THE NEW YORK HERALD.

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NEWS FROM CHARLESTON HARBOR.

Arrival of the United States Steamship Arago.

How the Union Army Spent Christmas.

THE EFFECT UPON CHARLESTON.

Destructive Conflagration in the City.

THE FIGHT IN STONO INLET.

CAPTURE OF THE REBEL MARSH BATTERY

General Gillmore's Christmas Eve Festivities,

&c., &c., &c.

The United States steam transport Arago, Captain Gadsden, arrived at this port yesterday, with Charleston harbor dates to Dec. 30, 1863.

We are indebted to Purser Grantigena for kindly taking charge of our despatches.

Mr. Oscar G. Sawyer's Despatch.

FOLLY ISLAND, S. C., Dec. 30, 1863.

CHRISTMAS ENTERTAINMENTS.

We celebrated Christmas in a very modest manner on the sea islands about Charleston. There was a deplorable scarcity of poultry of all kinds, and beef was not so abundant as the hungry seekers of festal pleasures could desire. There were about twenty-five superlatively happy individuals, according to the close calculations of observers, on the islands that day, and they dined, of course, on turkey. Several others, who were fortunate enough to procure chickens, were tolerably happy, and a few hundreds, who, less lucky, found only beef to dine upon, were comparatively joyous; but the great majority eked out a miserable apology for a grand Christmas dinner from salt beef and pork, with a trifle of cabbage to support it, and were undoubtedly miserable. I know the feelings of the latter from personal experience, and can testify to the fact. Hence Christmas with the command was, edaciously speaking, by no means the merry holiday that it is considered North. In a military point of view it did not lack interest to us all.

HOW WE ENTERTAINED THE CHARLESTONIANS.

At about one o'clock in the morning our rifles on Cummings' Point opened on the city of Charleston, rudely disturbing the slumbers of its virtuous citizens, and doubtless giving rise to the belief that brave old Santa Claus had paid them a midnight visit, with a battalion of aids, bearing all sorts of suspicious gifts, which he distributed rapidly but not noiselessly in private residences, among warehouses and about the silent and deserted streets, kicking up such a rumpus as has not before been witnessed in that beleaguered town. The firing was quite rapid, and, as it soon proved, exceedingly effective. Scarcely had a half dozen shots been fired before the rebel batteries began to open from James Island, and soon, as one after another joined in the fray, every rebel gun on James and Sullivan's Islands was in full play, and, the night being clear and comparatively still, the roar of the cannonade shook the islands about and awoke every one by its terrific thunders. Our fire, in spite of the rebels' activity, was kept up steadily, and at about three o'clock we discovered

FIRE KINDLED IN CHARLESTON.

The flames were first apparent in a block of buildings to the south of St. Michael's spire—probably in Bell or Elliott street—and speedily increased, throwing a light over the harbor and bringing out in bold relief the spires of the churches and the wooded front of the battery. As the conflagration spread our fire became more sharp and active, and our rifle shells dropped in and about the fire so accurately and regularly that the firemen of the city must have battled with the element with less boldness than they ordinarily do. While our guns were employed, any working of fire-engines near the scene of conflagration was out of the question, and the fire gained headway. To add to the discomforts and terror of the few remaining inhabitants two other fires were started in other parts of the city, but gradually went out, without destroying other buildings than those in which the shells first communicated the fire. The rebels, when they discovered the state of affairs, seemed to redouble their efforts to silence our batteries, and maintained a tremendous bombardment upon them. It was of no avail. Our guns were throwing shells into the city and into the rebel works as coolly as they would have fired at a target in peace times. Until daylight the artillery duel was exceedingly sharp and noisy, but of no damage to us. What the rebels suffered, other than in the destruction of one entire block of buildings, and two independent and detached houses, must be learned through their own papers. We are satisfied that the city was a sufferer from our fire, and that our Christmas entertainment will induce the few surviving denizens of the town to remove to the rural districts, where they may for a while be free from all danger of such visitations as have recently been showered upon them.

The effect of our shelling is said to be quite apparent in the city, in spite of all denials on the part of the press to the contrary. Bell and Elliott streets are perfectly deserted—not a single person living in either, nor a single building occupied for business purposes. All reports to the contrary, and to the effect that the city has not been damaged or its business affected by our bombardment, are pleasant little fictions invented for the Southern ear, and tolerably well calculated to fool us, if we did not have the means of knowing much better to the contrary. While we were delivering our Christmas salutations to Charleston the enemy returned the compliment from Johnson's Island, on the Stono river, and shoved us

HOW THE REBELS RECEIVED THE DAY.

Working most industriously through the night in building corduroy roads across a marsh near Legareville, and hauling lumber, intrenching tools and siege guns, the rebels were enabled to plant before daylight two siege guns within easy range of Legareville and the gunboat Marblehead, which laid off the town on picket. The first notice our small force in the village had of the enemy's presence and designs was a sudden and spirited attack in force on our pickets, before which they speedily fell back, and an audacious artillery fire upon the Marblehead from the two siege guns in the marsh.

