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EASTERN NEWS BY MAIL.

By the Eastern mail, which arrived on Friday evening, dates from Washington were received to the 19th, and from New York to the 22d of December. The news from the Atlantic slope is generally of a stirring and exciting character, mostly relating to the secession movements, which were rolling ahead with great rapidity and nothing seemed to impede their progress. Secession meetings continued to be held in the Cotton States and occasionally a union meeting in the Free States.

In Philadelphia, on Dec. 13th, a grand union meeting assembled in Independence square and was opened by prayer by Bishop Potter. Mayor Henry presided, assisted by a large number of Vice-Presidents and Secretaries. Resolutions were adopted proclaiming attachment to the Constitution; love for the Union; deploring the action of the States evading the provisions of the Constitution; pronouncing such as violations of the solemn compact; appealing for their repeal, pledging that the statute books of Pennsylvania shall be carefully searched, and every statute, if there are any such invading the constitutional rights of sister states, to be at once repealed; recognizing the obligations of the Fugitive Law; recommending the passage of a state law recompensing the owners of rescued slaves; submitting obediently to the decisions of the Supreme court as to the rights of slave owners in the Territories; recommending that the disputed questions be forthwith submitted to the said Court; and approving of the suggestion of a Convention of Delegates from all the States to settle existing difficulties.

A meeting of the prominent merchants and politicians of the city and State of New York was held in the city, on the 15th, to consult as to the best means to be adopted to avert the danger now threatening the Union, and to assure to the South sufficient protection in their constitutional rights within the Union.

Charles O'Connor presided, and speeches were made by John A. Dix, John McKeon and others. Mr. McKeon expressed the opinion that the Union was already dissolved; that it would be a peaceful separation until after the 4th of March, and that civil war would then ensue. Among those present were ex-President Van Buren, Israel T. Hatch, Washington Hunt, Watts Sherman, Erastus Brooks, James T. Brady, Edwin Croswell, Wilson G. Hunt, C. Comstock, of the Albany *Atlas and Argus*, Gerard Hallock, James W. Beekman, Fernando Wood, Augustus Schell, Richard Lathers, and many other gentlemen of prominent position as merchants or public men.

Resolutions were passed declaring that there is just ground for the existing excitement in the South, and appointing Millard Fillmore, Greene C. Bronson and Richard Lathers, a committee to go South and give assurances of the determination of the meeting to maintain their rights.

It was understood that Mr. Fillmore would accept the duty if desired, but that he expressed a belief that the mission would be unsuccessful unless he could bear with him some authorized pledge of conservative policy from the party about to assume control of the general government.

A caucus of the entire New York congressional delegation was held on the evening of the 15th, at Willard's hotel, to consider the question of Union and secession. It is reported that all, except Sickles, took a decided and earnest view of affairs, declaring strongly for union, that every interest of the Empire State rested in the perpetuity of the Union, and that the people were devoted to it outside of the interests of business.

Reynolds offered a resolution which, after the preamble, declared that the Union must and shall be preserved, and pledged New York to sustain it at every hazard, which was received with great satisfaction.

Prayer meetings were being held in many of the cities and towns in the Middle and Eastern States, the special object of which was to make intercession for the preservation of the Union.

Mr. Corwin made a speech before the conciliatory committee on the 15th, in which he reviewed the history of the country from the beginning, stating the various demands of the South and the concessions of the North. His speech is said to have been conciliatory in manner, but firm; and, although the Southern members of the committee winced under the force of historic facts, they were presented in such an irresistible way, that offence could not be taken.

It was reported that the crisis committee were not making much headway. Mr. Corwin, the chairman, had reported a series of resolutions, which met the approval of a majority of the republicans on the committee:

First.—Pledging the faith of Congress against any attempt to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia.

Second.—Against interfering with the inter slave trade between the States.

Third.—The abolition of slavery in the dockyards and arsenals in the slave States.

Fourth.—In favor of any amendments rendering the fugitive slave act effective and satisfactory to the South.

Fifth.—Against any discrimination by Congress against slave States asking admission.

Sixth.—Protecting persons and property in the Territories till they have thirty thousand inhabitants, then non-intervention by Congress shall be the law.

The South Carolina secession convention met on the 17th, at Columbia, and after organizing, adjourned to Charleston, in consequence of the small pox, which was raging there to an alarming extent. The inauguration of Governor Pickens was on the same day. He read his inaugural, the sentiments of which were decidedly in favor of secession. After the ceremonies were ended, the Legislature also, adjourned to Charleston; and the next morning, about four hundred delegates and representatives left Columbia by railroad, and arrived at Charleston, at one o'clock in the afternoon. They were received there in grand style, by a battalion of State Cadets under Major Stevens. A salute of fifteen guns was fired for the Cotton States, and the wildest enthusiasm prevailed.

