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NEWS FROM WASHINGTON.

PROCLAMATION BY THE PRESIDENT.

Brownsville, Texas, Opened to Trade and Commerce.

Important Debate in the House on the Proposed Sale of Gold.

Another Bill to Check Gold Speculations.

The Conference Committee's Report on the Enrolment Bill,

&c., &c., &c.

The Blockade of Brownsville, Texas, Relaxed—That Port Opened to Commercial Intercourse.

PROCLAMATION BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

Whereas, by my proclamation of the 19th of April, 1861, the ports of the States of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas were, for reasons therein set forth, placed under blockade; and whereas, the port of Brownsville, in the district of Brazos Santiago, in the State of Texas, has since been blockaded, but as the blockade of said port may be safely relaxed with advantage to the interests of commerce; now, therefore, be it known that I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States, pursuant to the authority in me vested by the fifth section of the act of Congress, approved on the 13th of July, 1861, entitled "An act further to provide for the collection of duties on imports and for other purposes," do hereby declare that the blockade of the said port of Brownsville shall so far cease and determine from and after this date that commercial intercourse with said port, except as to persons, things and information hereinafter specified, may from this date be carried on, subject to the laws of the United States, to the regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury, and, until the rebellion shall have been suppressed to such orders as may be promulgated by the general commanding the department or by an officer duly authorized by him and commanding at said port.

This proclamation does not authorize or allow the shipment or conveyance of persons intending to enter the service of the insurgents, or of things or information intended for their use or for their aid or comfort except upon the permission of the Secretary of War or some officer duly authorized by him of the following prohibited articles, namely:—Cannon, mortars, firearms, pistols, bombs, grenades, powder, saltpetre, sulphur, balls; bullets, pikes, swords, boarding caps—always excepting the quantity of the said articles which may be necessary for the defence of the ship and those who compose the crew—saddles, bridles, cartridge-bag material, percussion and other caps, clothing adapted for uniforms, sailcloth of all kinds, hemp and cordage, intoxicating drinks, other than beer and light native wines.

To vessels clearing from foreign ports and destined to the port of Brownsville, opened by this proclamation, licenses will be granted by consuls of the United States upon satisfactory evidence that the vessel so licensed will convey no persons, property or information excepted or prohibited above either to or from the said port; which licenses shall be exhibited to the collector of said port immediately on arrival, and, if required, to any officer in charge of the blockade; and on leaving said port every vessel will be required to have a clearance from the Collector of the Customs, according to law, showing no violations of the conditions of the license. Any violations of said conditions will involve the forfeiture and condemnation of the vessel and cargo, and the exclusion of all parties concerned from any further privilege of entering the United States during the war for any purpose whatever.

In all respects, except as herein specified, the existing blockade remains in full force and effect as hitherto established and maintained. Nor is it relaxed by this proclamation, except in regard to the port to which relaxation is or has been expressly applied.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this eighteenth day of February, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-four, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-eighth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

By the President—

WM. H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.

GENERAL NEWS.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 18, 1864.

THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

It is stated that there will be no change in the command of the Army of the Potomac. It is understood that General Meade will retain the position for the next campaign. There was a report, based on excellent authority, that General Grant had recommended General W. S. Smith for the command of that army, but this recommendation will probably remain in abeyance.

ANTICIPATED DESCENT OF REBEL CRUISERS ON THE COAST OF CALIFORNIA.

Something of a sensation was occasioned in the Senate to-day by the statements made by Mr. Conness, relative to the imperative necessity of sending a fleet of war steamers to the Pacific coast without delay. The authorities have positive information to the effect that rebel steamers have left Asia for that coast, and fears are entertained that great injury may not only be done our commerce in the Pacific, but that San Francisco may be menaced before our navy can afford the requisite protection.

THE PROPOSED SALE OF GOVERNMENT GOLD.

The bill reported by the Committee of Ways and Means, granting authority to the Secretary of the Treasury to sell surplus gold in the Treasury, at his discretion, occupied the attention of the House for three hours to-day. Opinions seem to be very much divided with regard to the advisability of the measure, the principal opposition coming from the democratic side of the House, Mr. Boutwell, of Massachusetts, having been the only republican who spoke against it. Fernando Wood embraced the opportunity to preach his usual peace sermon, and, as well as several other members, predicted the most disastrous results from the adoption of this policy. It is most likely that when the committee report it back to-morrow, as they were instructed to do, it will pass. The passage of such a bill, without the actual release of a dollar of coin from the Treasury, is expected to largely reduce the premium on gold, as Mr. Chase will then have it in his power at any time, should it rule too high, to throw sufficient gold on the market to break it down.

THE ENROLMENT BILL.

