

"SAVE ME FROM MY FRIENDS."

"It will be recollected that some twenty months since, in June, 1862, while Gen. Hunter commanded the Department of the South, and Gen. Benham the District now under Gen. Gillmore, an expedition was planned against Charleston, which landed at James Island."

"At Fort Pulaski he commanded all the troops engaged, and was the senior officer who gave any orders at that bombardment, being night and day under fire in the batteries, fully as much so as Capt. Gillmore himself, who was then Benham's chief engineer, having no higher appointment beyond what had been given him by Gen. Benham's predecessor. Yet, in connection with neither of these affairs does Gen. Benham's name appear in Headley."

The above are extracts from an article in the Washington Chronicle of Feb. 20th. The writer, whoever he may be, is either grossly ignorant of the history of this Department, or "is greatly given to lying." With the following corrections, from official records, what there is left of the extracts will perhaps "pass muster:"

1st. Gen. Benham never held the command now held by Gen. Gillmore. He commanded a District in this Department under Gen. Hunter.

2d. Gen. Benham and Gen. Hunter were both present at the bombardment of Fort Pulaski, but neither of them gave any orders altering or modifying the plan of the siege, which had been matured in all its details before either of those officers came to this Department. The bombardment was carried on in exact conformity to Gen. Gillmore's orders to the battery commanders written and issued the day before the bombardment commenced.

3d. Gen. Benham was in the trenches one night only, and not later than twelve o'clock. During the many weeks of laborious and enervating night work on Tybee Island, and in the marshes above Fort Pulaski, he was not even in the Department, but was awaiting orders in the North, under charges preferred by Gen. Rosecrans.

4th. Gen. Gillmore was never chief engineer to Gen. Benham. He held a command under Benham, comprising all the U. S. forces on Tybee Island, and afterwards on Tybee and Cockspur Islands.

These statements are all matters of history and official records, and Gen. Benham's friends are certainly not doing him a friendly turn in attempting to falsify history in his behalf.

IMPRESSIVE MASONIC CEREMONY.—On Monday last the body of Acting Master Granville W. Fogg, of the gunboat *Mercedita*, who died some ten months since, and was buried at Bay Point, was disinterred and sent North on the naval supply steamer *Massachusetts*, Capt. West, with impressive Masonic ceremonies. Such of the members of the Fraternity at this Post as could be notified at short notice, assembled at the quarters of Lieut.-Col. J. F. Hall, the Provost-Marshal-General of the Department, at one o'clock P.M., and marched to the pier, where a tug-boat was in readiness to convey them to Bay Point. There the body was received, and conveyed, in a suitable casket, to the *Massachusetts*. Lieut.-Col. Hall there performed such portions of the beautiful and impressive Masonic service as were appropriate to the occasion, and Col. J. R. Howell, commander of the

District, made a very solemn address, which drew tears from many eyes. The Masons present appeared without regalia, but wore the symbolic sprigs of cassia. Among the prominent military officers representing the Fraternity on the occasion, in addition to those above mentioned, were Col. Redfield Duryee, commanding the Post; Col. Campbell, of the 76th Penn.; Capt. W. L. M. Burger, of Gen. Gillmore's staff; Capt. Peck, Provost-Marshal, and Lieut. Woodruff, of Col. Duryee's staff. Many naval officers also participated in the solemn rites, and a number of civilians.

AFFAIRS AT JACKSONVILLE.

[From our Special Correspondent.]

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., March 14, 1864.

PILATKA OCCUPIED.

