

From Our Special Correspondent.
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THE UNION MARTYRS.

Their Delivery in Charleston Harbor.

Progress of the Release of the Ten Thousand.

THE WORK NEARLY FINISHED.

More of the Cruelties of the Rebel Savages.

The Officers' Camp at Columbia, South Carolina.

Loud Demand for an Immediate and Sweeping Exchange.

Arrival of Paroled Officers at Annapolis.

From Our Special Correspondent.
 FLAG-OF-TRUCE BOAT NEW-YORK.
 OFF FORT SUMTER, CHARLESTON, S. C.
 Monday, Dec. 12, 1864.

The work of Col. MULFORD'S mission in these waters, for the reception of our sick and wounded prisoners, approaches its end; and not before everybody connected with it has become heartily tired of the tardiness which the rebel authorities have shown in delivering the men. It was reasonably hoped by us that not more than two weeks would pass after the arrival of our fleet in the Savannah River, ere the vessels would return with the entire complement of the released prisoners, but we are now in the fifth week, and up to last night the aggregate number delivered was only nine thousand. To-day and to-morrow we shall, probably, obtain fifteen hundred more, and the business will be done. The detention is attributed by the rebels solely to the fact that the movement of Gen. SHERMAN through Georgia compels the use of their railroad transportation for military purposes, and there is no reason to doubt the truth of the assertion. With them, the expedition for the exchange of prisoners is now a secondary matter altogether, and, indeed, they were quite willing to stop the delivery ten days ago, when they notified Col. MULFORD that the Savannah River was no longer convenient on their part for the further carrying on of the work. At that time we had obtained 5,500 of our men; and feeling emphatically unwilling to leave his humane operations unfinished, to say nothing of the fruitless expense involved in bringing a half dozen or more large steamships here and sending them back empty to the North, Col. MULFORD proposed to the rebel authorities to receive the remainder of the prisoners at Charleston. This proposition was contingently accepted, and a few days of necessary delay followed, before the flag of truce could be transferred and established off Fort Sumter. Gen. FOSTER had to be consulted, and his consent obtained to a suspension of the siege operations in front of the "cradle of treason," and Admiral DAHLGREN had to be seen to get his sanction to a cessation of hostilities on the part of his fleet. These preliminaries having been settled, a compact was agreed upon between the authorities on both sides, including in its stipulations that, during the continuance of the truce, no military work, such as building and repairing fortifications, should be done by either party, and that quiet should reign supreme, except so far as blockade-running might be concerned. Of course, as no one here has the power to raise the blockade of the port of Charleston for a single moment, all vessels attempting to enter or come out of the harbor are subjected to the same risks as before the flag of truce was established.

CHARLESTON AND ITS HARBOR.

With these rules governing our action on Tuesday last, the vessels of Col. MULFORD'S fleet crossed Charleston bar and anchored within easy musket shot of the ruins of Fort Sumter—ruins, by the way, which are said to be stronger in their present state, as a defensive work, than the fort was before its shape was marred by the heavy artillery of the Morris Island batteries. From the point where we are at anchor we get an excellent view of the city, which is not so distant that those of us who have visited the place before the war, are unable to name streets and localities, aided in our conclusions by the spires of St. Michael's and St. Philip's, and the still standing tower of the burnt Catholic Cathedral. The harbor is lined with batteries, which are as plainly visible to the garrison of our forts on Morris Island as they are to us, and, therefore, I don't violate the sanctity of the flag of truce by making the fact public. Sullivan's Island beach, on our right, is strewn with the wrecks of four blockade-runners, that mutely testify to the vigilance of our navy; and one of them—a large white steamer—seems to have but recently gone on shore, as her decks are scarcely submerged. On two or three occasions I have seen a boat-load of enterprising rebels stealthily go to this stranded Anglo-Rebel vessel, and remain for a few hours, doubtless profitably employed in fishing out the cargo—an occupation which the monitor on picket duty, a mile or more away, has as yet shown no signs of interrupting.

TERRIBLE CONDITION OF THE PRISONERS.

