

THE HERALD OF THE UNION.

VOL. 1.—NO. 13.

WILMINGTON, N. C., MONDAY MORNING, MARCH 20, 1865.

PRICE TEN CENTS.

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WILMINGTON, MARCH 20.

THE LATEST NEWS.

Through the politeness of Brig. General Dodge we were last night placed in possession of New York papers of the 15th and 16th, brought to Federal Point by the steamer *Atlantic*, and thence to this city by the *Etta Hancock*. The lateness of the hour prevents our making any extracts this morning.

Details are given of Sherman's movement and of Schofield's advance to and occupation of Kingston.

Sheridan at last accounts was within twenty miles of Richmond, and had probably struck and destroyed the Danville railroad, severing the last southerly line of communication with the rebel capitol.

Gold sold in New York on the 15th at 174, and closed on the evening of that day at 175.

The gunboat *Eolus* arrived last evening from Fayetteville, which placed she left on Friday. Sherman's rear guard left that day and Hampton's cavalry skirmished with them in the streets of the town. No further damage was done to the town than has been reported.

The *Eolus* reports speaking a scout on the bank of the river who reported the occupation of Goldsboro by Schofield's forces.

Increased Attraction.

In the issue of THE HERALD OF THE UNION, on Tuesday morning, March 21st, we shall commence the publication of a tale by Charles Dickens, which has never appeared in any journal or periodical in this country. The publication will be continued from day to day until completed. Those who desire to read the whole of this production—one of the most interesting that has emanated from the prolific pen of that gifted author—should hand in their subscriptions without delay.

On Monday the 27th inst., we hope to be able to present THE HERALD OF THE UNION to its patrons in an enlarged form, and printed upon paper manufactured at the north expressly for printing purposes, and better adapted to that than blotting like that we are now forced to use. We shall continue to make improvements in the appearance, matter and general character of the journal as the patronage extended to us by the public will warrant.

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE.

INCENDIARY FIRE.—A fire was discovered on Saturday afternoon in a lot of rosin on the premises of the Messrs. Van Amringe, near Chadbourne's steam saw mill, at the east end of the town. This rosin had been twice set on fire by the rebels before they evacuated the town, but the fire had been extinguished, though damaging the rosin considerably by melting and spreading it on the ground. On Saturday it was about burned out. Chadbourne's mill had a narrow escape at one time during the conflagration, but was saved through the efforts of the soldiers and citizens. It is said that a negro employed at the mill reports having seen a person dressed in the uniform of a private soldier of the union army come to the enclosure where the rosin was stored and throw a lighted brand of fire upon it. Of course the fire must have been set intentionally by some one. Whether it was set by some of the national soldiers through pure devilry, or by some skulking rebel in Federal uniform remains to be seen. It will be noticed that General Abbott has offered a reward of fifty dollars for the apprehension of the incendiary whoever he may be.

MORE ARRIVALS FROM FAYETTEVILLE.—Every day adds to the influx of refugees from the grand crowd that followed Sherman into this State from South Carolina. On Saturday a steamer came in from above having in tow half a dozen barges loaded with men, women and children, whites and blacks, fleeing from the desolation of South Carolina. The fleet was three days in making the passage down the river. The number of passengers was increased by one on the second night out: The unhappy mother and child were kindly cared for by the officers in charge and their fellow refugees.

The grand caravan that is marching down is looked for daily. When it arrives the accommodations of the town will be sorely taxed to furnish shelter for them all.

Wilmington Theatre—Mr. and Mrs. Henry Watkins.

These distinguished American artists who finished impersonations have won for them a brilliant reputation both in England and America, will make their first appearance in the south, since their return from abroad, at the theatre this evening in Mr. Watkins successful drama of *The Hidden Hand*, pronounced by the distinguished authoress of the romance upon which the play is founded (Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth) to be the "best dramatization of her story she had ever witnessed." To those unacquainted with the subject the following from the *New Orleans Picayune* will prove acceptable:

"The *Hidden Hand* is the very faking title of one of the best dramas it was ever our good fortune to witness, presenting as it does, a combination of the thrilling, the terrible, the mysterious, the comic and the tragic.

