

The activity of the enemy's cavalry has, from the beginning, annoyed and injured the people of Virginia beyond measure, and the general impunity with which it has cut railroads, burnt bridges and farm-houses, devastated the fields, and outraged the female and the aged inhabitants, has thrown much and just discredit upon the arm of our own service, which should have met and checked it here as FORREST and MORGAN and STEPHEN D. LEE have done in the West. But when that much is said, all is said. We do not recollect a single instance in which the operations of the Confederate army have been prevented or delayed by a cavalry raid. It is impossible to give these disreputable and unsoldierly affairs that permanence, either in their own duration, or in the effects which they leave, which would seriously embarrass the supply or the transportation of an army, or a capital. They furnish material for a despatch from some such contemptible man as SPEARE, or KAUTO, or SHERIDAN, in which he may bray his fill over the number of rails he has orn up, the horses he has stolen, the dwellings he has pillaged and burnt, the number of "prisoners of war" he has brought off—the said prisoners being men of sixty, or cripples, or negroes; they prevent the transmission of the mails for several days; they cost the railroad companies some expenditure of rails and sills; but they leave the earthwork of the road, and the American railway is of such a character that a week's work, when the machine shops and organization of the company are complete, repairs the uttermost damage they can do. It is strange that a people like the Yankees do not know this. Perhaps they do; but the pleasure of safely tormenting non-combatants, and of making a sensation in the papers, render these cavalry raids the delight of their army and of the nation. There is but one means to deprive them of it—to place these mounted thieves where they should be: without the pale of honourable war, and hanging every one that is taken, on the spot where he is so taken. Whenever the game is played on that principle it will be brought to a speedy conclusion.

The raid on the Danville road, while partaking of all the piratical and dishonourable traits which characterize the others, has something like a strategical object. The cavalry under KAUTZ was intended to be the connecting link between the armies of HUNTER and GRANT. Its mission an indication—though not a proof—that the enemy is not yet well informed of what has happened to HUNTER. The idea that a body of cavalry would be sufficient to extend GRANT'S line across the Danville road is too feeble and stupid for GRANT and MEADE. Even if HUNTER'S army had gotten down there it would have been wholly insufficient to hold the ground, but there would have been some possibility of supporting it. Without HUNTER'S

army, the worst work of that cavalry is done, and it can be repaired in a few days.

We should also think, from the tenour of General LEE's despatch, that some considerable penalty would be paid by KAUTZ for his failure, had not the country suffered so many disappointments at the hands of our cavalry on similar occasions. HUNTER cannot come down the Southside to the assistance of KAUTZ; and the lodgment on the Weldon road, the gate by which he gained the upper Appomattox, is closed. A superior force of Confederate cavalry has cut his column in two, and defeated all efforts to reform. This statement looks ugly for KAUTZ. It is not clear how one portion of his command is to get out of the net; yet if KAUTZ is caught, the news of the fact will be received with a pleasure much heightened by surprise.

The public has entertained stronger hopes of the capture or complete destruction of the eighteen thousand villains who have devastated the Valley. For ourselves, there is no disappointment—at least since the first news arrived from Lynchburg. From that moment it was evident that HUNTER would get away, as AVERILL did last winter. If anything better turns up now, it will be the result of arrangements not even suspected. When he commenced his retreat there was nothing in his track but the mountains, and it was reasonable to suppose that his flight would be at least as rapid as any pursuit which could be made after him. So it has turned out. HUNTER is off. He has lost a thousand or so of his men; the telegram published to-day says his ammunition train, "a mile long," was blown up; that his wagon train was captured; and his whole army was almost captured—but not quite, because of the non-transmission of an order. If this information is exact, HUNTER will be in no condition to besiege towns or fight battles—for sometime to come, at least.—It may be safely added, without the assistance of the telegraph, that his horses are ruined, his men demoralized and disorganized. It will take a considerable period of time and much work to put them into fighting trim. But if he is permitted to establish his quarters peaceably in Lewisburg, he will recuperate, and one day again give the militia reserves of Lynchburg and Charlottesville a chance for glory. Let us trust, however, that General IMBODEN and the cavalry of the Valley are now competent to render a residence in Lewisburg unprofitable and unhealthy for HUNTER.