

THE WAR FOR THE UNION.

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REPORTS BY REBEL DESERTERS.

RECONNOISSANCE TOWARD DRAINSVILLE.

A SUCCESSFUL EXPEDITION.

SPEECHES ON THE REBELLION.

Special Dispatch to The N. Y. Tribune.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 8, 1861.

MR. GURLEY'S CONFISCATION BILL. The bill which Mr. Gurley of Ohio will offer in the House to-morrow declares all rebel property confiscated, and all slaves belonging to rebels free, and provides for the appointment of Commissioners in each rebel State to carry out the confiscation of property and the liberation of slaves in a systematic and orderly manner, and to take charge of such slaves and employ them in the service of the United States at reasonable wages, and in transporting to Florida such as may not be needed for the public service, and to apprentice them there for not more than six years at reasonable wages to loyal proprietors of lands; after which term of six years they shall be entirely free. Florida is to be occupied by United States forces as soon and as far as is practicable, and the estates of rebels are to be sold by Commissioners to loyal purchasers, and the slaves of loyal citizens purchased and paid for out of the confiscation fund. It is to be governed by military law, and as a Territory, until it shall have sufficient loyal white inhabitants to entitle it to a representative in Congress, when it may form a State Government and a Constitution excluding slavery. The bill is carefully drawn, and provides ample safeguard against fraud, and for the compensation of loyal creditors and sufferers by the rebellion, who are to be paid out of the confiscation fund.

MILITARY MEASURES IN CANADA.

The Commander of the British forces in Canada, which now number nearly 10,000 men, has received instructions from the home Government to grant no further permissions of leave to officers, and to retain the body of the troops within his immediate supervision. In consequence of this order Sir Fenwick Williams is said to have recalled all absent officers and is now engaged in exercising his forces with a view to securing their highest efficiency.

DINNER TO THE ORLEANS PRINCES.

On Saturday the Prussian Minister gave a diplomatic dinner to the Orleans Princes. The representative of royalty, forgetful or careless of the social law *duo veniens Romano venio mare*, seated the Prince de Joinville and the other princes above Gen. McClellan.

SHOOTING PICKETS.

On successive days pickets of Gen. Blenker's division have been shot, and some of them, three at least, killed. A farmer named Cook was strongly suspected to have abetted, or even himself perpetrated these murders. Twice or thrice he was caught and handed over to the chief of Gen. McClellan's staff, and twice or thrice has been set free, and furnished with a pass.

REPORTS BY REBEL DESERTERS.

Two deserters came into Gen. Sumner's headquarters yesterday. They have been at Booneville for several months. They state that the Rebels have 150,000 men at Centerville. They were told that there was a much larger number than that, but did not believe it. The Rebels were in daily expectation of an attack from us at three points. There were only about 10,000 soldiers at Manassas. Gen. Sumner sent the men to-day to Gen. McClellan's headquarters, and after examination by Gen. Marcy, they were handed over to the Provost Marshal.

ANOTHER RECONNOISSANCE.

Gen. McClellan made another reconnoissance toward Drainsville last night, returning this morning with seven prisoners and fifty-seven wagon loads of grain. One brigade of infantry, with a squadron of cavalry and a battery of artillery, supported by another brigade, marched ten miles and back. Near Drainsville they arrested two Colman brothers, cousins of two of the same name, captured by Bayard in the late reconnoissance, and three Poole brothers, resident there, who have been in the habit of shooting stray Unionists, whether citizens or soldiers. Two rebel women were also brought in from the farm of a noted rebel named Gannell, grain and cattle and two stout slaves were taken; no enemy was seen. The number of troops engaged in the expedition may seem disproportioned to its results, but Gen. McClellan is not one of those who send out scouting parties so small as to fall an easy prey to the enemy, but means to be prepared for any emergency, as well as to give his soldiers a useful experience.

SERENADE TO JUDGE SMITH OF WISCONSIN.

