

DOINGS OF CONGRESS.

WASHINGTON, DEC. 24.—The Vice-President called the Senate to order at noon. About forty members were present.

On motion of Mr. Hale twelve o'clock was the hour fixed for daily sessions.

The committee appointed to wait on the President reported he would communicate his message to Congress the next day at noon.

The House was opened with prayer by the Rev. Mr. Stockton. The roll of members was then called by the clerk, and one hundred and fourteen members answered to their names.

Several members recently elected were sworn in.

Some discussion arose in relation to the admission of Mr. Maynard, of Tennessee, to a seat. He was subsequently admitted. The claims of Foster, of North Carolina, Segar and Beach, of Virginia, to seats were referred to the committee on elections.

Mr. Lovejoy offered a joint resolution, tendering the thanks of Congress to Captain Wilkes for his arrest of the traitors, Slidell and Mason, which was adopted.

Mr. Blair offered the following as a question of privilege, which was passed:

Resolved, That John W. Reid, member of the House from the 5th Congressional District of Missouri, having taken up arms against the government of the United States, is hereby expelled from the House, and that the Speaker notify the Governor of Missouri of this fact.

Mr. Colfax offered the following, which was unanimously adopted:

Whereas, Michael C. Corcoran, who was taken prisoner on the battle field of Manassas, has, after suffering other indignities, been confined by the rebel authorities in the cell of a convicted felon, therefore,

Resolved, That the President of the United States be requested to similarly confine Jas. M. Mason, late of Virginia, now in custody at Fort Warren, until Col. Corcoran shall be treated as the United States have treated all prisoners taken by them on the battle field.

Mr. O'Connell submitted the following, which was also adopted:

Whereas, Col. Alfred M. Wood, of the 14th Regiment, New York State Militia, who was wounded and taken prisoner at the battle of Bull Run, has now, by the rebel authorities, been ordered to confinement in a felon's prison, and by the same order is to be treated as a prisoner convicted of an infamous crime, therefore,

Resolved, That the President of the United States be respectfully requested to order John Slidell to the same character of prison and to the same treatment until Col. Wood shall be treated as the United States have used prisoners taken in battle.

Mr. Bernhisel presented the constitution which was formed by the convention of delegates assembled at Great Salt Lake City, Utah, in March, 1856, accompanied by a memorial, asking Congress for admission into the Union as a State, on an equal footing with the original States.

Dec. 3d.—In the Senate, the President's message was communicated soon after the opening through his private secretary, Mr. Nicolay, and ordered to be printed.

In the House, Mr. Dunn offered the following, which was adopted:

Whereas, Henry C. Burnett, a member of this House from Kentucky, is in open rebellion against the government of the United States; therefore

Resolved, That the said Henry C. Burnett be, and he is hereby expelled from this House, and that the governor of Kentucky be notified of his expulsion;

Resolved, That the sergeant-at-arms be directed not to pay Burnett his salary, which has accrued since the close of the extra session.

Mr. Maynard presented the credentials of Mr. Clemens, from the fourth district of Tennessee, which were referred.

The President's message was received, read, and referred to the committee of the whole on the State of the Union.

Dec. 4th, in the Senate, Mr. Chandler introduced a resolution to expel Mr. Breckinridge. Mr. Powell took ground against it. As Mr. Breckinridge had already resigned, he could not be expelled.

Mr. Trumbull insisted that he should be expelled, and offered a substitute to Mr. Chandler's resolution, as follows:

Whereas, John C. Breckinridge, a member of this body, has joined the enemies of his country, and is now in arms against the government he has sworn to support, therefore,

Resolved, That the traitor, Breckinridge, be expelled.

Mr. Chandler accepted the substitute, and the resolution, as thus amended, was unanimously adopted. Yeas, 36; nays, none.

The standing committees were announced. They are constituted of the same persons as at the special session, with the following changes:

On Foreign Relations—Mr. Harris, in place of Mr. Breckinridge.

On Military Affairs—Mr. Nesmith, in place of Mr. Baker.

On Public Lands—Mr. Carlisle, in place of Mr. Bingham.

On Indian Affairs—Mr. Clark, in place of Mr. Foot.

On Pensions—Mr. Willey, in place of Mr. Bingham.

