

## THE CAPTURE OF THE HATTERAS FORTS.

We republish to-day the dispatch of yesterday morning, which many of our readers will not have seen, announcing the important and brilliant success of the expedition under Commodore Stringham and Gen. Butler, at Hatteras Inlet, on the Coast of North Carolina. Hatteras Inlet is about twelve miles south of Cape Hatteras, about one-third of the distance between that Cape and Ocracoke Inlet, and is the principal entrance to Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds. By its possession the insurgents are cut off, in a great degree, from all egress or ingress seaward through North Carolina and Virginia, and by way of the two broad, inland seas extending nearly from Cape Henry to Cape Lookout. The navigation of these waters leaving open Newbern, Norfolk, and other ports, whereby their intercourse with the interior was uninterrupted, through the Albemarle and Dismal Swamp Canals and the various rivers which empty into the Sounds, has been of vast importance to the rebels, and they have used them with the greatest diligence, for months past, to send their own products to a profitable market, and to receive from various sources arms, provisions, and much else needful to a vigorous prosecution of the rebellion. To cut off entirely that whole region of the South from all maritime intercourse it is only necessary to follow up this first blow, so well struck, by taking possession of the smaller inlets along the coast, and especially the larger and only very important one remaining, which commands the entrance to Beaufort. This, we trust, is to be the next work of this, or a similar, expedition. The stone-laden vessels are doubtless to be sunk in the smaller inlets, or possibly at the mouths, or rivers, or canals farther in shore; while the forts erected at Hatteras Inlet by the insurgents will be held by Federal troops to command this principal entrance to the two Sounds. Having this entrance, the Navy Department only needs to keep a sufficient force of small vessels in these inland seas to control completely all the commerce of those waters, so important to those in arms against the Government, and profitable to the traitors who traffic in their country's distress.

Should this or some other expedition proceed to Beaufort, though they may, and probably will, find a more difficult task and a less easy victory await them, their success will be all the more important as a completion of the work begun so well. To hold Beaufort is to hold the key of North Carolina, and may, even without another blow, by the help of the Union men of that State, reduce her insurrectionists to obedience. It will open a way to that region of North and South Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama, where Union men are largely in the majority, and call the rebels to the defense of something more than Virginia and Missouri. The possession of the Railroad would enable the Federal forces to cut off Charleston, S. C., at Goldsboro' from its most direct communication with the North, and by pushing still further into the State all communication by rail between that city and the North would be interrupted. The mere threat of the possibility of such an isolation of South Carolina by the possession of Beaufort would inevitably demoralize the insurgent army in Eastern Virginia. The reflection that such may be the consequences of the possession of Hatteras Inlet and the forts there must certainly be considered a very serious blow by the rebels themselves. But beside this possible danger, to hold possession of Albemarle Sound is to threaten Norfolk and Richmond in the rear, so that Mr. Jeff. Davis will be compelled to keep a lookout

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over his shoulder as well as that cheerful look-ahead for the promised march through Northern cities.

But without looking beyond the actual facts of the case, we may rejoice over this act of Butler and Stringham as a brilliant exploit. The capture of over seven hundred prisoners, among them several officers of distinction, including the Assistant Secretary of the Navy of Jeff. Davis's Cabinet, of many stands of arms, of a number of cannon and a large quantity of munitions and equipages; the control, besides, almost completely, of the important navigation of the Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds, make an event such as the people have waited for impatiently and long. Few will fail to recall the time when, four months and a half ago, we had news of another expedition that had gone into Southern waters, and if the feeling that is now aroused is not so manifest and has less of enthusiasm, it is because we can afford to be less demonstrative in triumph than in defeat.