The Press.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1865.

The Birthday of Washington.

To-day the nation will celebrate, with unusual ardor, the birthday of its founder. Events have given the anniversaries of American freedom new value; patriotism has its duties now as well as its pride; its sacrifices as well as its benefits. An American cannot properly honor the memory of WASHINGTON to-day unless he rejoices in the great victories we have won, does his part in keeping the country true to its purpose, and helps recruiting to the best of his power. GEORGE WASHINGTON does not want our praise now, but if his great spirit were now among the people it once protected, it would turn from the orators to the people and ask how many men were ready to volunteer.

Philadelphia, in celebrating the day, will ring her bells, throw out her flags, and fire her cannon, not only in honor of WASHINGTON's memory, but in joyful acknowledgment of the fall of Charleston, and the constitutional abolition of slavery. The peaceful and the war-like triumphs of freedom unite to make this recurrence of the birthday memorable. These give it a brighter glory. Upon the old flag a triple light will shine. It is a great day for Americans; crowned with diadem above diadem—the memory of the hero of the Revolution, the conquests of the Union armies, and the law that makes a man of every slave in the land. As such, it will be everywhere celebrated; the soldiers with GRANT and SHERMAN will not forget it; the flags will proudly wave in San Francisco as in Philadelphia; the nation will exult with one heart. Never was the memory of WASHINGTON greener, for never had we so much reason to profit by his teachings and honor his great example.

Charleston.

As the nest and hot-bed of treason, Charleston has long been superseded by Richmond. The war reduced it suddenly to a fifth-rate city. Other places in the South sprung into prosperity, and Charleston, owing everything to her harbor, was killed by a blockade and buried by a bombardment. The brains of treason worked elsewhere; nothing remained in Charleston but its venom. Still its capture has an importance, not dependent on what it has been to the rebellion, but upon what it may be to us. The last of the rebel cities on the Atlantic, it gives us the entire coast for a base, and its immediate result is the complete subjugation of South Carolina. Another point is gained; the war is transferred to North Carolina, a State long since repentant of rebellion, and SHERMAN will advance not among bitter enemies, but as a liberator through a population eager to be liberated.

The evacuation of Charleston was effected in a manner discreditable to its defenders. The rebel troops robbed the city before leaving it. The rich deserted it, and the poor were left, and white and black men and women eagerly entreated our soldiers for food. It is said that their poverty is greater than was that of the people of Savannah when it was captured; and we think that as Charleston is fated to be a Union city henceforth, Philadelphia might at once begin the work of regeneration by extending generous aid to these poor blacks and whites.

The fourteen thousand rebel troops which garrisoned Charleston have, in obedience to the rebel policy of concentration, fallen back to the northward. Those who believe that the evacuation of Charleston indicates the despair of the rebel leaders, are in great error. This evacuation of the coast is "miching malecho;" it means mischief. It means that battle is to be given to SHERMAN; that all the scattered forces of the enemy are to be drawn together, to offer stubborn and bloody resistance to GRANT. Though the capture of Charleston will be of incalculable value to us in the future, at present it is more glorious than useful. We are but on the threshold of great events, and if, in the coming battles, we are not victorious, these minor triumphs will be all eclipsed. To decisively contend against the concentration of the rebel armies, we must put every man into the field. Now is the time for volunteers. Now is the moment for the draft."

"The Press" Relief Fund.

The following voluntary contributions were received at *The Press* office yesterday, 21st inst.:

Miss Adeline Sager	$50 00
P.	5 00
B. D. Lambert	2 00
J. V. Lambert	2 00
Amount previously acknowledged	4,746 53
Total amount received to date	$4,805 53

The German Opera.

There was a magnificent audience at the Academy of Music last evening—without exception, one of the most brilliant that ever assembled within its walls. "Faust" among operas, in popularity, is like "Hamlet" among tragedy. Without being a first-class musical composition, it is sweet and quaint, and embodies a legend that the genius of man has striven to embody in every form. There are many charming airs; and without possessing any of the high originality of Beethoven and Mozart, Gounod has succeeded in writing one of the most exquisite operas in the art of music. Mr. Grover may felicitate himself upon having given us one of the shabbiest performances of "Faust" that we have ever had. In the first place, instead of giving the part of *Faust* to Hermans, who has a sweet, strong voice, Tamaro was selected. Tamaro is a conscientious, faithful singer, but he has a weak and rather piping voice, and is an awkward, bad actor. Then, again, he sings in Italian, and a nice ear is constantly shocked by the combination of the full, gushing German and the sweet, tender language of Tuscany. It was the only festival night, it should be satisfied, but it is the least. The music was slurred in the most reckless manner. Whole scenes were omitted, and towards the end the music and acting were rushed together in a pell-mell higgledy-piggledy style, as though the artists had other engagements at eleven o'clock, and were in a hurry to get away from the Academy. The chorus was very weak, and many of the singers evinced so have a proud feeling of indifference to melody or time. The only real attractions in the opera seemed to be Mr. Birgfeld and an immense drum that taxed the powers of four stalwart and gallant soldiers. Hermans, of course, sang his part splendidly. He is a great singer and a great artist and *Mephistopheles* is his best part. Frederici was perfect as *Marguerite*. She has a powerful contralto voice, is an agreeable artist, but occasionally gets out of time and falls if striking a note. Mdlle Dziuba as *Siebel*, made a success only surpassed by that of Hermans. The other artists went through their parts, and that was all. Altogether, we have seldom heard a more unsatisfactory performance of "Faust," and now that Mr. Grover is making a great deal of money and drawing immense houses, we feel like saying that such a performance is not what Philadelphia expects when she bestows her patronage in this princely manner. Mr. Grover has the field all to himself, and perhaps, while thousands go to hear an opera badly sung, it is a certain sort of economy to make no particular effort to have the singing improved. But no such policy can achieve a permanent success.

