The Press.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1864.

☞ We can take no notice of anonymous communications. We do not return rejected manuscripts.

☞ Voluntary correspondence solicited from all parts of the world, and especially from our different military and naval departments. When used, it will be paid for.

A New Plan of Campaign.

Strategically, the present campaign gives fair promise to prove the most interesting of the war. Perhaps, for the first time, we are to have practical and direct strategy administered efficiently on a grand scale. We cannot predict, of course; but after the outer defences of the rebellion have been demolished by assault, and so much of moral victory has been won by the armies and the Government, the time and situation seem more propitious for military genius to work clearly. We have broken the way to that arterial system which contains the life of the rebellion; or, in other words, we are to penetrate the enemy's interior. One glance at the map will show the original problematic character of the rebel States, with their intricate extent of roads and rivers, and defensible country. A part of the problem is solved, and the world is at last convinced that the rebellion *can* be put down, while the nation is assured that it *will*. We are speaking only in a military sense, not fairly allowing, perhaps, for those moral changes in the people, which affect the results of movements and of battles sometimes quite as much as strategy. But, as a matter of military conquest, it is absurd to specify a time for the downfall of the rebellion, and in that sense we should prudently regard it. If it suddenly collapses from interior causes of starvation, poverty, and discontent, so much the better; but here we have no present certainty of reckoning, and, after all, the stern logic of war bases our only thorough reliance on our military power. Moral suasion cannot take the place of bayonets, and the enemy is not weak so long as he can resist us with military ability. We may believe that our armies will move to a charm, and the rebel forces will dissolve like a dream, but this pleasant faith will not remove mountains. We must still fight patiently, stubbornly, watchfully, and still march, and march again. Let us consider for a moment the topographic character and strategic capacity of one single State of the Confederacy, and then remember that it requires time for armies to travel as well as to manœuvre. The rebel forces will be supplied just as long as the Confederacy remains, for the whole rebellion, to all intents, exists in its army; or, at best, the rebel *people* are only a secondary concern—a reserve from which their army is to be recruited, fed, and clothed, and which, in the last resort, may be sacrificed, just as the camel is killed in the desert to save the traveller from dying by thirst. Minus its colored population and their overseers, the whole rebellion is in effect one army. All the white population of the Confederacy capable of bearing arms are under Conscription, willingly or unwillingly, and it is impossible to reach the rebellion except by striking at it. As an army we must make up our minds to crush it, using, by the way, our old auxiliary, the laborer, peasant, and supporter of the South. To acquire what we at present hold, battle after battle had to be fought against great natural and artificial resistances. What remains to be done, even if less than what we have accomplished, is no child's play. No general will contract to put down the war in three or six months, or any specified time, even if his every movement were a success. We have reason to believe that the operations of the present campaign, after the experience which the country has undergone to find the solution of its great problem, will be dictated by wisdom and result in triumph; but time and patience must be allowed for the growth and harvest of plans and endeavors. We should rally again to the work as though we had a second war to finish. With such a resolution the war might break up before a campaign were fairly ended, but, at all events, we must rely upon our military power.

The new campaign has begun with much promise, but its merits will doubtless exist more in decisive strategy than in battles, which are not always the best achievements of war. If we can secure the greater part of the Southwest with but little bloodshed, a magnificent victory will be achieved. The movement which General SHERMAN is making on the line of Jackson and Meridian in Mississippi, threatening the lines from that point at right angles toward Mobile and Selma, co-operated with by a fleet and army from the Gulf, seems about to become the best and most profitable movement of the war. Its own intrinsic importance, and the relation which it bears to the position of General GRANT, commend it highly. To show its probable value more clearly, we adopt the intelligent speculations of the *Times*:

"The region into possession of which we shall come by the successful issue of the operations now on foot, forms a grand strategic triangle, whereof Meridian, Mobile, Selma, are the three points. Its value is threefold: first, the great facility for intercommunication it presents; secondly, the material value of the district of country of which it assures possession; and, thirdly, the military bearing of this region on the whole theatre of war. We can do no more than glance at these three points in succession.

