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THE PROSPECTS IN MISSISSIPPI.

The movements of both the Federals and Confederates in Mississippi and the concentration of powerful armies there, plainly indicate that a mighty struggle is to be made for the opening of the Mississippi river and the possession of that part of the country by the forces of the former; while the Confederates seem equally determined that their dominion in that State shall not be taken away by the "Yankee invaders." The probabilities are, from the signs of the times and the gigantic movements which have of late been made in that direction; the State of Mississippi will be one of the principal theatres of the war for a time to come, and that much blood will be shed within its borders before the undisputed occupancy will be determined.

After the failure of the Federal attack on Vicksburg last summer and the abandonment of the grand scheme for making that strongly fortified city an inland town by turning the river out of its natural channel by a canal, there was apparently but little done towards putting down the rebellion along the "Father of waters," between Memphis and Baton Rouge, by the forces of the Government; and the troops sent thither to war for the preservation of the Union, have, with little exception, remained inactive since the evacuation of Corinth by the Confederates and its occupation by the army under Gen. Halleck after a protracted siege. It is true that a few conflicts have transpired—the most important of which, was the battle of Corinth, in October last. None of them, however, of a decisive character, nor tending to the settlement of the question as to whether the Federals or Confederates should bear rule in the northern tier of counties in that State.

Within the last two months, Gen. Grant, in command in that region, has made some little demonstration, and caused the Confederates under Gen. Bragg to fall back slowly, destroying the roads behind them and laying so many obstacles in the way of the advancing Federal columns that it was impossible for the Union army to force the enemy to accept battle, or to drive them from the land, although General Grant's army is said to have been by far the most numerous, and much better supplied with arms, provisions and munitions of war, than that of the Confederates, who are represented to be much in want of the means of subsistence and defense, and in a state of great demoralization.

Having, under such circumstances, compelled the enemy to fall back from Holly Springs, which was immediately thereafter occupied by General Grant, he followed up the advantages thus gained as fast as the state of the roads and other circumstances would favor; but, so far as known, no great headway was made against the retreating Confederate legions who fell back but slowly before the overwhelming force of the "Yankees." While things were thus progressing about two weeks since, the precise time not stated, a detachment of the enemy, as per report, managed to get in the rear of the main body of the Federal army, made an attack upon and captured Holly Springs, and destroyed a large amount of property, including all the Government stores—one hundred thousand dollars' worth of cotton, two locomotives and fifty cars, the depots, machine shops, and everything which could in any way be used by the army for the prosecution of the war. The prisoners taken, said to have been about eight hundred, were paroled; and after completing the destruction of everything they desired, which was accomplished in a very short time, the Confederates decamped, leaving the place to be reoccupied by the Federals, which they lost no time in doing after the enemy had left to escape the punishment which would other-

wise have been meted out to them. The occurrence was not considered creditable to Gen. Grant who suffered the enemy to get in his rear, destroy his supplies and then escape with impunity; and to hide the disgrace, an official announcement was made denying that the enemy had attacked Holly Springs and destroyed the public property stored there, and stating that the report that such an event had transpired was without foundation in truth.

Subsequent statements, however, confirmed the first report of the affair and represented it as having been more disastrous than at first set forth. Other movements of the enemy have been reported, but nothing very definite has been stated concerning them. It appears, however, that Gen. Grant had, at latest dates, fallen back by the Tallahatchie and was acting on the defensive.

Gen. Sherman, to whom it appears the command of the Mississippi expedition, organized for the capture of Vicksburg, has been intrusted, left Helena on Sunday the 21st ult., with fifty thousand men, as represented, with one hundred and fourteen transports and seven gunboats. Admiral Porter was in command of the fleet. Subsequent reports represent that on arriving at the mouth of the Yazoo the fleet went up that stream some distance and landed the troops, which marched to the rear of Vicksburg, where some fighting had taken place resulting favorably to the Federal arms. While up the Yazoo the gunboat Benton encountered a Confederate battery, and in the conflict which ensued the Benton was struck by sixteen balls, three of which penetrated her iron plating, crippling the boat badly and killing and wounding several of the crew.

Should the Confederates determine to resist the combined forces of Banks and Sherman to the last extremity the capture of Vicksburg will not be accomplished without great loss of life. The defences of the city are said to be very formidable, but the number of troops stationed there is reported at only about ten thousand.

WAR MOVEMENTS IN TENNESSEE.

