The Press.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1861.

EXTRACT FROM THE LAST SPEECH OF STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS.—"The conspiracy to break up the Union is a fact now known to all. Armies are being raised, and war levied to accomplish it. There can be but two sides to the controversy. Every man must be on the side of the United States or against it. There can be no neutrals in this war. There can be none but patriots and traitors."

THE LATEST WAR NEWS.

The late news from England continues to be the principal topic of interest. While it must be admitted that there is some danger that the peaceful relations which have so long been maintained between the United States and Great Britain may be disturbed, the conclusion should not be hastily reached that a diplomatic difficulty will necessarily lead to war. There is no just reason whatever for hostilities in the act of Captain Wilkes in seizing the rebel envoys, Slidell and Mason; nor is there probability of a war breaking out unless for other causes England has determined to ungenerously assail us in the hour of our national difficulties, and to throw the weight of her influence in favor of the conspirators, whose avowed aim is the establishment of a Government of which slavery is to be the corner-stone.

The rumor telegraphed from Cincinnati, that four regiments of rebel infantry and three gunboats have been sent South from Columbus, Kentucky, to New Orleans, is, perhaps, correct, but it is by no means probable that the statement that a battle was being fought in the Crescent City is true. An excitement has no doubt been created there, by the recent landing of reinforcements under command of General Phelps, on Ship Island; and the people are probably awakening to a consciousness of the dangers which menace them, not only from the fleets and armies about to concentrate near the mouth of the Mississippi, but from the Union flotilla and gunboats preparing to descend that river.

Further particulars have been received of the great fire at Charleston, which show that the extent of the damage was but little exaggerated. The loss is estimated at from $5,000,000 to $7,000,000. The flames swept over nearly all portions of the city lying between East Bay and King and Hazel and Broad streets.

The reports of an advance movement in Kentucky are confirmed by a despatch from Indianapolis, which asserts that Green River Bridge is now in the possession of our forces, and that Buckner will soon be attacked.

The proclamation of Gen. Phelps, after he landed at Ship Island, is reported to have created much dissatisfaction among the officers and soldiers under his command. It differs so much from all the proclamations formerly issued by Union commanders that it is scarcely probable it was authorized by the Administration.

Tybee Island is being strongly fortified by our troops. The report that Fort Pulaski has been abandoned is no doubt untrue, but it will probably soon be attacked.

The news from Missouri is of an exciting character. It appears that Federal scouts having brought intelligence that Gen. Price was making forced marches to form a junction with the rebel Generals Rains and Stein, who are now in Lexington, Gen. Pope placed himself at the head of all the Union troops in central Missouri, and marched forward to cut off Price. An important engagement is expected, in which it is hoped our troops will be victorious, as great confidence is felt in Gen. Pope and his army.

An encounter is reported to have already occurred between the opposing armies on the south bank of Green river, opposite Mumfordsville, Kentucky, in which a rebel colonel and thirty-three of his men were killed by the Union forces.

No Surrender.

An old proverb truly tells us that "A misdoing owned is a misdoing atoned." Only obstinate and foolish people persist in declining to acknowledge that they did wrong, in the face of proof against them. There is something noble and frank in freely admitting an error of judgment or of action. Hence, if, as a nation, we *had* done wrong to England, it would not be below our dignity to acknowledge it, and, if necessary, to make all reasonable reparation for it. The fact that the demand for such acknowledgment and reparation had been offensively made, with a mixture of bluster and threat, would not nullify the justice and propriety of giving both.

Hence, waiving the imperious and (so far as we can yet judge) insulting manner in which England has taken up the capture of JEFF DAVIS' rebel Ambassadors, were that capture unjust or illegal, it would be proper to acknowledge the fault. But, when the very highest jurists in England have ruled, in like cases, that such action was entirely lawful, it is clear that Captain WILKES has merited well of his country—has deserved the thanks given to him by the Secretary of the Navy, by Congress, and surely we may add, by the mass of his countrymen.

It is wholly impossible, therefore, that Messrs. MASON and SLIDELL can be replaced under the protection of the British flag. They were lawfully arrested, and are legitimate prisoners of war. Rather than give them up, which would involve, to a large degree, the surrender of the national honor, we are bound to accept the alternative of contest with England. Let it be remembered that PALMERSTON and RUSSELL (Queen VICTORIA, poor woman, is a nobody here, though her name is used,) force upon us this resort to the argument of force—rarely used save when, as now, the force of argument is against those who, like England, take the offensive position.

HOLIDAY PRESENTS.—For some months past, as we stated several weeks ago, the well-known house of William Wilson and Son has been busily engaged in manufacturing varieties of plain and fancy silver-ware, calculating on a great demand at the present season, when every person is presenting a holiday gift to every other person. They are now much occupied in selling, and certainly the beautiful show of plate in their store would make even a miser open his heart and purse. Their store is at the corner of Fifth and Cherry streets.

MRS. SOUTHWORTH'S NEW NOVEL.—In a few days, we understand, Peterson and Brothers will publish a new work of fiction by many-initialed Mrs. Southworth. We cannot criticise a book without having seen it, but believe that the scene of "Hickory Hall; or, the Outcast," is in the mountains of Virginia, a locality now well known, because of the war in its vicinity.

THE EUROPEAN MAIL.—The steamship *Africa* will not sail until Thursday afternoon. Her mail will close in this city at 9 o'clock this evening. It is probable that the *Europa's* mail will reach the city this morning by the 11 o'clock train from New York. Her correspondence can be answered in time to be forwarded by the *Africa*.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.—From W. B. Zieber, *Eclectic Magazine*; and No. 23 of *The Pulpit and Rostrum*. From T. B. Peterson, *War and Emancipation*, a Thanksgiving Sermon by Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, and *Authentic Exposition of the K. G. C.* (Knights of the Golden Circle,) a history of Secession, from 1834 to 1861, by a Member of the Order. From J. B. Lippincott & Co., *The Army Officer's Pocket Companion and Manual for Staff Officers in the Field*. It contains much of Col. de Rouvre's French book, adapted to our service, and is admirably indexed.

THOMAS & SONS' SALES THIS WEEK.—Books, this (Wednesday) afternoon—the valuable private library of the late William Smith, Esq. Furniture, Thursday, at the auction store. Elegant furniture, on Friday, at Germantown. Ladies' superior Cloaks, on Saturday—the extensive stock of Messrs. Carl Peters & Co., Tenth and Chestnut streets—sale absolute. See catalogues and advertisements of the four sales.

SALE OF FANCY GOODS, &c.—The sale of fine French bronzes, Birquet figures and vases, Amarino ornaments, &c., takes place this Wednesday morning at 10½ o'clock, at the store, 1307 Chestnut street. The invoice is of Messrs. Viti & Sons' importation and well adapted to the present season.

LARGE SALE OF FINE FURS.—Particular attention is invited to the very attractive assortment of fine mink, squirrel, sable, and fitch furs, to be sold at auction, by N. F. Pancoast, at sales room, 431 Chestnut street, on Thursday morning, Dec. 19, at 10 o'clock. Furs will be arranged for examination early on the morning of sale.

WALNUT-STREET THEATRE.—Miss Alice Placide Mann—a niece, by the way, of our District Attorney—appears at the Walnut this evening, and takes a benefit. She has evinced unusual merit, and will doubtless rise to considerable eminence in her profession. With youth, merit, and ambition, Miss Mann cannot fail of success. The bill for this evening is a good one.

New Government Transport.

NEW YORK, Dec. 17.—The Belgium steamer *Gustav Pastor* has been chartered by the Government for three months. She goes to Boston to take aboard troops.

LETTER FROM "OCCASIONAL."

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17, 1861.

It is well, in this hour of national gloom and peril, to recall to the people and all their public servants the great objects of the present struggle for the preservation of our Government and the maintenance of our Constitution. To this end, the republication of the two important and solemn resolutions of the Houses of Congress, in July last, is deemed opportune. It will be borne in mind that the whole action of the President, and of every member of his Cabinet, has conformed to these comprehensive and explicit pledges; and until they are repealed by the high authorities that proclaimed them, and the public agents that have carried them out in good faith, they must stand as the platform of the Administration and the army in the management and prosecution of the war:

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES.

[Submitted July 22, 1861.]

Mr. Crittenden submitted the following resolution, viz:

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States, That the present deplorable civil war has been forced upon the country by the disunionists of the Southern States, now in arms against the Constitutional Government, and in arms around the capital; that in this national emergency, Congress, banishing all feelings of mere passion or resentment, will recollect only its duty to the whole country; that this war is not waged on their part in any spirit of oppression, or for any purpose of conquest or subjugation, or purpose of overthrowing or interfering with the rights or established institutions of those States, but to defend and maintain the *supremacy* of the Constitution, and to preserve the Union with all the dignity, equality, and rights of the several States unimpaired; and that as soon as these objects are accomplished the war ought to cease.

On the first branch of the resolution the vote was—

YEAS—Messrs. Aldrich, Allen, Alley, Ashley, Babbitt, Bailey, Baily, Baker, Baxter, Beaman, Bingham, Blair (Mo.), Blair (Penna.), Blake, Buffinton, Calvert, Campbell, Chamberlin, Clark, Cobb, Colfax, Conkling F. A., Conkling R., Conway, Cox, Crittenden, Curtis, Cutler, Davis, Dawes, Delano, Delaplaine, Diven, Duell, Dunlap, Dunn, Edgerton, Edwards, English, Fenton, Fessenden, Franchot, Frank, Gooch, Granger, Grider, Gurley, Haight, Hale, Harding, Harrison, Holman, Horton, Hutchins, Jackson, Julian, Kelley, Kellogg (Ill.), Killinger, Lansing, Law, Leary, Lehman, Loomis, Lovejoy, McClernand, McKean, Mallory, Menzies, Moorhead, Morrill (Me.), Morrill (Vt.), Morris, Nixon, Noble, Nugen, Odell, Olin, Patton, Pendleton, Perry, Pike, Pomeroy, Porter, Potter, Rice (Mass.), Rice (Me.), Riddle, Rollins (N. H.), Rollins (Mo.), Sheffield, Shellabarger, Sherman, Sloan, Smith, Spaulding, Steele (N. Y.), Steele (N. J.), Stratton, Thomas (Md.), Train, Trowbridge, Upton, Vandever, Van Valkenburg, Van Wyck, Verree, Vibbard, Wadsworth, Walton (Me.), Walton (Vt.), Ward, Webster, Wheeler, Whaley, White (Ind.), White (Ohio), Wickliffe, Windom, Woodruff, Worcester, Wright—121.

