

THE RECAPTURE OF THE CHESAPEAKE
GREAT EXCITEMENT AT HALIFAX.
THE PRISONERS RESCUED BY CITIZENS.
Government Officers Rendered Powerless.

Five United States Ships-of-War off
the Harbor.
Proceedings of the Pirates After
the Seizure.

HALIFAX, Friday, Dec. 18, 1863.
The Chesapeake has been transferred to the British authorities.

HALIFAX, Dec. 19, 1863.
The excitement prevails here this afternoon in regard to the steamer Chesapeake.

HALIFAX, Dec. 19-10 p. m.
At 1 o'clock this afternoon the steamer Chesapeake and the prisoners on board of her were delivered up to the Government.

Upon the arrival of the boat containing the prisoners at the Queen's Wharf the excitement became intense. The prisoners were immediately seized by a boat's crew in the ship, and hurried off by the crowd in attendance.

Upon the Government officers moving to arrest the prisoners, under a warrant, they were seized and held by prominent citizens, and rendered powerless to perform their duty.

The crowd finally succeeded in getting the pirates off in a small boat, which forthwith moved down the bay. The affair causes the greatest excitement throughout the city.

What course the authorities will pursue in the matter it is impossible to say. The pirates are now all at liberty, scattered throughout the Province.

The Union gunboats are preparing to leave. Some will take their departure to-night, and probably all will leave before Monday.

STATEMENT OF MR. JOHNSON, ENGINEER OF THE CHESAPEAKE.
The following is the statement of First Engineer Johnson of the steamer Chesapeake:

After we left St. John, the first port we entered was Shelburne, where we arrived on Thursday night. Here we took in ten tons of coal and some wood. The next morning we left for Halifax River, seeing a steamer of the name of the river, we concealed the vessel as best we could, and ascended the river on Friday night.

We had to stop at this point until Tuesday night, discharging part of the cargo for which we received \$1,000. We had the sugar for three cents a pound, the flour for 63 a barrel, and other articles for proportionate prices.

We left the river at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, lying to at its mouth all night, and loading a schooner with goods which we had not disposed of. On the morning of Wednesday we steamed for St. Mary's Bay, about 90 miles east of Halifax. About 2 o'clock on the following morning we saw a steamer. Immediately we concealed the vessel by hugging the shore.

When the steamer disappeared we started again. We arrived off Sambro without meeting with any further trouble, and was boarded by a pilot named Flynn, who took the vessel into Sambro harbor. Capt. Locke, now satisfying himself that there was not a sound enough on board to complete the voyage, concluded to anchor the vessel, and to do so at two o'clock in the afternoon.

In the meantime he started for Halifax to procure coal and engineers for the vessel. He told me (Johnson) that as soon as he obtained new engineers he intended to release me, and I told him that I would not on any account remain with the vessel any longer. The captain returned about two o'clock on the following morning, having been successful in his expedition. A schooner came with him. At about six o'clock on the same morning, the pilot Flynn informed the captain that Union gunboats were entering the harbor. The captain, satisfying himself that this statement was correct, ordered me (Johnson) to scuttle the vessel. I replied that I could not do it. The captain then hastily secured what plunder he could, and he and his officers and crew took to the boats as the shells and Annie appeared in sight.

THE GUNBOAT DAYLIGHT BLOWN UP BY THE REBELS.
Most of Her Officers and Crew Killed.
FORTRESS MONROE, Friday, Dec. 18, 1863.
To Messrs. ECKERT.
The Assistant Superintendent of United States Marine Transportation has just arrived from Beaufort in the Spaulding.

It was reported there that the United States gunboat Daylight had been blown up by the Rebels. Another gunboat had chased a blockade-runner ashore, and the Daylight went in to take possession of her, when a Rebel battery concealed on the shore threw a shell into the Daylight's magazine, completely destroying her, and killing most of her officers and crew.