At a serenade given in front of Willards by the band of the 19th Indiana last evening to ex-Judge Smith of Wisconsin—celebrated by his rulings in the Booth case—this gentleman said among other positive things, "the Northwest will consent to nothing but an utter squelching out of this great rebellion. [Applause.] We want you to chop the ring-leaders into mince-meat, put them into links, and draw them up into sausages, but when you do, beg pardon of the dogs of Dixie." [Cheers.]

THE GOV. OF THE GREAT STATE OF NEW-YORK BEING CALLED UPON FOR A SPEECH, ADDRESSED THE FOLLOWING:

"I have just been informed that this serenade was intended for me. I do not know to whom I am indebted for it, nor is it essential that I should, but I presume it is a portion of the grand army. [Three cheers for the band of the 19th Indiana.] Well, I am much indebted to the 19th Indiana. I think, I am much indebted to the State of New-York. But I want to ask you a question. Before going it, I will preface it with a short statement. The Legislature of the State of New-York, on the 25th day of April, passed a law to raise 20,000 soldiers, and appropriated \$3,000,000 to pay the ex-

penses therefor. They have not been in session since, and the Secretary of War, in his recent report, says there are now nearly 100,000 in the service of the Government. [Cheers for Pennsylvania, and cries of "She is ahead."] The question I ask you is this, whether the Legislature of the State of New-York, which is now to meet in about three weeks, will not think that I have slightly exceeded my authority. [Cries of "No, no."] I thank you, my friends, for this mark of courtesy, and bid you good night.

RECRUITING FOR THE NAVY.

Recruiting for the navy, brisk as it is, is not brisk enough to supply the demands of the service. One hundred and thirteen vessels are now fitting out, and 6,000 more seamen are wanted to man them. The prestige of the navy and the prospect of passing the winter in the sunny South ought to bring the requisite number of men at once. Flag-Officer Foot also wants 1,000 men to man the Mississippi flotilla. He expects them to come from the lakes.

DEFAULTER FOWLER.

I. V. Fowler, once Postmaster of New-York, is carrying on a tobacco manufactory in Tepec, Mexico, and is said to be making money.

CONSUL AT PORT MAHON.

Jos. J. Henry of Pennsylvania, has been appointed Consul at Port Mahon, Minorca Islands.

LAND AGENT AT BROWNSVILLE, NEBRASKA.

W. N. Jenks of Pennsylvania has been appointed Land Agent at Brownsville, Nebraska.

ACCEPTS.

Mr. Richardson of Illinois has decided to accept, if offered him, the Brigadier-Generalship.

GOV. MORTON ON THE REBELLION.

The interest attached to the opinions of public men here on the vital question of the day gives large audiences to serenade speeches. At the serenade on Saturday night to Gov. Morton of Indiana, he declared that Indiana would give her last man and last dollar to put down this rebellion; that the war should be prosecuted for the suppression of treason and the restoration of the Union, and for these purposes alone, using every practicable means known to civilized warfare, but doing nothing which could make the restoration of the Union impossible.

Mr. Kellogg, of Illinois, anathematized South Carolina, but believed there were Union sentiments in Georgia and other States, which should be encouraged. The negro question he would let alone. If it was a blessing, let the South enjoy it; if a curse, let them suffer it.

MR. COLfax was for conducting the war more vigorously, for striking the rebels hard, quick blows, for confiscating everything they possessed, and especially slaves, which had proved such an element of strength to them. He was for bullets and bayonets instead of olive branches, and against any suggestions of peace till every Union man from Virginia to Texas could sit peacefully under his roof-tree with none to molest or make him afraid.

MR. CRITTENDEN spoke briefly in favor of an onward movement to Tennessee, where he predicted our armies would be within ten days, and pledged Kentucky as unalterably for the Union and its maintenance at any cost.

Senator Lane of Indiana closed. He was for the confiscation of rebels' slaves, accompanied with colonization, for our armies taking the offensive everywhere.

TELEGRAPH TO FORTRESS MONROE.

