

THE BLAIR MISSION.

It appears certain that FRANCIS P. BLAIR, Senior, the old Editor of the Globe newspaper, has finally succeeded in procuring permission to visit Richmond, and we learn that he has even arrived safely at the Rebel Capital, and "proceeded quietly to the Spotswood House."

But it seems otherwise. BLAIR has departed upon his errand, whatever it may be, and forthwith the very atmosphere is charged with rumors of peace. The most unreliable and extraordinary canards are circulated—and believed—and the public expectation is wrought up to the highest pitch of anxiety.

It seems to us that nothing can be more unwise and unfortunate than a mission of this kind to the rebels, at this time. It may be, that those who are in the secret, are possessed of information which makes such a mission proper and timely. But we do not believe it; and we know that the country looks on with regret at actions which appear peevish and vascillating.

It is true, that the Rebellion is in great extremities, and gloom and despondency prevail throughout the Confederacy. There are occasionally croppings out of a disposition in Rebel- dom to rebel against Jeff. Davis' arbitrary rule, and a desire to come back under the old flag. But we fail to see, nor do we believe the shrewdest and best-informed can perceive any indications that the leaders of the rebellion, are ready to lay down their arms and cease their unnatural and unholly warfare.

Until such a spirit is manifested—until the leaders of the rebellion, show some manifestations of a desire to cease their wicked strife, and seek the clemency and pardon of the Government—until they make overtures—we conceive that all such missions as Mr. BLAIR'S—whether authorized or unauthorized—are fraught with incalculable mischief to the Union cause, and calculated to retard rather than promote the advent of peace.

The Rebel leaders know the road to peace, as well as any Union man. They went off on their own accord, and let them come back in the same way. Besides, such a mission will only tend to remove peace further into the future. If it does any thing, it will only revive new hopes among the rebels. They may conclude that we need a peace more than they do, else why make overtures?

They may conclude that it is as humiliating for us to sue for peace as for them, and that inasmuch as we do, there must be something more to cause this, than what is manifest on the face. But, it is alleged that Mr. BLAIR has no authority from the President to propose terms of peace, that as the personal friend of the Executive, with whose views he is familiar, he only goes to ascertain whether a peace is feasible. The rebel leaders understand this game of feeling them, and allow themselves to be felt accordingly. Moreover, what does Mr. BLAIR know of the opinion of the President on the subject of peace, that is not known to every intelligent man in the Union, and to the rebel leaders themselves? They know that all that is asked of them is to lay down their arms, and submit to the laws; and they know too, that they can come back in no other way. The people of the free States, who have thus far borne up against their hellish work, are not willing that they should be taken back on any other terms, and the President knows this. What need then of overtures? If these are made, the presumption at once will be, that there are conditions different from those which we have named, and which have stood out so prominent among the friends of the government, yet all must know there are no conditions for the rebels, except submission to the laws. We hope therefore, that no such error as is indicated in the report of Mr. B's mission, has been committed.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

The House of Representatives at Washington is engaged in discussing the Constitutional Amendment providing for the extinction of Slavery. The probabilities of its passage by the present Congress, are not flattering, as the Democrats oppose it. We notice some noble exceptions, such as O'NEIL, of New York, Mr. CREWELL, of Maryland, and two other border states men, Messrs. YEAMAS, of Kentucky, and KING, of Missouri, who have spoken in favor of the proposed amendment.

The opponents of the measure, seem to admit that slavery is dead; that it has strangled itself by bringing about and prosecuting the Rebellion—and yet they are not ready to provide legal enactments for its extinction, which shall put out of the way forever, this great cause of all our nation's troubles. It is assumed that should the measure fail in the present Congress, President LINCOLN, will immediately after the Fourth of March, call together the next Congress, which will without delay, pass the amendment.

A bill has passed both houses of Congress increasing the duty on Whisky to two dollars per gallon. The law went into effect on the 1st inst. It does not apply to the stock on hand, but only to liquor manufactured after that time.

ARMY CONTRACTORS—SPECULATIONS.

