THE BATTLES ON THE PENINSULA.

From the Richmond Dispatch of the 12th.

A gentleman who witnessed the fight near Williamsburg on Monday informs us that our force engaged amounted to six or eight thousand men. The battle lasted nine hours. The First Virginia regiment captured a battery of eight guns, and two colors, from the enemy. Gen. Early was not mortally wounded. Col. Williams, of the First Virginia, received a very severe wound, and is now in the hands of the enemy. Major Palmer, of the same regiment, who was reported killed, received only a slight wound in the arm. Neither Col. Kemper nor Col. Corse, both of whom were reported wounded, received any injury. The rumor that Gen. Anderson was killed probably arose from the death of his brother, who fell in the battle. The General was not injured. We hear that the loss on our side, in killed, wounded, and missing, is estimated at 500. The loss of the enemy can only be conjectured; though it was unquestionably much heavier than ours.

We are indebted to a gentleman who participated in the fight on Sunday, near Williamsburg, for the following narrative:

SUNDAY'S ENGAGEMENT.

The greater part of the forces falling back from the "Yorktown Line" of defence having halted for rest, in the open ground back of Williamsburg, gave the Yankee advance an opportunity of coming up with the rear guard, consisting of Gen Sims's Georgia and Gen. Griffith's Mississippi brigades, to which was attached Manly's North Carolina battery. The enemy did not appear in any force from under their cover of woods until our rear guard had left the open ground and redoubts, and were marching through Williamsburg, at which time a courier brought word to Gen McLaws that they were deploying in force to the right and left of Fort Magruder, (which our forces had just left untenanted,) and that they had planted a battery of rifled guns immediately to the front of the redoubt, and only distant 700 yards. The rear guard was immediately ordered "about face—double quick, march." Manly's battery was ordered to advance and seize Fort Magruder before the Yankees secured it. Then commenced a race—artillery, cavalry, infantry, had to run the "gauntlet" of the rifle battery fire for one and a half miles to seize a work from which the Yankees were only distant a quarter of a mile; but our forces did it nobly. Capt. Manly brought his battery into action in splendid style, halted, and fired five rounds to delay the enemy's advance and give our infantry time to come up, and then limbered up his guns and made a dash for the redoubt, which he succeeded in entering just in advance of the Yankee force on the right. From this point the battery did some of the finest practice that we have heard of in the record of any of our "artillery duels," firing 180 shots in 20 minutes, dismounting two pieces of the rifle battery, killing all the horses at two more pieces and four caissons, of which our cavalry taking advantage made a glorious charge on the infantry and cavalry supporting the battery, and cutting down all who yet remained; and held the ground until the officer commanding the Richmond Howitzer Battery, Capt. McCarthy, (having detached some of the horses from his pieces,) galloped forward, and hitching on to the three captured guns and four caissons brought them off in the face of the enemy, and gallantly offered them to Capt. Manly as the trophies gained by the fine service of his pieces. Thus, in forty minutes our glorious fellows had marched nearly two miles, captured three pieces, four caissons, twelve horses, and seven prisoners. The killed and wounded of the enemy could not have been short of one hundred men.

Gen. Johnston was present during the fight, and appeared to enjoy it exceedingly.

When the rear guard was ordered to "about face," such a cheer went up from them as the good folks of Williamsburg will long remember.

It is absurd to talk of whipping men who, after marching eighteen hours without rest or food, and heavily packed, will, at a chance of a fight, drop their knapsacks and, with a soul-stirring cheer, seize their muskets and run a race for nearly two miles to meet the enemy.

MONDAY'S FIGHT.

The following graphic account of the recent exciting events near Williamsburg is furnished by a gentleman who took part in the engagement on Monday, the 5th inst.

About sunrise on Monday morning firing was heard below the town, in the direction of our pickets, who were driven in by the enemy, and a heavy body of skirmishers being then thrown out by both armies, the booming of cannon, followed by the straggling fire of small arms, steadily increasing in volume and rapidity, told that the battle had begun.

Gen A. P. Hill's brigade, consisting of the 1st, 11th, 17th, and 7th Virginia regiments, were promptly formed and marched in the direction of the firing. A cold, steady rain was falling, and the roads were in the most deplorable condition; but, though wet to the skin, and not rested from the fatigue of watching and marching which they had recently undergone, the men were in the very best of spirits, and anxious to "fight and have done with it," as though the result were a foregone conclusion. As they entered the town, and the firing below became more distinct and rapid, their "quick march" was increased to a double-quick; "off with all luggage, boys," was the word, and knapsacks and blankets (which, singular to say, they had not been told to leave behind) were torn off and thrown into the porches, along the street, and on the men pushed for the open field, where the white sulphurous smoke had begun to form a canopy, and cannon balls were seen plowing up the ground in their murderous career from a battery which the enemy had planted in the main road, about half a mile beyond, where the woods skirted the field just below the town.

