The Press.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27, 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."

FOR SALE—The double-cylinder "TAYLOR" PRESS on which this paper has been printed for the last nine months. It is in excellent condition, having been made to order a year ago, and will be sold at a bargain. For terms apply at this office, or address JOHN W. FORNEY, 417 Chestnut street, Philadelphia.

THE LATEST WAR NEWS.

It is evident that the soldiers of Pennsylvania are destined to win an ample share of the glories of the present campaign. In almost every portion of the lines of our army, they are to be found occupying the posts of honor and danger: and whether we turn our attention to Kentucky, to the Upper Potomac, to the great camp south of Washington, or to South Carolina, we still find them bearing themselves gallantly in the most difficult positions.

We publish on our first page further particulars of the glorious victory of a portion of the Pennsylvania Reserves, at Dranesville, in which, even according to the rebel account, our troops were completely successful. And now we learn that the advance guard of Gen. T. W. Sherman, consisting of the Forty-fifth Pennsylvania Regiment, under Col. Welsh, have advanced to Fennwick's Island, which is but thirty-five miles distant from Charleston, and taken possession of that important point, which will, doubtless, soon be used as a new basis for operations against the rebels of that infamous place.

Charleston may now indeed be called a doomed city. The recent fire laid about one half of it in ashes, and it will be a long time before it can regain the prosperity it enjoyed before the present rebellion was commenced in its streets. But even if the fire had not taken place, we might still call it a "doomed city." There is no doubt but that its prosperity sprang from its commerce with the neighboring States and foreign countries. Now this will be forever banished from its wharves, for the main ship channel to its harbor has been effectually blockaded by our stone fleet. The work of sinking the whalers commenced on the 19th inst., and on the night of the 20th fifteen of them had gone down to their watery graves, thus completely stopping up all egress and ingress to Charleston by that channel. The fleet was towed ever the bar by the vessels of our blockading squadron from Port Royal, and as each old hulk reached its destination the plug was withdrawn, and she quietly settled down.

If we may believe the reports, and we see no reason why we should not, Gen. Price and his horde of rebels are retreating into Arkansas, and Missouri is almost free of rebels. The recent exploits of Gen. Pope's division have no doubt had a bad effect on

A full rebel account of the battle at Dranesville, copied from the Richmond *Dispatch*, will be found on our outside pages. It will be seen that the rebels acknowledge that they were beaten by our brave Pennsylvania boys, and that their loss was 43 killed and a large number of wounded and missing.

Price, and, thinking that by staying any longer in that State he might share the fate of his followers, who were captured by General Davis, he got his army and its effects under way, and by this time he is without the borders of Missouri—we hope, never to return. A full account of the recent capture of the fifteen hundred rebel prisoners, at Milford, which will be found on our first page, proves the exploit to be one of the most brilliant that have taken place since the present rebellion broke out, and too much credit cannot be awarded to the brave officers and men who took part in it.

The Washington correspondent of the New York *Evening Post* learns, upon authority, that all the rumors of a peremptory demand by Lord Lyons upon our Government are false. Thus far, no definite action has been taken in relation to the *Trent* affair.

It is said the members of the English embassy exhibit considerable curiosity and nervousness concerning the object of General Scott's sudden return from Europe. They evidently fear the interposition of Napoleon.

THE Secretary of State thoroughly understands the art of knowing what to say, and when to say it. With a reputation for reticence, few men are more frank and outspoken when the occasion arrives. His pleasant little paragraph to the New England Society of New York is exceedingly characteristic, and will produce a happy effect throughout the country.

"I would like so good an opportunity," he says, "to attempt to show to our cousins across the seas that there is no material benefit or moral influence that can accrue to us that will not also increase the prosperity and greatness of Great Britain, and that every disaster that befals the United States is also pregnant with suffering and sorrow, sooner or later to be borne by Great Britain."

Such, in fact, is the reigning sentiment of the Administration of Mr. Lincoln. I wish the recent discussions in his Cabinet, on the question now at issue between this Government and Great Britain, could be made public. What they were may be gathered from Mr. Seward himself, and from the spoken and printed words of all his associates. One of them said to me on Tuesday, "To-morrow we are to take up the *Trent* affair in the Cabinet, and if we can contribute to keep the peace with Great Britain, it will be the very best way to celebrate Christmas day."

