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The English Iron Rams—Their Armament.

A citizen of Providence, Rhode Island, who has just returned from England, communicates to the Journal, of that place, the following description of the rams in the Mersey:

By the Chief's advice of last week we are informed that the two steam rams from the Messrs. Laird's ship yard, on the Mersey, (opposite Liverpool,) are not to be allowed to sail for their destination in the service of the (so-called) Confederate States. The first of these vessels was launched on the 4th of July last, and must be at this time in readiness for service. The other left the stocks on Saturday, August 29. The ship yard was opened to the public, and from this circumstance an opportunity was afforded for an examination of these formidable vessels, which otherwise would not have been allowed.

In company with an intelligent and experienced ship-master, we crossed the Tannery Ferry and arrived at the yard at 10 1/2 a. m.—The ram on the stocks was of the same dimensions as the one previously built. In length about 250 feet; forty feet beam; and twenty feet depth of hold, as near as could be judged by the eye. The stem is of oiled iron, about six or eight inches thick and twelve or fifteen wide. The bottom is flat, with a slight keel, and the screw as usual, but protected in the conformation of the stern. The ram is a projection of solid steel, of the same thickness as the stem, and from six to eight feet beyond the perpendicular line, resembling more nearly an inverted ross. When the vessel floats, this formidable appendage is below the water line, and invisible.

As the clock struck 11, the last block was knocked from under, and the vessel moved steadily and gracefully into the water. The English ensign was flying from a spar at the stern post, and as the hull left the shed the French colors were raised at the stern. The momentum acquired carried the vessel nearly across the Mersey, where it was taken in tow by steam tugs and brought into dock, beside the first built. There were several ladies and gentlemen on the launch, friends of the builders and doubtless many representatives of the so-called "Confederacy," citizens and sympathizers. The other ram had her iron masts, spars and rigging in place. The masts are tubular and the topmasts intended to be enclosed as a spy glass. The fore castle and poop deck are of boiler iron and are calculated and arranged for being shot away in action.

The bulwarks are hung with heavy strap hinges, intended to be lowered in action, so as to give clean, flush decks, and to facilitate the boarding of an adversary. There are two turrets or towers about twenty feet in diameter and ten in height. They are placed partly above and below decks, are pierced for two heavy guns each, entered below decks through six man holes; they are built of very heavy boiler iron on the outside and inside, and to be filled in with a foot's thickness of wood, or some more resisting material. They revolve on twenty four wheels, (similar to the small wheels of a locomotive, radiating from a centre,) on axels of wrought iron, to the circle of the diameter of the turrets. The top of the turrets and deck is protected by thick iron. One of them is in the rear of the foremast, the other of the mainmast. Between the forward turret and smoke funnel is the pilot house, of an octagonal form, (if as the model of wood in place) pierced with small sight holes, and over looking the turrets.

What the arrangements may be for directing the movements of the vessel was not ascertained, as no one except workmen were allowed on board, and the small size of the pilot house would hardly admit of a wheel in it. Each vessel has a powerful engine of between 300 and 400 horse power. The hull of the ram nearest completion is first of heavy iron, one inch in thickness, then a planking of teak wood nine

inches, and an outer covering of iron plating of 4 1/2 inches thickness. But so well finished is this work that there is no indication of the thickness or strength visible. The tonnage of each must be nearly 2,000 tons, and the armament for the turrets was not the only ordnance to be carried on deck.

These vessels are of so peculiar a model and construction that I expressed confidently the opinion that under no subterfuge of reasoning or pretext could they be allowed to depart on their intended mission of destruction. The French and English colors were at mast head on this latter vessel also. It was stated that they were for the French Government, but a card from the French Consul denied the rumor. Afterward it was announced that the funds for their construction were furnished by M. Saugier, a French banker, who has a mortgage up on both vessels. The objection that they are unseaworthy seems futile, as the weight of the turrets and machinery is principally below decks. Such an objection certainly was not expressed by my very intelligent companion.

Our Situation.

The Richmond papers are very hopeful.—The Examiner says:

Our position is of much better promise than it was a few months since. The advances the enemy makes upon our soil are mischievous. His feet slip upon the dangerous path. In Virginia he retreats and fails to extend his grip. In the other portions of the Confederacy, he evidently has nearly reached the limits of feasible occupation. It is estimated to withdraw for the purpose of making fresh advances and finds the vacuum behind him immediately filled by active enemies.

Difficulties multiply as he advances. His work in the spring will demand greater strength than he has yet put forth. Will he be able to exert as much? His army goes out of service in the spring and summer. Voluntary recruits cannot be obtained. Conscription is difficult and dangerous. Unless Lincoln is invested with such absolute power as to fear no opposition, he will be forced to court popularity for the Presidential election. The army will be a turbulent element in the canvass. The soldiers are said to favor McClellan as their candidate, and it will be dangerous either to suppress the expression of their will, or to retain them by force under such standards. The question of maintaining the strength of their army is of immense importance; for if a large part of the present army goes out of service, and the conscription is unproductive, all conquest is at an end. The invasion will die from inanition, and the war may be protracted solely in the final stage of a settlement of boundary.

