

GRANT!

Official Despatch from Secretary Stanton.

Additional Details of the Operations of the Cavalry Under Gen. Wilson.

The Work They Accomplished Before Their Attempt to Return.

Sixty Miles of Railroad Track Destroyed.

Large Numbers of Negroes, Horses and Mules Gathered by His Force.

The Rebels All the Time Harassing Their Rear.

Several Engagements with the Enemy.

How They were Cut Off on Their Return.

Brave Fight and Escape of General Kautz and His Command.

THE OFFICIAL DESPATCH.

Secretary Stanton to Major General Dix.

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, July 3, 1864.

Major General Dix—

A despatch from General Grant's headquarters, dated at five o'clock this morning, gives the following result of General Wilson's operations: "Sixty miles of railroad were thoroughly destroyed. The Danville road, General Wilson reports, could not be repaired in less than forty days, even if all the materials were on hand. He has destroyed all the blacksmith's shops where the rails might be straightened, and all the mills where sawing for sleepers could be saved. Thirty miles of the South Side road were destroyed. Wilson brought in about four hundred negroes and many of the vast number of horses and mules gathered by his force. He reports that the rebels slaughtered without mercy the negroes they rescued. Wilson's loss of property is a small wagon train used for ammunition, an ambulance team and twelve caissons. The horses of the artillery and wagons were generally brought off. Of the caissons two were removed from their carriages, the wheels of which were broken and thrown into the water, and one other gun had been disabled by a rebel shot breaking its trunnions before it was abandoned. He estimates his total loss at seven hundred and fifty to one thousand men, including those lost from Kautz's division."

THE HERALD DESPATCHES.

Mr. S. Caldwell's Despatch.

THE POINT, July 3, 1864. The apprehensions entertained for the safety of General Wilson and his cavalry command were relieved last evening by the arrival of Captain Beaumont and a lieutenant, who left him near Clinton town, on the surveyor's road, at eleven A. M. yesterday. The troops are back within supporting distance of the army, and General Wilson is expected to report in person at about quarter to day. Last the Herald correspondent, who accompanied the expedition, failed to get his despatches off by this morning's mailboat, and a few brief scraps of information.

THE MARCH.

The command left camp on the 23d, and rode upwards of thirty miles, striking the Petersburg and Lynchburg Railroad at Ford's Station late in the evening. Both commands commenced the immediate destruction of the railroad and all public property within reach. Two locomotives and ten cars were captured and immediately destroyed.

KAUTZ'S MOVEMENT AND WHAT HE DID.

On the 23d Kautz was pushed ahead to Burkeville, the junction of the Petersburg and Lynchburg and Richmond and Danville railroads. The rebels were apprised of the probable destination of the expedition, and a considerable force of cavalry appeared on the rear early in the day. By taking advantage of a short cut across the bend of the main road, they reached the crossing in advance of Wilson, at "Black and White," and dispersed the further progress until attacked and routed. The caissons were in the light, but were unable to get them off. The halt of the rear that night was near Nettaway Court House.

THE WORK OF DESTRUCTION.

was prosecuted vigorously all day. Wilson worked on the Petersburg and Lynchburg road, and Kautz on the Danville road, south of the junction. At night the rear joined the advance at Meherin's Station.

ON THE 25th the entire force was at work, and succeeded in destroying the tracks, ties, rails and trawestwork to within three hundred yards of Roanoke river.

BY ROANOKES BRIDGE WAS NOT TAKEN.

The bridge was defended by infantry, with artillery, in strong position on the right bank of the river, and a line of breastworks and rifle pits at its head on the left bank. The cavalry were unable to dislodge them, as the country was so open, and subjected them to a mercurial fire at long range. Up to this time the work of burning and destroying had been carried on day and night, with little interruption from the enemy. Their force was constantly hovering around and skirmishing, but was not large enough to arrest the work, by engaging the troops.

THE REBELS REINFORCED.

Reinforcements were continually arriving, and the rebels became formidable, with infantry and cavalry. As the further progress of the command in that direction was arrested, and their retreat threatened, it was thought advisable to start on the return trip.

THE RETURN.

