THE MARYLAND NEWS SHEET.

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SEE FOURTH PAGE.

LATEST NEWS. TELEGRAMS.

FROM WASHINGTON.

Unfounded Reports—Health of General McClellan.

WASHINGTON, January 2.—It was yesterday reported that General McCall had been killed in a skirmish—the innocent firing of guns on the night previous being the only foundation for the rumor. Perhaps the report prevailing in distant cities, and about which questions by telegraph are asked to-day, of the death of General McClellan, results from a partial similarity of names. The response to specific inquiry this morning in the proper quarter warrants the assertion that at no time recently has General McClellan been dangerously ill; that he has nearly recovered from his indisposition; that he is attending to important business connected with the army, and expects to engage in out door business in the course of several days. The General has only been suffering from a severe cold taken at General Porter's last review. He is rapidly recovering from its effects.

General Benham Ordered to Duty, etc.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 2.—The Court of Inquiry on the charges against General H. W. Benham, preferred by General Rosecrans, assembled yesterday, and so soon as the charges were read he was released from arrest and ordered to duty at once.—Colonel Wilson's regiment of Mechanic Fusileers has been ordered to report to General Lane, Fort Leavenworth. This regiment is composed of twelve hundred practical mechanics.

The Light-House Board.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 2.—The Light-House Board, through its Secretary, Mr. Jenkins, gives evidence of its vitality by advertising for a supply of 70,000 gallons of the best quality of pure winter-strained sperm oil for the use of the establishment.

From the Lower Potomac.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 2.—The steamer Stepping Stones came up from the Potomac flotilla last night. This steamer, on her reconnoitering trip up Occoquan bay lately, scattered the Confederates with three well directed shots from her 24-pounder rifled gun, the shells bursting right in the midst of groups of Confederate soldiers. But on her return, she was followed by riflemen who, concealed behind trees, fired several bullets through her sides, one of which passed through the head of the Captain's berth.

The new Confederate battery is on Possum Nose, this side of Cockpit Point, and is therefore the nearest battery to this city. At least one heavy rifled gun is mounted there, as shells have been fired into the mouth of the Matawoman.

Washington Items.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 2.—Captains Shubrick and Wilkes, and Naval Constructor Pook, compose the board recently appointed by the Secretary of the Navy to examine and report upon certain inventions which promise usefulness in that branch of the service.

It is reported that the continuous firing through out Tuesday night by our troops on the Virginia side of the Potomac is to be the subject of a formal investigation.

A quorum of members was not present in either House of Congress to-day.

IMPORTANT FROM MEXICO.

Vera Cruz Occupied by the Spaniards.

NEW YORK, January 2.—The steamer Columbia, from Havana on the 28th ult., has arrived. She brings intelligence that Vera Cruz has been occupied by the Spaniards, and that the Spanish flag is waving over the famous fortress of San Juan d'Ulloa.

From the Havana *Diario* we learn that the Governor of Vera Cruz was willing to evacuate the city, but demanded and received a respite of twenty-four hours. General Gassett, on landing, issued a proclamation to the troops, and another to the people, the latter to the effect that the troops had come thither only to demand satisfaction for a failure in the fulfilment of treaties and for violence committed against their compatriots; and to obtain guarantees against similar outrages. The army, after fulfilling its mission from the Queen, would return to their own country, with the certainty of having merited the affection of the Mexicans. Nearly one hundred rifled cannon, of the latest pattern, were found in San Juan de Ulloa.

FROM GENERAL BANKS' DIVISION.

Skirmishing Near Hancock--Sharp Work by the First Maryland Regiment, etc.

FREDERICK, Jan. 2.—Official advices yesterday, from Williamsport, show the necessity of making some correction of the previous statement in regard to the affair of Tuesday on the railroad.

Detachments of the Thirteenth Massachusetts and First Maryland participated in the repulse and rout of the Confederate forces. Our men killed and buried 29 of the enemy, and it is supposed many afterwards died of their wounds. Our loss is reported by private sources to have been five wounded—none killed.

At Berlin, above the Point of Rocks, an affair occurred on the 31st, which shows the necessity of extreme caution in dealing with our enemies. Two men approached the river, on the Virginia side, with a flag of truce, and begged to be brought over, stating they were refugees. Captain Pardee, of Company A, 28th regiment Pennsylvania, gave orders to so dispose of his force as to cover a boat to bring them off, in the meantime entertaining those on the opposite side by conversation, to distract their attention. When all was ready, he despatched a sergeant and two men in a boat to bring them off. As the boat approached the shore, a company of dismounted Confederate cavalry showed themselves on the hill above, and fired a volley upon the boat. The crew threw themselves overboard towards the Maryland shore, and, thus protected, pulled the boat across. In the meantime Pardee's concealed riflemen opened on the cavalry with such effect as to cause a stampede, with great loss in wounded, at least. One of the boatmen had an ear lacerated by a ball from the cavalry.

