THE MARYLAND NEWS SHEET.

PUBLISHED BY

CARTER & NEILSON.

TERMS

Served in the city, and payable only to the carriers, TWELVE AND A HALF CENTS WEEKLY.

Mailed to subscribers out of the city at SIX DOLLARS A YEAR, or for a shorter period at proportionate rates, payable invariably in advance.

☞ A liberal reduction to Clubs and News Agents

THE TRI-WEEKLY NEWS SHEET.

Mailed to subscribers:

1 copy, one year	$4
Do. six months	2
Do. three months	1

ADVERTISING RATES.

One square, six lines	one insertion		$0
"	"	two insertions	75
"	"	three "	1 00
"	"	one week	1 75
"	"	two weeks	2 75
"	"	three "	3 50
"	"	one month	4 00
"	"	three months	10 00

* Longer advertisements at proportionate rates. Yearly contracts to be matters of special agreement.

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 27, 1861.

WAR AND OTHER NEWS.

The British steamers Australasian and Niagara which were chartered as transports reached Halifax yesterday with troops and munitions of war. About twelve thousand troops were to be sent to Canada. Two battalions of the Guards were expected to sail on the 18th.

According to the Paris correspondence of the London *Globe*, the despatches of Count Thouvenel to M. Mercier, the French Minister to this country involve matters of the utmost importance. M. Thouvenel desires to know whether the Cabinet at Washington recognize the Southerners *as belligerents, or rebels?* They have been flatly refused, he says, any rights in the first capacity. The second, as the right asylum has been denied to them as political refugees, has been set at naught. France must make the cause of the Trent substantially her own.

Our special correspondent at Washington furnishes us with an interesting, and as we have reason to believe, a truthful statement of the position held by the members of the Cabinet respectively in relation to the Trent affair. It will be seen that in regard to the proper disposition to be made of Messrs. Mason and Slidell there are differences of opinion in the Cabinet. We also learn now the reason why Lord Lyons still remains at Washington, and why he has not exacted a prompt reply to the ultimatum of the British Government. Besides this matter there are other troubles pressing upon Mr. Lincoln and his official advisers. The Port Royal expedition has grievously disappointed their expectations. General McClellan evinces no disposition to test the stamina of his troops against the batteries at Centreville, and the only present promise of success rests upon the result of the Burnside expedition. Mr. Lincoln, it is reported, does not "set his foot down" quite as "firmly" as he once promised to do. Whatever ardour he may have had for prosecuting the war has sensibly abated. He inclines towards making peace with the South *on their own terms* if—as a condition precedent—the seceded States will consent to return to the Federal fold. If peace can only be restored on this basis, we fear that the war is destined to be prolonged through many years.

From the Confederate account of the battle of Drainsville it was evidently a well contested affair on both sides. The Confederates state that the force which General Steuart carried into action did not exceed three thousand men, but they place the opposing force, under General McCall, at fifteen thousand strong. The telegrams from Richmond acknowledge that the Confederates were defeated with a loss of thirty-three killed, one hundred and twenty-seven wounded, and forty-four missing.—Both parties are said to have retired in good order after the engagement was over, and it is further announced that General Steuart, to whom reinforcements were sent, now occupies the battle field.

The Charleston *Mercury* states that on the 19th ult. an engagement took place at Port Royal Ferry between one of the Federal gunboats and a battery on the mainland. The gun boat was so severely handled that she steamed rapidly away, but got aground some three miles below the Ferry. Under a sharp fire from one of the Federal batteries on Port Royal Island, three flat boats, crowded with troops, left the shore to cross to the mainland, but the attempt was defeated by a Confederate battery of flying artillery, which sunk one of the flats and created terrible havoc among the others. The firing continued until night set in. The gunboat floated off at the flood tide, but the Federal loss is supposed to have been very heavy.

Some very interesting proceedings took place in the Confederate Congress on the 17th of this month, having reference to the present condition of Maryland, a brief account of which will be found elsewhere.

A project is now being agitated among certain prominent members of Congress with regard to the disposition of captured negroes. It is suggested that the Cherokees and other tribes who occupy what is known as "the Indian Territory," west of Arkansas, shall be summarily dispossessed of their lands, which are to be ceded to white settlers to whom the slaves captured during the war are to be apprenticed, for the purpose of cultivating cotton in that region.

The Confederate prisoners gathered up from various quarters during General Pope's recent expedition in Missouri, have reached St. Louis.—They number some thousand men.

The large bridge over Salt river, on the line of the Louisville and Nashville railway, was entirely destroyed by the Confederates on Sunday last.

The Hatteras prisoners, recently released from Fort Warren, have been sent under a flag of truce from Fortress Monroe to Craney Island.

By way of Nashville, December 23, we learn that from nine to seventeen thousand Federal troops had crossed Green River up to Friday last, and it was supposed that three divisions, amounting in the aggregate to sixty thousand men, would march by different routes upon Bowling Green.

