

# THE DESERET NEWS.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

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## ITEMS OF MISCELLANEOUS NEWS.

The Atlantic works, Boston, were destroyed by fire on the night of the 31st ult. Four nearly-finished monitor-turrets, valued at \$10,000 each, were destroyed with the buildings. Carleton's, Brown's and Lowell's wharfs were also nearly swept of buildings—principally machine-shops. Total loss estimated at \$300,000.

The Navy Department has just decided to build another fleet of iron-clads, more formidable than any now in the service of this or any other country.

The loss of property in the late earthquake at Manila is stated at forty million dollars.

The partial opening of the Mississippi has had the effect to greatly reduce the prices of provisions at New Orleans.

Secretary Chase has asked the banks of New York, Philadelphia and Boston for a further loan of fifty millions, the whole amount to be refunded in five per cent. treasury notes in October or November next.

From the burdensome catalogue of "astounding developments" in these latter days, we select, for the perusal of our marvelous-loving readers, the following statement by Henry R. Elish, lately returned from Richmond, Va., where he boasts of having resided for more than a year, published, at his instance, in the New York Times:

"I have, during my stay in Richmond, made the intimate acquaintance of J. Lane, Capt. in the Confederate army, son of Gen. Joe Lane, of Oregon, who is well informed and who assured me that the late invasions of the North by Lee and Morgan were made upon the earnest and undoubted representations of that true Southern man, Vallandigham, who assured Jeff Davis and his cabinet that the North was ripe for revolution and only waited the appearance of the Southern army to proclaim for Jeff Davis and forsake Lincoln. Vallandigham's representations were corroborated by the majority of Northern journals, who surely would not denounce the Administration so boldly, except by the assurance of having the masses so strongly in their favor."

Albuquerque (New Mexico) papers state that Col. Kit Carson, with a part of the first New Mexico regiment, had a fight recently with the Navajo Indians near Fort Canby, in which the Indians were defeated, with a loss of thirteen killed, over twenty wounded and many prisoners.

At Dayton, O., on the night of the 31st ult., as reported, there was no small excitement created over the arrest of two men named Henben and Selman, for the murder of Lieut. Waterman. The civil authorities demanded them for trial upon a writ of habeas corpus; but the Provost Marshal, under instructions from Gen. Cox, refused to surrender them. The militia was called out to take them by force; but, to avoid a collision which boded no good to himself or his soldiery, Gen. Cox surrendered the two men into the hands of the civil authorities. They were to be examined before the Mayor on a charge of shooting with intent to kill.

The prizes of the Federal cruisers and blockaders, during the past few months, have yielded rich returns to the captors. Within six weeks, at Mobile, the steamers Planter, Neptune, Kate Dale, Bagly, Jas. Battle, Alice Vivian, Crescent and Warrior were captured. About 3,000 bales of cotton was taken on these steamers and a large amount of assorted merchandise. The blockade-runners have been exceedingly unfortunate, or the blockaders have been unusually vigilant.

Fifty Federal deserters were shot at Mumfordsville, Ky., at noon of the 4th inst.

In a speech at Nashville, Tenn., Gov. Andrew Johnson avowed himself unequivocally in favor of the abolition of slavery. He said the system of negro slavery had proved baneful to the nation by arraying itself against the interest of the people and that the time had clearly come when means should be devised for its total eradication from Tennessee. He was in favor of immediate emancipation if it could be reached; yet, if this could not be obtained, he was for gradual emancipation

—and emancipation at all events. He believed slavery to be a curse and wanted to see it wiped out without delay.

Reconstruction meetings are reported as of frequent occurrence in portions of Alabama. They are speedily dispersed, however, by the military.

It is reported that scarcely a slave can now be found east of the Blue Mountains and north of the Rappahannock, who is not too old for service or too dumb to appreciate "liberty." They have been rapidly passed northward to serve in the armies of the North.

The steamer Sunbeam, belonging to the Milwaukee (Wis.) and Lake Superior line, foundered in a gale on Lake Superior on the 28th ult. All on board—numbering thirty-five—were lost, except the wheelman, who lashed himself to a piece of the wreck and after floating thirty hours, floated ashore some twenty miles from the scene of the disaster.

The tax for the support of the war, on Sept. 3d, netted to the government the sum of seven hundred and seven thousand dollars—the largest amount yet reported in one day.