NAYS—Messrs. Burnett and Reid—2.

On the second branch of the resolution the vote was—

YEAS—Messrs. Aldrich, Allen, Alley, Babbitt, Bailey, Baily, Baxter, Beaman, Blair (Missouri), Blair (Pennsylvania), Blake, Browne, Buffinton, Calvert, Campbell, Chamberlin, Clark, Cobb, Colfax, Conkling, F. A., Conkling, Roscoe, Cooper, Corning, Cox, Crittenden, Curtis, Cutler, Dawes, Delano, Diven, Duell, Dunlap, Dunn, Edwards, English, Fenton, Fessenden, Fouke, Franchot, Frank, Gooch, Granger, Grider, Gurley, Haight, Hale, Harding, Harrison, Holman, Horton, Jackson, Johnson, Kelley, Kellogg, (Ill.), Killinger, Law, Lazear, Leary, Lehman, Logan, Loomis, McClernand, Mallory, Menzies, Mitchell, Moorhead, Morrill (Me), Morrill (Vt.), Morris, Nixon, Noble, Nugen, Odell, Olin, Patton, Pendleton, Perry, Pike, Pomeroy, Porter, Reid, Rice (Mass.), Rice (Me.), Richardson, Robinson, Rollins (N. H.), Rollins (Mo.), Sheffield, Shellabarger, Sherman, Smith, Spaulding, Steele (N. Y.), Steele (N. J.), Stratton, Thomas (Md.), Train, Trowbridge, Upton, Vallandigham, Van Horn, Van Valkenburgh, Van Wyck, Verree, Vibbard, Wadsworth, Walton (Me.), Walton (Vt.), Ward, Webster, Wheeler, Whaley, White (Ind.), White (Ohio), Wickliffe, Windom, Woodruff, Worcester, Wright—119.

NAYS—Messrs. Potter and Riddle—2.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JULY 24, 1861.—Mr. Johnson, of Tennessee, submitted the following resolution:

Resolved, That the present deplorable civil war has been forced upon the country by the Disunionists of the Southern States now in revolt against constitutional government and in arms around the capital; that in this national emergency, Congress, banishing all feeling of mere passion or resentment, will recollect only its duty to the whole country; that this war is not prosecuted upon our part in any spirit of oppression, nor for any purpose of conquest or subjugation, nor purpose of overthrowing or interfering with the rights or established institutions of those States, but to defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution and all laws made in pursuance thereof, and to preserve the Union, with all the dignity, equality, and rights of the several States unimpaired; that as soon as these objects are accomplished the war ought to cease.

Adopted by the following vote:

YEAS—Messrs. Anthony, Browning, Chandler, Clark, Cowan, Dixon, Doolittle, Fessenden, Foote, Foster, Grimes, Harlan, Harris, Howe, Johnson (Tennessee), Kennedy, King, Lane (Indiana), Lane (Kansas), Latham, Morrill, Nesmith, Pomeroy, Saulsbury, Sherman, Ten Eyck, Wade, Wilkinson, Willey, and Wilson—30.

NAYS—Messrs. Breckinridge, Johnson (Missouri), Polk, Powell, and Trumbull—5.

You will observe that but one Republican vote in the Senate, and but two votes in all the House, were thrown against these resolutions. I need not enlarge upon the thoughts they suggest and the duties they impose upon all true friends of the Union and the Constitution. OCCASIONAL.

The Defences of Philadelphia.

HARRISBURG, Dec. 17.—The news by the last arrival from Europe created a sensation here, but the universal sentiment is to let the Government do exact justice, and nothing more nor less, and, if war comes, the President will be enthusiastically sustained.

The subject of the defences of Philadelphia is being urged upon the National Government by Governor Curtin. He is also actively engaged in preparing arms for the State defence. The subject is occupying the attention of the authorities, and all proper steps will be taken to insure the safety of the State.

The subject will be presented to the Legislature immediately upon its convening, and no alarm need be felt for the safety of Philadelphia and the lake shore, as Governor Curtin is prepared for every emergency.

Colonel Wynkoop's Cavalry, over 1,000 strong, will leave for Kentucky to-morrow.

Prof. McCoy will repeat his lecture on the London *Times* and the war for the Constitution to-morrow evening.

From New Mexico.

AN INDIAN MASSACRE.

KANSAS CITY, Dec. 17.—The Santa Fe and Canon City mail, with dates to the 2d inst., arrived here on Sunday morning.

One hundred and fifty militia called for by Gov. Connelly from the Second division, Major General Hovey, have been organized and one company mustered into service.

This mail brings intelligence of a horrible massacre at Fort Stanton. On the approach of the Texans to that post in the summer, all the citizens in the vicinity fled to settlements, leaving their homes, their crops, and everything else behind. After the Texans abandoned the place, the Apache Indians took possession, and had command of all the country around.

In the fall a party, numbering twenty men, determined to revisit the neighborhood and obtain what they could of their remaining crops, when the whole number fell into the hands of the savages and were brutally murdered.

All is quiet at this place.

Colonel Weir, of the Fourth Kansas Regiment, is in command. Colonel Jennison's Arkansas Cavalry, with a part of the Seventh and Iowa Twelfth, and also a section of Totten's battery, encamped within a few miles of this place last night, and will move towards West Point this morning.

From the Upper Potomac.

FREDERICK, Md., Dec. 17.—Advices from the upper commands on the river line report all quiet last night. A rumor existed at Williamsport that Jackson was about to march his force to the river at some point between Harper's Ferry and Hancock, but it could not be traced to any authentic source, and consequently was entitled to little or no credence.

Fatal Accident at Trenton.

TRENTON, Dec. 17.—The midnight train from New York last night brought on a number of companies attached to General Meagher's brigade. While at the Trenton depot a number got out to fill their canteens, and when the train started there was a rush to get on board. Martin Collins, of Company D, Fourth Regiment, fell between the cars, and had both legs crushed, rendering amputation necessary. He has since died. Michael O'Neal, of Company E, Fourth Regiment, was badly jammed and internally injured. Both were left here. Two others were slightly hurt, but taken on.

Hatteras Prisoners to be Released.

BOSTON, Dec. 17.—The bark *Island City* sailed to-day, with 250 of the Hatteras prisoners, for Fortress Monroe, to be exchanged for Federal prisoners now in prison at Richmond.

The Gunboat Monticello Spoken.

NEW YORK, Dec. 17.—Spoken, on the 6th inst., 30 miles south of Hatteras, the gunboat *Monticello*. Nov. 20th, lat. 22 deg., long. 53 15, gunboat *Shepherd Knapp*.

Wreck of the Schooner Wave, of Philadelphia.

HALIFAX, Dec. 16.—The schooner *Wave*, from Philadelphia for Newfoundland, has been wrecked, under suspicious circumstances, and a part of her cargo brought here in a damaged condition. The remainder of the cargo, it is expected, will be brought here.

The Kentucky Legislature.

FRANKFORT, Dec. 17.—The Select Committee has reported a resolution to expel Representatives Elliott, Mattherson, Merrett, Ewing, Silverworth, Gilbert, Boone, and King, for aiding in the rebellion.

Bank Meeting in New York.

RESOLUTION NOT TO SUSPEND SPECIE PAYMENT.

NEW YORK, Dec. 17.—At the meeting of the bank presidents, to-day, the propriety of a suspension of specie payment was debated, and a resolution was adopted not to suspend.

LATEST NEWS BY TELEGRAPH.

FROM WASHINGTON.

THE PROCEEDINGS OF CONGRESS.

THE VAN WYCK COMMITTEE MAKE THEIR REPORT.

A Reconnoissance from General Heintzelman's Division.

AN IMPRUDENT LIEUTENANT.

MORE BATTERIES DISCOVERED ON THE POTOMAC.

THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE SUMPTER.

CONTRABANDS COMING INTO GENERAL McCALL'S CAMP.

IMPORTANT FROM MISSOURI.

GENERAL PRICE REPORTED TO BE MARCHING ON LEXINGTON.

GEN. POPE ON THE MARCH TO CUT HIM OFF.

LATEST FROM KENTUCKY.

POSITION OF THE UNION FORCES.

Whereabouts of Zollicoffer.

FIGHT OPPOSITE MUMFORDVILLE.

REBELS DEFEATED, WITH HEAVY LOSS.

Special Despatches to "The Press."

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17, 1861.

From General Heintzleman's Command—A Reconnoissance—An Indiscreet Lieutenant Dangerously Wounded.

A reconnoissance was made to-day by a squadron of the First New Jersey cavalry, belonging to Gen. HEINTZLEMAN's division, under command of Captain SHELLMIRE.

A portion of the squadron commanded by Lieutenant JANEVILLE, of Company L, of Jersey City, was ordered to proceed to the Bone Mills to the left of Springfield Station on the Orange and Alexandria railroad, seven miles from the headquarters of General HEINTZLEMAN. The company there halted, when the Lieutenant, accompanied by an orderly, proceeded two miles beyond. On attempting to return, they found themselves surrounded by a body of rebel infantry. The Lieutenant was shot in six places, and the horse of the orderly was killed. The orderly made his escape.

The company in reserve, hearing the firing, proceeded to render assistance, and on its approach the enemy fled, leaving the lieutenant behind after robbing him of his small arms and nearly all his clothing. He was brought into camp, and was still alive at eight o'clock to-night.

A man came within General HEINTZLEMAN's lines to-day who left Alexandria in July for more distant Southern quarters. He stated that he had been living at Charlottesville for some time; that no rebel troops had recently gone South from the army of the Potomac, but during the last three weeks two Georgian regiments had been added to it; that the sickness in the army is great, the average from Manassas and Centreville being a car-load of invalids a day conveyed to the hospitals at Charlottesville; that he made three attempts to pass the rebel lines before he succeeded in making his escape, being obliged to take to the woods in order to avoid skirmishing parties.

Contrabands.

This morning the cavalry pickets from General McCALL's division brought in ten colored persons, who placed themselves in their hands for protection. The party consisted of four able-bodied men, three women, and several small children, one of them being carried on the back of a stalwart Ethiopian. They attracted much attention as they passed through the camp grounds to General McCALL's headquarters, where they were delivered up to be properly disposed of.