The Committee of Conference on the Enrolment bill made a report to-day agreeing upon the main features of the Senate bill, with amendments, and the substitution of a few sections of the House bill. The commutation at three hundred dollars is retained, and a compromise is made in limiting the exemption thereby to one year. The exemption of high officials in the Senate bill is stricken out, leaving as the only classes exempt the mentally and physically unfit, and soldiers in the field or honorably discharged. If the quota be not filled in any district by one draft, another is to be made until the number shall be obtained. The section authorizing the Secretary of War to assign drafted persons with religious scruples against bearing arms to hospital duty, or taking care of freedmen, is reported with a proviso confirming such provision to those whose department is consistent with their conscientious scruples against bearing arms. The House provision for the drafting of colored men is retained, with the essential modification that when the slave of a loyal master is drafted and mustered into the service, thereupon such slave shall be free, and the master shall be paid the bounty of $100 in the place of its being paid to the master on his freeing the person. It was held by the committee that he must not be a slave a moment after enlisting. It is understood that this is the disputed point upon which a contest is expected to-morrow. The report is signed by Messrs. Wilson, Nesmith and Grimes on the part of the Senate, and Messrs. Schenck and Deming of the House of Representatives. Mr. Kernan does not concur in it. The house has not yet taken definite action on the report of the Committee of Conference.

MILITARY APPOINTMENTS.

Notice has been given members of Congress that no military appointments will be made immediately; but that when it is necessary to do so they will be made on the same basis of representation as the appointments in the departments.

THE NAVIGATION OF THE POTOMAC.

The cold weather has again threatened to close the Potomac. Ice boats were kept running constantly to-day; but it is believed that the low temperature to-night will suspend navigation for a time, except in the narrow channel kept open between Washington and Alexandria.

CANADIAN POSTAGE.

The Post Office Department of Canada having, for the sake of uniformity, consented to so modify the postal arrangement between the United States and Canada of 1851 as to establish a uniform postage for letters of ten cents, the single rate between Canada and all parts of the United States, it is ordered by Postmaster General Blair that in future the international postage charge upon all letters between Canada and any part of the United States shall be ten cents, the single rate for half an ounce or under—prepayment optional—without regard to difference of distance or route of conveyance.

APPOINTMENTS CONFIRMED.

The Senate to-day in executive session confirmed the nomination of Horace James, of Massachusetts, to be assistant quartermaster, with the rank of captain, and Charles Hutchings, of Oregon, to be Indian agent for the Territory of Idaho.

THIRTY-EIGHTH CONGRESS.

FIRST SESSION.

Senate.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 18, 1864.

THE PAY OF SOLDIERS.

Mr. MORGAN, (rep.) of N. Y., presented a petition from citizens of New York praying for the equalization of the pay of all soldiers in the army without regard to color. Ordered to lie on the table.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF EMIGRATION.

Mr. SHERMAN, (rep.) of Ohio, from the Agricultural Committee, submitted a bill, accompanied by a report, to encourage emigration. Ordered to be printed.

This bill appoints a Commissioner of Immigration as an officer in the Department of State, at a salary of $2,500, to be assisted by one clerk of the first class and one of the third class. He shall collect information of the soil, climate, mineral resources, agricultural products, rates of wages, prices of labor, means of communication, and the wants and industrial interests of the United States, for dissemination throughout Europe in a concise and popular form, the cost of printing which shall not exceed twenty thousand dollars in one year. Correspondence with consuls is required, who shall furnish manifests of emigrants taking passage to the United States. An emigrant office is to be established at New York, under charge of a superintendent, with a salary of two thousand dollars, who shall procure and regulate the transportation of immigrants. Officers are forbidden to accept fees or become interested in lands for sale to immigrants. The President is also authorized to appoint another superintendent in New Orleans.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BUSINESS.

This being the day set apart for the consideration of the business of the District of Columbia, it was ordered that the Mayors of Georgetown and Washington be admitted to the floor. Numerous bills, relating exclusively to the District, were, on motion of Mr. GRIMES called up and passed. Among them was a bill for the education of youths outside of the limits of Washington and Georgetown.

THE ENROLMENT BILL.

Mr. WILSON, (rep.) of Mass., by unanimous consent, presented the report of the Committee of Conference on the Enrolment bill.

Mr. HENDRICKS, (opp.) of Ind., moved that the report be printed.

Mr. GRIMES, (rep.) of Iowa, thought this an unusual course.

Mr. WILSON had not heard of such a precedent before on a conference report.

The ayes and noes were demanded on a motion to print, and the vote resulted eleven ayes against twelve noes.

The CLERK suspended the reading of the report.

On a motion of Mr. WILKINSON, (rep.) of Minn., to reconsider the vote by which the motion to print had been rejected, the motion was carried, and the consideration of the subject postponed until to-morrow, when the report will be printed.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BUSINESS.

The Senate again returned to the consideration of the District of Columbia business.

TRANSFER OF SAILORS FROM THE ARMY TO THE NAVY.

