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NEWS FROM WASHINGTON.

Politicians and the Slavery Question.

Position of the President and His Principal Advisers.

The Question of an Exchange of Prisoners.

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 8, 1861.

POLITICIANS AND THE SLAVERY QUESTION—THE POSITION OF THE PRESIDENT AND HIS PRINCIPAL ADVISERS.

Communication with Cabinet members, and leading men in the Senate and House, must convince every one who is unbiassed that the view held on the slavery question by the bulk of sincere Union men here, is nearer in accord with that which has been so ably put forward in the columns of the HERALD. Wherever there is unrestrained expression of opinion, regardless of popular cant, and pro-slavery and anti-slavery cant, the subject of the nigger is set aside, for future consideration, as a very smallest practical importance at the present moment. What it may later become, circumstances and the movements of the war will determine; but none ought to perceive that the *ipse dixit* of politicians, demagogues and fanatics will not materially affect the issue. The President, his principal advisers, and patriotic individuals generally, connected with the government, have been thought, one anxiety, namely, the restoration as soon as may be of the integrity of the Union, and the suppression of the unholy rebellion which is consuming the country. Expediency, and the action of the leaders themselves will decide, as events progress, when, and in what manner, the black race is to be made instrumental in accomplishing this purpose. To arm or to arm them is discussed by no one, excepting the most ultra partisans of the Garrison school of thought, from any other point of view than the general welfare of the nation. To unchain negroes, and put weapons in their hands as the equals in race of federal soldiers, to adopt any policy whatever for their exclusive benefit or to further abolition projects, enters into the mind of none of the gentlemen, (this has reference to Secretary Cameron, Colonel Lane, and others who have been pointed at as being from the extremely moderate views of the majority,) who have been incorrectly represented as being bent on doing causelessly the relations between master and slave.

Of all parties agreeing, then, that abolition proper is undesirable, impracticable, and equivalent to the adoption of northern anti-constitutional programme, as represented by the secession theories of the South, the difference existing among sincere and unaffectedly loyal men as to what have given rise to such widespread misapprehension, sink into comparative insignificance. Except the semi-fatuous little clique of Sumnerites, of which Lovejoy is, after all, the most disinterested fiery spirit, those who put forward the proposition that the rebels may be employed in any and every way to help and the purposes of the war and crush out the rebellion do so just as they would advocate the use of horses and oxen for the same end. They disavow nigger partiality, or any proclivities, as a motive for resorting to the employment of blacks, but regard it as inconsistent with the nature of the slave being property that he cannot be used as all other property. A very able member of the House remarked last evening—"Do you call me an Abolitionist because I had rather see a nigger savages killed than one white man? He put jackasses, niggers and cotton in the same category. The proclamation of General Hunter to the free negroes of New Orleans, calling upon them to enrol themselves in opposition to British troops, and the numberless instances of their employment in the war of the Revolution, fighting side by side with patriots from Virginia, South Carolina and Massachusetts, are often cited, as proving that the question is one of principle but of expediency.

On the other hand, the same argument is employed by the opponents of negro arming, in repudiating a resort to the measure, as calculated to make the rebellion more bitter and; the hostility of the South to the North more implacable, and tending to prolong rather than end the war. They acknowledge the abstract necessity of employing every means that is expedient to bring the Southern States to their allegiance; but they say that nothing would be more inexpedient, impolitic, suicidal than for government so to trample under the prejudices of eight millions of people, and enrage beyond the possibility of reconciliation, as the case if their slaves were armed against them. The outrages, they say, would inevitably be committed by the blacks, which would revolt the Union sentiment that largely prevails in the South, and destroy one of the strongest grounds of hope for the future pacification of the country. There is no parallel, they allege, between a civil war, and a conflict between two independent nations. However embittered the former may be for a time, the dissevered parts are destined to be reunited. But how is such a reunion conceivable, if wanton outrage and barbarous accessories, are superadded to the ordinary horrors of such a struggle. "Let there be no hanging," said a Cabinet member, yesterday, "over every sinner that repenteth." "The name of the prodigal must not be mentioned," he continued, "but with shame and disgust, so long as he remains embedded in his husks with the swine; but let us have the fatted calf ready to kill for him when he returns in rags and contrition to the house of his father." This school of politicians would render justice with mercy, and they object to the policy going further than the President and Congress have already done, respecting slave property, because they fear it would enhance the difficulties of our national position.

