New-York Tribune.

VOL. XXIII.....No. 6,887. NEW-YORK, FRIDAY, MAY 1, 1863. PRICE THREE CENTS.

ADVANCE OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

Four Army Corps Across the Rappahannock.

THEY CROSS THE RIVER AT PORT ROYAL.

Cannonading and Severe Firing Heard on This Side.

PHILADELPHIA, Thursday, April 30, 1863.

A gentleman who has just returned from the Army of the Potomac, brings the following report of the proceedings in that direction:

The pontoons are said to have been laid on Tuesday night and Wednesday morning across the river at Port Royal.

Yesterday morning, at daylight, the troops began to cross, and by 10 o'clock a. m. four corps d'armee are said to have crossed in safety.

Cannonading and severe firing have been heard on this side of the river.

The sutlers have been ordered away from Acquia Creek.

Reported Resignation of the Rebel General Hampton—Confederate Desertion—Arrival of Fugitive Slaves.

From Our Special Correspondent.

HEADQUARTERS, CAVALRY CORPS, WARRENTON JUNCTION, April 28, 1863.

News comes by a deserter that Gen. Hampton, commanding the Hampton Legion, has resigned his commission and returned home. His action is said to have originated in his sympathy with the opposition of Georgia to the food assessment and other arbitrary acts of the Confederate Government. Whether other officers in the Legion have followed his example, is not reported, but considerable disaffection ensued among the privates, and they have been incorporated into Virginia cavalry regiments. The Hampton Legion of Georgia is defunct as an organization. Horses are becoming very scarce in the South, and from no quarter can supplies be received. Forage is scarce, the horses of the Rebel army are dying in the usual ratio, from sundry causes, and its cavalry is daily becoming weaker. A horse of any utility readily commands $1,000 of Confederate money. An officer captured the week before last by Gen. Stoneman's command, felicitated himself on their not having procured his horse, as it had cost $1,800.

It is the opinion of many escaping from the South, that the Rebellion must collapse within six months from starvation, if from no other cause. They are now cut off from their Texas and Western Louisana supplies, and the maturity of the coming grain crops will prolong their existence for but a short period. White labor has, to a great extent, been withdrawn, and negro labor has been much curtailed by a large employment of slaves for war purposes, by escapements, and by the diminished work, ensuing from the need of coercion by absent masters. In the very large portion also of the Rebel and Border States, overrun by each army, few crops have been planted. A general disinclination exists for the effort, where there will be no certainty of securing them, and in the majority of cases this is impracticable from the scarcity of labor and horses. We see this universally where we have penetrated in Virginia, and the same may be said of other States. The Texan supplies of beef having ceased, the need of animal food will also be greatly felt. Should we even not take the Rebel strongholds, a mere inactivity will surely do its work.

Eighty escaped slaves, 70 of whom were women and children, arrived here yesterday, from near Warrenton. They belonged to different masters, and were urged to the step very much from starvation. The little food their owners possessed they went for themselves. Gen. Stoneman sent them to Washington. The adults are much gratified at the prospect of being paid, in future, for their labor.

The band of the 2d Regular Cavalry serenaded Gen. Stoneman last night.

Young Rebels across the Rappahannock, growing restless at inactivity, are fond of excursions in small parties to our side. If a horse or a prisoner can be obtained, they return in triumph to their comrades. Lieut.-Col. Davies, of the Harris Light Cavalry, encountered four of these in United States uniform yesterday, six miles from here, while riding along. They called upon him to halt. Suspecting their appearance, he put spurs to his horse, and was chased by them for a considerable distance. The Colonel arrived at headquarters at dinner time, and reported the fact. Excitement of any kind, pleasurable or otherwise, is apt to destroy appetite. Four yelling fellows, popping carbines at him, had their due effect. The Colonel was agreeably loquacious and communicative, but did not eat much.

We are not moving at present. Gen. Stoneman awaits orders. It rains again to-day. Fords and roads will suffer. N.

Sunset in Virginia—A Moonlit Night—The Army of the Potomac—Necessity of immediate Action—A Want of Unity among its Commanders.

From Our Special Correspondent.

ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, April 26, 1863.

Last evening after the rain, the sun, which had not shown his face the entire week, went down amid unusual splendor. Along the horizon a broad belt of richest amber spread far away toward north and south; and above, the spent, ragged rain clouds of deep purple, suffused with crimson, were woven and braided with pure gold. Slowly from the face of the heavens they melted and passed away as darkness came on, leaving the clear sky studded with stars, and the crescent moon shedding a soft radiance below. I climbed to the top of a hill not far off and looked across the country. On every eminence, in every little hollow almost, were innumerable lights shining, some thick and countless as stars, indicating an encampment; others isolated upon the outskirts; here and there the glowing furnace of a bakery; the whole land as far as the eye could see looking like another heaven wherein some ambitious archangel, covetous of creative power, had attempted to rival the celestial splendors of the one above us. There was no sound of drum or fife or bugle; the sweet notes of the "good night" call had floated into space and silence a half hour before; only on the still air were heard the voices of a band of negroes chanting solemnly and slowly, to a familiar sacred tune, the words of some pious psalm.