Arriving upon the edge of a road that crossed the field at right angles with the main road, they halted, and, forming into close column, awaited orders. The cannon were meantime briskly playing from the enemy's battery, which were replied to by two guns from Fort Magruder, a redoubt commanding the road from Lebanon Church to Williamsburg. Two other batteries, upon the right and left of this redoubt, were also playing upon the enemy with two guns each; but the brunt of the battle was entirely sustained by infantry, the locality and the condition of the roads rendering it almost impossible to use artillery. Meanwhile the firing of musketry had subsided and almost entirely ceased; but it soon began again, gradually swelling until the woods echoed and rang with one sullen roar—a ceaseless monotone that told of death and carnage. The work of our men was now plain before them. The order "load at will" was given, and with fixed bayonets, steady pulse, and rapid steps, the defenders of Virginia moved through mud, along ravine, and up hill, to face and beat the foe. The Yankee hirelings were thick in those woods as leaves in Valambrosa, and like those leaves before the fiery breath of the tempest, they were swept away. Change their position as they might, increase their number as they would, our men moved upon them like a resistless tide, and bore them back wherever they were met. Charge after charge was made upon them, and they *always* fled. Our men *never* gave back except in obedience to orders. Terrible evidences of the destructiveness of their fire were to be seen at every turn of the eye. The dead Federals strewed the woods and fields, and the cries and groans of the wounded whom they had deserted appealed strongly from justice to mercy. There was very little manœuvering. Our men simply met the Yankees and drove them steadily back about two miles from their position.

The fighting was chiefly in a dense wood immediately upon the right of the main road. A large quantity of fallen timber, and the tangled nature of the undergrowth, greatly impeded the movements of the troops, and prevented a clear view of the enemy. When not seen, however, the flashing of their volleys indicated their presence, and guided by their murderous fire our men moved steadily and unflinchingly upon them, and routed them from their cover to fly like sheep. At no time during that dreadful day did the sound of musketry cease; but from 10 o'clock until night the firing filled the air with one unbroken roar. This was the greeting that awaited each new regiment that came into the fray, and if the infernal din and the venomous hissings of the leaden hail had sent the warm blood rushing back to every heart, it would have been but little cause for shame, for it seemed like entering the very valley of the shadow of death. But to the eternal glory of our men be it said that not one, from the humblest private to the highest in command, seemed else than every inch a hero. There was no hurry, no excitement, no confusion. Led by their officers on foot,—the field and staff of each regiment having all dismounted and left their horses in the rear—they moved quietly and steadily forward. A good deal of ammunition was in a damaged condition, owing to the continual rain, and many of the men whose guns would not discharge, threw them away and took the weapons and superior cartridges and caps of the dead yankees that lay around. It would be difficult to mention the performances of any regiment without making an invidious distinction. All behaved most gallantly. All of Longstreet's division, a portion of Stuart's cavalry and six pieces of artillery, stationed in the redoubts, are all that are known by the writer as engaged in the fight. There were several regiments drawn up in the field in rear of the scene of action as a reserve. They were not, however, called upon to aid in the action. Having driven the yankees back about two miles, captured eight pieces of artillery, several colors, a number of fine horses, and about 900 prisoners, our forces were withdrawn and marched to Williamsburg almost entirely exhausted, wet to the skin, hungry, and altogether as miserable in body as men could possibly be. About 2 o'clock the next morning the army again commenced their retreat towards Richmond, closely followed by the Federals, who entered Williamsburg about an hour after the Confederate forces left it. All our wounded who were unable to walk fell into the hands of the enemy—a fact greatly to be deplored, but unavoidable under the circumstances. The scenes of parting were painful in the extreme.

The War.—The change of system which has been introduced, is everywhere working its legitimate results. By abandoning detached posts which are within reach of the enemy's fleet, and which it is therefore impossible to defend, we are enabled to concentrate powerful forces upon essential points, and to baffle the enemy in every attack of vital consequence. The skies begin to grow brighter. Every day we hear of victories upon a small scale, which are, we are very sanguine in believing, but the forerunners of great events. Even the little panic which beset the city last Friday, in connection with the river, has been of essential service. We are warranted in saying that if the enemy get here, it will not be by means of his steamboats up the river. Nor can he reach us by a march from the Peninsula, where the cold steel of Johnston's troops effectually bars the way. At every step he takes on this line, he removes himself farther from his gunboats, and without his gunboats he can do nothing. Our troops on this line are in the highest spirits, and desire nothing so much as a battle. They are in no disposition to count numbers. They feel confident that they will beat the enemy wherever the fight shall come off. Nor do we apprehend anything from the direction of Petersburg. The authorities had well considered that question before Norfolk was abandoned. That evacuation was made with the utmost deliberation, and in pursuance of the system of concentration to which the Government is now fairly committed. It was well and thoroughly considered. The enemy took possession of it Saturday night with a few thousand troops. The presumption is, that he will endeavor to reach Petersburg by the railroad, and thus obtain possession of the Danville road, in pursuance of his plan of hemming us in and cutting off our supplies. Burnside is expected to unite with all his forces in this project. It is unnecessary to say that this scheme will be resisted, and that as it supposes an abandonment of the steamboats, it is the best thing that can happen for us.—*Rich'd Dispatch, 12th.*

