

FROM WASHINGTON.

What is to be Done with the African Regiments.

They will be Used to Guard the Mississippian.

They will also Garrison Southern Ports.

And Enforce the Proclamation of Freedom.

THE PRESIDENT STILL FIRMS FOR FREEDOM.

The Rebels Driven out of Charlestown, Va.

SEC. CHASE'S FINANCIAL SCHEME.

Majority of the Ways and Means Committee Opposed to it.

Wounded Soldiers' Christmas Dinner.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE WITH THE AFRICAN REGIMENTS.

Some of the African regiments, upon the organization of which the President has determined, will be employed to guard the banks of the Mississippi...

THE PROCLAMATION OF FREEDOM.

In the course of conversation yesterday the President said that he would not withhold his New-Year's Proclamation of Freedom if he could, and that he could not if he would.

JOHN BROWN'S SOUL MARCHING ON.

The Rebels have been driven out of Charlestown—John Brown's Charlestown—by a party of National soldiers, with a loss to the latter of only two killed.

SECRETARY CHASE'S FINANCIAL MEASURE.

Secretary Chase's financial scheme is before the Ways and Means Committee. Bankers and capitalists can rely upon the following synopsis of its provisions: The first section repeals the provision of the act of July last, which allows legal-tender notes to be converted at any time into 5.20 six per cent bonds...

ARRIVAL OF WOUNDED.

Large numbers of wounded arrived to-day from the Rappahannock.

THE DEPARTMENTS CLOSED.

The Government Departments were closed to-day, and business generally suspended.

CHRISTMAS AT THE HOSPITALS.

There were happy times at all the hospitals. At some, toasts, sentiments, speeches and good Christmas wishes were interchanged with the liberality of friends. The weather is fine.

AFFAIRS AT SUFFOLK.

Another Fight with Rebels on the Blackwater.

Yesterday, tactically speaking, was a full action day in this section. As I anticipated, four regiments were cast in Suffolk, and I think no returns will be received from Isle of Wight, Windsor, or Smithfield. The Rebels from the other side of Blackwater came over in force to put a quietus upon any Union men who might try to vote.

THE WOUNDED SOLDIERS' CHRISTMAS DINNER.

Nowhere else in the world than in America could have been seen the sight which has made this holiday in Washington remarkable and memorable—the banqueting of 35,000 wounded and sick soldiers upon a Christmas dinner, spread by the hands of individual benevolences.

COLLECTOR TO THE WAR DEPARTMENT.

Wm. Whiting, one of the best lawyers in Boston, has been appointed to the position of collector to the War Department, and which may be called the Solicitor to the War Department.

THE MISSISSIPPI NAVAL EXPEDITION.

The great Naval Expedition of Rear Admiral Porter on the Mississippi is attracting considerable attention here in military circles. Several officers

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of the army with nautical antecedents have resigned with the intention of identifying themselves with this promising naval enterprise in the West.

The name of Porter is, itself, regarded as a tower of strength, and will attract some of the best men in the country.

The cooperation of the public-spirited, ship-owners and captains of New-York and other cities will be appealed to for the securing of seamen, artificers, &c., to fill up the commands of the formidable vessels connected with the expedition.

Recently a number of papers belonging to Ex-Commander M. F. Maury, late of U. S. Navy, were found at Fredericksburg, Va., at the house of Dr. Herndon.

One of them, dated April, 1862, is addressed to "My Excellent Friend the Grand Admiral of Russia," a copy of which was sent to that functionary.

The rebellion, as they (the loyal citizens) term it, he says, they would fain have the statement of Europe believe well nigh crushed out. At first they said it was a small affair, that could be put down in a few weeks; then in sixty, then in ninety days.

Mr. Seward proclaimed, through his diplomatic organs abroad, that France and England should have faith in the promises and predictions he made; an entire year has rolled around, and he has as yet offered us, away from the water and his ships, not one pitched battle.

THE NEW-ORLEANS COMMISSION.

The President's Message upon the New-Orleans Commission is accompanied by a report of the Hon. Beverly Johnson, Commissioner to the Secretary of State.