THE MARBLEHEAD ATTACKED.

The attack was somewhat unexpected, but Lieutenant Commander Meade soon had his men at quarters and his guns in play. The time consumed in weighing anchor, getting headway on the ship and turning her around against an ebb tide gave the enemy a decided advantage, and they did not lose it. They repeatedly hailed the Marblehead while she was turning, shot away her main topmast and exploded two of their shells over her, and finally put two or three shots clear through her hull, killing two men and wounding five others. Her guns were served as rapidly and effectively as possible under the circumstances; but they could not be well directed while she was turning. Meanwhile the Pawnee, Commander Balch, immediately after the rebels opened fire, dropped from her position off the town to a point where she got an effective range, and opened with her heavy battery upon the rebel guns and upon a large supporting force of infantry, drawn up on the main road from Legareville. The Marblehead soon got in the proper position, let go her anchor, and got a cross fire with the Pawnee upon the enemy's position. The rebels stood by their guns as long as possible, but, after heavy loss, were compelled to leave the two guns in the marsh and retreat, but succeeded in maintaining for some time longer a fire from another heavy battery in the woods to the right of the marsh. The Pawnee's heavy battery enfiladed both the enemy's works, and, aided by the Marblehead and mortar schooner C. P. Williams, closed the day's entertainment against the rebels. The gallant manner in which the commander of the Williams beat up against a head wind and joined in the action received the highest praise from Commander Balch and the officers of the navy.

CAPTURE ON THE REBEL BATTERY.

Later in the day General Gordon went with a detachment of men, under cover of the guns of the Pawnee, and examined the location of the marsh battery. He found two eight-inch sea coast howitzers mounted on heavy siege carriages, a limber box, filled with ammunition, and a large number of shovels. The shovels and intrenching tools were brought off, the guns dismounted and spiked and the carriages disabled. At that time it was found impossible to carry off the guns. One dead rebel and five dead horses lying about the guns attested the accuracy of our fire, and a number of knapsacks, canteens and cartridge boxes showed that the enemy retreated hastily and in disorder. On Monday last Commander Balch landed a force and succeeded in bringing off the guns, which are evidently of late manufacture, but old style. The guns are now on the Pawnee as trophies. The fight proved to be a very disastrous one to the rebels, and our possession of the guns makes the affair a complete success for us.

The following are the names of those killed on the Marblehead:—Robert Brown, captain of the forecastle; Lorenzo S. Snow, ordinary seaman, and Joseph Phillips, ordinary seaman. There were seven wounded, whose names I have not been able to obtain as yet.

It is quite apparent that the rebels are endeavoring to erect batteries on John's Island, which may control Stono Inlet and interrupt our communications. If they cannot effectually close Stono with such batteries they can greatly annoy us, and may do us great injury. Of course they will not be allowed to carry on their work uninterrupted by us. They will be attended to in due time.

The body of George W. Russell, a cabin boy on the naval tug Geranium, came ashore in front of headquarters on Monday morning. It was recognized by Captain Windsor, of the tug, and has received a decent burial. Young Russell was from New Bedford, where his father resides, and was highly spoken of. He was drowned while attempting to rescue a boat's crew in the breakers off Lighthouse inlet, and fell a victim to his praiseworthy efforts to save the lives of others. He has sisters now residing in Brooklyn, New York. On the day he lost his life (December 17) six others met the same fate while attempting to cross Lighthouse inlet bar while a heavy sea was running. A majority of them were contrabands, and all were naval seamen.

GENERAL GILLMORE'S SOIREE DANSANTE.

On Thursday evening last General Gillmore gave an entertainment at headquarters building, Hilton Head, to a large number of invited guests. The ballroom was a temporary structure, ninety by forty feet, tastefully decorated with bunting and flags. The supper room was large and nicely arranged, and the tables were well supplied with the creature comforts of this part of the world, both solid and liquid. Two bands supplied the music—Ingall's post band that for dancing, and Seigler's celebrated brass band, of the One Hundred and Third New York, the music for the promenades and marches. There were at least fifty ladies present and innumerable gentlemen. The affair passed off in the most successful manner, and hereafter balls will be all the rage. Captain Burger, of the General's staff, aided by Captain Langdon, of the First artillery, and Quartermaster D. C. Brown, of the Volunteer Engineers, devised the decorations and superintended the entire work. Major Brooks and Lieutenant George C. Bingham acted as stewards, and performed their parts admirably.

CAPTURE OF A BLOCKADE RUNNER.

The gunboat Huron, stationed in Doboy Sound, captured, a short time since, the rebel steamer Chatham, a little old fashioned, high pressure river boat, loaded with cotton and bound for Nassau. Her cargo is valued at about seventy thousand dollars. The boat will probably be detained here until spring, as she is hardly able to endure the heavy winter weather north. She is of but little value for any service than that of smooth water.

THE WEEHAWKEN DISASTER AGAIN.