There is no positive confirmation of this affair, but it is believed by the naval officers at Beaufort.
L. T. SHELDON, Capt. and Asst. Surg.
The Daylight was a propeller of 400 tons register, built in this city in 1859 for one of the Eastern freight lines, and was one of the first steamers purchased by the Navy Department at the outbreak of the Rebellion. She was sent to the North Atlantic blockading squadron in the month of June, 1862. Her armament consisted of eight guns. At the reduction of Fort Monroe she was the flagship of the naval flotilla. She captured seven prizes, and rescued the ship John Clark from under the fire of the Rebel batteries at Lynn Haven Bay, Virginia.

The following is a list of her officers:
Francis S. Wells, Volunteer Lieut. Commanding.
John H. Galloway, Acting Master and Executive Officer.
Theodore Wetherill, Acting Master.
Henry M. Rogers, Acting Assistant Paymaster.
Frederic M. DeGroot, Acting Assistant Surgeon.
Jose W. Willard and Wm. H. Penfield, Acting Ensigns.
Wm. H. Best, Acting 1st Assistant Engineer.
Chas. O. Morgan and P. O. Brightman, Acting 2d Assistant Engineers.
Wm. H. Crawford and John E. Hilliard, Acting 3d Assistant Engineers.
Charles Atmore and J. M. Sims, Acting Masters' Mates.
W. T. La Forge, Captain's Clerk.
Frederic S. Hodges, Paymaster's Clerk.
George Wilkins, Surgeon's Steward.

The regular letter from Fortress Monroe says:
The steamer Spaulding, from Monrovia City on Friday night, reports that just before sailing, news reached there that the gunboat Daylight had been blown up by a shell from Fort Fisher, exploding in her magazine.

Sinking of the Steamer Prima Donna.
WHEELING, Saturday, Dec. 19, 1863.
The steamer Prima Donna struck on a sunken coal barge eighteen miles below here, this morning, sinking to the cabin floor. No lives were lost.

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ANOTHER CHESAPEAKE AFFAIR.

The Schooner Jos. L. Gerety Seized by
Pirate Passengers.

Severe Treatment of the Captain
and Crew.

The Morning Star brings as passengers Capt. Jas. Nichols and Walter Greenough, supercargo of sbr. Jos. L. Gerety, which was captured by pirates second day out from Matamoros.

Capt. Nichols reports that he left Matamoros, Nov. 10, bound for New York with a cargo of cotton and six passengers. On the night of the 17th, about 12 o'clock, the Captain and two men on deck, one at the wheel and the other aloft, the six passengers made an assault on the Captain with revolvers, knocked him down and threatened to shoot him if he made any noise. They took him forward and locked him in the fore-cabin, putting a guard over him. Four of them then went aft, and the mate, hearing the noise on deck came up and was taken in the same manner and put in the fore-cabin with the Captain and crew. Mr. Greenough, the supercargo, in attempting to come on deck, was kicked down into the cabin and two shots were fired at him, but fortunately did not hit him. The pirates confined him to his berth and kept a guard over him, with orders to shoot him if he attempted to make any resistance. After keeping them in confinement for eight days they put all hands into the small boat, and told them to find their way to land the best they could. They landed on the coast of Sinaloa, after being two days and nights at sea. There they got passage to Havana in a Spanish brig, and the crew were sent to New York by the sbr. Horac C. Bell from Sinaloa.

The six passengers had paid their passage to New York from Matamoros. Their names were T. E. Hogg of Baltimore, J. Brown of Canada, James Clements, Kelly and Brown and John Wilson. This Wilson was mate with Gordon the slaver, and he says he was in the Tombs in New York for four years and ten months.

They say that there are four other parties in Matamoros waiting for vessels and chances like this, and that they are sure to get them. This same party expected to have had a steamer at Matamoros, but it got away before they had their plans laid. After they had got the Captain and crew in the small boat they looted the Confederate flag, and fired off their pistols as a salute, saying that they had authority from the Confederate Government so to do. When asked where they were bound, they said to Buller, Honduras, where they could sell the vessel and cargo.

The vessel was owned by Francis Gerety of New York, and the cotton consigned to Sheper & Co.