"The principal character—Capitola—is a splendid conception, and the 'conservation of character,' as critics call it, is preserved throughout. She is the rightful heir of millions, but by the guilty machinations of the rever-sioner, she, the only obstacle betwixt him and his inheritance, is, together with an old mulatto nurse, stolen and spirited away in infancy, and cast as an unknown waif upon the chances of life in 'Rag Alley,' in the city of New York. The picture of her sufferings (from hunger, cold and desolation, as drawn by her own hand, is very touching and true. She almost starves, tries to obtain work as a washer, but finding a sixpenny pence, she resolves to live while it lasts. As a last resource she exchanges her girl's clothes for the suit of a boy. Then she makes a precarious existence by blacking boots, selling papers, and such other employments as offer. A planter in Virginia, who gets a clue to the mystery of her abduction from the nurse, goes to New York in search of her. He finds her by accident before the municipal court, taken up for her disguised sex. She is about to be sent to the house of refuge, but the planter claims her and takes her to his home in Virginia.

"There she appears as his pet, a wild, merry hoyden, who turns his household economy upside down, is a favorite with all, and yet a tyrant over all. She gets absolute control of the government, as in boy's palace she calls the old gentleman, and does what she pleases. In his absence she calls in the negroes, and has a dance, in which she kills with great glee. She is discovered, and the rever-sioner employs a notorious desperado to carry her off. He contrives to secrete himself in her bed-chamber at night, but the careless girl by her coyness and impudency, succeeds in detecting the assassin, whom she literally catches in a trap. Finally the plots are unraveled, the mystery disclosed, and she resumes her inheritance.

"As to the character of Capitola, it must be considered that the chances and circumstances of her life made it strange, wild, wayward and rugged. The tastes and ideas which she formed in Rag Alley, amid poverty and wretchedness, and in her career as a new-bay in New York, were not cultured or refined. Her translation to the home and heart of a southern planter could not translate her to the refinement of a native Southern lady. Her deportment must be judged by her antecedents and the dramatic character which she had to preserve, not by the standard of a planter's daughter, native and to the manner born. But her sudden elevation from poverty and wretchedness, to independence, to the mistress of a Southern home, was calculated to exalt her fully a full to the wildest excesses. That she is almost wild in her joy—singing, romping and dancing, a veritable care-devil—Lady Gay, was the most natural thing in the world.

"Of course Mrs. Watkins was magnificent, and it is needless to state, after the part to perfection. Takes her all in all, she is the most charming actress upon our stage. There is no other of equal capability in her expression which she can give, and a most beautiful. There is a truth and innocent mischief of fond and tender selfishness that makes her beauty more beautiful. In the course of the evening she introduced several of those little plays which she sings so expertly. In the character of Wool, Mr. Watkins is fitted to a hair—it is one of those consummate portraiture that almost ceases to be acting. In look, gesture, and accent it was a complete realization of the consensual dorker—the favored body servant, whose imperious and stolid bladders, and laughable humors could be tolerated nowhere but in the South. Mr. Watkins is certainly far in advance of all his predecessors in the delineation of negro character. He appears to have studied every phase of the negro's life, and has demonstrated by his performance that it is possible for two characters to be conceived. Nor does he ever lose sight of his character—from entrance to exit he is nigger all over."

IMPORTANT TO CITIZENS.—A notice is printed elsewhere in this paper addressed to all citizens directing them to clean their yards and premises. This is as it should be, and those who have been so long finding fault, and grumbling at the untidy condition of the town, and protesting so much pestilence in consequence may and must now do something themselves towards averting the anticipated evil. Generally speaking, we are assured, is determined to put the town in as clean a condition as is possible to be put, and those who neglect the part assigned them in the great work need expect no leniency.

THE WEATHER.—Yesterday was one of the most delightful days of the season. The blossoms on the fruit trees could almost be seen springing from the bud into the full blown flower. The churches were well attended. Every body and his wife and children improved the day to crawl out from the self-imposed imprisonment of the past few weeks. Finding themselves unharmed in consequence it is to be hoped that they will continue the exercise of their freedom.

THE REBELS AND THE NEGROES.

The Slaves Called Upon to Save the Confederacy.

PASSAGE BY THE REBEL CONGRESS OF THE NEGRO ARMING BILL.

Hunter of Virginia, Makes Speech against, and Votes for the Bill.

At 12 o'clock on the 7th inst. the rebel House bill to increase the military forces of the Confederate States, better known as the *Negro Soldier bill*, was taken up and read in the Senate. The following is the bill:

A Bill to increase the military forces of the Confederate States.

"The Congress of the Confederate States of America do enact, That in order to provide additional forces to repel invasion, maintain the rightful possession of the Confederate States, secure their independence and preserve their institutions, the President be and he is hereby authorized to ask for and accept from the owners of Slaves, the services of such able-bodied negro men as he may deem expedient for and during the war to perform military service in whatever capacity he may direct.

