MARYLAND NEWS SHEET

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BALTIMORE.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1862.

WAR AND OTHER NEWS.

In the Senate of the United States, a petition signed by a large number of merchants and others of New York, was presented, asking for a general bankrupt law. A bill was reported for the establishment of a railroad and telegraph from Missouri to the Pacific Ocean. The bill for the occupation and cultivation of certain cotton lands on the Southern coast was then called up and debated until the expiration of the morning hour. The number of members of the next House of Representatives, which required to be regulated in accordance with the census of 1860, was fixed at 241. The consideration of the case of Mr. Starke, of Oregon, was resumed and debated at length, but no vote was taken upon the question.

In the House of Representatives a resolution was adopted, instructing the Committee on Contracts to investigate the amount of monies received by Federal officers in New York, and also relating to the ownership of the public warehouses and to the storing of foreign goods. The question involving the right to a seat, as Representative of the Seventh Congressional District of Virginia—Messrs. Upton and Beach both claiming it—was taken up and debated until the hour of adjournment.

In the State Senate, the bill imposing a direct tax was read a second time. Also a bill to provide means for the defence of the State by negotiating a loan to pay the State's proportion of the United States Direct tax. The resolutions relating to the agitation of slavery were likewise read a second time. The resolutions relating to the abolishment of slavery in the District of Columbia, were called up for a second reading, but were postponed. The Senate then proceeded to ballot for State Librarian and Bank Directors.

In the House of Delegates no business worth noting was transacted except the election of a State Librarian and Bank Directors. The names of those who were chosen to perform these duties will be found in the Legislative proceedings.

Among the documents recently laid before the English Parliament, and since published in the London and New York papers, is a letter addressed by Messrs. Yancy, Rost and Mann to Earl Russell, in defence of the action of the Southern States in seceding from the Union, and giving an exposition of the causes that led to it, and of their ability to maintain their independence. The letter is too long to admit of being condensed within convenient space; but the importance of the subject, and the desire which is naturally felt to know something of the argument by which the appeal of the Southern Commissioners is supported, will probably command for it, especially at this time, an attentive perusal.

By the steamer from Fortress Monroe we have no further intelligence of the Burnside Expedition. The storm in the bay had however been productive of several serious disasters. The steamer Hoboken whilst engaged in laying the telegraph cable across the Bay, to connect with the line to Philadelphia, encountered the full fury of the gale and was driven ashore at Cape Henry, where she suffered total wreck. The steamer P. B. Forbes also went ashore at Nag's Head, but nothing is known as to her condition.

The project of a treaty with Mexico, which was presented to the Senate on Monday, and which included a provision to assume, on certain specified conditions, the payment of the Mexican debt due to foreign Powers, was summarily rejected in executive session by a vote of 29 to 9.

Colonel Kerrigan, whose trial on various charges took place recently, has been dismissed the service for conduct unbecoming an officer, and for gross negligence in the discharge of his military duty.

The Nassau, New Providence, papers publish the reached there from blockaded ports between January 20th and February 8th inclusive.

According to the New York *Tribune*, a proposition for a compromise has been submitted by the Confederate authorities to the Federal Government. The substance of the proposition is said to embrace an armistice for a specified term, with a view to a peaceful adjustment of all differences, and a convention of the States for the purpose of revising the Federal Constitution.

The appropriations of the Confederate provisional Congress for the year ending the 18th instant amount to about sixty-three millions of dollars.

The Richmond papers contain editorial articles relating to the recent defeats in the Southwest.—They deplore the loss sustained, but at the same time exhort the Southern people to a more determined resistance.

A requisition has been made upon Governor Brown, of Georgia, for twelve thousand additional troops for the Confederate service. The Governor of Alabama has also been called upon for twelve additional regiments. Proclamations have been issued in both instances in response to the call.—General Huger has also issued an order to the militia of Virginia and North Carolina, within his military department, to report to the nearest Confederate officer, and assist in taking measures to obstruct the progress of the enemy by breaking up the roads, obstructing the water courses, and by engaging in guerilla warfare. Gen. Bragg has moved his headquarters from Pensacola to Mobile. We have again reports from Cairo and St. Louis which state that Nashville has been occupied by General Buell, and that the Federal flag is flying over the State House. It is also reported that Commissioners have been appointed to arrange with the Federal authorities at Washington the terms for a transfer of allegiance.

MR. MURDOCH'S READINGS.—Mr. Murdoch's second reading of the Course, before the Mercantile Library Association, took place on Tuesday evening last. The attendance was quite as large as on the previous occasion. The subject chosen by Mr. Murdoch was a new poem, as yet unpublished, by T. Buchanan Read—copious extracts from which were given, with such explanatory remarks as were necessary to the development of the story. The portions chosen for recital were chiefly picturesque—the finest being the description of Berkeley Hall; of the waggoner in a storm on the Alleghanies; the scene at Berkely Church, and the rescue of the standard at the battle of Brandywine. The poem was well received, its finer touches being greeted with frequent applause. The third reading of the Course takes place this evening. The programme is judiciously varied, and the pieces selected for the occasion are among the choicest of their kind.

