

## MOVEMENTS OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

Since the battle of Fredericksburg, and the retirement of the army of the Potomac, to its former encampment at Falmouth, it has so far as known, remained in *Statu quo*, carrying out the inactive programme adopted soon after the organization of the Grand army, upon which the hopes of the nation centered, as the means of effectually putting down the rebellion in the course of a few months, by conquering the Seceded States, and persuading the people with force and arms to return to their allegiances to, and honor and obey the laws of the old Federation, from which they had separated themselves, for the purpose of establishing a government more congenial to their notions of independence than that established by their fathers, after throwing off the British Yoke.

It was believed by not a few, after the defeat of Fredericksburg, that the army would either fall back to Washington, or move in some other direction, with the view of capturing the Confederate Capital at the earliest practicable date, but it seems that the same course has been taken as heretofore, pursued after fighting a battle, whether victorious or vanquished, that is to remain idle for weeks and months, for reasons which to the world have never been satisfactorily explained. In the present case, there are no doubt good reasons for the course which is being taken, and the army may remain in its present position until spring, when some wonderful strategic movement may be expected, mysterious and grand, which will bring on another engagement, the result of which will not be "doubtful."

The history of all the wars, which have occurred among the inhabitants of the earth, since the dispersion from Babel, for whatever purpose they may have been commenced and carried on, does not furnish an instance of an army, as numerous and as well appointed, as has been the army of the Potomac, from the day of its organization up to the present and particularly when the existence or fate of a nation was supposed to depend upon its exertions, doing so little towards the accomplishment of the object in view, as it has from the first battle of Bull Run, to the retreat from Fredericksburg. The troops composing it, have, it is true, fought many battles and won several victories, but none of them have been very decisive, neither have the marchings and countermarchings of the various divisions and corps, the bravery and discipline of the soldiers, nor the strategy of the officers of that great army, effected much as yet, towards the accomplishment of the object for which it was raised, armed, equipped and placed in the field. What the army of the Potomac may do hereafter towards conquering a permanent peace, or bringing the war to a close, is beyond our ken.

The failure to accomplish what was expected of the army destined for the capture of Richmond, and the overthrow of the self-constituted Confederate Government, has been wrongfully imputed by some, to the want of energy, judgement, skill and ability on the part of the Generals commanding, or of some of them, including the former General-in-Chief. Others have considered the government at fault in the premises, and that the officers in the field, have been embarrassed in their movements, by the orders which they have received from time to time, from the Secretary of War, and from General Halleck, conflicting with the plans of operation, which the officers in command had devised for the accomplishment of certain desired ends. That such has been the case in many instances is unquestionably true, but in our opinion all concerned, with few exceptions, from the President down to the lowest officer in the army, upon whom any special responsibility has rested, have done as well as they knew how, and conducted things as wisely and energetically as was possible for men to do under the circumstances which have existed, and that the apparent aversion of the army of the Potomac, to being removed far away from the banks of the river from which it derived its name, has not been the result of cowardice, nor of the lack of military science or skill on the part of those to whom has been intrusted the conduct of the war, or the command of the troops composing one of the largest armies ever marshaled "on this continent," within the recollection of "the oldest inhabitant." They have had the prayers and

faith of a majority of the people, and the clergy have been enjoined by the rulers, to supplicate the Supreme Ruler of the Universe for favor in the day of the nation's calamity, and for non-compliance on the part of some, their churches have been closed, and the recusants incarcerated in military prisons, because they did not pray for blessings upon the nation, its rulers and armies; and why should not all things have been done about right under such circumstances. If they have not who is at fault in the premises.

## THE WAR IN NORTH CAROLINA.

There has been, since the first of December, some considerable moving to and fro of Federal and Confederate troops in the eastern part of North Carolina, as reported, and some little fighting has been done, indicating that the rebellion is not likely to be crushed out or put down in the "Old North State" without the shedding of some blood.

A battle of some magnitude was fought at or near Kingston, on the 13th and 14th of December, between a Federal force numbering, according to the Confederate statement, fifteen thousand men, under Gen. Foster, assisted by nine gunboats, which ascended Neuse river, and a Confederate force, under Gen. Evans, of about the same number, as stated in Gen. Foster's official report, with twenty pieces of artillery. Gen. Foster was victorious, but the enemy, as reported, fought bravely, and contested every inch of the ground, as they fell back before the overwhelming force of the "Yankees."

