

THE LOCAL NEWS.

To-Day—To-day is familiarly known as "Old Christmas," or "Twelfth Day," and it was once the conclusion of the twelve days which were kept merrily at Christmas tide in the olden days of Merry England. To this day many customs and observances were attached which have not fallen into disuse, and some of which, perhaps, were "more honored in the breach than in the observance."

A MURDER OR ASSAULT—An assault, which will probably prove fatal, took place at a house on King street, near Fayette street, to-day. The Israelites, who have been conducting business here for a few weeks past, under the firm of Vishaw & Simons, fell out at breakfast this morning, and the dispute ended by the former seizing a hatchet and cutting Simons across the head several times. The wounded man was carried to the hospital, and is not expected to live. The assailant was committed to jail, to await a further examination.

SNOW—The weather, for several days past, has been exceedingly cold. Last night we had a snow storm, and this morning snow is spread over the levels to a slight depth.

EPIPHANY—The festival of Epiphany, as observed by the Catholic church, was celebrated at St. Mary's church to-day, by services at 7 and 10 o'clock, Rev. Mr. Taeffer officiating.

MAYOR'S OFFICE—The case of murderous assault, mentioned in another column, came up, and the offender was committed to jail. Other small cases came up, and were properly disposed of.

The messages of the Governors of the Northern States, to the State Legislatures, as far as they have been received, all breathe the war spirit, in the most determined manner, and recommend appropriation for defence against foreign invasion, and for the prosecution of hostilities against the Southern States.

It is proposed in the Maryland Legislature that every person holding office under the State, and all traders and dealers, shall be compelled to take an oath of allegiance.

A large hotel in Courtland, N. Y., was destroyed by fire, on Saturday.

A portion of a powder mill exploded opposite New Orleans, on the 29th ult. Most of the powder, however, had been previously removed.

The New York Herald advises that Russell, the correspondent of the London Times, is absent out of the country. His late letters have given much offence at the North.

Mr. Lovejoy's resolution of "thanks" to Capt. Wicks, for the capture of the Trent, were passed in the U. S. House of Representatives.

The Baltimore Sun says: "Gull, in the early part of the week, took a sudden rise on the announcement of specie payments by the Northern banks, some sales being made as high as 3 per cent. premium; the rates yesterday, however, were 1/2 to 1 1/2 per cent. and advancing. There is no change in the rates of discount on Southern funds."

Some of the chaplains observe that profanity is very prevalent in the regiments to which they are attached, and they say it is surprising and alarming to see how soon young men form the habit, who had never been a day to it before. War always seems to engender it.

The N. Y. Chamber of Commerce has passed resolutions memorializing the U. S. Congress for a "speedy passage of effective laws by which such equal taxation shall be levied in the several States, and a system of excise devised as to sustain the public credit and form a staple basis for the payment of the interest, and the ultimate liquidation of the public debt;" also, expressing the regret of the merchants at the construction put upon late acts of the U. S. Congress in relation to an increase of duties on certain articles, and instructing a committee to prepare a remonstrance to its being applicable to goods imported prior to the passage of said law, and goods on shipboard prior to the 7th of August. The meeting closed with a personal enquete between Mr. Duer and Hon. R. Phelps, the former of whom gave the latter the lie, to which the latter retorted.

Captains Shubrick and Wilkes, and Naval Constructor Poole, compose the board recently appointed by the U. S. Secretary of the Navy to report and examine upon certain inventions which promise usefulness in the branch of the U. S. service.

A German journal speaks of a young antherose, who has distinguished herself in the literary world. She is called the Barons de Cloke kraestone and Pikkaken.

SOUTHERN NEWS.

The theatre, on the corner of Broad and 7th streets, in Richmond, Va., was entirely destroyed by fire on Thursday morning last. Several of the adjoining houses, were also burned.

The Secretary of the Treasury of the Confederate States, has announced that on and after the 2d instant, the interest on the funded debt of the government would be paid.

The Richmond Enquirer says that Wm. M. Browne, formerly editor of the N. Y. Journal of Commerce, is commissioned acting Secretary of State, during the temporary absence of the Hon. R. M. T. Hunter.

Gov. Letcher, of Virginia, had a reception on New Year's Day, which was largely attended.

Col. R. E. Colston, of the Sixteenth Regiment of Virginia Volunteers, has been promoted to Brigadier General.

Jacob S. Atlee has been again arrested near Centreville, Va., upon suspicion of endeavoring to communicate with the enemy.

The Dispatch remarks that it is justified in saying from information in its possession, that fully seven-eighths of the Virginia troops now in service will re-enlist when their present terms expire.

Gen. Lee has stated that he is confident of his ability to prevent the Federals from advancing on Charleston or Savannah.

