THE SECESSION MOVEMENT.

Important Report of the Secretary of the Treasury to Congress.

The Collection of Duties on Imports in the Seceded States.

Condition of the Lighthouses, Buoys and Beacons on the Southern Coast.

The Seizure of the Mint and Marine Hospital at New Orleans.

The Surrender of the Revenue Cutters to the Secessionists, &c., &c., &c.

The following report, sent to the House of Representatives on Thursday last by Secretary Dix, in answer to Mr. Sickles' resolution, will attract the attention of the country to the various movements of the seceding States to appropriate the revenue and property of the government:—

THE REPORT OF SECRETARY DIX.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Feb. 21, 1861.

TO THE HON. WM. PENNINGTON, Speaker of the House of Representatives:—

SIR—On the 11th instant the following resolution was adopted by the House of Representatives:—

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Treasury be requested to inform this House whether the duties on imports continue to be collected in the ports of entry established by law in the States of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana and Florida, and whether any hindrances exist to the law of entry and clearing of vessels therein; also the present condition of the lighthouses, beacons and buoys in the said harbors and adjacent waters; also what measures, if any, have been taken to secure the revenue vessels in the service of the department from seizure, or to recover possession of such as have been seized; also what measures have been adopted for the security of the public moneys in the hands of depositaries in the aforesaid States, and whether they are available to the treasury; also whether the use and control of any of the "marine hospitals, permanent or temporary, have been interfered with, and what proceedings have been adopted with reference thereto."

In obedience to the foregoing resolution of the House of Representatives, I have the honor to submit the following report in relation to the matters of inquiry embraced therein:—

THE COLLECTION OF DUTIES ON IMPORTS.

It is believed that the duties on imports continue to be collected in the ports of entry established by law in the States of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana and Florida, and that vessels are entered and cleared in the usual manner. But, as far as this department is advised, the Collectors assume to perform their duties under the authority of the States in which they reside, and hold the moneys they receive subject to the same authority.

THE COLLECTOR AT SAVANNAH, GEORGIA.

On the 4th inst. the following letter was received from John Boston, Esq., Collector of the Customs for the port of Savannah, whose resignation, dated the 31st January, was subsequently tendered:—

CUSTOM HOUSE, COLLECTOR'S OFFICE, SAVANNAH, Jan. 30, 1861.

SIR—I to day received the following despatch from his Excellency Joseph E. Brown, Governor of Georgia:—"You will pay no more money from the Custom House to any government or person without my order." Respectfully, your obedient servant, JOHN BOSTON, Collector.

Hon. JOHN A. DIX, Sec. of the Treasury, Washington.

The following answer was immediately despatched by mail:—

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Feb. 4, 1861.

SIR—Your letter of the 30th ultimo, containing a copy of a despatch from the Governor of Georgia, directing you to pay "no more money from the Custom House to any government or person, without his order," is received.

You will please to advise me, by return of mail, whether it is your purpose to obey his direction, or whether you will conform to the instructions of this Department and perform your duty under the laws of the United States. Very respectfully, JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of the Treasury.

JOHN BOSTON, Esq., Collector of the Customs, Savannah, Ga.

On the 12th instant the following reply was received:—

SAVANNAH, Feb 8, 1861.

SIR—Your letter, under date of the 4th instant, asking me whether it is my purpose to obey the direction of the Governor of Georgia to pay no more money from the Custom House to any government or person without his order, or whether I will conform to the instructions of this (your) department, and perform your (my) duty under the laws of the United States, is this moment received; and, in reply, I beg to say that I will as a good and loyal citizen, as I hope I am, obey the authority of my State. Very respectfully, your obedient servant, JOHN BOSTON.

Hon. JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of the Treasury, Washington.

This declaration was carried out at a later day by refusing to pay a draft for the compensation of a revenue officer in his own State.

SURVEYOR OF THE PORT OF AUGUSTA, GEORGIA.

Augusta is a port of delivery for goods entered at Savannah, and the Surveyor, who is the chief officer of the revenue, performs the duties of Collector. On the 21st of January he tendered his resignation, expressing the desire that he might continue to perform his duties until the 4th of March. It was naturally supposed that he would, while acting in his usual relations to the government, at his own request, consider himself bound, by his official oath, to discharge his duties faithfully, and, especially, to pay over to the United states all moneys received by him. But by the monthly statement for January, recently made, he credits his account with the sum of $2,490 78 paid over by him to "the State of Georgia, to their credit, by order of Governor Joseph E. Brown, dated the 2d instant."

In rendering his account, as if conscious of the official dereliction it disclosed, he says:—"I am well aware the account is not made out as required. Still you must consider me as an honest man, and if you do, pass it." The department did not pass it; but advised him that he would be held responsible, under his bond, for the payment of the amount to the United States.