"Stonewall" Jackson.—This brave and self-reliant hero reports that "God has blessed our arms with victory." This accords with the character of a Christian soldier, which is accorded him by all. The merit of an important success which scatters the marauders is enhanced by our confidence in the virtues of the commander who attributes to the Almighty the deliverance wrought by a human agent.

We undoubtedly believe that no cause can permanently succeed without the favor of God, but this favor is manifested rather by his vouchsafing to warriors and rulers the practice of virtues essential to military success, than by the immediate miracles which slew the armies of Pharaoh or Sennacherib.

We do not doubt that all soldiers who, like Jackson, are actuated by high principles of morality, are safer and more to be relied on than others equally brave by nature, whose self-indulgence inclines them to rely exclusively on discipline and courage. Such men seldom take good care of their men. They know little of their soldiers' wants, and take no pains to provide for their food, transportation, clothing or medical treatment. All this involves too much trouble. It interferes too much with the comfort which self-indulgent men habitually consider their right.

We have heard that Gen. Jackson's headquarters are often under a tree, and his couch a fence corner—that his equipage is little more than a frying-pan and a blanket; that he sees personally to the execution of his own orders. The effect of this industry, simplicity and attention is evident in the efficiency of his men. No command in this war has endured or effected more than that of Gen. Jackson, and these achievements are greatly attributable to his personal virtues. Jackson is everywhere attentive to the execution of his own orders; by consequence, he has as yet met with no great military misfortune.

When the campaign of Gen. Jackson shall be written, we do not doubt that in courage, vigilance, care of his men, knowledge of his ground, and capacity for sustaining himself under any difficulties, he will be found inferior to no General commanding a Confederate army, unless we accord the palm to that Washington of the West, Sterling Price. Let them share the honors which the modesty of each would accord to the merit of the other.—*Rich. Whig.*

The Blockade in Europe.—The copious extracts which we have recently made from European papers go to show that the Cotton famine is reaching its crisis in England. The tide of destitution is rising fast. For the want of Cotton, says an English paper, "the mills of Lancashire are closed and the hands who used to work them are *starving.*" The question thus becomes a very serious one, and the English papers have again taken to urging the raising of the blockade. The London Standard says "every hour of its prolongation offers new victims to the twin demons Famine and Pestilence; that it is a "fictitious" one; "a fraud upon neutrals;" "entitled to no recognition on the part of other nations;" and that "by recognizing it England is condemning thousands of her men to starvation."

After the Yankee Clothes.—A Corinth correspondent writes to the Charleston Courier of the scenes after Shiloh. Among the incidents related:—

"The [Yankee] prisoners railed somewhat at the ragged, well-worn clothing of our soldiers, and one of them made a humorous speech from the side of a car when here, in which he contended that we would fight a hundred per cent. better with whole garments and a plenty of them; "but," said he, "you'll do anyhow. You're a pretty good-looking set of fellers, take the long run, but I'm d—d if I wouldn't rather see you asleep than awake." Some one shouted to him from the crowd—"I say, old fel', you talk about fine looks, got any baggage along?" "Yes, you lousy son of a whelp, plenty of it. I believe that's all you fight for. You run a man ten miles just to get his clothes."

The Cadets.—The corps of Cadets left the Virginia Military Institute at Lexington, Va., on Thursday, the 1st of May, for Gen. Jackson's camp. They are under the command of Major Ship, and are accompanied by Maj. Gen. Smith, and Col. Preston. We have no doubt that they will do efficient service. Past experience shows that the boys in this war have been amongst the most gallant soldiers.—*Petersburg Express.*

Salt.—A large number of wagons have gone from this and adjoining counties to the Salt Works in Western Virginia for Salt, and we hear of others leaving every day or two.

Salisbury Watchman.

FROM NEW ORLEANS.

