

News of the Week.

THE WAR.

GENERAL SHERIDAN'S ARMY.

As we were going to press last week, news reached us of a great battle in the Shenandoah Valley in which the rebels were completely defeated. We had only time then to give a brief official dispatch from General Sheridan, announcing the victory. Since then the Union forces have hung closely on the rear of the retreating and defeated enemy, and administered additional punishment. The prestige of the rebels in the Shenandoah Valley is gone forever, and their hope of diverting Grant from his hold upon their capital has now vanished. Sheridan with his victorious army is still in hot pursuit. Feeling that our readers would like to read the details of such a battle, resulting in such a victory, we give a description from a correspondent with the army. After describing preliminary arrangements he says:

As soon as the Nineteenth Corps arrived it was formed in four lines of battle about three hundred yards apart, on the right of the Sixth Corps, and everything being in readiness the advance was sounded at about twelve o'clock, and the different lines moved forward. The two corps advanced in splendid style, and just as composedly as though marching to a review or a parade, drums leading and colors flying, presenting such an imposing spectacle as has seldom been seen in the present war. In fact some of the oldest and most experienced staff officers declared they had never before witnessed so truly grand a spectacle. The first line had not advanced more than two hundred yards before it became warmly engaged with the enemy, who were posted in line about six hundred yards distant. At the same time our artillery opened a furious cannonade, throwing shells and solid shot into the opposite woods, where the enemy could be distinctly seen moving up reinforcements. Our different lines of battle continued to advance steadily until they had approached within nearly two hundred yards of the enemy's line, when the Rebels opened a furious cannonade with grape and canister from two batteries, which they had previously kept secreted and which ploughed through our advancing lines, mowing down a large number of our men. The first line was obliged to give way under so murderous a fire, and in retreating beyond the second line threw it into momentary confusion, and it was also obliged to fall back beyond the third line, which had in the meantime been obliged to lay down in order to avoid as much as possible the effects of the withering fire, which the enemy's batteries were directing against our advancing lines. Our artillery was now brought and posted in commanding positions to silence these batteries of the enemy which had caused so much annoyance, and our line was re-formed and again moved forward, regaining the advanced position, which they had held when they were obliged to fall back. But this success was not gained without most obstinate resistance on the part of the enemy. General Sheridan had previously ridden along the lines and had received everywhere the men with the greatest enthusiasm; and when they advanced it was with terrible determination "to do or die in the attempt."

Having regained the advanced position which we had previously occupied, the different lines of battle were ordered to lay down and wait the arrival of Crook's corps, which was held in reserve on the eastern side of the Opequan. They were ordered up to take position on the extreme right of the line, in order to counteract a movement on the part of the enemy, who were massing troops on their left flank with a view of turning our right. Precisely at 3 o'clock Crook formed on the right of the Nineteenth Corps the First Division on the extreme right of our line, and the Second Division in the rear supporting a division of the Nineteenth Corps. General Crook having formed his men, rode along the lines, and was received with the most vociferous cheering, the men promising to "go in and wipe out Winchester." General Torbert, with Merritt and Averill's Division of Cavalry, having crossed the Opequan about 9 o'clock at Burns' and Knox's Fords, had been hard at work all day fighting considerable bodies of the enemy's infantry and cavalry, and having been successful in steadily driving them before them, now arrived on the extreme right, and were prepared to take part in the final struggle which secured us the victory. General Sheridan rode out to where Gen. Torbert was stationed, and after consultation with him as to the part the cavalry were to take, ordered a final charge, which was made with an impetuosity which nothing could resist. Our line, extending nearly three miles in length, advanced amid cheers and yells, which could be distinctly heard far above the noise made by the thunder of artillery and continuous roar of musketry, which for impetuosity has seldom been exceeded in any battle of this war. Our men had determined to win the day and never themselves accordingly for the coming struggle, and as our line advanced closer and closer to those of the enemy, the battle became more and more fierce until in point of desperate and fierce carnage it would compare favorably with any similar contest of this war. The slaughter now was truly awful, and at every discharge men were distinctly seen to drop all around, and the two contending lines at some points could not have been over two hundred yards apart. Just at this critical period, above the roar of artillery and musketry, and the cheers and fierce yells of the contending armies, could be distinctly heard the charge, which was the death knell of the rebel army. There could be seen the gallant Custer and Merritt, each with his head-quarters' flag in hand, and conspicuous among the advancing squadrons, gallantly leading his charge which in connection with the desperate courage displayed by our infantry, secured us the victory. All honor to these gallant chiefs who have done so nobly. Those who have never witnessed a cavalry charge can form no idea of its magnificence, nor of its demoralizing effect. When well executed upon an enemy, the sabre columns of the cavalry command were forced to give way and break before the fierce onslaught which our cavalry made upon them, who, with sabre in hand, rode them down, cutting them right and left, capturing seven hundred and twenty-one privates and non-commissioned officers, with nine battle-flags and two guns. The broken and demoralized divisions comprising Early's command now fled in confusion, throwing away everything which could in any way impede their flight, and strewing the ground with their arms. Some made for the heights beyond Winchester, but they were speedily dislodged by Averill, and forced to beat a hasty and ignominious retreat up the valley, where such of Early's command as are left him are now scattered. Our victory was a glorious one, and one well calculated to thrill the heart of every loyal man with impulses of sincere joy, but it has been well remarked, that "every joy has its attendant amount of sorrow," and ours was