A step was made on the night of the 25th near Meherin's station, and the men and animals allowed a few hours' rest. The rebels began to swarm around the gallant little command on the 27th, and were literally driven back, behind, and on every side of them, and constant fighting was carried on all day. The route was across to the Lynchburg plank road, and thence

up R. towards Lawrenceville. The rebels were moving across the country on the left bank, on the inside line, determined to cut off the retreat. On the 28th the little Nettaway was crossed eight miles from Jarrett's station, and an attempt made to cross the country directly to Ream's Station. At Rocky creek the rebel infantry was met in force, and our cavalry turned back. The fighting was now continuous day and night, and no rest allowed our men at any point.

THE FIGHT AT REAM'S STATION.

The next day—the 29th—the battle began near Ream's. Kautz struck the enemy in force, at eight o'clock, in the morning, and fought them till four in the afternoon. The rear was also hard pressed, and finally flank attack made, that cut the column in two, and finally separated Kautz and Wilson. The former came in with his command and a part of Wilson's that was cut off with him. The latter was forced to make a wide detour through the country, and only arrived last evening.

THE GUNS ARRIVED.

During the 28th and 29th it became apparent that the enemy moved with too much caution, and in too great force, to admit of bringing off our guns and wagon train. All the former, excepting two pieces, were spiked, run into the river, and abandoned. The wheels and woodwork were sawed and destroyed. The wagons were similarly destroyed or burned. No part of either was captured. The ambulances containing the wounded, who could not be brought off, were abandoned in good order, with the sick and wounded in them.

THE SPECTER OF THE REBELS.

are a probable loss of one thousand men killed and wounded and prisoners, and the abandonment and destruction of twelve guns, four small mountain howitzers, and a light train of wagons. This is counterbalanced more than tenfold by the amount of damage inflicted. The Petersburg and Lynchburg Railroad is utterly destroyed for twenty-six miles, and the Richmond and Danville Railroad for thirty miles, including the junction at Burkeville, connecting Richmond and Lynchburg. No such complete demolition of a road has ever been made. Not a single rail was left in all that distance. Part of the distance was the old flat rail. The stringers and ties of these were all burned, and the mill consumed that sawed them out. Excepting the last day's fight, the raid was successful and victorious every where. It is considered more successful as it is, even brilliant, by our highest military authorities. Not a single railroad now connects Richmond with the confederacy. All are badly destroyed. They cannot be rebuilt in thirty days, and possibly not in sixty, by the whole rebel army. Lee can only afford to lose their daily use. We can also threaten and harass their working parties at present, and hope to command the entire, long before the rebels can rebuild it. The price paid for the destruction of these important railroads is considered an exceedingly small one.

WHAT THE REBELS SAY ABOUT IT.

The rebel papers admit a serious destruction of their roads, and that much time and labor will be needed to repair them.

LATE.

The following data were furnished by an officer who accompanied the expedition—

CAVALRY CAMP NEAR FORM'S NECK, July 1, 1864.

