The Press.

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The Press.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2, 1863.

Recent American Poetry.

From New York, published by Mr. Carleton, we have two volumes—one of *poetry*, by Richard Henry Stoddart; the other of *verse*, by Thomas Bailey Aldrich. We shall speak, separately, of these books in this article: Mr. Stoddart's being a narrative poem, scarcely a tale, in the good old metre of Dryden and Pope, which was revived so well by Byron in "The Corsair," "Lara," and "The Island." This poem is entitled "The King's Bell." Mr. Aldrich's book is a collection of "Poems"—for the most part brief; mere snatches of song.

Poetasters and balladmongers are abundant; but Poets, with imaginations at once delicate and manly, capable of the highest flights yet always restrained by the self-criticism of severe judgment within the atmosphere of artistic truth—these, in our day, are very rare. Had Mr. Stoddart not written "The King's Bell," we should not have known him for the Poet he certainly is. He had previously written a good deal, but nothing giving promise of the excellence he now exhibits. In his former compositions might be found the sensuousness, the luxuriance, and the fancy of Keats; he has chastened his tone and expression in this new poem, and the result is something wholly original, yet what, were we asked for a comparison, might have been composed by uniting the polish of Rogers with the fancy of Leigh Hunt. "The King's Bell" might have been written by Oliver Goldsmith, perhaps, in a happy hour of inspiration. It places Mr. Stoddart high among living poets.

The story of "The King's Bell" reads as if founded upon some old legend, but may have been invented by the poet, or suggested by the lines which Byron puts into the mouth of a monarch:

"I strove to number o'er what days
Remembrance can discover,
Which all that life or earth displays
Would lure me to live over.
There rose no day, there rolled no hour,
Of pleasure unembittered;
And not a trapping decked my power
That gall'd not while it glittered."

The hero of the poem is Prince Felix, who has succeeded to the regal crown of his father. Full of youth and wealth, hope and life, he says:

"I shall be
So happy, the whole world will envy me."

Powerful and rich and young, and a King to boot, why should he not be happy?

"He built himself a palace, like his state,
Magnificent, with many a marble gate;
A great dome in the centre, and thereon
A gilded belfry, shining like the sun,
And in it hung a bell of wondrous tone,
From which a silken cord ran to his throne;
Nor only there, but o'er his royal bed.
(O, how unlike the sword above the head
Of that unhappy King of olden time!)
My people will be deafened by its chime,
Quoth he, when all was done. And now began
That perfect life, not yet vouchsafed to man."

He places the reins of State in the hands of wise and good men of mature age and experience, and resolves to live a happy, idle life:

"He lolled upon his couch with dreamy eyes,
Watching he cared not what—the summer skies,
The nest of swans, the fountain's rise and fall,
Or even the sunlight shifting on the wall.
Perchance he ordered music; at the word
His fancy, flattered from its trance, was stirred
And quickened with sweet sounds, from harp and lute,
Or *some rich voice that chid the music mute.*
Ten times a day he stretched his hand to ring
The bell, he felt so glad, but some slight thing—
A buzzing gnat—the wind too cold, or hot,
Deterred him till the impulse was forgot.
'Have you been happy?' something seemed to say
At night; 'I see you have not rung to-day.'"

He tires of this inglorious ease, and takes a ride in the country, (very charmingly described:)

"How sweet the morning was! how cool the wind;
A weight seemed lifted from his waking mind,
And faster flowed the current of his blood:
His proud steed bore him onward like a flood,
Shaking from his champed bit the snow-white foam.
The larks up-springing from their grassy home,
Winging the deeps of air—a jubilant choir;
The leaden clouds consumed with morning's fire,
Melting in seas of gold: the silver rills,
The broad champaign, the woods, the purple hills—
He saw, and felt them all, and, filled with joy,
Forgot the king, and shouted like a boy,
And, rising in his stirrups, clutched the air,
As if to ring his bell—ah! why was it not there?"

Returning home sobered, after this gush of enjoyment has subsided, he does *not* ring the bell, but plunges into the pleasures of the table and the wine-cup, and thence, by easy transition, into what is called gallantry in monarchs, and sensuality in their subjects:—the damsels who engage his attention are drawn with an artist's hand. Yet still the bell is silent. Felix has discovered, with Pope, that "man never is, but always to be blest." At last, his people desiring an heir to the throne, he marries, his council selecting the bride, as an affair of State:

"They chose a maid whom Felix had not seen,
More fitted for an Abbess than a Queen;
For in a cloister's shade her youth had passed,
In virgin dreams of heaven, too bright too last."

They wed—but Felix, so mated, is not happy. Agnes, his bride,

"She loved her lord, I think, but loved not well.
How could a maid bred in a convent cell,
And schooled by priests, know what a man demands
In her he loves—what work of heart, or hands?
She knew to count her beads, and say her prayers,
But not to share his joys, and soothe his cares.
Wavering between her faith and what she felt,
When he was near her tender heart would melt,
But thoughts of heaven would check her sinful bliss,
For she loved him and heaven, and both, alas, amiss!
Unhappy pair, I pity your sad fate!
Not wise enough to love, too wise to hate.
God made ye both unlike, in brain and heart,
But Man hath joined what God would keep apart!
The wrong is common; common, too, the cure;
There is but one—forgive, forget, endure."

A boy is born. The joyous news is brought to Felix, who

"Gravely wondered: 'Am I happy now?
A father—tell me'—But his challenged heart,
Disdaining parley, took the infant's part,
Whose cry he heard, and forced him to confess
A natural, manly thrill of happiness.
He stretched his hand to ring the silent bell,
But the grasped cord from out his fingers fell,
For entering now the grave physician said,
'Forbear your joy, my liege, the queen is dead!'"

What follows is well told. Felix, questioning his heart, discovers that his wife really had a place therein, and then arises what Byron so graphically calls "the late remorse of love." He is haunted by sad memories of the dead. He clings to his child, on whom he bestows

"The love he would have lavished on the queen,
But for that dreadful cloud that came between.
* * * * * * *
Clung to the child as if his heart would break:
He loved it madly for its mother's sake."

The father's association with the boy is finely drawn, and truly, too. But years glide on, and Felix flings himself into the craft of State, from a desire to make his people happy. Diplomatists vainly essay to cajole him, for

"He baffled all, not by a deeper art;
But by a larger brain and purer heart."

What ensued? The old result, the achievement unachieved:

"All went well,
Yet, somehow, Felix did not ring his bell."

At last he is compelled to engage in war, and with the aged father of his dead wife. In the description of the contest—particularly of his clemency to the besieged town and of his gallantry in combat—Mr. Stoddart exhibits force and power, precisely where they properly can be displayed. He returns home, a conqueror, and is hailed with joy by his people:

"It was a holiday throughout the lands,
Triumphal arches—banners—music's swell—
And all the bells were rung except the happy bell!"

