

The Local News.

COMMENCED
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ALEXANDRIA, THURSDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 19, 1861.

PRINTED AT THE
ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE OFFICE.

THE ORPHAN ASYLUM.—The calamitous condition of this section of the country, upon which has fallen so large a share of the evils of war, has materially lessened the revenue of the Female Orphan Asylum. Many of its benefactors are absent from the city, and the means of many others are largely lessened by the pending difficulties. We trust, however, that the charity of our people will be more than equal to the emergency, and the additional contributions will hereafter suffice to supply any deficiency in ordinary revenue. A box to receive contributions for this purpose has been placed at the Post Office and we trust that every visitor will contribute at least a mite for the ORPHANS.

RIVER MOVEMENTS.—The river side was very quiet this morning, the only arrival being the schooner White Pigeon, Capt. Simmonds, with oysters. The captain reports that he passed the Confederate batteries in safety, but when in Nanjemoy Reach, hugging the Maryland shore, he was fired at from one of the fish-houses at Nalley's landing, on the Maryland shore. Three shots, apparently from muskets or rifles, were made, two of the balls passing over the vessel, and the third struck the chicken-coop, killing a chicken. The ball which lodged in the coop is an ordinary Minie musket ball.

POST OFFICE.—The Post Office in this city is now doing an immense business. As a single example of the large incoming mails, we learn that there were received and distributed at that office this morning the large number of 20,000 letters, beside a great quantity of newspapers, periodicals, &c.

OVERBOARD.—The horses attached to one of the U. S. army wagons backed the vehicle into King street dock this morning, and the falling vehicle drew the horses after it. A large crowd soon gathered, and, by dint of considerable exertion, the horses were detached, and swam around to the beach, and the wagon was also saved.

CAMPFIRE EXPLOSION.—A campfire lamp exploded at the residence of Mr. Davis, on Wolfe street, near Fairfax, on Tuesday night, and set fire to the dress of one of his daughters, but no serious injury resulted.

A NEW TRIBUNAL.—In order to lessen the number of cases which are daily brought up at the Mayor's office, we learn that three members of the new court—Messrs. Penn, Sidebottom and Ware—will hold a semi-weekly session, similar to what is called in the country places of (Virginia warrant tryings at one of the rooms in the old Court House, Market square.

MAYOR'S OFFICE.—Some police cases of no interest were up this morning, and one of the parties fined, after which he took a voluntary oath to take two drinks more, and then refrain from the use of intoxicating drinks for a period of twelve months.

A synopsis of the report of the "Van Wyck Investigating Committee" is published in the newspapers. It makes most astounding developments of speculation, peculation, fraud and malfeasance in the furnishing of supplies, &c., to the U. S. army. In the purchase of arms, the chartering of steamboats, the buying of cattle, of horses and mules, the building of fortifications at St. Louis, &c., &c., there seems to have been an effort as to who could cheat most, and who could make the most money. The Philadelphia Press (Forney's paper) says, that, in reading this report, "words of burning indignation spring instinctively to the lips." The document will create great "sensation" at the North, and "be curiously scanned in Europe."

Turkeys are selling in Baltimore at from 63 cents to \$1, and geese at \$1 per pair. In Alexandria the prices are double or more than double. Canvass backs in Baltimore are from 75 cents to \$1 25 per pair. Here just twice as much.

The grumbling, growling, and complaining against Gen. McClellan in sections of the North and West, and amongst a portion of the members of Congress, continues.—There is a talk about having an "onward" Lieutenant-General.

FOREIGN NEWS.

The steamship Jura, brings Liverpool dates to the 5th inst. Cotton declined 1d @ 1 1/2d. Breadstuffs steady. Warlike preparations continue in England. Large numbers of troops are under orders for Canada. Seamen on leave were ordered to join their vessels. The American shipping interest was already disastrously affected. It was reported that Mr. Adams, the U. S. Minister regarded his recall as certain. The London News thinks that war might be avoided if the U. S. government would treat the great difficulty in the same spirit that General Scott did.