Will the English Government respect or will it reject this strong sentiment in favor of an amicable adjustment of the dispute? That is, after all, the first, if not the great question. It is charged that she is hungry for war with us; eager to break the blockade; and prepared to revive all the animosities of the past, and at one fell swoop to wipe out the American Union. But she cannot fail to perceive that, however anxious she may be to strike, she cannot do so like a robber and a murderer. History is full of warnings to England. No act of cruelty or of ingratitude on the part of one country to another has ever gone unpunished. What is true of individuals is equally true of nations. The honest Government, acting upon high and humane motives, as careful of its own honor as of its own welfare, never descends either to artifice, or fraud, or oppression. If England has forgiven herself for her treatment of the American Colonies; for her participation in the partition of Poland; for her bombardment of Copenhagen; for her remorseless betrayal and exile of Napoleon Bonaparte; for her most tyrannical conduct to poor Ireland, the world has not. Nothing, indeed, but circumstances, chief among which was the sense of her great power, enabled her to stand up with these bloody stains upon her name. If, in the teeth of all her own precedents, and the peaceful proffers of our Executive, England shall precipitate a war with this country, she will have need of all her philosophy, if not of all her boasted resources. All that our brave but suffering people can do to avert this war will be done. We will agree to much that will be misunderstood by factious and short-sighted men, in order that this bitter cup may pass from us. *But if it is forced upon us, there will be no lack of courage and of sacrifice.* The very remembrance that we were so willing to concede to all the just demands of England will awake such a feeling in the popular heart as will teach Great Britain the danger of irritating a free people.

Many extraordinary events have marked the present struggle. Many long-received opinions have been rendered obsolete. And it may happen, in the course of a short time, that we have strangely over-estimated the power of Great Britain to carry fire and death to the United States, and to dictate humiliating terms to a proud and courageous people.

OCCASIONAL.

CHRISTMAS AT THE CAPITAL.

[From our Special Correspondent.]

WASHINGTON, Dec. 25, 1861.

This twenty-fifth of December has been a quiet, charming, and delightful day. Indeed, our days, lately, with a very few exceptions, have been so very quiet, charming, and delightful, that I sometimes fancy we are in Italy—my ideas of Italy being altogether bookish. We were threatened with a heavy storm and fall of snow in the early part of the week, but the threat passed away in bluster, and the morning came upon us with all the beauty and associations of a Pennsylvania May-day. It was very un-Christmas-like, for I have a theory that it is impossible to enjoy this great holiday without a sheet of snow over the earth to beautify and brighten it—and a hard frozen, ridgey road over the house-tops, for the easy-travelling of Kriss-Kringle, and thick frost upon the panes for one to dream about, and a heavy, roaring breeze, to give the body health and vigor, the cheek a rosy, ruddy glow, and a mist in the air, to tone the church bells, and give a soft and merry tune to the Christmas carols. There was none of this, however, and, except that there were no flowers upon the bushes and the trees were stripped and bare, and the hills over in Virginia looked brown and dreary, it would have been accepted and recorded as a pleasant day in spring. Most of the Congressmen were out of town, and the metropolis was very quiet—(two independent facts, and not at all written as a cause and effect.) Most of the floating population floated away on Monday and Tuesday, to greet the New Year in a more northern zone. The House adjourned over in a straightforward manner, and the Senate would have adjourned, too, but it was impossible to pass the resolution without debate, and the more that was said the less was understood about the matter, until, finally, our excellent representatives in the upper branch talked a simple legislative proposition into a proceeding as interminable as an action in chancery, and adjourned over, quorumless, until Thursday.

The day was generally observed; that is to say nearly everybody closed the windows, and latched the blinds, the taverns doing a good business through the "private entrance." There was no evening paper, which was a great relief, and there will be no morning papers to-morrow, which will make breakfast quite delightful. The Departments were closed, the hotels were crowded, and the places of public entertainment have been open all day. The Avenue has been filled with sight-seers, and curious people, and handsome ladies, (how uncomfortable they must have found their furs,) and gentlemen in fast teams, and soldiers. An extra guard was stationed at every street corner, to maintain order, the patrol was increased, and under special orders. There was a very general desire to cross over into Virginia, but the provost marshal was stringent in his regulations, and comparatively few were gratified.

Our boys over the river had quite a jovial time, all things considered. There was a relaxation of discipline, and none of the monotonous drilling and guard duty. The cedars and pines were stripped of their branches, and the tents and camp-lines were improvised into pretty pastoral retreats. A great many soldiers were in town, the Avenue and diverging streets presenting a soldierly appearance. I passed through the Capitol this morning, and found a regiment or two strolling through the halls, corridors, chambers, and rotundo, reading the names on the desks of the members, admiring with proper awe the Vice President's seat, or enjoying the melodramatic spectacle over the Speaker's chair in the shape of two flags, and evidently regretting, as every true-hearted patriot must regret, that there is no eagle—a real eagle, embalmed in its feathers—surmounting them. The officers of the Capitol were all away, and the rooms had quite a vacant and unofficial look. There were a few policemen and watchmen sitting on chairs, and evidently having had a bad night's rest, for they were nearly all asleep, or in a fair way of falling into the arms of that tractable and stupid heathen—Morpheus.