Years roll on, and the bell gives out no thrilling sound of joy. The King grows old and sad, and here, to our taste, comes in the most thoughtful and fascinating portion of the poem, gradually leading to the climax. At last, the end approaches, for the King is smitten with a mortal ailment:

"Pale, pale his sunken cheek, and sharp his chin,
His long, thin hands, so white, more long and thin,
(Like knotted cords their large blue arteries rise,)
And what great orbs are in his pits of eyes,
Draped in the wrinkled lids whose fringes meet—
As dreadful as the dead beneath the winding-sheet!
Ah yes! and when at last the lids are stirred,
Lifting at some soft step, or loving word—
(Say, when the prince is by,) more dreadful yet,
Filled with such solemn light, such strange regret,
Unearthly, wild—as if the dead arose,
And stared about them in their burial clothes!
For hours he spoke not, moved not; shunning all
He turned his face in sorrow to the wall,
And, lost in shadow, slept, or seemed to sleep;
He murmured 'Agnes' once, and woke to weep!
Then, rest denied, he tried to dream of rest,
Stretched on his back, his hands across his breast,
Clasped as in prayer, his upward-pointing feet
Drawing in long white folds the marble sheet;
Pale, cold, dumb, dead—as awful in the gloom
As if he had become the statue on his tomb!"

The passages which we print in italics are beautiful,—from the last five lines sculptor or painter easily might take a glorious subject. The closing lines of the poem run thus:

"'Sit by my side—just there, and now your hand;
When one is going to a distant land—
As I am now—he loves to have a friend—
A son, say, as he starts, to cheer him to the end!
Speak kindly of me after I am gone,
And see my name be graven on the stone,
'Infelix,' mind, not 'Felix,'—that would be
A cruel, lying epitaph for me.
And yet I know not, for methinks I seem
Slowly awaking from the strangest dream;
The mystery of my life is growing clear;
Something—it may be Happiness—is near.
I hear such heavenly music? . . . Did you speak?
Who's shining yonder? Look! His voice grew weak,
Died to a whisper, while his swimming sight
Strained through the darkness to a shape of light,
Floating across the chamber to his bed.
'*Agnes!*'—he clutched the cord, and fell back—dead,
Striking in death the first stroke of his knell.
Thus Felix rang at last the happy bell."

There cannot be a second opinion upon this fine poem, on which Mr. Stoddart's rich fancy has been disciplined by correct taste and fine judgment. He is no hunter after conceits or similes—he does not look after dainty images or curious felicities of expression; yet his images are ever to the purpose, and his language is beautiful, as well as expressive. Lastly, we congratulate Mr. Stoddart on the accuracy of his ear. There is not a bad or careless rhyme in the whole poem.

"Poems," by Thomas Bailey Aldrich, in a little "blue and gold" volume, might better have been called poemlets, inasmuch as, for the most part, they are short lyrics. Mr. Aldrich is a mocking-bird, who imitates, but has few notes of his own. Shelley and Keats, Barry Cornwall, and Moore, Tennyson and Gerald Massy, have evidently been most suggestive to him. It is a pity that he did not imitate the exquisite rhyming of Mr. Stoddart. *Morn* he uses as a rhyme to *dawn*, and *morning* to *dawning*—though (p. 103) he properly adapts it to *adorning*, which is correct, as (p. 75) is *morn* to *corn*. So (p. 115) he rhymes *froth* with *north*, and (p. 130) *poney* with *bonny*. Nor is it quite allowable to consider *pretty* as corresponding in sound with *witty*. Where he could have found a "lute of amber" (p. 17) is a puzzle to us, considering that a lute is a pear-shaped musical instrument, about the size of a guitar, which never was, because it never could be, made of amber. A lyrist should use familiar words; but when (p. 19) Mr. Aldrich talks of "misty izar" and of "nedd," which patient search fails to find in Worcester's Dictionary, one is tempted to wish that he were not quite so Oriental. We have (p. 93) the lines:

"And an owl on the skirts of the wood
Hoots, and says: Do you hear?"

whereas owls do not say anything of the sort under any circumstances. In page 99, we find

"Nature smiles
On our mortality. A sparrow's death,
Or the unnoticed falling of a leaf,
Is more to her than when a great man dies."

Surely this is false philosophy? Pope more truly says:

"And sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish or a sparrow fall;"

but does not say that the fall of a sparrow is *more* than the death of a great man. Nevertheless, though Mr. Aldrich has not sufficient strength of wing for such flights as those masters of song, the poets, boldly take into new and far realms of thought and beauty, there are some pretty conceits in his verses. "The Ballad of Baby Bell," relating the brief life and the death of a young child, is the best piece in the volume; pathetic, simple, unaffected, and sadly expressive. Whether written before or after Gerald Massy's "Ballad of Babe Christabel" we shall not too curiously inquire. "Little Maud" is a lyric so rythmical that, as you read it, the words make their own music, and you catch yourself singing the refrain

O rosebud of woman! where are you?
(She never replies to our call!)
O where is our dainty, our darling,
The daintiest darling of all,
Little Maud!

"The Tragedy," somewhat reminding us of Willis's "Unseen Spirits," but more intensely wrought up, is another poem of high merit—a true lyric; and the elegiac stanzas upon the late General Fred. W. Lander are a grave, earnest, and hearted tribute to that brave and good man, poet, and soldier. It is a pity that the pen which wrote thus gravely and soothly should have perpetrated such mere tuneless and jingling sing-song as the verses commencing,

I have placed a golden
Ring upon the hand
Of the blithest little
Lady in the land!

A glance at Mr. Aldrich's feeble features, as exhibited on the medallion portrait, which is the frontispiece to the volume, makes us wonder that he ever wrote any thing better than this namby-pamby. A few of his poems, as we have said, are manly and earnest: many of his *concetti* are good. Here are a few:

When they had finished dressing her,
(The eye of morn, the heart's desire!)
Like one pale star against the dusk,
A single diamond on her brow
Trembled with its imprisoned fire.
* * * * * * *
Come watch with me the shaft of fire that glows
In yonder West: the fair, frail palaces,
The fading Alps and Archipelagoes,
And great cloud-continents of sunset-seas.
* * * * * * *
Wine-red jewels that seem to hold
Fire, *but only burn with cold.*
* * * * * * *
The music of her winsome mouth was like the laughing water
That *broke in silver syllables* by Farmer Phillips' Mill.
* * * * * * *
Sorrow itself is not so hard to bear
As the thought of sorrow coming. Airy ghosts,
That work no mischief, terrify us more
Than men in steel with bloody purposes.
Death is not dreadful; 'tis the dread of death—
We die whene'er we think of it!

Even though too much reminding us of Shelley's exquisite song, beginning

"Good night!—ah no, the hour is ill
That severs those it should unite,"

we must quote, from what he affectedly calls "swallow-flights," the best little poem Mr. Aldrich has given:

Good night! I have to say good night
To such a host of peerless things!
Good night unto that fragile hand
All queenly with its weight of rings;
Good night to fond uplifted eyes,
Good night to chestnut braids of hair,
Good night unto the perfect mouth,
And all the sweetness nestled there—
The snowy hand detains me, then
I'll have to say Good night again!