The Copperhead papers have much to say about speculations, and peculations, in the Army and Navy contracts of the government; and endeavor to throw the blame for all losses sustained in this way, on the Administration. This is very unreasonable. Every sensible man knows that it is literally impossible to prevent these things, where such heavy expenditures occur daily, as has been the case under the government since the war against the rebels began.

And that which adds very much to the injustice of the charges preferred against the administration on this ground, is the fact, that many of the worst wrongs, and greatest frauds, inflicted on the government through contracts, were perpetrated by copperheads. But, aside from this, in all the wars in which this country has been engaged, persons have taken advantage of the government, and speculated on its necessities. During the Revolutionary war, Washington wrote a number of letters to the Congress of the United Colonies, complaining of the frauds of those who were authorized to furnish army supplies; and during the Seminole (Indian) war, fifty dollars per cord was paid for wood, when an abundance could be had, at the same time and place, at ten dollars per cord!

Three dollars per bushel was paid for corn, when it could have been had at one-third that sum; and the effort to drive from Florida five hundred Indian warriors—part of the time less than two hundred—cost the government twenty millions of dollars!! This took place under Mr. Van Buren's administration; and we dare copperhead croakers to point to an expedition, or any military enterprise which the present administration has projected against five hundred, or against five times five hundred rebels, that cost the government in any proportion to this vast sum.

In the Mexican war large sums were realized by speculators under the commissary department. Col. Kinney, of this county, is said to have made over a million of dollars by supplying Gen. Scott's army with beef. Bonrienne, who was Napoleon's commissary of Cavalry, during some of his campaigns, accumulated large fortunes in the business. After B. had closed his account with his government, the emperor drew on him for a million of francs, and compelled him to pay it; and, the ungrateful dog, who afterwards became his benefactor's bitterest enemy, boasted, after he had been compelled to disgorge the million francs, "that he had millions left." The Rothschilds, made one account says, the enormous sum of seven millions pounds sterling, on the job of procuring, and conveying in coin, to Spain, the money that was necessary to pay the subsidies of England, and keep Wellington's army in supplies during the memorable Peninsular campaign. This is an infinitely greater sum than any contractor has yet realized under our government.

These latter are remarkable cases, and are only cited to show the impossibility of carrying on any war, under any government, much less such a stupendous one as ours, and avoid speculations, and even peculations, in supplies. Many smaller cases might be adduced to illustrate this further, but this is needless, not only because practical people do not need them to prove the truth of this, but for the reason, that notwithstanding the persistent and noisy efforts made by the copperheads, to injure the administration by means of this charge, the people did not believe them before the election, and do not now.

FREE MISSOURI.—Missouri has wheeled into the ranks of freedom at last. The Constitutional Convention have passed an ordinance to abolish slavery henceforth and forever, the law to take effect at once. The vote stood, 60 for Freedom and 4 for Slavery. Soon, one by one, we hope to know that the remaining States that have given their support to this heinous rebellion, have returned to their first love with not a stain of degrading and defacing slavery on their garments. This great result will complete the hope and realization of the Union. Maryland and Missouri hereafter will be twin sisters, going hand in hand, living examples to their sister erring States, and by their self devoted acts elevating themselves to eminent positions among the free States of our glorious old Confederacy.

Thus, one by one the props are falling, the arguments of the opposition are being flung back into their own faces—the world moves and freedom reigns. Simultaneously with this action in Missouri, we find two other States moving.—The Kentucky Legislature has passed resolutions in favor of emancipation, thus committing that State in favor of freedom, and initiating a new regime in the home of Henry Clay. A State Convention has also met in Tennessee, and adopted measures for reorganizing the civil government of that State on a free and loyal basis.—Emancipation, although it may be delayed in those two States, is now rendered certain, and thus we have two more free States assured to us making the number twenty-five. Louisiana and Colorado will give us twenty-seven. Delaware, Arkansas and Nebraska would raise the number to thirty, which we shall reach before the rebel States resume their allegiance, unless they hurry about it.