Mr. CONNESS, (rep.) of Cal., introduced the following joint resolutions:—

First—That the Provost Marshal General be, and he is hereby, directed to enlist such persons as may desert to enter the naval service of the United States, under such directions as may be given by the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy, which enlistments shall be credited to the appropriate district, provided, nevertheless, that inasmuch as persons enlisted in the naval service receive prize money; persons so enlisting shall not be entitled to receive any bounty upon their enlistment.

Second—That the President of the United States may, whenever in his judgment the public service requires, authorize and direct the transfer of persons who have been employed in service, and are now enlisted in regiments for land service, from such regiments to the naval service, upon such terms and according to such rules and regulations as he may prescribe, provided, nevertheless, that the number of transfers from any company or regiment shall not be so great as to reduce such company or regiment below the minimum of strength required by the regulations of the military service, and provided further that such sum as may have been paid to persons so transferred as bounty for enlistment to the military service, shall be transferred from the recruiting fund of the naval service to the credit of the proper appropriation for the land service.

On motion of Mr. GRIMES to following amendment was added:—

Resolved, That there shall be paid to each enlisted able or ordinary seaman, hereafter enlisted into the naval service, an advance of three months' pay as a bounty, to be refunded to the Treasury from any prize money to which such enlisted seaman may be entitled.

The joint resolution as amended was adopted.

Mr. CONNESS explained that the joint resolution gives discretionary power to the President to transfer seamen enlisted in the army to the navy, and to make up crews for ships of war to be sent to the Pacific coast. The Navy Department were ready to send ships to the Pacific coast for its protection; but by reason of the great bounties paid to the soldiers the Navy Department could not get sailors, and this provision was to meet this difficulty, and to enable the government to send such a fleet to the Pacific, as well as give it ample protection against any attack.

EXECUTIVE SESSION.

The Senate, on motion of Mr. LANE, (rep.) of Ind., went into executive session, and shortly afterwards adjourned.

House of Representatives.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 18, 1864.

AN ARSENAL AT ROCK ISLAND.

The House passed the bill providing for the government obtaining possession from the private owners of Rock Island, Illinois, on which to erect an arsenal, as heretofore provided for by law.

BILL CONCERNING LUNATICS.

Mr. BOUTWELL, (rep.) of Mass., from the Judiciary Committee, reported a bill, which passed, enabling commissioners or guardians of lunatics, appointed in the several States or in foreign countries, to act within the District of Columbia.

A BILL CONCERNING GOLD CONTRACTS.

Mr. CLAY, (rep.) of Ky., introduced a bill, which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means, providing that when a special or express contract has been made since the first of January, 1862, or shall hereafter be made upon the deposit or loan of gold, for the payment of such loan or deposit in gold, nothing shall be a legal tender for the discharge of such contract or of any judgment rendered thereon but gold, any law to the contrary notwithstanding.

VETERAN VOLUNTEER ENGINEERS.

Mr. GARFIELD, (rep.) of Ohio, introduced a bill, which was referred to the Committee on Military Affairs, to organize a regiment of veteran volunteer engineers.

THE SALE OF SURPLUS GOLD IN THE TREASURY.

Mr. FERNANDO WOOD, (opp.) of N. Y., called the attention of the House to the necessity of some immediate disposition of the joint resolution sought to be reported yesterday, authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to sell the surplus gold on hand at his pleasure. The mere proposition has unsettled the market of New York. It has deranged the basis of commercial transactions. It has deranged our exchanges and the value of commodities, and he had been appealed to by leading bankers to have some disposition made of the subject.

There being no objection,

Mr. HOOPER, (rep.) of Mass., from the Committee on Ways and Means, reported the joint resolution authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury, from time to time, to sell, at his discretion, the gold in the Treasury over and above the amount which, in his opinion, may be necessary to pay the interest on the public debt and for other purposes.

Mr. HOOPER explained the resolution, and said that on Saturday last, as he understood, the amount of gold on hand was $118,000,000, and of this sum $18,200,000 were in the Sub-Treasury in New York. The estimates from now to July 1 will increase this amount by from sixteen to eighteen millions, making at the latter period thirty-seven millions. The requirements for gold from now until July 1, to make payments of interest on the public debt will be less than twenty-four millions, which will leave an excess of from eleven to thirteen millions which may be disposed of. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. COX) had asked "What would be the effect of giving the proposed authority to the Secretary of the Treasury?" This was rather difficult to answer, and he should refer to two effects or things by way of illustration. Gentlemen might remember that the other day reference was made to a letter from Mr. Lamar, in which he advises his rebel friends to get up the price of gold as the true way of attacking our government. He (Mr. Hooper) thought the effect of this resolution would be rather to discourage the plans of those gentlemen, who are disposed to follow Lamar's suggestion, as it would be impossible for them to effect their object when the Secretary of the Treasury exercises the authority now sought to be conferred.

