The Press.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 1862.

THE LATEST WAR NEWS.

General Curtis' official report of the battle at Pearidge, Arkansas, has confirmed our anticipations of the severity of the contest, and the gallantry of our troops engaged. The attack was begun by the enemy on Thursday last, upon our right wing, and an attempt was made to gain its rear. This, however, proved unsuccessful, and resulted in the fall of the rebel General McCulloch. The enemy's centre was then attacked by Colonel Davis' division, supported by Sigel's command, which had previously been upon the left; while the right of our line was supported by Colonel Carr's division. Finally, a charge of infantry along our entire line, put to flight the entire rebel force, who retreated through the deep defiles of Cross Timbers, and it is thought have mostly returned to the Boston mountains. Thither they were being pursued by our cavalry at the latest accounts.

"Sound, sound the note! Sebastopol is taken!" sung the allied armies of the Crimea, when the frowning fortress had grown weary of bombarding, and the Russian eagles had been humbled to the dust. Our volunteers can sing as jubilant an anthem. The Sebastopol of the great rebellion has fallen, and the way has been cleared for an "on to Richmond" movement, that may now be undertaken without fears for the result, and with a glad assurance that a new victory awaits us at the rebel capital. An army of retreating volunteers—and above all, an army of disheartened and demoralized rebels—is not the kind of material that can successfully offer opposition to the enthusiastic Union soldiers, flushed with the glory of success, and panting for a fresh battle-field to show their devoted valor.

A special despatch from Washington states that the Navy Department is exceedingly active to-day in providing against all contingencies at Fortress Monroe. If the *Minnesota* had not grounded on Saturday, it is believed by our naval authorities that she would have grappled instantly with the *Merrimac*, and, with the assistance of the *St. Lawrence*, would have ended the contest on the decks of the *Merrimac*. The *Monitor* is believed at the Navy Department to be fully able to cope with the *Merrimac*, and certainly by to-morrow the squadron at the fortress will be so reinforced that the tables will be turned, and they will be forced to act on the defensive. A correspondent of the New York *Evening Post* says that the strong feeling in both branches of Congress in favor of the *immediate* passage of the bill containing the appropriation for iron gunboats, will carry it through whenever it comes up in the Senate.

Two companies of the Second Ohio Cavalry had a severe skirmish with a band of rebels near Independence, Missouri, on the 5th instant. The traitors, under the notorious Quantril, have been prowling around Independence, murdering and plundering, until the inhabitants could endure it no longer. They accordingly called upon the Ohio troops to rid them of their presence. Our troops were not fully equipped, having nothing but sabres and pistols, yet they succeeded in killing and wounding about twenty of the enemy, losing but one man killed and three wounded. They have also taken a number of prisoners. A company of Montgomery's men have just arrived at Fort Leavenworth, from the Missouri border, with about thirty prisoners, Jayhawkers and rebels.

Colonel Geary, acting brigadier general in command of our forces at Leesburg, Virginia, made a personal reconnoissance, day before yesterday, as far as Carter's Mills. He found that the bridge over Goose creek had been burned, and that the retreating enemy had burned granaries, hay and grain stacks, and such other property as could not readily be removed. The loyal feeling in and around Leesburg is increasing, and the oath of allegiance is daily administered to many of the residents.

Congress Yesterday.

SENATE.—Mr. Wilson, of Massachusetts, offered a resolution of inquiry relative to the late naval battle near Fortress Monroe. Referred to the Committee on the Conduct of the War.

Mr. Wilson also reported, from the Military Committee, a joint resolution authorizing the Secretary of War to accept the moneys appropriated by any State for the payment of volunteers, and to apply the same as desired by the State.

The confiscation bill was considered. Mr. Wilson, of Massachusetts, offered a substitute for the first section, which was ordered to be printed.

Pennsylvania Legislature.

SENATE.—The consideration of the resolutions instructing our Senators and requesting our Representatives in Congress to vote for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia was resumed. Mr. Lamberton offered an amendment, which, if adopted, would completely nullify the resolutions.

HOUSE.—The bill to incorporate the Entomological Society, of this city, was taken up on first reading, but objected to.

The act to incorporate the Frankford and Philadelphia Passenger Railway Company was taken up and passed.

Also, a supplement to an act incorporating the Bible Society of Philadelphia.

The Movement of the Army of the Potomac.

The long-expected advance movement of the army of the Potomac has at length been commenced. It is useless now to discuss whether the delay was wise or unwise, necessary or unnecessary. It is unquestionably an army of which any nation might justly be proud. In numbers, discipline, and equipment, it far exceeds any body of men ever before collected in the new world, and it has strength enough to perform military feats of far greater magnitude than any heretofore achieved on this continent. It is in excellent health and spirits, provided with every necessary appliance that foresight could suggest or money procure; and it contains many thousands of brave men who will eagerly embrace any opportunity that may be afforded them of crushing the armed foes of the Republic.