A change has been made in the programme for to-night. Instead of "Robert le Diable" the management has substituted "The Jewess," with Messrs. Himmer, Hermans, and Habelman, and Mesdames Johannsen and Rotter, in the principal parts. The reason for this change is not given, but it is probably owing to a continuance of the difficulty with Karl Formes, without whom "Robert" could not be properly produced by the present company.

DR. MACKENZIE IN PITTSBURG.—The Pittsburg *Commercial* of Monday says: "Dr. R. Shelton Mackenzie, of the Philadelphia *Press*, will lecture to-morrow night, under the auspices of the Tennyson Club, at Lafayette Hall, on the subject "Lights and Shades of Irish Character." This gentleman will also give another lecture on Thursday evening, on the subject of "Irish Law and Lawyers." Lovers of literature should endeavor to hear the Doctor, as his well known talent and ability in the preparation and delivery of his discourses render them deeply interesting and instructive. The subjects selected are interesting to all who venerate the immortal names in Ireland's history, and remember the fame acquired by a Curran and a Grattan."

WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON, February 21.

(Special Despatches to The Press.)

WINTER DAVIS ON RECONSTRUCTION.

Hon. HENRY WINTER DAVIS made a forcible speech in the House to-day, on the subject of reconstruction. He opposed MR. DAWES' bill, advocating provisional governments, established by act of Congress for the rebellious districts, and opposing the admission of persons elected by minorities to exercise the functions of representatives of States, saying that he would govern the South a thousand years with provisional governments, if a majority of the people did not sooner take the oath of allegiance, and form a State government under such conditions as Congress might prescribe. MR. DAVIS was listened to with the most marked attention. A number of Senators were present, and the usual confusion and bustle were for the time suspended.

THE EVACUATION OF WILMINGTON.

It is the general opinion in military circles that Wilmington must ere this be evacuated, as it could not hold out against the combinations proceeding against it.

EXCHANGE OF ADMIRAL BUCHANAN.

The rebel Admiral BUCHANAN, captured at Mobile, has just gone to Fortress Monroe to be exchanged.

GOVERNMENT OF THE INDIAN TRIBES.

MR. HARLAN introduced in the Senate yesterday a bill to provide for the consolidation of the Indian tribes and to establish civil government in the Indian Territory. It creates a temporary government within the boundaries of, and to be called, the Indian Territory, with a Governor, Secretary, and Supreme Court, to be appointed by the President; and a Legislative Council, consisting of one member for each thousand Indians, to be elected by the tribes, and if none should be elected, the Council is to consist of the chiefs of tribes, to be taken in the order of rank, as recognized in their tribal usages. The bill also authorizes the election of a delegate to Congress, who shall be a member of one of the Indian tribes residing in the Territory. It was referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC TO BE PAID.

Several paymasters left here yesterday for the Army of the Potomac, provided with funds.

THE FALL OF CHARLESTON.

National salutes were fired this morning, and flags were displayed from every prominent point of this city, in honor of the fall of Charleston. Additional details show that over two hundred siege guns are among the captured.

RECRUITING IN PENNSYLVANIA.

I am informed at the War Department that recruiting is progressing more rapidly in Pennsylvania than in any other State. Particulars in regard to numbers would, of course, be contraband.

BOUNTIES TO WOUNDED SOLDIERS.

MR. MORGAN to-day, from the Military Committee of the Senate, reported an amendment to the act of March 3d, 1863, extending the bounties to which non-commissioned officers and men may be entitled, after two years service, to those who are discharged within that period by reason of wounds, and to those who, though discharged by reason of expiration of period of enlistment, would be entitled to discharge by reason of wounds.

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL FOR THE NAVY.

MR. GRIMES, in the Senate, to-day introduced a bill, which was referred to the Committee on Naval Affairs, creating the office of Solicitor and Judge Advocate General in the Navy Department, at a salary of $4,000 per annum.

[By Associated Press.]

PROMOTIONS IN THE REGULAR ARMY.

