

THE LAST GREAT COMBINED MOVEMENT AGAINST CHARLESTON.

Recoiling from the disastrous assault upon Wagner, made on the 22nd of July last—preceded, as it was, by a no less bloody repulse, on the 18th, in a similar attempt at the reduction, by assault, of that apparently almost impregnable strong-hold—it was resolved by the respective commandants of the Federal land and naval forces before Charleston, to adopt some new mode of attack—the impossibility of reaching that “hot-bed of rebellion” through works of such formidable character, defended with a pertinacity bordering upon desperation, being declared in terms admitting of no misinterpretation.

The Federals, however, though writhing in the agony of successive discomfiture—intent upon the attainment of the prize which has been the object of repeated land and naval expeditions, in prowess never paralleled in ancient or modern warfare—were far from abandoning the idea of reducing Charleston. On the contrary, from each repeated failure they seemed to return nerved with an unwearied motive power and determination to stand as victors on the soil and once more float the stars and stripes in the sultry breeze of the metropolis of the Palmetto State.

The thunder tones of fifteen-inch rifled guns and two hundred pounder Parrots had measurably died away—their terrific fire being replaced by the smaller guns of the nearer land and water batteries; the monitors, also, drawing within fair range delivered but a sluggish fire—whose intent could only have been either to dissipate any exulting cat-bursts of feeling on the part of the defenders of Charleston in view of a repetition of defeat to the Federal arms, or for the purpose of covering the real character of the next onset.

Whatever may have been the design of these sportive discharges, it is quite obvious that meanwhile the assailants were indefatigable in making the required preparations for a vigorous and, as they hoped, successful renewal of hostilities in accordance with the change in tactics, found to be an unavoidable expedient and which, after laborious and deep thought, research, official consultations and the thorough racking of the concentrated inventive powers of the respective commandants, should be determined upon.

Besides the erection of new earthworks within more commanding distance and the construction of nearer approaches by rifle pits, heavy reinforcements were ordered from the north, which soon began to pour in. New batteries, also, were ordered—among which is publicly invoiced as having been received by Gen. Gilmore, about the first of August, a battery of guns the heaviest ever cast in the North, which were at once mounted on Morris Island. So powerful was this battery that it was asserted that an hour and a half's bombardment from it would compel the surrender of Sumter.

Herein is the first and only intimation given to the public as to the newly fixed point or character of attack, until the reiterated reports of Sumter's critical condition, serious breach, gradual demolition and the solemn assurance of its final fall announced in plainer terms than army dispatches had at any time revealed, that fated Sumter was the unconscious victim upon which was to be vented the most desolating fire ever poured forth from engines of destruction.

Fort Wagner was now pronounced positively impregnable. Contemptuously passing by Wagner, therefore, the range of the new guns and other batteries was tried on the Cumming's Point batteries, located on the extreme north end of Morris Island, which had previously been treated to a most furious bombardment by the Ironsides and two monitors, but with what effect has not transpired. The real point against which was to be directed the coming storm of battle was yet carefully disguised. The northern people were advised to calm down their eager and over zealous expectations of the immediate fall of Wagner and the forcible possession of Charleston,—the correspondents using language somewhat after this form—the long-expected day set for the humiliation of the imperious spirit of rebellion at Charleston has passed, with everything promising success though, perhaps, not as soon as some may wish.

To reduce Sumter's battlements was now so certain as to be regarded as already accomplished

—which, it was some satisfaction to be assured, would in a degree compensate for the fruitless labor expended on Wagner's apparently impenetrable defenses.

While Gen. Gilmore was thus vigorously preparing for another renewal of fierce artillery conflict, the Confederates were not inactive or listless observers. The works on James Island were strengthened; new batteries erected; necessary repairs made; defective and exposed points fortified, and other means of more effectual defense adopted.

Desultory firing continued from the guns of Wagner, Sumter, Gregg and the batteries on Cumming's Point and James Island, in reply to shot and shell from the monitors, gun and mortar boats of Com. Dahlgren and the land forces of Gen. Gilmore. The rifle pits of the Federal sharpshooters had also been brought up to within close range of the parapet of Wagner, and the sharp riflemen were said to be picking off some of Wagner's gunners, visiting upon its defenders no little annoyance. The Federal advance, Aug. 4th, was within 600 yards of Wagner. The shells of the enemy, which, at times, were poured in upon the Federals thick and fast, had but slight effect—the protection of the Union troops being so complete that their casualties, as reported, were hardly worth noticing.

