

this force General Wilson set out at one, A. M., on the 23d of June, starting from the vicinity of Prince George Court House. He crossed the Petersburg and Weldon railroad at Beams' station, at which point Colonel Chapman, with the Second brigade of Wilson's own division had a skirmish with a small force of the enemy, which, however, was easily driven.

The expedition moved by way of Diswiddle Court House toward Petersburg and Lynchburg on the south side of the railroad, which they struck at Ford's mill, near Sutherland's station. They then moved down the road, General Kautz in advance, as far as Ford's station, destroying the road as they moved. At Ford's station they captured two trains, comprising sixteen cars with the locomotives, laden with refugees leaving Petersburg. After destroying the depot and captured trains, the command bivouacked at Ford's station for the night.

Early on the morning of the 23d they resumed their march, General Kautz still in advance. Near Nottoway Court House a force of rebel cavalry, comprising two brigades, appeared on the right flank of the column while moving some distance south of the railroad. Colonel Chapman, of the second brigade, formed in line and engaged the enemy.

This was about 3 P. M., and the encounter continued till nearly eight, when the enemy was forced back. General Kautz, who had passed before the enemy had appeared, proceeded the same evening to Burkeville, the junction of the Petersburg with the Richmond and Danville railroad. Here he destroyed all the depots, railroad switches and appendances, and tore up the road as far as possible in every direction from the junction, after which he rested for the night.

General Wilson, who, with the remainder of his force, had bivouacked at Nottoway Court House, on the afternoon of the 24th, advanced across the country to Naberris' station, on the Danville railroad, to meet General Kautz, who was to meet him at that place, destroying the road as he advanced. After forming a junction at that station, the entire force advanced to Keyville and there bivouacked. The work of destruction was resumed early on the 25th, and by 3 P. M. we had reached the vicinity of Stanton bridge, on the Stanton river, having completely destroyed every foot of railroad to that point. The distance from Burkeville, measured on the map, is about thirty-five miles, and adding to portions of the Southside road which were destroyed, the aggregate would not be less than fifty miles, and probably more than that distance.

The Danville railroad was constructed in a fashion known to some extent in the extreme West, but now little used. Instead of ordinary T rail, solid beams of wood, technically called stringers, are placed upon the ties, and along their inner edges are firmly fastened long strips of iron, known as strap rails. The stringers were of yellow pine and, being perfectly dry, it was only necessary here and there to place a few rails from an adjoining trestle, to bridge the gaps in the structure in places. Miles of railroad might have been seen at a time in flames, and at night the whole canopy of the heavens was one glare of light. By day the conflagration, adding to the already suffocating temperature of the atmosphere rendered the heat almost intolerable, and many people living in the vicinity of the railroad were obliged to leave their homes and settle in cooler localities.

The rear of our column moving past the fires kindled by the advance was often compelled to leave the road and move at a respectful distance on the right or left, until, after a little experience, the plan was adopted of leaving depots and other buildings to be fired by those in the rear. The mode in which this work of destruction was accomplished was to dismount a portion of the command and march them parallel with the railroad; face a regiment at a time towards the road, have them advance and ignite the section of road in their front, and then resume the march. It was but the work of a few minutes for a regiment to perform its part, and the whole was accomplished nearly as fast as the column could move.

It is only necessary to remind the public of what is already known, viz: The fact that this railroad is now the only one upon which Lee could depend for communication with the South, Southeast and Southwest, and the only route by which he could bring up troops or supplies to Richmond or Petersburg; and this being remembered, it is easy to appreciate the vast importance of the destruction of so large a portion of it. Even with the best facilities for repairing, it would require several weeks to place it in running order; weeks of exceedingly precious time to the enemy, and considering the difficulties which surround them, including the army's worst want of material, and the constant liability to interruption, it is doubtful whether they will succeed in reconstructing this railroad before the present campaign is decided.

The Weldon road, although but a small portion of it is torn up, is equally unavailable, and practically the rebel army under Lee and the rebel Government are isolated by an interval of many miles from all railroad communication with the interior of rebeldom.

LATEST NEWS FROM GENERAL GRANT—GRANT PREPARATIONS GOING ON BEFORE PETERSBURG—GENERAL GRANT CONFIDENT OF SUCCESS—SEVERE LACK OF WATER FOR THE ARMY—THE EFFECT OF PALMER'S RAID IN NORTH CAROLINA—TORPEDO EXPEDITION IN VIRGINIA.

WASHINGTON, June 29.—Latest advices from General Grant's headquarters report only such occasional skirmishing and artillery practice as is inevitable result from the close proximity of the two forces. The chief enemy our soldiers have had lately to combat are the heat and dust, which have been the army's worst enemy of late. For thirty days not a drop of rain has fallen, making a drought of a duration unparalleled in that region for many years. It is with the utmost difficulty that men and animals get even a scanty supply of water.

General Palmer's raid from Newbern on the Wilmington and Weldon railroad seems to supply a perfect explanation of the recently reported march of rebel troops from Lee's army into North Carolina, on which such absurd speculations have been based.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

Tuesday, June 28—5, A. M. All remains quiet at the front. Our left wing swung round and took possession of the Weldon railroad, about four miles from the city, without opposition.