I am assured that the Weehawken when she sunk was not anchored, but moored to a buoy. The Court of Inquiry has made its report in relation to the cause of the disaster. Of its nature I cannot positively speak. I learn, though, that the leak which sank her was from her overhang. That was broken away from the hull in one or two places by the heavy seas and the plunges of the vessel, and through the gaps the water poured in in torrents. The report, if ever published, will give the cause, or the supposed cause, of the disaster, and until then we must wait.

GENERAL KELLEY'S DEPARTMENT.

REPORTED ADVANCE OF THE REBELS.

Our Pickets Driven in at Winchester,

&c., &c., &c.

Mr. T. C. Wilson's Despatches.

WINCHESTER, W. V., Dec. 31, 1863.

A rumor is prevalent here to-night of rebel movements; but I cannot trace the report to a truly reliable source.

There is much talk here on the question of Grant and the Presidency. The HERALD's persistency in pushing General Grant forward for the position gives rise to curious and animated comment and discussion.

CUMBERLAND, Md., Jan. 1, 1864.

Some ripples of excitement were created to-day at Martinsburg in consequence of our pickets at Winchester having been driven in as far as Bunker Hill. A portion of the Twelfth Pennsylvania cavalry was doing picket duty at the time, and in retreating took four of the enemy prisoners. This party had not proceeded far when they came upon a party of thirty rebels who had been despatched to cut them off. Our force, being very small, had to abandon the prisoners, and succeeded in escaping with a loss of one or two of their number.

For a time it was thought something serious might result out of these operations; but as the day wore away, and nothing of importance transpired, the excitement lulled, and all became remarkably quiet by night.

Rumors had continually been reaching us of rebel movements; but this morning's affair will likely enough account for them.

We learn that the Sixty-second Virginia mounted infantry, the Eighteenth Virginia cavalry and White's battalion constituted a part of the rebel force that advanced upon our picket line.

It is thought that this rebel movement was nothing but a scout in more than ordinary force.

The railroad line is considered perfectly safe for trade and travel.

CUMBERLAND, Dec. 30, 1863.

GENERAL AVERILL'S LATE RAID.

Orders have been issued to the Quartermaster's Department, by the Secretary of War, to issue an extra pair of shoes and one suit of clothing to the men engaged in the late expedition under General Averill. This order was given at the solicitation of General Averill, who faithfully represented the losses and sufferings his men endured.

The rebel papers state that General Averill, when at Salem, fired on a train while it was approaching that place. This is true. Three shots were fired, one of them passing through several cars. General Averill was compelled from necessity to order this proceeding. Nothing but his advance guard and one piece of artillery had as yet reached Salem, while, on the other hand, he had information that this train was approaching, loaded with a thousand rebel soldiers—these coming on to defend the place. It was to drive off this rebel force, just at that time superior to his own, that General Averill ordered the train to be fired upon.

Again, the rebel papers say that "a citizen" named Chapman was killed. This is not strictly true. At the time when Chapman was killed he had on a rebel captain's full uniform, and, though hailed several times, refused to surrender. He was known as Captain Chapman, and was said to belong to an artillery organization.

WOUNDED.

Lieutenant Murphy, of the Fourteenth Pennsylvania, was shot through the arm.

TAKEN PRISONERS.

Lieutenant Markebrite, Acting Assistant Adjutant General on the staff of Gen. Averill, was taken prisoner while lying exhausted in an ambulance.

Lieutenant McAdams was taken prisoner at the same time.

Lieutenant Paesley, Eighth Virginia, was also taken prisoner.

GENERAL AVERILL

is suffering severely from having his feet frozen during the late raid. For two days he had to walk in sheepskin shoes.

Many of his officers and men are also suffering severely from having their feet frozen.

During the march the men had to drag the artillery, not only over and through the streams, but along the roads. The horses could hardly walk, let alone draw the pieces. The horses suffered, too, awfully from the cold.

WEDDING PARTY CAPTURED.

General Averill captured a wedding party on top of Patte Mountain. There were about thirty rebel soldiers at the wedding, including the bridegroom. The whole party were taken prisoners. The bride followed the fortunes of her new made husband. Affecting, wasn't it?

INTERESTING FROM ALBANY.

Arrival of Members of the Legislature—Caucussing Going on Briskly—The Senate Committees—Candidates for Speaker and Clerk of the Assembly, &c.

ALBANY, Jan. 2, 1864.

The annual pipe laying and caucussing at Albany Hotels have been inaugurated to-day. About one-third of the Legislature are here, with the usual number of outside managers. A large majority of the Legislators present are old members re-elected.

The republican Senators held a caucus to-day on the formation of committees. Fifteen Senators were present. After a lengthy consultation they appointed Senators Folger and Cook a committee to wait upon Lieutenant Governor Jones and make up the committees with him.

There is no contest for Speaker of the House. Thomas G. Alvord will be nominated without opposition. It is doubtful if any other member allows his name to be used in the caucus for that office.

