

GENERAL NEWS.

A letter in the Chicago Times in relation to the movements of Gen. Sherman's expedition on Vicksburg, says:—"The march of the expedition down the river was marked by much devastation. Half of the town of Friar's Point was burned down. Plantations below the mouth of White river were also burned.—Gaines' Landing was destroyed, and a thousand cords of wood, opposite Milliken's Bend, were entirely burned up. At every landing place the troops applied the torch."

The first day of January was celebrated by the freed negroes of Hilton Head, South Carolina. "According to the order and invitation of Gen. Saxton, commanding that post, thousands of contrabands met together, and were treated to numerous speeches, music, odes, &c., winding up with the more solid and substantial spread of a dozen of roast oxen."

The Tammany Hall General Committee of New York have taken measures to petition the Legislature of that State to call a State Convention, at the earliest convenient date, for the purpose of discussing the propriety of convening a National Convention to adopt measures of peace. They invite men of all parties to join in the movement.

The grand jury of Macaupin county, Illinois, have indicted Brigadier General A. W. Ellet, John Palmer and Robert Gamble, for bringing negroes into the State contrary to law. They acted under the orders of Secretary Stanton. The same jury indicted James Reyburn, Wm. B. Dugger and J. C. Miller, for false imprisonment under similar orders.

James W. Roberts has been arrested on the charge of following up the army, and taking the hides from dead animals, which are claimed by the Government, and disposing of them for a consideration. It is stated that from \$30,000 to \$40,000 have been cleared by Roberts in this traffic.

The detectives yesterday took possession of a paper box which was being sent to Chelsea, Vermont, by Rev. J. L. Roberts, chaplain of the Fourth Vermont. When asked what the box contained, he replied, "Relics from the Fredericksburg battle." The answer not being deemed satisfactory, the officers opened the box, and found it to contain a nearly new breech-loading carbine. The weapon was taken possession of and restored to the Government.

The Richmond Dispatch of Tuesday says: "The whole number of prisoners in Richmond yesterday (5th) was 1,680. Twenty prisoners of war were received at Richmond yesterday from the Blackwater. Every prisoner admitted into Castle Thunder undergoes inoculation first." The Richmond Enquirer of the 5th says:—"Governor Letcher has selected from among the prisoners recently sent to Richmond from Floyd's command the following persons, who will be held in strict solitary confinement as hostages for Colonel Zarvona and others similarly held by the Federal Government: Captain Wm. Gramon, Lieut. Isaac A. Wade, Captain Thomas Dameson, Lieut. Wilson Dameson, John W. Hone, Isaac Goble, David V. Annier, Samuel Paek and Wm. S. Dells. They have been consigned to the State prison.

The corporation of Hagerstown, Md., has resolved to issue shinplasters, in defiance of the State law prohibiting their circulation.

The following is an extract from a late address by the celebrated abolition preacher, Henry W. Bellows. He says:—"It is no longer a war in defence of the Union, the Constitution and the enforcement of the laws. It is a war to be carried on no longer with the aim of re-establishing the Union and the Constitution with all their old compromises. God means not to let us off with any half-way work. I am now convinced, and I consider it the most humane, the most economical, and the most statesmanlike policy, now to take the most radical ground possible; to assume that this is a war for the subjugation, or the extermination, of all persons who wish to maintain the slaveholders whether it be constitutional or not."

Southern papers report that Gen. Foster has organized another expedition in North Carolina, this time supposed to be against Wilmington, to cut the railroad communication. Gen. Foster has been largely reinforced from Norfolk.

Count Mejan, who was accused by Gen. Butler of having acted as banker to President Davis, in keeping the money which went to pay for clothing for the Confederate army, and which money was paid over to Confederate contractors, after the investigation of Reverdy Johnson, has been dismissed from his post as Consul of New Orleans, and M. Fauconnet has been recognized.

The President and Mrs. Lincoln will receive on Saturday afternoons, from one until three o'clock, beginning Saturday, January 10th.