FROM FORTRESS MONROE.

FORTRESS MONROE, January 1—Captains Shillingham and Munson, of the 79th New York regiment, Lieutenant W. Dickinson, 3d regiment United States Infantry, Lieutenant J. W. Hart, of the 20th Indiana regiment, and Corporal Thomas McDowell, 79th New York regiment, arrived here from Richmond last evening, by a flag of truce from Norfolk. They are a part of the 250 men to be released or exchanged for an equal number sent to Richmond last week. Their experiences are listened to with the greatest interest, but they add little to the numerous similar statements already published. A great improvement in the treatment of prisoners is said to have taken place within two weeks. The above officers go to Baltimore to-night, on their way home. The remainder of the prisoners to be released are expected here to-morrow afternoon, and a number of our wounded, making a total of 284 to be released, are expected in a few days.

Last night's flag of truce also brought the captain and crew of the schooner John F. Crouch, from Alexandria for Dighton, Mass., with coal, which is reported to have been beached inside of Cape Henry on Friday night last.

New Year's calls are being made to day, and most of the officers here called upon General Wool this morning to pay him their respects.

A flag of truce early this morning brought over a young lady to go North.

Captain McQuaid, of the 38th New York regiment, and a Lieutenant of the regular army, died at Richmond on the 26th of December.

Arrivals from Port Royal.

NEW YORK, Jan. 2.—The steamer Ariel arrived yesterday from Port Royal, which post she left on the 28th. She brings no news of moment.

The United States frigate Sabine arrived yesterday from Georgetown, South Carolina, via Port Royal, for repairs. The prize bark Express has arrived from the bar of the Mississippi.

Messrs. Mason and Slidell Gone to Sea in a Storm.

PROVINCETOWN, January 2.—The British steam gunboat Rinaldo left here at five o'clock yesterday afternoon, with Mason and Slidell and their Secretaries on board. The wind blew a hurricane all night.

Consecration of a Bishop.

PHILADELPHIA, January 2.—Rev. William Bacon Steven, D. D., was this morning consecrated Assistant Bishop of the Episcopal Diocess of Pennsylvania. The consecration took place at St. Andrew's Church, of which the Rev. gentleman has been for many years the rector.

Arrival of the Steamer Macedonian.

BOSTON, January 2.—The United States ship Macedonian, from St. Thomas, is at anchor in the bay.

THE SUBSTITUTES FOR MESSRS. MASON AND SLIDELL.—The Toronto *Leader*, of Dec. 27, says:

Some days since it was stated that Mr. Breckinridge, late of the United States Senate, but now of the Southern Confederacy, had sailed in one of the Cunard steamers as Ambassador to England in place of Mr. Mason. Then it was said the statement was incorrect. It proves, however, to have been true, as will be seen from the following paragraph, which we take from the Halifax (N. S.) *Express* of the 13th inst.

Some few weeks ago it was announced in a despatch to this paper, that immediately on the receipt of the intelligence of the capture of Messrs. Mason and Slidell in the Southern States, Messrs. Hunter and Breckinridge had been appointed in their place; and that the latter would make his way on to Halifax and proceed in the Cunard steamer to Europe. The despatch turns out to be correct. Mr. Breckinridge, it appears, arrived here about a week ago, accompanied by another gentleman, and took passage this morning in the Canada for England.

It appears that the authorities in Boston were aware of the fact of Mr. Breckinridge being here, and the Attorney-General of Boston sent a note to the captain of the Canada, previous to his sailing from Boston, forbidding him taking Breckinridge on board. We learn that Captain Muir very quietly replied that he was not supposed to know who his passengers were; and he would like to see any passenger taken out of his ship, while under the protection of the British flag. It is also stated that a similar notice was served on the captain of the Canada here; but we are informed that no notice was taken of it, and Mr. Breckinridge is now on board the steamship *en route* for Europe.

There is much excitement in the Boston Navy-yard, in regard to a proposed reduction in the rate of wages and extension of the time devoted to work. A strike is talked of, and efforts are making to secure the co-operation of the workmen in other yards.

CITY INTELLIGENCE.

THE CONCERT FOR ST. MARY'S ORPHAN ASYLUM TO BE REPEATED.—The great gratification manifested by the auditory at the last concert for St. Mary's Orphan Asylum, and the disappointment of so many who failed to secure even a standing place, makes it certain that its reproduction will be very agreeable intelligence to our citizens generally. The same parties who generously assisted at the last entertainment will participate in this, and as they are composed of the best vocal and instrumental talent of the city, there can be no such thing as failure. Under the leadership of Professor Gegan, we always look for a success, as his reputation in that capacity is unsurpassed by any of our musical directors. We understand there will be some pleasing additions to the programme.