The Confederates, up to latest dates, were, according to reports, committing depredations in Western Tennessee, particularly along the Mississippi river, where they seem to be in considerable force. On the night of Sunday, Dec. 21st, a large guerrilla force under Col. Henderson is reported to have made a raid into Memphis, causing considerable excitement. The next evening a meeting of citizens was held to devise means of defense. Such was the strength of the Confederate forces, and the threatening attitude of affairs in the vicinity of Island No. 10, that Gen. Davis, commanding at Columbus, sent orders to the officer in command of the fortifications on the Island to spike the cannon, destroy the ammunition and stores, and evacuate the place. The order was not obeyed, and a second order was sent by an officer belonging to Gen. Davis' staff, who was specially charged to see that it was carried out to the letter. Sixty-nine cannon were accordingly spiked, ten thousand rounds of ammunition thrown into the river, and the post evacuated. New Madrid, on the Missouri side, was also evacuated by the Federal troops stationed there. These movements caused much excitement, and were deemed most extraordinary and unnecessary by the officers and men garrisoning the fort, who are said to have protested against the execution of the order.

The Confederates who have been operating in Western Tennessee are commanded by Gen. Forest, and their invasion of that part of the State is said to have been quite welcome to most of the people, who entertained the troops hospitably and furnished them with horses, clothing, provisions, and whatever was necessary for their comfort and subsistence, and for the accomplishment of their designs, notwithstanding the orders that had been previously issued forbidding all traffic with the enemy.

On the 26th of December Gen. Rosecrans, with the entire Federal force stationed at Nashville, consisting, as reported, of forty-five thousand effective men with one hundred pieces of artillery, marched from that place for Murfreesboro, where the enemy had assembled in great force, with detachments and divisions thrown forward to within a short distance of Nashville. Skirmishing with the enemy commenced soon after the

Federal troops were in motion, and was kept up, as reported, during the day. The Federal army marched by several different routes, and each encountered the enemy's advance corps and drove them back towards Murfreesboro during the day, in the course of which the Federal army marched twenty miles. Various movements and skirmishings are reported to have transpired during Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday—the Confederates as well as the Federal general's maneuvering so as to fight each other as advantageously as possible, and on Wednesday, Dec. 31st, a great battle was fought, or rather commenced, as it had not ended at the date of the last report from the battlefield, which was on Stone river, a short distance from Murfreesboro. In the first stages of the fight the enemy seems to have gained some advantage; but afterward the tide of battle is represented to have been in favor of the Federal arms.

The particulars of the sanguinary conflict, so far as made known, are not very explicit. More of the details of the battle will, of course, be received in a few days. It was unquestionably one of the fiercest engagements which has, as yet, been fought in the fratricidal war.

THE WAR IN KENTUCKY.

The operations of the guerrillas in Kentucky, under the leadership of Gen. John Morgan, during the last few weeks, have been very extensive, and several fights have taken place between them and detachments of the Federal army in that State, with which they have come in contact, resulting oftener than otherwise in their favor, but in a few instances, particularly of late, they have been badly worsted, and had to do some fast riding to escape capture. The amount of damage they have done to railroads, bridges, etc., has been immense; and the people in those sections of country which have been the scenes of their operations have been heavily taxed, as the bandits took whatever they needed wherever found. The "tender mercies" of that class of combatants are decidedly "cruel," but they are not more barbarous in carrying out their mode of warfare than are some of those reputed as regular soldiers in both the Confederate and Federal armies, if the reports of atrocities constantly being committed by them be true, of which, considering the nature of the war, there can be little, if any, doubt.

The enemy have appeared in considerable force in the vicinity of Columbus, and between the 20th and 25th of December that place was in danger, and fears were entertained that the enemy would make an attack before the reinforcements ordered thither could possibly arrive.

The latest intelligence from Columbus represents that the enemy was still in that vicinity, in force; but it was believed that a sufficient number of troops had been collected there to defend the place against any attack they would be able to make. Union city had been burned by the Confederates, and destruction without measure had been visited by them to whatever came in their way which might be of service to the "Yankees" in the further prosecution of the war.

MAILS.—We have had no mail from the Eastern States for six days. It was reported passing Weber yesterday forenoon and may therefore be looked for at the post office here this morning.

A telegram yesterday from Atchison, reported heavy snows this side of Denver. The stages have now commenced on their winter schedule time, which accounts for a part of the last six days' delay. The Western stage has not varied more than three hours in the time of its arrival for the last eight months.

ARRIVALS.—Lieut.-Col. Evans, of the 2d Cavalry, California Volunteers, arrived here on Friday. He assumes command of that regiment at Camp Douglas.