FROM CENTRAL AMERICA.

RIGHTS OF FOREIGNERS IN PANAMA.

By the arrival of the North Star, at New York, we have Panama papers to the 15th inst. The *Commercial Bulletin* says:

For the benefit of our English and American subscribers we have translated the following official letter relative to the construction of the law in regard to foreigners holding property. It will be seen that there is now no legal impediment in the way of our foreign citizens purchasing and holding real estate:

"PANAMA, Feb. 6, 1862.

"To the Prefect of the Department:

"The Governor of the State has this day resolved as follows:

"On the 1st instant the Prefect of the Department of Panama wrote to the Secretary of State, saying that, on effecting the sale of some of the property belonging to the public hospital, a doubt had arisen whether foreigners were or were not able to acquire landed property in the State of Panama. On consideration of the ninth article of the Union treaty of the 20th of September last, and the Governor considering—

"1st. That the State of Panama has accepted the Columbian Union treaty in reference, and inasmuch as it does not oppose the rights and privileges acknowledged in that treaty, convened in Cocon (Aspinwall) on the 6th September last, 1861;

"2d. That according to the treaty of Colon, and that of Carthagena of the 10th September, 1860, above referred to, it is exclusively the right of the State to settle all things connected with its civil legislation; and

"3d. That everything regarding the acquirment of property is undoubtedly a matter of State legislation,

"It is Resolved, All foreigners have full right to acquire landed property (real estate) in the State of Panama.

PABLO AROSEMENA,
Secretary of State."

Mr. J. Russell Smith is about to issue, in London, a reprint of the book published in 1645, containing the names of the Roman Catholics, Non-Jurors, and others who refused to take the oaths to King George I., together with their titles and places of abode, the parishes and townships where their lands lay, the names of the then tenants, and the annual value of them as returned by themselves, collected by Mr. Gwin, the Secretary to the Commissioners of Fortified Estates.

A DEFENCE OF SECESSION—AN APPEAL FROM THE THREE CONFEDERATE COMMISSIONERS.

The London papers of the 8th contain, among the documents laid before Parliament, the following letter addressed to her Majesty's Secretary of Foreign Affairs, invoking the recognition of the Confederate States of America:—

No. 15 HALF-MOON STREET, LONDON, August 14, 1861.

The undersigned, as your Lordship has already on two occasions been verbally and unofficially informed, were appointed, on the 16th of March last, a Commission to her Britannic Majesty's Government, by the President of the Confederate States of America.

THEIR INSTRUCTIONS.

The undersigned were instructed to represent to your Lordship that seven of the sovereign States of the late American Union, for just and sufficient reasons, and in full accordance with the great principle of self-government, had thrown off the authority of that Union, and formed a Confederacy, which they had styled the "Confederate States of America." They were further instructed to ask her Majesty's Government to recognize the fact of the existence of this new Power in the world, and also to inform it that they were fully empowered to negotiate with it a treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation.

THE FIRST INTERVIEW.

At an early day after the arrival of the undersigned in London, at an informal interview which your Lordship was pleased to accord them, they informed your Lordship of the object of their mission, and endeavored to impress upon your Lordship that the action of the seven Confederate States had been based upon repeated attempts on the part of the Federal Government, and of many of the more Northern States which composed the late Union, during a series of years which extended over near half a century, to rule the people of the Southern section of that Union by means of the unconstitutional exercise of power; and that secession from that Union had been resorted to as, in the opinion of the seceding States, the best and surest mode of saving the liberties which their Federal and State constitutions were designed to secure to them. They also endeavored to place before your Lordship satisfactory evidence that the justice of this great movement upon the part of the cotton States was so palpable that it would be endorsed by many, if not by all, of the Southern States which were then adhering to the Union, which would sooner or later become convinced that the security of their rights could only be maintained by pursuing the like process of secession from the late Federal Union, and accession to the Constitution and Government of the Confederate States of America.

SECESSION ARGUMENTS.

They were especially desirous of convincing your Lordship, and laid before your Lordship reasons for their belief, that the people of the seceding States had violated no principle of allegiance in their act of secession, but, on the contrary, had been true to that high duty which all citizens owe to that sovereignty which is the supreme fount of power in a State, no matter what may be the particular form of Government under which they live; they were careful to show to your Lordship, however, that the idea of American sovereignty was different from that entertained in Great Britain and Europe; that whereas in the great Eastern Hemisphere generally sovereignty was deemed to exist in the Government, the founders of the North American States had solemnly declared, and upon that declaration had built up American institutions, that "Governments were instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends (security to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness), it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government."

