THE MARYLAND NEWS SHEET.

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SEE FOURTH PAGE.

WAR AND OTHER NEWS.

In the Senate of the United States, a resolution of inquiry was introduced in regard to the late disaster in Hampton Roads in the destruction of the Cumberland, the Congress and other vessels, and the causes thereof. It was referred to the Committee on the Conduct of the War. The debate on the Confiscation bill was resumed, and, after a long discussion, was postponed until to-day.

In the House of Representatives, the joint resolution relative to the abolishment of slavery in all the States was called up. On a motion to postpone until Thursday next, the yeas and nays were called, and the House refused to postpone, by a vote of 66 yeas to 67 nays.—A motion was then made to postpone the consideration of the resolutions until Monday next, which was also voted down—yeas 67, nays 69.—The previous question was then demanded, when various amendments were offered, upon which a debate ensued. The vote was then taken on the amendments, which were rejected, and the resolution was adopted—yeas 88, nays 31.

In the State Senate on Monday the following bills were passed, among others of minor importance:—A bill supplementary to an act to provide for the erection of a hospital for the insane. A bill appropriating five thousand dollars in aid of the Union Relief Association. A bill relating to executions on judgment. A bill incorporating the Merchants' Bank of Cecil county. A bill repealing all acts granting exemption from taxation with certain exceptions. A bill relating to the inspection of flour. The bill providing for a rapid reorganization of the militia was rejected.

In the House of Delegates the following bills, among others, were passed:

To compensate the members of the Peace Conference at Washington. Incorporating the Chesapeake Marine Produce Company. Providing for taking the sense of the people on the propriety of holding a Convention to frame a new Constitution. The bill to indemnify the Provost Marshals, and to protect the Police acting under their orders, failed to pass, a sufficient number of members not being present to admit of suspending the rules.

Both Houses adjourned *sine die*.

Elsewhere will be found the speech of Prince Napoleon, in the French Senate, which has caused great excitement throughout Paris. The accusations which the Prince brought against the Marquis de la Rochejsquelin, of being a counter revolutionist, the boldness with which he announced himself as the defender of the Empire and of the revolution upon which it was founded; the daring with which he assailed the soldiers of the Pope, and declared that it was at Rome that men must look for the most bitter hatred of all that bears the name of Napoleon; his defence of a democratic press, his avowal that he belonged to the party of the revolution, and that the Empire signifies the destruction of the treaties of 1815—all these points distinctly stated amid great confusion and repeated interruptions render his speech, taking into consideration the consequences that may flow from it, one of the most remarkable on record. It has been published in full, and posted on the walls of Paris, where the general opinion appears to be that it will tend to consolidate the alliance between the government and the liberal party.

According to the Richmond *Dispatch*, based upon the statement of an "intelligent gentleman who has lately arrived from the South," the whole of the Southern country "is in a blaze of patriotic enthusiasm." Men of all ages are hastening to the field, and the Government is invoked to keep pace with the energy of the people. In another article the *Dispatch* states that by the last of April the Confederates will have a larger disposable force in the field than the Federals. In this, however, the writer's hopes evidently cloud his judgment, for he assumes that it will take two hundred thousand men to guard Maryland and the city of Washington.

The Richmond *Examiner* is satisfied that the number of Confederates, taken at Fort Donelson, has been greatly exaggerated by General Grant in his official report, but it does the latter the grace to believe that he has been really deceived by others. It is of opinion that the effective force at fort Donelson, did not exceed ten thousand men, and cites the Northern journals in proof of the fact that only six thousand prisoners were accounted for. Most of the Confederate troops at fort Donelson, we are told, were sixty day's men, raw militia from Tennessee and Kentucky, who became completely demoralized after three days hard fighting. The *Examiner* sees hope for the South in the recent enlistment of troops for the war, instead of for short terms of service.

From Fortress Monroe we learn that the Merrimac has not made its appearance since Sunday last. The Monitor was enthusiastically cheered as she passed the vessels in the harbor. She is reported to be uninjured, and prepared to resume the engagement. The Minnesota after throwing overboard some of her guns, and spiking others was gotten off and towed round to Fortress Monroe. The gunboat Whitehall was totally destroyed by fire yesterday morning, and it is now stated that the tug boat Dragon and four schooners were destroyed by the Merrimac at Newport News in addition to the gunboat Oregon, the dissbling of the Zouave and the destruction of the Congress and Cumberland. An accurate statement of the loss in killed, wounded, drowned and taken prisoners on board the various vessels, has not yet been made.

The New York *Times* states that the exploits of the Merrimac in Hampton Roads created great consternation in New York. Many persons believed she would speedily make her appearance in the harbor and lay that city in ashes. It was at once gravely proposed, under the influence of the panic, to sink stone boats in the channel for the purpose of keeping the terrible vessel out, but the *Times* now remarks quietly, that "this scheme may be safely postponed for a few weeks."