NEWS FROM RICHMOND.
Letter of a Southern ex-Senator to His Friend—He Acknowledges the Straits to which the Confederacy is now Placed—He Explains the Causes of It—How the Confederacy can be Supplied—Long-Street Quoted as an Example—A New Army of 100,000 Men to be Organized—Refusal of Johnston to Take the Place of Bragg—Beauregard His Probable Successor—Finance of the South.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18, 1863.
An ex-Member of the United States Congress, now an eminent member of the Rebel Confederacy, whose name I am not at liberty to publish, has written to one of his friends here a letter, which has been communicated to me, and of which I am allowed to give you a succinct account. The writer of the letter, I am informed, returned to the South by way of Nassau about six months ago, and has since been appointed Brigadier-General and attached to one of the bureaus of the War Department at Richmond. His views on the present position of the Confederacy, allowance being made for his private sympathies, cannot fail to add to the stock of information we possess on the subject.

His letter begins by candidly acknowledging the straits in which the Confederacy is now placed. The South was never so reduced in men, provisions and territory as it is now. Narrowed down on its western boundaries by the advance of the Union armies; cut off from its communication with the ocean by the strictness of the blockade; troubled in its transportation by the wretched state of its railroad lines—the life is now contracted, as it were, to half a dozen States, upon which it is now almost entirely dependent for support. But all these evils the writer pronounces to be purely accidental and temporary! They will protract the struggle, require heavier sacrifices, and impose upon the people greater sufferings than they have hitherto experienced, but they do not in the least impair the final result, he thinks, will end by the triumph of the cause he sustains!

The death of provisions he attributes to several causes: to the depreciation of currency, the greediness of speculators, the bad state of the roads, and to the improwidence of the War Department. To this must be added the prejudice of public opinion, which more than anything else paralyzed all attempts on the part of the Government to accumulate large stocks for the supply of the army. People had put too much confidence in their power to preserve in perpetuity the two great cattle and wheat producing States, Texas and Tennessee, from which they drew most of their stocks, that they never took the trouble of calculating the straits in which they would be placed should these two States be wrested from their hands. When this took place there was, of course, a great interruption in forwarding supplies Southward. This took the people by surprise, and it was some time before they were able to understand the usual channels of supplies were stopped. New ones now had to be opened. The difficulty was to get temporary resources which had been suddenly withdrawn. Cattle and provisions were said to be scattered about in various States, but no one knew how to get at them, or how to gather them at the points where they were most needed. This period of interruption and suspense was keenly felt in Richmond. Provisions rose to an enormous price, the army was reduced to scanty rations, the poor became uneasy and threatening, and the ghost of starvation, although still shrouded in a dim and distant future, stared the people in the face.

"This state of things" says the letter "was merely the product of transient circumstances, and not at all, as has been said, a result of the deficient condition of the Southern States as a producing country. The South circumvented by its actual limits may, with the instruments of labor it possesses, feed ten times the amount of people it now contains, and have still a balance for exportation. The trouble with us is not then to be found in the barrenness of the soil or in the want of arms to cultivate it, but in a sudden alteration of our territorial possessions and in the reliance which people had set upon them—a reliance which made us forget those measures of ordinary prudence which in such a crisis as this ought not to have been neglected."

The line upon which the Union army is now moving is, in the opinion of the writer, too extensive not to allow the Confederates to make raids in the State now under Union rule, and take in all the transportable property, such as horses, cattle, &c., which, added to those products of the Confederacy, will be more than sufficient to cover all deficiency. As a proof he quotes the example of Longstreet when, although at a considerable distance from his supplies, was able to make an army of twenty thousand men live upon requisition, support itself in three months, and no provisions were supposed to exist, and even forward a considerable quantity of salt and leather to Richmond.

The deficiency in men which the writer acknowledges to exist to a certain extent, is not in his estimation so serious an evil as it is supposed to be. "If the Southern army," he says, "is no smaller than it is, the difference in number is compensated by the unsurpassed quality of the material of which it is composed. The recruiting element has, of course, decreased, but still there are now in the Confederacy one hundred thousand able-bodied men represented by the same number of substitutes, which can be obtained at any time. The Confederate Congress has already made an appeal to these men, and it is expected that between now and next Spring another army of one hundred thousand men will be organized."

