INTERESTING FROM SOUTH CAROLINA

OUR NAVAL DISASTERS AND SUCCESSES.

Particulars of the Charleston Harbor Affair.

The Montauk's Operations on the Ogeechee.

Arrival of General Foster with Re-enforcements.

Operations of Negro Volunteers on Georgia Coast.

Correspondence Between General Hunter and the Rebels.

List of Casualties on the Meredita and Keystone State.

From Our Special Correspondent.

PORT ROYAL, S. C., Feb. 2, 1863.

The even course public affairs in these parts have followed for some time past, has been suddenly interrupted by a series of stirring events. A perfect flood-tide of exciting news set in night before last, and has continued ever since. So many matters of interest have claimed my attention during the last forty-eight hours, that I found it almost impossible to collect the details of all in time for transmission by this afternoon's mail for New-York. The leading occurrences, however, will be found fully described in the following, according to information obtained by me from official sources:

First of all, I have to record two serious disasters to the squadron blockading Charleston Harbor, intelligence of which was brought here by the vessels involved themselves. The principal of these misfortunes is no less than a reënactment, on a smaller scale, of the ever-memorable naval tragedy in Hampton Roads, in which the Rebel Merrimac and the ill-fated Congress and Cumberland were of the main performers—with the variation, however, that the part of the Monitor remained unrepresented.

The station of the gunboat Isaac Smith, carrying an armament of nine heavy guns and a crew of about 100 men, had been for some time at the mouth of Stono River. She had orders to make from time to time reconnoitering trips up the river for the purpose of observing the Rebel movements on its banks. On Friday afternoon she started from her station upon one of these reconnoitering trips. She passed up the river for some six miles, unmolested, without discovering any signs of the enemy. Upon returning, however, when near Grimble's plantation, some four miles from the mouth of the river, she was suddenly opened upon from three masked batteries—one of siege guns and another of field pieces on the right, and a third of heavy pieces on the left bank. She replied at once to the enemy's fire, but in turning she seems to have got aground and become a helpless mark of the enfilading Rebel artillery. The gunboat Commodore McDonough, which was lying in Folly Island Creek at the commencement of the firing, at once came up the river in order to assist the Isaac Smith. Upon nearing the latter, however, she discovered her fast aground, wrapped in clouds of steam, indicating the explosion of her boilers, and evidently already a prey to the enemy. The McDonough being no match for the Rebel batteries, she steamed back to the fleet and communicated the fate of the Isaac Smith to the commanding officer. This is all that is known at present to the naval authorities as to the fortunes of the Isaac Smith. The Southern papers will probably have informed you of the fate of her crew before this is likely to reach New-York.

The capture of the Isaac Smith proved a sort of prelude to still more successful Rebel exploits on the following morning. The vessels blockading the entrance to Charleston Harbor proper occupy positions forming the arc of a semi-circle. The gunboat Mercedita on Friday night rounded the main channel, formed along the sinking of the stone fleet, to the north of the old channel. The Keystone State was next to her, at a distance of about half a mile.

About 3 o'clock on Saturday morning the lookouts on the Mercedita discovered a steamer making, apparently, directly for the main entrance of the harbor. Supposing her to be a blockade runner, the Mercedita got under way and headed her off. Upon nearing and hailing her, she was found to be one of the transports carrying troops from North Carolina to this port, of the arrival of which I shall speak hereafter. After directing her upon the proper course, the Mercedita returned to her original position.

The morning was hazy, so that, although there was moonlight, it was impossible to distinguish objects at any considerable distance. The Mercedita had hardly resumed her station, when her officers discovered volumes of thick smoke arising, and evidently approaching from the main channel. A few minutes later the forms of two vessels were made out. Believing them to be making slow, if an attempt to run the blockade, the Mercedita made toward them. Having approached within a short distance, the nearest was hailed. An unintelligible reply was given, when the hail was repeated. No response being made, the order was given on the Mercedita to fire. Almost simultaneously there was a flash from the side of the rapidly closing in stranger, followed instantly by a fearful crash on the starboard side and through the hold of the Mercedita. A few more seconds, and the bow of the enemy, now disclosed, struck the Mercedita a tremendous blow on the starboard side, forward of where the projectile had entered, inflicting considerable though not fatal injury.

The Rebel fire, however, had already placed the Mercedita hors de combat. The first and only shell fired at her had entered on the starboard and passed clear through to and out on the port side, bursting on its passage, her boilers, deprived her of motive power and killed four and wounded three of her crew. The escape of steam revealing to the enemy her condition, she was summoned to surrender. Being completely at the Rebels' mercy, Capt. Stellwagen could but yield to the summons, which he did after some parleying, purposely protracted as long as possible in order to gain time to warn the other vessels of the fleet of the presence of the enemy. The Executive Officer, Lieut. Commanding Abbott, was sent aboard the Rebel vessel to make terms of surrender. He found her an exact second edition of the Merrimac as to exterior form and mode of iron plating. She was completely roofed over with thick plating, and he had to make his way to the interior through a small opening. The sides and roof were fairly flowing with oil, rendering them so slippery that he could not pass to the interior without assistance. Having reached the latter, he was introduced to the commanding officer. To the question whether he would take the crew of the Mercedita aboard, as she was filling with water and believed to be in a sinking condition, he replied that he could not do that for want of room, and would land only upon the parole of the officers and men not to bear arms against the Confederate States until properly exchanged. This Lieut. Abbott gave for Capt. Stellwagen, himself, and the remainder of the crew, and then returned to his vessel.

