

THE FREE SOUTH.

VOLUME II.

BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA, MAY 21, 1864.

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VICTORY.

DECISIVE BATTLES.

LEE'S ARMY Routed.

A Terrific Charge by General Hancock.

Desperate Fury of our Men.

Three Generals, 50 Officers, 2,000 Men and 12 Guns Captured.

Splendid news from General Sheridan.

Lee's Communications Totally Severed.

Trains and Supplies Captured.

Over Five Hundred Union Prisoners Retaken.

Dispatches from the War Office

FIRST DISPATCH.

(OFFICIAL.)

WASHINGTON, May 11—11.30 P. M.

To Maj.-General Dix:

Dispatches from Gen. Grant, dated at 3 o'clock this morning, have just reached this department. He says:

"We have now ended the sixth day of very heavy fighting. The result to this time is much in our favor. Our losses have been heavy, as well as those of the enemy. I think the loss of the enemy must be greater. We have taken over 5,000 prisoners in battle, whilst he has taken from us but few except stragglers. I propose to fight it out on this line, if it takes all Summer."

The Government is sparing no pains to support him

EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

SECOND DISPATCH.

(OFFICIAL.)

WASHINGTON, May 12—9.15 P. M.

To Maj.-Gen. Dix:

A dispatch from Gen. Sheridan, dated "Headquarters of the Cavalry Corps, May 10," states that he turned the enemy's right, and got into their rear, had destroyed from eight to ten miles of railroad two locomotives and three trains, and a very large quantities of supplies; and that since he had got into their rear there was great excitement among the inhabitants and the army. The enemy's cavalry had tried to annoy his rear and flank, but had been run off, and he had re-captured five hundred of our men—two of them Colonels.

No dispatches have been received for two days from Gen. Butler.

Dispatches received from Gen. Steele report his command as having arrived at Little Rock. He had fought a superior force of the enemy, commanded by Kirby Smith in person, at Saline River, and defeated them.

A steamboat from Red River, arrived to-day at Cairo, reports reinforcements going up to Gen. Banks.

Gen. Canby had passed Cairo on his way to Red River.

EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.
WASHINGTON, May 12.

Yesterday morning the fighting was again renewed, and was continued with various success until about 11 o'clock, when our lines were somewhat advanced.

At that hour a flag of truce is reported to have been sent by Lee, who asked for a cessation of hostilities for forty-eight hours, that he might bury his dead.

Gen. Grant replied that he had not time to bury his own, and would advance immediately; and some parts of our line were therefore pushed forward.

It is stated that the woods were shelled, but no response was elicited from where the enemy's centre had been a few hours before.

The prisoners captured on Tuesday and Wednesday number over 4,000. The re-

bel dead and wounded were found covering almost every foot of ground wherever our troops surged forward and the rebels gave way.

The slaughter among our troops was terrific, but not so great as that of the enemy, and but few captures were made by the latter.

Dispatches from the Army of the Potomac, dated Wilderness battlefield yesterday, say, probably the most desperate fighting of the past seven terrible days took place on Tuesday.

Believing the enemy to have sent a greater part of his troops to Richmond, an advance along the entire line was determined on at an early hour.

The Second Corps having the right of the line, had crossed the Po River the evening previous, and had met with but slight opposition.

In the morning the position of the enemy was found to be in the shape of a horseshoe, and on Hancock's troops advancing to attack they were compelled to fall back.

An attempt to break their centre was then ordered, and part of Hancock's men were sent to support Warren in the movement.

Our right was also advanced, and the move was begun in the afternoon.

The enemy were driven into their intrenchments in gallant style, and Upton's brigade of Wright's division, Sixth Corps, got into the enemy's rifle pits, capturing twelve guns and about one thousand prisoners.

Not being supported by other portions of the line, who were unable to gain the tier of works in their front, this brigade was forced to evacuate its advanced position, leaving the captured guns, after spiking them, but bringing off all the prisoners.

The enemy suffered heavy losses during the fight, our shells falling into their works, and our infantry delivering their fire with remarkable precision.

Gen. Rice was wounded in the thigh early in the engagement, and died after his leg had been amputated.

Gen. Stevenson is also reported killed. He commanded a brigade in Burnside's corps.

Our losses were very heavy. Gen. Gibbons' division has lost altogether over a thousand men.