The little town of Pilatka, on the left bank of the St. John's river, about seventy-five miles from its mouth and fifty from Jacksonville, was occupied by our forces, under Col. Barton, on Thursday morning last, the 10th instant, at daylight. The force, consisting of infantry and artillery, left Jacksonville on the transports General Hunter, Delaware, Maple Leaf and Charles Houghton, on Wednesday evening, and, under the direction of good pilots, reached Pilatka at about daylight, without anything of an exciting nature occurring on the trip up. The night was densely dark, and a terrible thunder-storm added not a little to the difficulty of the passage of the boats up the tortuous channel, and also to the discomfort of the men. The rain poured in torrents, and drifted into the boats and upon the men in young Niagaras, while the lightning was incessant, and the peals of thunder rapid and deafening. Through all these disagreeable accessories to a night move, the expedition progressed safely and satisfactorily, and had nearly accomplished its first object before sunrise of the fol-

lowing day. But few of the enemy were seen by those who disembarked first, and they offered no resistance to our movements. The rebels probably had only a small cavalry picket in the town, and on the approach of our men it was withdrawn and the place given up without firing a shot on either side.

The town was found entirely deserted, except by three small families, who professed Union sentiments, and desired to remain at their homes, and within the Yankee lines. They have but little property, and are not at all reluctant to seek refuge and food under the old flag. The remainder of the inhabitants of the once flourishing and promising town have fled, and found new homes elsewhere with the rebels.

The village is about one-fourth the size of Jacksonville, and was, before the war, one of the most active and business-like places in that section of the State. The town is well laid out, and boasts of quite a number of fine brick buildings on the river bank, used as warehouses and stores, which were formerly filled with cotton and produce, and large and valuable stocks of goods, such as are commonly found in country districts. There are also many dwelling houses in town, built of brick, and with some architectural pretensions. All of these buildings are now vacant and deserted. Many of them have furniture in them of no great value. The general aspect of the place is dismal and melancholy, and possesses but little interest at present.

Shortly after our forces arrived, a rebel deserter came in from Lake City, and gave some important information to the commanding officer relative to the enemy's strength and position. He was tired of the war, and embraced the opportunity afforded him by his command-

ing officer, who had sent him from Lake City to an outpost near Pilatka to bear dispatches. Once away from the rebel lines, he struck for the St. John's, and soon found himself among our men, who took good care of him. No considerable force of the enemy can be heard of within forty or fifty miles of the town. One or two cavalry companies are within the vicinity of our force, but are not very formidable in men or morale. Our lines are now a mile or more from town, and preparations for a strong defence have already been begun, and are well advanced.

As yet, the reports relative to the immense supplies of cotton, turpentine, &c., have not been verified. A more extended search than that already made may develop hidden and valuable supplies.

The naval tug *Columbine* escorted the expedition up the river, and remains to act in any contingency.

General Seymour and Commander Balch went up from Jacksonville, on Saturday, to look after affairs in that quarter, and to concert for what may prove an important movement.

THE COAST SURVEY.

The U. S. Coast Survey schooner *Caswell* has arrived at Jacksonville, and is anchored off the town. Capt. William H. Dennis, assistant in the Coast Survey Corps, has been attached to the staff of Brig.-Gen. Seymour, as Topographical Engineer, and has entered upon the discharge of his duties. His aids are also engaged in topographic and hydrographic work about Jacksonville, preparing maps and charts of the river and country about the town. The work is going on rapidly and must prove of great value to the military authorities in the Department.

The surveying steamer *Vixen*, Captain G. O. Boutelle, is daily expected at the mouth of the St. John's, to replace the lights in the light-houses, and re-light them. They are much needed at this point, in order to enable vessels, if necessary, to cross the bar in the night, and also to serve as beacons to vessels passing up and down the coast. The work will be speedily completed.

A NEW SIGNAL LINE

Has been established by Capt. Dana, Chief Signal Officer of the Southern District, from Jacksonville to the mouth of St. John's river. The intermediate station is to be at Yellow Bluffs, about midway between the termini of the line. The Yellow Bluff Station is now in process of erection. It will consist of a tower about one hundred feet in height, from the summit of which the eye can sweep over a vast region of country. The tower on the church in Jacksonville is clearly visible through a glass, as it is only seven and a half miles distant, as a crow flies. The light-house at the mouth of the river, which is to be used as a signal station, is seven miles and three quarters distant from Yellow Bluffs, in an air line, and is easily discerned in clear weather. The line will soon be in operation and will undoubtedly prove of great value to the Department.