The U. S. Consul at Paris had communicated to the French papers a letter from Gen. Scott, in which he declares there is no truth in the report that the Cabinet had ordered a seizure of the Southern Commissioners even under the protection of a neutral flag. He is quite ignorant of the decision of his government, but says it is necessary to preserve good relations between America and England; and England, he hopes, will agree on a solution of the question whether the prisoners were contraband or not. If they were agents of the Confederates, he says, it will be difficult to convince even impartial minds that they were less contraband of war than Confederate soldiers or cannon. In conclusion, Gen. Scott expresses his conviction that war between America and England cannot take place without more serious provocation than at present given.

The Paris Patrie learns that the San Jacinto, in November, searched a French, Danish, and Portuguese vessel. These facts, says the Patrie, are of some importance, as proving that the Washington Cabinet fancies that it has the power to exercise the right of search to the full extent.

The tone of reserve of the French press increases. Several of the leading Paris papers blame the British Government for having yielded to the pressure of public opinion as represented merely by Manchester and Liverpool, and for having acted too hastily in the Trent affair.

The iron-clad frigate Warrior is coaling for service on the North American coast. There was quite a rise in sugar and salt-petre.

Several papers have leaders on Mr. Bright's speech. The Times says: "Let America judge, by the speech of her greatest admirer, how little can be said for her outrage upon a friendly, although neutral country."

It is reported that the French Minister at Washington has reported to his Government the refusal on the part of the Washington Cabinet to deliver up despatches addressed from Paris to the French Consuls at New Orleans and Charleston.

AFFAIRS WITH ENGLAND.

The New York Evening Post learns from private commercial letters of the highest character, received from London, that the British Government proposes to seek explanations of the Trent affair, and perhaps an apology will be asked for our irregular proceeding; but no mention is made of a demand for the surrender of the Confederate prisoners. The English writers hope that the subject will be treated by us with patience and a kindly spirit.

Private letters received at Boston by the Europa and Jura, indicate firmness on the part of the English public to insist in the surrender of Slidell and Mason, but express the hope and belief that the Government will give them up at once. Other correspondents predict that England will go to war without wasting time in negotiations. The indications are that American stocks owned in England would be sent here for sale, but it is believed that no great amount have yet been sent forward.

Mr. Carlisle's speech in the Senate, the other day, in reply to Mr. Lane, in which he said, "if this war is to be waged for the overthrow of slavery, the United States would find their army melting away like snow before a Southern sun," is not relished in some quarters at the North. The N. Y. Tribune's Washington correspondent intimates that he is nearly as bad as his predecessor, Mr. Mason, now at Warren.

SOUTHERN NEWS.

The General Assembly of Virginia, on the 14th inst., adopted a resolution tendering sympathy to the citizens of Charleston, and instructing the committee on finance to inquire into the expediency of an appropriation for their relief.

A dispatch from Augusty, of the 19th instant, says it is reported that the Georgia Legislature has appropriated \$100,000 for the relief of the sufferers by the Charleston fire.

The Richmond Whig calls upon all farmers of Virginia near the lines of the railroads to build ice houses and collect large supplies of ice during the present season, as the whole South will have to get its ice from Virginia in the coming summer.

A series of resolutions adopted by the Legislature of Tennessee relative to the opening of the Southern ports, and recommending that no crop of cotton be seeded in the ensuing year, had been received by the Virginia Legislature.

An adjourned meeting of the citizens of Richmond was to be held last night to take into consideration the manning of the batteries around that city.

The Confederate Congress is said by the Richmond Examiner to have confirmed up to yesterday, not less than seven thousand army appointments.

The Charleston Mercury of Friday says yesterday was a gloomy day for Charleston. Business was universally suspended, and, with one impulse, our community united in giving sympathy and aid to the victims of the great public calamity. The Courier says: The fearful conflagration that has just passed over our city will cause the 11th and 12th of December, 1861, hereafter to be remembered as one of those dark and trying periods which for the moment seem to paralyze all the long cherished hopes and bright anticipations of the future.

Silver is selling in Richmond at 25 cents, and gold at 35 cents.

The 3d regiment of Georgia volunteers has returned to Norfolk from Roanoke Island.

GENERAL NEWS.

The British Government has now fifty-four vessels, carrying one thousand three hundred and sixty guns and ten thousand four hundred and forty-four men, in the waters of North America, and the West Indies, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Pacific ocean.

The New York Insurance companies, it is generally understood, will make no change in rates till the Cabinet at Washington has decided upon its action.

The subject of the defences of Philadelphia is being urged upon the National Government by Gov. Curtin. He is also actively engaged in preparing arms for State defence.