"And first, of the communications, it is to be said that no region in the South is so admirably situated, both naturally and artificially, as that just indicated. For in the district between Vicksburg, Selma, Mobile, *we have no less than two water bases—on the Mississippi and on the Gulf; and four lines of communication—namely, two railroads, and two rivers.* From Vicksburg, we have the line of the Southern Mississippi Railroad; from Mobile, we have the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, together with the Tombigbee and Alabama rivers. The Tombigbee opens the State of Mississippi up to Columbus and Aberdeen, and the Alabama opens the State of Alabama up to Selma, Montgomery, and beyond. These points will all be held and made powerfully fortified by the army. *They will form precisely the secondary base Grant and Grant must have in an advance into the Gulf States.* The material importance of the region is shown by the fact that its river bottoms form the richest cotton district in the South; and it is there, also, that the nexus of the distribution of the slave population shows its darkest hue.

"We now arrive at the strategic bearings of the region in its relations with the present disposition of the rebel forces in the Southwest. The bearing of it, in this view, cannot be overestimated. First of all, it will place the grand secondary line of rebel communications. With the possession of Chattanooga and Knoxville, we tapped the first of these lines; and the confessions of the rebels themselves show how terrible this itself embarrassment is. Well, we shall now seize the only remaining line. In the next place, it must call away a considerable portion, at least, of the rebel army from Grant's front, and enable him to advance. Supplies will soon be accumulated to make this possible. But finally, and most important of all, *it anticipates the rebels in the possession of the only remaining line of defence which it was possible for the rebels to take up, when Grant should once advance from Chattanooga.* Military men have long recognized, that if the rebels were once turned at Atlanta, the line of the Tombigbee was the only available position left them. The other lines tend directly into a *cul-de-sac*, ending in Florida. If, therefore, the present movements are successful, it clutches this single position at which the rebels could have hoped to make any protracted stand."

The two generals who will operate chiefly in the present campaign have been the leading spirits of the war in the Southwest—we mean Gen. GRANT and Gen. SHERMAN—and in these leaders we are fortunate in having full confidence. SHERMAN's march to reinforce GRANT at Chattanooga, and the march he has just made to Jackson, are both highly commendable for their expedition and unmistakable energy. We shall not be surprised if Gen. GRANT remains comparatively inactive for some time to come as regards the army of JOHNSTON, preferring to await the gradual ripening of his plans. A march into Georgia unsupported by the movement which Gen. SHERMAN must have time to make, would render more obvious his difficulty of obtaining supplies, and keeping open the Tennessee. Gen. SHERMAN's operations will be encouraged by abundant means of communication. Should Gen. JOHNSTON throw a part of his forces toward Selma and Mobile to check or destroy SHERMAN, he renders victory the more easy to General GRANT, and at the best will be in the toils of that plan which, by front and flank, threatens to drive the whole military power of the rebel Southwest into the heart of Georgia, and there crush it. What relation Gen. GILMORE's prospective movement on Tallahassee, in Florida, may bear to a campaign in Georgia, time may show.

The war in the Southeast has not yet assumed so much significance as the campaign progressing in the Division of the Mississippi; but we look for new vigor in the coming campaign in Virginia. The Army of the Potomac, reinforced sufficiently to act its part, cannot but have a great effect on the campaign elsewhere. Should Richmond be menaced with another large force, moving by the James river, the rebel hold on East Tennessee would soon be annulled, and the rebellion in East and West left at the mercy of a number of sure and vigorous blows. We are under no apprehensions of a "scatteration" policy, but, on the contrary, earnestly believe that the war of 1864 will be full of purpose and to the point.

The Free Plantations.