THE RICHMOND ENQUIRER, in an editorial review on the above article, says: "If we would reap the rich blessings to which our heroic struggle entitles us, if we would crystallize the abolition into acts of aid and comfort, we must convince the world that we are fighting for the self-government of the whites and not for the slavery of the blacks; that the war has not been waged as in defense of the right of property, but in defense of the right of the negro to be free; that the freedom of the negro was no part of the purpose of the struggle, but that the only purpose was to secure to the negro the same rights and independence as to the white man."

Fort Fisher Taken!

The Telegraph to-day (Tuesday) announces officially the capture of Fort Fisher and the adjacent forts, with 2500 prisoners and 72 guns. They were carried by assault on Sunday, by a portion of the 24th Corps, under command of Gen. Terry. Union loss heavy, particularly in officers.

Richmond papers say that Mosby is now at his father's house in Amherst; his wound is doing well, and he hopes soon to be again in the saddle. Ohio has furnished 211,500 men to the army and navy, of whom 16,500 have died in service and about 8,000 have been disabled.

THE COLLAPSE OF THE REBELLION.

Late Richmond papers give signs of collapse, and we refer the reader to the following extracts from the Richmond Sentinel, said to be Jefferson Davis' organ, and the Richmond Inquirer. The condition of the rebels must be desperate indeed, to be obliged to give utterance to such words, and adopt such a tone of despondency as characterize the articles in their leading papers. That this is their true condition cannot be doubted, but what is the object in publishing it to the world? There is something else behind these avowals of weakness, and despair, than these mere publications. Would they thus expose their situation, knowing as they do, that it must be a source of satisfaction to us, if they had not a motive, or a point to make? What this we cannot divine. But two things of them we do know. One is, that the desperate scoundrels, who led off, and have since held up the rebellion, will not be taken alive, if they can devise any expedient that will save them. They will, rather than be hung, go into the front and be shot down in a last desperate struggle. The other is, that Lee's veterans are still capable of a bold movement, and a powerful fight; and the confessions of the Richmond papers of defeat, disaster, and ruin, may, in some way, be connected with the last resort of the desperate villains, who are now endeavoring to escape the punishment they have so richly earned. It may be that these publications are only intended for a foreign market, or they may be sent out to test the feelings of their own people; but whatever the object, there is a point to be gained.

It is said that the article from the Sentinel has been deemed by Secretary Seward of such importance, and so truly representing the condition of the South and Jeff. Davis' own intentions, that he has ordered copies of it to be sent to our foreign ministers, to show that the rebel government is admitted by their own leaders to be a failure, and that, already exhausted and worn out, they are seeking for some port of refuge; and this being the case, that they be no longer considered as "belligerents." It is added that "those most familiar with Jeff. Davis and his writings declare this to be from his pen."

The Sentinel says: "It becomes us coolly and calmly to look into the circumstances of our condition, and adopt with firmness and energy such a policy as wisdom may point out and our necessity constrain. It is chiefly to win under misfortune. It is cowardly to sink under it. It is absurd to be encumbered by a brave man struggling with adversity is worthy of special admiration—a spectacle for gods and men."

"We think that our late reverses have done much towards preparing the minds of the people for the necessary sacrifices. Subjugation is a just and necessary result of our course. And in truth they are not sacrifices at all when compared with our situation. If subjugated, it is a question of time, whether we shall be sold into slavery, or whether the Yankees shall take for their. Subjugation means emancipation and confiscation. "All our servants and all our property yielded up to us, and we are now all our strength and all our wisdom. Let there be a conference of our wise men. Let there be a calm investigation of our wants and a catalogue of our resources. Then let us see how we can best employ the means and employment of these resources be removed. So long as we have a man or a dollar, and the man or dollar be needed, let the call be heeded."

"We lately published, from a thoughtful correspondent, a suggestion that, in the event of being unable to sustain our independence, we should surrender into the hands of those from whom we wrested or purchased it, into the hands of Britain, France and Spain, rather than yield it to the Yankees."

"From the favor with which this suggestion has been received, we are sure that in the dread event which it contemplates, our people would infinitely prefer to surrender to the European nations, on terms as favorable as they could desire, in preference to the domination of the Yankees. We will not dwell upon that subject, but we speak of them not out of cloudy forebodings, but simply as a man in health speaks of his will."