Gen. Foster left Newbern with his command on the 11th for Kingston, but in consequence of the bad state of the roads, he did not reach the place of his destination until the 13th. Anticipating his coming, General Evans had posted a strong force some distance out on the road on which Gen. Foster was approaching, where the battle commenced on the 13th, and resulted on that day, according to General Evans' report, after ten hours' hard fighting, in the repulse of the "Yankees," who fell back to their gunboats for protection. The Federal account of the battle sets forth that the enemy were posted in an almost impregnable position, but by a heavy artillery fire in front, and an infantry assault on each flank, Gen. Foster succeeded in routing them with but little loss.

Gen. Foster, as stated, advanced again on the morning of the 14th, and found the enemy posted in a position where he could not bring his artillery to bear upon him advantageously, and the fighting had to be done mostly with infantry. The Confederates were driven from their position after fighting several hours, and fell back towards Kingston, and made an unsuccessful attempt to burn the bridge leading to the town, failing in which, part of their forces retreated towards Weldon, and the balance took the road to Goldsboro, for which place Gen. Foster took up his line of march on the 16th, intending to capture the town and drive the Confederates from thence, or take them prisoners.

From the details of the battle which have been published it appears that there were other causes than bad roads for the army under Gen. Foster being so much longer than was expected in marching from Newbern to Kingston, as the march is represented to have been one continued series of fights and skirmishings, in which the Confederate loss was heavy in killed and wounded, as reported, but with their usual good luck, the Federal loss, from the time they left Newbern, until the evacuation of Kingston, did not exceed one hundred and fifty men—a very small number indeed, considering the severity of the fighting, in which every division, brigade, regiment and battalion is said to have "covered itself with glory," and several regiments, after exhausting their ammunition, charged upon the enemy with their bayonets, doing great execution. It seems marvellous that fifteen thousand descendants of the Huguenots, as unskilled in the art of shooting at "long range" as they are generally represented to be, could have fought so long and fiercely without killing more men than reported.

After crossing the Neuse, Gen. Evans fell back, according to Southern accounts, about seven miles before the overwhelming force of the invaders, contesting fiercely every foot of ground, and then awaited reinforcements, which shortly began to arrive in great numbers. Seventeen thousand men were reported at Goldsborough on the 17th, with regiments

constantly arriving, and Gen. Smith, who was in command there, was confident of his ability to hold the Federals in check and ultimately drive them back to the seaboard without more troops, which, as reported, were on hand if needed. It is stated that Gen. Lee sent word to Gen. Smith that if necessary he could send him thirty thousand men from Richmond.

Notwithstanding the greatness of the force which the enemy boasted of having at Goldsboro and vicinity, subsequent accounts state that Gen. Foster captured the place and then retired to Newbern, which "needs confirmation," as reporters generally state when circumstances do not seem to favor rumors put in circulation for effect as has too often been the case during the existing internecine war.

Other exploits of the Federal forces are reported along the sea-coast in Virginia and North and South Carolina, both on land and water, but so little has been made known concerning them that no definite statement can be made as to their importance, although it is safe to infer that the war is progressing in that region as rapidly as it can under the circumstances which control it, yet it cannot be presumed that any very important events have transpired in that region having a tendency either to produce peace or prolong the war.

## SOUTH-WESTERN WAR NEWS.

There has been but little known for a long time concerning the operations of the Federal and Confederate armies in Kentucky, Tennessee and adjoining States, and what the two hundred thousand Federal soldiers supposed to be in that part of the country were doing after the retirement of the Confederates from Kentucky to the south side of the Cumberland mountains last fall, was a mystery none could satisfactorily solve. Within the last few weeks, however, there has been some intelligence received from that part of the world, indicating that the war has been progressing very steadily; that destruction and desolation have been visited upon the people of those States to a great extent of late, and that there are no more signs of peace there than in Virginia and other States on the Atlantic coast.

The state of affairs in Kentucky, especially in the southern portion of the State, is represented to be most deplorable. The citizens of many counties have been visited by bands of guerrillas, who have taken from the people all their stock, provisions and clothing, leaving them destitute of the means of subsistence. Detachments of Confederate cavalry have, within two or three weeks, made excursions in different parts of the State causing, as reported, much alarm, the inhabitants fearing that another general raid would be made by the enemy, overrunning the country as before. The western counties seem to have been greatly annoyed by the incursions of the Confederates, and many of the Unionists left their homes and fled to Cairo and other places for safety. The object of these raids is reported to have been the procurement of provisions.