But there will come a time, my love,
When, if I read our stars aright,
I shall not linger by the porch
With my adieus. Till then good night!
You wish the time were now? And I.
You do not blush to wish it so?
You would have blushed yourself to death
To own so much a year ago—
What! both these snowy hands! ah, then,
I'll have to say Good night again.

It is a pity that he cannot always write thus. However, as there are four or five other creditable lyrics in the volume, we put it on the shelf where stands a battalion of poets, arrayed in "blue and gold"—the American livery of the Muses. If Mr. Aldrich will read and think during the next two or three years, and *then* write, the chance is that he may produce a book which "the world will not willingly let die."

DEPARTMENT OF THE SOUTH.

[Special Correspondence of The Press.]

PORT ROYAL, S. C., Dec. 27, 1862.

Christmas was passed here by our soldiers, and more particularly by the colored men under our protection, with great glee and joyfulness. Their life of freedom is becoming more and more a life of usefulness, and they begin to evince a proper and salutary knowledge of the necessities and duties of life. The coming of the New Year is anticipated with anxiety and pleasure. These benighted people seem to see in the future, freedom not only for them, but for all their race. Gen. Saxton, who is winning applause by his kind and just discipline, and his love for this unfortunate race, has issued an eloquent and spirited order in reference to the coming Emancipation proclamation of President Lincoln. I send you a copy:

"A happy New Year's Greeting to the colored people in the Department of the South!

"In accordance, as I believe, with the will of our Heavenly Father, and by direction of your great and good friend whose name you are familiar with, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, and Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy, on the 1st day of January, 1863, you will be declared 'forever free.'

"When in the course of human events there comes a day which is destined to be an everlasting beacon light, marking a joyful era in the progress of a nation and the hopes of a people, it seems to be fitting the occasion that it should not pass unnoticed by those whose hopes it comes to brighten and to bless. Such a day to you is January 1, 1863.

"I therefore call upon all the colored people in this department to assemble on that day at the headquarters of the 1st Regiment of South Carolina Volunteers, there to hear the President's proclamation read, and to indulge in such other manifestations of joy as may be called forth by the occasion.

"It is your duty to carry this good news to your brethren who are still in slavery!

"Let all your voices, like merry bells, join loud and clear in the grand chorus of liberty, 'We are free!' 'We are free!' until, listening, you shall hear its echoes coming back from every cabin in the land—'We are free!' 'We are free!'

"R. SAXTON,
"Brigadier General and Military Governor."

THE PIRATE ALABAMA.

Gigantic Preparations for her Capture—United States Vessels Ordered to Sea—Why She has not been Caught, &c.

The failure of our naval vessels to capture the Alabama before this time has caused the most erroneous impressions to prevail relative to the doings of the Navy Department. The public has been so far misled in this matter that it is only right to state the facts of the case. Notwithstanding the still unchecked success of Capt. Semmes, it is beyond contradiction that the history of the American, English, or French navy furnishes no parallel for the feats accomplished by our naval authorities in connection with the much-dreaded pirate. In times of peace, we had six navy yards, which were pretty generally kept going, providing for the current wants of the forty men-of-war we used to have in commission. When war came upon us Norfolk and Pensacola were swept away, leaving only New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Portsmouth, N. H., (Washington being an ordnance yard chiefly) available. And these have had to fit out a series of squadrons in fifteen months which could not be armed elsewhere in the same time. We have now over sixty vessels more in commission than England, and to keep their wants supplied, to keep them repaired always, relieved at the proper time, and to have ships approaching completion as others wear out, is one item of the daily work of the four navy yards named. Besides doing it well, time has been found, within the brief space of three months, to equip a fleet for the purpose of overhauling the Alabama, which is now represented in every sea. In order to estimate the extraordinary energy required to accomplish this, it is only necessary to know that not one vessel in forty at Mr. Welles' command would be worth anything for the business. The proper ships had to be first picked out; and, as they all need great alteration, and as some of them were at the furthest end of the blockade, time was required to bring them home and put them in proper trim. And now, after twelve weeks' work, the following fleet is on the ocean, every vessel belonging to it a match for the Alabama, save in speed, and several well able to overhaul her:

Vessels.	How Long Out	Screw or Paddle
Chippewa	A few weeks	Screw.
Dacotah	Four weeks	Screw.
Juniata	Bound out	Screw.
Kearsage*	Three weeks	Screw.
Minnesota	Ordered off	Screw.
Powhatan	Some weeks	Screw.
Rhode Island	Three weeks	Paddle.
Vanderbilt	Five weeks	Paddle.
San Jacinto	Some months	Screw.
Tuscarora†	Three weeks	Screw.
Canandaigua	Some weeks	Screw.
Mohican	Some weeks	Screw.
Fast steam frigate	Under orders	Screw.
Fast steam frigate	Ready Jan. 10	Screw.
Fast steam gunboat	Sails next Wednesday	Screw.
Colorado	A week	Screw.
Ossipee	Two weeks	Screw.
Sacramento	Under orders	Screw.

*Sent first after Sumter †Called from Europe.

As the armament or tonnage of these ships is not given, it can convey no information to the enemy. Some of the vessels named were not fitted out especially for the duty they are now believed to be engaged in. Besides putting these craft in fighting and chasing condition, the aforesaid four Navy Yards have had to despatch the following vessels for current blockade service, the neglect of which even the capture of the Alabama would not atone for:

Vessels.	Rate.	Work Done.
Alabama	Purchased paddle	Overhauled, in toto.
A. Houghton	Store ship	Repaired.
America	"Yacht" America	Almost rebuilt.
Colorado	50-gun frigate	Repaired, in toto.
Canandaigua	Iron sloop	Fitted out.
Dale	Sailing Corvette	Repaired.
De Soto	Paddle steamer	Repaired.
Daylight	Screw steamer	Repaired.
E. B. Hale	Screw steamer	Repaired.
Florida	Side-wheel steam'r	Repaired.
Housatonic	Screw sloop	Fitted out.
Iroquois	Steam gunboat	Thoroughly overh.
Lackawanna	Steam frigate	Finished.
Massachusetts	Prop. ship, transp't	Refitted.
Midnight	Dark	Refitted.
Montgomery	Screw steamer	Repaired.
Monticello	Screw steamer	Repaired.
Maratanza	Screw steamer	Repaired.
Mahaska	Paddle steamer	Repaired.
Monongahela	Screw	Was finished.
Monitor	Iron-clad	Overhauled.
Magnolia	Side-wheel steam'r	Repaired.
Potomska	Screw steamer	Repaired.
Sagamore	Screw steamer	Finished.
Shepherd Knapp	Ship	Repaired.
Sonoma	Paddle wheel	Finished.
Sacramento	Steam frigate	Now ready.
Troja	Steam gunboat	Finished.
Unadilla	Screw steamer	Repaired.
Water Witch	Paddle wheel	Repaired.
Wissahickon	Screw gunboat	Repaired.

This is twelve weeks' work, but it does not include the men-of-war now in progress, of which twelve or fifteen are building at the four navy yards. Nor does it include vessels fitted up elsewhere, and sent to the yards for "final preparations," which often occupy weeks; storeships were provisioned, transports commissioned and sent away, and other work done which should be performed if troops were to be fed or a blockade maintained.