At the first indications of the commencement of its march, the enemy made preparations for a precipitate flight. All the important points they determinedly held against us during the campaign of last summer, have fallen into our possession without a struggle. On our right wing Gen. BANKS has advanced, without a contest, towards Winchester; the our centre has quietly occupied the boasted stronghold of the rebellion; on the left, the Cockpit-batteries were tamely abandoned, the blockade of the lower Potomac voluntarily raised, and all obstructions to the onward march of our armies removed.

This craven flight of the enemy was unexpected by many, and can only be fully explained by future developments. Many theories are propounded. But antagonists probably felt that they were totally unable to cope with our mighty forces, and that only by a hasty retreat could they prevent a terrible defeat. The movements on their flanks, too, were pressing fearfully upon them. The necessity of contracting their lines became daily more and more apparent, as one fearful blow after another was dealt by our gallant soldiers. It was plain enough that if General BURNSIDE gained control of their railroad communications in North Carolina, and Gen. BUELL of the great railroad leading from Tennessee into Virginia, the rebel forces, thus isolated, would speedily be destroyed. Whatever power they still possess can only be made effective by so contracting their lines as to maintain communication between all their armies. Whether they intend to entice our brave men into ambuscades, to assail partially isolated divisions, or to devastate the country through which they retreat, and to impede our march by burning down bridges and tearing up railroads, in the hope of exhausting our resources, remains to be seen.

Some of their intercepted letters assert that large reinforcements have recently been sent northward to Virginia, a policy that would indicate a determination on their part to protract the war in the Old Dominion as long as possible, or make diversions on their right against Gen. BURNSIDE and on their left against Gen. BANKS. But, whatever may be their plans, there is little doubt that their capital will soon be in our possession, and their lines driven in on every side.

Probably the most serious embarrassment that our army will be subjected to will arise from the difficulty of transporting to it the supplies it will require. But, great preparations have, doubtless, been made to supply its wants. Immense fleets of boats will be ready to ascend any navigable rivers that may fall within our lines; injured railroads will be repaired with wonderful celerity, and the teams of the Government will be kept busily plying between the nearest accessible depots and the positions our forces occupy. We have not only an army of soldiers, but one filled with industrious laborers, farmers, mechanics, and engineers, who will evince as much skill and celerity in mastering physical difficulties as courage in assailing the rebel army.

The Monitor.

The opportune arrival of the *Monitor* in Hampton Roads is one of the most fortunate and gratifying incidents of the war. We have already published a full account of her success in driving back the iron-clad monster *Merrimac*, at the very moment when, flushed with victory, the rebel officers supposed that, after destroying the *Congress* and *Cumberland*, they could demolish at their leisure the *Minnesota*, and all the other Union vessels lying near Fortress Monroe. We had yesterday an interesting interview with a gentleman who went on board the *Monitor* a short time after the action terminated. There was little in her appearance to indicate her formidable character. At one end the stars and stripes were proudly floating. In the centre the revolving turret, in which her deadly guns were mounted, projected but a short distance above the level of the iron-plated deck; and in the rear was a cabin which, at a distance, seemed no larger than a hat. On entering this room he found it furnished in excellent style, and three or four officers as coolly arranging their toilets as if they were in their own quiet rooms on shore. On the bed lay Lieutenant WORDEN, exhausted by the terrible contest in which he had been engaged, and his eyes considerably injured by the matter contained in one of the enemy's shells that had burst upon the deck. That brave and accomplished officer is now in Washington, and under skilful treatment, the light of at least one of his eyes will probably soon be entirely restored. He is deservedly the hero of the hour, and shares, with Captain ERICSSON, the inventor of the new battery, the glory of her brilliant success.

The late naval engagement at Fortress Monroe is one of the greatest events of modern times, and will exercise a vast influence upon the naval warfare and the naval preparations of all countries. It is singular that America should be not only the first country to illustrate the wonderful efficiency of iron-clad steamships, (by the temporary triumph of the *Merrimac*,) but that she should also, by the timely completion of the *Monitor*, show how they can be successfully combatted. It is fearful to think of the injury the rebel monster was enabled, in a few short hours, to inflict upon vessels which, under the old system, we regarded with pride, and how much more mischief she would have perpetrated, if she had succeeded in running the blockade at Fortress Monroe. But a thrill of exultation is carried throughout the whole country by the thought that our inventive genius has already discovered an antidote for the boasted bane of the rebels.

The *Monitor* proved in return trial to be at once even more destructive than the iron-plated steamship of the enemy, and as invincible as her inventor could have deemed it possible, even in his most sanguine moments, to make her. In rain did the heavy balls and shot of the *Merrimac* rattle like hail upon her sides and deck; and the iron prow which so easily destroyed the *Cumberland* dashed against her sides without doing a particle of injury.