The following are the members of the Signal Corps in the District—all good and efficient men: Capt. G. S. Dana, Chief; 1st Lieuts. T. C. Vidal, T. L. Hatfield, Wilson Bruyn; 2d Lieuts. T. E. Weber, N. B. Roberts and Charles Wehl.

A WELL MERITED RECOGNITION.

The following extract from General Orders No. 10, issued by Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour, Commanding District of Florida, is a deserved tribute to the efficient and industrious agent of the Sanitary Commission at Jacksonville, A. B. Day, Esq. I have had an oppor-

tunity of observing the faithful manner in which Mr. Day has performed his arduous and varied duties, and can endorse every word of Gen. Seymour's acknowledgment:

"The Brigadier-General Commanding gratefully recalls to the recollection of the troops of this command, the debt incurred by them, during the recent movements, to the Sanitary Commission and its Agent, Mr. A. B. Day. Much suffering has been alleviated and many inconveniences removed by the energy and promptness with which the supplies of the Commission have been placed at the control of our medical officers; and for those who have been so benefitted, officers and men, the Brigadier-General offers his own and their most sincere thanks."

REGULATION "BOOTEES."

The following is an extract from a recent General Order:

"Long experience having shown that the Regulation "Bootees" are the best that can be worn by Infantry in Florida, on the march, and that straggling is mainly caused by wearing tight boots and shoes of other patterns, the enlisted men of this command are forbidden to wear any other than those issued by the U. S. Quartermaster's Department. Officers of all grades will give especial attention to this order."

HONOR TO THE HEROES OF OLUSTEE.

The batteries and redoubts about Jacksonville have been appropriately named after the following brave officers, killed or wounded at the battle of Olustee:—Capt. John Hamilton, Lt. Col. W. H. Reed, Col. Henry Moore, Lieut. Tulley McCrea, Col. C. W. Fribley, Lieut. J. R. Myrick, Col. S. Sammons. The General Order, designating these names, says in conclusion:

"No recollections can be more permanent to this command than of those who fell so gallantly and gloriously at Olustee; the above is less to commemorate than to acknowledge the honor that is justly felt to be due to those who spared neither their blood nor their lives on that occasion."

LATE NEWS FROM REBEL PAPERS.

We received yesterday files of Richmond and Charleston papers to the 11th inst. The former are still harping upon the atrocious enormity of Kilpatrick's raid and "the Lincoln dynasty," while the Charleston prints meekly follow suit in similar strains, and clamor for "retaliation."

AFFAIRS AT SUFFOLK.

The most important feature of the news from Richmond is to the effect that on the 9th instant our forces at Suffolk, Va., were attacked and routed, and were driven out of town in confusion, with the loss of a large number killed, one piece of artillery and a large quantity of commissary's and quartermaster's stores. According to the rebel accounts, our troops were "flying" toward Portsmouth, burning bridges and everything else behind them. By our papers we learn that the town was retaken on the following day.

EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.

The Richmond Sentinel has a column glorifying the eight hundred men whom General Butler recently sent up from Point Lookout, for having withstood the "bribes" held out to them; but it complains bitterly that "they were landed in silence; not a cheer—not even the waving of a handkerchief—to welcome them."

OLUSTEE.

The secession press is jubilant over the results of the battle of Olustee. One writer speaks of the long list of casualties in the New York Times of the 2d as "the prettiest page of printed matter he ever saw."

CAPTURED OFFICERS.

The Union officers captured in the recent raid have been placed in solitary confinement, by order of Jeff Davis.

CHARLESTON.

The Mercury states that a new iron-clad gunboat, entitled the *Ashley*, was