We need scarcely remind our readers, that the gratuitous assistance tendered by so many of our worthiest citizens, to this musical festival, is prompted solely by the knowledge of the necessities of the little orphan girls in whose behalf it is gotten up. These necessities have greatly multiplied this year, by reason of the inability of many charitable contributors to make their usual offering, and on account of the falling off in the demand for needle work, which was heretofore a considerable item in the annual revenue for the support of the Asylum.

We doubt whether there is a city in the Union, where there is as much vocal talent as in our own. This will be brought out in the coming concert, and our citizens, in addition to the rare entertainment they will have, will be able to go home with the consoling assurance, that they have done something to clothe and feed the helpless orphan girl in a winter of great want and scarcity.

The concert is to take place on the 2d of January, at the New Assembly Rooms. The doors will be opened at seven o'clock, and the performance commence at eight. Price of tickets 50 cents, reserved seats 25 cents additional. The tickets can be had at Mr. McCaffrey's music store, south side of Baltimore street, between Charles and Light streets.—*Catholic Mirror.*

THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL.—A few days since a committee of the members elect of the First Branch of the City Council, consisting of Samuel Duer, Ed. A. Lambdin and James Young, waited on Acting Mayor Baker for the purpose of conferring with him relative to the organization of the Branch on Monday next. It was currently reported that it was the determination of the Acting Mayor not to give official recognition to the Branch, as he regarded their election as null and void. In the interview between the committee and the Mayor, he informed them that he had advised with the City Counsellor, Geo M. Gill, Esq., and that officer had given the opinion that the election was illegal, and consequently they were not entitled to seats as members. He also referred to the fact that the law required all officers to take the oath of office within thirty days after their election, which the gentlemen had not complied with. The committee in reply stated that eminent counsel had been consulted, and opinions just the reverse of that of the City Counsellor had been given. The members were legally elected, and were entitled to their seats; and while the law required all officers of the city to qualify within thirty days after their appointment, it did not apply to them, as they were not officers, but members of the corporation of the city. After a free and frank interchange of opinions, the Mayor requested the committee to call in a day or two, and he would give them a decision in the matter. After a further consideration of the subject, the Mayor determined to offer no obstructions to the organization of the Branch, and it will accordingly meet on Monday afternoon next.

A FIGHT IN A BAWDY HOUSE—A SOLDIER SHOT.—On Wednesday night, about half past nine o'clock, a fight took place in the house of a woman named Louisa Fisher, on Eastern avenue, in the locality known as the Causeway, in which a soldier named John Ryan, of the New York Third regiment, it is feared received injuries which will prove fatal. A number of the New York Third were in the house, dancing with some women, when some half dozen of soldiers, wearing cavalry uniform, entered. A difficulty occurred between one of the New Yorkers and one of the cavalry soldiers in regard to one of the females, and a fight ensued, in which the latter were worsted and finally driven from the house. Scarcely had the door been closed when one of the cavalry soldiers opened it, and, taking aim, discharged a revolver at Ryan, who was standing near the door. The ball entered just below the right shoulder blade, passed through the right lung, and lodged near the right nipple. Ryan fell to the floor apparently dead. His comrades, instead of pursuing the man who fired the pistol, went to the assistance of Ryan, and the party who shot succeeded in making his escape. The report of the pistol brought several of the police to the scene, who took charge of Ryan and had him conveyed to the Eastern district police station. Dr. Dwinelle was called and succeeded in extracting the ball. Ryan remained at the station house until yesterday afternoon when he was taken to the house of Mr. Wm. Garnett, on Broadway, corner of Lancaster street, where he now lies in a critical condition. No arrests have yet been made.

PRISONER BROUGHT ON.—It will be remembered that on Christmas Day an affray took place on North street, near Foundry street, in which a young man named Nichols was severely stabbed by a man named Clabby, and the latter succeeded in making good his escape. It appears that Clabby went from the fight to the house of his mother, whom he told of the occurrence, and she gave him $100, and told him to leave the city.—He went to the town of Texas and thence to Harrisburg, where he got drunk and lost his money. He then made his way to the city of Philadelphia, but had been there but a day or two when he was arrested by the police of that city, information of his connection with the fight having been sent on by the police authorities. Yesterday he was brought on to this city, under the charge of Lieut. Wallis and Sergt. Sindall. Justice Nalls committed him to jail to answer the charge of stabbing with intent to kill. Nichols is much improved, and no fears are entertained of his final recovery.

THE BRIG FRANCES JANE.—On the 26th of December the brig Frances Jane, Captain Kirch, and owned by Kirkland, Chase & Co., cleared from this port for St. Johns, Porto Rico, returned to Annapolis on Wednesday, in charge of the first officer. It is reported that the brig, by order of the Captain, was run into the Potomac, and when off Smith's Point the Captain, a portion of the crew, and some half dozen young men who were secreted on board the brig when she left this city, went ashore on the Virginia side. It is also reported that a large quantity of quinine and other medicines, together with spool cotton, buttons and other articles, which had been clandestinely put aboard here, were removed in the boat and taken to Virginia. Kirkland, Chase & Co. are entirely ignorant of the designs of the Captain, and consequently have no complicity in the matter. The brig is still lying at Annapolis, but will no doubt proceed in a day or two on her legitimate voyage.