Further particulars are given of the disastrous fire at Charleston. It is now almost certain that the cause was wholly accidental. Much regret is expressed at the loss of the fine old family mansions which were the pride of Charleston, and one of its most distinguishing features. The destitution in consequence of the losses sustained by conflagration is acknowledged to be awful, but liberal and extensive measures were in progress to alleviate the suffering. A fight was supposed to be imminent at some point between Savannah and Charleston. The Federal troops are said to have made several flying incursions to the main. A point recently occupied by them was to be attacked by General Pemberton and a picked body of men.

We reproduce a singular letter to the London *Guardian*, from the pen of Mr. Hugh Davey Evans of this city. Comment would be superfluous. Everybody knows Mr. Evans and—but we forbear. Age, we suppose, should be allowed its accustomed privileges, and silence in this case is, at least—respectful.

The privateer Sumter has turned up again in Cienfuegos Harbor, where she is reported as blockaded by the U. S. gunboat Iroquois. The Confederate steamer Isabel is also blockaded at Nassau, New Providence, by the U. S. gunboat Flambeau.

In the United States Senate Mr. Hale introduced a resolution requesting President Lincoln to furnish copies of all despatches which have passed between the Government of the United States and that of Great Britain relative to the seizure of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, if not incompatible with the public interest. Laid over under the rule. The House met without a quorum, and adjourned until Monday next.

[COMMUNICATED.]

FORT MCHENRY, December 26th, 1861.

To the Editors of the Maryland News Sheet.

Gentlemen:—We, being confined in this Fort as prisoners of State awaiting the pleasure of the authorities, request the privilege of acknowledging, through your columns our lively sense of gratitude to those noble-hearted ladies of Baltimore, to whom we are indebted for the good things so kindly sent to us for our Christmas dinner. So long as we remember our imprisonment, and whenever we may think of it in after life, its recollections will afford us at least one pleasure:—We will remember with delight those names, and wish for them life's richest blessings.

We also desire to acknowledge the courtesy and kindness of the officers of the Fort.

ISAAC B. GIBSON,
JOHN DAVIS,
C. H. KUNGLE,
WILLIAM T. WILSON,
L. T. JOHNSON,
A. W. HADRESHAM.
BEN. T. GUNTER.

The passport system is most strictly carried on in Poland. To get a passport to leave the country costs a Pole four hundred rubles, which is about two hundred and eighty dollars.

Special Correspondence of the Maryland News Sheet.

FROM WASHINGTON.

Differences in the Cabinet in Regard to the Mason-Slidell Imbroglio—The Despatches of Lord Lyons—Mr. Seward's Letter to Mr Adams—The War Spirit in England—The Port Royal Expedition—McClellan Doubtful of Getting to Richmond—The War Fever Over in the Cabinet—The Burnside Expedition.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 26, 1861.

Never have the discussions which take place in the Cabinet Council here been more strictly guarded from inquisitorial correspondents than they are at present. There are some facts, however, in regard to the aspect in which the affair of the Trent is viewed by the respective members of the Cabinet, which it may not be amiss to state. There is very little doubt that Messrs. Seward and Cameron favor the release of the Southern Commissioners, and that Messrs. Chase, Blair and Smith oppose it. What view Secretary Welles *now* takes of the question is unknown.

There is no truth in the report that Lord Lyons has delayed handing in his despatches, although it is possible he may have extended the time allowed for a reply.

It is confidently asserted that Mr. Seward sent despatches to Mr. Adams, soon after the arrival of the San Jacinto, in which the act of Captain Wilkes was disavowed, and hopes expressed that no action would be taken by England until the matter was carefully examined into at Washington. It is for the answer to these despatches that Mr. Seward now desires to wait. It is believed, however, that their purport will have but little effect upon the question. Great Britain will be content with nothing less than the restitution of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, and an apology for the offence which has been committed. There can be no negotiation between Lord Lyons and Mr. Seward, on the basis of such a demand as the former was instructed to make. Private advices from England, speak of the war spirit as much more universal than is mentioned in the papers.

Whatever may be the result of the Mason and Slidell difficulty, it can add but little to the complication of affairs here. Members of the Cabinet are exceedingly disappointed at the failure of the Port Royal Expedition—for a failure it is—and also at the inability, frankly expressed by Gen. McClellan, to open the route to Richmond. The increasing war expenses begin to weigh most heavily. It is the opinion of men who ought to know, that President Lincoln and Secretary Chase, at least, would be glad to give the South pen and paper, and let them dictate their own terms—*to preserve the Union.* With all of the Cabinet the war fever is over. The desire is now for peace.

Considerable confidence is expressed in the success of the Burnside Expedition. Only nine of the regiments now at Annapolis have as yet been assigned to it. The character of the vessels selected for the transportation of the troops leads to the belief that their destination is not beyond Hatteras.