Mayor Anthony, of the city of Leavenworth, Kansas, was arrested on the 7th inst. by order of Gen. Ewing, military commandant of that district, and taken to Kansas city. The arrest caused considerable excitement. It will be remembered that the Mayor censured the district commander for allowing Quantrell's destructive raid. Retaliation being the order of the day, where the civil arm is not potent enough duly to maintain its dignity, encroachments, insinuations or implications derogatory to the conduct or bearing of high military rank, will undoubtedly, as heretofore, be promptly redressed. What punishment may be inflicted in the present case we know not; but presume that, after being taught some practical lessons in "military necessity" he will be released, on bonds conditioned for his future docility.

The defensive preparations for war on the Atlantic coast are being pushed onward with a degree of vigor which at least is not indicative of the immediate opening of the peaceful millennium. Fort Probie, in the harbor of Portland, Me., one of the most capacious on our Atlantic seaboard has been greatly strengthened. Nearly all the old guns and carriages have been removed and their places supplied with longer ranged rifled Columbiads and Dahlgrens. The ledge on the shore around the seaward walls is to be blasted to a level with the outer beach, thus doubling the height of the walls and forming a strong and natural foundation, against which, it is asserted, sappers and miners would work in vain.

The substitute business in Maryland has been suppressed by order of Gen. Schenck—it having been ascertained that the agencies for procuring substitutes to go out of the State and from that Department interfere with recruiting and drafting operations.

The number of substitutes who, having received the purchase-money, have no conscientious scruples in escaping from the peril of facing the deadly aim of the enemy's legions—to incur the chances of which is the proffered equivalent for the money received—if reports be relied on—would of themselves, if consolidated, make an army of no mean proportions. What their fighting calibre would be is not difficult of solution. It might even be required to back them up with "regular" bayonets to boost up their spirits, as Gen. Grant is reported to have done with the "Free Americans of African descent" in his terribly disastrous assaults on the heights of Vicksburg, where they were placed in the front ranks, thus serving as a breastwork to the white troops in their rear—which fully explains the reported wholesale slaughter of the blacks during Grant's operations before that Confederate stronghold.

At Buffalo, N. Y., on the night of the 9th inst., Wilkin & Wells' elevators were destroyed, including two hundred and fifty thou-

sand bushels of grain. Loss, four hundred thousand dollars.

Upon request of Col. Hill, of the Confederate army, Gen. Custer crossed to the south side of the Rappahannock and was received with marked respect by the Confederate officers. During conversation, Gen. Hill, as reported, confidentially remarked to Gen. Custer that peace was near at hand. Others, also, intimated the same thing. On being asked the grounds of the assertion, no further light was given, but a reiteration of the opinion. Some of the people of the North may go into ecstasies, now, over the prospect of immediate reconstruction.

About the 7th inst., a few daring scouts dashed into the headquarters of a brigade of the sixth army corps, near the Rappahannock, fired into the tents of Gen. Bartlett, and carried off the brigade flag. It is charged that the General had his headquarters too far from camp. Probably he did not want to become "demoralized."

At Haine's Bluffs, near Vicksburg, now occupied by the Federals, a correspondent states that a party of thirty-eight negroes, on the night of the 25th ult., murdered nine peaceable citizens in cold blood. We have no further particulars.

The Indian tribes of the Upper Missouri, are reported by some to be suing for peace. Other statements represent that they are as hostile as ever.

The life interest of seventeen "disloyal" persons, to sundry parcels of ground, condemned under the confiscation act, was sold in Washington on the 9th. An attempt had been made to effect a vendue several days previously; but the Provost Marshal stated that they were in the possession of the military authorities and would not be relinquished. The day of sale was therefore postponed, that, if possible, the obstinacy of the military might be appeased. They were, however, inexorable, and the sale was made under the express notification from Provost Marshal Todd that the premises would be retained until it should be deemed by them discretionary to surrender. Notwithstanding this embargo, the estates are reported to have sold at from one quarter to one fifth of their actual value.

There is a report in circulation that Maj. Gen. Magruder was killed in Galveston, about the 1st inst., by one of his Lieutenants, who caught the General in a criminal act with his wife.

Mayor Anthony, of Leavenworth, who was arrested a few days since by the military authorities, has been released, as per report. What penance he had to undergo for his impunity has not transpired.

