

THE PRODUCTION OF SALTPETRE—SOMETHING FOR EVERY MAN TO DO.

We beg leave to call the attention of our citizens to an important subject connected with the maintenance of our cause, and upon which absolutely depends our capability of self-defence.

It is well known that we have within ourselves all the materials necessary for the manufacture of powder, which is the very life blood of war; but some preliminary preparation is required before they can be converted into the proper form for use.

The War Department, some time since, offered thirty-five cents per pound for all saltpetre delivered before the 1st of January 1862; but in order to induce its manufacture by our own people at home, has proposed to give fifty cents per pound for all that is made within the Confederacy until January 1863, and for all made from artificial beds 50 cents per pound until January 1864.

When it is remembered that saltpetre is sold in Bengal at three cents per pound, and actually taken in payment of taxes by Prussia and Sweden at six cents per pound, and that we have equal facilities with them for its manufacture, the liberality of the Government and the lucrativeness of the business will be apparent.

We submit below two communications, which deserve general and earnest attention, both from the importance of the subject and the high character of their authors.

The first is a letter from Commander George Minor, C. S. N., and Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance and Hydrography in the Navy Department of the Confederate States, to Gov. Letcher, of Virginia, and by him communicated to the Legislature of the State in December last, as an accompanying document to his message; and the second, the reply of A. Snowden Piggot, M. D., a distinguished chemist, to certain inquiries propounded to him upon this subject.

BUREAU OF ORDNANCE AND HYDROGRAPHY, RICHMOND, November 6, 1861. Sir: The supply of nitre for the fabrication of gun powder being limited to the nitrous serites found in the caves of the Confederate States, of which the supply is uncertain, and, from a partial examination recently made, of a quantity not sufficient for the amount that will be required for a long war, I beg leave, very respectfully, to call the attention of your Excellency to the fact, and to suggest to you the propriety of establishing artificial nitre beds in every county in Virginia.

During the war which followed the French revolution, the supply of foreign nitre was cut off from the Continent by the English blockade, but instead of depriving the French of this article of prime necessity for carrying on the war, means were at once adopted for making it in quantity and quality sufficient to meet the exigencies of an army in the field. In France alone the yield was a thousand tons per annum. It was proportionate in Holland, Prussia, Sweden, and Germany. The practice of extracting nitre from beds is still kept up in Europe, especially in Prussia and Sweden, where it is received in quantities of several hundred tons annually.

It is true that one or more cargoes of nitre may pass the inefficient Lincoln blockade, but as the supply thus obtained is uncertain, while that of "beds" is certain, I submit to your Excellency if there would not be more wisdom in making nitre beds, than in relying upon an uncertain outside supply.

If you deem my suggestions worthy of consideration, I will be pleased to furnish you with all the information on the subject that you may desire, that I can impart. I have the honor to enclose you a copy of a letter I addressed to Dr. A. Snowden Piggot, a distinguished chemist, who is familiar with the subject, and his reply. I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant, A. SNOWDEN PIGGOT, M. D., His Excellency, John Letcher, Gov. of Va.

Dr. Piggot's reply to Capt. Minor's inquiries is as follows: RICHMOND, Oct. 28, 1861. Sir:—In reply to your letter of the 19th instant, I submit the following statements: 1. As to the best method of preparing nitre beds.

South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas; but to encourage the investment of labor and capital in this business, and to cover contingencies, the Government proposes to take, at fifty cents per pound, all saltpetre made in this way until the 1st of January, 1864.

The propriety of the difference in price fixed by the Government will be obvious upon a moment's reflection. If it was proposed to purchase at fifty cents per pound all saltpetre delivered prior to January, 1864, and the blockade should be raised within that period, importers could procure it abroad at six or seven cents, and realize incalculable profit. If all saltpetre made within the Confederacy, from nitrous earths, commanded the same price for that period, as the process is much less expensive than the artificial one, and requires a much shorter time, enormous amounts would be made by that method, should the war terminate speedily, and the Government would be compelled to fulfill its contract, although having no need of the amount furnished, and thereby incurring a heavy and unnecessary expense; but, if for what is made from artificial beds, the period of purchase was less, there would be no inducement to embark in it, as the limitation must expire before the saltpetre could be prepared and furnished.

We have called attention to this matter in the earnest hope and belief that our people will eagerly embrace the liberal offers of the Government, and while subserving their own pecuniary interests, advance the highest interests of the Confederacy.