Thus far since we have been off Charleston Bar the rebels have brought us nearly four thousand men, the large majority of whom are from the prison-pen at Florence, the remainder being less than a couple of hundred officers from Columbia. The condition of these men is not a shade better than those received from Andersonville and Millen. The same gaunt, famished features, the same wretched rags and indescribable misery mark the poor creatures who come to us from "chivalrous" South Carolina as from the other prisons in Dixie where there is less claim to the possession of generosity and magnanimity. Several of these victims of Southern barbarities have died in transit from the rebel boats to our own, and the condition of others is so pitiable that hundreds will scarcely reach their homes to die among their friends. Many of these half-starved and naked wrecks of humanity cry for food like babies as they step on board our vessels, and it is impossible to exaggerate the facts as it certainly is impossible to convey a truthful idea of the deplorable state to which cruelty has reduced them. I wish the people of the North could look just once upon an

average thousand of these emaciated, emaciated soldiers of the Republic, as they pass from the rebel boats to our receiving-vessel, or that a procession of the wretched crew might march up Broadway by day light, then I am sure that the sympathies of the nation would be so aroused by their misfortunes that there would be no cessation of the prayers and demands that would follow until the release of their forty-thousand comrades from their hideous captivity had been effected.

AN APPEAL FOR THE RELEASE OF THE CAPTIVES.

The sufferings of Union prisoners in the terrestrial hells of the South have reached a point which makes it the duty of the relatives of the sufferers and of all humane persons in the North, to unite in calling upon the Government to adopt toward our unhappy compatriots a policy whereby the demands of humanity may be satisfied without detriment to the military interests of the country. In order to cripple the Southern armies, is it necessary, or are parents and relatives willing that rebel prisoners should be pampered in Northern prisons, while dear sons and relatives are abandoned to starvation and death in Southern prisons? This question has not been duly considered by the people, and it can be satisfactorily solved in the interest of humanity and good government without the sacrifice of an iota of principle. It is a question that seems not to have been duly weighed by the War Department, else it would scarcely allow fifty thousand of its brave defenders to rot and die in the loathsome prisons at the South, without an effort to release them. Longer delay in this matter cannot be justified on the ground of military expediency, or for any other conceivable reason. The rebel authorities, I am informed, have officially announced their willingness to exchange prisoners, man for man. Having a large excess of Southern soldiers in its hands, the United States Government, by accepting the proposition, could procure the exchange of every white Union soldier now in captivity, and yet be enabled to retain of the rebel prisoners an ample sufficient number to be held as hostages for the few negro soldiers now in the Southern prisons. If this be true, as I am persuaded that it is, why should there be any longer hesitation on the part of the War Department to accept the terms? There would be no surrender of principle involved. The undoubted right of the negro soldier to protection, equally with the white soldier, would not be violated in any degree. Then the cartel of 1862 might be again carried out on both sides, and, as men were captured, they would be paroled as speedily as possible, while the number of rebel hostages for our colored soldiers could be increased as often as necessary, or until the rebel authorities choose, as doubtless they soon would, to recede from their unjust position as regards the refusal to exchange captured negro troops. Common justice and common humanity alike demand this course on the part of a powerful and enlightened Government. If there be any possible way, without a sacrifice of dignity and principle, of opening the prison doors to release the dying patriots in the hands of the barbarians of the South, in the name of a merciful God, the miserable captives implore that they may be released. Let mercy, too, be swift on her errand, or the rigors of Winter will put thousands beyond the reach of human aid.

THE PRISON-PEN AT COLUMBIA.

I turn now to the proof of rebel barbarity as furnished by the officers who have just been released from Columbia, and I am particularly indebted for my facts to Col. JOHN FRASER, of the One Hundred and Fortieth Pennsylvania Regiment, formerly the accomplished Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy in Jefferson College, Pennsylvania, who was among the paroled prisoners. To the number of fourteen hundred the Union officers were removed from Charleston on the 5th of October, and on the 7th of the same month were taken to the neighborhood of Columbia, S.C., where they have ever since been confined in camp "Sorghum," so called from the extraordinary large proportion which sorghum molasses bears to the rest of the rations issued to them. The camp is situated on a hill about two miles to the west of Columbia, and lies upon a gentle slope, at the foot of which runs a perennial but nameless rivulet of good water. The portion of the camp occupied as quarters covers about four acres, and at the time the prisoners were placed in it, had a sparse growth of dwarfish pines. The limits of the camp are marked off only by portions of small pine branches, about eighteen inches long, and placed at intervals of fifty or sixty feet apart.

