Weekly Intelligencer.

AN HISTORIC BATTLE RECALLED.

The death, at Selma, Ala., of Lieut Catesby Jones recalls one of the most momentous events of the war of the rebellion, and the beginning of a new era in the history of naval warfare. Lieut Jones, who was a brilliant officer of our navy, ranking with Dahlgren as an authority in ordinance, and gunnery, took the side with the south during the war. It was he who commanded the Merrimac, or Virginia as she was called by the Confederates, in her famous fight with the Monitor, and that is the event to which we refer.

On the afternoon of the 8th of March, 1862, the improvised ironclad Merrimac, whose appearance had long been anticipated and dreaded, steamed down the Elizabeth river toward Newport News. Her appearance was speedily signalled to the Union blockading squadron in that neighborhood, which consisted of the frigate Congress and the sloop-of-war Cumberland at Newport News, and the frigates Minnesota, Roanoke, and St. Lawrence, at Fort Monroe, six miles distant. Lieut Catesby Jones was in command of the Merrimac, which had been made into an armored vessel, by razeeing to the water line the old and famous frigate Merrimac, then lying abandoned at the Norfolk Navy Yard, and building up on her an iron casement to protect her battery. This shield was in the form of a roof, and the plating, which was of railroad bars, was four inches thick, which would be considered incredibly weak armor nowadays. Her battery consisted of eight 9-inch Dahlgren guns, and four 7-inch rifles of the Brooke pattern—a powerful armament for that time.

The fleet at Fort Monroe slipped their cables and advanced toward the monster, while the Congress and Cumberland stood ready to meet her. The three ships were soon engaged in a hot fight; but our vessels saw to their dismay that their shots had no more effect on the terrible Confederate than peas on an elephant's hide, while the Merrimac poured forth her broadsides with disastrous consequences to the wooden ships. The fight was a short one, the Merrimac soon striking and sinking the Cumberland, whose gallant crew went down with her. The successful then paid her attention to the Congress, dealing out to her a raking fire of hot shot, for the heating of which Lieut. Jones had prepared a furnace aboard the Merrimac, which was unharmed by the shells of the wooden frigate. The Congress was soon in flames, and the Merrimac made for the other vessels, but owing to her great draught of water was unable to get near enough to them to do them any injury; and at 7 in the evening the Confederate ironclad and her consorts steamed back to Norfolk. Lieut. Jones, in an account of the battle which he published long after, says he was satisfied with the day's work, as well he might have been, and had no doubt of his ability to start out on the morrow and clean out the rest of the Union fleet. Meantime a panic prevailed at Fort Monroe, and the whole country held its breath.

But Lieut. Jones did not do any more cleaning out. At 8 o'clock in the evening there appeared off Fort Monroe a strange looking little craft, which, two days before, had left New York. It was the Monitor, an experiment in naval construction, in which everything was new and untried, turrets, machinery, and all. Her guns had only once been fired, she had gone to sea from the stocks, the paint upon her was scarcely dry, and her officers, except two engineers, knew nothing by experience, of her working or capabilities. At 6 o'clock on the morning of the 9th (Sunday) the watch officer of the Minnesota espied the Merrimac steaming towards them from Sewall's Point, while the mast overlaid the water. The Monitor was at once signalled, and promptly hoisted anchor, battened down her iron hatchets and prepared for her maiden fight. The Merrimac hove in sight, and at once made for the Minnesota, which she had intended to capture and carry off as a prize to Norfolk, where crowds lined the wharves, waiting to see her towed into the harbor in triumph. But, before the Minnesota was reached, the little Monitor came out from under the quarter, and David advanced to meet Goliath. She ran down to within short range of the Merrimac, which promptly gave her turret three broadsides, but they glanced off without doing harm. The Monitor replied with her two eleven-inch guns, and, beginning at 8 o'clock, the naval duel proceeded, lasting until noon, the two combatants frequently touching each other, and sending their shot at close quarters, while, through a large part of the fight, they were only a few yards apart. In the excitement, the Monitor at first fired wildly, so elevating her guns that most of the missiles were wasted; but, later, the guns were depressed, and the shot began to tell. Mortally wounded, the Merrimac was towed to Norfolk, where she soon sank. If the Monitor had known, what was subsequently proven, that her eleven inch guns could stand a charge of thirty pounds of powder with solid shot, instead of the small charge she used, the fate of the Merrimac would have been decided after a few rounds.