All this occurred within less than half an hour. Having disposed of the Mercedita, the Rebel ironclad left her and made in the direction of the Keystone State. Her consort, which had taken no part in the action with the Mercedita, followed.

Capt. Le Roy of the Keystone State was resting undressed in the cabin, when he heard the report of the gun the Rebel ram discharged at the Mercedita. He immediately repaired upon deck to discover its occasion. After awhile, some unintelligible signals were discovered, and soon afterward two objects from which black smoke was issuing, were observed approaching. Capt. Le Roy, having ordered the entire crew on deck, directed a gun to be aimed at them. Upon the foremost coming within hail, Lieut.-Commanding Eastman sang out, "What ship is this?" An inquiring "Halloo" was heard in reply. Another hail having elicited no response at all, Capt. Le Roy ordered the bow gun to be discharged at the suspicious craft. The latter at once replied with a seven-inch shell which penetrated the starboard side, bursting after touching the deck. The explosion killed four, and wounded a dozen of the crew. After exchanging a few more shots, Capt. Le Roy made out the character of the enemy from the thunder rebound of his own projectile from the iron-roofed sides, and fell away, in order to make an attempt to run the ram down. He started his ship for the shot-proof adversary under a full head of steam, and was moving at the rate of twelve knots upon him, when another 7-inch shell struck her on the port side, penetrating the side and both chimneys. The lower decks were at once filled with steam, which made frightful havoc among those below by scalding. Capt. Le Roy, finding his ship disabled, bent himself upon efforts to get her out of the grasp of the enemy. The water was entering the hold in a stream, and apparently fast filling. Still there was enough motive power left to avoid the pursuing ram. Precisely as was the condition of the Keystone State, her guns continued to be gallantly worked, and shot and shell fired at the enemy when opportunity offered, without, however, any seeming effect.

In the meantime the firing had attracted the attention of the remainder of the fleet, and brought them on the way toward the scene of action. The Memphis first neared the Keystone State, and offered her a hawser. Capt. Le Roy, however, thinking to have motive power enough left, proposed to run his ship ashore, to save her from sinking in deep water. But after the lapse of a few minutes, the Chief Engineer reported that the engines would work no longer, when the hawser from the Memphis was accepted, and the Keystone State taken in tow by her. An examination of the hold of the former revealed that she was taking water through the holes in the sides only, and that after the towing had steadied her, it ceased running in. The holes were then stopped, and with the aid of the pumps the ship was soon cleared of water, and brought safely to this port.

The Meredita was also found to be less injured than first supposed; the holes in her sides stopped and the water pumped out, she was towed to this harbor by the McDonough.

The action between the main Rebel ram and the Keystone State had lasted nearly an hour. The companion of the former had also made attempts to come to close quarters with the latter and fired some shots at her. But she did little execution, and upon the whole was but a secondary participant in the conflict.

At the time the Keystone State got out of harm's way, day was breaking. Upon the approach of the Memphis, the Quaker City, the Housatonic, and others of the fleet, the Rebel craft gave up the pursuit and changed their course toward the entrance of the harbor. Our vessels made boldly at them, using all their guns they could bring to bear. But even the heavy batteries of the Housatonic, including 11-inch guns, seemed to have no effect upon them, and they steered clear of our vessels while exchanging shots with them, and made good their escape into the harbor through Swash Channel. The Quaker City and other vessels were struck, but received no serious damage, and had no casualties.

The loss of life and limb on the Mercedita was comparatively large, but on the Keystone State it comprised nearly one-fourth of the crew. Seventeen were killed outright—about two thirds by shot and shell, the remainder by scalding—and 23 wounded. Three of the latter died of their injuries on the way hither. I give further below a complete list of the casualties on both vessels.

Among the killed of the Keystone State was Assistant Surgeon Gotwold, who died nobly at his post while attending to the wounded on the berth-deck from the insulation of steam. He was found dead seated on the deck with some lint he was about applying to a wound, still in his hand.

Gunner Amee of the Mercedita was cut nearly in two by a shell.

One of the crew of the Keystone State had his head taken off by a piece of shell. Another saved his life by resting in his hammock with his head in the place his feet usually occupied. The toes of both of them were shot away.

I visited the Keystone State yesterday afternoon. Her berth deck is cut and torn in every direction, and bespattered with blood, brains, and hair. She was struck altogether ten times, but two shells did the principal damage.