On Territories—Messrs. Pomeroy and Carlisle, in place of Mr. Baker and Mr. Breckinridge.

Mr. Wilson introduced a resolution for the release of colored persons confined in prison

in Washington, and sent there by persons calling themselves justices of the peace.

Mr. Hale advocated the passage of the resolution. He thought Washington the most corrupt, from the Supreme Court down, of any other community in the country. The course of justice in the city was most extraordinary. He had occasion to go into the magistrates' courts in his district. In one case a colleague of his was arrested actually for stealing a railroad at the instance of what evidently was a crazy man. He argued that it was the duty of Congress to look into the administration of justice in the district. He then submitted the following, which was laid over:

Resolved, That the committee on judiciary be instructed to inquire into the expediency and propriety of abolishing the present Supreme Court of the United States, and establishing instead thereof another Supreme Court, in pursuance of the provisions of the Constitution, which, in the opinion of Congress, will meet the requirements of the Constitution.

Among the bills introduced, were the following:

By Mr. Latham, a bill to establish a line of steam mail ships between San Francisco and Shanghai, touching at the Sandwich Islands and Japan; and a bill to authorize and facilitate mining operations in the States of California and Oregon, in the territory of the United States.

In the House, Mr. Lovejoy, from the committee on agriculture, reported the homestead bill, which was referred to the committee on public lands.

Mr. Upton introduced a bill for the restoration of Alexandria county to the District of Columbia.

Mr. Watis (delegate from New Mexico) introduced a preamble concluding with a resolution requesting the Secretary of War to report to the House what measures have been or ought to be taken to expose and punish Major Lynde and other army officers who may be guilty of treason or cowardice in surrendering a larger and superior force of United States soldiers to Texan troops, so that those who are innocent may be released from blame, which was adopted.

Dec. 9th, in the Senate, Mr. Trumbull introduced a bill for confiscating the property and giving freedom to the slaves of rebels, and accompanied it with a lengthy speech.

An executive session was held, and then the Senate adjourned.

In the House, the Speaker announced vacancies in several of the standing committees, which had been filled as follows:

Ways and Means—Messrs. Hooper and Maynard.

Judiciary—Mr. Wilson.

Territories—Mr. Shiel.

Indian Affairs—Mr. Phelps, of California.

Public Buildings—Mr. Blair, of Virginia.

Military Affairs—Mr. Dunn.

Committee on the Establishment of a Western Armory—Mr. Kellogg, of Illinois.

Pacific Railroad—Mr. Sargeant.

Mr. Stevens submitted a series of resolutions referring the various branches of the President's Message to the appropriate committees.

Dec. 9th, in the Senate, Mr. Dixon presented the resolution of the legislature of Connecticut, asking that senators and representatives use their efforts to secure the repeal of so much of the act for the increase of the revenue as imposes an income tax, or else have the amount apportioned among special States, and allow them to raise the amount in their own way, which was referred to the committee on finances. He also presented the resolutions of the legislature of Connecticut, in favor of a system of decimal weights and measures, which was referred to the same committee.

Mr. Grimes presented a petition from a citizen of Iowa, who has invented a rebel mowing machine, or double acting bomb, to which he wished to call the special attention of the chairman of the committee on military affairs.

Mr. Sumner presented several petitions from citizens of Rhode Island and Vermont, calling on Congress, under the war power, to legislate on the subject of the emancipation of the slaves of rebels.

Mr. Colamer and others presented similar petitions. They were referred to the judiciary committee.

Mr. Hale's resolution directing the judiciary committee to inquire into the expediency of abolishing the present Supreme court and establishing another was taken up. He said the present Supreme court had failed. He believed if the rebels now in arms should succeed, the Supreme court would decide that the soldiers now in Virginia were trespassers and rioters.

Mr. Foster thought that Congress should legislate only for the great question before Congress. While he believed that the Supreme court had lost the confidence of the country, he did not think the judiciary would be benefited by the denunciation of its members. He did not believe this was the time for radical legislation on the judiciary.

Mr. Browning thought that it was not in the power of Congress to repeal the Supreme court. Such power was not given in the Constitution. There was no more power to repeal the court than there was to repeal the Constitution.