About half of the officers of the Customs in the States of South Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Georgia and Louisiana, have resigned their commissions; while others appear to have entered on their duties to the governments of those States, without considering it necessary to perform this official ceremony. So greatly has the moral tone of some of these federal officers been impaired by the example of disloyalty to the Union presented to them by the States, in which their duties were discharged, that a resignation seems to have been regarded by them as a mere of formality, and not as indispensable to their release from high official obligations.

THE CUSTOM HOUSE AND COLLECTOR AT NEW ORLEANS.

On the 24 instant, it was publicly announced that the Custom House at New Orleans had been taken possession of by the State of Louisiana, and that the Collector of the Customs had taken the oath of allegiance.

On the receipt of this intelligence the following despatch was sent by telegraph.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Feb. 2, 1861.

F. H. HATCH, Collector of Customs, New Orleans.

Have the authorities of the State of Louisiana taken possession of the Custom House? Have you taken the oath of allegiance to that State. JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of the Treasury.

No answer was received until the 6th instant, when the following despatch came to hand:—

NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 6, 1861.

Hon. JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of the Treasury:—

SIR—Your despatch of the 2d was received this day. The authorities of the State of Louisiana took possession of this Custom House on the 31st ultimo. I mailed my resignation on that day, and advised you of the same by letter of that date, to which please refer. F. H. HATCH.

It may be proper to state, in this place, that, while despatches by telegraph from New Orleans to this department have come in their regular course, when sent by persons in the interest of the State authorities, those sent from the department have, since the 1st instant, been from four to five days on the way, indicating that they were intercepted and scrutinized at some intervening point, and perhaps forwarded thence, through a different channel, to the persons to whom they were addressed. Between this city and New Orleans despatches are re written at Augusta, Ga., and Montgomery and Mobile, Ala., affording the opportunity of enforcing against the wishes of the telegraph company at each of those places, a system of espionage known only to the despotic governments of the Old World.

On the 5th inst. the following despatch was received by telegraph:—

LOUISVILLE, Feb. 4, 1861.

Hon. JOHN A. DIX:—

Collector at New Orleans declines to pass goods on bonds given here, unless cancelling certificates are given in name of Louisiana or duties are paid there. What shall I do about the matter. Will parties having goods for which they have given bonds for payment of duties here, be held released by government, if to get them without delay they pay duties at New Orleans. W. N. HALDEMAN, Surveyor of Customs.

The following was immediately transmitted:—

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Feb. 5, 1861.

W. N. HALDEMAN, Surveyor, &c., Louisville, Ky.:—

Telegraph despatches received. Too ingenious. Particulars in full by mail. JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of the treasury.

On the ensuing day the following was transmitted:—

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Feb. 6, 1861.

WALTER N. HALDEMAN, Surveyor, &c., Louisville, Ky.:—

What evidence have you that the Collector of Customs at New Orleans has acted as you stated in your despatch of yesterday? JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of Treasury.

The following reply was received on the same day:—

LOUISVILLE, Feb. 6, 1861.

Hon. JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of Treasury:—

Cassedy & son, importers here, were so advised by Clark, Mordy & co., their agents at New Orleans. Wrote you fully yesterday. W. N. HALDEMAN, Surveyor of Customs.

On the same day the mail brought the following letter, alluded to in the foregoing despatch:—

UNITED STATES CUSTOM HOUSE, LOUISVILLE, Feb 4, 1861.

SIR—Messrs. S. Cassedy & Son, china merchants of this city, received the following telegraphic despatch this morning from their agents at New Orleans:—

NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 1, 1861.

MESSRS. S. CASSEDY & SON—Custom House in possession of Louisiana. Enter by bonds received. Will your Surveyor grant cancelling certificates for goods bonded in the name of Louisiana? CLARK, MORDY & CO

At the urgent request of the Messrs. Cassedy, I at once telegraphed you for instructions. They are anxious to get their goods without delay from New Orleans, and had arranged to bond here and withdraw them as their sales required. Having given bond, however, for the payment of duties here, the question has occurred to them if they are not still liable for the duties to the United States, even if they pay them now at the Custom House at New Orleans. Of course I deci ned to give a cancelling certificate as requested, but as other like cases will arise, and as nearly all the goods brought to this port are received via New Orleans, I respectfully request full instructions in the premises. I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant, A. N. HALDEMAN, Surveyor of Customs.

Hon. JOHN A. DIX, Secretary United States Treasury, Washington, D. C.

On the 8th the following was received from the Surveyor of the Port of Cincinnati:—

CUSTOM HOUSE, CINCINNATI, Feb. 8, 1861.

Hon. JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of the Treasury, Washington:—

The following despatch received here:—"New Orleans, Feb. 6, 1861. Hunneywell, Hill & Co., Cincinnati. Carlyle arrived. Can't enter in bond. Shall pay duties here. Remit six hundred and thirty-two dollars. Voorhies, Griggs & Co." Several cases here of same kind. Merchants wish advice and instructions. T. JEFFERSON SHERLOCK, Surveyor of Customs.