In the New Orleans Evening Delta of Thursday, May 1st, we find the following interesting facts:

The occupation of this city, now momentarily expected by the U. S. forces, secures to them the control of the lives and property of 150,000 inhabitants, nearly all of them non-combatants. The property in the city is altogether of the description known all over the world as private property. Of other property, which has been recognized in all other countries, and in all other wars but this, as private, and not subject to seizure in war—that which forms the commerce of our people, and which has contributed mainly to the vast trade of our city—there is little or none left in our port. The cotton, which the U. S. authorities have in other places seized and appropriated, without authority of any law of nations, as recognized by civilized communities, was all consumed the moment the announcement was made that the Federalists had passed the Forts.

This was done by order of the Governor of Louisiana and of the military commander of the Confederate States. Fifteen thousand bales were consumed. The tobacco now stored here, being all held by foreign residents on foreign account, was not destroyed. The specie of the banks, to the amount of twelve or fifteen millions, was removed from the city and placed in a secure place; so of nearly all the stores and other property of the Confederate States. The records of the Court and of all the offices of the Confederate States were in like manner disposed of. There remain the public buildings, the Customhouse, the Post-office and the Mint. Of provisions of every kind, there is a scant supply, barely sufficient for the wants of the people. Of ships and steamers, which ordinarily at this period of the year crowd our wharves, as far as the eye can reach, there is not a single one left. The only ships in our port are the armed ships of the United States. They lie at the head of our principal streets, commanding them with their powerful batteries.

The prospects of any arrival of cotton are poor. By order of the Governor, the cotton on the banks of all the streams has been everywhere set on fire. Not a bale could be picked up by the most diligent and enterprising search. The whole valley of the Mississippi is now being illuminated by the conflagration of the most valuable articles of commerce. The execution of this order of the Government, though not prompted by any motive of the sort, will send grief and misery to the great manufacturing communities of the old world. The Confederate Government and the people aver that they have been forced to this great sacrifice by the enemy's threat and the performance of it, on a small scale, to confiscate this valuable product to their own use. It is a heavy loss to our own people, but they claim no commiseration or sympathy for such sacrifice. They can live without the proceeds of their cotton, and for the present the Southern people are, and will be, content with a bare subsistence. They have planted large crops of cereals, and will soon be quite independent of all other communities for the means of comfortable subsistence.

Such is historically our situation, and in the presence of a hostile military force virtually occupying the city, our functions as public journalists become those of the chronicler of facts, the mere historian of the condition of this city and of the Southwestern Valley of the Mississippi.

Some of our citizens have been unjustly charged with infidelity to the Government, and on mere rumor, or utterly insufficient grounds, subjected to mortification and insult. We have heard of several instances of such conduct on the part of the reckless and thoughtless that are shameful and outrageous. There seems to be a proneness on the part of certain violent, excitable and heedless people to create and foster the very suspicion which all good citizens should desire to see discountenanced, that there exist traitors and bad citizens in our midst. Nothing is more necessary for our safety, our peace and our future, than that our people should present themselves as a unit in the present condition of our affairs.

Are Justices of the Peace Exempt under the Conscription Law?—A friend at Stantonsburg asks us whether Justices of the Peace are considered "Judicial officers," under the Conscription law. We are inclined to the opinion that Justices of the Peace are not "Judicial Officers" in the sense meant by the Congress. Their jurisdiction is local, and they are merely conservators of the peace in their respective neighborhoods. The great body of them have no stated or regular duties to perform; but, in many Counties, there are Justices who constitute a special Court, who are County Court Judges,—and it may be, as they have duties to perform at stated and regular periods, that they are exempts. We suppose there are from four to five thousand Justices in this State, of whom, perhaps, two thousand are conscripts. It could hardly have been the intention of Congress to exempt so large a body of men from the operations of the act.

We will add that we have given this opinion after having consulted eminent lawyers on the subject.—*Raleigh Standard.*

The Yankee Prisoners Here.—By permission of the Commandant, Col. Gibbs, we paid a visit to the Confederate prison in this place last Friday. Several hundred of the prisoners were out in the yard, enjoying themselves variously. Since the weather has become a little warm, it has been found necessary to extend their privileges. They have been allowed, in limited numbers, to spend a day at a time in the yard, within certain lines. The experiment thus far, has proved every way favourable, especially on the health of the men, which exhibits a decided improvement.

Salisbury Watchman.

W. F. College Suspended.—Our readers will regret to learn that the exercises of this institution have been suspended. They were continued until the passage of the conscription bill, though the number of students was considerably reduced. On the passage of the bill, a member of the Faculty wrote to the Secretary of War enquiring whether students would be exempted. He was told that they would not; and, as all but five of those in attendance were subject to military rule, it was thought advisable to suspend.

