THE MARYLAND NEWS SHEET.

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TO THE PUBLIC.

THE MARYLAND NEWS SHEET will be issued daily from the office formerly occupied by the *Daily Exchange*, and will be, as its name implies, simply a "News Sheet." It will furnish the latest intelligence as derived from the despatches of the Associated Press, by which it will be supplied in common with the New York journals; from its exchanges, and from such reliable private sources of information as it may be able to command. Expressing itself no opinions, it will devote its editorial columns to such extracts from other journals as may be deemed of interest to the public.

BALTIMORE,

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1861.

WAR AND OTHER NEWS.

In the United States Senate petitions were presented asking that John C. Fremont be appointed Lieutenant-General. The remainder of the session was taken up by Mr. Willey, in speaking to a resolution offered by him, which declares that the existing war was forced upon the country, without provocation, by the States in rebellion.

In the House of Representatives the bill to amend the act granting a bounty of one hundred dollars to certain soldiers serving in the army of the United States, was laid on the table. The members of the committee appointed by the House to enquire into the conduct of the present war, are Messrs. Gooch, of Missouri, Covade, of Pennsylvania, Julien, of Indiana, and Odell, of Pennsylvania—to these are added the Regents of the Smithsonian Institute, Messrs. Colfax, McPherson and Cox. A resolution was passed calling upon the Secretary of War to furnish members of the House with copies of all orders, with reference to the transportation of troops and ammunition by railroad.

We have no report of the proceedings of the State Senate, the members of that body having adjourned until the afternoon of yesterday, to be present at a review of the Federal troops now encamped at Annapolis. In the House of Delegates, the resolutions of Messrs. Price and Donaldson, respectively, expressive of the views of the State of Maryland, with regard to the policy of the Federal Government, were passed. The new Police bill passed to a second reading.

The affair of the Trent occupies so largely the attention of the European press, and is, moreover, regarded as so serious a provocation to war that we continue to republish from the English journals such articles as may serve best to indicate the present temper of the English people toward the United States. That the British Government is prepared to go to war on this question is as certain as that it deprecates a resort to hostilities if the appeal to arms can be avoided without lowering the dignity of the flag. It is also equally clear that on this as well as the general course of policy which is to be pursued with regard to American affairs the Governments of France and England are acting in perfect accord. The impression seems to be gaining ground in political circles that Messrs. Mason and Slidell will be given up. The New York *Times*—good authority upon matters relating to Sec'y Seward's Department—states that a Cabinet meeting was held on Tuesday last, where, in the absence of Lord Lyons' despatches, the question was informally considered. The conclusion reached was that there must be no quarrel with England—in other words, that the demands of the British Government should be complied with. The reasons given for restoring Messrs. Mason and Slidell to the deck of a British vessel are curious enough. "The Government is probably satisfied," says the correspondent of the *Times*, "that this clamor for a war with England originates with and and is propagated by sympathizers with the Southern rebellion." As none of the journals have openly advocated "war with England," but many have declared emphatically that Messrs. Mason and Slidell would never be surrendered—among these being the New York *Times*, the *World*, the *Herald*, the Philadelphia *Press*, and the Baltimore *American*—the natural inference is that these papers, by their cry of "no surrender," which means war and nothing else—are open to suspicion as sympathizers with the Southern rebellion. However this may be, the facts remain that the Government has concluded to yield the point at issue, although the language in which the *Times'* correspondent couches the announcement, leaves it to be understood that this course has been adopted, not so much to satisfy England as to disappoint those who sympathise with the Southern cause. The artifice of words has rarely been more discreetly employed. The Washington correspondent of the Philadelphia *Inquirer* also states that the question will be amicably settled.

On the other hand, the correspondent of the New York *Tribune* asserts that *it is untrue* that the Government "has decided to return Mason and Slidell. So likewise asserts the correspondent of the *Herald*, who writes on what purports to be "the highest authority," that "the possibility of their surrender, under any circumstances, does not now exist; that the President is immovable on this point." Nevertheless, and in spite of the oracular outgivings of the *Tribune* and the *Herald*, the current belief is that the Commissioners will be restored, and promptly. Further confirmation of the intention of the Government to release them may be found in the despatch which is said to have been received at New York yesterday by Secretary Chase, announcing that the Trent affair "will be amicably settled."