"What we would have avoided the struggle into which the North has forced us. Long ago Lincoln declared that the republic could not exist half slave and half free. In various forms the people of the North pressed the issue upon us. Our enemies sought to divide us, and to divide us on terms of spoliation and subjugation; that the freedom of the negro was no part of the purpose of the struggle, but that the only purpose was to secure to the negro the same rights and independence as to the white man."

"If it be necessary to convince the world that we are fighting for the self-government of the whites, and that if liberation can be made to secure our recognition and the guaranty of England and France to our independence, we believe that the people of a stronger wisdom should insist upon this sacrifice. In such a light only do we understand the following declaration of the Richmond Sentinel: "We think that our late reverses have done much towards preparing the minds of our people for the necessary sacrifices. Subjugation is a just and necessary result of our course; and in truth, they are not sacrifices at all when compared with our situation. If subjugated, it is a question of time, whether we shall be sold into slavery, or whether the Yankees shall take for their. Subjugation means emancipation and confiscation. All our servants and all our property yielded up to us, and we are now all our strength and all our wisdom. Let there be a conference of our wise men. Let there be a calm investigation of our wants and a catalogue of our resources. Then let us see how we can best employ the means and employment of these resources be removed. So long as we have a man or a dollar, and the man or dollar be needed, let the call be heeded."

"If we have given to our contemporary a broader interpretation than the writer designed, we do not believe we have misrepresented the determination of our people. The consequences of emancipation would fall upon the unfortunate negro, and God would hold responsible those who had forced upon us the act. It is one of necessity, not choice. An act taken against our judgment and our conviction, to save us from the horrors of a prolonged war and the disgrace, ruin and destruction involved in the success of our country. "If France and England will enter into a treaty which shall save us from the horrors of a prolonged war and the disgrace, ruin and destruction involved in the success of our country. "If France and England will enter into a treaty which shall save us from the horrors of a prolonged war and the disgrace, ruin and destruction involved in the success of our country."

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glorious to devote our means to our success than to lose them as spoils to the enemy. Our situation, too, stripped of our property, but master of the government, would be infinitely better than if despoiled by the enemy, and wearing his bonds. These views have long received the theoretical assent of our people.

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TENNESSEE STATE CONVENTION.

The Commercial has a special dispatch from Nashville, which says: The Tennessee State Convention have unanimously passed a resolution declaring slavery forever abolished, and prohibiting its prohibition. The Convention also passed a resolution prohibiting the legislature from recognizing property in man, and forbidding it from requiring compensation to be made to owners of slaves.

A resolution was also adopted abrogating the declaration of state independence and the military league made with the Confederate States in 1861; also abrogating all the laws and ordinances passed in pursuance thereof.

All the officers appointed by the acting Governor since his accession to office were confirmed. The propositions of the Convention are to be submitted to the people for ratification on the 23d of February, and on the 4th of March an election is to be held for governor and members of the legislature.

Nearly three hundred delegates participated in the proceedings of the Convention, and the greatest harmony and good feeling prevailed. Parson Brownlow is the unanimous choice at the Convention for Governor.

GEN. BUTLER'S REPORT.

In accordance with the suggestion of Gen. Grant, the War Department permits the publication of Gen. Butler's report on the Wilmington Expedition.

It will be remembered that the naval preparations for this expedition were in progress for at least two months, and it is to be presumed that when Gen. Grant ordered the land force to rendezvous at Fortress Monroe, with ten days' coal and water, it was with the understanding that the naval force was ready to proceed.

On the 9th of December, then, Gen. Butler reported to Admiral Porter that all was in readiness on his part. The Admiral, however, was not ready, and Gen. Butler was compelled to wait through Saturday the 10th, Sunday the 11th, and Monday the 12th. Here the first three days were wasted before the navy force was ready to move on the 12th, and even then it would be compelled to put into Beaufort for ammunition for the monitors, probably because those vessels could not carry it any greater distance than from that place to New York.

