Pittsburgh Gazette.

WEDNESDAY MORNING, DEC. 24.

CITY AFFAIRS.

THE OFFICIAL PAPER OF THE CITY.

METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS for the *Gazette*, by G. R. Shaw, Optician, No. 55 Fifth street—corrected daily:

	IN SUN.	IN SHADE.
9 o'clock, A. M.	00	48
12 " M.	30	46
6 " P. M.		45
Barometer		29

NOTICE.—J. T. Sample, of Allegheny city, supplies passengers with the GAZETTE on the Mail Train West at 8 a. m., the Express Train West at 1:40 p. m., and on the Accommodation Train West at 4 p. m. Mr. Sample can supply any orders along the line to Crestline, Ohio, from either of the trains first named, and has also a supply of every edition at his news depot, at the Federal street station, Allegheny city.

The Neptune Fire Company and the Steam Fire Engines.

A meeting of the Neptune Fire Company was held on Tuesday evening, for the purpose of considering the proposition now before Councils to limit the number of steamers to six, and properly locate the same. Mr. Nathan Jones was appointed President, and Davis Glass Secretary. The following preamble and resolutions, endorsing the proposition now before Councils, were unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS, There is an ordinance now before the City Councils, having for its object the locating of the Steam Fire Engines, and the Neptune Fire Company believing that said ordinance is wise and just and calculated in its effects to enable the City Treasury to properly support the number of Steam Fire Engines contemplated by said ordinance; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the City Councils be earnestly requested to adopt said ordinance.

Resolved, That in the opinion of this company, six locations for Steam Fire Engines are amply sufficient for all purposes of protection against fire.

Resolved, That the members of Council from this ward are hereby requested to vote for the above ordinance, thereby enabling the City Treasury the better to provide for the efficient service of this company.

Resolved, That these resolutions be published and presented to Councils.

Our Book Table.

WALTER'S TOUR IN THE EAST. By Daniel C. Eddy, D. D., Author of "The Percy Family." New York: Sheldon & Co. Boston: Gould and Lincoln. Pittsburgh: for sale by W. A. Gildenemy, 55 Fifth street.

This volume, which is the first of a series of six announced for publication, describes a tour in Egypt, the performer, or hero, of which was "Walter," a lad from Cambridge, Massachusetts. Minnie, Walter's sister; Harry St. Clair, his schoolfellow; Mr. and Mrs. Percy, Walter's and Minnie's father and mother; Mohammed Achmet, an Egyptian Dragoman; and some gentlemen travelling in the East, form the other *dramatis personæ*, or persons represented in the story. There are four very appropriate illustrations, representing the scenery and incidents of travel in Egypt. The volume, moreover, is well written, handsomely printed at the Riverside press, neatly bound in cloth, and therefore may be commended as a suitable holiday present—a book that will both instruct and interest youthful readers.

HOLIDAY PRESENTS.—All in want of books suitable for holiday presents, or Photograph Albums, will find the largest and best assortment in this city at the great Gift Book Store, No. 118 Wood street. A costly gift, worth from 50 cents to $100, is given with each book sold.

SALES OF STOCK, by J. G. Davis, Auctioneer, at the Commercial Sales Rooms, No. 54 Fifth street, last evening:

Citizen's Bank	$55 00
Allegheny Bank	53 25
Mechanic & Manufacturers Bank	53 00

EXAMINING SURGEON FOR WESTMORELAND COUNTY.—Dr. Joseph W. Blackburn, of West Newton, was appointed, on Monday last, as Examining Surgeon for Westmoreland county, to reside at Greensburg.

SPECIAL LOCAL NOTICES.

GROVER AND BAKER'S SEWING MACHINE, for facility and manufacturing purposes, are the best in use.

A. P. CHANOVY, General Agent,
No. 18, Fifth street.

THE WHEELER & WILSON SEWING MACHINE has taken the first premium at the World's Fair just held in London, all the machines of the world competing. Salesroom 27 Fifth street.

FOR FALL AND WINTER WEAR.—The winter is upon us, and we must provide ourselves with the material to keep us comfortable. A good and well-made overcoat is the very article, and we don't know of any place where our readers can get one that will look as well, and at the same time withstand the most severe weather, as at W. H. McGee & Co.'s, corner of Federal street and Diamond Square, Allegheny. Their stock of overcoatings, business and dress clothing, pantaloons of all descriptions, are well assorted, and of the latest style. The gentlemen's furnishing goods department is all that a purchaser would wish. Call on McGee & Co. if you desire a nice suit.

VOLUNTEERS, READ THIS!—For the derangement of the system, change of diet, wounds, sores, bruises and eruptions, to which every volunteer is liable, there are no remedies so safe, convenient and sure as Holloway's Pills and Ointment, thoroughly tested in the Crimean and Italian Campaigns. Only 25 cents per box or pot. 23d

CHOICE HOLIDAY PRESENTS.—J. M. Robertz, No. 17 Fifth street, is now opening the most choice stock of fine Gold and Silver Watches, Jewelry, Silver Ware and Fancy Goods ever displayed in this city, and is selling them at remarkably low prices.