Fortunately, the period cannot be far distant when our navy will be well provided with these improved instruments of modern naval warfare. Several iron-clad steamers will soon be completed. In four months the celebrated Stevens battery, with its fearful broadside, can be finished, if the necessary appropriations are made, and, as the *Monitor* was built in 100 days, other vessels of a similar description can speedily be put into service. The genius and resources of the rebels were well nigh exhausted in remodelling the *Merrimac*, and it is utterly out of their power to materially increase their navy. The experiment upon which they concentrated the strong hopes that on Saturday last were apparently about to be fully realized, proved a virtual failure by the timely arrival of the new device that at once astonished and terrified them; and we look to the future with the consciousness that we have ample facilities for profiting by the lessons of experience, while they are tearfully impressed with a sense of the deficiency of their mechanical skill and appliances, and of their utter inability to cope with the great people they have defied, in arts or in arms; on land or on the sea; in military or naval engagements; in numbers, resources, or inventive genius.

The Blockade to be Observed.

One consequence, it can scarcely be doubted, of the reaction among British politicians and statesmen, in our favor, from the news of our successes over the rebels, in all directions, is Lord RUSSELL's declaration in the House of Lords that ours was *not* "a paper blockade," but one which England, as a maritime and commercial nation, was bound to respect. This, the *ultimatum* of the British Government, settles the question of recognizing the "so-called Southern Confederacy." Of course, in this matter, this is an European as well as an English decision. Mr. GREGORY asserted, and Mr. LINDSAY re-asserted, that between 600 and 700 vessels, breaking the blockade, had found their way into and out of Southern ports. How singular, if this were true, that the whole quantity of cotton brought into England since the blockade was commenced has not exceeded 700 bales. This shows how real the blockade has been.

LETTER FROM "OCCASIONAL."

WASHINGTON, March 11, 1862.

It is finally settled that the rebels have retreated from their strongholds, and are being rapidly and steadily pursued by the army of the Union. Whether this retreat is the result of policy or panic cannot, of course, be ascertained. Certain it is, however, that many of those who have clamored for an advance upon Richmond, during the last three months, accept the retirement of the rebel forces as a full realization of their predictions, that the enemy would fly if attacked, while it is not to be denied that many who have heretofore sustained the theory of delay, on the ground that we were not ready to move on, confess themselves grievously disappointed. Where the enemy will make a stand is the next question. Whether our columns are to march onward without a "retiring ebb," until they have captured Richmond and completely vanquished the traitors, or whether there is to be another great pause before the end of the rebellion is ascertained, are questions almost universally discussed. When the army began its passage into Virginia, on Sunday and Monday, many who had not estimated its numbers or its capacities were surprised at the magnitude and magnificence of the spectacle. The members of the British and French legations, who have been industrious in collecting all the available information in regard to this war, confess that they were astonished at the splendid *materiel* of the army, its almost perfect discipline and its admirable appointments. How it is to be subsisted in a country desolated by war will be one of the main difficulties of those having it in charge. Every pound of ammunition, forage, and rations must be conveyed from the base of operations, or, should a junction be effected with General Wool, from Fortress Monroe. It must be borne in mind, however, that the blockade of the Potomac has been raised, and that the railroad from Alexandria has been relaid to Fairfax. These are great advantages, but they may be counteracted by the certain destruction of the railroad by the rebels extending from Manassas to Richmond. The obstacles in regard to transportation and subsistence, particularly the latter, will compel prompt and rapid action, so as to prevent the rebels from fortifying themselves in new positions, and of depriving the Union army of the indispensable military facilities and of the necessities of life.

Without the army, Washington is a dull city. As I write, the streets and avenues, lately so bustling and excited, seem to be entirely deserted. Many of the trades and avocations, that flourished during the presence of the troops, will feel their departure seriously, particularly the publishers and vendors of newspapers. With all this, however, there is a deep and profound prevailing excitement. We are constantly on the *qui vive*, watching and waiting for intelligence from the different sections of the revolted country.

OCCASIONAL.

Mr. McKEON, the manager of the Continental Theatre, takes a benefit this evening, and presents a good bill for the amusement of the patrons of that establishment.

THE HUTCHINSON FAMILY give a concert, on Thursday night, at Sansom-street Hall, for the Port Royal contrabands. The Hutchinsons are the best and most popular vocalists on this continent.

From Gen Burnside's Expedition.

[From Our Special Correspondent]

Steamer CASSACK, March 4, 1862.

Again on board the *Cassack* quietly riding at anchor on the placid waters of Croatan Sound, with Roanoke Island to the eastward, the mainland with the dilapidated buildings at Nag's Head and hills of sand surrounding to the westward; the calm waters of the Croatan now mirroring the bright rays of the setting sun against the golden-tipped clouds, blending all the varied tints of the rainbow hues, to the northward. The vessels comprising the expedition lying at anchor, with here and there a little yawl or surf-boat skimming over the water from vessel to vessel, and to this island, I write to you again.