At the meeting at New York between the Associated Banks and Secretary Chase yesterday, the pending questions with the Treasury Department were harmoniously arranged. Secretary Chase states that the balances already in the Banks were sufficient to meet the wants of the Treasury until about the middle of January, before which time he predicted that brilliant results would be achieved by the Federal army and navy.

The correspondent of the St. Louis *Democrat*, writing from Rolla, Missouri, states that McCullough's forces had gone into winter quarters in Benton county, Arkansas, and that McCullough himself had been summoned to answer charges prepared against him. As McCullough with all the men under his command, was at Springfield, Mo., but a little more than a week ago this intelligence from Rolla cannot be true.

From Kentucky, by way of Nashville, it is reported that Humphrey Marshall is advancing towards Lexington, and has met, thus far, with little or no opposition. Only six thousand Federal troops were at Paducah a week ago. At Cairo and Bird's Point there were ten thousand, and at Smithland seven hundred. The Confederate General Crittenden was at Cumberland Gap, and large reinforcements were about to join him.

We have accounts of a skirmish between the Confederates and Colonel Geary's command at the Point of Rocks. The artillery of the Confederates is said to have been silenced by the Federal battery, and the Confederate troops driven back with loss. The true statement of the affair we have probably yet to learn.

It is reported in Richmond that the Federal forces on the line of the Potomac will make an advance and risk a general engagement within the next ten days.

The Richmond *Dispatch* announces the completion of the fortifications at Centreville, and states that they present a formidable appearance.

MR. FAULKNER.—We understand that Mr. Faulkner does not expect to be exchanged for Mr. Ely. He does not think the Southern Confederacy will consent to it. He has agreed upon a different exchange with Secretary Seward.

Among the twelve Confederate prisoners recently brought to St. Louis from North Missouri is Mr. John K. Lincoln, of Clinton county. He is a highly respectable, wealthy and influential citizen of that county, about 40 years of age, and a cousin of President Lincoln. The prisoner is charged with having permitted the Confederates to secrete ammunition in his cellar, induced young men to join the Confederate army, assisted in the robbery of Liberty Arsenal, and otherwise giving aid and comfort to the Confederates.

The Halifax *Chronicle* says the United States steamer Eastern State visited that port for the purpose of lying off the harbor, with the view of intercepting the Cunard steamer, to ascertain if Mr. Breckinridge or other Southerners should be on board.

Ex-President Gen. Miramon, of Mexico, and staff, consisting of Miguel Gaul, Manuel Gaul, Manuel Garcia Francisco Bueno, and David Valleltie, accompanied by the Senoritas Lola and Anita Schöttans, are at present in New York, on their way to Mexico.

EUROPE.

THE ARREST OF SLIDELL AND MASON.

The European Sentiment as Expressed in English Papers.

From the London Money Market Review, Nov. 30.

The gross violation of international law by the officers of the United States (whether with or without the sanction of their Government has yet to be ascertained), in forcibly taking out of the British mail steamer Trent, Messrs Slidell and Mason, the Confederate Commissioners, without first adopting the legal course of taking her into a port, and submitting the question to a Prize Court, is likely to lead to very serious complications between England and the Northern States. Not to mince words, war cannot be avoided, unless the Federal Government, on hearing of the blunder which they, through their officers, have committed, not only offer an apology for the outrage, but restore Messrs Slidell and Mason to the protection of the British flag. Nothing short of this will be accepted as satisfactory by the Government of this country. We fervently hope that the Federal Government will avert, by a voluntary apology, the necessity of our enforcing an involuntary one. They have precedents for so doing. When, in 1807, the British man-of-war Leopard fired into the American vessel, the Chesapeake, and unlawfully seized four sailors who had deserted from our service, the British Government disavowed the act of the Commander, recalled the Admiral from the station, and expressed its regret for the outrage that had been committed. When the Prince de Joinville forcibly took a pilot out of a British ship, the French Government immediately disavowed the act, and apologised. With these precedents on the part of France and England there will be no loss of dignity on the part of the Federal Government in adopting the same course. We will not believe that the Federal Government can be so blind to their own plain interest, as to refuse every reparation in their power. If we mistake not, they will see by the effect which the intelligence of our action will have in New York on the prices of public securities, and on the prospect of their raising more money, that they could not have taken a more effectual means of dropping their pecuniary resources. Neither could they have more effectually served the Confederate cause, for, most assuredly, should the worst come to the worst, this outrage will lead to the formal recognition of the South by England. France will not be slow in following the example. When the Federal Government come to reflect that, in the event of their refusing satisfaction, war with the most powerful nation of the earth will be added to the miseries of their domestic strife, and that their fleet, which is their mainstay against the South, will be swept from the face of the ocean in a fortnight, we have faith that however black the clouds may now look, England will not have a war forced on her by her determination to demand satisfaction for the gross outrage committed on her flag.