for the gallant dead and wounded, who poured out their life's blood freely, that this great and iniquitous rebellion should be put down.

On Thursday the 22d, Early was found posted at Fisher's Hill, about four miles south of Strasburg, with his right resting on the north fork of the Shenandoah and extending across the Strasburg Valley westward to North Mountain, occupying a position which seemed almost impregnable. After a good deal of maneuvering during the day, General Crook's command was transferred to the extreme right of the line carrying everything with him. While he was thus driving the enemy in the greatest confusion behind their breastworks, the Sixth and Nineteenth Army Corps attacked the rebel works in front, and the whole rebel army appeared to be broken up. They fled in the utmost confusion. Sixteen guns, with a great many caissons, artillery horses, &c., were captured. The casualties, or the number of prisoners, are as yet unknown. The attack not being commenced till four o'clock P. M., darkness alone saved the whole of Early's army from destruction. The First and Third Cavalry divisions were down the Luray Valley on the same day of the attack, and if they pushed on vigorously to the main valley the result of the engagement will probably be still more signal. Early's command, which has been thus signally and completely routed, embraced the famous Stonewall Brigade, and troops constituting "Stonewall" Jackson's Corps, and was the elite of the rebel army. The prisoners already taken are computed at no less than 7,200, and the total loss to the enemy is one-third of their whole army. They lost nine Generals—three killed, six wounded. Altogether, no victory in this war surpasses the present in completeness, and considering the numbers engaged, none surpasses it in the rapidity of its probable result. For we believe that Sheridan means to make clean work of the Shenandoah Valley. Early's is surely one of the worst beaten armies that the rebellion has yet seen, and cannot possibly be equal to the task of holding the Shenandoah against the impetuous advance of its victorious adversary.

The latest news from General Sheridan is his dispatch dated at Woodstock, Friday morning, September 23d, giving further particulars of the fight at Fisher's Hill. General Crook struck the enemy's left flank, doubling it up, and advancing along their line. Ricketts' Division, of the Sixth Corps, joined Crook's, Getty's and Wheaton's Divisions, taking up the same movement, followed by the whole line attacking and carrying the enemy's works. The rebels threw down their arms and fled in the greatest confusion, abandoning most of their artillery. It was dark when the battle ended. The Sixth and Nineteenth Corps were pushed on in pursuit during the night as far as Woodstock, and there halted for rest and rations. Sixteen pieces of artillery are reported captured. The Union loss is comparatively light. No estimate of the number of prisoners taken at Fisher's Hill can as yet be given. General Sheridan concludes:—"I do not think that there was an army so badly routed." On Saturday morning the 24th instant, Early was still continuing his retreat, with General Sheridan in close pursuit. The War Department are hurrying forward all needed supplies and reinforcements for General Sheridan.

ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

There has been no new or important movement in the army of the Potomac during the past week. Great enthusiasm prevails among the soldiers of the army of the Potomac over the glorious news of Sheridan's victory. The army has enjoyed several days of unbroken stillness. Both sides are reinforcing and fortifying. The position of the Union army is regarded as impregnable, even by the rebels, who decline all offers for attack. Their cavalry operations on the Union rear are generally of little moment.