NOTICE to the property owners of this city is hereby given, that any repairs needed about their houses will be done promptly, if they leave their order at Cuthbert's Carpenter and Joining Shop, on Virgin alley, just above Smithfield street.

OMNIBUS CALLS will be taken at the Omnibus office, No. 408 Liberty street, day or night. All orders left at the above place, will be promptly attended to. All calls must be paid in advance. 6m

TOY BOOKS and Games, at Pittock's, opposite the Postoffice.

POCKET BOOKS, &c., for Christmas Presents, at Pittock's, opposite the Postoffice.

PHOTOGRAPH ALBUMS at Eastern Prices, at Pittock's, opposite the Postoffice.

BUY your Photograph Albums of Pittock, opposite the Postoffice.

DIED:

WHITEHEAD.—On Tuesday morning, 23d inst., at 9 o'clock, FLORENCE NIGHTENGALE, daughter of Mrs. Martha A. Whitehead, aged 2 years and 15 days.

Funeral from the residence of her mother, No. 181 Liberty street, on THURSDAY MORNING, at 10 o'clock. The friends of the family are respectfully invited to attend.

FROM NORTH CAROLINA.

NEWBERN, N. C., Dec. 17.—VIA FORTRESS MONROE, Dec. 22.—In the engagement at Kingston, on the 14th, Company K, of the 32 New York cavalry, Capt. Cole, which was in the advance, charged over four deep ditches eight feet wide, and captured seven pieces of rebel artillery and brought them off in triumph.

Gen. Foster's forces were to reach Goldsboro to-day, and as cannonading has been distinctly heard here, the probability is that the battle has been fought, and that an important point is in our possession. The army will immediately move from there to another point.

There are two candidates for Congress in this district, one on the platform of free labor, and the other in opposition to the confiscation and emancipation acts. The latter receives the active support and aid of Gov. Stanley, and will doubtless be elected.

Six rebel prisoners were brought to Fortress Monroe from Yorktown, who were captured at Gloucester.

THE LATEST NEWS

BY TELEGRAPH.

FROM WASHINGTON.

OUR SPECIAL DISPATCHES.

Special Dispatches to the Pittsburgh Gazette.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23, 1862.

TENNESSEE AND THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION.

Emerson Etheridge and some other Tennesseans waited on the President, this morning, and presented a petition, signed by Gov. Johnston and other leading citizens of that State, asking that Tennessee be exempted from the effects of the emancipation proclamation. It is believed that they are not without reasonable hopes of having their request granted.

PRESIDENT BENSON—A TREATY WITH LIBERIA.

President Benson, of Liberia, who has recently been on a visit to London, has negotiated with Minister Charles Francis Adams a commercial treaty with the United States, placing citizens of Liberia on a footing with citizens of the most favored nations. This treaty has arrived here, and will come up for confirmation in the Senate immediately after the holidays.

THE ARMY NOT TO REMAIN IDLE THIS WINTER.

The President's address to the Army of the Potomac to-day is taken as another indication that the Army of the Potomac is not long to remain idle.

BURNSIDE'S REPORT.

Burnside's report continues to be regarded as an administration necessity rather than simply a military statement.

FOSTER'S EXPEDITION.

Foster's expedition is believed either to have reference to operations from the northern side of Richmond or to have been intended to co-operate with Burnside's late projected advance from Fredericksburg.

SIGEL'S EXAMINATION.

Gen. Sigel was examined to-day in the McDowell court in behalf of the defence and was somewhat tangled up by the shrewd cross examination. He charged neglect on McDowell's part to reinforce him (Sigel) with his cavalry at Waterloo. Also complained of the absence of that confidence and consultation on McDowell's part which should have existed between corps commanders, and said McDowell's treatment of brother officers and even of his staff officers was some times not courteous and proper.

THE SENATORIAL CAUCUS.

It is not believed that anything very definite was done at the Senatorial caucus on the Cabinet question, last evening, but several Senators have remarked, in conversations today, that the matter could not rest long in its present shape. Such declarations, in view of the recent failure to accomplish anything, will of course be taken with some discount, though no one pretends that the Cabinet, as at present arranged, possesses any elements that command confidence in its permanency.

AN IMPORTANT BILL PASSED.

In the House, to-day, McKee and Dunn succeeded in getting taken up, out of the usual order, and passed, the Senate bill providing that hereafter each regiment of cavalry shall have two assistant surgeons, and each company or troop of cavalry shall have from sixty to seventy-eight privates. The last provision will materially benefit recruiting for the cavalry service, and will prove of not a little importance.

PRINTER'S REPORT.