The Whig observes: Meanwhile, the work here goes bravely on. The tyrant is in the throes of dissolution. He is closely hemmed in at Chattanooga, where he was forced to take refuge to save himself from annihilation. He will soon, however, be compelled to come forth and try the issue of another conflict, which is certain to involve ruin for him, or sink safety by retreat, the consequences of which will be no less disastrous.

In Northern Virginia this condition is still worse. Disgracefully creating to his den near the Capital, he is hotly pursued by Lee with a good prospect, as we hope, of being overtaken and punished to the point of annihilation. At the other theatres of minor operations, his condition is no less hopeless; and what is worse he has nothing in prospect but an almost total depletion in May next of what-remnant of his veteran army may survive the pursuit of Lee and Bragg's siege. This, no doubt, will be a galling reflection to "neutral" England, after so lavish an expenditure of partiality and kind offices upon the Yankees, in the fond hope that she would be required on the day of victory, which Russell must have looked to as ultimately certain. He so-hoped, at least, and his abolition proclivities doubtless warmed up that feeling to the point of certainty. Our triumph would be a sad disappointment to him and his brethren of the "Emancipation Society;" but he must swallow the bitter pill, and Seward will be in no attitude to comfort him. It is not improbable that before his chagrin reaches its zenith, which it will, under the influence of our final success, he will get a foretaste of what awaits Britain in the future, in the probable discriminating action of the next Congress in behalf of France. We doubt not that Congress will attest its appreciation of the course of the French Emperor in respect to us, by some substantial concession. This should be done as well out of regard to the Emperor, as to fore close, by timely action, the hopes which England undoubtedly entertains of getting into our good graces in the future, by the agencies of intrigue and deception.

The Dispatch says: The man who does not take a cheerful view

of our affairs, so far as the war is concerned, at the present moment, must have something very much the matter with his liver. We see no hope for him, now that the season is over at the White Sulphur Springs, regarding him as so far gone that it is hardly worth while to consult a doctor. There are others, indeed, who seeing will not believe, and who hearing will not listen. To these we cannot apply the same advice that we should give to the first mentioned class, viz: to get their liver right.—They are of the class of Thomas, surname Didi-mus—they doubt of malice aforethought—they are determined not to believe, and believe they will not. They resemble the infidel who refused to put faith in Noah when he preached the coming of the deluge, and who, coming to the ark and praying for admission, raised his chain high enough above the encroaching element to blaspheme the flood, and declare that he did not believe the rain was anything more than a drizzle after all.

The Yankees are hard pushed for recruits to fill their army. Of that there can be no doubt. The draft of 450,000 produced but the ninth part of that number. The coming draft of 600,000 will, in all probability, produce not a larger proportion. The Irish and German elements is nearly exhausted. As a proof of it the officers of the Libby prison say that, where as the majority of prisoners were formerly of those nationalities, now they do not number more than a fourth, or at the outside a third.—The genuine Yankees begin to come in quite freely. The Irish and Germans tired of being shot at for thirty or forty cents depreciated currency a day. They enlisted in great numbers at the beginning of the war, because business was at a stand, and they could find no other means of supporting existence. Now there is plenty of work and they can do better by staying at home. The burthen of the war has fallen at last on the Yankees themselves, and we have already seen how they relish it.

Yankee Views of Charleston.—The Herald's correspondent writes:

WASHINGTON, Oct. 15.

From what can be ascertained of the real state of affairs at Charleston, the rebels have effectually closed the channel to the city to our fleet, reserving a passage, however, to their own craft, after the manner of a canal, with a safety lock against the enemy. The obstructions may be of such a nature as not to be removed by any appliances of our own, or of too formidable a nature to justify a hazardous attempt by our iron-clads to penetrate further into the harbor, and within range of the rebels' guns. Under these circumstances, the best engineering and strategic skill becomes necessary on the part of the respective commanders of the land and water forces, to make a thoroughly successful demonstration upon Charleston. Such a result is not considered doubtful, but time is necessarily required for the consumption of their plans.

The Ohio Election.

ADDRESS OF HON. C. L. VALLANDIGHAM TO THE OHIO DEMOCRACY.

Democrats of Ohio:—You have been beaten—by what means it is idle now to enquire.—It is enough that while tens of thousands of soldiers were sent or kept within your State or held inactive in camp elsewhere, to vote against you, the Confederate enemy were marching upon the capital of your country.

