DEAR BROTHER MEARS :--- These turbid waters of Washington are being constantly agitated by some under or surface commotion; some seemingly favorable or adverse breeze, and occasionally by a downright hurricane. SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION BURNT .---

A short time since this beautiful structure interview of cellistment, are in a state of intoxicatook fire from some defective flue, over-heated on a cold, windy day. Unchecked by the inadequate efforts of Washington The offenders are, however, subject to trial only by the civil courts, and not by courts martial or military commissions. February 8.—A petition from preferre of by the inadequate efforts of washington fire companies, the flames soon seized upon the cabinet cases, desks, shelves, burst out grandly through Hebruary 8.—A petition from military churches, asking exemption from military service, was referred to the Military Com-mittee. A resolution requesting the Presiand specimens, burst out grandly through the windows, nor ceased its rage until combustible material was no longer within reach. The building was by no means the most costly, yet certainly the most beautiful in architecture, of any in Washington, and perhaps in the whole country.

Your readers are perhaps sufficiently familiar with the origin and history of this Institution. Thirty-seven years ago a poor old English miser died in Genoa, Italy, worth half a million of dollars. Without friends to inherit his substance, or mourn him when dead, yet did the poor old man long for a name, and in order to obtain it, left all his money to the United States Government, to found an institution after his own name. The Institute is, therefore, independently rich -money in plenty to accomplish any desired object, and can soon repair the charred building. The Government voted the corporators fifty-two acres of waste, insightly, unhealthy land in Washingunsightly, unhealthy land in Washington, which was filled up and adorned with trees, according to the taste in planting of the lamented Downing-now the handsomest park in or about the Capital.

Doubtful whether the world in general or science in particular will, in the end, suffer great detriment in the destruction of the large cabinets of natural history. They have been hastily collected, somewhat crudely arranged, and many of the specimens not worth their shelf room. Fire is radical; a great consumer of trash, and hence often a public benefactor. The consumption of the old Alexandrian library, over which the literati have been so long whining, was a great public benefaction-ship loads of literary rubbish effectually out of the way. The same fate to many a modern library would give the world as much light as in their reading. A larger, better, more scientific, and finely arranged cabinet can soon be collected in the new Smithsonian, than in the old.

CONGRESS has finally voted an amendment to our organic laws, forever prohibiting human slavery within our American Union. Wonderful progress this within four years. 'For such a glorious triumph over the barbarism of ages, let us give thanks to God, and not to Congress. No special praises are due to it. Our Senators and Congressmen have the President relative to the peace conferacted in this matter when compelled by an external pressure. Our Representaan external pressure. Our Representa-tives in their majority votes seldom out-the Internal Revenue bill. The proposition strip public sentiment. President Lin- to increase the present tax on beer, lager coln, at his inaugural in 1861, made beer, ale and porter, was voted down. solemn protestations that neither he nor his party had the slightest thought of in-his party had the slightest thought of inhis party had the singhtest with shavery as existing by law in the Southern States, and Congress also at the time loudly re-echoed the as-trebruary 13.—A joint resolution was in the southern States, and Congress of the latter is still necessary. February 13.—A joint resolution was in the southern states, and congress of the amendment to the Consti-tution abolishing slavery; third, that there would be no cessation of hostilities, short of the disbanding of the surance. There seems no injustice to adopted appropriating \$25,000 for a contract the President in saying that, in efforts to with W. H. Powell, to paint a naval picture eradicate this our national cancer, he has never made a move in advance of public sentiment, but, on the contrary, rather tardily lagged behind. Congress has tion, was passed. A peace resolution and a done no better. What\_special thanks, war resolution, offered each by Pennsylvanians, therefore, deserve they now? Had they not voted all would ere long have have not voted, all would ere long have been lett at home, and others sent who would. Let special anthems be sung in praise to God, who has by his marvellous works and be section also exempts from duty or tax. in righteousness so argued public sentiment into those radical changes, and ment into those radical changes, and in common and primary sources, and in thus in so short a time compelled our books printed exclusively for the use of Sun-high functionaries to face about and get books valued at more than two dollars a upon a higher platform, or consent to be volume. run over and soon forgotten. OUR PRESIDENT, it is generally understood, slipped away, a few days, since to commune with rebel commissioners about peace. This seems to have been done in almost as *incog*. a manner as he came to Washington, early in 1861. Soberminded Union-loving people will be likely to whisper, "He had better have remained in the White House." The flourish of trumpets, observed in such papers as the Morning Chronicle of Washington, about the condescension and eagerness of the President for peace being so great as even to propitiate such ardent patriots as Fernando Wood, is twaddle likely to deceive but few. The lowering of Presidential dignity in hurrying to meet those rebel commissioners, has, instead of convincing them of his magnanimity, in all probability been takon by them as an evidence of weakness, nearly six miles in a southwestly direction beyond their former limit. Our forces, besides with an over-earnest desire for peace, and sent them back to Richmond full of new resolves to fight.

