

THE FREE SOUTH.

BEAUFORT, S. C., MAY 23, 1863.

Agents for the Free South.

TAYLOR & Co. Hilton Head, and St. Helena Island.
C. C. LEIGH, No. 1 Mercer street, New York.

The News from the Southwest—The Great Struggle for the Mississippi.

Our latest news from the Southwest indicates a successful issue to Gen. Grant's inland movement in Mississippi for the reduction of Jackson and Vicksburg.

The advanced detachments of his army, wherever they had come in contact with an opposing column of the enemy, had, after a severe contest, invariably routed it. The last reported engagement of this character, (according to a rebel despatch to the *Richmond Enquirer*, was on the 12th or 13th instant, at Raymond,) some five or six miles from the Jackson and Vicksburg Railroad, from which point, after a fight of several hours, the rebels fell back to Mississippi Spring, where they had reinforcements, but the Chattanooga *Rebel* of the 16th says that the rebels were driven out of Jackson on the 14th after a hard day's fight, not being able to hold that city. Meantime the main body of Gen. Grant's army was at Willow Spring and among the hills in that vicinity, some thirty miles below Raymond, and in close communication with his base of supplies at Grand Gulf. With his army strongly entrenched against the possible contingency of a rebel sortie in force down the country from Vicksburg, Gen. Grant was awaiting the reinforcements that were moving to his support from various points along the Mississippi River between Memphis and Baton Rouge.

With Admiral Porter in occupation of Alexandria, on the Red River, we may consider the work of the subjugation of the rebellion on the west side of the Mississippi as substantially completed. With our occupation of Vicksburg the works of reducing the remnants of the rebellious States on the east side of the river will be a comparatively simple and easy operation. Meantime, a rebel journal at Atlanta, Georgia, of the 5th of May, positively affirms that Port Hudson has not been evacuated. We hope that our next intelligence from that quarter will be that the place has been visited by a Union land and naval force which has settled the question.

Thus far the whole campaign in the southwest, since General Grant's movement below Vicksburg, has worked and is progressing prosperously. Let the war office see to it that while Grant is strengthened the rebel armies elsewhere are given abundant employment, and we shall soon have a victory that will abundantly compensate us for the failure of the attack upon Charleston and the inexplicable retreat of General Hooker.

HEAVENLY SIGHTS.—The pale moon was on the move amid the eternal stars last night, and all nature was as still as the oracular voice of fate. Everything in the heavens was ominous of peace, and the twinkling of each sparkling star that decks the cerulean concave, seemed portentous of coming events. The Moon and Venus were in conjunction, and as they walked side by side down the starry pathway to their hidden chambers in the west, we thought the heavens could scarcely produce two more lovely creatures than Diana and the majestic Hesperus. It was a beautiful sight to see these two ornaments of the firmament treading the heavens, as it were, hand in hand, while far away in the east, separated from them *two carls*, stood Jupiter, the ruler of the lesser stars, gazing fondly at the maiden—outshining him in splendor—who had so often caused the jealous tears of the queenly Juno to flow. The heavens were decked in their most gorgeous array to celebrate this meeting of the fair ones—the belt of Orion and his flaming sword shone brighter, Sirius looked more benignant, and the Great Dipper appeared to invite us to take a drink. We accepted the invitation!

GRIERSON'S EXPEDITION.

Last week we gave a synopsis of the movements of Colonel Grierson, as far as known to our authorities, north of Vicksburg. On Sunday, May 3d, he astonished our forces at Baton Rouge by appearing in their midst. His expedition was a magnificent success. He cut his way through the enemy's country with two regiments of cavalry, destroying on his route millions of rebel property, capturing over a thousand men and twelve hundred horses, demolishing a camp of instruction, with all its equipments, cutting the communication on the Great Northern and New Orleans and Jackson railroads and destroying a large number of cars, telegraph wire, water tanks and army stores. After passing through many dangers and working terrible damage he arrived at Baton Rouge on the 1st instant, to the great surprise of the inhabitants.

The importance of this expedition can hardly be realized without some reflection on what has been accomplished.

In seventeen days the troops marched over eight hundred miles. They traveled through the very heart of rebellion, fighting at every point where they met with opposition. They have killed and wounded a large number of the enemy, and have destroyed over four millions of dollars worth of property which would have been of immense assistance to the rebels in the prosecution of the war. On two important railroads they have completely cut off all communication with the strongholds of the enemy. They have taken over a thousand prisoners, captured over twelve hundred horses, and menaced the enemy at points where they were least expected.