You were beaten, but a nobler battle for constitutional liberty and free popular government never was fought by any people. And your unconquerable firmness and courage, even in the midst of armed military force, secured you those first of freeman's rights—free speech and a free ballot. The conspiracy of the fifth of May fell before you. Be not discouraged; despair not of the Republic. Maintain your rights staid firm to your position; never yield up your principles or your organization. Listen not to any who would have you lower your standard in the hour of defeat. No mellowing of your opinions upon any question, even of policy, will avail anything to conciliate your political foes. They demand nothing less than an absolute surrender of your principles and your organizations. Moreover, if there be any hope for the Constitution or liberty, it is in the Democratic party alone, and you, fellow citizens in a little while longer will see it. Time and events will force it upon all, except those only who profit by the calamities of their country.

I thank you, one and all, for your sympathies and your suffrages. Be assured that though still in exile for no offence but my political opinions and the free expression of them to you, in peaceable public assembly, you will find me ever steadfast in those opinions, and true to the Constitution and the State and country of my birth. C. L. VALLANDIGHAM. Windsor, C. W., Oct. 14.

CAMP VANCE.—Our readers are aware that a Conscript Camp, named after our excellent Governor, was established near Morganton about two months ago, in charge of Capt. James C. McRae, C. S. A. Its operations have been so useful and important that we are tempted to embody some particulars that have come to our knowledge. The first step of the Commandant was to obtain information from every county in the 9th and 10th Congressional Districts, preparatory to organizing a system for bringing in absentees from the army and conscripts. The information collected showed the whole country to be in a terrible condition, it having become the resort of deserters from every State in the Confederacy. In one county a regularly organized band of deserters and recusant conscripts; in another almost all the conscripts still at home and great disaffection prevailing; whilst in the border counties on the other side of the Blue Ridge, exposed to incursions from Tennessee Tories and swarming with deserters from every army of ours, open acts of violence were daily committed, private property carried off, and even murder of peaceful and loyal citizens committed. Affairs were so bad in some sections that loyal men dared not lift a voice in favor of our government. The Enrolling Officer in the 10th District was obliged to carry an armed guard with him in several of the counties. Capt. McRae has two companies which he has kept constantly employed in reducing order out of chaos. There were from 50 to 100 deserters in the mountains within 20 miles of his camp, mostly armed. He captured many of these, dispersed the rest, and by showing that he was in earnest caused many more to report voluntarily.—Squads of the latter, whom he found he could trust, he armed and sent back to operate in their own counties, filled up State companies of others of them to operate in the border counties, and raised a company of infantry and one of cavalry from among the conscripts. The presence of Gen. Hoke and his force at Wilkesboro', besides its own immediate success, was a powerful auxiliary to the operations of Capt. McRae; and the result so far has been that up to the 15th inst. he had sent to the army over 400 deserters and 200 conscripts, besides those he had retained for temporary service, and some captured in the extreme West and sent directly to Bragg's army. Wilkes, Yadkin and Alexander counties, are now among the most loyal in the State. It needed only the appearance of forces, headed by determined but kind and judicious men, to show the offenders the error of their ways, and this happily, has been done both by Capt. McRae and by Gen. Hoke and those in command under him. The prospect is that the whole mountain region will be thoroughly and speedily purged, and the army strengthened by thousands of good soldiers as we trust they will be.

We learn that Capt. McRae has been for months appealing to the War Department to order him to service in the field, but we submit to him that he is doing better service where he is though his labors are more arduous and with out any prospect of such a harvest of glory as the gallant soldier can reap on the field of battle. From what we have heard we have no doubt he had an easier time while digging and fighting in Virginia than in his present occupation. The marches of his men, too, are extremely arduous. To operate successfully their movements must be quick and secret, so that they often march at night, 20 to 30 miles with out stopping, over the roughest country in the world.—Fay. Observer.

Mississippi.

Gov. Pettus has issued his proclamation, ordering that the next regular session of the Legislature of Mississippi will be held in the town of Columbus, beginning on the first Monday of the ensuing month. The exposed condition of Jackson is given as the reason for designating Columbus, and that it is well founded reason, all will admit. Columbus is a large and beautiful town, and the accommodations for legislators and visitors are superior to those afforded at any point in the State.

It is also directed in the proclamation that, from and after the last Monday of this month, the seat of Government will be temporarily removed from Macon to Columbus.

Warning to Shoemakers.—We learn that a shoe maker in this city was arraigned a day or two ago, for charging more than 75 per cent profit. The enrolling officer was called in, and there is a prospect that the son of St. Crispin will soon be pegging away at the Yankees at eleven dollars a month.—Augusta Constitutionalist.

Gen. Hood.

The editor of the Columbus (Ga.) Sun has been shown a private letter from the physician of this gallant officer, in which he states that the General will recover from his wounds.—