The Press.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1863.

The Union League.

It is announced that the members of the Union League will celebrate the anniversary of Washington's Birthday, at their Club-house, this evening. As we understand the order of proceedings, it is desired that the members of the League assemble in the evening and partake of a collation. Social intercourse will be the main feature of the occasion, and addresses will be delivered by various members and distinguished strangers who may be present. The association known as the Union League has been in operation for some weeks, but the celebration to-day may be regarded as the formal opening. Viewing its history as it now appears, we look upon the whole movement—its conception, its progress, its present success, and the grand benefit already flowing from it—as one of the most remarkable and gratifying triumphs of our cause. It is no less a triumph because it has been accomplished in the way of peace. Not many weeks have passed since men were wont to say to one another that the refined and influential sentiment of Philadelphia was opposed to the Union. In other words, that the intelligence, the wealth, and, if such a phrase can be permitted without misconstruction, the social position of Philadelphia was arrayed against the Government. We were told that every tradition of our city, as represented by the descendants of illustrious and beloved names, was attached to the cause of treason. So deeply had this feeling penetrated, that when eminent men of private nation came here and were admitted into the homes of eminent citizens, they were impressed with the belief that, in so far as love for the Union and respect for the constituted authorities of the Union were concerned, Philadelphia was as faithless as Charleston or Richmond.

This idea gave rise to the Union League. Good men knew that these impressions were false—that Philadelphia was as true to the Union as any city within its limits. They felt that the one thing necessary was confidence, and that social communion, and friendship, and earnest co-operation in the good cause would produce noble and permanent results. A few met together. After an occasional conference, organization was effected. It was done quietly. No extraneous influences were invoked. No effort was made beyond a mere conference and suggestion. And now it outnumbers any association of a similar nature in the country. In New York, and Boston, and Washington, loyal men are following the example which Philadelphia has given. In Baltimore, an organization, having similar objects, but organized on a larger and more comprehensive scale, has been in existence since this war began, and its influence for good has been wonderful. In other parts of the country we see movements of a similar character, and we cannot but believe that before the impetus of the Union League subsides, the Union sentiment everywhere will be thoroughly organized. Organization is all that is necessary. We have been too prone to look upon our whole cause as something too holy, too good, and too pure to require any effort on our part to win for it the affections and sympathies of men. We believed that enmity to the Union was impossible—that with all the precious blessings that Union entailed, its memories, hopes, and victories, its influence among the nations of the earth—the respect which liberty and civilization paid to it, the fear that tyranny and slavery entertained—no American could be found base enough to contemplate its downfall, or to sympathize with any traitor and enemy to its peace. The rapid rise of an insidious and desperate party dispelled these hopes. We own it rapidly assumed power and strength—controlling municipalities, districts, States, a hesitating press, timid statesmen, ambitious politicians—drawing to its alliance thousands who permitted themselves to be betrayed, and converting hollow friends into open enemies. It obtained a temporary success, and this success made it bold enough to proclaim its purpose to be an unrelenting war upon the very existence and integrity of the Government.

The gentlemen who have established the Union League show to the world that the friends of the Union are not insensible to the aggressions of October, nor disposed to permit their mischievous efforts to pass unrebuked. They consolidate and concentrate the Union sentiment of this city. Men know where they can go for counsel and assistance—where in times of anxiety they can find comfort and safety. It will be a rallying point and a refuge. Our loyal friends in Boston and New Orleans, and Baltimore, will find a welcome when they come to our city; and curious travellers may move in good society, drink a glass of wine, and enjoy pleasant and profitable social intercourse, without gaining an impression that the gentlemen in Philadelphia were traitors to the Union. In these ways, and in many other ways that require no suggestion from us, this Union League will be of great good. In times of danger men must be near one another, and they must know where they may look for friendship, and where they may expect enmity. If the members of the League bear these things in mind, and in all their dealings maintain a high order of loyalty—if they make their devotion to the Union paramount to any personal or selfish considerations, their success in the future will more than realize the brilliant anticipations they have the right to entertain. Above all, they must avoid the abuses that every organization, and particularly an organization founded in times of excitement and so powerful as the Union League, is liable to possess. The petty ambitions that corrode and degrade reckless power—the cunning of the politician—the folly of the snob, the visionary ideas of the theorist—all the little vanities, anxieties, intrigues, and enthusiasms, that in the hands of bold men become dangers, in the hands of bad men crime—these can be avoided by firmness and caution now. If it begins well it will end well. We are glad to know that thus far the League has realized all these hopes—and that as it stands now, Philadelphia should be proud to know that it exists, that its existence has been such a splendid success, and that in this, as in other good and great undertakings, she has been the pioneer.

The New Post Office.

