

# The Daily Journal

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J. S. FULTON, Editor. A. L. PRICE, Associate Editor.

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January 14 187-1f

## THE DAILY JOURNAL.

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA.

WILMINGTON, N. C., WEDNESDAY, JAN. 25, 1865.

"JUSTITIA."—We publish to day a communication over the above signature, as a matter of justice to the distinguished leader therein referred to, although we are unconscious of having done any injustice of the kind alluded to. Other papers have referred to Gen. Bragg in terms not simply uncomplimentary, but even bitter and denunciatory. It would not be right for us to comply with our correspondent's request, to point out and particularize the forces between this point and Fort Fisher, but we do think that the safety of that important work depended greatly upon any expeditionary force being immediately attacked before entrenching. Such was certainly General Whiting's opinion, as shown by the fact that he urged this course upon General Bragg. Seeb, no doubt, formed a part of his plan for the defence of Fort Fisher. The General of division, to whom General Bragg gave the order to attack, reported the enemy already entrenched. These facts, we believe, are generally admitted. The harm was done. The masses of the enemy held an entrenched position between Fort Fisher and its supporting infantry force, and the result was what is already known. A handful of men in Fisher was overwhelmed by superior numbers, whilst three times their number of veteran troops, within sound of the firing, did not at all participate, perhaps because they could not. We take it that they are men of the army of Northern Virginia, and it is too late in the day to doubt their courage. That General Bragg did order an attack, but subsequently withdrew the order at the request of the gallant General of Division, is a proof that he did approve of an attack, and did not consider it impossible. The reason for the withdrawal of the order shows either that it had been too long delayed, or that the reconnoissances were defective. We are looking at things simply as they are.—We do not mean to set up for military critics:—not we—but does it require military genius to see what is plain to the plainest common sense? The chance of the first blow, with its consequent advantages, was lost and all the rest followed. We see that it did. That was the only chance for Fort Fisher. That General Bragg did not have forces enough, we take to be likely, but, taking everything into account, that deficiency on our part and preponderance on theirs was due to their tremendous naval force. We do not know that even had the enemy been attacked at once Fisher would have been saved. That can now never be known.—But then if ever there was a chance.

There is undoubtedly a good deal of injustice done by thoughtless newspaper generals. To this we ourselves have frequently borne witness. But are the sneers at such "generals" or "military critics," always in good

taste? Is it any argument to insist that because you cannot command an army or make a better plan of a battle yourself you must wholly surrender your judgment and shut your eyes? Surely not.—We know a horse that we can say for ourselves is not a good horse—in fact he is a bad horse. Neither we nor anybody else can make a better horse, nor in fact any horse at all; but shall we therefore be precluded from seeing, knowing, and, if necessary saying that he is a bad horse? Does nobody wear a coat and use his judgment in selecting or rejecting that garment unless he can make a better one? Shall no man presume to judge even of our humble paper or of this humble article unless he can write and print something better? We do concede freely that in judging of things which are of the nature of a specialty—of a life-time study and profession, unprofessional persons should approach them with caution, candor and a becoming modesty; but without shutting their eyes or remaining blind to consequences. Consequences will make themselves seen and felt, whether we will or not. We know that good and true men are too often sacrificed, and of this the noble Albert Sidney Johnston forms an illustrious example. He was sacrificed, and yet he admitted the propriety of the common rule of judgment which decides by and in favor of success. In the long run there can be no other.

The writer of "Justitia" is a clever gentleman and a good soldier. None of his remarks touch us, nor if they did, would that be a cause for their exclusion from properly written. We think it a duty to give to every honorable cause such opportunity of being heard as our means will afford. We also claim the right of commenting upon any communication, courteously, but according to our own notions of what is right. These are mutual rights. If we differ from the course of any public servant, we take the liberty of saying so. If we misrepresent him in any way, he or any of his friends or others who may differ with us, shall have a fair showing.

## A BREATHING SPELL.

It is quite possible that the instructions given to the expeditionary force of the enemy only contemplated an attack upon Fisher, with the view to its reduction, and a subsequent advance upon and capture of Wilmington, if that could be accomplished without opposition.—That could not be done without opposition, and appears to have been deferred for the present, or postponed to await further orders. Had an attack at present been on the programme, it appears to us that it would have been made immediately after the fall of Fort Fisher, so as to secure the large amount of cotton and other Southern products then supposed to be stowed here.