For the North to engage now in a struggle with this country would be the most hopeless, desperate course that ever entered into the mind of an insane political government. The Federals cannot put down the rebellion, as they call it, within their own territory, with their undisciplined army, and their inadequate fleet. What, then, could they do against the gigantic force—particularly on the sea—which we could quickly bring to bear on them? Besides, France is with us, as is proved by the tone of the French press, which receives its inspiration from well-known sources. The French Emperor will be quite too happy to mould his policy in this affair as far as possible in unison with ours, for his people want the locked up cotton as badly as we do, and the fact that one of the imprisoned Commissioners was on his way to the French Court gives the Emperor the right to take a valid interest in the matter. Let the Federal Government, then, look forward, and see Great Britain and France united against them; their fleet demolished or chased away; their commerce annihilated; their every port sealed up in a far more effectual manner than the ports of the South are now; the Southern ports re-opened; the cotton streaming forth as fast as ships can be got to carry it; abundance of munitions of war, together with the means of carrying them to the Confederate States; and the independence of those States formally recognized by Great Britain and France, as well as tacitly recognized, from sheer impotence, by the North itself. Let the Federal Government, we say, look forward, ponder on this vision of the future," which it requires nothing but their own unscrupulous conduct to realise; and let them tremble before they invoke such contingencies.

Each of these considerations forms a safeguard of peace. Yet another safeguard is involved in the fact that Great Britain has rarely been better prepared at all points. Our navy is stronger by far than at any period of our history. Our finances are in excellent order. A collision could not produce a convulsion in our American trade, because the Americans have already destroyed it. We are not, as we were last year, in any pressing need of the cotton of the Southern States, which war would bring into our ports and mills. Finally—one more point in favor of peace—the Federal Government must know that they would enter into the strife loaded with the condemnation of every nation in the world, every State being interested in upholding, for the common protection, those principles of international law, which the Federal Commander has flagrantly violated. The latest rumor is that the American Minister in London, who personally deplores this unhappy affair in the strongest manner, has given some assurances of a satisfactory nature to our Government. We trust the fact is so, and that his Government will endorse them. We hear of one fact, vouched for by eyewitnesses of the memorable scene on board the Trent, and not generally known, which increases our hope for a peaceful issue to the present grave difficulty. The First Lieutenant of the San Jacinto was heard to state distinctly, that he was acting upon his own responsibility and not upon precise instructions from his Government. Let the latter, therefore, disown the act, and that promptly, in the interest of peace, humanity and trade.

From the Saturday Review, Oct. 20.

THE SEIZURE OF THE CONFEDERATE COMMISSIONERS.

We may be reasonably proud of the manner in which the news of the seizure of the Confederate Commissioners, while under the protection of the British flag, has been received in England. There has been the most serious determination to uphold our rights, and the keenest jealousy of our national honor; but there has been the honest wish to abide patiently by the rules of law, and to accept the law from those whose official duty it is to advise the Government at such a crisis. We only want to know what England ought to do in justice to others and to herself. If she has to put up with an act offensive in manner, but legal in character, she will know how to bear the burden with dignity. If she has a claim to make, the refusal of which will lead to war, she is sure to fight hard and stoutly enough when the time comes.

