

Reviews of the Week.

THE WAR.

ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

In taking possession of the Weldon railroad, Gen. Grant has evidently touched a vital spot in the approaches to the rebel capital. A single fact will serve to illustrate this. When the news reached Richmond that Gen. Warren had captured the railroad, four advanced one hundred dollars a barrel. This item of news shows how important this road was to the enemy. But we need not go to Richmond to learn this. During the last week the desperate efforts of the rebel army to drive our troops from their position on the railroad are sufficient to show how important it is to them. Up to this time these efforts have all ended in failures. Grant evidently understands the importance of the position, and accordingly the railroad for some considerable distance has been completely destroyed, and our army is entrenched on the ground where the railroad was. Gen. Warren, according to a despatch received on the 23d, had advanced a mile further on the railroad toward Petersburg. He found the rebels busily entrenching, as if apprehensive of further encroachments on their line. We give a Summary of Operations.

during the week. In our last we recorded the heavy battle of Friday the 20th ult., in which our side lost considerably (mostly in prisoners) and barely held our original lines at the close. Saturday the 21st ult. passed quietly, the heavy rains interfering with the movements on both sides. On Sunday the 22d ult., a heavy column of rebels made a dash upon the Fifth Corps, posted on the left of the railroad on the battle ground of Friday. The enemy rushed up on what they supposed to be our flank, but found themselves in a trap with batteries and muskets pouring in an enfilading fire of the hottest description. They quickly made signs of surrender, and nearly 400 of them came in—as many more taking advantage of the cessation of firing to run the other way. The men were mostly from South Carolina and Mississippi. One Colonel, 3 Lieutenants, Colonels, and 37 Captains and 1 Lieutenant were among the prisoners. Gen. B. Agood, (Rebel) is supposed to have been killed, his body lying between the lines where he fell from his horse. On our side Gen. Cutler was slightly wounded and Col. Ducenne killed; our total loss was about 150 killed and wounded and 100 prisoners. The losses in the Fifth Corps in the battles Friday and Saturday are computed at about five thousand. The rebels disappeared from our front on Monday the 23d ult., evidently displeased with the result of Sunday's fighting. On Wednesday, the 25th ult., our line was extended on the left about six or seven miles, which fixed our hold on the Weldon railroad to a place known as Reams's station. By this movement it was discovered that that portion of the enemy's force which had been on our front, had fallen back to the works within two miles of the Petersburg. On Tuesday the 26th ult., the rebels again launched a large body of rebel troops upon our extreme left, and besides other A. P. Hill's entire corps were known to be there. It was evident that movements were going on by the enemy having for their object either the destruction of the Second Corps by an overwhelming assault, or else flanking them on the left with such force as might involve the capture of the greater part of the Corps.

On Thursday morning, Gen. Gibbons's division was to have moved southward from Reams's station, to continue the destruction of the road still farther to the westward, but Colonel Spear's brigade, in that direction, being attacked by the enemy, and the circumstances indicating the probability that our operations on the railroad might meet with interruption, the order was to move out was countermanded. Subsequently the opinion that the only force the enemy had been formed, and General Gibson was again ordered to move down the road, which he commenced to do at about half past nine A. M. Colonel Smith's brigade having the advance and a regiment of Gregg's Cavalry preceding the division.

Starting along a road running to the left or east of the railroad, they turned to the right and crossed the latter about half a mile below Reams's and had not proceeded half a mile further before the cavalry was checked by meeting a line of rebel skirmishers. Col. Smith then deployed as skirmishers the First Delaware regiment, supported by the Twelfth New Jersey Regiment in rear, and the Tenth New York on the right flank. Advancing this skirmish line parallel with that on the right of the railroad, its left flank resting near the same, Colonel Smyth pushed back the enemy's skirmishers until, on arriving in sight of a narrow swampy range extending from the railroad obliquely to the right, and with its acute angle on the side next to us, he found their troops in line of battle beyond it and protected by strong breastworks. The enemy immediately charged upon our skirmishers, and drove them back to our main body. The result of this battle, which considering the importance of the position attacked, and the desperate efforts of the enemy, was one of the fiercest struggles of the war, we give in the official despatches of Generals Grant, Meade and Hancock.