The Senate also confirmed the following officers to be brigadier generals by brevet in the regular army. Brevet Colonel Richard S. Satterlee, Col. Alexander S. Shepherd, Assistant Commissary General of Subsistence Major Langdon, C. G. Aston, Q. M. U. S. A., Col. Edward D. Trenscd, Assistant Adjutant General, U. S. A.

THE STATUS OF POLITICAL PRISONERS.

The Secretary of War, in reply to a resolution of February 14th, has transmitted to the Senate a communication relative to persons held as political prisoners. He states that upon the passage of the act of March 3d, 1863, he directed Judge Advocate HOLT to commence proceedings against all such as should not be released under the provisions of the act. The prisoners were confined at St. Louis, Alton, Louisville, Sandusky, Wheeling, Camp Chase, Fort Lafayette, Fort McHenry, Fort Delaware, and the Old Capitol.

It not being generally stated in the rolls by whose authority the arrests were made, says Judge HOLT: "It has been presumed, for the purposes of the present lists, that all were made by the authority, either directly or indirectly, of the President, acting through the Secretary of War. In point of fact, however, it is believed that the arrests were generally made by military commanders and provost marshals without any intervention on the part of the President or Secretary. The cases of guerillas, it seems, and such as are clearly triable by court-martial, were not generally included in the lists, whether were the cases of parties under sentences of military courts. Those embraced in the lists were those awaiting charges, hostages, refugees, rebels, disloyalists, etc."

The Secretary says that prior to the passage of the act he had taken measures to examine and determine the cases of State and political prisoners by appointing commissioners to examine the prisoners and discharge all proper cases. He states that in some military departments prisoners had been incarcerated by State Executives or local military commanders; that such cases did not come within the terms of the act, but that measures had been taken for their investigation, and their discharge when it could be done without prejudice to the public safety. A commission charged with this duty consisted of BENJAMIN S. COWAN, ROSWELL MARSH, and SAMUEL BOSTWICK. A special commission, consisting of Judges KING and BOND, was also appointed for the examination of prisoners at Fort Delaware or elsewhere in the Middle Department, and General DIX was directed to investigate the cases of imprisonment at Fort Lafayette and other prisons in the Eastern Department for the custody of blockade-runners and illicit traders.

MAJOR TUCKER was directed on Feb. 1st, 1864, to make investigations at the Old Capitol, westward the custody of prisoners arrested by military commanders and by the Navy Department. He was directed to discharge minor offenders, who were not prisoners of war, to report for exchange all prisoners of war, report for trial all charged with violation of the laws of war, and to investigate and report abuses in arrests by provost marshals or others to the military governor. The Secretary also states that frequent examinations of military prisons have been ordered from time to time. The Secretary recounts the facts of defection from loyalty of officers of every rank and department of service, and says in this emergency the President thought it his duty to employ with energy the extraordinary powers which the Constitution confided in him in cases of insurrection. He called into the field such military forces, even unauthorized by the existing law, as seemed to him necessary; he directed measures to prevent the use of the post office for treasonable correspondence; he subjected passengers to and from foreign countries to new passport regulations, and he instituted a blockade, suspended the writ of habeas corpus in various places, and caused persons who were represented to him as being about to engage in treasonable and disloyal practices, to be arrested by special civil as well as military agencies, and detained in military custody, when necessary to prevent them and deter others from such practices. Examination of such cases was instituted, and some of the persons so arrested have been discharged from time to time under circumstances, or upon conditions compatible, as was thought, with the public safety. Meantime a favorable change in public opinion has occurred, the line between loyalty and disloyalty is plainly defined, the whole structure of the Government is firm and stable, apprehensions of public danger and facilities for treasonable practices have diminished with the passions which prompted heedless persons to adopt them.

The insurrection has culminated and is believed to be declining.

He further stated that the President has directed the discharge of all political or State prisoners upon their subscribing to a parole to render no aid to the enemies of the United States. The Secretary of War authorized the discharge of such orders all rebels and others whose release is deemed dangerous to the public safety. An amnesty granted to all such as keep their parole, and he promises that hereafter arrests will be made by military authority alone.

THE NEW LOAN BILL.

The following is the loan bill reported to-day from the Committee of Ways and Means:

Be it enacted, &c., That the Secretary of the Treasury be, and he is hereby authorized to borrow, from time to time, on the credit of the United States, in anticipation of the revenue, such sum or sums not exceeding in the aggregate $600,000,000, and to issue therefor bonds or other obligations of the United States, in such form as he may prescribe, and for so much thereof as may be issued in bonds shall be of denominations not less than fifty dollars, and may be made payable at any period not more than forty years from the date of issue, or may be made redeemable at the pleasure of the Government at any period not less than five years, nor more than forty years from date, or payable at aforesaid, as may be expressed upon the face; and so much thereof as may be issued in other forms than bonds may be made convertible into any bonds authorized by this act, and may be of such denominations, not less than $50, and made redeemable or payable at such periods as in the opinion of the Secretary of the Treasury may be deemed expedient, and the interest on such bonds shall be payable semi-annually on coupons, and other obligations authorized by this act the interest may be made payable semi-annually or annually, or at the maturity thereof, and the principal or interest, or both, may be made payable in coin, or in lawful money, provided that the rate of interest on any of such bonds or other obligation, when payable in coin, shall not exceed six per cent. per annum, and when not payable in coin, shall not exceed seven and three-tenths per cent. per annum, and the rate and character of interest shall be expressed on all such bonds or obligations.