We regret this, but perhaps it is best. The suspension will be only temporary; and the regular exercises of the institution will be resumed, at the close of the war, under new and more favorable auspices.—*Biblical Recorder.*

Destructive Fire.—ATLANTA, May 12.—A destructive fire occurred here yesterday. Wallace's warehouse containing 800 bales of cotton, 200 tierces rice, 250,000 pounds government bacon, and other government stores, 200 pounds sugar, oil, and hides, and 10,000 pounds of bacon, nearly all destroyed. The warehouse was destroyed, and the adjoining buildings badly damaged. The total loss is estimated at $100,000; insurance $35,000. The Augusta Insurance and Banking Company lose above $16,000. Two men were seriously injured, one, it is thought mortally.

Speculation in Memphis.—Sugar has advanced over one hundred per cent. in Memphis within the last few days. The Memphis Avalanche more than hints that the rise is caused by the probability that the Federalists will occupy Memphis.

WAR NEWS.

Occupation of Norfolk by the Federals—A Great Panic in the City.—RICHMOND, May 12.—We have important intelligence from Norfolk. The evacuation of that city by our forces has now been completed; but it appears that although the work of evacuation has been in progress for a week, the city was at last surprised.

On Saturday morning it was announced that the enemy had landed in large force (it was said 10,000) at Ocean View, and that their advance was already near the suburbs of the city. The whole population of the city was thrown into a state of the greatest confusion and dismay. It is said that an attempt was made to hold the enemy in check by a small portion of our artillery, while the last of the stores were being removed and the Navy-Yard was being fired.

As the last train, filled with frightened women and children, passed over the Elizabeth river the bridge over that stream was blown up.

It is not known to what point our forces lately evacuating Norfolk have fallen back; but it is supposed that the bulk of them will be withdrawn from the south side of the James, and that immediate measures will be taken for the destruction of the Seaboard and Roanoke railroad, which being built to the extent of many miles on lines of piles through marshy districts, may be destroyed in such a way that the enemy cannot repair its connections.

It is believed that all of our troops, arms, ammunition, quartermaster's and commissary's stores were safely removed. But we regret to hear that the Confederate loss at the Gosport Navy Yard has been immense. An employee in the yard ever since the war commenced, estimates the loss there at six millions or more. A large quantity of very valuable machinery, and some $200,000 worth of copper have been left to the enemy. All the buildings that could be destroyed, were fired and consumed. Some of them being fire proof, could not be so destroyed. The Dry Dock, one of the most costly and perfect establishments of its kind, probably in the world, was blown up. This Dock is said to have cost $5,000,000, and required several years for its construction.

It is a matter of universal regret that the gunboats, which had just been completed and received their armament and stores, were burnt. These could easily have been carried to Richmond, passing to the mouth of James river under the protection of the Merrimac. Four other gunboats, on the stocks, and unfinished, were also consigned to the flames. The splendid transport Wm. Selden and a number of smaller steamers, tugs, etc., were all burnt.

PETERSBURG, May 12.—The startling intelligence of the destruction of the iron-clad Merrimac yesterday morning, was brought to this city last night, by passengers from Suffolk. The news is almost incredible—and we earnestly hope may prove untrue. It is stated that the vessel was set fire to on Saturday night, and the crew made their escape to Suffolk. Yesterday morning between 5 and 6 o'clock, the pride of the Confederate Navy was blown to atoms by the terrible explosion of her magazine. Gentlemen who came up last night, state this to be undoubtedly true, and we also understand that several of the Merrimac's crew came up. This is the most unpleasant piece of intelligence we have yet heard. The Merrimac was looked upon as impregnable, and as affording ample protection to James river.

The Startling Intelligence Confirmed.—At a late hour last night we ascertained beyond all doubt, that the above intelligence is certainly correct. The chief pride and reliance of the Southern Confederacy, and the terror of the yankee navy, was blown to atoms yesterday morning at 5 o'clock, by direction of the Confederate authorities. Does the history of the world furnish a parallel to this stupendous piece of folly? We think not. The Merrimac was provisioned for a crew of 350 men twelve months, loaded with coal to her fullest capacity, carried the most powerful armament known to modern warfare, and was perfectly invulnerable to the combined attacks of the whole yankee fleet. What that fleet could not hope to do has been accomplished by the Confederates.—*Express.*

The Richmond Enquirer of the 13th has gathered from a gentleman who was on board, the following particulars of the Virginia's last days:

It had been determined that the Virginia, after the evacuation of Norfolk, should be brought into the James. Com. Tatnall, her commander, was requested by Gen. Huger to protect him on the water side while he remained in Norfolk, with the promise that 20 hours' notice of the time of the intended evacuation should be given. The Virginia accordingly lay at Sewell's point. The treachery of Byers, who carried over the Confederate tug-boat A. C. White, to the enemy, revealed also the dismantled condition of Norfolk, and precipitated the coming of Wool's troops and the departure of ours. The evacuation was thus effected not only without the promised notice to Com. Tatnall, but he was not aware of it until it was completed.