The convention assembled at four o'clock in the afternoon, at Institute Hall, according to adjournment, and proceeded to business.

A bill for arming the State, introduced into the Legislature of North Carolina, passed the Senate on the 18th, and was expected to be under consideration the next day in the House, where it was supposed it would meet with but little opposition.

The line of steamers between Boston and Charleston discontinued their trips on the 13th. The weather was very cold in the Eastern and Middle States, and at Richmond, Va., the snow was so deep on the 15th, as to obstruct the passage of trains on the railway.

The South Carolina Legislature elected Mr. Pickens governor on the seventh ballot, on the 15th. The vote was—Pickens, 82; Jamison, 64; scattering, 12.

Col. L. W. Lander arrived in Washington on the 15th, and presented his report of the Wagon Road Expedition. He is represented as being decidedly in favor of a Pacific Railroad over the central route.

Gen. Frost's brigade returned to St. Louis, from the Kansas campaign, on the 16th, and was disbanded.

William Henry Ovenden, British consul at Baltimore, died, on the 17th, of a disease of the brain.

The Secretary of the Treasury had advertised for proposals until the 28th for the issue of five millions in Treasury notes, pursuant to the act recently passed.

It was rumored in Washington that there was no probability of the appointment of a Commissioner of Patents in place of Mr. Thomas, the newly appointed Secretary of the Treasury and Mr. Shugert, Chief Clerk, would have the business transferred to him, being the acting Commissioner by law, until the vacancy should be filled.

A fire at Baltimore, Dec. 12th, destroyed property to a considerable amount. On the 13th, there was a fire at Orange, N. J., destroying several stores and other buildings. Loss, \$30,000.

On the 14th, the Overton block, corner of Main and Monroe streets, Memphis, Tenn., was burned. Loss, \$175,000.

At Medford, Mass., on the morning of the 15th, a fire destroyed the American Hall, occupied as stores, offices, etc. Estimated loss, \$15,000.

In Buffalo, N. Y., on the night of the 16th, the tavern connected with the extensive cattle yard of Burnes & Dickey was entirely destroyed by fire. Two persons were burned to death and others badly injured. The weather was intensely cold.

The steamers Goody Friend and South Bend collided near Memphis, on the 14th of Dec.; the latter sank and several lives were lost.

The steamer John Tompkins was burned on the Falls of the Ohio, on the 13th. She had been fast on the rocks for several days.

The Indian troubles on the Plains, in the direction of New Mexico, were, at latest dates, assuming a very serious aspect. The mail party, which arrived at Independence, Dec. 14th, were charged upon by thirty Camanches at McKees creek, and, as reported, it was only by prompt action they were repulsed. The Indians were well armed. The outward bound mail was also attacked, and had to retreat to Pawnee Fork.

At latest dates from Mount City, Kansas, all was quiet then, and no arrests had been made; Montgomery, Jennison, Scammon and others were not to be found. Gen. Harney had ordered two companies of Infantry, under Major Wessels and Capt. Lyon, to be stationed at Mount City, and two companies of dragoons, under Capt. Steele, at Fort Scott. Gen. Harney wished to declare martial law, but Governor Medary would not consent, preferring that the United States marshal should make the arrests, and the prisoners be tried by Territorial law.

Embarrassments of Government Officials.

In these times of national distress and perplexity consequent upon the secession movements, when the treasury is empty, and the means of replenishing it, so very precarious, Government officials, whose duties require funds to keep matters and things intrusted to their charge in motion, must feel much embarrassed by the existing state of affairs; and we are much mistaken, if such offices are considered by their present incumbents, particularly by those so far away from Washington as are the Federal officers in Utah, very desirable. However, they seem to have good courage, and keep moving, especially the Secretary, who occupies at best, a very thankless position, as he is so bound up by instructions, that if he had the money in hand, he could exercise little or no discretion in its disbursement.

We have heard some fault found with that functionary because he has not been more lavish in his expenditures, but if they knew the restraints that are placed upon him, they would think otherwise. So far as relates to his arrangements for the comfort and convenience of the Legislature during the present session, he has certainly done admirably well; and we very much doubt, if those who have censured him, of which there are but few, could have done any better, if as well, had they occupied his position under the circumstances that have attended his official acts thus far, and there seems to be no prospect of their being much better very soon.