SEC. 2. That the Secretary of the Treasury may dispose of any of the bonds or other obligations issued under this act, either in the United States or elsewhere, in such manner and at such rates, and under such conditions as he may think advisable, for coin or for lawful money of the United States, or for any treasury notes, certificates of indebtedness, or certificates of deposit, or other representatives of value which have been or may be issued under any act of Congress; and all bonds or other obligations issued under this act shall be exempt from taxation by or under State or municipal authority.

SEC. 3. That all the provisions of the act entitled "An act to provide ways and means for the support of the Government, and for other purposes," approved June 30th, 1864, in relation to forms, inscriptions, devices, and the printing, attestation, sealing, signing, and counterfeiting thereof, with such others as are applicable, shall apply to the bonds and other obligations issued under this act; *Provided*, That nothing herein contained shall be construed as authorizing the issue of legal-tender notes in exchange, and a sum not exceeding 1 per centum of the amount of bonds and other obligations issued under this act is hereby appropriated to pay the expense of preparing and issuing the same and disposing therefor.

The following is the substitute to be offered by MR. STEVENS:

Be it enacted, &c., That the Secretary of the Treasury be and he is hereby authorized to borrow from time to time, on the credit of the United States, a sum not exceeding six hundred millions of dollars, and to issue therefor coupon or registered bonds, redeemable at the pleasure of the Government after ten years, payable at any time not more than forty years from the passage of this act, at a rate of interest not exceeding eight per centum per annum, and of such denominations, not less than fifty dollars, as he may deem expedient; and he may, at his discretion, dispose of such bonds, at any time, upon such terms as he may deem most advisable; and the said bonds shall be exempt from taxation by or under State or municipal authority.

SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That the Secretary of the Treasury shall be at liberty to exchange bonds similar to those provided for in the first section of this act, with the holders of any bonds or obligations of the United States bringing interest, *provided*, that such exchange shall be offered by the holders of obligations within two years after the passage of this act.

The bill is made the special order for Thursday.

SENATE CONFIRMATIONS.

The Senate, in executive session, last night confirmed about 500 nominations—a large number of them being promotions in the regular army, the remainder assistant quartermasters, commissaries of subsistence, assistant adjutant generals, and other officers in the volunteer forces. The following promotions were made:

TO BE MAJOR GENERALS BY BREVET.—Brigadier Generals John B. Sanborn, Nathan Kimball, Thos. H. Ruger, John McArthur, Regina Garrard.

TO BE BRIGADIER GENERALS BY BREVET.—Col. Thomas J. Harrison, 8th Indiana Cavalry; S. B. Brown, 11th Michigan Cavalry; W. F. Lynch, 88th Illinois; John W. Stiles, 63d Indiana; Thomas G. Henderson, 112th Illinois; Horace S. Sargeant, late of 1st Massachusetts Cavalry; Thos. W. Humphrey, 96th Illinois; James A. Mulligan, late of 23d Illinois; Delavan Bates, 13th U. S. Colored; Charles S. Russell, 28th U. S. Colored; B. C. Christ, 15th Penna.; Richard Coulter, 11th Penna. Veterans; Charles S. Wainwright, 1st N. Y. Artillery; James A. Beaver, 14th Penna; J. K. Sigfried, 43d Penna.; J. Irvin Gregg, 16th Penna. Cavalry; J. W. Hoffman, 56th Penna.; Wm. Humphries, 26 Michigan; Charles H. Smith, 1st Maine Cavalry; Henry L. Abbott, 1st Connecticut Heavy Artillery; John C. Tidball, 4th N. Y. Heavy Artillery; Fred. Winthrop, 5th New York; G. A. Stedman, 11th Connecticut; Silas Colgrove, 27th Indiana; John T. Wilder, 17th Indiana; Benjamin F. Scribner, 38th Indiana; George N. Macy, 20th Massachusetts; Thos. O. Devin, 8th N. Y. Cavalry; Charles Wheelock, 97th New York; Ed. W. Pinnion, 8th Massachusetts; George L. Beal, 29th Maine; Alex. S. Diven, late of 107th New York; Hiram L. Brown, 148th Pennsylvania; Ray Spear, 140th Pennsylvania; William S. Tilton, 22d Massachusetts; Green B. Rawson, 56th Illinois.

