

Spirit of the Morning Press. The Intelligence treats further upon the President's emancipation proposition. The Republican has no editorial to-day.

OUR MILITARY BUDGET.

MANASSAS IS OURS!

THE REBELS DESTROY ALL THEIR THEY COULD NOT CARRY OFF!

Ere nightfall last night, Col. Averill, with a large body of Union cavalry entered the rebel works at Manassas, and hoisted the Stars and Stripes over what remains of them. They bivouacked in them throughout the night.

No rebel forces were in sight, and from the best information at hand it was clear that they had entirely fled from that immediate portion of Virginia.

It is to be presumed that in the course of to-day our military authorities will learn through refugees and others from beyond Manassas, whether they have essayed to make any pretence of a stand whatever at the Rappahannock river, twenty-four miles in the rear of Manassas, and up to which point (and indeed nine miles beyond it) the territory bordering the railroad is almost a continuous indefensible plain, interspersed with few patches of woods, none of which will furnish available cover for troops.

Ere leaving their works at Manassas, the enemy destroyed everything they were unable to carry off that might be likely to prove serviceable to our army.

The country, therefore, from Manassas to Washington, at least, has been cleared of rebels in arms, and we think for at least thirty or forty miles back of Manassas. That, however, is not our opinion, as up to noon to-day it was not known in this city what information concerning the state of affairs immediately south and west of the late rebel stronghold our military leaders on the field had been able to obtain.

WHAT NOW?

Without knowing aught of the intended movements of our army, our impression is that the reconstruction of the Orange and Alexandria railroad is absolutely necessary, to enable it to advance any distance to speak of, beyond Manassas. There is no doubt that the road has been destroyed in their retreat, so that it cannot be made available for our army's purposes, except with great labor and trouble—say at the rate of not more than three or four miles per diem.

Nor is it known whether it is proposed to make the main advance towards Richmond upon the Manassas line. We regard that as being exceedingly doubtful, in view of the better natural facilities for transportation via York river.

These are mere speculations of our own, however, founded on personal knowledge of the country.

WHERE HAVE THEY GONE?

The general impression around us to-day, is that a considerable portion of the flying rebel army of Manassas is now far on its way to meet Burnside. We do not share this belief, because very certain that the manner of their retreat involved the disorganization of their forces to a very considerable extent. Our fellow-citizens of the Federal Metropolis know from experience after the battle of Bull Run how thoroughly a general retreat units volunteers for any efficient service for a considerable time after its occurrence. Our theory is that, from Manassas to Memphis, the whole country and the whole rebel army are suffering under a condition of universal panic and confusion, in which any aggressive movement whatever on the part of the latter is a matter of impossibility.

THEIR MARCH.

The haste with which the rebels evacuated their line of the Potomac is proved by the fact of the capture of five rebel infantry as late as yesterday, in the immediate vicinity of Burke's Station, only fourteen miles out of Alexandria. Unless they were purposely left there to be captured, as it were, they fell into our hands because it was impossible in the haste of leaving to call them in time to save them.

LATEST FROM FORTRESS MONROE.

We have information from Fortress Monroe up nine a. m. to-day, at which time all was quiet here, and no sign of the return of the Merrimac to risk a second engagement with the Monitor, was visible. Nothing had been heard therefrom Norfolk up to that hour, since her defeat by that ship.

That she was too seriously crippled on that occasion to continue the fight, is evident from her abandonment of it when the splendid steamer Minnesota lay aground and utterly helpless within a reach of her guns. Nothing but being defeated by the Monitor, at that time, would have tempted the Merrimac to forego her evident purpose of destroying the Minnesota, which, otherwise, would have been wholly at her mercy.

FROM THE LOWER POTOMAC.

The Stepping Stones, Capt. Van Dervent, went down to Quantico yesterday afternoon, and returned to the Navy Yard last night. A force of 500 men, from General Hooker's division, was landed at Evansport yesterday. They acted as a picket guard, while a large force was employed in gathering from the late secession magazines at Cock-pit Point, Quantico, and Shipping Point, the ammunition left by the rebels in their hasty retreat. Enough of ordnance stores, in good condition, were recovered to load a barge. The Stepping Stones, late yesterday evening, towed from Quantico to Budd's Ferry a barge containing the picket guard of 500, and returning towed to the Maryland shore the barge containing the stores mentioned.