SOUTHERN PRINCIPLES.

The undersigned assumed it to be incontrovertible, in order to give practical vitality to this declaration, that the people who were declared to possess this right "to alter or to abolish" such oppressive government, must be the people whose rights such government either assailed or no longer protected. Whether that government should be administered by one tyrant or the more heartless and equally effectual despotism of a sectional and tyrannical majority, could make no difference in the application of the principle. When the people who thus act in "abolishing" their form of government are not mere self-constituted assemblages of disaffected individuals, but the sovereign people of great States, each possessing separate Constitutions, and Legislative and Executive powers acting in modes prescribed by those Constitutions, and taking votes under form and by virtue of law, the minority yielding cheerfully to the decision of the majority as to the question of redress, it became clear that, whatever might be European views as to such action if developed in Europe, the seceding States were amply justified by the great American principles of self-government proclaimed by their ancestors in 1776. They submitted that, so far from the principles of American allegiance having been violated by the people of the seceding States, in those States alone is that principle upheld whereby the actions of men claiming to be the representatives of the men of 1776 are to be guided and justified, and that the people and Government of the States upholding Mr. Lincoln in his war upon the Confederate States are alone the traitors to that great political truth, and as such must be judged by an impartial world.

CONDITION OF THE SOUTH.

In connection with this view, the undersigned explained to your Lordship the unity, the deliberation, the moderation and regard for personal and public right, the absence of undue popular commotion during the process of secession, the daily and ordinary administration of the laws in every delegatures of this grand movement. They expatiated upon the great extent of fertile country over which the Confederate States exercised jurisdiction, producing in ample quantity every variety of cereal necessary to the support of their inhabitants, the great value of the products of cotton and tobacco grown by them, the number and character of their people; and they submitted to your Lordship that all of these political and material facts demonstrated to the nations of the world that the action of the Confederate States of America was not that of rebels, subject to be dealt with as traitors and pirates by their enemy, but the dignified and solemn conduct of a belligerent Power, struggling, with wisdom and energy, to assume a place among the great States of the civilized world, upon a broad and just principle which commended itself to that world's respect.

A GLEAM OF LIGHT.

The undersigned have witnessed with pleasure that the views which, in their first interview, they pressed upon your Lordship as to the undoubted right of the Confederate States, under the law of nations, to be treated as a belligerent power, and the monstrous assertion of the Government of Washington of its right to treat their citizens found in arms upon land or sea as rebels and pirates, have met with the concurrence of her Britannic Majesty's Government; and that the moral weight of this great and Christian people has been thus thrown into the scale to prevent the barbarous and inhuman spectacle of war between citizens so lately claiming a common country, conducted upon principles which would have been a disgrace to the age in which we live.

COMPLAINT AGAINST ENGLAND.

The undersigned, however, received with some surprise and regret, the avowal of her Britannic Majesty's Government that, in order to the observance of a strict neutrality, the public and private armed vessels of neither of the contending parties would be permitted to enter her Majesty's ports with prizes. The undersigned do not contest the right of the British Government to make such regulations, but have been disposed to think that it has been unusual for her Majesty's Government to exercise such right, and that in this instance the practical operation of the rule has been to favor the Government at Washington, and to cripple the exercise of an undoubted public right of the Government of the Confederate States.

This Government commenced its career entirely without a navy. Owing to the high sense of duty which distinguished the Southern officers who were lately in commission in the United States navy, the ships which otherwise might have been brought into Southern ports, were honorably delivered up to the United States Government, and the navy, built for the protection of the people of all the States, is now used by the Government at Washington to coerce the people and blockade the ports of one-third of the States of the late Union.

LETTERS OF MARQUE.

The people of the Confederate States are an agricultural, not a manufacturing or commercial people. They own but few ships. Hence there has been not the least necessity for the Government at Washington to issue letters of marque. The people of the Confederate States have but few ships, and not much commerce upon which such private armed vessels could operate. The commodities produced in the Confederate States are such as the world needs more than any other, and the nations of the earth have heretofore sent their ships to our wharves, and there the merchants buy and receive our cotton and tobacco.

CRIPPLING OUR RESOURCES.

But it is far otherwise with the people of the present United States. They are a manufacturing and commercial people. They do a large part of the carrying trade of the world. Their ships and commerce afford them the sinews of war, and keep their industry afloat. To cripple this industry and commerce, to destroy their ships or cause them to be dismantled and tied up to their rotting wharves, are legitimate objects and means of warfare.