On Thursday, Capt. George Wallace, of the U. S. Volunteers, from San Francisco, arrived here to assume the duties of Quartermaster. He is accompanied by Mr. Badger in the capacity of Secretary.

Mr. Wright, of the Virginia Territorial Enterprise, arrived on Saturday, and stays over a few days, before going further east.

Mr. Lockhart, Indian agent for Nevada, passed through here on New Year's day en route for Washington.

LECTURE ON THE ART OF COMPOSITION.

The following interesting and instructive lecture, on the Art of Composition, was delivered in the Seventies' Council Hall, by Mr. Edward W. Tullidge, on Tuesday evening, Dec. 16. It should be read by all our young men who desire to improve themselves in this important accomplishment:

Literature and discourse constitute an art based on the science and capabilities of language. Their rank in the scale of general art is not low, nor is their usefulness of trifling consequence. Indeed, they belong to art of the highest importance, and form the most beautiful ornament of civilized man. And when we consider, that, through the medium of discourse and writing, the associations of our race have grown, from the dwarfish nature of a rude barbaric state, to the gigantic character of highly civilized society, none will hesitate to grant their paramount importance. Not only are they the vehicles of thought through which minds commune and mankind associate,—not merely are they aids in mental development and the enlargement of human knowledge, but they are the means through which are carried on the business and usefulness of life. Moreover, through their instrumentality the history and progress of the human race are transmitted to posterity. But, destitute of these acquisitions, language itself could not flourish, ideas and thought would find no form to clothe themselves, sentiment and worth no translation into words, and passion and feeling no expression beyond that of the brute creation. In fact discourse and writing as arts, and language as a science, stand pre-eminent and are the means by which the whole circle of science and art are perfected.

The art of composition grows out of discourse and writing, and is based on the capabilities of language. It follows language in the development of her laws, and traces her methods in the application of them. It weaves for thought a fitting clothing, imitates nature in creating forms for the ideals of imagination, models the works of God, as types for the conceptions of man, and copies the expressions of the physical universe, to give to the passions and feelings of the soul a tongue with which to speak. Even to the subtlest metaphysics of mind, it presents tangible shapes; to the gigantic understanding it brings a substance to grasp; the visible it employs to translate the invisible; and to those fine realities of a higher life, which to the coarser sense seems as "aerial nothings," it gives a local habitation and a name. In short, it aims to use the infinite capabilities of language and thought to grasp the immensities of creation, and to express all that can be said concerning it effectively in writing and discourse.

It may be observed that thousands speak and write with considerable effect, who are unacquainted with composition as an art. Indeed, there are many who also treat the art itself as unworthy the attention of a common-sense mind, and especially repugnant to inspiration. Such a one might say, I speak with propriety, and write with effect, yet have never studied composition. The answer could be given: If you can speak with propriety and write with effect, then, although you never did study the art, you have acquired it by practice. A man with a considerable talent, an excellent judgment, a refined taste, and much practice, will imperceptibly observe the laws of the art, follow in the paths which it points out, and reach the ends for which it aims. Hence, the effectiveness, in writing and discourse, of men who have never given to composition a special study. As much may also be said of the art of music. Many can sing most eloquent music, with exquisite taste, who know nothing of the science of harmony, nor even the established system of notation. Yet nature has endowed some of them with voices of the richest quality, accompanied with a fine ear, and the genius of music largely developed in their souls. Hence, their power to charm with sweet sounds. It can farther be said that there are many fine vocalists and instrumentalists who cannot compose, even upon the simplest models of musical science. The reason of this is because singing and playing belong to execution, while composition belongs to theory. In the former the millions join; in the latter only the units stand. Hence nearly every one, with ordinary endowments, can either sing or play on an instrument, while there are but few composers of music, and still fewer who can enter the highest branches of harmony.

Like as it is in singing and playing on instruments, so also is it in writing and discourse. Here, however, touching the art of composition, we find the reverse of the fact just noticed in music. While but few are capable of musical composition, in writing and speaking, in some sense, all may be said to be composers. The reason of this is because the associations of men, as already stated, are carried on through the medium of writing and speaking. Without possessing a theoretical knowledge of the art of composition, men acquire the habit of arranging their thoughts and ideas in language, and the power to communicate with others in speech and writing. Moreover, some, who have never committed more than a general knowledge of grammar, have studied the art of composition, and are far advanced both in its theory and practice. Indeed, there are men whose creative minds are more adapted to the development of laws than to the study of them.