Mr. PENDLETON, (opp.) of Ohio, differed from his colleagues on the Committee of Ways and Means. The passage of the resolution would be very unfortunate. The Secretary of the Treasury now has power to buy gold when he thinks it necessary, and this resolution proposed to give him power to sell—thus giving him power to control the money market whenever he thinks proper. Besides, the amount of gold was so comparatively small that it would afford but little, if any, relief to the government.

Mr. MALLORY, (opp) of Ky., a member of the Committee on Ways and Means, inquired whether anybody knew what was the desire of the Secretary of the Treasury on this subject. The Secretary had neither communicated with the committee or Congress, as to the propriety of conferring this additional power of selling gold.

Mr. PENDLETON, resuming, said that he would not entrust this delicate power to a single head of a department. He did not intend to say an unkind word derogatory to the Secretary; but, he repeated, he would not trust any officer with the power to buy and sell gold—thus giving him an opportunity to raise or depress the market in that particular. Within the next four months there is to be paid as interest on the public debt, a greater amount of gold than we now have on hand. What was now proposed was a transaction in which no man would engage who managed his own private affairs.

Mr. BROOKS, (opp.) of N. Y., showed that our imports largely exceeded our exports, the former making extensive drains upon the specie of the country. We had become so extravagant, owing to the superabundance of paper money, that the agriculturists have almost ceased to labor, while nearly everybody is attempting to speculate, and are deserting their farms and over populating our cities. We should not, by such an expedient as is now proposed, cut loose from our anchor—the basis of the credit of our government—and throw all our gold upon the market in order to buy paper. He repeated that the curse of the country was the over importation of luxuries, such as silks, satins and cashmere shawls, and if gold would rise high enough to stop importations it would be the greatest blessing of which we could have any conception. He argued that the public faith is solemnly pledged to devote the receipts of gold to the payment of the interest on the public debt. Here was the law of 1862. If there was a surplus of specie in the Treasury, let the Secretary, if he will, anticipate the payment of the interest on the national debt falling due in July next. The President has the sword, and, through the Secretary of the Treasury, the purse, and he therefore stands forth the impersonation of despotism if he chooses to exercise it. The Secretary of the Treasury has the manufacture and disposition of thousands of millions in paper money. He believed that the Secretary was an honest and upright man; but never, in the whole course of his public life, had he seen an officer more surrounded with thieves and robbers. He could name a dozen whose standing was such that neither republicans nor democrats would trust them with their private affairs, and now the proposition is to give the Secretary of the Treasury power over the money market of the country. Let us hold fast to the specie basis.

Mr. STEVENS, (opp.) of N. Y., maintained that the House itself, with great unanimity, should have originated a bill requesting and directing the Secretary of the Treasury to use the gold accumulating in the Treasury beyond its requirements, and not have waited for the Secretary to intimate a wish for it. He said that the government was hoarding gold from necessity, because there was no legal way of parting with it. In consequence of the interest on the funded debt gold was daily becoming more scarce—so scarce that the large transactions caused by the customs, by the export demand, by contracts maturing in Wall street and on the Stock Exchange, through sterling exchange transactions, by the gold room transactions, and through the traffic at the hotels, were tending to enhance its value, and consequently the value of all the necessaries of life. It was simply a question as to whether the government should continue to occupy this position or whether they should be empowered to sell at the market price all the gold that they did not require for the special purposes indicated by the laws. He believed that the Secretary of the Treasury would use the power with wisdom; that all his efforts looked in that direction, and that the House had no good reason to doubt that he would continue to manage his department in the same way. He regarded the question as purely one of interest to all classes of the community and the necessities of the nation, and not in any way political, and he should govern his vote accordingly.

Mr. GARFIELD, (rep.) of Ohio, made an estimate as to the receipts into the Treasury. They were at the rate of four hundred thousand dollars a day. In July next twenty-three millions and a half are to be paid out in coin, and that was every dollar which the government was pledged to pay on the 1st of that month. There would then remain a surplus, on the basis of the present receipts, greatly exceeding the estimates. There would be fifty and a half millions in gold in the Treasury on the 1st of July, and there was no law to enable the Secretary to dispose of this sum. He (Mr. Garfield) said, in conclusion, that great wars were not conducted with gold, but with paper.

Mr. BOUTWELL, (rep.) of Mass., said that the first security of public credit is faith. All public officers should be held to a rigid responsibility. By taxation and judicious legislation they had provided for the payment of the interest on the public debt, and designated the medium in which it should be paid. They had guaranteed by legislation, sanctioned by public opinion, that the interest on the public debt should be paid in specie. They were told that they were to have a surplus of gold, but he did not concur in the statement of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Garfield). If the proposition now pending should not be accepted he would move an amendment authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to anticipate the payment of the July interest, from time to time, at the rate of six per cent, in gold, and thus redeem the coupons. The true way to relieve the Treasury of its surplus of coin was to pay it out in this way.