The public of this city may at length congratulate themselves on the possession of a suitable and convenient post office. We speak only within the bounds of strict moderation when we say that the new building on Chestnut street, this day to be inaugurated by the Postmaster General, in person, is not excelled, in all the requirements of a first-class post office by any other in the country. The spacious, yet judiciously-planned accommodations of its interior afford every facility for the despatch of the constantly-increasing business of the Department, while the exterior must be allowed on all sides to be a dignified, correct, and classical piece of architecture—and, as such, a conspicuous ornament to the important thoroughfare on which it is located. We believe that care has been taken throughout, to introduce every improvement and every convenience which experience has shown to be really valuable in similar establishments throughout all the largest cities of the Union.

It is doubtless known to many of our readers that more than ten years ago Congress did its whole duty in this matter, by the appropriation of a most liberal sum of money for the purposes of a new structure. But the attempts which were made to carry out the intentions of the General Government by the successive administrations of FILLMORE, PIERCE, and BUCHANAN, were rendered abortive by local interests and prejudices, and foiled by the discordant influences at work among our own citizens. The final triumph of the project therefore, and its successful completion in the ceremonies of to-day, certainly affords matter for the most satisfactory reflections to those who have at heart the welfare and convenience of our growing population.

The present postmaster of this city certainly has shown himself, in this respect, to be entitled to the praise of an intelligent and energetic public officer. In the month of June, 1861, this gentleman, on a review of the position of the United States Government in the matter of the two estates then in its possession, the Bank of Pennsylvania and the BAILEY and LEVY properties, decided that the true interests of the Post Office Department could best be subserved by the remodelling of the buildings on the last-named estates, for a post office and United States courts, as a substitute for the costly palace which, in the month of December, 1860, had been proposed by the Administration of Mr. BUCHANAN, but which had been laid aside at that time, under the emergencies in which the country had so suddenly become involved. In a communication made by Mr. WALBORN to the Postmaster General the cramped, inconvenient, wretched, and even filthy condition of the old post office shortly to be vacated were fully and clearly set forth, and such cogent statements made in reference to the feasibility of preparing the two estates on Chestnut street for the objects of the department, as to decide Judge BLAIR fully and thoroughly to investigate the whole subject. The appointment of THEODORE ADAMS, Esq., as an expert, and an able and intelligent master mechanic, produced a report of the most favorable character, fully sustaining the recommendations of Mr. WALBORN. Mr. ADAMS was aided in his examination by Mr. G. J. F. BRYANT, of Boston, an architect of much judgment and experience, well known to Mr. ADAMS, and empowered by Judge BLAIR to aid him in elucidating his views by plans and estimates of cost. The result of the united labors of these gentlemen proving of the most satisfactory character to the Department, the Postmaster General thereupon decided to recommend to Congress the passage of an act granting him the necessary authority to contract at once for the construction of the present building. The necessary formalities having been complied with, Mr. BRYANT received instructions to prepare all the plans, working-drawings, specifications, and other papers, and the works have been executed under a contract with JOHN KETCHAM, Esq., master builder of this city, and with the constant supervision also of Mr. J. FRASER, architect of Philadelphia, as resident superintendent throughout. Both these gentlemen have been constantly in communication with Mr. WALBORN in regard to all the details and arrangements of the post office, and with United States Marshal HILLYARD with respect to those of the court rooms and their adjuncts. The result of their labors cannot but commend itself to the favorable judgment of our citizens, nearly every leading post-office and court room in the Union having been examined in its minutest details, with a view to making this the model of Governmental offices of the kind, as it unquestionably is to-day, of the whole country.

The arrangements of the new building will be read with interest by our people. The first story and basement, throughout the entire buildings, and a portion of the second and third stories of the Chestnut-street building, are appropriated to the post-office department, the entrances to which are from Chestnut and Library streets, into an ample corridor, which extends from street to street, and affords communication with the several departments of the office. In addition to the public entrances, there is a ladies' entrance from Chestnut street, to a separate apartment, where ladies can go without entering the public corridor. There are entrances on the east side from the passage-way, between these buildings and the custom-house, for access to the postmaster's private rooms, and for the clerks and assistants, and for receiving and delivering the mail-bags. The entire building on Library street, above the first story, and most of the building on Chestnut street, above the first story, are appropriated to the United States courts, and offices connected therewith, The principal entrance to the courts is from Library street, by an ample staircase, and a private staircase leading from the public corridor of the post office. The court apartments and offices in the Chestnut-street building are connected with the Library-street building in a convenient manner, by a corridor. The United States Marshal's offices are located on Chestnut street. The principal courtroom is in the Library-street building, and is a pleasant, convenient apartment of ample dimensions. Every part of the building is well lighted by a goodly number of large windows and skylights, and is thoroughly warmed by the most approved steam heating apparatus in use, having connected with it a "fan-blower," for forcing in warm air in cold weather, and fresh, cool air in summer, to take the place of impure air which is forced off through a suitable number of ventiducts, thus rendering the buildings healthy, comfortable, and pleasant throughout, at all seasons of the year.

The Debate in Parliament.