The news of the victory in the Valley of the Shenandoah, was read to the troops along the lines on the 20th inst., and was received with unbounded enthusiasm and repeated cheering. A salute of one hundred shot guns will be fired to-morrow at daylight in honor of the event. The steam-ship "Washington," from City Point, arrived at Washington on the 24th, with fifty-five rebel deserters. She reported the capture of Petersburg. Rebel desertions continue frequent. One hundred and twenty-five entered the Union lines from a single Florida regiment. There are now sixty-five hundred prisoners at Point Lookout. One hundred and fifty arrived there on the 23d from Grant's army, and within a week some four hundred have been transferred to Northern prisons. A rumor prevails that General Grant had commenced fighting at Petersburg, but there seems to be no truth in the rumor. The fighting between the pickets in front of the right of the Third Division, Second Corps, still continues and casualties occur daily.

Expedition to the Rapidan.

It having become known that the rebels had constructed a large and valuable bridge over the Rapidan, about fifteen miles from Culpeper, for the double purpose of completing the railway communication from that place with Richmond and offering an easy exit from the Shenandoah valley for all his late occupation of that district. Colonel H. M. Lazelle, of the Sixteenth Regiment New York Volunteer Cavalry, commanding the cavalry brigade, near Fall's Church, was ordered to effect its destruction. Accordingly, on the morning of the 17th inst., that officer started at three o'clock, with three hundred men of the Sixteenth New York Volunteer Cavalry, and fifty men of the Thirteenth New York Volunteer Cavalry, for the scene of action. The party was furnished with the necessary rations and fully provided with axes, &c., for the contemplated work. The command moved through Fairfax county and crossing Wolf Run Shoals after a severe march, bivouacked at Elk Run. Next morning at three o'clock the party resumed its march, and crossing the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford, passed through Stevensburg, capturing the rebel videttes on the route, then crossed the Rapidan at Raccoon Ford, and following the course of the river re-crossed it at Rapidan Station, charged through the village, capturing the enemy's advanced line of pickets. At this point information was obtained of a large corral of the rebel Government's horses, mules, &c., being in the neighborhood, and a dash was made at them, resulting in the capture of the guard, and upwards of two hundred and fifty mules that were quietly grazing there were duly collected and cared for. The work of destroying the bridge, about two hundred feet in length, by one hundred and fifty in height, then commenced, under Colonel Lazelle's supervision. Meanwhile another party proceeded to fire a large mill containing five thousand barrels of flour, the telegraph office, railroad depot and other public buildings, which were all soon consumed, together with the bridge. During these operations a large train was approaching, but having observed the smoke of the burning buildings did not

come near enough to admit of its capture. The work of destruction having been thoroughly completed, the command, together with the prisoners, of whom some were officers, and captured property, moved up to Culpeper, where it was met by the advance of Early's army, consisting of McCloud's Division, numbering about four thousand men, two hundred cavalry and six pieces of artillery, that had been sent expressly to guard against the deed just so effectually accomplished. During the march from the Rapidan to Culpeper the enemy in small bodies harassed the rear guard considerably, until the column came on the main body of McCloud's Division, which at once opened a heavy fire on its flank. Col. Lazelle then marched his command on three parallel lines, and struck the foot of the mountain, where two regiments of infantry had been sent to endeavor to cut off our retreat. The advance was allowed to pass, and on the approach of the columns a terrific fire was opened by the rebel infantry. Here Captain Lawrence Leahy (acting Major) and Captain Brown, of the Thirteenth New York Cavalry, ably assisted by Lieutenants Raveland and Dougherty, of the Thirteenth and Sixteenth, respectively, charged with their commands, in the hopes of routing the infantry, but owing to the positions the enemy had taken up, with a swamp in their front, were repulsed with loss. The enemy's cavalry seeing this charge repulsed, at once charged on the rear of the column, with the view of cutting off the only road now left for retreat, but were defeated in the main object, with heavy loss, and only succeeded in recapturing a goodly portion of the horses and mules, having been again charged in turn by Captain Leahy and his command. Colonel Lazelle now seeing, by the new forces momentarily developing themselves, that he was so greatly outnumbered, commenced his retreat without gratifying the evident wish and intention of the rebel commander of charging on the breastworks, in which case the whole command must inevitably have been captured or cut to pieces. Our total loss in killed, wounded and missing, was one officer (Lieutenant French, Sixteenth, missing) and forty men. Of this number the Thirteenth lost four and the Sixteenth one officer and thirty-six men.