Sorties and skirmishing were of almost daily occurrence from the time of the last deadly assault to the revival of the impending general attack. In one of these, on Aug. 2d, the Federals are reported to have captured five hundred Confederates on an island in rear of Folly Island. On the night of the 4th, while on a scout near Light House creek, Capt. Payne, of the 100th New York, and nine men were captured by the Confederates. On the night of the 5th, while on picket duty, a boat belonging to the Ironsides was run under by a Confederate steamer and part of the crew drowned. The remainder, says one account, were picked up by another boat belonging to the Federal picket fleet. Another account says they were captured.

A fierce artillery fight was inaugurated, apparently unintentionally, by a little shell practice from the gun-boat Ottawa and one of the monitors, taking their position off Fort Wagner, on Sunday morning, 2d ult. The practice, however, proved too serious a matter for the Confederates to tamely allow—nearly every shot from the Ottawa's hundred pound parrot being plunged into the works. Sumter, with her heavy rifled guns, attempted to drive the impertinent annoyance away; but her shots were badly ranged—falling in the water and all about the Ottawa and not in a single instance striking her. Regardless of the wrathful salutations of Sumter and Moultrie—which had also joined in revengeful protest—bolt succeeding bolt was dashed in on Wagner until it was enshrouded in one vast pyramid of smoke and dust. The fort occasionally responded with her ten inch columbiads; but to no purpose.

Finally, however, a shot from the Ottawa either dismounted a gun or blew up a small service magazine in Wagner and woke up the garrison. In their rage they sprang to their guns and opened fire upon the Federal works and upon the Ottawa and for a couple of hours the fire was more intense and rapid than ever before proceeded from that work. Gilmore's batteries responded with the greatest rapidity. The enemy's works on James Island next caught up the deafening refrain and belched forth their noisy salutations, while Sumter, Moultrie and Johnson joined in the chorus.

The fire was unexampled in rapidity and generally in accuracy. Wagner was covered with bursting shells, enveloped in smoke and dust; but her bold defenders stood by their guns with the greatest of steadiness.

The trenches of the Federals were gleaming with flaring fires of exploding shell and the air was impregnated with sulphurous fumes and alive with the whistle of solid shot, the hum of shells, the shriek of rifle projectiles and all that variety of strange sounds that proceeds from a hundred flying missiles. The work in the trenches necessarily slackened, as the men found it essential to their safety to take to cover very frequently.

This thundering cannonade continued an hour or more, when the New Ironsides hoisted anchor and moved majestically to her old position off Wagner, where she anchored and brought her port broadside to bear on the work. In a moment she fired a shot from her rifle gun forward and getting the range, let fly a broadside at the fort from her two hun-

dred pound rifles and eleven inch guns. Her fire thus opened continued with steadiness, accuracy and effect.

One after another the enemy's guns ceased firing and finally an occasional shot from a ten inch columbiad at the Ironsides was the only visible indication that Wagner was still in the hands of the enemy. As if in imitation of her impregnable antagonist, the Ironsides also ceased shelling and, save an occasional shot from Johnson, at noon all was still again.

It was not known that, during this impetuous and spiteful naval and land fight, a single casualty occurred. The Federals deny having sustained any loss—while it is well known that their opponents were securely shielded by bomb-proofs, which perfectly neutralize the terrific concussions of shot and shell.

At Washington, on the 14th, dispatches said to have been of a business character and therefore not proper for publication were received, in which Gen. Gilmore and Com. Dahlgren reiterated the former confident assurances of their ability, with the preparations then being made, to conduct the operations against Charleston to a triumphant issue.

To batter down or overwhelm by assault the stronghold of Wagner having become among the admitted impossibilities, as already stated, it was hinted by an officer who reached New York from Charleston on the 17th, that it would be the purpose of the commandants of the Charleston expedition to return to the only mode of reducing that work—namely assault—upon being so largely reinforced as to render another failure among the things impossible. Sumter, however, the chances were, could be knocked to pieces more readily. This would at least be some satisfaction, although the assailants would not be able to occupy it, even should they succeed in demolishing its forty or fifty feet high walls.

The interregnum following the crushing assault of the monitors on Sumter on the 7th of April last, by Admiral Dupont, had afforded ample opportunity for increasing their efficiency, as that disastrous failure, sought to be palmed upon the country only as a “reconnoissance,” had fully shown the utter inefficiency of the iron-clads to take Charleston alone. These were, therefore, taken, it will be remembered, to Port Royal, eight in number, and put in a state of repair which, it was deemed, would make them absolutely impervious to any missile or projectile known among modern destructives.

The intention to open the grand concerted and final assault on Sumter was announced for the 13th—which, it was subsequently explained, was abandoned on account of some difficulty as to the quality of the army ammunition and also owing to the serious indisposition of Gen. Gilmore, who, having recovered his equanimity, appointed the following day, 14th, for the opening of the siege which was to be the beginning of the end of Sumter. This predetermination, however, was frustrated through the blundering display of intrepidity by Gilmore's batteries, heretofore alluded to.

