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EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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AMUSEMENTS THIS EVENING.

WINTER GARDEN, Broadway.—SHANDY MAGUIRE—AN HOUR IN SEVILLE—IRISH TUTOR.

WALLACK'S THEATRE, No. 844 Broadway.—MAGIC MARRIAGE—HE'S NOT A MISS.

LAURA KEENE'S THEATRE, Broadway.—SEVEN SONS.

NEW BOWERY THEATRE, Bowery.—OTHELLO—GALE BREEZELY.

BOWERY THEATRE, Bowery.—STICKNEY'S NATIONAL CIRCUS.

BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM, Broadway.—Day and Evening.—THE EARL'S DAUGHTER—HIPPOPOTAMUS, WHALE, AND OTHER CURIOSITIES.

BRYANTS' MINSTRELS, Mechanics' Hall, 472 Broadway.—UN BALLO IN MASCHERA.

HOOLEY'S MINSTRELS, Stuyvesant Institute, No. 659 Broadway.—ETHIOPIAN SONGS, DANCES, &C.

MELODEON CONCERT HALL, No. 539 Broadway.—SONGS, DANCES, BURLESQUES, &C.—LA SALTA IN BANIO.

CANTERBURY MUSIC HALL, 585 Broadway.—SONGS, DANCES, BURLESQUES, &C.—MAGIC LAUREL.

GAIETIES CONCERT ROOM, 616 Broadway.—DRAWING ROOM ENTERTAINMENTS, BALLETS, PANTOMIMES, FARCES, &C.

AMERICAN MUSIC HALL, 444 Broadway.—SONGS, BALLETS, PANTOMIMES, &C.—ROBERT MAKE-AIRS.

METROPOLITAN CONCERT HALL, 600 Broadway.—SONGS, DANCES, FARCES, BURLESQUES, &C.

CRYSTAL PALACE CONCERT HALL, No. 45 Bowery.—BURLESQUES, SONGS, DANCES, &C.—WIDOW'S VICTIM.

PARISIAN CABINET OF WONDERS, 563 Broadway.—Open daily from 10 A. M. till 9 P. M.

NATIONAL MUSIC HALL, Chatham street.—BURLESQUES, SONGS, DANCES, &C.—MASQUERADE BALL.

NOVELTY MUSIC HALL, 616 Broadway.—BURLESQUES, SONGS, DANCES, &C.

BROOKLYN MELODEON, corner of Court and Remsen streets.—SONGS, DANCES, PANTOMIMES, BURLESQUES, &C.

New York, Monday, December 9, 1861.

THE SITUATION.

Nothing of importance occurred yesterday in the army of the Potomac. The scouts from General Wadsworth's brigade, which have been scouring the country since Friday last, report that Flint Hill and Fairfax Court House are entirely abandoned by the rebels.

The government, it is said, is contemplating a general exchange of prisoners with the rebels, in order to release the officers and soldiers of the Union army from the miseries which they are suffering in their Southern prisons. Such a measure will bring consolation to many a Northern fireside

We give to-day some further details of the proceedings of the privateer Sumter, which we have before reported at Martinique. It appears that she had captured two American vessels—the brigs Joseph Parks and Daniel Trowbridge—destroying the latter vessel by fire and taking her crew to Port Royal, Martinique. We have before mentioned the fact that the United States gunboat Iroquois had started in pursuit of the privateer. Our news to-day comes from the British schooner Emeline, which arrived here yesterday from Port Royal, where she left the Sumter taking in coal.

General Banks has taken up his winter quarters at Frederick, Md. He was received there with great apparent enthusiasm by the inhabitants, and located himself in the residence of Colonel Bradley J. Johnson, of the rebel army. There are no signs of the rebels between Harper's Ferry and Point of Rocks, where Colonel Geary's command in keeping a vigilant lookout for them.

The effect of the President's Message, and his modification of Secretary Cameron's report relative to the disposition of the slaves in the South, is said to have been very marked in Kentucky. It has given confidence and strength to the Union men—a fact which is indicative of a like result all over the South, if the administration confine themselves to preserving the integrity of the Union and maintaining the constitution and the laws as the object of the war in spite of the factious opposition of the abolitionist traitors, who are urging them to a different course.

The Africa, at this port yesterday, brought important advices concerning the aspect of American affairs in Europe on the 24th ultimo. Our news columns contain full details of the arrival of the rebel steamer Nashville, Commander Pegram, at Southampton, England, on the 21st of November, as well as the announcement of the fact that she was duly received by the authorities as a war vessel commissioned for a special service by a belligerent Power. Captain Pegram himself published the particulars of the overhauling and destruction of the ship Harvey Birch, near the mouth of the British channel, exhibited his commission from Jefferson Davis and gave up the captain and crew of the Harvey Birch immediately to the charge of the United States Consul in Southampton. Such of the crew of the Harvey Birch as refused to make a declaration not to attempt any violence on board the Nashville were put in irons by Captain Pegram. Captain Nelson, the commander of the Harvey Birch, had published a protest in the English papers against the acts of the rebel officers. Mr. Peyton, a rebel Commissioner to Europe, and his wife, were landed from the Nashville, and had, with Captains Pegram and Nelson, gone to London—the first named parties to communicate with Mr. Yancey, and Captain Nelson to see Mr. Adams. The affair produced intense excitement in the commercial, financial and political circles of England, but the impression seemed to be general in favor of sheltering the Nashville for refit and supplies, just as the Union vessel James Adger had been treated a few days previously. Rumors were afloat that the Adger had gone out with the intention of forcibly taking Messrs. Mason and Slidell from the British mail steamer, even in an English port, and the Edinburgh *Scotsman*, a reliable journal, asserts that the law officers of England had decided that United States officials had a perfect and legal right to seize a mail steamer knowingly conveying such contrabands, even in the harbors of Great Britain. The case would, it was thought, be taken into the courts for argument. It was also stated that a British Admiralty Council, which was attended by the leading members of the Cabinet, had been held on the subject.