An idea may be gained of the activity of Col. Grierson's command, when the fact is stated that in thirty hours, while in pursuit of a rebel cavalry force, they traveled seventy-five miles, fought four battles, skirmished considerably, forded a river, and all the time neither men nor horses had anything to eat.

Every effort was made by the rebel Generals Gardner and Pemberton for their surprise and capture; but in every instance the enemy was completely outwitted by Colonel Grierson's stratagems and rapid marches. The mails and couriers captured kept our forces constantly in possession of the latest news concerning the movements of the rebels and their intended plans for our capture. During their march an effective force of at least five thousand cavalry was sent against them, which, whenever met, was defeated by our men, with heavy loss to the rebels.

SCENES AND INCIDENTS.

While several of our scouts were feeding their horses at the stables of a wealthy planter of secession proclivities, the proprietor, looking on apparently deeply interested in the proceeding, suddenly burst out with—"Well, boys, I can't say I have anything against you. I don't know but that on the whole I rather like you. You have not taken anything of mine except a little corn for your horses, and that you are welcome to. I have heard of you all over the country. You are doing the boldest thing ever done. But you'll be trapped, though; you'll be trapped, mark me."

At another place, where our men thought it advisable to represent themselves as Jackson's cavalry, a whole company was very graciously entertained by a strong secession lady, who insisted on whipping a negro because he did not bring the hoecakes fast enough.

On one occasion seven of Colonel Grierson's scouts stopped at the house of a wealthy planter to feed their jaded horses. Upon ascertaining that he had been doing a little guerrilla business on his own account, our men encouraged him in the belief that, as they were the invincible Van Dorn cavalry, they would soon catch the Yankees. The secession gentleman heartily approved of what he supposed to be their intentions, and enjoined upon them the necessity of making as rapid marches as possible. As our men had discovered two splendid carriage horses in the planter's stable, they thought, under the circumstances, they would be justified in making an exchange, which they accordingly proceeded to do. As they were taking the saddles from their own tired steeds and placing them on the backs of the wealthy guerrilla's horses the proprietor discovered them, and at once objected. He was met with the reply that, as he was anxious the Yankees should be overtaken, those after them should have good horses. "All right, gentlemen," said the planter; "I will keep your animals until you return. I suppose you'll be back in two or three days at the farthest. When you

return you'll find they have been well cared for."

Our soldiers were sometimes asked where they got their blue coats. They always replied, if they were traveling under the name of Van Dorn's cavalry, that they took them at Holly Springs of the Yankees. This always excited great laughter among the secessionists. Our scouts, however, usually wore the regular "secesh" uniforms.

From Folly Island.

We have received several letters from our soldier friends in the Sixth Connecticut now stationed at Folly island. From them we glean a few items, showing how they are getting on in their new quarters so close to Charleston.

"SIXTH" says "it is anything but a paradise. Probably it received its name from the extreme folly of calling it an island at all or giving it a name, for it is nothing but a sandbank with a few palmetto trees sprouting out where nothing but that filthy looking tree and crabs could exist." He considers that the former proprietors of plantations on that delightful spot were fully justified in seceding. The Sixth are making the best of it, and seem to be in very good health. The water is wretched stuff, "about the color of burnt brandy," *SCIPPIO* says. From his letter we learn that furloughs for thirty days are being granted to three men of each company every ten days. The officers receive but twenty days each. Of course all are anxious to avail themselves of this privilege, and the best spirit animates the men. They feel that the government recognizes the fact that they are men as well as soldiers, and is willing to incur some trouble and expense to give them an opportunity to visit their loved ones at home, after the toils and perils of two years service. The effect upon the spirits of the regiments is excellent.

The Fourth New Hampshire is at the upper end of Morris island. The rebel pickets are stationed along the shore of Cole's island, and are not over fifty yards from our boys. The Palmetto and the Granite State meet on very friendly terms, bandy words on the news from the Rappahannock, and trade tobacco for coffee. The rebels are very honest in their trading operations and we have heard of no instances where they have been made the victims of misplaced confidence by receiving provisions of the wooden nutmeg order in return for genuine pig-tail.

Both parties are fortifying their positions. Negro women as well as men are employed in throwing up rifle pits in sight of our pickets. Rebel ladies often come down on the beach to have a look at the horned Yankees. The rebels are more communicative than our boys are allowed to be. One of them called over that a new general had assumed command, and that his name was General Starvation.

Most of them seem to regard their shoes, if they have any, as too good for every day wear, as they may be seen on picket every day bare footed. They say they hope for a battle soon, as by that means they hope to replenish their ward robes.