The best way to put the question of law is this: If the Commissioners are asserted to have been liable to seizure as what is technically termed contraband, then the Trent itself had committed a breach of neutrality, and might have been condemned as lawful prize by a competent tribunal. The only case known to international law in which the conveyance of persons can thus affect the character of the carrying vessel is that of the conveyance of military persons concerned in the actual operations of the enemy. The reason why this is a breach of neutrality is plain. It is of the greatest service to a belligerent that its military officers should be transported safely to the place where they are intended to serve. A vessel that renders this service as clearly takes part in a war as if it were endeavoring to land shot and shell in the port of a belligerent. On the other hand the private subjects of a belligerent State may always be safely carried on board a neutral vessel. It is part of her ordinary carrying trade from which she is no more to be debarred in time of war than from the carriage of silks or cottons to an open port of a belligerent. It is true that the Commissioners were something more than private citizens of the belligerent power. They were envoys dispatched on a special mission to neutral powers. But this only throws over them an additional protection.

If a neutral flag will shelter a private man, much more will it shelter a man who is invested with a character of ambassadorial sanctity, and makes a special appeal to its protection by the very character of his office. There is also a further point if the carriage of the Commissioners is to be treated as an infraction of neutral obligations to that of carrying munitions of war. The vessel and all persons and things on board it, held to be contraband, ought to have been carried into the jurisdiction of a regular Court of Prize, and the question ought there to have been submitted to the scrutiny of a strict and legal investigation. International law would be a nullity if every commander of a man-of-war were to constitute himself in the first instance a plenary judge and condemn as contraband whatever he might like to seize on.

The case for the Americans is so weak if the seizure of the Commissioners is justified on any other ground, than that of the vessel being painted with a belligerent character by carriage of contraband, that the points scarcely deserve discussion. The Americans cannot say that these Commissioners are not belligerents, but rebels, for it is for the neutral to impress the belligerent character on one or both of two contending parties in a civil war, and we have exercised our right and declared that the South, so far as we are concerned, is a belligerent power. Even if we had not done so, we should not dream of surrendering political rebels to any power on earth. Nor is there any real analogy between the position of the American captors and that which we assumed in exercising the right of search, in order to reclaim our naval and military deserters. Perhaps this demand was a stretch of the powers of a belligerent, but at any rate the cases are quite different. We claimed our men because by the nature of the engagement they had formed they belonged in a special way to the English Crown.—These Commissioners are not bound in a special way to the American Government. By the mere fact of recognizing the belligerent rights of their government we have treated them not as rebels but as combatants on a fair ground. Still free can they be seized as ambassadors of the enemy. A belligerent may seize his enemy's ambassador *on his own ground, but certainly not in neutral ground.* There is no more justification for Capt. Wilkes carrying off Mr. Slidell as an enemy's ambassador from an English ship than there would be in the commander of the Nashville trying to kidnap Mr. Adams in London.

Lawyers, therefore, cannot be surprised to hear that the opinion of the legal advisers of the Crown is very decided against the validity of the right exercised by the American captain. There can be little doubt that the Cabinet will act in conformity with the opinion of its advisers, and we may be quite sure that the country will abide by its decision; and if the Queen's Government demands—what it is natural it should demand—the restoration of the captured Commissioners, and the disavowal by the American Cabinet of the act of Captain Wilkes, we shall all of us be perfectly ready to see that the demand is not made in vain. But we, none of us, wish that the demand should be put in any other than a conciliatory way. We remember that we have ridden roughshod over neutrals in our time, and that we have done acts, as belligerents, which, if legal ingenuity has justified them, the common sense of modern times would condemn. There are also many reasons to incline us to hope that the American Government will act fairly. We can scarcely believe that this act has been, out of set purpose, to insult England.—The captain of the Nashville is said to have been aware that the envoys were to be seized, but nevertheless there is some slight ground for supposing that the stoppage of the Trent may, after all, have been unauthorized by the American Government. The San Jacinto had been at the Havannah since the 8th of this month, and she stopped the Trent on the 8th. It is difficult to believe that she could have communicated in the meantime with the Government at Washington, and she could scarcely have had orders from it previously to her touching at the Havannah. If it be true that she came to Cuba on the 24, straight from the coast of Africa, during the two days of her stay at the Havannah, (the interval between the 24 and 4th), she learned that the Confederate Commissioners were waiting for a passage by the Trent, and the measure taken in consequence must have been concerted or determined upon immediately afterwards. Of course, it is possible that she may have received orders through the American Consul at Havannah; or she may have instantly conveyed the intelligence to the Commodore of one of the blockading squadrons, and been instructed by that officer to intercept the English packet. On the other hand, it may be that Captain Wilkes took upon himself to act on the information he had obtained, and went straight to lurk in the Bahama Channel. To insinuate this of an officer of any other service than the American would be not so much unjust as stupid. But the proofs of insubordination on the part of military servants of the United States have recently stared us in the face. Putting aside General Fremont, who is not a regular officer, we cannot forget that, just before the civil war broke out, General Harney deliberately set aside at San Juan, a convention solemnly agreed to by the Government he served, and perpetrated an outrage which furnished an indisputable *casus belli* against his own employers. It is not easy to overrate the temptations to which the excited state of feeling among the Northerners exposes an ambitious officer. He may fairly count on being sustained by public opinion against the Government, if he venures on any act which is at once violent, striking, and anti-British. General Harney was simply rebuked, and quietly removed; yet at this very moment the fire-eating American correspondent of one of the London newspapers declares General Scott a public enemy for not having preferred him to McClellan.

