will be driven from Morris Island, as Gen. Gillmore is determined to have possession of it to-night.

Gen. Gillmore on Thursday notified Beauregard that if he did not surrender the forts he would shell the city within twenty-four hours; at the same time he requested him to remove the women and children. No attention was paid to this notice, and on Friday night Gen. Gillmore threw a 15-inch shell into Charleston charged with Greek fire.

On Saturday afternoon Beauregard sent down a flag of truce with an urgent protest, denouncing Greek fire as a villainous compound, and unworthy of civilized nations, and demanding that more time be allowed to remove the women and children.

The English, French, and Spanish consuls also denounced the short time given by Gen. G., and claimed more time to remove subjects of their respective countries. General G., replied by renewal of the demand for the surrender of the forts and public property.—Beauregard replied by asking for a truce of forty hours. General G., refused giving any more, and would accept no other terms than unconditional surrender.

At twelve o'clock last night shelling the city with Greek fire was resumed. It is generally thought that the stars and stripes will wave over Fort Sumter to-night. The monitors and iron-clads are preparing to go up at the hour the steamer sails.

It is now believed that there are not over twenty men in the ruins of Sumter. The whole rear wall is down, and the shells pass through. The sea-wall is terribly disfigured. All the guns of Sumter are now mounted on Sullivan's Island. Balls and shells from monitors went with crushing effect into the walls of Sumter. Had not the fog been almost impenetrable Admiral Dahlgren is convinced that he could have destroyed the whole walls of Sumter with the monitors in a few hours. This morning the south sea-wall of Sumter is in ruins down to the front tier casemates.—The Keokuk's guns mounted on its wall were toppled into the sea by a well-directed shell on Sunday morning.

The French war steamer Xisophon, from off Charleston on Sunday, has arrived at New York. She reports the siege progressing and Sumter a pile of ruins, but it has not surrendered.

C. & O. CANAL.—The annual report of the president of the company, shows that the tolls for the year ending 31st December, 1862, were \$6,581, 14 less than those of the preceding year, and amounted to \$63,985 83, which with water rents, &c., made a total revenue for that year of \$72,624 95. The current expenses were in excess of this amount \$14,026 31, but included \$49,814 83 for repairs. There is an accumulation of unpaid interest on the current loans of the company for repairs, &c., during the past two years, of about \$40,000.

The certificates receivable for tolls issued under former orders of the board have been suspended in consequence of the reduced business of the Company for the past two years, but, with a reasonable prospect of increased revenues, the board have directed that one fourth the amount of tolls accruing commencing with the month of May last, be paid in such certificates, and they trust that the future business of the canal will enable the Company to continue to receive them from month to month, until they are all redeemed. The amount outstanding and payable of such certificates on the 31st May last was \$64,769 65. The report states that there is a great deficiency in the number of boats navigating the canal compared with the coal business which would otherwise seek this channel. It is understood that many are now in progress of building. From the 1st January to the 31st of May last there has been shipped from Cumberland 83,396 tons of coal, and the aggregate amount of tolls collected for that time was \$56,615 14.

The New York Tribune says:—"For years there has been a bitter and growing enmity on the part of the Mexicans of the Rio Grande States toward the Americans inhabiting the opposite side of the river; and it is certain that no movement would be so popular in Mexico, or so tend to unite all parties, as the reannexation of Texas, by diplomacy or force, to the Government of Mexico.

We learn from Point Lookout that Gen. Marston will not permit contrabands to take refuge there.

An English paper says there has not been a better or more abundant crop than that which now covers the earth, in the memory of any living man. The potato, is, so far, free from blight, and appears to have everywhere recovered much of its natural flavor.

The Washington correspondent of the N. Y. "Commercial" writes: "There has been some additional trouble with conscripts, quite a large number eluding the guard and making a successful escape for the time being. It is feared that enough to form a company escaped. Measures were taken to capture them, and they will be regarded as deserters. The drafted men are well treated, and it is only the professional substitutes that are making all the trouble."

Among the Mexican prisoners brought to France by the transport Rhone is a young Indian woman, only twenty-three years of age, who was lieutenant colonel of the regiment of Zacatecas, and who, in the course of seven years, rose step by step from the ranks, by her courage and talents.