The President has given his approval to a scheme for a line of telegraph from here to Fortress Monroe. Only 20 miles of it will be submarine. In connection with this, New-Yorkers are advocating a submarine line to Hatteras, thence to Port Royal, thence to Key West and Fort Pickens.

THE CASE OF COL. KERRIGAN.

The trial of Col. Kerrigan will commence to-morrow morning before a Court-Martial, over which Gen. Casey presides. Among the eleven members are Generals Palmer and Parke, Col. Frank Wheaton, of the 2d Rhode-Island, Col. Stockton, of a Michigan regiment, and four New-Jersey Colonels. Lieut. McCool, 3d Infantry, is Judge Advocate. An autograph letter from Fernando Wood on behalf of Col. Kerrigan's friends, praying that he might have a speedy trial, was received after the day was fixed.

MR. WILSON'S SUTLER ABOLISHING BILL.

The sutlers are making great efforts to defeat Senator Wilson's bill for the protection of soldiers against their extortion. Not satisfied with personal appeals to members of Congress, those who have the Sutter's pockets at heart, have prepared a printed circular for circulation in the camps, by which every vendor of gingerbread and grog is requested and required to contribute twenty-five dollars to a fund to be used to defeat the measure in Congress. To men who charge five cents a piece for postage stamps, and two cents a piece for the commonest envelopes, this sum is a mere bagatelle.

IT HAS NOT OCCURRED TO THE FRIENDS OF THE private soldier to raise money to help on the bill, but they have showered upon the Senator who has moved in this reform letters of thanks, and letters enumerating some of the extortions they have suffered.

THE EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.

At 12 o'clock on Friday night, a special train conveyed the residue of the Rebel prisoners here, 27 or 28 in all, to Fort McHenry, whence they will be taken to Fort Monroe, and under a flag of truce, to Norfolk. Thus practically an exchange of prisoners going on. No system of exchange has, however, been agreed upon. Leading New-Yorkers are here urging the adoption of some system. Gen. McClellan and the President have expressed themselves desirous of effecting the end, but not clear as to the proper means. The matter will be brought before the Military Committee of the House, probably to-morrow, when the New-York delegation will appear.

DEATHS OF UNION SOLDIERS.

The following Union soldiers died yesterday: Private Daniel Schwart, 1st Long Island Volunteers; Private B. Oakes, 4th New-York Regiment; private J. H. Mason, 43d New-York Regiment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF DEATHS.

The death of Senator Baker will be announced on Tuesday, and that of Mr. Bingham on Wednesday.

CONFISCATION.

The general disposition among Congressmen is to pass a law making more certain and stringent the forfeiture of rebel property, while that of Unionists will

be more surely protected. In other words, making a wide discrimination between the two classes.

It is not at all probable that anything will be done to militate against the heretofore declared object in vigorously prosecuting the war.

THE POTOMAC FLEET.

The steamer Mount Vernon yesterday took Commodore Wyman, flag officer of the Potomac Flotilla, down to the Harriet Lane, off Indian Head, returning to the Navy-Yard in the evening.

The Harriet Lane is now the flag ship, the Yankee being at the Navy-Yard undergoing extensive improvements.

Com. Harrell resumes his duties as flag officer of the lower flotilla on board the Union.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAPLAIN.

The Rev. Dr. Michael of Covington, Ky., was today appointed Chaplain to the 5th Regiment of United States Cavalry.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8, 1861.

THE DISTURBANCES AMONG THE INDIANS.

The Indian Bureau has received information that Gen. Hunter, by his direction, was holding a council at Leavenworth with influential representatives of the Southern Indian tribes, including those from the Creeks, Cherokees, and Choctaws, in relation to the disturbances occasioned by the present rebellion. The instructions sent thither by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs contemplate their return to their own people, with strong assurances of the friendship of the United States Government.

SENATOR TRUMBULL'S SPEECH.