On the same day the following was sent by telegraph, in reply to the Surveyors of the Ports of Louisville and Cincinnati:—

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Feb. 8, 1861.

Department cannot recognise the payment of duties to the State Collector at New Orleans. The goods will be liable to the United States for duties notwithstanding such payments. JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of the Treasury.

On the 9th the following was received from the Surveyor of the port of Cincinnati:—

CINCINNATI CUSTOM HOUSE, Feb. 9, 1861.

Hon. JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of the Treasury:—

The following despatch received here this morning:—

NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 8, 1861.

HUNNEYWELL, HILL & Co., Cincinnati:—

Convention decided goods can be transported in bond as heretofore. Certificates only required. Publish telegraph. VOORHIES, GRIGGS & Co.:—

Your despatch received. T. JEFFERSON SHERLOCK.

It will be seen hereafter that this despatch was founded on a misapprehension, or that the oppressive and illegal practice supposed to have been abandoned was speedily resumed.

From these communications by letter and by telegraph, from mercantile houses and from the chief revenue officers at the ports of Cincinnati and Louisville, it appears that the Collector of the Customs at New Orleans, after assuming to act under the authorities of the State of Louisiana, refused to pass the goods entered at that port for transportation to and delivery at Louisville, Ky., and other ports of delivery, unless the Surveyors of the latter ports, holding their commissions from the United States, and performing their duties within a State loyal to the Union, would acknowledge the authority of the State of Louisiana by cancelling transportation bonds given in her name to secure the payment of duties on goods imported by sea. This they could not do without violating their oaths of office; and, in default of such an act of official turpitude in any case, the duties were to be exacted at New Orleans. No doubt this was the alternative designed to be secured. The declaration of an intention to execute a particular purpose, except on a condition impossible to be performed, can only be regarded as an absolute determination to carry out the purpose without condition.

Under existing laws, the importer of goods by sea, to be delivered at Louisville, a port of delivery, may make entry at New Orleans, and give a bond for their transportation to the former port where the duties are paid.

On their arrival at Louisville, the importer may place them in a warehouse and pay the duties when he withdraws them for consumption. On payment of the duties the bond is cancelled. The interior ports of delivery above New Orleans are twenty in number, and among them are Nashville and Memphis, Tenn.; Louisville, Ky.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Evansville, Ia.; St. Louis, Mo.; Wheeling, Va.; Pittsburg, Pa., and Cairo and Alton, Ill. The duties collected at these twenty ports of delivery have, during the last five years, averaged over $500,000 per annum. For the year ending June 30, 1857, they exceeded $700,000.

The refusal of the Collector at New Orleans to pass goods in bond for transportation to the ports of delivery above, and the exaction of duties at the former ports (for such was the effect of his requirements during the first seven days of this month), not only subjected importers to the onerous obligation of paying the impost before the goods were needed for consumption, and thus deprived them of a privilege secured by the revenue laws, but it forced them either to resort to other channels of communication or pay double duties, for the department cannot recognise the Collector at New Orleans, who has resigned his commission and assumes to act under the authority of the State of Louisiana; and, therefore, the payment of duties to him does not exonerate them from the payment to the United States.

But there is a larger view of the subject which is of far graver importance. The revenue derived from merchandise imported for consumption, by way of New Orleans, into the great States bordering on the rivers which have their outlet to the Gulf of Mexico, through the territories of Louisiana, has been monopolized by her. In so doing, she has struck a fatal blow at the free navigation of the Mississippi, by making the inward commerce of the West by sea subject to her authority, and tributary to her treasury.

Whatever may be the practice in regard to goods received from our own cities by sea, and destined to the upper ports, there can be no doubt that merchandise imported from foreign countries is required to be entered at New Orleans; and, if the duties are not exacted, they must be bonded in the name of the State of Louisiana for transportation. For, notwithstanding the assurance contained in the despatch of the Surveyor of the port of Cincinnati, of the 9th of February, communicating one from Voorhees, Griggs & Co., of the 8th, goods are not "transported in bond as heretofore." On the contrary it appears that bonds executed at the twenty ports of delivery above New Orleans, in the name of the United States, as they may be under existing laws, are not recognized by the Collector of the latter port, but that he requires them to be executed at New Orleans, and in the name of the State of Louisiana.

On the 14th instant the following letter was received at the department:—

CINCINNATI, Feb. 12, 1861.

Hon. JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of the Treasury:

DEAR SIR—We notice to day that the Collector at New Orleans has decided that duties on all goods passing through New Orleans, destined for inland ports, must be paid at that port, on account of the treasury of Louisiana. We have about two hundred crates earthenware due at New Orleans in the ships Wurtemburg and Oroondates, and will than. you to inform us on receipt of this what course we shall pursue in regard to payment of duties. Will the department protect us, or must we pay duties at New Orleans? The invoices are all sworn to here and sent forward for shipment to this port, in bond. Very respectfully, BARK & WEST.