A Sham Fight.

A very successful and effective sham fight took place to-day on Turner's Hill, Virginia. General MORELL's brigade, with artillery and cavalry, marched out to a large field, where they went through the details of a sham fight and the manœuvring of a battle. The charge of the cavalry, the roar of artillery, and the sharp reports of the infantry, altogether made quite a splendid and exciting scene. There were quite a large number of spectators present, who watched with interest the different evolutions.

The Pirate Sumpter.

Intelligence has been received at the Navy Department in relation to the overhauling of the ship *Montmorencie*, of Bath, Maine, on the 25th ult., by the pirate *Sumpter*, in lat. 30.30 north, long. 58.40 west. She was last from Wales, loaded with coal, for the British Mail Steam Company at St. Thomas. The ship was ransomed by the payment of $20,000, and allowed to proceed, after taking a quantity of paints and other ship stores from her.

Affairs on the Lower Potomac.

The steamer *Reliance* came up from the Potomac flotilla yesterday, and reports that two new rebel batteries have been erected above those heretofore reported. One of them is nearly opposite the station of the flotilla, at Indian Head, and the other nearly opposite the mouth of the Matawoman creek. At both, heavy guns are evidently mounted, as they throw shot over upon the Maryland shore.

The tug *Pusey* left Indian Head last night, and reached the navy yard early this morning. When she left, the *Harriet Lane* and *Yankee* were near Indian Head, the *Anacosta*, *Resolute*, *Reliance*, *Jacob Bell*, *Stepping Stones*, *Murray*, and *Herbert*, were between the new batteries above mentioned and the station of the steamer *Page*, in Quantico creek. The *Union*, *Freeborn*, and *Satellite*, are below Quantico creek. The *Reliance* was to have run the blockade last night.

Much activity prevails at the navy yard, and during last week, four steamers, the *Yankee*, *Cœur de Leon*, *Stepping Stones*, *and Leslie*, were sent out thoroughly refitted. The repairs upon the *Wyandank* will be completed to-day.

Projectiles are being manufactured rapidly. A monster gun, just finished, weighing 15,099 pounds, has been mounted in the practice battery, and was fired for the first time this morning. The projectile used was the Dahlgren conical percussion shell, weighing about one hundred and thirty pounds; and the first shot, with a moderate charge of powder, was an excellent range shot, and hit a little out of line of the target. The nominal weight of the projectile for this gun is one hundred and fifty pounds.

Secretary Seward's Foresight.

The present aspect of our relations with England recalls the admirable letter of Secretary SEWARD to the Governors of the different States, advising them of the importance of making immediate preparations for the fortification of their respective coasts and harbors. This letter appeared more than two months ago, and wherever acted upon, as in the case of Maine, proved to be a most timely and valuable admonition. Whatever may be the issue of the new complication with England, immediate steps should be taken by the authorities of Pennsylvania and the authorities of Philadelphia to look carefully to the protection of all the approaches to your great city, and to other salient points along your borders. I understand that a resolution or bill will pass the House at an early day, appealing to the Governors of the different States in the spirit of Mr. SEWARD's circular letter.

Col. Baxter's Fire Zouaves.

This regiment is composed of a splendid body of men, the pick of the firemen of Philadelphia. They are the most generally educated men in the field, and their gifted colonel may well feel proud of his regiment. Wherever they go all are struck with their soldierly bearing. Those who have witnessed their battalion drills and heard the music of Prosser's band, will remember with pleasure the exactness and perfection of the men's movements, nor fail to notice the importance of a good band in perfecting the men in marching. Col. Baxter had much experience as a drill officer. The colonel himself is an old soldier, having seen service in Mexico. A company of Sappers and Miners attached to this regiment have been very useful to the brigade, in constructing hospitals and other buildings for the brigade.

Colonel Owen's "Irish Regulars."

Colonel OWEN's has had the hardest work of all the colonels. The universal wonder is how he manages to control his "Irish Regulars," as they are generally and very properly called, so well. The discipline of his camp is good and the men move well. They go through the evolutions of the battalion and of the line as well as any of the regiments except BAXTER's. But when it comes to hard fighting this regiment will rank among the very best.

Colonel Kerrigan's Regiment.

Colonel KERRIGAN had command of one of the finest regiments in the army of the Potomac. They are in General PORTER's division, and are encamped a mile beyond Ball's Cross Roads, in the vicinity of Hall's Hill. They were out yesterday in the full brigade, and it was remarked by officers and citizens that the precision of their movements was unsurpassed by any regiment in the division. The evolutions of the whole brigade were of a superior order, but KERRIGAN's Regiment carried off the palm. They are individually a fine set of fellows, and are worthy of a colonel whose sympathies are above suspicion.

General Burns' Brigade—From the Upper Potomac.

The Third Brigade Corps of Observation, commanded by General WILLIAM W. BURNS, and composed of regiments mostly recruited in Philadelphia, and lately commanded by Colonel EDWARD D. BAKER, deceased, is rapidly improving in efficiency. There is not in the service a finer body of men, robust, intelligent, and full of ardor, and the officers are all desirous and capable of acquiring military knowledge. The regiment was fast improving under Colonel BAKER, and since his lamented death, having been fortunate enough to have placed over them a regular army officer, they have continued to improve, and are now ready to march wherever they may be needed.

The California Regiment.

The California Regiment, or more properly the 71st Pennsylvania Volunteers, is gradually recovering from the effects of the Ball's Bluff disaster. The wonder is that it did not become completely demoralized. As soon as Col. WISTAR, the present colonel of the regiment, recovers from his severe wounds, and we understand that he is fast recovering, the regiment will resume its former rank as one of the best in the field.

Col. Morehead's Regiment.

This regiment is not quite so large as some of the others, but it is fast becoming quite expert in discipline. The men are all of the right stamp to make good soldiers.

Hon. Wm. A. Richardson, of Illinois.

It is understood that the Hon. WM. A. RICHARDSON will accept the post of brigadier general, conferred upon him by the President, and enter upon its duties the moment his active services may be required in the field.

Arms for the Army and Navy.

In order to set at rest the apprehensions of those who speculate upon the damage that will be done to the good cause on account of the prohibition of all exports of arms from Great Britain, it is only necessary to say that few or no orders have been sent for British muskets, rifles, cannon, or military munitions. The Government a long time ago availed itself of supplies from other and more friendly sources.

Our Consul to Bayonne.

WILLIAM MORAN, Esq., of Philadelphia, lately appointed United States consul to Bayonne, received his final instructions to-day, from the State Department, and will soon leave for Europe.

Reception at the White House.

The President's public reception to-night was largely attended, and many distinguished gentlemen were present.

The Kerrigan Court Martial.

In the Kerrigan court-martial case to-day, the examination was principally with regard to the reinstating of a deserter without a trial and the alleged drunkenness of the Colonel on the march from Ball's Cross Roads to Upton's Hill. Further proceedings were postponed till Thursday.

The case of Colonel HALSTED, of the First New Jersey Cavalry, for alleged malfeasance in office, will be brought before the same court to-morrow.

THE EUROPA AT BOSTON.

DESPATCH OF A BRITISH WAR STEAMER FROM HALIFAX.

The Queen's Messenger on his Route to Washington.

DESPATCHES FROM THE AMERICAN MINISTER.

BOSTON, Dec. 17.—The *Europa* arrived here at four o'clock this afternoon.

Within thirty minutes after the *Europa* touched at Halifax, the British steam sloop-of-war *Rinaldo* got up steam and left, it is supposed, in pursuance of orders from the Queen's messenger, to communicate with the admiral of the British North American squadron.

The Sixty-second and Sixty-third British regiments are under orders for Canada.

Capt. Seymour, the Queen's messenger, and also a special messenger from Mr. Adams, the American Minister, left Boston, this afternoon, direct for Washington.

The European mails and papers will reach Philadelphia to-morrow afternoon.

FURTHER FROM BEAUFORT.

THE STONE FLEET IN CHARLESTON HARBOR.

EXPEDITION TO FERNANDINA, FLORIDA.

NEW YORK, Dec. 17.—A private letter from Beaufort says the stone fleet had sailed from Savannah for Charleston, in company with a man-of-war.

The ships were to be sunk in Charleston harbor on Saturday last.

Tybee Island is occupied by 1,000 Federal troops, who are to throw up batteries for use against Fort Pulaski if necessary.

The sloop-of-war *Savannah* and three or four gunboats were off Tybee Island.

The steamer *Baltic*, with 1,000 troops, had left Port Royal for Fernandina, accompanied by the *Bienville* and another gunboat. The rebel fortification there consisted of five guns, manned by from 200 to 300 men. It was believed that it would fall into our hands after a brief struggle.

FROM MISSOURI.

GEN. POPE IN PURSUIT OF THE REBEL ARMY.

TIPTON, Mo., December 16—[Correspondence of the St. Louis *Democrat*.]—Yesterday, orders were received here for all the forces at this post to hold themselves in readiness to march at a moment's notice. At the same time, General Pope, commanding the Department of Central Missouri, at the head of nearly all the troops in winter quarters at Otterville, marched westward towards Warrensburg, for the purpose, as was generally believed here, of cutting off General Price, who, our scouts reported, was making forced marches to reach the rebel force under Generals Rains and Stein, now in the entrenchments at Lexington. Every one is on the qui vive for startling and good news, as universal confidence is felt in the ability and bravery of General Pope and his army.

LEAVENWORTH, December 17.—Advices from Mound City to the 14th mention that a foray had been made by a party of two hundred rebels near Potosi, Lynn county. Twenty houses were pillaged and one man killed. Colonel Montgomery had gone in pursuit of the marauders.

It was believed at Mound City that none of General Price's forces had crossed the Osage river.

THE WAR IN KENTUCKY.

A FIGHT OPPOSITE MUMFORDVILLE.

UNION FORCES VICTORIOUS.

THIRTY-THREE REBELS KILLED, AND FIFTY WOUNDED.

FEDERAL FORCES CROSSING GREEN RIVER.

CINCINNATI, Dec. 17.—A special despatch from Frankfort says:

Five rebel officers and soldiers, captured some days ago in Tennessee by a party of Unionists from Whitely county, Kentucky, passed through this city to-day, on route for Louisville.