CHARGE OF STEALING.—James F. Plowman was yesterday morning taken into custody upon the charge of stealing five packages of coppers, containing twenty-five cents each, the property of George Cole. Some of the coppers were found upon the person of Plowman, who is quite a youth. He was arraigned before Justice Logan, who committed him to jail in default of bail to answer the charge.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.—At a meeting held by Iris Lodge, No. 48, I. O. O. F., for an election of officers, the following gentlemen were elected for the ensuing term. Noble Grand, John Walker; Vice Grand, Wm. H. Cox; Financial Secretary, Thos. C. McGuire (re-elected); Recording Secretary, Jas. M. Fisher; Treasurer, Brice H. Hobbs; Representative to Grand Lodge, Job Scott.

ANOTHER CALENDAR.—Mr. John D. Toy, printer, corner of Baltimore and St. Paul streets, up stairs, has issued a counting house calendar for 1862, which is unsurpassed in neatness of typography.

THE CODE.—"There was no business of public interest transacted in any of the City Courts yesterday.

Amusements.

THE GRAND COMBINATION AT THE HOLLIDAY STREET THEATRE.—Saturday evening closes the engagement of the most splendid company that ever appeared in this city. Artistes of the first calibre are banded together to give perfection to the representation of the best plays in the English language. Mr. Ford deserves the highest encomiums for this endeavor to lead public taste back into legitimate sources. Last evening we witnessed the perfection of comedy acting. The *School for Scandal* was admirably performed by all concerned. Mrs. Barrow, acknowledged to be the best Lady Teazle of the day, delighted all by the finish and appropriateness of her acting, bringing out points that we had never before seen made anything of; her interviews with Sir Peter were arch in the extreme, and in the scandal scenes she fully embodied the meaning of the brilliant Sheridan, carrying her audience completely with her; Mrs. Barrow entirely sustained her high reputation throughout. Mr. Mark Smith made a capital Sir Peter; indeed, few have excelled him who are now on the stage. Mr. E. L. Davenport, as Charles Surface, fairly surprised us, his representation of the *insouciant* man about town was admirable, showing a versatility of talent that is very rare.—Joseph Surface received his share of the honors of the evening, Mr. Wallack doing him every justice; it was a finely conceived performance, and added to the fame he has already acquired. As a whole, perfection was nearly attained, and it is fair to presume that a great success awaits the "Combination" at Niblo's Gardens, New York, where they appear next week. This evening, Mr. E. L. Davenport appears in his great character of Hamlet; Mr. Wallack as the Ghost; Mark Smith as Polonius; that fine actress, Mrs. Wallack, as the Queen, and Mrs. Barrow as Ophelia. The New York press highly commended the latter's performance last week, pronouncing it as exquisitely touching. This cast could hardly be improved and will assuredly draw a crowded house.

FRONT STREET THEATRE—*Meg Merriles.*—To-night the great tragic actress, Mrs. Waller, will appear in her best character, Meg Merriles, in the operatic drama of *Guy Mannering*, on the occasion of her benefit. The rendition of this weird gipsy character is said to be the most thrilling and imposing of Mrs. Waller's extensive repertoire. We are confident of Mrs. Waller's ability to perform her part in an entirely satisfactory manner. Those of our gentlemen readers who intend to visit Front Street with ladies should secure their seats in advance to avoid the crowd at the box office. To-morrow (Saturday) evening Mr. and Mrs. Waller will appear for the last time, when Schiller's tragedy of the *Robbers* will be enacted by the combination company.

CUBAS.—On Monday evening a great attraction will be offered the *habitues* of the Front Street Theatre by the management. We refer to the *debut* of Senorita Isabel Cubas, the beautiful Spanish danseuse from the Academy of Music, Philadelphia, where, for the past month, she has been performing. The papers of that city pronounce her to be unrivalled. Her style is essentially her own. Her whole form seems full of life. In every look or motion she is the queen of the scene—triumphant in her poses, faultless in precision and lightness of step. As a terpsichorean *artiste*, she has never been excelled, and we advise all our readers to be sure and see her.

BALTIMORE MUSEUM.—This popular place of amusement appears to have lost none of its attractions, as has been attested by the crowded houses that have nightly filled the auditorium during the present holiday season. The manager keeps up the attractions most admirably, new scenes and original jokes being presented nightly. All those who may desire an hour's hearty laugh can find no better place whereat to enjoy it than at Kunkel's Museum.

LAW INTELLIGENCE.

Reported for the Maryland News Sheet.

BALTIMORE COUNTY COURT—Judge Price.

TOWSONTOWN, January 1.