Charles G. Loring, William Cumming, James L. Van Buren, and John Craig, of Pennsylvania, to be military storekeepers in the Q. M. Department, vice Tallafero retired; E. Penrose Jocses, of New York, to be military storekeeper in the Ordnance Department, vice Walters, deceased.

MILITARY NOMINATIONS NOT YET CONFIRMED.

The President made the following military nominations to the Senate to-day:

To be Major General—Brigadier General George Stoneman.

To be Brigadier Generals—Brevet Brigadier General Rawson, Brevet Brigadier General G. A. Pennypacker, Major Charles T. Holland.

To be Major General by Brevet—Brigadier General J. C. Paine.

To be Brigadier Generals by Brevet—Cols. C. E. Lippencott, E. Hatch, J. W. Ames, E. Wright, J. S. Settell, W. Alden, R. Daggett, W. J. Moore

CHARLESTON.

OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CAPTURE.

DESPATCH FROM GENERAL GILMORE.

THE CITY OCCUPIED BY OUR FORCES

Two Hundred Cannons and a Large Supply of Ammunition Captured.

THE UNION FLAG RAISED ON FORT SUMPTER.

ATTEMPT OF THE RETREATING REBELS TO BURN THE CITY.

GREAT DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY

SEVERAL HUNDRED CITIZENS KILLED BY AN EXPLOSION.

Condition of the City and its Inhabitants

MOVEMENTS OF GENERAL SHERMAN'S ARMY.

CELEBRATION OF THE FALL

SPECIAL ORDER OF THE WAR DEPARTMENT.

SALUTES IN HONOR OF THE EVENT.

OFFICIAL GAZETTE.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21.—This Department has received the official report of Major General Gilmore, announcing the surrender of the city of Charleston, South Carolina, to the United States forces under his command, at nine o'clock on Saturday morning, the 18th inst.

Among the captured property are two hundred pieces of good artillery and a supply of fine ammunition. The enemy burned their cotton warehouses, arsenals, quartermasters' stores, railroad bridges, two iron-clads, and some vessels in the ship-yard.

EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

OFFICIAL REPORT OF GENERAL GILMORE.

CHARLESTON, S. C., Feb. 18,
via New Hamburg, Feb. 21.

Major General Halleck, Chief of Staff:

GENERAL: The city of Charleston and all its defences came into our possession this morning, with about two hundred pieces of good artillery and a supply of fine ammunition.

The enemy commenced evacuating all the works last night, and Mayor Macbeth surrendered the city to the troops under General Schimmelpfennig, at 9 o'clock this morning, at which time it was occupied by our orces.

Our advance on the Edisto and from Bull's Bay hastened the retreat.

The cotton warehouses, arsenals, quartermasters' stores, railroad bridges, and two iron-clads, were burned by the enemy. Some vessels in the shipyard were also burned.

Nearly all the inhabitants remaining behind belong to the poorer classes.

Very respectfully,
Q. A. GILMORE,
Major General Commanding.

DETAILS OF THE OCCUPATION.

NEW YORK, Feb. 21.—The steamship Fulton, from Port Royal and Charleston Bar on the 18th instant, at 6 P. M., arrived this morning. Purser McManus furnishes us with the following memoranda:

Charleston was evacuated by the enemy on the night of the 17th, leaving the several fortifications uninjured, besides two hundred guns, which had been spiked. The evacuation was first discovered at Fort Moultrie, on the morning of the 18th, at ten A. M. Four hundred troops stationed at James Island crossed over in boats and took possession of the city without opposition, the upper part of the city being on fire.

Previous to the enemy evacuating they fired the upper part of the city, by which six thousand bales of cotton were burned, and it is supposed that before they could subdue it two-thirds of the city would be destroyed.

A fearful explosion occurred in the Wilmington Railroad depot, the cause of which was unknown. Several hundred citizens lost their lives. The building was used by the Commissary Department, and was situated in the upper part of the city.

Admiral Dahlgren was the first to run up to the city, where he arrived about 2 P. M. Gen. Q. A. Gilmore soon after followed, and subsequently Gen. W. Colt, and had an interview with Gen. Schimmelpfennig, he being the first general officer in the city, and for the present in command.

It is supposed that Beauregard evacuated Charleston in order to concentrate and give Sherman battle.

The remains of two iron-clads were found, which the enemy destroyed by blowing up previous to the evacuation.

The blockade-runner Cyrene, just arrived from Nassau, fell into our hands, and two others were expected to run in on the night of February 18th.

The first flag over Sumpter was raised by Capt. Henry M. Bragg, A. D. C. on Gen. Gilmore's staff, having for a staff an oar and boat hook lashed together.

The houses in the lower part of the city were completely ridded by our shot and shell. The wealthy part of the population have deserted the city, and now all that remain are the poorer classes, who are suffering for want of food.

It was reported at Hilton Head that the left wing of Sherman's army had reached Midway, on the Charleston and Augusta Railroad, and that the rebels, in consequence, had evacuated Branchville and had fallen back on Orangeburg.