We had become nicely ensconced in comfortable quarters, and were indulging in all the luxuries—wild geese, brant, duck, fine shad, salmon, and perch—that the waters of Albemarle and Croatan abound in. The natives (the Islanders) were bringing everything that could be obtained, and were exceedingly anxious to exchange for "*Uncle Sam's*" *silver, gold*, or notes—that which they but a few weeks before despised and depreciated, not on account of its intrinsic value, but on account of its nationality. We were just beginning to have some of the luxuries, after having seen a *little* of the *roughs* of North Carolina life, when orders came for an immediate embarkation. Up goes the hat of one, down goes the bright smiling countenance of another. "Long march," says one; "can't stand it," says another. That plaguey rheumatism has returned, and away he goes limping, while two minutes before he was gay and frisky, ready for an imaginary enemy. Up comes a lean, lank, gaunt-looking soldier, musket shouldered, knapsack packed, and says "I tell you, boys, we may be chawed up this time; but I guess we'll make them fellers git four buck shot and a Minie ball, in old *Harper's Ferry*—sho'll scatter em." It is amusing to hear the conversation and actions of some on receipt of orders for marching. However, nearly all hail the orders with great satisfaction, and await anxiously for the time when they can render their country the aid it requires, and crush the arm that dares to destroy the Constitution framed by patriots, whose forms have returned to dust, but the emulation of whose virtues, and the admonition of whose counsels, still raise the patriotic impulses of thousands upon thousands of the brave soldiers now risking their all for a country distracted by treason's blighting curse, prompted by patriotism, guided by a love for our cherished institutions, a union of States, of interests, and the perpetuation of a glorious nationality. The Union soldiers go forth to grapple with treason at the cannon's fierce mouth, amid the most terrific showers of shot, shell, grape, canister, and musketry; brave every danger; endure every hardship peculiar to a life in an enemy's country, with a changing climate of twenty to thirty degrees in an hour, and a thousand and one hardships, &c. Imagination can more graphically picture than the pen describe. It is to the Union soldiers that the maintenance of the great boon of constitutional freedom is due. It is to them our country to-day owes its national existence.

I would here say that the Fifty-first, on the engagement of the 5th—noted by some of the special correspondents as in the rear or on the reserve—were on the right flank, plodding through the deepest and worst part of the morass, almost side by side with the Twenty-seventh Massachusetts, and exposed to the enemy's fire. Their bravery, steady bearing, and undaunted gallantry was highly complimented by Gen. Reno. Every officer and soldier felt the importance of his position, and pushed forward with that energy and zeal characteristic of Pennsylvania soldiers. A studied desire on the part of the reporters of some of the leading New York dailies to place the Fifty-first regiment in a different position from that which they occupied, in order to heap all the honor upon the New York Hawkin Zouaves and the Fifty-first New York. I am willing to see justice meted out where it is due, but, at the same time, I don't want to see all the honor heaped upon a few to the detriment of others whose bravery and conduct was equal to any. As a Pennsylvanian, I feel a State pride in the gallant troops we have now in the field, and in none of the recent victories has the old Keystone been deficient or in want of an honorable representation. The Fifty-first, under the gallant Hartranft, represents the Old Keystone in the Burnside Expedition, and when the time again arrives to enter the conflict, it will do its duty.

Contrabands are still arriving, but bring no news of importance. Their intelligence, thus far, of the forces, and the important places occupied by the enemy, has been of but little account. However, they came from points remote from posts occupied by the rebel army.

Health of the expedition is good.

Yours, ALPHA.

We would gladly publish the letter of our correspondent in full, but it contains much information which might be pronounced contraband by the authorities.—ED.

LETTER FROM NEW YORK.

[From Our Special Correspondent.]

NEW YORK, March 11, 1862.

We are a very forbearing people here. For months a new Secession organ has existed in our midst, and as yet no arm of authority has been raised against it. The longer it is let alone the more impudent it becomes. "The Decline of New York;" this is a specimen of the announcement of an article on its bulletin. Such captions frequently meet the eye, and increase the disgust of passers by. That feeling may one day be fanned into a passion which our excellent police may be called upon to cool.

An arrangement is nearly completed for holding Union army prayer meetings in various churches in this city. As far as I am able to learn, the plan contemplated is to hold a morning prayer meeting at a central point, to be conducted much in the same manner as the "great revival" meetings; and other meetings to be held every evening in different churches. In all cases, prayer to be made specially for the success of our arms, and the preservation of our friends and relatives, who represent us on the battle-field. I think this is one of the most interesting steps that have been taken since the breaking out of the rebellion. How a soldier must fight when he is conscious that, in *his* behalf, the city is bent in prayer!

The sons of Vermont held a meeting at the Fifth-avenue Hotel last night, agreed upon a constitution, and elected an executive committee. They met again this morning, at the Park Barracks, to entertain a regiment from Vermont. On Thursday evening, there is to be a grand "Sons of Vermont" levee, at the Fifth-avenue Hotel, to which are invited former residents of Vermont, their descendants, their wives and their daughters. It is expected that Governor Holbrook and staff, of Vermont, will be present.