Defrees's report of the operations of the government printing establishment was presented to-day. It shows a saving, in twenty months, of two hundred and six thousand dollars under what the same printing could have cost on the old system.

THE CABINET TROUBLES.

The account of the Cabinet troubles, which appeared in yesterday's New York Times, was written by Raymond, after dinner with Seward. Its inspiration can, therefore, be easily seen through. We should be sorry to attribute to the same distinguished source the systematic unfairness of representation and perversion of the fact which runs through the whole account.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR.

The report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War concerning the Fredericksburg affair, presented to-day, will make five or six columns closely printed matter. The Associated Press agrees to furnish a full abstract.

GEN. SOL. MEREDITH,

Of Indiana, has been released from arrest and restored to his command without explanation, which is interpreted as a virtual admission that there were not sufficient reasons for arresting him.

A CHRISTMAS DINNER FOR THE SOLDIERS.

The State of Indiana gave $700 to-day to Mrs. Caleb B. Smith for a Christmas dinner to the soldiers in the hospitals here.

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

Mr. Smith having been confirmed District Judge, the Secretaryship for the Department of the Interior is now vacant. A nomination is not thought likely to be made till the Senate reassembles after the holidays. In the meantime the business of the Department remains in charge of Assistant Secretary Usher.

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS GONE HOME.

A large number of members of Congress left by this afternoon's train to spend the holidays at home.

SURGEONS APPOINTED.

Western Pension Surgeons appointed: Dr. A. B. Ames, Lyon, Id.; Dr. O. Howell, Aurora, Ills.; Dr. F. J. Grayston, Huntington, Ind.; Dr. Stephen D. Ayres, Marion, Ind.; Townsend Regan Anderson, Indiana.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23.—The President has issued the following:

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
WASHINGTON, Dec. 22, 1862.

To the Army of the Potomac:

I have just read your Commanding General's report of the battle of Fredericksburg. Although you were not successful, the attempt was not an error nor the failure other than an accident. The courage with which you, in an open field, maintained the contest against an intrenched foe, and the consummate skill and success with which you crossed and recrossed the river in the face of the enemy, show that you possess all the qualities of a great army which will yet give victory to the cause of the country and of the popular government. In condoling with the mourners for the dead and sympathising with the painfully wounded, I congratulate you that the number of both is comparatively so small, I tender to you, officers and soldiers, the thanks of the nation.

(Signed) ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

THE REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23.—The Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, reported in answer to a Senate resolution of the 18th inst., calling on that Committee to inquire into the facts relating to the recent battle at Fredericksburg, Va., and particularly as to what officers or officers are responsible for the assault, that they had proceeded to the Headquarters of the Army of the Potomac, and taken the deposition of Major Generals Burnside, Sumner, Franklin and Hooker, and Brigadier Generals Woodbury and Haupt, and on their return to Washington, those of Major General Halleck and Brigadier General Meigs, all the facts relating to the movements of the army under Gen. Burnside, the forwarding of pontoons and supplies, the recent battle at Fredericksburg are so fully and clearly stated in the depositions herewith submitted, that the Committee report the testimony without comment.

Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside sworn by the Chairman.

Question—You have seen the resolution of the Senate, under which this Committee is now acting. Will you now go on and in your own way, without questioning, give such account of the matters embraced in that resolution as you may consider necessary and proper?

Answer—In order that the whole matter may be entirely understood, it may be well to go back a little.

Question—Very well—make your statement in your own way?

Answer—When after the battle of Antietam, Gen. McClellan decided to cross the Potomac, I said to him that in my opinion he would never be able to take the army on that route beyond the Rappahannock, unless he succeeded in fighting the enemy at some place this side; that if he proposed to go to Richmond by land, he would have to go by way of Fredericksburg, and in that he partially agreed with me. After we had started we had another conversation on that subject, and several other officers were present. On the 6th of November after the conversation, Gen. McClellan gave an order to Capt. Drum, his Chief Engineer, to have all the pontoon bridges at Berlin and in that neighborhood that could be spared, taken up and sent down to Washington, with a view of getting them down to this time in case he decided to go by way of Fredericksburg. The letter conveying that order was written on the 6th of November, but, as I understood, was not received until the 12th of November. On the 7th or 8th of Nov. I received an order from the President of United States, directing me to take command of the Army of the Potomac, and also a copy of the order relieving General McClellan from the command. This order was conveyed to me by General Buckingham, who was attached to the War Department. After getting over my surprise, the shock, &c., I told Gen. Buckingham that it was a matter that required very serious thought; that I did not want the command; that it had been offered to me twice before, and I did not feel that I could take it. I counselled with two of my staff officers in regard to it, for I should think an hour and a half. They urged upon me, that I had no right as a soldier to disobey the order, and that I had already expressed to the government my unwillingness to take the command. I told them what my views were with reference to my ability to exercise such command, which views were those I had always burnsereadly expressed; that I was not competent to command such a large army as this. I had said the same over and over again to the President and Secretary of War, and also, that if matters could be satisfactorily arranged with Gen. McClellan, I thought he could command the Army of the Potomac better than any other General in it. But they had studied the subject more than I had, and knew more about their obligations to General McClellan than I did. There had been some conversation with regard to the removal of General McClellan when he was bringing away his army from Before Richmond. The first of these conversations with the President and Secretary of War occurred at that time, and then after Gen. McClellan had got back to Washington, and before the commencement of the Maryland campaign, there was another conversation of the same kind, and on both of these occasions, I expressed to the President the opinion that I did not think there was any one who could do as much with that army as Gen. McClellan could, if matters could be so arranged as to remove their objections to him.