The following paragraph was unintentionally omitted in the transmission of the recent speech of Senator Trumbull: "Without any special act of Congress, I presume no one questions that our military commanders, in the prosecution of the war in insurrectionary districts, may for the time being seize and make use of the property of the Rebels and their slaves, but on the restoration of peace the right of the owners would revive. Hence, if we would have uniformity of action among the commanders of our armies, and forbid forever the property of Rebels and their claims to the service of their fellow-men, it must be done by act of Congress."

PENSIONS TO REBELS.

The Pension Office has withheld the payment of pensions to a number of persons on account of sufficient evidence of their disloyalty. It appears that some show a willingness to take the prescribed oath of allegiance and loyalty for the purpose of obtaining money from the Government, but who afterwards either join the rebels or otherwise give them aid and comfort. As a large number of the pensions are paid after the 1st of October, the returns thus far received do not afford sufficient data from which to judge as to the extent of the defalcation. The widow of Commodore Thomas Ap Catesby Jones is among those who removed into Jefferson, and thus lost the benefits of her pension.

THE CAPTURED LINCOLN CAVALRY.

Captain Todd, of the Lincoln Cavalry, who with a few of his companions was taken prisoner in the neighborhood of Pickett Church, about three weeks ago, while on a reconnoissance, has written a letter, which was received here yesterday, stating that none of those who were with him at that time were injured, and that they are now imprisoned in Richmond.

THE MATTHEWS POINT BATTERY.

The Rebel battery located a short distance above Matthews Point threw a shell into the camp of the 14th Massachusetts Regiment on Friday. Failing to explode, it did no injury.

THE ROADS ON THE LOWER POTOMAC.

The roads between Washington and the camps on the Maryland side of the Lower Potomac are almost impassable for the army baggage-wagons. Nearly all the stores are now shipped by small steamers and transports.

MORE CONTRABANDS.

Thirty-one contrabands have arrived here. They are women and children, and were brought over from Matthews Point by Col. Graham during his recent reconnoissance. The men, numbering over fifty, are still with Gen. Sickles, employed as laborers. These slaves had been deserted by their masters, and were in a destitute condition when discovered by our troops.

APPLICATION FOR PROMOTION.

It is understood that the Representatives in Congress from Philadelphia, together with Colonels Ripley, Chantry and Egan, yesterday personally applied to the President to appoint Col. Barsey of the 23d Pennsylvania Regiment to a Brigadier-Generalship. This city is largely represented in the Army of the Potomac.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

The House Committee to examine into Government contracts, of which Mr. Van Wyck is Chairman, will report in part some time this week. It is said that large sums of money have already been saved to the Government through their investigations.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES.

The weather to-day is beautiful. The religious exercises in the various camps were unusually largely attended.

REPORTS BY SCOUTS.

Scouts, sent out by Gen. Wadsworth's Brigade, on Friday, returned to-day. They reported that Flint Hill and also Fairfax Court-House are entirely deserted by the Rebel pickets. They passed through and beyond the village of Fairfax before they met the pickets of the enemy.

SHELTER FOR CAVALRY HORSES.

The different cavalry regiments on the south side of the Potomac are, of their own accord, erecting shelters to protect their horses from the influence of the weather.

IMPORTANT FROM MISSOURI.

St. Louis, Mo., Saturday, Dec. 7, 1861. Gen. Pope has been assigned to the command of all Union forces between the Missouri and Osage Rivers. This force constitutes the largest part of the army which Gen. Fremont took to Springfield. Busy preparations are now being made for the establishment of Winter quarters for the troops.

Gen. Price is still south of the Osage, and is losing more men by desertion and expiration of the time of service than he has gained by his proclamation.

St. Louis, Mo., Thursday, Dec. 4, 1861.

Gen. Henry Heath of Virginia has been appointed a Major-General, and supercedes Gen. Price in command of the Department of Missouri.

Kansas City, Saturday, Dec. 6, 1861.

A band of Rebels entered Independence last night arrested several Union men, and forced them to take an oath that they would not take up arms against the Southern Confederacy.