Covering an area of country comprising in its extent many long miles, is an army upon which the hopes of a great people may be said to depend. It is composed of as fine material as any that the world has seen, and although considerably reduced from its original magnitude by a series of severe campaigns, is, nevertheless, exceedingly formidable. And yet, the ever recurring question will arise, why has this mighty host been held at bay? Why have they been defeated and driven back? Why have they not long ago penetrated into the enemy's country and enforced loyalty at the points of their bayonets? It is not a question affecting their efficiency as troops, for they are well drilled, in most respects well disciplined; they have courage, enthusiasm, energy, and the hardy endurance without which the infantry soldier falls from the ranks weary with the fatigues of the march. It is a question which admits of no cavil, to which there is but one reply, and that is contained in the report of the Committee on the conduct of the War, and is spelled in this wise, INCOMPETENCY—incompetency on the part of a general who so long commanded it, and who even his own partisans are beginning to acknowledge was a charlatan and a failure.

In the lapse of a few weeks the periods of enlistment of a number of regiments from various sections of the country will expire, involving no inconsiderable diminution in the strength of this army. It would seem, then, if an important movement is to be made, that the period intervening between the present and that near approaching day is the time in which the blow must be struck. Gen. Hooker is doubtless aware of the necessity for immediate action; he must accept it as an alternative, or march against an intrenched enemy with a force hardly inferior in numbers to his own, having the additional advantage of strongly constructed earthworks. Let us hope that in the future we shall have no reason to bewail a want of efficiency; that we have, at length, a man with the brain to conceive and the dexterity to execute. The patient North has been tried severely and too long. Her blood has been spilled, her strength wasted, her treasure expended, and all to no purpose, save to flatter the vanity and to serve the ambition of men who have led her sons remorselessly to the slaughter. And yet, each time has she bound up her wounds, girded her loins, and hailed with a shout of enthusiasm each successive champion who has come forward to do battle on her side.

Let the Army of the Potomac, as it now is, be skillfully led, as it will march to Richmond without a reverse before another month shall have passed. No Slaveholding Confederacy can keep it in check. It has in it the sure elements of success. Faults it contains without a doubt, faults which should long ago have been corrected, which might, even at this late day, be remedied; but the greatest of all its faults is that it is a political institution, in which politics is at war with generalship, and political influence insures advancement.

Is it possible to introduce reform here? Would that it might be done! We have already experienced the evils of partisanship in our leaders. There is a sad want of unity among them of feeling and purpose. But one method there is, and that is plain to every unbiased mind. President Lincoln at last awoke to the necessity of Emancipation; and now, since the negro is free, why should he not be allowed the privilege of asserting his right to the precious boon of liberty?

If this be yielded him it will be done reluctantly. The black man is ambitious of bearing arms in the great struggle which, if successful, is to strike from off his race the shackles that have held them in bondage, and sound the death-knell of Slavery in America. He is tractable and patient, easily disciplined, hardy, courageous, patriotic, brimful of enthusiasm. Here is a great element of strength. Shall we make use of it? Who is responsible if we do not? N. G. S.

RECONNOISSANCE TOWARD WARRENTON.

Skirmishing with Detachments of Guerrilla Rebels—No Regular Rebel Force Between Bull Run and the Blue Ridge Mountains—Thirty-eight Prisoners Taken.

Special Dispatch to The N. Y. Tribune.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, April 30, 1863.

Your correspondent with Gen. Stahel forwards the following:

ALDIE, Wednesday, April 29, 1863.

Gen. Stahel, with about 2,000 cavalry and a light battery, left Fairfax Court-House on Monday morning last, to make a reconnoissance in force toward Warrenton and the Blue Ridge, taking the Aldie Pike. The column moved on to Aldie without meeting any force of the enemy. Several captures of Moseby's bushwhackers were made, some on foot, who were hoping to pick off a scout or two for the sake of the horses.

At Aldie the advance guard ran a small party of Moseby's men out of the town, capturing three. From Aldie to Middleburg light skirmishing was continued on all sides with guerrillas, who were watching our movements.

At Middleburg, Moseby, who preceded the command up the road with about fifteen men, succeeded in getting from fifty to sixty together. A charge through the town by the advance guard routed them, however, and drove them to the woods beyond, from which they were dislodged and scattered by a half dozen shells from Capt. Dwelle's battery.

Camping at Middleburg on Monday night, scouting parties were sent out toward Snicker's and Ashby's Gaps, but found nothing but scattered parties of guerrillas.

On Tuesday the March was resumed to Salem. Skirmishing with other parties of guerrillas took place along the route, and at Salem Moseby, with 150 men, was driven from the place.

