ADDITIONAL FROM EUROPE.

THE MAILS OF THE BOHEMIAN.

British Naval Artillery Against the Great Guns of America.

THE PRIVATEERS.

Napoleon's Rearrangement of His Plan of a Congress.

FASHIONABLE LIFE IN FRANCE,

&c., &c., &c.

Our European files by the Bohemian reached this city from Portland yesterday. The papers are dated in London to the 24th of December, and contain the following details of the news of that day.

Our Paris Correspondence.

PARIS, Dec. 18, 1863.

The Emperor Sends for Dr. Gwin—What Does it Mean?—Mexican Affairs—The Archduke Maximilian Out of the Ring—Mexico to be Made a French Colony—Opposition Caucus—Who is "M. Supervielle?"—New Line of Steamers—Minor Items—Louis' Fair, &c.

The Emperor has taken Dr. Gwin into his counsels. On Monday last, when his Majesty was at the Tuileries, he sent for the Doctor, who is stopping at the Grand Hotel, and, receiving him in his *cabinet de travail*, remained closeted with him for more than an hour, after which he gave him an autograph letter to M. Drouyn de Lhuys whom Dr. Gwin called on at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the following day. Now, so far as the fact is concerned, I am sure, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that my information is correct.

What does this interview signify? It cannot be that the Emperor desired to congratulate the Doctor upon the recent defeat of Bragg and the present dilapidated condition of the "confederacy," unless, indeed, as a commentary, he advised him, and through him all leading rebels, to leave the sinking ship as quickly as possible. It can not be, in face of the thoroughly loyal position which California now and always has occupied, that the Emperor could have placed any reliance upon statements made by Dr. Gwin, when he first arrived here, that with a little management California could be induced, in case of the success of the rebellion, to accept the protection of France. It may possibly be that the Emperor wished to recommend to Dr. Gwin to use his influence with Jeff. Davis and the other Southern leaders to carry into practical operation the recent recommendation of the HERALD, and remove themselves to Mexico, there to establish the nation which there now seems no probability of their building up in the Southern States. All those who know of the fact of the Doctor's interview with his Majesty understand it to have some connection with Mexican affairs, or rather, perhaps, with the affairs of Texas, where Dr. Gwin has resided, and in which he now has large landed interests. May it be that the Emperor still hopes to add the lone star State to his new Mexican empire? You may depend upon it some intrigue of this nature led to the recent interview.

The Mexican plan is now understood to have been entirely changed. The Archduke Maximilian is no more talked of or thought of in Europe than though he did not exist. It is well known that he absolutely refuses to run the risk of losing his beautiful head of hair, unless he is furnished with money and troops to protect him, and has a guarantee given him that he shall not be ousted from his throne. These guarantees will not be given him, and it is believed now that the Emperor has about decided to arrange his plans for the future, with the view of making Mexico a pure and simple French colony. It is understood that Marshal Forey, who, immediately upon reaching Paris, proceeded to Compiegne, recommends this course. Great preparations are certainly being made for the transportation of troops and munitions of war. The steamer which left St. Nazaire on Tuesday carried out a number of officers, and the war ship Souveraine, carrying fifty-six guns, is being put in order as rapidly as possible at Cherbourg, to follow the Victoire, which left Brest a few days since for the Pacific coast, to blockade Acapulco and Mazatlan.

At a caucus held among the opposition members of the Legislature, at which twenty-two were present, the only point upon which they agreed to make a united action was in the demand that the French troops should be immediately recalled from Mexico. Thiers opposed the idea of urging a war for Poland, and upon general matters it was decided that each member of the opposition should be left free to act individually, proposing such amendments to all government measures as would tend to a larger liberty. But against the Mexican swindle a determined united opposition, led by M. Thiers, is to be made.

Everybody has been exceedingly puzzled at a statement made in the telegraphic despatch containing the Mexican news, published two days ago, that "M. Supervielle, the newly appointed agent of the rebel States, had arrived at St. Nazaire from Vera Cruz, which he reached by way of Matamoras." How this ridiculous blunder originated I cannot imagine, but have taken pains to ascertain the fact that M. Supervielle, who did arrive in the last Mexican steamer, so far from being an agent of the rebel States, is a good Union man, who has left the South in disgust. He is a Frenchman and a lawyer, and has been living in San Antonio for the last twenty years; and he represents the chances of success of the rebellion as becoming "smaller by degrees and beautifully less."

A new line of steamers is to be put in operation between Havre and New York in April next. This line is the property of the "Compagnie Generale Transatlantique," and the service will be commenced with the steamers Washington and Lafayette, now building on the Clyde. These boats are of nine hundred horse power each, and are guaranteed by contract to be able to make eleven and a half knots per hour, winter and summer. There will be excellent accommodations for three hundred and thirty-five cabin passengers in each, and the boats are to be fitted up in elegant style. The departures will at first be only monthly, but are intended to become semi-monthly as rapidly as the boats are completed. The agents of the company at Havre are Wm. W. Iselin & Co., for many years the consignees of the Franco-American line; the agent at New York, Wm. Mackenzie. There is no doubt of the complete success of this new line, which will supply the desiderata of rapid, regular and direct communication between France and the United States.