There is still a third anti-abolition school of politicians at Washington, which includes in its numbers some very prominent men. They believe that niggers ought to be got rid of together; that they are the source of confusion and discord and will continue so as long as they remain in the country; that slavery is bright enough, but ruinous from the highest point of view of political and agricultural economy, even for the cotton States. They believe that wholesale colonization schemes should be encouraged by Congress, and the entire black population of the United States transferred to Central America, on the theory promulgated by Jefferson, and so ably defended by Madison, that the adaptation of the negro race to tropical climates should be made serviceable in holding this country of an incubus, and rendering the portions which white men cannot advantageously inhabit, subject to the rule of the American government. None of this school are abolitionists, or have any sympathy with the anti-slavery faction so called. Its head is the President himself, who entertains the opinion that the moral difficulty does not radiate from the principle of slavery, but from that of incompatibility of race. That the Southern States, especially the border States, are needed for the use of the whites, while the blacks are out of place there wholly; that the non-slaveholding population of the South are subjected to an improper competition of labor with blacks, which it is indispensable should be brought to an end; that free and bond negroes should be alike sent out of the United States in order that the Caucasian race here may attain its highest development.

QUESTION OF AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS WITH THE REBELS.

The subject of exchange of prisoners is seriously occupying the attention of the government. The condition of our brave, federal officers, many, of them are left terrible. In one Southern fortress, where several prisoners are packed together in one small room, the ordinary wants of nature can only be attended to by recourse to large open tubs, placed in the middle of the close apartment, and these are emptied of their contents but once in twenty-four hours! The food supplied is disgusting in quality insufficient in quantity, and want, disease and death threaten to sweep away by hundreds our valiant soldiers whose only crime has been devotion to their country. They are, in large numbers of instances, destitute of clothes, and, if not relieved, will suffer fearfully from the inclemency of the coming season. Under these circumstances, rebel convicts must be temporarily released, and restocked and punished, for their offences, if requisite, after the rebellion shall have been put down, from motives not only of humanity but of national gratitude. No sacrifice of principle will be involved, and a cause of deep anxiety and apprehension among our soldiers will be removed.

FEIRFAX COURT HOUSE AND FLINT HILL DESERTED BY THE REBELS.

Scouts sent out from General Wadsworth's brigade Friday returned to-day. They report that Flint Hill and also Fairfax Court House are entirely deserted by the rebel pickets. They passed through and beyond the village of Fairfax before they met the pickets of the enemy.

STATEMENT OF A DESERTER FROM THE REBELS.

On Friday night a man from the Eastern Shore of Maryland, who has been since September last a member of Captain Andrews' rebel Maryland artillery, now stationed a short distance up Chopawamsic creek, effected his escape from the Virginia side, and crossed over in a small boat to the Maryland shore, where he was taken in charge by our pickets and afterwards brought to General Hooker. He says the rebels on the other side say that they have twenty-five thousand men on the Lower Potomac, under General Holmes, and are anticipating an attack from the flotilla and the Union forces on the Maryland side. He also states that the rebel steamer George Page was on Thursday night removed from Quantico creek and is now lying in Chopawamsic creek for greater safety. He thinks, as she is useless to them at present, they intend to take the guns from on board of her for service on land.

FIRING ON A STEAMER ON THE POTOMAC.

About midnight on Saturday three shots were fired from the rebel batteries on Shipping Point at a steamer passing up the river, but neither of them hit her. The name of the steamer was not ascertained by our pickets.

THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

The report of the Secretary of the Treasury has received the finishing touches, and will go in to Congress to-morrow. Arrangements have been made for its immediate presentation to the public. It will be by far the most interesting of all the department reports.

EVERYTHING QUIET ALONG THE UNION LINES.

In military matters there is nothing to relate. There has been to day an absolute calm throughout the whole line of the Army of the Potomac.

NEWS EXPECTED FROM FORT PICKENS AND PORT ROYAL.

The Navy Department has received no news from the South. The arrival of the Connecticut at New York with the latest reliable intelligence from Port Pickens and Port Royal is hourly expected.

THE CONSOLIDATION OF REGIMENTS.

The proposed consolidation of regiments the companies of which have been hitherto scattered has occasioned a considerable movement of detached forces in various directions, and the transfer of forces from one division to another. Captain T. B. Bunting's battery of artillery has been transferred from General Stone's column to that of General Hooker, and the cavalry companies which were on duty in squadrons here and there are being gathered together at the points where the majority of the regiments to which they belong are posted.

THE PROPOSED STATISTICAL BUREAU.

The proposed statistical bureau is intended to embrace all facts gathered by the census, the commerce and navigation, tonnage and loan divisions of the Treasury, the commercial returns received at the State Department from our Consuls abroad, such facts as can be produced regarding our coasting, river, canal and railway traffic, and the operations of the banks, insurance and manufacturing companies, the whole to be condensed into a compendium of facts annually, in order to show at a glance the agricultural, industrial and financial condition of the country and the progress made in each branch every year. The portion of the President's Message referring to this subject will be confided to a select joint committee of five from the House and three Senators.

ARRIVAL OF CONTRABANDS IN CAMP.

Thirty-one contrabands have arrived here. They are women and children, and were brought over from Mathias Point by Col. Graham during his recent reconnoissance. The men, numbering over fifty, are still with Gen. Sickles, employed as laborers. These slaves had been deserted by their masters, and were in a destitute condition when discovered by our troops.

THE ARMY.