Altogether it was a very quiet, pious, and sedate old Christmas day. Up here, on Capitol Hill, it has been especially so; the venerable inhabitants of this antiquated community never allowing themselves to share the folly and frivolity of the tumultuous inhabitants below. There is a very neat and unpretending little church, a tasty edifice in brown, (brown after all is the true religious color,) whose bells occasionally chime forth a pleasant refrain, telling how Christ the Lord has risen from the grave and gone to sit forever on the right hand of the Father. I have quite a regard for the little church—it has such a modest, genial look—no turrets, and gables, and solemn faces over the wall, to make us all feel so wicked; and no unpleasant inscriptions, about entering or perishing, and personal allusions to our national depravity and the dangers of the broad road. I like to have a church in the range of my window, especially if it has a spire on the top, or a steeple pointing up to heaven. I like to look at it in the morning, when the early mists are gray and heavy, or under the clear moonlight, when one can almost fancy he sees a halo of glory over all, and the spirit of prayer forever ascending and descending. If there is a graveyard, so much the better, for I don't believe in ghosts, and there is something so sweet and solemn about the pale tablets over the dear departed; something tender and touching about these stones, so sacred to the memory of those passed away! I don't believe in ghosts, and yet there is a grandeur in the sentiment which they represent—the longing to know what may be in the hereafter; the longing to feel that all we love and esteem is not with the ashes under the sod; the idea of communion and friendship when we find

"Our lives so far apart,
We cannot hear each other speak!"

I had no idea of getting into this personal strain, and would have closed this letter before writing the last paragraph, but the evening chimes came upon the ear, and with them came the thoughts I have so crudely written. It is all very calm, and one can hardly realize that it is the great holiday. I hope your Christmas has been a merry one, and that the new year so swiftly coming, will come burdened with fortune and felicity. J. R. Y.

Our Boston Letter.

MILITARY AFFAIRS—FORT WARREN—PREPARATIONS FOR THE BRITISH—NAVY YARD—NEW BOOKS—THEATRICAL MATTERS—HERRMANN LOSES HIS DIAMONDS—ELLA ZOYARA—A NEW VOLKS GARDEN.

[Special Correspondence of The Press.]

BOSTON, December 23, 1861.

The grand sensation of the past week has been the visit to the city from Readville—their camping ground—of the cavalry regiment. The constant readers of *The Press* will probably not know what cavalry, but let them know that we have a cavalry regiment, commanded by Colonel Williams, a native of the sacred soil of Virginia, a gentleman and a good soldier; the corps musters a trifle over one thousand, and, considering that the regiment has only been in camp about two months, and that the horses were of course all raw, their appearance was excellent; our home guard cavalry honored them with an escort—our streets looked really lively with the crowd of spectators, and altogether we had quite a gala day of it. A battalion of the regiment leaves for the seat of war (wherever that may be) this week, and the remainder of the regiment remains at Readville for further drill. The merging of all our petty recruiting offices into a few, under one general superintendent, has had the effect of lessening the number of recruits obtained for the general service, but the increased cold of the past few days drives a some man to enlist.

We used to regard Fort Warren as a part of Boston, or at least a suburb, but it is now further away than Philadelphia, for since our fleet of city boats with the city fathers on board has been prohibited calling there we only get an occasional item from there by the way of Saugers; it is confidently stated, however, that several of the men have the mumps, and that ten rounds of ammunition have been served out to the men for the purpose of repelling the anticipated attack by the British fleet which is coming out to rescue Mason and Slidell. It is proposed to launch in a very short time from the Charlestown navy yard the ship-of-the-line *Virginia*, whose keel was laid over forty years ago, and has been seasoning in one of the ship houses in the yard ever since. She is the largest vessel launched from the yard since the *Vermont* left her ways.

Although war matters have spoken quite loudly to "the hub" and drumsticks are displacing yardsticks, literary affairs are not entirely deserted or neglected. Ticknor & Fields have brought out a beautiful edition of selections from Sir Thomas Brown's works, embracing all his better known articles, Hydriotaphia, Religio Medici, &c. The volume is well worth looking over, if only to see its typographical execution, for it is certainly one of the most beautifully printed books printed which the American press has yet produced. Four more volumes of Richard Grant White's Shakspeare have just been issued by Little, Brown, & Co., making the edition complete, with the exception of the first volume, which will contain the life of the poet and his miscellaneous poems.

Hermann has been delighting and puzzling us all for a few days, but has himself been much puzzled by the disappearance of six hundred dollars' worth of diamonds from the case in which his jewels were on exhibition, carried off by some adroit thief in the presence of a crowd which was in constant attendance. The horse opera succeeds him at the Academy, with the once mysterious Zoyara and the Australian horse rider, Melville.

The Octoroon is being played to full houses at the museum with an excellent cast, Miss Reignold playing *Zoe* and the never-failing Warren taking the *Salem Scudder*. A new hall is being fitted up away "up-town" for a lager-beer saloon after the style of the Volks Garden in New York, the first attempt here at anything of the kind, but which promises to be well patronized, for the quiet young men of the city have an exaggerated idea of the amount of amusement to be obtained from the judicious investment of a dime in beer and pretzels. I much doubt if the German element is large enough here to sustain an institution of this kind, and it is by no means to be regretted if it would lead to the establishment of "Concert Halls." We had looked for plenty of out-of-door amusement at Christmas—by we I mean all young Boston—for the cold weather of last week had covered the ponds in our vicinity with ice, and old skates were being ground and new ones bought; but this morning a storm of snow and rain set in and has blasted our hopes—and Boston belles must wait another opportunity to show their bright faces on Jamaica.

