

File

SANITARY COMMISSION.

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No. 70.  
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PRELIMINARY REPORT

OF THE

OPERATIONS OF THE SANITARY COMMISSION

IN CONNECTION WITH THE

ENGAGEMENT IN THE HARBOR OF CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA,

July 1st to 20th, 1863.

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To meet inquiries, the following statement has been compiled from hastily-written letters and memoranda received from Dr. M. M. Marsh, the Chief Inspector of the Sanitary Commission in South Carolina, who accompanied the attacking force in the recent movement upon Morris Island, and from Mrs. Marsh, who is acting as his Secretary at Beaufort, at which point the fixed dépôt of the Commission is established. The Commission has a good-sized brig employed as a floating dépôt, with the fleet in the harbor of Charleston. From this such supplies as are found to be wanted in the medical and sanitary care of the troops on shore, are daily sent for distribution.

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Mrs. Marsh writes on the 15th: The brig sailed from here on the 8th, with stores which would gladden the hearts of those who have friends exposed. The effect of these home offerings brings tears to the eyes and encouragement to the hearts of

men ready to die. \* \* \* On Sunday some two hundred wounded men were brought to Hilton Head, part of them rebels. I learn that the Commission is operating very successfully, with men and appliances stationed at intervals from the front to the Hospital ships, seven miles in the rear. Dr. Marsh wrote you at length for the last steamer, but the mail was not allowed to be taken.

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Dr. Marsh writes, on the 20th,--

“Permit me to give you a hasty account. On the 10th inst., by an admirably managed movement, our forces gained a foot-hold upon Morris Island. On the next day, we made an unsuccessful assault upon Fort Wagner. On the 18th inst., after a bombardment from five monitors and the Ironsides for six hours, an assault was again made, which also resulted in a repulse. The attacking force, about 4,000, was divided into an attacking, supporting, and reserve force. A part of the attacking column entered the outer works of the fort, and held it for a time, but retreated, with great loss; particularly among officers. The 62d Ohio came out of the fight without a line officer. This morning a Major commands a Brigade. The attacking force seemed in the best of spirits previous to the assault *as our men passed among them, giving to each man his hot soup and crackers.* There seemed a determination among the officers generally, to take the fort at any cost. Sumpter, and Cumming’s Point batteries completely command Fort Wagner, and as our advancing column approached it, they dropped shell freely among them. They did not falter, (as some now assert; I was in place to witness all,) but were repulsed in a hand to hand conflict, by at least equal numbers of the enemy who, on their own ground, had every advantage of circumstances. Our loss is estimated, generally, \* \* \* \* \* this, considering the small attacking force, is very great. Last

evening the enemy made a feint attack. During the night a blockade runner was burned. The opinion prevails that our position will be not only held, but that we shall, by gradual approaches, ultimately take Charleston. For the last five weeks our men have worked like slaves; and severe labor, with the mercury at 100 degrees, must tell upon their health. For 48 hours previous to the attack, we had freely supplied the assaulting party with hot beef soup and crackers. This attention to troops "in the front," endears the Sanitary Commission to both officers and men; and those who were detailed to help in the undertaking, as they passed along the lines, received a welcome that would do the contributors of the Commission good to hear. Previous to the engagement, each little squad had its duties assigned; and discharged them in such manner, as to win the public commendation of the Medical Director. He was heard, during and subsequent to the removal of the wounded from the field to the ship to exclaim: "God bless the Sanitary Commission." General Strong, Col. Chatfield, and other officers requested, when carried from the field, to be taken to our quarters. We are doing well. The army needs *men*. It is worked incessantly. The result is not uncertain. Nature may, for a time, give credit, but no discharge from her dues. This constant labor will kill more than the enemy. Yesterday word was circulated in the army that the President had succumbed to the mob; and suspended the draft. The report causes great dissatisfaction, and dampens the soldiers' ardor."

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The Port Royal *Free Press* (army newspaper), of the 25th inst., says: "The officers of the United States Sanitary Commission have won for themselves a splendid reputation in this department. They have, by their discretion and zeal, saved many valuable lives. Under the guns of Wagner, in the hot-

test of the fire, their trained corps picked up and carried off the wounded almost as they fell. As many of our men were struck while ascending the parapet and then rolled into the moat, which at high tide contains six feet of water, they must inevitably have perished had they been suffered to remain. But the men who were detailed for service with Dr. Marsh went about their work with intrepidity and coolness worthy of all praise. The skill and experience of the members of the Commission has, since the battle, been unremittingly employed to render comfortable the sick and wounded."

*The following is a statement of the supplies sent to the dépôt of the Sanitary Commission in South Carolina, for the summer campaign, 1863 :*

|                                             |        |             |
|---------------------------------------------|--------|-------------|
| Articles of hospital body clothing.....     | 10,000 |             |
| Towels and napkins.....                     | 8,000  |             |
| • Bedding and cushions for wounded limbs... | 6,753  |             |
| Lint, bandages, and old linen.....          | 100    | barrels.    |
| Fans.....                                   | 2,100  |             |
| Cologne water.....                          | 2      | gallons.    |
| Bay rum.....                                | 60     | bottles.    |
| Concentrated beef soup.....                 | 1,000  | 1 lb. cans. |
| "    milk.....                              | 1,000  | "           |
| Brandy.....                                 | 216    | bottles.    |
| Whiskey.....                                | 336    | "           |
| Wine.....                                   | 384    | "           |
| Egg Nogg, concentrated.....                 | 24     | cans.       |
| Farinaceous food.....                       | 1,000  | lbs.        |
| Tea.....                                    | 156    | "           |
| Refined sugar.....                          | 300    | "           |
| Eggs.....                                   | 79     | doz.        |
| Butter.....                                 | 181    | lbs.        |
| Lemons.....                                 | 2      | boxes.      |
| Lemonade, concentrated.....                 | 322    | "           |
| Dried fruit.....                            | 35     | bbls.       |
| Fresh vegetables.....                       | 26     | "           |
| Boston crackers.....                        | 20     | "           |
| Apple butter.....                           | 120    | cans.       |

with a quantity of quick-lime, chloride of lime, soap, sponges, combs, hospital utensils, cooking utensils, chloroform, morphine, alcohol, salt, mustard, pepper, surgical instruments, etc., etc.