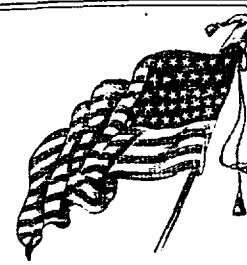


Daily Telegraph.

Forever float that standard sheet!
Where breathes the foe but falls before us?
With freedom's soil beneath our feet,
And freedom's banner streaming o'er us!

OUR PLATFORM.

THE UNION—THE CONSTITUTION—AND
THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAW.

THE UNITED STATES LAWS
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THE PENNSYLVANIA DAILY TELEGRAPH.

HARRISBURG, PA.

Tuesday Afternoon, December 24, 1861.

CHARLES J. BIDDLE.

We are forced to allude to this man again, for the purpose of reminding him that the regiment which he deserved for an opportunity to vent his spleen against a Republican administration, has covered itself with immortal glory, and is now hailed as the hero regiment of the Keystone state. The question is asked by our people now, would the Bucktails have been led as gallantly into the fight, with Biddle at their head, as they were by the intrepid and dauntless young Lieutenant Col. Kane? Would Biddle have faced the enemies of his country on the battle field as fiercely as he attacks the friends of the government on the floor of Congress? These questions are answered in the negative by the nation in thunder-tones, and the congratulation is universal that Charles J. Biddle was not at the head of his regiment when it so gallantly faced the enemy at Dranesville. Had he been in command, it is easier to conjecture the result than it is to write as to how the rebels would have treated our betrayed troops, and hereafter when this suspicion is more emphatically attached to the name and person of Charles J. Biddle, by the people of Pennsylvania, whom he has insulted and outraged he will have himself to blame, and must look elsewhere than among loyal men for reparation and recognition for his base ingratitude and insolent vituperations. We repeat the congratulations of the people of Pennsylvania, that Charles J. Biddle was not at the head of the Bucktails at the battle of Dranesville.

FORTIFICATIONS.

The report of Gen. Barnard, Chief Engineer of the Army, which has just been submitted to Congress by Mr. Secretary Cameron, shows that the defences around Washington consist of forty-eight works, mounting three hundred guns; that the whole defensive perimeter occupied is about thirty-five miles—exceeding by several miles the famous fieldworks of Torres Vedas, the most extensive fortifications of this kind known in modern times. General Barnard asks the appropriation of \$150,000 from Congress for the completion of these works, as many of them were thrown up in the face of the enemy, and therefore require considerable labor to make them perfect.

Secretary Cameron has also submitted to Congress a report in favor of the appropriation of \$4,710,000 for putting our coast defences in order, from the Lakes round to San Francisco, a large portion of which is to be devoted to defences of New York harbor.

THE CONFEDERATE FORCES.

A contemporary has made an estimate, which it seems to be nearly correct, of the strength of the confederate forces now in the field. It is based upon the recent messages of the Governors of the seceded states and other official documents put forth by those states. The estimate of the number of troops is as follows:

State.	Authorities.	Number
Georgia... Governor's Message.....	27,000	
Louisiana... Governor's Message.....	25,000	
S. Carolina Governor's Message.....	19,000	
Virginia... Governor's Message.....	83,000	
Tennessee... Governor's Proclamation.....	35,000	
Kentucky... Estimated.....	10,000	
Missouri... Price's Proclamation.....	6,000	
Alabama... Estimated.....	22,000	
Mississippi Vicksburg Sun.....	21,000	
Florida... Estimated.....	10,000	
Texas... Estimated.....	30,000	
N. Carolina Governor's Message.....	35,000	
Arkansas... Report of Adjutant of State.....	22,000	
Maryland... Estimated.....	3,000	
Total.....	349,000	

THE SUCCESS OF GEN. McCALL.

The success of the skirmish ordered by Gen. McCall, at Dranesville, has roused up the army on the Potomac. The troops on that line were almost impatient waiting and watching for an opportunity to strike an effective blow, and when the brilliant achievement at Dranesville was announced in the different camps, it is reported to have produced the most unbounded enthusiasm among the men. The war fever runs very high inside and outside of the army along the Potomac. A few more successes like the one achieved by the troops under Gen. McCall, and we may be certain that a much more important advance upon the enemy would prove successful.

Col. Black, of Gen. Morell's brigade, offered his Sixty-second Pennsylvania regiment, on the occasion of the review at Hall's Hill, a reward to that soldier who should present the neatest appearance in person and arms. A daguerreotype of the winner, taken at Brady's, should be subscribed and hung in the Colonel's quarters. The lucky individual was Charles B. Fahnestock, of Company K, Captain Alexander McDonald.

THE MASON AND SLADELL CASE.—We apprehend that the instructions sent to Lord Lyons by the British ministry were predicated upon an assumed state of facts, so differing from the real facts, that Lord Lyons will be obliged to wait for fresh instructions before the case can be brought to any definite diplomatic issue in this country.