We publish what appears to be a frank, and is certainly a lucid, statement of the recent engagement in Hampton Roads, between the Merrimac and the United States vessels of war, inclusive of the action between the Merrimac and the Minnesota. The account we give is from the New York *World*, and is furnished to that journal by Mr. A. B. Smith, who was the Pilot on board of the United States sloop-of-war Cumberland at the time, and who was an eye-witness not only of what transpired on board of his own ill-fated but gallantly defended ship, but of the subsequent operations of the Merrimac.

The reported abandonment of Manassas is confirmed from official sources. The Federal troops took peaceful possession of the deserted fortifications yesterday morning. Simultaneously with the evacuation of Centreville and Manassas we learn that the Confederates raised the blockade of lower Potomac, spiked most of the guns that could not be carried away, and fell back to some point which is not yet divulged.

An official despatch from General Curtis gives the details of the recent battle in Arkansas, in which the combined forces under Price, McCulloch, Van Dorn and McIntosh were defeated after three days hard fighting—the main body falling back to Boston Mountains. General Curtis states that the Federal loss is heavy, whilst the loss of the Confederates could not be ascertained. The retreating forces are said to have retired in great confusion, but "rather safely," through the deep, impassable defiles of cross timbers. General Ben McCulloch is reported to have been killed in the action.

Official information has been received of the retirement of the Confederates from the lower Potomac, the positions which they held being now occupied by the Federal troops. Before leaving, the Confederates destroyed everything which they could not conveniently carry away. Its said they have fallen back to the Rappahannock River.

GOTTSCHALK'S SECOND CONCERT takes place tonight, with the same brilliant combination of talent as at the first Concert. The programme is exceedingly rich, embracing operatic gems of great beauty, rendered as only such *artistes* can give them. Mr. Gottschalk gives three of his own compositions and the Carnival of Venice, together with a Serenade composed by him, and sung by Brignoli. The Concert given last night at the New Assembly Rooms was a most brilliant affair, and the various musical gems were received with the most rapturous applause by the large and fashionable audience present. It will be seen that another Concert is to be given at the same place this evening. A "Grand Gottschalk Gala Night," will be given on Thursday evening at the Holliday Street Theatre, when Donizetti's celebrated comic Opera of *Don Pasquale* will be performed, with Miss Hickley and Signors Brignoli, Mancusi and Susini in the cast, under the musical direction of Max Maretzek. In addition, Mr. Gottschalk will perform several *morceaux* never before given in Baltimore, forming, altogether, a most attractive combination. Seats for both Concert and Opera can be secured to-day at the Music store of Mr. McGeffrey.

LATEST NEWS.

TELEGRAMS.

FROM EUROPE.

Arrival of the North American.

LORD RUSSELL ON THE BLOCKADE.

PORTLAND, March 11.—The steamer North American, from Londonderry on the 28th ultimo, has arrived.

The papers relative to the blockade had been submitted to Parliament. Lord Russell in a letter to Lord Lyons, dated February 15th, says "the fact of ships having successfully run the blockade don't prevent the blockade being effective," and he argues that a neutral State ought to exercise great caution with regard to a *de facto* blockade, and ought not to disregard it unless the power of the blockade is abused.

The unemployed laborers at Liverpool had made a demonstration, which, however, was peaceably dispersed by the police.

PARIS, February 28.—The *Opinione Nationale* says that a revolutionary movement is being prepared in Southern Italy for next spring. Reactionary bands are organizing at Trieste, Malta and Rome. They will disembark simultaneously at several points on the Neapolitan coast.

The *Presse* says the French Government has sent orders to the Commander of the Naval Station at China, not to permit a repetition of atrocities similar to those committed by the vessels at the capture of Ningpo. The English Government will send similar instructions.

TURKEY, February 27.—The garrison at Tripoli, following the example of the garrison at Nauplia, have revolted. It is believed that the insurrection at Nauplia will hold out. Many Greeks now staying at Genoa, Leghorn and Ancona are preparing to return to Greece. The number of insurgents will soon be considerably increased. This insurrection is considered important, because it might influence the state of things in Turkey.

LONDONDERRY, February 28.—The Warrior has arrived at Plymouth. It is reported that she steers well and has had no leakage.

The *Herald* reports that Sir Robert Peel and William Cowper are about to exchange offices.

The *Times'* Paris correspondent says the excitement consequent on Prince Napoleon's speech is increasing.

The *Daily News'* correspondent says it is rumored that there is a serious conflict between the Emperor and the Corps Legislatif on the subject of Count Palikaos' doubloon, which is likely to end in a compromise, the House voting him a life pension of 50,000 francs, and the Government consenting not to have it made hereditary.

THE BATTLE IN ARKANSAS.
Reported Death of Ben McCulloch--Official Report of Gen. Curtis.

ST. LOUIS, March 11.—The following is the official report of Gen. Curtis, of the great battle in Arkansas:—

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE SOUTHWEST, PEA RIDGE, Ark., March 9.

