

Brentsville

New York Times

May 26, 1862

front page

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brigade was again turning its face westward. An hour's march brought us to Brentsville, which is a small village of not more than a dozen houses. The fruit trees along the road showed promise of abundance. But the farms which bordered had the appearance of unyielding deserts. Horses lay at frequent intervals dead by the roadside, and many more were buried. Union homesteads lie in ruins, consumed by the torch of the rebel incendiaries. Flags of truce were displayed at the doors of many of the houses, and some feeling insecure under the immunities of one, showed two. One family near Brentsville hung out the Stars and Stripes and wore the only cheerful faces I saw upon the route. The roads were very muddy, but the brigade arrived at their camping-ground with the division at 12 o'clock M., having accomplished a march of twelve miles.

Along the latter portion of our march, the indications of agricultural industry became more distinguishable. Grain, principally wheat, with here and there patches of corn, just piercing the soil, refreshed the eye; but, as a general thing, the vast fields seemed withered. A wasting fever appeared to have followed the treacherous host we were pursuing. Even the forests were blackened and scathed; and silence and gloom and melancholy rested everywhere. The flowers, too, seemed "faded and gone," in the very spring-time of their beauty. The scattered inhabitants who came to the doors of their isolated dwellings to watch us as we passed, wore no cheerful looks, but gazed like marble statues from out their expressionless eyes. The dogs whined, the cattle moaned, the little children showed no animation. All seemed to partake of the universal woe which had settled upon the land.

Seven wagoners have been killed upon their wagons by rebel guerrilla parties, who linger in the woods between here and Cumberland, and in consequence all wagons traversing that portion of the road are accompanied with a guard of cavalry.

Gen. McCLELLAN is now at the White House, about twenty-five miles from Richmond. The enemy are sixteen miles this side of Richmond, and are not nearly so strongly entrenched as they were at Yorktown. Their fortifications are very similar to those at Williamsburgh, not any stronger, and in a less defensible position. They are, however, working busily in strengthening them.

ARGUS.

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The March from Williamsburgh to New-Kent Court-house—Incidents—Agricultural Features of the Country, &c.

FIRST BRIGADE HOOKER'S DIVISION, }
CAMP NEAR NEW-KENT COURT-HOUSE, VA., }
Saturday, May 17, 1862.