Parliament has assembled, and the Queen's speech has been read. We can see nothing in her Majesty's address to the lords and gentlemen, beyond the meaningless phrases with which these mysterious declamations abound. Her Majesty is very sorry about the war in America, and our present condition causes her "the deepest concern." She alludes to the suffering which the war entailed upon Lancashire, and finds a source of consolation in the prospect of a renewal of employment in the manufacturing districts. The debate that attended the delivery of the speech is looked upon by the London *Times* as a very remarkable illustration of the feeling of the English nation upon the question of war with America. The Ministry were silent; the leaders of the Opposition acquiesced in the policy of the Government. The Earl of Derby was sorry that there had been no joint mediation in connection with France, as he was confident that such a course would have made the Americans reflective and repentant, and, perhaps, ended the war. Mr. D'ISRAELI made a few flippant remarks in reference to the want of harmony manifested by the members of the Government, but could find no fault with the policy of neutrality and non-interference. Other addresses were made, but no definite policy was developed. It is probable that a bold effort will be made on the part of the Southern sympathizers in Parliament to force a vote upon the question of recognizing the Southern Confederacy. The Government may oppose this course, but we do not think its failure or its success will in any way alter the moral effect of England's attitude in this war. We cannot but see that she is opposed to this Republic, and that from the beginning she has never given us a word of comfort or encouragement. Englishmen may glory in this now—and America may be silent and submissive; but when the war is over and gone, and the nation is again at peace, the memory of these days will be looked upon with sorrow by Englishmen, and with surprise by Americans.

New Publications.

ATLANTIC MONTHLY.—We have received copies of the March number (already noticed in *The Press* on Friday), from T. B. Peterson & Brothers, and also from T. B. Pugh.

LONDON QUARTERLY REVIEW.—From W. B. Zieber we have the new number, just published. In merit, variety, and interest, its contents are above par. There are good, almost exhaustive papers upon Peru, Constitutional Government in Russia, and recent editions of the New Testament. Also, an attack on the shortcomings of the Palmerston Cabinet (which has steadily refused the Parliamentary Reform it was placed in office to pass), called "Four Years' of a Reforming Administration." The purely literary articles are reviews of the Life of Professor Wilson, by his daughter, and of a charming volume of Miscellanies, by Earl Stanhope, better known in this country as Lord Mahon. It includes poetry by "Bonnie Prince Charlie," the Young Pretender; a Valentine by Lord Macaulay; a charade by Lord Chatham, and articles and memoranda by William Pitt, Edmund Burke, Sir Robert Peel, Sir John Moore (the unfortunate general killed at Corunna), and a historical criticism on Napoleon, by Wellington.

THE SLIGO RIFLE SENTINEL.—A ballad, thus designated, written by Mr. Janvier, and recited with great effect by Mr. Murdoch, has been printed in 12mo., by Peterson & Brothers. It illustrates an act of thoughtful kindness and mercy in Mr. Lincoln's official life, and is above the usual dead level of our recent war-poetry.

AUCTION NOTICE—SALE OF BOOTS AND SHOES.—The attention of buyers is called to the large and attractive sale of 1,000 cases boots, shoes, brogans, &c., to be sold by catalogue this morning, by Philip Ford & Co., auctioneers, at their store, No. 525 Market, and 522 Commerce streets.

WASHINGTON.

Special Despatches to "The Press."

WASHINGTON, February 22, 1863.

Sensation Reports Contradicted.

The rumors which have been paraded in certain journals respecting the probabilities of a war with France are known to be pure speculation. There is not so much danger of a war with France to-day as there was six months ago. Some of these foreign war articles are believed to be written by men who desire either to break down the Government or to affect the stock market for private purposes. I am informed, on excellent authority, that the State Department have no fears whatever of any immediate trouble with the French Government. There is nothing in the recent correspondence between the two Governments to warrant any such belief.

Bill to Promote Efficiency of the Army.

The bill reported by Senator WILSON, of Massachusetts, to promote the health, comfort, and efficiency of the armies of the United States provides:

First. The medical department shall unite with the line officers of the army in supervising the cooking within the same as an important sanitary measure, and it shall promulgate to its officers such regulations and instructions as may tend to insure the proper preparation of the rations of the soldier.

Second. That cooks shall be detailed in turn from the privates of each company of the troops in the service of the United States at the rate of one cook for each company numbering less than 30 men, and two cooks for each company numbering over 30 men, who shall serve ten days each.

Third. That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby, authorized to cause to be enlisted, for each cook two under cooks, of African descent, who shall receive for their full compensation $10 per month and one ration per day; $3 of the monthly pay may be in clothing.

Fourth. That the army ration shall hereafter include pepper, in the proportion of four ounces to every 100 rations, and that tobacco be furnished to the enlisted men by the commissary department at its cost, and charged against their pay, under such regulations as the Secretary of War may adopt for that purpose.

Fifth. That hereafter all nurses in the general hospitals shall be employed by authority of the Surgeon General; and hospital matrons shall receive $10 per month, and one ration per day in kind, providing the washing of hospitals may be given out by contract, at a price not exceeding the cost of the number of matrons authorized by the regulations.