A movement had been made by the force under General Hatch, which resulted in the capture of six guns, which the rebels had abandoned. The carriages were destroyed.

ADDITIONAL PARTICULARS.

The New York *Evening Post* gives the following additional particulars of the news brought by the Fulton:

THE EVACUATION.

The evacuation was discovered by our forces under General Schimmelpfennig, from James Island. Exactly at what time is not yet reported, though the occupation of the city and of the fortifications took place at about ten o'clock in the forenoon of the 18th instant.

The departure of the rebels from Forts Sumpter and Moultrie was, it is understood, seen from our picket boats which reconnoitre the harbor at night; and the operations of the rebel garrisons began about twelve hours before the evacuation was completed—namely, at ten o'clock on the evening of the 17th.

THE FIRING OF THE CITY.

Early on the morning of the 18th, two terrific explosions in Charleston were observed from our fleet. Fire, smoke, and burning fragments filled the air for a great distance, and the shock was severely felt by all our vessels.

Soon afterwards, and before daylight, fires were set in other places, and extended throughout the upper part of the city. It has since been ascertained that many thousand bales of cotton were burned in consequence of the explosion of the warehouses and other public buildings that were fired by the rebels.

OUR FORCES TAKING POSSESSION.

Our forces took possession of the city in the forenoon, as already reported. Gen. Schimmelpfennig was unopposed, the rebels leaving as the Union troops came in sight. There was not even a show of resistance.

REBEL THIEVES.

It appears that the rebels who remained to the last were not well organized, and a majority of them were thieves, whose object in staying was plunder. It is reported by the inhabitants of the city that these men were guilty of many disgraceful acts. They had little difficulty in effecting their escape with their booty.

REBEL DESERTERS.

Several hundred rebel deserters were concealed in the houses in Charleston, and when our troops entered they surrendered, declaring that they were tired of the rebellion, and would no longer fight for it. They were received as prisoners.

THE NEGROES.

Crowds of negroes met our troops, and made many demonstrations of joy. There were men, women, and children. They wanted food. Many of them said they would be glad to work; some proposed to take up arms against their masters.

THE FORDLANDS.

The population of Charleston consisted entirely of the poorer classes, who were unable to get away; the rich had for several days been removing. The persons who remained were in want; they had nothing to eat, and no means of obtaining anything. Their situation is described much worse than that of the inhabitants of Savannah after the capture of that city.

CONDITION OF THE CITY.

The lower part of the city, within reach of our guns, was in effect a ruin, and was almost uninhabited. Comparatively few persons dared to remain there. Some of the houses were knocked down; bricks and timbers were lying everywhere, and the streets in particular were strewn with the fragments, in many places entirely obstructing travel. Shells were lying among the ruins. The appearance of the city—the lower part uninhabitable and the upper part in flames—is described as dreary and desolate in the extreme.

THE REBEL ARMY AND SUPPLIES.

There is information that the evacuation of Charleston began nearly three weeks ago. A rebel officer, who deserted and was examined at Port Royal, gave some of the details, but they were not then believed. Since that time the rebels have been at work removing stores, though all the heavy supplies were left.

The only information in regard to the rebels is that the direction taken by them in their flight was northward, and that their number was about fourteen thousand.

An expedition of Union troops to Bull's Bay, a short time before the evacuation, was, it is understood, intended to cut the railroad north of the city; but, if successful, it could have prevented the escape of only a few of the rebels.

CELEBRATING THE VICTORY.

The Fulton came into the port of New York gaily dressed with flags in honor of the victories.

The demonstration at Hilton Head, from our gunboats, were witnessed from the Fulton, and are described as magnificent. Colors were flying, the sailors were in the rigging and on the highest points of observation, and the cheering was enthusiastic and universal. These patriotic exhibitions were answered from the Fulton.

OFFICIAL ORDER.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21—8.30 P. M.

Major General Dix, New York:

The following special order has just been issued. You will see it is executed in your Department.

E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

ORDERED, that a national salute be fired to-morrow noon, February 22d, at West Point, and at every fort, arsenal, and army headquarters of the United States, in honor of the restoration of the flag of the Union upon Fort Sumter.

E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

LOCAL CELEBRATIONS OF THE EVENT.

BOSTON, Feb. 21.—Washington's birthday will be celebrated to-morrow. A salute of 100 guns will be fired on the Common and 100 on Dorchester Heights, in honor of Sherman's victorious march.

NEW YORK, N. Y., Feb. 21.—A salute of 100 guns was fired here to-day, in honor of the capture of Charleston.

TROY, N. Y., Feb. 21.—A salute of 100 guns was fired here to-day, in honor of the capture of Charleston.

ARRIVAL OF WOUNDED FROM JAMES ISLAND AT BEAUFORT HOSPITAL—THE FIGHT ON THE 10TH INSTANT—GENERAL SCHIMMELPFENNIG'S COMMAND ENGAGED.