After I had conversed with my staff officers I went to see Gen. McClellan himself, and he agreed with me that this was an order which a soldier ought to obey. He said that he could not retain the command, for he as a soldier would have to obey the order directing him to give up that command. In the midst of a violent snow storm, with the army in a position I knew but little of, I had previously recommended but one corps upon the extreme right in the advance since that campaign had began. I probably knew less than any other corps commander of the positions and relative strength of the several corps of the army.

Gen. McClellan remained some two or three days to arrange his affairs and came with me as far as Warrenton and then left, having given me all the information he could in reference to the army. Gen. Halleck came down to see me on the 11th of November; on the 9th I made out a plan of operation in accordance with the order of Gen. Halleck, which directed me not only to take command, but also to state what I proposed to do with it.

That plan I wrote on the morning of the 9th of November, and sent it by a special messenger to Washington. I can furnish the committee with a copy. I do not have it here now.

Question—State the substance of it, if you please? That may do as well.

Answer—I stated in substance that I thought it advisable to concentrate the army in the neighborhood of Warrenton; to make a small movement across the Rappahannock as a feint, with a view to divert the attention of the enemy and make them believe we were going to move in the direction of Gordonsville; then to make a rapid movement of the whole army to Fredericksburg on this side of the Rappahannock. As my reasons for that I stated that the further we got into the interior of Virginia the longer would be our line of communication, and the greater would be the difficulty we would have in keeping them open, as the enemy had upon our right flank a corps, that almost at any time could, by a rapid movement, seriously embarrass us if we were caught by the elements so far from our base of supplies, and at the same time in the enemy's country, where they had means of getting information that we had not. It might prove disastrous to the army as we had but one line of railway by which to supply it. In moving upon Fredericksburg we would all the time be as near Washington as the enemy, and after arriving at Fredericksburg, we would be at a point nearer to Richmond than we would be even if we should take Gordonsville, on the Gordonsville line. The enemy, in my opinion, would not give us a decisive battle at any place this side of Richmond. They would defend Gordonsville until such time as they felt they had given check, and then, with so many lines of railroad open to them, would move on Richmond or upon Lynchburg, and, in either case, the difficulty following would be great. In connection with this movement, I requested that barges, filled with provisions and forage, should be floated to Aquia creek, where they could easily be landed; that materials be collected for the reconstruction of wharves there, and that all the wagons at Washington, that could possibly be spared, should be filled with hard bread and commissary stores, and with a number of beef cattle, &c., be started to Fredericksburg, on Dumfries road, and that this train be preceded by a pontoon train large enough to span the Rappahannock twice. I stated that this train could move in perfect safety because it would be all the time between our army and the Potomac; or, in other words, our army would be a sure protector; but at the same time I said that if a cavalry escort could not be furnished from Washington, I would send some of my cavalry to guard the train. On the morning of the 14th of November, feeling uneasy with reference to the pontoons, I directed my Chief Engineer to telegraph again with reference to them.

Question—To whom did you telegraph?