Having no navy, no commercial marine out of which to improvise public armed vessels to any considerable extent, the Confederate States were compelled to resort to the issuance of letters of marque, a mode of warfare as fully and clearly recognized by the law and usage of nations as any other arm of war, and more humane and more civilized in its practice than that which appears to have distinguished the march of the troops of the Government of the United States upon the soil and among the villages of Virginia.

These facts tend to show that the practical working of the rule that forbids the entry of the public and private armed vessels of either party into British ports with prizes operates exclusively to prevent the exercise of this legitimate mode of warfare by the Confederate States, while it is, to a great degree, a practical protection to the commerce and ships of the United States.

PRECEDENTS FOR RECOGNITION.

In the interview already alluded to, as well as in one of a similar character, held between your Lordship and the undersigned, at a later date, the undersigned were fully aware of the relations of amity existing between her Britannic Majesty's Government and that of Washington, and of the peculiar difficulties into which these relations might be thrown if her Majesty should choose to recognize the nationality of the Confederate States of America, before some decided exhibition of ability upon the part of the Government of those States to maintain itself had been shown. Therefore they did not deem it advisable to urge her Majesty's Government to an immediate decision upon so grave a question, but contented themselves with a presentation of the cause of their Government, and have quietly waited upon events to justify all that they had said, with the hope that her Majesty's Government would soon come to the conclusion that the same sense of justice, the same view of duty under the law of nations, which caused it to recognize the *de facto* Government of Texas while yet a superior Mexican army was contending for supremacy upon its soil, the *de facto* Governments of the South American Republics while Spain still persisted in claiming to be their Sovereign, and the *de facto* Governments of Greece, of Belgium and Italy, would induce it to recognize the Government of the Confederate States of America upon the happening of events exhibiting a deep-seated and abiding confidence that success will attend their efforts. At all events, reconstruction of the Union is an impossibility. The brief history of the past confirms them in this belief.

THE POLICY OF THE NORTH.

Since the organization of the Government of the Confederate States in February last, and since Mr. Lincoln assumed the reins of government in the United States, and commenced preparing his aggressive policy against the Confederate States, the moral weight of their position and cause, aided by the constitutional action and policy of the new President and his Cabinet, have caused four other great States—viz: Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Arkansas, containing about 4,500,000 inhabitants, and covering an extent of valuable territory equal to that of France and Spain—to secede from the late Union and join the Confederate States; while the inhabitants of three other powerful States—viz: Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri—are now agitated by the throes of revolution, and a large part of them are rising in arms to resist the military despotism which, in the name of the Constitution, has been so ruthlessly, and in such utter perversion of the provisions of that instrument, imposed upon them.

ILLINOIS TO SECEDE.

The undersigned have also sufficient reasons for the belief that even in the northwestern part of the State of Illinois, a part of the people have proclaimed open opposition to Mr. Lincoln's unconstitutional and despotic Government, while in several others public assemblies and their Legislatures have condemned the war as subversive of the Constitution. In addition to these striking evidences of the increased strength of the Confederate States, and of great internal weakness and division in Mr. Lincoln's Government, the undersigned can proudly and confidentially point to the unity which exists among the people of the eleven Confederate States, with the solitary and unimportant exception of the extreme northwest corner of Virginia, lying between Ohio and Pennsylvania, and settled almost exclusively by Northern emigrants.

THE CAUSES OF SECESSION.

Whatever differences of opinion may have been entertained among the people of the United States as to the policy of Secession, there was little difference of opinion as to the unconstitutional causes which led to it, and often, by a fair decision at the polls, by the majority in favor of Secession as the means of expressing their liberties, the great mass of the people at once yielded all objections, and are now engaged with their wealth and their persons in the most patriotic exertions to uphold their Government in the course of independence which had been decided upon.

ADMIRATION FOR NORTHERN PEOPLE.

Whatever tribute of admiration may be yielded for the present to the people who submit to Mr. Lincoln's usurping Government, for energy displayed in raising and organizing an immense army for the purpose of imposing the yoke of that Government upon a people who are struggling for the inestimable right of governing themselves, in order to a preservation of their liberties, a just and impartial history will award to the people of the Confederate States an unmixed admiration for an effort which, in the space of nine months, has thrown off the authority of the usurper; has organized a new Government, based upon the principles of personal and public liberty; has put that Government into operation; has raised, organized, and armed an army sufficient to meet and defeat in a fair field, and drive in ignominious flight from that field, the myriads of invaders which the reputed first General of the age deemed fit to crush what he termed a rebellion.

ADVANTAGES OF LINCOLN'S GOVERNMENT.