A different state of affairs exists in relation to the Clerk. There are three candidates pressing their claims for this position—Cushman, of Oneida, Clerk last year; George W. Van Nost and Mr. Underhill, of New York.

Cushman is supported by the old members, and therefore leads his competitors here to-night. Van Nost stands next on the list and Underhill third. Were it not for the fact that Cushman comes from the same Judicial district of Mr. Alvord, the Speaker, there would be no doubt of the result; but as it now stands, all depends upon whether Van Nost's and Underhill's united strength exceeds that of Cushman, and also whether they can unite their strenght in an emergency.

Religious Intelligence.

Rev. C. C. Goss, pastor of the Christian Alliance, will preach, as usual, in Hope Chapel, Broadway, this evening. The subject presented will be "The Example of Christ." Children's meeting at three o'clock.

Rev. James L. Phillips will deliver a discourse to Sabbath schools this morning, at half-past ten o'clock, in the First Free Will Baptist church, in Twenty-eighth street, West of Broadway.

Rev. Dr. Junkin will preach in the Canal street Presbyterian church, corner of Greene street, to-day, at half-past ten A. M., and half-past three P. M. Seats free, and the public are invited.

In the French Episcopal church, Du St. Esprit, West Twenty-second street, near Fifth avenue, morning services in French, by Rev. Dr. Verren, at half-past ten o'clock. Evening services in English, by Rev. J. Campbell White, D.D., at half-past seven o'clock.

The second series of the South Church Lectures, being discourses upon Christian life, are now being delivered at the South Baptist church, Twenty-fifth street, between Seventh and Eighth avenues. The Rev. A. Cleveland Coxe, D. D., rector of Calvary church, will preach the first of this series of practical sermons this evening, at half past seven o'clock. Subject—"The Light of the World."

At the Church of the Resurrection, Thirty-fifth street, a few doors east of Sixth avenue, divine service at half-past ten o'clock in the morning and at half-past seven o'clock in the evening. The rector, Rev. E. O. Flagg, will preach morning and evening.

Religious meetings of the New York Progressive Forum are held every Sunday afternoon at three o'clock, at Union Hall, corner of Broadway and Twenty-third street. Next subject for discussion—"Are there any Special Providences?" An election of officers also takes place to-day. Seats free to the public.

At the Second Universalist church, corner of Eleventh street and Second avenue, the Rev. G. T. Flanders will preach in the morning. In the evening a sermon will be delivered by the Rev. Moses Ballou. The public are cordially invited.

By special request the sermon preached by the Rev. F. C. Ewer, at Christ church, Fifth avenue, on the morning of the first Sunday after Christmas, from the text, "How art thou fallen, O Lucifer," will be repeated by him in the same church this evening. Services commence at half-past seven o'clock.

The Rev. Samuel B. Bell, D. D., will preach in the Fiftieth street Presbyterian church, between Broadway and Eighth avenue, this morning, at half-past ten o'clock, and at half-past seven in the evening. A New Year sermon will be preached in the morning. Subject of the evening discourse to be announced in the morning.

Rev. Sidney A. Cory will preach in the Murray Hill Baptist church, corner of Lexington avenue and Thirtieth street, this morning, at half-past ten o'clock, and at half-past seven in the evening.

Dr. P. B. Randolph, the eloquent champion of truth and common sense, will speak on an important topic this morning, at half-past ten o'clock, at the corner of Broadway and Twenty-third street, and in the evening, at half-past seven o'clock, Mr. H. S. Dunn will speak on "What is True Religion?"

Skating Intelligence—The "Ball Up" Again.

The cold northerly winds of Friday night froze up all the shallow ponds around the city, and a few persons who were rugged enough in their natures to withstand the effects of the piercing blast amused themselves yesterday with the sport of skating. The ladies were not out on the ice at all, as far as we could see; but doubtless they were busily employed in making calls.

The "ball" will doubtless make an ascension this morning, and skaters will once more have an opportunity of trying the strength of the Park ice. Although the lakes were not entirely frozen yesterday aft noon the ice of the Park was in splendid conditi n, hard as a flint, smooth as glass and several inches thick. The ice of Christmas did not entirely disappear, notwithstanding the recent heavy rains, and has, therefore, formed a firm basis, upon which the new ice has been created.

Brooklyn City News.