Judge Paddock, of Cincinnati, in a soldier's habeas corpus case, last week fined a lieutenant \$25 and costs, and ordered him to be confined twenty-four hours on bread and water, for contempt of court.

George A. Simons, of St. Mary's county, was arrested in Baltimore yesterday by detective Smith, on the charge of drinking to the health of President Davis. He was held for a hearing.

It is stated that President Lincoln has presented to Senator Sumner, for transmission to George Livermore, of Cambridge, Mass., the pen with which he signed the emancipation proclamation.

A letter from Beaufort, N. C., states that Gov. Stanly had been hung in effigy in that place, in consequence of some excitement growing out of the pending Congressional election.

The grand jury of New York city, are busily investigating the cases of illegal arrests, some of which received the attention of a former grand jury. Several United States officials have been summoned to appear.

The emancipation proclamation was the theme of many of the preachers of New York and Brooklyn on Sunday. Rev. Henry Ward Beecher delivered a sermon on the proclamation and the duties of Christians in regard to it, at Plymouth Church. He urged that all other policy should now stand aside, and the struggle be fought out. He commended the bravery and fidelity to principles of the South as superior to the North. His remarks were received with applause.

Thomas J. Wilson, editor of the "Annapolis Gazette," has been commissioned a paymaster in the regular army, with the rank of major.

Much complaint is justly made at the exorbitant prices asked, in this place, for articles of necessity—prices far exceeding, in many instances, those asked for the same description of articles in Washington and Baltimore. This should not be.

A Washington letter-writer complains of the offensively small supply of egg-nog and apple-jack at the New Year receptions in Washington. He plaintively says nobody was drunk.

A raid was made on Sunday night on the sheriff of Barbour county, Va., by a secession party. They carried off the sheriff, upon one of his four captured horses.

The Wheeling Legislature is again in session.

Four ladies were put off the flag of truce boat New York, at Fortress Monroe yesterday, having been detected in carrying contraband goods and information.

It is positively asserted that an important change will be made in the War Department by the 29th instant. Some believe that Mr. Stanton himself contemplates retirement; others state that Assistant Secretary Watson is going; while still others insist that both the chief and the subordinate will vacate together.

A Turin letter of December 20, says:—"The departure of General Garibaldi for the island of Caprera, which took place at Leghorn this morning, marks the close of the revolutionary era in Italy. Garibaldi goes back to his quiet home, most probably, this time with a firm purpose to abide there."

Gov. Curtin, of Pennsylvania transmitted his annual Message to the State Legislature on Wednesday, in which he states that Pennsylvania has furnished 200,000 men for the war, exclusive of 50,000 who were ready for the service as volunteer militia in September last.

The U. S. Senate yesterday confirmed the nomination of Judge Usher, of Indiana, as Secretary of the Interior.

The lower House of the New York Legislature is at a dead lock. The Republicans and Democrats are equally divided in the House, and neither can elect a speaker.

A letter from a member of the Anderson troop, which refused to go into action at Murfreesboro', attempts to justify the action of the corps. The only grounds alleged are that it had no confidence in its officers, and that it had been disappointed in not being assigned to duty as General Rosecrans' body guard.

A flag of truce boat arrived at Fortress Monroe on Wednesday, bringing three hundred Union prisoners of war from Richmond.

CRYING FOR MORE.—Although the President has yielded to the radicals and issued his Emancipation edict, they nevertheless arraign him at great length in a document presented to the Senate to day, signed by Cheever, Beecher and other prominent divines of New York.—They state that they deprecate the indecisive manner in which the war has been conducted with regard to slavery, and hope that Congress will declare the immediate emancipation of slaves whether of loyal or disloyal owners, and in all of the United States. They add that if the President had declared all the slaves free when Fort Sumpter was fired on, the war would now be at an end.—N. Y. World.

The Court Martial at Nashville, Tenn., in the case of Gen. Buell, precipitately broke up, on the day of the conflict at Murfreesboro'.