From Salem the column moved on to White Plains, which place was reached about dark. Here a Rebel Lieutenant in Stuart's command was found, who was wounded. From White Plains the force made a night march back to Middleburg. Halting a few hours, they moved on to Aldie, which place they reached about 4 o'clock.

After resting a few hours at Aldie, the line of march was taken for this place, and the troops reached camp about 5 o'clock this morning, horses and men pretty well tired.

This reconnoissance has demonstrated that there is no regular force of the enemy in the valley between the Bull Run mountains and the Blue Ridge. About 500 guerrillas are in the mountains, who operate in scattered parties. Thirty-eight prisoners, from Moseby's, White's, Stuart's, and Imbodin's commands, and about 100 horses, are the spoils of this march.

The roads were very bad for artillery, and only fair for cavalry.

FROM SUFFOLK.

Preparations for a Formidable Attack by the Rebels—Our Position being Strengthened—The Rebel Blockade run by two Transports—The Contrabands Rendering Excellent Service—Recent Casualties.

Correspondence of The N. Y. Tribune.

CAMP SUFFOLK, Va., April 28, 1863.

It now appears that the Rebels are elaborating some bold and extensive plan of attack upon this place. Impending events promise to be of considerable moment. An ambulance sent out on the Somerton road yesterday, under flag of truce, to recover a dead body, found the enemy constructing substantial breastworks where, the day of Gen. Corcoran's reconnoissance, they had their rifle pits. They have brought some heavy guns down the South Quay road, and the indications are that they are making active preparations for dealing us a powerful blow.

Gen. Peck is almost constantly out superintending the strengthening of our position, and there is universal confidence in our ability for successful resistance, and, too, of turning to good account said success.

Col. Spear yesterday afternoon sent a few shell from his Rocket Battery in search of the Rebels on the Somerton road, and the compliment was returned to-day by their throwing a few into our camp; but no damage was done us.

Two transports that have been lying at the wharf here ever since the Rebels first invested us, were run the blockade early this morning by Lieut. Row. It was a brave and gallant deed, and the Lieutenant merits the highest praise, and those who were best informed as to its practicability, thought him, in volunteering to go, accepting inevitable death. The object was to unmask the Rebel batteries. Fortunately, no one was hurt. The boats received several shots, but were not materially injured, being well protected with bales of hay.

The contrabands are making themselves eminently useful by their labor. In fact, I think they are a little abused, and worked too hard. Still, they work cheerfully, feeling that they are thus assisting to permanently establish their freedom. For nothing is truer than that this much-despised race hates Slavery, and loves Liberty.

The sharpshooters have kept up a continuous "popping" to-day, but without effecting other execution than wounding two of our men slightly, viz.:

John Humphrey, Co. D, 6th Mass., flesh wound, right hip; John W. Davis, Co. D, 6th Mass., flesh wound, foot, slight.

The casualties on the 27th, were: A. J. Foss, Co. F, 13th N. H. V., leg, rifle-ball extracted; Corperal Felix Maley, Co. E, 99th N. Y., leg, slight; John Bradey, Co. A, 99th N. Y. V., arm, slightly; Samuel A. Westcott, Co. H, 130th, N. Y. V., flesh wound, left thigh. R. D.

ADMIRAL PORTER'S PASSAGE OF THE VICKSBURG BATTERIES.

Detailed Report of the Feat.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, April 30, 1863.

The detailed reports of Admiral Porter's passage of the Vicksburg batteries has been received at the Navy Department. The vessels comprising the expedition started in the following order, 50 yards apart: Benton, Lieut.-Comdr. Green; Lafayette, Capt. Walker, with the Gen. Price lashed on the starboard side; Louisville, Lieut.-Comdr. Owen; Mound City, Lieut. Wilson; Pittsburg, Lieut. Hall; Carondelet, Lieut. Murphy, and Tuscumbia, Lieut.-Comdr. Shiek, with the tug Day, which was lashed to the Benton.

The three army transports were in the rear of these vessels, and the Tuscumbia was placed astern of all, to see that the transports did not turn back. Two of the transports, when the firing became heavy, attempted to run up stream, but Lieut.-Commander Shiek drove them back and staid behind them until the Forest Queen was disabled. We then took her into tow and placed her out of reach of the enemy's shot.

All the vessels except the Benton took coal barges in tow, and all except the Lafayette brought them safely past the batteries. Having the Price alongside, the Lafayette did not manage very well, and the coal barge got adrift, but was picked up at Carthage. The Louisville, Lieut.-Comander Owen, lost hers in the melee, but picked it up again.

While under fire, the Benton was beautifully handled by her pilot, Mr. Williams, who was in the Essex when she ran the batteries. He kept the vessel's guns bearing on the town and water batteries all the time while drifting down. The guns of the Benton fired over 80 shell, well directed, into the town and batteries.

The Pittsburgh, Mound City and Tuscumbia were more fortunate than the others in not turning round as they came by, although no ill results happened to those vessels which did turn.

