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## From Richmond

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Memphis Appeal

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## FROM RICHMOND.

Special Correspondence of the Memphis Appeal.]

RICHMOND, March 10, 1862.

The brilliant performances of the Virginia, formerly the Merrimac, signaling the adoption of her new name, must have created a very lively feeling of gratification everywhere in the Confederate States. I could not allow you to remain in ignorance of the facts one moment longer than it was necessary for the telegraph to make you acquainted with them, and so I sent you two dispatches containing all that was known here up to the hour of their transmission. The full accounts have not yet been received in this city, but in addition to what you have already learned, before the writing of this letter, we hear to-day that the Yankee steamer Minnesota, perhaps the finest vessel in the United States navy, which was run aground and badly damaged during the fight, was blown up this morning by her commander, to prevent her capture and ammunition falling into our hands. The loss of life resulting from the sinking of the Cumberland and the burning of the Congress, must have been great. The Cumberland went down almost immediately, it is said, after she was struck by the Merrimac, and as there were not less than three hundred men on board, very few of them could have possibly made their escape. Twenty-three were picked up from the water, in which they were striving to keep afloat, and taken as prisoners on board our vessels. Not the least injury was done to the Virginia, whose terrible efficiency as a moveable battery in deep water has thus been so satisfactorily proven.

Capt. Franklin Buchanan, and Lieut. Robert Moxor, the two officers highest in command, were slightly wounded from the effects of a splinter; that is, fragments of the iron near a port hole were thrown inward by a round shot striking there just at the time that one of the guns was fired, and hitting each of them gave each a trifling wound. Two men are said to have been killed at the port bow gun in like manner; these constitute all the casualties that occurred on board the "Virginia." A shell entered the boiler of the Patrick Henry, disabling her and inducing the death of two of her crew. Lieut. James Tayloe was severely wounded at this time and has since died of his injuries. This gallant officer was not attached to the Patrick Henry, but had volunteered to go with her into the action only the day before she moved down into Hampton Roads. Lieut. Tayloe was in

command in a gunboat at Roanoke Island, which boat it became necessary to burn at Elizabeth City, to save it from the Yankees, and his presence on the deck of the Patrick Henry was only as an amateur who could not allow anything so exciting to come off without having a hand in it.

It would be difficult to estimate the value of this twenty-four hours' cruise of the Merrimac (or Virginia) in Hampton Roads. What she has done once, with the combined fire of five first-class ships, the Cumberland, Congress, Colorado, Minnesota, Edisson, and of the land batteries at Newport News, raining shot and shell upon her roof, she can do again, in spite of any amount of opposition that can be brought against her by the Yankees. It is, therefore, rendered quite certain that all idea of attacking Norfolk or the seaboard railroad from the water will have to be forever abandoned; and it is highly probable that the Yankees will speedily withdraw from Newport News, as no longer a tenable position.

The change of the Merrimac's name, though it has been attended with most brilliant auspices of future usefulness and renown, was not, I think, a happy one. If it were to be altered at all, we had Indian names of rivers musical enough to suit a war steamer—Rappahannock, Appomattox, Mattaponi, etc. etc.; but there is something in making an enemy hate their own cherished name and regard them with dread and abhorrence, and, therefore, it would seem to have been better to retain the name of Merrimac, and cause the Yankees to associate it for all time with ruin and disaster.

We have been quite quiet to-day. Reports have been in circulation, however, that the army of the Potomac had abandoned Manassas and were falling back upon Culpeper Court House, thus leaving Winchester and the valley of Virginia open to the enemy. So far as I can learn, the works at Centerville have been evacuated and destroyed, the hospitals burned and the main body of the army is now several miles this side of the late position, but certainly it is not intended as yet to surrender Winchester or the valley, nor to give up Manassas Gap railway as a means of communication with that region.

Events seem hastening rapidly to a crisis in that direction, and the long-expected engagement with McClellan's army proper would appear likely enough to come off within a very short time. Whatever Gen. Johnston may determine to do, the country may rest assured that it is the very best military step that can be adopted under the circumstances, and will so turn out. Critics were swift to censure his evacuation of Harper's Ferry last summer, and yet the result proved his skill and sagacity in so doing. Let us wait awhile before we condemn the evacuation of the position at Centerville.

DATE.