Mr. Colamer moved, as a substitute, that all portions of the President's message relating to the judiciary be referred to the judiciary committee, which was agreed to, and the resolution as amended was adopted.

On motion of Mr. Chandler, the resolution inquiring into the causes of the disasters to our army at Bull Run and Ball's Bluff was

taken up.—The question was on the substitute offered by Mr. Grimes, "that a committee investigate the causes of all disasters that have happened to the Union forces."—A lengthy discussion followed, in which Messrs. Pomeroy, Chandler, Lane, Foster, Fessenden, Sherman, Grimes, Hale and Wallson participated. In the course of his remarks Mr. Willson said he thought it was time that the proclamations by officers should cease, and the government have the sole settled policy. We had not men of large military experience. Great mistakes had been made, and were likely to be made, but he wanted it understood that the people expected that no mistakes would be made, but every man give all he has, and is, to the country.—The resolution was adopted.

In the Senate, Mr. Dawes, from the committee on elections, introduced a resolution, which was passed, authorizing the parties in the contested election case of Beach against Upton, in the Fairfax district of Virginia, to take evidence.

Mr. Morrill gave notice of his intention to introduce a bill donating lands to the several States, for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts in the establishment of colleges.

Mr. Richardson, from the committee on military affairs, reported the following, which was passed:

Whereas, The exchange of prisoners in the present rebellion has already been practiced indirectly, and as such exchange would not only increase enlistments and the vigor of the army, but subserve the highest interests of humanity, and as such exchange does not involve recognition of the rebels as a government, therefore,

Resolved, By the Senate and House of Representatives, etc., that the President of the United States be requested to inaugurate systematic measures for the exchange of prisoners in the present rebellion.

Mr. Conklin introduced a bill to subject certain persons to military trial and punishment, covering the cases of such as may enter into speculations for the purpose of defrauding the government, and who may offer bribes for the advantages of furnishing military stores, munitions of war, etc. Military and naval court-martials are authorized. Those found guilty are to be punished with imprisonment for not less than two years. He said:—The government has been cheated of large sums of money. There was a multitude of harpies, which no man could number, preying upon the vitals of the commonwealth. They should be punished with certain severity. He repeated there was a class of desperate speculators who are depleting the treasury to enormous amounts in a variety of injurious modes.

Mr. Dawes, one of the special committee to examine into government contracts, briefly spoke of the discoveries of fraud that have already been made. He said that without further legislation the Treasury will become bankrupt.

The bill was referred to the judiciary committee.

On motion, it was resolved that the committee on foreign affairs be instructed to inquire into the expediency of furnishing relief to the starving population in Ireland, and to report by bill or otherwise.

Mr. Benham introduced a bill repealing all acts and parts of acts, authorizing the commitment of persons of color as runaways, or suspected or charged with being runaways, and being sold to pay expenses, etc., and to punish for such practices.

Mr. Gurley introduced a bill to confiscate the property of rebels, liberate their slaves, and colonize them.

Mr. Hutchins introduced a bill to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia.

Mr. Upton introduced a bill to facilitate judicial proceedings in the confiscation of captured property, and for the better administration of the prize law.

Several other bills and resolutions of minor importance were introduced and referred.

VALUE OF ONE CENT.—A French Mathematician has been calculating what would now be the sum produced by one cent put out at five per cent per annum compound interest, at the commencement of the Christian era.—He estimates what would be the value of a ball of solid gold, equal in size to the earth. He then makes the astounding statement that had one such ball of gold fallen each minute, during the past eighteen hundred and sixty years, the value of all these globes together would not amount to so much as the sum produced by one cent at compound interest, during the same period.

SMOOTH BORE MUSKETS.—Many army officers prefer a large proportion of regiments armed with smooth bores, in a general engagement. Each is loaded with a bullet and three buckshot, and they are far more effective than rifles for close fighting, besides bearing much longer use without becoming fouled; though arms of greater range and accuracy are better adapted to skirmishing.

GREAT MEN.—Alexander had a wry neck; William the Conqueror, in his latter days, was scarcely able to move from corpulency. Hannibal and Philip of Macedon had but an eye apiece. Caesar and Mahomet were troubled with the falling sickness; and the northern hero, Odin, is said to have been little else than a compound of disease. When Voltaire was first introduced into the Russian palace, he was desired to enter a closet, where he found a little withered figure, under the clothes, shivering with the ague—it was Frederick the Great.