It is believed the enemy's lines have been somewhat contracted since Friday last, and the opinion prevails that a force has been sent to meet and drive back General Hunter.

Almost nightly an attack is made on some part of the picket line in front of the Ninth corps, but finding our men on the alert and ready for them, the rebels quickly retire.

As an instance of the sharp practice between the lines, a man yesterday, not daring to stand up, put his foot on the works, when he was instantly struck by a ball in the ankle. Many are wounded daily while going from their pits for water, and on other errands which cannot be postponed.

The Sanitary Commission are busy issuing fresh vegetables to the troops, which are very gratefully received, and will prove a great benefit to them.

TUESDAY, June 28—12 o'clock, M.—Quite a severe engagement took place on Saturday between our cavalry and a force of the enemy, consisting of cavalry and mounted infantry, at the Chickahominy river.

The rebels allowed Sheridan from the White House, in the expectation of being able to cut off part of his wagon train, which was very large, and it was here they made their attack.

Torber's division was detailed to protect the train, while Gregg's division was placed in position to resist an attack from the enemy on the roads which they were known to occupy.

At an early hour skirmishing commenced and was kept up until noon, when the rebel infantry, which had been dismounted, made a desperate charge on our lines, and, although our men dismounted and fought them gallantly for a time, they were finally compelled to retire, sustaining considerable loss.

Our men fell back to their supports near the bridge, and the command, with a slight train, subsequently got over to a point further loss.

The rebels made no effort to follow us up, and it is thought they must have suffered heavily or they would have done so.

The whole command has arrived at the James river, and will be all across by night.

Two soldiers are on trial at headquarters, charged with outraging a woman in the vicinity. The authorities are determined to put a stop to these shameful crimes, and if the proof is sufficient to convict the offenders, they will be dealt with as the law demands for a similar crime, namely—hanged.

There are now about five thousand sick and wounded in hospital at Olty Point, and they suffer much from the heat and from a lack of good water. The members of the different aid societies are fast giving out from exhaustion and fever, and many of them have been forced to give up their labors and return home.

BALTIMORE, June 29.—A prominent officer of the Christian Commission sends the following note to the editor of the American:

"I am just from the front this morning. Every thing looks very well. The troops are in fine spirits. You may be assured of this, as I have been in personal contact with hundreds, both in the reserve and in the rifle pits. I had an interview with General Grant on Monday afternoon. He is confident of the result. He says there can be but one result—the defeat of the enemy or his (the enemy's) retreat from Petersburg; and then his complete overthrow.

Extensive preparations are in progress, and soon the country will be more loudly applaud the military genius and executive ability of Generals Grant and Meade. I was surprised to find some of our Union men, despondent when I arrived here (at Baltimore) this morning. You can easily assure your readers that there is no occasion for it."

FOREX MONROE, June 27.—The schooner Copthwait, which was seized on James river by the Government, leaves here this afternoon for Washington, to be delivered to the United States Marshal.

REBEL RAID ON THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAILROAD.

BALTIMORE, June 30, 1864.—Last night a party of Mosby's guerrillas made a dash into Dunfield's station, on the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, beyond Harper's Ferry, robbed the stores and captured some fifteen members of an Ohio regiment, but did no damage to the road, and quickly decamped, pursued by our troops under Sigel. Trains are running without interruption, and the road is amply guarded.

OPERATIONS IN GEORGIA.

BATTLE FIELD, June 23, 1864.—Perhaps, for duration and the fierce, obstinate nature of the conflict, the present campaign in Georgia is unparalleled in history. It is now nearly fifty days since the opening of the campaign. Few of these days but there has been more or less fighting along our lines. These were followed by weary nights of incessant toil, oftentimes of fighting and building breastworks and intrenchments. Weiried nights, of restless anxiety, with the cold, damp ground our bed, sleeping on wet leaves or branches of trees, sometimes on rails, to keep us out of the mud; and then how often were our beds covered with the hot for us by the pattering bullets which came to disturb our slumbers.

This bloody campaign is yet dragging its slow length along. The rebels, like a lion at bay, now and then turn in desperation on their fierce, relentless pursuers. Indeed they are literally disputing every inch of ground. Their desperate fighting qualifies win our admiration, and begot the sad regret that they are not engaged in a holier cause.

In my despatch of the 17th I stated that they had fallen back, as was then supposed, behind the Chattahoochee; but this announcement was premature.

It is sad to contemplate the fearful sufferings of the people, particularly the women and children, in those parts of Georgia over which we have campaigned. As for the men, the young are in the rebel lines; the old have fled to the woods. Some few have ventured to remain at home; these have fared the best.

Our men have in too many instances burned down the houses, destroyed their contents, driving their wretched inmates homeless, starving, outcasts to perish of cold and hunger. True, such heinous acts are not tolerated; but stragglers and hangers on, who bring up the rear of a large army, destroy everything like a swarm of locusts, particularly when they find houses deserted.