The country took a breath of relief, for one of the gravest dangers of the war had been overcome. If the Merrimac had followed up on the 9th the astonishing success she achieved on the 8th; the whole fleet at Newport News would have been destroyed or captured, Fort Monroe would have been at her mercy, the James river would have been closed to the Union, and our whole Atlantic seaboard would have been in peril. The little Monitor had begun a new era in naval warfare, the era of the last fifteen years, and the one which is to be succeeded by that of the movable torpedo, which, properly developed, will neutralize the great monitors that now form the main strength of all modern navies. Lieut. Johnson at once recognized that the impregnable turret was henceforth to be the chief feature of naval construction, and did not hesitate to so express himself.

The building of the screw steamer Princeton was one of the milestones of progress; the use of shell guns was a second; the Monitor was a third; and now comes movable torpedoes, whose successful application will eventually make great navies things of the past, and the world will gladly get rid of such enormously expensive marine establishments.

On the side of the Confederates, Lieut. Catesby Jones in this historic battle bore himself with distinguished gallantry, and the success of the Monitor was chiefly due to the skill and bravery of her two engineers, Alban C. Stimers and Isaac Newton, who believed in their untried vessel, knew most about her, and dared to take all risks inside of her plated turret.—[N. Y. Sun.

There is a certain sort of guilelessness which never wears out. We were reminded of this while standing at the entrance to Barnum's circus the other day. Two women—the youngest about thirty years old—approached the door-tender. The elder extended the tickets, one being red and the other green. The door-keeper took them, looked at them, and then at the two women, and blandly observed: "All right. Which of you two is under nine years of age?" The two women looked at each other with an expression of sickening uncertainty.—[Danbury News.

A French machinist has discovered that by keeping his turning tools constantly wetted with petroleum he was able to cut metals and alloys with them, although when the tools were used without the oils their edges were turned and dulled. The hardest steel can be turned easily if the tools be thus wetted with a mixture of two parts of petroleum with one part of turpentine.

CAN A POULTRY FARM PAY?

A correspondent of the London Journal of Horticulture gives us his opinion in regard to the above subject:

This question has been fully answered in the affirmative by our neighbors, the French. Hitherto with us the attempts have ended more or less in failure, but is that a reason, if a proper method is adopted, and due care and supervision exercised, that we should not succeed in the future? From the accounts I have before me of the French country farms, I gather that if we followed their example and bred for sale just as ordinary farmers do their sheep and oxen, there is no apparent reason why a fairly remunerative profit should not be realized by poultry farmers of this country. My belief is that all attempts hitherto in Great Britain have been undertaken and carried out on a fallacious basis. The mania for prize-winning and fancy exhibiting has helped to bar success. Again, too expensive and elaborate buildings, etc., have been another cause of failure. Look to some of our most extensive breeders; ordinary wooden houses have been enough for them, and their birds have everywhere gained commendation. Let, therefore, economy and real, not elaborate, efficiency, be our aim.

1. Let there be plenty of space in the open runs. The poultry will find for themselves much good and wholesome natural food, and so save extra feeding.

2. Let the home feeding be regular and liberal, but not excessive. Your birds then will always be in good health and condition. Whether you propose producing eggs or meat for the table, choose suitable breeds for each object. Do not, however, use too many different breeds, as that involves complication in your houses, yards and accommodation generally. 4. Let your personal supervision be constant, and employ only the best and most trustworthy assistants.

The human body expands immensely with age. When eleven young men are seated on one side of a street-car, they can easily sit up a little closer and make room for a pretty girl, but three of them can monopolize an entire seat to the utter exclusion of an old woman—Hawkeye.

The Egyptian ladies as a rule are not as good looking as Cleopatra, but travellers and connoisseurs of taste, who were on the Nile last winter, report that there are many handsome ones among the modern lot. The fairest of the fair, in point of beauty, if not of complexion, are the Copts in Cairo. Their tint is the darkest prevalent, but the best artists proclaim them to be admirably put together in form and features. The Egyptians are not much blacker than the Italians.

