The Press.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1863.

Abolition of Slavery in Virginia.

There is a tide in the affairs of the Union which the Virginia Legislature has taken at the flood, and which flows on to the abolition of slavery throughout her territory. The gigantic strides which our cause is making towards a triumphant goal are felt upon her soil. On Monday an act was passed by the loyal Legislature of Virginia, the preamble to which states the necessity of changing the constitution so as to conform it to the provisions of the President's proclamation. Since the Legislature of the State is debarred by the constitution from acting upon the subject of slavery, and since the districts of the supreme and circuit courts have been disordered by the organization of West Virginia into a State, a constitutional convention is indispensable. It is, therefore, enacted by the General Assembly that an election of delegates shall be held January 21st, 1864, to convene at Alexandria on the 13th of the ensuing February. At this election any voter who has not adhered to the rebels since September 1st, 1861, may be chosen to the convention. Likewise every loyal citizen, who has not assisted the rebels since January 1st, 1863, is entitled to vote. Three commissioners in each county will be appointed by the Executive to count the votes and give certificates. Any voter who is challenged must take the oath of allegiance to the United States, and declare that he has not voluntarily borne arms against the Union, or in any manner assisted the rebels.

All the Southern States, as they are reclaimed from the rebellion, must in turn imitate this action of Virginia. It is right, it is necessary that they should. They cannot safely come back into the Union bearing the lighted torch of perpetual strife, which kindled the war that has dyed the whole sky in flame. They cannot come back in the Union with the germ of disunion in the future. They must, in returning to their allegiance to the Government, prepare for the abolition of slavery, and begin the establishment of that common interest, North and South, which is indispensable to the peace of the Republic. And it must be borne in mind, that thus far every State which our armies have released from the tyranny of the Richmond usurpation has signified its opposition to slavery. Missouri is radically abolitionized; in Arkansas immense Union meetings are held, in which the abolition of slavery is advocated; in Kentucky and Tennessee, the hatred of slavery visibly increases; Louisiana is unmistakably dedicated to freedom. Now Virginia, distinguished discreditably for many years as a slave-breeding State, is about to give her voice against the system which has so long locked up her mines, kept waste her soil, diminished her population, and dwindled her influence. In destroying slavery, she will earn a title more honorable than that of the "Mother of Presidents." She will, indeed, do what the first of her Presidents believed she long since would have done, and act upon the principles which WASHINGTON himself repeatedly declared. She will prove true to the anti-slavery doctrine of JEFFERSON. The abolition of slavery in Virginia will be the most important political event that her history records since the formation of the Union, and the desolation of her finest counties, by the tread of contending armies, will be nothing compared with that permanent prosperity which will spring up when they pass away. The abolition of slavery will, in short, make Virginia what Nature destined that great State to be—the rival of Pennsylvania and New York.

The Pennsylvania Senate.

Major HENRY WHITE, a member of the State Senate, is now a prisoner at Richmond; his absence will lose the Union majority of one vote in the Senate, which was given by the late election, and tie the opposing parties. There is no probability that Major WHITE will be exchanged, but too much that his absence will result unfavorably in retarding the organization of the Legislature, and interfering with its action. It must be, therefore, thoroughly impressed upon every Union man in the Senate that the organization, by the expressed will of the people, belongs to the Union party. The issue in the late canvass was between the friends and the opponents of the Government; it was clearly presented, and emphatically decided. Pennsylvania elected a Governor who is for the war and the Administration, and placed in the Legislature a working majority to sustain him. Any attempt to falsify the results of that election will be an attempt to thwart the will of the people, and an insult to the State. The Opposition have no moral right to use the advantage the accident of war has given, to retard the organization of the Senate, and no just claim to any part in its official management. The minority was intended to be a minority, by the people, and the majority should remember this, and surrender no right, while acting in all courtesy to their opponents. The Pennsylvania Legislature is pledged this winter to a thorough support of the National policy, and no honorable man on the other side will make the misfortune of a brave soldier the occasion for an unjust appeal from the formal decision of the people.

General Michael Corcoran.

A telegram from Fairfax Court House announces the death of the brave Irish-American soldier, Gen. Michael Corcoran. He died from injuries received by a fall from his horse. For some months before his death he was in command of the division formerly under Brigadier General Rufus King, our present minister to Rome. Corcoran was born in Carrowkel, county Sligo, Ireland, in 1827—descended from an honorable and patriotic Irish stock—claiming direct relationship to the renowned Earl of Lucan (Gen. Patrick Sarsfield)—the bravest officer of his day—through his great-grandmother, who was fourth daughter of William Fitzgerald, of Cloonmore, in the county of Roscommon, and great-granddaughter of the gallant Sarsfield. At nineteen, after having received a good English education, he entered the Irish constabulary establishment, serving for three years. In 1849 he came to America, and was for some years in the employ of the proprietor of Hibernia Hall, New York, whom he succeeded in business in 1861. During the well known "Quarantine War," in 1858, Captain Corcoran, then senior captain of the 69th, was complimented by the Inspector General. In his official recognition of merit the inspector said: "What I might say of Captain Corcoran, commanding Company A, as to his military knowledge, would not add to his already well-known reputation as the best, if not the very best, officer of his rank in the 1st Division." On the 20th of August, 1859, he was elected to fill the vacant colonelcy of the regiment. One particular feature of his career in that capacity was the fact that in 1860 he declined to parade the command of Irish-born citizens to do honor to Prince Albert. For this offence he was tried by court martial; but, on the breaking out of the rebellion, the proceedings were quashed, the more especially as Colonel Corcoran arose from a sick couch to take command of his regiment in the field.