Captain Leroy and his officers and men certainly made a most honorable fight. Capt. Stellwagen and those under him on the Mercedita did, likewise, all that could be expected of them. Admiral Dupont, I understand, has expressed his full satisfaction with the conduct of all engaged in the unequal conflict. The misfortunes of the Isaac Smith, as well as the Mercedita and Keystone State, must be justly ascribed to the character of these vessels, rather than to any dereliction of duty on the part of those that fought them. All of them were improvised men-of-war. The Isaac Smith and Mercedita were formerly doing their country service as cattle boats. Had they been regular navy-built vessels, their machinery would have been below and not above the water line, which drawback to their efficiency was the very cause of their mishap.

The Rebel rams had our wooden vessels at a most decided advantage, not only as to their iron-clad safeguards against our projectiles, but also in other respects. They sat so low in the water that both their shots and balls struck our ships in their most vulnerable parts, while our own fire passed mostly over them harmless. Their exploits have proved them most formidable vessels, although their early retreat does not seem to indicate any great confidence in their strength on the part of their commanders. Opinions of naval officers differ as to whether they were apprehensive of being overpowered by superiority of armament or numbers, or of being run down, or whether they retired, being satisfied for the time with what they had accomplished. They seemed to be slow vessels, and the caliber of their guns to be inferior to those of most of our vessels. The comparative passiveness of one was probably due to an armor less protective than that of the main actor.

That the appearance and achievements of the Rebel iron-clads have produced great excitement among naval and military men, may be easily imagined. There is, however, no apparent apprehension that their mischief-making is beyond the power of control. At all events, the blockade of Charleston is as close as ever, and measures have been taken that will insure different results should the rams make another sortie. It is likely, however, that the so-fully demonstrated existence of naval Rebel means of resistance will produce some modifications of the plans for the campaign by land and sea that is about being opened.

There is much speculation and theorizing as to the real object of the excursion of the Rebel iron-clads. Some argue that it was an attempt at the capture of the English steamer Princess Royal, of whose Captain I shall speak hereafter; and others, that a dash among the fleet of transports carrying reënforcements from North Carolina, and off the harbor at the time of the attack, was intended. The best naval authorities, however, entertain the conviction that neither of these objects was in contemplation, but that the rams had merely improved the smooth sea and veiled atmosphere, so advantageous for a close approach without discovery, for a test of their fighting qualities.

The Mercedita and Keystone State will both have to be taken North for repairs.

A partial compensation for the reverses to our fleet off Charleston others in the capture of several valuable prizes. On the morning of the 27th ult. the yacht Hope took the schooner Emma Tuttle, laden with a valuable cargo. Early on the morning of the 29th ult. the pilot-boat Blunt espied a steamer making all speed for Mallitt Channel. She signaled to the Unadilla, which lay near by, got at once under way, and succeeded in cutting the blockade-runner off. The latter was run ashore, but got off uninjured the next morning by our head-draft boats. The captain, pilot and some passengers got a boat, and under pretext of hoarding the Unadilla, left their ship and made good their escape. The pilot had sailed in London six months for the fitting out of the steamer he failed to guide to her destination. Among those aboard now in our hands is an English machinist, who came across for the purpose of superintending the putting up of the machinery forming part of the cargo. The capture of the Princess Royal will be the worst disappointment to the Rebel authorities yet prepared by the blockaders. She has machinery for several iron-clads now erecting in the Confederacy. Her cargo was valued in London at £25,000. From a Charleston paper of the 30th, received at headquarters, I copy an account of the capture:

From The Charleston Courier, Jan. 30, 1863.

CAPTURE OF THE BRITISH STEAMER PRINCESS ROYAL.—The steam propeller Princess Royal, Capt. Lawson, from Glasgow, via London, where she took in cargo for St. John's (N. F.), Halifax (N. S.), and Bermuda, having left the latter port on Friday, 23d inst., was captured at an early hour yesterday morning, off this port, by the Yankee blockaders. She was suddenly surrounded by a number of the fleet before daylight, and the officers had to run her on the beach of Long Island as the best resource left to them. During yesterday the light draft Yankee steamers got a tow-line to her and succeeded in getting her off before high water. Capt. Thomas Craig, the Charleston pilot, Mr. Weston, a passenger, of Georgetown, S. C., and two other persons, escaped from her in a boat and reached the city last evening. Valuable dispatches which were on board from Capt. Maury, now in Europe, to the Confederate Government, have been saved and brought to this city. The Princess Royal had on board a cargo of great value to us, consisting of machinery for gunboats, Whitworth rifles, rifles, powder, and some workmen who were to instruct parties here in reference to the manufacture of new projectiles. The bulk of her freight was about 600 tons weight and an assortment. Capt. Lawson was sick in the cabin at the time of the capture, and has had a terrible voyage, experiencing terrific gales in a high hurricane latitude, and was compelled to put into St. Johns, N. F., Halifax N. S., and Bermuda, in order to coal his vessel. The Princess Royal is built of iron, and is schooner rigged. She is propelled by a screw, and makes an average speed of about twelve knots an hour. She had ten guns in the hold, but none on deck.