WHAT LINE OF PINE STICKS FORMS THE "DEAD LINE." Any officer who intentionally or thoughtlessly passes that terrible line is liable to be shot. The camp is guarded by a battalion of reserves and a pack of blood-hounds. The human guards are posted at short intervals from one another, along a line from ten to twenty paces outside of the "dead-line," and are encouraged to strictness in the discharge of their duty by the assurance of a furlough of thirty days to every sentinel who shoots a "Yankee" who may be found, or who may be supposed to be found, outside of the "dead-line" without permission from the prison authorities. Several guards have already enjoyed their furlough for having shot "Yankee" officers. At the time (Dec. 9) when the present paroled officers left Camp Sorghum, it was a matter of speculation among the prisoners whether the human guard who shot, or rather murdered, Lieut. G. F. TURBAYNE, Sixty-sixth Regiment New-York Volunteers, on the morning of Dec. 4, would be commissioned or furloughed. Two officers who were present at the time are prepared to give their affidavits that Lieut. GEORGE F. TURBAYNE was shot four or five feet within the dead-line. Great indignation was manifested by the officers on account of what they justly considered a cold-blooded murder, but the assertion of the guard, who stated that he believed Lieut. TURBAYNE was shot outside of the "dead-line," was accepted by the prison authorities in preference to the statement of officers who declared upon their honor that he was shot four or five feet within the dead-line. And Lieut. TURBAYNE'S was not the only case of murder. On the night of October 21, about 9 o'clock, Lieut. YORNA, of the Fourth Pennsylvania Cavalry, was seated at a camp fire, conversing with his messmates of friends at home, when a musket was discharged on the guard-line, and the ball entered Lieut. YORNA'S right side, passing through his body, and causing death almost instantly. The explanation vouchsafed by the prison authorities, was that the affair was accidental, and no other satisfaction could be obtained. Under such circumstances there was no security felt among the officers for their lives, even though they complied strictly with the harshest of the rules imposed upon them by their jailors. These are but two instances of very many of like character that have occurred within the past few months. The canine guards were chiefly used for tracking officers who attempted to effect their escape. On the 7th of December, two of these blood-hounds accidentally got loose and strayed into camp. Lieut. W. H. SMYTH, 16th U.S. Cavalry, was shot by one of them, and he died on the spot. It is needless to say they did not get out again alive.

In Northern prisons there always has been, and in Southern prisons there used to be, an inclosure or stockade which served at once to confine and protect the prisoners. But in Camp Sorghum there is not the humanity of a stockade or fence to caution and protect the captives against the danger of passing, however thoughtlessly, the line of death.

DESTITUTION OF THE PRISONERS.

As to the internal arrangements of the camp, the prison authorities have given themselves no concern about it. They have not provided shelter, even of the poorest kind, for the accommodation of the officers. When first brought to Camp Sorghum, the prisoners naturally gathered with a rush, and squatted around the dwarfish pines, already alluded to, to get protection from the sun by day and from the dews by night. It is these scattering pines, together with the rights of squatter scavenging, which have determined the very irregular distribution of the rude shelters which have slowly enough made their appearance, and which now have rendered the proper policing of the camp an impossibility. Not a broom or wheelbarrow has been provided by the prison authorities, for policing quarters. The ground has become honey-combed with holes out of which clay has been dug to roof or daub shelters, and it is now very difficult by day and very perilous by night to walk over the camp. From the want of policing implements these holes have become the receptacles for filth. If these officers should be confined in this camp during the warm season, the Andersonville tragedy, in all its horrors, will inevitably be reënacted. It is difficult to enable northern citizens to realize the pressure of prison life as actually felt by the sufferers. The following statement of facts may serve to throw some light on the condition of prisoners at Camp Sorghum:

Not an ounce of meat was issued from Sept 27 up to the time (Dec. 9.) when the present paroled prisoners left camp. The usual daily allowance of rations consists of one pint of unsifted corn meal, one half pint of sorghum molasses, one-tenth of a pint of rice, one-fourth of a table spoonful of salt, and sometimes about one-fifth of a pint of shorts, or of very bad flour. To cook these materials the prisoners are not supplied with one-tenth part of the utensils necessary. Not a single culinary utensil was issued from Oct. 7 to Dec. 9. The only utensils which the prisoners possessed were a few which, with great trouble, they had carried with them from other prisons, together with a few very rude ones, which they had manufactured out of stove-plates which fell into their hands at Charleston. The owner of a piece of flat iron for baking cakes, found it necessary to keep a written list of the messes which were, in turn, to be accommodated with the use of it. Kind-hearted matrons, experienced in the culinary art, are alone prepared to appreciate the trials undergone, by experienced officers who had to work over green pine fires which smoked profusely, and very reluctantly yielded a feeble heat, with unsuitable utensils, for the use of which they had to wait patiently for hours. Some messes could cook only one meal a day on account of the scarcity of cooking utensils.