Two days before the receipt of this letter a despatch had been transmitted to the Surveyor at the port of Louisville to ascertain what rule was then enforced by the Collector at New Orleans in regard to bonds for duties and transportation. On the 14th the following reply was received:—

LOUISVILLE, Ky., Feb. 14, 1861.

Hon. JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of the Treasury:—

Bonds for the goods were given here, not at New Orleans, and our importers inform me that the Collector there still declines to recognize them. Have telegraphed him to know definitely, and will advise you immediately after his reply comes. W. N. HALDEMAN, Surveyor.

At a later hour on the same day the following despatch was received:—

LOUISVILLE, Feb. 14, 1861.

Hon. JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of the Treasury:—

Collector Hatch telegraphs me that transportations are continued as usual, but bonds must be given to the State of Louisiana and executed at New Orleans. W. N. HALDEMAN, Surveyor, &c.

As this despatch was founded on one received on that day from the Collector at New Orleans, it must be regarded not only as authentic but official; and it shows that no bonds are received unless executed at that port and in the name of the State of Louisiana.

That the department has not misinterpreted the meaning of this despatch, or misapprehended the effect of the practice adopted in New Orleans in regard to the payment of duties and the nature of the bonds required of importers residing at the upper ports, is also manifest from the letters of complaint received almost every day asking the protection of the government against these exactions.

The following is one of these letters:—

LOUISVILLE, Feb. 14, 1861.

Hon. JOHN A. DIX:—

DEAR SIR—We are just in receipt of a letter from the Custom House at New Orleans informing us that a lot of Queensware for us had arrived, but that it would be impossible for us to get it unless it would be paid for (the customs). We have given a bond for it here, and we would not like to pay for it twice. You will confer a great favor by answering us immediately. Yours, &c., GODSKAW & FLEXNER.

It is not distinctly understood whether the duties are, by the condition of these bonds, to be paid at New Orleans, or whether the obligors may be discharged by payment at the port of delivery. In either case the authority of the federal government is overthrown, and the free navigation of the Mississippi abrogated. If Louisiana is, as she assumes to be, a foreign Power in reference to the nine States above her, which have ports of delivery where duties on goods imported by way of New Orleans may be paid, the exercise of the right of requiring such goods to be entered and bonded for transportation to those ports is in violation of the principle, always asserted by the United States, in regard to the free commercial use of navigable streams by States bordering on them.

The question is not varied in principle if she has become, or shall hereafter become, a confederate of the five other States which have assumed to throw off their allegiance to the Union. While this right was exercised by the United States, Louisiana and the States above, in which there are ports of delivery, being subject to the same government, it was merely for the institution of revenue regulations common to all. But if Louisiana has become a foreign Power in reference to them, it rises into an international question of the very highest delicacy and importance.

The United States have uniformly placed the free navigation of rivers on the ground of natural right. The Congress of Vienna, in 1815, recognized the same principles by declaring the navigation of the rivers separating or crossing the territories of the great Powers to be entirely free. The vindication of this right in regard to the Mississippi river, at various epochs in our correspondence with foreign Powers, when they were in possession of territories bordering on it, has produced some of the ablest State papers in the archives of the government. * * * * One of the chief objects in view in the purchase of the territory of Louisiana was to secure this right to the people of the United States. The possession of the country at and near the mouth of the Mississippi by Spain and France had given rise to embarrassments and contentions which threatened, at different periods, to involve us in hostilities with both those Powers; and it was in order to put an end to these dissensions forever, and especially to protect the people of the states on the higher portions of the river in the free use of its waters for commercial purposes, that the territory was purchased of France by Mr. Jefferson, after a protracted negotiation and at a heavy expense to the national treasury; thus securing to the United States and the inhabitants—to use his own language—the uncontrolled navigation of that river in its whole course.

Louisiana was created a State out of a portion of the territory thus acquired, on the express and fundamental condition that the river Mississippi, and the navigable rivers and waters leading into the same, and into the Gulf of Mexico, should be common highways, and forever free, as well to the inhabitants of the said State as to the inhabitants of other states and the Territories of the United States without any tax, duty, impost or toll therefor imposed by the said State.

In violation of this condition, and in open defiance of a great natural right, written—to use the language of our diplomacy—in deep characters on the heart of man, the State of Louisiana, after declaring herself separate from the other States of the Union, and in the exercise of a sovereignty wholly independent of them, assumes to arrest the free passage of goods from the ocean to the States above her, to estimate their value by her own officers, to assess imposts on them, and to exact from the importers, not her own citizens, bonds for the payment of the duties, and for their transportation to the places out of her own territory to which they are destined.