It is understood that the representatives in Congress from Philadelphia, together with Colonels Ripley, Cherry and Ross, yesterday personally replied to the President to appoint Colonel Harney, of the Twenty-third Penny vania regiment, to a Brigadier Generalship. That city is largely represented in the Army of the Potomac.

The Court Martial to try Colonel Kerrigan will meet to-morrow. The different cavalry regiments on the south side of the Potomac are, of their own accord, erecting shelters to protect their horses from the influence of the weather.

CONFERENCE WITH INDIAN TRIBES AT LEAVENWORTH.

The Indian Bureau has received information that General Hunter, by its direction, was holding a council at Leavenworth, with influential representatives of the Southern Indian tribes, including those from the Creeks, Cherokees and Choctaws, in relation to the disturbances occasioned by the present rebellion. The instructions sent thither by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs contemplate their return to their own people, with strong assurances of the friendship of the United States government.

SENATOR TRUMBULL'S SPEECH.

The following paragraph was unintentionally omitted in the transmission of the recent speech of Senator Trumbull:—

Without any special act of Congress, I presume no one questions that our military commanders, in the prosecution of the war in insurrectionary districts, may, for the time being, seize and make use of the property of the rebels and their slaves, but on the restoration of peace the right of the owner would revive. Hence, if we would have uniformity of action among the commanders of our armies, said forfeit forever the property of rebels and their claims to the service of their fellow men, it must be done by act of Congress.

WITHHOLDING PENSIONS FROM DISLOYAL PERSONS.

The Pension Office has withheld the payment of pensions to a number of persons on sufficient evidence of their disloyalty. It appears that some show a willingness to take the prescribed oath of allegiance and loyalty for the purpose of obtaining money from the government, but who afterwards either join the rebels or otherwise give them aid and comfort. As a large number of the pensions are paid after the 1st of October the returns thus far received do not afford sufficient data from which to judge as to the extent of the defection. The widow of Commodore Thomas Ap. Catesby Jones is among those who removed into Jeffdom, and thus lost the benefits of her pension.

LETTER FROM A UNION PRISONER.

Capt. Todd, of the Lincoln cavalry, who, with a few of his company, was taken prisoner in the neighborhood of Pohick Church, about three weeks ago, while on a reconnoissance, has written a letter, which was received here yesterday, stating that none of those who were with him at that time were injured, and that they are all now imprisoned in Richmond.

THE CAUCUSES OF SATURDAY NIGHT.

The caucuses held last night were slimly attended and adjourned to Monday night without doing anything, except to appoint committees to call the postponed meetings.

SERENADES TO DISTINGUISHED PERSONS.

Last night serenades were in order. In addition to the one to Governor Morgan, previously mentioned, similar compliments were paid to Governor Morton, of Indiana, and the venerable John J. Crittenden, of Kentucky. The conservative sentiments uttered in response by both these gentlemen were loudly applauded, and evidently touched the key note of popular sympathy.

FIRING FROM A REBEL BATTERY.

The rebel battery located a short distance above Mathias Point threw a shell into the camp of the Fourteenth Massachusetts regiment on Friday. Failing to explode it did no injury.

THE REPORT OF THE VAN WYCK COMMITTEE.

The House Committee to examine into government contracts, of which Mr. Van Wyck is chairman, will report in part some time this week. It is said that large sums of money have already been saved to the government through their investigations.

IMPORTANT FROM EUROPE.

Arrival of the Africa with Two Days Later News.

THE MASON-SLIDELL CASE.

Important Opinion of the Law Officers of the English Crown on the Right to Seize Contrabands Like Mason and Slidell.

The Arago, with Gen. Scott, Safe in England.

Maritime Rights and England's Neutrality.

The Rebel Steamer Nashville at Southampton, England.

Particulars of the Capture and Burning of the Ship Harvey Birch.

Captain Pegram, of the Rebel Navy, Received as a Commissioned Officer.

Protest of the Commander of the Harvey Birch.

Movement of the Expeditionary Force to Mexico.

The American Question as a Parliamentary and Cabinet Question.

PROPOSITIONS OF ITALY TO THE POPE, &c., &c., &c.

The Cunard mail steamship Africa, Captain Shannon, which left Liverpool at eleven A. M. on the 23d, and Queenstown on the 24th ultimo, arrived here at half-past nine A. M. yesterday (Sunday), bringing mails, passengers and £6,050 in specie.

The news by the Africa is two days later than that brought by the North American to Portland, and published in the HERALD on Saturday morning.

The mails of the North American reached this city from Portland yesterday morning.

Our advices from both continents are of an important character.

The London *Shipping Gazette* (evening) of November 25 contains the following important news:—

SOUTHAMPTON, Nov. 25, 1861.

The steamship Arago, from New York 9th instant, has arrived. She brings 117 passengers for Havre, and 12 for Southampton, and $400 in specie for France. *Among the passengers are General Scott and family, Colonel Scott, Mr. Hosmmille, attache of the French Legation at Washington, and Captain De Lamount, of the French navy.*

This sets at rest the absurd rumors of the capture of the Arago, with General Scott on board, by the rebels.