In the advance of the army, under McDowell upon Manassas, the "Irish" 69th, under Colonel Corcoran, was brigaded under the command of Col. (now Major General) Sherman. The gallantry displayed by the regiment, at the battle of Bull Run, is still remembered with pride and pleasure by every true and loyal American. It was at this battle that Corcoran was made a prisoner. The constancy and firmness with which he endured the malignity of the rebels during his imprisonment, and the threatened dangers that he has so boldly faced, rather than prove recreant to his country and his loyalty, are too fresh and green in all the minds of our readers to need any further comment from us. As a reward, and a just one for his conduct, he was made a brigadier general, his commission dating from the day of the battle of Bull Run—viz: July 21, 1861.

Entering into active service again, General Corcoran distinguished himself in East Virginia, under Major General Dix, defeating the rebel General Roger Pryor on the Blackwater. At Suffolk, he was second in command under Major General Peck, and led a number of highly successful movements. Here that unfortunate affair, the killing of Colonel Kimball, occurred; but the universal sense of the country fully acquitted General Corcoran of the facts became known. He has not latterly taken a part in decisive actions, but has filled a position of responsibility.

FINE ARTS.—Peremptory sale of a private collection of oil paintings by Gillette & Scott, auctioneers, No. 619 Chestnut street, this evening, at 7½ o'clock. We desire to call special attention to this sale, the collection embracing some of the finest paintings ever offered at public sale. We notice several fine original pictures by H. Boese and Paul Ritter, of the National Academy of Design; also, by G. W. Nicholson, Pritzi, Seymour, and others of equal merit. The frames are of pure gold-leaf of the Dusseldorf and other approved designs. Those contemplating purchasing a good painting would do well to attend the sale. Paintings and frames will be sold together.

WASHINGTON.

Special Despatches to The Press.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 22.

The Army of the Potomac.

General AYOUB made a trip to-day on the railroad as far as Bull Run, for the purpose of inspecting the road, and providing against raids by the enemy. The bridges were all found to be in good condition, and measures have been adopted that will doubtless prevent another descent being made upon the line within this department. The guerillas and small squads of rebel cavalry still infest the country beyond Manassas, however, and depredations upon Government property between that point and the Rappahannock are of frequent occurrence. Advices from the army to-day report all quiet.

Correspondence with the Legislative and Executive Departments.

It has been erroneously stated that all letters to members of Congress must be pre-paid. The transmission and receipt of mail matter by them continues as heretofore under the franking privilege, (namely) free. All correspondence, however, addressed to any Executive Department, or any officer of it, must now be pre-paid, excepting official communications written by some officer of the Department or an officer under its control, or responsible to it, and in such cases, under the words "Official business," on the envelope, the officer must sign his name, with his official designation.

Distinguished French Visitors at Washington.

Among the distinguished visitors at the Capitol are the Prince D'Arenburg, the Count D'Choiseul, M. Blount, and Capt. Vegeaud, of the French naval service.

Yesterday, accompanied by the French Minister, they dined with the Secretary of State, and to-day they proceeded to visit the Army of the Potomac.

Payment of Bounties and Advance Pay.

The bill which has passed both Houses of Congress, to supply deficiencies, appropriates twenty millions of dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary, for the payment of bounties and advance pay, provided that no bounties excepting such as are now provided for by law shall be paid to any persons enlisted after the 5th of January next; that the money paid by drafted persons, under the enrolment act, shall be paid into the treasury, and shall be drawn out on requisition, as in the case of other public moneys; and the money so paid shall be kept in the treasury, as a special deposit, applicable only to the expenses of the draft, and for the procuration of a substitute for those purposes, it is hereby appropriated.

Arrival of Revenue Steamer Tiger.

The U. S. Revenue steamer Tiger arrived at Alexandria to-day, from Fortress Monroe, having brought hither the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, FIELD, and Messrs. RISLEY and RODGERS, who are connected with the special service of the Treasury Department.

The steamer passed, inside of Point Lookout, a large schooner sunk in fifteen fathoms of water, with her mastheads above water, and her lower sails and gaff topsails set, apparently having been run into within a day or two, and sunk by the collision.