The imperial family make their entrance into Paris to-morrow for the purpose of taking up their winter quarters at the Tuileries. At the last hunt at Compiegne, it was remarked that the Prince Imperial was permitted for the first time to ride without his horse being led by the bridle. The young man is progressing bravely.

The Sanitary Commission Committee in Paris have already commenced sending circulars to Americans in Europe, and it is expected that large contributions will be realized.

The fair of the ladies of the American Episcopal church, held for the purpose of raising funds to purchase an organ, is well attended. The stalls are kept by some of the most attractive American ladies in Paris.

Americans ambitious of shining in the imperial presence have already begun to make applications to the American Minister to be presented at the Tuileries during the coming season. The price of court dresses, hired for the occasion, has been reduced from sixty to forty francs, in consideration of the present severe loss by exchange.

The American Navy.

[From the London Times, Dec. 24.]

The report just presented to the federal Congress from the Secretary of the Navy is a document possessing great interest for us on this side of the Atlantic. While naval architecture and naval armaments are in a state of transition, and nobody can exactly forecast the character which may be assumed by naval warfare, it is exceedingly important to observe the conclusions of other nations, and especially when, as in the case of the Americans, they are actually at war. We must also do Mr. Welles the justice to say that he makes his statement very plainly, and leaves us in no doubt about the position or views of the department over which he presides. How peculiar, and, indeed, unique, this position has become will very quickly appear.

It will not have been forgotten by the readers of this journal that we have repeatedly objected to the examples selected from the American system and proposed for our imitation at home. We remarked that the cases of the two countries were not parallel. We showed that the Americans were directing all their efforts to one particular end, and were intent, not on the establishment of a powerful navy, but on the construction of vessels for special service in their own waters. They desired, not to acquire supremacy or security on the high seas, but to command the inland streams, to blockade the ports of the confederacy and to capture Charleston. In conformity with these purposes they shaped their proceedings; but the results, whether successful or otherwise, could not be taken as examples of a comprehensive system. These were the views which we expressed, and they now receive an absolute confirmation from the Secretary's report. Mr. Welles distinctly represents the whole federal navy as a navy constituted for home service exclusively. The Northern States do not, in his opinion, possess a single vessel fit for the duties of foreign war except as regards coast defences. All their new iron-clads, built or building, are mere harbor ships or coasters, and nothing more. In fact, with the exception of a few "double enders," these vessels are simply Monitors; and all that Mr. Welles can say of that class of ships is that "it has proved itself to be well adapted for harbor defence and coast service," adding that "in some emergencies these vessels, from their great powers of endurance, have shown themselves to be efficient and serviceable in offensive operations." This, of course, is an allusion to the part played by the iron-clads in the siege of Charleston; but it is not so much as pretended that any one ship of that fleet is fit to go to sea. A notable event, indeed, occurred just too late for official cognizance. * * * * Mr. Welles, however, enters upon a further question of no ordinary interest. While acknowledging that America has no ships fit for general service at present, he sees that she must have some by and by. All that he can say now is that American harbors are protected against the possible attacks of foreign men-of-war; but he argues that real fighting ships must sooner or later be constructed, for service at sea; and, as he speculates in great detail on the character which should be given to such vessels, we learn his opinions on this important subject. He appears, then, to think that the most necessary condition of a good modern man-of-war is enormous size. Such a vessel, he says, should not only carry machinery powerful enough to insure great speed, and ordnance heavy enough for any assault, but should be able to stow away fuel sufficient for long cruises without the necessity of recoaling. This, however, it will perhaps be remembered, was the very condition which produced the plan of the Great Eastern; and, from what Mr. Welles adds, it really seems as if he contemplated a model of nearly the same magnitude. He does not descend to particulars on the point; but he remarks that even in the present crisis of affairs, when the chief energies of his department have been devoted to the satisfaction of more pressing exigencies, he did issue proposals for the construction of one of these monster vessels. The result is most surprising. "The cost," he tells us, "as shown by the propositions received for a ship of the necessary magnitude, was so great that it was deemed advisable to enter into no contract involving so large an expenditure, except by the express sanction of Congress." Now, considering that the Americans are actually spending on their navy about double what we spend, and that their prodigality in incurring all kinds of war charges has been literally boundless, we can only imagine with amazement the amount of the outlay upon a single vessel which Mr. Welles was afraid to sanction and does not venture to state. What could have been the proportions of this mysterious and formidable fabric? Was it a Warrior on the scale of the Great Eastern? The Secretary is evidently of opinion that even Congress may be startled by the price of the article, for he apologizes beforehand for it, and argues that no charge can be too heavy for the peace and security which a squadron of such vessels might be expected to insure.