A letter from a prominent officer at Mumfordsville says Generals McCook, Johnson, Wood, and Rousseau's commands rested on the northern bank of Green river on Sunday.

A letter from Lebanon says General Thomas' division is making rapid preparations and will leave in a few days.

There are many rumors about the movement of the enemy below, but there is nothing reliable.

General Nelson's division was encamped on Muldraugh's Hill, on the old Nashville turnpike, on Sunday, in fine order and spirits.

A private letter, dated Somerset, Sunday night, reports the capture of the negro servant of a rebel officer as he was about taking provisions to the rebel pickets. He says Zollicoffer has 6,000 men on this side of the river, and 2,000 on the other side. He is fortifying both sides with a purpose of wintering on its banks.

It is rumored at Somerset that a hundred rebel cavalry has surprised a portion of Colonel Hazzard's regiment, killing a few, and capturing several of our troops. Hazzard's camp is fifteen miles from Columbia.

If Frankfort is a fair index of Kentucky sentiment, this State will give a prompt and cordial support to the Government in refusing to surrender Mason and Slidell.

Fight Opposite Mumfordsville.

LOUISVILLE, December 17.—Four companies of Colonel Willich's German Regiment, were attacked this afternoon on the south bank of the Green river, opposite Mumfordsville, by Colonel Torry's Regiment of Texas Rangers, two regiments of infantry, and six pieces of artillery.

Colonel Willich was reinforced, and drove the rebels back, with a loss of thirty-three killed, including Colonel Torry, and fifty wounded.

The Federal loss was eight privates and a lieutenant killed, and sixteen wounded.

The *Democrat* has advices that the Federal troops were crossing Green river, southward, all day, with great rapidity.

The *Democrat* has also a business letter, dated Somerset on Monday, which mentions no engagement in that vicinity.

The Twelfth Kentucky Regiment, Col. Hoskins, is entrenched two miles south of Somerset.

All was quiet in the vicinity of Campbellsville up to the 16th.

XXXVIIth CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION.

WASHINGTON, December 17, 1861.

SENATE.

A bill from the House was received to authorize the raising of a volunteer force for the defence of Kentucky.

On motion of Mr. POWELL, of Kentucky, it was referred to the Military Committee.

Mr. SUMNER, of Massachusetts, presented several petitions for the emancipation of the slaves of rebels.

Mr. WILSON reported a bill to increase the number of cadets at West Point.

Mr. FOOT, of Vermont, offered a resolution that the Commissioner of Public Buildings inform the Senate by what authority a portion of the National Capitol has been converted into a bakery. Agreed to.

Mr. SUMNER offered a resolution that the Committee on Military Affairs be instructed to inquire into the expediency of providing by legislation that the army shall not be employed to surrender fugitive slaves. Laid over.

Mr. LATHAM, of California, offered a resolution that the Secretary of War be requested to inform the Senate by virtue of what law, and for what reasons passports are required from passengers going from New York to San Francisco. Agreed to.

Mr. SHERMAN, of Ohio, offered a resolution that the Secretary of War be requested to furnish the Senate with a copy of all correspondence between General Scott and General Patterson. Agreed to.

Mr. SUMNER introduced a bill in relation to claims for French spoliations.

Mr. LANE, of Kansas, called up the resolution that the Secretary of War be requested to furnish the Senate a copy of the orders for the erection of barracks for the Kansas troops.

Mr. LANE said he had a right to criticise fairly the acts of the Government, and should exercise the right. It was time the truth was told in the halls of Congress. He had confidence in the Administration. But that great and glorious army now assembled to battle for the Union should not be suffered to go into an inglorious burial in winter quarters without one blow being struck. If it is, this subtle confidence is misplaced, and such a fact would be like a fire-bell at midnight. Why is the army kept in inactivity? The army is composed of volunteers, and inaction is a bane to volunteers. The troops who won the battle of Buena Vista were not so well drilled as the troops on the Potomac. Our troops are superior to the rebels in the open field, and were sufficiently efficient. Why then do we tarry? If Washington could march troops with bleeding feet over the frozen hills of New Jersey, could not the present army march South? The occupation of the rebel States by the army is a military necessity. If we wait till the rebels are exhausted, the people of the country will lose confidence in their leaders long before the time of exhaustion comes. We cannot expect the loyal people in the South to show their loyalty till they have our protection. We must advance the army into the rebel States and whip somebody; then they will come out by thousands. He contended that the Government should take possession of the slaves, and the masters, in their desire to recover them, would bow down in submission even to Abraham Lincoln. The cause demands an advance. Let the future lessons to the army be taught in the field. Then the Government will be safe and freedom triumphant.

Mr. CARLILE, of Virginia, said he was convinced that the people of the country and the President had made a great mistake in not having appointed the Senator from Kansas commander-in-chief to lead their armies. It was very easy to criticise military movements on the floor of Congress. He was surprised to hear the Senator say that twenty millions of loyal people are not able to contend with the rebels without the aid of 4,000,000 of slaves. Mr. Carlile continued at some length, and said that this was a war for constitutional rights of the people of any State. The rebellion had its origin outside of slavery, and this war is not an inhuman crusade against liberty. If the army is turned into negro-catchers, it would dissolve like snow. He would not violate the guarantees of the Constitution. He was willing to trust the President. He supposed he had come here to take constitutional measures to restore the Union, yet he was obliged to listen to the anti-slavery speeches of men working simply for party. If the Senators from the free States do as much as the loyal citizens in the rebel States to correct the crazy notions which have produced this rebellion, and bring about a good feeling, then peace would come back to every part of this distracted country.

Mr. FOSTER, of Connecticut, asked, as a question of privilege, that the contested seat of the Senator from Kansas be taken up. He claimed that this was a privileged question, and moved that the other subject be postponed. Disagreed to.

Mr. LANE, of Kansas, said if we are deterred from fighting a battle simply for fear of defeat, then the Government will fail. We must fight to gain victory before England sends her navy or army upon us. Victory is what we want. He was astonished to hear a loyal Senator charge that the cause of rebellion was the slavery agitation. This war was instituted because the slave oligarchy could not steal territory for its expansion. No one had urged that the war was to be waged against slavery. It was a war against the rebellion, and let slavery take care of itself. If the war was to be waged without any idea of freedom, he feared for the result. There would be nothing to excite enthusiasm.

Mr. CARLILLE asked if the question of the preservation of the Union was less calculated to excite enthusiasm than a crusade against slavery?

Mr. LANE said he could never have a proper enthusiasm so long as the war was without a purpose. He would wage the war to crush out the rebellion, and let such an emanation from hell as the institution of slavery take care of itself, and if it perish, let it perish, and freedom smile.

Mr. McDOUGALL, of California, opposed the resolution. He protested against bringing into Congress subjects not calculated to further the great interests of the country.

Mr. GRIMES, of Iowa, moved to lay the resolution on the table. Agreed to.

Mr. WILSON, of Massachusetts, reported back from the Military Committee a bill to provide for allotments among the volunteer forces, with a substitute, which was passed.

Mr. FOSTER, of Connecticut, moved to take up the case of the contested seat of the Senator from Kansas. Agreed to.

The subject was postponed till to-morrow, and the Chair announced as a committee on the part of the Senate, to investigate into the general conduct of the war, Messrs. Wade, Chandler, and Johnson (Tenn).

The resolution from the House in regard to the adjournment over the holidays was laid on the table.

The Senate then went into executive session, and subsequently adjourned.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Mr. BINGHAM, of Ohio, from the Judiciary Committee, reported back the joint resolution directing and requiring the Provost Court, at Alexandria, Va., to retain and safely keep in its custody any property taken as that of persons engaged in or aiding the rebellion against the United States until the further action of Congress touching the same. The resolution was passed.

The House resumed the consideration of the special order, being Mr. Eliot's, of Massachusetts, resolutions proposing the emancipation of the slaves of rebels, &c.

Mr. HARDING, of Kentucky, invoked a calm and patriotic consideration of the subject now before the House. It was with the deepest pain that he witnessed the introduction of the proposition at so early a period in the session, and the attempt to pass it under the operation of the previous question. He thought there was a disposition to exclude all reflection and a refusal to pause in the apparently mad career. But when a disposition was afterward shown to act with deliberation, his hopes revived. He proceeded to elaborate the following points of his opposition to the pending resolutions:

First. We have no constitutional power to pass them, or any bills or resolutions on the subject.

Second. That Congress, the President, and the Administration stand pledged in the most public and solemn manner against all interference with slavery, as he proceeded to show from copious extracts; therefore to sanction such a policy would be a palpable violation of the plighted faith of this Government.

Third. He opposed the resolutions, because legislation on the subject is forbidden by every principle of sound policy.

Fourth. He opposed them and all kindred measures because they would inaugurate a war which would involve in its horrors the loyal and disloyal, the innocent and the guilty; a warfare disgraceful to any civilized and Christian nation. In the course of his remarks he said that this war has nothing more to do with slavery than with any other institution. Let slavery alone, it will take care of itself. He showed the misfortune of diverting the war from its original design—namely, the restoration of obedience to the Constitution and law, and the preservation of the Union.

Mr. KELLOGG, of Illinois, moved that the resolutions now under consideration, and all those relating to the subject, included in the same special order, be referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. Agreed to—yeas 77, nays 57.

Mr. WASHBURN, of Illinois, from the special committee to inquire into the Government contracts, made a report. He stated that the committee had given the report their unanimous concurrence, with the exception of Mr. Jackson, of Kentucky, who was with the committee for a few days, but was called to Kentucky by a telegraphic despatch, which requested his immediate presence to aid in putting down the rebellion. Mr. Washburn submitted a resolution that five thousand copies of the report, together with the evidence, be printed; also, that ten thousand copies of the report be printed without the evidence, for the use of the House. The resolution was referred to the Committee on Printing.

The following resolutions were submitted by Mr. VAN WYCK, of New York, chairman of the committee:

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Treasury be requested to decline making any further payment to parties interested in the steamboat *Catiline* on account of the charter of that vessel by the United States on the 25th day of April, 1861.

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Treasury be requested to adjust the claim against the Government for the 5,000 Hall carbines purchased through Simon Stevens, Esq., by Gen. J. C. Fremont on the 6th day of August, 1861, and afterwards delivered at the United States Arsenal, at the city of St. Louis, on the basis of a sale of the said arms to the Government for $12.50 each, rejecting all other demands against the Government on account of the purchase of said arms.

