

# LETTER FROM GRANT'S ARMY.

Battery No. 4, before Petersburg }  
Oct. 30th, 1864. }

On right and left, and here in front of Petersburg, has steel met steel again, and the re-action of the shock finds the belligerents both at bay and secure behind breastworks as before.

The past week has been a busy one with this army. Few imagine the immense labor necessary to a preparation for even a slight advance which is liable to bring on an engagement along the whole line. Heavy forces were concentrated and corresponding reductions made at various points; new batteries were put in position and old ones vacated for the time being; small, isolated camps came in and joined the main body, and all appendages of the army not indispensable to an attack were moved to the rear. Sutlers and civilians withdrew for better security, and to be out of the way of the movements of troops.

This done and the immediate rear of the front usually so noisy and active had the appearance of a country common after a "muster." Only batteries of heavy pieces here and there with small supports of Infantry, occupied the place. The stillness presaging the storm became oppressive. The usual daily trains were suspended and only a train or two of empty cars with plenty of straw and other accommodations, such as sick and wounded men would require to bear them from the field, passed on towards the "left." Hearing few particulars, men about the fort looked anxious, and passed conjectures as to the nature of the move being made, or discussed in groups the latest news picked up at neighboring forts, or gleaned from some stragling soldier. Rumors are afloat that Petersburg has rung its last secession Sabbath bell, and Richmond is to be in the Union before January. Now the "Cockade City" is at last to lift its hat to Gen. Grant, and the capture of Richmond is to end the long campaign. The slightest possible premises afford sufficient grounds for the most important conclusions; "the exposed condition of our "front" is to invite an attack, while Union forces will march into the city from another direction." Sherman's game at Atlanta is to be repeated;—because our fort has been latterly made more secure by the completion of an epaulement, "a cavalry raid is apprehended from the rear;" and "the new works about City Point are designed to prevent its capture or destruction."

The boom of a distant cannon, a circumstance of almost hourly occurrence for months past, now became the signal for a visit to the most prominent points of observation about the camp. Thus passed a day or two of intense suspense, when boom, boom, boom, came echoing against the beams of the morning sun from miles away, telling that the battle had actually begun. All day the conflict raged more or less fiercely. Though the distance was too great for small arms to be heard by us, the character of the artillery indicated that it was not alone; besides a courier or orderly from near the scene would drop a word or two to relieve our anxiety as he hurried by with dispatches or accompanied his superior down the line. Now as the enemy was being hotly pushed was his time to divert the tide flowing too strongly against him by a raid round the left, or an attempt on the apparently weakened lines in front, for which we along the quiet parts of the works were on the lookout, and the hope that such attempts would be made, were repeatedly expressed. Officers scanned the lines with their glasses to discover the first appearance of such movements, but, like our own, his line was still and showed no sign of unusual forces. So evening closed with no demonstration near us, only a report that rebel troops were massing just on our left. At tattoo the men are cautioned to have arms and equipments ready, and to "fall in" at once if called. The lights were out and the soft patter of the rain upon the roof was gradually wooing the mind from the fever of war to sweet thoughts of home and friends and loved ones, which tired nature's sweet restorer was fast weaving into dreams, when we were startled into wide wakefulness by the order to "fall in," and the close reports of many heavy guns and a perfect roll-call of musketry. A very few minutes found us inside the fort with a regiment of Infantry already under arms. There was a charge of some kind evidently being made close on our left in front of the City. The sky was literally lighted up by balls of fire; one, two, three, a half dozen and more shells were in the air at a time from our guns, which hissed a mad salute to the rebel shots passed on their way to the enemy's ranks. Gradually the firing slackened until, except the now fully aroused pickets, and the periodic discharge of a cannon, it was quiet again. The men were ordered to their quarters with the same cautionary command as before; twice more during that rainy and broken night were they out and under arms.

Nothing came of it, however, and the morning brought intelligence that the disturbance was occasioned by a visit of the 142d Pennsylvania to the rebel works; the rebels did not remain to welcome them but precipitately fled to their next and stronger line. After accomplishing their object, which was to ascertain their real strength, and spiking the only piece of ordnance found, the regiment returned. The result of the engagement on the left near the South side road was a development of the real force of the enemy there, and a positive though not an extensive advance of the line. Butler on the right towards Richmond, was not idle; heavy reports from time to time from that direction indicated that the right hand was helping the left, and to sum up the whole it appears that, aside from a knowledge gained of the enemy's strength at all points, Gen. Grant has made one more of his short, firm steps, which are never taken backwards.

AMIDOWN.