Sec. 2. That the General-in-Chief be authorized to organize the said slaves into companies, battalions, regiments and brigades, under such rules and regulations as the Secretary of War may prescribe and to be commanded by such officers as the President may appoint.

Sec. 3. That, while employed in the service, the said troops shall receive the same rations, clothing and compensation as are allowed to other troops in the same branch of the service.

Sec. 4. That if, under the previous section of this act, the President shall not be able to raise a sufficient number of troops to prosecute the war successfully and maintain the sovereignty of the States, and the independence of the Confederate States, then he is authorized to call on each State, when or he thinks it expedient, for her quota of 300,000 troops, in addition to those subject to military service under existing laws, or so many thereof as the President may deem necessary, to be raised from such classes of the population, irrespective of color in each State, as the proper authorities may determine.

Sec. 5. That nothing in this act shall be construed to authorize a change in the status of said slaves.

HUNTER'S SPEECH.

Mr. Hunter said that he had been instructed by the Virginia Legislature to vote against the conviction, it was proper that he should give public expression to his opinions. Since his first appearance in public life he had recognized the right of the Legislature to instruct and upon that body he desired to place the responsibility of the measure should it become a law. Until this morning he had abandoned the idea of publicly expressing his views; but his friends had suggested that justice to himself required that he should do so. He would necessarily have to go over much of the same ground as when he kindled in 1848 was recently under discussion in secret session.

When we left the old Government he had thought we had opted for, never of the slavery question; that we were entering into a new Confederacy of homogeneous States where the question of the slavery question, which had become intolerable under the old Union, was to have no place. But to his surprise he finds that the Government assuming the power to man the slaves, which involves also the power of emancipation. To the agitation of this question, the assumption of this power, he traced the origin of the gloom which now oppresses our people. They know that their liberties were to be achieved, it was to be done by the sword and by the hands of free men. It also injured us abroad. It was regarded as a confession of despair and an abandonment of the ground upon which we had steeled from the old Union. We had insisted that Congress had no right to interfere with slavery, and upon the coming into power of the party who it was known would assume and exercise that power, we abandoned.

We had also, they contended, that whenever the two races were thrown together, one must be master and the other slave, and we vindicated ourselves against the accusations of the abolitionists by maintaining that slavery was the best and happiest condition of the negro. Now what does this proposition admit? The right of the central Government to put the slaves into the militia, and to emancipate at least so many as shall be placed in the military service. It is a clear claim of the central Government to emancipate the slaves.

If we were right in passing this measure, we were wrong in delaying to do so. The Government the right to interfere with the institution of slavery and to emancipate slaves. Besides, if we offer slaves their freedom as a boon, we confess that we were insincere, were hypocritical in asserting that slavery was the best state for the negroes themselves. He had been sincere in declaring that the central Government had no power over the institution of slavery, and that freedom would be no boon to the negro. If we now believed, as he had formerly said in discussion on the same subject, that arming and emancipating the slaves was an abandonment of this contest—an abandonment of the

grounds upon which it had been fought. If this is so who is to answer for the thousands of men who have died for the war? Who was to answer for the bar of Heaven? Not that we are in the contest on principle and on principle, but those who have a principle, but those who have a principle. Not for all the good would he put his name to such a measure unless he felt that he was long as he was free to vote from his convictions nothing could have occurred.

Mr. Hunter then argued that the negroes if they were manly there was something in the front head that tells us it must be done. If we could make the condition of the soldier better in society, we could make the manly, to command white men and ambitious President might use the seize the liberties of the country white men under his feet. There is no power under the Constitution to emancipate the slaves, and we are granted no such great powers by the Constitution.

Mr. Hunter then showed from that no considerable body of negroes had been raised in the States over which he had control, with all the facilities of the labor abundantly necessary, food. He thought there was a chance of getting the large number back to the army than of getting it. The negro soldier of the soldier. The maintenance of authority to impress negroes had, between last September and now, been able to get an hour of these thirty-five hundred men from Virginia and North Carolina, and from Alabama. If he would see of impressments, could the laborers how will we be able to do it? Unless they are to be sent to the Yankees, if we depend upon us we can't get them, and will desert to the enemy, who will better price than we can. If they then found, that they had no expense. It is not possible to get into the army. If we put the negro all over.

In conclusion, he considered that when we have a large number of negroes in the army, it is not possible to get into the army. If we put the negro all over. He considered that when we have a large number of negroes in the army, it is not possible to get into the army. If we put the negro all over.

Mr. Hunter also opposed the bill to hold out to the rebels, and he considered that when we have a large number of negroes in the army, it is not possible to get into the army. If we put the negro all over.

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