If, then, we are to measure our own proceedings in these matters by the estimate of the case formed in America, we must needs conclude that we are on the right tack, and that the only fault to be found with our Minotaurs and Northumberlands is that, though they are larger than any men-of-war afloat, they are not large enough. Mr. Welles thinks nothing of gunboats or smaller vessels. His model man-of-war is a ship with the biggest engines, biggest guns and biggest coal bunkers ever seen. He thinks, too, that it must be built of iron, though it is instructive to observe that his mind is hardly made up on this question, and that he balances one material against another as if he scarcely knew how to decide. On the question of guns he says very little, being content to assume, what nobody would deny, that "heavy" ordnance is indispensible in modern warfare. But it is important to remark that whatever may be the relative merits of the British and American system, the latter must necessarily be subjected to the serious drawback of cumbrous and unmanageable pieces. We, by throwing lighter projectiles with greater velocity, obtain corresponding lightness and portability in the guns themselves. The Americans, by relying not on velocity, but on weight, are compelled to increase in proportion the calibre and weight of their cannon, until they arrive at last at this result, that such pieces are only fit for land fortifications or floating batteries, and have not yet been mounted on any vessels competent to keep the sea. When, therefore, they speculate, as they have recently done, on the efficiency of a vessel like the Weehawken against a vessel like the Warrior they are comparing dissimilar things. The Weehawken was little more than a floating battery; the Warrior is a good seagoing ship. What Mr. Welles' new man-of-war may be we cannot conjecture, but our own experience has certainly suggested that the quality of bigness may be easily carried too far.

The New Iron-Clads.

ENGLISH OPINION OF THE TWIN SCREW PRINCIPLES.

[From the London Times.]

The success which has attended the adoption of the double or twin screw principle in England and America during the past three years has invested it with great interest. To Captain Carpenter, R. N., we are undoubtedly first indebted for the introduction of the twin screws; but the first advance of moment in its practical demonstration was made by Mr. G. Rennie in 1852, followed up in 1857 by the same firm in constructing several gunboats on the same principle for Indian river service. From some cause, however, difficulties appear to have existed, for no great success seems to have been attained, as the principle was not followed up, and a strong feeling certainly existed against its adoption for either mercantile or warlike purposes. The single screw, with all its acknowledged faults, accordingly held its own against all comers. The double versus single screw has been a subject of strong controversy at the meetings of the Society of Arts, the Royal United Service Institution, and other places where such matters are discussed, as well as of lengthy correspondence and editorial articles in the professional journals, especially since the Messrs. Dudgeon, of Millwall, have adopted the principle, and have begun to launch from their building yard nearly one double, or twin, screw steamer per month. The doings of these vessels on their trial trips have been recorded in these columns, and now the Admiralty have adopted the principle in the construction of some iron-plated gunboats which are about to be laid down for the royal navy, taking the data obtained by their officers from Messrs. Dudgeon's trial trips for their guide. Through this long interval, however, of partial and complete success for the twin screws, Captain Thomas E. Symonds, R. N., a nephew of Sir Wm. Symonds, once Surveyor of the Navy, has been their most earnest and persistent advocate, and the triumph of the twin screw is, in fact, the triumph of the plan that officer has so long advocated. It is, however, doubtful how far at present the twin may supersede the single screw. In the royal navy it may possibly only be adopted in vessels specially built to carry a heavy armament and large engine power at a moderate draught of water, and which may be designed for operations on a line of coast, or off harbors—as a coast defence vessel, in fact—and therefore requiring a power of turning shortly such as only two screws can give. It is difficult, however, to say where the line can be drawn, for draught of water and powers of maneuvring are of equal importance with speed.

On the 22d of April last, at a meeting of the Society of Arts, Rear Admiral the Honorable Joseph Denman, who was in the chair, said with reference to our large iron-clads:—"He had no doubt two or three ships of smaller size would be fatal antagonists to such vessels as the Minotaur or Northumberland, if the smaller vessels possessed a superior power of turning by means of double screws." Turning, however, from opinion to facts, it will be found that the Americans have very largely adopted the twin screws for their men-of-war. The loss of the iron-clad ram Indianola was attributed, by the accounts in the American papers, to her "inability to maneuvre." The writer says:—"She fell a prey to two small gunboats having a power of turning to a high degree. They could ram her first on one side, then on the other, till the mailed giant was beaten to death." These two gunboats were driven by twin screws. The Naugatuck, another American gunboat, is fitted with twin screws, and carried a two hundred-pounder Parrott gun on a fixed carriage. By the power of her screws the vessel is trained at the object, and the gun thus brought in a line of fire. The John Nelson, a vessel used for transporting the mail trains across the Delaware river, is driven by twin screws, and has to turn end for end at every trip in order to deliver the train at the same end it entered. She is two hundred and twenty-five feet long, and is stated to often perform the maneuvre in a strong current checked with ice in from one minute twenty seconds to one minute thirty seconds. A twin vessel is now building in America to mount two monster guns of fifty tons each. These guns will be on fixed carriages, will be fired at point blank range, and will be brought to bear upon the object fired at, like the gun of the Naugatuck, by the screws revolving the ship. This is the position of the twin screw system in England and America at the present time, *and the civil war now raging in America will supply the means of testing its usefulness for ships of war.*