General:—On Thursday, the 6th inst., the enemy commenced an attack on my right, assailing and following the rear guard of the detachment under Gen. Siegel, to my main lines on Sugar Creek Hollow, but ceased firing when he met my reinforcements about 4 P. M.

During the night I became convinced that he had moved on so as to attack my right or rear. Therefore, early on the 7th I ordered a change of front to the right. My right, which thus became my left, still rested on Sugar Creek Hollow. This brought my line across Pea Ridge, with my new right resting on the head of Cross Timber Hollow, which is the head of Big Sugar Creek. I also ordered an immediate advance of cavalry and light artillery under Col. Osterhaus, with orders to attack and break what I supposed would be the reinforced line of the enemy. This movement was in progress, when the enemy, at 11 o'clock in the morning, commenced an attack on my right.

The fight continued, mainly at these points, during the day, the enemy at one time having gained the point held by Col. Carr, at Cross-Timber Hollow. But he was entirely repulsed with the fall of their commander, Ben McCulloch, in the centre, by the forces under Col. Davis.

The plan of the attack on the enemy's centre was gallantly carried forward by Col. Osterhaus, who was immediately sustained and superseded by Col. Davis' entire division, supported also by General Siegel's command, which had remained till near the close of the day on the left.

Col. Carr's division held the right, having entirely ceased and continuous fire, all day.

In the evening, the firing having entirely ceased in the centre, and the right being now on the left, I reinforced the right by a portion of the Second Division, under General Asboth. Before the day closed I was convinced that the enemy had concentrated his main force on my right. I therefore commenced another change of front forward, so as to face the enemy where he had deployed on my right flank in strong position.

This change had been partially effected, but was fully in progress when, at sunrise on the morning of the 8th, my right and centre renewed firing, which was immediately answered by the enemy with renewed energy along the whole extent of his line.

My left, under General Siegel, moved close to the hills occupied by the enemy, driving him from the heights and advancing steadily towards the head of the Hollows. I immediately ordered the centre and right wing forward, the right wing turning the left wing of the enemy and cross firing on his centre. This final position placed the enemy in the arc of a circle, when a charge of infantry, extending throughout the whole line, completely routed the whole rebel force, which retired in great confusion, but rather safely, through the deep and impassable defiles of Cross Timber.

Our loss is heavy. That of the enemy's can never be ascertained, for his dead are scattered over a large field. Their wounded, too, may, many of them, be lost and perish.

The foe scattered in all directions, but I think his main force has returned to Boston Mountain.

General Siegel follows towards Keithsville, while my cavalry is pursuing him towards the mountains, scouring the country and bringing in prisoners, and trying to find the Rebel Major General Van Dorn, who had command of the entire force at this battle at Pea Ridge.

I have not as yet received the statement of the dead and wounded, so as to justify a report; but I will refer you to a despatch I will forward you very soon.

The officers and soldiers have all displayed such unusual gallantry, that I hardly dare to make distinctions. I must, however, name Commanders of Divisions:—Gen. Siegel gallantly carried the right, and drove back the left wing of the enemy.

General Asboth (who is wounded in the arm in his gallant effort to reinforce the right); Colonel and acting Brigadier-General Davis who commanded the centre where McCulloch fell on the 7th and pressed forward the centre of the enemy on the 8th; Colonel and acting Brigadier-General Carr is also wounded in the arm, and was under the continuous fire of the enemy during the two hardest days of the struggle.

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Ohio and Missouri may proudly share the honor which their gallant heroes have won over the combined forces of Van Dorn, Price and McCulloch, at Pea Ridge, in the mountains of Arkansas.

[Signed] R. CURTIS,
Brigadier General.

Major Gen. Halleck, St. Louis.

FROM WASHINGTON.
The Great Retreat--Manassas Positively Evacuated.

WASHINGTON, March 11.—The *National Intelligencer* of this morning says:

From information received last night as late as eleven o'clock, at the Headquarters of the Army in this city, we learn that the intelligence previously reported respecting the precipitate flight of the enemy from Manassas and its environs is confirmed. Our troops were then in possession of the late Confederate stronghold at Centreville. Gen. McClellan was at Fairfax Court House.

The enemy's escape from his batteries on the Potomac appears, from all the indications left behind him, in the shape of deserted guns, provisions and ammunition, to have been effected under the influence of a pervading panic. In a word, it would seem from present appearances that the army which the people of the South expected to capture the city of Washington and to carry the war into the loyal States, has confessed itself vanquished without waiting to accept the battle about to be offered it on its own chosen and strongly fortified ground.

OFFICIAL BULLETINS FROM VIRGINIA.
Manassas Evacuated by the Rebels--the Union Troops in Quiet Possession.

WASHINGTON, March 11, A. M.—Manassas has been evacuated by the Rebels and our forces have taken peaceful possession. No other news of public interest has been received this morning.

Later

WASHINGTON, March 11.—The reliable details of the evacuation of Manassas and its occupation by our troops have not yet been received. The whole fortifications were abandoned, and everything possible burned.