The first annual commencement of the Bellevue Hospital Medical College was held last evening, in Irving Hall. The audience was very large and very enthusiastic. At the close of the regular exercises, the Rev. Dr. Chapin delivered a spirited and eloquent address to the faculty, to the graduates, and to the people. He said that the medical profession was one which called forth two of the most powerful elements in man's nature—Love and Wisdom. To them society was shown in its usual garb. The hypocrisy of pride and modesty was thrown aside in presence of the physician or the surgeon. Humanity throw off its mask and exhibited a poor, weak, and fallen nature, in it veriest frailty. They, also, had an opportunity of seeing society at home in its surroundings of luxury, and its attendant misery and wretchedness. The discovery of a great difficulty had been the harbinger of a forthcoming improvement, and year after year the medical faculty were mastering new problems in the treatment of new diseases. A *Merrimac* of evil may show itself, but an Ericsson's battery will rise to view in due time, sent by advancing science as a *Monitor* to teach rebels lessons in wisdom. The Bellevue College has been in existence for several years, but this was its first public demonstration, and it proved a success.

The manufacturers of hooped skirts had a meeting this afternoon, to take into consideration the tax to be levied on steel skirts. Of course, they do not propose to rebel against the tax, but they consider it quite important to have a general understanding in the trade as to whether the manufacturer shall add the tax to the price of the skirt, and so make the consumer the responsible taxpayer, or whether the tax shall be equally divided between the maker and the wearer.

Notwithstanding the value of money to the taxpayer, and the prospect of the Federal tax, our City Fathers are very considerate. From a step which they took last night in the Board of Aldermen, it is very evident that our City Hall is going to be the centre of some very large transactions during the current year. Our tax levy has been increased to an enormous figure, and yet we submit. Why should we not? The men who do these naughty tricks are elected by the people, at least they who had most votes at last election consider so. Look at the following presentment and sympathize with us:

Gross amount recommended by the Comptroller	$5,780,713 36
Gross amount adopted by Councilmen	4,510,558 97
" " " Aldermen	6,053,365 95
Increase on Comptroller's estimates	874,752 60
" Councilmen's estimates	1,135,806 99

This morning 144 of the wounded soldiers from Burnside's army arrived here. A portion of them have been sent on by the train this forenoon. Others go in the evening, and a portion of them, the most serious cases, remain at the military department of the New York City Hospital.

Major General Fremont and family are here. They are at the Astor House.

The Constructor of the Monitor.

As many of our readers wish to know who Mr. Ericsson (the inventor of the iron-clad battery *Monitor* which did such efficient service at the recent naval engagement in Hampton Roads) is, we have compiled the following short biographical sketch of that distinguished person. John Ericsson was born in 1803, in the province of Vermeland, among the iron mountains of Sweden. His father being engaged in mechanical pursuits, the son early evinced a remarkable taste for the same occupation, and before he was ten years of age he constructed several mechanical contrivances which would have been creditable to older heads. In 1814 he was appointed to a cadetship in the corps of engineers in the Swedish army, and while in that position was several times made supervisor of important trusts, although several officers outranked him both in age and position. In 1826 he visited England, and proceeded to construct a number of new engines of his own invention, which met with wonderful success. In the fall of 1829, the Liverpool and Manchester Railway having offered a prize for the best locomotive engine, to be tested on their road, Mr. Ericsson constructed the Novelty steam carriage, which darted along the track at the rate of fifty miles an hour, to the unbounded admiration and applause of the spectators. He afterwards constructed several steam fire-engines, which proved to be successful inventions. He was the first to apply to marine engines centrifugal blowers, using anthracite coal. Mr. Ericsson emigrated to this country in 1839, and his first great achievement was the building of the United States steam frigate *Princeton*, the first vessel that steam was ever introduced into with the works below the water line. His success was so remarkable that the French Government engaged him to plan the French frigate *Pomone*, of 50 guns, which also proved a success. He next undertook the planning and invention of the steamer *Ericsson*, and although it did not meet the expectations of the builder, it was a success. He next determined to construct a battery which would be useful in naval warfare. On the 5th of October he signed the contract for the construction of the *Monitor*, and on the 31st of December, being a period of two months and eight days, the steam machinery and propeller were put into operation, and on the one hundred and first working day she was launched. The rest of the history of the *Monitor* is so well known to our readers that its recapitulation here would be unnecessary.

A subscription paper is now in circulation, among the merchants of New York, intended as a suitable testimonial to Captain Ericsson for his public services. We learn that handsome sums have been subscribed.

FROM WASHINGTON.

THE CAPTURE OF MANASSAS.

THE EVACUATION OF OCCOQUAN.

The Central American Mails.

PROCEEDINGS OF CONGRESS.

VOLUNTARY EMANCIPATION RESOLUTION.

Special Despatches to "The Press."

WASHINGTON, March 11, 1862.

From General Banks' Division.