In a paper read by Captain Symonds on twin screws in April last, that officer advocates double keels and rudders for twin screw vessels, and gives as his reasons that by applying twin screws to single keel ships of the present form the intervening dead wood is a serious obstacle to their perfect action; it divides and materially reduces the column of water coming to the inner arms of the screws, increases friction, and causes a series of shocks that produce vibration. The vessels which Captain Symonds and Mr. Roberts, C. E., conjointly propose for construction for twin screws are designed for double keels, with a rudder in the line of each keel, and nearly in a line with each screw shaft, with the two keels cellular, and a cellular bottom worked up into the engine frames for strength. These propositions, however, are purely professional, and we feel confident that with Mr. Reed in the office of chief constructor of the navy, they, together with the whole principle and adaptation of the twin screw system, will receive that consideration which their importance demands.

The Privateers.

DISPOSITION OF THE SHIP SAXON BY THE ALABAMA.

[Plymouth (Dec. 22) correspondence of London Times.]

The Saxon, taken off Penguin Island by the Vanderbilt, was supposed to have on board the cargo of the Conrad, captured by the Alabama, and renamed Tuscaloosa, or of the Sea Bride. The vessel, with her crew, had not reached Table Bay; her mate was reported to have met with his death, but it was not known by what means. The Vanderbilt appropriated two hundred and fifty tons of coal on Penguin Island belonging to a firm at Cape Town. She was refused coal by the authorities at Table Bay, consequent on her having coaled within three months at St. Helena, Simon's Bay, and Mauritius. She boarded a coasting vessel on the 4th of November, examined her papers and cargo, and then steered for Angra Pequena. Her Majesty's ship Valorous was then sent to protect any British property, and returned with the news of the capture of the Saxon.

CAPE TOWN, Nov. 20, 1863.

The captain of the Alabama sold the Sea Bride and the cargo of the Conrad. The former, it appears, was delivered at Saldanha Bay, and a rendezvous made at Angra Pequenar, and it is understood that some part of the cargoes must have been landed at that place, or on Penguin island, close by. It is said that a vessel had loaded and sailed from Penguin Island with part of the Conrad's cargo before the capture of the Saxon. The Isabella, which is the vessel that has on board the crew of the latter, has passed Ichaboe to go to Hottentot's Bay to fill up with cargo for that place. The Saxon was sent away for New York in charge of the prize crew, on the 2d of November.

An English Soldier in the Union Army.

EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES OF A BOY IN THE UNION ARMY AND ON HIS RETURN HOME.

[From the Liverpool Journal, Nov. 21.]

In the Police Court on Thursday a man about thirty years of age, who stated his name to be Thomas Greenock, and said he was a native of Coventry, and a lad, thirteen years of age, who said his name was Frederick Charles Whittler, and that he was a native of Gravesend, were brought up in custody on the charge of having stowed themselves away on board the Etna (belonging to Messrs. Inman & Co., of this port) on a voyage from New York to Liverpool, with intent to defraud the owners of the vessel of the passage money, by doing which they had rendered themselves liable to a fine of five pounds each, or, in default, three months imprisonment.

The boy Whittler, on being asked what he had to say, made a rather romantically martial statement with respect to home army service and the state of affairs in the American armies. He said he had a natural taste for soldiering, and, in order to gratify it, he proceeded to Portsmouth, where he wanted to join the Second Buffs, but he could not be enlisted on account of his youth. He thence proceeded to Southampton, and worked his passage on board the Saxonia to New York, where he got acquainted with several members of No. 6 battery, at a place called Soldiers' Retreat. There he was treated with the greatest kindness, having been supplied with food for some time. He then made his way to Maryland, where he enlisted as drummer boy in Captain Bruner's Eighth company, Seventh regiment, Seventh Maryland militia. That regiment was commanded by Colonel Webster, and was in the brigade of General Kelly. He says he was present at the battles of Winchester, Culpepper and Rapidan. Ultimately he was taken prisoner by the Southerners, sent to Richmond, where he was lodged on Belle Island, in company with a lot of other federal prisoners. Here, as well as provisions would allow of it, he was well treated; but food at times ran very scarce, and the value of it increased with the necessity, for he had known as much as a valuable watch to be given for a small loaf of bread. Ultimately, he said, he was paroled, and sent back into the American lines. The captain of the company to which he had been attached, being unaware that he had been taken prisoner, presumed that he had deserted, and entered him on the pay sheet as such, and, in consequence, eighty dollars, which he could have claimed as pay, were stopped. He had not, however, deserted, having been discharged because he could not, on account of his youth, endure the long marches which the federal armies had daily to take, which sometimes amounted to twenty-five or thirty miles. Subsequently he reached New York. Here he was totally without money or friends, and in his anxiety to get to his native country and to his friends he stowed himself away on board the Etna, where he was found.