Sixth. That all the instruments, documents, and papers relating to the procurement of bounty land and other bounties, pensions, and orders of pay, by or for officers, soldiers, and seamen, or their legal representatives, who have been or may be in the service of the United States, be and the same are hereby exempt from the tax duty.

Proposed Amendments to the Tax Bill.

The amendments reported by the Committee of Ways and Means to the tax bill are numerous. Among them are the following:

To strike out the valuation prices on tobacco as the basis of the tax, and increase the tax on snuffing tobacco, made exclusively of stems, from 3 to 5 cents.

On rolled copper and yellow sheathing metal in sheets, 1 per centum ad valorem.

On ready-made clothing or articles of dress for men, women, and children not specially mentioned, hats, caps, or bonnets, 3 per centum *ad valorem*; provided, that dress boot and shoemakers making to order for customers, and not for sale generally, shall be the amount of $1,000 be exempt, and for any excess beyond that amount, shall pay a duty of 1 per centum ad valorem.

On iron, not otherwise provided for, $1 per ton, provided that there be deducted from the duties assessed upon railroad cars any duty which may have been assessed and paid upon car wheels under the provisions of the existing law.

No duty to be assessed or collected on beer, lagger beer, ale, or porter, brewed or manufactured, or on coal illuminating oil, and the refined product by distillation of coal oil, asphaltum, petroleum, or rock oil, manufactured prior to September, 1862.

All contracts for the purchase or sale of the gold or silver coin of the United States or bullion, and all contracts for the loan of money or currency of the same, are to be stamped; the absence of which, on such contracts, renders them null and void, and liable to a tax of a quarter of one per centum.

A deputy commissioner is provided for at a salary of $3,000; an assistant solicitor at $2,500; a cashier at $2,500; assessors are to have, in lieu of their previous compensation, an annual salary of $1,500, with 1 per centum of all in excess of $300,000, when the revenue collected shall exceed that sum.

National Academy of Sciences.

The bill of Senator WILSON, of Massachusetts, incorporating the National Academy of Sciences! Among the names in the bill for incorporators are LOUIS AGASSIZ, A. D. BACHE, Joseph Henry, BENJAMIN SILLIMAN, and J. G. POTTER. It is made obligatory upon the Academy at the call of any department of the Government to investigate, examine, experiment, and report upon any subject of science or art.

The Treaty with Peru.

With a view to carry into effect the treaty recently concluded with Peru, with a joint commission to adjust the claims between citizens of the United States and those of Peru, Senator SUMNER to-day introduced a bill pending for the appointment of two commissioners, and a solicitor and secretary.

The Tax Bill.

There is no increased tax on whisky proposed in the amendments of the Committee of Ways and Means to the tax bill. The tax on ale and beer, however, has been reduced to sixty cents per barrel until the first of April, 1864. The paper question will hereafter be considered by the committee.

Promotion of Colonel Mulligan.

Representative ARNOLD and Father DUNN, of Chicago, called on Commodore Wilkes yesterday, and urged the promotion of Colonel Mulligan. Mr. ARNOLD has aided in raising two regiments for the war.

The New Banking Law.

Capitalists seem likely to avail themselves promptly of the advantages of the new banking law. An application for the organization of a banking association in this city, with a capital of $500,000, was filed in the Treasury Department on Saturday.

Naval Orders.

Acting Assistant Surgeon WM. NIELSON, Jr., has been ordered to the United States steamer Sumpter.

The Snow Storm.

About five inches of snow fell this morning, and there is now good sleighing, being the first for the season.

DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA.

The Late Fire in Norfolk—A Suspicious Vessel—Reorganization of the Norfolk Fire Department—Affairs at Old Point.

FORTRESS MONROE, Feb. 20.—While the recent fire was prevailing on Main street, in Norfolk, the ship Cornelia was discovered in Bell's Dock, attempting to move out. This created a suspicion by the guard, and she was boarded and examined, when $1,500 worth of goods, belonging to Mr. King, one of the sufferers by the fire, was found. One of the suspected parties was arrested, and it is understood that he has turned State evidence, and implicated his confederates. The affair is being investigated.

The old Norfolk fire department has been reorganized, and General Viele has sent for new hose, &c., which has long been needed.

The schooner Eliza and Rebecca, which went ashore on the Rip-Rap shoals during the recent storm, was hauled off yesterday by the steam-tug Freeborn. The schooner had a cargo of coal for the quartermaster's department at Old Point.

LATER.

Arrival of Exchanged Union Prisoners—Reports from Rebel Papers—Advance of the Yankee Army in Middle Tennessee—Difficulty on the Texas Frontier—Incursions of Mexicans.

FORTRESS MONROE, Feb. 21.—The flag-of-truce boat State of Maine arrived here last evening about 6 o'clock, and brings down between two hundred and three hundred exchanged Union prisoners, in charge of Captain Rohley, of the 3d New York Infantry. The boat left with them immediately for Annapolis.