This delay, which was the cause of the delay in the expedition, was not necessary, and Gen. Butler, that he might give the naval force a start of thirty-six hours, steamed up the James to deceive the Rebels as to his probable destination, and on the 14th, Wednesday, put to sea. But even then he had not given Admiral Porter time enough. On the evening of the 15th he arrived at New Inlet, near Fort Fisher, where he waited three days longer, in fine weather and with a smooth sea, the 16th, 17th, and 18th, before the fleet appeared. Thus nine days had elapsed since, by order of Gen. Grant, he had reported that the land force was in readiness to proceed—nine precious days lost because the naval authorities had failed to complete their preparations at the appointed time. This inexcusable delay and dilatoriness, of course, involved still further postponement. The coal and water, provided for ten days—ample had the whole expedition started at the appointed time—were now exhausted, and the transports, by Admiral Porter's advice, put into Beaufort to recruit. The weather, moreover, had changed. For three days it blew a gale, and it was not till the 21st that the fleet could be again brought to the place of rendezvous for the combined attack. That they would be there at that time Admiral Porter was duly informed the day before, but he, for whom everybody else had waited so long, could wait for nobody, and he prematurely, though harmlessly, blew into the air half a million worth of gunpowder, before which the walls of Fort Fisher were to have fallen. He was confident, however, that he had silenced his guns, but he nevertheless declined to take his ships above the fort to protect the landing of the troops, and prevent reinforcements from being sent to the enemy, lest he should encounter their guns. But the attack was commenced, only to prove that the fort was uninjured, and that the division was unimpaired. There was a larger force opposed to Gen. Butler than his own. To proceed in the attack, according to his judgment, and that of three officers, would only be a useless sacrifice of his men, and Gen. Butler therefore ordered his forces to be re-embarked.

Such, in brief, is the whole story. When the army first arrived off Wilmington, there were, as deserters and prisoners declared, and as Gen. Grant knew when he ordered the expedition to start, less than 400 men in Fort Fisher, and less than 1,000 within twenty miles. Had the expedition started according to the plan laid out, and not been delayed three days at Fortress Monroe, or had the fleet been present when the land force first reached New Inlet, and that three days more not been lost, Fort Fisher would have been an easy capture. That delay gave the enemy time to re-enforce it, and Gen. Butler simply acted the part of a humane and prudent commander in then withdrawing from a hopeless contest. Such we believe will be the judgment of the country. If it be correct, the question is still an open one—Why was Gen. Butler removed?—Tribune.

PERSONAL. —ROBERT FARIES, a well known citizen of Williamsport, died at that place, on 12th Nov. last, aged 60 years. Mr. F. was born in Ireland, and was but a few months of age when his parents emigrated to this country. He has been closely identified with the public improvements of the State, and particularly with the Sunbury & Erie Railroad. His loss will be deeply felt, as he was much respected and highly honored.

HUGH RIDGELY, Esq., of Port Jervis, for many years Superintendent of the Delaware Division, has been appointed General Superintendent of the Erie Railway, in place of Charles M. Rice, resigned. The position was tendered to Mr. Ridgely by the unanimous vote of the Board of Directors, and the appointment gives general satisfaction to the officers and employees of the Company.

JUDGE WILSON, of Lewistown, died at his residence in that place on last Monday week, aged 64.

DANIEL S. NORTON (Union) of Winona County, has been elected United States Senator from Minnesota, to succeed Morton S. Wilkinson, and serve six years from the 4th of March next.

GEN. JAMES H. LANE, Union, has been re-elected to the United States Senate from Kansas, for six years from March 4th.

BISHOP THOMAS C. BROWNELL, of Connecticut, presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, died at his residence in Hartford, Connecticut, on Friday morning, the 8th of his age.

REV. W. M. DELONG will preach at the Universalist Church in Sheshquin, Pa., on the 4th Sabbath in January, at 10 1/2 o'clock, A. M.

W. H. KEMBLE, of Philadelphia, was, on Wednesday, 11th inst., elected State Treasurer, by the Legislature of this State. Mr. K. is a true Union man, and well deserves the promotion.

HON. EDWARD EVERETT died at his residence, in Boston, on Sunday last, after a brief but severe illness, in the 71st year of his age.

