

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE MERRIMAC.

No event of the war has created more intense excitement, nor a greater outburst of popular indignation, than has the destruction of this formidable iron-clad war vessel.

It is stated that there are but two rivers in the Confederate States which can accommodate a vessel drawing as much water as did the Merrimac. When she last left the Navy Yard, her draft was 22 feet.

A council was now held among the officers, and it was determined to try and get into James River, but upon consultation with the pilots, the commander was assured that the vessel could not be run in James River, unless her draft was reduced to 18 feet.

To think of giving battle in the now exposed condition was out of the question, and to remain in her then condition rendered her capture only a matter of time.

The plates, heated to a cherry red, were laid, 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.

Her destruction has caused many a heart to throb with painful anxiety for their fate, but if she could not have been made useful for the purpose desired, then it was far better she should have been burnt a thousand times than to have fallen into the hands of the enemy.

Salt from Smoke Houses.—Mr. James D. Matthews has shown us a specimen of salt procured from the earth in his smoke house.

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 grid-iron banner was no where to be seen.

The destruction of the Navy Yard and all the buildings, including stores, timber, etc., was complete. The officer's quarters in the Yard were spared, for two or three reasons—the most potent being the dangerous proximity of the buildings near, owned by private citizens.

We have no later reliable information from Norfolk, than that already given, there are many rumors. One is that the Atlantic and National Hotels, Norfolk, have been burnt.

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.

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.

THE SITUATION.

The evacuation of Yorktown and Norfolk opens a new act of the drama in Eastern Virginia. About the wisdom of the first of the above movements, we never had the slightest doubt.

It is possible that the evacuation of Norfolk and the destruction of the Merrimac, the wisdom of which measures we are under the painful necessity of doubting, until we are better enlightened on the subject than we now are, may change the present Peninsular programme of McClellan, and thus lead the new moves on the military chess-board.

The Despot's Rule.—We understand that Gen. Wool sent a flag of truce into Norfolk Saturday morning, informing the citizens that they would be allowed 48 hours to take the oath of allegiance to the Lincoln Government.

A man getting out of an omnibus, a few days ago, made use of the two rows of knees as banisters to steady himself, at which the ladies took offence, and one of them said aloud, "A perfect savage!"

"HISTORY" PHILOSOPHY TEACH BY EXAMPLE.

There are thousands of facts presented by History as Examples to the Southern Confederacy in this its great struggle for Liberty and Law and Life.

The Charleston Mercury has made amends for some of its assaults upon the Administration, so productive of disaffection and discouragement, when we need and have a right to expect words of confidence and hope—by copying at great length from Macaulay's Review of the Life of Frederic the Great of Prussia, the eloquent detail of the Seven Years' War in which he established not only his own fame as a General but the independence of his country, and laid deep and broad the foundation of its future prosperity and power.

Who can read of this—and the detail, running through many pages, is far more interesting than we can make it in our brief space—without feeling confident of ultimate success? Frederic, though having right on his side in that war, was an ambitious, selfish, and cruel tyrant.

THE CONDITION OF MEMPHIS.

The Western correspondent of the Charleston Courier gives the following description of the condition of Memphis, Tennessee:

The occupation of New Orleans, of course opens the mouth of the Mississippi, and Federal gunboats have already started up the river in chase of one of our escaping steamers. They are looked for in the vicinity of Memphis within four days—a contingency which your correspondent will sagaciously anticipate by "pegging out."

A large portion of the so called "Home Guard" are among those who will tender their respects to Federal soldiers. The ladies, as ever, are true as steel, together with hundreds of brave men who cannot leave; but besides these, the fighting population being largely represented in the field, few can be singled out with whom the Almighty Dollar is not of vastly more consequence than the interests of the Confederacy.

A Difference.—The whole world knows of and will never forget, the conduct of the Yankee regiments which left the Manassas battle field on the morning of the battle, and after the battle had commenced, because their three months' term of service expired on that day.

DOINGS OF THE FEDERALISTS IN NEW ORLEANS.

Richmond, May 12.—The following is a copy of a despatch received by the Secretary of State to-day:

CAMP MOON, May 12.—To Honorable J. P. Benjamin: General Butler, on the 11th, took forcible possession of the city. The office of the Consul of the Netherlands was searched, as also the person of the Consul, and the key of the vault was taken from him. In the vault were eight hundred thousand dollars, transferred by the citizens from the bank of Hopes, of Amsterdam, to pay interest on bonds.