I am enabled to give you a full report of the part taken by Colonel Spear's command in the late expedition. On the morning of the 21st of June they broke camp, and proceeded to Mount Sinai church. There they joined the rest of the command, under General Wilson. At two o'clock they took up their line of march towards the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad. The first station reached was Ream's, where they destroyed thirteen cars, two water tanks and all public property. They report that there has been no train passed over this road for three weeks, our guns being in a position to command the road. Remembering their march to the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad, reaching Ford's station at thirty-five minutes past five P. M. At this place they destroyed large quantities of commissary stores, cotton and tobacco. Working here until twelve o'clock, they succeeded in effectually destroying six miles of track. Reaching here until morning on the 23d, at half-past one o'clock, they proceeded up South Side Railroad, in the junction of the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad, passing through, on their way, Wilson's station at four o'clock, and "Black and White" at half-past six. At this place they destroyed cars and railroad buildings, and reached Nettaway at half-past eleven A. M. Here they captured a large rebel mill and destroyed the station. Here the rebels also destroyed ten miles of track. At this place they also found a rebel hospital, containing several wounded "rebs," who state Uncle Sam's rations with a gusto. The expedition left the camp on the morning of the 24th at four o'clock, Colonel Spear's brigade being left in the rear to burn depot and stores. From the junction they made up along the Danville road, reached Meherin at nine o'clock A. M. and keptville at half-past one P. M. Here they worked until three o'clock, destroying eight miles of track as they went. The men then laid down to sleep for a few hours. At five o'clock they resumed their march, passed Drake's Branch at eight o'clock A. M. and reached Roanoke Station at five o'clock P. M. Here they found the enemy strongly entrenched. The enemy also had a gun mounted on a car and containing several shells, and was prepared to fire. The First District of Columbia and Eleventh Pennsylvania cavalry, employed as stragglers on the left of the main road, Colonel Spear's brigade, the Third New York and Fifth Pennsylvania cavalry, deploying on the right of the road, and the advance to within good rifle range, and held the position until nearly out of ammunition. They then fell back to the depot to get a fresh supply. After doing this they marched back, took the morning line, formerly occupied, and held it until night. They did not succeed in burning the bridge over the Stanton river, but burned the depot and destroyed the track. Here Captain Reynolds, of the Eleventh Pennsylvania cavalry, was killed, while leading his men gallantly on the bridge. Colonel Cooper and Major Curtis, of the First District of Columbia cavalry, are supposed to have been killed in this engagement. At daylight the next morning the troops withdrew. Colonel Spear proceeded along the Christianville road. Here he expected to cross the river; but there being no bridge in less than eighty miles distant, he was compelled to fall back towards Ream's, the rebels hanging on the flank and rear. This was cavalry, supposed to be from the command of Fitzhugh Lee. They marched until two o'clock on the morning of the 27th, and at half-past six on the morning of the 27th took up their line of march. They arrived at Meherin's at forty-five minutes past eight A. M. No fighting to-day. We camped at Price's farm. On Tuesday morning, the 28th, at half-past five, we proceeded towards the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad, passing through Liberty church at forty-five minutes past nine, Snake Ordway, on the Petersburg plank road, Nettaway bridge and Stony Creek Station on the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad, about eleven o'clock. At six o'clock in the evening arrived in the vicinity of Ream's and marched to within about five hundred yards of the enemy, when they opened on the cavalry with artillery, musketry, while Hampton at this time was in the rear driving in our rear guard. The Eleventh Pennsylvania cavalry were ordered to the rear, and the carbines to dismount, about twenty to a company. The remainder, mounted, was kept in position, ready for a charge should the enemy advance. The First District of Columbia cavalry, being armed with six-shooters, were dismounted, excepting every fourth man, who held the horses, and advanced. As the First District of Columbia cavalry got into position, an Alabama brigade, commanded by Colonel J. J. Saunders, made up by the Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh and Fourteenth Alabama regiments, charged upon the skirmishers, when the mounted portion of the Eleventh Pennsylvania and First District of Columbia cavalry met them in the charge, driving them back under the cover of the woods. In this charge we captured about seventy-five prisoners. Col. West in the morning held our position on the right, which he succeeded in doing for two hours, and also getting our wounded to the rear. At this time we were surrounded on three sides. Then came the order to cut loose from the wagons and artillery. Here we lost four pieces of Captain Alder's battery, First United States Artillery. The only possible way for us to escape at this time was through what was supposed to be impenetrable woods and swamps. It was finally decided that Colonel Spear should make the attempt to break through, the firing being very heavy at this time, the shell making bad havoc among the horses, wounding as many as three at a time. The command was formed, and with Colonel Spear and Major Stratton at their head, they were led gallantly through. These entrenchments are

forming of a great deal of credit, so also in Lieutenant Commins, Assistant Adjutant General on the staff of Colonel Spear. On the evening of the 29th we reached our picket reserve, in command of Captain Crowl-shield, and camped all night. Some of the men had no sleep before in seventy-six hours. We arrived at the old camp on the evening of the 30th.

THE SECOND CORPS.

Mr. Stanley Anderson's Despatch.

CAMP NEAR FERRISBURG, July 1, 1864.

Nothing of special interest has occurred in front of the Second corps to-day. Three deserters from a Mississippi regiment, who came into our lines this morning, represent that many more would gladly abandon the rebel cause if they had an opportunity of doing so, or had anywhere to go.

A CONSPIRACY IN FERRISBURG.

There seemed to be a large fire in Petersburg last night. We could see a brilliant light, like that of an aurora, illuminating the horizon, and could hear the sound of the fire bells pealing through the midnight air.

THE ENEMY IS STILL CONCENTRATING TROOPS IN FRONT.