Intelligence from Western Virginia represents that many of the citizens of Raleigh and Fayette county have had to abandon their homes and seek refuge in Monroe, in consequence of the outrages perpetrated by invading parties of Federal troops.

The Confederate steamer Ella Ware ran the blockade, and arrived in Charleston on the 21st inst. She was fired on by the blockading vessels, but with no effect. She was from Nassau and brought a valuable cargo, and important dispatches to the Confederate government.

A schooner arrived at Mobile, Alabama, on the 27th ult., from Havana, bringing a cargo of coffee, sulphur, medicine, &c. The blockading fleet saw her as she came in port, but could not catch her.

The Richmond Dispatch of Friday says: "A private dispatch was received yesterday from Centreville by a prominent military officer now in Richmond, in which it was stated that the indications point to a Federal attack at an early day on Evansport, and the probability was that a simultaneous attack would be made at other points on the Potomac."

WAR NEWS.

A fight occurred on the 2d inst., between the gunboats Yankee and Anacostia, of the Potomac flotilla, and the Confederate battery at Cockpit Point. The missiles from the rifled gun of the battery struck the Yankee, doing some damage to her hull.

Gen. Kelley has been relieved of his command at Romney, Va., at his own request. He entered the field too soon after being wounded in the attack on the Confederates at Phillipi, Va., and has suffered continued ill health in consequence. Gen. Reynolds has taken his place.

The news from Kentucky is important.—The Confederates, under Gens. Johnson and Buckner, have destroyed a large portion of the Louisville and Nashville railroad beyond Green river, burning all the material of which it was constructed that could be thus consumed. At last advices they were engaged in blowing up the tunnel, which is some three hundred feet in length.

The Confederate official report of the battle of Drainesville states that the number of Southern troops engaged in that action was sixteen hundred infantry, one thousand cavalry and four pieces of artillery.

From Fortress Monroe we learn that the Confederates have evacuated Great Betnet, and taken all their armament with them.

A forlorn hope of Gen. Butler's expedition had taken possession of Biloxi, a town in Mississippi, about ninety miles east of New Orleans, and it was believed that they would sweeply all the towns on the coast in that region.

Col. De La Zuel took charge of the Confederate forces at Caney Island on Friday last.

Dispatches from Mobile state that as a Confederate steamer was passing from Pensacola to the navy yard, on the 1st inst., she was fired on by Fort Pickens, when the Confederate batteries opened on the fort, and the firing was kept up between them all day, but without any casualties on the side of the Confederates.

There was a battle on the South Carolina coast also on the 1st inst. Three thousand five hundred Federal troops landed on the main land near Port Royal ferry, and were met and repulsed by two regiments of South Carolina volunteers. The guns from the boats opened on the Confederates, killing, it is said, six and wounding twelve. The next day the Federals returned with reinforcements, and the Confederates fell back. The object of the advance of the Federal force at that point is believed to be to take possession of the railroad, and thus interrupt communication between Charleston and Savannah.

GENERAL NEWS.

Gen. Wool, U. S. A., in a published order to his troops, expresses his strong disapprobation of the burning of buildings, and such like wanton destruction of private property. He says it is not justified by even "retaliation"—and that "two wrongs do not make a right."

The Union Fire Arms Company, of New York city, whose principal armory will be at Newark N. J., are to execute contracts for the manufacture of 90,000 stand of small arms. This company, organized under the laws of New York, with a capital of \$400,000, will give employment to several thousand mechanics.

A terrible epidemic is prevailing among the cattle in the western provinces of Russia. Usually the plains of Russia abound in vast numbers of stock of almost every kind, and thence immense herds are annually exported to Germany. Now, however, this exportation has nearly ceased.

Official notification of the death of Prince Albert has been received at the British Legation in Washington, the members of which have gone into "mourning." All the dispatches are now written on paper with a heavy black border, and sealed with black wax.

The N. Y. Journal of Commerce of Thursday says: "The banks held a meeting to-day to discuss the question of receiving United States demand notes, and to settle other matters connected with recent financial movements. The committee on demand notes made their report, which was understood to be adverse to the plan of receiving them on deposit. This brought out a spirited discussion, and the document was referred back to the committee to report again at a future meeting, whereupon the whole party adjourned without further action."

We see it stated that the released Confederate ambassadors are to go no further than Halifax in the English war steamer Rinaldo. There they are to take the Cunard steamer.

A new mode of rilling cannon has been invented in New York, whereby guns of the largest calibre may be filled in 66 minutes—the power used being hydrostatic pressure.

The steamer Northern Light has arrived at New York from Aspinwall, with \$711,000 in gold from San Francisco.

Five hundred bales of cotton, en route for Europe, have arrived at Panama from Peru, and a much larger amount is going via Cape Horn. Efforts are making to raise a very large crop the ensuing year.