A few days ago Lieut. Hughes with a party of fifteen soldiers belonging to Col. Geary's command crossed the Potomac at or near Berlin, and after gathering considerable plunder were attacked by some armed countrymen. Two of the soldiers were wounded, four were taken prisoners and all the spoils were recovered. X.

LATEST FROM THE SOUTH.

FROM FORTRESS MONROE.

Return of Mr. Ely.

There was no news of importance by the Fortress Monroe boat which arrived yesterday morning. There was a flag of truce on Christmas day, which brought up Congressman Ely, of New York, who was confined as a prisoner in Richmond since the fight of Bull Run. He has been exchanged for the Hon. Charles J. Faulkner, Ex-Minister to France, who was arrested some months since, and who was released about one week ago, with the understanding that if he was unable to effect the release of Mr. Ely, he was to return to Fort Warren. As Mr. Ely has arrived here, Mr. Faulkner will, of course, remain in Virginia.

This gentleman was in high spirits, and after reaching here proceeded to the Eutaw House, where he remained until yesterday afternoon, when he proceeded to Washington for the purpose of attending to his Congressional business. He states that he was recently visited in Richmond jail by the Hon. Charles J. Faulkner, for whom he was exchanged, and had a very pleasant interview. He had not been as closely confined as was represented by the Northern papers, but allowed pretty liberal bounds, and withal was at liberty to have the best quality fare at his own expense. Rations of the army regulation were supplied daily, but he would not accept them when he could easily get daintier food.

On Christmas day the steamship S. R. Spaulding, Capt. Sol. Howes, came into Hampton Roads from the North Carolina coast, bringing a few passengers. Amongst them was a 1st Lieutenant 48th Pennsylvania Volunteers, who had been on duty for some time at that place. He was ill, and died shortly after his arrival at Old Point. We could not ascertain his name. Judge Hamburton also came up, accompanied by his son, who is an officer of the steamship Roanoke. An attack of illness caused his son to retire for the present from active service.

The Hon. D. W. Voorhees, of Indiana, who visited Fortress Monroe about two weeks since, also returned and proceeded to Washington. Shortly after his arrival at the fortress he was suddenly attacked with illness, and has been in the hospital ever since.

The various regiments stationed in and near Fortress Monroe enjoyed Christmas dinner, the bill of fare of which was far superior to the army rations. Good cheer prevailed throughout the camps.

Confederate Account of the Fight at Drainsville.

From the Norfolk Day Book, Dec. 23.

RICHMOND, Dec. 21.—A portion of our Potomac army suffered a defeat yesterday. At 4 o'clock yesterday morning General Stuart, with six hundred and fifty cavalry, the Jeff. Davis Artillery, 1st Kentucky regiment, 10th Alabama, 11th Virginia and 6th South Carolina regiments, being a portion of General Longstreet's brigade, left Centreville to attempt the capture of a Federal foraging party at Drainsville, 16 miles from Centreville.

As they neared the place they found the Yankees' 15,000 strong. General Stuart, with 3,000, attacked them. The fight lasted a greater portion of the day, when the Confederates retired. Our loss was about thirty killed and an equal number wounded. Among the killed are Col. Thomas Taylor, of the First Kentucky, and the Major of the same regiment. The Eleventh Virginia regiment, from Lynchburg, had seven killed and twelve wounded. A third field officer was killed, and another had his arm shot off. Four of the Jeff. Davis Artillery were killed at their guns, and several wounded.—General Stuart sent to headquarters for reinforcement, and last night the balance of General Longstreet's Division—fourteen regiments—went down to give the Yankees another fight. Nothing heard of the operations in that quarter to-day.

Second Despatch—Further Particulars.

RICHMOND, Dec. 22.—The following additional particulars have been received:

A foraging party was sent out by Gen. Stuart, consisting of about two hundred wagons, escorted by the 11th Virginia, 6th South Carolina, 10th Alabama, and 1st Kentucky regiments, the Sumter Flying Artillery, and detachments from Ransom's and Radford's Cavalry, the whole force was about 2,500. When the Confederates neared Drainsville they found the Yankees prepared, and during the skirmish the 1st Kentucky fired into the 6th South Carolina, killing five. After the engagement ceased, both sides withdrew in order.

Colonel Tom Taylor, in personal reconnoisance, found himself nearly surrounded by the Yankee cavalry; he eluded them and secreted himself until dark, when he escaped and joined his regiment. The only injury he received was a slight wound on the hand.

The following is a list of casualties: Virginians killed—Melvin Gibbs, Henry Golden, W. Campbell, James N. Painter and John Henry.

Wounded—Lieutenant Horton, Walker Thurman, W. H. Hobson, S. F. Franklin, Joseph E. Rice, John B. Wood, A. Carper, James McDowell, R. Burt, Joseph Flowers, Captain Jamieson, Judson Embry, Captain Yeatman, James L. Black, James D. Johnston and Peter Carlyle.