The pilots were deceived by a large fire started on the side opposite to Vicksburg by the Rebels, for the purpose of showing the vessels more plainly. Fires being started on both sides of the river at once, the vessels had some narrow escapes, but were saved in most instances by the precautions taken to protect them. They were covered with heavy logs and bales of wet hay, which was found to be an excellent defense.

Admiral Porter speaks in terms of the highest praise respecting the conduct of all Commanders, saying:

"They carried out my orders to the best of their ability, having great difficulties to contend with; strong currents and dangerous eddies; glaring fires in every direction, that bothered the pilots, almost enveloping the squadron, and a very heavy fire on the vessels, that were fair targets for the enemy. I have no cause to be dissatisfied with the result. No one was killed. Only one or two were badly wounded, and there were only twelve casualties in all. The enemy's shot were of the heaviest caliber, and some were of excellent pattern. No material damage was done by those coming on board beyond smashing the bulwarks. No lives were lost on the Henry Clay, which was burnt and sunk while passing the batteries. Most of the crew were picked up, and others got away in the yawl."

The reports from the commanders of the different vessels, accompanying Admiral Porter's dispatch, all testify to the extreme difficulties experienced in this hazardous, though eminently successful expedition. The Benton, bearing Admiral Porter's flag, passed within 40 yards of the town; and those on board could hear the rattling of falling walls after our fires. Her acting Ensign, Edward C. Brennan, was wounded, and three others.

The Lafayette received nine effective round and cannon shots through her casemates which closely engaged with the Rebel batteries.

The Pittsburg received no material damage, though struck seven times. No casualties occurred on board.

The Mound City proved a splendid target for the enemy, in consequence of the bonfires which were kindled opposite the point, and who availed himself of the opportunity by sending a ten-inch shot through both casemates, passing out through the iron on the starboard side, and wounding four men. Beside this she was struck four times while abreast these batteries, but sustained no injury from them.

The Tuscumbia, which had charge of the transports as mentioned in Admiral Porter's report, experienced considerable difficulty. For when the two transports turned up the steam, the Tuscumbia stopped under the very heavy fire of the enemy until the Henry Clay was set on fire, and the Forrest Queen turned around.

After this, and while the Tuscumbia was drifting, in order to keep her proper place in the line, she struck the Louisiana bank of the river, but soon got off without damage. In backing, however, to get her bow down the stream, she got foul of the transport Forest Queen, and the two vessels remained together several minutes. This collision seemed to cause the Rebels great joy, and her commander says for a few moments the fire from the shore concentrated on the Tuscumbia and Forest Queen. But providentially none of the shot did much damage. She was here struck below the water line, starting seven planks, and causing the vessel to leak freely; but by the use of syphon pumps she was soon brought under control. The Tuscumbia also, when the Forest Queen became disabled, took her in tow and landed her on the Louisiana shore. Notwithstanding the trials she experienced, no casualties occurred on board.

The Louisiana was struck four times. No damage was sustained.

Important Capture by Admiral Farragut—Supply of Cattle for Rebels Cut Off.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, April 30, 1863.

Rear-Admiral Farragut reports to the Navy Department that, on the 8th inst., he captured the steamer J. D. Clark. She had on board Major Howard, of the Rebel Commissary Department, who was making extensive arrangements for the crossing of cattle over to the eastern shore of the river at various places, all of which was frustrated by his capture.

Operations on the Lower Mississippi—The Destruction of the Ram Queen of the West, the Diana and the Hart—Our Forces in Pursuit of two other Rebel Vessels.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, April 30, 1863.

The Navy Department has received official information of the destruction of the ram Queen of the West in Berwick's Bay, after a fight of 20 minutes; also the destruction of the Diana and the Hart. At later dates our forces were in pursuit of two other vessels, which are believed to be the only Rebel vessels now in those waters.

OPERATIONS OF THE BLOCKADING FLEET.

Capture of Six More Blockade Runners, and a Number of Rebels in a Small Boat.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, April 30, 1863.

The Navy Department has received intelligence of the capture of the English schooner St. George, by the U. S. steamer Mount Vernon. The vessel was attempting to run the blockade off New Inlet, and was seized by our steamer close in with Fort Fisher. Her master acknowledged having run the blockade several times. The cargo of the St. George consisted chiefly of salt, rum and merchandise.

The schooner Nettie was captured on the 29th of March by the steamer South Carolina, about 25 miles east of Port Royal, with a cargo of cotton, mostly damaged. The captain and crew admitted having run out of Charleston a few nights previous.

On the night of the 19th inst. three vessels were captured while attempting to run the blockade off Charleston, namely; a brig and schooner laden with salt, and a sloop with cotton. They were sent North by Commodore Turner.

The U. S. steamer New-London reports the capture, on the 3d inst., of the British schooner Tampico, bound from Sabine Pass to the Balize with 112 bales of cotton.

On the 12th inst. the same vessel, of Sabine Pass, picked up the officers and others of a small boat while attempting to land. Among them was Capt. Charles Fowler, who commanded the steamer Josiah Bell at the time of the capture of the Morning Light. Fowler had a commission from Major-Gen. Magruder of the Rebel army, giving him exclusive control of their "squadron," as they call it, at Sabine Pass.