Mr. Seward's conceptions of policy since his accession to office are known to have been so wildly extravagant that there is scarcely any conceivable piece of folly from which we can confidently exonerate him without inquiry. Yet, unless all judgment has left him, he can hardly have given such orders as Captain Wilkes has acted upon, if orders he had. The Secretary of State formed the project of uniting South and North in an attack on Canada; yet, in his most eccentric dreams, we cannot suppose him capable of believing that the South would join the North in a war with Great Britain provoked by the capture of its own Commissioners. Until, too, the contrary is proved, we are bound to assume that every serious act of a powerful Government is intended in some way to promote its own advantage. What could be the object of the United States in thus capturing the Confederate Commissioners? To prevent their eloquence, doubtless, from carrying away European audiences, and their persuasions from taking effect on European Governments. But, by violating the deck of the Trent, they have endowed these gentlemen with more hortatory power than Peter the Hermit, and more diplomatic persuasiveness than Talleyrand. Though Mr. Mason had spoken with the tongue of an angel, he could not have stirred all the meetings that could have been called in all England to a tithe of the depth to which every English family was moved by Thursday morning's news; nor could Mr. Slidell have urged anything at the Tuileries, or his colleague in Downing street, which could be compared for effectiveness to the Intelligence which carries with it an Intimation that the Government of the United States is ready at any moment to offer an insult to England.

From the London Morning Herald, Nov. 29.

With two exceptions, which together constitute but one, all the morning journals of London and the country are unanimous in their expression of disgust and indignation at the American outrage. Mr. Bright, by his London and Manchester organs, stands forth in opposition to the humor of his country and the universal feeling of his country; now as ever hateful in the eyes of all educated and thoughtful men; now as never before the object of the scorn and reprobation of all Englishmen, whatever their political creed or party, who love their country more than faction or leader. On only two points does there seem to be the smallest doubt or question among honest men. First: Was the act of the San Jacinto authorized by the Government whose flag she bore?—Second: Admitting that the seizure of the passengers on board the Trent was a gross insult to Great Britain, and an infamous violation of international decency and morality, is it perfectly clear that by no trick, quibble, or sophistry, either of American diplomacy or whig legal ingenuity, can an excuse be so framed as to bring the act within the letter of international law? We believe, on our part, that there is no room for hesitation. The San Jacinto did what she did by distinct orders from Mr. Seward and his colleagues, and her act cannot, by any special pleading, be made one of even doubtful legality. It was, as described by Captain Williams, one of simple and wanton piracy, as much so as would have been the seizure, on Canadian ground, of a fugitive slave or political offender from Delaware or New York.