The civil docket was taken up, and the case of Jesse Waters *vs.* Francis Kendig occupied the attention of the Court for three hours, when Mr. Walsh asked leave to amend the *narr.*, and the case was continued to the next term.

William and Ann Wise, administrators of John Wise, *vs.* the Northern Central Railway Company. An action to recover the value of a horse killed by one of the company's engines passing over the road. On trial.

The grand jury to-day paid their official visit to the jail, and found it in a cleanly condition.

The Clerk of the County Court has issued the following number of marriage licenses during the past five years, viz:

Months.	*Years.* 1857.	1858.	1859.	1860.	1861.
January	11	7	9	10	7
February	7	6	6	7	4
March	3	2	11	13	6
April	5	7	7	9	13
May	10	5	6	15	8
June	8	22	3	5	8
July	6	6	5	5	6
August	7	10	5	14	6
September	10	8	8	14	18
October	13	8	10	12	9
November	8	3	12	16	10
December	7	22	11	20	20
Total	95	108	93	140	108

TOWSONTOWN, Jan 2.

The jury in the case of Wise *vs.* the Northern Central Railway, commenced yesterday, for the recovery of certain damages sustained in the killing of a horse, returned a verdict in favor of the defendants.

Alexander Knotts, a private in the Second Maryland regiment, convicted of forcible entry and destroying the furniture of a colored woman residing in the eighth district of this county, was sentenced to the penitentiary for three years.

The call of the civil docket was resumed, and the following cases disposed of: Henry O'Connell *vs.* Thomas Dougherty, *non pros*; Charles Wagner *et al.* *vs.* Frederick Von Lindenberger, *non pros.*; Daniel Scott *vs.* Richard Grason, *non pros.*; Jacob B. Hooker *vs.* Henry Coale, *off.*; Samuel Burnes *et al* *vs.* James Owings *et al.*, judgment of non suit; Henry Waters *vs.* Robert Irwin and Wm. W. Taylor, *off.*, F. Barrenger *vs.* Adam Snyder *et al.*, non suit. Robert Brown, Jr., *et al.* *vs.* Wm. McCann, non suit.

[The jurors this evening suspended a large American flag from the portico of the court-house. Four companies attached to the 87th Pennsylvania regiment were present.]

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES.

WASHINGTON, December 30.—Hon. D. W. Gooch, of Massachusetts, Mr. William H. Y. Hackett, and Mr. E. C. Ingersoll, of Illinois, were admitted attorneys and counsellors of this court.

No. 51. Lloyd N. Rogers' administrator, &c., appellants, *vs.* Joseph E. Law. The argument of this cause was commenced by Mr. J. M. Campbell for the appellants, and by Mr. Brent for the appellee.

WASHINGTON, December 31.—No. 51. Lloyd N. Rogers, &c., appellants, *vs.* Joseph E. Law, &c. The argument of this cause was continued by Mr. May for the appellee, and concluded by Mr. J. M. Campbell for the appellants.

Adjourned until Thursday.

MARYLAND LEGISLATURE.----REGULAR SESSION.

SENATE.

ANNAPOLIS, JANUARY 2.—The Senate met at 12 o'clock, and was called to order by the PRESIDENT.

Mr. HARRISON presented a petition from John T. Ashcomb and others, of Queen Anne's county, for a modification of the "stay law," which was referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Mr. EICHELBERGER asked leave for the Committee on Corporations to report a bill providing for the holding of elections in Frederick.

Mr. ECCLESTON obtained leave for the Committee on Corporations to report a bill incorporating the Baltimore City Passenger Railway Company.

On motion of Mr. FIERY, it was ordered that the daily hour of meeting be 11 o'clock.

A communication was received from the Governor endorsed "Executive Business."

Mr. EICHELBERGER, from the Committee on Corporations, reported a bill regulating the holding of elections in Frederick, which was read a first time.

On motion of Mr. EICHELBERGER, a message to the House was adopted, proposing the appointment of a joint committee to wait on the Governor, and notify him that the Legislature was ready to proceed to business.

The PRESIDENT appointed, on the part of the Senate, Messrs Eichelberger and Billingslea.

The committee retired, and returned after a short absence, with the word that the Message might be expected in a few moments.

In a few minutes Mr. JEFFERSON, the Private Secretary, delivered the Message, which was read by the Clerk.

After the reading of which, it was ordered that one thousand extra copies should be printed.

The Senate then adjourned.

HOUSE OF DELEGATES.

The House was called to order at noon by the SPEAKER, and Rev. Mr. DAVENPORT opened with a prayer. The roll was called and a quorum found to be present. The proceedings of yesterday were read and approved.

The SPEAKER laid before the House the report of George H. Carman, Clerk of the Circuit Court for Baltimore county, in relation to papers destroyed by fire in the Court House, which was ordered to be printed, and referred to the Baltimore county Delegation.