General BANKS, in a document which will have a place of interest in the archives of the war, has, for the first time, pronounced a system by which free labor is to be protected and governed. The military power is the basis of this government, but, arbitrary as it must be, it could not be exerted with greater humanity, justice, and beneficence than in the present case. In a proclamation of some length, General BANKS announces provisions for dividing the parishes of his province into school and police districts; provides for the establishment of schools and police; interdicts flogging or other cruel and unusual punishment; makes the planters responsible to military authority, which, until other tribunals are made, will try all questions between the employer and the employed; provides also for sick and disabled persons, places the sale of intoxicating liquors under restraint, and prohibits the possession of arms or dangerous weapons without authority. Ten hours in summer and nine in winter, with pay of $8 for first-class hands, just treatment, good quarters, healthy rations, fuel, clothing, medical attendance, and instruction for children, wages to be deducted in case of sickness or misconduct, are fixed provisions for the government of labor and its compensations. Laborers are permitted to choose their masters, but are bound to their agreement for the year, under protection of the Government, and may be permitted to cultivate land on private account to the extent of one acre, a half, or a quarter each, to be increased for good conduct at the discretion of the employer. "The encouragement of independent labor," General BANKS remarks wisely, "will strengthen all the advantages which capital derives from labor, and enable the laborer to take care of himself, and prepare for the time when he can render too much labor for so much money, which is the great end to be attained." It is further advised that employers should provide for the current wants of their hands by perquisites for extra labor, or by appropriation of land for share cultivation, discourage monthly payments so far as it can be done without discontent, and reserve till the full harvest the yearly wages. A free-labor bank will be established for the accumulation of wages and savings, the bank to be connected with the United States Treasury.

The transportation of negro families to other countries will not be approved. Here we end the reading of a number of wholesome and sensible provisions, which show how well General BANKS has studied his subject as a soldier and a statesman. His remarks on the relation of Planter and Negro are extremely interesting:

"The last year's experience shows that the planter and the negro comprehend the revolution. The overseer, having little interest in capital and less sympathy with labor, dislikes the trouble of thinking, and discredits the notion that anything new has occurred. He is a relic of the past and adheres to its customs. His stubborn refusal to comprehend the condition of things occasioned most of the embarrassments of the past year. Where such incomprehension is chronic, reduced wages, diminished rations, and the mild punishments imposed by the army and navy will do no good."

Basing these regulations upon the assumption that labor is a public duty and idleness is a crime, Gen. BANKS further demonstrates their necessity in the following forcible paragraph:

"Successful industry is especially necessary at the present time, when large public debts and onerous taxes are imposed to maintain and protect the liberties of the people and the integrity of the Union. All officers, civil or military, and all classes of citizens who assist in extending the profits of labor, and increasing the product of the soil, upon which, the national prosperity and power depends, will render to the Government a service as great as that derived from the terrible sacrifices of battle. It is upon this consideration only that the planter is entitled to favor. The Government has accorded to him, in a period of anarchy, a release from the obligations of his allegiance, immediate and mad resistance to sensible reforms, which can never be rejected without revolution, and the criminal abuse of his success and power to excite politicians, who thought by metaphysical abstractions to circumvent the laws of God. It has restored him in improved, rather than impaired condition, his due privileges, at a moment when, by his own acts, the very soil was washed from beneath his feet."

"A more majestic and wise clemency human nature does not exhibit," says Gen. BANKS. In this we heartily concur.

YESTERDAY's New York *World* has a beautiful little gem of an editorial, which intimates that the fundamental principle of our national system is not liberty. The writer commences by saying that the revolutionary question was not a question of liberty, and winds up by asserting that the fundamental ideas of our system is rights. This editorial gem is a diamond in the rough; we cannot perceive its lucidity. The fundamental idea of our system is not liberty—it is rights. The leading idea of a physician ought to be not to cure his patient, but to make him well. Both statements are equally absurd in form. The writer makes a distinction, and doubtless perceives a difference. It has been a very general idea that the fundamental idea of our national system *is* liberty. This idea sadly needs correcting. The fundamental idea is rights. The fundamental idea of the Revolution was Government, and the fundamental ideas of our Government is rights—not liberty! It takes a little while to get out of the old grooves of prejudice—the old channels of thought. The *World* materially assists us here. It proves incontestably that we have been deluded all along. In time, of course, the impression that the fundamental idea of our national system is liberty, will entirely vanish, and it will seem strange that fundamental idea is not liberty, but rights! If we ask what rights, we shall be told by the *World*, probably, any kind of rights except the right of liberty, for we are to expressly understand, if we understand nothing else, that the fundamental idea of our national system is *not* liberty.