The undersigned call your Lordship's attention to the fact that Mr. Lincoln's Government, though possessed of all the advantages of a more numerous population, of the credit due to a recognized Government of long continuance, of the entire navy of the late Union, has not been able to retake a single fortification of which the Confederate States possessed themselves; but, on the contrary, has been driven out from a mighty fortress upon the Atlantic, and from several forts on the Western frontier, by the Confederate arms; that it has not been able to advance more than five miles into the territory of any of the Confederate States where there was any serious attempt to prevent it, and is in danger of losing three great States of the Union by insurrection. Even at sea, upon which the Government of Mr. Lincoln possesses undisputed sway, it has not been able to make an effectual blockade of a single port but those which find an outlet through the mouth of Chesapeake bay; vessels of every class, public and private, armed vessels belonging to the Confederate States, and traders, having found their way in and out of every other port at which the attempt has been made.

CONFEDERATE LOANS TAKEN.

In everything that constitutes the material of war, thus far the Confederate States have supplied themselves from their own resources, unaided by that free intercourse with the world which has been open to the United States. Men, arms, munitions of war of every description, have been supplied in ample abundance to defeat all attempts to successfully invade our borders. Money has been obtained in the Confederate States in sufficient quantity. Every loan that has been put upon the market has been taken at and above par, and the undersigned but state the universal impression and belief of their Government and their fellow-citizens in the Confederate States that, no matter what may be the demand for means to defend their country against invasion, sufficient resources of every character, and sufficient patriotism to furnish them, exist within the Confederate States.

SEVERAL STATES DECLARED RICH.

The undersigned are aware that an impression has prevailed, even in what may be termed well-informed circles in Europe, that the slaveholding States are poor, and not able to sustain a prolonged conflict with the non-slaveholding States of the North. In the opinion of the undersigned, this idea is grossly erroneous; and considering the importance of a correct understanding of the relative resources of the two contending Powers, in resolving the question of the ability of the South to maintain its position, your Lordship will pardon a reference to the statistical tables of 1850, the last authentic exposition of the resources of the United States which has yet been published, and which is appended to this communication. The incontestible truths exhibited in that table prove that the Confederate States possess the elements of a great and powerful nation, capable not only of clothing, feeding and defending themselves, but also of clothing all the nations of Europe under the benign influence of peace and free trade.

DELICATE GROUND—THE NEGRO.

The undersigned are also aware that the anti-slavery sentiment so universally prevalent in England has shrunk from the idea of forming friendly public relations with a Government recognizing the slavery of a part of the human race. The question of the morality of slavery it is not for the undersigned to discuss with any foreign Power. The authors of the American Declaration of Independence found the African race in the colonies to be slaves, both by colonial and English law and by the law of nations.

Those great and good men left that fact and the responsibility for its existence where they found it; and thus finding that there were two distinct races in the colonies, one free and capable of maintaining their freedom, the other slave, and, in their opinion, unfitted to enter upon that contest, and to govern themselves, they made their famous declaration of freedom for the white race alone. They eventually framed and put in operation, in the course of a few years, two plans of government, both resting upon that great and recognized distinction between the white and the black man, and perpetuating that distinction as the fundamental law of the government they framed, which they declared to be framed for the benefit of themselves and their posterity; in their own language, "to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

WAS SLAVERY THE CAUSE OF SECESSION?

The wisdom of that course is not a matter for discussion with foreign nations. Suffice it to say that thus were the great American institutions framed, and thus have they remained unchanged to this day. It was from no fear that the slaves would be liberated that secession took place. The very party in power has proposed to guarantee slavery forever in the States, if the South would but remain in the Union. Mr. Lincoln's Message proposes no freedom to the slave, but announces subjection of his owner to the will of the Union; in other words, to the will of the North. Even after the battle of Bull Run, both branches of the Congress at Washington passed resolutions that the war is only waged in order to uphold that (pro-slavery) Constitution, and to enforce the laws (many of them pro-slavery), and out of 172 votes in the Lower House they receive all but two, and in the Senate all but one vote. As the army commenced its march, the commanding General issued an order that no slaves should be received into, or allowed to follow, the camp.

AN ADMISSION.

The great object of the war, therefore, as now officially announced, is not to free the slave, but to keep him in subjection to his owner, and to control his labor through the legislative channels which the Lincoln Government designs to force upon the master. The undersigned, therefore, submit with confidence that as far as the anti-slavery sentiment of England is concerned, it can have no sympathy with the North; nay, it will probably become disgusted with a canting hypocrisy which would enlist those sympathies on false pretences. The undersigned are, however, not insensible to the surmise that the Lincoln Government may, under stress of circumstances, change its policy, a policy based at present more upon a wily view of what is to be its effect in rearing upon element in the Confederate States favorable to the reconstruction of the Union, than upon any honest desire to uphold a Constitution, the main provisions of which it has most shamelessly violated.

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY.