(Special Correspondence of The Press.)

HILTON HEAD, February 18, 1865.

The following wounded in the fight on James Island the 10th have arrived at the Beaufort Hospital, also under charge of Senior Medical Officer Dr. J. M. Hawks, surgeon of the 20th United States Colored Troops:

23D (PENNA.) REGIMENT UNITED STATES COLORED TROOPS.

Corporal Wm. Lee, Co. F, knee, flesh.
Wm. Lancaster, H, left breast, slight.
Corporal C. Paston, H, left wrist, fracture.
John Ray, C, flesh, left thigh, head, and both arms.
George Walter, K, right ankle fractured.
Samuel Lyons, H, flesh, left thigh.
Corporal John Turner, H, left leg, flesh.
Thomas Gibbs, H, left leg, flesh.
James Sample, C, right thigh, flesh.
C. D. Kidder, B, left foot.
George Randall, I, chin, flesh.
Lewis Smith, abdomen, slight.
Co. Sergeant Jno. A. Jones, A, left hand, fracture.
Wm. Banks, C, right fore finger.
Daniel Wales, H, slight contusion.
H. King, fracture of right wrist.
J. E. Montgomery, K, left leg, flesh.
Isaac Turnel, K, left arm fractured.
Henry Lewis, H, right arm fractured.
Chas. Green, H, left thigh, flesh.
Geo. S. Giles, C, contusion, slight.
Cornelius Williams, G, right shoulder.
John Mason, C, contusion.
Wm. Hall, K, right leg, ball extracted.
Edw. Jackson, E, right leg.
Henry Smith, H, left arm amputated.
Corp. Jonathan Henson, D, pelvis.
Robt. Cune, I, left leg; ball extracted.
I. Edwards, I, right leg amputated.
Perry Stewart, Colored Citizen.

55TH MASSACHUSETTS U. S. COLORED TROOPS.

Jno. Berry, G, forehead and face.
Samuel Flora, G, forehead and face.
Alex. Lewis, G, left arm amputated.

These men were wounded in the fort on Long Island during the engagement. Capt. W. H. Johnston and Lieut. Jas. Nutt, of the 144th New York, were also wounded, the latter very severely in the left foot. About thirty of the 144th and 54th New York are among the wounded.

The forces engaged belonged to the command of Gen. Schimmelpfennig, of Pennsylvania, which crossed over from Cole's Island on the 10th, and charged and drove the enemy out of a first line of breastworks. The rebel Major Manigault and a lieutenant, both wounded, fell into our hands, and another rebel major was thought to be mortally hurt. Three men were killed in the 32d, which has gone off on another expedition along with other forces.

THE SOUTHWEST.

DICK TAYLOR SAID TO BE IN LARGE FORCE AT SELMA.

Hood's Army Sent to Meet Sherman's.

WRETCHED CONDITION OF THE TROOPS.

THE SLAVEHOLDERS DISSATISFIED WITH NEGRO CONSCRIPTION.

GENERAL FORREST AT JACKSON.

CAIRO, Feb. 20.—A correspondent of the New Orleans *Times*, writing on board the steamer Bienville, off Galveston, on the 8th instant, says a large number of vessels were then outside, loading with cotton, but the weatherwas so bad that but few were able to secure cargoes.

The Bienville arrived at New Orleans on the 13th instant, encountering a severe storm on the coast forcing her to leave Galveston.

The blockade-runner Wren escaped from our fleet into Galveston by a flag-of-truce ruse.

The Memphis *Bulletin* learns from gentlemen who left Selma, Alabama, on the 24th ultimo, and on same through Meridian and Jackson, Mississippi, that Dick Taylor has a considerable force at Selma, and also at Meridian.

The rebel manufactories at Selma were turning out large quantities of munitions of war. The fortifications extend all around the place, but are not very formidable.

Most of Hood's army had been sent to operate against Sherman. They were nearly naked and much dispirited, and had lost all hope of successful resistance to the Federal troops. Large numbers of them are barefooted, and it is stated that ten thousand of Hood's army had their feet frozen on the retreat from Nashville, during which they suffered more than in the previous three years.

The rebel slaveholders are greatly dissatisfied with the conscription of slaves and free blacks for service in the rebel army, that the work was actually going on.

General Forrest is collecting a great force at Jackson, Mississippi, for operations against Vicksburg.

The *Mississippi* Legislature was to meet at Columbus on January 20th, and believe the destitute people.

CAPTURE OF MAJOR GENERALS CROOK AND KELLY BY GUERILLAS.

WHEELING, Va., Feb. 21.—A party of rebel cavalry dashed into Cumberland before daylight this morning, surprised and captured the pickets, and carried off Major Generals Crook and Kelly. It seems to have been a very daring and well-planned affair. A cavalry force has been sent in pursuit of the retreating rebels.