GENERAL SHERMAN'S ARMY.

There has been no further fighting in Sherman's army. Sherman has shown Hood and his rebel friends that he can write a letter, as well as fight a battle. The following is his reply to General Hood's charge of "studied and ungenerous cruelty" about the removal of the citizens of Atlanta:

HEAD-QUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSISSIPPI, IN THE FIELD, ATLANTA, GA., Sept. 10, 1864.—General J. B. Hood, commanding Army of the Tennessee, Confederate Army:—General—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this date, at the hands of Messrs. Ball and Crew, consenting to the arrangements I had proposed to facilitate the removal of the people of Atlanta who prefer to go in that direction. I enclose you a copy of my orders, which will, I am satisfied, accomplish my purpose perfectly. You style the measures proposed "unprecedented," and appeal to the dark history of war for a parallel, as an act of "studied and ungenerous cruelty." It is not unprecedented, for General Johnston himself very wisely and properly removed the families all the way from Dalton down, and I see no reason why Atlanta should be excepted. Nor is it necessary to appeal to the "dark history of war," when recent and modern examples are so handy.

You yourself burned dwelling houses along your pathway, and I have seen to-day fifty houses that you have rendered uninhabitable, because they stood in the way of your forts and men. You defended Atlanta on a line so close to town that every cannon shot and every musket shot from our line of investments that overshot their mark went into the habitations of women and children. General Hardee did the same at Jonesboro', and General Johnston did the same last summer at Jackson, Miss. I have not accused them of heartless cruelty, but merely instance these cases of very recent occurrence, and could go on and enumerate hundreds of others, and challenge any fair man to judge who of us has the heart of pity for the families of "brave people." I say it is kindness to the families of Atlanta to remove them, now at once, from scenes that women and children should not be exposed to, and the "brave people" should scorn to commit their wives and children to the rude barbarian who thus, as you say, violate the laws of war, as illustrated in the pages of its "dark history."

In the name of common sense, I ask you not to appeal to a just God in such a sacrilegious manner. You who, in the midst of peace and prosperity, have plunged a nation into war, and declared that you had destroyed and bagged us to battle, insulted our flag, seized our arsenals and forts that were left in the honorable custody of a peaceful ordnance sergeant, seized and made prisoners of war the very garrisons sent to protect your people against negroes and Indians, long before any overt act was committed by the, to you, hateful Lincoln Government, tried to force Kentucky and Missouri into rebellion, despite of themselves, falsified the vote of Louisiana, turned loose your privateers, to plunder unarmed ships, expelled Union families by the thousands, burned their homes, and declared by an act of your Congress the confiscation of all debts due to Northern men for goods had and received. Thus to the marines, but not to me, who have seen these things, and who will this day make as many sacrifices for the peace and honor of the South as the best Southerner among you. If we must be enemies, let us be men, and fight it out as we propose to-day, and not deal in such hypocritical appeals to God and humanity.

God will judge us in due time, and he will pronounce whether it be more humane to fight with a town full of women and the families of a "brave people" at our back, or to remove them in time to places of safety, among their own friends and people. I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant, (Signed) W. T. SHERMAN, Maj.-Gen. Commanding. Official copy.—(Signed) L. M. DAVTON, Aid-de-Camp.

General Sherman is busily engaged in fortifying Atlanta. Passengers from Atlanta report all quiet. A portion of the city is being destroyed, and the lumber from the dwellings is used to construct camps. The rebel army is swinging around to cover the Atlanta and West Point Railroad, so as prevent our advance on Mobile. Governor Brown, of Georgia, has offered General Sherman propositions of peace.

LATEST WAR NEWS.