The soldiers of General BANKS' division have pushed their way rapidly towards Winchester. Several events of the march remarkably illustrate the varied mechanical aptitude of the Northern troops. In completing the preparations for the pontoon bridge on which they crossed the Potomac, the skilful hands of many of the mechanics of the division found congenial employment. As they proceeded into the interior they found that the rebels, in accordance with their usual devastating policy, had totally destroyed telegraphic communication; but the activity and energy of the Union troops, in an almost incredibly short period, fully restored them.

A large field, containing several hundred acres, near Charlestown, was filled with corn, in shock and unhusked. The troops detailed to make it available for the quartermaster's department performed that service in a double-quick style rarely before exhibited in agricultural operations in slave-holding districts.

Although the rebels fled precipitately before them, they could not, in all cases, elude the swift pursuit of our dashing cavalry regiments, and several of their schemes of destruction were unexpectedly frustrated by the rapid movements of our mounted soldiers.

Many of the rebels exhibited the same rude and hostile spirit that was manifested when Charlestown was occupied last year by General PATTERSON; and in one case, one of the so-called "ladies" of the town spat in the face of a Union soldier, who, notwithstanding this flagrant insult, protected, in obedience to orders, the house she occupied.

A great scarcity of salt was freely complained of. I was told that in one case $40 was paid for a single sack, and in numerous instances considerable quantities of pork were spoiled for want of that indispensable article.

General BANKS rapidly marched forward, occupying in rapid succession, without opposition, each of the strategic positions which lie between Harper's Ferry and Winchester. The latter town is now virtually if not actually in his possession.

The Evacuation of Occoquan.

Official information to-day reports that the enemy, formerly encamped back of and below Occoquan, have retreated, destroying everything they could not carry on their back. They left on Saturday. Our troops took possession this morning, and were welcomed by a part of the inhabitants with great joy. Every boat in the vicinity and anything that would float had been destroyed. The rebels told the villagers that they were going to fall back to the Rappahannock.

A call from the rebel Governor of Virginia on the militia of the State for ten thousand men was proclaimed in the streets of Occoquan on the 9th inst., by an official, who immediately departed. Nearly all the able-bodied men of the village left with the rebel army. A few refused to go. The rebel force which has thus retreated was composed of three Texan, one Georgia and Mississippi regiment, and the Hampton Legion.

Com. Vanderbilt Agrees to Carry the Central American Mails.

Commodore VANDERBILT gave notice to-day, to the Postmaster General, that he would carry the Central American and South Pacific mails on his line of steamers, provided he could be protected against parties who are smuggling California mails over his line, for which he received no payment.

The United States Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court will not hear the argument of any case after Thursday, the 20th instant, nor of any motion after Friday, the 21st, the court intending to adjourn on the 15th instant.

Our Fleet in Florida.

Captain DAVIS, United States Navy, reached Washington yesterday, with despatches from Commodore DUPONT, which were yesterday published by order. He gives some suggestive particulars of the state of public opinion in Florida and Georgia. The poorer classes denounce the war as a rich man's war, and the accounts brought by the prisoners indicate that the heart and determination of the rebels are gone forever. He states that the chasing of the railroad train by the Union gunboat *Ottowa* was a most amusing affair. Captain DAVIS returns here to advocate the plan of iron-clad steamers, and to pronounce against the wooden walls. He was one of the naval commission that decided in favor of the Ericsson floating battery.

The Latest from Fortress Monroe—The Merrimac at Norfolk.

A despatch from Fortress Monroe, this evening, says that all is quiet in that vicinity. A flag of truce was received to-day from Craney Island. No information has been obtained about the injury to the *Merrimac*. She reached Norfolk on Sunday evening, from which it may be inferred that she was not capable of making very good time.

Ten More Gunboats for the Western Waters.

CINCINNATI, March 11.—The Secretary of War has requested proposals for the building of ten new gunboats, the same as those now at Cairo. The proposals are to be sent by telegraph, specifying the price and the time at which they can be furnished ready for service.

A Visit to Ball's Bluff—Burial of the Bones of the Victims.

Colonel GEARY, with some of his officers, and a detachment of the First Michigan Cavalry, rode to Ball's Bluff to-day, and buried the whitening bones of the brave American soldiers, who fell upon that field in October last. Impressive remarks preceded this humane act, and a monument of gross rebel neglect was hid from human sight.

Ineligibility to Office.

In the House to-day, Mr. WILSON, of the Judiciary Committee, introduced a bill providing that no person who has ever held any office, either civil, *military*, or naval, under the so-called Confederate Government, shall ever hold any office under the United States Government, or in any State of the Union. Such a bill as this will doubtless pass.

All Quiet on the Line of the Potomac.

All is quiet on the line of the Potomac, as represented to-night by telegraph.

Two Light-draught Steamers Wanted.

The Quartermaster General advertises for two light-draught steamers, suited for towing boats at Ship Island. He invites proposals.

Captain Buchanan, of the Merrimac, Wounded.