The control thus assumed over the commerce of the Mississippi goes far beyond the pretensions set up in the Old World on the basis of ancient prescription—pretensions which have been, in times past, a fruitful source of dissension and bloodshed, but are now condemned by the general judgment of mankind.

In its bearing on the revenue system of the United States, this subject assumes an importance peculiar to itself. The usurpation in question practically abolishes the twenty ports of delivery above New Orleans, at any one of which, under existing laws, goods may be received by sea, and the duties on them paid. It diverts the customs revenue, ordinarily collected on such goods at these ports from the Treasury of the United States into that of Louisiana. It abrogates the whole revenue system of the United States in the Valley of the Mississippi above New Orleans, so far as it is applicable to the importation of merchandise by sea. This subversion of the authority of the United States is sustained and enforced through the military occupation by Louisiana of the fortresses erected at the mouth of the Mississippi at the common expense of the States of the Union for the protection of the vast commerce of that river and its tributaries. The vessels placed there by the federal government to enforce the execution of the revenue laws have fallen into her hands. It matters not whether the officers to whom they were confided were corrupted through the agency of others, or whether their treachery to the government to which they had sworn allegiance and fidelity, was the fruit of a spontaneous dereliction of high moral and official obligations. The State, by receiving them and the vessels they commanded into her service, has given her countenance and sanction to the most odious of political offences. She has completed a series of unrepeated usurpations, without a parallel in our history, by seizing the public treasure in the Branch Mint at New Orleans, (placed there by a confiding government, with the assurance that, under the aegis of her honor, it would be secure from violation,) and appropriating it under circumstances showing either that there was a criminal complicity, on the part of the officer to whom it was entrusted, or that he yielded to the coercive power of superior physical force. As aids to a forcible assumption of the revenue authority of the government these successive acts have an importance too obvious to be overlooked. That this pretension will be speedily renounced can hardly be doubted. It concerns the interests of nine States which are loyal to the Union, and which have an aggregate population of more than fourteen millions of souls. If persisted in, it must soon become a source of the most embittered strife. Its assertion as the exponent of the independent attitude Louisiana has assumed, shows that the safety of the riparian States, on the Mississippi and its tributaries, must depend on the regulation of the revenue system on these waters by a common government; in the administration of which it have a voice, and that the possession of the fortresses which command the entrance into this great natural channel of internal communication cannot, for any length of time, remain under a less restricted military control without the most serious disturbances. And it behooves the whole country, especially that great portion of it which is penetrated by the currents of the Mississippi and its confluents, to consider where the commercial ascendency, thus assumed by the State of Louisiana, will be likely to have its termination, if any just conception of its magnitude and arbitrary control may be inserted from these its incipient developements.

Throughout this whole course of encroachment and aggression the federal government has borne itself with a spirit of paternal forbearance of which there is no example in the history of political society, waiting in patient hope that the empire of reason would resume its sway over those whom the excitement of passion had thus blended, and trusting that the friends of good order, wearied with submission to proceedings which they disapproved, would at no distant day rally under the banner of the Union, and assert themselves with vigor and success against the prevailing recklessness and violence.

THE LIGHTHOUSES, BEACONS AND BUOYS.

SOUTH CAROLINA.

On the 20th December last Commander T. T. Hunter, United States Lighthouse Inspector at Charleston, reported to the Lighthouse Board that the Governor of South Carolina had requested him to leave the State, authorizing him to take the lighthouse tender, but prohibiting him from removing any property belonging to the United States in the buoy shed. On the 1st January the Governor forbade the removal of vessels belonging to the lighthouse establishment from Charleston, but the Inspector (Commander Hunter) was allowed to leave by land. On the 8th the removal of the light vessel at Rattlesnake Shoals, off the harbor of Charleston, was reported to the Lighthouse Board, and the Board was informed that the three tenders in the harbor of Charleston had been seized by the authorities of South Carolina.

Official information having also been received of the removal of buoys, the extinction of lights and the obstruction of the principal channel of the harbor of Charleston, the following notice was published:—

NOTICE TO MARINERS—NO. 105.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE LIGHTHOUSE BOARD, WASHINGTON, D. C., Jan 26, 1861.

Information has been received at this office that the light vessel at Rattlesnake Shoals has been withdrawn; that the lights on Morris Island, and at the entrance into the port of Charleston, S. C., have been discontinued; the buoys removed and the main ship channel so obstructed as to be unsafe for navigation. By order. R. SEMMES, Secretary.

GEORGIA.

On the 6th of February the keeper of St. Simons light, near Darien, reported that his light had been obscured by a party of persons claiming authority from the State, but the light was not extinguished.

On the 8th, Capt. W. H. Whiting, of the United States Engineers, reported that possession had been taken of his office, furniture, &c., in Savannah, by the authorities of the State.

ALABAMA.