A gentleman from the office of Mr. Inman said, although he had been directed to prefer the charge against the prisoners, he had no instructions to press it strongly. The frequent recurrence of similar cases rendered it imperative on the part of the firm to bring them forward before the court.

Mr. Gardner (one of the magistrates) said he thought it would be a pity to send a boy like Whittler to prison, and he would give a half sovereign to an officer to pay his fare to Gravesend. The other prisoner, who was evidently in a most destitute state, was, after a caution, ordered to be handed over to the overseers of the poor.

The Congress.

NAPOLEON'S MINISTERIAL CIRCULAR OF EXPLANATION.

[From the London Post (goverdment organ), Dec. 24.]

The circular note of M. Drouyn de Lhuys revives the question of a congress, partial in its representation, and shorn of the support of those Powers which doubt the policy of its convocation. This ulterior suggestion is highly characteristic of the tentative turn of mind of the French Emperor. Napoleon III. will never readily relinquish a scheme which he has once attempted to realize. In the present circular M. Drouyn de Lhuys recommends that there should be a conference, or general understanding arrived at between the Ministers of the several Powers which may fall in with the French proposal, previous to any assemblage of European sovereigns. This, it will be remembered, was very much the criticism thrown out by the King of Prussia to the sovereigns who assembled at Frank ort to discuss the terms of a federal reconstruction of Germany; and no doubt, where there is to be a meeting of sovereigns at all, such preliminary is indispensable to practical discussion. It was not, however, the original suggestion of the Emperor of the French to convoke a congress solely, or even especially, of sovereigns; and we have no doubt that, if that design had been realized, the principal Powers at any rate would have been represented by special envoys, and not in the persons of their respective sovereigns. But the scheme which M. Drouyn de Lhuys has now shadowed out in his present circular note is apparently that of a general conference—as general, at least, as the extent of European acquiescence will admit of—after the arrival at certain data of discussion by the foreign Ministers of the accreding Powers, or else by some special conference of their representatives to be held for that preliminary purpose.

It has been no secret for some time past that such a suggestion was about to be put forward, and that the French government, though discouraged by our inability to coincide in the view they had put forward, had not been altogether disheartened by it. Nevertheless, it seems hardly to be disputed that, since the proposal of a new European charter seemed chimerical to ourselves, even on the condition of a universal concurrence in a congress being held, *it must appear certainly impracticable now that the combination of European Powers for the purpose can, at best, be but partial.* M. Drouyn de Lhuys recounts with some confidence the fact that England is the only Power which has refused to participate in the Emperor's measure. It was, we are certain, with deep regret that the British government found themselves unable to see this question in the same light as their valued ally; and it would have given them satisfaction to, even in spite of their withdrawal, any alternative could have been devised to lessen the anxieties of the Emperor of the French for the future of Europe. But we believe that, since the date of the present circular of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, the German Powers have shown an increased concurrence in the soundness of the view which we originally took. Indeed, when we bear in mind the mighty place which this country occupied in the settlement of the affairs of Europe in 1815, it would be impossible to imagine that any practical result could follow a discussion of European treaties by other Powers of the continent, except, at least, in so far as special arrangements of questions between particular Powers might be concerned. No doubt there are questions which a partial congress might determine, assuming the conclusions arrived at by such a body to be in conformity with the general opinion of Europe. There is, for example, the Italian question. The fate of Venetia and the fate of Rome are still questions that are held to be in abeyance. * * * * * *

It involves, therefore, no national egotism on our part to look upon our own reluctant conclusion to abstain from participation, at this moment, in general deliberations as conclusive on the issue of any such measure. General deliberations cannot be brought to a practical result without a general sanction being accorded to them, and without an equally general participation in them. Nor would it seem that this country by any means stands alone in the resolution at which our government arrived. The alluring proposal of the French government has been found, on a fuller consideration, *to contain many dangers imperfectly apprehended in some quarters at the outset;* and when we consider that the course independently taken by England is meeting apparently with increasing acquiescence on the part of other Cabinets, we feel additionally persuaded that other means must be found than that of a congress of European sovereigns to smoothe away the difficulties which, in several quarters, threaten the present position of the continent.

Fashionable Life in France.

THE DUKE DE MOUCHY'S GRAND FETE.

[From the Paris Presse, Dec. 23.]

The Duke de Mouchy's grand *fete* at his superb domain of Mouchy Noailles, came off on Saturday with all the *eclat* and magnificence which was to be expected from his exquisite taste and large fortune. Two special trains were organized, one of which brought forty guests to dinner at five o'clock, the other arrived at seven with the rest of the company. At the Heilles-Mouchy station the visitors found the Duke's carriages and four and postilions in powdered wigs waiting to take them to the chateau.