CHRISTMAS!

It would be difficult for a loyal American citizen to think of a really merry Christmas, at this time with all the attending circumstances of our national embarrassment so fearfully before us, and with all the clangor and preparation for war so distinctly borne on every wind that blows. The same may be written of the world. Nations are watching each other with angry impatience, lest one should attempt a self-aggrandisement at the expense of a neighbor, or still more fearful, that one ruler should be able to destroy the power and the influence of the others. When the peace loving and humbly patient shepherds, watched their flocks by night on the fruitful plains of Judea nearly two thousand years ago, they also saw a most dazzling and splendid light and heard a voice, which proclaimed to the world many glad and glorious things, concluding with

"On earth peace—good-will toward men."

This was the omen of Christmas twenty centuries ago—and yet the peace thus brilliantly foreshadowed by the Angel of the Lord, seems to be battled against by the perverseness of man. The Christmas of 1861 sees the world full of strife and our own land full of rebellious contentions and traitorous designs. Never before have the engines of war, ships, forts, and armies been so profusely scattered along our coasts and over our territories. This is not in conformity with the reign of peace so long announced, though not God, who promised the blessing of peace, but the evil heart of man who will not receive it, must be held responsible for the long delay which sickens the lovers of peace, of good, of truth, and of humanity.

If man has failed in the performance of his duty to man—if nations have been corrupted by evil rulers, and if power has been prostituted by ambitious governments, Christmas comes to us shorn of none of its holy glory or diminished in no degree in any of its sublime promises. It is still the anniversary of the Saviour's birth, an epoch in the world's history unequalled by any other for glory, grandness and Heavenly love. It must be the Christmas of the soul, though our hearts are sorrowful. It must be a Christmas for those at home, though many homes are now made desolate by the absence of their ornaments; and we trust, too, that while men are arrayed in battle, the Christmas of the year will be made glad for the children of the land. They seem always to drink in its inspiration and the holy and happy influence of the times, however they may be ignored or forgotten by others. Santa Claus, gracious spirit of gladness and benevolence, comes down the chimney to them if he never appears to their elders.—The Christmas delusion is their happiest one, and the little stockings that hang so trustingly up beside the stove or the grate the night before Christmas, can be ill replaced by anything else which the world can offer in later life. Cherish the transparent delusion, and make the little ones happy this Christmas, parents and elder children, if you deny yourselves something to that end. The children are changing space, and they will soon be beyond the reach of Christmas illusions, if they are not beyond the sound of the Christmas bell, and taking their long sleep in Mount Kalma or the country church yard. Cherish them—pet them—make them happy if you can; and find the "Merry Christmas" we ardently wish you, in that attention to their welfare, if nothing else.

It is not out of place, in a department of political editorial to introduce, in this connection, the charming lines of Professor Moore, so inseparably connected with Christmas time, and which always afford such delightful perusal for the old and the young :

A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS.
Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house,

Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse,

The stockings were hung in the window with care,

In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,

While visions of sugar plums danced in their heads,

And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,

Had just settled down for a long winter's nap;

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,

I arose from my bed to see what was the matter.

Away to the window I flew like a flash,

Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast of the new fallen snow,

Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,

When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,

But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer;

With a little old driver, so lively and quick,

I knew in a moment it must be old Nick,

More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,

And he whistled and shouted, and called them by name.

"Now Dasher! now, Dancer, now, Prancer and Vixen!"

On, Comet! on, Cupid! on Donder and Blitzen!

To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!

Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,

When they meet with an obstacle mount to the sky;

So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,

With a sleigh full of toys and St. Nicholas too.

And then in a twinkling, I heard on the roof,

The prancing and pawing of each little hoof;

As I drew in my head, and was turning around,

Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur from his head to his feet,

And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;

A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,

And he looked like a pedlar just opening his pack.

His eyes how they twinkled, his dimples how merry!

His cheeks were like roses his nose like a cherry;

His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,

And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth;

And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;

He had a broad face and a little round belly,

That shook, when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,

And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;

A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,

Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work;

And filled all his stockings; then turned with a jerk,

And laying his finger aside of his nose,

And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose,

And sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,

And away they all flew like the down of a thistle,

But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,

"Happy Christmas to all and to all a Good-night!"

Battle of Dranesville.

Correspondence of the Telegraph.]

CAMP FERFORT, Va., Dec. 22, 1861.