This morning they took possession of the stage leaving for Lexington, but through the influence of some Rebel citizens it was restored.

St. Louis, Dec. 8, 1861.

The report sent last night that the rebels captured yesterday ten of our mule teams and took the teamsters prisoners was a mistake. The men and teams have arrived here, having been released after all the arms belonging to the party were taken from them.

IMPORTANT NEWS FROM CALIFORNIA.

CAPTURE OF A PARTY OF REBELS WHILE EN ROUTE FOR TEXAS.

San Francisco, Friday, Dec. 6, 1861. A party of rebels on their way to Texas, over land, were captured on the northern border of the State by Union troops. It is supposed that 150 others, intending to leave California by the same route, will be taken. Showler, the duelist, commands them.

The weather is rainy. Business dull. Crushed sugars are selling at 15c. per pound. Candles reguared via Panama, 35c. Buter, 30c.

IMPORTANT FROM PENSACOLA.

REPORTED FIGHT BETWEEN UNION AND REBEL GUNBOATS.

Chicago, Saturday, Dec. 7, 1861.

The Memphis Avalanche of Dec. 5 contains the following dispatch:

PENSACOLA, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 1861.

The steamships Florida and Pamlico engaged the Union fleet, off the east end of Hern Island, at 9 o'clock to-day. The Union forces retired.

THE WESTERN VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE.

Wheeling, Va., Saturday, Dec. 7, 1861.

In the Legislature to-day, Mr. Porter offered a resolution looking to Virginia's paying her portion of the Union direct tax.

Mr. Davidson offered a resolution requiring all ministers to take the oath of allegiance before receiving a license to perform the marriage ceremony.

A bill was reported releasing non-commissioned officers and privates from the payment of the customary taxes.

On motion of Mr. Logan it was ordered that the national flag be displayed each day from the building where the Legislature transacts its business.

EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.

Boston, Saturday, Dec. 7, 1861.

Next week 11 officers and 210 privates of the North Carolina regiments will be sent to Fortress Monroe from Fort Warren, and released on parole. An equal number of our men will be returned from Richmond.

THE TWELFTH MAINE REGIMENT.

Boston, Dec. 7, 1861.

The steamship Illinois has arrived and the 12th Maine Regiment will probably embark to-morrow to join Gen. Butler's expedition.

The 2d Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Stephenson, will leave camp at Readville at noon to-morrow, for Annapolis, to join Gen. Burnside's expedition.

CHANGE OF POSITION OF GEN. BANKS'S FORCES.

FREDERICK, Md., Friday, Dec. 6, 1861.

The 3d Brigade of Gen. Banks's army, Gen. Williams commanding, arrived here this morning, and after passing through the city, making a magnificent appearance, took encampment near the hamlet of Fairview, three miles out on the Hagerstown turnpike, and on a bluish stream, gushing fresh, pure, and abundant, from the recesses of the Catoctin Mountain. The brigade and regimental supply and baggage trains followed immediately in the rear of the regiments.

The 1st and 2d Brigades, commanded by Gen. Abercrombie and Hamilton, arrived respectively on Tuesday and Wednesday. The former is located on the Monocacy and Baltimore turnpike, and the latter on the Monocacy near Jannsville, both four to five miles from the city, the two cavalry companies and the artillery battalion, under Capt. Best of the 4th U. S., have also arrived. None of the forces composing the Muddy Branch Camp are now behind, except the 19th New-York, Col. Lodie, which guards the division supply train, and is now on its way hither.

As might have been expected, after ruralizing in listless inactivity for months in the solitude around Damascus, large numbers of the soldiers came immediately into the city to enjoy the luxuries of city life and a city market. After an experience of 21 hours it was found that the number composing the Provost guard for the county was totally inadequate to preserve order in the streets and public places, and a company of cavalry was added to the Guard. Subsequently an order was issued to Col. Rager of the Wisconsin 3d, to assume the duties of Provost Marshal, with his whole regiment as a guard. Last night he marched his men to the city, and fixed their encampment near the fair grounds, where the prison camp is located. He has not yet assumed the duties of Provost Marshal, but his men have today, under their own officers, been leading valuable assistance to Capt. Warwick in picking up stragglers and suppressing intemperance. To the credit of both troops and citizens it should be stated, that notwithstanding there has been a considerable degree of dissipation, there have been no riots or disorders of a general character, whatever has been the ebullition of pent-up appetites for excitement and jollity.