The flag-of-truce boat New York brought from City Point 80 to 90 of the crew of the United States gunboat Isaac Smith, recently captured in Stono river; also, 19 United States officers; being the remainder captured previous to Jeff. Davis' proclamation.

The Richmond *Enquirer* of the 20th says there are rumors of an advance of the Yankee army upon Middle Tennessee. Cannonading was heard on Wednesday last in front. There were also artillery reports from the direction of Beech Grove, where Gen. Buford with his brigade of Kentucky cavalry is stationed to ward off the blows that might descend in that direction.

General Forrest has crossed Duck river, north of Columbia, with cavalry and artillery.

The Texas *Flag* of the 2d instant has accounts of an invasion of our soil by Mexican banditti, stealing horses, cattle, &c. Captain Benevidas' company was attacked in Zafata county, and all their horses stampeded. They also captured and hung Isador Vella, chief justice of Zafata county.

About five hundred Mexicans have been organized for the purpose of plundering our frontier, and approved by the Mexican authorities. The banditti at the last accounts were on the Texas side of the river, and some of them under the United States flag.

The following are the names of United States prisoners who have died in the military hospital at Richmond since the last report: John Wright, sutler, Washington, Feb. 2d; J. B. Corey, private Co. A, 21st Wisconsin, Feb. 3d, pneumonia; P. H. Caswell, private, Co. K, 74th Illinois Infantry, Feb. 7th, fever; S. S. Marchant, Capt. Co. H, 136th Pennsylvania, Feb. 18th, fever. Forwarded by John Wilkins, surgeon in charge.

THE PIRATE ALABAMA.

Action of the New York Chamber of Commerce—A Memorial and the Report of the Special Committee.

NEW YORK, Feb. 21.—A special meeting of the Chamber of Commerce was held at 1 o'clock this afternoon, to hear a report of the committee appointed to consider the continued piracies of the Alabama, and to report what action the Chamber of Commerce should take; of the Committee on the Defence of New York Harbor; and to consider the propriety of memorializing Congress to construct a line of submarine telegraph between Fort McHenry or Fortress Monroe and Galveston, Texas.

Mr. George W. Blunt presented a memorial in relation to the construction of the telegraph referred to, remarking that the action of the Senate Military Committee in opposition to the bill that had been presented for the establishment of the line was much to be regretted.

Mr. A. A. Low, of the Committee on the Piracies of the Alabama, presented a lengthy report, which closed as follows:

Resolved, That it is the desire of this Chamber, as it is the interest of all its members, to cherish sentiments of amity with the people of Great Britain, to maintain those cordial relations which have led to profitable intercourse, and to strengthen the ties that knit them together in mutual courtesy and respect.

NEW YORK, Feb. 22.—The bark Sarah, from Carthagena, arrived, reports being boarded February 8th, off Cape Antonio, by the gunboat Vanderbilt, which was en route to Kingston, Jamaica, direct, to lay off and await the pirate Alabama.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST.

The Next Indian Campaign—Preparations for Frontier Defence—Letters from Gen. Sibley and Gov. Ramsey.

GOV. RAMSEY TO GEN. SIBLEY.

STATE OF MINNESOTA,
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, ST. PAUL, Feb. 13.

GENERAL: The prevailing rumors that the Sioux, under Little Crow, are preparing for a resumption of hostilities in the spring, are, I am informed, exciting a deep anxiety throughout our frontier settlements.

From the well-known suddenness and secrecy of Indian movements, and the great extent of the exposed frontier, a feverish apprehension exists that you may be unable with the force at your command to protect our border settlements from the stealthy encroachments of the wily foe, and that with the opening of spring, life and property everywhere on the frontier will be menaced with a repetition of the dangers and horrors from which they were apparently rescued last fall. The prevalence of this feeling of insecurity is likely to lead to disastrous results, unless checked by assurances that the means at your disposal are, or will be, ample to protect our people. A single successful blow struck by these Indian assassins at any unexpected quarter on the frontier, would create a panic as wide spread and frenzied as that of last autumn, and probably drive nearly the whole population of our western counties back to the Mississippi towns.

I do not doubt that with five regiments of infantry and one of mounted rangers at your disposal, you will be well able to proceed across the plains, and chastise the Sioux allies of Little Crow, and at the same time guard our extended settlements from any reasonable probability of an inroad from Sioux or other Indians.

It is, at least, highly important that our people should know beforehand to what extent they can rely on your disposition of forces for their protection; and how much they must depend on their own co-operation may be necessary to insure their security.

It occurs to me that if it were known that numerous parties of scouts would, upon the earliest opening of spring, be thrown out in advance of our settlers and in advance of your main force, so as to give timely notice of the purpose of the Indians, or of their approach, if they determine upon that course, a knowledge of the fact that these precautions were taken would have a tendency to allay the apprehensions now felt of a stealthy attack.