Resolved, That the practice of employing irresponsible parties, having no official connection with the Government, in the performance of public duties which may be properly performed by the regular officers of the Government, and of purchasing, by private contract, supplies for the different departments, where open and fair competition might properly be invited by a seasonable advertisement for proposals, is injurious to the public service, and meets the unqualified disapprobation of this House.

The consideration of the report was postponed till Tuesday.

Mr. FENTON, of New York, said he had signed the report, and concurred in what was said, except some of the deductions from the testimony taken in the Western Military Department of St. Louis.

Mr. MORRILL, of Vermont, introduced a bill, which was passed, to suspend the appointment of assessors and collection of the income tax until the 1st of April next.

Mr. STEVENS, from the Committee of Ways and Means, reported a bill making an appropriation for invalid and other pensions, and a bill providing for the payment of consular and diplomatic expenses for the year ending June 30, 1863.

Mr. BLAIR, of Missouri, reported, from the Military Committee, a bill providing for the allotment of pay-certificates among the volunteer forces. The bill was passed.

Mr. COX, of Ohio, from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, reported a bill appropriating $1,000 as full compensation to the owners of the British ship *Perthshire*, in consequence of her detention by the steamer *Massachusetts*, in June last, for a supposed breach of the blockade at Mobile. Mr. Cox referred to the fact that the President, in his message, had recommended this satisfaction. Besides, the papers in the case show it to be a just one. He said the bill was reported in accordance with the recommendations in the President's message, and a letter from Secretary Seward, which he had read, stating that he had examined the facts, and believed that the *Perthshire* was lawfully engaged in commerce on the high seas when seized and detained by the United States steamer *Massachusetts*. She left Mobile for Liverpool, with cotton, on the 31st of May. The blockade began on the 26th of May, but the ship left within the time allowed by the President's proclamation. She was taken back, a distance of two hundred miles, to Pensacola, and there released by the captain of our squadron. The bill reports the damage at $1,000. The amount is inconsiderable, but the prompt action of Congress in awarding it is an earnest to Great Britain that this Government will be as ready to indemnify for a wrong as to defend a right. Our naval officers were as clearly in the wrong in seizing this ship, as they were right in overhauling the *Trent*. In the jealous defence of our maritime rights, our officers may exceed their duty, but the moment it is ascertained, as in this case, the Government takes pride in according satisfaction. It is to be hoped that the action of this House, at least, toward foreign Powers, will show a wise, a just conciliation, without any timid or time-serving submission. While we would not yield an inch to any servile fear or ungenerous compulsion, such as the news threatens us with, it is becoming the dignity of the Republic promptly to remedy wrongs. Thus are we triply armed to demand the prerogatives belonging to our nationality at home and abroad. Great Britain should meet us in this spirit when we demand of her why the steamer *Nashville* has an asylum in her ports without any nationality, and without even the pretence of the barbarous privateering commission; and when within a short distance of her own shores, and bearing an envoy from the rebellious States, Colonel Peyton, she overhauls the *Harvey Birch*, lowers her stars and stripes, irons her crew, and with the red hand of the bucaneer, burns her to the water's edge, and then finds a hospitable haven in Southampton, to be refitted for another outrage with warlike armaments from English storehouses! We should demand to know how it is consistent with England's ill-disguised neutrality to allow such wanton piracy to go without even the forms of adjudication or even a mockery of punishment. Surely, if in this case of the *Nashville*, England should act as the accessory to such an atrocity, she cannot complain that, in the midst of our great national perils, and while the public nerve is acutely sensitive to indignities offered in the time of our trial, we should pursue to the letter, as in the case of the *Trent*, the international code she has herself prescribed. Our justification in that case is that her act was one of hostility, whether it consists in carrying despatches and envoys, or other and worse than contraband on board a neutral ship. It will not do to answer that no case like this has been adjudicated; that no case like this is to be found in the *Lex gentium*. Gen. Cushing, in his recent letter, gives the reason why precedents are not to be found in the geographical relations of European nations. But the principle covering the case is most cogently stated by Phillimore, and other writers, and the English jurisprudent, unless determined to be warped in his judgment by his pride or prejudice, cannot deny the doctrine of Stowell, which would stop, in time of war, on neutral ships, the ambassadors of an enemy, whose Government is not yet an accomplished and recognized fact. It seems to be conceded that this principle would apply to the case of despatches. If so, in a forum of purer reason and enlightened conscience, which makes up the code international, for a stronger reason, it will apply to ambassadors publicly declared, and whose mission is of more importance than battalions of armed men, and whole cargoes of shot, shell, guns and sabres. An ambassador is the creator and provider of these. By his alliance he may win battles and solve revolutions. To give him the protection of the neutral flag in a public vessel is a *casus belli*. To give him the protection of the neutral flag on a private vessel is an act of hostility, an aid of the public enemy, and a seizure and confiscation should follow. The more this question is pondered and examined, the more impregnable is our position. Nor is there anything in our previous diplomacy to weaken this position; which, had I the time, I could demonstrate. It is enough now for us that on this ground we may safely say to England, Fulfil your neutral obligations—you have assumed them voluntarily, and against our protest. Until you do so, you cannot quarrel with us for the exercise of our most indubitable rights. If you insist on belligerent rights between North and South, do not, as a neutral, help the one belligerent to the detriment of the other. This is fraud. In this spirit alone can our relations towards England continue amicable.

We will readily yield her rightful demands, as in this case of the *Perthshire*. We could yield nothing to her arrogance, passion, or pride, when we are clearly in the right. The letter of General Jackson to Mr. Livingston, the original of which was read by the historian, Bancroft, at a meeting at New York, and applied by him to the Disunionists here, may be as appropriately applied to their sympathizers abroad. "The Union must be preserved without blood, if this be possible; but it must be preserved at all hazards, and at any price." So with our honor among the nations. For it is thus in the gigantic conflict of our national existence, that we should avoid the entanglements of a foreign conflict with nations whose material interests, as they think, depend upon our discomfiture, and whose chronic jealousies of our Republic's success have led their rulers to hail such discomfiture with ill-concealed delight. We are too sensitive of foreign opinion.

We naturally dislike to have our Government and institutions misrepresented. We have the spirit of the Spanish motto: "De nic Rei solo yo;" no one shall speak of our king but ourselves. But we can afford to be indifferent to the malignity of foreigners whose moral standard is increased by their commercial loss and gain, and whose compliant neutrality can view a great Christian and kindred nation humiliated without a regret or sympathy, because of its splendid illustration of commercial grandeur and Democratic Government. Let us pursue our duty to our age and country with unruffled composure. Heaven will not desert the undismayed. To despair is to die. Flinging aside the burden of our national woe; lamenting nothing of the past; daring all that is just and constitutional; making no cruel and disastrous diversions from the great object of rescuing our nationality; crushing as we would a nest of adders, those who would divert us from that object to other and ignoble objects, involving fresh diversions, cruel deceptions, social revolutions, servile insurrections, perpetual penalties, and eternal hates; moving one and all, heart, soul, body, men, means, munitions, intelligence, and patriotism, to the one grand object, the restoration of the dismantled Union as it was and ought to be: we may emerge from this strife, and arise like the fabled demigod, from our prostration, more grateful and strong, inspired with a larger measure of power, and a clearer and less ostentatious consciousness of our destiny.

During the debate a colloquy occurred between Mr. Colfax and Mr. Vallandigham. Mr. Colfax, in replying to a remark of Mr. Cox, said he yesterday voted to refer Mr. Vallandigham's resolution justifying Com. Wilkes' conduct because he preferred that whatever was sent out on the subject should emanate from a standing committee of the House, after grave consideration, instead of being impulsively acted upon by the House.

Mr. VALLANDIGHAM said that Mr. Colfax was not so circumspect and explicit on the first day of the session, when he offered a resolution proposing to closely imprison Mr. Mason in retaliation for the treatment of Col. Corcoran. The gentleman had not then heard from England.

Mr. COLFAX further explained the reason why he offered his resolution on the first day of the session, was because Mr. Mason had, as a Senator, taken an oath to support the Constitution and had violated it. He was not only a traitor, but had perjured himself. When we deal with nations it is a different thing.

Mr. VALLANDIGHAM could not perceive why the gentleman was so ready to justify the act of Commodore Wilkes on the first day of the session, but not now. There were no fewer traitors now than at that time. What made the difference?

Mr. COLFAX replied that he was still in favor of meting punishment to traitors.

Mr. VALLANDIGHAM predicted that in less than three months Mason and Slidell will be returned.

Mr. COX hoped the prediction would prove untrue.

Mr. DIVEN, of New York, was for leaving the question with England in the hands of those, on our part, who will conduct the negotiations. It would be conducted with dignity, and a due regard to its honor and interest. Under these circumstances he was willing to risk the chances of war. Two classes would be disappointed by the preservation of peace—namely, those who want a war to give strength to the rebels, and enable them to succeed, and those who have been revelling in the spirit of bravado.

The bill was then passed.

Mr. SEDGWICK, of New York, from the Committee on Naval Affairs, reported a bill which was passed, further to promote the efficiency of the navy by retiring officers, etc.

He also reported a bill authorizing the Secretary of the Navy to construct twenty iron-clad steam gunboats, by contract or otherwise. He stated that each would cost from $500,000 to $580,000.

After a brief debate, the further consideration of the bill was postponed, and the House adjourned.

THE CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY INTO GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

REPORT OF THE VAN WYCK COMMITTEE.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17.—Van Wyck's Select Committee, to inquire into Government contracts, made a report to the House of Representatives, to-day, of their progress. It was presented by Mr. Washburne, of Illinois. The resolutions submitted by the chairman will be found in the Congressional proceedings.

The committee report that they held their sittings in Washington, New York, Boston, New Bedford, St. Louis, Cairo, Chicago, and Harrisburg, and the members have travelled from six to seven thousand miles in the performance of their duties. They have examined two hundred and sixty-five witnesses, and the testimony embraced in the report will cover eleven hundred pages.

The labors of the committee are far from being closed. A large number of transactions at Washington and elsewhere seem to deserve their attention, and, with the approbation of the House, the committee propose to vigorously prosecute their investigations, so long as it may appear that they are demanded by the public interests.

THE STEAMER CATILINE CASE.