But they confidently submit to your Lordship's consideration, that success in producing so abrupt and violent a destruction of a system of labor which has reared up so vast a commerce between America and the great States of Europe, which, it is supposed, now gives bread to 10,000,000 of the population of those States, which it may be safely assumed is intimately blended with the basis of the great manufacturing and navigating prosperity that distinguishes the age, and probably not the least of the elements of this prosperity, would be visited with results disastrous to the world, as well as to the master and slave.

RESORT TO SERVILE WAR.

Resort to servile war has, it is true, as we have heretofore stated, not been proclaimed, but officially abandoned. It has been, however, recommended by persons of influence in the United States; and when all other means shall fail, as the undersigned assure your Lordship they will, to bring the Confederate States into subjection to the power of Mr. Lincoln's Government, it is by no means improbable that it may be inaugurated. Whenever it shall be done, however, the motive, it is now rendered clear, will not be that high philanthropic consideration which undoubtedly beats in the hearts of many in England, but the base feeling of selfish aggrandizement, not unmixed with a cowardly spirit of revenge.

BULL RUN.

The undersigned call your Lordship's attention to what is now so publicly known as a fact—to the great battle of Bull Run, three miles in front of Manassas Junction, in which a well-appointed army of 55,000 Federal soldiers gave battle to the Confederate States army of inferior force. After nine hours' hard fighting the Federalists were defeated and driven from the field in open flight, and were pursued by the Confederate States army to Centreville, the position of the Federal reserve. The enemy lost honor, and nearly all the arms and munitions of war which had been so industriously gathered together for months for an offensive campaign in Virginia; and they did not cease their flight until, under cover of a stormy night, they had regained the shelter of their entrenchments in front of Washington. The Confederate States forces have commenced offensive movements, and have driven the vaunting hosts of the United States behind entrenchments upon the borders of Virginia, and so far from threatening the integrity of the territory and the existence of the Government of the Confederate States, the Government at Washington seems content at present, and will be rejoiced, if it can maintain a successful defence of its capital, and preserve the remnant of its defeated and disorganized forces.

COTTON-PICKING SEASON.

The undersigned would also ask your Lordship's attention to the fact that the cotton-picking season in the cotton-growing States of the Confederacy has commenced. The crop bids fair to be at least an average one, and will be prepared for market and delivered by our planters and merchants as usual, on the wharves of the ports of those States, when there shall be a prospect of the blockade being raised, and not before. As a defensive measure, an embargo has been laid by the Government of the Confederate States upon the passage of cotton by inland conveyance to the United States. To be obtained, it must be sought for in the Atlantic and Gulf ports of these States.

They submit to your Lordship the consideration of the fact that the blockade of all the ports of the Confederate States was declared to have commenced by the blockading officer off Charleston, when, in truth, at that time, and for weeks after, there was no pretence of a blockade of the ports in the Gulf. They submit for consideration that since the establishment of the blockade there have been repeated instances of vessels breaking it at Wilmington, Charleston, Savannah, Mobile and New Orleans.—It will be for the neutral Powers, whose commerce has been so seriously damaged, to determine how long such a blockade shall be permitted to interfere with their commerce.

THE LAST APPEAL.

In closing this communication the undersigned desire to urge upon her Britannic Majesty's Government the just claim which, in their opinion, the Government of the Confederate States has at this time to a recognition as a Government *de facto;* whether its internal peace, or its territory, its population, its great resources for both domestic and foreign commerce, and its power to maintain itself, are considered; or whether your Lordship shall take into consideration the necessity of commercial relations being established with it, with a view to the preservation of vast interests of the commerce of England. If, however, in the opinion of her Britannic Majesty's Government, the Confederate States have not yet won a right to a place among the nations of the earth, the undersigned can only assure your Lordship that such an announcement will be received with surprise by the Government they represent, and while that Government is to be left to contend for interests which, it thinks, are as important to commercial Europe as to itself, without even a friendly countenance from other nations, its citizens will buckle themselves to the great task before them with a vigor and determination that will justify the undersigned in having pressed the question upon her Britannic Majesty's Government; and when peace shall have been made their Government will at least feel that it will not be justly responsible for the vast quantity of blood which shall have been shed, nor for the great and widespread suffering which so prolonged a conflict will have entailed upon millions of the human race, both in the Eastern as well as upon the North American Continent.

The undersigned, &c.,

W. L. YANCEY,
P. A. ROST,
A. DUDLEY MANN.

LORD RUSSELL'S REPLY.

The following is Lord Russell's reply:

EARL RUSSELL TO MESSRS. YANCEY, ROST AND MANN.

FOREIGN OFFICE, Aug. 24, 1861.

The undersigned has had the honor to receive the letter of the 14th inst., addressed to him by Messrs. Yancey, Rost and Mann, on behalf of the so-styled Confederate States of North America.