The rebel steamer Page is lying in Quantico Creek, burned to the water's edge.

The Baltimore and King Philip left the Yard some days since. Their destination is not known.

THE STEVENS BATTERY.

The great events which have just transpired in the waters near Fortress Monroe give vast importance to the abstract of Mr. Stevens' memorial which we published yesterday. The Stevens battery, as appears by the letter of the Messrs Stevens of August, 1841, originated with them at that date, and was the first organized in any country of iron vessels, with submerged propellers protected by iron armor, and especially, of such iron placed at an angle so as to give shot or shell. The Monitor, although a much smaller vessel, is based on the same great ideas.

On Saturday and Sunday last came off the great contest between Wood and Iron. As shown in advance by Mr. Stevens' experiments of 1841, iron was the victor, with scarcely a contest, over best and finest wooden vessels and steamers being captured or going down before the rebel iron-clad vessel, the Merrimac, like a pasteboard house before a gust of wind. But when the two iron-clad steamers, the Monitor and Merrimac, came in conflict, after a battle of four hours, and after touching and striking at each other from close quarters, and with the enormous ten and eleven inch guns. Neither as yet are known to have been very seriously injured; certainly ours was not even mangled.

Surely such facts as these furnish conclusive proof that the Stevens' battery should be at once completed, especially as it appears she could be

finished in four months; whereas it would take eighteen months to build a new vessel of equal size and power.

IRON CLAD WAR SHIPS.

The backing and filling of the Senate upon the question of making the appropriation repeatedly asked by the President and Secretary of the Navy for the construction of iron clad vessels, delayed the arrival of the Monitor at Hampton Roads three weeks after the time it was intended that she should reach there. It was well known to the Government here that the rebel iron-clad fleet could not be ready to attempt a demonstration until about this time, and every effort was made to meet those vessels with the Monitor's heavy guns.

Had Congress promptly responded to the President's and Secretary's recommendations in this connection, instead of wasting their time over the inevitable negro, and in intrigues to wholly overturn the Constitution of the United States, under the plea of there being a military necessity for so doing, which no military man sees, we would not have lost the Cumberland and Congress, all must now know.

It is due to Mr. Grimes and others of the Senate, and to the Naval Committee to call public attention to the fact that they have labored unceasingly for two years past to induce Congress to appropriate liberally for the construction of such ships as the Monitor. It is to be presumed that their advice will now have its legitimate weight in this matter, in their Chamber.

The Merrimac, another such ship, will very shortly be ready; and the third in a week or two afterwards.

We shall therefore probably have all three on the station before the Merrimac can be prepared for sea by the rebels, either one of which will be more than a match for her, as was demonstrated by Sunday's action, in which she was so signally crippled by the Monitor, without the latter's receiving any injury whatever.

Her two big guns—11 inch columbiads—are clearly too much for anything seesh can get up.

THE DEAD HERO.

The remains of the late Lieut. Joseph B. Smith, U. S. N., killed in the naval action of Saturday last, while in temporary command of the frigate Congress, are now on the way up to this city, coming via Baltimore. He was killed by the explosion of a shell, which shattered his person dreadfully. His corpse was brought off the surrendered ship by some of the men set at liberty by the rebels. The remains will of course be carried to the residence of his father here.

NO MORE PASSES FOR DIXIE.

Major General Dix has issued an order directing that no more passes shall be granted to go South for the present. All travel Dixward, save by the blue coats, is thus suspended.

HIGHLY IMPORTANT FROM THE SOUTHWEST.

A Great Battle—The Combined Rebel Army of Van Dorn, McCulloch, Price and McIntosh defeated Gen. Sigler on Both Sides—Guns, Flags, Provisions, &c. Captured.

OFFICIAL DISPATCH.