FOR THE OBSERVER. SWEET POTATOES. MESSRS. EDITORS:—You will permit me, through your paper, to make a few remarks upon that valuable esculent, the sweet potato.

As many of our farmers are now in the battle field, and a probability of more soon being there, I think it behooves those remaining behind to turn their attention to the cultivation of those products which will yield them the most for their labor. I think there is nothing grown upon a farm that will make a more handsome yield, according to the labor bestowed, than the sweet potato.

I was reading in a Patent Office Report of a gentleman that selects an acre from a field of ten, and dug 1200 bushels from his acre. What else could I have put his acre in to have got half such a crop? Although we may not raise 1200 bushels per acre, we can very easily raise from 400 to 600. They are not only an excellent luxury for the table, but also nearly as good as corn for fattening pork. I therefore am astonished that there is not more of them grown, taking into consideration the small amount of labor necessary to their production, compared with other products. Boiled potatoes, with the addition of some salt and meal, will, I think, fatten hogs as fast, or faster, than all corn, and at about one-third the cost. Potatoes, to be fed profitably to hogs, should always be cooked. In an experiment of cooked and uncooked potatoes fed to fattening hogs, it was found that the cooking increased their value 230 pr. ct.

Having said thus much about their uses, I will now make a few remarks about their production. 1st. The seed should be perfectly sound. There are a great many different varieties of the potato, and most persons have their notions about the kind they wish to plant. I think the African, or "me-gro choker" as they are commonly called, will produce most; they are likewise a very hardy potato. 2d. They should be bedded on a warm bed made as follows: Stand down plank edgewise as large as you want your bed, and secure them by driving up stakes; or in other words, make you a box as large as you want your bed, and in a sunny place convenient to water. Then haul stable manure and put in your box 12 inches deep. Pack it down well and wet it well with water, which will cause it to heat soon. Then place on this manure 2 inches of earth. Then your potatoes, and do not crowd them—the slips will have a better set. Then cover your potatoes from 14 to 2 inches with loose earth. They should not be covered too deep, as they are more apt to rot, and will likewise cause the slips to be more spindling. You have now only to attend to your bed and water it about three times a week to keep it from getting too hot. This should be done in the morning, as you can then, by grubbing in them, best tell the temperature of the manure. It done in the evening, when the sun has warmed the bed, you cannot so well tell. Keep it as near as you can at a blood heat. I have tried this method of bedding for 3 or 4 years, and have never failed to produce as many again sprouts, I think, as I would have done by the old way. I will remark that you may, if you see proper, dig down some 6 or 8 inches and let your bed be partly above and partly under the ground. The advantages of a hot-bed are these: 1st. Your potatoes, when the directions are followed, are much less liable to rot than when bedded the old way. 2d. They are from 2 to 3 weeks earlier. 3d. They sprout much faster, the heat of the manure causing them to sprout nearly as fast in the night as they do in the day time. 4th. You can get some three drawings in May. People should make it a rule to set out no slips after May goes out. The product is not only larger and finer but they get their growth and therefore keep much better than if planted late.

Remarks.—Land for sweet potatoes should be manured with a mixture of ashes and stable manure. It is the best manure of which we would be likely to get enough. Scrapings from under horses is probably the best. I omitted mentioning that sand answers an excellent purpose to mix with the dirt, half and half, that goes on the bed previous to placing on the potatoes, and likewise in the dirt to cover the potatoes. It makes them sprout better. Green cropping is of great advantage to a potato crop. Turn under a coat of oats, rye or wheat where you design planting. They should be planted in hills of one or two slips in a hill. Potatoes to make a good yield should be plowed and hoed three or four times. The common method of scraping down potatoes is wrong; you thus expose the roots, and the hill soon becomes dry through. But you should scrape up and leave the loose earth on the hill. This plan would not do were the patch allowed to get grassy, but you must work it after every rain and by keeping the surface disturbed they will not get grassy. They should be plowed with something like the common counter plow. The land to suit, early setting out, and thorough cultivation are the things to ensure success.

Littering for sweet potatoes as you would for Irish does not answer well. I have tried the experiment and made an entire failure. It keeps the ground too cool. The manure in your warm bed can be taken up and applied to anything you wish, having got better by the process. Some may object to planting largely from the fact they can't keep them. But plant and make them and there will probably, by that time, be directions given you by which there will be but little more danger of their rotting than there is of your corn in your crib. MOORE.