Among the first subjects investigated was the charter of the steamer *Catiline*. She was chartered by Col. D. D. Tompkins, assistant quartermaster general of New York, under an order from General Wool. No doubt can be entertained that Col. Tompkins acted in entire good faith, so far as he was connected with the transaction. M. M. Freeman & Co. held as security for the money they had advanced the insurance of $20,000 on the vessel, the notes of several other parties, and the contract with the Government. The contract with the Government is not remarkable for disinterestedness in promoting the national welfare, yet the Government will certainly be satisfied with ordinary fairness and integrity in contracts made on its behalf, even if a willingness to seize upon the public misfortunes for personal aggrandizement is manifest in the transaction. While the Republic has a right to expect it, it cannot compel the unselfish devotion of its citizens.

The provision that the Government should pay $50,000 for a vessel just purchased for $14,000 in the event of her loss by a peril not covered by the insurance is totally indefensible. But the main provision of the contract, while undoubtedly exorbitant, is less to be condemned. The Government was to pay $10,000 per month for the vessel, and that, too, for a period of not less than three months. Colonel Tompkins seems to have paid no attention to the time for which the vessel was chartered. The order of General Wool is silent on the subject. The presence of Captain Comstock at the time the proposition was drawn up would justify the inference that the time, which was a very material feature in the contract, was adjusted between himself and Devlin & Freeman, the other parties thereto.

There is some conflict in the evidence as to what would be a fair price for the charter of the vessel, and especially as to the cost of running her. The latter inquiry is manifestly the most important in its practical results. The committee especially call attention to the arrangement between the Secretary of the Navy and Mr. Morgan, for purchasing vessels for the Government, saying that it is of such a character, whether it be in the stipulated amount received, or in the mode of payment, alike indefensible and reprehensible. That arrangement is a system of commission, usually 2½ per cent. of the purchase money paid for each vessel, and one under which Morgan received as compensation during the period of seven weeks previous to the 6th day of September, (when this testimony was taken,) the enormous sum of $51,584, as admitted by himself before the committee. If he has received the same rate of compensation since as before that date, there must be added to this sum paid him before that date the further commission of $43,424 for services rendered since, *making in all the sum of $95,000 paid to a single individual for his services as agent of the Government since the 15th of July, a period of four months and a half.*

THE PURCHASE OF ARMS.

The committee next devoted themselves to the subject of the purchase of arms. The extraordinary demand for them, resulting from the conspiracy to overthrow the Union, has resulted in extraordinary expenditures, and, exciting the cupidity of large numbers of persons both in Europe and America, has opened up a system of unprecedented speculation. The Government has been the victim of more than one conspiracy, and remarkable combinations have been formed to rob the Treasury.

The profits from the sale of arms to the Government have been enormous, and realized, too, in many instances, by our own citizens, through a system of brokerage as unprincipled and dishonest, and as unfriendly to the success and welfare of the nation, as the plottings of actual treason.

The system adopted at an early moment for the purchase of arms naturally encouraged this result. The Government and the several States entering the market in active and direct competition, stimulated, it is true, to some slight extent and but temporarily, the importation and manufacture of arms, but scarcely compensated for general profligacy in the expenditure of the public treasure and the corruption of the public morals.

Since the adjournment of the extra session of Congress, the War Department is understood to have authorized the several States, and to have recognized the right in the generals commanding the several divisions of the army, to purchase arms to be paid for by the General Government, creating an unwise and ruinous competition against itself without increasing the number of arms in the market.

The committee, after examining into the effect of this system of competition last September, called the attention of the War Department to the subject, and suggested as the only effective remedy that the purchase of arms should be confined to a single bureau, and the several States notified that the General Government would not pay for arms purchased in competition with itself. The committee are informed that this policy has been adopted—a most desirable result—although its earlier adoption would have saved millions to the treasury, and, at the same time, by placing the arms purchased under the control of the Government, would have secured their use at points where the public safety was the most in peril.

Major Hagner, an ordnance officer, who was engaged in the purchase and inspection of arms, testified as follows:

"The agents of Fremont, of the Governors of States, of cities, of Union Defence Committees, of colonels of regiments, and of generals of our army, are all here in New York. I may be in treaty for arms, and the first thing I hear, the arms are sold to some agent. Some of the men who hold the arms, I sometimes think, are disposed not to have a *bonafide* sale. They like to keep the arms in market in order to advance the price. I think they have been gambling in arms just as they do in stocks, etc."

The committee remark that in numerous cases which have come under their observation, the price paid for arms was inexcusably exorbitant. In some instances the arms were worthless, and in others exorbitance in price was coupled with other evidence of a purpose to defraud the Government.

The abuses in the purchase of Austrian and other firearms are noticed, and the testimony appended.

ARMY SUPPLIES.

Next the committee examined into the army supplies. They say, among other things, that either through corrupt motives, or from a want of reasonable prudence, the act of Congress only permitting contracts to be made without advertising for proposals in cases where immediate delivery is required by the public exigency, has been almost a dead letter even in that large class of cases where it might have been properly applied. Immense supplies, both in the Navy, as well as the War Department, the necessity for which, in the ordinary course of things, was easily foreseen, have been purchased privately under contracts, express or implied, without any competition being invited. In one important division of the army, the Western, the law has been almost totally disregarded, and even the responsibility of public officers has, in many cases, been unnecessarily removed, by the employment of irresponsible agents in purchases of large quantities of supplies, even where responsible and experienced and upright public officers were in a position to perform the required duty. A vast amount of supplies have been made on what is called a requisition. In the Western Department, especially, requisitions have taken the place of contracts.

THE PURCHASE OF HORSES AND CATTLE.

The committee say that in the purchase of cattle there is much evidence of gross mismanagement, and in the purchase of horses and wagons in New York they find great irregularities.

OFFICIAL FRAUD.

The committee call attention to a case of the official prostitution of official position to the base purpose of illegal gains as set forth in the evidence of Samuel A. Hopkins, and in this connection the committee say that a man by the name of Wood, enjoying the confidence of the President, was appointed commissioner of public buildings, a place not only requiring great business capacity, but unflinching integrity, and that Wood, from his own declaration, made himself an instrument for plundering the Government. The committee, in discharge of their duty, made a representation of the facts to the Executive, but before any action was taken the Government was released from the presence of an unworthy official by his resignation.

THE FORTIFICATIONS AT ST. LOUIS.

The committee next approach the subject of the fortifications at St. Louis. The circumstances surrounding this work being of the most extraordinary character, and marked by extravagance, recklessness, insubordination, and fraud, they express the hope that some means may be found to make the parties to the atrocious contract disgorge the sum out of which the Government has been defrauded, and that the laborers who have done the work on the faith of the Government will not longer be delayed in receiving their just dues.

THE PURCHASE OF HORSES AND MULES.

The committee found that the most astounding and unblushing frauds had been perpetrated in the purchase of horses and mules, and matters were so arranged that it was impossible for the original owners to sell either horses or mules directly to the Government, but all such sales were made by certain middle men and go betweens, who, it appears, alone could get any horses or mules taken by the quartermaster's department.

The abuses in the Western Military Department are prominently eliminated, including those relating to the shipment of ice, the diversion of moneys from the Paymaster's Department, for which they were appropriated, the rotten and condemned blankets, the roofing of the Benton barracks, transportation, &c.

In the above notice the language of the committee has been quoted throughout.

The report is signed by Messrs. Van Wyck, of New York, Washburne, of Illinois, Holman, of Indiana, Fenton, of New York, Dawes, of Massachusetts, and Steele, of New Jersey. The other member, Mr. Jackson, is absent in Kentucky.

THE CITY.

AMUSEMENTS THIS EVENING.

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF MUSIC—Broad and Locust streets—"Jack Cade."

WHEATLEY'S CONTINENTAL THEATRE—Walnut street, above Eighth.—"The Southern Rebellion by Sea and Land"—"The Cataract of the Ganges."

WALNUT-STREET THEATRE—Ninth and Walnut sts.—"Lady of Lyons"—"French Spy."

ARCH-STREET THEATRE—Arch street, above Sixth.—"Violet"—"Jack Sheppard."

TEMPLE OF WONDERS—N. E. corner Tenth and Chestnut streets.—Signor Blitz's Entertainment.

CHARGED WITH LIBEL.—Yesterday morning, in the Court of Quarter Sessions, before Judge Allison, Lane Schofield was on trial, charged with libel. The bill of indictment charges that the defendant caused to be published, in the *Evening Argus*, a card attacking James M. Gibson, formerly connected with the Highway Department, asking him to explain why, while chairman of the Committee on Highways, he drew out of the City Treasury $1,069.52; why, while he "hates the naturalized citizens as the devil does holy water, and, at the same time takes John Kano, with many others of the same kidney, to his warm and kind embrace;" why vessels were "ballasted with new paving stones that cost near $4 per load, and the captain of the vessel pays 90 cents;" "why did he persuade George Shaffer that proposed to clean the First district for $200 less to draw down, and give it to Mr. Thompson at $200 higher!"

There are other charges in the card, implying misconduct. The Commonwealth proved the publication of the article which had Lane Schofield's name attached; that it referred to Mr. Gibson, the prosecutor.

The defence, represented by L. C. Cassidy, Esq., proceeded to prove the truth of the charges in the article.

Mr. Shaffer, from the City Treasurer's office, testified that a warrant was drawn in 1858 in favor of Mr. Gibson for $1,069.52.

John Long testified that he remembered the stone deposited on the lot, at Sixth and Carpenter streets, in 1858; there were a good many loads; paving stone worth then from $2 to $2.25 per load; the stone on the city lot worth more than $2; saw them loading from that lot in the summer of 1858, in some of Shaffer's carts.

John Shaffer testified that he recollected the lot, Sixth and Carpenter, and in 1858 some of his carts took stone from that lot; did not remember the number of loads; might have been a dozen or twenty-five; they were hauled to a wharf on the Delaware and deposited there; they were for a stevedore named Joseph Stevenson; it might have been Shippen-street wharf; Mr. Gibson ordered him to take it there; did not get any money for it; Joseph Stevenson was to pay seventy-five cents a load, and he said when the vessel was ballasted he would pay; paid the city for those stones.