MURDER OF A WOMAN BY A SOLDIER.—A woman named Bridget Dailey, wife of Dirkett Dailey, was murdered last evening in an outhouse in the rear of a house in Gold street, midway between York and Prospect streets, by a man in the uniform of a United States soldier, who stabbed her in the abdomen with a knife, from the effects of which she died. The family of deceased resides at 55 Tallman street. It appears that deceased left her home about half-past five o'clock to go to the grocery on the next corner, to get some vegetables for Sunday. She remained much longer than usual, and her little daughter was sent to ascertain the cause of her absence. She met her in York street, near Charles, and the child seeing that her mother was nearly exhausted, led her some distance, when she fell down exhausted from the loss of blood. She was taken up and conveyed to her residence. Every effort was made to ascertain the cause of her injuries, but without avail. She refused to give any information, although physically able to do so at the time. Sergeant Craft, of the Second precinct police, and Coroner Norris traced the tracks of blood along the sidewalk to a house in Gold street, midway between York and Prospect streets, and thence into the privy in the rear, where they found large pools of blood. The Coroner ascertained that the woman had gone into that place with a man in uniform, apparently a soldier. They were heard to quarrel and he was seen to run away. She was heard to say "That's the man that did it." On examining the body it was discovered that there was an incised wound over the region of the stomach about an inch in length. The knife penetrated some vital part, and death resulted soon after she reached her home. Mr. Dailey was absent at his work at the time his wife left the house, and had not returned when she was brought home. The perpetrator escaped. He was a tall, slim man, having on a soldier's cap and light blue military overcoat, with a cape. A post mortem of the body will be made to-day. Every effort will be made to arrest the perpetrator of the deed.

PRESIDENT OF THE KINGS COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS.—The Board held their annual meeting at the county jail, on Saturday, January 2, and organized by electing General Philip S. Crooke, Supervisor of Flatbush, as Chairman for the ensuing year. After the appointment of committees and some routine business the Board adjourned to Monday, January 11.

TENTH WARD ALDERMAN.—J. Oakley Nodyne, Esq., having been elected Street Commissioner, resigned his position as Alderman of the Tenth ward yesterday. This will give the majority to the democrats, who will thus be enabled to organize the Board on Monday evening. The Board will now stand ten democrats to nine republicans.

IMPORTANT FROM EUROPE.

Arrival of the City of Baltimore Off Cape Race.

TWO DAYS LATER NEWS.

Capture and Release of the Ship Living Age.

Probable Non-Acceptance of the Mexican Crown by Maximilian.

ALARMING TROUBLES IN INDIA.

HEAVY LOSSES OF THE BRITISH TROOPS

Revolutionary Manifestations in Hungary.

Heenan and King Before the Magistrates,

&c., &c., &c.

CAPE RACE, Jan. 2, 1864.

The steamship City of Baltimore, from Liverpool on the 23d, via Queenstown on the 24th of December, passed here *en route* to New York at one o'clock this (Saturday) morning. She was boarded by the news boat of the press and a summary of her news obtained.

The dates by the City of Baltimore are two days later than those already received. She has sixteen cabin and thirty steerage passengers.

The ship Living Age, from Akyab for London, had been captured by the rebel privateer Tuscaloosa, and was released on giving bonds.

The London *Times* had insinuated that the Archduke Maximilian will not accept the Mexican crown, and that Napoleon will have to cast about for some one else.

The troubles in India were assuming alarming proportions. The British troops had lost heavily.

Russia continued to send off considerable numbers of Polish prisoners to Siberia.

A revolutionary manifesto had been placarded in the principal towns of Hungary. Kossuth was at the head of the movement.

King and Heenan had appeared before the magistrates for breaking the peace, and both were bound over to appear at the Quarter Sessions.

Cotton was dull, with a declining tendancy.

In breadstuffs there was also a downward tendency.

Provisions dull.

Consols 91 a 91½ for money.

The steamship Louisiana, from New York, arrived out on the 22d of December.

Dangerous Illness of Archbishop Hughes.

NO HOPES ENTERTAINED OF HIS RECOVERY—HIS CONDITION YESTERDAY.

The city was startled yesterday by the unexpected announcement that the Most Rev. Archbishop Hughes was dangerously ill, being in that low condition which indicated scarcely a possibility of recovery. The intelligence created a very profound sensation, not only among the Catholics of the metropolis, but also among all classes of the community. The feeling was one of deep regret at the probable loss of one who has so long enjoyed the respect and confidence of his fellow men, and figured so prominently both in public and private life.

Archbishop Hughes has been suffering from a severe attack, growing out of a disordered state of the stomach and liver, for over a year past, and has frequently been confined to the house and bed during that period on account of the harrassing nature of his malady. The arduous labors of his high office, requiring vast mental exertion, also contributed in no slight degree to increasing the painful character of his complaint, and he has repeatedly been compelled to give over attending to his archiepiscopal duties for weeks at a time.

Last August, in obedience to the mandate of his medical advisers, he took a trip to Saratoga for the benefit of his health, and likewise paid a visit to his farm in Jefferson county, the effect of which was to give him some slight but only temporary relief. Ever since his return he has been suffering greatly and dying slowly under his peculiar affection, which it appears had made too many inroads upon his constitution to render a cure possible. On Wednesday, the 9th of December, three weeks ago, he was obliged to take to his bed, from which he has not been able to rise since, and on which in all human probability he will yield up his soul to his Creator. On Friday evening his condition became exceedingly low, showing that the last struggle was near at hand. The fact having got abroad, most of the Catholic clergy hastened to the residence of the Archbishop, at the corner of Madison avenue and Thirty-sixth street, for the purpose of ascertaining the true state of his health. Only a few were admitted to the sick chamber; and the meeting with these is said to have been most affecting. His Grace was scarcely able to articulate, and could only look upon his visitors in recognition of their kindness and affection. The interviews in all these cases were marked by the utmost composure on the part of the Archbishop, who showed no signs of excitement, while his visitors could scarcely keep their deep sorrow from exhibiting itself.