The Tiger stopped near, and saw no person upon the wreck. It laid in mid channel, and is dangerous to vessels running at night.

General Schofield.

General SCHOFIELD will be confirmed as a major general if he goes to the front into active service, as it is expected he will do.

Major General ROSECRANS has been appointed to the command of the Department of the Missouri, vice Major General SCHOFIELD.

ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

NO RETROGRADE MOVEMENT.

The Rebels not Disposed to Assume the Offensive.

MATTERS IN CAMP.

THE CHARGES AGAINST GENERAL HUMPHREYS.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22.—Information from the Army of the Potomac to-night, says there is no indications of a retrograde movement toward Washington, as has been reported; nor is it believed that the enemy, in their present condition, are able to give much annoyance. Their cavalry, which is diminishing considerably in our front, are not equal to the task of making any formidable raid on our base of supplies, owing to the impoverished condition of their horses. The insufficiency of shoes and blankets, if the information of deserters can be relied upon, renders it equally improbable that Lee's infantry can be called from their strong position and comfortable shelters to undertake a campaign during the rigors of winter.

The probable number of re-enlistments into the veteran corps from the Army of the Potomac is estimated at probably ten thousand.

THE THIRTY DAYS' FURLOUGH.

The delay in indicating the precise date of the thirty days' furlough has caused many to reconsider their first intention. The desire to visit their homes during the holidays has proved more powerful than the liberal bounties offered for re-enlisting.

Five and perhaps six companies of the 93d New York have re-enlisted, and are expected to start homeward on Wednesday. This regiment has for a long time been filling the responsible position of provost guard at Brigade headquarters and provost guard. During that period over 20,000 prisoners have been received and turned over by them to the authorities at Washington. The regiment is temporarily commanded by Lieut. Col. Butler.

The Oneida Cavalry, Captain Mann, an independent company attached to the Quartermaster's Department, are also re-enlisting, and will probably be sent home to recruit.

The 1st Maryland Cavalry, Major Thistleton, are also making rapid movements in the same direction.

GENERAL HUMPHREYS.

The charges against Major General Humphreys, Chief of Major General Meade's staff, cause considerable comment among his brother officers, but so far as can be ascertained from an extensive interrogatory among the army, they are almost unanimously denounced as merely the emanations of a revenge-ful spirit, caused by just punishment of the violation of military rules.

The charges are so foreign to what is well known of General Humphreys by his associates of many years' standing that they are unanimous in recommending him to take no steps in regard to them. As the confirmation of General Humphreys' appointment, made since the charges were uttered, is now pending in the Senate, the inference generally is they have been reported to obtain his rejection.

Hundreds of sutlers to-day, under the new order, have crowded the Provost Marshal General's office to obtain permits and transportation for the much needed supplies. The order gives universal satisfaction.

NASHVILLE.

Movements of General Grant—Guerilla Raids.

NASHVILLE, Dec. 20.—Mrs. Anne Johnston, of Cincinnati, is on trial before the Military Committee, for acting as a rebel spy, and smuggling saddles and harness from Cincinnati to the rebel lines. The articles were packed in barrels purporting to contain bacon, for the shipment of which permits had been regularly obtained. She will probably be convicted.

Gurley is still on trial. Major General Rousseau was called as a witness in his case, and his evidence throws much light on the cruelty of the guerilla system.

Major General Grant arrived last night, and will remain for the present. General Sherman is expected to-night.

General Rousseau has sent a gunboat up the Cumberland, to protect the shipment thither of coal from Pulaski county, Kentucky. Great suffering prevails for want of food.

Forrest is at Jackson, Tennessee, marauding and plundering the country.

Our railroad operations are being prosecuted with vigor.

The weather is extremely cold, with severe frosts for the past two days and nights.

CHATTANOOGA.

CHATTANOOGA, Dec. 21.—Two boats from Bridgeport arrived here last night, loaded with provisions.

All citizens here from the North are being enrolled in view of the draft. This order causes some alarm among them.

A great improvement has been made here in the post-office and mail arrangements by the new postmaster, Hood, and the mail agent, E. P. Cox.

Governor Curtin's Health.

HARRISBURG, Dec. 22.—Governor Curtin leaves here to-morrow for New York city, to be absent during the week. He goes hence for medical advice and assistance.

While the state of his health is not dangerous, his friends and family deem it absolutely necessary that he should make this visit for medical aid, permanently to restore his wonted good health and vigor.

Death of General Michael Corcoran.

FAIRFAX COURT HOUSE, Dec. 22.

To the Associated Press:

General Michael Corcoran died at half past eight o'clock this evening from injuries received from a fall from his horse. THEODORE M. REED, Lieut. Col. Commanding 69th Regt., Irish Legion.

No Pirate Near Gibraltar.