The news from the scene of operations of the monitor Montauk, on the Ogeechee River is not as favorable as I expected it to be. I was utterly mistaken in stating at the conclusion of my last that the attack had been renewed on the 29th. The reports of guns heard here arose from practice-firing at Beaufort. The attack was not resumed until yesterday. The attempts to move the obstructions had failed.

On the 29th, the colored pilot of the Nashville, with four other contrabands, including one who had been employed on the top engaged in making an opening in the obstructions for the inward passage of the Nashville, and in placing the torpedoes on the pile-work, made their way to our fleet. The pilot offered to take the monitor within seven hundred yards of the Rebel fort, and did so yesterday morning. The Montauk having moved within that distance signaled to open firing at 7½ o'clock. She continued to direct shot and shell from both her guns at the fort until 1:30 p. m., when, after spending some seventy rounds, the low tide compelled her to stop firing and fall back to her old position. Capt. Worden himself is said not to claim having inflicted any considerable destruction to the Rebel work owing to its remarable strength.

The Montauk was struck between 45 and 50 times, without suffering any other damage than the driving in of six bolts on the pilot-house armor by a rifled shot, and the complete tearing to pieces of the chimney. One of the gunners had his toes crushed during the action by the accidental falling of one of our own missiles upon them.

Six wooden gunboats lay off at long range, while the Monitor engaged the Rebel work at short, and kept up a heavy fire until the former retired. They seem to have neither done nor suffered much harm. The Seneca and mortar-boat Williams were struck, but neither disabled, nor had they any casualties among their crews.

I think that the Montauk will for the present desist from further attempts to reduce the Rebel work, but content herself with watching it and the Nashville. The fort was to be re-enforced after the first attack by 2,000 infantry from Savannah, which may render the employment of a land force on our side necessary for its reduction.

The long-expected and almost despaired of re-enforcements from North Carolina have at last arrived. On Saturday morning the first steamers of an immense fleet loaded with troops of all arms arrived, and vessels have been coming in constantly until this morning, when the last made port on the steamship Spaulding, conveying Gen. Foster and Staff. With the troops came Gens. Negley, Heckman, Stevenson and others. The subject being contraband, I forbear from any mention of the movements of the troops since their arrival. They complain greatly of having been detained unnecessarily long—twelve days—on vessels before starting. Such protracted delay seems surely to require an explanation.

The expedition of the First South Carolina Volunteers, the departure of which I mentioned in a former letter, returned last evening. A full account of the work it has done is given in the subjoined highly interesting report of Col. Higginson. It should stop the sneers and slanders of those whose anti-negro prejudices have urged the destitution of the Southern slave population of all the higher impulses of manhood. The death of Capt. Clifton of the John Adams is greatly regretted throughout the Department, in which he was universally known and esteemed.

ON BOARD STEAMER BEN DEVOND, Feb. 1, 1863.

Brig.-Gen. R. Saxton, Military Governor, &c.

GENERAL: I have the honor to report the safe return of the expedition under my command, consisting of 422 officers and men of the 1st South Carolina Volunteers, who left Beaufort, January 23, on board the steamers John Adams, Planter and Ben Deford.

The expedition has carried the regimental flag and the President's Proclamation far into the interior of Georgia and Florida. The men have been repeatedly under fire, have had infantry, cavalry and some artillery arrayed against them, and have in every instance come off not only with unblemished honor, but with undisputed triumph.

At Township Florida a detachment of the expedition fought a cavalry company which met us unexpectedly on a midnight march through pine woods, and which completely surrounded us. They were beaten off with a loss on our part of one man killed and seven wounded, while the opposing party admits twelve men killed, including Lieut. Jones, in command of the company, besides many wounded. So complete was our victory that the enemy scattered and hid in the woods all night, not returning to his camp, which was five miles distant, until noon next day—a fact which was, unfortunately, unknown until too late to follow up our advantage. Had I listened to the urgent appeals of my men and pursued the flying enemy, we could have destroyed his camp; but in view of the darkness, his uncertain numbers, and swifter mashes, with your injunctions of caution, I judged it better to rest satisfied with the victory already gained.