Yesterday his Grace was evidently much worse; his pulse was more feeble, and the general prostration of the whole system more apparent. His mind, however, was thoroughly collected, and no evidence of extraordinary excitement was visible. He recognized and conversed a little with those surrounding him, and requested to be prepared for death according to the solemn ceremonies of the Catholic church. The last sacraments were administered to him by one of the fathers of the house, and he received them with astonishing fortitude and composure, evidently knowing that his death was at hand, and meeting it with true Christian resignation.

Yesterday a great number of people called at his residence and left their cards. No one, however, but his immediate attendants and his physicians were admitted to his presence. Drs. James R. Wood and Alonzo Clarke, who are attending him, express themselves satisfied not only that he cannot survive the attack, but also that he is liable to drop into eternity at any moment. When our reporter called last night he was sinking rapidly, but preserved his composure quite as remarkably as ever. The Very Rev. Father Starrs, V. G.; Rev. Dr. Francis McNierney, private secretary of the Archbishop, and other clergymen, were in attendance on him.

A general order has been issued for all the congregations in the various churches of the city to pray for the happy recovery of the Archbishop or the grace of a happy death.

Police Intelligence.

MAN STABBED IN CHATHAM SQUARE.

At a late hour on Friday evening an unknown man was fatally stabbed in Chatham square by some person who is also unknown, and who succeeded in effecting his escape. The Fourth precinct police were soon on the spot and conveyed the body to the station house, and notified the Coroner to hold an inquest. The deceased is about thirty years of age, five feet eight inches in height, with dark hair and mustache and imperial. In his possession were found eight Union ferry tickets and one dollar and five cents in change. The affair is at present involved in mystery, and the police are endeavoring to gain some clue to its elucidation.

FOUND DEAD ON BROADWAY.

Early on Friday evening a man named Bernard Hueson was found lying dead in Broadway, at the corner of Liepenard street. His head was resting on the curbstone, while his legs extended towards the middle of the street. He is supposed to have been knocked down and run over by an omnibus. The body was removed to the Fifth ward station house and the Coroner notified. Deceased was a liquor dealer, and resided at No. 147 Worth street.

THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

Mr. William Young's Despatch.

ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, Jan. 2, 1864.

Since the judicious order of General Patrick, forbidding correspondents from communicating for publication the names and strength of regiments absent on furlough, there is but little to say, except that the weather is most uncomfortably cold, and that no surprise is expressed in the army at the continued publication in Washington papers of the very information wisely regarded as contraband in the order referrd to. Army readers know how careful army correspondents are, and they know, too, how persistent the Washington press is in defying military authority.

The Press Despatch.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 1, 1864.

There are indications that the rebel General Early contemplates a movement or raid towards Winchester, and, perhaps, beyond that town.

An order has been issued from the Army of the Potomac, prohibiting all newspaper correspondents connected therewith from publishing, or causing to be published, the number or designation of regiments re-enlisting in the army or leaving the same, the number of re-enlistments or the number of men furloughed.

An order from Provost Marshal General Patrick requires a correct enrolment made of all civilians or army followers—excepting actual residents—within the lines of the different corps. This is designed to reach those who have sought refuge in the army to avoid the draft.

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 1, 1864.

MOVEMENTS TO CHECK THE APPREHENDED ADVANCE OF THE REBELS.

The apprehensions expressed of rebel raids into Maryland and Pennsylvania have been anticipated by the military authorities, and provision made to check any such proceeding on the part of the rebels. They may, however, make demonstrations towards Winchester or Cumberland or New Creek, with a view to reach the haystacks of Maryland and Pennsylvania, if they do not find the federal troops sufficiently on the alert.

THE GOVERNMENT FINANCES.

Secretary Chase strenuously insists on limiting the appropriations to his means, and in providing by taxation for every dollar appropriated beyond the amount which can be certainly obtained by loans, and that without too largely increasing the public debt. He asserts that the increase of expenditures by additions to salaries or other compensation can only result in disappointment, unless the means to meet the increase are provided by the same legislation which allows it.

DEATH OF SENATOR BOWDEN, OF WEST VIRGINIA.

Senator Bowden, of West Virginia, died this morning, after a short but painful illness.

GATHERING OF POLITICIANS—GEN. GRANT AND THE PRESIDENCY.