The Retreat of the Rebels from Manassas.

CENTREVILLE, March 11.—Yesterday morning, our force, amounting to upwards of 2,000 men, proceeded to Centreville, and occupied this village about 4 o'clock on the previous afternoon. It was altogether deserted.

The entire command thence proceeded to Manassas, arriving there in the evening. The rebels had destroyed much of their property, which they could not carry away, by fire and otherwise.

The bridges and railroad track and depot in that vicinity, were extensively damaged, nothing but wreck and desolation were apparent.

When some time ago it was stated in this correspondence that the rebels were falling back from Manassas, the assertion was industriously contradicted, but there is now satisfactory evidence that the main body left their lines nearly two weeks ago. The roads in Virginia, in some places, are tolerably good, and improving.

The whereabouts of the rebels who retreated from Manassas, is a subject of earnest speculation.

Later.

Upon closer examination it was discovered that the rebels, before evacuating their much boasted stronghold, had set fire to such of their commissary stores as they could not conveniently carry off. The place presented a scene of the utmost desolation, a mass of charred and blackened ruins.

The rebels also blew up the bridges along the line of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad for some miles below Manassas. Such of the locomotives, which were out of repair were also destroyed. It is supposed by being blown up, also the vicinity of the depot is covered with fragments of machinery belonging to the destroyed locomotives. It is said the rebels left Centreville on Sunday morning.

The earthworks at Centreville had been greatly misrepresented. They were not of the formidable character supposed. The enemy, before evacuating, had somewhat injured them, by breaking the embrasures and casemates. So at Manassas, which, however, has not been fully examined.

Our troops, on arriving at Fairfax Court House, found not more than a dozen families.

The soldiers rushed into the Court House and brought away some of the records, but this being discovered, the officers directed their return.

When our troops learned that Manassas had been evacuated their spirits suddenly became depressed, as they had anticipated a spirited conflict with the enemy.

About a mile and a half before reaching Centreville, a number of graves were discovered, principally of Alabama troops. The graves were marked with head and foot-boards, with the names of the deceased thereon. A guard was placed near them as if to shield them from mutilation, although it was not to be supposed such an act would be committed.

The Retreat of the Rebel Army from the Lower Potomac.

WASHINGTON, March 11.—Official information received to-day reports that the enemy formerly encamped back of and below the Occoquan river, have retreated after destroying everything they could not carry on their backs. They left on Saturday. Our troops took possession this morning, and were welcomed by a part of the inhabitants with great joy.

Every boat in the vicinity, and anything that would float, had been destroyed.

The Rebels told the villagers that they were going to fall back to the Rappahannock.

A call from the Governor of Virginia on the militia of the State for 10,000 men, was proclaimed in the streets of Occoquan on the 9th instant, by an official who immediately departed. Nearly all the able bodied men of the village left with the Rebel army, but a few refused to go. The Rebel force which has thus retreated was composed of three Texan, one Georgia, and one Mississippi regiment, and the Hampton Legion.

Mails for Central America and the South Pacific.

WASHINGTON, March 11.—Commodore Vanderbilt gave notice to-day to the Postmaster-General that he would carry the Central American and South Pacific mails on his line of steamers, provided he could be protected against parties who are smuggling California mails over his line for which he received no payment.

A Visit to Ball's Bluff.

WASHINGTON, March 11.—Col. Geary, with some of his officers, and a detachment of the First Michigan cavalry, rode to Ball's Bluff to-day, and buried the whitening bones of the brave Union soldiers who fell upon that bloody field in October last. Some impressive remarks preceded this humane act, and an evidence of the gross neglect of the rebels was hid from human sight.

Tow Boats Wanted by the Government.

WASHINGTON, March 11.—The Quartermaster General advertises for two light draft steamers, suitable for towing boats at Ship Island. He invites proposals.

Later from New Orleans and Memphis--Great Excitement and Distress--Union Clubs.—Gen. Beauregard Gone to Island No. 10.

ST. LOUIS, March 11.—A special despatch to the *Democrat*, from Cairo, says: Two Union men have arrived from New Orleans, which they left on the 26th ult. Both have spent the winter in New Orleans, where the greatest excitement and distress prevail. The approaches to the city on the south are pretty well defended. On the north the fortifications run back from Carrollton. The only parties in the city not regularly enlisted are the Jews. The city is full of secret Union Clubs, and at least 12,000 citizens belong to these clubs.

The condition of things is no better in Memphis. The *Appeal* advises the burning of the city, as a last resort. The Mayor, however, had issued a proclamation that any person detected in setting fire to houses should be immediately hung.

Gen. Beauregard had left Jackson, and was expected to take command at Island No. 10.

A large number of transports were lying at the foot of this island, to take off the troops in case of a defeat.

FROM LEESBURG.
The Trail of the Retreating Enemy.