Gen. Robinson's division, after losing both its general officers and about two thousand five hundred men, had no General to command it, and it has been broken up and distributed among other divisions of the Fifth Corps.

No division of the army fought better than this one.

The Ninth New York State Militia fought gloriously, and suffered probably more than any other regiment in the field. After the action four officers and fifteen men were all that was left of it, except a few on detached duty.

Lieut. Luper, of the Ninetieth Pennsylvania, had his head blown off by a piece of shell.

The rebels are in very strong positions, behind earthworks, abattis and woods, and in many places it is impossible to penetrate to them.

Burnside is reported to be within a mile of Spottsylvania Court House, about to turn the rebel right.

If he is successful we shall obtain position of the point which the struggle has been for during the past three days, and then Lee must retreat.

At 1 o'clock on Tuesday a fire raged between the two armies, at a point in the line, and a large number of wounded of both parties were lying on the spot.

Our men, in attempting to get their comrades off the field were fired on by the rebel skirmishers and driven off, and the poor suffers had to be left to perish in the flames.

Gentlemen prominently connected with the Government are to-day in good spirits, in view of the recent military events in Virginia, and consider our final triumph merely a question of time. Movements are in progress which will soon be publicly developed, forming a part of the general plan, looking to success.

Gen. Burnside directed to have his friends in Washington told that everything looked very favorable and hopeful.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, May 12.

It was Gen. Hill's corps that Gen. Burnside repulsed so gallantly.

The Star says: Gen. Burnside's colored troops were held in reserve, but were subsequently

brought into action and fought with desperation.

Their officers expected to have considerable difficulty in restraining them, as they appeared desirous not to take any prisoners, being exasperated by the remembrance of Fort Pillow and the atrocities committed there by the rebels on their race.

It was believed in the army that Sigel having made forced marches, had destroyed Lee's railroad connections with Lynchburgh, and that Sheridan had done to his communications with Richmond.

An order was given for another advance yesterday morning.

At 6 o'clock A. M., when our informant left, our centre and right were heavily engaged with the rebels.

The Ninth Corps was then on the march.

Our losses are represented to have been very heavy, but everything looks hopeful. Prominent officers say that we shall soon see the end.

It is confirmed that in an order issued on Monday, found on some prisoners, that Gen. Lee notified his army that his communication with Richmond was broken, and no rations could be drawn from thence, and he advised them to capture supplies from our army.

Gen. Grant had captured up to yesterday about 6,000 prisoners. Part of a regiment was captured entire. It was composed of men who had been exchanged but a few weeks since.

The loss of the enemy in killed is much greater than ours. His wounded are supposed to be about the same.

The latest edition of the Star of this afternoon has the following:

"Gen. Lee is reported to have asked for a cessation of hostilities to bury his dead."

Gen. Grant replies that he has not had time to bury his own dead, and that he proposes to advance immediately.

The woods were shelled, and Gen. Lee turned up missing in front.

Yesterday morning the fighting was again resumed and continued with varying success until about 11 o'clock, when our line had somewhat advanced.

LATER.—Up to this morning we have received no confirmation of the rumor in regard to Gen. Lee above mentioned, but the fact that such a report was current in Fredericksburgh yesterday shows the buoyant feeling there in regard to our position, based upon a knowledge of general facts of a hopeful nature.

WASHINGTON, May 12—5.38 P. M.

Maj. Gen. Dix:

Official dispatches are just received by this Department, dated yesterday, 8 A. M., at the battle-field near Spottsylvania Court House.

They state that during the night Gen. Hancock marched from his previous position on our right, and occupied the ground between Gens. Wright and Burnside. At daylight he attacked with his accustomed impetuosity, forcing the first, and then the second line of the enemy's works, capturing the whole of Edward Johnson's division and part of Early's, together with Maj. Gen. Johnson, Gen. Stewart, and from 40 to 50 cannon.

The number of prisoners is not given, but is to be counted by thousands.

Gen. Burnside, on the extreme left, opened at the same time with Gen. Hancock, and advanced with comparatively little opposition. His right has formed a junction with Gen. Hancock, and his left is now actively engaged.

Gen. Wright's troops attacked at 7:15 o'clock, and are now at work.

