

LETTERS FROM MORRIS ISLAND.

MORRIS ISLAND, Sept. 18th.

I have written about almost everything pertaining to the siege of Charleston. Forts, batteries, torpedoes, monitors, gunboats, monster guns, etc., have been respectively brought on the stage and made to play their part in the tremendous drama. It strikes me that now is a fitting time to let your readers know somewhat of those who are behind the screen controlling the minutia of the struggle. The erection of each battery, the building of every fort, the planting of every gun in the siege of Charleston is made in accordance with a plan or drawing prepared after the most exact scientific calculation. As Leverrier sitting quietly in his studio demonstrated that a planet must revolve somewhere outside the orbit of Herschell, and then, turning his glass upon that portion of the heavens, found it and named the new world Neptune, so the work of the reduction of Sumter, and of all the fortifications of the harbor exist in diagrams and plans which are followed with mathematical precision—the grand summing up of which is *delenda est* Charleston. Every appliance of science, every resource of ingenuity, every energy of the brain, assisted by education and experience, have been brought to bear in the prosecution of this siege. On the other side equal care and labor have been expended in the effort to render the capture of the city an impossibility. Genius and engineering ability of a high order produced Wagner and Gregg and strengthened Sumter, and we have yet that to do which will tax our every resource. The advantages gained already are a sure earnest of ultimate if not speedy triumph, and as nothing of startling import is now transpiring this may be a favorable time to gratify the public with a glance at the actors engaged. As first in command and foremost in labor we must refer to the commanding General

Q. A. GILLMORE.

This gentleman was born in the township of Black River, Lorain Co. Ohio, on the 28th day of February, 1825. His parents still reside there. At Elyra he received an academic education and in 1845 entered the military academy at West Point, graduating at the head of his class in 1849. From the academy Gen. Gillmore was brevetted a second lieutenant of engineers July 1st, 1847, promoted to a first lieutenant July 1, 1856, to a captain August 6, 1861, and to a majority in June 1863. In the autumn of 1849, Gen. Gillmore married the daughter of T. O. Mahew, Esq., of West Point, N. Y. Four sons are now living as the issue of this marriage. Previous to the out-break of the rebellion Gen. Gillmore's military services had been such as are usually assigned to young men in time of peace. In one respect his case forms an exception to the general rule. It was then he laid the foundation of his late successes and present world wide reputation. By a long series of experiments upon the breeching effect of shot of different calibres upon various kinds of masonry he demonstrated to his own satisfaction what he has since illustrated and proved to the world in the fall of Pulaski and Sumter. In October 1861, Capt. Gillmore was appointed chief engineer to Brig. General Sherman commanding the land forces of the expedition to Port Royal. The turning point in his career, that which rendered his name famous, marked an era in the history of engineering, and the power of rifled ordnance to demolish masonry, was the siege of Pulaski from Tybee island in the spring of 1862. The reception of the news of the fall of Pulaski startled the government as well as the nation and in recognition of his distinguished services, Captain Gillmore was appointed a Brigadier General of Volunteers April 28, 1862. In the winter of the same year he was assigned to the military district of

filed. This was an engagement with Gen. Pegram at Somerset, whose force was twice his own, and whom he routed after an engagement of five hours with severe loss. His victory was the result of masterly strategy and hard fighting. The history of the siege of Charleston thus far has been pretty thoroughly written and all I need say here, is that every part of it bears the stamp of the genius of the commanding general and has added to his former reputation.

Harpers Weekly of September 12th, contains an excellent likeness of Gen. Gillmore. The peculiar animation and force of expression of the original is wanting however in the picture.

Gen. Gillmore is a man of decided religious convictions, correct in his deportment, active in his habits, and tireless in his labors. His manner is social, cordial and frank. His large light blue eye has rather a subdued and benevolent expression. His mental calibre is of a high order and he would shine in the field and in strategy as well as in planting cannon. His presence is gentlemanly, noble and dignified.

Major T. B. Brooks, Aid de camp to Gen. Gillmore comes next in order. This gentleman was born near West Point, N. Y., was educated at Gilespie's celebrated engineering school at Schenectady in that state. He entered the war as a Lieutenant of a N. Y. Volunteer Regiment, and was with Gen. Gillmore at the siege of Pulaski, and under his masterly directions reduced to unexpected practice the principles he had been taught in the academy. He served in Kentucky with the Gen'l. as aid in 1862. His well earned promotion to the majority occurred since the siege of Charleston commenced. He has had the entire charge of the engineering work against Wagner and of a part of that against Sumter. Major Brooks is a man of solid worth, modest and unassuming in his character and must be known to be appreciated. Gen. Gillmore places the highest estimation upon his abilities and entrusts the execution of the most important matters to his hands. Whilst this siege is remembered, the name of T. B. Brooks will not be forgotten.

