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Wednesday,.....May 13, 1863.

TO THE PUBLIC.

I hereby inform the public that the DESERET News is not and has not been an organ of mine, for, except matter accompanied with my name, I have only occasionally, and that too some time ago, known any more of the contents of the News until after it is published, than I have of the copy furnished to the compositors of the New York Ledger.

BRIGHAM YOUNG.

G. S. L. City, Jan. 28, 1863.

THE LATE BATTLES ON THE RAPPAHANNOCK.

There has not as yet, been any official report of the great battles fought at and near Fredericksburg, on the 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th and 5th days of May instant been made public, as a rigid censorship has been exercised by the government, over the telegraph lines and other mediums of communication, since the army of the Potomac commenced crossing the Rappahannock to renew offensive operations. What little the public have been favored with in relation to those bloody conflicts, has been derived from private sources, and not very explicit; but enough has been announced to induce the belief that the fighting was of the most desperate kind—more sanguinary than most of the battles which have been fought during the war. That the enemy was victorious has not been denied, and Gen. Hooker with his army was forced to fall back and recross the river, as the result of five day's fighting with the overwhelming forces of the Confederates which were hurled upon the Federal columns in front, flank and rear.

The retreat was commenced on Tuesday, the 5th, and was so compulsory and precipitous that most of the dead and wounded were left on the several battle-fields to the mercy of the enemy. The precise time when the last of the retiring columns reached the left bank of the Rappahannock has not been reported, but from the very imperfect reports published, it is inferred that the last corps recrossed the river some time in the afternoon of the 6th, the enemy close in their rear.

A tremendous flood is reported to have occurred on the 5th and 6th, the rain pouring down in torrents from five o'clock in the afternoon on Tuesday till late in the day on Wednesday. The Rappahannock rose some ten feet in the course of a few hours, submerging the ends of the pontoon bridges to that extent that the troops could not cross on them till one of the bridges was taken up, to lengthen out the others. The scene from what little has been communicated concerning it was horrid in the extreme. The wounded left on the field were lying uncared for, and unprotected from the descending torrents, the sick and exhausted were left lying in the roads and by the way side, and hundreds and thousands of them died for want of care, as represented by some of the correspondents while others make no mention of those matters, for fear, no doubt, of resulting consequences.

Gen. Stoneman, in command of a large cavalry force, said by some to have been twenty thousand strong, crossed the river on the 29th at Kelly's Ford and by a circuitous route, gained the rear of the enemy and while the fighting was progressing near Fredericksburg was, as reported, tearing up railroads, burning bridges, destroying telegraph lines and scouring the country between Fredericksburg and Richmond—captured many prisoners, burned and destroyed a vast amount of provisions and military stores and spread terror and desolation far and wide. One or two divisions of his forces are said to have approach-

ed near to Richmond, causing much consternation in the Confederate capitol, after which they went down the Peninsula.

The respective losses of the Federal and Confederate armies engaged in the conflicts which took place while Gen. Hooker was on the south side of the Rappahannock cannot be definitely stated, and if ever known it will be some time hence. The highest estimates made represent the Federal loss at fifteen, and the Confederate at eighteen thousand in killed, wounded and prisoners, but if as many brigades were annihilated as reported, the number of killed must have been at least forty thousand.

INDIAN WAR IN IDAHO.

A messenger arrived here on Thursday last from Bannock City, Idaho Territory, with a request or petition from the whites in that place, to Gen. Connor, soliciting aid in suppressing an Indian war, which has recently broke out in that region, somewhat threatening in its aspects, and as per statement, had resulted in the shedding of some considerable blood before the messenger left. He came through in great haste, having been only about five days in making the trip from Bannock City. He met Gen. Connor at Kay's Creek, or in that vicinity, on his way to Soda Springs, to select the site for the new military post and city, to be established at or near that place, and delivered the message, after which he came on to the city. We have not been advised whether the General will respond to the call or not, but the presumption is that he will not, although all the troops at Camp Douglas might be sent on that service as well as not, so far as their presence is necessary to the protection of the Overland Mail and Continental Telegraph Line, for their being stationed in Great Salt Lake Valley is no guarantee whatever against Indian attacks on the stations either east or west. They afford no protection to the mail stages and passengers when travelling over the road, and so far as respects those institutions, they might just as well be stationed at Bannock City or on the Potomac as in Great Salt Lake, where hostile Indians have never come since the settlement of these Valleys by the whites. The various bands inhabiting the surrounding country know full well that the people here are always prepared to give them an unwelcome reception, should they make any hostile demonstrations in this valley. They have not forgotten the battle-fields of Utah and Tooele Counties, on which the citizens of Great Salt Lake punished them so severely for their murderous and thieving deeds, since which they have kept at a respectful distance when thus inclined, excepting the little stealing they did for the benefit of Buchanan's invading army, when stationed at Fort Bridger, in the spring of 1858, and to which they were incited, if reports were true, by men now numbered with the dead, and who, if strict justice had been meted out to them, would never have perished on a battle-field nor died a natural death.