THE WAR IN THE SOUTH-WEST.

Battle on the Tennessee River—Rout of the Rebels—Their Commander Mortally Wounded—Destruction of a Large Amount of Property Belonging to Rebels.

CAIRO, Thursday, April 30, 1863.

Gen. Ellet's Marine Brigade, on its return from the Expedition up the Tennessee River, was fired on by the Rebels, under Major White.

The fire was returned by the gunboats. The Rebels fled with a loss of 10 killed, and 20 wounded, Major White mortally. Our loss was two killed, and four wounded. Gen. Ellet has destroyed every grist and saw-mill, and every distillery on the Upper Tennessee, beside 500,000 feet of lumber. The towns of Hamburg and Eastport were also destroyed.

BATTLE OF CAPE GIRARDEAU.

Attack of Marmaduke with 10,000 Men!—The Place Defended by Brig.-Gen. John McNiel with 2,000 Men for Five Hours!—The Enemy Repulsed with Great Slaughter!

From Our Special Correspondent.

CAPE GIRARDEAU, Mo., April 27, 1863.

Yesterday morning I dispatched a letter describing the approach of the Rebel Gen. Marmaduke, with 10,000 men, against this important military post, and the preparations of Brig.-Gen. John McNiel for its defense. As I was about starting the letter, we were lulled into a feeling of security by a rumor that the enemy, apprehending an attack in the rear from a Union force, dispatched to our aid from Pilot Knob, had commenced to withdraw without making an attack. This I indorsed on the back of my correspondence, but it proved to be false.

In less than fifteen minutes after the letter had started, the fight commenced, about a mile and a half back of the town, between Shelby's brigade and the 1st Regiment of Nebraska Infantry, under Lieut.-Col. Baumer, a German officer of great merit, who held three regiments of Rebel infantry in check for an hour, when he was obliged to fall back within the protection of the batteries. In this preliminary engagement, the 1st Nebraska troops, led by their brave Lieutenant-Colonel, and by Capts. Ribble, Major, Gillette, Potts, Lawlor, Provost, and Curren, displayed a most determined bravery, and the skill of veteran troops. This beginning of the battle took place about 10 o'clock a. m. on the Jackson Road, in an open field, near a piece of woods from which the Rebels emerged to the attack in large numbers, supported by a field battery. The 1st Nebraska fell back a short distance to a small piece of timber, where they were supported by the 1st Wisconsin Cavalry, under Lieut.-Col. Pomeroy, and by the 2d Missouri Battery.

From this time (about 11 o'clock a. m.) the battle became a severe contest between the artillery of the respective forces, until 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when the enemy retreated from the field, and the battle ceased, with great loss on their side and small loss on ours.

The artillery of the enemy was posted in the edge of the woods, and in the roads leading to the town, about one mile beyond the outermost fort, named B.

Our own batteries were planted on hills about half a mile beyond the fort, and that much nearer the enemy. These were Welfly's and the 2d Missouri Batteries, commanded by Lieuts. Jacoby and Zepp. The artillery of Fort B was commanded by Col. Daniel Huston, and the entire force of artillery was commanded by Capt. Meisner, Chief of Artillery on Gen. McNeil's staff. The several batteries were supported by detachments of the 1st Nebraska Infantry, and the 33d Iowa Infantry. Their firing was splendid throughout the battle, their shot and shell going straight to the mark. At almost every discharge you could see the Rebel cavalry fall from their horses.

On passing over the battle-ground afterward, I saw one fellow lying with a ghastly wound from a cannon ball in his left breast, cold and stiff, with clenched hands, a horrible expression of ignorance and depravity on his countenance, and near by two fine white horses, lying dead, the latter with far more innocence in their faces than their human companion.

In one instance we saw some Rebel officers come into an open field, as if for the purpose of selecting a position for a battery. They were not able to remain two minutes on the ground, so well directed were the shot and shell from our cannon to the spot where they stood. In the size and caliber of our ordnance we had great advantage. The siege guns of the fort were 24-pounders, and several of our pieces 12-pounders.

The enemy threw nothing larger than 6-pound balls, spherical, and oblong. Their cannon, however, were rifled, and their balls flew a great distance. They generally passed over our heads, and some of them reached the town. We saw many of them picked up after the battle. Very few of their shells burst. Their fire began to slacken about 1 o'clock in the afternoon. Ours continued wherever a trace of the enemy could be seen, till 3 o'clock, when the battle ceased.

A large brick residence, in which some of the enemy took shelter, bears the mark of our cannon-balls. One large hole through the kitchen could be seen a mile off.

In one place, within an area of a few acres, seventy-five dead horses were said to have been counted, and in many places dead men were found, whom the Rebels were not able to carry off the field. Many, however, were carried away, their blood having stained the ground.