On another occasion a detachment of about 250 men on board the John Adams fought its way 40 miles up and down river regarded by the naval commanders as the most dangerous in the department—the St. Mary's—a river left untraversed by our gunboats for many months, as it requires a boat like the John Adams to ascend it successfully. The stream is narrow, swift and winding, and bordered at many places with high bluffs, which abound with rifle shots. With our glasses we saw mounted men by the hundred galloping through the woods from point to point to swarm on, and, though fearful of our shot and shell, they were so daring against musketry, that one Rebel actually sprang from the shore upon the large boat which was towed at our stern, where he was shot down by one of my sergeants. We could see our shell scatter the Rebels as they fell among them, and some terrible execution must have been done, but not a man of this regiment was killed or wounded, though the steamer is covered with bullet marks, one of which shows where our brave Capt. Clifton of the vessel fell dead beside his own pilot-house, shot through the brain by a minié ball. Major Strong, who stood beside him escaped, as it by magic, both of them being unnecessarily exposed without my knowledge. The secret of our safety was in keeping the regiment below, except the gunners, but this required the utmost energy of the officers, as the men were wild to come on deck, and even implored to be landed on shore, and charge on the enemy.

Nobody knows anything about these men who has not seen them in battle. I and that I myself knew nothing. There is a fiery energy about them beyond anything of which I have ever read, unless it be the French Zouaves. It requires the strictest discipline to hold them in hand. During our first attack on the river, before I got them all penned below, they crowded at the open ends of the steamer, loading and firing with inconceivable rapidity, and shouting to each other: "Never give it up." When collected into the hold they actually fought each other for places at the few portholes from which they could fire on the enemy.

Meanwhile the black gunners, admirably trained by Lieuts. Stockdale and O'Neil (both being accomplished artillerists) and Mr. Heron of the gunboat, did their duty without the slightest protection, and with great coolness, amid a storm of shot.

This river expedition was not undertaken to mere bravado. Capt. Sears, U. S. A., the constructor of Fort Clinch, had urged upon the War Department to endeavor to obtain a large supply of valuable bricks, said to remain at the brick-yards, thirty miles up the St. Mary's, from which Fort Clinch was originally supplied. The War Department referred the matter to Col. Hawley, who approved my offer to undertake the enterprise. Apart from this, it was the desire of Lieut. Hughes, U. S. N., commanding U. S. steamer Mohawk, now lying at Fernandina, to obtain information regarding a Rebel steamer, the Berora, said to be lying still further up the river, awaiting opportunities to run the blockade. Both objects were accomplished. I brought away all the brieks, and ascertained the Berora to be worthless.

I have the honor to state that I have on board the Ben Deford 250 bars of the best new railroad iron, valued at $9,000, and much needed in this Department. This was obtained on St. Simons and Jekyer Islands, Georgia, from abandoned Rebel forts, a portion of it having been previously blown up, and collected by Capt. Steedman of the Paul Jones. I have also eight large sticks of yellow pine lumber, said to be worth $700, which came from St. Mary's, Georgia. There is also a quantity of rice, rosin, cordage, oats, and other small matters, suitable for army purposes. On board the John Adams there is a flock of 25 sheep from Woodstock, Florida. I have turned over to Capt. Sears about 40,000 large sized bricks, valued at about $1,000, in view of the present high freights. I have also turned over to Judge Saltc, Civil Provost Marshal at Fernandina, four horses and four steers, and a quantity of agricultural implements suitable for Mr. Helper's operations at that location.

I have seen with my own eyes, and left behind for want of means of transportation (and because brick was considered even more valuable) enough of the choicest Southern lumber to load five steamers like the Ben Deford—an amount estimated at more than a million feet, and probably worth, at Hilton Head, $50,000. I also left behind from choice valuable furniture by the household, pianos, china, &c., all packed up for transportation, as it was sent inland for safe keeping. Not only were my officers and men forbidden to take any of these things for private use, but nothing was taken for public use, save articles strictly contraband of war. No wanton destruction was permitted, nor were any buildings burned unless in retaliation for being fired upon according to the usages of war. Of course no personal outrage was permitted or dreamed.

At Woodstock I took six male prisoners, whom I brought down the river as hostages, intending to land part of them before reaching Fernandina, and release them on parole. But in view of the previous attacks made upon us from the banks, this would have seemed an absurd stretch of magnanimity, and by the advice of Col. Hawley I have brought them for your disposal.

At the same place we obtained a cannon and a flag which I respectfully ask permission for the regiment to retain. We obtained also some trophies of a different description from a slave jail; which I shall offer for your personal acceptance: Three sets of stocks of different structure—the chains and staples used for confining prisoners to the floor, and the key of the building. They furnish good illustrations of the barbarism against which we contend. We returned at the appointed time, although there are many other objects which I wish to effect, and our rations are not nearly exhausted. But the Ben Deford is crowded with freight, and the ammunition of the John Adams is running low. Capt. Hallet has been devoted to our interest, as was also until his lamented death the brave Capt. Clifton. Of the Planter, I have hitherto said nothing, as her worn out machinery would have made her perfectly valueless, but for the laborious efforts of Capt. Eldridge, and her Engineer, Mr. Baker, aided by the unconquerable energy of Col. Trowbridge of Company A, who had the command on board. Thanks to this they were enabled during our absence up the St. Mary's River to pay attention to the salt works along the coast. Finding that the works at King's Bay formerly destroyed by this regiment had never been rebuilt, they proceeded five miles up Crooker River, where salt works were seen. Capt. Trowbridge, with Capt. Rogers of Company F, and thirty men then marched two miles across a marsh, drawing a boat with them, and then sailed up a creek and destroyed the works. There were twenty-two large boilers, two store-houses, a large quantity of salt, two canoes, with barrels, vats, and all things appertaining. I desire to make honorable mention not only of the above officers, but of Major Strong, Capts. Jones, Company B; Boudolph, Company C; Metcalf, Company G, and Dolly, Company H. Indeed, every officer did himself credit so far as he had opportunity, while the cheerfulness and enthusiasm of the men made it a pleasure to command them.