P. S. I should have mentioned that the potatoes should be bedded on a warm bed from the 10th to the 25th inst. If there be danger of late frosts the vines can be protected by covering.

The notes purporting to be issues of the "Peetersburg Savings Bank," are spurious and counterfeit.

THE BATTLE OF ROANOKE ISLAND. STATEMENT OF CAPT. LILES, OF ANSON. From the Watersboro Argus. LILESVILLE, N. C., March 1, 1862. MR. FENTON: In compliance with numerous requests, as well as my own desire to correct several misstatements, I proceed to give you for publication, a correct account of the battles of the 7th and 8th of February at Roanoke Island, and especially the part taken by the "O. K. Boys." About two weeks before the enemy made his appearance, my company and the "Hatters Avengers," Capt. Chas. W. Knight, of Martin county, were ordered to Ashby's Landing, a distance of eight miles from our camp, and near two miles below our lowest battery, Fort Bartow. Two brass field pieces, a 12 and 18 pounder, were put in my charge, and I was ordered to defend the Landing, and, at every hazard, to save the artillery. An officer from the 8th Regiment was detailed to drill squads from Capt. King's and my company on the cannon, but he only visited us twice, spending each time about half an hour. All that our men really learned of Artillery drill was taught them in an hour, by Col. Jordan, and Lee or two short lessons by Lt. Kinney, of Wise's Legion, who came to the Island about three days before the battle. "I had no horses, and the mules before the battle," had no horses, and the mules before the battle. "I had no horses, and the mules before the battle," had no horses, and the mules before the battle.

FOREIGN AND NORTHERN NEWS. NORFOLK, March 6.—Northern papers of yesterday have been received here.

PORTLAND, Me., March 4.—The Norfolk has arrived with Liverpool dates to the 21st. The Confederate steamer Sumter was still at Gibraltar waiting for coal. In the House of Commons the supplementary estimates of expenditures caused by the Trent affair, amounting to £973,000, was agreed to. Mr. Bright denounced the policy of the Government, and said that the money was worse than thrown away. Palmerston said that Bright's opinions were confined to himself. The gunboats prepared for commission under the Trent difficulty had been directed to be dismantled.

An address to the Emperor of France by the Senate had been read. The debate commenced on the 20th of February. The address regrets the suffering in France on account of the war in America, and the effect on the trade and manufactures, but agrees with the Emperor that the friendly relations between the two countries render neutrality incumbent on the part of France. The defeat of the Spaniards by the Mexicans is confirmed.

RICHMOND, March 7.—Late English papers report a more favorable aspect of affairs towards the South at the opening of Parliament than at first announced through Northern channels. Nearly all representative men express favorable views towards the Confederate States, and the reverse towards the Northern Government.

LIVERPOOL, Feb. 21.—The sales of cotton for 4 days reached 41,000 bales, of which 20,000 bales were taken by speculators and exporters. The market closed firm at a slight advance. The following are the quotations: Fair Orleans 14 1/2; Middling Orleans 13; Fair Mobile, 13. No other quotations given. The stock of cotton in Liverpool is 479,000 bales, of which 178,000 are American.

NEW YORK, March 6.—The Herald of this morning says that the late foreign news states that Earl Russell expresses himself satisfied about the sailing of the stone fleet in the Charleston harbor. The Herald's Paris correspondent says that the Emperor Napoleon is the enemy of the Union cause, and will show it after he humbles England in Mexico.

WASHINGTON, March 4.—Gen. Banks's forces occupied Martinsburg on yesterday, without opposition. Andy Johnson has been formally appointed military Governor of Tennessee. From Europe.—A gentleman in this city has received per the Confederate steamer Nashville, from a friend in London, an interesting letter, from which we have been kindly permitted to make the following extract.

"The Trent affair has retarded rather than hastened the raising of the blockade of our ports. The measure, I have the best of reasons for believing, was agreed upon some weeks ago between England and France—the former power to take the initiative. The settlement of the Trent difficulty on terms so disgraceful to the Lincoln government, renders it somewhat indelicate for her in view of such a triumph now to do so. I am certain, however, that it will occur soon. All Europe will be united upon the subject."

We are not authorized to use names, but we feel at liberty to say, that the above comes from high authority, and from one as likely to be posted in public matters as any other man in the British realm.—Petersburg Express.