It is said that the rebel General Ewell's corps, which had been opposed to Hunter, arrived in Petersburg last night, and this morning moved out to a position on the right of the rebel army line opposite our left. This Beauregard holds the city and the extreme left of the rebel line. Next come A. P. Hill's and Longstreet's corps, and then come Ewell's, which, it is said, took up position on their extreme right this morning.

WILSON AND HIS CAVALRY SAVERS.

Information was received from General Wilson and his cavalry to-day. A scout came into our lines with the intelligence that when he left the column this morning it was on the Suffolk and Prince George Court House road; that Wilson had crossed the Blackwater and was marching to our lines with his command. Later intelligence from Wilson left him at Cable Point. He is expected to arrive safely at City Point to-night.

THE SIXTH CORPS.

Mr. Charles H. Harman's Despatch.

HEADQUARTERS, SIXTH ARMY CORPS, JERUSALEM PLANK ROAD, June 30, 1864.

WHAT WE DID AT REAM'S STATION.

Ream's station is a place about ten miles south of Petersburg, on the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad. It had evidently been a place of considerable importance to the rebels. The station was of large size, and substantially built. We here found large quantities of stores. The principal articles were rails and car wheels, articles at this time of almost priceless value to the rebels. The Fourth and Ninth corps, and other regiments, belonging to the First brigade of General Ricketts's division, went into the rail twisting business on duty. The station house, a small machine shop, and several other buildings, were fired and completely consumed. The telegraph wires and poles were also torn down and rendered useless.

THE UNDERGROUND REBEL TELEGRAPH.

One of our men found on the edge of the line and hid away in the grass another telegraph line. It was a very ingenious and cute device, and was evidently intended by the rebels to be used in case we should succeed in destroying the old line. The wire was well made, and evidently of recent make. This underground telegraph was also destroyed, and our men carried long lengths of the wire away, to use in place of ropes for drawing water. Before we left this important line it was rendered entirely useless to the rebels for at least some months to come.

THE WORK OF DESTROYING THE RAILROAD WAS CARRIED ON UNINTERRUPTED BY THE REBELS.

Strong pickets were thrown out, both up and down the track. Occasionally a rebel cavalry man showed himself on the edge of the woods, and after satisfying himself that General Wright's corps had not been withdrawn, put spurs to his horse and galloped off.

COLORADO RECYCLED.

Some into our lines in considerable numbers. They were taken to General Wright's headquarters, and on being interrogated, said there was no real force of any strength in our vicinity, but that yesterday, the 29th, there was a right smart lot of them. This was doubtless the force that fought, and afterwards went off in pursuit of General Wilson's cavalry, which, I learned, had been confronted at this place by three thousand colored cavalry and a division of infantry. I have been unable to learn anything definite in relation to the result of the contest, except that General Wilson was unable to force his way through, and fell back with the rebels in hot pursuit. Several of his wounded managed to hide themselves, and reached General Wright's headquarters to-day. A few caissons, abandoned in the pursuit, were found in a marsh to the southwest of our position, and were recovered to-day. Information was received this morning that General Kautz, and the regiments under his command, had made their way back in safety to our lines.

GENERAL SHERIDAN IN THE REAR.

About one o'clock one of General Sheridan's aids arrived at the little church where General Wright had his headquarters, and reported that General Sheridan, with a large force of cavalry, was en route for Ream's station; that he had already marched his troops twelve miles, and would be up during the afternoon. The inference to be drawn from this information was, that General Wright, with the Sixth corps, would unite with General Sheridan, for the purpose of relieving General Wilson.

ORDERS TO MOVE.

About an hour afterwards orders were issued for the Sixth corps to move. General Russell, with the First division, moved first, General Ricketts, with the Third, had the centre of the line, and General Getty, with the Second division, brought up the rear. The line of march was along the same road we had traversed twenty-four hours before, and towards our old camping ground.

OUR PRESENT POSITION.

When the head of the column reached the Jerusalem turnpike, orders were received from General Meade for the corps to halt there. General Wright established his headquarters in a small farm house on the road side. This division went into position massed in line of battle.

REBEL NEWS.