LEESBURG, March 11.—Col. Geary, acting Brig. Gen. of troops here, made a personal reconnoissance yesterday as far as Carter's Mills. The trail of the retreating enemy was blackened with the ruins of granaries and the smouldering ashes of hay and grain stacks, fences, &c. He found the bridge over Goose Creek had been burned after our occupation here on Saturday. The enemy have completely fallen back. The command continues towards [illegible]. The loyal feeling is growing, and many come forward to take the oath of allegiance daily.

The Latest from Upper Virginia--The Announcement of the Evacuation of Winchester Premature.

BUNKER HILL, March 11.—The intelligence of the evacuation of Winchester was premature. It was Berryville that the reconnoissance reported as evacuated.

The latest intelligence from Winchester is to the effect that the town is occupied by at least one brigade of infantry. Other troops are there also, and there is a strong suspicion that a portion of the forces which evacuated Centreville have been ordered to reinforce Winchester.

Our pickets were undisturbed last night. Active scouting is constantly kept up.

Later.

STEVENSON'S DEPOT, 5 Miles from Winchester, March 11—5 P. M.

The forces under Gens. Hamilton and Williams, constituting an arrived reconnoissance, has reached this point without serious opposition.

Large numbers of contrabands have reached our lines, which now extend beyond Manassas Junction, and are still coming in by droves.

On our way from Centreville yesterday morning, we passed at least one hundred who were making their way to Washington. Some of the refugees claim to have come twenty miles west of Manassas. They all agree in saying that the rebels left the latter place in great precipitation, and that the destruction of the commissary stores was commenced at an early hour on Sunday morning.

The contrabands state that a portion of the force which left Manassas passed Northwardly, but this is considered improbable; but if they did it was for the purpose of reinforcing Jackson at Winchester. They also state that all the bridges along the route which they came had been blown up by the rebels in their retreat, and that the greater portion of the track is also blown up.

Most of the contrabands above alluded to were cheerful and happy in their liberty, and remarkably communicative to the extent of their knowledge.

Occupation of Fairfax and Centreville by the Federal Troops.

NEW YORK, March 11.—The *Tribune's* special says that the companies under Major Hatfield were ordered on Sunday morning to go to Fairfax Court House by the old Braddock road. They met the enemy a mile this side, but the Rebels retreated and our troops entered the Court House at noon yesterday. Major Hatfield's company reached Centreville and found it had been evacuated on the night previous, leaving behind tents and other property in large quantity. Both places were occupied last night. General Kearney's brigade drove back the Rebels at Sangster's on Sunday.—Lieutenant Weeded, of the Lincoln Cavalry, was killed. Several were killed on both sides.

LATER FROM TENNESSEE.

LOUISVILLE, March 11.—Humphrey Marshall is at Gladesville, eight miles from the Kentucky line, near Pounding Gap, with the four unsettered, demoralized forces belonging to Col. Williams' regiment. Marshall first attempted to conciliate the people of that region, but since his defeat, has become irritable and overbearing.

Tennessee advices say the citizens of Shelbyville and Beford county burned, on Sunday night, a large quantity of Confederate stores, to prevent their falling into the hands of the rebel troops under Gen. A. Sidney Johnston, who were in full retreat from Murfreesboro'.

FROM FORTRESS MONROE.
All Quiet.

WASHINGTON, March 11.—A despatch from Fortress Monroe this evening says that all is quiet in that vicinity. A flag of truce was received to-day from Craney Island; but no information has been obtained about the injury to the Merrimac, except that she reached Norfolk on Sunday evening, from which it may be inferred that she was not capable of making very good time.

The Frigate Vermont.

BOSTON, March 11.—The schooner, J. W. Chapman, from New York, arrived here last evening, reports that on the 2d she fell in with the frigate Vermont, and lay by her till the 6th. She left her in lat. 39 45, lon. 68 08, drifting S. S. E. at a rate of two knots per hour; rudder, sails and anchors gone and entirely helpless. She needs powerful tugs at once.

The President's Emancipation Resolution!

WASHINGTON, March 11.—Six Southern men voted aye, and nine nay, in the House to-day on the President's emancipation resolution. Others from the border States were either not in their seats or withdrew.

Buckner and Tilghman in Close Confinement.

BOSTON, March 11.—Generals Buckner and Tilghman have been put in close confinement at Fort Warren. The reason is not stated.

The Beverly rubber factory at Boston, was burnt on Wednesday night, involving a loss of $100,000. Insurance $70,000. The company had a contract for the manufacture of 70,000 rubber blankets.

Some idea of the number of Jews in New York may be formed from the fact that eighteen hundred barrels of flour are contracted for to make bread for the coming Passover.

There were 293 deaths in Philadelphia last week. Of this number 219 were born in the United States, 59 were foreigners, and 15 unknown.

There were sixteen large class British ships-of-war at Bermuda about the middle of last month—a larger number than at any time since the war of 1812.

THE FIGHT IN HAMPTON ROADS.

Full Details of the Affair.

STATEMENT OF THE PILOT OF THE CUMBERLAND.