Notwithstanding all the embarrassments that surround him, we are credibly informed that he is making every exertion to provide the balance of the means not on hand, required for paying the per diem and mileage of the members, together with the other expenses of the session, for which if he succeeds in his endeavors, he will certainly be entitled to much credit, for his business tact and perseverance; and will be favorably remembered by those thus accommodated, in days to come, let what will be the future of the Government and of its representatives.

It is well known that we are not much in favor of imported officials of any kind, but when we find men striving, under adverse circumstances, to discharge their duties faithfully, we feel in duty bound to speak well of their official acts, whether they be citizens of Utah, or of any of the States, or other Territories of the confederacy, however much we may differ with them in relation to other matters.

MORE ALMANACS.—Phelp's "Second Edition" of 1861 Almanacs, containing the "Revelation on, and rebellion of South Carolina, is ready for sale—and, from appearance, the edition, like the motto of the United States, will soon be *E. Pluribus non allum.*" So says the author.

LATEST BY TELEGRAPH
AND
PONY EXPRESS.

We are indebted to a merchant of this city, for Washington news up to the 4th inst.

The government had determined to show opposition to South Carolina. The President had appointed—McIntyre, of Pennsylvania, collector of customs at Charleston, and instructed him that should he meet with any opposition in the collection of custom dues, or any obstacle in the discharge of the general duties of his office, that he should immediately telegraph to the government, and federal troops should be instantly sent to his assistance and for his protection.

This last news had caused the greatest alarm everywhere, as there was every likelihood of opposition being offered to Mr. McIntyre, in the discharge of the duties of his office. The South Carolinians had added to their former declarations of intents, the appointment of their own officers, to collect all the revenue within their State, formerly collected by federal officers.

The President's wavering course, in recent difficulties, had greatly embarrassed all classes of politicians, and but little confidence would have been felt in the promise of the government to sustain the new collector at Charleston; but the resignation of Floyd, the Secretary of War, lends confirmation to the promise, and nothing less than a magnificent row is everywhere expected. The republicans have worked in vain for a place to creep out, and still maintain their principles, and the South has long since passed beyond compromises, so that a free fight is beautifully imminent.

Col. Anderson, who was in command of fort Moultrie, had abandoned that fort, after spiking the guns, destroying the carriages and the ammunition, that he could not take with him, and had taken his command to fort Sumpter, which is considered invulnerable.

At latest advices, it was reported that four companies of artillery were ordered to reinforce the Col. in the new position which he had taken.

The report that the south Carolinians had taken a revenue cutter in the port of Charleston, is contradicted. The cutter was taken, by the orders of another party altogether, and returned to the government, by Gov. Brown, of Georgia.

The elections, recently held in Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, and Alabama, were unanimously in favor of immediate secession, and they unitedly favor the course pursued by South Carolina. It is stated that the citizens of Charleston had taken possession of the arsenal at that place, and were abundantly supplied with arms and munitions of war.

Late on the evening of the 3d of January, the news reached Washington that ex-Governor Wise, of Virginia, had declared that in the case of a dissolution of the Union, that he would march the Virginia militia to the Capitol, and take possession in the name of the Southern Confederacy. The President's answer to his friends was something ludicrous—if true, as reported: "I will then," says old Buck, "call out ten companies of federal troops, and repulse him." Capital joke, bravo, old man.

A large meeting of the citizens of Philadelphia, had been held for the purpose of concluding on the character of obligations that the present distracted state of the country, now forced upon them. A deputation was appointed to confer with the Governor of the State, which has resulted in his Excellency issuing orders to the military commanders of the State to place the militia in readiness for eventualities.

The Bailey—Russell—Floyd fraud continues to create great excitement. Col. Russell had been unable to find in New York, the \$500,000 bail, which judge Betts required of him, and had been taken to Washington by an officer from that city who had apprehended him. Bailey was at first delivered from the hands of the officers, and finding sureties to the amount of \$3,000; but has since been surrendered by his bondsmen, and remitted to jail, and Russell was likely to find bail—but that with considerable difficulty.

The House of Representatives had appointed a special committee to investigate the matter. Secretary Floyd has addressed a communication to the speaker of the House in his own justification, in which he places Russell in the position of having violated the understanding upon which he received the acceptances. Poor Bailey, least benefited by the transaction is likely to get the worst of it, and thus it goes in the world—the greatest scoundrel always escapes.