During the marches of the several brigades and battalions there were no incidents worthy of record. The roads in many places were rough, caused by the frost directly after a wet season. Two days were occupied by the brigades in marching a distance of about 31 miles, and at night the men and officers slept in their blankets under the open sky.

The more seriously ill of the division were put into comfortable canvas boats at the mouth of the Seneca and carried to the Point of Rocks, where a train was in waiting, which brought them directly hither—thus avoiding the jarring of rough country roads. They are all well provided for in the barracks located in the Fair grounds adjoining the suburbs of the city. Dr. King, the Medical Director of the division, has spared no pains, expense or ingenuity to conduce to their comfort and recovery.

Gen. Banks's headquarters are in the spacious mansion of Bradley F. Johnson, now a Colonel of the rebel army. It had been unoccupied, except by his servants, since his advent into the rebel army, and is a most appropriate and convenient place for its present use. The servant left in charge by Johnson is still continued in the same capacity by Gen. Banks, and the remaining furniture will be well protected, either for the late owner or the purchaser under the confiscation law.

The location of the several brigades appears to have been well selected, with a view to winter comforts as well as to a sudden movement hence, and to convenience in obtaining supplies. The only troops located in the city are Gen. Banks's Body Guard, composed of the Zouave D'Afrique, and Company A, Capt. Fitzsimmons, and Company K, Capt. — of the Van Alen Cavalry. The latter, however, are acting in connection with the Provost Guard.

As the troops passed through the city to-day, they were greeted with warm demonstrations, and even those set down as warm Secessionists, in some instances, joined in the greetings. There appears on the surface to be a general satisfaction at the presence of Gen. Banks's Division, and some hail it as the sign of a radical change of sentiment, as in part evidenced in the late State election. Some cases have been noticed where fastidious Secessionists have thrown open their mansions for the accommodation of officers and attaches of the army, and in no case has there been, to the knowledge of your correspondent, that exhibition of hostility to the Union cause which he had been led to expect from previous reports. Still, this seeming courtesy may be only a hypocritical disguise to avoid the shoals which a more manly or defiant course would raise only to wreck their prosperity.

Dr. King to-day left for Baltimore to look after the state of the sick of his charge, in General Hospital there, and to procure additional supplies for those in the regiments and division hospital there.

Instead of establishing a division post-office here, Mr. Houghton, the Post-office Agent and Acting Postmaster of the division, goes into the City Post-office, which is being enlarged and a department is being fitted up for military purposes.

Mr. Tucker, his Assistant, will take charge of the mails sent by two of the brigades, thus dividing their duties and facilitating mail delivery. These gentlemen are from the 3d Massachusetts Regiment.

For the first time since the army crossed into Vir-

ginia, our transition this week was made under an auspicious sky. The roads were in better order than could have been anticipated, considering the wet weather of the previous week, but were very wet in many places. Still the troops were rejoiced at the change, and arrived here cheerful and unexhausted.

Gen. Banks and staff visited Sandy Hook to-day on a special train, it being his first visit since the evacuation in July. Everything was quiet from the Point of Rocks to Harper's Ferry, nor were any of the boats of the enemy seen. Col. Query's command were vigilant, and allowed the rebels no opportunity to depredate upon the Unionists. Gen. Banks is suffering from a temporary indisposition to-night.

FROM FORTRESS MONROE.

Fortress Monroe, Old Point Comfort, Dec. 5, 1861.