We found no large number of slaves anywhere; yet we brought away several whole families, and obtained by their means the most trustworthy information. I was interested to observe that the news of the President's Proclamation produced a marked effect upon them, and in one case it was of the greatest service to us in securing the loyalty and of a guide, who was timid and distrustful until he heard that he was legally free, after which he guided us gladly and came away with us.

My thanks are due, for advice and information, to Capt. Steedman, U. S. N., of the steamer Paul Jones; to Acting-Master Moses, U. S. N., of the bark Fernandina; to Acting Lieutenant Budd, U. S. N., of the steamer Potomska, for information and counsel, and especially to Lieutenant Commanding Hughes, U. S. N., of the steamer Mohawk, for 20 tons of coal, without which we could not have gone up the river.

I may state in conclusion that I obtained much valuable information not necessary to make public in regard to the location of the supplies of lumber, iron, rice, rosin, turpentine and cotton; and it would afford the officers and men of the regiment great pleasure to be constantly employed in obtaining these supplies for the Government from Rebel sources. But they would like still better to be permitted to occupy some advanced point in the interior with a steamer or two like the John Adams and an adequate supply of ammunition. We could obtain to a great extent, our own provisions, and rapidly enlarge our numbers, and could have information in advance of every movement against us. A chain of such posts would completely alter the whole aspect of the war in the seaboard slave States, and would accomplish what no accumulation of Northern regiments can so easily effect.

No officer in this regiment now doubts that the key to the successful prosecution of this war lies in the unlimited employment of black troops. Their superiority lies simply in the fact that they know the country and white troops do not, and moreover they have peculiarities of temperament, position and motive which belong to them alone. Instead of leaving their homes and families to fight, they are fighting for their homes and families, and they show the resolution and energy which a personal purpose gives. It would have been madness to attempt, with the bravest white troops, what I have successfully accomplished with black ones. Everything, even to the fighting of the vessel and the selection of the proper points for commanding, was done by my own soldiers; indeed the real conductor of the whole expedition up the St. Mary's was Corporal Robert Sutton, of Co. G, formerly a slave upon the St. Mary's River, a man of extraordinary qualities, who needs nothing but a knowledge of the alphabet to entitle him to the most signal promotion. In every instance when I followed his advice the predicted result followed, and I never departed from it however slightly without having reason for subsequent regret.

I have the honor to be, General, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant, T. W. HIGGINSON,
Col. Commanding 1st Regiment South Carolina Vols.

The following correspondence has taken place under flag of truce between the Rebel Gen. Mercer, commanding at Savannah, and Maj.-Gen. Hunter:

HEADQUARTERS CITY OF SAVANNAH,
SAVANNAH, GA., Jan. 31, 1863.

Maj.-Gen. DAVID HUNTER, Commanding, &c., Hilton Head, S. C.

GENERAL: I beg leave respectfully to call your attention to the case of Mr. D. McDonald of Mcintosh County, in this state.

Mr. McDonald is a non-combatant and has never been in military service. He was taken from his own residence, and conducted to Darien of my kind whatever. He was charged, it is now understood, to Hilton Head, and is detained as a prisoner by you. I must request that you will at once consider his case and, if not that you will at once consent to release Mr. McDonald, so that he may return to his family, who are much in need of his attention.

I am, General, very respectfully, &c.,
R. R. MERCER, Brigadier-General, Comdg.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE SOUTH,
HILTON HEAD, S. C., Jan. 26, 1863.

Gen. MERCER, Commanding District of Georgia.

GENERAL: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication dated Jan. 21, 1863, calling attention to the case of Mr. D. McDonald of McIntosh County, Ga., claimed by you to be a non-combatant, who has never been in military service, now held as a prisoner at our command, and saying that I take Mr. McDonald's case into consideration, and that he be released and returned to his family.

Without pausing to enter upon the merits of this particular case, I would most respectfully inform you, that by the same flag of truce which conveyed your letter, I received notification that Lieut. Noah H. Cass, Company C, 7th Regiment New-Hampshire Vols., recently captured in the vicinity of St. Augustine, Fla., is held as a prisoner in Charleston Jail, thus, disregarding having assured him that "being a commissioned officer he is not subject to exchange," but that he will "probably be turned over to the local authorities of the State of Florida for trial under the statutes made and provided in that State for the punishment of persons engaged in exciting negro slaves to insurrection." This action is doubtless based on the declaration made in the recent message of Mr. Jefferson Davis, that "hereafter, unless Congress" (meaning the Confederate Congress) "think some other course more expedient," he will cause all commissioned officers of the United States taken prisoners of war to be turned over for punishment as before recited to the authorities of the several States in which they may have been taken.