HE THINKS THE MERRIMAC UNINJURED, AND SAYS SHE CAN GET TO SEA.

From the New York World, March 10.

Mr. A. B. Smith, pilot on board the United States sloop-of-war Cumberland at the time of her battle with the iron-plated steamer Merrimac, arrived in this city late last evening, and we obtained from him the following authentic statement of the great naval battle of last Saturday and Sunday in Hampton Roads:

STATEMENT OF THE PILOT.

On Saturday morning, the United States sloop-of-war Cumberland laid off in the roads at Newport News, about three hundred yards from the shore, the Congress being two hundred yards south of us. The morning was mild and pleasant, and the day opened without any notoworthy incident. About eleven o'clock, a dark-looking object was descried coming round Craney Island through Norfolk channel, and proceeding straight in our direction. It was instantly recognized as the Merrimac. We had been on the lookout for her for some time, and were as well prepared then as we could have been at any other time, or as we have been during the last six months.

As she came ploughing through the water right onwards toward our portbow, she looked like a huge half-submerged crocodile. Her sides seemed of solid iron, except where her guns pointed from the narrow ports, and roof slantingly from the water like the roof of a house or the arched back of a tortoise. Probably the extreme height of the apex from the water's edge, perpendicularly, was ten feet. At her prow I could see the iron ram projecting straight forwards, somewhat above the water's edge, and apparently a mass of iron. Small boats were alongside or lashed to her sides, and the Confederate flag floated from one stag, while a pennant was fixed to another at the stern. There was a smoke-stack or pipe near her middle, and she was probably a propeller, no side-wheels or machinery being visible. She is probably covered with railroad iron.

GETTING READY FOR ACTION.

Immediately on the appearing of the Merrimac the command was given to make ready for instant action. All hands were ordered to their places, and the Cumberland was sprung across the channel, so that her broadside would bear on the Merrimac. The armament we could bring to bear on the Merrimac was about eleven nine and ten-inch Dahlgren guns and two pivot guns of the same make. The gunners were at their posts, and we waited eagerly for her approach within range. She came up at the rate of four or five knots per hour.

OPENING THE BATTLE.

When the Merrimac arrived within about a mile we opened on her with our pivot guns, and as soon as we could bear upon her, our whole broadside commenced. Still she came on, the balls bouncing from her mailed sides like India rubber, apparently making not the least impression, except to cut off her flag-staff, and thus bring down the Confederate colors. None of her crew ventured at that time on her outside to replace them, and she fought thenceforward with only her pennant flying. *She appeared to obey her helm and be very readily handled, making all her movements and evolutions with apparent facility and readiness.* We had probably fired six or eight broadsides when a shot was received from one of her guns which killed five of our marines.

It was impossible for our vessel to get out of her way, and the Merrimac soon crashed her iron horn or ram into the Cumberland, just starboard the main chains, under the bluff of the port bow, knocking a hole in the side, near the water line, as large as the head of a hogshead, and driving the vessel back upon her anchors with great force.—The water came rushing into the hold. The Merrimac then backed out and discharged her guns at us, the shot passing through the main hay and killing five sick men. The water was all the while rushing in the hole made by the ram, so that in five minutes it was up to the sick bay on the berth deck. In the meantime her broadsides swept our men away killed and maimed, and also set our vessel on fire in the forward part. That fire was extinguished. I cannot tell how many were wounded. The sick bay, berth deck and gun deck were almost literally covered with men killed and wounded, but the surviving ones still fought well, and every one, officers and men, displayed the utmost heroism.

The fight lasted about three-fourths of an hour, the Cumberland firing rapidly and all the time, the water pouring in the hold, and by and by the ports, the middle ones first, sinking deeper and deeper. Near the end of the fight the Merrimac came up close to the side of the Cumberland and sunk down heavily, as if to give her iron-plated roof, and a ball from one of our guns instantly cut him in two. That was the last and only Confederate that ventured within sight, the rest remained in their safe, iron-walled inclosure. We fired constantly, and the Merrimac occasionally, but every shot told upon our wooden vessel and killed a crew. Her guns being without the least elevation, pointed straight at us along the surface of the water, and her nearness, she being much of the time within three hundred yards, made it an easy matter to send each ball to its exact mark. Probably her guns would be useless at a considerable distance, as it appears impossible to elevate them.

Finally, after about three-fourths of an hour of the most severe fighting, our vessel sunk, the Stars and Stripes still waving. That flag was finally submerged, but after the hull grounded on the sands fifty-four feet below the surface of the water, our pennant was still flying from the topmast above the waves. None of our men were captured, but many were drowned as the vessel went down. We had about four hundred on board, and I suppose from one hundred and fifty to two hundred were killed during the engagement and drowned at the sinking. Lieutenant George V. Maurice was in command of the vessel, Captain Radford being absent on the Roanoke, at a court of inquiry, and though he hurried back to reach his vessel, he could not arrive till after she had sunk. Very few of our men swam ashore, most of those who were rescued from the water being saved by small boats. The Merrimac seemed to be uninjured, although her small boats and flagstaff were shot away in the commencement of the action.