We shall proceed to justify both these opinions. In the meantime we have to remind the *Morning Star* and its accomplice of two facts of some moment, that the Emperor of the French, whom they and their patron so stavishly flatter and panegyrize, would have avenged the outrage, not by a diplomatic remonstrance or expostulation, but by the method he adopted when a similar attempt was made on a French slave trader—the immediate despatch of a fleet to the enemy's capital; and that the American Government, their idol of constitutional perfection and statesmanlike excellence, would have declared war within twenty-four hours after receiving such an insult from us. We have to notice also a significant exception to the general feeling of the country in the evening journal to which is assigned the task—no easy or pleasant one—of excusing the vacillation and irresolution of her Majesty's Ministers. The *Globe* has been apparently instructed not to commit its paper or itself to any measure of retribution, but not to fly in the face of public opinion until it is ascertained what course an "united Cabinet" is to adopt. Whether Lord Russell shall write a pedantic lecture on international law, to men who will neither understand argument nor deal upright with principles, or whether the peaceful Mr. Gladstone shall send Mr. Cobden, as we recognized envoy, to congratulate Mr. Lincoln on his righteous and manly policy; or, finally, whether Lord Palmerston shall vouchsafe the gigantic force—particularly on the sea—which we could quickly bring to bear on them? Besides, France is with us, as is proved by the tone of the French press, which receives its inspiration from well-known sources. The French Emperor will be quite too happy to mould his policy in this affair as far as possible in unison with ours, for his people want the locked up cotton as badly as we do, and the fact that one of the imprisoned Commissioners was on his way to the French Court gives the Emperor the right to take a valid interest in the matter. Let the Federal Government, then, look forward, and see Great Britain and France united against them; their fleet demolished or chased away; their commerce annihilated; their every port sealed up in a far more effectual manner than the ports of the South are now; the Southern ports re-opened; the cotton streaming forth as fast as ships can be got to carry it; abundance of munitions of war, together with the means of carrying them to the Confederate States; and the independence of those States formally recognized by Great Britain and France, as well as tacitly recognized, from sheer impotence, by the North itself. Let the Federal Government, we say, look forward, ponder on this vision of the future," which it requires nothing but their own unscrupulous conduct to realise; and let them tremble before they invoke such contingencies.

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Lawyers, therefore, cannot be surprised to hear that the opinion of the legal advisers of the Crown is very decided against the validity of the right exercised by the American captain. There can be little doubt that the Cabinet will act in conformity with the opinion of its advisers, and we may be quite sure that the country will abide by its decision; and if the Queen's Government demands—what it is natural it should demand—the restoration of the captured Commissioners, and the disavowal by the American Cabinet of the act of Captain Wilkes, we shall all of us be perfectly ready to see that the demand is not made in vain. But we, none of us, wish that the demand should be put in any other than a conciliatory way. We remember that we have ridden roughshod over neutrals in our time, and that we have done acts, as belligerents, which, if legal ingenuity has justified them, the common sense of modern times would condemn. There are also many reasons to incline us to hope that the American Government will act fairly. We can scarcely believe that this act has been, out of set purpose, to insult England.—The captain of the Nashville is said to have been aware that the envoys were to be seized, but nevertheless there is some slight ground for supposing that the stoppage of the Trent may, after all, have been unauthorized by the American Government. The San Jacinto had been at the Havannah since the 8th of this month, and she stopped the Trent on the 8th. It is difficult to believe that she could have communicated in the meantime with the Government at Washington, and she could scarcely have had orders from it previously to her touching at the Havannah. If it be true that she came to Cuba on the 24, straight from the coast of Africa, during the two days of her stay at the Havannah, (the interval between the 24 and 4th), she learned that the Confederate Commissioners were waiting for a passage by the Trent, and the measure taken in consequence must have been concerted or determined upon immediately afterwards. Of course, it is possible that she may have received orders through the American Consul at Havannah; or she may have instantly conveyed the intelligence to the Commodore of one of the blockading squadrons, and been instructed by that officer to intercept the English packet. On the other hand, it may be that Captain Wilkes took upon himself to act on the information he had obtained, and went straight to lurk in the Bahama Channel. To insinuate this of an officer of any other service than the American would be not so much unjust as stupid. But the proofs of insubordination on the part of military servants of the United States have recently stared us in the face. Putting aside General Fremont, who is not a regular officer, we cannot forget that, just before the civil war broke out, General Harney deliberately set aside at San Juan, a convention solemnly agreed to by the Government he served, and perpetrated an outrage which furnished an indisputable *casus belli* against his own employers. It is not easy to overrate the temptations to which the excited state of feeling among the Northerners exposes an ambitious officer. He may fairly count on being sustained by public opinion against the Government, if he venures on any act which is at once violent, striking, and anti-British. General Harney was simply rebuked, and quietly removed; yet at this very moment the fire-eating American correspondent of one of the London newspapers declares General Scott a public enemy for not having preferred him to McClellan.