The news of the capture of Messrs. Slidell and Mason had not reached England when the Africa sailed. The City of New York would not arrive there from New York, with the first reports of the fact, for about two days after the departure of the Africa, as she was spoken about two days out from the British coast.

Judge Goodrich, Secretary of the Legation of the United States at Brussels, and special bearer of despatches, came out in the Africa, having left London on the night of the 23d of November, reaching the steamer at Queenstown.

The Liverpool *Times* of the 23d ult. says:—

Mr. Adams, the American Minister, has been on a visit to the Right Hon. the Speaker, at his place in Nottinghamshire.

It is mentioned in the Manchester *Guardian* that throughout the cotton districts the spinners are generally making experiments with India cotton, and that the opinions expressed of the result are various, but that it is evident that, by a slight alteration in the machinery, this cotton may be made to enter, in various proportions, into much higher numbers than has hitherto been supposed likely.

Prince Napoleon, who was to have gone to London to superintend the arrangements for the French part of the Universal Exhibition, has postponed his departure from Paris for a few days.

The Paris *Moniteur* states that the Emperor has received a letter by which his Excellency Don Jose Joaquim Perez notifies his election to the Presidency of the republic of Chile.

The funeral of the late King of Portugal took place on the 16th at Lisbon. There was a grand procession, including 10,000 troops.

Despatches from Calcutta to October 31 state that there was a large demand for yarns and goods on speculation, and that prices were higher. Freights active and advancing. Hong Kong despatches are to the 16th of October. Tea was firmer. Silk slightly lower. The import markets were dull from the pressure of large stocks. Sterling exchange 4s. 5½d.

The Glasgow arrived at Queenstown early on the morning of the 22d ultimo, and at Liverpool on the 23d.

The Anglo-Saxon reached Londonderry on the afternoon of the 22d ultimo, with the news of the loss of the North Briton on Paraquet Island on the 5th ult.

THE MASON AND SLIDELL AFFAIR.

The Case Settled in Advance—Important Opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown—Capt. Wilkes Act Sustained.

[From the Edinburg Scotsman, Nov. 21.]

A strange *yet true* story—showing how near this country has been, and perhaps is, to a rupture with the United States, or at least how very well disposed our American friends are to bring about such an event—*reaches us to-day from sources to be thoroughly relied on.*

The week before last our government received information that a United States war steamer had brought up in Southampton water, ostensibly for the purpose of refitting, but under circumstances warranting the suspicion that she had some other object in view. Subsequently various circumstances, including the conversation of some of her crew who had come ashore, led to the discovery of the fact that her real object *was the seizure of the West India mail steamer then due.* The United States cruiser had been despatched in pursuit of the Nashville, the vessel conveying the Confederate delegates sent to this country, which had eluded the blockade. The delegates succeeded in reaching Cuba, *and there got themselves conveyed on board one of the British mail steamers.* Their movements became known to the commander of the pursuing vessel, who took the remarkable step of running straight over to the British coast, with the intention of waylaying the mail steamer, and making capture of her *as a neutral vessel, carrying, in the delegates and their credentials, "contraband of war."*

Upon the assumption of these being the facts—an assumption, it will easily be believed, not made and proceeded on without inquiry and consideration—*the British man-of-war commander thought he ought to watch the American, and to protect against her any vessel bearing the British flag.* As it happened, the American captain, perhaps attracted by hospitalities after a stormy voyage, remained in port for some days, and then, putting to sea, was met by a severe gale on the south coast, which forced him to anchor at Cobbett. The same cause that stopped his cruise expedited the voyage of the mail steamer, which arrived two days before her time, and passed into her port unconscious of her danger. Communications then took place between our government and the American Minister, in which the *latter declared any such intention as that imputed to the proceedings of the United States steamer*—or rather, he disclaimed any knowledge of the matter.

At the same time it was ascertained to be *the opinion of the law officers of the Crown that, according to the interpretation of the law, as laid down in former decisions, the relations of Britain to the American belligerents are, perhaps, such that there might have been fair legal grounds for the American cruiser seizing the mail steamer as prize, even in British waters, if it could have been shown that she knowingly harbored the vessel and property of enemies of the United States, in the shape of the delegates and their despatches.*

THE UNITED STATES STEAMER.

The United States steamer has now departed; but is supposed to be cruising off the Irish coast, for purposes similar to those which brought her to Southampton.

It cannot be necessary to point out the wanton offensiveness and danger of the course understood to have been adopted in this and perhaps similar cases by the United States government. That government is entitled to do all in its power to prevent egress or ingress at its own ports, and the ports of the Confederates; but to leave these not half guarded, and come across to British waters on a roving commission to seize a British mail steamer which had taken on board at a British port two American passengers and their portmanteaus, is an act easy to be understood and not easy to be endured. It indicates a desire not so much to prevent the movements of American "rebels" as to insult and provoke the government and people of this country.