An Appeal to the Union League—The Election in New Hampshire.

It is to be hoped that the following appeal will be generously and promptly responded to by the members of the Union League:

"The election in the State of New Hampshire takes place on the 8th of March next.

"It is a very important election in this—that it is the first in the year 1864—the year of a Presidential election—and the Legislature now elected will choose a Senator in the place of Hon. John P. Hale.

"The election will be very close. The Copperheads are straining every nerve, and there is great danger they will prevail.

"Last year there were three candidates for Governor, and no one was elected by the people.

"The plurality was only *six* hundred.

"The Legislature elected Governor Gilman.

"This year there are but two candidates, and the Copperheads claim they can and will carry the election.

"They will do so, unless every exertion is made by the Union men of New Hampshire, and every facility afforded them.

"They need the aid of all Union men."

The Capture of the Rebel Steamer Cumberland.

The Navy Department has received information of the capture of the Anglo-rebel steamer Cumberland, on the 6th inst., by the United States steamer De Soto. Her cargo consists largely of arms and munitions of war, and it is confidently stated that the vessel was intended to become a rebel privateer. She arrived at Havana late in September last, and commenced making extensive alterations. She sailed on the 31st of January, but was run into Mariel by one of our gunboats. She sailed again on the 3d inst., intending to run the blockade at Mobile. The De Soto captured her after a chase of less than ten hours. She is a vessel of about 700 tons, and is reported to be a fast sailer.

THE ARMY AND NAVY JOURNAL, of New York, has added General McClellan's Report to the list of official reports which have already appeared in that paper. The report is published entire, in supplementary sheets, uniform with the *Journal*, in a form convenient for preservation, and accompanied by an index. The two double numbers containing the report are for sale by newsdealers, at twenty cents each; or will be sent by mail by the publisher, W. C. Church, 192 Broadway, on receipt of the price—forty cents for the two numbers.

WASHINGTON.

PROCLAMATION BY THE PRESIDENT.

OPENING OF THE PORT OF BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 18, 1864.

By the President of the United States of America:

A PROCLAMATION.

Whereas, by my proclamation of the nineteenth of April, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-one, the ports of the States of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas were, for reasons therein set forth, placed under blockade; and whereas, the port of Brownsville, in the district of Brazos Santiago, in the State of Texas, has since been blockaded, but as the blockade of said port may now be safely relaxed with advantage to the interests of commerce, now, therefore be it known that I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, pursuant to the authority in me vested by the fifth section of the act of Congress, approved on the 13th day of July, 1861, entitled an act further to provide for the collection of duties on imports, and for other purposes, do hereby declare that the blockade of the said port of Brownsville shall so far cease and determine from and after this date, that commercial intercourse with the said port, except as to persons, things, and information hereinafter specified, may from this date be carried on, subject to the laws of the United States, to the regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury, and until the rebellion shall have been suppressed, to such orders as may be promulgated by the general commanding the department, or by an officer duly authorized by him and commanding at the said post.

This proclamation does not authorize or allow the shipment or conveyance of persons in or for inducing to enter, the service of the insurgents, or of things or information intended for their use or for their aid or comfort; nor, except upon the permission of the Secretary of War, or some officer duly authorized by him, of the following prohibited articles—namely:

Cannon, mortars, fire-arms, pistols, bombs, grenades, powder, saltpetre, sulphur balls, bullets, picks, swords, boarding caps (always excepting the quantity of said articles that may be necessary for the defence of the ship, and those who compose the crew), saddles, bridles, cartridge-bag material, percussion and other caps, clothing adapted for uniforms, and cloth of all kinds, hemp, and cordage, intoxicating drinks other than beer, and light native wines.