Mr. ELISHA LEWIS, member from Harford, appeared this morning and qualified.

Mr. PRICE submitted a message in answer to one of the Senate asking that a joint committee consisting of two members of the Senate and three of the House be appointed to wait on the Governor and inform him of their readiness to proceed to business, which was adopted, and Messrs. Price, Davis, of Montgomery, and Smyth were appointed on the part of the House.

The committee in a short time returned with the answer that the Message would be sent to both Houses at half past one o'clock.

Mr. ALEXANDER presented the petition of H. H Owens, asking a repayment of taxes paid by him as executor, which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. WAINRICH presented the petition of the Board of Managers of the Red Men's Hall of Baltimore, asking exemption from general and local taxation, which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Leave was granted to the Committee on Corporations, to report a bill extending the charter of the Pipe Creek Benevolent Society.

Leave was given to the Judiciary Committee to report a bill authorizing A. D. Miller to settle an administrator's account.

Leave was given to the Committee on Inspections to report a bill repealing certain laws relating to the appointment of three Tobacco Commissioners to supervise the inspectors.

Leave was given a Special Committee to report a bill regulating the taking of oysters.

Leave was given to a Special Committee, consisting of Messrs. Reese, Hug and Taylor, to report a bill authorizing the Court of Appeals to hear petitions for writs of *mandamus* growing out of the opening of Holliday street, Baltimore.

Leave was given the Baltimore city Delegation to report a bill authorizing the election of a loyal Mayor and Second Branch of the City Council of Baltimore.

Leave was given to a Special Committee to amend the laws relating to the trapping and killing of partridges.

Leave was given to a Special Committee to amend the laws relating to crows.

The Committee on Claims have leave to report a bill to compensate J. H. Alexander for services in the case of the State against A. L. Jarrett and Spring Harwood.

The Message of the Governor was then received by the hands of Thomas J. Wilson, Secretary of State, and read by the Clerk.

It was ordered that five thousand extra copies of the Message be printed for the use of the House.

On motion of Mr. HAMMOND leave was given the Committee on Ways and Means to report a bill appropriating a sum of money to redeem unused stamps.

Mr. MAGRUDER, from a Special Committee, reported a bill relating to the catching and killing of partridges, which was read the first time.

Mr. ALEXANDER, from a Special Committee, reported a bill ratifying the purchase and organization of Patterson and Druid Hill Parks, in Baltimore, which was read the first time and ordered to be printed.

Mr. PRICE, from the Committee on Judiciary, reported adversely on the bill relating to the removal of causes from the Baltimore City Courts.

Mr. DAVIS obtained leave for the Montgomery and Howard delegations to report a bill repealing an act authorizing the opening of a road in Howard and Montgomery counties.

The House at half-past two adjourned to eleven o'clock to-morrow.

The Toronto *Leader*, of the 27th December, on the faith of a statement made by the Halifax, Nova Scotia, *Express*, of the 13th ultimo, repeats the rumor that John C. Breckinridge, and Mr. Hunter, of Virginia, took passage on that day on board the Canada, from Halifax, to represent the Southern Confederacy in place of Mason and Slidell.

WAR ITEMS.

THE MILITARY SITUATION IN KENTUCKY.

The Respective Positions of the Contending Armies.

Correspondence of the Boston Journal.

THE FIELD.

I propose to take a panoramic view of the entire field of operations, just as you sometimes look upon a landscape from commanding hill-top. Your readers will, I think, better understand the combined movements of the army when they shall take place, by first taking an out-look at all the positions from one stand-point. In this respect, a more satisfactory view can be had from this city than from any other point. After a general out-look will come the nearer inspection which I propose to make along the lines of the advancing divisions, provided the powers that be grant reasonable facilities.

There are two grand divisions of the army west of the Alleghanies—that commanded by General Buell in Kentucky, and that commanded by Gen. Halleck in Missouri. There will soon be a third, commanded by Gen. Lane, in Kansas. Gen. Buell has all of Kentucky east of Cumberland river. All west of that, including Cairo, is in Gen. Halleck's division.

Now let me ask the readers of *The Journal* to sit down by their cozy firesides, and, with a map of Kentucky before them, follow me in my look at the field. Let them forget that they are in their own snug parlors, and imagine instead that they are in this city, with eyes so keen, so far-sighted, that they can overlook the Kentucky hills, the intervening valleys, cleared fields and wooded slopes, and behold the white tents of our armies. Let us climb the high, steep, almost precipitous bluff behind this steaming city, redolent now with unsavory smells from all its slaughter-houses, and enter the Observatory where Prof. Mitchell (now General) has searched the depths of space with his superb telescope. Below us is *la belle Riveire* of the French Jesuits, winding in graceful curves along the beautiful valley. We are at its northmost sweep, as you see by a glance at the map.—Draw a line straight down along the meridian to Tennessee, and you measure Kentucky at its greatest width.