At half-past nine private theatricals commenced. The theatre was improvised in a temporary building adjoining the orange conservatory, at a little distance from the house. All the ladies were conveyed thither in Bath chairs, called vinaigrettes. The gardens were brilliantly illuminated. The performances were l'Histoire d'un Sou, and an occasional piece called Les Cascades de Mouchy, written by the Marquis de Massa. All the performers were princes, dukes, marquises, or counts.

The Fairy of the Cascades was represented with great success by the Countess de Pourtales; the Marquise de Galifet played a Vivandiere, and sang several couplets with the Duke de Mouchy.

After the play, the ladies being taken back to the house in their rolling chairs, there was a first supper. This over dancing began, and at two o'clock there was an animated cotillon. The first return train took away a great many ladies at three o'clock; but enough of the party remained to keep up dancing all night. There was a second supper at four o'clock, and it was not till half-past seven A. M that the lights were put out, and the last train left for Paris.

The *fete* was worthy of the most brilliant days of Louis XV., and will never be forgotten. Bouquets were presented to all the ladies, and also fans of white silk, on which were written in red letters the names of the noble performers in the theatrical entertainment. The following is a list of some of the company, besides those above named:—The Prince and Princess de Metternich, the Princess de Sagan, the Count de Saint Roman, M. and Madame de Ganay, M. and Madame de Courval, M. and Madame Alphonse de Rothschild, M. and Madame Gustave de Rothschild, Madame de Cazes and her sister, M. and Madame Contat Destontaines, Madame de Belleyme, M. Fould, the Prefect of the Oise, Baron Pinot, MM. de Saint Pries, de Merlemont, Reiset, Lupin, de l'Aigle, Auguste de Pelleyme, de Balleroy, Talleyrand de Perigord, Poniatowski, de Miramon, Hottingeur, de Belbeuf, de Montreuil, &c.

A PECULIAR INSTITUTION IN IOWA.—Among the curious phases of Iowa society is the "Amanna Society," located in Iowa county, twenty miles west of Iowa City. From the Muscatine *Journal* we glean the following facts relative to this community. It says:—It numbers eight hundred members and is divided into seven villages. It is governed by trustees elected by all the members of the society. The society owns twenty thousand acres of land in one belt. They have a large stock of horses, sheep and cattle—seven hundred head of cattle, twelve thousand head of sheep and a large number of horses; also two thousand two hundred acres of land under cultivation. They are to some extent in manufacturing, and have a good flouring and saw mill, and a large woollen factory in successful operation. They card, spin, weave and full all kinds of woollen goods, running twelve looms—nine narrow and three for weaving broadcloth. Their machinery is of the most perfect kind. They will work up this season from five thousand to six thousand bales of wool. The members of the society are of a religious order. Everything moves on in perfect harmony. When necessary the women aid in outdoor work. We saw twenty in one carrot patch, all at work. In the same field eight teams were plowing. The society is destined to become wealthy.

Obituary.

MRS. SARAH DRAPER died at Chesterfield, N. H., on the 19th ult., at the great age of over 101 years. She was a native of Harvard, Mass., where she was born on the 3d of July, 1762.

ABRAHAM QUICK, aged 117 years, 10 months and 26 days, died on the 22d day of October last, in the town of Floyd, Oneida county, New York. He was born in New Marlborough, Ulster county, N. Y., on the 27th day of November, 1745.

Of the three hundred and sixty-four persons who died at Newport, R. I., during the year 1863, sixty-one were over seventy years of age. The united ages of the sixty-one was 4,894 years, averaging over eighty years for each.

THE NEW LINDELL HOTEL at St Louis was sold at auction last week, by order of the trustees, on account of the failure of the hotel company to meet the coupons due in July on the second mortgage bonds, amounting to $338,000. Henry Ames & Co., were the successful bidders at $155,000—their purchase being subject to the first mortgage bonds (ten per cent bonds) of $200,000, and an accumulation of rear interest thereon of $20,000. These bonds have about eight years yet to run. The sale was subject to a lease of fifteen years to Messrs. Sparr and Parkee. The original cost of the property was over $750,000.

The Park Yesterday.

THE SKATING FUROR INCREASED—SEVENTY THOUSAND PEOPLE ON THE ICE—THE ICE IN SPLENDID ORDER—SLEIGHING ON THE DRIVE—FURTHER DONATIONS, ETC.

The excitement of skating seems to increase instead of diminish as it becomes a comparative stale thing. The largest number of visitors to the ice on any one day since Christmas was on the ponds yesterday. It was estimated that between sixty-five and seventy thousand persons visited the skating grounds between sunrise and sunset, and during the afternoon the crowds were so thick on the upper lake that skaters could not move with any extraordinary degree of speed without either upsetting themselves or some other man.

The ice is in excellent condition and a foot in thickness; therefore we may expect good skating for several days to come, even if a thaw should set in.

The refreshment houses had a heavy task yesterday to perform in victualling so large a crowd. Having the experience of Christmas day before their eyes, the managers have taken especial care to have a good supply of everything on hand, so that there was no chance of again being eaten out of house and home. A regulation has also been adopted by the Park authorities to allow no smoking in the ladies' rooms, and the fair sex can now enjoy their coffee and other refreshments without annoyance.