That they can return again when they please, we all know. We have seen how soon they did return after their first repulse at Fort Fisher: We can therefore only designate the present apparent tranquillity as a breathing spell. We would advise all to make the best possible use of it in setting their houses in order, and preparing to meet any contingency that may arise.

If our authorities appreciate our cordition, and feel the strategic importance of this point, as we think they do, we beg that they will also stand ready to give us all the timely assistance that can possibly be spared. Do not let it be again said that Gen. Bragg has been sacrificed for want of force and resources, for such has been said. At any rate let us here know and understand our condition.

All the rumors about peace commissioners to Washington are only so much "bosh," especially when it is asserted that the following persons have been appointed on the part of the "rebel" Congress:—Vice President Stephens, of Georgia; Judge White, of Georgia; Messrs. Boyce and Orr, of South Carolina; Rives, of Virginia; Leach and Gilmer, of North Carolina, and Smith and Singleton, of Mississippi. Among these names there are some good and true men, but there are also some to whom no Confederate Congress would entrust the public honor.

We have lost some good men within the last twelve months, but we doubt much if the loss of any two men has done us more harm than that of the two lawyer Generals from Massachusetts, N. P. Banks and E. F. Butler. How well they did serve us let the Valley of the Shenandoah and of the Red River bear witness, and the failures of Butler on Confederate Point, and at sundry other points attest. Indeed, and indeed again, our loss struck us heavily when they dispensed with the services of these heroes and sages. We mourn for our Banks, and we miss our Butler, and cannot be comforted. It was cruel of Ulysses S. Grant to deprive us of these our pets. Can't we get them restored in some way.

YESTERDAY there was no news that any of the enemy's forces had crossed over to the South, or rather West side of the Cape Fear River, with a view of operating upon that bank.

SHAD made their appearance in our market yesterday and to-day at \$1 50 per pair, in specie. In the present excited state of the money market it would be difficult to say what the equivalent of this would be in Confederate money. A heap, we may feel certain.

We regret to learn from the *Carolinian* of this morning, that the gallant Captain Wm. T. Robinson, son of Wm. Robinson, Esq., late assistant editor of the *Goldboro' State Journal*, was killed recently in front of our lines. Capt. Robinson, at the head of Hoke's skirmishers, whom he commanded, had approached the enemy's works, where he received his death wound.

We knew Captain Robinson well, and parted with him of our streets, it seems but yesterday. He was a brave and honorable man; he died in the path of duty, and leaves to comfort his bereaved parents the proud recollection of a stainless name, and the kinder memories of a pure affection. He was about twenty-four years of age.

A man works for years, with indefatigable means, reluctantly accorded, to provide for the defence of the chief town of North Carolina. He studies its means and modes of defence and attack. He identifies himself with the subject. He knows every foot of ground. He has mentally mapped out the whole subject, and we are now coolly told that it was no reflection upon this man's skill, military knowledge or courage to ask that when the necessity arises for carrying out these plans, another man shall be put over him—he shall be superseded—deprived of the right and power of carrying out his own plans. If that is the way men are to be treated, we need hardly wonder at anything and we don't much.

It don't matter who the man might be—no man could be expected to carry out another's plans as well as that other, nor was the whole action towards the superseded worker and thinker any more grateful or gracious.

With his own appointment to this post, General Bragg had nothing to do.

Messrs. Editors: For the Journal.

I am loathe to add a word to a subject which has already been worn threadbare by military editors, but justice to a genuine patriot who has devoted life and fortune to the cause in which we are now fighting, seems to justify a short communication to the public by one who has seen him on many bloody fields and who can vouch for his patriotism, his valor and his Roman will to conquer or die. In this struggle of life and death which is now so sorely taxing the patience of our people.

It must be a source of mortification to all the good and reflecting people in our midst to read, from day to day in political journals, the unbecoming censures upon the movements of our commanding generals, with entire disregard of the causes which have induced them and without looking to the inadequate resources at their command. Failure, strange to say, has become synonymous with incompetency, and without regard to difficulties which, under other circumstances would excuse all defeats or misadventures, the officer, so matter how distinguished in the past, who now falls is damned, and this, too, by critics who know nothing of the facts.