Captain BUCHANAN, who commanded the *Merrimac* on the first day's fight, is reported, by a telegram received to-day, to be wounded. Captain JONES commanded the *Merrimac* on Sunday, when she met the *Monitor*.

The Vote on the Emancipation Resolution.

Six Southern members voted in the affirmative and nine in the negative, in the House of Representatives, to-day, on the President's emancipation resolution. The other members from the Border Slave States were either not in their seats or withdrew before the vote was taken.

The U. S. Frigate Vermont Spoken.

BOSTON, March 11.—The schooner *J. W. Chapman*, from New York, arrived last evening, reports that on the 2d inst. she fell in with the U. S. frigate *Vermont*. She lay by her till the 6th, and left her in lat 39.45, long. 68.08, drifting S. S. E., half E., at the rate of two knots per hour. Her rudder, sails, and anchors were gone, and she was entirely helpless. She wants the assistance of powerful tugs at once.

Charter Election at Syracuse, N. Y.

SYRACUSE, N. Y., March 11.—At the charter election, held to-day, a large vote was polled. The Republicans elected their candidate for mayor by 291 majority, and the entire city ticket, except for justice of the peace. The supervisors stand as follows: Republicans 6, Democrats 2; and the aldermen, Republicans 6, Democrats 2.

Generals Buckner and Tilghman Put in Close Confinement.

BOSTON, March 11.—Generals Buckner and Tilghman were yesterday put in close confinement at Fort Warren. The reason for this is not stated.

FROM CENTREVILLE.

MORE CHEERING NEWS.

OUR TROOPS OCCUPY MANASSAS.

THE STARS AND STRIPES WAVING OVER THE ENTRENCHMENTS.

The Rebels in Full Retreat on Richmond.

OUR TROOPS IN CLOSE PURSUIT.

[Special Despatches by Our Own Correspondent.]

The News of the Evacuation of Manassas.

WASHINGTON, March 11, 1862.

The news of the occupation of the famed Manassas Junction reached the city at an early hour this morning, by an official telegram, which set at rest the idle rumors of a fight, retreat, etc. The intelligence which has been coming in ever since Saturday from contrabands and refugees, has all centred to the fact that the rebels were falling back from Centreville, with the intention of not only abandoning their works there, but at Manassas, a few miles in the rear. The evacuation of the batteries on the lower Potomac, and the withdrawal from Leesburg, all tended to the confirmation of these stories, which were fully realized at a late hour last night, by the advance of our forces from Centreville, towards Manassas, which they entered early this morning. The forlorn hope of the rebels was seen straggling over the hills, but a short distance beyond the road to Strasburg, as our cavalry entered the deserted entrenchments. It was evident that no inconsiderable panic had seized the rebels, for their works seemed to be as hastily abandoned as on the lower Potomac. The rebel flag was flying at Fairfax Court House and Centreville, and was allowed to remain up, but with the glorious flag of the Union waving proudly over it in the clear light of this balmy morning. Some of the rebel pickets that were not quick enough to follow their panic-stricken companions were captured, and reached the city to-day, a most dejected, worn-out looking set. They were dressed in a white woollen uniform, made from negro-cloth, but the hardships of the service had rendered it of many colors. In other respects the soldiers seemed far inferior to ours, and displayed an ignorance and stupidity rarely seen in the human face. They were placed in confinement. On their march up Pennsylvania avenue they were the objects of great curiosity, hundreds rushing on the streets to get a sight of them.

CENTREVILLE, Va., March 11.

I arrived this forenoon in the former stronghold of the rebel troops, but, as I anticipated, found the place completely evacuated, and presenting a scene of gloom and desolation rarely witnessed. Though it is evident that the rebels have been sending regiments away within the last week, the general evacuation did not commence until Saturday last, and continued until Sunday night.

On Sunday, during the latter part of the movement, it seems that a terrible panic seized the rebels, they leaving in great haste, burning everything that they could not move away, besides destroying locomotives, and immense quantities of provisions, tents, ammunition, &c. Most of their cannon were removed, though a few inferior ones were spiked and left in the fortifications here, which were formidable, the rebels placing batteries over the hills, in the rear of Centreville, for a long distance, while others followed them in regular lines, so that, if our forces drove them out of one entrenchment, the rebels could easily fall back within another. The fortifications at Manassas, some four miles from this place, are reported to be the same as those constructed prior to the battle of Bull Run, but likewise greatly strengthened.

Numbers of refugees and contrabands came into this place, and during yesterday some rebel pickets that were not quick enough in getting off were captured. Their statements differ as to the number of rebel troops that were here, but from the best information I could gather I think they numbered one hundred thousand men, including those on the upper and lower Potomac. These latter evacuated their posts on Saturday, leaving their guns, etc., in our possession, and immediately started for Richmond via Fredericksburg. It is evident that the main portion of the rebel army managed to leave in cars, the rear falling back on Culpeper Court House or Gordonsville on foot.

MANASSAS, 7 P. M.