The British Government do not pretend in any way to pronounce a judgment upon the questions in debate between the United States and their adversaries in North America; the British Government can only regret that these differences have, unfortunately, been submitted to the arbitrament of arms. Her Majesty has considered this contest as constituting a civil war, and her Majesty has, by her Royal Proclamation, declared her intention to preserve a strict neutrality between the contending parties in that war.

Her Majesty will strictly perform the duties which belong to a neutral. Her Majesty cannot undertake to determine by anticipation what may be the issue of the contest, nor can she acknowledge the independence of the nine States which are now combined against the President and Congress of the United States until the fortune of arms or the more peaceful mode of negotiation shall have more clearly determined the respective positions of the two belligerents.

Her Majesty can, in the meantime, only express a hope that some adjustment satisfactory to both parties may be come to, without the calamities which must ensue in the event of an embittered and protracted conflict.

The undersigned, &c. RUSSELL.

GREAT FIRE AT BOSTON.

HALF A MILLION DOLLARS' WORTH OF PROPERTY DESTROYED.

A fire broke out about nine o'clock last evening, in the building on the corner of Clark and Commercial streets, which proved to be the most destructive that has occurred in this city for several years. A fierce gale, which sprung up soon after sun down, was prevailing at the time, and the fire spread with most astonishing rapidity.

The building fronted on Commercial street, extended back to North street, and was four stories high. The front was of stone and the rest of brick. The north end, in which the fire caught, was occupied by W. H. Marsh & Co., liquor dealers, on the first floor, and by A. K. Bryer, rigger, above. It is not known whether the fire caught in the lower or the upper part. Before the engines arrived on the spot, the whole north end of the building was in flames.

The wind swept the flames in a southeasterly direction, across the street directly against the large, handsome building known as the Mathews Building; and the first efforts of the firemen were directed to the preservation of that. The fire progressed so rapidly that the large building in which it originated was completely wrapped in flames in the course of twenty minutes from the time it broke out, and the whole heavens were lighted up with the glare. It was found quite impossible to approach the fire from the southerly side, on account of the dense smoke and showers of sparks driven in that direction by the wind.

The walls of the large buildings on both sides of the street were very badly constructed, being usually thin in front and containing many windows. The firemen, who had been in dread of a fire in that locality for some time, were shy of attempting to scale the walls, or of approaching very near them, and in this they were very wise. Soon after 10 o'clock the front walls of the building in which the fire was raging began to fall out into the street. The flames burst forth with greater freedom, and the walls of the Mathews Building soon began to crumble before the fiery blast. The firemen were obliged to fall back, and the flames, driven unchecked before the hurricane, swept over the whole range of building on Sargent's wharf and the north side of the Eastern avenue.

Soon after the fire broke out, Lieut. Tarbett, of the Harbor Police, was thoughtful enough to send for a number of pipents, and direct that the ships lying at the wharf—five in number—should be hauled into the stream. Thus they were saved. By 11 o'clock the building in which the fire originated was burned completely to the ground, and the walls, with the exception of a portion on the south side, had fallen in. The wooden buildings adjoining, on Fleet street, were mostly saved. They were principally occupied by Irish families.

The Mathews Building burned with great rapidity. The buildings below were occupied by the Boston Linseed Oil Company and Dyer's rice mill. All these buildings—the one in which the fire originated, the Mathews Building and the building on Sargent's wharf—were owned by George Mathews, Esq. They were probably worth between $150,000 and $200,000.

The occupants of the first building were John Gove & Co., dealers in ready-made clothing and boots and shoes; A. K. Bryers, rigging loft, and W. H. Marsh & Co., liquor dealers. There were other occupants whose names we did not learn.—Their whole stock was destroyed. Bryers had a partial insurance on his property. In the cellar of this building a large quantity of pork was stored.

The occupants of the Mathews Building were Albert B. Low, rigger, and James Charter, junk dealer. The Seaman's Free Chapel occupied a part of the second story. The heat from the burning of this building and the falling walls set fire to the wooden buildings adjoining on the north side, notwithstanding they were drenched with water by the firemen, who had a fair chance to play on them. Those that were burnt were occupied by Lund & Ryder, Pettingill & Donnell, P. J. White & Co., and Henry K. Adams.

At 2 o'clock the fire had spent its force. The whole range of buildings on Sargent's wharf and the north side of the Eastern Avenue, the Old Eastern Exchange Hotel, and the East Boston Ferry-slip were entirely destroyed, with their contents. The buildings on the wharf and the avenue were occupied by the Boston Linseed-Oil Mills, D. Dyer's rice mills, and a sugar mill. A portion of the building was occupied for the storage of flour, grain and pork. The Exchange Hotel was a large six-story building, at the end of the wharf. The Ferry-slip was in good repair, and will be a heavy loss. The flour mills on the south side of the avenue were somewhat damaged, and it was with the greatest difficulty that the firemen succeeded in saving them. The ships lying at the wharf were removed just in time to be saved.