Missing—George W. Rogan.

Of the Alabama regiment, fifteen were killed, and among the wounded was Colonel Forney, Lieut. Col. Martin was reported killed. Wounded forty-five.

Of the South Carolina regiment—killed eighteen, wounded forty-four, missing five, Major Woodward slightly wounded.

Of the Sumter Flying Artillery of Georgia—killed four, wounded thirteen. Of the Kentuckians—killed one, wounded twenty-five, missing eight. A number of the names of the wounded of the Alabama regiment are omitted in consequence of very slight injuries; also, of all their missing, thirty in number; many, perhaps all, may reach the camp.

The Federals were evidently fully apprized of the approach of the Confederates, and were prepared to meet them in a strong position. Nevertheless, their loss fully equals that of ours. Reinforcements were sent to General Stuart, who now holds the battle-field. Further results unknown.

Engagement at Port Royal.

A YANKEE RECONNOISANCE AND WHAT CAME OF IT—NUMBERS OF THE ENEMY KILLED BY A NORTH CAROLINA BATTERY.

From the Charleston Mercury, Dec. 20th.

GARDNER'S CORNER, (via Pocotaligo), Dec. 20.—About half-past one o'clock, yesterday afternoon, one of the enemy's gunboats passed by Port Royal ferry. Our batteries opened fire upon her, striking her three times. Upon meeting with this rather hot reception, she steamed rapidly past, and ran aground about three miles the other side of the ferry. As soon as our troops became aware of the fix into which the Yankees had got themselves, Lieutenant McIlhenny, of Captain Moore's field battery, (from Wilmington, N. C.,) was despatched, with a section of the battery, to a point just opposite to the shoal on which the gunboat was aground. In the meantime, three flats, crowded with the enemy's troops, had moved from the opposite shore, under a sharp fire from one of their batteries, directed against our troops on the main. At that point our force consisted of Captain West's company, of Jones' regiment.

Lieut. McIlhenny's battery arrived just as the flats had come out about midway in the stream. He immediately opened fire upon them with tremendous effect. One of the flats was soon sunk, and our fire created terrible havoc among the soldiers on the other two flats, which hastily put back. Night came on and ended the cannonade. The steamer moved off with the flood tide. The enemy's loss among the men on the flats must have been very heavy. Colonel Jones' regiment was moved up promptly to the support of McIlhenny's battery, but the enemy seem to have abandoned the attempt to cross, if such was ever their intention. Lieutenant McIlhenny's battery was exposed to an incessant fire from the guns of the steamer during the whole engagement.

House of Delegates and Ex-Governor Lowe.

On the 17th inst., the Virginia House of Delegates received a communication from Ex-Governor Lowe, of Maryland. Upon a motion to print 5,000 copies, which was subsequently adopted, remarks were made by Messrs. Robertson, Buford and Anderson.

Mr. Robertson hoped the letter would be spread as far as possible, that it might not only communicate to others the pleasure it had given him, but awake anew the flames of patriotism in the hearts of all lovers of constitutional liberty, and inspire them to new deeds of valor in its defence. While up he would take occasion to convey to the House the pleasing intelligence received from a source entitled to entire credence that the late outrageous act committed by the Lincoln Government on the high seas, in the seizure of our ambassadors, had been met in England by a universal outburst of indignation.

Mr. Buford—The time has not been during this contest, and certainly is not now, sir, when everything possible to link indissolubly this State with the gallant State of Maryland has not met my favor. I want Virginia, through her General Assembly, to indicate to Maryland that she has our cordial sympathies.

Mr. Anderson, of Botetourt—I cannot find it in my heart to remain silent on this occassion. I am, sir, a half Marylander, myself. My venerable mother was a daughter of Maryland, and my heart bleeds for the down-trodden land of her nativity.—I feel delighted, sir. I do not know when I was so much rejoiced as when I heard that noble document read, coming as it does from an Ex Governor of Maryland. I am glad, sir, that it is to be placed upon the journals of this House, and is forever to remain a monument of the true spirit of Maryland.

There is nothing, sir, connected with the prosecution of this war that has grieved my heart so much as that we have been compelled, thus far, to neglect that unfortunate people. Since the battle of Manassas I have thought of scarcely anything else but the pushing of our armies across the Potomac. I had hoped, sir, that those who were at the head of the Government, and those who are in the command of our armies, would have found it good policy (to say the least) long since to cross the Potomac and rush to the rescue of Maryland. I hope, sir, the day is not far distant when we shall be able to do it.

Another Bridge-Burner Hung.

AUGUSTA, Dec. 21.—The Rome (Georgia) *Southerner* of the 19th says that an attempt was made on Monday night last to burn the State Road bridge over Pettit's Lock. The incendiary was caught and hung at Carterville, on Friday.

Colonel Terry's Remains.