Of the two generals who had been pointed out as Bragg's probable successor, one, Joe Johnston, has declined. He grounds his refusal upon his repugnance in taking the place of a man whom he considers more competent than himself to fill the office of Commander-in-Chief. If Bragg persists in his resignation, Gen. Beauregard, who stands next to Lee in the estimation of the Southerners, is likely to receive the appointment.

One of the greatest causes of the weakness of the South is, he is mainly to be attributed to the inexperience in financial matters of the men who now control that department. But here, as on the battle-field, President Davis entertains the fullest confidence in the self-sacrificing spirit of the nation. "A people," says the latter, "who lavish their best blood in defense of their rights is not likely to hoard up gold when gold is needed."

The writer concludes by stating that Secretary Meminger's recommendations will be acquiesced in, that the existing debt will be funded, and that the loan and the tax will be successful.

Late Southern News.
From late Southern papers we extract the following:
A SWEEPING CONSCRIPTION BILL.
Mr. Sparrow of Louisiana reported bills in reference to substitutes and exemption, and offered a report, providing that the conscription law should be amended so that the white male residents of the Confederate States between sixteen and fifty-five shall be in the military service.

2. All between sixteen and eighteen and between forty and fifty-five shall belong to the reserve corps; between eighteen and forty-five to the army in the field.

FROM CHATTANOOGA.
Nothing Concerning Fighting in East Tennessee—The Order Relative to Recruitments.

WASHINGTON, Saturday, Dec. 19, 1863.
The Star has the following:
"The authorities here have dispatches from Gen. Grant at Chattanooga, dated last night, at 9 o'clock. They do not indicate any recent change in the state of affairs there. Gen. Grant is in constant and direct telegraphic communication with Gen. Foster at Knoxville, and had there been fighting between Longstreet's forces and ours pursuing him—as the press dispatches from Cincinnati state—Gen. Grant would doubtless have sent such dispatches here. The fact that he says nothing about any such engagement or engagements induces the belief that the statements via Cincinnati referred to above are much exaggerated."

CHATTANOOGA, Saturday, Dec. 19, 1863.
The order that three-fourths of the aggregate of the veteran regiments must recruit in order to get furloughs almost stops enlistment—in many cases more than one-fourth being either in the hospital or prisoners—and the men want to get home before the holidays so as to spend them with their families and friends.

THE WAR IN WEST-VIRGINIA.
The Affair near Upperville—Reported Destruction of the Railroad Between Staunton and Gordonsville.

BALTIMORE, Saturday, Dec. 19, 1863.
A dispatch to The Baltimore American dated at Harper's Ferry last evening says:
Just as the mail is about to close a detachment of the 12th Pennsylvania Cavalry has brought in Col. Carter of the 1st Virginia Cavalry and six other prisoners, captured yesterday at Upperville, Fauquier County.

Messengers from Gen. Sullivan's cavalry, beyond Winchester, report that Gen. Averill and his cavalry were in Staunton yesterday, and tore up the railroad for six miles between that place and Gordonsville. This is very important, if true. It lacks confirmation, however.

MURKIN FOR ARKANSAS.
Legal Meeting of Union Citizens.

At a meeting of a large and highly respectable number of the citizens of Saline and the adjoining Counties, held at Benton, Ark., on the evening of the 18th inst., the following proceedings were had:
On motion, Capt. E. H. Vance of Saline Co. was called to the chair, and the Hon. Willis Jones of Pike Co. was appointed Secretary.

After a brief explanation of the object of the meeting by the President, it was moved and seconded that a Committee of thirteen be appointed to draft resolutions expressive of the sense of the meeting, which Committee consisted of the following gentlemen:
Capt. A. C. Weaver of Clark Co., Capt. A. S. Arnold of Sevier Co., C. T. Jordan, esq., and the Rev. M. J. L. Lewis, D. D., of Boone Co., Messrs. J. M. Smith, Capt. J. E. Patton, Dr. J. Mitchell, esq., and the Rev. I. D. Cantrill, all of Pike Co., the Hon. J. Spray, A. Hartgrove, and Dr. J. H. Green, all of Hot Spring Co., and the Rev. J. C. Tridley of Montgomery Co.