Com. Tatnall now, at 7 o'clock on Saturday evening, had to choose between two courses. The one was to brave Fortress Monroe and the large fleet there, (including the Monitor and other iron-clads,) and attempt to enter York river—the other was to carry out the purpose of entering the James.

The latter still seemed the most eligible, and was determined upon. Meanwhile, difficulties had interposed. The treachery of Byers had caused the enemy to send gunboats up the James the same day. They were also fully aware of the intentions of the Virginia, and prepared to obstruct them.

The pilots required that the Virginia should be lightened so as to reduce her draught from 22 feet to 18. At 11 o'clock on Saturday night the crew set about this heavy work. The ship was thereby raised out of the water so as to expose her woodwork, her rudder and propeller. She was therefore left in no condition for fighting. Hence her escape up the James required that she should make the trip that night. At this condition of things the pilots interposed to say that the westerly winds had so reduced the water in the river, and such was the lowness of the tide that they could not undertake to carry the vessel up the James. Why they reserved this communication to such an hour needs explanation.

The condition of the ship was now such as to render the other course at first entertained, as an alternative, a simple folly. Nothing remained in the judgment of her commander but to destroy her.

At two o'clock on Saturday night, she was run ashore near Craney Island, and the crew commenced debarking in two small boats. At three they were all on land, and commenced their march to Suffolk. On leaving they fired the Virginia. At five she blew up with a tremendous explosion. The crew bent their course towards Suffolk, 22 miles distant, which point they reached on Sunday afternoon. Some of them have arrived in our city.

The Virginia was provisioned for one month; and but for the course induced by the pilots, might have remained longer afloat, and taken the chances of escaping or hewing her way through the enemy's fleet. But the offer to take her up the James if the draught were reduced to 18 feet, caused the virtual dismantling of the ship for all purposes; and when it was then declared that the low stage of the water rendered it impossible to bring her up with the despatch requisite under the circumstances, the escape of her crew from the fast inclosing lines of the enemy, who were already at Pig's Point, allowed no waste of time in her destruction. Strict inquiry will doubtless be made into the combination of circumstances that constrained this painful necessity. So far as fault shall be discovered any where, it must be *rigorously punished.* So far as the result is due to those accidents which make up so large a part of war, we must submit with equanimity.

But as we are at present circumstanced, the loss of the Virginia need not disturb us much. Practically it is of small import; for we had already washed our hands of the water. The closure of the James below Richmond, is all that we were expecting of the Virginia. It may be effected without her, perfectly and completely. We can imagine no deeper disgrace than will overtake our engineers and our authorities generally, if they fail in this. The people are ready to bestow their labor in unlimited amount at the call of government. A narrow, crooked stream, with high banks, affords admirable opportunity for the employment of obstructions, batteries, sharpshooters, etc. Let the fate of the Virginia give renewed energy to the preparations which are still progressing, and the loss will be repaired.

The Petersburg Express says, "it was determined to destroy her, and steps were immediately taken to consummate the deed. Her roof, already covered with tallow and other fatty matter, was saturated with oil, and her decks also received a copious supply of the same material. Her crew, numbering 350, were then safely disembarked in small boats, and ten men detailed to apply the torch. This was accomplished by laying small trains of powder from each port to various parts of the ship, which upon being ignited, speedily enveloped the noble vessel in a sheet of flame. The waters were brilliantly illuminated for miles, but not a boat's crew from any of the Federal vessels dared approach the burning mass to extinguish the fire and secure the prize. She continued to burn until 4 o'clock, when the fire reached her magazine and caused an explosion which shook the earth at Suffolk, 32 miles distant, and sent her enormous guns and nine hundred tons of iron plating flying in the air to a height of three or four hundred feet.

"The plates, heated to a cherry red, we are told, presented an awful but magnificent sight. A moment or two more, the flying fragments fell into the water, and all that remained of the most formidable war vessel ever constructed, was her charred and burning hull. We can well imagine the fiendish delight with which our enemies chuckled over this annihilation of what had been to them a "rod of terror," since the 6th of March last, and how soundly Gen. Wool must have slept for the first time since the terrible havoc of that memorable day."

Latest from Portsmouth.—We have intelligence from Portsmouth as late as Sunday 10 a. m. Up to that hour our informant states, that Confederate flags were flying all over the city, but that the gridiron banner was nowhere to be seen. All the cotton and naval stores of every description, were burnt, and the tobacco was placed beyond the reach of the invaders, by knocking the ends from the boxes, and pitching them into the Elizabeth. The people generally submitted to this execution of the government's orders without a murmur. We heard of but one or two instances where objection was interposed, and in these the Provost Marshal quickly settled matters by the aid of an armed force. The destruction of the Navy Yard and all the buildings, including stores, timber, etc. was complete.