# News of the Week.

### XXXVIIIth CONGRESS----2d SESSION. SENATE.

February 7.—The enrollment bill was taken up, and an amendment adopted, subjecting to punishment substitute brokers, recruiting agents, or other persons who, for profit, shall

dent to communicate information respecting the conference in Hampton Roads was adopted, not, however, until after consider-able opposition and debate. The postal bill was debated. This being the day for the Congressional count of the Presidential vote, the Senate repaired to the Representatives' Hall, where in joint meeting the count was made with the usual formalities, and the proper certificates of the election ordered.

February 9.—A bill was passed, enlarging the area of the State of Nevada, by adding thereto one degree from the Territory of Washington. A bill establishing a bridge across the Ohio River at Cincinnati, waspassed. Also, a bill to reimburse Missouri for expenses incurred in calling out the militia. A bill was reported establishing a uniform militia system for the United States.

February 10.-A bill was passed authorizing the issue of a warrant of attachment against the property of defaulting post-mas-ters and other postal agents, who have coun-tenanced or abetted the rebellion. The morning was chiefly devoted to the legislative, judicial, and executive appropriation bill

February 11.—A memorial was presented recognize Christianity. The appropriation bill consumed the most of the time of the session.

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

February 7.-The Select Committee on the outrage committed on the person of Repre-sentative Kelley, brought in a resolution directing the arrest of A. P. Field, the aggressor, for breach of privilege, and also, that he be denied the privilege of the hall hereto-fore accorded to him as an applicant from Louisiana for a seat in the House. The resolution was not acted upon. The day was chiefly spent on an amendment, offered by Mr. Brooks, of New York, to the fortification bill, striking out therefrom the appro-priation of half a million of dollars for the lefences around Washington. The amend-

ment was rejected. February 8.—A resolution of inquiry in relation to the peace conference, addressed to the President, was adopted. A select com-mittee was ordered for inquiry into alleged frauds and corruptions in the Patent Office. A joint resolution was adopted appropriating \$1000 for procuring a marble bust of the late Chief Justice Taney, to be placed in the Supreme Court room. A bill was introduced providing for the confinement in Houses of Refuge, of juvenile offenders in the District Columbia Columbia.

February 9.—The morning was spent in miscellaneous business. A long evening session was devoted to amendments to the Internal Revenue bill, those relating to the tax on domestic liquors, occupying the chief at-tention. No decision on any one of them was reached.

February 10.—The amendment to the In-ternal Revenue bill, taxing sprits on hand, was defeated. A message was received from ence. [Noticed in another column.] No action was taken.

SHERMAN'S MOVEMENTS.—Southern pa-pers of Friday last, received at Washington, show that Sherman is making a successful advance in South Carolina. He has already, that executive and the main of the main of the successful advance in South Carolina. He has already, that executive advance are source at the successful advance in South Carolina. He has already, that Sherman are source at the main of the main of the statement with the statement with the statement that Sherman are source at the statement with at last accounts, soized the railroad between Augusta and Branchville, and is now moving in force upon the latter place. The rebels virtually acknowledge that the evacu-ation of Branchville and Charleston must ensue, and, from the exceedingly feeble resistance which the rebels have opposed to Sherman, we may conclude that he will make as grand a march through South Carolina as he did through Georgia.

General Grant's recent movement is admitted by rebel editors to have been a success, inasmuch as he succeeded, notwith standing the temporay reverse to the Fifth corps, in extending his line westward to the Boydton plank road. This will enable him to make a dash upon the South Side Railroad, or so threaten Lee that he will be afraid to detach troops for the assistance of Beauregard or Hardee.

Rumors also come by way of Richmond, that Sherman has possession of Branchville, and that the evacuation of Uharleston is going on. They have not as yet been traced to any reliable source.

#### EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 11.-General Grant in answer to a question from the Committee on the Conduct of the War, answered that he had effected an arrangement for the exchange of prisoners, man for man, and officer for officer, or his equivalent, according the old cartels, until one or the other party has exhaust-ed the number they now hold.

THE HAMPTON BOADS CONFERENCE. The resolution of inquiry, adopted by the House of Representatives on the 8th inst., has furnished the President with the opportunity to give to the nation authentic information of the beginning, the progress, and the end of the movement which, while in progress, kept all parties under so nervous an excitement. The message of the President, with the accompanying documents, would fill several columns of our paper. Its main points are thus compressed in an editorial in the Inquirer of this city :--

First. That Mr. Blair was granted authority to go to Richmond upon a simple pass, without authority to speak or act for the United States Government, and without apprising the President what he intended to do or say. Second. That at Richmond Mr. Blair must have taken upon himself the functions of an ambassador, and that he made representa-tions as to what the United States might be nduced to do. Third. That in consequence of Mr. Blair's

voluntary statements, Jefferson Davis was inat \$15 per head; cucumbers, \$10 each; and duced to write a letter to Blair, to be shown a bunch of six small fish for \$20. The same paper says: — "A disgraceful affair is now to President Lincoln, in which he said he was not disposed to find obstacles in forms; that going on up town. A mob of women, with the black flag, are marching from store to he was willing to enter into negotiations for the restoration of peace, and to send a com-mission whenever he had reason to believe store, pillaging. The Pelham Cadets are or-dered out to disperse them."---Informathat it would be received, or to receive one if tion, regarded as reliable, states that ten thousand of the best troops from Hood's late army have been despatched across the counsent, and that he was prepared to renew the effort to enter into a conference, with a view

to restore peace "to the *two* countries." Fourth. That President Lincoln then wrote a letter to Blair, authorizing him to say to Jefferson Dayis that he (Lincoln) had always of the House of Representatives, Rev. Henry Highland Garnett, a colored minister, preach-ed in the Representatives' Hall last Sabbath. been, and still was ready to receive any agent whom Davis, or any other influential person, The attendance was very large, and the event now resisting the national authority, might informally send "with the view of securing occasions much comment in Washington.-Eleven hundred and fifty bales of cotton ar

beace to our common country." • Fifth. That Blair went to Richmond a sec rived at Cairo, February 11, from Memphis, on the way to Cincinnati.—Bullion of the and time, and showed President Lincoln' value of \$1,800,000 was received at San Franletter to Jefferson Davis, and informed him that the part, in the letter of Lincoln, "about isco, during the ten days ending February 2 our common country," referred to that part in Davis's letter " about the two countries." COLONIZATION .- The annual meeting of

[The sixth, seventh and eighth points, re-late to the application of Messis. Stephens, Hunter, and Campbell, for permission to go Washington, which was so far granted as to low their proceeding to Fortress Monroe, Delegates were present from nearly all the nd their conveyance thither.]" [loyal States. The finances of the society are Ninth. That the President then ordered in a satisfactory condition. Receipts for the allow their proceeding to Fortress Monroe, and their conveyance thither.]"

Secretary Seward to proceed to Fortress year ending December 31, 1864, \$91,454 74. Monroe and meet the Commissioners, in- /Disbursements, \$89,931 45. The failure of structing him to notify them that three emigration, on account of the war, gives the things were indispensable to peace :--First, society a surplus of \$35,000.

a restoration of the Union; second, that the

L.TEST-TUESDAY. The stateme. that Sherman occupied Branchville is not 'nfirmed, nor yet denied, in the latest rebel peres. The rebels say that Grant has been 's forced by 12,000 of detached some of the fragmen's of his broken army to move eastward. Set for and Ex-Governor Thomas H. Hicks, of Maryland, died February 12. Senator Morgan, of New York, nominated by the President as Secretary of the Treasury, requested that has name might be withdrawn, which was acco-dingly done. A bill to arm the slaves, but TREASURER CHRISTIAN COMMISSION, Western Bank, Philadelphis STORES. Stores received by the U.S. Christian Commission at Central Office, Philadelphia, for week ending February 9, 1865.