Mr. FERNANDO WOOD, (opp.) of N. Y., deprecated the character of that species of legislation and executive action which resorted to these temporary expedients. While he did not propose to discuss the immediate question before the House in a factious or partisan spirit, candor compelled him to say that the fundamental error was in the financial system adopted by the administration. It was based on an utterly false principle. It was neither new nor safe. It had been tried by other countries, and frequently by enterprising Wall street financiers, and in every case had led to like results—namely, ruin, bankruptcy and repudiation. There was no mystery in this question; it was simply whether an individual or a government could sustain itself long by relying upon borrowing, and not upon legitimate sources of revenue. He appealed to the representatives of the government to bring forward some propositions which would enable us to pass through the present terrible ordeal without bankruptcy and ruin. The imminent danger of a collapse in the public credit should admonish them that, by mathematical calculations, another three years—and we may have ten years of this war—will end not only in the collapse of the Treasury, but in the prostration of all the national interests of the people.

Mr. KASSON, (rep.) of Iowa, would so far depart from the question as to say that if the gentleman who had just taken his seat and his friends would endeavor to unite the North in a solid phalanx to suppress the rebellion by force of arms, the soldiers for whom these gentlemen profess to sympathize would soon be permitted to return to their homes. As to the pending resolution, it did not propose to sell the amount of gold on hand, but only the surplus not needed for the payment of interest on the public debt. It only appropriated the surplus beyond the wants of the government. It did not, therefore, touch, or come in conflict with the public faith. No gentleman could say the Secretary of the Treasury ever violated the public obligations. It was true the resolution gives the Secretary the discretion to sell, but this was absolutely necessary to render the measure effective.

Mr. ELDRIDGE, (opp.) of Wis., would ask whether the Secretary had not already disposed of gold as proposed in this resolution. He understood that the Secretary had heretofore thrown gold on the market.

Mr. KASSON asked Mr. Eldridge to give his authority. He did not believe it.

Mr. DAVIS, (rep.) of N. Y., said the Secretary told him that not one dollar had been disposed of contrary to law.

Mr. ALLEY, (rep.) of Mass., was understood to make a similar statement.

Mr. ELDRIDGE thought he learned so from the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Hooper.)

Mr. HOOPER replied that if the gentleman got such an impression, he misunderstood him.

Mr. KASSON concluded his remarks, and regarded the passage of the resolution as necessary to enable the Secretary to check gold speculations.

Mr. DUMONT, (rep.) of Ind., said he was in favor of the restoration of the government. At all events one way to put an end to the war was by the bayonet and the naked sword. Another was to concede all the rebels ask, and to say they were right and the Northern people wrong. Another way was to now fall back on the specie basis in the payment of our debts and obligations. That would end the war. But his opposition to this resolution was on a different ground. He had no disposition to quarrel with the government. It did not come into power by the aid of his vote; but a quarrel with the government was to help to paralyze its arm. He was opposed to the resolution, because its passage would involve a violation of public faith. It would turn the Treasurer's office into a great broker's shop. He offered an amendment in the form of a proviso, that the Secretary of the Treasury shall not sell any gold under this act without the advice and consent of the other Executive departments of the government, and that the operation of this act shall cease at the expiration of one year.

Mr. COX, (opp.) of Ohio, modified an amendment which he offered at an early stage of the proceedings, so as to read:—

Provided, that before any such sale shall take place at least five days' public notice shall be given of the time and place for receiving bids; and provided, further, that the Secretary of the Treasury may, if he deems it for the interest of the Treasury, withdraw from the market gold offered at any time before a bid is actually accepted.

Mr. COX said he learned that fifteen millions more were required to pay the interest on the public debt than would be received from customs. If the gold was sold, it would have to be bought back again.

Mr. STEVENS, (rep.) of Pa., said he did not expect the discussion would last all day. He found that the merchants of New York did not desire relief, and that, according to their representatives, they would rather be ground between the upper and nether millstones. Three important amendments had been offered, which it might be better to incorporate in this resolution in some shape, and therefore he moved to recommit the resolution, with leave to report to-morrow.

This was agreed to.

PAYMENT OF TAXES.

The House passed a bill appropriating $20,000 to pay taxes on government lands in the West.

SOLDIERS TO VOTE WITHOUT SURTIES.

Mr. CRISP, (opp.) of N. Y., from the Military Committee, reported a joint resolution explanatory of certain acts of Congress. He explained that many petitions had been sent hither from several of the States, and under the instructions of the Committee on Military Affairs he had reported the resolution. Under the acts referred to the President had called out militia for nine months, and a large number had received the twenty-five dollars bounty. The resolution simply explained that others might also receive that amount. It was an act of justice to the soldiers.

