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WAR NEWS.

Advices from the North Carolina coast state that the great naval expedition was ready to sail last Friday, and were only awaiting the abatement of the storm. Its destination is of course conjectural, but it is believed that either Charleston or Savannah will be the point of attack. On Monday of last week sixty steam transports, having on board as many thousand troops, were lying in the harbor of Beaufort, together with a hundred and fifty sailing vessels, laden with artillery and munitions of war. This constitutes the largest naval expedition of the war.

Advices from Murfreesboro' to the 27th ult. note the engagement at Woodbury, on the McMinnville railroad, some account of which had been received from the South. It was an attempt to surprise a large force of Confederates, but they got warning, and fell back.—There was some fighting, in which the Federal loss was two killed and nine wounded. The Confederates lost, it is said, their colonel and thirty-four others killed, and one hundred prisoners.

A Federal scouting party, consisting of one hundred and thirty men, under command of Lieut. Col. Steward, recently made a demonstration into Van Buren, on the Arkansas river, and captured a steamer and three hundred passengers.

Late Southern journals furnish some war news of interest. It is stated that a Federal iron-clad steamer attacked Fort McAllister, at the mouth of the Ogechee river, below Savannah, on the 17th ult., but was compelled to draw off, her turret being injured. An officer from the Federal fleet, who arrived at Fortress Monroe yesterday, contradicts this report, however, and says that the Montauk, the steamer engaged, lay under the fire of the fort for four hours, the shots of the Confederates having no effect upon her. These accounts confirm the previous reports concerning the movements of this iron-clad, but nothing is said of the Confederate steamer Nashville, to capture which, it was stated, was the chief object of the expedition.

A Richmond paper states that there were indications of an early renewal of battle before Vicksburg. The Federal fleet consists of one hundred and seven boats, ninety-six transports and sixteen gunboats, having on board a force estimated at eighty thousand men. Some five thousand troops are engaged on the canal opposite Vicksburg. A Cairo dispatch corroborates this statement, and says that the water was running through the canal two or three feet deep, but there were no signs of the channel widening. The chief of Gen. McClelland's staff was killed by the Confederates while he was engaged in destroying the ferry boats opposite the city.

A dispatch received at the U. S. Navy Department says: "The Richmond Whig, of Saturday, announces the capture, on Thursday morning, off Charleston, of the steamer Princess Royal, running the blockade with a most valuable cargo. The pilot and one of the crew escaped, and arrived at Charleston, with dispatches from Captain Maury. The Princess Royal is one of the steamers the Navy Department has been particularly looking for. Advices received at that Department show that she took in, prior to sailing, 600 bbls. (60,000 lbs.) gunpowder, machinery for steam boilers; steam cooking wagon, six screw propellers, two Armstrong guns, 500 cases brandy, 95 cases boots and shoes, 229 bags coffee, 800 bales sheet iron, 500 boxes tin plates, 144 bales hardware, 16 cases machinery, 1 case buttons, 10 cases blankets, &c., &c."

The Harriet Lane, it is reported, escaped from Galveston on the morning of the 19th ult. The Brooklyn and two or three gunboats chased her.

It was reported at Havana that heavy firing was heard at Matanzas and Cardenas, as if coming from a serious contest at sea. It was also stated that the Oreto or some other Confederate vessel had been chased by several Federal gunboats, but the result is not known.

The Creole, from New York, arrived at Havana on the 28th ult. She brought news that she spoke the Federal gunboat Cayuga, which reported she had observed a steamer on fire, and supposed it was the Oreto, and three other vessels were firing into her with great rapidity. The locality of the engagement is not definitely stated, but was in the vicinity of capes off Cardenas and Matanzas.

The public reception of Gen. McClelland at Boston yesterday, was an enthusiastic demonstration. There appears to have been nothing of a partisan character about the affair, Mayor Lincoln and the city authorities, all Republicans, taking part in it. From seven to ten thousand persons were congregated in front of the hotel.

The telegraphic dispatch from New York to the effect that a son-in-law of Senator Doolittle of Wisconsin had committed suicide, was a blunder either of the Associated Press or the operator. It is untrue. The suicide was a connection of a former distinguished official from the same State.

Mr. Boileau, of the Philadelphia Journal, recently arrested, and subsequently released, has made "full apology for the publication of the article for which he was arrested" and pledged himself hereafter, "not to write or print any such articles" and "to demean himself in all things as a true and loyal citizen of the U. S.," &c. His former friends say that his "back down" is as rapid as could have been desired" by those who arrested him.

Some of the papers in Chicago, are urging the confiscation of the real estate in that city, formerly owned by John A. Washington, of Va., and now the property of his infant heirs.

CONGRESS.—In the U. S. Senate yesterday, Mr. Richardson presented the petition of Madison Y. Johnson, who claimed to have been arrested by the Government and discharged without cause. It being admitted that the petitioner could have obtained his discharge by taking the oath of allegiance, the Senate laid the petition on the table. Mr. Harris, from the Judiciary Committee, reported back the bill to aid the State of Maryland to emancipate the slaves within her limits, with amendments. The Legislative, Executive and Judicial Appropriation bill was adopted, with amendments appropriating eighty thousand dollars for the Agricultural Department, and twenty thousand dollars for experiments in preparing hemp and flax as a substitute for cotton. After disposing of some unimportant business, the House resumed the consideration of the bill to raise one hundred and fifty thousand negro soldiers. The debate was closed by Mr. Stevens, who called the previous question. The motion to refer the bill to the Military Committee was rejected—ayes 51, nays 83. Mr. Hickman's substitute was also rejected. The modifications proposed by Mr. Casey, exempting the States of Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri and Western Virginia from the provisions of the bill, and preventing negro officers from commanding white soldiers, were adopted, and the bill finally passed—yeas 83, nays 55.

The N. Y. Post argues that it is hopeless to get to Richmond at present, and that Richmond is of no earthly use anyhow, and that the Army of the Potomac had better be broken up and sent West.

Baker has arrested eight parties for procuring soldiers' discharges on forged papers.—Among them is Lieut. C. N. Holding, of the 2d Wisconsin, who forged Dr. McCall's name, receiving from twenty-five to a hundred dollars for each case.

To-day is the day fixed for the election of United States Senator from the State of New York, to supply the seat to become vacant on the 4th of March next by the expiration of the term of the Hon. Preston King. It is expected that the contest between the Republicans will be a lively one.

The Health Officer of Brooklyn has prohibited the sale of rye coffee in several stores, a respectable German family of eight persons having been poisoned by the seeds of poisonous weeds which, growing among the rye, had been roasted and ground up with it.

At one o'clock, Sunday morning, a fire broke out on Main street, Norfolk, destroying the following buildings: Bateman & Millwood's restaurant, J. A. Bates' bar room, one grocery and shoe store. Adams & Co's Express office, opposite to the fire, was in great peril for a while and narrowly escaped.

Henry J. Sedgwick, late postmaster at Syracuse, has been indicted for embezzling \$4,544 of the money of the United States.