To vessels clearing from foreign ports and destined to the port of Brownsville, opened by this proclamation, license will be granted by the consuls of the United States, upon satisfactory evidence that the vessel so licensed will convey no persons, property, or information excepted or prohibited above, either to or from the said port, which license shall be exhibited to the collector of said port immediately on arrival, and, if required, to any officer in charge of the blockade, and on leaving said port, every vessel will be required to have a clearance from the collector of customs, according to law, showing no violations of the conditions of the license. Any violations of said conditions will involve the forfeiture and condemnation of the vessel and cargo, and the exclusion of all parties concerned from any further privilege of entering the United States during the war for any purpose whatever.

In all respects, except as herein specified, the existing blockade remains in full force and effect as hereunto established and maintained; nor is it relaxed by this proclamation, except in regard to the port to which this relaxation is, or has been, expressly applied.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, [L. S.] and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this, the 18th day of February, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-four, and of the Independence of the United States, the sixty-eighth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State.

The Draft—Modifications of the Enrolment Bill.

The committee of conference on the enrolment bill made a report to-day agreeing upon the main features of the Senate bill, with amendments and substitution of a few sections of the House bill.

The commutation clause is fixed at $300, and a commutation is made as to the effect of the exemption thereby, which is limited to one year.

The exemption of high officials in the Senate bill is stricken out, leaving, as the only classes exempt those mentally or physically unfit, and soldiers in the field or honorably discharged. If the quota is not filled in any district under the draft, another is to be made till the number shall be obtained.

The section authorizing the Secretary of War to assign drafted persons of religious scruples against bearing arms to duty in the hospitals or the care of freedmen, is reported with a proviso, confining such provision to those whose department of worship with the conscientious scruples against bearing arms.

The House proviso for drafting colored men is retained, with the essential modification that when the slave of a loyal master is drafted and mustered into the service, thereupon such slave shall be free, and the master shall receive the bounty of one hundred dollars, in place of its being paid to the master on his freeing the person.

It was held by the committee that he must be a slave a moment after his enlistment, and it is understood that this is the disputed point upon which a contest may be expected in the House.

The report is signed by Messrs. WILSON, of Massachusetts, NESMITH, of Oregon, and GRIMES, of Iowa, on the part of the Senate; and Messrs. SCHENCK, of Ohio, and DEMING, of Connecticut, of the House of Representatives.

Mr. KERNAN, of New York, does not concur in it.

The two Houses have not yet taken definite action upon the report of the Committee of Conference.

Postal Affairs.

The Post Office Department of Canada having, for the sake of uniformity, consented to modify the provisions of the postal arrangements between the United States and Canada of 1851, so as to establish a uniform postage for letters of ten cents, the single rate between Canada and all parts of the United States, it is ordered by Postmaster General BLAIR that, in future, the international postage charged upon all letters between Canada and any part of the United States shall be ten cents the single rate of half an ounce or under, prepayment optional, without regard to difference of distance or route of conveyance.

Death of a War Correspondent.

Mr. THEODORE BARNARD, correspondent of the Associated Press in the Army of the Potomac, died to-day, at the headquarters, of pleuro-pneumonia. He was a resident of Washington city.

Executive Session of the Senate.

The Senate, in executive session, to-day, confirmed the nominations of HORACE JAMES, of Massachusetts, to be assistant quartermaster, with the rank of captain, and CHARLES HUTCHINS, of Oregon, to be Indian agent for the Territory of Idaho.

Amendments of the Homestead Law.

Mr. JULIAN, chairman of the Committee on Public Lands, has reported to the House a bill containing the following amendments of the homestead law:

Section 1 provides that persons in the military or naval service of the United States, who may be prevented thereby from complying with the law, may file the affidavit required before the officer in command of their regiment or company, who shall be deemed of the party to the register of the proper land office.

Section 2 provides that the homestead claimant shall pay one per cent. for the entire quantity of land at the time of entry, and a like sum when his claim is finally established.