On the 20th of January Commander E. L. Handy, Light House Inspector, reported that the tender Alert, belonging to the light house establishment, was seized at Mobile by order of the commanding officer of the State troops at Fort Morgan. On the 21st, T. Sanford, Collector of the Customs at Mobile, notified Commander Handy that he, "in the name of the sovereign State of Alabama takes possession of the several lighthouses within the State, and all appurtenances pertaining to the same." Mr. Sanford had resigned his commission as Collector on the 12th of the same month.

On the 1st of February Commander Handy transmitted a copy of a letter addressed to R. T. Chapman, Esq., late of the United States Navy, by T. Sanford, Collector, appointing him Lighthouse Inspector in place of Commander Handy, to whom the appointment was tendered by the authorities of Alabama, but who refused to accept it.

Commander Handy having no force at his disposal to resist these assumptions of authority, was, at his own request, relieved from the embarrassing position in which they had placed him.

LOUISIANA AND FLORIDA.

Several keepers of lights in these two States have tendered their resignations, alleging as a reason that their States had seceded from the Union. No successors have been appointed.

FLORIDA REEF.

A special agent has been despatched to provide for the safety of the lights on this reef by arming the keepers. They are at a distance from the main coast of Florida, and no apprehension is entertained that they will be interfered with by the State authorities. But it was thought not impossible, in the present disordered state of the country, and with the relaxation of moral and political ties involved in it, that they might be extinguished by evil minded persons for the purpose of causing shipwrecks.

It is not known that any lights on the Southern coast, except those in South Carolina, have been extinguished. The lights and all other aids to navigation on that coast were amply supplied with all necessaries and in good condition when they were seized.

THE BRANCH MINT AT NEW ORLEANS.

The Treasurer of the Branch Mint at New Orleans is *ex officio* Assistant Treasurer of the United States at that place. On the 21st of January, six days after I took charge of the Treasury Department, I caused a draft on him, as Treasurer of the Branch Mint, to be issued for $350 000, payable to Adams Express Company, for transfer to the Mint at Philadelphia. At the time this draft was given there were in his hands the following sums:—

As Treasurer of the Mint	$389,267 46
As Assistant Treasurer to the credit of the Treasurer of the United States	265,445 14
As Assistant Treasurer to the credit of disbursing officers	225,374 80
Total	$880 087 40

In view of the unscrupulousness with which the public property had been seized in other quarters, I did not think it right to leave so large an amount in a State, which, from all indications, was about to pass an ordinance of secession. A draft was accordingly drawn for $350,000, as above stated, with a view to transfer the coin and bullion to a safe place of deposit. The Treasurer of the United States was also instructed to draw rapidly for disbursement on the balance standing to his credit. As the deposit to the credit of disbursing officers was in a regular course of reduction by their payments, and as the re-transfer of these moneys to the treasury would have been attended with some embarrassment, they were not disturbed. In pursuance of my instructions to the Treasurer of the United States, the deposit to his credit was reduced by his drafts from $265 445 14 to $18,149 20. It has been ascertained that about $70,000 were paid on these drafts before the 31st of January, when, as will be seen hereafter, the Branch Mint and its contents were seized by the authorities of the State of Louisiana. If all the drafts drawn by this department had been paid, the first two items in the above statement, amounting to $654,712 60, would have been reduced to $57,410 66.

By some irregularity of the mail, which cannot be accounted for, the draft for $350 000 to the order of Adams Express Company, though transmitted from this department on the 21st January, was not received at Baltimore till the 24th, on which day a duplicate was issued with a request that no time should be lost in presenting it. In answer to an inquiry made by the department on the 26th, the following telegraphic despatch was received:—

BALTIMORE, Jan. 26, 1861.

Hon. JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of the Treasury:—

Your despatch received. Instructions went forward two days since to execute your order. S. M. SHOEMAKER, Supt. Adams Express Co.

On the 29th January the following despatch came to hand:—

OFFICE OF THE ADAMS EXPRESS CO., BALTIMORE, Md., Jan. 30, 1861.

Hon. J. A. DIX, Secretary of Treasury, Washington, D. C.:—

Our advices in cipher by telegraph from New Orleans are that the Assistant Treasurer has not sufficient funds in hand to pay your draft. That three or four days will elapse before the Mint will turn over sufficient to meet this demand. The Assistant Treasurer declines paying until he is able to pay the whole. I deem it my duty to inform you of these facts. We have nothing which would indicate an intention on the part of the United States officers or others to throw any difficulties in the way of our receiving the bullion. Respectfully and truly, S. M. SHOEMAKER, Superintendent Adams' Express Company.