The joint resolution was passed.

BUREAU OF FREEDMEN'S AFFAIRS.

The House resumed the consideration of the bill to establish a bureau for freedmen's affairs.

Mr. COLE, (rep.) of Cal., spoke in favor of the measure and of the employment of negro soldiers, thus strengthening the national arm to crush the rebellion.

Without further proceedings, at half-past four o'clock the House adjourned.

MILITARY AFFAIRS.

Arrival and Reception of the First New York Cavalry.

PARADE THROUGH THE CITY—REVIEW IN THE CITY HALL PARK—DINNER AT JEFFERSON MARKET DRILL ROOM—GENERAL M'CLELLAN PRESENT—AN ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTION TO THE LATE COMMANDER.

The First New York cavalry, Colonel A. T. McReynolds, having re-enlisted for the war, arrived in this city yesterday, and were the recipients of a most cordial and hearty reception at the hands of the public as well as the city authorities. All who are in any manner conversant with the history of the present war cannot fail to recognize the First New York cavalry as one of the best and bravest regiments in the service, and the reception accorded to these veterans yesterday afternoon was nothing but what was due to their gallantry while in active service.

At three o'clock the returning regiment filed through the Park, accompanied by the Seventh regiment, National Guard, Colonel Lefferts. They were reviewed by Mayor Gunther, accompanied by a large delegation of the Common Council. There was a large crowd of spectators congregated in the Park at the time, who loudly cheered the returning volunteers. The men of the First presented a fine appearance. They looked, indeed, like veterans in every sense of the word. Their bronzed and hardy features betokened the hard service through which they had passed, while their marching and general movements proved the excellent military training which they had received at the hands of their officers. The route of the procession was up Broadway to Eighth street, along Eighth street to Sixth avenue, and thence up to the Jefferson market drill rooms, where they sat down to a splendid collation, provided by the city authorities.

After the solders had properly appeased their appetites Alderman Hardy, as chairman of the Committee on National Affairs, welcomed the regiment in an eloquent and appropriate speech. He enumerated the many valuable services which they had rendered the country, and concluded by toasting the "Health of the First New York cavalry."

Col. McReynolds responded in a lengthy speech. He also alluded to the services which the First New York cavalry had rendered the government. When they returned with less than one-third their number, he could but look upon them as a Spartan band. The gallant Colonel concluded by returning thanks for the hospitable and kind manner in which he had been received in the city of New York.

Alderman Hardy next proposed the toast of the officers of the First New York cavalry. Major Quinn responded, and introduced the Rev. Mr. Parker, who also spoke at some length. General Wetmore followed.

Alderman Hardy then read the following relative to the regiment:—

HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN VIRGINIA, Feb. 14, 1864.

Major F. QUINN, Commanding First regiment New York Cavalry:—

I desire to acknowledge the valuable services you have rendered during the time you have been attached to the First division. The gallantry and zeal displayed by the officers and men on all occasions, and the promptitude with which you have discharged your arduous duties, have been excelled by no other cavalry regiment in the United States service. I trust you will meet with that hearty welcome you so well deserve, and that at the termination of your furlough you may rejoin my command. I am, very respectfully,

JAMES C. SULLIVAN, Brigadier General.

Scarcely had Alderman Hardy ceased reading the document, when General McClellan was announced to be coming into the room. The wildest excitement here seized every soldier present. Cheer upon cheer went up in the most enthusiastic manner, in the midst of which "Little Mac" entered, smiling and bowing. He was immediately surrounded, and after a hard tussle, amid cheering, hand shaking and innumerable blessings poured upon his head, the General at length succeeded in reaching the head of the room, where the officers of the regiment, together with the invited guests, were seated. Col. McReynolds then introduced the General in a few flattering remarks, when the latter gentleman mounted on a chair, and was again met with a perfect storm of cheers, which lasted for several minutes. Order being at length restored,

General McClellan spoke as follows:—My friends and comrades—I came here not to make a speech to you, but to welcome you home and to express the pride I have always felt in your career, not only when you were with me, but since I left the Army of the Potomac. You have been fighting battles under others than your late commander. I can tell you now conscientiously and truly I am proud of you in every respect. There is not one stain on your career, not a line of it of which you, your State and your country may not be proud. I congratulate you on the resolution that so many of you have formed in your desire to re-enter the service. I hope and I know that your future career will be as glorious as your past. I have one other hope, and that is that we may yet serve together some time again.

At the end of the General's speech, cheer upon cheer again burst forth, and it was with the greatest exertions that the soldiers could be kept from laying hands on "Little Mac" and overpowering him with embraces. They insisted upon another speech and a clearer view of General McClellan, when that gentleman had again to mount the chair, saying:—My friends, now I shall have to bid you goodby. I propose the health of the First New York cavalry.