Be kind to the book agent. He has a father, perhaps, and a mother who knew him in his innocent youth. Perhaps even now, in some peaceful New England village, fond hearts are beating for him, and sweet lips breathe love's dearest prayer for his welfare. Therefore lay him down tenderly, fold his hands peacefully on his breast, and close his eyes gently as you put him to rest under the branches of the weeping willows, where the birds carol all through the summer days their sweetest songs. But plant him deep—plant him deep!—[Puck.

John McCullough tells a good story of his recent trip through New York state. He was playing at the modern Syracuse John Banim's noble play of the ancient Syracuse, "Damon and Pythias." Damon, when he hears of the election of Philistius as president, mournfully says: "There is now no public virtue left in Syracuse." At this point a hard-handed old farmer, from somewhere along the line of the canal, being carried away by the illusion of the play, and indignant at the slur on Syracuse, rose up and solemnly remarked, "If you come to that, neither is there in Utiky!"

Cases are very much altered by circumstances. If you ask the blooming young lady to take a pound of tea to old Mrs. Brown, who lives four blocks off, she says she is worn out, and however much she would like to do it, she really can't. She looks pale enough at the very mention of such a thing to be on the edge of a hasty consumption. But if there is to be a german, and you object because it is warm weather, and the exercise is too great, she declares that she is fresh as a lark and that the gymnastics of the dance are just what she needs. Old Mrs. Brown almost always has a wearing effect on a young girl, but the anticipation of a dance, with bouillon to keep the strength up, ice cream to cool off with, and Adolphus to protect her from highway robbery on the way home, enables her to endure the pangs of living with becoming and complete resignation.

Statistics show that men of genius bear up under their wear and tear better than women of genius. When Charlotte Brent's "Jane Eyre" suddenly fell on the London literary world, it actually threw into the background, for the time, "Vanity Fair," then freshly issued, although Thackeray had spent long years in building up his fame. Miss Brente, after her remarkable debut as an author, was repeatedly rumored to be on the point of marriage, and in letters to friends she positively denied these rumors. While writing "Villette," she often complained of frightful headaches, which rendered existence a burden, and declared that the task she had undertaken of finishing this, her last novel, to the publishers, was accompanied by positive anguish. Upon throwing away her pen and marrying—wedlock was too late—the gift of genius had completely worn her out, and death came to her at a rapid pace.

Among the officers on the grand duke's staff is a tall, handsome man, with a lithe, slender, active figure, a clear, blue eye, a prominent, well-shaped nose, and a face young enough for a second lieutenant. It is Skobeleff, the youngest general in the Russian army, the conqueror of Khokand. He has the reputation, even among the Russians, of being a mad man, who would fling away his own life and those of his troops without the slightest regard for the consequences. During the war which resulted in the conquest of Khokand, a Russian detachment of 800 men, with 400 Cossacks, was compelled to retreat before a superior force of the enemy. Gen. Trotsky decided upon a night attack, and confided his plans to Skobeleff, then his chief of staff. The latter entered into the idea with great enthusiasm, and proposed to lead the attacking column himself, and to take only 150 Cossacks. Skobeleff, having reconnoitered the ground, perceived the Khokandians had encamped within a mile of the Russians in an open plain, which gave every facility for the maneuvring of cavalry. At midnight he took his 150 Cossacks, divided them into three parties, and cautiously surrounded the enemy's camp. The party led by Skobeleff managed to pass the enemy's outposts, who were sound asleep. Then he gave the signal for the attack by firing his pistol, and followed by his one hundred and fifty Cossacks, he rode headlong into the enemy's camp of six thousand or seven thousand men, shouting and yelling like fiends, and cutting down everything in their passage. For a quarter of an hour the plain resounded with shrieks and yells, shots, the trampling of horses, shouts and groans, and all the uproar of battle. Then all was silence. Skobeleff assembled his Cossacks, and when morning came he found that the whole army of the enemy, six thousand or seven thousand men, had disappeared leaving on the field about forty dead, two thousand or three thousand muskets and sabers, all their camp material and baggage. But what was his astonishment at roll call to discover that he had not lost a man, either killed or wounded. MacGahan, who first met him on the banks of the Oxus, relates this exploit to show how much method there is in this dare-devil's madness.

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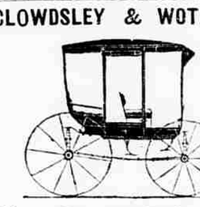

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