Two of their wounded officers fell into our hands, Major Blackman and Adjutant Edwards of the 1st Regiment of Shelby's brigade. They represent our fire as having been very destructive to them. They knew personally of five of their line and field officers being either killed or wounded. The whole number of their killed is estimated at 60, and of their wounded 300. Owing to the great disparity of their forces and ours, Gen. Niel did not pursue them, and so they had time to take away most of their dead and wounded.

In one instance they charged upon one of our batteries, but were driven back with slaughter. The Union forces had every advantage in position, were well armed, well managed, the batteries were admirably handled, the siege guns from the powerful fortification (a high eminence, over-looking the whole field) were fired with great precision, so that a more decided victory was gained, with small loss, and the Rebel hordes from Arkansas were terribly repulsed and driven from the suburbs of the city. Our whole loss is but six killed, and as many wounded.

The Rebels had counted on an easy victory. They had summoned the surrender of the place with great pomp, pretending to do it by order of Maj.-Gen. Sterling Price, commanding, who, I suspect, was not within one thousand miles, and had offered Gen. McNiel a half hour to make up his mind. In the reply, conveyed back by Col. Strahan, Volunteer Aid to the General, the Colonel claimed that they should credit Gen. McNiel with twenty-nine minutes, as he had decided in just one minute to hold the post himself. Their defeat is undoubtedly a terrible disappointment and humiliation, for they had a double purpose in view.

They not only expected to make great capital out of the capture of Cape Girardeau, and raise the hopes of Rebeldom and the Copperheads of the North, but they were also bent on plunder. Their army, as represented by Maj. Blackwell and Adjt. Edwards, is destitute of provisions, and they expected large supplies and great spoil at Cape Girardeau. As it is, they have robbed the farmers' houses in the vicinity, but they will scarcely take anything away out of the country, should they be so fortunate as to escape with their lives.

In this battle Gen. John McNeil displayed his accustomed bravery. He was cool, collected, and determined, vigilant day and night, taking but little sleep, and seeing to it that all his plans, in their utmost details, were executed. He knew that a great stake to his country and himself rested on the issue. To have lost Cape Girardeau, an important military position in Missouri, and midway between Cairo and St. Louis, and immediately opposite to Southern Illinois, would have been a great disaster; and for John McNeil to be taken a prisoner would, as he said, have left Mrs. McNeil a widow, and his children fatherless.

The Southern Confederacy has set a price upon his head, for his prompt execution of their guerrilla bands in Missouri, and to get him into their possession would afford them an opportunity of glutting their vengeance, which they are not likely soon to obtain, for Gen. McNeil will never be taken by them alive.

Throughout the day the General received important aid from Col. Strahan of North-East Missouri, who came down from St. Louis, on hearing of his peril, to render his assistance, and acted as a volunteer aid-de-camp throughout the battle. His Assistant Adjutant-General, Lieut. Poole, and Lieut. Williamson, and Lieut. Kramer, Post Adjutant, acting as aids, rendered important and valuable service; and among the heroes of the fight was Lieut.-Col. Baumon of 1st Nebraska Infantry, whose head was grazed with bullets, and who led his men into the thickest of the fray, and came out unharmed.

Much praise is also due to Assistant-Surgeon N. B. Larch of the same regiment, who remained on the field all day with his corps of ambulances ready for service, and to Surgeon Wm. McClellan of the Post General Hospital, who was frequently on the field, and had every preparation for receiving a large number of wounded men.

Just as the battle was nearly ended, the steamer Ocean Wave arrived from St. Louis with reenforcements, consisting of the 37th Regiment of Illinois Infantry (Colonel Funk), four companies of the 20th Iowa Infantry, and two pieces of cannon, accompanied by Col. Livingston of the 1st Nebraska Regiment, who had been absent at St. Louis. They were marched out to the field of battle, but too late to take any part in the engagement.

Col. Livingston has the reputation of a splendid officer, which is justified by his appearance, and his regiment is proud of him. But, seeing his Lieut.-Colonel covering himself with laurels, the Colonel declined to take command at the close of the fight, and allowed Lieut.-Col. Baumer to finish what he had so nobly begun, namely, to carry his regiment successfully through the battle.

After 4 o'clock, p. m., the soldiers began to search the battle-field. We saw one with an elegant shot gun, which he found by the side of a dead Rebel. But generally everything had been carried off.

We rode over the field with the Rev. Dr. Wood, Chaplain of the 2d Mo. Militia Cavalry, and had the satisfaction of viewing many points of interest. During the battle I had taken my position with the artillerists in fort B, where, from the great eminence of the fort, I beheld the whole scene in its awful sublimity—saw the flash of the cannon, witnessed the fall of killed and wounded men, and heard the roar of the dread artillery shake the heavens and the solid ground.

At first as I went out toward the fort a mingled sense of awe and fear came over me, but the fascination of the scene drew me on, till, when I had got among the men, and saw their cheerful and determined courage, and heard their deafening cheers and cries, all sense of fear was lost, and the impulse became almost irresistible to take up a weapon and step into the ranks.