Col. Serrell, Capt. Reese and Lieutenant Suter, assistants to Gen. Gillmore have acted a more general and miscellaneous part, and the historian will faithfully chronicle their names and services.

Col. J. W. Turner, Chief of Artillery, graduated with honor at West Point in 1855, and has been on duty in Oregon, Florida and the plains of the West. His duties have consisted mostly in mounting guns and superintending everything pertaining to ordnance. When it is remembered that we are engaged in an artillery war and that some of our guns are the heaviest that was ever mounted, it will be conceded that his duties have not been light. It is thought by knowing ones that he could without occasion for blushing exchange the eagle for a star.

Though it does not exactly enter into my plan yet I cannot take my leave of headquarters without a reference to the services of Brig. Gen. A. H. Terry. The military bearing of this gentleman had almost indelibly fixed the impression in my mind that he had spent some four years at West Point or in some other military school. But the fact is, when the war broke out he was a thriving Connecticut lawyer and fast rising to distinction in his profession. He now commands the 1st division in the department. I have heard his name frequently mentioned in connection with the fight on James Island at the time of Gillmore's advance upon Morris Island, and all parties award to him high soldierly qualities. As commander of a division he is ever vigilant, and nothing is allowed to get out of place. He is one of the most polite men in the world to do business with when every thing is right on your part. Though bred a lawyer, yet every part of military etiquette must be scrupulously observed. His tal-

ents are of a high order and would win for their possessor distinction in any field he might choose to enter.

Some other names I would like to mention in this connection but an order is in force prohibiting any reference to brigades or their commanders. Some if not all of these are candidates for a star or an additional star and perhaps we had better defer taking their pictures till they don their new uniform. M.

MORRIS ISLAND, Sept. 20th, 1863.

Since my last nothing decisive or important to the public eye has occurred in front of Charleston. The fleet has not to my knowledge fired a gun since the Weehawken was got off the bar and out of harm's way. Gen. Gillmore has formed a plan for future operations which should be learned by the rebels only by experience. They simply have the satisfaction of seeing Wagner and Gregg metaphorized into loyal batteries, by the strong but now free hands of those who were once their slaves. Of the nature of the changes made, the calibre of the guns to be mounted, the purpose they are to serve and how soon they will break the seals of their mission are matters concerning which the conspirators must be left to conjecture. They seem not to have forgotten the value of those strong points. Their firing and shelling from Johnston and other batteries indicate that Beauregard has a greater anxiety about them now than he had when garrisoned by his own men. It is an important and to us a glorious fact that Gregg is at least a mile nearer Charleston than the swamp battery, which scattered Greek fire through the city sometime ago. Should it be in the General's plan to try that game from Gregg, the gunners at least will have the privilege of seeing where the shell strike and witnessing the effect produced, for the heart of the city is in full view of Cumming's Point. One of our heavy guns has been replying to Johnson and Fort Simpkin's for the purpose of relieving. I suppose, our men at work in the forts. It does one good to see with what precision our gunners will explode a shell or plant a shot just where they want it, and do this as often as they have occasion to fire.

Furloughs have been granted to a small percentage of the army and already the boys are off to loved homes far away. Our siege works, however, will not be allowed to slacken in the least on this account. We can hold the island, for no land attack could dislodge us now, and prosecute the work preparatory to a further movement with a little less force than we have at present.

I have seen the Charleston Courier of the 16th ult., and find it a very readable sheet. It contains the best description of Sumter as a ruin I have read or imagined. The late explosion of a magazine on James island killed five persons and wounded it was not known how many. Col. Hifaluten Keitt was in command when Wagner was evacuated, the rebels are puzzled about our present movements but expect an immediate attack from the fleet; the streets of Charleston are desolated and things generally in rebeldom wear a gloomy aspect.

Will your readers put the following facts together and draw their own inference: No regiment on the island has been more exposed at the front than the 2d S. C. Volunteers. Not a man has been injured by shot or shell thus far during the siege. Entire abstinence from all that intoxicates is the faithfully observed law of the regiment by both officers and privates. A glass of water will not shield from a shell, but a glass of whiskey may send one into its path. M.