We are again assured by those likely to know, that nothing of value in either the Quartermaster or Commissary's Department at Norfolk was left to the invaders. Here, as in Portsmouth, the cotton, etc., was all burnt. It is stated by a hundred or more persons that a man in Norfolk, a well known dealer in West India fruit, before the blockade, was hung by order of the military authorities for his outspoken sympathy with the Lincoln cause; and that a man recently employed in the Navy Yard named Mahone was shot through the head for a similar offence.

The proprietor of the Day Book, Mr. Hathaway, has determined to remain in Norfolk and publish the Day Book, if the Lincoln authorities will permit. He will now be enabled to procure the late Northern news without trouble.—*Pet. Ex., 13th.*

From the Peninsula.—RICHMOND, May 12.—We have intelligence that the main body of our forces on the Peninsula have invested the line of the Chickahominy, and are now about 18 miles from Richmond. A general action was expected, and on Saturday our men remained all day in line of battle. The enemy is confronting our main lines at the distance of about three miles. Yesterday there was a slight skirmish of artillery. Our men are in excellent spirits at the prospect of a general engagement.

There appears to be a strong indication of a general action on the Peninsula to-day.—*Ex.*

From the Peninsula.—RICHMOND, May 13.—We learn that President Davis and General Lee went down yesterday to our line of defence on the Chickahominy. At a late hour yesterday reliable information was received that McClellan's forces had fallen back, and the supposition is, that astute general is about to join his forces with Burnside, and attempt operations on the south side of the James river, to which consummation of his plans the evacuation of Norfolk has broadly and plainly opened the way.

Through a gentleman who has obtained sight of a late copy of the Baltimore Sun, we learn that that paper published some days ago an official dispatch addressed by General McClellan to the President, in which he writes, "*Yorktown is ours, and we will press the rebels to the wall.*" This dispatch was succeeded by one of later date, in which it was announced that "the rebels were *in superior force.*" This is very good as a preface to the news of the battle of Williamsburg, which by this time is fully known in Washington.

Examiner.

PETERSBURG, May 13.—A couple of gentlemen from the army of the Peninsula, who reached Richmond Monday afternoon, state that McClellan's army was just this side of New Kent Court House on the morning of that day, and Gen. Johnston's forces were but three miles ahead, hotly pressed by the Yankees. It was thought that Gen. Johnston was endeavoring to reach a point on the Chickahominy, known as Bottom's Bridge, but nine miles distant, where he would make a stand. If the supposition be correct, the great trial of strength between the two armies, cannot be well deferred much longer than to-day.

Bottom's Bridge in New Kent county is on the main stage road between Williamsburg and Richmond, and but fifteen miles from the latter city. The country in the immediate vicinity is admirably adapted for a battle field, and one in which cavalry and artillery can be used most advantageously. It is also in easy marching distance of Richmond, and our forces can be reinforced from the capital as rapidly as may be required by any emergency which may occur. But should the uncertainties of battle throw the scale against the Confederates at Bottom's Bridge, another advantageous position is presented at Boar Swamp, in Henrico county, six miles West of the Bridge, and nine from Richmond. The latter is possibly the best position, and while a show of fight may be made at Bottom's Bridge, it is not unlikely the great struggle will occur at the Swamp.—*Express.*

Jackson's Victory.—The following is from Gov. Letcher's correspondent, A. W. Harman:

"STAUNTON, May 10.—Gen. Jackson dispatches that we have gained a brilliant victory. The enemy are in full flight and hotly pursued. Our loss is 40 killed and 200 wounded. The enemy's loss is very heavy. They left their dead and wounded on the field."

"STAUNTON, May 10.—The enemy's loss at McDowell's was 400 killed and wounded. In their flight they burned all of their baggage and wagons, our forces pursuing them closely. Part of our wounded have arrived here."

Later.—RICHMOND, May 12.—From passengers by the Central train yesterday afternoon, we have some further particulars of this fight. Up to Saturday evening, the enemy were still retreating, and Gen. Jackson pursuing them, but with not much prospect of coming up with them. They had taken the Franklin road through the county of Pendleton, which is the most direct route to Cumberland, Md. Prisoners captured represent that Gen. Fremont was expected to reinforce Milroy on the day the fight occurred.

Our loss in the fight was 300 killed and wounded, principally in the 12th Georgia regiment, which suffered severely. We captured in the engagement about one hundred boxes of fixed ammunition, from 400 to 500 Enfield rifles and Minnie muskets, 60 to 75 cavalry saddles, and from 150 to 200 head of cattle. These latter were afterwards claimed by citizens of the county of Highland, from whom they had been stolen by the enemy. Citizens of the neighborhood state that the loss of the enemy in the fight of Thursday was very heavy, and believed to be from 1,200 to 1,800.