Section 3 provides that any person who may be prevented by age or bodily infirmity from going to the office of the proper register, may file the affidavit required before the clerk of the county in which he resides, and forward it to the office of the register.

Section 4 provides that the minimum price of the public lands shall be fixed by the General Land Office, and shall not be less than $1.25 per acre.

Section 5 provides that persons who have taken the initiatory steps required by law to preëmpt a law, and have been prevented by being called into the military or naval service from complying with the law, may make and forward their affidavits, as required in the first section.

Section 6 is unimportant, only increasing the fees of the register and receiver in cases arising under the pre-emption law of 1841.

Our Relations with Nicaragua.

A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT LINCOLN TO PRESIDENT MARIANO DIEKINSON'S ADDRESS, AND THE RESPONSE.

Upon his arrival at the capital of Nicaragua, Mr. Dickinson, United States Minister, submitted the following letter from President Lincoln to Señor Don Tomas Martinez, Captain General, President of Nicaragua, accompanying it with the remarks appended:

MR. LINCOLN'S LETTER.

Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States of America, to his Excellency Señor Don Tomas Martinez, Captain General, President of the Republic of Nicaragua:

GREAT AND GOOD FRIEND: I have received the letter which you addressed to me on the 1st of September last, informing me of your elevation to the supreme constitutional authority of the Republic of Nicaragua by the free choice of its people, and assuring me that one of your most ardent desires is to cultivate the friendly relations established between that Republic and the United States.

I congratulate your Excellency upon this manifestation of the confidence of the people of Nicaragua in your wisdom, patriotism, and statesmanship.

I feel satisfied that the high trust confided to you will be discharged in a manner to subserve the best interests of that Republic.

It shall be my constant endeavor so to cultivate the relations between our respective countries as to strengthen the good understanding which now happily subsists.

I pray your Excellency to accept the assurances of my most earnest wishes for your personal happiness, and for the prosperity of your country.

And so, commending you to the care of the Almighty, I remain your Excellency's good friend.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

By the President.
F. W. SEWARD, Acting Secretary of State.
WASHINGTON, Dec. 23, 1863.

REMARKS OF MR. DICKINSON.

MR. PRESIDENT: I am instructed by my Government to congratulate your Excellency upon your recent elevation to the Supreme Constitutional authority to the Republic of Nicaragua. This manifestation of the confidence of the people in your wisdom, patriotism, and statesmanship, is a source of great gratification to my Government.

The unjustifiable invasion of your State was stopped in a bold and energetic manner by your consummate skill as a general and the valor of your soldiers. The happy and successful termination of the late conflict in which this State has been engaged, is a proof that your Excellency is as brave in war as you are wise in counsel.

I feel satisfied that the high trust confided to you by the people, will be discharged in a manner to subserve the best interests of the Republic, and at the same time strengthen the bonds of friendship and increase the mutual interests between the two Governments.

I have the honor to place in the hands of your Excellency the letter of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States.

REPLY OF PRESIDENT MARTINEZ.

MR. MINISTER: Aware of the delicate attention of Your Excellency's Government, I have the first duty and purpose to correspond with dignity to the desires and expectations of the people of the Republic and the friendly Government who do so much honor to my feeble efforts.

Proclamation of Universal Emancipation.

The Washington correspondent of the *Herald* writes as follows:

It is understood that on the 22d of February Mr. LINCOLN will issue a proclamation of universal emancipation, including the border States.

THE WAR IN THE SOUTHWEST.

RUMORS CONCERNING THE DISPOSITION OF JOHNSTON'S ARMY.

Alarm at Mobile and Selma.

CINCINNATI, Feb. 18.—A despatch from Chattanooga to the *Gazette* says that the information received from the rebel army is contradictory. Some persons declare that Johnston's entire force is around Dalton, and others that large portions, including the artillery at Kingston, have gone to reinforce Longstreet.

John Morgan is said to be in the vicinity of Dalton, with a considerable cavalry force, preparing for a raid.

Gen. Watts, of Alabama, had telegraphed to the citizens of Selma to prepare to receive a number of non-combatants from Mobile, as that city was soon to be attacked by the United States forces.