The Illinois and the Cosmopolitan will sail to-day for Port Royal, with two Pennsylvania regiments, which, together with four others that have been waiting transportation, should have reinforced Gen. Sherman two weeks ago; when the other regiments will follow, it is difficult to conjecture. The Ericsson, which was ordered with the Illinois, and which was said to have left New-York at the same time, has not yet reported herself. It will be months before Gen. Sherman receives the reinforcements which he was to have received within a few weeks. It appears that the transports are at Port Royal that ought to be here, where the troops are; why they are at that distant point it is difficult to understand.

It is not improbable that Quartermaster Tallmadge may assume the responsibility of despatching the Squadron with a regiment within the next day or two.

Commodore Goldsborough has returned from Washington with his broad shoulders placed under the Burnside expedition. I do not know that a new direction has been given to this expedition, but according to its objects and destination have taken shape, an increased interest is given to it. It is now evident that it will not be among the least important movements of the war. The fleet, which will be under the direction of Commodore Goldsborough, will play an important part, though a not less important service than that originally designed will be assigned to the forces under Gen. Burnside. The rebels are evidently anxious concerning this expedition, and have mixed it up with the so-called Butler expedition, but as yet they have failed utterly to ascertain either its character or the points at which the blow will be aimed. Their favorite theory is that a demonstration will be made up York River, with the view of sweeping the rebels from the peninsula and making an effective stroke at Richmond direct. In this theory it may turn out that they are more than half right, and yet utterly wrong. The expedition, I have no doubt, will have a good many things on its hands.

The Spaulding arrived from Hatteras this morning. They have had another gale there, the effects of which, though not as disastrous as the gale of three weeks since, were nevertheless severe, and added new discomforts to that most uncomfortable of all places. While the Spaulding was there, two rebel propellers, the Fanny and another of the same character, came so near the fort as to throw shells within 300 yards of the Spaulding and the Stars and Stripes, the flag-ship of the station. There were four Union gunboats there at the time that might have given the rebel steamer chase, if they did not capture them. But Lieut. Worden of the Stars and Stripes declined to allow our boats to proceed.

Several men who went from Hatteras to the main shore in September last, and were taken prisoners, have made their escape from prison, and arrived back to Hatteras.

Gen. Williams is placing his men in as comfortable winter quarters as possible. It is not probable that any change in his command will be made for the present.

Lieut. Baylor of the Ordnance Department here, has within the last few days been making some highly interesting and satisfactory experiments with the old 32-pounder rifle for the critical shot and shell. The experiments show not only great accuracy, but that the range that may be attained at an extreme elevation is very great—at least four and a half miles. Lieut. B. has rifled several of these guns, and it is doubtful whether anything better can be found in the service, the only point on which a question can be raised being that of weight of metal. Lieut. B. does not doubt the capacity of the gun in this respect. Experimented 1,000 yards, with two and a half degree elevation, and five and a half pounds powder, placed three successive shots in the target within the size of a man.

Major-Gen. Wood yesterday forwarded to prisoners of war in the South, via Norfolk, about 700 letters, 13 of which contained money. By the same bag of truce he also dispatched a large quantity of clothing, for distribution among the Union prisoners, as follows:

For Massachusetts Troops—19 boxes, containing 350 blankets, 350 overcoats, 700 fannel shirts, 700 pairs socks, 700 pairs drawers, 350 pairs trousers, 350 pairs shoes, 301 towels, and 170 handkerchiefs.

For members of the 20th Indiana Regiment—63 boxes, containing 53 blankets, 53 caps, 53 blankets, 53 shirts, 53 pairs trousers, 53 pairs drawers, 53 pairs shoes, 53 pairs socks, and 37 greatcoats.

[By Telegraph.]

FORTRESS MONROE, Saturday, Dec. 7, 1861.

A flag of truce was dispatched to Norfolk this morning from the flag-ship Minnesota, but brought no news from the enemy.

The Ericsson, from New-York, arrived this morning, and will, after taking aboard troops, proceed to Port Royal.

The weather here is most beautiful.

A sad accident happened this afternoon on board the flag-ship Minnesota. A sailor let a block down by the