Mr. Seward's conceptions of policy since his accession to office are known to have been so wildly extravagant that there is scarcely any conceivable piece of folly from which we can confidently exonerate him without inquiry. Yet, unless all judgment has left him, he can hardly have given such orders as Captain Wilkes has acted upon, if orders he had. The Secretary of State formed the project of uniting South and North in an attack on Canada; yet, in his most eccentric dreams, we cannot suppose him capable of believing that the South would join the North in a war with Great Britain provoked by the capture of its own Commissioners. Until, too, the contrary is proved, we are bound to assume that every serious act of a powerful Government is intended in some way to promote its own advantage. What could be the object of the United States in thus capturing the Confederate Commissioners? To prevent their eloquence, doubtless, from carrying away European audiences, and their persuasions from taking effect on European Governments. But, by violating the deck of the Trent, they have endowed these gentlemen with more hortatory power than Peter the Hermit, and more diplomatic persuasiveness than Talleyrand. Though Mr. Mason had spoken with the tongue of an angel, he could not have stirred all the meetings that could have been called in all England to a tithe of the depth to which every English family was moved by Thursday morning's news; nor could Mr. Slidell have urged anything at the Tuileries, or his colleague in Downing street, which could be compared for effectiveness to the Intelligence which carries with it an Intimation that the Government of the United States is ready at any moment to offer an insult to England.

From the London Morning Herald, Nov. 29.

With two exceptions, which together constitute but one, all the morning journals of London and the country are unanimous in their expression of disgust and indignation at the American outrage. Mr. Bright, by his London and Manchester organs, stands forth in opposition to the humor of his country and the universal feeling of his country; now as ever hateful in the eyes of all educated and thoughtful men; now as never before the object of the scorn and reprobation of all Englishmen, whatever their political creed or party, who love their country more than faction or leader. On only two points does there seem to be the smallest doubt or question among honest men. First: Was the act of the San Jacinto authorized by the Government whose flag she bore?—Second: Admitting that the seizure of the passengers on board the Trent was a gross insult to Great Britain, and an infamous violation of international decency and morality, is it perfectly clear that by no trick, quibble, or sophistry, either of American diplomacy or whig legal ingenuity, can an excuse be so framed as to bring the act within the letter of international law? We believe, on our part, that there is no room for hesitation. The San Jacinto did what she did by distinct orders from Mr. Seward and his colleagues, and her act cannot, by any special pleading, be made one of even doubtful legality. It was, as described by Captain Williams, one of simple and wanton piracy, as much so as would have been the seizure, on Canadian ground, of a fugitive slave or political offender from Delaware or New York.

We shall proceed to justify both these opinions. In the meantime we have to remind the *Morning Star* and its accomplice of two facts of some moment, that the Emperor of the French, whom they and their patron so stavishly flatter and panegyrize, would have avenged the outrage, not by a diplomatic remonstrance or expostulation, but by the method he adopted when a similar attempt was made on a French slave trader—the immediate despatch of a fleet to the enemy's capital; and that the American Government, their idol of constitutional perfection and statesmanlike excellence, would have declared war within twenty-four hours after receiving such an insult from us. We have to notice also a significant exception to the general feeling of the country in the evening journal to which is assigned the task—no easy or pleasant one—of excusing the vacillation and irresolution of her Majesty's Ministers. The *Globe* has been apparently instructed not to commit its paper or itself to any measure of retribution, but not to fly in the face of public opinion until it is ascertained what course an "united Cabinet" is to adopt. Whether Lord Russell shall write a pedantic lecture on international law, to men who will neither understand argument nor deal upright with principles; or whether the peaceful Mr. Gladstone shall send Mr. Cobden, as our recognized envoy, to congratulate Mr. Lincoln on his righteous and manly policy; or, finally, whether Lord Palmerston shall vouchsafe the gigantic force—particularly on the sea—which we could quickly bring to bear on them? Besides, France is with us, as is proved by the tone of the French press, which receives its inspiration from well-known sources. The French Emperor will be quite too happy to mould his policy in this affair as far as possible in unison with ours, for his people want the locked up cotton as badly as we do, and the fact that one of the imprisoned Commissioners was on his way to the French Court gives the Emperor the right to take a valid interest in the matter. Let the Federal Government, then, look forward, and see Great Britain and France united against them; their fleet demolished or chased away; their commerce annihilated; their every port sealed up in a far more effectual manner than the ports of the South are now; the Southern ports re-opened; the cotton streaming forth as fast as ships can be got to carry it; abundance of munitions of war, together with the means of carrying them to the Confederate States; and the independence of those States formally recognized by Great Britain and France, as well as tacitly recognized, from sheer impotence, by the North itself. Let the Federal Government, we say, look forward, ponder on this vision of the future," which it requires nothing but their own unscrupulous conduct to realise; and let them tremble before they invoke such contingencies.