THE NASHVILLE IN ENGLAND.

Her Entrance into the Port of Southampton—The Burning of the Ship Harvey Birch—Landing and Liberation of the Union Prisoners—Captain Pegram Exhibits His Commission from Jeff. Davis—Protest of Captain Nelson, of the Harvey Birch—The Rebel Commissioner Peyton and His Wife Landed from the Nashville—Attentions of the British Officers at Bermuda—Scenes on Board the Rebel Vessel—English Opinion of Maritime Reprisals and Her Neutral Rights, &c.

THE NASHVILLE AT SOUTHAMPTON—GREAT EXCITEMENT CONCERNING HER ARRIVAL IN THE PORT—THE PRIVATEER DESCRIBED AS AN AMERICAN "BELLIGERENT."

[Southampton (Nov. 21) correspondence of London Times.]

Great excitement has been created here by the arrival in our waters this morning of a steamer-of-war bearing the flag of the Confederate States of America, and which has since come into dock, where she now lies snugly berthed in the outer tidal basin. She came up the river about eight o'clock, and anchored off the mouth of the Itchin, with the Confederate flag flying at the peak and a pennant at the main.

Soon afterwards a number of men were landed from her on the docks, who proved to be the crew of a late American merchant ship, named the Harvey Birch, which had been captured and burned on Tuesday morning *near the entrance of the channel.*

The steamer in question was called the Nashville before she was purchased for the Confederate navy, and is of 1,120 tons burden. She is commanded by Captain Pegram, his chief subordinate officers being First Lieutenant Rootes and Second Lieutenant Bennett, and she has a crew of eighty men, all whites, mostly English and Irish. She carries only two long twelve pounder rifled cannon.

The Nashville is from Charleston, last from Bermuda, for Bermuda, on special service. It will be remembered that this ship ran the blockade in Charleston harbor, about twelve o'clock at night, towards the end of October, passing through a fleet of two federal cruisers, but, exhibiting no lights, she ran close along shore and escaped detection. She put into Bermuda for coals, and the captain *was treated with the utmost attention and politeness by the Governor of Bermuda.*

BURNING OF THE SHIP HARVEY BIRCH.

About eight o'clock last Tuesday morning, when in latitude 33 degrees 40 minutes north, longitude 70 degrees 40 minutes west, the Nashville fell in with the American ship Harvey Birch, Captain Nelson, bound from Havre to New York, in ballast, with the American flag flying. She ran down to her, and, as was stated to us, opened her ports, and ordered the ship to heave to, (the flag to be hauled up, and the ship to come to on board immediately. This was done, and Captain Nelson seemed surprised to find, on boarding her, that the captain of the Nashville had all the crew to get their things ready as soon as possible, and go on board the Nashville, as they intended to destroy the Harvey Birch. They were allowed an hour or an hour and a half for this purpose, and put part of their things out. The men from the steamer took most of the provisions, with the ship's chronometer, barometer, and some of the charts, permitting Captain Nelson to retain his own chronometer, but he has lost $1,200 or $1,400 worth of personal effects, books, charts, &c.

They then set fire to the ship, fore and aft, apparently in the deck houses, and the vessel was soon in flames from stem to stern. The three masts were seen to go over the side, and the hull was still burning when the steamer left her.

The Harvey Birch was a fine full rigged ship of 1,487 tons, American measurement, and cost about $175,000 in her construction.

She had a total of twenty-nine souls on board, including Mr. Blydenburg (a son of her owner), who was a passenger, Captain Nelson, two mates, two boatswains, cook, steward, carpenter and twenty seamen. The men were put in irons on board the steamer (with the exception of the captain and mate, who were treated with great politeness), and kept as prisoners until the arrival of the vessel here this morning, when they were immediately landed in the docks, *and set at liberty*, with all the personal effects belonging to them. It is stated that before they were put in irons the Confederate oath was tendered to the men, which they refused to take, *but Captain Nelson tells us that he is not aware of the fact, although it may be correct.*

THE CREW OF THE VESSEL REFUSED FOR THE UNITED STATES.

Immediately on landing Captain Nelson waited on Captain Britton, the American Consul at this port, who has caused the crew to be temporarily boarded at the Sailors' Home, and made arrangements for them to be forwarded home to New York in the Inman steamer, which sails hence on Wednesday next.

Captain Britton has also put himself in communication with Mr. Adams, the American Minister in London, and made that gentleman acquainted with all the facts of the case.

CAPTAIN PEGRAM'S DEFENCE OF HIS ACTION.

On leaving the Nashville Captain Pegram told Captain Nelson that he hoped they would not part bad friends, for what had been done was a simple act of retaliation on the Northern States for invading their territories, burning their houses, ill treating their women and stealing their negroes, and they were bound to retaliate on the property of the North in every way they could.

THE REBEL VESSEL SEARCHED BY THE AMERICAN ADMIRALTY AGENT.

