

[Correspondence of the N. Y. World.]
THE PENINSULA ADVANCE.

CITY POINT, VA., MAY 6.

The James River movement has so far been accomplished very quietly and very successfully. We have met with no opposition, and therefore no battle has yet been fought. The movement comprised a feint and an actual advance up the James River in such a manner as it now appears has surprised the rebels most admirably. It is stated, however, in such a manner as seems worthy of belief, that Beauregard has been ordered to join Lee, and that all the available rebel forces in this part of the country have gone to that command with a view of first giving battle to Gen. Meade and then turning immediately on this command, and annihilating it, if possible. How much truth there is in this time alone can determine. With longing hopes, and anxious expectations, we look to the front, and listen for the signals that may denote the approach of an enemy. Gen. Smith ("Baldy") is quiet and determined, and is not to be turned aside from his onward progress; for this command comprises a number of brave men, and a force of gunboats that can bid defiance to a larger force than the rebels dare detach from Lee's immediate presence.

THE FEINT.

Two or three days ago a large force of troops were sent to occupy Yorktown, Gloucester and West Point, the latter place being at the junction of the Pamunkey and Mattaponi rivers, with a view of leading the rebels to believe that another peninsula campaign was about to be commenced. At Yorktown our troops landed in front of the log-protected fortifications, and, marching through the sand, went up to the bluffs and camped. They went to work immediately as if they were preparing for a greater force to follow them, and march up via Williamsburg toward Richmond. Our forces at West Point acted in a similar manner. The country there is flatter and more of a plain, the low shore hardly rising above the small waves that roll up the sand as lightly as a mother strokes her baby's hair. This place is famous in blackberry time for the brier-fields loaded with the luscious fruitage of June. Both sides of the river were occupied, and every preparation made for a seeming advance up the land, the apparent route for the West Point force being on the line of the long-unused West Point and Richmond Railroad, crossing the Pamunkey at White House, on the bridge burned by Gen. Dix last July.

But the feint proceeded still further. While a large part of the Tenth and Eighteenth corps were busy at these places, a brigade of troops were sent up in broad daylight, and without any attempt at concealment, to occupy White House. This was done on the 4th, and the troops at once commenced to cut down the large pine trees about the landing, and on other parts of the locality, as if they were about preparing for the arrival of a very large body of soldiers. The landing-places were also repaired, building of wharves commenced, and quite a number of transports were sent still further up, conveyed by gunboats, apparently on a reconnoitering expedition. It was generally believed among those who did not know any better, that this force would advance through the woods that surround the place to Bottom's bridge, where they would be joined by the forces at West Point and Yorktown, and that a combined movement would thus be made upon Richmond directly upon its front, from the same position from which they were menaced by Gen. Keyes last Summer.

The feint appears to have been successful. Becoming satisfied that the James River would take care of itself, the rebels abandoned their works at City Point and pushed in the direction of Bottom's bridge, to dispute the passage of the Chickahominy. Deluded beings. They were exactly following out the plans of our military leaders, who did not intend this force to cross at Bottom's bridge.

Night came. Quietly as twilight closes a Sabbath day the troops at White House, West Point and Yorktown re-embarked upon the transports, and lay down upon the decks and in the holds to slumber in security. From Bottom's bridge the rebel pickets still peered with anxious eyes into the surrounding darkness, and rebel guerrillas skulked among the shadows from bush to bush, fancying they saw the gleam of the sentry's musket, and heard in the sighing of the wind the distant beat of evening taps. Among our soldiers there was little speculation as to where they were going next. They saw that they were evidently performing a side-play in the grand tragedy, upon which the curtain was about to rise; but they were content and slept soundly, pillowing their heads sometimes upon each other's breasts. All that night, the boats with these troops, steamed down the York River, and rounded the point, some of them anchoring till morning at Hampton Roads, where they lay almost motionless in the quiet waters while the army slept.

THE GRAND EXPEDITION.

It was evident that to make the battle against Lee's army and Richmond thoroughly successful, the rebel capital must be isolated from the South—that is, its railroad communication must be cut off so that, when Lee is defeated by Gen. Meade, and Richmond assaulted by this force from the James River, there must be no train of cars, with "steam up" ready to whistle off the retreating army and rebel leaders into the centre of the Confederacy. Accordingly, a cavalry expedition was organized, consisting of some thousands

of men, well mounted, under command of Brig. Gen. A. V. Kautz. This force left Suffolk on the morning of the day before yesterday, (Tuesday, the 3d instant) for Hickford, on the We'don, Petersburg and Richmond Railroad. At this place he will destroy the railroad which connects Richmond with North Carolina. The road at that place passes over a bridge some two hundred and fifty feet long, and the work of destruction can therefore be easily performed when the expedition arrives there. Gen. Kautz's command may be called an independent one, as he will be mostly without communications with any part of the grand armies; and he will probably hover about the extreme rear of Richmond, keeping a sharp look out at the "back-door" of the rebel city. Who knows but Jeff. Davis himself may try to flee, disguised in a Scotch cap and cloak, and that some gallant cavalryman may have the chance of marching him into Gen. Kautz's presence at the point of the sabre.