SORGHUM, RICE AND MEAL.

Who but a prisoner can realize the terrible monotony of diet. Unsifted corn meal, sorghum molasses and rice! Rice, sorghum molasses and corn meal! Monsieur SOREAU would be horrified at the elaborate blunders perpetrated in the desperate attempts to satisfy appetite and sustain life, by exhausting all the possible combinations of these ingredients.

MORE INHUMANITY.

For the first ten days of their imprisonment in Camp Sorghum, the prisoners were not allowed free access to a sink. From sunrise to sunset (for nature was not supposed by the Confederate authorities to work in "Yankees" by night) they were permitted to go under guard outside of the "dead-line," at a particular point, to relieve themselves, in squads of five at first, afterward of twelve at a time. A very large number suffered from diarrhoea. This barbarous treatment was attended with results which, in about ten days, shocked even Confederate inhumanity, and induced the prison authorities to provide sinks to which the prisoners now have access at all hours.

The greatest suffering was caused by the want of shelters. The Confederate authorities had provided none, and the prisoners were thereupon obliged to supply themselves. With, at first, eight very unserviceable axes, which the rebels had subsequently increased to twenty, among fourteen hundred officers, the work of erecting shelters progressed very slowly. The necessary wood could be procured only from the neighboring forest, distant from a fourth to one-half a mile. In these woods, with blunt axes and under guard, the officers were obliged to cut very hurriedly the wood necessary for fuel and cabins, and to carry the material on their backs into camp. While the slow process of erecting shelters was going on, very many officers, weak from long confinement, and afflicted severely from diarrhoea and chills and fever, with ragged clothes, worn-out shoes and blanketless, suffered hardships beyond their power of endurance, exposed, as they were, to drenching rains and severe frosts, and occasionally to scorching heat. The hospital accommodations are shockingly defective. All the patients are kept in beds on the ground, without any stoves, and even this poor treatment was not given to all the sick.

Add to these physical grievances a few others which I shall mention, and you will barely have an approximate idea of prison life at Camp Sorghum. There is a uniform delay in the distribution of letters, breathing love and comfort, from home. Many officers, who wrote frequently during the past half year, have not during that time received a single letter from friends who were never known to neglect them before. In aggravation of these hardships we must not forget that the rebels detain all moneys sent to the prisoners, while rebel capitalists are permitted to loan money at the usurious rate of five or six Confederate bills for one dollar in Northern gold.

From these horrors, four to five hundred officers have attempted to make their escape, in squads of from two to five, passing the guards by stealth, and more often by bribery. These fugitives are now roaming over South Carolina, Georgia and North Carolina. Some of them, through the invariable hospitality and guidance of the negroes, have already reached our lines in safety, and it is hoped that at least one-half of the number will get through.

I might go on indefinitely with the proof of rebel barbarity toward our officers, but for the present I forbear. My letter has already exceeded the limits I had proposed. I shall at once forward you a list of several thousand names of deceased soldiers at Florence, Savannah, and elsewhere, with additional evidence of the inhumanity of the enemy.

H. J. W.

LIST OF OFFICERS PAROLED AT COLUMBIA, S. C., DEC. 9, WHO ARRIVED AT ANNAPOLIS, FROM CHARLESTON, ON WEDNESDAY EVENING.