PENNSYLVANIA. PENNSYLVANIA. Philadelphia—James T. Ford, 1 package. Germantown—Mrs. Work, 1 package; Market Street Presbyter'n Sunday-school, 12 housewives; Teld Hospital Association, per Mrs. R. K. Wight, 1 barrel. Ceter Valley—Union Aid Society, 3 hoxes, 2 barns, 3 kegs. Churkown—Per Mrs. Lucy O. Jacobs, 1 barrel. Easton Ladies' Aid Society, per Mrs. M. L. Maxwell, box. Muncy—Lies' Aid Society, per Mrs. S. G. Life, 1 box. West Octoraro, Ladies' Christian Commission, per Miss Sallie Bord, 1 box. NEX JERSEY dingly done. — A bill to arm the slaves, but not to free them, has been referred in the

ITEMS.

rebel House.

Thus far only the State of Delaware has voted against the emancipation amendment. New Jersey and Kentucky have not yet voted.——The severity of the winter is not confined to our continent. Accounts from the South of England say that memory has to go back many years to find a parallel to the cold there experienced.——It is said there is prospect of reform in the material of NEY JERSEY. Paterson-Ladies' Chis. Commission, per Miss Paterson-Ladies Ongs. Commission, per March Z. W. Rogers, 1 box. Newark-E. Simon & Bather, 1 box. Woodbury-Mary Lord, 3 ords court-plaster. Unionville-Soldier's Aid Sciety, per Mr. C. our tractional currency. They are to be printed on fabric that is impervious to water, and more tenacious than parchment. ——Rev. Thomas Johnson, who distinguished himself arrison, 1 box. Flemingtonville-Aid Society, Ar Miss E. C. as a leader in the pro-slavery crusade against Blackeville, 1 box. Kansas eight years ago, but who, since the breaking out of the rebellion, has been a strong Union man, and spoken and labored therefor, was cruelly murdered by a party of guerillas, in his own house, near Westport, New York-Samaritan Hose Co., 12 paintose. Albany-Branch U. S. C. C., per Wm. Molyroy, boxes Mo., on the 6th ult. On Christmas day, 1855, more than nine years ago, George B. Lincoln, now Postmaster in Brooklyn, wrote Troy-Branch U S. C. C., per F. P. Allen boxes, 1 barrel. Poughkeepsie, Dutchess Co.-Ladies' Christian Commission, per Mrs. C. W. Tooker, 3 boxes. rom St. Louis as follows :--- '' Missouri is try-Binghampton-Union Aid Commission, per Mrs. I. M. Myer, 1 box. Palmyra—Aid Society, per Samuel Adsit, 1 box. ng by violence to make Kansas a slave State

but in what will this ruffianism end? It will end in making Missouri a free State, not Kansas a slave State."——The Western Pres-byterian says that a guerilla raid was made upon Danville, Ky., on Sabbath morning, 29th ult. The guerillas entered the town thirty-five in number, took some fine horses, and committed a few other denredations and Boston-Army Com. Young Men's Christian Association, 52 boxes, 4 barrels, 72,700 papers. Springfield - Branch U. S. C. C., per F. A. Brewer, 4 boxes. New Haven-Branch U. S. C. C. 4 boxes, 1 bar'l. and committed a few other depredations, and retreated in time to leave the hour of public worship undisturbed. They were, however, pursued, four of them killed and five cap-Bangor-Branch U. S. C. C., per T. G. Stickney, boxes turod. Three of the prisoners were wounded, one mortally.—John C. Breekinridge has been called into Jeff Davis's cabinet as Secre-Cumberland-1 box. tary of War. He has made a poor account

Cincinnati-Branch U. S. C. C. 5300 papers. of himself as a General. — The rebel Senate has rejected the proposition to arm the ne-Total, 99 packages of Stores. groes. Wisely done.—According to the Southern Confederacy, a paper published at Macon, Ga., cabbages are selling in that city

Our Treasury is empty. The calls upon us multiply on every side with an earnest pleading that we cannot hear and keep silent. We come before God and his people with this great opportunity and great responsibility. Read the Re-port of our Anniversary. See what is being done, and what remains to be done, and then help as the honour of the nation and the honour of Christ demand.

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## REV. A. M. STEWART'S LETTER. WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 10, 1865.

Rebel bullets, shells, and bayonets are not our dangers; but unworthy companionship with traitors are the shoals on which we are in danger of shipwreck. It would be cruelty to our country, as well as imminent danger to future peace, to receive aught from these rebels now, save unconditional submission. This cy may dictate.

for the head of the grand stairway of the Capitol. A resolution of inquiry into the condition of the freedmen about Washington, many of whom are said to have died of starvacussion, to exempt bibles and testaments, or

arithmetics, spelling books, geographics, grammars, and school books of the kind used in common and primary schools, and all

THE WAR.