The cause of the outbreak in Idaho has not transpired; but rumor says that the killing of one of the Indian chiefs by a white man, in retaliation for some real or supposed injury, made the red men mad, who in turn killed, as reported, a company of twenty-four white men, who were out hunting after stock, whereupon the whites killed seventeen Indians who were in Bannock City, friendly of course or they would not have been thus caught. Those occurrences are represented to have taken place about the 1st of May. The messenger stated that three hundred men had started before he left, with the intention of finding the noted Bannock Chief Winnemuk, whose scalp they were anxious to take.

An Indian war can certainly be of no benefit to that infant Territory, and it is not probable that the reported difficulty is the initiatory to an Indian war farce after the Oregon style, in order to ease the National Treasury of a few millions for the sustenance of a lot of blood-suckers, who have congregated in the Idaho mines, although it somewhat resembles a movement of that kind.

Since writing the foregoing we have seen a gentleman direct from Bannock City, who represents that the report brought in by the messenger referred to, is a garbled concern got up for effect, and that the facts in relation to the difficulty with the Indians are, that soon after the discovery of the Grasshopper mines, when there were comparatively but few white men in all that country, Winnemuk

came to the place now known as Bannock City, with a large number of warriors, and that the miners entered into a treaty with him, which the chief had not violated on his part, but had faithfully observed. One of the stipulations of the treaty was, that Winnemuk and his band should not steal anything from the miners; another was, that they should go to the Buffalo country to spend the winter, which they did, leaving that section of country in September last, and did not return till sometime in April.

Soon after their return to Bannock City, a few weeks since, a gang of about seventy-five renegade, broken down gamblers, who had infested the mines during the winter, to the great annoyance of the miners, entered into a plot to kill the chief and his band—all but the young squaws, take the horses and property, including a large amount of skins and furs, brought from their hunting ground on the eastern slope, which would enable them to gratify their hellish lust, and also to carry on their gambling operations. Their plan was to go to Winnemuk's camp near town, each armed with two revolvers, enter the lodges and make a simultaneous attack, and shoot all both old and young excepting the squaws, which they wished to capture.

By some means their conspiracy became known to some of the miners, who immediately informed Winnemuk of the plot. He thereupon sent away all the squaws and children and made ready for the contemplated attack and massacre, of which the conspirators were advised before the appointed time arrived, and consequently they deemed it prudent to abandon their murderous scheme. They however, afterwards made an unsuccessful attack on another chief called Snag, who with a small band of about fifteen lodges, was encamped about two miles east of Bannock City, in which attack twenty-four of "the whisky bloats" as Winnemuk calls the gambling gentry, in contradistinction to the miners, and some Indians were killed. What subsequently transpired our informant does not know, as he left about that time, but he asserts without reservation, that had it not been for the presence of those gambling outlaws, there would have been no serious difficulty with the Indians, and none whatever either with Winnemuk or Snag and their respective bands. There has been some stock stolen by Indians, supposed to have belonged to Pocatello's band or some other on the south side of Snake River, but to the best of his knowledge and belief, the Indians in and about the mines had no complicity in the matter whatever. Our informant further states, that many of the miners had been murdered by that desperate gang of renegades within the last six months, how many he could not definitely state, but the grave-yard where the bodies of the unfortunate victims to their diabolical thirst for blood have been interred, presents a woful scene, illustrative of the depravity of those wicked men, to punish which no power in Idaho exists. That class of beings nine times out of ten, are the ones who inaugurate Indian wars.

INDIAN OUTRAGE IN BOX ELDER COUNTY.