Trusting that you will feel at liberty to give me, for the use of the public, the information sought, I have the honor to be, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,
ALEXANDER RAMSEY.

Brig. Gen. H. H. SIBLEY, St. Paul, Minn.

REPLY OF GEN. SIBLEY.

HEADQUARTERS, DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA,
DEPARTMENT OF THE NORTHWEST,
ST. PAUL, Minn., Feb. 14, 1863.

His Excellency Alex. Ramsey, Governor of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minn.:

SIR: I have the honor to state that your communication of yesterday reached me this morning. In reply to the inquiries therein contained, relating to the disposition of troops stationed in this military district, and the precautions taken against apprehended stealthy attacks by the hostile Sioux upon the frontier settlements in the spring, I proceed to give you, briefly, such information as can properly be made public at the present time.

I have not failed to inform myself from the most reliable sources of the condition of affairs among the several Indian tribes in this district, and to communicate the results from time to time to the headquarters of the department. With regard to the expedition you refer to, I can only state that I have assurances that my requisitions will receive proper attention, and that clothing and other supplies required duly furnished. The plan proposed by me has not yet been acted upon by the higher authorities, and I can therefore give no assurance with reference to the campaign until the decision is made. I am endeavoring to dispose of all my available force so as to afford the most protection to the more exposed points. An order has already been issued to the commanding officers at the several stations along the line where no defensive works have been erected to employ the men of their respective commands in constructing stockades, within which the settlers may find refuge in case of threatened attack. I have also instructed my scouts employed also to give notice if the Indians make their appearance at any point of approach to the settlements, or depredating; a party of reliable half-breeds up the Minnesota river, to remain there during the spring, who will advise me in case the savages show themselves in that quarter.

If the requisitions for arms and ammunition are filled, I will be enabled to arm all the infantry regiments with Springfield muskets, and in such case I shall apply for authority to turn over the arms now in the hands of most of the companies for distribution by the State to the people of the localities most exposed to danger. I would respectfully suggest that companies of Home Guards be formed under the authority of the State, so that in case of necessity there may be some concert of action on the part of the settlers. Such an organization would do much to prevent a panic, and tend to appease the apprehensions of the people generally.

Having adverted in brief terms to the precautionary measures adopted for the security of the border against a renewal of the scenes of last summer, I close by assuring you that so far as I have the means, they shall be employed to the best advantage to protect our citizens, and appease the fears of the settlers.

My own belief is that the hostile Indians will make no descent upon the border until they find they are attacked in their own favorite haunts. Still it is well to make preparation at all points to repel them should onslaughts be attempted.

Very respectfully, your ob't serv't,
H. H. SIBLEY,
Brigadier General Commanding.

Maine Legislature.

PORTLAND, Feb. 22.—A special despatch to the *Press*, from Augusta, states that both branches of the Legislature have concurred in referring J. J. Sheed's petition for the incorporation of a new telegraph line to the next Legislature.

From San Francisco.

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 22.—Sailed, the steamer St. Louis for Panama, with $946,000 specie for England, and $342,000 for New York.

Departure of the Europa—George N. Sanders a Passenger.

HALIFAX, Feb. 21.—The royal mail steamship Europa, from Boston, arrived here at six o'clock last evening and left Liverpool at 8 o'clock.

Among her passengers was George N. Sanders, the rebel emissary.

NEW YORK, Feb. 21.—The steamer Etna sailed for Liverpool to-day with ninety-four passengers, and $412,000 in specie.

The steamer Tonawanda cleared, but her departure is delayed till to-morrow morning. She has sixty-four passengers, but no specie list.

Fire in Boston.

BOSTON, Feb. 22.—The large building, Nos. 17 and 19 Washington street, was almost entirely burned last night. Among the heaviest losers were J. H. Abbott, bookbinder; Smith & Bullard, gas-fitters; Robert Wheeler, electrotyper, and Rand & Avery, printers. Their losses were mostly insured.

The Snow Storm.

BALTIMORE, Feb. 22.—The snow commenced falling before daylight this morning, and has continued throughout the day.

NEW YORK, Feb. 22.—A tremendous snow-storm has been raging since 9 o'clock this morning and still continues to-night, with a furious gale.

BUFFALO, Feb 22.—The snow has been falling heavily all day.

Public Entertainments.

CHESTNUT-STREET THEATRE.—Mr. Forrest will give several representations of his original, remarkable, and studiously prepared character of *Hamlet*. In this, as in other characters, Mr. Forrest has dared to go beyond the beaten track of other actors and critics, and presented his own conception of the part in a powerful and yet most pleasing manner. The objection to Mr. Forrest's size of person for this character has just been laid aside, since history and a proper appreciation of the text of the sublime play makes "Hamlet" a man of powerful nervous material, and physical form and constitution.

On Wednesday evening Miss Lucille Western will make her appearance at this theatre. Our readers will remember that this lady appeared in her own character of "East Lynne," at the Academy of Music, some months since, and she will not be considered an entire stranger here."