BOSTON, Dec. 22.—A letter from Gibraltar, dated the 27th ult., states that the supposed rebel steamer which was seen off the Straits proves to be a French war steamer, attached as a despatch boat to the French iron-clad fleet which is cruising off Cape St. Vincent.

The Draft in Kentucky.

CINCINNATI, Dec. 22.—A messenger from the Governor and Legislature of Kentucky left Frankfort yesterday for Washington, to request the President to postpone the draft until corrections are made in the enrolment papers.

Reported Capture of General Ullman.

BOSTON, Dec. 22.—Letters received here state that General Ullman, with a part of his brigade, was captured near Port Hudson, and is now a prisoner of war at Richmond.

The National Conservative Convention.

CINCINNATI, Dec. 22.—Delegates have left Frankfort, Ky., for the purpose of attending the National Conservative Convention, to be held at Philadelphia.

Gens. Sherman and Shackelford in Louisville.

LOUISVILLE, Dec. 22.—Generals Sherman and Shackelford, with their staffs, arrived in this city this evening.

Restriction on Passengers by Sea.

NEW YORK, Dec. 22.—All passengers from this city by vessel, hereafter, are to have passports, which can be obtained by any one whose loyalty is properly vouched for.

Christian Commission in the Army of the Potomac.

The great appreciation of the work of the Christian Commission in the Army of the Potomac has seldom been more forcibly expressed, though often testified to by officers and men, than in the unsolicited letter of Surgeon Cady, which we publish below:

HEADQUARTERS 2D BRIG., 3D DIV., 3D CORPS, December 19, '63.

DEAR SIR: A sense of duty compels me to thank, through you, the noble "Christian Commission" for the assistance afforded by its agents to the wounded of this brigade, before and during the late retrograde movement of the army from the Rapidan.

The wagon of the Commission was constantly at the hospital in the field and with the ambulance train during the retreat, and your agents seemed indefatigable in dispensing necessary food, medicines, bandages, stimulants, &c., to our wounded and the sick; and I know that through their enterprise and humanity a great amount of suffering was alleviated. For six days and nights your agents were constantly employed in their work of Christian mercy. Six bitter cold days and nights did they labor without cessation.

In the name of the wounded of my brigade, I tender you and the Commission most hearty thanks.

I am, dear sir, truly yours,
CHARLES E. CADY, Surgeon-in-Chief,
2d Brigade, 3d Division, 3d Corps.

To GEO. H. STUART, Esq., President Christian Commission, Philadelphia.

SALE OF CHOICE AND VALUABLE BRONZE STATUES AND GROUPS.—Messrs. Gillette & Scott, auctioneers, 619 Chestnut street, will sell at public sale, on this (Wednesday) morning, at 12 o'clock, a fine collection of French Bronzes, comprising elegant statues in armor, representing Don Cæsar and Don Juan, sold at Goltier's; Huguenot and Liguer, Columbus and Cortez; superb Groups of Spring and Autumn, Faust, &c., all recently received from Paris. The collection is now arranged for examination, and comprises the most expensive and choicest assortment of Bronze Statues ever offered at public sale in this country.

ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS.—A very powerful stereoscopian has been arranged at the Assembly Buildings. The exhibition will commence on to-morrow evening. Rare views of great merit, in America, Europe, Asia, and Africa, will be exhibited. They cannot fail to be attractive. The advertisement, in another column, states the particulars.

THE FRANKLIN REPOSITORY.—The prospectus of this paper, published at Chambersburg, Pa., by McClure & Stoner, will be found in our advertising columns. It is one of the oldest, and certainly one of the best-conducted, papers in Pennsylvania. As an advertising medium it merits the attention of our business men.

XXXVIIIth CONGRESS—1st SESSION.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22, 1863.

SENATE.

Exemptions.

Mr. COWAN, of Pennsylvania, presented petitions from Connecticut in favor of the exemption of clergymen.

Revision of the Statutes.

Mr. SUMNER, of Massachusetts, gave notice of a bill to provide for the revision and codification of the statutes of the United States.

Mr. POMEROY, of Kansas, gave notice of a bill relative to the assumption of the indebtedness of Kansas.

Mr. ANTHONY, of Rhode Island, offered a resolution that a select committee of nine members upon the Pacific Railroad be appointed, which was agreed to.

Mr. SUMNER submitted a resolution requesting the Postmaster General to communicate to the Senate the reason of the frequent failure of the mails between the city and New York, and asking what legislation is necessary to remedy them, and if a new railroad to New York be not required to meet the demands of the postal service.

A Bill against Congressmen Acting.

Mr. WILSON, of Massachusetts, introduced a bill concerning members of Congress as follows: No Senator, Representative, or Delegate in Congress shall, during his continuance in office as such, be employed, with or without compensation, as attorney or solicitor, directly or indirectly, in any suit, case, or matter, in which the United States is interested as a party or otherwise, pending or to be heard or determined in any court, or before any department or tribunal whatsoever, civil or military.