Answer—He telegraphed to Gen. Woodbury or to Major Spaulding. It subsequently appeared that was the first they ever heard of my wish to have pontoon trains started. Although the authorities in Washington had my plan sent them on the 9th of November, and had also been discovered by Gen. Halleck and Gen. Meigs, at my Headquarters, on the nights of the 11th and 12th of November, and after discovering it fully they sat down and sent a telegram to Washington, which I supposed covered the case, and would secure the starting of the pontoon trains at once. I supposed of course that those portions of the plan which required to be attended to in Washington would be carried out there at once. I could have sent my own officers there to attend to those matters, and perhaps I made a mistake in not doing so, as Gen. Halleck afterwards told me. I ought to have trusted to them in Washington for details. In reply to the telegram I had ordered to be sent, Gen. Woodbury telegraphed back that the pontoons would start on Sunday morning probably, and certainly on Monday morning, which would have been on the 16th or 17th of November, and would have been in time; they did not start until the 19th, and on that day it commenced raining, which delayed this so much, and the roads became so bad that when they got to Dumfries they floated the pontoons off the wagons. They sent to Washington for a steamer, and carried them down to Aquia creek by water, sending the wagons around by land. The pontoons arrived about the 22d or 23d of November. On the 15th of November, I started a column down the road to Fredericksburg, not knowing about the delay of the starting of the pontoons, because the telegram announcing the delay of the same did not reach Warrenton Junction until I had left to come down here, and that the telegram didn't reach me until I arrived here on the morning of the 19th, when it was handed to me by an Orderly, who had brought it down to Warrenton Junction. After reaching here, I saw at once that there was no chance of crossing the Rappahannock with the army at that time. It commenced raining, and the river began to raise, not to any great extent, but didn't know how much it would rise. There were no means of crossing, except by going up to the fords, and it would be impossible to do that, because of the inability to supply the troops after crossing. General Sumner, with his command, arrived here in advance. He sent to me, asking if he should cross the river; he was very much tempted to take his own across to Fredericksburg, by the ford near Falmouth, as there was no enemy there, except a very small force. I did not think it advisable that he should cross at that time. The plan I had in contemplation was, if the stores and those bridges had come here, as I had expected, to throw General Sumner's whole corps across the Rappahannock, fill the wagons with as many small stores as we could, and having beef cattle along for meat, then to make a rapid movement down in the direction of Richmond, and try to meet the enemy and fight a battle before Jackson could make a junction there. We knew that Jackson was in the valley, and felt that there was force enough on the Upper Rappahannock to take care of him. We felt certain that as soon as the enemy knew of our crossing down, the force of Jackson would be recalled, and we wanted to meet their force and beat it before Jackson could make a junction with them, or before Jackson could come down on our flank and perhaps cripple us. I had recommended that some supplies should be sent to the mouth of the Rappahannock, with the view of establishing a depot at Port Royal. After we had advanced to Fredericksburg, after the first delay starting the pontoons, I think they were sent on as quickly as could have been, and the supplies and quartermasters' stores have been always in as great abundance as we could have expected.

After the 19th of November the weather and roads, particularly bad. Horses, mules, &c., were sent down to us so that our cavalry and teams were in very good condition. After it was ascertained that there must be delay and that the enemy had concentrated such force as to make it very difficult to cross except to cross by a number of bridges, we commenced bringing up from Aquia Creek all the pontoons we could, after enough of them had been brought up to build bridges, we called several councils of war to decide about crossing the Rappahannock. It was first decided to cross down at Skenker's Neck, 12 miles below here, but our demonstration was simply for the purpose of drawing down there as large a force of the enemy as possible. I then decided to cross here because, in the first place I felt satisfied that they did not expect us to cross here, but down below. In the next place I felt satisfied that this was the place to fight the most decisive battle, because if we could divide their forces by pedetrating their lines at one or two points, separating their left from their right, then a vigorous attack with the whole army would succeed in breaking their army in pieces. The enemy had cut a road along on the rear of the line of heights, where we made our attack, by means of which they connected the two wings of their army, and avoided the long *detour* round through a bad country. I obtained from a colored man, from the other side of the town, information in regard to this road which proved to be correct. I wanted to obtain possession of this new road, and that was my reason for making the attack on the extreme left. I did not intend to make an attack on the right until that position had been taken, which I supposed would stagger the enemy, cutting their line in two, and then I proposed to make a direct attack on the front, and drive them out of the works. I succeeded in building six bridges, and taking the whole army across. The attacks were made and we were repulsed, still holding a portion of the ground we fought upon, but not the extreme advance. That night I went all over the field on our right—in fact I was with the officers and men until nearly daylight. I found the feeling to be rather against the attack in the morning—in fact was decidedly against it. I returned to my headquarters, and after conversing with Gen. Sumner, I told him that I wanted him to order the 9th army corps (which was the corps I originally commanded) to form the next morning in a column of attack by regiments. It consisted of some eighteen old regiments and some new ones. I desired that the column should make a direct attack on the enemy's works. I thought that these regiments, by arriving quickly up after each other, would be able to carry the stone wall and batteries in front, driving the enemy into their next line and by going in with them they would not be able to fire upon us to any great extent. I left Gen. Sumner with that understanding, and directed him to give the order. The order was given and the attack formed. Next morning, just before the column had started, Gen. Sumner came to me and said: General, I hope you will desist from this attack. I do not know of any general officer who approves of it. It will be disastrous to the army. Advice of that kind from General Sumner, who has always been in favor of an advance whenever it was possible, caused me to hesitate. I kept the column of attack formed and sent over for division and corps commanders and consulted with them. They unanimously voted against the attack. I then went to see the officers on the other side and found the same opinion prevailed among them. I then sent for Gen. Franklin, who was on the left, and he was of the same opinion. This caused me to decide that I ought not to make the attack I had contemplated, and besides inasmuch as the President of the United States had told me to be in no haste in making this attack, that he would give me reinforcements, and now that I had lost half the army of the Potomac destroyed, I felt I could not take the responsibility of ordering an attack, although my own belief at the time was that the works could be carried in the afternoon of that day. I again saw the officers, and told them I had decided to withdraw to this side of the river all our forces, except enough to hold the town and bridge, and that I should keep the bridges, there for future operations in case we wanted to cross again. I accordingly ordered a withdrawal, leaving Hooker to conduct the withdrawal of our forces from the town and Franklin to conduct it on our left. During that evening I received Gen. Hooker, and about ten o'clock at night Gen. Butterfield came over with a message from Gen. Hooker stating that he (Hooker) felt it his duty to represent to me the condition in which I was leaving the town and the troops in it. After a long consultation on the subject with General B., I felt that the troops I proposed to leave behind would not be able to hold the town. I then partially decided to withdraw the whole command, which is still a more perilous operation. It commenced raining, which was to some extent an assistance to us, but a very bad thing in the moving of troops. I tho't over the matter for about two hours, and about 1 o'clock sent over an order to withdraw the whole force, which was successfully accomplished. There had been a great deal of division of opinion among the corps commanders as to the place of crossing, but, after all discussion, the decision to cross here, I understand, was well received by all. While on here Gen. Hooker on the morning of the 20th of November wrote me a note in which he suggested that he should cross his force over the Rappahannock nearest the town of Richardsford, and move rapidly down to Saxton's Station and take position there. He stated that he had three days provisions and thought he could meet any force of the enemy in front. I replied that I was always very glad to take advice of my General officers and should always be loth to make a move without consulting them, but could not approve of the move he suggested, because, in the first place he would have to march 36 miles yet to Saxton's Station. It was then raining and would have to ford two rivers which might rise and cut off from the main body of the command, and as I had no means of crossing at Fredericksburg, would be prevented from sending him supplies and assistance, and although he might reach Saxton's Station and not meet any force of the enemy at that time, yet it would be a very hazardous movement to throw a column like that beyond its proper support. This reply I sent the Gen. Hooker. He thanked me, and said he had only made it as a suggestion, and the weather, as it was then, raining of course, rendered it impossible to make the movement he suggested.