This department did not put on the conduct of the Treasurer the charitable construction expressed in the last paragraph of the foregoing despatch. On the contrary, it was regarded as indicating a design to gain time and a premeditation to place the government of Louisiana in possession of the Branch Mint and its treasure. There was no ground for the pretext assigned for not paying a portion of the draft. There were gold and silver coins, amounting to over $280,000, which might have been delivered on its presentation. A large part of the coin and bullion was in silver; it weighed several tons; it could not all have been taken for remittance by the express company on the same day. Nor was there any foundation for the excuse that there was not a sufficient amount on hand to pay the whole draft. This pretext had been anticipated. There were more than $38,000, and the draft was purposely drawn for $350,000 only, leaving a balance of nearly $40,000. The despatch was received on the night of the 30th, and early the next day the following was sent by telegraph:—

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Jan. 31, 1861.

A. J. GUIROT, Esq., Treasurer of Branch Mint, New Orleans:—

You are requested to pay as much as you can on the transfer draft in favor of Adams Express Company at once. JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of the Treasury.

No further advices were received until the 2d instant, when the following despatch came to hand:—

BALTIMORE, Feb. 2, 1861.

Hon. JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of the Treasury:—

United states Treasury notified on yesterday your transfer draft would not be paid, as the State Convention had taken charge. I am unable to give you the precise language; but this is the purport of it. We await your instructions in the premises. S. M. SHOEMAKER, Superintendent Adams Express.

On the same day the following despatch was sent:—

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Feb. 2, 1861.

A. J. GUIROT, Treasurer of the Branch Mint, New Orleans:—

Have the authorities of the State of Louisiana taken possession of the Branch Mint? Have you taken the oath of allegiance to that State? Have you paid over to Adams' Express Company any part of the coin or bullion in your custody on the draft of the United States Treasurer and in obedience to my order? JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of the Treasury.

On the evening of the 6th inst. the following was received:—

NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 6, 1861.

Hon. JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of the Treasury:—

Your telegraphic despatch of the 2d inst. has been received to day. The State of Louisiana took possession of the Branch Mint on the 31st ult. at half past nine o'clock A. M. The agent of the Adams' Express came to the Mint the same day at two o'clock P. M., and asked me whether the report of the taking of the Mint was correct. I answered in the affirmative. He then said, if so, there is no use to present the transfer draft of three hundred and fifty thousand dollars for payment. I told him to apply to the Convention. Whether he did so or not I cannot say. I transmitted the same day my resignation to the President under your cover, and I have since taken the oath of allegiance to the State of Louisiana. Respectfully, A. J. GUIROT.

In this despatch the Treasurer of the Branch Mint wholly omits to acknowledge the first presentation of the draft, or to refer to and explain the attending circumstances, which were regarded as the evidence of a predetermination on his part to violate his duty to his government. The facility with which his official obligations were thrown off, as shown by his own statement, justifies the interpretation put on his conduct six days before. In his official oath, on file in this department, he solemnly swore that he would "faithfully and diligently perform the duties of his appointment" as Treasurer of the Branch Mint and Assistant Treasurer of the United States at New Orleans "according to law." The law required that he should keep safely all public money in his possession and custody, and when orders for transfer or payment were made by the proper department or officer of the government and such orders for transfer or payment were received, "faithfully and promptly to make the same as directed." These duties were violated before he took the oath of allegiance to the State of Louisiana; for no officer can, by a mere resignation, without a discharge by the government to which he is accountable release himself from the engagements he has assumed. Even if the seizure of the Mint, by the authorities of Louisiana, was an act of coercion which he could not resist, he might have protected himself from imputations derogatory to his official character by protesting against it, instead of yielding to it the tacit consent which his communication to the department implies. The Assistant Treasurer at Charleston, Benj. C. Presly, Esq., in honorable contrast, has promptly paid all drafts on presentation to him, and has applied to this department to draw for the balance in his hands, in order that he may be released from his official liabilities.

The precise amount of coin and bullion thus appropriated by the State of Louisiana, in entering on her assumed career of independence, cannot be ascertained until the drafts issued by the Treasurer of the United States shall be returned for non-payment, or until she shall deem it due to herself to restore to the treasure confided to one of her own citizens, with no other protection from public rapacity than the generous trust reposed in her. An opportunity will be speedily furnished by the presentation of other drafts for payments due her own citizens and the citizens of neighboring States.

By the enclosed copy of a letter marked A, from the Director of the Mint at Philadelphia, it will be seen that the weekly returns required to be made by the Treasurer of the Branch Mint at New Orleans have not been furnished since the 1st inst., and that if money is coined at the latter, the government has no means, under existing circumstances, of securing a conformity to the established standards of value.

DEPOSITARIES OF THE PUBLIC MONEY.

At an early day after taking charge of this department, I directed the treasurer to issue his drafts for disbursements on the depositaries of the public moneys in all the States (including those specified by the resolution of the House of Representatives) in which there were any decided manifestations of an intention to follow the example of South Carolina in throwing off their allegiance to the Union. These drafts were, as a general rule, paid, and the balances in the hands of the depositaries referred to, were reduced to very small sums.