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE CONGRESS.

The Merrimac then turned her attention to the Congress, which lay probably two hundred yards to the south of where the Cumberland was. The Merrimac came up under her stern, and her crew fired their pistols into the ports of the Congress as she approached. I saw her fire on the Congress. The sailors of that vessel say that the Merrimac struck her; but of this I am not sure. The Congress had a good crew of fifty men from the Cumberland previously taken on board, fifty from the Minnesota, fifty of the Naval Brigade, fifty from the Roanoke, and some others. Lieutenant Joseph Smith, who was in command, was killed by a shot. A great many of the Naval Brigade were also killed. The entire command seemed to have acted bravely during the engagement, which probably lasted not over half an hour, when the white flag was run up. During that night some sailors and men of the Congress returned and set fire to her, and she blew up about twelve o'clock. Neither the shot of the Cumberland nor Congress appeared to have any effect on the Merrimac, bounding off harmlessly, with a loud ringing sound from the iron plates.

THE MANY KILLED ON THE MINNESOTA.

The engagement with the Minnesota resulted in the killing of four men on the latter vessel, which was aground. The Merrimac did not seem to like to go near her, perhaps on account of her large armament of heavy guns, but more probably because she was afraid of also getting aground, the water being quite shallow in that neighborhood. The Minnesota is not much injured. She was off, and steaming down about 6 o'clock Sunday night.

FIGHT BETWEEN THE MONITOR AND MERRIMAC.

The Monitor came in Saturday night, and proceeded up past the Minnesota. The Confederate steamers Jamestown and Yorktown were not ironplated, or, at any rate, only partially so. They came down in the daylight, making for the Minnesota, but to their surprise found the Monitor ready to receive them. On Sunday morning the Monitor moved close up to the Merrimac, and, side by side, engaged her for four hours and twenty minutes. Once the Merrimac dashed her iron prow squarely against the Monitor, but did not injure that vessel in the least. The Monitor in turn determined to try her force in a similar operation, but in some unaccountable manner the wheel or other steering apparatus became entangled, it is said, and the Monitor rushed by, just missing her aim. Captain Worden is confident that he put three shot through the hull of his antagonist—probably through the port.

The Monitor fired 178-pound cast-iron shot. The wrought-iron shot were not used, because their great weight and peculiar construction render the guns much more liable to burst. The Merrimac fired about forty shots on the Monitor, which replied as rapidly as possible, but, so far as is known, *neither vessel is damaged.* Those on board the Monitor say the balls rattled and rang upon both vessels, and seemed to bound off harmless. *The Merrimac is probably not injured*, at least more than the starting of a plate or so of her iron covering; and her machinery being uninjured, she is probably fit to come out again. *It is impossible to keep the Merrimac from coming out. She can sail three knots an hour faster than the Monitor.* From her evolutions I should judge she can go at the rate of eight or nine knots per hour.

It is impossible to board the Merrimac. Should she come out again, she will be obliged to pass within range of the Union gun at the Rip Raps, but it is very difficult to manage so heavy a piece of artillery, and the Union gun, in all probability, might be fired fifty times without touching her. I do not think the Merrimac is calculated to carry much coal, and that might have been a reason for her retiring from the contest. The Monitor perhaps might follow up the rebel steamers and disable them; but if she gets among the rebel batteries a heavy fire might be concentrated on her from different points, and she be thus injured; or possibly she might be grappled to and towed ashore. These and other reasons may suffice to show why the Monitor did not follow among the batteries of Craney Island and Norfolk. Gen. Wool, I understand, has ordered all the women and children away from Fortress Monroe, in anticipation of the Merrimac's reappearance. During all Sunday morning, while the battle was raging between the two iron-clad vessels, the high cliffs of Newport News and vicinity were crowded with spectators, earnestly watching the progress of the fight.

FROM THE SOUTH.

The Prisoners Taken at Fort Donelson.

From the Richmond Examiner, March 7.

The late intelligence from the North satisfies us that the number of Confederates taken prisoners at Fort Donelson was grossly exaggerated in the report of the Federal General Grant. He was, probably, really deceived. He ascertained that he had taken all that remained of seventeen regiments, and hence he estimated his prisoners at twelve or thirteen thousand. But not one of those regiments was full; while, to the certain knowledge of this writer, many of them could not muster three hundred men. There is no ground for doubting the opinion expressed by General Floyd that the effective force in and around the fort was ten thousand men. Of these many were killed, and many more got away who were not included in the first arrivals at Clarksville. The Northern journals are now unanimous in the testimony that there are only six thousand prisoners in their hands, surrendered by Buckner and taken in the neighborhood of Fort Donelson.

