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GENERAL NEWS.

In the U. S. Senate, on Thursday, but little business of interest was transacted, no quorum being present several times during the day.—The bill from the House to change the districts of the U. S. Circuit Courts was amended and passed. The House disagreed to the Senate amendment to the confiscation bill. The bill to provide for the release of political prisoners was reported back from the judiciary committee, with an amendment authorizing the President to suspend the writ of habeas corpus in case of invasion and for the public safety. A bill was passed in relation to schools for the education of colored children in the District of Columbia.

In Baltimore, on Thursday, Mr. George U. Porter, Secretary of the Exchange Reading Room, was arrested by order of General Wool, and sent to Fort McHenry. The charge against Mr. Porter was the promulgation of a statement that General McClellan had been utterly routed, and had taken refuge with his staff on board the gunboat Galena—that he had asked terms of capitulation, and that General Lee had refused any terms but an unconditional surrender. It was also stated that the whole of McClellan's Division had been captured. A written statement to this effect was handed around and laid on the table for general perusal. The rumor in question created great excitement in the city, and caused some persons to sacrifice Government stocks at a ruinous rate. Thomas S. Piggott was also re-arrested and sent to Fort McHenry on a charge of promulgating fabulous statements. He was out on his parole, having been previously confined. George W. Davis, a resident of West Baltimore, was also arrested and taken to Fort McHenry.

A bill is now pending in the House of Representatives providing for the discharge of State prisoners, and others; and to authorize the Judges of the United States Courts to take bail or recognizances to secure the trial of the same.

On the 26th of June last, Gen. Sigel announced at Middletown, Va., that he was to take command of the German Division. The news of this change was received with great enthusiasm by the Germans.

Gen. McClellan's movement from his base on the Pamunkey and York rivers to James river, and the serious actions which accompanied the withdrawal of his right wing, continue to be the all-absorbing theme of public conversation. Scarcely any other topic is heard on the street. Intelligence from the scene of action is of the most conflicting nature.

The N. Y. Herald wants "a reformation of the Cabinet and an overhauling of Congress; and also, a general mass meeting of the people of N. York city."

Mr. Sherman's opposition will be offered to any appropriation for the purpose of carrying out the proposed treaty with Mexico. The arguments employed against it are that the whole Mexican debt to Europe may be bought up for less than the eleven millions mentioned in the bill, and that the treaty is only a profitable job.

The late despatches sent from Washington to Gen. Butler are said to contain instructions concerning the way in which foreigners will have to be treated in the future, and review at the same time the debatable cases upon which he has already pronounced.

In a recent examination of the papers of the late Joseph Ellicott a letter was found dated at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, in 1814, enclosing \$69.19 as the contribution of that town for the sick and wounded soldiers on the Western frontier. The letter was carefully folded and filed in Mr. Ellicott's own handwriting, with the money as originally enclosed. A portion of it was bills on the old Banks of Troy, and the City Bank of New York, which are now good, although nearly fifty years have expired since the money was forwarded.

The following paragraph from the Philadelphia North American shows that the "City of Brotherly Love" is as hard pushed for small change as New York: "Silver change just now is so scarce as to command a premium of six dollars on a hundred. The passenger railroad companies have posted up notices in the cars that they no longer change bank notes, and that people who want to ride must provide the amount of their fare before entering the cars."

A dispatch from Washington in the N. Y. Herald, dated the 3d inst., says: "The publication of a brief despatch from Gen. McClellan, under the authority of the War Department, announcing the safety of his army and his guns and stores, has given great relief to the anxiety previously prevailing. The people are enthusiastic in praises of Gen. McClellan, and curses both loud and deep are heaped upon the reckless politicians who abuse him."

Henry Ward Beecher says some sensible secular things as well as foolish ones. Talking of newspapers, here is what he says about the paragraph and item department:—"It is worth more than all the small fry of correspondents, with an editor thrown in to boot! Like a caravan, it stretches along in columns, with packages and parcels, spices and gems, bits of fragrance or cunningly wrought metals, gathered from the Orient and from the whole world besides. The items of the paper, like the stuffing of a Thanksgiving turkey, represent everything in the house, crusts of bread, crackers, and all spices."

Several gentlemen connected with the army of General Halleck in the West, contradict, with great emphasis, the current reports in regard to the intemperance of Gen. Grant. They represent the story as a malicious invention.

The Mormon Saints know a thing or two.—We copy the following paragraph from the Deseret News:—"If you want chicken dinners—which the law allows at this season of the year—and your neighbor's chickens are cooped up and can't trespass upon your lot, and afford you opportunity of twisting their necks, just slip out early in the morning and open your neighbor's chicken coop door—they'll come out and go over to your lot. They will—they have done it."

A jealous wife in Geneva, N. Y., recently revenged herself on her rival by stripping the latter of all her garments in the public streets, and in that condition leaving her to find shelter where she could.

The Memphis Avalanche, of June 26, publishes a list of nearly three hundred business men who took the oath of allegiance to the United States Government during the week ending June 19. The rule requiring the publication of these names, which was made by Col. Slack, is to be revoked by Gen. Grant, it is said.

A lady in New York, cleared her house of flies by putting honey on her husband's whiskers when he was asleep. The flies stuck fast, and when he went out of the house he carried them off with him.

Prof. Lowe describes the whole battle of Friday week, as witnessed from the balloon, grand and picturesque beyond the compass of language. The evolutions of battalions, the chaotic masses of men, the rapid shifting of events, the great veil of smoke occasionally lifted from the field, and the fearful picture behind the combatants, where the ground had been fought over and consecrated with blood—all these were elements upon which the aeronaut looked like the habitant of a remote planet.

The death of General "Stonewall" Jackson from wounds received in the fight on Thursday or Friday last, and of Barnwell Rhett, of South Carolina, is announced by the Richmond Dispatch of last Monday.

Senator Hale in answering a remark of Mr. Sumner, reflecting upon his refusal to vote aye upon an amendment making Negro testimony admissible, said that he had long labored for that object, but that if incorporated in a law it would be rendered nugatory by the present Supreme Court, and he, therefore, regarded such action as utterly futile. He preferred to abolish the Court altogether.

The French Minister at Washington, having been informed that several shipments of stores and munitions of war had been forwarded from New York to Mexico via Panama to Acapulco and Mazatlan, has given the order to the French squadron in the Pacific to watch closely the Mexican coast and not to let any contraband of war go through. Among the various war implements sent to the President of Mexico there is a newly invented machine for the fabrication of lead bullets, which is said to strike sixty thousand bullets an hour.