NEW ORLEANS, Dec. 21.—Col. Terry's remains arrived this afternoon. They were laid in state in the City Hall, and afterwards escorted to the railroad depot, en route to Texas, by the military and citizens.

From the Richmond Enquirer, Dec. 19.

Re-Enlisting.

We are informed that one entire Mississippi regiment of twelve months' men, serving on the Potomac, have resolved, to a man, at the expiration of their present term, to re-enlist.

This is what we might have expected of a gallant and patriotic people. It stands out in refreshing contrast to the conduct of the Yankee troops, who, as soon as their time is up, rush home, leaving their cause and their flag to go to destruction their own way. The virtual desertion of their country in the hour of need has made them the laughing stock of all Christendom. We scarcely see an article from a foreign paper which does not express combined amusement and amazement at the promptitude of the Yankees in leaving the service as soon as their time is up. Yet, after all, such extraordinary conduct has, in them, at least, this extenuation, that they are not engaged in defending their own homes and firesides, and that, though they leave, they lose nothing but the chance of glory, which, sad it will not pay a man's house rent or his market bill, they don't think worth fighting for.

If the Yankees, in leaving when their time was up, had left the road open to their hearthstones and altars, and no further obstacle to the march of a foe who had proclaimed in advance that he meant to desolate and defile their homes, they would have given a proof of utter recreance and degradation, such as has not yet added the finishing blackness to their smutty character. We have, therefore, never for a moment entertained the supposition that the army of the South would leave the service of their country, of their homes and families, at the end of their present term of enlistment. We say the service of their country, for this is a war of the country, and not of any Government, and our soldiers are fighting for the country and for their wives and children, for freedom and independence; and, therefore, however irksome military discipline may be, and however unjust and negligent may be the treatment they sometimes receive from officers, they submit to it cheerfully, looking upon these and all other trials and inconveniences as a part of the price they pay for freedom, and to be borne with fortitude and determination, as they bear bad weather and the pains of bullet and bayonet wounds.

The private soldiers of the Confederate army, mostly gentlemen, and the equals in every respect of their officers, have entered the army not for pay and emolument, but from an honest desire to serve their country, and hence we believe that, like the noble Mississippi regiment, they will stand by her, and serve her to the end. If the officers of the army would rival the devotion of the privates, and entitle themselves to an equal share in the country's gratitude, they must vie with each other in the most energetic and systematic measures for the comfort, health, happiness and efficiency of the men.

From the Richmond Dispatch

The Blockade.

A Southern contemporary very recently made the assertion, upon authority entitled to credit, that Secretary Meminger had expressed a decided opinion that the blockade would be raised in thirty days. The remark may have been prophetic, and the indications now point to its fulfillment. The Southern people have suffered some inconveniences from the blockade, much of which might have been avoided had the spirit of speculation been suppressed in its incipiency; but we believe, after all, that Washington is now the worst blockaded city on the American continent. A gentleman who visited that modern Sodom a few days ago, informs us that the comforts and necessities of life are by no means so easily obtainable as the Northern papers represent; and instances among other items the article of wood, which is selling there at $20 per cord.

From the Richmond Examiner.

Southern Literature.

We are glad to notice the commencement of publishing enterprizes in the South, particularly in the city of Richmond, where the firm of Messrs. West & Johnson have already taken the lead in giving the public works by Southern authors.—Heretofore, the want at home of anything like a Southern literature has been due, not to the want of literary authorship, but to the lack of enterprize, the niggardliness, and even positive meanness of Southern publishers. They would never touch anything Southern on their own account, as long as they can make their dollars and cents out of the printed trash of Yankee books and periodicals.—They complain that our people would not read Southern books, when the fact was that they themselves had educated this taste by turning the cold shoulder to Southern authors, and stocking their shelves with "Cobb's" last story and the miscellanies of Ann street. Many of these publishers are still behind the time in responding to the literary demands of the people; and we notice that some of them are still trying to palm off their old stock of prurient Yankee books and old novels by advertising them at half price.

The Niagara—Speech of Gen. Bragg.

A soldier in the Confederate army at Pensacola, writes as follows:—

"On the morning of the 23d, we again repaired to our battery and waited for Pickens to open upon us, which she did at a quarter to eleven. We let loose upon her and were soon again hotly engaged. The ships did not come in then until we had been fighting some two or three hours, when the Niagara moved slowly up and began firing again on Fort McRae. Captain Kerr then turned his gun upon her, as did Captain Smith. Captain Kerr struck her fair on the side near the bows, making her careen to one side as if she were sinking, and set off in a hurry to get out of range. While she was leaving, Captain Smith gave her a shot in the stern which injured her screw. All the other ships immediately crowded around her, and from that fact, among others, we suppose she must have been badly injured.