THE MARINE HOSPITAL.

In the month of June, 1858, the Marine Hospital opposite New Orleans became seriously injured by the overflow of the waters of the Mississippi river. Its foundations were so disturbed by the flood that it was deemed unsafe for occupation. The barracks, two miles below the city, being untenanted and not needed for troops, they were, with the consent of the War Department, appropriated to the use of the sick, who were removed to them, and have occupied them ever since.

On the 26th day of January ult. I received the following letter from the Collector of the Customs at New Orleans:—

CUSTOM HOUSE, NEW ORLEANS, COLLECTOR'S OFFICE, Jan. 14, 1861.

SIR—I have the honor to inform you that the United States barracks below the city have been taken possession of in the name of the State of Louisiana, as will appear by the enclosed communication from C. M. Bradford, captain Louisiana infantry. I shall take steps to remove these invalids, if necessary, at an early date and with due regard to economy. Very respectfully, your obedient servant, F. H. HATCH, Collector.

Hon. P. F. THOMAS, Secretary of the Treasury, Washington:—

In this letter was enclosed one from Capt. Bradford, to which it alluded, and which is as follows:—

BARRACKS NEAR NEW ORLEANS, Jan. 13, 1861.

SIR—On the 11th inst. I took possession of these barracks in the name of the state of Louisiana, and they will hereafter be held by the same authority. I find herein some two hundred and sixteen invalids and convalescent patients, who were removed here some months ago, by your authority, from the Marine Hospital on the opposite bank of the river during the recent overflow. As these quarters will all be required for the Louisiana troops now being enlisted, I have to request that you will immediately remove those patients who are convalescent, and as soon as in the opinion of the resident surgeon it may be practicable and humane; those also who are now confined to their beds. I beg leave further to add that quarters now occupied by the surgeon and his assistants, nurses, the stewards, &c., will remain at their use and disposal as long as may in the surgeon's opinion be necessary. Very respectfully, your obedient servant, C. M. BRADFORD, Capt. First Louisiana infantry.

F. H. HATCH, Esq., Collector U. S. Customs, New Orleans.

On the following day I sent to the Collector the following despatch by telegraph.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Jan. 27 1861.

F. H. HATCH, Collector of Customs, New Orleans:—

Apply to the Governor of Louisiana to revoke Capt. Bradford's order. Remonstrate with the Governor against the inhumanity of turning the sick out of the hospital. If he refuses to interfere, have them removed under the care of the resident surgeon, and do all in your power to provide for their comfort. JOHN A. DIX, Secretary of the Treasury

On the 28th I addressed the following letter to the Collector:—

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Jan. 28, 1861.

SIR—I did not receive until the 26th inst. yours of the 14th, informing me that the United States Barracks below the city of New Orleans, which have for several months been occupied as a Marine Hospital, had "been taken possession of in the name of the State of Louisiana." I found enclosed a copy of the letter of Capt. C. M. Bradford of the First Louisiana infantry, advising you that he had taken possession of the Barracks; that they would "be required for the Louisiana troops now being enlisted," and requesting you to "immediately remove those patients who are convalescent, and as soon as in the opinion of the resident surgeon it may be practicable and humane; those also who are now confined to their beds." He also states that the barracks contained "two hundred and sixteen invalids and convalescent patients." On this transaction, as an outrage to the public authority, I have no comment to make; but I cannot believe that a proceeding so discordant with the character of the people of the United States, and so revolting to the civilization of the age, has had the sanction of the Governor of the State of Louisiana. I sent a telegraphic despatch to you yesterday, desiring you to remonstrate with him against the inhumanity of Captain Bradford's order, and ask him to revoke it. But if he should decline to interfere, I instructed you in regard to the removal and treatment of the sick, and in that event I trust you will carry out my direction, not merely with "economy," but with a careful regard to their helpless condition. The barracks, it seems, were taken possession of on the 11th inst., Capt. Bradford's letter is dated the 13th, and yours the 14th, though I had no information on the subject until the 26th. I infer from the newspaper paragraph you enclosed, which telegraphic advices in regard to the subject matter show to be of a later date than your letter, that the latter was not despatched until the 21st or 22d inst. I hope I am mistaken, and that the cause of the delay is to be found in some unexplained interruption of the mail. I should otherwise have great reason to be dissatisfied that the information was not more promptly communicated. From the tone of the newspaper paragraph you enclosed, and from the seizure of the barracks in violation of a usage of humanity, which in open war between contending nations, and even in the most revengeful civil conflicts between kindred races, has always held sacred from disturbance edifices dedicated to the care and comfort of the sick, I fear that no public property is likely to be respected. You will, therefore, have no more money expended on the revenue cutter Washington, now hauled up for repairs, until I can have the assurance that she will not be seized, as soon as she is refitted, and