In view of the political caucuses, conventions and consultation, to be held here during the current month, numbers of political wire workers of all parties are beginning to arrive here. Some rich developements may shortly be expected. The nomination of Gen. Grant, and the popular enthusiasm manifested in his behalf, have evidently disconcerted the calculations of these quondam managers, and left them all at sea. They are chagrined at the fact that they have had no hand in this nomination and can claim no credit for it; at the same time they are afraid to pronounce themselves against it for fear of being left in the lurch. It appears that General Grant was the candidate held in reserve by a number of leading republicans, to be brought forward in case a sharp contest should ensue between the Chase and Lincoln factions. The nomination of Grant by the Senate has overset all these calculations, and negotiations are now progressing with a view of promoting unanimity in the Republican Convention. While many assert that Mr. Lincoln is the only man who can be run against Grant with any hope of success, some of the most active workers insist that under the circumstances it is absolutely necessary to fall back upon Mr. Chase, whose splendid success in managing the national finances, and high character for firmness and energetic action, point him out as the Colossus of this first republican administration. It seems, however, to be generally conceded that Grant is to be a candidate somehow; whether with or without a convention, or as a party, or simply a popular candidate, does not appear to have been definitely concluded. The difficulty appears to be among those who aspire to be the authors of Presidential nominations to find some one of their own selection who can beat him before the people.

MILITARY DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS.

An order has been issued creating the Military Department of Kansas, including Fort Smith, and assigning Major General Curtis to the command.

THE DEPARTMENT OF MISSOURI.

No action has been taken with regard to the Department of Missouri, nor will there be until the Senate shall have considered the nomination of General Schofield to be a Major General.

DETENTION OF THE MAILS.

The train due from New York this evening has not yet arrived, and probably will not before to-morrow morning, as the Susquehanna river is closed with ice and the ferry boat cannot cross at Havre De Grace. We are consequently without the mail due this evening.

CONGRESSMEN COMING IN.

The members of Congress have already commenced to arrive after their holiday vacation. Speaker Colfax reached here last evening from his home in Indiana, to which he had paid a flying visit.

ICE IN THE POTOMAC RIVER.

The recent cold weather has again affected the navigation of the Potomac. To-day the steamers found great difficulty in making their trips between the city and Alexandria, and it is believed that to-night will close the river completely.

CONSUL RECOGNIZED.

Jose Carlos Tracy has been recognized by President Lincoln as Consul for Peru at New York.

THE HOMESTEAD LAW.

The following is an extract from a letter dated December 29, 1863, from the Commissioner of the General Land Office to Register and Receiver Ionia, Michigan:—

A homestead settler has not a complete legal right, but merely an inceptive title, liable to be defeated for nonperformance of conditions, and can therefore only use the timber for fencing, building, fuel or repairs.

Under the bounty of Congress he is permitted to acquire a homestead on the public domain for agricultural purposes, on the condition of "settlement and cultivation, for five years." Until this condition is satisfied he cannot commit waste by felling the timber for market, as the land reverts to the United States on failure to comply with the terms of the law.

As to any supposed purchase by a party from the homestead settler, no right can attach under such sale. The homestead settler had no power to sell; hence the timber cut on the land is liable to seizure by the United States.

ARRIVAL OF PRISONERS AND DESERTERS.

Fifty prisoners and deserters reached Washington today.

ARREST OF NEGRO SUBSTITUTES.

A number of colored men belonging to this District, on their way to New York to be used as substitutes there, were taken off the steamer Baltimore at Georgetown yesterday by one of the detectives.

POSTMASTER AT SAN FRANCISCO.

R. F. Perkins has been appointed Postmaster of San Francisco, vice S. M. Parker, removed on account of complaints preferred against him of mismanagement of the Post Office business.

ARRIVAL OF CAPTURED REBELS.

The gunboat Commodore Read arrived yesterday at Alexandria, bringing up two lieutenants and five privates of the rebel army and several women, captured while attempting to cross the Potomac. Among the latter was a Mrs. Davis, wife of a rebel colonel.

SENTENCE OF A DESERTER.

Before a general court martial in Philadelphia, private Bernard Devlin, Eighty-first Pennsylvania Volunteers, was tried and found guilty of desertion and conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline in having deserted and re-enlisted as a substitute, and was sentenced to be shot onto death by musketry, General Couch approving the sentence, which will be carried into effect February 5.

The Navy.

SUPPLY STEAMER FOR THE WEST GULF SQUADRON.—The United States naval supply steamer Bermuda, Acting Volunteer Lieutenant J. W. Smith, will leave the Philadelphia Navy Yard January 5, 1864, for the West Gulf Squadron. Packages, letters, &c., must be forwarded soon to insure their going out in the Bermuda.

IMPORTANT FROM THE SOUTHWEST.

Abandoned Cotton Plantations Along the Mississippi.

RESULT OF LAST YEAR'S EXPERIMENTS.

PLANS FOR THE COMING YEAR.

EXTENT OF THE FREED.

Settlement of the Mississippi with a Loyal Population.

DANGER FROM GUERILLAS.

Aid Extended by the War and Treasury Departments.

Probable Opening of the Red River and its Tributaries,

&c., &c., &c.