We challenge any naval Power in the world to show such a twelve weeks' work as this. Under the circumstances, the mere manning of such a fleet as ours, and keeping it supplied with beef, bread, butter, cheese, flour, raisins, apples, &c., is marvellous. France challenged the world to equal her sending off fourteen thousand men in transports, and about ten men-of-war, in two weeks. We have sent as many in a week, if the everlasting changing of crews, relieving and reshipping, were taken into account.

While all these facts are true, it may seem strange that the energy and resources of the country cannot result in ridding the ocean of a pestering pirate. Officers of the highest standing give the following reasons for this:

First—In the Alabama everything is sacrificed for speed. It would not do to build men-of-war on that plan before the pirate's peculiarities were known; and since, the most expeditious constructor could not have completed her equal.

Second—The difficulty of finding one small ship on the wide ocean, especially when she can have as bright a lookout as her competitor, and can get out of the way with great alacrity.

Third—There is not in the United States, to be purchased for love or money, a steamer possessing the speed necessary to catch her, and, at the same time, the strength to fight her.—*N. Y. Herald.*

ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND.

The Army in Motion—Preparations for a Great Battle—The Enemy Driven Back—Sharp Fight near Nolinsville, Tenn.—Engagement with Hardee's Forces.

CAMP, TEN MILES FROM MURFREESBORO, Wednesday, Dec. 31, 1862.

General Crittenden reports the enemy drawn up in line of battle, on the east side of Stone's river, menacing General Rosecrans. He is ordered to form in line of battle, two divisions in front, one in reserve and covering his flanks, and Generals Negley and Rosseau to close up. General McCook also reports his command on Wilkinson's creek, seven miles from Murfreesboro. The enemy is in line of battle on Stone's river, from Murfreesboro to Franklin pike. A similar disposition of his forces is ordered as on General Crittenden's line. It now appears that a great battle will be fought on Stone's river to-morrow, in front of Murfreesboro.

HEADQUARTERS 14TH ARMY CORPS, ONE MILE FROM MURFREESBORO, MONDAY, Dec. 29, 1862.

Gen. Rosecrans' army moved on the enemy, Dec. 26.—Gen. Thomas' grand division on the right, Gen. McCook's in the centre, on the Nolinsville pike, and Gen. Crittenden on the left, on the Murfreesboro pike.

Gen. McCook had sharp skirmishing. The 101st Ohio, of Carlin's brigade, captured one gun and caisson from a Georgia battery. Our loss was two killed and five wounded. The troops behaved splendidly. There was also slight skirmishing on the left.

December 27, the army pushed on with sharp skirmishing on the right and left. Crittenden lost two killed, twenty-seven wounded, and five prisoners. They killed and wounded some rebels, captured thirty-six Alabama cavalry, and captured the bridges on Stewart's creek in gallant style. McCook drove Hardee from Triune, which lies due west from Murfreesboro. The weather was heavy and the troops fatigued. Gens. Negley's and Rousseau's divisions now moved to the centre, leaving McCook on the right.

On Sunday nothing was done, Gen. Rosecrans declining to attack on that day. The army was in motion at daylight on December 29. Gen. Jeff. C. Davis moved upon Murfreesboro in advance on the right, on Bully Jack road; several miles north of Triune, Gens. Negley's and Rousseau's divisions of Thomas' grand division in the centre, Crittenden's corps on the left, moving down Murfreesboro and Jefferson pikes, Wood's and Vancleve's divisions of the latter corps right and left, respectively, while Palmer's division was in reserve. A battle on Stewart's creek was anticipated, but, excepting an artillery duel between Parsons' 6th United States Artillery and a rebel battery, at 9 o'clock A. M., to the right of Murfreesboro pike, crossing the creek, there was no engagement. From 10 to 1 all was quiet, our army crossing Stewart's creek, from right to left, without opposition. At 1 we were within six miles of Murfreesboro on the direct pike, the army still pushing on in splendid style, McCook, with Davis', Sheridan's, and Johnson's divisions on the right, Thomas, with Negley's and Rousseau's divisions in the centre, Crittenden, with Wood's and Vancleve's divisions in front, and Palmer in reserve on the left. At 1 o'clock it was marvellous we were not stubbornly resisted at Stewart's creek. At 2 we are anticipating a battle, with some doubt of a general engagement at Murfreesboro. Now and then there is a cannon shot and a little skirmishing with cavalry outposts.

Gen. Rosecrans says his headquarters will be established near Murfreesboro this evening. He is now at Stewart's creek, ten miles from Murfreesboro', and all but the reserves are far across the creek. The grand battle, if any, will be on Stone's river, at Murfreesboro. The day is magnificent. An afternoon engagement will be in our favor. There is some skirmishing, and the wind blowing in the faces of the enemy. We have no casualties yet. Should the enemy evacuate Murfreesboro', we shall pursue rapidly, anticipating a battle near Shelbyville.

REPORTS FROM LAVERGNE.

CAMP NEAR LAVERGNE, Dec. 27, 1862.

As soon as it became certain that Morgan's and Forrest's rebel cavalry were engaged in raids north and west, and that Bragg was mainly deprived of cavalry, General Rosecrans determined to make a demonstration against Murfreesboro, in the hope of possessing himself of sufficient country to feed his army while the communications were interrupted.

Information having been received that Murfreesboro had not been fortified, as reported, General Rosecrans, on Christmas day, took the field, and on Friday his whole army was put in motion. Crittenden's and McCook's corps moved on Murfreesboro, and Thomas, on the Nolinsville road, moved rapidly, and camped at night at Lavergne. During the whole march the rebels in front kept up skirmishing with our forces; but the movement was not seriously opposed by any main body of the enemy. On the Murfreesboro road we encountered pickets, with Anderson's division, of Hardee's corps. The whole rebel force fell back slowly, and, it is understood, has concentrated for desperate defence at Murfreesboro. Communication was kept up with the force on the Nolinsville road, and I learn that they met with some success, the rebels retiring slowly.

This morning the skirmishing became more serious. We have advanced to within eight miles of Murfreesboro. The enemy resisted with more energy than they did yesterday. We have captured two pieces of artillery which were taken from Grant at Shiloh, and which belonged to Dardan's rebel battery. On reaching Lytle's creek, eight miles from Murfreesboro, we found the enemy strongly posted in force in front, and here to-night we rest. I do not think the rebels will be found in the morning, as we hear rumors of their evacuating already.

General Rosecrans has gained his purpose, and now has possession of a portion of country on which forage is richer than was supposed. Whether Rosecrans will attack, or Bragg evacuate, remains to be seen.

I have no returns of the casualties. We have probably taken six hundred and fifty prisoners. They report Bragg fifty thousand strong, but say there are no fortifications at Murfreesboro. They also say Bragg will retire before us to the Tennessee river; that he only came to get provisions, and will evacuate Murfreesboro.

ARMY OF THE BLACKWATER.

General Pryor near the Nansemond River, with a Large Force—A Reconnoissance—Capture of Prisoners—Stabbing Affray—An Engagement Expected.