We are very much pleased with these gossiping letters of our friends in the Sixth and hope they will favor us often.

We may as well answer here an inquiry which has been put to us by several correspondents at Folly island. We have no means of sending papers except through the mail, and cannot furnish them unless they are paid for in advance, together with the postage.

Gen. Blunt, of Kansas, is organizing a force of whites, negroes and Indians, to operate against Arkansas and Texas. The Kansas regiment of negroes is now full, and is made up of refugees from Missouri and from the Cherokee country.—Capt. Hoyt, who has seen much of them, assures us that the Cherokee negroes, who have more or less Indian blood, are the most desperate fighters he has ever seen.

Of all our Presidents, not one was a citizen of a great city.

FROM GEN. HOOKER'S ARMY.

[From the New York Times.]
THE BATTLE OF SATURDAY.

In the morning, as we stood on the balcony of Chancellor's house, the attention was aroused by a sharp rattle of musketry coming from a column of rebels coming up by the main Fredericksburg plank road, directly in front of us. Knapp's battery, however, which was planted directly in front of the position, opened upon them, and, after a few rounds, forced them to retire.

Immediately afterwards a battery opened from the height which I have mentioned as having been gained by Sykes yesterday and then abandoned by us. One of our batteries was immediately opened in reply. The third shot blew up one of the caissons, and a subsequent shot blew up another, and this settled their account. Subsequently a reconnaissance was sent on our part, consisting of the Twenty-sixth Pennsylvania Volunteers. They went out on the plank road, deployed on both sides in the form of a letter V, chased the rebel skirmishers a couple of miles, till they came to a heavy double line of battle, with artillery in position, when they retired, bringing us that piece of intelligence.

Another reconnaissance was next sent out on our right, consisting of Berdan's Sharpshooters. They met the enemy's pickets, drove them handsomely, and at four o'clock returned with fifty prisoners of the Twenty-third Georgia.

At four the rebels are moving down in force on the plank road, where we had a little before made a reconnaissance.—Geary's division of Slocum's corps is sent on the double-quick into the woods, their bayonets flashing in the sunlight. A sharp contest ensues, and in a few minutes they come back in disorder. A portion of Kane's brigade, composed of raw troops, had broken, and thrown the column into confusion.

An aid from Slocum comes to ask Gen. Hooker if he can have reinforcements. "No! he must hold his own. Howard will, of course, support him from the right. Let Geary's division, however, be thrown to the right of the road, so that the artillery may be able to sweep the enemy on the left." This treatment presently repaired the damage, and checked the hope of the rebels of being able to pierce our centre.

Poiled in this, they now prepare to make a still more desperate dash on our right flank. We were aware that they had been massing against that point all the afternoon, and the terrific treble of the demoniac yell with which the rebels always rush into battle announced their approach from the woods by the Culpepper plank road. Jackson's whole corps, reinforced by D. H. Hill's division, numbering in all forty thousand men, had precipitated themselves on Howard's corps, forming our extreme right wing. This corps is composed of the divisions of Shurz, Steinwehr and Deven, and consists in great part of German troops. Without waiting for a single volley from the rebels, this corps disgracefully abandoned their position behind their breastworks, and commenced coming, panic-stricken, down the road, towards headquarters. Our right was thus completely turned, and the rebels in a fair way of doubling us up.

It was a critical situation, and brought out the superb resources of Gen. Hooker. He was in the saddle in a moment, calm and cool, the master of a situation fit to overmaster the most. The first thing was to check the rebel advance, which must become fatal if allowed to go on much further.

It was a terribly animated scene. The whole open plain presented such a spectacle as the simoon might make in the desert. Through the dusk of nightfall a rushing whirlwind of men and artillery swept over the plain. The shattered, fleeing columns of men were rushing down and over at headquarters.

Hooker's dispositions were made in a moment. Whom, of all others, should he send at this fearfully critical moment, but the darling child of his own creation, his own old corps, now commanded by Gen. Berry.

"General!" shouted the commander, "throw your men into the breach; receive the enemy on your bayonets; don't fire a shot; they can't see you!"

Oh! it was a sight to see that glorious band rush at the double-quick to the rescue! Pressing up in their horrid array of glittering steel, the enemy's advance was quickly checked, and he had to withdraw to the line of breastworks just vacated by the Eleventh corps.

Batteries were immediately sent up in thunderous clamor to the front, and Captain Best, chief of artillery of Slocum's corps, massed twenty pieces on the crest near Gen. Sickles' headquarters, and a terrific fire was opened on the enemy, and kept up far into the night.