And here I ought to mention that there were several instances of this kind on the part of patriotic Union citizens of the Cape, all of them Germans, who brought their shot-guns and rifles and took part in the battle. All honor to the German element in our American civilization. It is always found true to freedom and the rights of humanity.

In contrast with this I might mention that several native-born citizens of the town got on the steamboat provided for the women and children, and left for the other side of the river.

The scenes on board the steamer Mary Forsyth were full of interest. The commander of this fine steamer, Capt. N. S. Green, took every pains to receive and accommodate all the women and children who came on board. They filled his cabin to overflowing, and he gave them matresses and places to sleep, and food, and kept them on his boat two nights and nearly two days, showing them the utmost consideration and kindness, being himself also detained from an important trip to Memphis, and obliged to land much of his freight on the Illinois shore.

All this hindrance and loss he bore not only with patience and patriotic resignation, but with actual cheerfulness. For his noble deeds in this emergency and his generous sacrifices he will be gratefully remembered.

This morning, long before day, Gen. McNiel had made every preparation for a renewal of the attack from the enemy, knowing them to have a large force in reserve. But morning came and the sound of cannon of a larger caliber than those of the enemy was heard in the distance.

It must be that Gen. Vandever had arrived from Pilot Knob, and attacked the enemy in the rear, and this is now believed to be the fact. Gen. McNiel immediately ordered a cavalry force in pursuit on the Bloomfield Road, and the prospect now is that Marmaduke and his Rebel invaders will be utterly annihilated before they can get back into Arkansas.

Our steamer Mary Forsyth is now released, and we are steaming our way down the Mississippi, from whence I shall mail this letter at Cairo. GUILBERT.

P. S.—The following is a list of our own killed and wounded:

KILLED—Sergt. Michael O'Neil, Co. C, 1st Wisconsin Cavalry; Cyrus Phillips, Co. H, 1st Wisconsin Cavalry; Christopher Johnson, Co. G, 1st Wisconsin Cavalry—leg shot off, from which he afterward died, following amputation; Henry Smith, Co. A, 1st Nebraska Infantry; R. H. Tindall and M. Zgen, Co. I, same regiment.

WOUNDED—Sergt. Wm. H. Hacker, Co. C; Sergt. Wm. Wells, Co. A; Privates James Chappel and De Witt Chase—1st Nebraska Infantry, all slightly.

Capt. Shipman, 1st Wisconsin Cavalry, whom I reported as badly wounded in a fight the day previous at the White Water, is doing well, and has a good prospect of recovery. G.

FROM WASHINGTON.

GOOD NEWS FROM THE MISSISSIPPI.

Establishment of Sanitary Relief Stations.

PROMOTION OF COLONEL WILD.

HE IS TO RAISE AN AFRICAN BRIGADE.

Special Dispatch to The N. Y. Tribune.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, April 30, 1863.

GOOD NEWS FROM THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI.

The Government is in receipt of further gratifying intelligence from the Mississippi, indicating that Admirals Farragut and Porter and Gen. Grant are making good use of the fleet which so gallantly ran past the Vicksburg batteries.

SANITARY RELIEF STATIONS.

The Sanitary Commission has established relief stations at Nashville, Cairo, Memphis and Louisville, for discharged soldiers returning home, similar to those in this city.

PROMOTION OF COL. WILD.

Col. Ed. A. Wild of the 35th Massachusetts Regiment has received a Brigadier-General's commission and been empowered to raise a brigade of Freedmen to be known as "Wild's African Brigade," and to consist of four regiments to be enlisted in North Carolina, and of Col. Shaw's regiment, now in camp in Massachusetts. Gen. Wild is to appoint his own officers, most of whom will be taken from white regiments now in the service. Gen. Wild is the son of the Rev. Dr. Wild, a clergyman of Brooklyn, a graduate of Harvard and a regularly educated physician. He served in the Crimea as surgeon in the Turkish army, and also saw no little military service in the field there. He entered our army as Captain of Company A, in the 1st Massachusetts Regiment. On the Peninsula he received a bullet through one hand, and at Antietam was so severely wounded in the other arm that it had to be amputated at the shoulder. He is reputed an excellent officer.

DECISION CONCERNING HOTEL-KEEPERS AND LIQUOR-DEALERS.

The Commissioner of Internal Revenue has made the following decision concerning license of hotel-keepers and liquor-dealers:

The act of Congress of July 1, 1862, called the Excise law, directs that "every place where food and lodging are provided for, and furnished to travelers and sojourners in view of payment, shall be regarded as a hotel, inn, or tavern, under the act." In order, therefore, to be entitled to carry on that branch of business, which consists in accommodating travelers and sojourners with food and lodging for pay, the keeper must have a license; and the class to which his hotel belongs, reckoned according to its rental value, determines the sum of money which the license will cost him. If that value is $10,000, he must pay $200; if it is but $100, he must pay $5. The license fee is graded according to the rent or rental value, and there are three different classes to which the fee assigned is less than $20.