Under date of August 25th, Gen. Hancock writes: The attack about 5 30 P. M., was probably intended to be simultaneous by Wilcox on my centre and Heath on my left. The enemy formed in the woods, placed their artillery in position and opened a heavy cannonade, lasting about fifteen minutes. They assaulted Miles's force. He resisted tenaciously but the enemy broke his lines. Some of Gibbons's troops were hurried over to repair the damage, and the enemy gained a slight foothold. The 27th Division attempted to extreme left, driving Gibbons's Division from the line. His men had been much worn by rushing over to General Miles and back during the repeated assaults. General Gibbons succeeded in forming a strong line, and the enemy who pressing on with great enthusiasm, were severely checked by the dismounted cavalry under General Gregg, whom he handled handsomely. General Miles regained most of his intrenchments, distinguishing himself. All he had to work with were such small parties as could be rallied and found by staff officers. The fighting was continued till dark, the enemy being held by artillery, dismounted cavalry and skirmishers. At dark we withdrew for reasons stated. The enemy made no advance up to a late hour last night, having as far as we have seen, some of our captured guns with their skirmish line. They must have suffered heavily. My own loss, including cavalry, will not perhaps exceed twelve or fifteen hundred.

though this is surmise, as the command is not yet organized. This is acknowledged to have been one of the most determined and desperate fights of the war, resembling Spottsylvania in character, though the number engaged gives it less importance. A few more good troops would have given us a victory of considerable importance. I forward, this forenoon, prisoners from the said Wilcox and Heath, and Major Angel, of my staff, saw and conversed with two prisoners of Mahon's Division last night. I do not find them this morning. They said Mahon's Division, with the exception of one brigade, was there.

At half past two in the afternoon of the 26th ult., Gen. Meade sent the following despatch to Gen. Grant, dated on the battle field: A safeguard that was left on the battlefield, remained there till after daylight this A. M. At that time the enemy had all disappeared, leaving their dead on the field unburied. This shows how severely they were punished, and, doubtless, hearing of the arrival of reinforcements, they feared the results, to-day if they remained.

In a second despatch to Gen. Grant dated at 1 o'clock A. M., of the 17th ult., General Meade says: Since sending my last despatch I have conversed with the safeguard referred to. He did not leave the field till after sunrise. At that time nearly all the enemy had left, moving towards Petersburg. He says they abandoned not only their dead, but their wounded also. He conversed with an officer who said their losses were greater than ever before during the war. The safeguard says he was over the field, and it was covered with the enemy's dead and wounded. He has seen a great many battle-fields, but never saw such a sight. There were very few of our dead, nearly all being of the enemy. All our wounded are brought off, but our dead are unburied. I have instructed Gregg to make an effort to send a party to the field and bury our dead.

Our forces hold the Weldon Road, and in a despatch dated at 3 P. M. of the 26th ult., General Grant says that "the loss of this road seems to be a blow to the enemy which he cannot stand. I think I do not overstate the loss of the enemy in the last two weeks' battles at ten thousand killed and wounded. We have lost heavily, but our loss has been mostly in captured, when the enemy gained temporary advantages. The number of rebel prisoners taken on our side is not yet reported.

General Grant makes the following report of an unsuccessful assault by the enemy on General Butler's picket line. The picket guard soon rallied however, and drove the enemy back and re-established their line. The result was one killed, sixteen wounded and fourteen missing on our side. Two commanding officers and fifty-nine enlisted men were captured from the enemy. What their casualties in killed and wounded were we do not know. The failure of the rebels to drive our troops from their position on the railroad, in this last battle, may be looked upon as a most important victory. If Grant can continue to hold this railroad, it will cripple the rebels more than anything else.

The latest from the Army of the Potomac represent all quiet along the lines, with the usual lull which generally succeeds a severe engagement, such as the fierce but unsuccessful assault on Hancock's Corps on Thursday. The rebel papers are rather reticent respecting this memorable fight, but admit the loss of five Generals, four killed and one wounded.

Our loss is believed to be 2000 men and eight guns; rebel loss 5000.

MIDDLE MILITARY DIVISION. General Sheridan, in command of our forces in the Shenandoah Valley has been acting with great caution and deliberation, and his movements show that he is keeping a wary watch over those of the enemy. He has shown all along an aversion to marching up the Valley till he knows precisely what he may expect to encounter, or what force he may leave behind him. How large the rebel force is, is still, probably, a matter of conjecture. Early is supposed to have had with him, originally about 17,000 men. There is now good reason for believing that he has been positively reinforced by at least 12,000. It is also thought that other reinforcements have been sent him from Richmond, but how many is not certain. General Sheridan's caution is perhaps owing to his incomplete knowledge of the strength of the enemy. That he is quite able to withstand it whatever it may be seems clear from the result of the fight near Charlottesville on the 21st ult. On that occasion, but one Corps was seriously engaged, and the loss in that was not heavy. Whether the rebels really mean an advance, or whether they mean to hold the Valley remains yet to be seen. We give a Summary of Operations.

forces from the Shenandoah Valley. It is very probable that Early will make every effort to reach Richmond at the earliest possible hour. Should he, however, attempt to cross the river, he will most probably be held in check by Union troops, understood to be guarding the fords in strong force.

