

**Crossing the Chickahominy at New Bridge—
Prof. Lowe's Balloon Ascension—A Brisk
Skirmish—Retirement of the Rebels—Fea-
tures of the Country, &c.**

ACROSS CHICKAHOMINY RIVER, IN SIGHT OF
RICHMOND, Friday Evening, May 23.)

This afternoon ROBINSON'S and TIDBALL'S batteries, which are attached to Gen. STONEMAN'S advance force; were taken to an eminence overlooking the Chickahominy River, and the woods for some distance beyond. Fire was opened upon the swamps in the immediate vicinity of New Bridge; also the woods upon each side were thoroughly shelled, but not a single response could be elicited from the enemy. Prof. Lowe made a balloon ascension at the time of the firing, and by noticing the effect of the shot was enabled to give directions as to the point where it would be most effective. In the morning, the rebels, numbering about four thousand, were bivouacked in a piece of woods on the opposite side of the river, and not far from New-Bridge. They had two pieces of cannon, apparently of small calibre, in position at the edge of the woods and commanding the approach to the bridge. As soon as we opened fire the two pieces were drawn to the rear. The rebels, who were plainly observed by Prof. Lowe, were in great confusion, and scattered in every direction. After firing for about half an hour, our batteries withdrew and waited further orders.

At 3 o'clock P. M., Gen. STONEMAN'S command, also DAVIDSON'S Brigade, and the First New-York and Fifth United States Cavalry, advanced toward the river. Nothing of importance occurred until ROBINSON'S Battery, which led the column, had crossed the bridge, when the rebels opened a cross fire upon it from guns placed in position at the edge of the woods, about 100 yards from the opposite side of the river. The first intimation our men had of the presence of a rebel battery was when a shower of missiles came rattling over their heads. For a few minutes the rebels worked their guns quite lively, but their range was out of all reason, in consequence of which but one man on our side was wounded. As near as could be ascertained, the enemy had three guns on the right and one on the left of the bridge. They fired principally solid shot. We let them have their own way until we could get four pieces of ROBINSON'S and six pieces of TIDBALL'S batteries into position on a rising ground a short distance from the bridge on the Richmond side, when we gave them grape and canister in such profuse quantities, that they could hardly work their pieces, and were finally compelled to retire into the woods, drawing their guns after them. During the engagement with the batteries, four squadrons of the rebel cavalry and one regiment of their infantry issued from the woods and made a movement as if to flank us on the right. Companies B and H, of the Sixth United States Cavalry, and A and C, of the Second Rhode Island Regiment advanced to meet them, but before they could get within rifle shot of the rebels the latter suddenly wheeled, and returned to the woods. Our forces then crossed the bridge, and took a position near the batteries, ready to oppose the rebels, should they attempt a second attack. Up to a late hour this evening the firing had not reopened, although we are inclined to think that the enemy has not retired far from his original position. Our men lay on their arms, and everything is in readiness to act either on the offensive or defensive.

Chickahominy River at the point where we crossed

(New-Bridge) is but about eighteen feet wide, and can be easily forded by infantry. The bridge has been recently built by the rebels, and was not burnt as it was reported to have been by our skirmishers a day or two ago. Before reaching the bridge from the eastern side we crossed a small stream which branches off from the main creek, (for it must not be supposed that the Chickahominy at this point has anything like the dimensions of a river,) and flows into a hollow, where it is damned for the purpose of driving the wheel of a saw-mill, which is situated a few yards below. On approaching the stream the road is winding and is flanked on either side by woods. At the time of the firing this portion of the road was filled with our troops, but the shots fell beyond them and struck in the woods.

Upon the hill where our guns are stationed, and just in their rear, there is a house surrounded by several negro huts. We learn that the inmates of the house fled into Secesh when they heard of our approach. It is supposed that they took the negroes with them, as none are to be seen about the premises. Articles of furniture, bedding, crockery, clothing, &c., still remain in the house, the inmates undoubtedly not having time to remove them.

Standing upon an eminence a short distance from the house we were enabled to see the dome of the capital and the church spires at Richmond. The intervening roads and hills prevented us from viewing the open country this side of the city.

It is possible we may have an engagement here in the morning.

WHIT.