On the afternoon of Friday last, the 18th inst., as reported by Mr. Burt, of Brigham city, six or eight Indians of Sagwitch's band, as supposed, made their appearance in Box Elder canyon or valley about four miles from Brigham city at a herd-house, and made inquiry of a boy who was the sole relative to the whereabouts of the soldiers. The boy replied that he did not know, but supposed that they were in Salt Lake City, for he had not heard that any portion of Gen. Connor's command was moving northward. The savages told the boy that he was a liar, and designated the place where the soldiers encamped the night before. They then took the lad's hat and two horses that were near by and went to the herd some distance away, where they got eight or nine more, which they succeeded in driving off, making ten or eleven in all.

They made a strong effort to drive away the entire herd of cattle grazing in the canyon, but were prevented by the timely interference of some eight or ten Danish men, who were making a farm in the valley not far distant from the herd. The men were unarmed but on seeing the movements of the freebooters immediately took measures to defeat their object, which, after a severe struggle with

the red men, they succeeded in accomplishing.

On being convinced that they could not get the cattle the Indians fled with the horses, and in their flight came upon a man by the name of Thorp who was burning coal in a small side canyon, whom they killed with arrows, the party having no guns. The body of the murdered man was found next day considerably mutilated. A wife and five or six children mourn his loss. He came into the Territory last fall, as reported, was not wealthy, and his family were entirely dependent upon his labor for support. We understand that the facts were immediately communicated to Gen. Connor, who left Brigham city on his way north before the particulars in relation to the raid became fully known.

ANOTHER FIGHT WITH INDIANS.

According to report, Capt. Smith, 2d cavalry, C. V., who marched with his company from Camp Douglas soon after the late Indian attacks on the Western Mail route in the vicinity of Shell creek, for that point, by order of Gen. Connor, taking the Northern route via the Humboldt, had a fight with Indians on the 4th of May, fifty miles south of Shell creek, in which twenty-nine Aborigines were killed. In another conflict on the 6th, twenty-three others were killed and considerable stock captured. In the two fights only one soldier was wounded.

It has not been stated what Indians they were, nor whether they were those who committed the depredations along the Overland route or not, but the presumption is that they were. It has been rumored, however, that the Indian mode of retaliation has been adopted by the volunteers—that is, when an Indian or band of Indians commits a depredation, punishment is to be inflicted upon the first red men found, whether innocent or guilty, friendly or belligerently inclined to the whites, the same as red men are wont, for when some scapegrace infringes upon their rights or wantonly kills some of their number, they take as much property or shed the blood of as many whites as will pay the debt or make atonement for the offense according to their code, oftener slaying those who never did them an injury than those who have, because they can be more readily found. It has been stated also that orders have been given to shoot all Indians wherever seen in this military district, whether friends or enemies, without distinction. We do not believe the report, for we cannot think that any gentleman wearing lace can be thus void of humanity.

MILITARY EXPEDITION.

On Wednesday last Gen. Connor left Camp Douglas with a company of cavalry for Soda Springs, Idaho Territory, for the purpose of selecting a site for the new military post in that vicinity, and, as understood, to look after Pocatello and his braves for the purpose of ascertaining the truth of the report relative to his wanting to fight the C. V.'s. It is our opinion that the chief will skedaddle with his band when he shall have ascertained that the General desires to make his acquaintance, but perhaps he will make fight should opportunity present.

The infantry company which marched on Tuesday was overtaken before reaching Brigham city, where the command camped on Friday and remained till Saturday, when it moved on towards Bear river. Several civilians accompanied the expedition—Judge Waite of the number, and the presumption is that he does not intend to hold any court whatever in his district, and perhaps intends to take up his abode in Gen. Pope's military district.

WANTED.—We are minus No. 25, Vol. XI, DESERET NEWS, bearing date Dec. 18th, 1861, and if any of our subscribers have that number which they do not wish to keep, a liberal price will be paid for as many as may be necessary to complete a number of copies of that volume, which we wish to have bound. We presume that some of the agents have copies of that number. Will they report?

ARRIVAL AT OMAHA.—Among the unusually large amounts of freight brought to the frontiers this spring, the Omaha Republican chronicles a quantity for Gen. H. S. Eldredge, of Salt Lake City, per steamer West Wind, on Sunday, 26th ult., together with a large number of passengers.