In conjunction with this force another cavalry expedition is riding up, already beyond Yorktown, under Col. West, with a view of harassing the enemy along the peninsula, and doing duty which shall be both a feint and a real movement; that is to say, they can attack the rebels where they find they are not too strong, and can, perhaps, draw off considerable bodies by pretending to retreat before them, where Col. West finds there is no chance of victory. Col. West will endeavor to cross the Chickahominy at Bottom's bridge; but as there is a possibility, owing to the feint at the White House, that the rebels may be there in too strong force, he will, if baffled there, try it at some point nearer the James River.

SPIES IN OUR ARMIES.

B. F. Taylor, correspondent of the Chicago Journal, in referring to the various ways in which news is communicated to the enemy, gives the following incident:

"Women—not invariably any 'better than they should be'—have always been employed to persuade information out of unsuspecting, but not unsuspected persons, and they bring a degree of tact and shrewdness into play that hirsute humanity can never hope to equal. Many a woman has been caught with their honey of hypocrisy. Take an illustration: a subordinate Federal officer in a certain city within this department had been long suspected of disloyalty, but no proof to warrant his arrest could be obtained, and so as a dernier resort a woman was set at him.

She smiled her way into his confidence, and became his "next best friend," but, finding that ears were of no use, for he could not be induced to say one word of matters pertaining to his office, she changed her plan of attack, and turned a couple of curious and, as I am told, beautiful eyes upon him. Not unfrequently he would ride out of town into the country, and be absent three or four hours and return. For all the hours in the twenty-four but just these she could account. Within them, then, lay the mischief there was, and she began to watch if he made any preparation for these excursions. None. He loaded his old fashioned pistol, drew on his gloves, lighted a cigar, bade her a loving good-bye—only that, and nothing more. Was he deep and she dull? Time would show. At last she observed that he put an unusual charge into the pistol, one day, and all at once she grew curious in pistols.

Would he show her some day how to load a pistol, how to be a dead shot? And just at that minute she was athirst, and would he bring her a lemonade? She was toying with the weapon, and he went. The instant the door closed behind him she drew the charge, for she knew quite as much of pistols as he, and substituted another. She was not a minute too soon, for back he came, took the pistol and rode away. No sooner had he gone than she set about an examination of the charge, and it proved to be plans and details of Federal forces and movements, snugly rolled together. The mischief was in the pistol, then, though none but a woman would have thought of it, and so it was that he carried information to his rebel friends with rural proclivities. The woman's purpose was gained, and when the officer returned, his 'next best friend' had vanished like an Arab, and he had hardly time to turn about before he was under arrest."

DEATH OF JUDGE RALSTON.—Late last evening we heard from a perfectly reliable source of the death of Judge Ralston, formerly a resident of this city and well known to a majority of our citizens, also well known in California. A letter was received in this city from Mrs. Ralston last evening, from Austin (the late place of residence of the Judge), stating that some days since he left his home to visit a rancho owned by him, some distance in the country, and upon his not returning as soon as was expected, search was made and his dead body found, when it appeared he had fallen chilled and had frozen to death. This is about all we were able to learn. He had been dead several days when his body was found. We presume that he lost his life during one of the late snow storms in that region. He was a feeble old man.—[Virginia Enterprise.]

—A Richmond correspondent of the Atlanta (Georgia) Appeal says that a resident of Richmond advertises his furniture for sale because his rent was raised from six hundred dollars to five thousand dollars.



PEAS AS A FIELD CROP, CULTIVATION, ETC.

It is a reproach upon American farmers that (excepting clover) we have so neglected the Leguminous plants, as field crops. True, we raise white beans where we think nothing else will grow—when we are belated about getting in spring grain, or where crops fail in spots, but peas, lupins, leuilles, vetches, and to these may be added, crimson clover, lucerne, sanfoin, melilotus, etc.—are almost unknown to American agriculturists. This ought not to be. Of them all, peas offer the most attractions perhaps. They will thrive upon any good corn or wheat soil, delighting most in clayey loams, but doing well on calcareous soils, if used for seeding.

This is an excellent crop to put upon a fresh turned sod, free from bad weeds. If the sod be heavy it need not be manured; otherwise, apply a reasonable dressing of manure. Sow the peas as early as the ground can be worked, after pouring scalding water upon them, in quantities not exceeding 6 quarts of seed together, little more than covering them with water, letting them soak 8 to 12 hours, and drying them with plaster. This scalding operation kills the "pea bug," a weevil which lays its eggs just after the blossoms have fallen. The grubs penetrate the pods and locate each in an embryo pea. Here they mature and remain till sown with the peas, when they appear and make their attacks at the proper time. Though unnoticeable at first (and not injuring green peas,) they detract much from the value of the crop. Peas for seed should be sowed late—after June 12th—and will thus escape injury almost, if not wholly.

