

THE FREDERICKSBURG BATTLE.

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there, and that all the wagons in Washington that could possibly be stored should be filled with bread and small commissary stores, and with a large number of beef cattle, stored down to Fredericksburg on the road by way of the Potomac. The wagons that were to be used to transport the cattle should be preceded by a pontoon train large enough to span the Rappahannock twice; I stated that this was a train could move in perfect safety, because it would be all the time between our army and the Potomac, or in other words, our army would be all the time between the enemy and that train; but at the same time, I said that if a cavalry corps could not be furnished from Washington, I would send some of my cavalry to guard the train. On the morning of the 15th of November, fording survey with reference to the pontons, as I had not heard of their starting, I directed my Chief Engineer to telegraph again with reference to them.

A. Every single man of them was under artillery fire, and about half of them were at different times formed in column of attack; every man was put in column of attack that could be got in.
Q. What was your knowledge as to the force of the enemy here?
A. I estimated at all the way from 100,000 to 200,000. I think myself it was less than 100,000.
Q. What was the extent of the casualties on our side resulting from all the fighting?
A. It will not be far from 10,000 men killed, wounded and missing.
Q. What is the present condition of our troops here?
A. As far as my knowledge and information goes, it is good.

CHRISTMAS EVE.—This evening the little folks were early, leaving their stockings hanging in chimney corners, against stovepipes, on mantelpieces and door-knobs, and dream of a little, fat, old gentleman with a white beard, laughing eyes, and fat, round belly, driving a white horse in front of a tiny sleigh-load of toys and confections. They will smile in their slumbers to the pleasant visitor fill their shoes and stockings, bags and boxes, and lead their white horses and sleighs to the door, and when they awake at night and find the room still dark, how they will wish for daylight and wonder why they force themselves asleep again, and then they will try to force themselves away from the order to annihilate the time that keeps them away from the anticipated presents. With the rising sun they will rise, and without waiting to dress themselves, hasten to the spot where they hope to find the coveted treasures. Adults are only children of a larger growth, and they will also look for gifts of books, pictures, jewelry, and other tokens of friendship, which will be their best friends to friend in close and still closer alliance. There are kind-hearted men and women, who will come to be driven a stouter team than Santa Claus ever guided with wild and rein. They will make hearts happy and kindle "merry Christmases" by darning barrels of flour and loads of coal in front of poor tenement houses. They will distribute baskets full of good things to eat and packages of clothing to the poor. How the streets will be thronged, and how the shops will be crowded with all sorts of people buying all sorts of presents for relatives and friends. Fair hands will be busy in trimming trees for Christmas, and three trees, more marvelous to children than the one the Apostle saw in his vision bearing all manner of fruit, will yield a double blessing by inspiring sensations of happiness to donor and recipient.

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