President Lincoln, Secretary Chase, and several prominent senators and representatives were present on the stand to hear Horace Greeley's lecture at the Smithsonian on Friday night. Greeley declared himself for "liberty" with or without the Union.

A slave of Col. J. D. Bowling, of Prince George's county, who decamped with some federal soldiers, has voluntarily returned home.

Wm. G. Brownlow, of Knoxville, Tenn., recently arrested and imprisoned on a charge of treason to the Confederate government, has been discharged from custody.

Gen. Fremont arrived in Washington on Saturday evening, and took private quarters.

Col. D. Cassy, of the Garibaldi Guard has been appointed a Brigadier-General of Volunteers.

Thirteen prisoners, captured by Gen. Porter's division of the Federal army in Virginia, have been brought to Washington, and lodged in the old capitol.

The steamer Louisiana, at Baltimore, from Old Point, on Saturday, brought up 260 released Federal prisoners, recently exchanged. They were well clothed, and looked well and hearty—and were escorted to the room of the Union Relief Association, where a breakfast was prepared for them.

The Washington correspondent of the Baltimore Sun says that there is so much sickness from small pox in Washington and vicinity, as to justify precautions against its spread.

The Charleston Courier states that the "stone blockade" only blockades about 3000 feet of the entrance to Charleston harbor, that it believes the obstructions will all soon be washed away, and that there is plenty of room yet for the entrance and departure of vessels.

The Richmond Examiner has a long article complaining of the condition of the Confederate army—and stating that there is "too much drunkenness among the officers and idleness among the men," allowed. It says the courage of the troops has not abated—but that insouciance, and the evils of a camp life are having a very bad effect—and that many, already there, though not dreading a fight, are for obtaining substitutes, &c. The Examiner is severe in its comments.

The opinion of Comptroller Whittlesey, acquiesced in by Secretary Chase, is that, according to the present law regulating the compensation of Members of the U. S. Congress, they can receive mileage only for the regular sessions. Therefore, mileage for the July extra session remains to be provided for by future legislation. Several Senators were paid the two mileages before the opinion was furnished.

The widow of the late Thoroughgood Dix, in Accomack county, Va., was lately assassinated. It appears she was sitting at the window sewing on Friday night, the 20th ult., when some one from the outside fired a gun through the window, lodging five balls in her bosom, killing her instantly. Two of her step sons have been arrested, together with five blacks, belonging on the estate, and placed in Dummontown jail.

The gale of wind which prevailed here on Wednesday evening, was unusually violent at the East. At Boston, and in that vicinity, considerable damage was done. Several buildings were unroofed, chimneys blown down, trees prostrated, and vessels driven ashore in and about the harbor.

Com. Goldsborough, who is to command the naval portion of Gen. Burnside's expedition, has arrived at Annapolis, and is busy inspecting the transport fleet. Probably all of the vessels ordered to rendezvous at the place are now there.

A meeting of British subjects was held in New York on Friday, to renew allegiance to the Queen, and give a suitable expression of their sorrow for the death of Prince Albert.

We find the following in a Philadelphia paper:—"We have learned, through what we believe to be the most reliable sources, that letters have been received from Rev. Dr. Burrows, of Richmond, stating that his two sons and son-in-law perished at the battle of Bull Run. One son was brought back dead, the other, reported at the time severely wounded, has never been heard from since the day of the battle." We do not know what truth there is in this.

Mr. Chase suggests the propriety of the adoption of a joint resolution by the U. S. Congress, directing him to permit warehoused goods to be withdrawn on payment of the duties imposed by the act of August last; and to refund any excess of duties above those thus imposed, which may have been collected on goods already withdrawn.

The twenty-first anniversary of the return of the First Napoleon's ashes from St. Helena has been celebrated at the Hotel of the Invalides in Paris. The old soldiers of the First Empire residing in the department of the Seine all attended the religious ceremony celebrated on the occasion. The greater number of them were attired in their ancient uniforms.

The autumnal freshets in Oregon are said to have swept away nearly all the mills in the State, with great quantities of grain.

A Confederate privateer succeeded in running the blockade off Charleston harbor on the night of December 26, after having previously made several ineffectual attempts.

It is reported that the British transport steamer Parana, with 1100 British troops, has been wrecked in the river St. Lawrence. The report of the loss of this vessel, is, however, not believed. She was not expected to come to the St. Lawrence.

Since the 21st ult., the floods have been renewed to a great extent throughout the valley portion of California. Sacramento and Sockton have been partially overflowed again without much additional damage. Business with the interior has been suspended and more property has been destroyed than in the State by the freshest than in the old freshest heretofore.

Jeffords, convicted of the murder of Matthew Lewis, in New York, has been sentenced to be hanged.

Mr. Seward was on a visit, last week, to his farm, in Orange county, N. Y.