The active operations of the week have been chiefly an advance movement of the Army of the Potomac against the right of the rebels, made by our Fifth Corps, with no important result beyond an improvement of the position of our line on the south side of Hatcher's Run. The principal movement was made on the 6th instant, and the fighting on that and the next day, was severe, no less than three Corps of the enemy taking part in the conflict. Our losses, considering the numbers engaged, were very severe, being an aggregate loss, killed, wounded and missing included, of between 1100 and 1200, out of a force of about 4000, who went into action. The first accounts represented the main purpose of the movement as having failed, although, beyond the loss of men, we had suffered no material disadvantage. Later accounts, however, (Washington, February 9), speak of it as a complete success, and one of considerable importance. The movement has resulted in an extension of our lines for being somewhat nearer the famous Southside

road, can more readily co-operate from their advance position with any movement from the Atlantic coast against Richmond. Perhaps the diversion which our recent operations have created in favor of Sherman is even a more important result than the mere lengthening of our lines. As Sherman moved steadily nearer and nearer to Charleston, like a devastating angel of progress, it has been generally believed that Lee would endeavor to send troops enough to the assistance of Hardee to save unconditional submission. This done, grant them whatever Christian magnanimity and a sound national poli-cy may dictate. fences now; his lines are narrowly watched

position of the President on the slavery question, assumed in his last annual message the end of the war, and the disbanding of the hostile rebel forces. That minor matters would be liberally considered. That Seward was to listen to all that was said, but to consummate nothing, without further report and

authority. Tenth. That Secretary Seward set out upon

his mission. Eleventh. That General Grant telegraphed to the President that he would delay no military movement in consequence of the commis-

Twelfth. That General Grant also telegraphed to Secretary Stanton that, in his pinion, it would be advisable for President Lincoln to see Hunter and Stephens at least, Campbell probably not expressing himself as favorably to peace as his colleagues.

Thirteenth. That upon the reception of this despatch, President Lincoln resolved to go to Fortress Monroe. Fourteenth. That he did go.

Fifteenth. That on the morning of Febru-

ary 3d the distinguished party met. That an informal and verbal Conference

took place between them. That the substance of the instructions to Secretary Seward were communicated to the Southern Commissioners, as containing the only basis of peace which could be admitted by the United States. That the Southerners did not say that, in any event, or in any condition whatever, would they consent to re-union; and yet that they did not declare that they would not consent. They wanted a postponement of that question, and the adoption of some other course, which they argued might, or might not, lead to re-union, but which the President and Secretary Seward thought would lead to postponement.

The Conference ended without result. This is the President's sentiment.

Sixteenth, Secretary Seward transmits a copy of a despatch sent to Charles F. Adams, United States Minister to London, giving an account of the preliminary events and of the conference. In the letter he says that specific demands were not made by the rebel commissioners, nor direct refusals of the demands of the United States announced. They wanted a postponement of the question of separation, and a united action by the two Governments upon "some extraneous policy or scheme for a season, during which passions might be expected to subside, and the armies be reduced, and trade and intercourse between the people of both sections resumed." This, no doubt, was the union of the North and South to attack Maximilian, and avenge the Monroe doctrine. Secretary Seward does not say, but the inference is strong, that this could have been the only policy proposed. The Southerners thought that by this "ex-traneous policy" abetter feeling would be fostered, and that eventually some kind of a cy may dictate. Some professors pass for very meek, good-natured people till you displease them. They resemble a pool or a pond; while you let it alone it hocks clear and limpid, but if you stir it toward the bottom the rising sediments soon discover the impurities that lurk be-neath — Tundady.

The Emperor Napoleon has appointed Prince Napoleon Vice President of the privy Council. On account of the tenets of the prince this is regarded as a direct slap at the Pope's late Encyclical. UNITED STATES CHRISTIAN COMMISSION

the American Colonization Society was held

in Washington city, on Tuesday, January 17th. Speeches by Senator Doolittle, Hon. G. W. Warren, of Boston, and Dr. S. H. Cox.

MONE-Y.

31:55

1 00

Oash Acknowledgments for the week ending Febru ary 6, 1865.

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tonwood St. Presby'n Church, Philad'a, per H. B. Lincoln, 27 00- 147 05 Other Contributions.

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