"On the morning of the 24th, while at our battery, General Bragg rode up and said, 'Gentlemen, I have come to thank you for your gallant conduct in the engagement. You have had the post of danger, consequently the post of honor.—You have shown the enemy that our farmers and mechanics can beat them firing, notwithstanding their boast that they have old soldiers. You feel now, doubtless, paid for your long labors in the sands of Florida. The enemy have attacked you, and found you ready, to their cost. Judging from the number they have buried this morning, they have lost many more than we. I hope you will remain prepared to repel them in case they should make a land attack. Should they attempt it, use your bayonets vigorously, and water the sandy soil with Yankee blood until it will produce corn.'"

The Situation About Charleston.

Richmond Examiner's Correspondence.

CHARLESTON, S. C., Dec. 15.—Our people have scarcely yet awakened from the trance of horror and dismay into which they were plunged by the great disaster of Wednesday night and Thursday morning. The more carefully I survey the path of the fire the more shocking is the sense of utter desolation and distress which it creeps over me. The newspapers here have published long and elaborate accounts of the frightful event of the week, but they do not and cannot picture a tithe of the public and private losses, the keen, individual suffering and general gloom which have fallen upon the noble old city of Charleston. To give anything like a full history of these would require a book of very respectable size.

There is no doubt whatever that the fire was purely the result of accident. It probably originated from the sparks of a camp fire which was lit to the windward of the large sash factory where the flames first burst forth. A furious gale had just arisen, and in less than an hour the lower portion of the city was on fire in a dozen places. The wind whirled about great chunks of burning wood for a distance of many blocks from the burning tenements, and the vast multitude of these red hot lighting up the air, gave to the scene the aspect of a fiery snow storm. The conflagration attained its full width among the dry and ancient timber-box shanties of State and Market streets. From that neighborhood it swept rapidly resistlessly forward, spreading neither to the left nor to the right, but borne by the wind in a straight line, diagonally through the city, until it had cleared its road of ruin from the Cooper to the Ashley river. It is somewhat singular to mark the clearness with which the broad line pursued by the fire is defined. Indeed, so furious and unchanging was the gale that blew during the whole of that fearful night that I think it actually served as a protection to the houses situated on either side of the line of the fire—inasmuch as it kept the flames surging and roaring steadily onward and gave them no opportunity to turn, or to bend, or to spread.

The most irreparable of the results of this awful calamity is the wholesale destruction of the antiquities of our city. Great numbers of those grand old mansions of revolutionary memory, which have given to Charleston the prestige which attaches to every city of the ancient regime, now lie blackened and smouldering heaps of ruins. The stately hall in which the Rebels of '76 were wont to live and move are lost to the Rebels of '61. The ancestral homesteads of the Heywards, the Laurences, the Pinckneys, the Middletons, the Haynes, and of many of our families whose names are entwined with the history of the State, are levelled with the ground. It is now impossible to go from that portion of the city in which are situated the Battery, the Post Office and the City Hall, to the neighborhood of the Charleston Hotel, or to any part of Wentworth street, without passing through whole blocks of the desolated tract encumbered by huge piles of stone, brick and charred rafters. Those who are unacquainted with these localities will be able to form some idea of the extent of the fire from the fact that its sweep embraced about a quarter of a mile in width and fully a mile in length, through the very heart and oldest quarter of the city.

Much of the movable property which had been taken from the houses was consumed, owing to the fact that it was foolishly placed in the street some distance ahead of where the fire was raging, but at a point over which the fire swept a little later. It is appalling to think of the immense quantities of rich and old fashioned furniture, the accumulation of rare and costly libraries, the well-stored cellars of old wines, beyond all price, and the mass of household relics and effects of every kind which have been swept away, and which, in the present state of affairs, will be found quite impossible to replace.

The firemen worked with all the energy of desperation; but their efforts, in the face of the fierce gale, were of very little avail. The only really effectual check given to the conflagration was due to the resolute and prompt course of General Ripley. Mounted and accompanied by his staff, he rode swiftly hither and thither, often through streets over which the flames were already madly arching, his face and person blackened with smoke, giving his orders with his characteristic clearness and decision.

In the earlier period of the fire he saw its fearful character, and gave orders to blow up the entire line of buildings next in front of those which were burning. Had this order been promptly carried out, perhaps the extent of the conflagration might have been very materially lessened; but some delay or hesitation occurred, and the auspicious moment passed. Subsequently the General himself superintended the work of blowing up the endangered ranges, and there can be very little doubt that the safety of the Orphan Asylum, the Roper Hospital, containing two hundred and forty sick, and the jail, in which the Yankee prisoners were confined, is due solely to his ready assumption of the grave responsibility of blowing up the intervening houses.

I cannot attempt to particularize even the principal losses. The St. Andrew's Hall was the scene of the solemn separation by the Convention of the State of South Carolina from the United States. The Institute Hall, (alias "Secession Hall," in which the act was enthusiastically ratified by the people, is, to Charleston, what Faneuil Hall is to Boston. The Cathedral of St. Finbar, built of brown stone, was a structure equalled in grandeur by very few edifices in the Confederate States. The Mill's House had a most singular escape, the fire having burned furiously on three sides of it. But, if I should begin to dwell upon incidents like these, my letter would soon reach an unseemly length.