Of these, we learn now, the largest number were sixty days' men, raw militia from Tennessee and Kentucky, serviceable enough behind breastworks, but worthless in every other situation, and incapable of supporting long fatigue or of extricating themselves from the confusion of defeat by that mechanical obedience to orders which can be obtained only by a different organization and experience under arms. They were completely demoralized at the close of three days' fighting, and that is the true explanation why no attempt could be made to carry local troops through the enemy's lines to a place of safety. With trained regiments it would have been difficult, with militia it was impossible.

Every event in this war has furnished a new proof of the utter impossibility of maintaining a struggle on a great scale by means of loose and uncertain organizations, such as volunteers and militia will always be. In any continued contest, and in extensive operations, they have always failed, and they will always go down before regularly constituted armies, organized on the strict principles of military law. Individual bravery and worth are greater in the ranks formed from the best population of the country, than can ordinarily be found among troops levied under compulsion and treated as machines. But the effective qualities of an army are destroyed by the superiority of the individuals to the mass; they must act as wholes and not as parts. It is impossible to govern troops when the men are the equals of their officers, have created them yesterday and look on them rather as their servants than their masters. Regular armies are machines; obedience and fortitude are the only virtues of a common soldier.

It may seem repulsive and disgusting to sink the best part of citizens into such a condition; but the argument that impels us is unanswerable—necessity and the existence of property and liberty in this land. We must be real soldiers, regular soldiers, military slaves to-day if we that we may be free citizens to-morrow. Unless we can make a temporary sacrifice of feeling as well as comfort, we incur a far more serious and lasting loss, and sink into a degradation far deeper, eternal in duration.

Nothing gives greater hope to reflecting persons than the fact that the Southern Confederacy takes into its service no more sixty days or ninety days, or twelve months volunteers. Our levies are now for the war, and in a short time even the new men, if properly mingled with the troops that have served one term and gloriously re-enlisted, will soon be as invincible as those.

Where Are the Arms?

From the Richmond Examiner, March 7.

What has become of the enormous number of arms stored in Southern arsenals at the beginning of this war? Into what proportions have the cargoes, said to have been brought in from time to time, by rumor, dwindled through official count? They are certainly not in the hands of soldiers now in the field, nor are they still in the arsenals, nor have they been captured by the enemy. Admit that in the hands of prisoners taken by the enemy there were twenty thousand stand; that half as many more have been broken or lost in marches and hospitals, the total that should be subtracted from the original sum is still too small to account for the present scarcity of muskets and of bayonets.

But a vast quantity have, undoubtedly, gone with the sixty days' men, the four months' men, the six months' men; a still greater loss is attributable to the many useless and unprofitable assemblages of the militia.

It is certain only that the Ordnance Department has not the arms for the new levies. There are many more soldiers at the government's command than muskets. It could find full employment for five hundred thousand stand of arms that it has not in possession or in prospect. Under these circumstances no wiser measure could have been adopted by the Government than the call for the guns in the hands of the citizens as private property.—There are a million of guns possessed by the citizens of the South in this manner, and the country has a shot "to fire a gun" at them now. Most shot-guns and are much better made than the musket. Troops armed with double barreled shot-guns need no bayonets for any line that attempted to charge them would be annihilated by the second load, which will always be retained, and can be delivered at twenty paces. It is hoped that the Government will inexorably enforce its regulation; and no sincere patriot will be unwilling to assist its execution to the utmost of his power.

New Artillery Corps in Richmond.

From the Richmond Examiner, March 7.

The brass cannon proposed to be used in the artillery company being raised by Mr. T. T. Cropper was exhibited yesterday on the Capitol square. It shoots with great force, and accurately, too, it is said, over a mile. It weighs one hundred and seventy-five pounds. It has been tried with twenty, forty, and sixty musket balls, and with the latter charge scattered thirty seven feet. It is so light and so easily drawn that five boys can advance or retreat with it as fast as infantry at double-quick.

The Enthusiasm in the South.

From the Richmond Dispatch, March 8.

An intelligent gentleman who has lately arrived in our city from the South, states that the whole country is in a blaze of patriotic enthusiasm. The late reverses have awakened a military spirit which throws into the shade the glorious demonstrations at the beginning of the war. The whole population is offering itself *en masse* for the defence of the country. It is said that nothing like the universal and fervid awakening of the people to the exigencies of the times has occurred before from the beginning of the war. Men of all ages are eager to unite in the holy work of driving back the foul invader from our Southern homes; and even the women, if they could procure arms, would buckle them on and hasten to the field.

As it is, the prayers of mothers, wives and daughters were sent up unceasingly to Heaven in behalf of "the case, the cause, the course" that is giving strength even to the arm of old age, converting boys into veterans, and even the weak and timid into heroes.

Let the Government keep up with the energy of the people, and we have every reason to believe it will; let the Government emulate the splendid boldness of the soldier, and the tide of battle will soon be in our favor. Let all be prepared for sacrifices, to make bonfires of cotton and tobacco, and convert every Southern town to ashes, rather than submit to a base and inhuman foe. In such a spirit, and with humble reliance on Heaven, our independence is