Cross-examined.—Gave Mr. Gibson fifty cents per load, and sold it for seventy-five cents; the stone was not fit for anything except ballast; they were old stone which had been used probably fifty years before; they were not worth $2 a load; the stone he took was not worth more than twenty-five or thirty-seven and a half cents per load; paid Mr. Gibson fifty cents for them.

Robert Luther testified that he went to Shippen-street wharf in August, 1858, and saw the paving stones on board the vessel *North Carolina*; went at the request of Mr. Schofield; the stone in the vessel he presumed was used for ballast; some of it was good and some bad.

Cross-examined.—Think some of the stone might have been used by the city for paving; did not know the value of the stone.

Mr. Dutton testified that in 1858 paving stone was worth from $2 to $2.25 per team load (two carts).

Wm. Long testified that he was a carter; did not work for the city in June, 1859, nor any other time in 1859 or 1859; William Riding was the supervisor of the First ward, western division.

Mr. Hufty, city controller, produced pay-rolls for 1858 and 1859, and, at the instance of Mr. Cassidy, read from Mr. Riding's pay-rolls for these years, charges in the name of William Long for a number of days.

ARRIVAL OF IRISH VOLUNTEERS.—Yesterday morning, about 7 o'clock, the Fourth and Fifth Regiments of the Irish Brigade passed through the city. The Fourth Regiment, or Eighty-eighth N. Y. S. V., numbers 1,000 men, the greater part of whom were recruited in New Jersey by Col. Baker, who was Colonel of the New Jersey Second Regiment of three-months volunteers.

The Fifth Regiment is still incomplete. When the organization is finished, it will be known as the Second Battalion of N. Y. V. A. Four batteries passed through yesterday morning.

THE MOUNT VERNON SCHOOL.—At a meeting of the school directors of the Third section, a resolution was passed declaring it inexpedient for the teachers of this section to comply with the resolution of the Board of Controllers asking them to report to the Controllers the names and residences of the pupils in their schools, as the usual course of official communication being through the representative of the section in the Board of Controllers. The resolution of the Controllers was in reference to a number of pupils of the Mount Vernon School who reside in another section.

PASSING COUNTERFEIT COIN.—John Maher was arrested on Monday night on the charge of passing counterfeit quarter dollars at various lager-beer saloons, in the Second police district. About twenty dollars in the bogus coin were found upon the person of the accused. Maher was committed to await a hearing before the United States Commissioner. Yesterday afternoon, Aaron Briggs was held for a further hearing by Alderman Beitler upon the charge of passing counterfeit 5s on the Phillipsburg Bank of New Jersey.

ATTEMPTED BURGLARY.—Yesterday morning, about four o'clock, a man was discovered in the sleeping apartments of Mr. Daniel McGowen, who keeps a public house at the corner of Swanson and Washington streets. The fellow escaped from the house, but the alarm was given, and Officer Stevenson, of the Harbor Police, gave chase. After a race of several squares he captured the individual. The latter gave the name of Andrew McKeown. He had a hearing before Alderman Dallas, and was held in $1,000 bail to answer at court.

DONATIONS FOR RICHMOND PRISONERS.—Yesterday thirty-three blankets were obtained for the members of Company A, First California Regiment, now prisoners at Richmond. Donations consisting of woollen socks, drawers, shirts, and blankets, for the privates of the above company may be sent to the dwelling of Wm. M. Conrad, No. 1305 Locust street, or to the office of Cash & Reduer, No. 150 South Fourth street.

REPAIRING DAMAGES.—The breach in the culvert at Sixteenth and Green streets is much more serious than was at first supposed. Workmen are now engaged in repairing damages, and will probably be engaged several days in their work.

DEATH OF A WELL-KNOWN CITIZEN.—Joseph M. Thomas, Esq., a well-known citizen, died at his residence on Filbert street a day or two since. The deceased was a prominent, active member of the old Whig party, and occupied, at different times, seats in both branches of Councils.

SPIRITUAL.—An enterprising daily yesterday announced that the United States frigate *Roanoke* had arrived at the navy yard on the previous afternoon. Captain Turner asseverates on his honor that he "didn't see it." As the enterprising reporter wouldn't describe anything that he did not see, it is fair to presume that the arrival of the *Roanoke* was "spiritual."

ADMITTED TO BAIL.—A youth named William Sharkey, who was found among the crew of the privateer *Petrel*, and has been confined in the debtors' apartment of the County Prison, on account of delicate health, has been admitted to bail in the sum of $2,000. His uncle has become security for his appearance when required.

IN NEED OF FUNDS.—The daily infant school for colored children, located in Clifton street, between South and Shippen, and Tenth and Eleventh streets, is greatly in need of funds.

FINALLY COMMITTED.—Yesterday afternoon James Allen was finally committed by Alderman Beitler to answer the charge of stealing $200 from a boarder at the Continental Hotel sometime since.

CORRECTION.—The memorial alluded to in a local paragraph, on Monday, as emanating from the Board of Trade, has no connection whatever with that body. L. BLODGET, Secretary.

FIRE.—Last evening an alarm of fire was occasioned, about eight o'clock, by the burning of a bed in the house of Patrick McBride, in Fillmore street (above Arch), near Fifteenth. It was speedily extinguished without any damage being occasioned to the building.

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL.

THE MONEY MARKET.

PHILADELPHIA, December 17, 1861.

The stock market continued feverish to-day, with a more marked effect upon the better class of securities. Reading Railroad stock closed at 16⅝ to 16¾. In stock circles the principal topics of discussion are the effect upon the banks that their taking of the Government loan so largely will produce, and the benefits to be secured to the Government by a suspension of specie payments on their part; the reported stoppage of specie shipments by the *Africa*, and the postponement of her sailing until Friday; and the propriety of an embargo by our Government upon grain shipments to England. On all these questions there is great diversity of opinion. The action of the New York bank presidents, this evening, in deciding not to suspend, is what might have been expected from the known diversity of opinion among them as to the measure, and the fact that it was proposed, not because of the needs of the banks, but with a view to promote the public good. Had it been necessary, for the preservation of the banks, the suspension would have been decided upon per force, but as many able financiers doubt whether a suspension at this time would afford the advantages claimed for it, and the banks naturally love to maintain a good standing, the decision not to suspend comes almost as a matter of course.

The unsettled state of the stock market is in part owing to the calling in of demand loans made to brokers.

The money market is quiet and dull, and the perturbed feeling of yesterday is succeeded in business circles by more steadiness.

The New York *Evening Post*, of to-day, says:

A calmer feeling pervades Wall street to-day. The tone of the stock market is decidedly better, and financial affairs wear altogether a more settled and self-reliant look.

Stocks opened at an advance of ½@¾ per cent. on the lowest prices touched yesterday, with a better demand throughout the list. An improvement of ¼@1 per cent. in Government securities at once gave tone to the market, greatly assisting the recovery in the speculative stocks, which, in some cases, are 1@1½ per cent. better than at the morning board of yesterday.

New York Central opened at 76¾ and gradually rose to 77¼, finally closing at 77.

Galena and Chicago jumped to 70 to-day, after selling as low as 67½ yesterday morning. The cash stock was wanted to-day for delivery, as the transfer-books close to-morrow, for the payment of the five per cent. declared some time since. This makes the stock stand 65 in the market.

There is some talk of a dividend by the Michigan Central Company, and, previous to the receipt of the English news, &c., we understand, partially decided upon, but the indications are that the subject will be passed over for the present, at least till such time as the directors feel sure that their business is to suffer no interruption on account of its connection with the seaboard running through Canada.

Erie was very fluctuating. The first sales were at 26¾, then at 27 and 26½, and finally at 27@27⅛. This stock is influenced by the fear of a supply by the next steamers from Europe, from parties who find no market for it in London, and who may be forced to sell.

Erie preferred sold at 48, which is ¾@1 per cent. better than yesterday. Three of the five thousand shares sold by a leading director of the company came due on Saturday, and was paid for by the buyer. This sale, it will be remembered, was made the middle of October, as follows: 3,000 shares at 50 buyer sixty days, and 2,000 shares at ninety days.

Pacific Mail improved 1¼ per cent., selling at 83¼ against 82 last evening. Panama was also in demand at an advance of 1½ per cent.

The railroad bonds are not sensibly affected by the panic in fancy stocks, and prices of the first-class mortgages are comparatively well maintained. This class of securities within a few years has become a great favorite with investors, and every breath of war does not frighten them out of their bonds.

The list of State stocks shows no special change. Missouris and Tennessees ruled at about the prices of last evening. Georgias are scarce—65 is bid.

The foreign exchange market has a more settled appearance to-day, but still irregular. The rates on London for first-class bankers' bills range from 110¼@111, at which a small business only is doing at the close. The postponement of the departure of the *Africa* till Friday checks transactions, and the sales are now only of a retail character.

Philadelphia Stock Exchange Sales, December 17, 1861.

REPORTED BY S. E. SLAYMAKER, Philadelphia Exchange.

FIRST BOARD.

10 Harrisburg R.... 52	50 Reading R...... 16
1000 City 6s Nw C&P. 87¼	50 do...... 16¼
100 Lehigh Nav..... 48	50 do...... 16¼
30 do...... 48	2 Corn Exch Bk... 20
700 City 6s...... 79	3000 Penna 6s..... 78
1 Penna R...... 37¼	2000 do...... 78
1000 do....2dm.. 83¼	10 Gr & Coates R.. 16¼
50 Reading..cash... 16	50 do.....s5.. 16¼
100 do....cash... 16	3000 Penna R 1stm s5. 95
50 do...... 16	2000 do...1stm.s5. 95
20 do...... 16	2000 do...1stm.s5. 95

BETWEEN BOARDS.

1277 66 Penna 5s.............. 78

SECOND BOARD.

4 Sec & Third R... 47½	3 Beaver Mead.... 59¾
16 do.....s5.... 47¼	3 Morris Cnl Prf..108¼
6 do.......... 47¼	1 do..........108¼
300 City 5s Nw C&P. 87⅞	19 Penna R....... 37¼
1000 Penna Coup 6.... 05	6 do......... 37¼
10 N Liberty G.s5.. 30	2000 do...1stm.s5.. 95

AFTER BOARDS.

100 Reading R.............. 16¼

CLOSING PRICES—STEADY.