I have met frozen groups of afflicted, starving women and children huddled together in the woods, where many of them perish of cold and want. Such sad pictures of old and young—gray-haired matrons and timid girls—clinging together in hopeless misery, may be imagined but cannot be described. I have seen whole columns of brave men melt away before the leaden storm of shot and shell. I have ridden among the dead, the dying and wounded of many a battle field. I have heard the groans of fearful agony from the poor sufferers under the scalpel knife, where piles of legs and arms—the grim trophies of war—attested death's fearful carnage. Yet I was not moved as I have been by the sight of these poor, helpless miseries. Alas! also for this cruel war of blood and tears. Is there a Tartarus deep enough or hot enough for its authors.

SECRETARY STANTON AGAINST GENERAL M'CLELLAN—A DISGRACEFUL PROCEEDING.

It appears that Lieutenant Colonel Bowman, late Superintendent of the Military Academy at West Point, has been dismissed by the Secretary of War for the unpardonable offence of having invited General McClellan to deliver the address on the late interesting occasion at the Academy of the laying of the corner stone of a monument to the West Point soldiers who have fallen or may fall in this war for the life of the nation. General McClellan, as a West Point soldier, distinguished in his professional services in this war and in the Mexican war, a fine scholar, a Christian gentleman, a favorite with the army, and a favorite among the people, was certainly a proper man on this occasion for orator of the day. His beautiful and patriotic address establishes this fact. Yet, for this very natural mark of respect to General McClellan, Lieutenant Colonel Bowman is removed from West Point, in consequence of the implacable hostility of the Secretary of War to General McClellan. This disgraceful proceeding President Lincoln surely cannot sanction if he can be made to comprehend it simply as a matter of policy. He will act wisely in turning Mr. Secretary Stanton aside, and in putting General McClellan in his place. On the other hand, the endorsement by Mr. Lincoln of this disgraceful act of petty tyranny and vindictive punishment on the part of his man Stanton will be apt to prove in the end, so far as the President is concerned, one of the most serious of all the blunders of his administration.

THE SIXTY DAYS' NOTICE.

It will be seen that the Senate Military Committee yesterday struck out the sixty days grace for volunteering in the House bill. This destroys the hope of compromise on the commutation clause—unless the Senate reverses the decision of the committee. A provision that ample notice should be given of the draft was the salvation of the bill in the House. But for that provision, most assuredly the three hundred dollar clause would have been retained. It would seem, therefore, that the only hope now of getting the measure through in any workable form will lie in an acceptance by both Houses of what is the clear, unmistakable judgment of the public that there should be a fixed commutation fee, big or little. And in this matter public opinion, as well as merely official theories, must be consulted, to insure cordial co-operation on all hands in the great work before us.

WHO GOES NEXT?

Will it be Blair, or Bates, or Stanton, or old Mr. Welles? We dare say that old Mr. Welles, in any event, will be the last to go, because he has done nothing to offend the vanity of Father Abraham.

EXTRACTS FROM LATE NORTHERN PAPERS.

We continue to make some interesting extracts from our late Northern papers of affairs about Petersburg and late operations of Grant's army:

THE YANKEE ACCOUNT OF WILSON'S GREAT RAID.

The Yankee papers give a full account of Wilson's great raid. It is gotten up in the real-Yankee style. The following tremendous shout, with which it is announced, is in keeping with the account:

General Wilson's Raid—Immense Destruction of Rebel Railroads—Two Trains of Cars Destroyed—Sleepers and Ties Burned and Rails Destroyed—Lee's Communications Cut Off—His Army Isolated from the South—Lee's Wrath at the Raiders—He Swears Not One of Them Shall Escape—How He Didn't keep His Oath—Desperate Efforts to Capture Wilson—The Fearful Perils of our Gallant Boys—Their Unconquerable Spirit—Terrible Fighting Day and Night for a Week—Final Abandonment of their Guns—Wilson's Safe arrival within Our Lines—Gallantry of Kautz, Spears, Chapman and McIntosh.

Then follows the account, dated at "Headquarters army of the Potomac, near Petersburg." We copy the most interesting portion of it:

The country will be pained to learn that the cavalry raid of General Wilson, successful in an eminent degree, up to Tuesday evening, has ended unfortunately. After marching over two hundred miles through the enemy's country, thoroughly destroying not less than fifty miles of railroad on two of the most important lines in the rebel Confederacy and fully accomplishing the most important objects of the expedition, the greater part of the command, including Wilson and both of his brigade commanders, were cut off.

All that we have so far got in are General Kautz, with most of his command, about two hundred and thirty men of the Second Ohio, and one hundred and sixty of the Fifth New York, with small squads of men, belonging to several other regiments.

General Sheridan, with a heavy force, have gone out in pursuit of the enemy, and it is hoped that a portion of our missing officers and men may be rescued; but at best our loss will be heavy, and even though the military value of the works so accomplished is sufficient to compensate for the loss of the entire force engaged in it, we do not less regret the gallant men who have been identified.

The force composing the expedition consists of General Kautz's own division and that of General Kautz's command of the department, the whole under the command of the former, and numbering from five to six thousand men. There were also with the expedition three batteries of four gun each, half rifle ordnance, and half light and heavy, and one battery of small mounted howitzers. With