About twelve o'clock the Nashville steamed into dock, where, as mentioned above, she now lies, and soon after she was boarded by Captain Patey, the Admiralty agent, out of mail packets at this port, went on board and had an interview with the captain.

ANOTHER REPORT AND ADDITIONAL PARTICULARS.

[Southampton (Nov. 21) Correspondence of London News.]

The greatest excitement prevailed here this morning by the arrival in the river of a large war steamer with the Confederate flag of America flying at the peak and a pennant at the main. She proved to be the Confederate steamer Nashville, which ran the blockade at Charleston on the 26th October. She brought the crew (twenty-nine in number) of the American ship Harvey Birch, and landed them in the docks at ten o'clock this morning, with all their effects.

Captain Nelson states that Commander Pegram informed him that he held no commission from the Confederate government of America as a war steamer (or lettres of marque); that himself and his two mates were treated exceedingly well whilst on board the steamer, but that the crew were all placed in irons immediately on their getting on board.

He further states that the Nashville shipped her crew in Charleston, and that they are composed chiefly of English and Irish lads; that they *were shipped under false pretences, and forced to sign other articles when on board.* He also says that Commander Pegram endeavored to compel himself and his crew to take the oath of allegiance to, and swear not to take up arms against the Southern States.

At half past twelve o'clock the Nashville arrived off the entrance to the docks, and at one o'clock P. M. was moored alongside the north jetty, which was literally besieged with spectators.

HAULING DOWN THE UNION FLAG.

The following is the report of Commander Pegram:—On the morning of November 19 at eight o'clock, sighted the packet ship Harvey Birch, of New York; immediately bore down upon her, and when near enough hailed her, having unlimbered guns and cleared decks for action. Then spoke the vessel and ordered the captain to haul down his colors and bring his papers on board. *The Stars and Stripes immediately went down slowly*, and Captain Nelson and his crew came on board the Nashville. Captain Pegram then informed him he demanded an unconditional surrender, but all private effects would be respected. The crew were then brought on board, and, with the exception of Captain Nelson, his two mates and a passenger, placed in irons. The captain and mates were allowed to retain their revolvers, but were put upon parole. A few provisions were then brought on board, and the Harvey Birch committed to flames. Before the Nashville left her, the three masts were seen to fall, and the entire vessel was a burning mass.

CAPTAIN PEGRAM'S FEELINGS TOWARDS THE OLD FLAG.

Captain Pegram states that the burning of the ship and *hauling down her flag was the most painful act of his life*, he having served for a period of thirty-two years in the United States Navy, and been an officer of the United States Navy, and been conspicuous part in the Mexican war, in the Pacific and in an expedition against Japan, and during the war waged by the English and French in China. For his services in the latter he received a sword of Virginia, voted him by the unanimous voice of the General Assembly of the legislature, a splendid sword.

THE PASSENGERS ON BOARD.

The Nashville brought as passengers, under orders of the Hon. the Secretary of the Navy, Colonel Peyton and lady. Colonel Peyton is on special duty for the State of North Carolina.

During the voyage the Nashville experienced heavy weather, the gig, and portions of her paddle boxes, were washed away. Colonel Peyton and Commander Pegram will proceed to London by express train to-morrow morning.

COLONEL PEYTON'S CORDON SANITAIRE.

Colonel Peyton says that there are 700 bales of cotton of the old crop, over four million pounds of the new crop, and fifty hogsheads of tobacco with 60 barrels in the navy stores ready for shipment. He also states that Norfolk, Pensacola and Mobile, the Southern Confederate Ports, left Charleston on the 10th of October in the steamer Theodore, passing through the blockading squadron at night. Their safe arrival was reported at Cardenas, Cuba, before the Nashville left Charleston—on the 26th—and they are expected to arrive here by the West India steamer La Plata, due on the 29th inst.

THE U. S. SLOOP OF WAR.

The reports relative to the scant rations and clothing in the Southern army are contradicted by the Confederates arriving in the Nashville. The food of the army is said to be abundant. President Davis, instead of being dead, is in the enjoyment of health and spirits, as are also Generals Beauregard and Johnston, who have been reported killed.

GENERAL MOVEMENTS IN FOR MEXICO.

As soon as the captain and crew of the Harvey Birch were liberated, they were brought protection from the United States (Federal) Consul, and the crew found shelter in hospitable homes. The mayor of the town and the naval packet superintendent at the port boarded the Nashville on her arrival in the dock, to make the necessary inquiries, in order to communicate with the government. The officers of the Nashville telegraphed to London, and received a number of telegrams in return. Telegrams also were continually passing between the governor of Nashville in Southampton and London. The United States (Federal) Consul also communicated with London, in order, if possible, to prevent, if possible, the Nashville from having any assistance. The Nashville is only armed with two guns.

THE ARAGO EXPECTED.

The Arago, a well armed Federal mail steamer, is hourly expected at Southampton.

RUN OF THE NASHVILLE FROM CHARLESTON—HER NEWS REPORTS FOR ENGLAND.