Question—What reasons do you assign for the failure of your attack here.

Answer—It was found to be impossible to get the men to the works of the enemy, the fire being too hot for them. The whole command fought most gallantly. The enemy themselves say that they never saw our man fight so hard as that day.

Question—Were the enemy's works very strong.

Answer—Their works are not strong, but occupy very strong positions. It is impossible the points of attack were wrongly ordered. If such is the case, I can only say I did it to the best of my ability. It is also possible that it would have been better to cross at Rinker's Neck, but for what I supposed to be good reasons, I felt we had better cross here; that we would have a more decisive engagement here, and that if we succeeded in defeating the enemy here, we would break up the whole army. I think it is now the most desirable thing, not ever second to the capture of Richmond, for if this army is broken up, though it might defend Richmond for a while, it could not make any protracted effort there.

By Mr. Goche—Do I understand you to say it was your understanding that Halleck and Meigs, while at your headquarters in Warrenton and before you commenced the movement of your army, send orders to Washington for pontoons to be immediately forwarded to Falmouth?

Answer—That was certainly my understanding.

Question—In your judgment could pontoons have been forwarded in time for you to have crossed the Rappahannock when you expected, if all possible effort had been made by those charged with that duty?

Answer—Yes, sir, if they had received their orders in time.

Question—Did the non-arrival of the pontoons at the time you expected, prevent your crossing when you expected to cross, and interfere with the success of your plan?

Answer—Yes, sir.

Question—Since you have assumed the command of the army of the Potomac, have all its movements been made by you according to your own judgment, or have some of them been decided by the General-in-Chief, the Secretary of War or the President of the United States?

Answer—They have all been made in accordance with my own judgment. In some cases I have submitted my views, which have been approved.

Question—Who did you understand was responsible for the forwarding of the pontoons to Falmouth?

Answer—I understood that Gen. Halleck was to give the necessary orders, and then the officers who should receive the orders were the ones responsible for the pontoons coming here. I could have carried out that part of my plan through officers of my own, but having just taken command of the army, with which I was but little acquainted, it was evident that it was as much as I could attend to, with the assistance of all my officers, to change the pontoons from Warrenton to Fredericksburg—and I felt, indeed I expected, that all parts of the plan which was to be executed in Washington would be attended to by the officers at that place under the direction of the different departments to which those parts appertain.

Question—Did you or not understand that you were to be responsible for seeing that these orders were carried out.

Answer—I did not, I never imagined for a moment that I had to carry out anything that was required to be done at Washington. Gen. Meigs told me distinctly, several days ago, in Washington, that he never saw my plan of operations until I showed it to him on that day.

Question—Do I understand you to say in your statement that you expected Gen. Franklin to carry the point at the extreme left of the ridge, on the rear of the town, and thereby enable our troops to storm and carry the fortifications.