From the best accounts at hand it appears that the oft detracted work of the demolition of Sumter was actually recommenced by the batteries on shore, the monitors and wooden war-ships simultaneously, on Saturday, Aug. 15th, at daybreak. The plan of the new attack as now developed, seems to have been to allow Gilmore, with his two hundred pound parrots, aided by other effective shore batteries, to engage Sumter, while the five monitors, wooden gun-boats, nine in number, with other naval armaments, were brought to bear against Wagner, Gregg and whatever batteries were in a position to cripple or in the least degree interrupt Gilmore in his efforts against Sumter.

On Sunday, the 23d, the land batteries, aided by the monitors, also, closed in with Sumter and their combined fire was terrible and destructive in the extreme. The shots, as per report, swept through the fort. Col. Rhett, commanding, was wounded, as also several other officers. In Wagner, Col. Gaylord was reported killed and several wounded.

Twenty three war vessels, including the iron clads, were then within the bar of Charleston harbor. The bombardment was doing its work. The heavy shots, at every discharge, made perceptible breaches. Up

to Friday, 21st, twenty five hundred missiles, as reported, had struck the fort.

On the 22d, Admiral Dahlgren, with five monitors, bombarded Sumter from midnight till six o'clock next morning, during which time one hundred balls struck it—many of them passing through the sea wall.—The whole parapet was carried away; but Sumter still displayed the Confederate flag, which had already been shot away repeatedly.

A dispatch to Gen. Halleck, dated Morris Island, 24th, announced the “practical demolition” of Sumter, as the result of seven days' bombardment of that work and, on that day, says the dispatch, Sumter was a shapeless, harmless mass of ruins.

Another feature of the stratagem concocted for the reduction of Charleston was the erection of a battery on a marsh between Morris and James Islands, from which—pursuant with due notice on the 20th, to Beauregard, commanding at Charleston, at a distance of four miles, on the 21st, Gilmore sent his greeting of fifteen shells, charged with Greek fire, to the citizens of Charleston. Beauregard, as reported, protested against this uncivil treatment, denouncing the Greek fire as the most villainous compound ever used in war.

At twelve o'clock on Saturday night, 23d, the shelling with Greek fire was resumed. It was then thought that the stars and stripes would wave over Sumter on Sunday night.

We have ever anticipated the recapture of Charleston by the Federals. As to how much time may elapse before it is consummated, we do not pretend to be advised; but, when the Federal flag waves over that “shapeless, harmless mass of ruins” beyond the upper point of Morris Island and three and a half miles from the city of Charleston, we shall be enabled to announce the fall of Sumter.

A FATAL STAMPEDE.

We are informed by letter from Capt. John R. Young, dated at Laramie, August 6th, that he left Florence, N. T., on the 6th of July in charge of a company of Scandinavian Saints en route for Deseret. They had cool, pleasant weather and a prosperous journey, without accident, up to the 28th of July. At about three o'clock in the morning on that day the cattle and horses belonging to the company stampeded, but fortunately were all recovered in the course of the day. Deeming it best to move camp a short distance after finding the stock, they hitched up and traveled about four miles when another stampede occurred, every team in the company starting simultaneously and rushing across the plain at their utmost speed. The scene is represented to have been one of fearful wildness and great noise and confusion. Women and children leaped from the wagons as they were going as fast as it was possible for the cattle and horses to propel them. Two women were killed instantly and one man received injuries resulting in his death shortly after. Several adults, both men and women, were seriously hurt, but miraculously no children were injured. At the time of writing, nine days after the sad occurrence, the wounded were all recovering and the company were getting along finely.

ARRIVALS.

A few days since the following gentlemen reached this city, on their respective tours en route for home, or post of official appointment:

Maj. Holland and Lieut. Stack, of the British army in China—homeward bound. Mr. O. V. Hollenbeck, of N. York, late from Japan, where he has resided during the two past years—enroute for home. Mr. Edwards, of Kentucky, lately appointed U. S. Attorney for Nevada Territory, on his way to his post.—Hon. Hadley D. Johnson, late of Omaha, N. Territory with his family, enroute for the gold fields of the north.

The gentlemen first named, who have crossed the Pacific, expressed themselves in terms of the highest eulogy of the great Overland Route, and regretted exceedingly the almost unpardonable tardiness in hastening the Pacific Railway to its completion—which, when built, they hesitated not to predict, would monopolize the great bulk of the China, Japan and East India trade with the North American States.

Elders Brigham Young, Jr., and Chancy W. West, arrived on Thursday last, 27th ult., on their return from their respective missions in Europe.