The General then, with much difficulty, took his departure, being subjected to a similar quantity of hand shaking, embracing, &c.

Mr. P. Reed, being called upon, said that Mrs. McClellan had remarked that she was very sorry she could not go around to the Jefferson market and shake every one of them (the regiment) by the hand.

After some further remarks the soldiers dispersed, highly pleased with their reception and entertainment.

The following are the officers of the regiment:—Colonel, A. T. McReynolds; Major, Timothy Quinn; Major, D. H. Harkins; Captains, Abram Jones, J. K. Stearns, J. C. Batterzby, C. H. Bailey, R. H. O. Hertzog, R. S. Prendergast, F. Passegger, J. B. Stevenson; First Lieutenants, F. G. Martindale, D. A. Dabrow, C. Thompson, Fredk. Daber, A. C. Hinton, C. B. Knowles; Second Lieutenants, C. A. New, —— Poindexter; Adjutant, A. Puelm; Quartermaster, Wm. Alexander.

The Twenty-fifth New York Cavalry.

SPECIAL ORDERS—NO. 55.

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON, Feb. 4, 1864.

14. The following regiments, now organizing in the respective States, are hereby assigned to the Ninth army corps, under the command of Major General Burnside. Twenty-fifth New York cavalry.

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By order of the SECRETARY OF WAR.

E. D. TOWNSEND, Assistant Adjutant General

Sword Presentation.

Lieutenant A. H. Spierre, of Battery F, Sixteenth New York artillery, now lying at Gloucester Point, Va., was presented by the members of Battery F with a magnificent sword, belt and sash, on Saturday, February 13. The scabbard is heavily plated with silver, and handsomely mounted with gold. The blade is a fine Solingen, inlaid with gold. The scabbard bears the following inscription:—"Presented to Lieut. A. H. Spierre by the members of Battery F, Sixteenth N. Y. V. artillery, as a token of their regard. Gloucester Point, Va., Feb. 10, 1864."

The Death of Colonel Cornyn.

A court martial was convened at Memphis, Tenn., at which Lieutenant Colonel William D. Bowen, Tenth Missouri cavalry Volunteers, was tried for maliciously and wilfully shooting and killing Colonel Florence M. Cornyn, of the same regiment, on or about the 10th of August, 1863. To this charge Lieutenant Colonel Bowen pleaded "not guilty," and after a trial the court found him "not guilty as charged, the homicide being justifiable." The prisoner was therefore acquitted. To this finding General Hurlbut protested, and his protest was published in full, in General Orders, No. 63, Vicksburg, Oct. 14, 1863. General Grant, therefore, disapproved of the finding of the court, and dismissed Lieutenant Colonel Bowen from the service.

No Signs of the Africa.

HALIFAX, Feb. 18—11 P. M.

No signs of the Africa. Light north wind. Cloudy.

Good Out of Nazareth.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.

I perceive that the ladies engaged in the Metropolitan Fair enterprise have resolved to assert their dignity and independence, and to adhere to their original determination to have raffling embraced in the programme, despite the recent fulmination of certain hypercritical clergymen. This is all right and very good. But this is not the only good thing this controverry has produced. It has provoked inquiry into the Scriptures, by which some of your contemporaries have been enabled to ascertain how frequently instances of casting lots occur therein. With all their researches, however, they seem to have overlooked the most remarkable instance of lot casting recorded in the sacred pages, which was when Lot's wife was cast into a pillar of salt.

Court Calendar—This Day.

SUPREME COURT—CIRCUIT.—Part 1—Short causes—Nos. 1341, 1125, 1554, 1627, 1749, 1719, 1784, 1628. Part 2—18 Duane street—Nos. 351, 1353, 1005, 955, 182, 1267, 1273, 584, 1286, 904, 1057, 755, 688, 681, 986, 578, 1139, 18, 618, 620.

SUPREME COURT—TRIAL TERM.—Part 1—Nos. 3371, 3213, 3217, 3437, 3363, 3509, 3511, 3513, 3515, 3517, 3519, 3521, 3523, 3525, 3527. Part 2—Nos. 2018, 2750, 2008, 3334, 3560, 2372, 3580, 3562, 3564, 3566, 3568, 3570, 3572, 3574, 3576, 3468.

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS.—Trial Term adjourned. General term is sitting daily at eleven o'clock.

INTERESTING REBEL NEWS.

Conflicting Reports About Johnston's Army—Non-Combatants to Leave Mobile—Loss of the Blockade Runner Denbigh, &c.

CINCINNATI, Feb. 18, 1864.

A Chattanooga despatch says the information from the rebel army is contradictory. Some declare that Johnston's entire force is around Dalton; others say large portions, including the artillery, at Kingston, have gone to reinforce Longstreet. John Morgan is said to be in the vicinity of Dalton with a considerable cavalry force, preparing for a raid.