Answer—I did expect him to carry that point, which being done, would place our forces in the rear of their extreme left, and which I thought at the time would take their forts on the ridge, to such an extent that the position in front could be easily stormed and carried.

Question—To what, do you attribute his failure to accomplish that?

Answer—To the great strength of the position and forces there. I expected bridges would be built in two or three hours after they were unloaded which was about daylight, instead of that, those on the right were not built until 3 p. m., and I had only means of getting across Division One. The bridges on the right of Gen. Franklin were built about noon and held by our troops on the opposite bank. This gave the enemy time to accumulate in that force, which strengthened along the river from Port Royal up to the battle field, and before I was able to order an attack and whilst the men were here undoing the bridges and putting them into the water the enemy's sharpshooters opened a very heavy fire on those who were putting them down, and opened upon the town with a view of silencing them. In this manner the bridges were built about two-thirds of their length, at which time the bridge builders were driven off and had to shelter under the bank. Repeated efforts were made to get these bridges built out to the ends of the bridges with necessary materials, but all failed. It was then reported to me that it was impossible to build the bridge under that fire, and that the sharpshooters could not be driven out of the town by artillery fire. We had 143 guns in position, the largest proportion of which were playing upon the town. I said to the officers who had reported to me that it was impossible to build the bridges, that they must be built, and that some plan must be devised for getting those sharpshooters out of the way.

Upon consulting with Gen. Hunt, Chief of Artillery, and Gen. Woodbury, of the Engineers, it was agreed to fill the boats with one man, run quickly across under fire, throw them on the bank, and let them go up into the streets and houses and drive the sharpshooters away. This plan succeeded, and in fifteen minutes after the first detachment of troops had reached the opposite bank, our men on the left, began building bridges, and in half an hour more were completed.

Question—What was the conduct of the officers and men during the attack?

Answer—With the exception of a single regiment, it was excellent.

Question—Will you state as nearly as possible the whole number of troops engaged?

Answer—About [illegible] on the other side of the river.

Question—What part of that number were actually in the battle?

Answer—Every single man of them were under artillery fire, and about half of them were, at different times, formed in columns of attack. Every man was sent in the column of attack that could be got in.

Question—Have you any knowledge as to force of the enemy here?

Answer—I think it was less than 100,000, but it has been estimated as high as 200,000.

Question—What was the extent of the casualties on our side resulting from all the fighting?

Answer—It will not be far from 10,000 men, wounded and missing.

Question—What is the present condition of our troops here?

Answer—As far as my knowledge and information goes it is good.

Question—Do you or do you not consider your troops demoralized or their efficiency impaired, except so far as has been from the loss of so many men?

Answer—I do not.

I would add here that although at the time I ordered the column for attack to be formed on the morning after the battle, I thought the enemy's works could be carried and advorted to that opinion. During that day I afterwards became convinced that it could not be done, owing to the great strength of the enemy, and the time given for reinforcing, and the belief also of our officers was that it could not be done. I accordingly telegraphed to the President of the United States that I withdrew our army because I felt that the enemy's position could not be carried.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23.—The following has been received at Headquarters of the Army:

Washington, Dec. 19.—Pursuant to your orders I visited the army of the Potomac on the 12th, to inspect the horses and mules in the cavalry, artillery and teams of the army.

The movement of troops on that day and the engagement at Fredericksburg that followed, during the six days that I remained with the army, gave me but little opportunity to see the management of the horse department in detail; though I had an opportunity to see them on duty. Having gone there very unfavorably impressed with accounts drawn from the dark side of the picture by those taking the rejected and disabled horses of the army as their stand-point, I found these animals in better condition than I expected. The mule teams, with some exceptions, were in good condition, and I doubt if ever an army under similar circumstances was better provided for in this respect.

The cavalry horses suffer most, many of them being thin and scarcely fit for service. The duties that they have to perform—excursions that sometimes require from 24 to 36 hours without much food or rest—the heavy weight they have to carry, and the unskillful manner in which they are ridden, makes it almost impossible to be otherwise, except they were treated with the greatest care.

The artillery suffer much, but are a grade better than the cavalry.

The greater labor and destruction of horses in the army is, I believe, the want of skill, judgment and care of the individual man of his individual horse. A more diligent look-ing after of his detail by officers in charge would be highly beneficial. The effects of which is seen in some instances where the diligence has been exercised with judgment by officers attending to this important but much neglected duty. Every man who is permited to ride a horse, should be compelled by duty, if he has not the humanity and moral principle, to see that the horse has every care in his power to give; that he is properly groomed and fed. The manner in which food is given, where only a sufficiency is allowed, is highly important, as much is wasted and trampled under foot. I believe, for a winter campaign, a saddle blanket, to cover the back and loins of the horse, to be left off when the saddle is removed, would be of great service.

The Arabs, who live more with the horse than any other people, and who are older in horsemanship than any other nation in the world, never remove the saddle from the horses back when on a long journey. Their saddles have always blankets attached that cover the back and loins of the horse. They argue that this vital part, when heated by riding, should never be made to feel the effects of cold.