Gen. Warren is demonstrating to hold the enemy in front of his lines. The rebel works at that point are exceedingly strong.

EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.
BATTLE FIELD NEAR SPOTTSVILANIA, C. H.,
May 12—3 P. M.

We have to-day achieved a signal success by the capture of two lines of the enemy's rifle pits.

Maj. Gen. Ed. Johnson, commanding a division of Ewell's Corps, with three of his brigadiers, Stewart, Johnson, and another whose name I have been unable to learn, captured from 20 to 40 pieces of artillery, and about 3,000 prisoners.

The honor of the achievement belongs Maj. Gen. Hancock, who last night, at 11 o'clock, moved his corps down to our left, and at early dawn charged the rebel works, taking the enemy by surprise and making the captures above mentioned. Our men are jubilant, and perfectly confident of success.

An order from headquarters to the troops, announcing our captures, was read this morning, and produced the greatest enthusiasm.

Rebel prisoners states that their army is fearfully demoralized, and that if the fight continues but few will be left to tell the tale of the battle of the Wilderness.

The fight has raged desperately all day. At about 9 o'clock A. M., the enemy charged upon the works taken by General Hancock earlier in the morning, and for three or four hours endeavored to repossess their rifle pits. They were in every instance repulsed with great slaughter, and our men are now in undisturbed possession of their works.

Burnside occupies the extreme left of our position and has been engaged to-day.

Considerable cannonading on our right is still going on. The bands along the line are playing national airs and every one is confident of success.

Maj. General Sheridan commanding the Cavalry Corps has destroyed ten miles of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad near Gordonsville, also two locomotives and a large amount of supplies near Beaver Dam, he also captured 500 of our men taken prisoners during the late battle, say he has been annoyed by flank and rear attacks, which he invariably repulsed, and that he expects to fight the enemy's cavalry on the other side of the South Anna River.

It has been raining very hard at intervals all day. The fighting has nevertheless been incessant. Gen. Rager, with re-enforcements, is expected up to-night or to-morrow morning from Belle Plain and Fredericksburg.

Our lines have been concentrated, and are now not over two miles in length. Our losses to-day have been very heavy.

SPOTTSVILANIA COURT HOUSE, Va.,
Friday, May 13, 5 A. M., 1864.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War:

Lee abandoned his position during the night, whether to occupy a new position in the vicinity, or to make a thorough retreat, is not determined.

One division of Wright's and one of Hancock's are engaged in settling this question, and at 7:30 A. M. had come up on his rear guard. Though our army is greatly fatigued from the enormous efforts of yesterday, the news of Lee's departure inspires the men with fresh energy. The whole force will soon be in motion, but the heavy rains of the last thirty-six hours render the roads very difficult for wagons and artillery. The proportion of severely wounded is greater than on either of the previous days' fighting. This was owing to the great use made of artillery.

WASHINGTON, Friday, 2:40 P. M., May 13, 1864.

To Maj. Gen. Dix:

A dispatch from Lieut. Gen. Grant has just been received, dated Spottsylvania Court House, May 12, 6:30 P. M. It is as follows:

The eighth day of battle closed, leaving between 3,000 and 4,000 prisoners in our hands for the day, including two general officers and over thirty pieces of artillery.

The enemy are obstinate, and seem to have found the "last ditch." We have lost no organization—not even a company—while we have destroyed and captured one division (Johnson's), one brigade (Dobb's), and one regiment entire of the enemy's.

E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War.
WASHINGTON, Friday, May 13—2 P. M.

An Extra Star has the following:

"We learn from high authority that a dispatch received in this city last evening from Gen. Sheridan stating that he had cut off communication with Richmond—by destroying ten miles of railroad between Gen. Lee and Richmond—captured three rebel trains, and released 500 Union prisoners who were on the train."

A little daughter of a proprietor of a coal mine in Pennsylvania was inquisitive as to the nature of a hell, upon which her father represented it to be a large gulf of fire of the most prodigious extent. "Pa," said she, "couldn't you get the devil to buy coal of you?"

A Culppeper farmer, on whose farm the opposing pickets are stationed, recently remarked to a Union officer: "I haint took no sides in this yer rebellion. but I'll be dog gorned if both sides haint took me."

Some of our military officers have four aids—promenade, serenade, lemonade, and gasconade, and still are of little aid to the country.