FORTRESS MONROE, December 29, 1862.—The rebels have crossed the Blackwater in force, and warm work may be daily expected in the neighborhood of Suffolk. In my last letter I informed you that the enemy already had two pieces of artillery on this side of the Blackwater, between Franklin and Zuni, and that four pieces on the other side protected them.

Since then a large force of infantry, cavalry, and artillery crossed near that point, and at the last reports were still on this side.

Yesterday afternoon, about three o'clock, Colonel Gibbs, of the 130th New York, commanding a brigade, received orders to occupy the attention of the enemy's scouts, for a particular purpose, which, for the present, shall be nameless. The brigade was soon moving rapidly towards Carsville, but had not passed far beyond our advanced pickets before those of the enemy were discovered. Our troops charged and drove them a considerable distance, capturing nine of the rebels. The night being now far advanced, and our soldiers weary with their long and hasty march, the brigade bivouacked some ten or eleven miles from Suffolk, throwing out a strong picket guard. The enemy showed no disposition to make an attack, and, the object of the expedition being accomplished, Colonel Gibbs returned with his command and prisoners at an early hour this morning.

The captured rebels were warmly and comfortably clothed. Over their dark suit of gray they wore army overcoats made of white flannel blankets, the black line extending around the bottom. The coats reached nearly to their ankles. Two or three wore shawls in lieu of the overcoat. They were well shod. Most of them had black slouched hats on their heads.

Those of the prisoners who are communicative agree in saying that the rebel General Pryor is at Carsville, and that his force consists of two brigades of infantry, two regiments of cavalry, and nine pieces of artillery. One said that if our column had advanced a little further it would have met with this overwhelming body. A Union soldier who accompanied the expedition here quietly chimed in, "Yes; but we didn't see it."

On the same afternoon another very interesting affair occurred on the Windsor road, at Providence church. At about dusk the enemy's pickets accidentally entered our mounted picket line. The rebels evidently intended to surprise us, but were surprised at our surprising them, and commenced a hasty retreat. Several shots were fired at them, wounding two. One of these escaped; the other and five of the fleeing rebels were overtaken and captured. The prisoners resembled those mentioned above in their dress and appearance.

FORTRESS MONROE, December 30, 1862.—The prisoners have been brought here. A serious stabbing affray occurred at Norfolk at about six o'clock last evening. A man named Miles Taylor was descending the steps of the National Hotel, leading into the street, when he fell, and was lifted up by a man named Williams. Taylor said that he would rather lay on the ground than be picked up by a damned Secessionist, when Williams drew a dirk knife and stabbed Taylor in the back, inflicting an ugly wound. Williams was arrested. Taylor is said to be in command of the contrabands at Norfolk, and Williams an old resident of that city. Both parties were in liquor.

THE CITY.

The Thermometer.

JANUARY 1, 1862.	JANUARY 1, 1863.
6 A. M....12 M.....3 P. M.	6 A. M....12 M.....3 P. M.
38.........49.........55	25½.........33.........36
WIND.	WIND.
SW by S..SW by S...SW.	NW by W..WNW..WNW

New Year's Day Celebration.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES.

The Emancipation Proclamation.

Yesterday was a day of sunshine. The skies rained spangles of gold. The molecules in every ray quivered with brightness, and were redolent of glory. The skies were of their very bluest, and shone on faces happy as those skies themselves, and rejoicing in the noontide of the New Year. The air was brisk and sharp, affording red and beautifying pinches to noses, cheeks, and ears. The very ground was glad, and in its slipperiness made the inadvertent suggestion that falls and bruises were sometimes concomitant with happiness and sunshine. The day was a gala one; walking, and eating good things, were the universal rule. Gum shoes and gum drops, brandy drops and brandy bottles, were equally in request. From the gay scenes which the atmosphere unveils, it was easy to see that something was in the wind, and people went to church and to the theatre in the same breath, so to speak. Interchange of visits is neither so lively nor general in Philadelphia as in some other cities, Christmas day being considered as *the* festival of the season. Yesterday, however, a goodly amount of visit variegated with pleasurable exchange of compliment every fashionable environ. The compliments of the season were paid in personal appearance. Photographs usurped the place of autographs, and furnished a fresh subject for talk. Nothing is more pleasant (so cynics say) than to remark upon the appearance of another person. Flattery and back-biting are brother and sister, and were seen together yesterday. The good feeling of the season, however, enwrapped in genial and rich golden atmosphere both the city and its people. The breakfast table, the dinner party, the company, party, ball, were rich in every phase of feeling and of fashion which add fresh zest to the life of this season of laughter and of mirth. Both sexes, every sect, all ages, claimed and possessed their share of enjoyment. The blessings of the past year were remembered amidst the recollections of its reverses. Supplications for mercy in the future were mingled with the glow of gladness in the present. In hearts, in homes, in thronged streets, and vacant, untrod country lanes, the feeling of enjoyment approximated to content, and shed around a halo of prosperity. It is a complete and beautiful feature of language that very short words may express a very long idea. A "jam" is the word which expresses the idea of the crowded state of the principal streets yesterday. Belphegor's and wandering minstrels were in abundance; gay Lotharios, with "Bardolphian blossoms," preponderated. The icy, scampering breeze furnished an incentive to exertion, and the man who cleaned teeth gratis, and had his hat stuck with teeth, (suggestive of bacon stuck with cloves), doubtless thought the air was *biting* cold. Every shade of every color is in the rainbow, each tint of each character was yesterday upon the street. There were tit-bits of girls, blush-blooming, lily-sweet; there were fresh lads, beautiful and brave; dingy old maids, skeletons in passion as in beauty; fat matrons having the semblance of human dumplings; boys dressed like old men, and men dressed like young boys; gaudy women with lips illuminated with meretricious smiles, and male sprigs out on a spree, and in for it generally. The streets were never more crowded, the citizens never more hilarious. Taking into consideration both past and future, the country has more to be thankful for than to lament. The day was of more than ordinary interest, in consequence of the fact that it was the time fixed when the Emancipation Proclamation of the President was to take effect. This fact was alluded to at all the religious and social gatherings, and much anxiety was felt during the day to see the proclamation of the Chief Executive in print. The principal observances of the day are given below.

PRAYER FOR THE COUNTRY.

A meeting to offer "prayers for the country," composed of representatives from all the Evangelical denominations, was held at the Baptist church, Broad and Arch streets.

Rev. Dr. Jeffery was called upon to preside. He remarked that there was abundant cause for prayer and encouragement; that God would bring out our light as the noonday. The hymn, "Blow ye the trumpet, blow," was sung.

Rev. Dr. Boardman prayed that God, who held the nation in his hand, would do what was too great for us, and through a fiery process purify and save the nation.

Rev. Dr. J. Newton Brown said we must be in sympathy with God and 500,000 colored Christians at the South, to have God help us.

Rev. Mr. Atwood thought God would take care of us in the furnace, and bring us out unharmed. He was able to sleep sweetly, with these words in mind: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." We will be graduated, when we have finished our education in the school of Providence.