HANNAM.

Public Amusements.

EDWIN FORREST AS METAMORA.—Perhaps the largest audience that ever congregated in the Academy of Music was that of Christmas evening. The play of "Metamora," (which, by the way, was not the Indian name of King Philip,) has been performed by Mr. Forrest for twenty years. It admits of fine positions, and gives opportunity for the display of great powers, but does not attempt to delineate character, and the plot is of an exceedingly ordinary description. The character of Philip is not outlined, and the cause of his hostility to the whites is indifferently explained. None of the other personages are characterized, and the text, although sometimes trenchant and poetical, is often inharmonious and commonplace.

None are so well aware of the demerits of Metamora as Mr. Forrest himself. It could not be otherwise with the exponent of the great creations of Hamlet, Coriolanus, and Lear. But from his long association with the part, its nationality, and, above all, its popularity, he has retained it to the present time. In any other hands Metamora would scarcely have survived a single performance. Its success is a beautiful instance of the power of genius to consecrate and perpetuate. Forrest has been a Midas to the crude works of many playwrights, turning them to gold. We find the name of Metamora—a fanciful but euphonious alteration of Metacomet—as much in vogue as "Knickerbocker" or "Tammany." It is inscribed upon steamboats, omnibuses, and hotels, and will probably be some day urged as the original Wampanoag for King Philip.

Forrest embodied in this melo-drama the stalwart sachem of Pokanoket as the Indian of undegenerate days is seldom represented. He rendered the intense passages of the first acts earnestly but moderately, husbanding his power for the council scene, where, throwing down the war-hatchet, with his foot on the Governor's chair, he uttered a frenzied defiance that made the hearts of half the audience stand still. To see Forrest in this single scene is something to be remembered through a lifetime.

A like characteristic scene is presented at the close of the play, where the sachem murders his wife, to baffle the English, and receives their fire with a haughty menace upon his lips. His death-throes were those of a strong man passing away.

To-night Mr. Forrest will repeat Hamlet. The rush for seats was very great during yesterday morning and afternoon.

On Saturday "Jack Cade" will be repeated, and "The Gladiator" next week. "Lear" is to be repeated shortly, and "Othello" will quickly follow.

ARCH-STREET THEATRE.—"Love's Labor Lost," or, as some editions print it, "Love's Labor's Lost," has been produced in good style at the Arch street Theatre. Critics disagree in ascribing the authorship of this play to Shakspeare. It is generally believed that he altered and adapted it; but it abounds in passages of his characteristic humor, elegance, and power. If he did not write it, there must have been excellences in it sufficient to enlist his attention.

The best acting character of the comedy—that of the pompous, pedantic *Armado*—was consigned to Mr. John Gilbert. He was cleverly costumed, and, excepting some tedious episodes, made the part sufficiently eccentric. The scenes between the suites of Navarre and France would have been wearying at periods, but for the interposition of Miss Wells and Frank Drew, who divided all the applause of the evening. The former, with her usual care and taste, gave us a perfect Shakesperian picture. Mrs Drew and Mrs. Baker were richly costumed. The new scenery by Mr. Hayes was of a highly artistic character, and the last scene, representing shepherds reclining by a rivulet, was gorgeous beyond precedent. The effect of the water dashing down a succession of rapids, with foliage above and around, and cropped figures of swains and ladies, was intense. If the text of the comedy could be materially curtailed, and the last act particularly shortened, we should have, with the rivulet scene, one of the best entertainments that we have had for years.

CONTINENTAL THEATRE.—The drama of "The Forty Thieves" has been prepared with Mr. Wheatley's usual enterprise and good taste. The processions of men and steeds, the humor and the interest of the piece, are we rendered, and it will probably have a long career. Last night the house was crowded.

WALNUT-STREET THEATRE.—Clarke's late engagements have been very successful. His broad humor, keen perception of the ridiculous, and thorough facial command, are elements that have made him a reputation. In some of the farces which he is now producing he has no equal. The bill for to-night is a varied and amusing one.

Movements of Gen. Scott.

NEW YORK, Dec. 26.—General Scott, on his arrival here this afternoon in the *Arago*, took rooms at the Brevoort House. It is said that he will not leave the city for two or three days, but this must be a mistake. He despatched a letter to Secretary Seward immediately upon his arrival.

Arrival of the Arago.

NEW YORK, Dec. 26.—The steamship *Arago*, from Havre and Southampton, arrived at half past 5 o'clock this evening. She brought full files of papers but no mails. Her advices have been anticipated by the *Niagara* at Halifax. Gen. Scott is among the *Arago's* passengers.