The following is the official dispatch from Gen. Halleck, announcing the great victory in Arkansas, has been received here:

St. Louis, March 10.—G. E. McClellan, Major General, Washington, No. 61. "The army of the Southwest, under Gen. Curtis, after three days' hard fighting at Singer Creek, Arkansas, has gained a most glorious victory over the combined forces of Van Dorn, McCulloch, Price and McIntosh. Our loss estimated at one thousand killed and wounded. That of the enemy is still larger. Guns, provisions, &c., have been captured in large quantities. Our cavalry are in pursuit of the enemy. H. W. Halleck, Major-General.

FROM FORTRESS MONROE.

A dispatch from Fortress Monroe last evening says that the Merrimac did not make her appearance yesterday.

The Monitor was honored with salutes and cheers, both from the fort and fleet. Everybody was enthusiastic in her praise for the good service she rendered on Sunday.

The following is copied from an official report of Gen. W. Wood, dated Fortress Monroe yesterday, and received per telegraph:

"Nothing of importance has occurred to-day. The Merrimac has not made her appearance since yesterday. It is not yet known how much she was injured. The chief engineer of the Monitor says three balls from that vessel passed through the Merrimac. The whole crew of the Monitor suffered very little, although she was struck twenty-three times."

POSITIVELY FALLING BACK.

There is no longer any doubt that the rebels have evacuated Centerville, Winchester, and other important points, indicating a general falling back of their forces.

CHARLESTOWN, Va., March 10.—It is generally reported here, and believed that Winchester was fully evacuated yesterday. A reconnoissance was sent out this morning to ascertain the facts. Intelligence from other quarters greatly encourages the friends of the Union to look for a speedy crippling of the rebellion.

LATER.—CHARLESTOWN, Va., March 10, p. m.—It is now ascertained beyond doubt that Winchester has been evacuated by the rebels. Prominent officers of the Union army and Winchester are now occupied by our troops.

CONGRESSIONAL.

XXVIIIth CONGRESS—Second Session.

SENATE.—After our report closed yesterday. Mr. Foot, from the Committee on the District of Columbia, reported a bill authorizing the opening of Sixth street west. [This bill requires \$3,000 to carry the same into effect.]

Mr. Wilson introduced a joint resolution to grant aid to the States of Maryland and Delaware to emancipate certain persons held to labor therein; passed on a second reading.

The bill to encourage enlistments in the regular army of the United States, and for other purposes was passed, also the House bill making an additional article of war. Adjourned.

HOUSE.—After our report closed. The bill providing for the appointment of sutlers in the volunteer service and defining their duties was passed.

Mr. R. Conkling, introduced the following joint resolution (recommended by the President of the United States): Resolved, That the United States, to co-operate with any State which may adopt abolition of slavery, give to such State pecuniary aid, to be used by such State as compensation for injury, public and private, produced by such abolition.

After spirited discussion, the House adjourned without taking final action upon the resolution.

The State election of New Hampshire takes place to-day.

HOW THE GEN-BOT MONITOR BEHAVED ON THE PASSAGE TO FORTRESS MONROE—The Sea Punt Coffin, sailed from New York for Fortress Monroe on the 6th instant, with the battery Monitor in tow, the wind light from N. W. Her captain reported that at 10 a. m. she made Buzsage Light, wind N. W. On the 7th, at 4 a. m. A steamer Light was in sight, the wind North, and strong. At 10 a. m. made the Capes of the Delaware. At 11 a. m. the sea broke over the battery, when she was broken up, and reported that the sea had broken in the smoke pipes, and put out her fires. Headed N. W. for two hours, she kept her head to the sea. The gun-boats Sachem, and Currituck were in sight, but unable to render assistance. After five hours the wind moderated, and the Monitor arrived at Fortress Monroe at 9 p. m., on the 8th inst.

THE MONITOR AND MERRIMAC.—A gentleman just reached here who witnessed the naval engagement at Hampton Roads on Saturday and Sunday. Only one man was killed during the contest, and the Merrimac was disabled from the Monitor's arrival. The Merrimac is powerless against a fort or vessel, unless within half a mile of the Monitor, and the Monitor's heavy guns, which are barely above the level of the water, are a gale she would be useless. The report of the Monitor's guns were much heavier than the Merrimac's, and the Merrimac's guns were all being hoisted. The Monitor is powerful enough to shift her guns in any direction, even to a line parallel with her keel.