Rev. Dr. Newton looked hopefully upon the future, yet felt that our hope was only in God. He hoped the proclamation would be a wheaten loaf of Gideon to carry dismay to the heart of rebeldom, and wipe away the stain of our national escutcheon.

Rev. J. Wheaton Smith said that God was as ready to listen to us as we would be to the cry of real misery; but our only egress from national calamity, was through the channel of deep, national repentance.

Rev. Mr. Lockwood, missionary from the freedmen of Fortress Monroe, read a hymn of liberty that has been sung by the slaves for fifty years: "The Better Day Coming"—and spoke of another: "Let My People Go," that has been sung for at least thirty years.

The meeting was [illegible] deeply interesting, and the watchmen of Z[illegible] to see eye to eye on the great question of the day.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, a similar meeting was held in the same place. The church was very well filled, with a congregation at once attentive and intelligent. The prayers and addresses were not confined to the clergymen present, the members of the church and others likewise participating. The present crisis of the country's history was alluded to with all the eloquence of true and hearty feeling. The blessing of God was supplicated for the future, and his mercy implored for the past. If any thoughtful man could have been found uninterested in the subject of the hour and its treatment, the time so employed might to him have seemed wearisome. As it was, however, the spirit of every heart contributed its quota to that of the hour. The voice of religion spake in meaning tones, and appropriately celebrated the afternoon hours of the first day of the New Year.

The evening meeting was held, at seven o'clock, at Dr. Wylie's Church, the First Reformed Presbyterian. This meeting, like the preceding ones, was most appropriate to the season and grateful to the assembly. Many of the truest and most celebrated ministers of the Gospel in the city recommended the first of January as a day of prayer, and invited a general unity in the duty of thanksgiving. The response was full and cordial. The prayer and other religious meetings were extremely well attended, and conducted with a fervor and devotion equalled but by few examples in the chronicles of our country's New-Year's history.

INTERESTING WATCH MEETING.

On New Year's eve, a religious meeting of peculiar interest was held in the lecture room of the Green Hill Presbyterian Church, (Rev. Frank L. Robbins, pastor.) It began at 10½ o'clock, and concluded shortly after midnight. It combined with the ordinary features of a "watch-meeting," the extraordinary one of hearty Christian sympathy with President Lincoln's glorious emancipation proclamation. Stirring addresses, alternated with prayer and praise, were delivered by the pastor, by Rev. Mr. Lockwood, chaplain to the contrabands at Fortress Monroe, and by two clergymen of the Episcopal Church, who were present. Just before midnight, the congregation engaged in three minutes' silent prayer; and then, just as the clock struck twelve, the hymn "The year of jubilee is come," was sung with thrilling effect.

THE VOLUNTEER REFRESHMENT SALOONS.

THE UNION.

There was a gay and happy time at the Union and the Cooper Shop Refreshment Saloons, during the greater part of yesterday. The event of raising the large eagle on the eastern front of the Union was interesting and imposing. It rekindled the fire of patriotism in the bosoms of all the participants and beholders. At 11 o'clock the Massachusetts soldiers, being six companies of the 50th Regiment, from the Old Bay State, were drawn up into line in front of the Union. The drum corps and glee club occupied their assigned positions. At 11 o'clock the eagle, measuring 19 feet 6 inches from tip to tip, was raised and firmly fastened in its place on the top of the saloon immediately over the main doorway of entrance. The drum corps now played the reveille, and the glee club sang in admirable style several patriotic and appropriate songs.

When the American flag was run up to the clear breeze above the eagle the cheers were most enthusiastically given by the military and spectators; the ladies adding *eclat* to the great occasion by their joyous presence, the waving of handkerchiefs, etc. There would have been a national salute fired, but this was dispensed with because of the sick in the adjacent hospitals. Speeches were made by the Rev. Mr. Brainerd and Rev. Dr. Goddard, whose patriotic remarks elicited rounds of applause. These ceremonies being over, a grand dinner was served up of the substantial necessaries of life, at which the Rev. Mr. Brainerd invoked the Divine blessing. The whole arrangement, from the beginning to the end, was of that character that it will ever be reverted to with pleasure, pride, and gratification.

THE COOPER SHOP.

There was also a brilliant time at the old, world-renowned Cooper Shop. There had been voluntarily contributed to the committee a large number of turkeys and rounds of the choicest quality of beef, all of which were served up to the Massachusetts soldiers. This dinner was arranged rather above the ordinary styles, as the following bill of fare, placed on every plate, will attest:

COMPLIMENTARY DINNER
TO THE
FIFTIETH REGIMENT MASSACHUSETTS MILITIA,
AT THE
COOPER-SHOP VOLUNTEER REFRESHMENT SALOON,
Philadelphia,
NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1863.

The Jefferson Cornet Band will escort the Regiment to the Saloon.

BILL OF FARE.

ROAST.
Turkey. Chickens. Ducks. Beef. Lamb.

BOILED.
Turkey, Chickens, Corned Beef, Ham, Tongue.

ENTREES.
Oysters stewed, Oysters fried,

VEGETABLES.
Baked Potatoes, Boiled " Sweet Potatoes, Boiled Beans. Baked "

PASTRY.
Mince Pie, Apple " Pumpkin Pie.

DESSERT.
Cranberry Tarts, Apple "

ICE CREAM.
Vanilla, Lemon, Pine Apple, Strawberry.

Apples, Cheese, and Crackers.

All the tables in the lower saloon were handsomely decorated; and the good things spread out upon them were enjoyed with peculiar *gusto* by the soldiers of the 50th Massachusetts.

The Jefferson Band, who had so kindly volunteered, were present, and discoursed most eloquent music. There not being sufficient room in the main saloon, a table was spread in the committee room, for the field, staff, commissioned, and non-commissioned officers.

The Rev. Mr. Parry officiated in his ministerial capacity. This table was supplied in accordance with the above bill of fare. While all this was going on, the soldiers of the hospital were not forgotten, for they had a handsome dinner served up also.

There was an extra amount of pains taken by the Committee of the Cooper Shop, while extending the hospitalities of the day, to do so in a style that would reflect credit upon Philadelphia. The Massachusetts officers say the committee succeeded in the most admirable manner.

THE NIAGARA.

A very large number of ladies and gentlemen visited the Saloons during the most pleasant part of the day. Many of them, being attracted by curiosity, paid a visit to the transport Niagara, lying in the dock at Prime-street wharf. Numbers of them obtained small pieces of her rotten timbers and planking, well satisfied that such a vessel was not fit for rough-water navigation.

THE JENNY LIND.

The sailing vessel Jenny Lind, on board of which one company of the Massachusetts regiment arrived on Wednesday evening, is at anchor in the stream opposite the Refreshment Saloon. It was very evident, among a considerable number of people, that they entertained much distrust as to this craft.