The common Yellow Field Pea is usually cultivated, and the Marrowfats are also recommended. Those which make a very rank growth of straw are undesirable. Sow 2 to 3 bushels to the acre, broadcast, and plow the seed under about 3 inches deep. After plowing it is well to roll the land, but if the ground is likely to bake, it may be "dragged" with a harrow turned over. The haulm of the peas is so branching and tangled and the roots are drawn from the soil so easily that, when the crop is mature, a revolving hay rake will easily throw it into winrows. It is best to leave till dry in heaps, which may be protected from rain by hay caps. The crop is feed to hogs or cattle without curing, when the peas are nearly ripe; ripe and thrashed, the grain is excellent fattening feed for cattle, horses, sheep, or hogs, and the straw, well cured, is similar to clover in feeding properties, and is a favorite fodder for sheep.

Peas are off the ground early enough to prepare the land for wheat, which follows very well, and this will be found a very excellent crop to introduce into a rotation, either before or after wheat. Thin sowed peas lodge badly, but when sowed thick they stand by holding on upon one another by their tendrils. The use of lime and gypsum, though advantageous, to the crop, make the peas hard when boiled—the same is partly true of peas raised on lime soils.—[American Agriculturalist.]

TO PREVENT FRUIT FROM BEING WORMY.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE EVENING POST:—I have a communication to make in reference to the worm nuisance. You will, I think, receive the thanks of two cities by publishing the following:

With a large gimlet or auger bore into the body of the tree, just below where the limbs start, in three places, a groove inclining downwards. With a small funnel pour a shilling's worth of quicksilver into each groove. Peg it up closely, and watch the result. Had it been done when the sap first started on its upward circuit it would have been more efficacious—yet, even now, it will greatly abate the nuisance.

The plan was first tried for a wormy apple tree by Samuel Jones, Esq., of Canaan, Columbia county, New York, and with entire success. It is believed that, far from damaging the trees, it will even add to the beauty of the foliage. In case of the fruit above mentioned the cure was surprising, not only the fruit becoming perfect and beautiful, but the very leaf seemed to be larger and far more dark and glossy.

Any one desiring further particulars (though none other is needed for doctoring our city trees,) is referred to an eye-witness, the daughter of the above-named gentleman, at 225 Union street, Brooklyn.

A CONSTANT READER.

Brooklyn, May 7.

—Tom Thumbs retires on a quarter of a million, says the London Court Journal, and adds: "This is but a fair illustration of the strange freaks of fortune of these topsy-turvy times. It seems much easier to make a fortune by littleness than by greatness."

—A celebrated philosopher used to say—"The favors of fortune are like steep rocks—only eagles and creeping things mount to the summit."

RAT AND RATTLESNAKE FIGHT.—The Sacramento Union relates the following:

Dr. Hall of this city, received recently as a present from the vicinity of Folsom, a rattlesnake some twenty-eight or thirty inches in length, and an inch and a half in diameter at the centre of the body. Being embellished with eight or nine rattles, it is fair to presume that the creature is eight or nine years old. The doctor concluded on Monday to try an experiment by bringing into collision the snake and a rat, feeling the same relative interest in the result as was experienced by the old lady when her husband and the bear were the combatants. A rat of medium size was deposited in the glass case with the snake, and a ferocious fight ensued. While the snake struck the rat several times, infusing, of course his poisonous venom, the rat seized the snake repeatedly by the neck, body or tail, damaging him materially with each wound. It was the opinion of some of the speculators that the rat would come off victor by breaking or crushing the back of his adversary, and thus killing him before the poison with which his own system had become infused could take effect. Such did not prove to be the case. After a contest of about eight minutes duration the rat rolled over on his back and died from the effects of poison, as was evident from the quivering of his limbs. Soon afterwards a second rat was placed in the cage. The combatants now met upon comparatively equal grounds, for it became evident that the rattlesnake had, to a great extent, lost his poisonous power. A fight ensued, which lasted several minutes, when the contending parties seemed to suspend hostilities. The cage was subsequently removed to Johnson's saloon, on Second street, near I street, where, in the afternoon, the fight was renewed and lasted twenty-five minutes. Both the rat and the snake were exhausted, but each remained alive in the cage until yesterday afternoon, renewing the contest occasionally. The rat was then taken out and killed. It appears evident from this experiment that the virus of the snake was almost entirely expended in the assaults upon the first rat, and after a few strokes at an antagonist, time for recuperation is necessary before the bite of the rattlesnake is greatly to be dreaded.

—When a man wants money, friends or assistance, this world is very apt to accommodate him, and let him want.

—A leading maxim with almost every politician is always to keep his countenance and never to keep his word.

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