Colonel Mulligan at Trenton.

TRENTON, Dec. 26.—The brave Colonel Mulligan, whose heroism is in everybody's mouth, arrived in this city last night, with his family. He was visited by our State military and civil functionaries.

LATEST NEWS
BY TELEGRAPH.
FROM WASHINGTON.

THE TRENT AFFAIR IN THE SENATE.

GENERAL McCLELLAN'S HEALTH.

BURNING OF GOVERNMENT STABLES.

NEARLY TWO HUNDRED HORSES BURNED.

OUR PICKETS NEAR DRANESVILLE DRIVEN IN

THE DEFENCES OF PENNSYLVANIA.

Special Despatches to "The Press."

WASHINGTON, Dec. 26, 1861.

Destructive Fire at Washington—The Government Stables Destroyed—Nearly Two Hundred Horses Burnt.

To-night a fire broke out in the Government stables, near the Observatory. They contained over six hundred horses, between one hundred and fifty and two hundred of which perished. Of a train of a hundred and two horses, belonging to a Massachusetts regiment, only eleven were, it is said, saved. Some of the animals were so shockingly burnt that it was judged humane to shoot them in order to relieve them from their suffering.

It is supposed that the conflagration resulted from carelessness. So rapidly were the flames communicated to the various racks, which were filled with hay, that the horses in the stalls were nearly all at the same time suffocated. The scene was most sickening and offensive. The remainder of the horses, not immediately near the fire, were either set loose or broke their fastenings, and wildly ran in different directions. They were pursued by squads of cavalry with a view to their capture. A large quantity of harness, and a house occupied as a residence by the teamsters, were also destroyed.

This large loss affords an additional argument for the employment of steam fire engines, which has long been contemplated.

U. S. Marshal for North Carolina.

The President has nominated to the Senate CHAS. H. FOSTER, of North Carolina, to be United States Marshal for that district.

Rush's Cavalry

Are encamped on Fourteenth street, about two miles and a half out of Washington. Their camp is called Camp Barclay, after Dr. C. BARCLAY, of Philadelphia, who contributed his means towards the support of the regiment while in process of formation. They have been highly complimented on their efficient drill, by General STONEMAN, chief of cavalry.

Our Pickets near Dranesville Driven In.

Information was received to-day from General MCCALL'S division, to the effect that early this morning our pickets extending towards Dranesville were driven in. At the latter place, the rebel forces, it is believed, have been largely reinforced since the late engagement. Hence increased watchfulness on the part of our troops as become necessary.

Deaths of Pennsylvanians.

The following deaths among the Pennsylvania troops have taken place in the hospitals and in the camps since the last report: Albert A. Hollenback, Sixty-fourth regiment; John De Groot, Twenty-third Pennsylvania volunteers; T. J. Mason, Company B, Cameron Dragoons; Samuel Hess, Company A, Fifty-second Pennsylvania volunteers; Marcus Deyfoos, Company G, Ninety-sixth Pennsylvania volunteers; F. R. Smith, Company C, One-hundred-and-fourth Pennsylvania regiment; Wm. Dempsey, Company A, Eleventh Pennsylvania reserves; John Ingle, Company I, Eleventh Pennsylvania reserves; Corporal Chas. A. Dart, Company M, Fourth Pennsylvania; John Lawrenton, Fifth Pennsylvania reserves; George Richards, Company D, Fourth Pennsylvania reserves; Sergeant Valentine Pfferman, Company B, Thirty-first Pennsylvania volunteers; John Quirk, Company D, Eighty-third Pennsylvania volunteers.

Government Horses.

The Secretary of War has directed that no more horses be bought until all now belonging to the Government are in active service. Quartermaster MEIGS having been especially charged to carry this order into effect, the attention of all quartermasters of the regular and volunteer army is called to the subject.

General Scott's Despatches.

The statement that General SCOTT has brought despatches to this Government from France is totally without foundation, like much of the early intelligence of the Satanic press.

Naval Paymasters.

The Acting Assistant Paymasters recently appointed by the Navy Department will be interested to learn that unless they file their bonds and report for duty immediately, their appointments will be revoked.

They Want a Fight.

Several members of the Seventy-third Pennsylvania Regiment, having received leave of absence, learned on Tuesday that the regiment had been ordered to advance from their present position on Bailey's Cross Roads, immediately waited on Major SCHOTT, and informed him that under no circumstances would they leave the regiment while there was a prospect of a fight. Every man of them remained in camp. Major SCHOTT has made several reconnoissances in the vicinity of Fairfax without discovering any rebels.

During the absence of the Colonel (KOLTES) he was in command of the regiment. He rode, twice a day, along the whole line of pickets, which extended in different directions for a distance of seven miles. One night two rebel shots were fired at him, just grazing his head; he dashed after the rebels, but they escaped in the darkness. Major SCHOTT was in the war at Baden, was captured and sentenced to be shot, but escaped to this country. He was a classmate with General SIGEL.