Public Lands—A Grant to Wisconsin.

Mr. HOWE, of Wisconsin, submitted a joint resolution for the relief of Wisconsin.

The resolution is as follows:

Be it Resolved, By the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, That the Secretary of the Department of the Interior be and is hereby authorized to allow the State of Wisconsin the use and retention of the net proceeds derived from the sale of public lands, as provided in the act of the 6th of August, 1846, and shall, in the settlement of that account, credit the State one hundred and twenty-five thousand four hundred and thirty-one and eighty-two-one-hundredths cents, granted to the Territory of Wisconsin, to aid in the construction of the Lake Michigan and Rock River Canal, in the said State, against the last mentioned charge, which all paid over to the Territory of Wisconsin, to the Lake Michigan and Rock River Canal Company, and with all other sums disbursed by the Territory, to defray expenses, which, by the law, were chargeable upon the Treasury of the United States.

Bounties and Enlistment.

The joint resolution of the House, appropriating twenty millions for the bounties, advance pay, and premiums of enlisted men, was taken up.

On motion of Mr. WILSON, of Massachusetts, the additional provision of fifty thousand dollars, to supply deficiencies in printing, was stricken out.

Mr. FESSENDEN, of Maine, moved that a proviso be inserted, that no part of the sum be paid to any enlisted man after the 5th of January next. Adopted.

Mr. FESSENDEN moved that the proviso be now amended, that no bounty be paid after the 5th of January, except such as is now provided for in the existing law.

Mr. SHERMAN, of Ohio, opposed the policy of paying bounties, and favored an adherence to the present system. There was a limit to the ability of all nations to pay, and that limit should be avoided by some appropriations. He would not embarrass the operations of the Government, nor did he believe the adoption of his recommendation would occasion any embarrassment.

Mr. NESMITH, of Oregon, favored the present law of enrolment as the fairest and best mode of increasing our armies, and one entirely adequate to the requirements of the service.

A Draft Necessary.

Mr. FESSENDEN said that we might go on, and fail to pass the bill, and the expense of enlistment would run on under the pledge of the War Department, till the bounties would cost more than the bill demanded. We should regulate the matter by law. He wanted the Executive to know, that when a law is given, it was no part of their duty to make promises that can not be form. They were led into this mistake by an error of calculation. Enlistments had come up far faster than the commanding army from conjecture, they thought they were authorized to promise the bounties to them their pledges. He had no particular fault to find with them, because the reality had exceeded their calculations. Congress is the body to settle these questions, and they should be settled now. We should rely on the most fair and equal policy that could be devised, viz., a draft.

Mr. COWAN asked how we are to procure the re-enlistment of soldiers if these bounties are not offered?

Mr. SHERMAN replied, that the enlistments did not expire generally till July or August, affording ample time to fill the ranks.

Mr. WILSON discussed the general features of the measure proposed, and favored a speedy passage of the needed amendment of the law, letting the commutation principle stand, as it was, as a feature which he favored ninety-nine-hundredths of the people favored. He also hoped that further burdens would not be placed on the aid of the country, and that black regiments would be placed in the field to the number of a quarter of million. He believed that a shout of joy throughout the country would attend such a consummation.

Mr. HOWE, of Wisconsin, and Mr. TEN EYCK, of New Jersey, made a few remarks on the merits of the bill.

The vote upon Mr. Fessenden's amendment was then taken, resulting as follows—yeas 22, nays 9.

The resolution was then reported to the Senate, and Mr. WILSON offered an additional section to the effect that the money received from drafted persons shall be paid into the treasury of the United States, to be drawn out on requisition as other money and to be appropriated to the payment of bounties and procuration of substitutes.

After a few remarks the amendment was adopted.

The resolution was then read a third time and passed without a dissenting voice.

Thanks to Captain Rogers.

Mr. GRIMES, of Iowa, reported the House joint resolution tendering the thanks of Congress to Captain John Rogers, for the captures made by him and his general good conduct.

The resolution was considered and adopted.

The House resolution for an adjournment on Wednesday till Tuesday the fifth of January, was then taken up.

On motion of Mr. FESSENDEN it was laid on the table.

The Enrolment Bill.

The pending bounty and pay bill was laid on the table on motion of Mr. WILSON, and the enrolment bill was taken up.

The amendments proposed by the committee from the last 5th section were acted upon seriatim and adopted.

Mr. FESSENDEN, of Maine, moved to strike out the section relative to classes as follows: "That the nation-ality of persons of the United States, not yet in military service and enrolled under this act, shall be divided into two classes, the first of which shall comprise all persons subject to do military duty, between the ages of twenty and forty-five years, and who are unmarried. The second class shall comprise all other persons subject to do military duty, and the persons of the second class shall not in any district be called into the service of the United States until those of the first class shall have been called." He supported the amendment in a speech, giving the reason why married persons should be exempt until an absolute necessity exists for their service.