FROM GEN. GRANT'S ARMY.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, JAN. 11. The heavy rains which have fallen for the past week, have swollen the James river to several feet above the usual height, and the low grounds along the bank of the river are flooded, making travel in the vicinity anything but pleasant.

The river is full of floating debris, a great deal of which comes from above the canal. I learned last evening that these high tides had caused an opening in the bulk-head of the canal, and that a stream now flows through it some eight or ten feet wide and several deep—the elements thus combining to accomplish what engineering skill had failed to do. The pontoon bridge at Alton's Landing and Deep Bottom were both torn from their moorings yesterday, and travel was thus interrupted most of the day; but towards evening they were replaced and travel resumed. This morning the mail boat struck the bridge at Deep Bottom, carrying away a portion of it, but doing no damage to the boat.

There were no Richmond papers received yesterday, the rebels refusing to exchange, owing, it is believed, to their containing news which they did not relish. About thirty deserters came in yesterday. They represent that forces have been sent from Richmond to South Carolina, to meet Sherman.

A BLOODHOUND CHASE.—The rebel practice of chasing Union prisoners of war with bloodhounds, is thus illustrated in a letter from Sherman's army to the Cincinnati Gazette: "Our escaped prisoners are hunted by bloodhounds. These are kept at all the posts for that purpose. To kill one of them is certain death if discovered. On one occasion two were killed at Andersonville, and the authorities not being able to find those who committed the act, placed the carcasses of the dogs outside the dead line in the brook which supplied the camp with water, and allowed them to rot there. "Hundreds of our officers and men have been chased by these dogs. They are kept at all guard-stations and picket-posts throughout the South, and especially at the ferries and fords of the rivers, and are used to hunt both our men and deserters from the rebel army."

"We have space only for one case of a bloodhound chase. The parties who had escaped were private Crummett and Harris of the 9th Illinois cavalry, Martin Chas. of Illinois, and a partner of the 2d New York. Two of these soldiers were eighteen years old, one twenty, and one only seventeen. They were chased by fifteen dogs in charge of some twenty men. "One man, finding the dogs close upon him, and no chance of escape presenting itself, climbed on the porch of a house and waited till the party came up. Enraged that their thirst for Yankee blood had not been gratified, they knocked Crummett down to them, then knoed Harris on the head with a musket, formed a ring, put the dogs in it, and threw him to the ground. He was terribly torn, and soon after Harris and Chas. were treated in the same way and were badly torn."

Patterson, who was a mere boy, knoed down and prayed these human fiends not to let the dogs tear him; but to no purpose. He was forced down, and in undertaking to regain the porch was kicked in the face, all his front teeth broken out, and he rendered insensible, and that state thrown into the ring. The dogs had satiated themselves with blood, and refused to touch him. This is only a single case of many which could be related."

NEWS FROM EUROPE.—The China, which left Liverpool the 31st of December, and Queenstown on the 1st of January, arrived at N. Y. Friday, with two days later news. The English press continue to comment on the St. Albans raiders and the order of Gen. Dix. All the papers declare against allowing the Rebels to infest the United States from Canada. The Confederate Loan has declined six per cent, and further news from America was expected with great anxiety.

A meeting has been held at Dublin, Ireland, for the purpose of forming an association for the reform of the law of landlord and tenant, and for obtaining the abolition of the church establishment. Nearly all the Roman Catholic bishops take a leading part in this association.

The French Government is said to be greatly annoyed by the Pope's plea. A desperate encounter has taken place between French troops and a band of brigands near Teroli, in the Papal State.

IMPORTANT TO DISSENTING SOLDIERS.—The Harrisburg Telegraph says that it is important to soldiers who go to Washington, to know their arrears of pay and bounty, and to know that the cost of their transportation to and from that city is deducted from the account. This deduction can be saved by the soldier, by enclosing certificates of discharge and blank vouchers, signed by Col. Frank Jordan, the Pennsylvania State Agent at Washington. Such accounts can be collected without the presence of the soldier, and whenever the papers are dispatched as herein directed, Col. Jordan will see that all accounts thus entrusted to him without the presence of the soldier, and to his department are collected, and the sums received immediately remitted to the soldiers.