

DOINGS OF CONGRESS.

In the Senate, on Tuesday, Dec. 16th, Vice-President Hamlin presented a message from President Lincoln, placing at the disposal of Congress three swords formerly belonging to Major-General Twiggs, forwarded to him by Major-General Butler, from New Orleans, and suggesting that if the swords should be given to any one by Congress as rewards of courage and bravery, Major-General Butler should be entitled to the first consideration. The message was laid on the table.

Mr. Rice introduced a bill, which was read and referred, granting public lands to the State of Minnesota to aid in improving the navigation of the Minnesota and Red River of the North, and connecting the same by a canal.

A resolution was introduced by Mr. Sumner, which was adopted, requesting the President to communicate to the Senate any unpublished correspondence touching the cultivation of cotton in Asia Minor and Egypt.

The resolution, censuring Mr. Buchanan, was taken up, on motion of Mr. Davis, of Kentucky. It was opposed by Mr. Hale, who, in the course of his remarks, said he should vote against the resolution; not because he did not believe the facts as stated, and not because he did not believe that Mr. Buchanan did fail to do what he might, but because he would not in this way condemn any man unheard. Mr. Buchanan was a private citizen; and this resolution, if passed, would stamp him with eternal infamy, and his friends might thank God that he had no children to leave behind him. He was opposed to the Senate's passing judgment against a man who had had no notice of any kind of such a proceeding against him. He had always considered Mr. Buchanan as the most overrated man he ever knew. Mr. Saulsbury offered an amendment, providing that a copy of the resolution be served on Mr. Buchanan and, that he be at liberty to defend himself against the allegations therein contained. The resolution and amendment were tabled by a vote of 63 to 3.

In the House on the 16th, the speaker presented, for consideration, the message of the President in relation to General Twiggs' old swords, which seem to be considered valuable relics by the President. The message met with more favor in the House than it did in the Senate, as, instead of being laid on the table, it was referred to the committee on military affairs.

Mr. Stevens' resolution, declaring that this Union must be and remain one and indivisible forever, and that it would be high crime to advise or accept peace propositions on any other terms, which had been made the special order of the day, were, on motion, postponed for three weeks.

Mr. Aldrich introduced a bill, which was referred to the committee on Indian affairs, providing for the removal of the Sioux Indians and the disposition of their reservations in Minnesota and Dakota.

The West Point Academy appropriation bill passed without debate or amendment, after which the death of Mr. Hanchett, member of the House, from Wisconsin, was announced, upon which, several eulogistic speeches were made, and the usual resolutions of condolence passed.

In the Senate, on Dec. 19th, Mr. Wilson, from the military committee, reported back the bill to facilitate the discharge of disabled soldiers from the army, and the inspection of convalescent camps and hospitals, also, a bill to improve the organization of the cavalry forces.

Mr. Rice from the military committee reported back a bill to forfeit the pay of absent officers of the army.

Mr. Nesmith introduced a bill to establish a branch mint at Portland, Oregon; referred to the committee on finance.

Mr. Saulsbury offered a resolution, directing the Secretary of War to inform the Senate whether any soldiers were sent into the State of Delaware to be present at the polls in November last, at the general election in said State; and if so by whose orders, upon whose application, the necessity, if any, of their being sent, to what places they were sent, and how many were sent, and how many to each of such places, the names of the regiments or companies sent, with the names of the officers commanding such regiments or companies, and whether any, and if so how many provost-marshal have been appointed

in said State, and at what places, and their names, and the necessity, if any, for their appointment, and the powers conferred upon them; to communicate all papers in his department relative to the sending of these soldiers; also a resolution directing the Secretary of War to inform the Senate whether he has authorized a military organization, called the Home Guard, in Delaware; if so, for what purpose, by what authority of law, and by what necessity for such organization in that State; whether he has undertaken to exempt from liability to be drafted persons who shall become members of such Home Guard, and if so by what authority; whether he has promised pecuniary compensation to such persons as an inducement to join such Home Guard, and if so by what authority of law; whether such persons have been assured by his authority that they shall not be required to leave said State in the military defense of the country; and to communicate all orders and papers in his department relative to said military organization in the State of Delaware, both of which were laid over under the rule.

A bill to amend the act to provide for the collection of the internal revenue, approved July 1, 1862, was taken up and passed.

In the House on the 17th, most of the time appears to have been spent in committee of the whole, on the President's Message, the various parts of which were referred to the appropriate committee.

In the Senate on the 18th, among the resolutions presented, was one by Mr. Wilkinson, instructing the committee on the conduct of the war to inquire into the facts relating to the recent battle at Fredericksburg, and as to what officer or officers were responsible for the assault which was made on the enemy's works; and also for the delay which occurred in preparing to meet the enemy. Mr. McDougall suggested that the resolution be so amended as to direct that the committee report the result of their investigations to the Senate, which was accepted, and the resolution adopted. A resolution was presented by Mr. Sumner, requesting the President to communicate to the Senate any information he may have in his possession, showing why Gen. Saxton was removed from his command at Hilton Head. Mr. Grimes offered a resolution, which was adopted, directing the Secretary of War to inform the Senate of whom the transport vessels Thames and Niagara, and schooner Nymph, were chartered for Banks' expedition, and by what agent or agents of the War Department they were chartered, at what price, and for what time; and also to report to the Senate what officers or agents examined said vessels as to their seaworthiness.