The Drive was yesterday alive with the jingle of bells and the rapid movement of thousands of sleighs. The Park roads are in splendid condition, and the cutters slide along as easily as a well oiled piece of machinery.

Further donations have been added to the Park collection of living animals, which are now constantly arriving from all parts of the Union. Since our last list the following have been received:—

One central diver, a species of water animal, with a very fine fur, from S. M. Espencheid, Nassau street, New York.

Twenty fancy pigeons, from W. R. Powell, Esq.

One pair of wild pigeons, from W. R. Powell, Esq.

Three pair of fancy ducks, from W. R. Powell, Esq.

The collection by next spring will doubtless show one of the finest beginnings of a grand zoological collection that was ever gathered together in so short a time by voluntary contributions. It is understood that several donations, consisting of specimens of young wild animals, such as elks, &c., are ready to be shipped from the West as soon as the weather is in any sort of condition to allow of their transportation. Anything rare will be gladly received by the Commissioners and duly acknowledged.

SYLVAN LAKE POND.

About two thousand persons visited the Sylvan Lake pond, Hoboken, yesterday, among whom were a large number of ladies. The ice was in an excellent condition, and the skating was apparently enjoyed by all who participated in this healthful exercise. This pond has become a favorite resort, especially by those living on the west side of the city and accessible to the Hoboken ferries. This evening there is to be a grand promenade concert, under the superintendence of Mr. George Linford, proprietor. The whole pond will be illuminated and a fine band of music in attendance. During the middle of the week a base ball match will take place on the ice, participated in by the members of several leading base ball clubs of this city.

Sleighing.

The sleighing carnival was in full blast again yesterday. Although the snow on the ground was pretty well cut up from the sleighing of the two previous days, still hundreds of those who could not afford time during the business days of the week to indulge in the luxury of a ride without the aid of wheels availed themselves of the Sabbath to do so. The Bloomingdale road, Harlem lane, the Park and the other prominent outlets from the city were all alive with every description of sleighs freighted with all classes of the community. The scene was quite enlivening, and such as has not been equalled even in our more peaceful and prosperous days.

Our Brooklyn neighbors, too, had a good time of it during the day, as there was capital sleighing along the Flatbush road, Fifth avenue, and, in fact, on all the roads on Long Island.

FORTY FEET OF SNOW.—It is stated that the snow is forty feet deep on the Rocky Mountains—a greater depth than has been previously known there for years.

The Alleged Frauds in the Navy Yard.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.

BROOKLYN, Jan. 10, 1864.

On reading communications in several daily papers of New York and Brooklyn relative to certain charges brought against me, and as there seems to be a great ado about defalcations to an enormous amount, which are almost ruining the government, while employed as master carpenter of the Navy Yard, I beg leave to offer some explanations, hoping that the public ear will be as willing to hear the truth as eagerly as the false statements which have been published by those who have never dared to append their names to any communications which they have sent for publication to the newspapers. I was employed as master carpenter of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, but I will merely give a few facts in refutation of those charges, which I defy any person or persons to contradict with proofs, or even dare to come out boldly and append their names as vouchers.

In the first place, I am charged with having men at work on vessels outside of the yard at different times while being paid by the government. Second, that I had lumber and material belonging to the government taken out of the yard for my own use; that I had wheels built, chests, boxes and numberless other articles made from government material, and by men working in the yard, and taken out for my own private use that I appropriated for my own use money collected and intended for the use of the General Committee of Kings county, and, worst of all, and what I would scorn to be guilty of, that I appropriated money collected for the Relief Association of the carpenter's department, organized for the purpose of giving a weekly allowance to aid the families of those who enlisted directly from the shipcarpenter's department, all of which charges I pronounce to be most false, and sent to Washington for the perusal of the Secretary of the Navy without the names of the authors of the communications, and with names appended thereto as witnesses against me before the Board of Inquiry of my most bitter enemies—men who have been heard to say that they would resort to any extremes, no matter at what cost to themselves or others, to hurl me from my position. These men, at the instigation of others as unprincipled as themselves, intended to kill me politically.

To accomplish their purpose my removal was necessary, in accordance with deep laid plans, as the events of the next fall's nominations by these able designers will prove, and any excuse for that cherished object would suffice, even if the blasting of my reputation was necessary.

In refutation of these charges I would say that it is utterly impossible for myself or any person in the Navy Yard to send a person out of the yard for the purpose of doing any other than government work, or to take any material away without the knowledge of the officers of the yard.

In refutation of the third charge—in regard to having wheels, chests, boxes, and so forth, made—I never did anything in that shape; and I defy contradictory evidence, except by the Naval Constructor's orders, or what was customary, as the making of chests for apprentices and boxes for quartermen for keeping ship augers, saws and tools safely locked. As to the General Committee fund, I can positively prove that I returned ever dollar collected for that purpose to the proper person appointed to receive the same. I can disprove the statement made that I appropriated relief money in my charge, by simply referring to the books of the Secretary from the first organization of that association, which can be seen at any time. The amount has been paid to families, and every cent which has been collected; and the books will prove that not one cent has been appropriated for any other purpose than the weekly stipend allowed and meant for the families of those who are gallantly serving their country as volunteers. Respectfully, &c.,

ROBERT W. STEELE.