Now let us aid our vision with the telescope, and see the bearings of the different columns of the army as we should see them if we could add a mile to the altitude of our observatory. One hundred and forty miles, as the river winds to the east—about a hundred in a straight line—we see the Big Sandy which comes down from the mountains of Virghia and joins the Ohio, just above the town of Ironton. It is the boundary for a portion of its course, between Virginia and Kentucky. Ceredo, the little colonial town which was forced into being and died in infancy, lies above on the Virginia side. The Big Sandy is navigable fifty miles.—Following up the stream fifteen miles we come to the town of Louisa, county seat of Lawrence.—Here if General McCook, with a force of about four thousand, your readers, or those who have any vivid recollection of Bull Run will remember that he was in that affair. I saw him bring his regiment into position at Stone Bridge not fifteen minutes before the panic begun on our right.

Here, you observe, the river branches—the east fork being the State boundary, while the west fork cuts through Lawrence, Johnson and Pike counties, then turns a little east and spreads into rivulets among the mountains of Buchanan county in Virginia. A road—quite a good one for this section—winds along the banks of the stream, passing through the towns of Prestonburg and Piketon, both county seats. Prestonburg has two hundred inhabitants and Piketon five hundred. Flatboats can ascend to the last named place. Here are Confederates—three or four thousand, commanded by Humphrey Marshall. Just above Piketon the road forks, but by either route we can reach a very important position in Southwestern Virginia. About sixty miles distant from Piketon in a straight line, but farther by the road, is the town of Abington, the county seat of Washington county. It is on the great line of railroad over which the communication is kept up between the Confederates at Nashville and Manassas. Abington is the most important town in all this section—has six or seven churches, manufactories of leather, saddles and harness, which are of great value to the Confederates.

It is only eight miles from the boundary of East Tennessee, and there are loyal men all around it. Let it be kept in remembrance, for it may be of note before the war is over. Gen. McCook has not men enough to advance, neither has the Confederate commander. Both are watching, both guarding—the one an advance upon Ohio, the other an advance upon the railroad and a severance of the artery which would essentially stop circulation in Secessia.

Moving now almost exactly south, and looking along the meridian we see Lexington, and sixty miles beyond it Somerset, the county seat of Pulaski, only a half dozen miles from the Cumberland River. There is the encampment of Gen. Schoepff, the Hungarian who has seen service under Gen. Bem. He has six or seven thousand men and is waiting orders to move. Following up the Cumberland thirty miles or more, is Williamsburg, county seat of Whitley, and fifteen miles further is Barbboursville, the county seat of Knox. The Confederates under Zollicoffer are here five or six thousand, it is reported, guarding the roads leading to Cumberland Gap, that great natural gateway in the Cumberland mountains. Here let me correct an error, which I think is almost universal. The railway from Virginia to East Tennessee does not pass through the Gap, but further South. The great national road of which so much was said in the days of Jackson, Benton, Clay, and their compeers, runs through the Gap. And this force of the Confederates is designed to prevent Schoepff from penetrating the Gap, or sweeping down across the Cumberland and seizing the railroad west of the Gap. A railroad runs from Cincinnati to Danville, through Lexington. Gen. Thomas is at Danville with a brigade, designed perhaps to follow up Schoepff as a reserve. It is a broken country between Danville and the Cumberland, and Schoepff must rely upon the resources around him for the support of his army. The railroad recommended by the President to be constructed will open communication through this section, if the recommendation is carried out.

GENERAL BUELL'S MAIN ARMY.

Turning now to the southwest, we see a line of railroad leading towards Nashville, Tennessee, from Louisville. Seventy-two miles down the line is Munfordville, on the north bank of Green River, which crinkles through the State, turning, coiling and recoiling upon itself in interminable curves. Here you see the wreck of a noble bridge, which the Confederates destroyed, blowing up the massive stone piers and precipitating the magnificent structure to the bottom of the river. Here, too, you can see the white tents of a hundred regiments. A thousand men are hard at work upon the bridge, rearing a temporary structure. They have got it well along, and in a few days it will be complete. Crossing the river and turning ten miles towards the West we see the Mammoth Cave. Beyond, fifteen or twenty miles, is Bowling Green, where the Confederates are in strong position, it is said, under Johnson and Buckner, about forty thousand of them behind intrenchments.

Can they be shelled out, or flanked? Looking once more at the river, we find that it is navigable for steamboats up to Morgantown, which, as you observe, is quite a place in Butler county. Looking straight down towards the Tennessee line from Morgantown, thirty miles distant, or two days' march, is Russellville, the county seat of Logan, near the centre of the county. It is in rear of Bowling Green, and on the stage road leading from Morgantown to Russellville. It is on the direct course towards Nashville, which is about fifty miles further south. There are some Federal troops near Morgantown, and at other places on Green River, which can receive transportation by steamboats, provided the river is not closed by ice. When General Buell is ready for them to move, undoubtedly you will hear that Bowling Green has a fire in the rear. The Confederate force at Bowling Green is variously estimated. The Confederates say one hundred thousand, but I hear that that is bravado to blind Buell, and that the real available force does not exceed fifty thousand. Time will tell which is the true estimate.