Important Propositions.—Foreign Success.—The question of the suspension of the tariff has not yet been touched in the permanent Congress, and is not likely to be touched, unless in a connection that may somewhat surprise the public. We learn that there is almost a unanimous disposition in Congress to extend propositions to foreign governments for success, these propositions to be grants of peculiar commercial privileges, and terms of years of free trade; but that this disposition has been checked by motives of delicacy, as the matter is considered to be one of treaty stipulations, and to belong to the Executive.

It appears to be generally thought by members that the suspension of the tariff, at present, would lose us an important element of power in our treaty stipulations, that might, too, possibly be used as a basis for propositions for foreign success in the existing war. We speak advisedly when we notify our readers that propositions for the success of foreign governments are likely to be soon considered in a secret session of Congress, so far as those propositions can be framed to avoid anything like humiliation, and to invoke no concessions other than commercial favors. Richmond Examiner.

Run the Blockade.—Arms for the Southern Confederacy.—Within one week, two steamers laden with munitions of war, coffee, merchandise, &c., entered Confederate ports in the vicinity of New Orleans, and four more have passed out. The steamers which ran in were the "Victoria" and the "Miramón," both from Havana—both ineffectually pursued by the blockaders—each of which brought 25,000 pounds of powder and a number of rifles.

The trip of the Victoria was a very eventful one, as she encountered a severe Norther which almost foundered her, damaging her machinery so badly that her final escape seemed almost providential. Escaping this danger, she ran in the track of some Federal cruisers but she managed to elude them. She sailed on the 7th of Feb'y, and on the night of the 12th approached her destination, which was Fort Livingston below New Orleans. The water being very shoal, and the boat heavily laden, she struck on the bar, about two or three miles distant from the fort. Here she remained until next morning at eight o'clock, when a Yankee armed vessel bore down rapidly upon her, until about one mile distant, where she stuck, and commenced firing shot and shell at the Victoria, firing in all 283 shots from rifled guns, at that short range, only three of which struck.

One shell penetrated a bag of coffee, above the powder stowed in the hold, to within two inches of the kegs, but did not burst. At 5 1/2 P. M. the enemy's boat suddenly retired, but returned at daylight with two others of lighter draught; but during the night, by the use of lighters, the Victoria was taken in with her cargo under the guns of the fort.

The Miramón was also chased but not fired upon, escaping in the fog from her pursuer. We derive this information from Edwin De Leon, Esq., former editor of the "Southern Press," who came as bearer of dispatches from Europe. Rich. Enquirer.

A Noble Hea.—It is related that the following anonymous note, written in a delicate hand, was found tucked upon the bosom of a garment (furnished by the Georgia Relief and Hospital Association,) used in shrouding a young soldier who died recently, at the Georgia Hospital, in this city: "Poor Confederate soldier, whether sick or wounded, when you wear this garment, remember there is one who lives and prays for you for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. I wish I knew you, but that is denied me; but I hope you may be preserved from all harm, and saved in Heaven. If it shall shroud the dead, may it be one who is robed in the beautiful garments of salvation. There, I shall hope to meet you, where we shall walk the golden streets above."—Rich. Whig.

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WAR NEWS.

Gen. Price reported to have shipped the Yankees.—MEMPHIS, March 6.—The Captain of the steamer Vicksburg reached this evening from New Madrid. He states that scouts had brought in the St. Louis Republican, which says that Gen. Price had a fight with the enemy and whipped them. He killed 1500, took many prisoners, and put them to flight, and is now in full pursuit of them towards St. Louis.

Fernandina Occupied.—A dispatch received here yesterday states that the enemy had landed on Cumberland Island, and sent forward a detachment to occupy the town of Fernandina. Most of the citizens abandoned the place some weeks ago, and the military was withdrawn from Amelia Island (on which Fernandina is situated) ten days since; consequently no resistance was offered. If the enemy should not burn the place they are welcome to it, as they will reap but little benefit from its possession.—Savannah Rep., 4th.

The Evacuation of Columbus.—The evacuation of Columbus, Ky., is officially announced in the Northern papers, and the report says the Confederates are falling back. Several fires were visible in town, indicating the destruction of military stores and equipments, if not the town itself. The Federal troops were expected to occupy it immediately.

The Memphis Appeal of the 4th inst. confirms this. The place was evacuated on the 1st inst., and the troops and guns moved to Island No. 10 and other points below. The Appeal says that the new position is considered by Gen. Beauregard as much more impregnable than Columbus, inasmuch as a flank movement cannot be made against it with such facility. We look on Memphis and the Mississippi valley as safer today than they were two weeks ago.