Police Intelligence.

ARREST ON SUSPICION OF ARSON.—Captain Grier, of the Third precinct, on Saturday evening detained John D. Vermeule on suspicion of having purposely set fire to the crockery store of Francis C. Hall & Co., No. 282 Greenwich street, on the night of the 12th of December last, for the alleged purpose of defrauding the fire insurance companies. From the sworn depositions before Justice Hogan, it appears that Mr. Vermeule is a partner of Francis C. Hall; the business was very much involved; there was an insurance of $16,000, which was nearly double the amount of stock on hand. On the evening of the night of the fire, after the lofts had been closed by the porter, Mr. Vermeule was seen to go up stairs on three occasions just prior to the final closing of the store. The salesman of the store sets forth in his deposition that he heard Mr. Vermeule go to the third story. It was on this floor that the fire is alleged to have originated. The porter of the store testifies that on the afternoon of the night of the fire, Mr. Vermeule handed to him a two gallon can, and sent him to purchase two gallons of Kerosene oil. He got the oil and brought it back to the store and placed it by the street door. After the occurrence of the fire this can of Kerosene oil was found at the back part of the second floor. How this oil got there is a matter not yet known, as no one in the store admits taking it there. There is evidently trouble between the two partners, Mr. Vermeule, unknown to Mr. Hall, having, by advice of counsel, allowed the firm to be sued on certain notes without advising Mr. Hall. Judgment was procured on these notes, amounting to some $8,000, an execution issued and the Sheriff was placed in possession of the store and goods. This transaction, Mr. Vermeule asserts, has been the cause of Mr. Hall charging him with setting fire to the store. The whole matter is now under investigation by Fire Marshal Baker, before Justice Dowling, at the Halls of Justice. The Justice required bail in the sum of $5,000 to answer the charge.

MONTREAL FUR MARKET.—The unusual demand for mink no longer continues to the same extent as of late, and prices are consequently not nearly so high. Very prime large dark Ottawa skins might bring $3 25; but a much lower figure would be the current price for the ordinary run of skins. The large lot of nearly six hundred, which was brought into town last week, was sold at a high price to the Hudson Bay Company. There is no demand whatever for musk rat. We quote them at 10c.; but at this figure, unless extraordinarily good, they would find no purchasers. Our last week's remarks with reference to marten are still applicable. Coon are out of fashion altogether, whether for robes or otherwise, and are barely worth quoting prices for. Bear skins continue in good demand for local consumption. The following may be looked upon as current prices:—Mink, $2 to $2 50; extra large and dark, $3 to $3 25; fox, $1 to $1 75; beaver, per lb., $1 25 to $1 50; musk rat, 10c.; marten, $1 50; fisher, $3 to $4; otter, $5; raccoon, 20c. to 50c.; bear, $6; extra large and prime, $8 to $10.

The Navy.

NIPHON, 5.—The United States gunboat Niphon, Acting Master Breck commanding, sailed from the Boston Navy Yard on the 7th inst. for the blockade of Wilmington. The Niphon has been on the station before, and was very active.

METACOMET, 9.—The new double-ender Metacomet was put in commission recently. The following is a list of her officers:—

Lieutenant Commander—James Jouett.
Assistant Surgeon—E. D. Payne.
Acting Assistant Paymaster—Horace M. Harriman.
Acting Masters—Henry J. Sleeper, C. W. Wilson.
Acting Ensigns—George Ewing, J. O. Morse, John White.
Acting Master's Mates—C. C. Jones, James Sturges, J. K. Goodwin.
Engineers—First Assistant, James Atkins; Third Assistants, Jas. Morgan, George R. Rodgers, James H. Nash, S. W. King, S. Fowler.
Acting Gunner—Peter McGovern.
Clerks—Paymaster's, George Heath; Captain's, Jesse T. Lee.
Surgeon's Steward—L. D. Montague.

CYANE, 19.—The sailing sloop-of-war Cyane, Commander Paul Shirley, arrived at Panama, N. G., Dec. 27. All well.

PORTSMOUTH NAVY YARD.—A recent letter from the Portsmouth (N. H.) Navy Yard states that the following vessels are there:—Sloop-of-war Vandalia, receiving ship; steam sloop Dacotah, Commander Clary, repairing; Agawam, double-ender, Commander Rhind, fitting out; Alabama, steamer, repairing; the line-of-battle-ship New Hampshire, which is ready for launching, and the Agamenticus, iron-clad, whose boilers are being placed in her as rapidly as possible.

The writer, speaking of the patriotism of the workmen at that yard, says:—It is quite pleasing to the pat