Heavy, indeed, would be the coffers of our insurance companies if they could stand a blow like this, in which the losses must be counted by millions. Some of them may survive, but it is now admitted that most of our city companies will barely be able to pay the amount of the insurances with their whole capital. This, of course, will be ruinous to the stockholders.

Rumor hath it that the blockading squadron fired a salute during the conflagration. It is certain that a number of guns were heard on the harbor, but whether they were meant as an evidence of the brutal joy of the Yankees is a matter of doubt. It is not difficult to predict that the Northern newspapers will gloat like vampires over the terrible calamity which has occurred. But let their hireling hosts approach, and they will find the spirit of our people is unshaken in their woe, and that those who have bowed to the sovereign with which Providence has afflicted them, are not yet prepared to succumb to the invader.

The destitution here is awful. I am glad to be able to add that the most liberal and extensive measures are being taken to remedy the widespread suffering.

Our sister States and communities are nobly rallying to the rescue. Georgia (the State) has given her "mite" of one hundred thousand dollars; Savannah ten thousand; Augusta eleven thousand, and the citizens of Charleston have already rolled up more than fifty thousand; New Orleans and the other cities of the Confederacy are bestirring themselves, and there is no doubt that the millions needed will speedily be forthcoming.

A fight is imminent at some point between here and Savannah. The Yankees are pushing forward, and have already made several flying incursions to the main. We have a report that General Pemberton has taken a force of picked men to attack the enemy at a point which he has lately occupied. The sharp work will certainly soon begin.

Reception of C. J. Faulkner in Richmond

RICHMOND, Dec. 19.—C. J. Faulkner arrived this evening. He was met at the depot by Governor Letcher, the Mayor of the city, and a large concourse, with music, and escorted through a portion of the city, when the crowd increased to thousands. The ladies from the windows and crowded balconies saluted the procession with smiles and waving handkerchiefs, and cheers from the thronged sidewalks, greeted the procession along the route to the City Hall. Mayor Mayo introduced Mr. Faulkner, and Mr. Faulkner made a speech, detailing his captivity, imprisonment, and present position [illegible] England and the United States. He said if Lincoln recedes from the present status in the Mason and Slidell affair, the furious abolition sentiment will overwhelm him, and if he does not they will be involved in a war with England. Mr. Faulkner said he was a fellow-prisoner in Fort Warren with Messrs. Mason and Slidell, and said they never wavered, but felt confident that England would protect them and her flag. Gov. Letcher made a few remarks welcoming Mr. Faulkner to Virginia, and the immense crowd dispersed.

A WOMAN'S STORY.

To the Editor of the New York Tribune:

SIR: Having seen by the papers that an investigation into the causes of the disaster at Ball's Bluff was stilled in the House of Representatives, I give the following facts which have come to my knowledge, and which may give a clue to the spirit which prevails in the management of some portion of our army on the Potomac.

The news and detailed account of that fearful event filled us with indignation. From day to day contradictory statements of the killed and missing reached the relatives of those who participated in the engagement. Mrs. ——, wife of Capt. ——, (a brave, high-toned and respected officer in the Tammany regiment of this city,) received a letter from a brother officer stating that it was his painful duty to inform her that her husband had fallen at Ball's Bluff. For a time nothing could console her, but friends made more particular inquiry, and there seemed reason to believe that he was only wounded, and a prisoner. She immediately sent a friend to Poolesville to make an investigation and discover the truth. She awaited his return in an agony of suspense. He came, but brought no tidings.

Gen. Stone had refused him a flag of truce, although his letters gave ample proof that his mission was simply one of charity to relieve the heart of a disconsolate wife. Providing herself with influential letters, Mrs. —— proceeded to Washington, and from thence to Poolesville. Stopping with a private family, she naturally made known her sad errand. The family assured her there would be no difficulty in obtaining a flag of truce, for Gen. Stone had granted one to the wife of a Confederate officer to go to New York and remain three weeks; only a few days ago she had returned home again through Gen. Stone's kindness.

Sanguine of success, and hopefully trusting that her husband still lived, Mrs. —— presented her letter of introduction to Gen. Stone. With an earnestness that should have touched any heart, however hardened, she told her grief, and asked the favor of a flag of truce to go and find her husband.

"Madam," he replied in a haughty tone and manner, "your husband is dead. Capt. —— was buried by the Confederates."

"Buried by the Confederates?" she answered, "how can that be? When Captain Vaughen was sent to bury our dead, why should the *rebels* bury him?"

"The account they give," said he, is, "that Captain Vaughen left him on the field, and they buried him. He was lying about two yards from Captain Alden."