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| Col S M Weld, 56th Mass. | Lt Col J B Cunningham, 52d Pennsylvania. |
| Col S J Crook, 2d N Y C. | Lt Col H R Stoughton, 2d U S S. |
| Col E G Marshall, 14th N Y Artillery. | Lt Col O Moulton, 25th Mass. |
| Col John Fraser, 140th Pa. | Lt Col Wallace, 47th Ohio. |
| Col John Bedell, 3d N H. | Maj W H Forbes, 2d Mass C. |
| Col Frank C Miller, 147th New-York. | Maj T A Smith, 7th Tenn C. |
| Col Pennock Huey, 8th Pa Cavalry. | Maj Wm P Hall, 6th N Y C. |
| Lt Col M P Buffum, 4th R I. | Maj M Dunn, 19th Mass. |
| Capt J Norris, 6th, 2d Pa Artillery. | Capt J D Wheel, A I G. |
| Capt S U Sherman, Co A, 4th R I Infantry. | Capt S T Elyker, 18th U S. |
| Capt J N Hetsler, 9th Ohio Cavalry. | Capt W A Robinson, 77th United States. |
| Capt Oscar Eastmond, 1st North Carolina. | Capt J A Richey, 73d Ind. |
| Capt J T Piggott, Jr, Co D, 8th Penn Cavalry. | Capt And Stewart, A A G. |
| Capt H G Hamilton, 140th New-York. | Capt Geo Urwid, 67th Pa. |
| Capt H B Hoyt. | Capt M R Baldwin, 3d Wis. |
| Capt B W Olcott, 134th N Y. | Capt S C Judson, 166th N Y. |
| Capt S F Murrey, 2d U S S. | Capt J R Wright, 6th Ohio Cavalry. |
| Capt W F Pickering, 6th Iowa. | Capt J L Hume, 19th Mass. |
| Capt R G Hutchinson, 8th Mich. | Capt Cyrus Newlin, 7th Penn Cavalry. |
| Capt L R Davis, 7th Ohio. | Lt W H Wilcox, R Q M. |
| Capt J L Green, A A G. | Lt W H Wilcox, 36th Ill. |
| Capt W C Beck, 62d Penn. | Lt P Krohn, 5th N Y Cav. |
| Capt A Heer, 28th Ohio. | Lt I L Stone, A Q M. |
| Capt J Krause, 3d Penn Art. | Lt R Bartlett, Signal Corps. |
| Capt Nat Rollins, 2d Wis. | Lt W H Maynadier, 1st U S Art. |
| Maj W L Parsons, 2d Wis. | Lt H W Baldwin, 2d N Y. |
| Lt and A D C, G H Sterling, 52d Penn. | Lt W M Hays, 34th Ohio. |
| Lt G H Lindsey, 18th Conn. | Lt E M Fay, 42d N Y. |
| Lt E L Palmer, 57th N Y. | Lt G H McHenry, 85th NY. |
| Lt B S Cate, Lt and A D C. | Lt J Webster Jones, 17th Iowa. |
| Lt C A Peterson, 14th Cav. | Lt J O Ladd, 35th U S. |
| Lt H C Potter, 18th Pa Cav. | Lt J Casey, 42d N Y. |
| Lt W A Dudley, 8th Penna Cav. | Capt W W Ogan. |
| Whifer. | Lt W L Malambra. |
| Lt T B Stewart, 61st Md. | Lt R Chute, 56th Mass. |
| Lt H H Pierce, 7th Conn. | Lt E De C Loud, 2d Penn Art. |
| Lt W B Roach, 49th N Y. | Lt S Harris, 5th Mich Cav. |
| Lt W H Smyth, 16th U S Cavalry. | Lt M C Causter, 19th U S. |
| Lt R P Wilson, 4th U S Cavalry. | Lt J Sweadlow, 5th Md. |
| Lieut Oscar Bahn, 8th Pa. | Capt E M Lee, 5th Mich Cavalry. |
| Lieut D W Hakes, 18th Ct. | Capt O Powell. |
| Lieut D D Van Valzah, 12th United States. | Lieut W J Morris, 5th Md. |
| Lieut C Van Rensselaer, 14th New-York. | Lieut E L Schroeder, 5th Md. |
| Lieut H P Crawford, 2d Ills Cavalry. | Lieut J Kulcer, 5th Md. |
| Lieut S A Faye, 85th N. Y. | Lieut G W Dutton, 67th Pa. |
| Dr. D H Warren. | Lieut J Sibley, 16th Ohio. |
| Lieut W Willis, 51st Ind. | Lieut G D Bissel, 16th Me. |
| Lieut G F Barclay, 149th Pa. | Lieut T H Ward, 50th U S. |
| Lieut H Richardson, 19th Indiana. | Lieut G W Reis, 18th Conn. |
| Lieut R C Gates, 18th U S. | Lieut G A Barker, 1st R I Cavalry. |
| Lieut E A Tullier, 104th N Y. | Lieut G G Lumbard. |
| Lieut N D Mathers, 6th Va Cavalry. | Capt P Handy, 27th Ills. |
| Lieut W D Grant, 117th N Y. | Lieut C Suttien, 34th N Y. |
| Lieut W A Mery, 104th N Y. | Capt W A Swazey, 3d Ohio. |
| | Lieut H Capple, 1st Md Cav. |
| | Lieut J McGovern, 75th Pa. |
| | Lieut M D Pullion. |
| | Lieut F T Bennett, 15th U S. |
| | Lieut W H Bricker, 3d Penn Cavalry. |