The Trent Affair.

The Cabinet held a meeting yesterday morning, and had under consideration the communications from the British Government relative to the seizure of MASON and SLIDELL. The contents of these important papers were hitherto known only to the President, Secretary SEWARD, and Lord LYONS. The conference occupied about three hours. The Cabinet officers do not appear to anticipate a war with England growing out of the *Trent* affair. It is the impression that the next English steamer will bring Lord LYONS a peaceful solution of the whole matter.

The Lower Potomac.

There was nothing received from the Lower Potomac up to three o'clock this afternoon. A schooner, which came up yesterday morning, was fired at by the Confederates, as she ran the gauntlet of their batteries, and four shots put through her under-sail. The President and Cabinet expect to take a trip down the Potomac in the *Pensacola* this afternoon.

Sub-Marine Telegraph.

The Vice President has appointed as a committee to consider this important enterprise Senators SIMMONS of Rhode Island, SHERMAN of Ohio, and LATHAM of California. These appointments have been well considered, and reflect great credit on the sagacity and impartiality of Vice President HAMLIN. All sections, all parties, and all interests are alike consulted. SIMMONS is taken from the Finance Committee, and represents the Atlantic seaboard; SHERMAN, from the Navy Committee, the West; and LATHAM, from the War Committee, the Pacific. The two former are Republicans, and the latter a Democrat.

Charleston Harbor Blockaded by the Stone Fleet.

The Navy Department received to-day despatches from Commodore Dupont, at Beaufort. The commander had returned to Port Royal on the 21st inst., after having successfully blocked up the entrance into Charleston harbor, by sinking stone laden vessels across it.

The Parrott Guns.

General HOOKER tried the range of one of the 10-pound PARROTT rifled guns, which has been placed in battery in his division. The mark was one of the enemy's batteries on the other side of the river, a distance of about one mile and a quarter. The shot fell into the enemy's works with much precision, dismounting one of their guns. The test of range occurred in the night, and the cries of the rebels, as the shot took effect, could be plainly heard by our troops.

Commodore Stringham.

Commodore STRINGHAM is in this city at present.

Gen. McClellan's Health.

Gen. MCCLELLAN is much better this evening. His disease is a mild form of the typhoid fever. He will be in the saddle again within three days.

Official Information.

The following official information was received this afternoon by Gen. MCCLELLAN:

ST. LOUIS, Dec. 24, 1861.

To MAJOR GENERAL MCCLELLAN: Col. Bishop's detachment overtook a party of bridge-burners yesterday, and killed ten, took seventeen prisoners and thirty horses. All the damages to the railroad will be repaired in three days.

H. W. HALLECK.

Governor Yates, of Illinois, has obtained from the War Department a grant of ten thousand stand of arms for the State, and one thousand for Milligan's regiment, in addition to the eight thousand sent to Cairo.

A Chicago paper insists that Cairo shall be made the headquarters of a department including Illinois, Indiana, and Southeastern Missouri.

At the World's Horse Fair, to be held in Chicago, in September next, there will be premiums of $1,000 for running horses, $3,000 for equestrian performances by women, and others for different classes.

The names of over fifty thousand persons have already been reported as petitioners for the establishment of a National Armory at Chicago. Of these petitioners a great number reside in New York, and represent a large amount of property.

THE NIAGARA AT HALIFAX.

Speculations Relative to General Scott's Mission.

M. THOUVENEL'S DESPATCH.

HALIFAX, Dec. 26.—The steamship *Niagara* has arrived, with Liverpool dates to the 15th inst.

The *Niagara* has £20,000 in specie and twenty-four passengers for Boston, and three hundred and fifty-one troops to be landed here.

She will sail at seven o'clock this evening for Boston, where she will be due on Saturday morning.

She passed the *Asia* on the 15th instant, eleven miles off Tuscar.

The ship *Coronet*, from Deal, for New York, had put back.

The ship *John Jay*, from Hong Kong, for New York, had put into Singapore, leaky.

The ship *Vanguard*, from Liverpool, for New York, put back on the 14th, with loss of sails, etc.

GREAT BRITAIN.

It is intimated that about 12,000 troops will be sent to Canada. Two battalions of the Guards were expected to sail on the 18th in the *Adriatic* and *Parana*. No cavalry or horse artillery will be despatched for Canada till spring.

The Paris correspondence of the London *Globe* says that M. Thouvenel's despatch to M. Mercier is known to have confined the Federal Executive to the simple dilemma are the Southerners belligerents or rebels? They have been fully refused any rights in the first capacity, and in the second the right of asylum acquired by political refugees has been set at naught, and France must make the case of the *Trent* substantially her own.

The London *Times* publishes a letter from Thurlow Weed defending the American Government, and Mr. Seward in particular, from the alleged hostile intentions towards England.