Each of these considerations forms a safeguard of peace. Yet another safeguard is involved in the fact that Great Britain has rarely been better prepared at all points. Our navy is stronger by far than at any period of our history. Our finances are in excellent order. A collision could not produce a convulsion in our American trade, because the Americans have already destroyed it. We are not, as we were last year, in any pressing need of the cotton of the Southern States, which war would bring into our ports and mills. Finally—one more point in favor of peace—the Federal Government must know that they would enter into the strife loaded with the condemnation of every nation in the world, every State being interested in upholding, for the common protection, those principles of international law, which the Federal Commander has flagrantly violated. The latest rumor is that the American Minister in London, who personally deplores this unhappy affair in the strongest manner, has given some assurances of a satisfactory nature to our Government. We trust the fact is so, and that his Government will endorse them. We hear of one fact, vouched for by eyewitnesses of the memorable scene on board the Trent, and not generally known, which increases our hope for a peaceful issue to the present grave difficulty. The First Lieutenant of the San Jacinto was heard to state distinctly, that he was acting upon his own responsibility and not upon precise instructions from his Government. Let the latter, therefore, disown the act, and that promptly, in the interest of peace, humanity and trade.

From the Saturday Review, Oct. 20.

THE SEIZURE OF THE CONFEDERATE COMMISSIONERS.

We may be reasonably proud of the manner in which the news of the seizure of the Confederate Commissioners, while under the protection of the British flag, has been received in England. There has been the most serious determination to uphold our rights, and the keenest jealousy of our national honor; but there has been the honest wish to abide patiently by the rules of law, and to accept the law from those whose official duty it is to advise the Government at such a crisis. We only want to know what England ought to do in justice to others and to herself. If she has to put up with an act offensive in manner, but legal in character, she will know how to bear the burden with dignity. If she has a claim to make, the refusal of which will lead to war, she is sure to fight hard and stoutly enough when the time comes.

The best way to put the question of law is this: If the Commissioners are asserted to have been liable to seizure as what is technically termed contraband, then the Trent itself had committed a breach of neutrality, and might have been condemned as lawful prize by a competent tribunal. The only case known to international law in which the conveyance of persons can thus affect the character of the carrying vessel is that of the conveyance of military persons concerned in the actual operations of the enemy. The reason why this is a breach of neutrality is plain. It is of the greatest service to a belligerent that its military officers should be transported safely to the place where they are intended to serve. A vessel that renders this service as clearly takes part in a war as if it were endeavoring to land shot and shell in the port of a belligerent. On the other hand the private subjects of a belligerent State may always be safely carried on board a neutral vessel. It is part of her ordinary carrying trade from which she is no more to be debarred in time of war than from the carriage of silks or cottons to an open port of a belligerent. It is true that the Commissioners were something more than private citizens of the belligerent power. They were envoys dispatched on a special mission to neutral powers. But this only throws over them an additional protection.

If a neutral flag will shelter a private man, much more will it shelter a man who is invested with a character of ambassadorial sanctity, and makes a special appeal to its protection by the very character of his office. There is also a further point if the carriage of the Commissioners is to be treated as an infraction of neutral obligations to that of carrying munitions of war. The vessel and all persons and things on board it, held to be contraband, ought to have been carried into the jurisdiction of a regular Court of Prize, and the question ought there to have been submitted to the scrutiny of a strict and legal investigation. International law would be a nullity if every commander of a man-of-war were to constitute himself in the first instance a plenary judge and condemn as contraband whatever he might like to seize on.

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