A bill was introduced to facilitate proof for the allowance of pensions; a bill to extend the Walla Walla and Fort Benton military road to Fort Abercrombie; a bill to provide for the protection of overland emigrants to the States and Territories on the Pacific coast; and a bill to provide for the appointment of commissioners to examine and decide upon military claims originating during the present rebellion in the State of Virginia, west of the Blue Ridge, prior to Sept. 30, 1862—were presented and referred.

A bill to facilitate the discharge of disabled soldiers from the army, and for the inspection of convalescent camps and the hospitals of the army, was taken up, amended, discussed at length and finally passed. A bill to improve the organization of the cavalry forces, was also taken up and passed.

In the House on the 18th, Mr. Bingham from the judiciary committee, reported back the bill extending relief to loyal men for slaves wrongfully taken or abstracted, with the recommendation that it do not pass, upon which a lengthy discussion arose. The bill was ultimately tabled by a vote of 86 to 45.

A resolution was adopted instructing the committee on naval affairs to report at an early day whether letters-of-marque ought not to be issued for the purpose of capturing or destroying the piratical vessel known as the "No. 290," or the "Alabama," and other vessels of like character now fitting out in the ports of Great Britain for the purpose of preying upon our merchantmen engaged in lawful commerce, and what legislation, if any, was necessary for that purpose.

The House then went into committee of the whole on the army appropriation for the year ending June 30th, 1864, appropriating seven

hundred and thirty-one millions of dollars. Mr. Mallory offered an amendment, which was tabled by an overwhelming vote, providing that no part of the money appropriated should be expended so as to encourage the escape of slaves from their masters, or to support and maintain slaves that do escape from their masters, or for any purpose of emancipation, or colonization, or for any other object than the re-establishment of the authority of the Constitution, and the laws of the United States over the rebels. The bill was passed by a vote of 107 to 3.

ONE OF THE RAMS.

An iron-clad vessel, called the Keokuk, is being constructed for the government, at New York, by Mr. Whitney, of which the following is said to be a correct description:

The Keokuk is a two turret ram. The ram is an extension of the backbone of the vessel, as it were, and is composed of heavy wrought iron. It is five feet long, three and three-quarter inches thick at the front, and fastened back to the main hull of the ship ten feet. The dimensions of the ship are: Length, over all, 159 feet 6 inches; breadth of beam, 36 feet; depth of hold, 13 feet 6 inches; draught of water, 9 feet. The hull is built of half inch rolled plates. Her sides stand at an angle of thirty-seven degrees, which, it is thought, will prevent shot from getting a square bit at them. She is not all iron, as has been erroneously stated. There are five and a half inches of wood on her deck, and on the hull the bars of iron alternate, for a considerable space, with bars of timber. She has three keelsons running the whole length, and two fore and aft bulkheads, bearing on each side; for the ship's length, a separate space and forming an inner skin, and two water-tight bulkheads, one forward and one aft, which can be filled with water, if advisable, to sink the ship lower down. These can be filled in fifteen minutes, and emptied, by pumps, in forty minutes. The forward bulkhead answers, also, another purpose. If, in using the ram, that should receive a severe wrench, the leakage would be confined to this department, and would not embarrass the crew or endanger the ship. The ship will, in ordinary trim, show five feet six inches above the water, and can be sunk one foot by filling the tanks. The rudder and propeller are guarded by an overhanging structure and a wrought guard on the after part. The vessel has capacity in her magazine for 200 eleven-inch shell, with shrapnel and canister, small ammunition and powder in proportion.

The armament will consist of two eleven inch guns, there being only one in each turret. Ten men, at least—which is a saving of fifteen—will be required to work these pieces of ordnance. The turrets have six and a half inches of iron, or five and a half inches less than the Passaic. They are slanting, however, and not straight. The inclination, the builder believes, will make them strong enough. The turrets will not revolve at all. They remain stationary, but the guns inside revolve to the desired porthole. There are three of these ports in each turret. The turrets are about twenty feet in diameter at the base, and fourteen feet at the top. The guns move on revolving slides, and stand on a floor twenty inches below the level of the deck, thus giving a greater height to the turrets, which, if they be added, are additionally supported within by bars of five-by-one inch iron, fifteen inches apart, and the ports are made sufficiently large to give the guns ten degrees vertical and eight degrees lateral range. The turrets are eight feet eight inches high.