Though not an habitual correspondent for newspapers, Messrs. Editors, I could not refrain from this communication in view of the gross injustice which is being daily done through the journals of the country to the distinguished leader alluded to in the beginning of this article. I mean no less a personage than Gen. Bragg. I must confess that I have seen from day to day censures upon his military conduct in this department, which, my previous knowledge of the man as well as of the general, could but denounce as false and "fit to treason."

Why this pronouncement, Messrs. Editors, to saddle upon him the recent reverses to our arms? And why, especially, at a time when the general is doing his best to study the facts of the case about which they so knowingly expound their criticisms? If so, why do they not give them to the eager and enquiring public? Does not their whole course, on the contrary, prove that they speak in entire ignorance of the facts upon which they dilate so learnedly? Indeed, one cannot read them without being reminded of the too common character of such productions—*vox et preterea nihil*.

I am persuaded, Messrs. Editors, that if such learned critics and idle defamers would put themselves to half the trouble in investigating the facts to which they do to study up terms of invective against a man who has from the beginning proven himself so "good and true" as General Bragg, our newspaper articles would at least contain more truth, be read with more profit, and our cause be better promoted. It will indeed be a good omen for our cause when men who undertake to lead and inform the public mind shall look more to the truth and facts, and discard the prejudices of the hour against our able leaders, because, forsooth, they have failed for want of means or resources in this or that undertaking.

Let us hope that for the future there may be a greater regard for that even justice which is based and can rest alone on facts. We know that if denied now, history, that unerring arbiter, will wipe away the cobwebs of reproach which are now being woven around the name of one who was a braver and better patriot and soldier does not live—Braxton Bragg.

In the meantime, Messrs. Editors, and all who have undertaken to throw the whole blame of our recent misfortune upon the management of Gen. Bragg, let us have the whole truth of the case. Tell us, if you can, how our fort could have been saved? When was the blunder made, on Friday, Saturday or Sunday? Inside the fort or outside? Because Gen. Whiting was not reinforced or because the enemy was not driven from the land? What forces had Gen. Bragg and how many had the enemy? What facts were then in possession of the commanding General?—What would you have done situated as he was, you military critics? Can you now, looking back at what has transpired, and knowing of course even more than could have been known to Gen. Bragg or any other person, tell us what should have been done? If so do be kind enough to tell us now what the programme should have been and wherein was the blunder.

We shall await with impatience for an answer to these interrogations, for really we are anxious to know how and why our defenses were lost and how they might have been saved. Those who know, owe it to military science to give their knowledge to the world. It may save us from similar misfortunes in time to come.

I would state that the writer of this is not a member of General Bragg's military family.

Yours Respectfully,

JUSTITIA.

PORTER'S GREAT TORPEDO.—The New York World, in an editorial on Porter's torpedo, gives the following excellent hit at the unhappy trick, so "gunpowdery and pranky," which failed to blow down Fort Fisher:

"Early in the Anglo Chinese war the English were amused by the Chinese army, which met them with the sound of gongs, the braying of trumpets, and a corps of gymnasts, who performed all sorts of acrobatic feats, dressed in hideous costumes. For a time the object of these remarkable exhibitions was not apparent to the

European army, and it was supposed to be a custom of the Celestials observed by them in all their battles, probably in the nature of an invocation to their deities. After the battle, however, they captured the general orders of the mandarin chief, and found that the "Children of the sun" were ordered to sound their abominable gongs and blow their trumpets when the "barbarian" approached, and were promised that the effort would be so terrifying to the English that they would all fall down from fear; and then the order stated that their breeches were so tight that they never could get up again, and might be easily captured.

The torpedo at Wilmington evidently was designed on the same principle, and, no doubt, was intended to produce the result which the Chinese promised themselves from the dreadful noise of their gongs; but unfortunately, the Secretary of the Navy did not consider that the rebels are generally without breeches and consequently, that they could get up again easily after the fright they experienced at the noise of the explosion; hence the failure. The only way that the Secretary can make his new invention work is, to supply the rebels with tight breeches, so that when they fall from fear they can be caught before they are able to recover their feet."

