

THE WAR NEWS.

Yesterday was another quiet day. There was no news and but few rumours concerning military operations along the lines of the army of Northern Virginia.

The day also passed off quietly in Petersburg, with the exception of the monotonous and never-ceasing shelling of the town by the enemy. We hear nothing more of Grant's rumoured change of base. Military men believe he has no intention of abandoning his present position, though from time to time he may vary the disposition of his troops according to circumstances.

His contracting his front and withdrawing his left from the neighbourhood of the Petersburg and Weldon railroad, can be explained without supposing the intention on his part of abandoning the siege of Petersburg. The neighbourhood he occupied near the railroad is, at all times, remarkable for the scarcity of water. After the protracted drought that has prevailed, no water at all can be obtained there. It was necessary, therefore, that he should bring the troops on this part of his line nearer the river.

But, even if water were abundant, we doubt if he would have attempted to hold it after the experience Mahone has administered to him there on two occasions. The bravado of holding the railroad south of Petersburg cost him seventeen hundred prisoners on one day and five hundred on another, not to enumerate the killed and wounded. He could not afford the expense incident to holding the position.

FROM CHARLESTON.

An officer of the army, who reached the city yesterday morning, brings the report that, on last Sunday night, the Yankees made an attack in launches on Fort Johnson, in Charleston harbour, and were defeated with great loss in killed, wounded and prisoners. We captured five of the launches, containing the commander of the expedition and one hundred and forty prisoners.

YANKEE BURNING THE CROPS ON JAMES RIVER.

Dense columns of smoke were visible yesterday morning down the river, apparently distant twelve or fifteen miles. This smoke rather increased than diminished during the day. Towards evening persons arriving in the city from the direction of the conflagration, reported that, before daylight yesterday morning, the Yankees crossed from the south side and set fire to the wheat shocks on the Turkey Island and Carls' Neck plantations. At last accounts the fire had extended from the wheat fields to the woods, and was, owing to the wind and parched condition of everything, raging with terrific fury and making wide spread devastation. It was feared that every thing of value, houses, fences, and crops, would be swept away by the devouring element. We hope the accounts that have reached us of this conflagration have been exaggerated. We now think it probable that the smoke mentioned yesterday proceeded from harvests which were being burned by order of General Grant.

CANNONADE HEARD IN CHARLOTTESVILLE.

Early last Monday morning the citizens of Charlottesville were startled by the sound of what appeared to be a distant but rapid cannonade. From so great a distance did the sound seem to proceed that it was impossible to decide upon their direction. Most persons believed the firing was in the direction of Winchester; others were equally positive that it was at Petersburg. We know it was not at the latter place, and cannot imagine who should be firing cannon at Winchester; but we do know of a place where many a blank cartridge was fired that morning. At Washington city the day was ushered in with a grand salvo of artillery. Possibly the citizens of Charlottesville heard Abraham Lincoln's Fourth of July guns.

A FOURTH OF JULY INCIDENT.

In front of Mahone's division, southeast of Petersburg, the respective earthworks of the hostile armies are not more than a hundred yards apart. On the morning of the Fourth, the Yankees spread new and gorgeous star-spangled banners to the southern breeze, and their flag bands being brought well up to the front, made the forest resound with their national airs. The Yankee soldiers manifested their enthusiasm by frequent cheers. At length a brass band struck up Yankee Doodle—their own peculiar, only national anthem. As the jig tune was brayed forth, their enthusiasm rose to such a pitch that they could no longer contain themselves. They seemed seized with sudden frenzy, and, leaping to the top of their breastworks, waved their hats and cheered and sprang about for all the world like dancing Dervishes. Our men looked calmly over our intrenchments at this insane exhibition, and when the tune was ended and the excited Yankees subsided into their places, manifested their appreciation of the whole performance by a b-a-a-h! that would have done credit to ten thousand balls of Bashan.

CORRESPONDENTS OF SOUTHERN NEWSPAPERS.

Some of these men hang around this city, or about General Lee's army, and write to their newspapers everything they either hear, see or imagine, without any apparent regard for consequences.