If to the business of providing for travelers and sojourners, the hotel-keeper adds the retailing of spirituous liquors, he is required to pay an additional sum of $20 for license; and this he must pay, whether his hotel belongs to the first, last, or any intermediate class.

The fourth paragraph of the 64th section of the act is imperative. It says retail dealers in liquors, including distilled spirits, fermented liquors, and wines of every description, shall pay twenty dollars for each license. This has obviously no relation to the provision for sale of food or lodging. A man may keep a hotel and not retail spirituous liquors, or he may retail spirituous liquors and not keep a hotel. Although it is usual in some States to unite the two kinds of business, the law preserves the distinction between them, and subjects each to a tax in the shape of a license fee, and this at a rate and upon a principle altogether different. The value of the property is the basis of the tax in the one case; the nature of the business the basis in the other.

By the 43d section of the supplement, approved March 3, 1863, no alteration is made in the act of July 1, 1862, except that the latter act prohibits the person licensed to keep a hotel from selling liquors to be taken off the premises. This is intended to prevent a hotel keeper licensed to sell liquor, as well as food and lodging, from pursuing, under cover of his license, a distinct branch of business, and entering into competition with apothecaries, merchants, or others, who may be allowed by the local law to sell, by retail, liquors to be carried off the premises, and who, like the hotel keeper, must, in such case, pay for his privilege a license fee of $20.

The provision in both acts, that nothing contained therein "shall authorize the sale of any liquors, &c., to be drank on the premises," is no more than a legislative declaration that it is not the intention of Congress to authorize the retail of liquors. That body leaves the right to traffic in the article to be regulated by the law of the proper State. A State may prohibit the sale of spirituous liquors altogether. If, however, such sale is allowed, a tax is imposed for the support of the Government in the shape of a license fee; and a retailer, whatever other business he may choose, or be permitted to pursue, in connection with his sale of spirits, must pay the $20 required by the law.

DECISION CONCERNING THE TRANSFER OF LICENSES.

The Commissioner of Internal Revenue has made the following decision:

When a person holding a license desires to change his place of business, he must apply to the Assessor of the District in which his license was granted for permission to remove the business to another part of the district, or to another district—in either case stating specifically the place and premises to which he intends to remove. If satisfied of the applicant's bona fide intention to remove the Assessor will certify the facts to the Collector who granted the license, and will at the same time make an entry of the facts against the name of the person in his License Record.

The Collector, upon receiving this certificate, will indorse on the license permission to remove as follows: "Permission is hereby given to the within named A—— B—— to remove from the premises within described to ——, and to carry on the trade [or profession or business] specified in the within license, at said described place or premises, during the residue of the term for which the within license was originally granted," and the Collector will make an entry of the indorsement, in brief, in his License Record.

If the holder of the license removes to another district, he must present his license, properly indorsed, to the Assessor of that district, who will make an entry of the same in his License Record.

Assessors and Collectors must use due precautions to prevent persons from carrying on the same business in different places under one license.

DECISION CONCERNING ADMINISTRATORS' AND EXECUTORS' BONDS.

The Commissioner of Internal Revenue has made the following decision:

A bond of an executor or administrator, taken by a Judge of Probate, Register, or other officer taking probates of wills, or granting letters of administration, requires a fifty-cent stamp.

Whether such a bond is conditioned for the faithful performance of the general duties of the office of executor, or administrator, or for the payment of collateral inheritance tax, or for the performance of any special duty required of such executor or administrator by a law of the State, makes no difference as to the necessity of a stamp. It is the duty of Collectors to inquire of, and report to this office, cases in which there shall have been any neglect or omission, by executors or administrators, to place the proper stamps on their bonds; and it is made, by law, a delinquency in Judges of Probates, and Registers of Wills, to exhibit to the Collector, Assistant Collector, or other law officer of the United States, all such papers belonging to their offices as he may need to examine, concerning personal property or estate of which decedent may die possessed, and to which legatees or distributees may be entitled. The facilities therefor for obtaining information as to the proper use of stamps by executors or administrators are ample, and neglect of duty in this particular, on the part of Collectors, is not excusable on the ground of the want of means for obtaining information.

BLANK FORMS FOR ASSESSORS AND COLLECTORS.

The following official circular has been issued by the Commissioner of Internal Revenue:

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF INTERNAL REVENUE, WASHINGTON, April 24, 1863.

To Assessors and Collectors of Internal Revenue.

The ordinary blank forms in use by Assessors and Collectors are supplied by this office. Officers of Internal Revenue are directed not to procure their blanks elsewhere, and are hereby notified that bills for the purchase of such blanks, incurred without the sanction of the Commissioner, will not be approved.

The urgent necessity for the exercise of greater economy than has been practiced by many officers, renders this notice requisite. JOSEPH J. LEWIS, Commissioner.

To the Associated Press.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, April 30, 1863.

DEATH OF PAYM