	Bid.	Ask.		Bid.	Ask.
Phila 6s........	83	84	Elmira 7s '73....	..	66
Phila 6s R.....	83	84	Long Island R.	9¾	10¼
Phila 6s new...	87½	88	Leh Cl & Nav..	48	48½
Penna 5s.......	75	78¼	Leh Cl & N Scrp	32	33¼
Reading R......	16¼	16⅝	N Penna R.....	4¾	5¼
Reading Bds '70	81	82	N Penna R 6s..	55½	56½
Read M 6s '86..	72½	73½	N Penna 10s...	70	80
Penna R........	37¼	37½	Catawissa Pref.	4	4¼
Penna R 2d m 6s	83½	84	Frkfd & South R	37	..
Morris Cl Con..	..	36	2d & 3d sts R.R.	47⅛	47¾
Morris Cl Pref.	108¼	108½	Race & Vine R	..	3
Sch Nav 6s '82..	60	63	W Phila R....	50	..
Sch Nav Imp 6s	..	73	Spruce & Pine..	8	8½
Sch Nav Stock.	3	5	Green & Coates	16¼	17
Sch Nav Pref...	9	11	Chest & Walnut	30	32
Elmira R Pref.	..	9¾			

Philadelphia Markets.

DECEMBER 17—Evening.

There is very little inquiry for Flour, either for shipment or home use; sales comprise 300 bbls fine Flour at $5.25; 250 bbls superfine at $5.50; 400 bbls Jenny Lind family at $7; and 500 bbls Western do at $6@6.25 per bbl, the latter for selected brands; the sales to the trade range from our lowest figures up to $6.50@7 per bbl for fancy lots, as to quality. Rye Flour is steady, with sales of 100 bbls in lots at $5. Corn Meal continues scarce; 600 bbls Pennsylvania Meal sold at $3 per bbl.

WHEAT.—The demand has fallen off, but prices are well maintained; 5,000 bus sold at 140c for prime Pennsylvania reds in store, 142c for Southern do afloat, and 145@150c for white. Rye is dull, with small sales of Pennsylvania at 76c. Corn comes in slowly, and meets ready sale at 66c for old, and 55@56c for new yellow. Oats are unchanged; sales of 5,000 bus at 40c for Southern, and 40½@41c for Pennsylvania.

BARK.—Quercitron is quiet at $30 per ton for 1st No. 1.

COTTON.—There is not much doing, owing to the firmness of holders, who are asking an advance on previous quotations.

GROCERIES AND PROVISIONS.—There is very little doing in either; a cargo of Rio Coffee (3,000 bags) sold by auction to-day, ranging at 17¾@18⅜c cash.

SEEDS.—There is very little doing in Clover; small sales are making at $4.62½@4.75 per bu. Flaxseed tends upwards; small sales at $2.05@2.10 per bu.

WHISKY is firmer, and 500 bbls sold at 20½@21c, and drudge at 19¾@20c per gallon.

New York Stock Exchange—Dec. 17.

10000 U S 6s '67....... 88	535 Erie Railway..... 27
2000 Ill Canal B '60.. 79	50 do.........s10 27
3000 Tenn St 6s '90.. 40½	100 do.........b30 27¼
9000 do.......... 40¼	100 do.........b30 27
1000 Missouri 6s..... 38¼	100 do............ 26¾
6000 Cal St 7s....... 80	200 do.........b60 26¾
1000 Hud Riv 1st m..104	50 do............ 26¾
1000 do..........104¼	550 do............ 26¾
4000 Mich C 8s 1st m 90½	50 Erie R Pref...b10 48
1000 C B & Q S p c.. 94½	150 do............ 48
1000 Mich So S Fd... 77	100 Harlem R 10¾
2000 Chi & N W S F. 81	225 do............ 11
6000 Clev & Tol S Fd 77¼	15 Clev & Pitts R.... 13¾
5 Am Exchange Bk. 80	100 Mich Cent R..... 44¾
5 Del & Hud Co.... 85	155 do............ 44⅛
10 Pacific Mail S..... 82	50 do.........b10 45
355 do............ 82¼	100 do............ 45
75 do............ 83	150 Mich S & N I.... 17½
100 Hudson Riv R.... 35½	200 do.........b60 18
300 do............ 35⅞	200 Mich S Gua'd.... 37¼
50 do.........b30 36	50 do.........s30 37¼
20 do............ 36	105 Panama R.......110
200 N Y Cent R...s10 76½	5 do.........109½
150 do............ 76⅝	575 Ill Cent Scrip..... 58½
225 do............ 76¾	5 do............ 59
100 do.........s10 76¾	60 Gal & Chi R...... 69¾
150 do.........s30 76¾	69 do............ 69¾
100 do.........b10 76⅞	50 do.........b10 70
500 do............ 76⅞	220 do............ 70
200 do.........s10 76¾	50 do.........b30 70¼
20 do.........b60 77	100 Chi & R I R...b10 49
59 do.........b30 77	25 do............ 48½
750 Clev & Tol R..... 30¾	250 do.........opg 48¼
125 do............ 30⅝	100 do.........s30 48¼
7 C C & Cin R......100	50 do.........b10 48¾
75 Mil & P Du Chien. 17	

CITY ITEMS.

ANOTHER LECTURE BY REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER.—The next lecture of the People's Literary Institute course will be delivered at Concert Hall, to-morrow (Thursday) evening, by the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher. He has not yet announced his *subject*, preferring, as we are informed, to speak upon topics that may be suggested by *current* events now accumulating. Mr. Beecher, we may state, is engaged also to lecture at Wilmington and Washington, and it may be presumed, therefore, that what he will have to say on Thursday, however impromptu it may seem, will be worthy of his name and fame. As this is to be his last appearance in Philadelphia this season, we anticipate for him a tremendous house.

ADVICE TO THE LADIES.—As a considerable portion of time between this and Christmas will be spent by the ladies in shopping for presents for their gentlemen friends, we recommend as suitable articles in this line, handsome Dressing Gowns, Smoking Caps, an elegant Scarf, a Muffler; or, if they wish to be still more practical, good Flannel Overshirts, heavy Underclothing, or a set of fine Shirts, all of which they will find in *greatest variety* and at the *lowest prices*, at Mr. W. W. Knight's, 606 Arch street.

DELICIOUS FRUITS AND FRENCH CONFECTIONS.—The celebrated Foreign Fruit and Confectionery Emporium of Mr. A. L. Vansant, Chestnut street, second door below Ninth, we venture to say, is attracting more attention just now than any other single holiday establishment in the country. His stock looks more like a sumptuous banquet prepared for the gods than for the gustatory enjoyment of the mortals who are now flocking to his store by hundreds daily, to secure his elegant preparations for the holidays.

LADIES' FANCY FURS, ET CETERA.—Messrs. Charles Oakford and Sons, under the Continental Hotel, are closing out the balance of their elegant stock of Ladies' Fancy Furs at astonishingly low prices. Magnificent sets, splendidly suited for Christmas presents, they are now positively selling at little more than half the usual rates. They are also giving their customers *bargains* in Gents' Furnishing Goods, Ladies' Shoes, Hats for Children and Misses, and a variety of other articles. Everybody should give them a call.

CHRISTMAS BEGUN AT E. G. WHITMAN & CO.'S.—The elegant stock of fine Christmas Confectionery, at Messrs. E. G. Whitman & Co.'s, Second street, below Chestnut—the choicest, we think, ever offered in this city—has set the Christmas column in the direction of their store in motion early. Crowds are already flocking there daily to select from the various dainty and artistic preparations with which their counters are now loaded, and everybody goes away delighted and determined to recommend their friends.

ESHLEMAN'S NEW TIES.—The tasteful new articles for the Neck, for Gents—at Mr. J. A. Eshleman's, Northwest corner of Seventh and Chestnut—known as the "McClellan Scarfs and Ties," are exciting universal admiration. What a neat way for ladies to remember their friends of the other sex by, these Christmas times, it would be for them to drop in at Seventh and Chestnut, and make a few selections from these beautiful new goods!

PURE OLD JAVA.—Mr. C. H. MATTSON, dealer in fine groceries, at Arch and Tenth streets, has now on hand a very superior and *pure* article of old Government Java Coffee. Those who enjoy good coffee will always find the juice of this celebrated coffee a most delicious beverage.

LOW PRICES—WAR OR NO WAR.—PATTEN always sells cheap. Window Shades, Curtains, Damask, Lace, and Satin De Laine Curtains, Furniture Coverings. Also, Hair Springs and Husk Mattresses, made to order. Materials warranted pure. Upholstering done at a moment's notice, by careful and competent workmen, at W. Henry Patten's New West End Curtain Store, 1408 Chestnut Street.

THE ENGLISH JOURNALS.—We do not expect that a war will grow out of our present difficulty with England, as we have nothing to this effect except the blundering and blustering of the English journals. These papers, however, are not altogether lost to reason and justice, notwithstanding their prejudices to this country, as we notice in them occasionally first-class notices of the splendid styles of winter garments manufactured at the palatial Clothing Emporium of Granville Stokes, 609 Chestnut street. These same papers also speak of the superior manner in which clothing is manufactured at this establishment, and of the very low prices at which it is disposed.

THE WAR WITH ENGLAND—IMPORTANT FROM WASHINGTON.—Lord Lyons has written a private note to the Secretary of State, respecting the Mason and Slidell complication. His lordship draws it mild, and says nothing about demanding his passports. After assuring Mr. Seward of his "distinguished consideration," he remarks that, let what may result from the *Trent* affair, he shall adhere firmly to the opinion, long since formed, that the most elegant and durable garments for soldiers or civilians to be found in the United States are those made at the Brown Stone Clothing Hall of Rockhill & Wilson, Nos. 603 and 605 Chestnut street, above Sixth. Lord Lyons is not quite lost to reason, it seems.

REBELLION AND RETRIBUTION—CHARLESTON IN ASHES!—Should the details of the great conflagration prove true, in the city of Charleston, it will show how insecure is life and property in that hot-bed of treason. Now those who have long been the oppressors will become the oppressed, and, however much we would dislike to see a slave insurrection, our sympathies are blunted when we think of the valuable and loyal men that have been shot down in the present war, for which South Carolina is largely responsible. How different the aspect of things in the loyal cities! Our people retire to their beds with a perfect sense of security; trade flourishes; the advertising columns of the newspapers are a good index of our prosperity, and conspicuous among them is the advertisement of Charles Stokes' "One-Price" Clothing Store, under the "Continental."