Our Special Natchez Despatches.

NATCHEZ, MISS., Dec. 19, 1863.

Considerable interest is manifested concerning the plantations along the Mississippi that have been leased by the government to private parties. Several letters have been written upon the subject, and the report of Adjutant General Thomas has been given to the public. Parties are coming here in considerable numbers to fill up the country, and there is now a good prospect that the cotton region will be pretty generally settled during the coming season. It is hoped that the establishment of loyal residents along the Mississippi will tend to keep open and secure the navigation of the river. The great demand for cotton will be met to a certain extent. It was sought to be demonstrated that free labor could be profitably employed in the production of cotton at the present value of that staple. The experiment has proved a success.

In April of last year Adjutant General Thomas came to the Southwest to put in operation his plans for the organization of negro regiments. On arrival he found that the most of the region along the Mississippi between Napoleon and Vicksburg had been abandoned by the inhabitants and was not under cultivation. On some of the plantations there were quantities of ungathered cotton in the fields that had been left when our army descended the river to commence the siege of Vicksburg. Commissioners were appointed who took in hand the matter of leasing the abandoned plantations to private parties. Those on which there was any cotton were at once taken up for the sake of the ungathered crop. This cotton, on being gathered, was the source of a large profit to all concerned. Some of the lessees considered it a sufficient remuneration for their trouble, and made no attempt to run the plantation for the production of a fresh crop. Those who did buy it met with varied success. Most of them received a handsome return for their trouble and outlay, and some were successful beyond their expectations. A few were unfortunate and obtained no profit upon their investments.

Those who leased plantations last year did not begin work until early in May, fully two months too late. The cotton crop will mature even if the planting is delayed until May; but it will be only half the usual yield. Few of the lessees could boast of more than half a crop, on account of the lateness of their work. The raids that were made upon the plantations in June stopped all operations for the month, and by the time the negroes were again collected at work the weeds had acquired considerable headway. In several instances they gained complete ascendancy over the cotton and rendered it worthless. Unless weeds are carefully kept down they grow with great rapidity.

During the earlier part of the operations against Vicksburg I met an individual from one of the Western States who was attending the footsteps of the army in the hope of falling upon some fortunate speculation. Finding nothing better he concluded to lease a plantation, and when I saw him in May last he was just beginning work. I met him in Vicksburg a few days ago and interrogated him about his success as a planter. He had nearly completed his shipments of cotton, and was congratulating himself on a handsome profit. I will let him tell his own story:—

When I took that plantation I found tools on it, but no stock. I bought the stock and got my land ploughed and the seed in pretty late. In June the guerillas came in near there and "stampeded" my negroes, so that it was nearly a month before I got at work again. Owing to that drawback I did not get more than half a crop.

In starting it cost me about three thousand dollars to get under way. During the summer my outlay was about five thousand dollars, and it has just cost me five thousand more to pay off my negroes. The cotton that I have taken to Memphis and sold will bring me a hundred and thirty-five thousand dollars. To go on with the work next year will cost me about the same that it did this season. At two plantations above and below me the guerillas came in and destroyed everything. Beyond the scare in June, and the stealing of about five hundred dollars worth of provisions, I was not disturbed.

Here is a profit on the season's work of a hundred and twenty thousand dollars. In this case the lessee was particularly fortunate in having no previous interference by guerillas. Most of the lessees were not so fortunate. I cite the case above as showing the gains when under favorable auspices. Others have probably done equally well, while a few, in exposed situations, have lost their whole investments and received no returns whatever. Probably one half the plantations leased have been failures.

A gentleman connected with the Sanitary Commission, who has recently visited the post at Milliken's Bend, tells me that on several plantations the negroes have been cultivating on their own account. On the Paran plantation one negro, assisted by seven others, had raised and put up fourteen bales, and thought he would have twelve more when his crop was all picked and ginned. Another, with two persons assisting, had made seven bales; and a third, working alone, two and a half bales. On the Blackman plantation several negroes working together had made nearly three bales each. Other instances are cited; but the above will suffice.

Cotton planting during the past year is thus shown to have been highly profitable. The value of the staple on the river's bank is not less than $250 per bale. Those negroes who labored for themselves and succeeded in raising from two to four bales each have realized for their time and trouble a handsome remuneration. It is an established fact that when labor of any kind is profitable to an individual it will be much more so to an association. The negroes made, as above, three or four bales each. On a plantation it is estimated that they would make eight bales to the hand—worth, at the present valuation, two thousand dollars. The wages of the negro will not exceed eighty dollars a year, and his subsistence and clothing as much more. Any person can readily estimate the profit to be derived from a year's work of a hundred hands.

Parties thoroughly conversant with the business have given me the figures, as near as they can be given, for the cultivation of an abandoned plantation. We will suppose a man comes here from the North to engage in the business. He finds a plantation deserted, as nearly all have been, by its owner. The buildings remain undisturbed and the tools are in ordinary condition.