She registers between 700 and 800 tons, and is so poorly ventilated as to be unfit for passengers of any kind. There are nearly seven hundred soldiers to embark on board this small vessel. In case of rough weather, which is not unlikely at this season of the year, the hatches would have to be put down. The men then between decks would be in a far worse position than if they were in the Black Hole of Calcutta. The colonel of the regiment is rather under the weather at present. It is probable, if he listens to many of his command, he will not accept of such a craft. Quite a large number of the Massachusetts regiment are sea-faring men, who know the ropes, and whose word is worth consideration.

CELEBRATION BY THE COLORED PEOPLE.

The only celebration by the colored people, yesterday, was a grand demonstration at Big Wesley Church, Lombard street, below Sixth. This was a celebration of the emancipation of slaves in all the States now in rebellion against the Government. The exercises consisted of numerous addresses, interspersed with appropriate musical selections. The attendance was large, a number of white persons being in attendance.

PRESENTATION OF SILVER PLATE.—Yesterday Barton H. Jenks, Esq., was presented, at his residence, in this city, by the operatives at the Bridesburg Armory, with a handsome service of silver plate, manufactured by Messrs. William Wilson & Son, at the southwest corner of Fifth and Cherry streets, from a mass of pure silver equal to a thousand dollars in coin.

This plate is unique in its character. A gift equally appropriate is rarely presented. Upon each piece, in a medallion centre, is engraved a vignette representing the most important machines used in the various manufactures of the firm. The service comprises seven pieces, including the largest salver ever yet made by the Messrs. Wilson. The pieces are an urn, water, tea, coffee, and cream pots, and sugar bowl. The urn is 20 inches in height. The design is pure Grecian; the embellishments are of exquisite incrustation, in frosted ground, with burnished relief. The various pieces are in entire harmony with each other. The makers have in hand a corresponding service, ordered by a millionaire of Brazil, for presentation to the Emperor Don Pedro. The urn, coffee, and tea pots, are surmounted with figures representing Chinese mandarins, and other characteristic figures.

The plate in the centre of each piece bears the words, "To Mrs. Elizabeth E. Jenks." The broad salver is inscribed thus:

As a token of their appreciation of the skill and energy manifested by
BARTON H. JENKS, ESQ.,
in organizing and carrying into successful operation a complete system of machinery for manufacturing Springfield muskets, and also as a mark of personal respect entertained for him, this service of plate is respectfully presented to his wife,
MRS. ELIZA E. JENKS,
by the workmen employed in the Bridesburg Machine Works and Armory, January 1, 1863.
"*Finis Coronat Opus.*"

The whole is enclosed in an elaborate plate chest of rosewood, finished like a pianoforte case. The presentation came off at the house of Mr. Jenks, where a band of music was also in attendance.

MEETING OF PATIENTS AT THE CHRISTIAN-STREET HOSPITAL.—At a meeting of the patients of the United States army hospital, Christian street, held on Wednesday, the proceedings were as follows:

The patients of this hospital, under a deep sense of obligation to their friends, who so generously ministered to their wants in the abundant repast on Christmas day, feel that this outward demonstration of inward sympathy can never be forgotten.

The enjoyments of that day were, moreover, greatly increased by the kind consideration of the surgeon in charge, the assistant surgeons, and cadets, who were not only present, but cheerfully mingled with the men, and with kindly advice bid them take time and enjoy themselves heartily.

To the ladies the soldiers express a debt that can never be paid, not only for their liberality and personal exertions on that day, but also for their daily acts of kindness and attentive ministrations to their comfort and wants.

They also feel deeply indebted to the chaplain, Rev. J. Long, for his kind and efficient help in guiding them to the Fountain of Living Waters.

The following was also unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That our most grateful thanks are due, and be hereby tendered, to all the within-named, who have thus so nobly and generously devoted themselves to the comfort and well being, both here and hereafter, of the sick and wounded soldiers, who exclaim, with unfeigned admiration, "All honor to the ladies of Christian-street hospital."

THE WAR PRESS.
(PUBLISHED WEEKLY.)
THE WAR PRESS will be sent to subscribers by mail (per annum in advance) at $2.00
Five " " 9.00
Ten " " 17.00
Twenty Copies " 32.00
Larger Clubs than Twenty will be charged at the same rate, $1.60 per copy.
The money must always accompany the order, and in no instance can these terms be deviated from, as they afford very little more than the cost of the paper.
Postmasters are requested to act as Agents for THE WAR PRESS.
To the getter-up of a Club of ten or twenty, an extra copy of the Paper will be given.

INAUGURATION OF MAYOR HENRY—HIS ADDRESS.—Yesterday, at noon, the inauguration of Mayor Henry took place in Common Council, in the presence of a large concourse of spectators, many of whom were ladies. Previous to the ceremony both branches of Councils assembled in their respective chambers. The committee appointed at the last meeting of Councils to wait upon the Mayor, consisted of Messrs. Fox, Davis, King, Trego, Baird, and Paul.

At noon the committee, accompanied by Mayor Henry, entered the Select Council chamber. The Mayor was introduced by Mr. Baird, chairman of the committee, and the members of Select Council formed in line and proceeded to the Common Council chamber, the Mayor being accompanied by Mr. Cuyler, president of Select Council.

In Common Council chamber, Mr. Cuyler took the chair, and announced that Councils had met in pursuance of an act of Assembly, to participate in the inauguration of the Mayor elect.

Rev. Mr. Adams then addressed the Throne of Grace in an impressive manner. He prayed for those in municipal authority, for the President of the United States, and that he may be recognized as such by the people of all the States; for Congress and all in legislative and executive authority under the Government; for the soldiers and marines who are upon the battle-field; for the sick and wounded soldiers in the hospitals, and for those who have surrendered their sons, husbands, and fathers for the good of their country. The reverend gentleman also prayed that peace should soon be restored to us in an honorable way.

Hon. Oswald Thompson, president judge of the Court of Common Pleas, was then introduced and administered the oath of office to the Mayor elect.

Mayor Henry then stood in front of the President's desk and delivered his inaugural address, as follows:

INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF THE MAYOR.

Gentlemen of the Select and Common Councils:

When, nine years ago, by a single act of State sovereignty, numerous communities, dissimilar in their laws and organizations, were consolidated under the present municipal government, it was an experiment so comprehensive and untried that there might well be question of its success. Those intervening years have vindicated the enterprise and sagacity by which that scheme was projected.

The conflict of contending jurisdictions, the rivalry of contending interests, and the weakness of detached energies, have given place to the oneness of administration, purpose, and effort, which has already signally advanced the growth and prosperity of Philadelphia.

A city so large and populous demands of its Executive the care of interests reaching beyond its own limits, and affecting others with its own people, beside its constant watchfulness over the many and changing incidents which are comprised in its every-day existence.

In this view of the duties pertaining to the Mayoralty, the obligations which have just been assumed in the oath of office become impressive and momentous; may He who is the source of all power give the needed strength for their diligent fulfilment.