From the Liverpool Albion.

## AMERICAN PROSPECTS.

Among those that are born of women there beats not a bolder heart than that of Jefferson Davis. We are not ashamed to confess to a large amount of hero worship for the man for whom his Northern foes can find no better name than rebel and slave owner. Never unduly elated by success, never dismayed by adversity, his voice rings out clear as a trumpet call on the darkest day that befalls his country. Not Cato himself spoke to his little Senate at Utica with more dignity and steadfastness than does the Southern President when addressing his suffering fellow countrymen. Four years have passed since the tremendous struggle began with which his name will be forever identified; and, if American figures can be trusted, (a point on which we always feel serious misgivings,) those four years have witnessed a greater amount of bloodshed and a larger loss of human life than any other four consecutive years since the deluge. The loss of ten thousand men on a single day has become quite a common event; and a conscription of one, two or three hundred thousand at a time, no longer excites astonishment. The waves of war have surged from North to South and from East to West. It has been waged by land and sea, on mid ocean and in harbor, and up thousands of miles of rivers—in the midst of forests, on spacious plains, and on the sides of lofty mountains. Eminent soldiers and amateur generals have tried their hands upon it; attorneys and politicians have brought their talents to its aid; every invention of modern times has been pressed into its service. New fangled ships, cannon of hitherto unknown calibre, fills of novel construction, new tactics and new tools, all have been used in turn, and yet the end has not come. Such energy, such obstinacy, such determination to win, have been shown on both sides as were hardly ever seen before, and such an amount of money expended as no other country ever spent in a period ten times as long. If, in the early days of this struggle, we were ever disposed to sneer at the efforts of either side, we must now, all of us, confess that we had underrated both their intentions and probable performance.

It is a struggle of heroic proportions on both sides. But, come what may, it is to the weaker party that the highest amount of admiration is justly due; and what is true of one is doubly true of the other. And now, after vicissitudes innumerable, the tide has turned of late against the South; and, doubtless, sore discouragement has fallen upon many a heart which not long ago was exulting in the sense of victory. It is not, indeed, a great many weeks ago since we were told on what was assumed to be good authority, that discouragement was universal throughout the Northern States, and that the cry for peace—peace at almost any price—was upon every tongue. The result shows the folly of generalizing freely from particular instances, and yet only forty-eight hours ago there were many faint-hearted friends of the Southern cause in a state bordering on despair about its future prospects. So many men are ready to rush from one extreme to its opposite! But clear across the waters comes the brave voice of Jefferson Davis; there is no quaver in his tones—he speaks with no uncertain sound. Few as are his words reported to us, we cannot for a moment doubt his resolution; his voice is still for war! Dark as is the present hour, he has passed through hours as dark before, and thro' the gloom he believes he sees the coming dawn. When New Orleans was taken, when Vicksburg was surrendered, when Stonewall Jackson fell in the noonday of his glory, a sadness and discouragement spread over all the Southern Confederacy; and as their undaunted President raised anew their spirit then, so we are persuaded he will do now. We shall not, of course, think of denying that the exhaustion of men and means has been immense since these events took place; but it must be borne in mind that, whereas the Southern armies are still entirely composed of white men, the Northern army, according to a recent speech of Mr. Lincoln, numbers two hundred thousand blacks amongst its soldiers. And Mr. Lincoln adduced this fact as a reason for maintaining the policy of emancipation. There remains, therefore, to the Southern Government the expedient of resorting to the negro element for the replenishment of their ranks; and though this will, no doubt, for obvious reasons, be a last resort, we feel no doubt that the operation will, by a long period, precede submission to the Federal. We see no reason to doubt that the negroes will fight for their masters as willingly as they work for them, and we imagine a Southern negro is quite as capable of fighting as his Northern brother. So far, therefore, as the supply of men for their armies is concerned, we do not think that the South is at yet any worse off than the North.

An orator out West lately startled his audience thus: "Mr. President, the morning of 25th thunder was heard far and wide, and remained with those who heard it of the clattering of the hoofs of 40 many wild horses galloping across a bridge over a creek, where the little fish were seen skipping from puddle to puddle—the lightning flashed and flashed, and every now and then the whole canopy of heaven looked as though it was lit up with talow candles, and then all snuffed!"