Mr. HOWE said he was afraid that all magistrates and clergymen would require relief from their burdensome duties should the amendment be adopted, from his experience which he had had in the special provision made for the families of enlisted married men in Wisconsin adopted last session, which would be the case.

The amendment was rejected without a division.

Exemption of Clergymen.

Mr DIXON, of Connecticut, offered a resolution exempting clergymen, and supported it in a speech. As the title of minister is vague he proposed to restrict the exemption to those only actually in the clerical service, and vouched for as such by their own communion.

Mr. LANE, of Indiana, said that clergymen were among the most patriotic of men. They had preached for the Union, and prayed for the Union. He was sorry to see that they should fight for the Union. The precedent of Charlemagne, cited by the gentleman from Connecticut, should not affect his vote.

Mr. HARLAN, of Iowa, did not think that clergymen had complained of the exemption. He had heard them thank God that their manhood was thus recognized.

The vote was then taken on this amendment, and it was negatived—yeas 5, nays 32. The negative vote consisted of Messrs. Anthony, Dixon, Doolittle, Hicks, Morrill, Sauls bury, Sumner, and Wade.

Mr. WILSON offered an amendment offering to persons who may enlist in any of the seceded States the benefit of the provision of the act, after a few remarks, he withdrew the amendment temporarily.

The bill was then laid on the table.

Mr. JOHNSON, of Maryland, called up the House resolution for an adjournment from Wednesday, on which a vote was taken, with the following result—yeas 27, nays 16—as follows:

YEAS.			
Anthony,	Hendricks,	Powell:	
Buckalew,	Hicks,	Ramsey,	
Cowan,	Howard,	Saulsbury,	
Davis,	Howe,	Sherman,	
Dixon,	Johnson,	Sprague,	
Doolittle,	Lane (Ind),	Van Winkle,	
Foster,	Morgan,	Wilkinson,	
Harris,	Nesmith,	Willey,	
Henderson,	Pomeroy,	Wright.	
NAYS.			
Chandler,	Foot,	Sumner,	
Clark,	Grimes,	Ten Eyck,	
Collamer,	Harding,	Trumbull,	
Conness,	Harlan,	Wade,	
Fessenden,	Morrill.	Wilson.	

Generals Without Commands.

Mr. TRUMBULL, of Illinois, submitted the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Secretary of War be directed to furnish the Senate with the names of all the Major and Brigadier Generals, who are without commands, equal to a brigade, stating how long each has been without such command, and whether each has a staff, and if so, how numerous, and of what rank, and what amount of pay, including the commutation and rations of each, designating those who have been recently relieved while so without a command; and also, that he inform the Senate of how many Major or Brigadier Generals, who are in the command of departments, districts, and posts in the loyal States, and whether any necessity exists that requires that their departments, districts, and posts should be commanded by officers of such high rank with their numerous and expensive staffs.

On the motion of Mr. SHERMAN, the Senate then adjourned.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

The Post Office.

Mr. STEVENS, of Pennsylvania, from the Committee on Ways and Means, reported the post-office appropriation bill, which was made the special order for the 5th of January.

A Claim Case.

Mr. HOLMAN, of Indiana, from the Committee on Claims, reported a resolution requesting the First Comptroller of the Treasury to suspend all proceedings in the case relating to the claim of Carmack & Ramsey, involving nearly two million dollars, on account of carrying the mail, until the further action of Congress.

Mr. COX, of Ohio, said the First Comptroller had already expended a million in the research.

Mr. DAWES, of Massachusetts, inquired whether the comptroller, after hearing the argument, had not come to a point to make up his decision, and whether his resolution did not come from parties who had agreed to submit the question to the comptroller?

Mr. HOLMAN replied that he did not know the comptroller was prepared to render his judgment. He thought the Court of Claims was the proper tribunal to decide the case.

A further debate ensued, in the course of which

Mr. MORRILL, of Vermont, said that, to take the subject from the comptroller's hands involved an imputation on the latter's judicial character.

The resolution was then adopted—yeas 110, nays 36.

Mr HALE, of Pennsylvania, of the Committee on Claims, reported a joint resolution, referring all the papers in the Carmack and Ramsey case to the Court of Claims, and it was passed.

The resolution was adopted to print ten thousand copies of the memorial of the National Canal Convention, which was communicated to the House by the President.

Payment of the Western Home Guards.

The House then resumed the consideration of the bill reported yesterday, to pay the officers and men called out for home defence in the Western or Missouri Department.

Messrs. McCLURG, BOYD, BLOW, and KING, all of Missouri, earnestly advocated the bill. In the course of the debate it was said that the Home Guard were the first to bear the hardships and privations of the soldier's life, and had it not been for them, Missouri would now be a rebel State. Speculators, on false representations, were buying the claims at from thirty to fifty per centum discount, and the early passage of the bill would end this genteel swindling.