The following is Secretary Stanton's Bulletin, giving the latest news from all our armies:—WASHINGTON, Sept. 26, 10-30 A. M.—Major General Dix, New York:—Despatches from General Sheridan, dated 11 o'clock Saturday night, six miles south of New Market, have been received. He had driven the enemy from Mount Jackson, which was being able to bring on an engagement. The enemy were moving rapidly, and he had no cavalry pre-

sent to hold them. General Torbert had attacked Wickham's force at Luray and captured a number of prisoners. General Sheridan found rebel hospitals in all the towns from Winchester to New Market, and was ninety miles from Martinsburgh. Twenty pieces of artillery were captured at Fisher's Hill, 1100 prisoners, a large amount of ammunition, caissons, limbers, &c., a large amount of tools, small arms and debris. No list of captured material has yet been received. The small towns through the valley have a great many of the enemy's wounded. General Stevenson reports the arrival at Harper's Ferry of a train of our wounded, twenty-six captured guns and eighty additional captured officers. Breckinridge has gone to take command of the rebel Department of the Southwest. Despatches received this morning from General Sherman's command, state that Hood appears to be moving toward the Alabama line. A strong force of rebel raiders are reported to be operating against Sherman's communications, and had captured Athens, Alabama. Vigorous exertions were being made to overtake and destroy this force. Jeff. Davis is reported to be at Macon. Reports have also been received from Major-General Canby. General Steele has been strongly reinforced and has taken the offensive. Despatches from General Grant, dated five o'clock last night, report no military operations. The above comprises the substance of military information proper for publication received to present date by this department. EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Guerrillas in the West.

The guerrillas are quite active in the West. A train of two hundred wagons, with an escort of eight hundred men, was captured on the 19th inst., at Cabin's Creek, Kansas. The value of the train is estimated at half a million dollars. The attack was made at three o'clock in the morning by a force of fifteen hundred rebels, supported by a Standwaite, and must have been a complete surprise. The train was destroyed on the spot, indicating a rapid movement northward by the rebels. A despatch from Mount City, Kansas, says that a large force of rebels were moving north, one column toward Fort Scott, and another toward Springfield, Mo. A party of two hundred guerrillas had plundered the town of Kyrville, Clarion county, Missouri, on the 21st, and burned the court house, with all the records, and killed the sheriff, Robert Corman, and a noted Union scout, William Young. General Fisk, with a strong force of cavalry and artillery, was in close pursuit. A party of the militia had a fight on Saturday last with a party of bushwhackers, four miles from Lexington, and killed six or seven of them. The Second Regiment of Missouri Volunteers are reported to have fallen back from Bloomfield to White Water River, fearing an attack from a superior force of Shelby's rebels. It was also reported at Charleston that the Missouri Militia had been overtaken, and that a fight was going on at White Water on the 22d inst. It is believed that Gen. A. J. Smith, in command of this Department, is fully able to check the threatened advance of Shelby and Marmaduke's forces into Missouri.

Change in the Cabinet.

When the resolution of the late Baltimore Convention, declaring that they "deem it essential to the general welfare that harmony shall prevail in the national councils, and regarding as worthy of public confidence and official trust those only who cordially indorse the principles proposed in the series of resolutions, and which should characterize the administration of the government," was, shortly after its passage, read by Postmaster General Blair, he at once verbally tendered his resignation, which was not formally made and accepted until to-day, as will be seen from the following correspondence. It is understood that ex-Governor Dennison, of Ohio, will be his successor:—

EXECUTIVE MANSION, } WASHINGTON, Sept. 23, 1864. } MY DEAR SIR:—I have received your note of this date, referring to my offers to resign whenever you should deem it advisable for the public interests I should do so, and stating that, in your judgment, the time has now come, I now therefore formally tender my resignation of the office of Postmaster General. I cannot take leave of you without renewing the expressions of my gratitude for the uniform kindness which has marked your course toward me. Your very truly, M. BLAIR. The President.

Further Decline in Gold.

The victories in the Shenandoah Valley, the general feeling which prevails that the rebellion now totters to its fall, have had a visible effect upon the gold market during the past week. It is now below 200. This (Tuesday) morning it is 190 and the tendency still downward. Already the panic in gold has communicated to the other dry goods market, and cotton has declined 40 cents per pound. At an auction sale on the 24th in this city, shawls, silks and other dry goods sold at the same price as when gold was at par. Some of the necessities of life such as groceries have also given away slightly in price. It is to be hoped that the visions of speculation will receive such a rebuke as to prevent prices from again reaching such enormous figures.

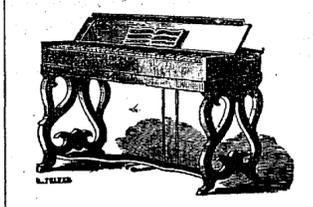
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