A Richmond paper of the 29th inst. was brought to General Wright's headquarters to-day. They claim that Sherman has been defeated by Joe Johnston, which, they contend, proves the wisdom of the remark attributed to the veteran Winfield Scott, "Beware of John on a retreat." The editor is also at some pains to impress on General Grant the necessity of exercising great vigilance, or he may make up some day morning and find his army in a tight place.

FRINGE ON THE RIGHT.

Very heavy firing is heard on our right to-night. The pieces are apparently worked rapidly, and the reports indicate that heavy guns are being used.

EVERYTHING IS QUIET IN FRONT OF THE SIXTH CORPS THIS MORNING.

ALL QUIET.

THE NINTH CORPS.

Mr. James C. Fitzpatrick's Despatches.

NINTH ARMY CORPS, HERRON'S FERRISBURG, Va., July 2, 1864.

OPERATIONS DURING THE PAST WEEK HAVE BEEN OF THE MOST MONOTONOUS CHARACTER.

Of course I speak of matters on our immediate front only. The other corps and the cavalry have had some hard work and sharp fighting; but the Ninth corps has remained almost inactive in their line of intrenchments, with the enemy less than a hundred yards in front. Even picket firing has been less brisk than usual. Our men have instructions not to fire unless the enemy advance, as the musketry is confined to a few stragglers shot from the rear, who, like the Irishman we saw, in addition to this, they keep up at intervals fire on the new wire in process of construction for our siege batteries. The artillery on both sides embrace every opportunity for a shot at whatever object presents a good mark—such as a man on a white horse, a running wagon train or a body of troops coming from the rear. The whistling noise made through the trees at this time, in many cases, "headquarters" have had to erect caissons in front of the line.

THE REBELS.

I mentioned in a previous article the fact that many of our men had inflicted wounds upon themselves in order to get to the rear, with the hope of being sent North. The following letter shows the steps taken to remedy this evil—

Very respectfully, your obedient servant. JAMES HARRIS, Med. Ins. Ninth Army Corps. Dr. HORACE LEONARDSON, Surgeon in charge First division hospital.

A VISIT TO FRINGE CORPS HOSPITAL.

In company with a party of officers I yesterday visited Prince George Court House—a spot of considerable interest for its many venerable associations. After a substantial dinner with Captain Wright, of the Fourteenth Massachusetts battery, we proceeded on a tour of inspection. Some of our men, however, had been before us, and the documents stored at the Court House, many of them being books, beyond the Revolution, were strewn about in every direction. Registers, wills, indentures, marriage licenses and other papers—some of them on parchment, and beginning in the olden style, "By the Grace of God and our sovereign Queen Anne"—were among these documents thus ruthlessly scattered to the winds. After an inspection of the jail, the Court House, with its stone floor and ancient prisoners' cell, the old lan on the opposite side of the road, and the Masonic lodge room, and a call upon General Ferrero, who is in position with his colored troops, the party returned.

THE DUNS HOUSE HOSPITAL.

The works carried by the colored troops on the 15th inst. immediately surrounded the Duns House, as it is known—a mansion of the usual Virginia pattern. Dr. Prince, surgeon-in-chief of the Fourth division, has located his hospital here, and has been complimented very highly for the admirable manner in which it is laid out.

NINTH ARMY CORPS, HERRON'S FERRISBURG, Va., July 2—A. M.

SHORT STORIES.

Last night just at ten o'clock the rebels made a determined and sudden charge upon the lines of General Led with and Wilcox, with a view to driving back the men and gaining possession of the fort which I spoke in my last letters, and which the rebels evidently dread, situated, as it is, in an angle of our position and commanding several of our batteries. The work on the fort was begun a few nights since. In the daytime the rebels plunged upon it with artillery, but with little effect. The next night they repaired all the damage. In fact, so far had the work proceeded that our men, by means of a covered way, continued their labors in the daytime yesterday afternoon. It gave indications of completion, and the rebels were driven to the necessity of making a desperate charge to undo what they attempted, too, by the hope that it would lead to a position and gain possession of the fort which I spoke in my last letters, and which the rebels evidently dread, situated, as it is, in an angle of our position and commanding several of our batteries. The work on the fort was begun a few nights since. In the daytime the rebels plunged upon it with artillery, but with little effect. The next night they repaired all the damage. In fact, so far had the work proceeded that our men, by means of a covered way, continued their labors in the daytime yesterday afternoon. 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