

A REBEL LETTER.

How the People of Petersburg bear shelling.

A letter from a rebel officer in Petersburg, dated in August, has been communicated to the *London Morning Herald*. The writer says:

"The shelling of Petersburg has been much slackened within the last two weeks. Now, often not more than half a dozen shells are thrown into the city in the course of twenty-four hours; but still it would not be prudent for families to return to their homes. Many of the wealthiest people are in tents on the outskirts of the town. You have no idea how well ladies have accommodated themselves to this mode of life. Except on Saturday, I was in Petersburg on the last shelling of any extent. I had been in bed and was nearly asleep when a shell passed by the window of my room, and crashed into a neighboring house, of course waking me fully. For half an hour the shells came into town every few minutes. Although several houses in the neighborhood of where I was were struck, none came nearer to me than the yard; at the best it is not pleasant. Now, is it not barbarous this shelling of a city in the middle of the night, when no object beyond killing women and children can be gained? Friday last, for the first time, I visited the lines. At the time there was no firing and officers walked with impunity over the hills in the rear of and on the breastworks less than a hundred yards from the Yankee lines. Had the firing opened of course I would have made for the trenches as rapidly as possible. These unauthorized truces are queer affairs. When in the heat of the day the firing has sensibly slackened some soldier holds up a paper on a bayonet, to intimate a desire to exchange. The same is done on the other side. The firing gradually stops on that part of the line; pickets are thrown forward by both belligerents, and for a few hours all is quiet; finally, some one not being able to resist a tempting shot, tries it; then the pickets run to their holes, and all officers on the hills or breastworks skedaddle to the trenches, from which, if they are on curiosity duty only, as I was, they get out perhaps not until night. Fortunately there was no attempt at firing during my visit, and I had ample opportunity to inspect a portion of the lines, and in such full view that I could see the Yankee heads above their fortifications."