The *Times* says that England asks nothing from America but that she shall abstain from actual outrage, or that if it is committed, that she shall make reasonable reparation. If not, the alternative will not come in the desired form of protested negotiation.

The London *Herald* takes strong ground against the argument of the London *News* in favor of arbitration. It says that negotiation cannot be listened to while Mason and Slidell are detained prisoners.

The Sheffield Foreign Affairs Committee had petitioned Government to visit its high displeasure on Captain Moir and Commander Williams for having, in the *Trent* affair, violated the Queen's proclamation, and thereby show to America that England's neutrality is strict and impartial.

The West India mail steamer had taken to England news of the escape of the *Sumpter* from Martinique; as also that on the 28th of November the *Sumpter* captured the American ship *Montmorency*, from Newport, England, with coals for the St. Lawrence River, and released her on receiving a bond by the captain, proposing to pay $26,000 three months after peace was proclaimed.

The British war-vessel *Cadmus* had arrived off St. Thomas, to protect vessels against another *Trent* affair.

The attitude of, and preparations by, England, show no change.

The *Times* accumulates evidence of a long-cherished intention on the part of Mr. Seward to do England an injury.

In another leader on the consequences of civil war, the *Times* advises the Federal Government to make peace in time, before it is committed to a treble war, viz., with the Confederates, the British Government, and its own Abolitionists.

The illness of Prince Albert assumed such alarming symptoms that the Prince of Wales was suddenly telegraphed for, and went to Windsor at 2 A. M. of the 14th.

A telegram from Brussels of the 12th, to the *Times*, says:

"There is a rumor in diplomatic circles that mediation in the American conflict will be offered by King Leopold. The Secretary of the British Legation has left for London."

The *Morning Post* says there is no truth in the above rumor.

General Scott's sudden return home was the theme of much speculation. It was generally reported that he had some sort of mission from the French Government to the Washington Cabinet.

The *Herald's* Paris correspondent says General Scott had a long interview with M. Thouvenal before his departure.

The general impression in financial circles was that he carried out a momentous communication from the French Government. It is estimated that about twelve thousand troops are to be sent to Canada, to be ready to take the field immediately on landing.

The British Government continued to charter all available steamers.

Two battalions of the "British Guards" were expected to sail on the 18th inst., in the steamers *Adriatic* and *Parana*, under the command of Lord F. Paulet.

Orders have been issued for the hasty manufacture of two thousand pack-saddles and a proportionate number of ambulance wagons and cars, to be despatched to Canada.

Colonel E. R. Wetherell is gazetted as Chief of the Staff in Canada, and Major Generals Brimley and David Russell are ordered to embark forthwith to join the staff.

English ship owners were adopting a system for their outward-bound vessels to communicate to passing English ships that there was a prospect of war with the United States. They had also resolved to form a society for mutual assurance against war risks.

The United Prayer Meeting at Exeter Hall took place on the 12th inst., as announced. Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel and other ministers participated in the proceedings, and fervent prayers were offered up for peace.

Lord Shaftesbury declined to attend the meeting, stating in his reply to an invitation to do so, that it would be interpreted by the bulk of the press and the Americans as a cloaked rebuke to the British Government, and favor the opinion that the country was not united in this serious question. He commended the purpose of the meeting, but thought it would be better carried into effect by private and congregational means.

At a meeting of the Congregational Board resolutions were adopted deprecating hostilities, and calling for arbitration if diplomacy fails to secure peace.

A circular issued by the Minister of Commerce to the mercantile bodies says measures are to be adopted for the protection of merchant vessels in case hostilities break out between England and the United States.

It was asserted that Prince Napoleon continued to argue against the recognition of the Southern States, and that he was instrumental in causing General Scott to go to Washington.

The Paris correspondent of the *Post* asserts that peaceful anticipations prevailed among the Americans in Paris, and says that Minister Dayton and Consul Bigelow used all their influence, combined with that of General Scott, to inspire conciliatory councils at Washington. He also asserts that the French Government desires peace between England and America.

The same writer, also in reference to General Scott's return, says that it is not impossible that France, if asked, may mediate, and, at the same time, the laws of neutrals may be revised, provided England, according to the wishes of the other European Governments, agrees to a modification of the existing code.

FRANCE.

The Paris *Presse* says that Gen. Scott's mission appears to have been arranged so as to allow him time to fulfil it before the ultimatum of England is remitted, and perhaps modify the nature of this step on the part of England.

The *Pays*, on the contrary, asserts that the English ultimatum is the act of an absolute character.

The monthly statement of the Bank of France shows an increase of cash in hand of nearly forty millions of francs.

The Bourse was heavy rather than lower on the 13th inst., the Rentes closing at 67f. 60c.

AUSTRIA.

It was stated that during the Emperor's stay at Venice he ordered all political prisoners to be set at liberty.

PRUSSIA.

Movements contributed to be made for the establishment of the Prussian navy.

It was reported that a loan of ten millions of dollars would be negotiated for the Prussian fleet.