The strength of the U. S. navy is being canvassed in England. The Times says that although the whole Federal navy scarcely presents a dozen worthy antagonists, it would be imprudent in the extreme to despise the power of the Americans at sea.

The National Intelligencer says that the general-in-chief, in accepting the services of the French princes on his staff, did not require an oath of allegiance from them.—They decline to receive any pay.

It now appears that the office where Bernard Levy, the broker, in New York, was found dead—murdered or a suicide—had been robbed of a considerable amount of money.

The Irish government organs take sides against the United States, as to the late affair of the Trent—while the opposition or anti-government papers support the course of the United States.

In consequence of the nature and character of Mr. Bllet's pamphlet, in relation to the conduct of the present war, and the comments on it in the public press, it is in great demand in Washington and elsewhere. Mr. E. is said to be very severe on Gen. McClellan.

The Long Bridge has not been passable for wagons for a day or two back.

Efforts are being made in the U. S. Senate to expel Senator Polk, of Missouri, from his seat. The House of Representatives has declared that Mr. Foster, of N. C., claiming to be a representative from that State is not entitled to a seat.

In the U. S. House of Representatives, the "Homestead bill" has been postponed until February.

Some 250 Hatteras prisoners lately at Fortress Monroe have been sent on to Richmond to be exchanged for U. S. prisoners there.

The New York banks up to yesterday refused to suspend specie payments. Ditto, Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

It is remarked that at the late great fire in Charleston, the negroes manifested great zeal in their efforts as firemen and laborers.

It is said that Gen. Shields has accepted a commission in the U. S. Army, and is on his way to Washington from New Mexico.

As Gen. T. F. Meagher's brigade was coming on to Washington, at Trenton, they made a rush to get on the cars, and several of them were killed and wounded accidentally.

The Apache Indians have fallen upon a number of whites near Stanton, and murdered them.

Platte City, in Missouri, has been partially burned. It is said it was fired by Confederates.

An inquiry has been ordered in the U. S. Senate as to whether Gen. Phelps' famous proclamation was authorized by the Administration. In the same body a bill is reported "for the collection of direct taxes in revolutionary districts or states."

The New York World says:—"The reported battle at New Orleans is, of course, sheer nonsense. The landing of Federal troops at Shipping Island no doubt alarmed the inhabitants of the Crescent City, who feared an immediate attack, and hence sent for reinforcements from the Upper Mississippi. From this probably arose the report of a battle, to which we allude. Equally absurd is the reported evacuation of Fort Pulaski."

Reports say that Leesburg has been of late reinforced by from four to five thousand men. It is thought that Jackson's force could be easily strengthened on short notice.

There is no truth in the statement that the Strasburg and Winchester Railroad has been completed. Not many days ago several loads of railroad iron were sent to Strasburg from Winchester, which probably gave rise to the report. The bulk of the rails are still piled up near Winchester.

Secretary Chase denies positively any intention on the part of the government, to forbid the exportation of specie.

Henry C. Burnett and Judge Monroe took their seats in the Confederate Congress on Monday last as Senators from Kentucky.

It is reported that both Confederate and Federal privateers are cruising at the entrance of the English channel.

Capt. Seymour, the Queen's Messenger, with despatches to Lord Lyons, has arrived in Washington.

The Postoffice Committee in the U. S. House of Representatives will report in favor of abolishing the franking privilege, and against any further privileges in the case of soldiers' letters.

It is said that Mr. Foster, of N. C., now says himself, that he has no right to a seat in the U. S. House of Representatives.

DIED.

Of diphtheria, at the residence of her uncle, T. H. Osbourn, near Marlborough, Md., on the 8th inst. Miss ALICE M. SCOTT, daughter of the late Edward P. Scott, Georgetown, D. C., aged 19 years. This is the fourth death from this terrible disease that has occurred in Mr. Osbourn's family this fall.

MINCE MEAT.—Just received, a nice article of Mince Meat. J. T. COOK, dec 19 Old Post Office Corner.

EGGS.—Fresh Eggs, just in time, for sale low by the dozen. J. T. COOK, dec 19 Old Post Office Corner.

NEW JOWL.—Just received, a lot of new Jewis, very nice. J. T. COOK, dec 19 Old Post Office Corner.