Against all sorts of ships the new craft will be very formidable, especially if she can close on and ram them. Even at a distance shots could not easily hit her with much effect. Indeed, she is for defensive purposes, as far as her own security is concerned, likely to be par excellence of iron-clads. Every one who has seen her declares this. But in attacking land forts, beside an iron-clad armed with 15-inch guns, she would not retain her superiority armed as at present. If she, with her two 11-inch guns, each being worked by ten men and throwing a 180 pound ball, and the Montauk, armed with two 15-inch guns, each worked by eight men, and throwing a 450 pound ball (as that may be her battery), were to attack a fortress at seven o'clock in the morning, each firing one shot every two minutes until six o'clock in the evening, the Keokuk would have thrown 118,800 pounds of iron against the enemy, with the assistance of twenty men, while the Montauk would have thrown about 297,000 pounds, or 178,000 more with eight men. But this has nothing to do with the principle on which Whitney's ship is built. Of course he could put 15-inch guns on board his vessel if he pleased, but until lately 211-inch pieces were deemed large enough for the most tremendous ship. Beside the bigger ones, however, they look insignificant.

She seems admirably adapted for river work, her light draught and easy guidance by means of two propellers fitting her especially for intricate navigation. Her builder is confident that, though in some respects novel in construction, she will be found as shot proof and as serviceable as any, and the care and completeness with which he has applied every precaution, and multiplied means of offense and defense, give hope of a most efficient boat.

SEVENTIES' HALL LECTURES.

On Tuesday evening, 30th ult., Mr. Elias L. T. Harrison delivered an interesting and amusing lecture upon the Oddities we meet with in Life. The lecture was exceedingly spicy and instructive, being replete with mimicry and fine exhibitions of those peculiarities of address and oddities of manners manifested by characters we meet with in every-day life.

On Friday evening last, Mr. T. B. Broderick gave the first of a course of lectures on geology. As usual, his lecture was a proof of his extensive geological research.

MORE TROOPS WANTED FROM CALIFORNIA.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE PACIFIC, San Francisco, Cal., December 16, 1862.

The undersigned, commanding the Military Department of the Pacific, takes great pleasure in announcing to the patriotic citizens of California, that he has been authorized by the Honorable Secretary of War to call upon His Excellency the Governor for an additional regiment of infantry and seven companies of cavalry to be mustered in the service of the United States.

The troops called for are designed for distant service in the field, and will be commanded by able and experienced officers.

Californians! You have already exhibited a noble devotion to the Union. Ten thousand men furnished by your State, and the magnificent voluntary contributions in money and supplies which we have sent forward to aid our sick and wounded soldiers in the East, bear witness to your love for the old Union.

Knowing, as I do, the people of this State, their love of country, their intelligence, their zealous and holy attachment to the Union, I appeal to them with confidence.

Respond promptly to the call; rally under the protecting folds of the glorious old Star-spangled Banner, and swear fidelity to the Union.

G. WRIGHT,
Brig.-Gen. U. S. Army, Commanding.

THE PAPER FAMINE.

Chase's Greenbacks are said to be unexchangeable for rags in Naples, from whence we used to get \$1,000,000 worth annually—which is by the Chicago Post assigned as one of the causes for the oppressive rise in the price of paper. By the following formula, another class allege that this aggravation is all owing to African slavery—proving it by the Administration style of reasoning—thus:

"The rise in paper is owing to the scarcity of rags, which is owing to the rise in sterling exchange; which is owing to greenbacks; which are owing to shoddy army contractors; which are owing to the war; which is owing to the wrath of heaven; which is owing to the 'oppression of God's poor'; which is owing to slavery—therefore, slavery is the cause of the rise in paper, don't you see!"

WATCHING ONE'S SELF.—"When I was a boy," said an old man, "we had a schoolmaster who had an odd way of catching idle boys. One day he called out to us:

"Boys, I must have a closer attention to your books. The first one of you that sees another boy idle, I want you to inform me, and I will attend to the case."

"Ah!" thought I to myself, "here's Joe Simmons that I don't like. I'll watch him, and if I see him look off his book, I'll tell." It was not long before I saw Joe look off his book, and I immediately informed the master.

"Indeed?" said he, "how did you know he was idle?"

"I saw him," said I.

"You did; and were your eyes on your book when you saw him?"

I was caught, and I never watched for idle boys again.

If we are sufficiently watchful over our own conduct, we will have no time to find fault with the conduct of others.

THE POPE AN EXECUTOR.—The following anecdote of Pope Pius IX. is related in a monthly review entitled *Le Monde Judiciaire*: "The Sovereign Pontiff, among his other powers, enjoys that of annulling the wills of his subjects. The son of a Roman landed proprietor complained to his Holiness that his father had bequeathed the half of his fortune, or 40,000 francs, to the priest who on a particular day and in a church named should say the first mass. The Pope, not daring to cancel a will on account of an act of religious insanity, adopted another plan. He went himself at daybreak to the church in question and celebrated the first mass. He thus gained the 40,000 francs, which he then handed over to the grateful heir."

—England is quietly putting men and munitions of war into Canada. France is quietly putting men and munitions of war into Mexico.