The English war vessel *Bürgdfice*, carrying twenty-six guns, had been purchased by Prussia.

ITALY.

The eruption of Mount Vesuvius continued. Houses were falling in Torre de Greco, and the village was in imminent danger of destruction by lava. All communication between the places in the vicinity and the mountain was interrupted. Earthquakes were frequent. In the Bay of Naples, the sea had receded fifty metres.

The Italian Chamber of Deputies had passed a bill extending the application of the Sardinian penal code to Lombardy.

The brigand Borges, before his execution, is said to have declared that he had been deceived by the Legitimist Committee at Paris, and that no elements of revolution against the Italian Government existed in the Neapolitan provinces.

TURKEY.

It is stated that a panic on the Bourse was caused by fraudulent speculations in "Metalliques," but in consequence of the energetic measures of the authorities order was not disturbed in Constantinople.

Satisfactory intelligence had been received from Omar Pacha.

INDIA AND CHINA.

The overland mail had reached Marseilles, and was due in London in season for the American portion to go forward per the *Niagara*.

CALCUTTA, Nov. 17.—Shirings active and unchanged; Twist dull and without alteration; Linseed advancing; Exchange unaltered; Freights advancing.

CANTON, Oct. 31.—The reports from the foreign legations at Pekin are satisfactory.

Canton was finally evacuated on the 21st of October.

Shanghae is in a state of alarm, in consequence of the proximity of the rebels.

The English and French troops assisted the Chinese to hold Che Foo against the rebels, who ultimately retreated.

Cotton goods at Canton were active and advancing. Teas was without change. Exchange was ½ per cent. higher.

JAPAN.

Affairs in Japan were unsatisfactory.

The European representatives were inviting instructions from their Governments.

AUSTRALIA.

MELBOURNE, Oct. 25.—Trade is generally dull.

The ship *Kent* sailed to-day for England with 105,400 ounces of gold.

LATEST VIA QUEENSTOWN.

LONDON, Dec. 15.—The first intimation of the illness of the Prince Consort was had on Tuesday, December 3d, when it was stated that he had been suffering from a feverish cold.

The first bulletin in regard to his condition was issued on Wednesday, Dec. 11. It stated that the Prince was suffering from a fever, unattended by unfavorable symptoms. On the following day a bulletin announced that the Prince had passed a quiet night, but that his symptoms had undergone little change. A bulletin of Friday stated that his symptoms had assumed a more serious form.

A bulletin issued at 9 o'clock on Saturday night was more favorable. At half past 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon a bulletin was issued, as follows: "His Royal Highness is in a more critical state." From that hour his symptoms commenced to take a most unfavorable turn, and fever, of a typhoid character, set in. The Prince then continued to sink gradually until the last gleam of hope had departed, and he expired tranquilly at 10 minutes to 11 o'clock.

The Queen and Royal Family surrounded the death-bed of the Prince

The *Observer*, in announcing the lamentable event, exclaims: "Peace to his ashes! A good husband, a good father, a wise Prince, and a safe counsellor, England will not soon look upon his like again."

CONSTANTINOPLE, December 14.—The monetary panic has partially subsided. The Bourse remains closed.

COPENHAGEN, December 15.—Prussia has rejected Denmark's proposition for the settlement of the Holstein question.

TURIN, Dec. 15.—The report of the commission appointed to inquire into the opening of letters passing through the post states that certain postal agents had consigned letters to the authorities, but without ministerial orders.

WARSAW, Dec. 14.—News of the resignation of the Marquis of Wiloopoloskes is received. He remains a member of the council of State.

LATEST VIA LIVERPOOL.

LIVERPOOL, Dec. 14—P. M.—The *Niagara* did not get away by the morning's tide as intended, owing to the delay in getting stores, etc., on board for the troops.

Thurlow Weed, in his letter to the *Times*, disclaims, in behalf of Mr. Seward, any unfriendly feelings or intentions toward England, and says that the threat of insulting England, which Mr. Seward made to the Duke of Newcastle, was merely idle talk or badinage.

Mr. Weed says that he believes if England's despatch to Lord Lyons is peremptory in tone it will meet with peremptory refusal. He appeals for moderate counsels on both sides as the only method of avoiding a collision.

The *Times* editorially comments on Mr. Weed's letter, and says he has made the cause of his client and his country considerably worse than he found it.

The command-in-chief of the forces in Canada will remain in the hands of Sir Fenwick Williams.

No additional orders were issued on the 13th for regiments to be held in readiness.

The preparations are represented as on a scale which would have astonished people in anti-Crimean times.

The Paris correspondent of the *Times* says the general belief is that Gen. Scott has gone back with the intention of enlightening the Washington Cabinet as to the ideas of the French Government. He is doubtless acquainted with the opinions of the Emperor, and that it is not favorable to President Lincoln's policy. Gen. Scott will probably convince his countrymen that they cannot count on the moral support of France. Something is also said of his being charged to propose the mediation of the