Gen. Watts, of Alabama, has telegraphed to the citizens of Selma to prepare to receive non-combatants from Mobile, as that place was soon to be attacked by the Union troops.

The steamer Denbigh was lost recently while attempting to run the blockade from Mobile.

The Mobile papers think Sherman's plan is to penetrate to Central Alabama, and thus compel the evacuation of Mobile.

There are no indications in the news reports that Grant is preparing for active operations.

GENERAL KELLEY'S DEPARTMENT.

Extensive Rebel Preparations for a Movement Along the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad—Capture of a Noted Guerilla and Other Prisoners, &c.

MR. T. C. WILSON'S DESPATCH.

HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN VIRGINIA, Feb. 18, 1864.

From reports of deserters and refugees, it is evident that the rebels are making extensive preparations along the line of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, either apprehending an advance from us or preparing for an offensive movement themselves.

Guerillas are active in the Kanawha region.

Enlistments of negroes are brisk at Cumberland.

Old Dan Dusky, of Calhoun county, West Virginia, and seventeen other prisoners, were captured in Webster county, by a detachment of the Tenth West Virginia regiment. Dusky is probably the most notorious guerilla character in the State. At the breaking out of the rebellion he raised a guerilla company, and took to the mountains and woods with them. Among the number were his three sons and daughter Nancy. In 1861 he robbed the mail and Post Office in Jackson county, for which he was tried by a Union court and sent to the penitentiary. Some time last year, through the interposition of friends, he was pardoned by the President, upon conditions that he would be a loyal citizen; but instead of that, upon being released, he took to his old habits, and afterwards became more active and vindictive than he was before. General Kelley, no doubt, will place him where he will not do much injury for some time to come.

Lieutenant Snodgrass, of Martinsburg, was one of the robbers of the passengers on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad train. Snodgrass took a scarf from off the neck of one of the lady passengers, besides committing other disreputable acts.

Weather fair, but very cold.

TENNESSEE FOR THE UNION.

The people of Tennessee are inaugurating public meetings, to take place throughout the entire State, to elicit, in the most general and unquestionable manner, the patriotic feelings of the people. A meeting was held on the 27th ult. at Kingston, Roane county, called for the purpose of consulting as to the best plan to restore civil law and order, and to adopt such measures to that end as the exigencies of the times demands. The different districts of the county were, with one exception, all represented.

The meeting was organized by the appointment of Wm. Ellis, Esq., as chairman. Messrs. Wm. S. Patton and N. A. Patterson were appointed secretaries. Colonel Sherman, commanding brigade; Colonel Byrd, commanding post, Colonel J. T. Shelly and Lieut. Colonel Young, deputy Provost Marshal, by invitation attended the meeting. A series of resolutions with preambles were reported, some of which were as follows:—

Whereas, in the month of February, 1861, the people of Tennessee, by a most decided voice at the ballot box, declared their opposition to the tide of secession then rushing its polluting way through the Gulf States; and whereas, in May of the same year, the disloyal Governor of our State called together what unfortunately happened to be a disloyal Legislature, which, goaded forward by the secession pressure, not only within but from without the limits of the State adopted, practically, an ordinance of secession; and whereas, said act of legislative secession was, as a matter of mock formality, submitted to a vote of the people in June following, but without allowing any thing like a free discussion of the grave matters at issue before the people, save in the Eastern portion of the State; and that there—namely, in East Tennessee, an overwhelming majority of votes was frowningly cast against said legislative ordinance, and that a majority of votes were only cast in its favor, where free discussion was not allowed; and, therefore,

Resolved, That the action of the State of Tennessee in February, 1861, evinced the strong and overwhelming feeling of loyalty of the immense mass of the people.

Resolved, That the action of our Legislature in May, 1861, was unrighteous, invalid, illegal and void; and that the assumed and so called election in June following was a grave insult to a free people, a base fraud on and against the elective franchise, and that it gave no validity to the disloyal acts of the Legislature.

Whereas, the rebellion in the Southern States, inaugurated by intriguing enemies of free and republican government, have placed the institution of negro slavery as the corner stone of the assumed rebellious government, making that institution the practical issue; therefore,

Resolved, That the Southern slaveholders, by their own hands have stricken the fatal and suicidal blow at that peculiar institution, accomplishing hurriedly and surely what its enemies outside the limits of the Southern States could not have effected in a long series of years; and,

Resolved, That in the reorganization of our State government, looking first to the interest of our State, and secondly, that of our national government, we adopt the gradual emancipation system; and that the practical interest of our State demands that our negro population be disposed of in the manner above stated at as early a day and as speedily as possible.

On motion, the resolutions were submitted separately, and severally adopted by the meeting.

On motion, the preamble and resolutions were then submitted to the meeting as