Under these circumstances and until this policy, in violation of all the rules of war among civilized nations, be distinctly and practically repudiated, I announce to you that all commissioned officers of your service now prisoners, or hereafter to become so, in my hands, will be kept in close confinement, and held answerable with their lives, for the safety of my officers who are prisoners, and that I will not discourage nor entertain applications for discharge, upon any pretext whatever, any citizens or residents of Georgia, South Carolina or Florida, now in my hands, or who may hereafter be captured by coastwise expeditions and incursions.

Regretting that a previous departure from the recognized rules of civilized warfare on the side of your authorities should compel this retaliatory declaration, and the acts to follow it on my part,

I have the honor to be, General,
Your most obedient servant,
D. HUNTER, Major-General Comdg.

As soon as Admiral Dupont had received intelligence of the performances of the Rebel rams off Charleston, he ordered the New-Ironsides to steam thither without delay, and accordingly she left at an early hour this morning. She is in complete fighting trim, having all her topmasts, spars, tackle, cabin furniture, &c., removed.

The Monitor Passaic left Saturday morning in a southward direction. She will not proceed far, but it would be imprudent to indicate her precise destination at present.

The following additional extracts from *The Charleston Courier* of the 30th ult. show rather lively movements on the part of English blockade-runners:

The steamer Cornubia from Wilmington, N. C., had arrived safely at Bermuda.

The steamer Thistle, from Nassau, has arrived at a Confederate port, having left Nassau on the 20th. She had on board a mixed cargo of British merchandise.

The steamer Giraffe had arrived from Wilmington, N. C.

The steamers Annie Childs and Nina had sailed from Nassau.

PROMOTIONS IN THE TENTH ARMY CORPS.

THIRD RHODE ISLAND HEAVY ARTILLERY.

Major Horatio Rogers, jr., to be Colonel of the 11th Rhode Island; Maj. John Ayscue to be Lieut.-Colonel; Capt. Chas. W. H. Dyer to be Major; 1st Lieuts. Charles R. Brayton and Augustus W. Colwell to be Captains; 2d Lieut. George O. Carlton to be 1st Lieutenant and Adjutant of the Regiment; 2d Lieuts. George E. Smith and Martin S. James to be 1st Lieutenants; 1st Sergeants Henry Harbison, Henry L. Metcalf, John E. Burrough, David S. Irwin, Judah W. Kenyon and James Rich, and Charles H. Aldrich, to be 2d Lieutenants; Sergeants Edwin W. Keene and Edward A. Weaver are to be 2d Lieutenants; Privates Benner H. Peckham, jr., Wm. Steven, and Thomas H. Carrique, to be 2d Lieutenants.

SEVENTY-SIXTH PENNSYLVANIA VOLUNTEERS.

Capt. Cyrus Diller to be Major; 1st Lieutenants James S. Hock, D. B. Hoagland, W. S. Diller, Joseph H. Findley and Charles Knerr to be Captains; 2d Lieutenant A. J. Marshall to be 1st Lieutenant and Adjutant; 2d Lieutenants S. E. Bergeson, Alfred Hicks, G. H. Gaeb, William Miller, and 1st Sergeant M. Stambaugh to be 1st Lieutenants; 1st Sergeants A. C. Miles, Joseph D. Keene, Joseph Cannon, Joseph Atkinson, W. T. Blair, 2d Sergeant A. N. Stawbridge and Sergeant Major J. J. McCormick to be 2d Lieutenants. Quartermaster Sergeant A. Robeson has been appointed Sergeant-Major, and Corporal John McKevin Quartermaster-Sergeant.

THIRD NEW-HAMPSHIRE VOLUNTEERS.

1st Lieut. J. R. Hines to be Regimental Quartermaster; 2d Lieuts. Flanders, Libby and Stearns to be 1st Lieutenants; Quartermaster-Sergeant Brainard, Sergeant-Major Copp, and Sergeant Wardsworth, Co. F, to be 2d Lieutenants. Varnum Hill has been appointed Quartermaster-Sergeant, and L. W. Dodge Sergeant-Major.

FORTY-EIGHTH NEW-YORK VOLUNTEERS.

Major Green to be Lieutenant-Colonel; Captain Stockland to be Major; 1st Lieutenant Swartout to be Captain; Sergeant-Major George L. Smith to be 2d Lieutenant.

RESIGNATIONS.

The resignations of the following officers in this Department have been accepted during the past week:

Capt. S. J. Foster, 49th N. Y. Volunteers; 1st Lieut. J. S. Coney, 7th Connecticut Volunteers; 2d Lieut. John Armstrong, 77th Pennsylvania Volunteers.