With regard to the return of the \$200,000 to the agent of Hope & Co., Mr. Forehall, he says: "The circumstances attending the payment, and the object of Mr. Forehall in depositing the coin with the Consul of the Netherlands, are stated in these despatches, and so clearly, and with such evident frankness, that it is impossible to doubt their truth."

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out money such a long time, that I fear his sudden advent might be dangerous. Some of us might die of joy, others of surprise. But if he'll come, we'll risk the peril.

FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE SOUTH.

Expedition to Gather up Contrabands—Col. Higginson's Regiment—What the Rebels are doing up the Pee Dee River—A Lady Murdered—A White Woman sold into Slavery—Statement of the Woman.

On Wednesday, Dec. 3, the steamer Ben Deford left this pretty little town on a trip to North Island, S. C., about fifteen miles below Georgetown, S. C., for the purpose of gathering up the contrabands who were assembled there, and who had managed to escape from the districts in the neighborhood of the Santee and Pee Dee Rivers.

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11th Kansas, and the 1st and 3d Cherokee Regiments, the 1st Kansas and the 3d Indiana batteries and four mounted howitzers, leaving the First Brigade, Gen. Salomon, to protect my rear and flank and my supply train, meeting the command of Gen. Herron about midnight, which caused considerable delay.

I did not reach Bentonville until daylight of the 21st. At this latter place I halted until 5 o'clock, p. m., at which hour my train, left behind at Pea Ridge, came up. Having learned from my scouts, sent out during the day, that Cooper and Standwater were at or near Mayville, with a force variously estimated at 5,000 to 7,000, I determined, if possible, to reach their camp and attack them by daylight. The distance to March was thirty miles, and the road through a rough and wooded and hilly country. Three miles from Bentonville I directed my train to go into camp and follow in the morning at daylight, and moved the column forward, Gen. Cloud's brigade being in the advance.

At about 5 o'clock in the morning the advance guard, composed by Capt. Russell, of the 2d Kansas Regiment, and two men, for the purpose of getting information. In this we succeeded admirably. Stopping at a large, fine house, at the edge of the prairie, and disguised as Rebel soldiers, just escaped from the Unionists, and wishing to get with Cooper's command, I readily enlisted the sympathies of the Rebel lady, whose husband was a soldier in the Rebel camp. She showed us where their pickets stood, and the location of their camp, and their strength, which was near 7,000 men, two Texas regiments having joined them the day before.

I now moved the advance across the prairie, and halted a quarter of a mile from their camp, which was at the edge of the timber, on a little wooded stream, near the town of Mayville. From this point I sent out my scouts, and the 1st of the 2d Kansas Regiment, under Capt. Hopkins, by a circuitous route, to enter the town in the rear of the enemy's pickets, for the purpose, if possible, of capturing them without alarming their camp.

This, however, proved fruitless, from the fact, as I afterwards learned, that they heard our advance across the prairie, and ran in, and firing at the enemy the whole of the night, the male inhabitants, speedily assembled, to seek Rebel protection.

It was now near 5 o'clock, and my desire was to attack at daylight; but, while waiting to give Captain Hopkins time to get in the rear of their pickets, on going back to ascertain if the column was closed up, I learned, much to my surprise and disappointment, that during the night two or three hours' march, the main body with me had been captured, and sent back, under Capt. Hopkins.

The main column was back seven miles, where it was first halted. After sending a messenger back to order it up, I proceeded with the one company remaining with me to the town, and reached there at the same time with Capt. Hopkins.

There I learned that intelligence of an approach had been given, and that the Rebels, who had come up with me in the advance, back to move his brigade forward as rapidly as possible, with the three companies, I determined to push ahead, attack the enemy, and endeavor to hold them until reinforcements could arrive. Finding an intelligence company, the only one left in the Rebel camp, with the locality of which he was well acquainted, I had no difficulty, by promising him his freedom, in engaging his services as a guide.

The route from Mayville to the timber where the Rebels were posted lay across the prairie in a southerly direction, about three and a half miles distant. Dashing on rapidly, we drove the pickets from the open ground under cover of the timber. The remainder of the 2d Kansas, with two mounted howitzers, were following up, and the