The State of Tennessee has received considerable attention from the Confederates within the last month, and they have been concentrating large bodies of troops there, especially in the vicinity of Nashville, and several fights are reported to have taken place, some resulting in favor of the Federal and others in favor of the Confederate arms. In the western part of the State, between the Tennessee and Mississippi rivers, the enemy has made several demonstrations, destroying the railroads and capturing several places, including Trenton. The amount of property destroyed by them is said to have been immense. Several engagements are reported to have taken place, mostly resulting in favor of the enemy, but at latest dates troops were being sent there in sufficient numbers to either bag the Confederates, or drive them out of the country. Gen. Davis left Columbus on the morning of the 22d, with an army of several thousand men for that purpose.

On the 15th of December, it was reported that a Confederate force of about forty thousand, was between Nashville and Murfreesboro, and about seventy thousand in the State, greatly emboldened by their recent successes. Jeff. Davis, who has been visiting Tennessee and the Gulf States, is reported to have made a speech at Murfreesboro on

the 12th, urging vigorous measures for the prosecution of the war, and declaring that Tennessee must be held by the Confederates at all hazards. Some big battles are anticipated in the vicinity of Nashville before long. Gen. Rosecrans is said to be very confident of his ability, with the forces under his command to vanquish the enemy, and Gen. Johnson and Polk are equally sure of success when can get a chance to fight the Yankees, which they, as represented, much desire.

There has nothing been permitted to be published for a long time in relation to Gen. McClelland's Mississippi expedition, and but little is known concerning the movements of Gen. Grant. It is understood that he has been operating some little against the Confederates under Gen. Bragg, in the vicinity of Holly Springs, Miss., but so far as reported there has not been much fighting done, the heavy rains having rendered it impossible to move an army with any rapidity, and it was announced about two weeks since that no immediate advance was anticipated. Grant's headquarters were at Oxford at latest dates, with the enemy not far distant.

A recent report states that the Confederates have retaken Holly Springs, and news from that quarter is looked for with much interest.

## MISCELLANEOUS NEWS ITEMS.

The navy of the United States, before the commencement of the present war, was not very effective. According to Mr. Welles' report, when he entered upon the discharge of his duties as Secretary of the Navy there were only forty two vessels of all kinds in commission, and seven thousand six hundred seamen in the pay of the Government. Most of the vessels were in distant waters, and on the breaking out of the war, there were not more than two hundred men in the ports and receiving ships, to man the vessels and protect the Government Navy Yards and depots. Since then by construction and purchase the Government has afloat and in progress of completion four hundred and twenty seven vessels carrying thirty-two hundred and sixty-eight guns of which three hundred and twenty-three are steam vessels.

A tremendous gale is reported to have occurred at Aspinwall and along the coast, the last of November which prevailed for three days, doing much damage to shipping.

The citizens of Minnesota, who suffered so much from the effects of the Indian war last fall are represented as having been exceedingly averse to the Indians, who were tried by a military commission and sentenced to be shot, receiving any mercy at the hand of the President. An attempt was made about the first of December, by a company of about one hundred and fifty men, to break into the camp where they were confined in order to put them to death; but were prevented from carrying out their intentions, by the guards who captured the entire party. They were subsequently paroled, the same as prisoners of war. Seemingly to allay the excitement the President directed, as per report, that about forty of the condemned Indians, who were designated some supposed to have been the most guilty, should be hung which may and may not be satisfactory to the enraged settlers.

On the 17th inst. the President nominated Caleb B. Smith, Secretary of the Interior, to be Judge of the District Court of the United States for Indiana which, nomination the Senate; subsequently confirmed.

On the night of the 25th Nov. 21 men of the Maine artillery deserted from Newbern, N. C., in a sailboat, taking with them their muskets, cutlasses and pistols.

It is stated that one of the ten Confederate prisoners executed by order of McNeil at Palmyra, Mo., Nov. 18th had a wife and seven children dependent upon his daily labor for support. A young man knowing the condition of the family, offered himself as a substitute for the husband and father, was accepted, and was one of the ten who was shot.

The Liverpool Journal of Commerce of Nov. 11th says that another steamer for the Confederates is about to be launched, described as being one of the fastest and most beautiful steamers ever built at Liverpool. Her plates are of steel, only one thirty-sixth of an inch in thickness. She will be about 250 tons burden 12 ft. deep, 30 ft. beam and 220 ft. long. It is expected, from the peculiarity of her build and the power of her oscillating engine, that she will be able to steam upwards of twenty knots an hour.