Dispatch.

Further Reports from the Valley.—RICHMOND, May 13.—A report reached here last night by the Central train that Gen. Jackson, who, last dispatches stated, was pursuing the enemy, had come upon the Yankees in Pendleton county, and had achieved another victory. No particulars are given to enable us to judge of the credit or likelihood of the report.

From Southwestern Virginia—Another Victory.—An official dispatch was received by Gen. Lee yesterday from Gen. Heth, stating that the Confederate troops had repulsed the enemy in the neighborhood of Giles Court-House. The contents of the dispatch are, in brief, that about sunrise Saturday morning we had attacked the enemy's forces and dispersed them. No particulars are given.—*Examiner, 12th.*

The Lynchburg Virginian says of this affair: "We are reliably informed that intelligence reached this city Saturday night, from Newbern, that our forces attacked the enemy near Giles C. H., and succeed in routing them, capturing thirty horses, and recapturing the stores that fell into the possession of the enemy when our forces evacuated Giles C. H. We were unable to ascertain the number of killed or wounded on either side."

The Battle at Corinth.—RICHMOND, May 12.—The following dispatch has been received at the War Department.

"CORINTH, May 9.—To Gen. S. Cooper: We attacked the enemy to-day and drove him from his position several miles.

G. T. BEAUREGARD.

MOBILE, May 10.—Another battle occurred at Corinth yesterday, resulting in the repulse of the enemy. Generals Bragg and Van Dorn advanced on the morning of the 9th, at eleven o'clock, and after a sharp fight of three hours drove them two miles beyond Farmington.

About five thousand were engaged on each side. Our casualties were few in number.

We captured a large amount of clothing and knapsacks, and took possession of the Federal telegram line to Farmington.

The enemy's loss is very heavy.

The Confederates offered a general battle but it was declined.

MOBILE, May 10.—The Corinth correspondent of the Advertiser says he has just returned from our front.

The enemy have been driven across Seven Mile creek, and are running like sheep.

It appears that Pope's division of the Federal army alone occupied Farmington.

Halleck, with the main body of the Federal army, is still on the river.

The Federals retreated so rapidly that we were unable to capture many prisoners.

The Confederates are returning to Corinth.

It is reported that the Confederate forces are operating down the Tennessee river, and have captured a large number of prisoners and a large amount of property at Paris and Paducah.

Further Details from Corinth.—AUGUSTA, GA., May 12, 1862.—The Savannah Republican's Corinth correspondent of the 10th inst., says: All is quiet here (Corinth,) to-day. It is believed the enemy is slowly advancing on our lines by three routes.

Federal prisoners taken yesterday, say that four thousand of their troops were masked behind the Seven Mile Creek.

The Morning News says that a Confederate picket of five men captured a barge with fifteen Yankees, at White Marsh Island below Savannah on Sunday, (yesterday.)

The Montgomery Advertiser of this morning, says that the Navy Yard and other property at Pensacola has been blown up and burned by the Confederates.

CORINTH, May 10.—The enemy, although claiming to outnumber us two to one, and threatening to gobble up Beauregard's army at one mouthful, refused battle yesterday, and fled to their gunboats.

They were hotly pursued by the Confederates, and many prisoners are being now brought in.

Nothing further to-day.

From Fort Pillow—A Success on the Water.—Dispatches have been received in this city, which are supposed to be reliable, stating that one of our steam rams in the vicinity of Fort Pillow, on the Mississippi, had sunk one of the mortar boats of the enemy and two of his gunboats.—*Ib.*

A Remarkable Gun.—The Williams gun has been achieving wonders wherever it has been tried. A Kentucky officer, with a few marksmen, took it out a few days ago, and it brought down the game at *eighteen hundred yards*, just twice the longest range of the enemy's weapons. At twelve hundred yards it was as reliable as most guns at three hundred. The inventor of this gun lives within a stone's throw of the place where we write. This deadly weapon has been invented a whole year, during which time he has sought in vain to have it introduced. At last he has succeeded. The General who ordered the experiments which have resulted as are described has given such an account of them that a certain number has been ordered. If we had had them a year ago, they might by this time have changed the whole face of the war.—*Richmond Dispatch.*

Cool.—The following incident is related of a young Confederate soldier, wounded at Corinth. A lad of fifteen or sixteen was so badly wounded that his leg had to be taken off. When he had recovered from the effects of the chloroform, he was asked how he felt? "Feel," said he, "first rate! That old leg has bothered me ever since I was born. I've had it broken twice, and laid in bed six months with a sprained knee. It has been a d—d unlucky leg, anyhow; but now I'll have a wooden one, and the Yankees may shoot at that all day."