## THE GREEK FIRE.

This compound, reported to have been unqualifiedly anathematized by Baurgard as the most villainous ever used by civilized nations, when thrown into Charleston, at a distance of four miles, by Gilmore's marsh battery, it would seem, after all, from the following extract, not to have been wholly a modern invention. Historical data show that it was used by nations called "civilized" as long ago as the middle of the seventh century of the Christian era. Whether or not Gen. Gilmore did indeed in this rude manner ingratiate himself into the affections of the Southrons, at Charleston, as represented by some newspaper penny-a-liner, has been seriously questioned—many regarding it as a military extravaganza, which is but a mild term for official lying, a practice well known to be, now-a-days, especially in vogue when reference is made to the doings of aspirants for military renown.

It is scarcely presumable that the masterly engineer of the defences of Charleston was ignorant of the origin and subsequent use of the Greek fire, by the Greeks themselves and afterwards by the Romans and other warlike nations of antiquity. The assertion smacks of the fishy. The Sacramento Union from

which we extract the following account, copied into its columns from the "American Encyclopedia," thinks that, if there is no brimstone in the compound, it will not be because "the traitors of Charleston do not deserve a dose of it."

The knowledge possessed of this ancient material of war is gathered by Gibbon in the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Chap. 42. The subject is also ably treated by Dr. McCulloch in Vol. XIV. of the "Quarterly Journal of Science." The Greek fire was most advantageously employed in the defence of Constantinople during the two sieges of the Saracens of A. D. 668-675 and 716-718.

The secret of its preparation and use was derived from a native of Heliopolis of Syria, or, according to Cedrenus, of Egypt, who deserted to the service of the Emperor. It appears to have been a compound of bitumen, sulphur, and pitch, and to have been poured from caldrons, or projected in fire balls, or on arrows and javelins around which flax was twisted saturated with the inflammable compound. It was vomited through long copper tubes from the mouths of hideous figures, which were set in the prows of fire ships. These were themselves consumed, as they sent fire and destruction among the galleys of the enemy.

For 400 years its secret was successfully preserved by the Romans of the East, the vengeance of heaven being imprecated upon whomsoever should divulge the composition, which the people were taught to believe was mysteriously revealed by an angel to the first and greatest of the Constantines. The Mahomedans finally obtained the secret, and in the holy wars of Syria and Egypt turned the art against the Christians.

Joinville in his *Histoire de St. Louis* describes the fire as coming through the air like a winged long-tailed dragon, about the thickness of a hog's head, with the report of thunder and the velocity of lightning, producing so much light from the quantity of fire it threw out, that one might see in the camp as if it had been day—a description not inapplicable to the rocket. Its use was continued till the middle of the fourteenth century, when it gave place to the more efficient compound of somewhat similar nature then invented.

The name Greek fire has been applied to compounds that burn on the surface of or under the water. An inflammable liquor of this character is said to have been discovered in 1755 by a goldsmith of Paris, named Dupre, who was not, however, permitted to make its character known.

The photographer, M. Niepce de St. Victor, has experimented, by request of the French Minister of War, upon the property of benzole to burn upon water and of igniting if a bit of potassium or of phosphuret of calcium be contained in it. He found that if a glass vessel containing 300 grammes of benzole and one half gramme of potassium were broken on the surface of the water, the benzole would immediately overspread a considerable surface, bursting at the same time into flame.

A mixture of three parts of benzole and one of sulphuret of carbon, being put into a hand grenade previously heated by immersion in boiling water, produced a disengagement of vapor, which could be ignited and would continue to burn from a jet till the whole was consumed. Phosphorus in solution increases its power of setting fire to other objects. Oil of petroleum may be substituted for the benzole.

It was thought that this might be used in naval warfare as the ancient Greek fire was employed. The subject is fully treated by Scofield in his work "Projectile Weapons of War and Explosive Compounds" (London, 1858), in which he also names several liquid mixtures that spontaneously ignite, and may be used for the same purposes as Greek fire.

A solution of phosphorus in sulphuret of carbon thrown in a glass grenade was found, in experiments conducted at Woolwich, to ignite sooner after the liquid was scattered—Chloride of sulphur may be substituted for the sulphuret of carbon, the ignition not taking place quite so soon, thus giving time for the liquid to penetrate into wood work and canvas. An abominable odor is diffused during the combustion.

AN EXPERIMENT.—Col. Wm. H. Dane and Mr. Charles Wall cached fifty pounds of flour near Parowan. It was put in a pine box and buried beneath some rocks, where it was allowed to remain four years. When taken from its hiding place a short time ago, it was found to be quite good, and excellent biscuits were made from it. The same gentlemen have some more flour similarly cached, put away at the same time as the fifty pounds above mentioned, which they intend leaving two or three years longer.