Mr. COX's amendment was adopted for the purpose of securing payment to those immediately interested.

After further debate, the bill was passed.

It appropriates over seven hundred thousand dollars to pay the officers and men in the Western or Missouri Department.

The Military Bill.

The House proceeded to the consideration of the military appropriation bill.

Mr SCHENCK, of Ohio, expressed the hope that the previous question would not be called on its passage. He wished the bill to be referred to the Committee on Military Affairs, which has now before it the immortals and letters more or less connected with the support of the militia, academy, and involving questions as to how far the military schools can be sustained, without the aid of the Government, and how far future appropriations for West Point may be curtailed.

Mr. STEVENS, of Pennsylvania, thought they had no time to reconstruct the West Point Academy during the war. He hoped that the gentleman of the Military Committee would prepare their bill without reference to this.

Mr. SCHENCK did not see the force of the gentleman's remark, as the pending bill appropriates for the year ending June, 1865. He moved to refer the bill to the Committee on Military Affairs, which was disagreed to.

The bill was then passed.

A resolution was adopted instructing the Committee on Military Affairs to make immediate inquiry into the expediency of amending the enrolment act so as to compel the provost marshals to hold their examinations for physical disqualification, at the county towns.

The Constitutionality of the Conscription Act.

Mr. PHILIP JOHNSON, of Pennsylvania, offered the following preamble:

[*Whereas*, The supreme judicial tribunal of the State of Pennsylvania has solemnly declared that the act of March 3d, 1863, commonly called the conscription act, is contrary to and violative of the provisions of the Constitution, and is, therefore, null and void:

Resolved, That it is the sworn duty of the Executive Department of the Government either to acquiesce in the decision in that State or to bring the question involved before the Supreme Court of the United States for final adjudication, to the end that, if Congress shall deem such legislation necessary, a bill shall be prepared not liable to constitutional objections.

The resolution was tabled—yeas 80, nays 48.

YEAS.

Alley,	Farnsworth,	O'Neill (Penna),
Allison,	Fenton,	Orth,
Ames,	Frank,	Patton,
Anderson,	Ganson,	Price,
Arnold,	Gooch,	Randall (Ky),
Ashley,	Grinnell,	Rice (Mass),
Baily,	Hale,	Rice (Maine),
Baldwin,	Higby,	Rollins (N H),
Beaman,	Hooper,	Schenck,
Bontwell,	Hotchkiss,	Schofield,
Boyd,	Hubbard (Iowa),	Shannon,
Brandegee,	Hubbard (Conn),	Sloan,
Broomall,	Julian,	Smith,
Clarke, W.	Kasson,	Smithers,
Clarke, Freeman	Longyear,	Spalding,
Cobb,	Lovejoy,	Stevens,
Cole,	McClurg,	Thomas,
Creswell,	McIndoe,	Train,
Davis (Md),	Miller (N Y),	Upson,
Dawes,	Morehead,	Van Valkenburgh,
Deming,	Morrill,	Washburne (Ill),
Dixon,	Morris (N Y),	Washburn (Mass),
Donnelly,	Myers, Amos	Wheeler,
Driggs,	Myers, Leonard	Wheeler,
Dumont,	Norton,	White (O),
Eckley,	Odell,	Williams,
Eliot,		Wilder,
		Windom,
		Winfield.

NAYS.

Ancona,	Harris (Md),	Pendleton,	
Baldwin (Mich),	Harris (Del),	Perry,	
Biles,	Holman,	Rogers,	
Brooks,	Johnson (Pa),	Ross,	
Coffroth,	Johnson (Ohio),	Scott,	
Cox,	Le Blond,	Seale (N Y),	
Dawson,	Long,	Steele (N J),	
Denison,	McDowell,	Stiles,	
Eden,	McKinney,	Strouse,	
Edgerton,	Middleton,	Stuart,	
Eldridge,	Marvin,	Wheeler,	
Fink,	Nelson,	White (I),	
Grider,	Pendleton,	Wood F,	
Hall,	O'Neill (Ohio).		
Harding,			

The House concurred in the Senate's amendment to the bill appropriating twenty millions for pay, bounties, and premiums.

The House then adjourned.

(The name of the Hon. Leonard Myers, of Pennsylvania, was omitted in the list of those who voted on Mr. Harding's proviso that no part of the twenty million appropriation should be expended in equipping and paying negro soldiers. Mr. Myers voted against the proviso.

A mistake also occurred in the proceedings of the House on the same day, in which Mr. Kellogg, of Michigan, was reported as voting for the amendment of Mr. Kelley, of Pennsylvania. The names were confused by the telegraph, and the error was purely accidental, occurring both in the papers of this city and New York.)

CITY ITEMS.

Sensible Christmas Gift.