Washington's Birthday.

NEW YORK.

NEW YORK CITY, Feb. 21.—The Mayor of this city has issued a proclamation urging all citizens to celebrate Washington's birthday to-morrow. The 7th Regiment will make a full parade in honor of Gen. Sherman's recent victories, the restoration of our flag to Fort Sumpter, the fall of Charleston. A meeting of prominent citizens will be held to-morrow to arrange for a general celebration of the recent victories. Flags have been flying in all directions to-day in honor of the fall of Charleston, and considerable enthusiasm was manifested in many places on the reception of Gen. Gilmore's despatch.

The 69th Regiment have offered their services to the Government to garrison Charleston for three months.

TRENTON, Feb. 21.—The Legislature of New Jersey will hold a public meeting to-morrow night in honor of Washington's birthday. Gov. Parker will preside, and C. C. Lathrop, of Burlington, will deliver the address.

NEW YORK CITY.

NEW YORK, Feb. 21, 1865.

RECRUITING.

Recruiting in this city is progressing favorably. Nearly 150 men enlisted yesterday and over 100 to-day.

A PETITION TO THE PRESIDENT.

A petition is in circulation here requesting the President to appoint Gen. Butler provost marshal of Charleston and South Carolina.

THE EVENING STOCK BOARD.

Stocks active and firm; Gold very active and strong at 201¼; Illinois Central, 119½; Pittsburg and Cleveland, 83¼; Rock Island and Chicago, 86½; Northwestern, 50½; Fort Wayne, 95¾; Chicago Company, 33¼; Ohio and Mississippi Certificates, 26¾; Cumberland, 65¾.

CATTLE MARKET.

Beef Cattle 3c. lower. Receipts 6,000. Sales at 13@22c. Sheep scarce. Receipts 13,000. Sales at 5¼@16c. Swine firm. Receipts 2,000. Quoted at 14@14½c.

The Great Boston Dry-Goods Sale.

BOSTON, Feb. 21.—As the great sale of dry goods, which commenced to-day, probably not less than 2 000 persons were present, including business men from all sections of the country.

J. H. Osgood was the principal auctioneer, assisted by Mr. Morent, of New York, and Mr. Chas. E. Stevens, of Philadelphia.

The bidding was spirited, and the prices realized were deemed generally satisfactory. The sale will be continued to-morrow.

The Constitutional Amendment Ratified by Wisconsin.

MADISON, Wis., Feb. 21.—The proposed constitutional amendment to abolish slavery was ratified by the Legislature to-day.

The Draft Commenced in Brooklyn.

BROOKLYN, L. I., Feb. 21.—The draft commenced here to-day, and has progressed quietly.

EUROPE.

Rumors of Diplomatic Trouble between France and the United States.

No Minister to be Sent to Washington till Maximilian is Recognized.

American Affairs in the House of Lords.

General McClellan in England.

The China at New York.

NEW YORK, Feb. 21.—The steamship China arrived this evening from Liverpool on the 11th, via Queenstown on the 12th.

GREAT BRITAIN.

It is rumored that the British Admiralty contemplates the reduction of the coast guard service, owing to the policy of disarmament among the Continental governments.

The Hon. L. Stanley, son of Lord Stanley of Alderly, addressed a large gathering of the friends of the Freedmen's Aid Society of Manchester last evening, confirming his remarks on the impressions and information acquired during a recent visit to America. He expressed a hearty admiration of the anti-slavery Government of the North, and dwelt upon the favorable results which may be expected to flow from the American war in relation to the principle of emancipation. He earnestly hoped the South might be subjugated and saved from a triumph which would only lead to their own destruction.

SPAIN.

The Spanish Government is said to have resolved to prohibit the publication of the Pope's Encyclical in Spain. The Bishop who had published it was not to be prosecuted.

POLAND.

Official instructions from the Russian Government for the reorganization of Poland had reached Warsaw. The office of Governor of Poland is suppressed. The Provincial Government is suspended, and the public administration will hereafter be only through the department of the respective ministers at St. Petersburg.

VERY LATEST VIA QUEENSTOWN.

QUEENSTOWN, Feb. 12.—The Paris Bourse is quiet. Rentes closed at f. 67 20c.

The London *Globe's* Paris correspondent says: "No French minister at Washington will be appointed until the late Wm. L. Dayton's post is filled by the bearer of satisfactory instructions respecting the threats made against Mexico."

Commercial Intelligence.

LIVERPOOL, Feb. 11—Evening.—Sales of cotton to-day, 8,000 bales, closing with a declining tendency and little inquiry.

Breadstuffs are dull. Provisions quiet and steady. Lard quiet but firm.

Petroleum is 11d@2s.

LONDON, Feb 11.—Consols for money 89¼@89¾. Illinois Central shares 60¾@61¾; Erie Railroad 32½@32¾.

PORTLAND, Me., Feb. 21.—The steamship Nova Scotia, Captain Wylie, from