As one who loves the horse, who appreciates his intelligence and keen sensibilities, and can anticipate his wants, I do most deeply deplore the dejection of spirit, suffering and loss of life, consequent upon the exigencies of war; but while war rages this law must continue. In an army, fifty thousand horses subjected to the service and exposure of the army, there must necessarily be a large percentage of disabled and diseased horses constantly accumulating.

It is even so with the soldiers of the army, who are gifted with intelligence and reason, and whose first law of nature is self-preservation, and for the comfort and welfare of whom the greatest energies of the people and officers of the army are exerted. How can it be otherwise with the horse? He is not invincible to exposure, which he can scarcely bear as well as man, and with whom he must suffer alike, if not more, in time of war.

I am happy to see the extensive hospitals lately erected in the city to restore the disabled horses. I believe they are conducted on the best and most economical principles, and will, I have no doubt, be the means of restoring thousands of horses to the army that will be better on their second service than they were on their first.

Hoping the Government will as an act of humanity as well as economical use every effort in its power for the protection of this noble animal. I remain, General, very truly your obedient servant, JOHN S. BARRY.

To MAJ. GEN. HALLECK, Commander-in-Chief U. S. A., Washington, D. C.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23.—The following has been received at the headquarters of the army:

HEADQUARTERS DEP'T. NORTH CAROLINA,
December 23, 1862.

To Maj. Gen. Halleck, Commander-in-Chief:

My expedition was a perfect success. I burned the railroad bridge at Goldsboro, and Mt. Olive, and tore up several miles of the track of the Wilmington & Weldon railroad. We fought four engagements, viz: at Southwest Creek, Kingston, White Hall and Goldsboro; and whipped them handsomely each time.

(Signed) J. G. FOSTER, Brig. Gen.

XXXVIITH CONGRESS—SECOND SESSION.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23.

SENATE.—The Vice President laid before the Senate a communication from the Secretary of the Interior transmitting his annual financial report. Also a communication in regard to sums due the Chippewa, Ottowa, Pottowotomie Indians. Also a message from the President transmitting the report of Hon. Reverdy Johnson, United States Commissioner at New Orleans.

The concurrent resolution from the House, that the Houses adjourn from Tuesday, the 23d, to the 1st Monday in January, was taken up.

Mr. Sherman, of Ohio, moved to amend so as to make it a joint resolution, adjourning both Houses until the 1st Monday in January.

The amendment was adopted, and the resolution as amended agreed to by the following vote:

Yeas—Messrs. Arnold, Bayard, Browning, Chandler, Cowan, Davis, Field, Foote, Harding, Harris, Howard, Kennedy, King, Lane, of Indiana, Lane, of Kansas, McDougal, Nesmith, Pomeroy, Powell, Saulsbury, Sherman, Sumner, Ten Eyck, Wilkinson, and Wilson, of Mo.—26.

Nays—Messrs. Clark, Collamer, Fessenden, Foster, Grimes, Hale, Harlan, Howe, Latham, Trumbull, Willey, Wilson, (Mass.,) and Wright—13.

Mr. Howard, of Mich., introduced a bill to amend the Act to amend the Judicial system of the United States. Referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Mr. McDougal, of Cal., introduced a bill to amend the act to aid in Constructing a Railroad and Telegraph line to the Pacific Ocean.

Mr. Hale, of N. H., offered a resolution that a Committee be appointed to inquire into the chattering of the Banks expedition; that they also be instructed to inquire into the employment of transports generally by the quartermasters and agents of the War Department, the rates at which they were engaged, by whom, and for how long. Adopted.

Mr. Lane, of Kansas, gave notice of his intention to introduce a bill to authorise the President to raise two hundred regiments of infantry, to be composed of persons of African descent.

Mr. Sumner, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, reported a bill for the relief of the Norwegian bark, Admiral Tordenskald.

Mr. Saulsbury's resolution of inquiry as to whether any troops had been sent to Delaware at the late election, was taken up and discussed till the expiration of the morning hour, when the Bankrupt bill was taken up.

Mr. Doolittle, of Wis., offered an amendment exempting homesteads, when they are exempt by State law, where a bankrupt resides.

Mr. Trumbull, of Illinois, offered an amendment to strike out the words "exempting banking and railroad corporations" from the provisions of the bill for compulsory bankruptcy. He said the laboring people of Illinois had lost $5,000,000 in less than five years by these banking corporations; in no way have the people lost more, or been cheated worse. The amendment was rejected—yeas 17, nays 18.

Mr. Wade, of Ohio, from the Committee on the Conduct of the War, made a report relative to the late battle at Fredericksburg, which was ordered to be printed.

Mr. Collamer offered an amendment exempting municipal corporations from that provision of the bill as proposed by Mr. Hale. Adopted. Also an am