The Committee reported after due deliberation the following preamble and resolutions:
Whereas, The history of our country and especially of this State, has been a constant struggle between the rights of Liberty and the rights of Slavery, as well as the great superiority of free institutions; and

Whereas, The people of the Slave States in defiance to the rights of the free States, have constituted but an insignificant minority of their fellow-citizens, have for years created a system of Slavery, which has been a burden upon their energies, and a blight upon their every best interest; and

Whereas, Assisted by political demagogues, these same States have endeavored to extend their system of Slavery to other States, and to amend our Constitution so as to place the question beyond the reach of any vote; and

Whereas, Our Constitution, as it now stands, restricts the power of Congress to regulate commerce with foreign Nations, to regulate the Commerce among the States, and to place the question beyond the reach of any vote; and

Whereas, The people of the Slave States have, in defiance to the rights of the free States, have for years created a system of Slavery, which has been a burden upon their energies, and a blight upon their every best interest; and

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FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE SOUTH.
The Loss of the Weehawken—Explosion—Fire in Fort Sumter—Harbor Obstructions Washing Ashore—Shelling of Charleston—The Steamer Miller With Us—Discovery of a Brass Twelve-Pounder.

From Our Special Correspondent.
FOLLY ISLAND, S. C., Dec. 14, 1863.
The monitor Weehawken, Capt. Colburn, one of the finest of our new monitors, was lost while at anchor Sunday, the 6th inst., at 3 o'clock p. m. At the time of the disaster the wind was blowing very fresh from the northeast, and a heavy sea was on. Through some oversight the forward hatch was left open, when a huge wave washed over her decks, sinking her instantly in ten fathoms, directly in the channel leading to the city, two miles from Fort Sumter.

Her complement consisted of 90 men, officers included. Twenty-seven sailors and four engineers were lost. The others were immediately seen floating on the water, and were rescued by the united efforts of the fleet in small boats. Capt. Colburn, at the time of the disaster, was on board of the Ironides on official business.

On Friday, the 11th inst., at nine in the morning, a terrific explosion occurred in Fort Sumter—supposed to have been one of the magazines situated in the north-west corner of the Fort, not far from where their flag floated. The bricks and mortar were hurled into the air in vast heaps to the height of three hundred feet, and were scattered by the wind. The explosion was so violent that it was formerly a Rebel floating battery, as it evidently shows signs where guns have been mounted, but of late has been used as an obstruction to the harbor, and very large stones are still in it, which would justify the belief.

During the past week shells have been thrown into the city of Charleston at the rate of twenty per day. The shelling does not take place at the same time each day. At one time the shells send us compliments to the Charlestonians as early as 5 a. m., just to let them know that he is awake. At other times a few are dropped in at the hour of 12 m. (dinner time), the world being at one time in a state of quietude, and at other times there long as it is the programme here to knock it away daily.

On Saturday night, during the storm, a wooden corner of the Fort, double planks on the bottom and sides, strengthened by beams a foot square, was washed ashore on this island one mile from Light-House Inlet. The general inquiry is "What is it?" and was resolved by the Chief of Artillery, Gen. W. T. H. Anderson, that it was formerly a Rebel floating battery, as it evidently shows signs where guns have been mounted, but of late has been used as an obstruction to the harbor, and very large stones are still in it, which would justify the belief.

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THREE DAYS LATER FROM NEW-ORLEANS.
A BATTLE NEAR NATCHEZ.
THE REBELS DRIVEN EIGHT MILES.
A NUMBER OF PRISONERS TAKEN.

THE ATTACK ON THE STEAMER VAN PHUL.
Destructive Fire at New-Orleans.

The steamship Morning Star, J. M. Courtney, commander, from New-Orleans and Havana, arrived at this port yesterday. We are indebted to Purser Fuller for facts.
The Morning Star left New-Orleans on Sunday, Dec.