The Office of Commanding General.—We learn that there has been some hesitation in Congress to pass the bill creating the office of Commanding General to direct the movements of the war before the President decides on the re-organization of his Cabinet. With reference to the delay in the re-organization of the Cabinet, we may say that it is reported in well-informed quarters that nominations have already been sent in to the Senate, and that that of Mr. Mallory as Secretary of the Navy has, by a large vote, been rejected.—Rich. Examiner.

The Examiner of the 7th says:—The report, which we mentioned as a popular rumor yesterday, of the rejection of Mr. Mallory's nomination by the Senate, is incorrect, as we understand positively that President Davis has not as yet sent in any Cabinet nomination. Gen. Lee was expected to arrive in Richmond yesterday, having been summoned here, it is understood, by President Davis. He is named for the office of Commanding General, should the appointment be committed to the Executive.

General Price.—RICHMOND, Feb. 7.—We are informed that Sterling Price has been promoted to a Major-General, and will be assigned to duty in Missouri. This is unquestionably a good appointment, for Gen. Price has shown himself a daring and capable officer.—Dispatch.

Guilford in Motion.—Volunteering is still going on quite briskly. The following gentlemen are forming volunteer companies for the war, with fair prospects of early success, viz: Chas. E. Shober; Lt. James T. Morehead, Jr.; Lt. Watlington; Dr. A. P. McDaniel; David Scott, Jr., (who was in the Bethel fight); and perhaps others. The old companies from Guilford have also lately received large numbers of recruits. From present indications, Guilford will do her part in achieving the Independence of the Southern Confederacy.—Greensboro Patriot.

Rockingham.—We are pleased to learn that a new impetus has been given to the patriotic citizens of Rockingham, by the late reverses to our arms, and that the whole county is aroused to enthusiasm in support of the war.

Samuel H. Boyd, Esq., has succeeded in raising a company of more than 100 as fine men as could be called into service. Col. John H. Dillard has a company far advanced to completion. Dr. James Courts and Dr. John W. May, are each also engaged in raising companies for the war, with fair prospects of success.—Id.

WAR NEWS.

The Right Spirit.—We learn that the companies that volunteered to guard the prisoners here, are now volunteering almost to a man for the war. In this they have acted nobly, and shown our people that it was not cowardice that prompted them to offer themselves as guard, but that they are brave men, and are willing to tender their services in whatever capacity they may be needed in this struggle for their country and their homes.—Salsbury Banner.

The "Silver Grays" in the field.—An old citizen of Rutherford county, N. C., writes enthusiastically of the uprising of the people of that State since they heard of the disaster at Roanoke Island. He says: "I was at Burnt Chimneys, which had previously furnished over 200 volunteers, and it was a sight to see the Silver Grays coming up to answer to their names. I have a son in the army, not yet fifteen years of age. I am fifty-seven, and carry led in my person, shot there by a savage; but I will be with Jeff. Davis in six troubles, and in the seventh will die before I forsake him."

Good effect.—The Macon Telegraph states that immediately upon the reception of the news of the fall of Fort Donelson, an artillery company of 140 men was made up in Sumter county, Georgia. In Dougherty county forty-five came forward in one hour.

Attempt to raise a Union Flag in East Tennessee.—We have been informed that an attempt was made last week, by some Union men, to raise a Union flag in Jonesboro, Tenn., which led to a row between the Secessionists and Unionists, resulting in the killing of three of the latter.

Parson Brownlow.—We learn through a gentleman just from Knoxville, Tenn., that Parson Brownlow is still lying very ill at his home, and is not expected to recover. His house is guarded constantly by a detachment of soldiers.

Lynchburg Virginian.

M. E. Conference Postponed.—The Southern Christian Advocate has a letter from Bishop Anderson, postponing the meeting of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which was to have taken place at New Orleans on the first of April. The time and place will be fixed on by a future meeting of Bishops.

Losing the Distilleries.—Gov. Brown, of Georgia, has issued a proclamation ordering each distiller in that State to desist absolutely from the manufacture of ardent spirits after the 15th day of March, 1862. The Superintendent of the State Road is forbidden to transport any whiskey over that Road, and other railroad Superintendents are requested to do likewise. In case of distillers refusing to obey this order, their stills are to be seized and sent to Rome, Ga., to be manufactured into cannon; and all liquor brought into military encampments is to be emptied upon the ground.

The Shelling of Bowling Green by the Federals resulted in the killing of five persons—two ladies, a child and two negro men.