[From the London Times, November 23.]

We take the following account of the voyage of the Nashville from Reuter's express:—

The Confederate steamer Nashville, Captain Pegram, left Charleston on the night of the 26th of October, at 11 o'clock, passing over the bar at 12.

When she started the weather was thick and cloudy; but just as she was crossing the bar the weather cleared up, and the moon rose brightly, lighting up a full view to the eastward, distant about four miles, two steamers of the blockading squadron—one the United States steam frigate Sabine, mounting 50 guns, the other a powerful propeller armed. The Nashville, being under the lee, and from the moon, was not seen by them.

She encountered strong northerly winds and very heavy seas, but made the passage to Bermuda in three days and a half.

On arriving at Bermuda *there received a pilot on board, who, for the reason to be known, did not take us into St. George's.*

The next day Captain Pegram, not being satisfied, obtained a second pilot from the dockyard, who took the Nashville safely round into St. George's, at which place the vessel coaled.

During their stay at Bermuda *the commander and officers were treated with the greatest hospitality and civilities by both the officers and the officers of the English army and navy stationed there, and every facility for getting stores, coals, &c., was afforded them by the inhabitants.*

A few days prior to the arrival at Bermuda of the Nashville the United States steamer Connecticut had called at the Island for the purpose of ascertaining if the Nashville had been there. She had a crew of 400 men, with six guns mounted. Not hearing anything of the steamer they were in search of, they again proceeded to sea, without stating their destination.

The Nashville sailed again from Bermuda on the 5th inst., and from the next day until the 17th she experienced a succession of gales from all points of the compass.

Nothing of interest further transpired until the 19th, when she destroyed the United States ship Harvey Birch.

The officers on board the Nashville say that the statement in the New York papers that multitudes of people in North Carolina have gone in and sworn allegiance to the United States government since the capture of Fort Hatteras *is utterly untrue and without foundation. A few wreckers came in to see the times, and, in order to deceive the Yankees, they hoisted false lights for the occasion and, of course, they had to take the oath, but their number does not exceed probably one hundred.*

Fort Hatteras, instead of being a formidable fortification, as represented by the United States papers, is composed simply of light sand banks, and is an incomplete concern.

THE OWNER OF THE HARVEY BIRCH.

[From the London Herald, Nov. 22.]

One circumstance, forcibly illustrating the strictly sectional character of the present unhappy outbreak, is that the owner of the burnt ship, not of our New York, is said to be a man of strong Southern proclivities.

PROSPECTS OF THE REBELS AT SOUTHAMPTON.

The captain states that the Nashville has put in here to have her top deck taken off and to be *fitted out as a vessel of war; but how far this intention will be given effect to, cannot with the legal and international bearing of the case be seen.* The arrival of the vessel here, under the circumstances, and her landing prisoners of war, as they are called, is looked upon by many persons as an infraction of the Queen's proclamation of neutrality. *Groups of politicians and commercial men have been actively discussing the knotty points involved in the question*, and sundry messages have passed up and down the telegraphic wires during the day in relation to the subject.

It is stated that she has some square officers on board for fitting or preparing for England for the Confederate navy.

The Nashville is a sister ship to the federal steamer James Adger, which put in here for a few days a fortnight since. Some five or six years ago she was temporarily chartered for the mail service between Havre, Southampton and New York, and made a few voyages each way with the mails.

The paddle wheel steamer Pacific, lately belonging to the Galway Company, which has been lying in our docks for some months, and has just been sold, is now fitting out in the docks, it is said, for a voyage to the West Indies, but a strong impression prevails that she is bought for the Confederate states.

We must stand that the capture of the Harvey Birch took place in 75 fathoms depth of water.

CAPTAIN PEGRAM DISPLAYS HIS COMMISSION.

[South ampton (Nov. 21) correspondence of London Times.]

Captain Pegram flatmatly denies the statement of Captain Nelson that he holds no commission from the Confederate states of America, and has furnished us with the following copy of his commission under the Confederate seal:—

The President of the Confederate States of America to all who shall see these presents, greeting:—Know ye, that reposing special trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, fidelity and abilities of Robert B. Pegram, I do appoint him a lieutenant in the Navy of the Confederate States, to rank as such from the 16th day of June, A. D. 1861. He is therefore, carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of Lieutenant, by doing and performing all manner of things thereunto belonging, and I do hereby charge all officers and others under his command to be obedient to his orders as Lieutenant. And he is to observe and to follow such orders and directions from time to time he shall receive from me or the future President of the Confederate States of America, or the superior officers set over him, according to the rules and discipline of war. Given under my hand, at the city of Richmond, this 16th day of September, in the year of our Lord, 1861.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

By the President. S. R. MALLORY, Secretary of the Navy.

APPEARANCE OF THE NASHVILLE IN PORT.

[South ampton (Nov. 21) correspondence of the Manchester Guardian.]

