

On Monday morning our people were startled by the intelligence that the Rebels had crossed the Potomac in force, after defeating Gen. Milroy at Winchester, and were about to invade Pennsylvania. Urgent calls from the Governor upon the people of Pennsylvania to take up arms in defence of the State were received by telegraph. A committee of citizens of Columbia proceeded to Harrisburg by the Mail train to consult the authorities as to the necessity and advisability of defending the bridge. General Couch decided that every crossing, by bridge or ford, of the Susquehanna, should be defended if possible, and that the Columbia bridge was so important a point as to demand most energetic defensive measures on the part of the citizens of this town and vicinity. General Couch, in the following Special Order appointed Capt. C. C. Haldeman to command at this point:

HEADQUARTERS OF THE DEPARTMENT
OF THE SUSQUEHANNA, June 15, 1863.

Captain C. C. Haldeman, of Columbia, Pa., is hereby authorized to raise troops and assume command of the same, for the defense of Columbia, Pa., the Bridges, Dams, and Fords in the Susquehanna river in the vicinity.

By order of D. W. Couch, Major General Commanding.

JOHN S. SMUTZ, Acting A. A. G.

Upon receiving notice of his appointment Captain Haldeman at once called upon the citizens to organize for service. An impromptu force was got together for duty during Monday night, which was disposed to the best advantage for patrol and outpost duty upon the turnpike and other approaches to Wrightsville, armed with Harper's Ferry muskets, 200 of which, with ammunition, were procured by the committee. On Tuesday two companies of Infantry were organized under Captains John Peart and Noah Kosey, and a considerable number of mounted men, unorganized, reported for scouting and outpost duty. A number of citizens, without any regular organization, also reported for guard duty on the bridge and elsewhere. By the flooding and Columbia Railroad the same evening, a fine company of men from the vicinity of Litch, generally armed with their own weapons, under command of Captain Seale, arrived here. They were marched to the Town Hall where their own arms were exchanged for the State arms procured from Harrisburg. The whole force performed duty on the York county side of the river, as on Monday evening, being, as then, under command of Capt. G. H. Erisman. The outposts were some six miles from the river, and scouts were sent to York during the night. The citizens there were found entirely tranquil, and our forces were undisturbed.

On Wednesday Captains Cox and Nevin, with two companies from Lancaster reported for duty to Captain Haldeman. The same day earthworks for the defense of the approaches to Wrightsville were located by Captain Haldeman, and John Sheaff, Esq., Chief Engineer of the Reading and Columbia Railroad, staked out the work for the laborers who worked in the trenches all night. The working party consisted of over one hundred negroes from Tow Hill, divided into reliefs. They have done excellent service, and the cheerfulness with which they shouldered the pick and shovel is in contrast with the reluctance displayed by many of our whiter citizens to shoulder the musket.

On Thursday our forces were additionally increased by the arrival of Companies of Capt. Wickersham, Millertown, Capt. Wm. Agg, Allen, Lancaster, Capt. Redeker, Enterprise, Capt. Jacobs, Churchtown and New Holland, and Capt. R. K. Young, of Lancaster, with a battery of artillery. We should have mentioned that on Wednesday the handsome rifled piece manufactured and owned by Supplee & Bro., of the Columbia Manufacturing Company's Shop, was planted at the entrance of the Columbia Bridge. The work on the entrenchments was steadily continued, and the preparations for a determined resistance should the Rebels make a dash in this direction are still being pushed with vigor.

On Thursday afternoon Gen. Wm. B. Franklin, accompanied by Major Haller, 7th U.S. Infantry, now detailed as Aid to Gen. Couch's staff, and in command at York, inspected the position on the other side. Gen. Franklin pronounced the site selected for defense unexceptionable, and the defensive works well-planned and properly constructed. He complimented the forces on the ground, and the officers in command.

In addition to the works thrown up on the York County side, the hands of the Columbia Rolling Mill have erected breastworks opposite the abutment of the Columbia dam, on the Lancaster county side.—Fortunately the river is so high as to forbid any attempt to cross on the dam breast; but as a preparation for future contingency the works may be of importance.

Whilst we are glad to record the untiring energy of many of our citizens during the existing crisis, and thank them in the name of the community for their devotion to the good cause, we regret the necessity of com-

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plaint that Columbians as a body have scarcely done their whole duty. There has not been want of willingness to act, but rather a disinclination to organize. The disjointed efforts to be useful made by hundreds of our people have not been as effective and as telling in our favor as would have been the organization of three or four good companies, ready to leave everything and to serve during the existing emergency. The returned nine months' men—officers and privates—have turned out nobly; and the officers have persevered in their efforts to obtain efficient organization in spite of every discouragement. Captain Haldeman occupies a very responsible position, and there is but one voice as to the manner of his government. He has done admirable service under very trying circumstances, and deserves the thanks of his fellow citizens.

As to the future of the "raid," we are as much in the dark as our neighbors. We believe that upon the impending battle between Lee and Hooker depends the future character of the Rebel inroad. Up to this time it has simply been a dash of cavalry, who, in pursuit of Milroy's retreating trains, found a defenceless and rich country which they have barried with impunity. Shall Lee make good his advance in despite of Hooker's counter advance and attack, we may look out for the shock of battle on the banks of the Susquehanna. If Hooker, on the contrary, either defeat or check Lee, then the devastation of Pennsylvania, and the favorite design of the Rebels—to bring the horrors of war home to the Northern people—will fail forever.

It is well in this dilemma to make ourselves as safe as possible against the worst; and as Gen. Couch considers this point one likely to be menaced in case of an advance of the enemy in force, every man should lend his entire energies towards putting the position in as forward a state of defence as possible. We have made a fair beginning, and if the Rebels do not come in overwhelming numbers, are even now ready to give them a wrestle for the bridge. We will fight for it before we will burn it.