It has been customary, in the beginning of a new administration, to indicate, at some length, the policy which is contemplated in reference to the various prominent subjects of local interest. If it was designed to depart from the policy hitherto pursued, in any material point, it would be proper to make it known upon this occasion; but no such purpose is determined. A rigid accountability will still be exacted of the official agents appointed by the Mayor or under his control. The discipline will be maintained under which the police have effectively promoted the good order and safety of the city. Sedulous efforts to further every undertaking that will conduce to the welfare of the citizen, or to the aggrandizement of the community, will be kept up; and those schemes which individual cupidity may devise to plunder the public treasure, or to encroach upon private rights, will be resisted to the extent of constitutional authority. But whatever the firmness and justice of administration, its wholesome results will depend, in great measure, upon the liberal confidence of the people. There is a prevalent misconception of the powers of the City Executive, which attribute to him the sole regulation of the many incidents to the daily comfort of the citizen, and the redress of the numerous annoyances to which he may be subjected. This erroneous belief may be accepted as the spontaneous testimony of public sentiment to the fitness of investing the Executive with the direct control of the several departments of Government and to the propriety of holding him, when such power is possessed to a strict responsibility for their efficient management. The popular idea of the functions of the Mayor is at variance with the anomalous provisions of the municipal law, which gives to him oversight of the complex machinery of government, but withholds the power of guiding its movement, or checking its disorders. To this fundamental defect in the corporate system my immediate predecessor in office more than once directed public attention, and the intelligent views which he promulgated have been fully corroborated by all subsequent experience. However dissonant it may be with the increasing tendency to fill all offices by the popular will, it is manifest that there can be no administration of public affairs thoroughly effective in every province; none in which the consciousness of both power and responsibility will develop adequate force, unless the Mayor shall be allowed to select and control the heads of its various departments.

Whether the authority of the Executive be co-extensive with his imputed responsibilities or circumscribed by its present limits, those measures which most nearly and most generally concern the community, must proceed from practicable wisdom, and enlarged views in the municipal Legislature. The management of the finances of the city, both in their supply and expenditure, and the adaptation of the public economy in its numerous details to the wants of the citizen, can only be achieved by prudent foresight and vigilant care. Unless the law-giver puts aside his individual passions and aims, he is not truly the representative of a self-governing people, nor can he properly discern those universal interests which are the only interests of his delegated power.

The near presentation to Councils of the annual message of the Mayor, in which it is usual to review the condition of the city in relation to its most important interests, and to recommend such measures as may be deemed expedient, precludes their special notice upon this occasion.

The prosperity which attends the opening of a new year, and has marked the annals of the one just closed, demands a thankful recognition of the Providence which has averted from us those calamities now desolating other parts of our land. It is not the rich returns which have awarded the energy and industry of this community, or the uninterrupted quiet by which it has been pervaded, that alone claim our sincere gratitude; but above these, a sense of the constancy and devotion to the cause of our Union, which has been so universally manifested by its people.

If, through the clemency of a Federal Government, merciful in its conscious strength, sedition has been suffered to pillory its shame in our midst, it has only attracted the common derision; and when treason has thrust its hideous sores before the public gaze, it has been turned from with loathing of its exposure.

Amongst the diversities of opinion which an intelligent people with honesty entertain concerning measures made use of or contemplated for the suppression of a rebellion that, in its stubborn resistance, is laying waste to all within its reach, no schemes of national dishonor or projects of national suicide can engage their favor or mislead their patriotism. The mists of factions, reeking from the ferment of disappointed ambition and fruitless cupidity, may for a time obscure the grand structure of national policy which was reared by our fathers. But let our faith be steadfast, that they shall waver harmlessly around its enduring form, and that the Union, which has been our birthright, shall be transmitted to our children in its unimpaired symmetry and its unshorn strength. [Applause.]

At the conclusion of the Mayor's address the Rev. Mr. Adams offered a benediction.

The Mayor then received the congratulations of the members of Councils; after which the Select Branch retired to its Chamber. Both branches then adjourned.

SUSTAINING THE PROCLAMATION.—A meeting for prayer and conference was held in the First Reformed Presbyterian Church, Broad street, below Spruce, with especial reference to the President's proclamation, Rev. J. T. Cooper, D. D., chairman. Eloquent addresses were delivered by Rev. Drs. Wylie, Jeffries, and Cornell, and Revs. J. Wheaton Smith, J. Walker Jackson, and others. During the progress of the meeting the President's proclamation of emancipation was received and read, at the end of which the audience evinced their feelings by a round of applause. A resolution was adopted cordially approving the proclamation, and pledging the meeting to support it firmly.

GRAIN MEASURER'S OFFICE.—Amount of grain measured for the port of Philadelphia, for the quarter ending December 31, 1862:

	Bushels.
Corn	301,682
Wheat	476,237
Oats	301,562
Rye	15,618
Barley	66,209
Malt	16,741
Seeds	253
Sundries	4,010
Total	1,182,312

BOARD OF SCHOOL CONTROLLERS.—The terms of several members of the Board of Controllers of the public schools expired yesterday. The following gentlemen have been elected to fill vacancies:

First ward—James S. Stewart.
Twenty-first ward—James Lees.
Twenty-fifth ward—Jonathan Roberts.

Mr. George Inman Riche, who represents the Seventh ward in the Board, has presented his resignation to take effect on Monday next, in consequence of having been elected a member of Select Council. Dr. R. W. Richie has been elected by the sectional board, to fill the place to be vacated by Mr. Riche.

NEW AMBULANCE.—Yesterday the members of the Diligent steam fire engine company housed a new ambulance. The apparatus cost $600, and is one of the finest in use by the firemen. The ambulance is handsomely painted; this part of the work having been performed by W. H. Young, Esq., of this city. With the ambulance, was also presented a fine set of harness. The members of the Diligent have not only contributed numbers of their members to the Union army, but, like others, intend engaging in the Christian work of removing the sick and wounded to the hospitals upon their arrival here.

THE LADIES' AID SOCIETY OF U. S. HOSPITAL, Sixth and Master streets, acknowledge the following receipts in cash: Young Ladies' Institute, Tenth and Spring Garden streets, $15; from Fair at Frankford, $62.35; from Edmund Hill, $50; from Fair held at Mrs. Beckenbach's, in Green street above Seventh, by Thos. B. Beck, Chas. W. Beck, Robert Beckenback, and Emma Hutchinson, $60; part proceeds of Fair held at No. 614 Marshall street, by the Misses Shellenberger, Hallowell, and Baird, $25; from Cain, Hacker & Cook, $25.

APPOINTMENT.—Dr. L. S. Filbert has been appointed pension surgeon by the United States Government. Dr. F. is a Philadelphian who is widely esteemed, and his appointment to this responsible office will give satisfaction to a host of friends. As a physician and loyal citizen, none stand higher than Dr. Filbert.

HOW GEN. MCCLELLAN SPENT HIS NEW YEAR.—Gen. McClellan arrived in this city, upon Wednesday night, from New York. He spent New Year with his brother, Dr. McClellan, and, despite his *incognito* arrival, awakened much enthusiasm along the route, and among his friends in this city. He departed last night for Washington.

ACCIDENT.—A lad named Leverin Greenfield, residing in Coral street, below Otis, had his finger blown off yesterday by the accidental discharge of a pistol.

WATER RENTS.—The total amount of water rents received at the Register's office during the year 1862 was $544,767,26.