GUERRILLAS AT WORK.

We learn from the Richmond Examiner of the 14th inst, that

Our guerrilla bands in Northwestern Virginia have been doing good work. They made, a few days since, a descent on Sommerville, the county seat of Nicholas county, drove out the Yankees, taking a number of prisoners and capturing their baggage and stores.

Our men then followed up and took the enemy's stronghold on Chest Mountain, capturing a number of prisoners, together with all the baggage, and put the remainder of the Federal force to flight.

Judge Swaine, of Memphis, Tennessee, a few days since, in the case of two men who claimed exemption from military duty on the ground of foreign birth, that foreigners who are transient simply passing through the country, or remaining here temporarily, are exempt from military duty.

The reported landing of Yankee forces at Swanboro', in Onslow county, turns out to have been a less important matter than had been supposed. The report probably originated in the landing of a small party from a boat or boats, who however did not remain long, but no doubt returned to the vessel from which they came.—Wil. Jour.

The evacuation of Norfolk could simply a matter of time, after its chief supplies were cut off by the occupation of Eastern North Carolina. The fall of Roanoke Island, which need not have fallen, cost the Confederacy uncounted millions, and untold numbers of men.

After the back door was opened by the sacrifice of Roanoke Island, nothing short of a terrible and decisive overthrow of the Federal army of the Potomac could have relieved Norfolk of the coil which was gradually tightening around her.

Messrs. Editors:—Wilmington has not yet been attacked by the enemy—but in there not offered a strong temptation for him to attack us? Have we not piled up on our wharves at least 100,000 barrels of ruin? This ruin, in New York market, would bring near one half million of dollars.—Wil. Journal.

Cotton Seed Oil.—Messrs. Stephens & Whinnant have got their Oil Mill in operation near this place and are making Oil, though in limited quantity as yet. We have tried the oil on our Press, and find it answers for lubricating purposes very well.

The Ohio Legislature refused to pass a law allowing the troops of that State to vote while at the seat of war.

THE GUNBOAT EXPEDITION ON THE JAMES—RECRUITMENT, ETC.

We learn that the enemy's gunboat expedition in the river appeared early yesterday morning in front of the obstructions at Drury's Bluff, and about half-past nine o'clock fired a shell, which fell short, and then a shot, which passed over the batteries, with the intention, it is supposed, of determining the range of their fire.

The prospect of an immediate demonstration of the enemy's gunboats on the river is not entertained, unless by the dastardly creatures who are already in flight from Richmond on account of their fears, who are packing their cellars with manufactured tobacco and supplies of every description, into which they have created their Confederate funds.

There is no occasion for panic. Let our citizens determine with one accord to repress the excitement of their fears and to meet the future with spirit and dignity and firmness. It must be weeks before the operations of McClellan on the South side of the James can get the city in any critical extremity.

In the meantime every moment is precious in increasing the defenses of the river. There is an important proposition on foot, to which we are not at liberty to refer without conveying information to the enemy, but it shows a desperate valor on the part of the brave men who have volunteered for the task, and an undiminished spirit on the part of our soldiers and officers that only needs direction to give it effect.

It has been suggested to increase the immediate defenses of the city by turning the water out of the ship at the lower end of the canal, and converting it into a battery commanding the head of the river in the immediate vicinity of the city.

We direct attention to a call published in another column on the subject of our city defenses, and addressed to the many Washingtonians and Marylanders who may desire an opportunity of distinguishing their attachment to the South by a special corps to undertake a particular task in the defense of Richmond.

More Masked Batteries for the Yankees.—Notwithstanding the presence of the Lincoln battery in Clarksville, Tenn., they have been unable to squeeze out the patriotism of the ladies of that city.

The ladies of Clarksville have, right under the very noses of their Yankee oppressors, formed themselves into a bona fide company, well drilled, which they call, very appropriately and doubtless in derision of the well known feat of said oppressors, "The Rebel Masked Battery."

We learn that at the battle of last Monday week, near Williamsburg, Va., the 5th N. C. Regiment, under command of Col. D. K. McRae, was among those most hotly engaged, and conducted itself splendidly.

A Yankee Thief Killed.—It is stated that a Yankee soldier went to the home of a gentleman, just previous to the fight at South Mills, and robbed him of all the money he had and some bonds. The next day he was found dead on the field of battle, and the gentleman examined the body and recovered the stolen property.—Fay Obs.