WALNUT-STREET THEATRE.—This evening very good bill is presented, which will develop the artistic powers of Mr. Eddy, Miss Denin, and the entire company by which they are supported. For the first time in this city the "grand psychological drama" of the "Spirit Friend" will be presented. It was written especially for Mr. Eddy, and in addition to its original mechanical effects, it affords full scope for Mr. Eddy's talents as a melo-drama actor of undoubted ability. Miss Denin, who is a sensational school, will appear as *Eugenia*. "Paul Jones" will also be presented, with Mr. Eddy as *Long Tom Coffin*. The evening's entertainment will conclude with a military sketch of "The Picket on Duty."

ARCH-STREET THEATRE.—John Wilkes Booth, young tragedian, and a brother of the celebrated Edwin Booth, commences an engagement this evening, presenting as his opening tragedy "Richard III." His *Duke of Gloster* has received the favorable consideration of critics, and the crowded audiences with which he has hitherto been honored. Mr. Drew appears as *Queen Elizabeth*, which is her first appearance in five weeks.

THE GERMAN OPERA.—The coming season promises to be even more charming opera than it has been in the past six o'clock train in the evening, en route home. He will shortly return to Washington when it is understood that he will have an active and important command in the South.

EUROPE.

The Canadian Halifax—Arrival of Lancashire Operatives—The Polish Insurrection Spreading—The Queen's Speech—Reference to American Affairs—Earl Derby's Reply—Commercial Intelligence.

HALIFAX, Feb. 21.—The royal mail steamship Canada, from Liverpool on the 7th inst., via Queenstown on the 8th, arrived at this port at 11 o'clock this morning.

She has eighteen passengers for Boston; also 149 Lancashire operatives, who were sent out by Miss Burdett Coutts.

The Canada reports having passed on the night of the 10th a steamer supposed to have been the China.

THE LATEST VIA QUEENSTOWN.

The Polish insurrection is spreading.

The United States consul at Cardiff writes to the journal that no Confederate vessel is lying there, as reported.

The vessel in question formerly belonged to Baltimore, but is legitimately engaged in the Brazilian trade.

POLAND.

Wingow has been taken after a sanguinary battle and the insurgents dispersed.

FRANCE.

It is asserted that France asked Spain to send back the troops to Cochin China.

Spain replies that she will respect the treaty she has concluded with that country.

It is stated that the steamer Adriatic has been ordered to get ready for sea and proceed to New York.

The London *Times* states that it is reported that a new offer was made two months ago by certain parties in Paris to negotiate a loan for the Confederate Government, of five millions sterling on the basis of cotton at five cents per pound, the bonds bearing the option, after a certain period, of exchanging this cotton for Confederate bonds at 70, bearing 6 per cent interest. This offer has been partially accepted.

The Prince of Wales has taken his seat in the House of Lords.

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

The Queen's speech has been delivered to Parliament. It contains little of importance, except the following paragraphs:

"Her Majesty has abstained from taking any step with a view to induce a cessation of the conflict between the contending parties of the North American States, because it has not yet seemed that any such overtures would be attended with the probability of success.

"Her Majesty has viewed, with the deepest concern the desolating warfare which still rages in those regions, and has witnessed with heartfelt grief the severe distress and suffering which that war has inflicted upon a large class of her Majesty's subjects, but which have been borne with great fortitude and exemplary resignation. It is some consolation to her Majesty to be led to the hope that this suffering and distress is rather diminishing than increasing, and that some renewal of employment is beginning to take place in the manufacturing districts."

News has been received in Paris of an insurrection in Cochin China, and desperate attacks made on the French forces. Severe fighting had taken place, but the Cochin Chinese were repulsed with heavy loss.

It is confirmed that the Duke of Saxe Coburg has declined the Greek throne.

The ship Connecticut, from Liverpool for New York, put into Queenstown on the 7th inst.

The Canada passed the steamer Edinburg on the 14th.

The steamer Teutonia arrived at Liverpool on the 9th, and the Damascus on the 6th inst.

DEBATE ON THE AMERICAN QUESTION.

Earl Derby criticized the Queen's speech at length. He spoke in congratulatory terms on the Prince of Wales' marriage. He said he had no objection to raise against the course the Government had adopted in regard to the American war, but he regretted that the Government had not felt themselves justified in joining the attempt in which they were invited by France, not to intervene, nor for the purpose of putting an end to the war, but to obtain, by their good offices, if possible, such an armistice and cessation of hostilities as would lead the two parties themselves to reflect on the miseries and hopelessness of the war in which they were engaged. Before he censured the course taken by the Government, it was but fair that he should say they were in possession of much better information than he was as to whether interference on their part would have been judicious. He differed from the opinion expressed by many of his political friends, that the time had arrived for recognizing the Southern States. There were only two cases in which recognition on the part of a neutral Power could be justified, namely: where there was no further struggle going on, or where it was desirable, in the interests of humanity, that the great Powers should interfere, in order to prevent the continuance of a desolating warfare. But in that case, recognition was always followed by something further. It meant support by force of arms of the claims of the country whose right was recognized—such as was the case on the separation of Belgium from Holland, and of Greece from Turkey. His conviction was that, come what may, the reconstruction of the States as they formerly stood was absolutely impossible, and, on the whole, he approved of the course which the Government had taken. [Cheers.] He then deplored the distress which the war has brought on the Lancashire operatives, and reviewed the foreign policy of the Government in regard to Italy, Greece, &c., and deprecated the idea of ceding the Ionian Islands to Greece.