We must insist upon it, that the most sensible present that a gentleman can make to a lady is a Wheeler & Wilson Sewing Machine. Doubtless many of our readers have made up their mind to buy a sewing machine for *somebody* between now and Friday, but have not decided which machine to select. Buy the *Wheeler & Wilson* by all means. It is not an experiment which, after a trial, may disappoint, but a magnificent and acknowledged success, as much so as a Colt's revolver or a Hoe's press.

To husbands we would say, therefore, Give your wife a Wheeler & Wilson. It will add years to her life.

To fathers and mothers, the suggestion is most opportune. Give your daughters a Wheeler & Wilson Sewing Machine. It will prove to them a never-failing friend.

Brothers, who wish to compliment their sisters in a manner at once creditable to their heads and hearts, let them select for that purpose a Wheeler & Wilson Sewing Machine.

Sons! in no way can you better express your filial love to the being who bore you, than by presenting to her a Wheeler & Wilson Sewing Machine. It will gild with domestic sunlight her declining years.

Lovers! would you demonstrate to the object of your affections that you are wise and worthy of her confidence and regard, send them a Wheeler & Wilson Sewing Machine.

If you desire to compliment some newly-married bride, make her the happy recipient of a Wheeler & Wilson Sewing Machine.

Congregations are now ordering the Wheeler & Wilson Sewing Machine for their pastors' wives. Let those who have not yet done so go and do likewise.

Friends of Woman, Show the sincerity of your interest in the sex by making an object to place in the hands of every sewing woman a Wheeler & Wilson Machine.

Our reasons for this emphatic preference for the Wheeler & Wilson instrument over all others are numerous, among which we may specify the following:

1. Beauty and excellence of stitch alike upon both sides of the fabric sewed.
2. Strength, firmness, and durability of seam that will not rip nor ravel, and made with—
3. Economy of thread.
4. Its attachments and wide range of application to purposes and materials.
5. Compactness and elegance of model and finish.
6. Simplicity and thoroughness of construction.
7. Speed, ease of operation and management, and quietness of movement.

No wonder, in view of all these facts, that there have been more Wheeler & Wilson Machines sold for *Christmas presents*, than all other machines combined.

THEY ARE
THE CHEAPEST AND BEST.

Over five thousand are in use in Philadelphia. Over one hundred and forty thousand have been sold.

Call and examine. Instruction given at the homes of the purchaser without charge.

Call easily and secure one.

Splendid assortment of Ladies' ready-made Furnishing Goods now on hand.

Salesrooms 704 Chestnut street, Brown-stone Building. Wax figure in the window.

McALLISTER & BROTHER'S GREAT COLLECTION OF CARD PHOTOGRAPHS.—The community owes much to Messrs. McAllister & Brother, the widely-known opticians, No. 728 Chestnut street, for the extensive and artistic gratification which they have afforded to the public by the introduction of a superior class of *Card Photographs*, in which the ideal, as well as the real, is exquisitely materialized, on durable cards, by the Sun-painting process. These gentlemen have recently issued a very complete circular, in which their entire range of subjects is catalogued and numbered, with such descriptive notes as enable the purchaser to select with facility what he wants. Portraits of well-known men and women, of course, occupy a prominent place in this circular (which numbers, in all, nearly a thousand pictures), though copies of fine, rare, and valuable engravings are also numerous, in which the classical, graceful, and the humorous may be duly represented. Pictures of statuary also abound in the list, together with a large number of specialities, such as "The Colored Volunteer;" "Domestic Blockade;" "Evening," by G. G. Fish; "Hours," by Raphael; "McClellan at Antietam;" "Palmer's Marbles;" "Sinking the 290;" "That's What's the Matter;" "The Bitter Draft;" "Bombastes Furioso;" "Day Dreams;" "I-wish-I-was-in-Dixie;" "A Never-ending Story;" "Found;" "Lincoln's Guardian Angel;" "Matrimonial Joys," and "Matrimonial Sorrows;" "Uncle Sam's Scapegoat;" "When this Cruel War is Over," and others. The collection of military heroes presented in this stock, both living and dead, is the finest in the country, and their assortment of medium size for photographic albums, for parlor display, is also very rich, numbering nearly two hundred of the most desirable subjects. We invite attention to Messrs. McAllister & Brother's advertisement in another column.

A HOUSEHOLD BLESSING—HOW TO SECURE IT.—Some one has loudly and truthfully said that "a good Sewing Machine lightens the labor and promotes the health and happiness of those at home;" and, with equal truth, it may be said that the most beautiful Christmas or New Year gift, to the mother, sister, or friend, that could be given, would be a Grover & Baker Sewing Machine. Money is being spent lavishly for Christmas gewgaws, and what we would suggest, in order that this most valuable of household blessings may be secured is that all who have not yet done so shall *first* supply their families with one of these inimitable machines; after that, let them gratify their liberality by presenting a *Grover & Baker* Machine to their friends. In this connection, we deem it important that the public should be advised of the following facts:

First. The machines manufactured by the Grover & Baker Sew