CAPTURE OF FORT MORGAN. We have news through rebel sources of the surrender of the only remaining stronghold of the rebels in Mobile Bay. We received the first intelligence of Farragut's victory from the rebels before, and as it proved more than true, we have no reason to doubt the present important news. It capitulated after a bombardment of five days. The work was delivered over to Admiral Farragut and General Granger on Tuesday the 23d ult., with twelve hundred prisoners, including General Page and fifty pieces of artillery, stores, &c. Our fleet will soon pass up to the city, as the harbor obstructions are being removed, and it is expected that the city will soon fall into our hands. The control of the bay, secured by the surrender of Fort Morgan releases a number of vessels belonging to the blockade squadron. They will be sent to reinforce the squadron at Wilmington, and assist in making the blockade at that point more stringent.

GENERAL SHERMAN'S ARMY. We have had little of definite news from Sherman this week. He continues secure in his position before, and as it proved more than true, we have no reason to doubt the present important news. It capitulated after a bombardment of five days. The work was delivered over to Admiral Farragut and General Granger on Tuesday the 23d ult., with twelve hundred prisoners, including General Page and fifty pieces of artillery, stores, &c. Our fleet will soon pass up to the city, as the harbor obstructions are being removed, and it is expected that the city will soon fall into our hands. The control of the bay, secured by the surrender of Fort Morgan releases a number of vessels belonging to the blockade squadron. They will be sent to reinforce the squadron at Wilmington, and assist in making the blockade at that point more stringent.

Gen. Kilpatrick destroyed the Macon railroad in several places, tearing up about 14 miles of it. He also captured and burned a train of supplies belonging to the rebels on the road to Atlanta. On his return he met the rebels in strong force, and totally defeated them, capturing four stands of colors, six cannon and 200 prisoners. Afterwards he met another force of rebels, who pressed him so heavily that he was obliged to abandon all but two of the guns, and most of the prisoners. He made an entire circuit of Atlanta, and reached DeKalb with 100 men. He inflicted serious damage on the rebel communications.

MISCELLANEOUS. Chicago Democratic Convention. The convention for the nomination of Democratic candidates for the offices of President and Vice President is now holding its sessions in Chicago. We have little definite information as to the action of the Convention. All reports agree, however, as to the character of those in attendance. Chicago is a wicked city—according to its population the worst perhaps in the Union. On ordinary occasions the Sabbath is but little respected. Accounts received represent that on last Sabbath the scenes in Chicago rivalled the worst days of the rule of infidelity in France. Political speeches were made in front of the hotels, bands of music marched through the streets, followed by great crowds of Sabbath breakers and blasphemers of God's holy name. This is a faint picture of the character of the men who propose setting up candidates for the highest offices in the gift of the nation. Who can doubt but their candidates will be altogether like themselves? To their crime of disloyalty, they have added the grossest immorality and outraged the Christian sentiment of the country. Up to this time, no nomination has been reached, but the general belief seems to be that Gen. McClellan will be the successful nominee for President. Mr. Bigler, of Pennsylvania is temporary Chairman of the Convention.

This Convention has attracted to Chicago the disloyal and disaffected from all parts of the Northern States, and the speeches, so far, indicate what the loyal people of the country may expect if these men shall succeed in getting into power. While their mouths are filled with anathemas against the present administration, and against the war, they have not a word of censure or rebuke for the traitors who began the war and are responsible for its continuance. Let the loyal people of the country by the proceedings of this body of moral corruption and treason, and let them determine that no effort shall be spared to defeat the machinations of traitors at home, and repulse the more manly and deadly assaults of traitors in the field.

HEATING THE GOVERNMENT A CRIME. The sentence of the court-martial in the case of Surgeon-General Hammond for cheating and defrauding the Government, which was that he be dismissed the service and be forever disqualified from holding any office of trust or profit, impressed a great many with the idea that this was the end of the fraud and that the party guilty of these frauds, though disgraced, was henceforth to enjoy unmolested the fruits of them. This is, however, a mistake—the court-martial determined the fact of the crime having been committed, and now the Government intends to prosecute for a recovery of the amount of frauds perpetrated. A despatch from Washington to the New York Tribune says the Solicitor of the War Department has been instructed to cause prosecution to be commenced against Dr. William A. Hammond, late Surgeon-General U. S. A., Messrs. Wyeth & Brother, of Philadelphia, and William A. Stephens, of New York. Dr. Hammond in a card calls himself the "victim of conspiracy and false swearing and malignant abuse of official power." It is unfortunate that he did not establish these assertions before the military court. The investigation lasted four months, therefore, sacred time was allowed to prove the facts. It was as the President says one of the "most patient and thorough that has ever occurred in our military history, and the accused had through out the assistance of eminent and able counsel in conducting his defence. The features of this transaction present it as a crime of more than ordinary turpitude. Shoddyites have cheated the Government in shoes, in clothes and in food, but to defraud the Government of its medical supplies, thereby compromising the lives of the sick and wounded soldiers in all our hospitals, is a degree of callousness, selfishness and cruelty which should be looked for anywhere but in the quarter which had the interests and health of these soldiers committed to its charge.—Philadelphia Ledger.

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