[For the Deseret News.]

Animal and Vegetable Life.

BY ALEXANDER OTT.

By the somatic or animal life is understood a variety of interesting phenomena that manifest themselves in multifarious transformations and changes produced by the consumption of various nutritious elements, such as food, oxygen and moisture.

As a clock that has to be wound up and set at certain times, so the animal body requires to be regulated in order to keep the wonderful machinery of life in motion. And with such a remarkable accuracy is the process of animal existence carried on, that as long as the equilibrium of the organs of life is maintained, a constant receiving and giving out of elements takes place, so as to bring alimentary particles from a state of motion to that of rest, and thus produced decomposition, assimilation and combination.

Being exposed to the all-destroying element of the atmosphere, the animal as well as the vegetable system requires a constant renewal of the materials of which they are composed, in order to make the blood pure and sufficiently strong to supply five hundred muscles (viz: of the animal body) effectively, the healthy and pure circulation of the sap in plants is likewise depending upon a well regulated alimentary process.

The chemical operation of the atmosphere, by means of oxydation as well as the process of nutrition, makes every thing of the animal and vegetable kingdom subject to constant changes. By the remarkable law of compensation which we find every where in nature, the power of the nutrient vessels is concentrated in constructing, with wonderful accuracy, the animal and vegetable body, while the absorption of certain atmospheric elements such as oxygen, etc., and incessantly decomposes or removes particles of the body by means of secretion.

These changes, although calculated to entirely metamorphose the system, are still brought about with such a remarkable correctness and regularity that the identity of the animal or vegetable body is never lost, although, in the course of a few years, not a single particle may be found in the system which existed at the commencement of this interesting transformation. The exact time of such an entire change in the animal body depends upon a variety of external and internal influences, and is supposed to vary from four to seven years.

The process of secretion is entirely governed by the activity of the nutrient capillary vessels to select for every tissue and fiber a certain amount of particles which are capable of assimilation with the body, while incongenial portions are being removed, thus each organ imbibes as much alimentary matter as is essential to its development and growth.

It occurs sometimes that the nutrient arteries operate so rapidly in some parts as to produce preternatural growth. Some times, the vessels which act as depositories of fat, accelerate their operation to such an extent that wens or swellings of an anomalous character are being formed. The process of other arteries is again so singular as to deposit quite heterogeneous matter, such as is not found elsewhere in the body.

An analysis of the system shows that the process of nutrition is introduced in the animal and vegetable body, in order to neutralize or counteract the constant and rapid waste of the system occasioned by the principle of respiration, and this very latter vital phenomenon (as will be shown in another article), not only sustains life but destroys it also. Hence, a constant repair and renewal of the system so required by the decomposition and organization of matter from the blood which, by the process of respiration, is impoverished.

The deposition of fat through the medium of nutrition is a very important and wise law, because, by the activity of the respiratory organs, the body would be kept in a state of leanness, on account of its rapid consumption, if the food were not supplied faster than it is consumed and did not accumulate in the shape of fat; and it is this very principle which sustains during periods of privations, such as the hibernating of animals, etc.

The nutrient elements of animals consists of substances identical in composition with the body it is to sustain; and lives thus by the assimilation into its own substance of the most complex and elaborate products of the organic kingdom, while the existence of a plant depends upon entirely inorganic food, such as the carbonic acid, the nitrogen of the atmosphere, the rain, dew, and ammoniacal vapor of the air, and the alkali and saline matter of the soil.

To Sharp for him.

A supercilious and, haughty Virginian, named Vinton, had a pass to enter our lines; and meeting a Zouave picket, handed it to his slave, probably deeming himself too good for the contact. The Zouave read the pass and told the darky to go on. When Vinton attempted to follow, he was stopped by a bayonet.

"But that's my pass," he exclaimed angrily. "Can't help it; it says, pass bearer, and bearer has passed."

"I will call Sam back, and take it: Here, Sam."

"Won't do," said the picket. "That pass is to Alexandria, not to Fairfax. The nigger's got to have another one before he can return."

So the discomfited Virginian was forced to turn back.