There is little or nothing of interest here, the grand and formidable position of the rebel army having been at Centreville. Our cavalry passed over the Bull Run battle-ground during last night, and ere dawn this morning raised the stars and stripes over the famine-looking place. The same picture of a hasty retreat and destruction of property is exhibited here. The country from Washington for thirty miles back is one vast scene of desolation and woe, and it will take a long time to repair the damage done to the surrounding country by the ruthless hands of the rebels. A.

The Scene at Manassas—Destruction of Property.

[Correspondence of the Associated Press.]

CENTREVILLE, March 11.—Upon a closer examination, it was discovered that the rebels, before evacuating their much-boasted stronghold, had set fire to much of their commissary stores as they could not conveniently carry off. The place presented a scene of the utmost desolation—a mass of blackened ruins.

The rebels also blew up the bridges along the line of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad for some miles below Manassas. Such of the locomotives which were out of repair were also destroyed, it is supposed by blowing up, and the vicinity of the depot is covered with fragments of machinery belonging to the destroyed locomotives.

It is said that the rebels left Centreville on Sunday morning.

Large numbers of contrabands have reached our lines (which now extend beyond Manassas Junction), and are still coming in by droves.

On our way from Centreville, yesterday morning, we passed at least one hundred who were making their way to Washington.

Some of the refugees claim to have come a distance of twenty miles west of Manassas. They all agree in saying that the rebels left the latter place in great precipitation, and that the destruction of their commissary stores was commenced at an early hour on Sunday.

The contrabands state that a portion of the force which left Manassas passed northwardly. This is considered improbable; but if they did, it was for the purpose of reinforcing Jackson at Winchester.

They also state that all the bridges along the route by which they came had been blown up by the rebels in their retreat, and that the greater portion of the track is also torn up.

The earthworks at Centreville had been greatly misrepresented. They were not of the formidable character supposed. The enemy, before evacuating, had somewhat injured them by breaking the embrasures and casemates.

The same is probably the case at Manassas, the fortifications of which, however, have not yet been fully examined.

Our troops, on arriving at Fairfax Court House, found not more than a dozen families remaining there. The soldiers rushed into the court house and brought away some of the records, but, on this being discovered, the officers directed their return.

When our troops learned that Manassas had been evacuated, their spirits suddenly became depressed, as they had anticipated a spirited conflict with the enemy.

Most of the contrabands above alluded to were cheerful and happy in their liberty, and remarkably communicative to the extent of their limited knowledge.

About a mile and a half before reaching Centreville a number of graves were discovered, principally of the Alabama troops; the graves were marked with head and foot boards, on which the names of the deceased were inscribed. A guard was placed near them, as if to shield them from mutilation, although it was not to be supposed such an act could be committed.

Manassas Evacuated Two Weeks Ago.

WASHINGTON, March 11.—When, some time since, it was stated in this (the Associated Press) correspondence, that the rebels were falling back from Manassas, the assertion was industriously contradicted; but there is now satisfactory evidence that the main body of the rebels left their lines at that place *nearly two weeks ago*.

The roads in Virginia, in some places, are tolerably good and improving.

The whereabouts of the rebels, who retreated from Manassas, is a subject of earnest speculation. Eleven prisoners, who were captured in the vicinity of Burke's Station, on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, yesterday, were brought here today. They are roughly clad.

Reports of Union Men from New Orleans and Memphis.

ST. LOUIS, March 11.—A special despatch to the *Democrat*, from Cairo, says two Union men reached there from New Orleans to-day. They left that city on the 16th ult., and by careful travelling they were enabled to get off in safety. Both spent the winter in New Orleans, where the greatest excitement and distress prevail. The approaches to the city on the south are pretty well defended. On the north, the fortifications run back from Carolton. The only persons in the city not regularly enlisted are the Jews. The city is also full of secret Union clubs, and at least twelve thousand citizens belong to these clubs.

The condition of things was no better in Memphis. The *Appeal*, of the latter city, advocates the burning of the city as a last resort; but the Mayor has issued a proclamation declaring that any person detected in setting fire to the houses shall be immediately hung. Beauregard had left Jackson, and was expected to take command at Island No. 10. A large number of transports are tying at the foot of that island, to take off the troops in case of defeat.

THE WAR IN ARKANSAS.

THE BATTLE AT PEA RIDGE.

FURTHER PARTICULARS.

FEDERAL LOSS 450 KILLED AND WOUNDED.

Rebel Loss 1,000 Killed and Wounded, and 1,000 Prisoners.

THE ENEMY'S FORCE 25,000.

BEN McCULLOCH AND GEN. McINTOSH MORTALLY WOUNDED.

SPRINGFIELD, Mo., March 10.—(Special to the St. Louis *Republican*.)—A messenger who arrived here at three o'clock this morning reports that the battle at Pea Ridge lasted from Thursday morning to Saturday evening, and that our loss was about four hundred and fifty killed and wounded.

The rebel loss was about 1,000 killed and wounded, and 1,000