On Thursday evening orders were given to Gen. E. O. C. Ord, commanding Third regiment Penn'a. Reserves, to advance in the direction of Dranesville for the double purpose of obtaining an amount of forage known to be in that part of the country and to rout a body of rebels supposed to be in the vicinity of the village. The brigade consisted of the Sixth Penna. Reserve Corps, Col. W. Ricketts' Ninth Penn'a., Col. F. Jackson's Twelfth Penn'a., Col. John C. McAlmont's Twelfth Penn'a., Col. John H. Taggart, the Bucktail Rifles, commanded by Lieut. Col. Kane, and a detachment of five companies of the First Penn'a. Reserve Cavalry, commanded by Lieut. Col. Higgins, and Capt. Easton's Battery of four guns, (two 12, and two 24-pounds,) altogether numbering between four and five thousand men. At daylight on Friday morning the brigade marched in the direction of Dranesville. After passing beyond our pickets, flankers consisting of two companies from each regiment were sent out on each side of the road and preceded the advancing columns. The brigade then marched on with nothing taking place until within a short distance of Dranesville, when the columns halted, and the Artillery, which was in the rear, came up near the front. The Bucktails were then sent, by the order of Gen. Ord, to the right of the village and the Sixth Penn'a. to the left, and Lieut. Col. Higgins, commanding the Cavalry, led the advance into the village, with the expectation of capturing some rebel Cavalry who were seen there. But although the charge was made in a gallant style the rebel Cavalry succeeded in making their escape. The houses were immediately surrounded, but no troops were found. General Ord then approached rapidly with the Artillery and took positions on the left of Dranesville in the rear of the church. Col. Higgins then formed the Cavalry on the right of the Artillery. He had remained in that position but a short time until he was ordered to move the Cavalry back to the rear of all the Infantry, excepting one regiment, which was done; and as soon as we arrived at that point the enemy opened with shell upon our left flank from the woods almost opposite the junction of the Alexandria and Lee'sburg turnpike. Their Battery of six guns was within two hundred yards of the pike; but we could not see them on account of the dense growth of underbrush with which the woods in that part of the country abound. Gen. Ord immediately moved the Artillery to the rear, and ordered Col. Higgins with his Cavalry to follow in the rear of the Artillery, which he did; and in passing in front of the enemy's Battery had one horse killed in company I, being struck by a shell from the rebel Battery. Our artillery halted directly opposite the enemy's guns, and planted their pieces under a heavy fire and opened on them with shell. Our Infantry also poured volleys of shot into the woods, advancing all the time upon the enemy until they were forced to retreat. The fight lasted just one hour of incessant firing, commencing at fifteen minutes before one and ending a few minutes before two o'clock P. M. In the beginning of the contest the enemy had a thorough range of their pieces; but after our Artillery opened on them their firing was very wild, most of their shell and shot going above our heads, and the shell exploding harmlessly in the air. Capt. Easton's men behaved with a coolness and alacrity with a credit to which they deserve great credit. They fired right into the enemy's guns, killing their gunners and horses. The enemy suddenly abandoned their positions, and from their thorough knowledge of the country eluded the vigilance of our troops, taking with them their artillery, excepting one piece which was blown up and one caisson to which was attached two very fine horses. They also left a large quantity of arms and ammunition and any amount of clothing, blankets and provisions. During the fight our men exhibited the coolness and valor of disciplined veterans. The number of killed and wounded on our side are eight killed and about sixty wounded. Of the enemy's killed and wounded I have no idea, but their loss is heavy. The road around their battery was strewed with dead men and horses, and the woods were thickly strewn with their dead.

The bark Island City arrived here last night from Boston with two hundred and forty-nine prisoners of war released from Fort Warren, who are to be exchanged for an equal number now held at Richmond. The steamboat George Washington took them to Craney Island this afternoon under a flag of truce.

Mrs. Brown, and two daughters and servant, of Missouri, and Mrs. Ingersoll of Michigan, were also passengers for the south.

The Richmond prisoners are expected here in a day or two.

The gunboat, Young Rover, stationed at the mouth of the York river, reports an extensive conflagration in Yorktown, about a week since.

A chapel tent, 42 by 28 feet, sent to the 16th Mass. regiment, by its friends in Boston, was dedicated with religious services yesterday afternoon, in which chaplains of all denominations participated.

The steamer Con De Leon arrived from the Potomac last night with four launches in tow.

The first rain for about three weeks fell last night. The wells were previously quite dry.

A great light was observed on Friday night over toward Sewall's Point. It created some excitement at first, as it was thought that the flames might be as far back as Norfolk. We learn by a rebel flag of truce to-day, that the light was caused by a fire occurring in a large rebel storehouse, which spread to the woods back of the Point. No account of the damage done was received, although it was believed to be extensive.

It is rumored here that Gen. Williams is in possession of facts which render it probable that the rebels will make an attack upon Fort Hatteras and Clark before long. It seems that they are making vigorous efforts to dialogue our brave boys at the inlet, but Gen. Williams and his men are ready for the rebels, and will tender them a cordial reception.

We understand that General Wool has determined to have the Post Office and Express Office, at present in the casemates, removed and placed in some safe building on the Point outside. This looks as if the Fortress was to be improved and put into complete trim for action.