A sad accident occurred between 12 and 1 o'clock, resulting in the death of one fireman and the injury of two others. They were in the wooden building, north of the Mathews Building, when the roof fell in upon them. Reuben Hansford, a member of Hose 5, was probably instantly killed.—His body had not been recovered at two o'clock. Samuel Green was injured, but not seriously. Another man, whose name was not ascertained, was quite severely hurt. He was removed to the Hospital.

The entire loss by the fire will probably exceed half a million dollars.

The immense business transacted in petroleum oil is set forth by some returns of traffic over the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad during the month of January. The number of barrels of oil carried was 70,000, and the cartage alone amounted to $85,000.

The whole amount of public lands, disposed of by Government up to September 30th, 1861, was 406,207,010 acres.

MARRIED,

In this city, on Sunday, the 23d instant, by Rev. Mr. Elbert, JOHN HUGHES to SUSAN, eldest daughter of Samuel Williams, Esq., all of Patapsco Neck, Baltimore county.

At All Hallows Church, on the 20th of October, 1861, by the Rev. G. N. Nelson, RICHARD PARHAM, son of the late Col. Alfred Sellman, of West River, Md., to ANN HILEHART, daughter of the late Judge James H. Watkins, of Prince George's county.

DIED,

On the 25th of February, ANN E., wife of Henry S. Austin, of San Francisco, California, aged 28 years.

CHAMPAGNE WINES.
CIGARS.
Java and Laguayra
COFFEE.
Superior and very choice
Green and Black
TEAS.
Lard Oil $1.00 per gallon.
Hams 10 and 11 cts.
Brown Sugar 9 and 10.
Crushed do. 12½.
For sale by
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52 North Charles st.

FISHER BROTHER & CO.,
FRENCH DYERS AND SCOURERS.
Office (old stand), No. 139 West Fayette street, between Park and Howard, and
No. 65 Baltimore street, south side, three doors east of Gay.
We take the liberty to inform our customers and public generally, that we have combined with our FRENCH SCOURING A FANCY DYEING ESTABLISHMENT, and will be able to execute any work entrusted to our care, in the new branch of our business, to the entire satisfaction of our patrons.
To our old customers we tender our thanks for their patronage so liberally bestowed upon us for many years, and respectfully solicit a continuance of the same. For our new establishment we request a trial. Having fitted up the same with the latest French Dyeing apparatus at a considerable expense, we have obtained the services of a gentleman, whom we have given an interest in the business, who has had considerable experience in the largest and most celebrated dyeing establishments in France and in this country. Possessing a thorough chemical knowledge in the art of fancy dyeing, we are confident that we will be able to please all who may favor us with their custom.
N. B.—We ask the particular attention to the fact, that we are alone in possession of the French scouring process, which has given universal satisfaction.
By this process we are enabled to cleanse ladies, children and gentlemen's clothes of velvet, silk, wool or mixed goods, without taking the garment apart, and will effectually remove all grease spots without shrinking or emitting the slightest odor or injuring the garment in any manner.
fe21 3m Respectfully, FISHER BROTHER & CO.

WILLIAM F. OWENS,
205 *BALTIMORE STREET,*
Has just received a NEW, CHOICE and COMPLETE assortment of
FALL AND WINTER
FURNISHING GOODS
FOR
GENTLEMEN.
Cartwright & Warner's celebrated English Merino
UNDER-SHIRTS AND DRAWERS.
Scotch Wool, Red and Shaker Flannel Goods of every size and quality.
SHIRTS MADE TO ORDER
by our improved pattern, and warranted to fit. o17-tfr

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A DOLLAR SAVED IS TWO DOLLARS MADE.
This can be done by purchasing Wood already Sawed and Split, at Office of City Steam Fire Wood Mill,
No. 3 NORTH STREET.
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ISRAEL & CO.
IVORYTYPES.
WATER-COLORED
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MEZZOTINT PHOTOGRAPHS,
125 BALTIMORE STREET.
jul4-tf

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TO CONSUMERS OF COAL.
LARGE REDUCTION IN PRICE.
The undersigned having on hand a large stock of
BALTIMORE COMPANY'S COAL
of all the various sizes, has determined to reduce the prices to
$5.50 and $5.75
PER TON OF 2,240 LBS.,
delivered free of charge, in any part of the city.
CUMBERLAND COAL.
A fresh stock on hand and daily arriving. Lump for domestic use. Run of Mine for manufacturing, and fine for Smiths' purposes.
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