Earl Russell, in reply, justified the policy of non-intervention which the Government had pursued in the American war. The circumstances were very different from those which existed when Belgium was separated from Holland, and Greece from Turkey, and taking all matters into consideration, he thought the Government had taken the wisest course in their power to pursue. At the same time he expressed the strong opinion that it would be impossible for the union of the Northern and Southern States to be again established.

Earl Malmesbury expressed regret that England had not joined France in the proposed mediation.

Earl Grey took the contrary view, and after a few more speeches, the address was agreed to.

In the Commons, Mr. Calthorpe moved, and Mr. Bailey seconded, the address.

In detail, and took some the ministerial programme to the distress in the cotton districts. He thought House might on such occasions confine themselves to the order and avoid tedious speeching. It was only too long this state of things is likely to last; but, for his own part, he could not but regard what was passing in America as revolution. He briefly sketched the rise of the Union, and expressed the opinion that the ultimate results of the war would be an America very different to that known to our fathers, and even to this generation.

There would be an America of armies, an America of diplomacy, and an America of turbulence and wars. He believed the course originally marked out by the Government was one honorable to the country and beneficial to all its interests. He was greatly surprised in the autumn, when an important member of the Government, apparently with the sanction of his colleagues, made a declaration which could only be regarded as intention to recognize the Confederate Republic. He felt there was great vacillation and inconsistency on the part of the Government. The Foreign Secretary said that the North was fighting for empire and the South for independence; but the President of the Board of Trade alleged that the curse of slavery was at the bottom of the war. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was warmly in favor of the South, but he was followed by the Secretary of War, who avowed opinions diametrically opposed thereto; and, lastly, the Chief Secretary for Ireland declared that it was his conviction that the Lord of Hosts was fighting for the Confederates. He found fault with sundry Government proceedings in their foreign policy, and opposed the cession of the Ionian Islands.

Lord Palmerston replied, but said nothing of moment in regard to America.

The address was agreed to.

In the House of Commons on the 6th, Mr. Layard, in response to some explanations on the Brazilian difficulty, said he believed that friendly relations would soon be restored.

Mr. Bentinck made some remarks on the American war. He said that he believed that if the proposal to recognize the South was brought forward it would be supported by Parliament.

The *Times*, adverting to the American question in Parliament, points out that the views of the opposition are the same as the Government. After a recess of six eventful months, there is not a single statesman on either side who believes that the reestablishment of the Union, on the terms of the original compact, is possible; not one who believes that the forcible subjugation of the South is possible. Though there is one who declares that if such a conquest were practicable, it would only prove a political ruin of America. We arrive then at the one conclusion, that separation on peaceable terms, and at the earliest moment, is the result which the friends of America ought to desire.

The *Times* has another disparaging article on emancipation meetings and those who take part in them, and says it will maintain its solemn protest against domestic massacre in the garb of emancipation.

The British men of war in commission have been reduced by 90 vessels and nearly 13,000 men since August.

An important trial against the Admiralty, in which Mr. Clare sought to recover half a million sterling for infringement of his patents in iron shipbuilding, resulted in a verdict for the crown.

The marriage contract of the Prince of Wales is published. The princess is secured £10,000 a year.

Professor Hughes has been exhibiting with great success, the working of his telegraph instrument before the leading men of Liverpool and Manchester, over the wires of the United Kingdom Telegraph Company. Great satisfaction was given, and the instruments were being brought practically into play on the wires of the above company, who had secured the exclusive right to their use in England. The newspapers are eulogistic of the instruments, which, as yet, are novelties in England.

The merchants of Liverpool, in the Brazil trade, had held a meeting, and adopted a resolution, deprecating the summary and extreme measures taken against Brazil, and calling on their members of Parliament to ask the Government for information on the subject.

A Paris letter gives a report that President Lincoln's Administration demands from France a categorical explanation of the European intentions in Mexico, and of the interpretation to be put on his letter to Gen. Forey.

FRANCE.

In the Corps Legislatif, the general debate on the address had closed, and the first paragraph was adopted, after some demur to the Government policy towards the Pope, and the modifications of the electoral lists. The second paragraph was also adopted after an effort to get a favorable mention of Poland inserted.

It was reported that the Pope has refused a Cardinal's hat to the new Archbishop of Paris, although the Empress asked the favor.