KILLED AND WOUNDED OF THE KEYSTONE STATE.

KILLED.

J. H. Gatwald, Asst. Surgeon. E. Livermore, Orderly Sergt.
S. W. Boyle, surgeon's stew'd. Marines.
D. L. Caldwell, seaman. Wm. A. Graw, Corp. Marines.
G. Reynolds, ordinary seaman. John W. Armstrong, private.
Wm. H. Clark, do. Wm. Bolte, private.
J. E. Stetson, landsman. John P. Conway, private.
O. J. Mellowan, landsman. Wm. Paton, private.
R. H. B. Thomas, landsman. Patrick Herrick, private.
Jas. Barr, 1st class fireman. R. Weidinger, 2d class boy.
Geo. A. Hutton, do. R. McKenzie, 2d class boy.
Thomas Riley, wounded.

Pentin Belleville, severely scalded in face and hands.
Wm. Cutin, Quartermaster, slightly in toe, from shell.
John W. Wilgus, Captain of the hold, slightly scalded in face and hands.
Moses O'Conor, ordinary seaman, injured in head by a bonnet.
Thomas Kelly, ordinary seaman, slightly, in foot, by shell.
John Sullivan, landsman, toes of both feet shot away.
John Quinn, 2d landsman, shot in thigh.
Patrick Lohan, 1st class fireman, badly scalded in hands, face, and side.
Robert A. Atkinson, 1st class fireman, slightly scalded.
Reuben A. Rose, 2d class fireman, slightly scalded in face and hands.
Wm. Lohan, 2d class fireman, badly scalded in face, hands, arms, and body.
James Hussey, coal heaver, scalded in hands, face, and neck.
Alexander McKnight, coal heaver, slightly scalded in hands, face, and neck.
Patrick Farron, coal heaver, slightly scalded in face, hands, and neck.
John McKinney, coal heaver, slightly scalded.
Frank Hight, slightly scalded.
John Quinn, coal heaver, badly scalded in face, hands, and neck.
Hugh Golden, coal heaver, scalded in hands, face, and neck.
Henry Gould, 2d class boy, slightly scalded.
Michael Scott, marine, wounded in foot from splinter.

KILLED AND WOUNDED ON THE MEREDITA.

KILLED.

Jacob Amee, gunner. P. Gallagher, 1st class fireman.
Jas. Gale, 2d class fireman. John Riley, coal heaver.

WOUNDED.

A. Rouse, 1st class fireman. W. Eastwood, 1st class fireman.
James Armstrong, ordinary seaman.

The scalded and mangled dead of the Keystone State and Mercedita, twenty-four in all, were buried yesterday afternoon with full honors, in the naval burying ground at Bay Point. The funeral was a very imposing one. Delegations from all the men-of-war in port attended it. Capt. Leroy of the Keystone State read the funeral service.

Shortly after his arrival this morning, Gen. Foster called on Gen. Hunter. This afternoon the former and Admiral Dupont were the guests of the latter at dinner.

NEW-YORK CATTLE MARKET.

REPORT

FOR THE WEEK ENDING TUESDAY, Feb. 10, 1863.

TOTAL RECEIPTS OF CATTLE OF ALL KINDS FOR THE WEEK.

According to the reports from the several market places in the city, there have been received this week:

	Beeves.	Cows.	Veals.	Sheep and Lambs.	Swine.	Total.
At Allerton's (Bdwy)	611	20	250	7,[illegible]	....	....
At Brownlow's (8 Bot.)	455	27	43	1,548	....	....
At O'Brien's (Bdwy)	97	42	28	2,[illegible]	....	....
At Chambers'(Pk. st.)	37	21	15	1,[illegible]	....	....
Sent direct to butchers	100	....	....	....	....	....
Sold to butchers, at Bergen	250	....	....	....	....	....
Total	5,[illegible]	120	336	4,[illegible]	21,271	31,[illegible]
Total previous week	5,[illegible]	101	3[illegible]	3,[illegible]	31,[illegible]	44,[illegible]
Av. No. ⅌ wk. last yr.	4,[illegible]	101	575	2,[illegible]	21,064	30,[illegible]

DRIVES FROM DIFFERENT STATES.

A. M. Allerton & Co., proprietors on the Washington Drove Yards, Forty-fourth street, report the Cattle in market from the following States:

New-York	720	Illinois	2,[illegible]
Pennsylvania	30	Kentucky	130
Ohio	611	Iowa	64
Indiana	285	Missouri	63

STOCK IN MARKET, ETC.

They also report Beeves and other stock received by railroads, &c., as follows:

	Beeves.	Cows.	Veals.	Sheep and Lambs.	Swine.
By the Erie Railroad	669	....	....	....	1,[illegible]
Hudson River Railroad	2,[illegible]	....	....	....	19,[illegible]
Harlem Railroad	1,174	20	240	250	....