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THE CAMPAIGN IN VIRGINIA.

Dispatches from the Petersburg Express of the 23d, as telegraphed from Fortress Monroe, state that on the 20th instant a fleet of Federal gunboats were in the Rappahannock river, twelve miles below Tappahannock, with a dredging machine in the advance, searching for torpedoes. The dispatch expresses the opinion that Tappahannock or Port Royal will be the base of Burnside's co-operative movement against Richmond. Another dispatch, from Orange Court house, mentions a rumor that the Federal army commenced on the 22d to move up their rear, preparatory to an advance. There was nothing, however, it is added, to indicate an immediate advance.

The Washington correspondent of the N. Y. Post says that gigantic preparations are going on for the approaching campaign in Virginia; that General Grant is actively making his arrangements for a great battle, and that whilst it is not probable that the shock of arms will take place during this week, if Gen. Lee remains in his present position, the latter has it in his power to force a battle at any moment. If he concludes to do so, it is asserted positively, that the offer will not be declined.

From the telegraphic announcement, from Fortress Monroe, that the Federal steamer Greyhound has been sent up the James river to City Point "to order down the two French steamers and two sailing vessels which recently went up there after the tobacco belonging to the French Government," it is surmised that active military operations on the line of the James river are about to commence.

Volunteering under the last call for eighty-five thousand militia to serve for one hundred days is said to be progressing favorably in Ohio and Indiana.

A New York paper compiles a list of twenty-nine leading articles of farm produce, which show an average rise of 98 per cent., while gold had risen only 70 per cent. It also gives a list of sixteen leading articles which have risen 130 per cent.

The Cincinnati Gazette comes to the conclusion, from all its sources of information, that the damage to the wheat crop, during the past winter, was not as great as has been apprehended.

Advices from Bermuda to April 20 state that the steamer Atlanta, supposed to be another blockade runner, had arrived from England.—The Eugenia and Hanson have left for England.

The blockade runner Vance, from Wilmington, via Nassau, has arrived at Halifax. She was chased twice after leaving Nassau. She reports that the blockade runner Will o' the Wisp was going into Wilmington when she came out.

U. S. CONGRESS.—In the Senate, yesterday, the bill to provide a National currency, &c., was further considered and postponed until to-day. Mr. McDougal offered a resolution instructing the Committee on Foreign Relations to report to the Senate the House resolution in regard to French occupation in Mexico, but Mr. Sumner objected, and the resolution went over.

In the House of Representatives, the joint resolution appropriating twenty-five millions of dollars for paying, arming, equipping and transporting volunteers, tendered by the Governors of several States, was taken up and passed. The Internal Revenue bill was further considered.

A special dispatch to the New York Herald from Harper's Ferry states that a very spirited contest had taken place (when not stated) between a detachment of the 1st New York Cavalry and a "body" of Confederates, in which the former lost one officer and "a number of men." "Superiority of numbers," says the despatch, "alone gave the rebels the advantage they gained"—but what the advantage was, is not stated. The despatch concludes as follows:—"The New York cavalry thus engaged was out on a scout, being despatched from Martinsburg. It is evident they 'scouted' out the position of the enemy, and subsequently 'scouted' for the old position of friendly quarters."

The siege of Charleston is still kept up.—Shells, it is stated, are now thrown into the middle of the city, with, however, little effect. Firing on Sumter is also continued from Fort Gregg. Sumter occasionally returns the fire. No serious damage is reported on either side. The siege has been in progress about two hundred and ninety days. Gen. Beauregard, according to Federal accounts, is constantly traveling between Charleston and Savannah.

The Maryland State Constitutional Convention assembled at Annapolis yesterday, eighty members being present. H. H. Goldsborough received 58 votes and was declared permanent President of the Convention. The Democrats did not vote. Fourteen Democrats elected did not take their seats, and it is not known whether they will do so.

A dispatch from Mobile, on the 22d, to the Petersburg Express, as telegraphed from Fortress Monroe, makes the very brief announcement that "on Wednesday General Wirt Adams repulsed 1,500 Federals near Mechanicsville, Miss."

Augustus Sickle, a private of company E, 13th New York cavalry, stationed at Fort Ethan Allen, near the Chain Bridge, accidentally shot himself last Tuesday, death ensuing instantly.

A refugee, recently from Mobile, represents that place as almost impregnablely fortified.—The bay is defended by two rams, four iron-clads, and two floating batteries.

Gold in New York, yesterday, 177½.

The steamer City of New York from Liverpool on the 13th reached New York yesterday, bringing the intelligence of the defeat of the British Ministry in the House of Commons on the 12th, by a majority of eight, on the minor educational question. The Morning Herald says Lord Clarendon's mission to Paris is to restore amicable relations, and dispel Napoleon's irritation against England. The Emperor Maximilian's health is improved. It is stated that he will leave Mexico en route for Mexico on the 14th of April. He has made sundry diplomatic and ministerial appointments. The Prussians continue a vigorous bombardment of Duppel. It was reported that the Danish fire was very weak, several batteries having been silenced. A Flensburg dispatch says the Danes are preparing to evacuate the entrenchments. The Prussians, in Jutland, have advanced further northward.—They drove the Danes out of Horsens after a short engagement. The Conference has not assembled at London. Garibaldi had been enthusiastically received in London.

The Richmond Enquirer says: "Within the last few weeks near a hundred deserters from Grant have passed over the line and come asking asylum in the bosom of the rebellion. For the last few days they have been particularly persevering in getting to Richmond ahead of time, unwilling to wait for Grant, and stand the chances of being put to a great deal of unnecessary trouble and in no little danger. It is becoming a customary sight to see squads of five, six, eight, or ten per day, marching up to General Winder's office under guard, but seeming as gay and glad as if they were in the best luck and with the best prospects in the world."

The Baltimore Gazette of this morning says: Mrs. L. V. De Larianaga, a widow lady of Spanish birth, and three children, were arrested by order of General Wallace and sent across the lines to the South, not to return during the war, under the penalty of being treated as spies. It is stated that she came from the South about six months ago, expecting to get employment as a teacher of Spanish, music and painting. She was sent last evening by the Fortress Monroe boat.

A dispatch from Chattanooga to the Northern papers states that on Friday morning, at daybreak, the Confederates approached the Federal outer videttes, in Nickajack Gap, and were challenged, and one shot by the sentinel, who retreated on the mounted reserve. The Confederates attacked the reserve in large force, capturing twelve and killing four.

The Marlboro', Md., Gazette says:—"We are glad to learn that Mr. John Z. Jenkins, of Serratt's district, in this county, has been released from the military prison in which he has been detained for two weeks past. What he was charged with has not transpired."

Capt. Archer, late U. S. Quartermaster of Arizona, under Gen. West, recently absconded into Old Mexico.