M. E. CONFERENCE.—In the Baltimore Conference on Saturday, several members were elected to deacon's orders, and the day consumed in the usual business of the Conference, relative to the financial affairs of Dickinson College, Christiana College, and other appointments of the Conference.

In the East Baltimore Conference, several ministers were admitted into full connection, deacon's orders conferred upon a number, and the remainder of the session devoted to the consideration of financial matters.

Prisoners Captured.—St. Louis, March 10.—The expedition sent out from Sedalia, by Brigadier General McKean, into Bates county, has just returned with forty prisoners, and a number of arms and ammunition.

Official Report of the Capture of Fernandina, Florida, and Brunswick, Georgia.

Capt. Davis, late fleet captain of the South Atlantic squadron, has arrived here, bringing an official dispatch from Commodore Dupont, of which the following is a copy:

St. Marks, Fla., March 8, 1862. Harbor of Fernandina, March 4, 1862. Hon. Gideon Welles, Sec'y of the Navy: Sir: I had the honor to inform you in my last dispatch that the expedition for Fernandina was completed on the 27th inst. I sailed from Port Royal on the last day of February, in the Wabash, and on the 24th inst. entered Cumberland Sound by St. Andrew's Inlet, in the Mobile Channel, and on the 25th inst. boarded of which ship I have hoisted my flag.

The fleet comprised the following vessels, sailing in the order in which they are named: Ottonia, a schooner, commanded by E. S. Seminoe; Pawnee, Pocahontas, Flag, Florida, James A. Adger, Bienville, Alabama, Keystone State, Seneca, Huron, Pembina, Isaac Smith, Penguin, Potomac, and the Drayton, all of which were armed with the whole of the defenses of Fernandina, and were at that moment retreating from Amelia Island, carrying with them such of their munitions as they could not get on shore. The object of conveying the whole fleet through Cumberland Sound was to turn the heavy works on the south end of Cumberland and the north end of Amelia Island, and receiving this intelligence I directed the gunboats and the steamers of light draught from the main line, and placing them under the command of Commodore Dupont, and the Drayton, and the Potomac, I ordered him to push through the same passage, to save public and private property from threatened destruction, to prevent poisoning the wells, and to strike all those outrages by the penetrating of which the leaders of the nefarious war hope to deceive and exasperate the southern people.

In the meantime I went out of the sound and anchored in the main channel, with the Drayton in consequence of bad weather I was unable to cross the bar till this morning. Commander Drayton, accompanied by Commander C. R. P. Drayton, and the small-armed companies from the Wabash, arrived several hours before me.

Immediately on his entering the harbor, Commodore Dupont, with the Ottonia, the Potomac, to hoist the flag on Fort Clinch, and the national colors on which the ensign of the Union has resumed its proper place since the first proclamation of the President of the United States was issued.

A few scattering musket shots were fired from the town by the flying enemy, when it was discovered that a railroad train was about to start, on board of which were several small gunboats, and a few shells at it, aiming at the locomotive, some of which took effect. It was reported that the train was about to start, and the United States of the State of Florida, escaped from this train and took to the water. Commander C. R. P. Drayton, pushing ahead with the major capture of the rebel steamer Darlington, containing military stores, arms, wagons, mules, forage, &c., and fortunately secured the drawbridge, which was held during the night of the second launch of the Wabash.

There were several other small gunboats, and the small-armed companies from the Wabash, were fired upon and refused to hoist a white flag. Notwithstanding the entreaties of the women, none was injured. I sent the captain of the steamer home a prisoner. His name was Jacob Brock. He is a native of Vermont, but has been a resident of Florida for twenty-three years.

The same night Commander C. R. P. Drayton ascended the St. Mary's with two Rodgers, possession of the town, driving out a picket of the enemy's cavalry.