The steamer Denbigh was lost recently in attempting to run the blockade from Mobile.

The Mobile papers express the opinion that it is the plan of Gen. Sherman to penetrate to Central Alabama, thus compelling the evacuation of Mobile. They also say, "There is no indication in the news reports that Grant is preparing for active operations."

NEW ORLEANS.

NEW YORK, Feb. 18.—The steamer Creole has arrived, with New Orleans advices of the 11th. She reports having passed the Havana, for New York, off Cape Florida. The Catawba arrived out on the 9th, with 860 recruits, under command of Colonel Thomas, of the Louisiana Regiment. The George Washington arrived out on the 7th.

Captain Stephen E. Hopt, of St. Louis, a native of Massachusetts, has been appointed acting mayor of New Orleans.

Mr. Christian Roselius has declined to run for the Governorship.

The house of David Berwick, of Attakapas, was robbed of $3,500 by some soldiers, who were afterwards arrested.

A grand review of General Lee's Union cavalry division was held near New Orleans on the 9th, comprising brigades of Colonels Lucas and Dudley.

The veteran 1st Indiana Artillery, 500 strong, left on the 10th for Cairo, on furlough.

At New Orleans, exchange on New York at sight was 1@1¼ discount; gold 63@64. Cotton firm, at 62@76c. for ordinary to good middling. Sugar and molasses unchanged; sugar 12½@13¾c.; molasses 54@60c. for common to choice new crop; inferior 46.

The prize schooner Cosmopolite, taken by the gunboat Aroostook, arrived on the 7th.

SHIPPING.—Arrived at New Orleans 9th, steamer Albany, New York; Ella Morse, Hilton Head. 10th, Steamers Jersey Blue, New York; Republic and Columbia, Philadelphia; schooner Hannah, do. Cleared, ship Thomas Fosdick, Philadelphia. 10th, Steamer Continental, New York; bark Old Hickory, Philadelphia; brig A. Hopkins, do.

Nearly a mile of the level at Point Coupee recently fell into the Mississippi. The levee near Baton Rouge is sadly out of order, and an overflow is feared with the rising of the river.

Over 4,600 were registered in New Orleans previous to the ninth.

Captain Chas. R. Marsh, of the 13th Maine Regiment, was accidentally shot on Matagorda Island on the 21st of January, and died instantly.

Admiral Farragut and the greater portion of his fleet have left New Orleans.

There is no news of interest from Texas. Not even a skirmish is reported.

THE ESCAPE FROM RICHMOND.

ADDITIONAL PARTICULARS.

Some of Our Officers Tracked by Bloodhounds and Recaptured.

BALTIMORE, Feb. 18.—The steamer from Fortress Monroe, which reached here at an early hour yesterday morning, brought as passengers twenty five of the Union officers who had escaped from Libby Prison. One remained at Fortress Monroe, viz: Lieutenant Colonel J. F. Boyd, United States Quartermaster.

On the passage up from Fortress Monroe the escaped officers held a meeting, and selected one of their number, Captain J. M. Johnston, of the 6th Kentucky Infantry, to prepare a thorough and trustworthy account of the entire affair from its conception to the present time.

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GEN. BUTLER'S DEPARTMENT.

Secession Sympathizers en route for the South—Arrival of Another Libby Prisoner.

FORTRESS MONROE, Feb. 17.—The flag-of-truce steamer New York sailed this morning for City Point, taking up about thirty women, and as many children, who have decided to reside at the South during the war. They were from Norfolk. Among the passengers were Rev. M. M. Hemke and family, and three rebel officers, all in charge of Major J. E. Mulford, truce officer.

The naval despatch steamer Bermuda arrived this morning from the Gulf Squadron. She brings a large mail for New York.

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Extension of the Harlem Railroad.

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Markets by Telegraph.

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THE WAR IN THE SOUTHWEST.

RUMORS CONCERNING THE DISPOSITION OF JOHNSTON'S ARMY.

Alarm at Mobile and Selma.