"It is strange they should so soon bury him."

"They did it for *my* sake," said the General.

"It is not likely, General," said Mrs.——, "that Capt. Vaughen would bury one officer and leave another unburied within two yards of him. This is not to be believed. If the rebel is the only source from which you have gained the account of my husband's death, I do not credit it, for they are not to be believed or relied upon at all."

"Madam," said the General, with sternness, you surprise me. What better source could you wish. The Rebels are *gentlemen*, and are to be believed and relied upon. I wish you to know that many of them are my *intimate friends*, and I believe everything they say respecting your husband.—You are very much mistaken in your ideas, Madam."

"I am sorry we differ so far in opinion respecting them, General. If they are what you represent them to be, there was no occasion to go to war with them. I do not believe my husband is dead, and if he is, you will not refuse me a flag of truce to go to the spot where he is buried, and to obtain his body?"

"I *cannot* grant it, Madam."

"*Cannot* grant it, General?"

"No, Madam, it cannot be done."

"Am I not entitled to the favor as well as Mrs. Col. ——, the wife of a Rebel officer, to whom you granted a flag of truce to go and come on a less important errand?"

Gen. Stone turned pale, and changed his stern manner, but persisted in his refusal.

Mrs. —— became much excited, and spoke to him of the Ball's Bluff affair, as it would be well if those in power had eloquence and heart to speak.

Just before leaving she said, "Had my husband died on the field of battle, and in so doing had he benefited his country, I could have resigned, but he was not led to battle but to slaughter."

"Madam, do you intend that remark for me?" said the General.

"The blame rests upon some one, and whoever the cap fits may put it on," she replied.

"When we get to Virginia I will make every investigation you desire."

"When we get to Virginia! That does not look likely to happen soon. You, General, may be in Virginia before we can be."

Leaving him, Mrs. —— returned to Washington, distressed and disappointed.

Here are the facts, Sir, and how do they strike every reader? Can it be that the Rebel officers opposed to Gen. Stone's division are his "intimate friends?" Can it be he considers them "gentlemen and to be relied upon?"

How many more such intimate friends have the Rebels on the line of the Potomac? God only knows; and while our homes are made desolate, and our country bleeding at every pore, who will be the first to rise in their might and arouse our leaders to an effort worthy of the Sons of Freedom?

Men of America! Are you men and stand in thousands and in hundreds of thousands, in the face of an insolent and rebellious foe and dare not strike the blow?

There you stand buffetted by the South on one cheek and by England on the other, and still you remain unmoved. You should have gone forth with half your numbers, not with strength of your own but with confidence in God, for your cause is just, and with but an arrow and a sling, felt that you could have brought down the enemy.

We, mothers, have sent forth our sons cheerfully. We have given them to the cause of liberty, but we cannot see them sacrificed—we cannot see incompetent or traitorous leaders destroying brave and loyal men without mercy—see them led like sheep to the slaughter, and not raise our voice against it.

We demand an investigation at once. When the leaves fell we were to see justice done. The blow was then to be given effectually. It is now nearly midwinter, and the fine weather almost gone. Our army is sleeping on the Potomac within sight of the enemy. The only General willing to trust to the strength of will and patriotism of his soldiers, rather than his numbers, is recalled on the eve of a battle! Our fleet went forth with flying colors and a "God speed" from anxious hearts, but alas! here, too, we find no noble deeds of daring and success to record. Why is it, sir? Why is this? We have a right to ask.

I hope the facts related above will only apply to an isolated case, but it is the sacred duty of our Government *to know* why we have not subdued the enemy.

If we *cannot*, let us know it, and we will acknowledge to the world that we have no *men* among us, and, like the women of old, we will fight our own battles.

I speak not alone for myself, and from one aching heart, but from many, and from thousands who are mourning and waiting.

A SOLDIER'S MOTHER.

New York, Dec. 20, 1861.

BRITISH NAVAL FORCES ON THE NORTH AMERICAN STATION.

With regard to the naval forces under Vice-Admiral Sir Alexander Milne, K. C. B., Commander-in-Chief on the North American station, the *British Army and Navy Gazette* publishes a corrected statement up to the 30th, of the names, strength, &c., of the effective ships already on the station, or on their way to join the admiral:

Ships.	Guns.	Men.	H.-p.	Tons.	Com. Officers.
Nile	90	850	500	2022	Capt. E. K. Barnard.
St. George	86	880	500	2804	Capt. Hon. F. Egerton.
Immortalite	51	570	600	2059	Capt. G. Hancock.
Diadem	52	485	800	2183	Capt. G. Randolph.
Mersey	40	600	1000	3733	Capt. H. Caldwell.
Ariadne	26	400	800	3214	Capt. H. Vansittart.
Challenger	22	400	800	1462	Capt. J. Kennedy.
Cadmus	21	270	400	1466	Capt. Hillyar.
Jason	21	270