This finishes the general view of Buell's division. I hope in a few days to give a closer inspection, to make personal observations upon the ground and to stand with our triumphant troops upon Bowling Green; but Buell is not yet ready to push on.

With this panoramic view of the positions, your readers, if they have a good map, will be able to obtain a correct understanding of the field of operations, and to draw accurate inferences as to what is General Buell's plan. If they have not a map I fear that my attempt at topographical and geographical delineation will be an unintelligible jumble. I will not at this time take a survey of the positions in Halleck's division, lest I make confusion worse confounded. In due time I hope to be able to see what is going on at Cario, Paducah and St. Louis.

The Situation in Missouri.

A correspondent, writing from St. Louis under date of December 27th, says:

As I predicted some days since, General Price would not await the consummation of General Halleck's little plan for his capture. The wily warrior has waited as long as it was safe, and accepted the least disastrous horn of the dilemma—a retreat toward the Arkansas line. I have every reason to believe that General Pope received from headquarters positive instructions not to approach too near to Osceola with his main column. This looked as if the bird was to be trapped, not frightened. Price undoubtedly took counsel of his fears. The brilliant dash of a battalion of cavalry inside of Rains' pickets was magnified into an impending attack, and at that moment Price was but badly prepared for a formidable resistance. To my mind, it is to be accounted as a misfortune that Price has been allowed to make his escape. General Halleck contemplated his capture, but was anxious to make no false or premature step. We could afford to wait, but we could not afford to tempt fortune by any unequal combat. The proximity of the Confederate camp was no reason for alarm, but the Confederate strength has been over-estimated at Osceola. A sudden dash at him would, in the opinion of many, have resulted either in the capture of part of his command, all of his baggage, and possibly part of his artillery. That it was not sooner attempted will, we think, be a source of regret to General Halleck himself.

Meantime, the effect must be very disheartening to the Confederates and their sympathizers. Very many of them had kept up their sinking hopes by the fond tales of their superiors that they were to march to St. Louis, and there join the victorious forces under Pillow. The wholesale capture of prisoners by General Pope must have cast a cold shade over the spirits of men who believed they were destined to be in at the distribution of two hundred million of dollars' worth of plunder. The sudden and hasty exit of Price from Osceola must have correspondingly sent the mercury of the spirits of loyal men up to the fever heat. The territory lying between the Missouri river and the Arkansas line has been used as the hunting ground—the national army chasing the Confederates down to the line, and the Confederates chasing back the Union army to their cover near the river. With every turn of the scale the vast majority of the people turn also. Like the Covenanters of old, they are "good Union men," or "good Southern men," as the case may be.

A part of Price's plan was undoubtedly to have his agents and friends in the portion of the State north of the Missouri river; at a given signal from him burn and destroy the bridges and road-bed of the North Missouri and Hannibal and St. Joseph railroads. The time for his co-operation had not come; but, on the contrary, a large portion of his men were captured. Chagrin at his loss, or possibly a message of Price sent to divert attention from his retreat, caused the simultaneous destruction of the two roads. The rebellious spirit was supposed to be almost extinct in this region, but, as events show, the traitors in heart are only to be trusted when they are powerless to do mischief. General Halleck's stringent orders look to their severe and prompt punishment; but something more than "General Orders" must be applied, if we would have our mandates obeyed. It is not a little strange, in this connection, that Colonel Blye, with his regiment of sharpshooters, who was stationed at Renick and Hudson, should have been so ineffectual in suppressing these incendiaries, the more so as the last report which reaches us represents him as being surrounded by Confederates, and in a critical position. It is remarked by some that it may prove to be a streak of that ancient weakness of his nature which showed itself to bad advantage during the Canadian rebellion at Ogdensburg. A body of troops has been despatched up the North Missouri Railroad, and at last accounts had restored the telegraph as far as High Hill, seventy-six miles from this point. They had encountered no enemy as yet, and all fears of a serious collision are dismissed. The facts are, all that can be seen wherever our troops advance, is an entirely loyal and devoted population, who talk little about the bridge-burning, and who testify that there are no secessionists in the neighborhood. The road will not be opened for some weeks, and will then require to be strongly guarded. Fortunately, by that time, we shall have enough State troops to spare for that purpose.

The Burnside Expedition--Preparations for Departure.

Correspondence of the N. Y. Evening Post.

ANNAPOLIS, Maryland, Dec 29.—Ever since the first gathering of the transports at Annapolis there has been an eager anxiety to see the fleet sail, and this anxiety will doubtless be soon relieved. Almost everything is ready, or rather, everything is almost ready. To day the vessels are taking in the last of the ordnance and ammunition