MORRIS ISLAND, Sept. 21, 1863.

The rebel batteries have been quite active for the last 24 hours and the following casualties have been reported to medical director. It is likely that a few others may have been killed or wounded whose names were reported only to reg-

imental surgeons. From what I can learn I fear that many of the boys have become so familiar with bursting shell, and have escaped so many times that they have become a little careless, failing to "cover" when they might and when they should.

Sept. 20, G. W. Richardson, Co. I, 9th Maine, flesh wound in the leg; S. H. Day, Co. D, 9th Maine, wounded in thigh.

Sept. 21, Amandis Lilly, Co. D, 104th Pa., wounded in the hip by a shell, mortally; Godeib Hartfelder, Co. D, 104th Pa., wounded in the face and arm, slightly.

The following casualties were produced by the explosion of a single shell.

W. A. Rich, Co. F, 4th N. H.; Geo. Wagner, N. Y. Independent Battalion; Peter Riley, Co. M, 3d R. I. Battery; Harvey Shadlinger, Co. A, 104th Pa.

Yours, M.

(From the Tribune correspondence Sept. 17.)

The flag of truce which went up last week to fort Sumter with clothes, money and some provisions for the prisoners captured in the unfortunate naval assault of the 8th inst., returned bringing a number of messages from the prisoners to their friends in the fleet. Also, the impertinent statement that should we fire on Sumter they would place our men on the parapet. I am told that Admiral Dahlgren has expressed his intention, should this inhumanity be exercised, to lash the prisoners we have belonging to them to the turrets of our monitors and give battle. These would prove, I imagine, a more effective safeguard than either bales of hay or cotton.

The following are the names of the officers captured:

Lieut. commanner E. P. Williams, Lt. G. C. Remy, Flag Lieut. S. W. Preston, Lieut. E. T. Brower, Ensign Benjamin H. Porter, Lieut. C. H. Bradford, wounded in groin, severely, Lieut. Meade, U. S. M. C., Acting Master's Mate Hbuey, U. S. M. C., also wounded and a prisoner, Sailmaker Dayton, in hand.

Gen. Beauregard's obstinate holding of this point would seem to indicate that it is, even in its present dismantled and reduced state, the key to Charleston Harbor. Under the fires of Forts Moultrie, Johnson, Battery Bee, and Beauregard even did we occupy it, we could hardly put it in an offensive position; it must remain as it is now. In the precise relative value which it is to the enemy in this siege, so is the possession of it to us. We may hope, therefore, its occupation by our forces will not long be delayed—that the late repulse, instead of disheartening, will only tend to make us more determined, and that ere a week shall pass our flag shall float where so long the standard of rebellion has waved in defiance to the progress of our arms.

THE OBSTRUCTIONS.

It is surprising that nothing has been done to discover the character and magnitude of the obstructions in Charleston Harbor. That their importance has been magnified and exaggerated, I do not doubt. They are a bugbear and a scare, which serve to paralyze without sufficient reason the action of the fleet. No attempt has been made that I am aware of to pass by them, so that it is not actually known at this day whether such an effort would not meet with success. It requires no complicated machine to remove them, I think, for they must necessarily be of a simple character to allow free passage to blockade-runners and exclude our ships at pleasure. It is generally thought that there is one principal chain to which the minor obstacles are attached, and that it is raised or lowered to suit circumstances. Now, it is natural to suppose that if this chain were severed, the whole arrangement would drop to the bottom, and the reduction of the Sullivan's island batteries be rendered unnecessary, as Charleston would then be at the mercy of our iron-clads. This might be accomplished in numerous ways. A vessel loaded with combustibles might be towed up against this chain, and exploded by means of a slow match, which would tend to blow to atoms the whole construction. This idea, I believe, has been suggested already; it appears a sensible one, and likely to succeed, if tried. Grappling-hooks attached to an empty shell, and thrown from a mortar to the precise spot where this chain rests, then drawn back by steam power, might result in breaking it. I am setting forth no ideas of my own; I only wish to urge the necessity of doing something in this matter even if the means tried be experimental. If they are successful, it is enough; if they fail, no harm can be done by the trial.

A new monitor, the Tecumseh, was launched at Jersey City on Saturday. She is 220 feet long, 45 beam, 12 depth of hold, and 7½ draught.