On the morning of the 7th inst. the town of Fernandina was occupied by a party of our marines from Commander Drayton's command. In both places most of the inhabitants had fled by the water, and the rebels were in a state of confusion. A company of seamen and marines from the Wabash was sent from the Mobile to hold Fort Clinch. It is reported to me by Lieut. Commanding the Drayton, that the whole structure of the railroad on the peninsula of Amelia Island, and the swinging drawbridge, is quite uninjured.

The rebels have done some damage by the river, but I am not yet informed of the extent of the damage. Motives, baggage cars, tenders, freight cars, and some other property, besides that found in the streets of Darlington, have been recovered.

The whole number of captured arms up to this time is thirteen, embracing heavy 32-pound, 8-inch guns, and one 50 and one 120-pound rifle.

The towns of St. Mary's and Fernandina are uninjured. I visited the town, Fort Clinch, and the earthworks on the sea face of the island. It is impossible to describe the vigor and the vigor of the defense without being surprised that the rebels have been voluntarily deserted. The batteries on the north and northeast shores are as complete as the forts of the United States, and are protected by ranges of sand hills, which afford a perfect shelter for the men, and are so small and thoroughly covered by the natural growth of the island, that the rebels could not strike them from the water would be the mere result of chance.

A battery of six guns, though larger, and affording, therefore, a better mark, is equally well sheltered, and is in a state of readiness. The heavy guns mounted on Fort Clinch, commanded all the turnings of the main ship channel, and make an approaching enemy. Besides these there was another battery on the northeast shore of Cumberland Island, the fire of which would cross the channel inside of the bar.

The difficulties arising from the indirectness of the approach, and the shallowness of the bar would have added to the danger of the approaching vessels a long time exposed to fire under great disadvantages, and when the batteries were in a state of readiness, and the rebels would have passed all those defenses and naturally masked battery at the town, which commands the access to the inner anchorage.

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Official Dispatch of Capt. Marston, of the Flag Ship Roanoke, relative to the Naval Engagement at Hampton Roads.

Hampton Roads, March 10, 1862. To Hon. Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy: Sir: I have the honor to inform you that yesterday, at 10 o'clock, one of the look-out vessels reported by signal that the enemy was coming out.

I immediately ordered the Merrimac to get under way, and as soon as the two tugs appointed to tow this ship came alongside I shipped cable. The Merrimac was soon discovered passing out by Sewall's Point, standing up towards Newport News, accompanied by several small gunboats. Every exertion was made by us to get the speed on the Roanoke that the two tugs were capable of giving her, but in consequence of our bad luck we were unable to do so. We desired to do. The Merrimac went up and immediately attacked the Congress and Cumberland, particularly the latter ship, which was hid from us by the Wabash about seven or eight miles from Fortress Monroe the Merrimac going up. We continued to stand on, and when we came in sight of the Cumberland, we saw that she had been disabled, and was unable to fight.

The enemy, who had been joined by two or three steamers from James River, now devoted themselves exclusively to the Congress, but she being disabled, could bring but five guns to bear on them, and at ten minutes before one o'clock we had the mortification of seeing her haul down her flag.

We continued to stand in till we found ourselves in three and a half fathoms water, and then we grounded astern. Finding that we could go no further, I ordered one of the tugs to tow us up to the shore, and as soon as the Roanoke's head was pointed down the bay, I ordered the Merrimac to anchor. I directed the tugs to go to the assistance of the Merrimac, under the hope that, with the two others which had accompanied her, they would be able to get her out of the time that I now write they have not succeeded in doing so.

At 5 o'clock the frigate St. Lawrence, in tow of the Cambridge, passed by us, and after she also grounded, but by the aid of the Cambridge she was got astern again, and being unable to render any assistance to the Merrimac, she was towed up to the shore, and being disabled, she was unable to fight.

In passing the batteries at Sewall's Point, both going and returning, the rebels opened their fire on us, which was returned from our pivot guns, and by the aid of several small gunboats, the enemy's shot fell beyond us before one o'clock through our foremast, cutting away two of our shrouds, and several shells burst over and near the ship, scattering their fragments on the deck.

Between seven and eight o'clock we discovered that the rebels had set fire to the Congress, and she continued to burn until 1 o'clock, when she blew up. This was a melancholy satisfaction to us, as it showed that the rebels were unable to fight.

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