CINCINNATI, Feb. 18.—A despatch from Chattanooga to the *Gazette* says that the information received from the rebel army is contradictory. Some persons declare that Johnston's entire force is around Dalton, and others that large portions, including the artillery at Kingston, have gone to reinforce Longstreet.

John Morgan is said to be in the vicinity of Dalton, with a considerable cavalry force, preparing for a raid.

Gen. Watts, of Alabama, had telegraphed to the citizens of Selma to prepare to receive a number of non-combatants from Mobile, as that city was soon to be attacked by the United States forces.

The steamer Denbigh was lost recently in attempting to run the blockade from Mobile.

The Mobile papers express the opinion that it is the plan of Gen. Sherman to penetrate to Central Alabama, thus compelling the evacuation of Mobile. They also say, "There is no indication in the news reports that Grant is preparing for active operations."

NEW ORLEANS.

NEW YORK, Feb. 18.—The steamer Creole has arrived, with New Orleans advices of the 11th. She reports having passed the Havana, for New York, off Cape Florida. The Catawba arrived out on the 9th, with 860 recruits, under command of Colonel Thomas, of the Louisiana Regiment. The George Washington arrived out on the 7th.

Captain Stephen E. Hopt, of St. Louis, a native of Massachusetts, has been appointed acting mayor of New Orleans.

Mr. Christian Roselius has declined to run for the Governorship.

The house of David Berwick, of Attakapas, was robbed of $3,500 by some soldiers, who were afterwards arrested.

A grand review of General Lee's Union cavalry division was held near New Orleans on the 9th, comprising brigades of Colonels Lucas and Dudley.

The veteran 1st Indiana Artillery, 500 strong, left on the 10th for Cairo, on furlough.

At New Orleans, exchange on New York at sight was 1@1¼ discount; gold 63@64. Cotton firm, at 62@76c. for ordinary to good middling. Sugar and molasses unchanged; sugar 12½@13¾c.; molasses 54@60c. for common to choice new crop; inferior 46.

The prize schooner Cosmopolite, taken by the gunboat Aroostook, arrived on the 7th.

SHIPPING.—Arrived at New Orleans 9th, steamer Albany, New York; Ella Morse, Hilton Head. 10th, Steamers Jersey Blue, New York; Republic and Columbia, Philadelphia; schooner Hannah, do. Cleared, ship Thomas Fosdick, Philadelphia. 10th, Steamer Continental, New York; bark Old Hickory, Philadelphia; brig A. Hopkins, do.

Nearly a mile of the level at Point Coupee recently fell into the Mississippi. The levee near Baton Rouge is sadly out of order, and an overflow is feared with the rising of the river.

Over 4,600 were registered in New Orleans previous to the ninth.

Captain Chas. R. Marsh, of the 13th Maine Regiment, was accidentally shot on Matagorda Island on the 21st of January, and died instantly.

Admiral Farragut and the greater portion of his fleet have left New Orleans.

There is no news of interest from Texas. Not even a skirmish is reported.

GEN. BUTLER'S DEPARTMENT.

Secession Sympathizers en route for the South—Arrival of Another Libby Prisoner.

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Great Fire at Gloucester, Mass.—Seventy-five Buildings Destroyed.

GLOUCESTER, Mass., Feb. 18.—A fire broke out in Sawyer's Block at 3 o'clock this morning, and it is estimated that seventy-five buildings have been destroyed. It has not yet been stopped entirely, on both sides, and is still raging furiously. Some eight or ten buildings have been blown up to arrest its progress. The engines cannot be worked in consequence of the cold, and the firemen are used up. Among the buildings destroyed is the telegraph office.

[SECOND DESPATCH.]

11 40 A. M.—The fire commenced at half-past three this morning, and is still raging with unabated violence. A steam fire engine has arrived from Salem and has commenced playing on the flames.

About seventy buildings have thus far been destroyed, including the Cape Ann Bank, the contents of which were saved. One vessel was also burned.

The flames spread east and west, taking everything in their path even down to the water's ed