The Nashville is lying along the eastern side of the dock. She appears to have met with foul weather and, in crossing the blockade, having touched ground, she will go into the graving dock to be examined. The crew of the Harvey Birch are lodged in the Sailors' Home. They are highly exasperated, and vow vengeance against the officers and crew of the Nashville if they can get at them. The Nashville is preparing to come into dock for refitting, having experienced very bad weather since running the blockade at Charleston. A few young officers may be occasionally seen strolling on deck; otherwise all is quiet.

THE TOWN POLICE OF SOUTHAMPTON PLACED ON DOCK DUTY.

[Southampton (Nov. 22) correspondence of the London Times.]

Nothing whatever has publicly transpired to-day concerning this vessel. She still lies at her berth in the dock, but no movement has been made to supply her with coals or stores, or to effect repairs. A body of the town police was last night placed on duty in the docks in case of any breach of the peace occurring between the men belonging to the Nashville and the crew of the burnt ship Harvey Birch, but their services have not been called into requisition.

THE DEPARTURE OF MASON AND SLIDELL ANNOUNCED.

[Southampton (Nov. 21) correspondence of the London Star.]

Colonel Peyton says that Messrs. Mason and Slidell, the Southern Commissioners, left Charleston on the 12th October, in the steamer Theodore, passing through the blockading squadron at night. Their safe arrival was reported at Cardenas, Cuba, before the Nashville left Charleston on the 26th ultimo, and they are expected to arrive here by the West India steamer La Plata, due on the 29th inst.

WHAT THE REBELS REQUIRED OF CAPTAIN NELSON AND HIS CREW.

Captain Nelson stated that Commander Pegram endeavored to compel himself and crew to take the oath of allegiance, and not to take up arms against the Southern States. This is denied by Commander Pegram and officers, who state that the only document that Captain Nelson and officers were requested to sign was one of which the following is a copy:—

CONFEDERATE STATES STEAMER NASHVILLE, AT SEA, Nov. 19, 1861.

We, the undersigned, officers and passengers on board the United States ship Harvey Birch, being now prisoners on board the Confederate States steamer Nashville, do pledge our honor as gentlemen and American citizens, that we will in no manner be concerned directly or indirectly against such Confederate States till our release or exchange or discharge.

W. H. NELSON, Master,
CHARLES C. STEVENS, Mate,
FRANCIS [illegible], Second Mate,
[illegible] H. Passenger,
FRANK [illegible], Passenger,
THOMAS W. COPPAS, Boatswain,
[illegible],
GEORGE [illegible],
GEORGE SIMMONS.

The remainder of the crew, seven in all, refused to sign the above document, and were placed in irons until their arrival at this port.

PROTEST OF CAPTAIN NELSON, OF THE HARVEY BIRCH.

The following is the protest of Captain W. H. Nelson, Master of the burning ship:—

To all to whom these presents may come:—

I, William Henry Nelson, of the city of New York, in the United States of America, Master Mariner, do solemnly and truly declare that I sailed from the said port of New York, on the 5th day of September last, as master, and in the ship Harvey Birch, of New York, a ship owned and registered in New York, in conformity with the laws of the United States, bound for the port of Havre de Grace, in France, with a cargo consisting of wheat. About the 6th day of October I arrived at Havre, and having discharged the cargo of my ship and ballasted her, I sailed in her again for the port of New York on the 16th day of November, first having received the register, sea-letter, articles, and all papers belonging to the ship in proper form from the United States Consul there. On the morning of Tuesday, the 19th instant, the ship being in about lat. 33 40 N., long. 072 W., a stranger was made out bearing for the Harvey Birch, which, on getting nearer, was found to be an armed vessel, and hoisted at the peak the flag of the so-called Confederate States, and when within hailing distance a person on board, who I learned was the captain, hailed my ship, saying, "Haul down your colors and heave the ship to," the ensign of the United States being at this time set at the peak of my vessel. This order was complied with, and I then received the order, "Lower your boat and come on board," which I also complied with, taking my papers with me. Since arriving on board the steamer I was introduced by the first Lieutenant, by name Rootes, to Captain Pegram, as commander of the Confederate States steamer Nashville, to whom I produced all the papers of my ship for examination, to show that I was engaged in lawful trade. Captain Pegram took the ship's papers, kept them, and put the men and boats's crew, and told me that he should hold me a prisoner of war by authority of the Confederate States. He then told me I might go on board my ship and I was ordered to send my crew on board the steamer as quickly as possible. I returned to my ship, and at once made preparations to leave her, but orders were repeatedly given from the steamer to hurry up, and sufficient time was not given to enable me to get any of my crew to get our effects out of the ship. The Second Lieutenant, with other officers, came on board the ship and took charge of her, and orders were given to select provisions, &c., and in consequence of not all the fresh meat, poultry, eggs and butter were taken out and put on board the steamer, it was clearly made out that all the oil, tea, coffee and sugar should be put on board the steamer, which was done.

When all this had been accomplished, the