The steamship Arago, with General Scott on board, reached Southampton from New York on the 23d ultimo, in the afternoon—a fact which of course dismisses at once all the rumors of her capture by the rebels.

Lord Stanley, in a speech to his constituents, said it was not reasonable to blame the federal government for not doing that which, as trustees for the people, they hardly could do, and which no government since the world began had ever done—for not giving up half their territory without a blow in its defence. The result of the struggle was beyond human calculation; but he thought, sooner or later, a Southern confederacy would be established.

Mr. Layard, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in a speech before his constituents, alluded at some length to the American question, and defended the policy of the British government towards the United States.

Mr. Bright was expected fully to enter upon the American question at the approaching banquet to be given him at Rochdale.

It is asserted that the Commissioners of the Confederate States were only present at the late banquet at Fishmongers Hall as the guests of some individual member or members of the company.

Deputations from the governments of Canada, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia had arrived in London for the purpose of urging the imperial government to aid the construction of the projected railway from Halifax to Quebec. One of the arguments is that the line will be a defence against the United States. The London *Times* seems to think that some defence is needed.

The allied expedition to Mexico was fairly afloat. It was feared in some quarters in England that the event may lead to serious complications. Spain is to attack the fortress of San Juan d'Ulloa, at Vera Cruz.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS.

The Africa, from Liverpool the 23d and Queenstown the 24th ultimo, arrived at this port yesterday morning, with European news two days later than that brought by the North American to Portland, and published in the HERALD on Saturday morning.

Consols closed in London on the 23d ultimo at 93⅞ a 94. The discount market was more easy, and transactions were numerous at 2⅝ per cent for best bills. The London *News* says that, owing to the affair of the Nashville, the recent inquiries for American securities had subsided. The Bank of England bullion shows an increase in the week of £351,092. Cotton remained steady, but quiet, in Liverpool. Occasional sales had taken place at a decline of ⅛d. per pound in the lower qualities of American; the better kinds, however, were less affected. Stock in port, 586,000 bales, including 273,530 American. Quantity at sea, 105,000 bales, against 186,000 same time last year. Flour was slow but unchanged.

The news of the wreck of the North Briton had been received in England. The Italian Parliament had been opened. The speech of the Prime Minister confirms the rumor of a failure at negotiation for reconciliation with Rome. The Emperor Napoleon was to have undertaken the mediation, but the indisposition of the Pope to negotiate defeated the intention. Baron Ricasoli's plan for reconciling the Catholic religion with politics was tolerably broad. The Cardinals were to retain their dignity and inviolability, and the Pontiff was to have full liberty guaranteed for his acts of divine right as chief of the church. He was also acknowledged as a Prince of Italy. Ecclesiastical discipline was to be entirely confided to him, and the King of Italy renounced his right in respect of benefices. *The Italian government relinquished all right of* interference with the election of bishops, and guaranteed his Holiness an adequate revenue. The remainder of the general news report is not of much importance.

A member of the Arkansas Legislature and thirty-five citizens of that State recently arrived at Rolla, Missouri, and joined the Union forces under Colonel Phelps. They represent the people of the northern part of Arkansas as being truly loyal, and that their seeming allegiance to the Southern confederacy is merely a pretence to save themselves from secession marauders.

There are twenty thousand well disciplined and well armed and equipped troops now in the vicinity of Louisville, Kentucky, and more expected.

The Grand Jury of Monmouth county, N. J., in session at Freehold, on Wednesday, found a true bill against Radski, the person suspected of the murder of Sigismund Fellner, in October last. The testimony of Mrs. Marks, the detectives who have worked up the case, and other persons before the Grand Jury, was of a most interesting character, and almost positively indicates Radski as the person who committed the deed. A full report of this case is given in our paper this morning.

A man named Thomas A. McGill, residing at No. 292 First avenue, yesterday, in a fit of insanity or intemperance, threw his own mother out of a fifth story window, killing her instantly. The police immediately arrested the perpetrator of the deed, an Irishman by birth, aged about thirty-one years. The deceased and her son had lived together peaceably about a year in the house, and bore the reputation of being sober, industrious people. The landlord states that when McGill paid his rent on Friday last he appeared to be either insane or drunk, and that he had warned the mother to beware of him. A report of the case will be found elsewhere.

An infamous scamp, calling himself S. C. Mosely, was yesterday arrested and locked up for endeavoring to entice the daughter of a respectable citizen, aged fourteen years, from her home. The scoundrel, who is an elderly man, learned her name and residence by picking up her handkerchief in church, and had written the child several letters (copies of which will be found in our report of the case), offering to meet her at the Museum and other places. The girl promptly handed the letters to her father, who had the fellow arrested. His case will come up before Justice Brennan this morning.

The schooner Richard A. Wood, Capt. Crammer, arrived here yesterday from Alexandria, with a cargo of coal, having run the blockade of the Potomac, during a snow storm, on the night of the 2d inst. Capt. Crammer had been detained seven weeks waiting for an opportunity to get away.

The schooner Gazelle, Capt. Ketchum, from Pocomoke river, also arrived yesterday, having a cargo of wood. This is the first arrival from the Western Shore of Maryland for some months.

The United States steam transport Albany, lying at pier No. 9 North river, is loading provisions and ammunition for Locust Point, and will sail to-day.

The United States steam transport Admiral is lying at anchor in the North river, waiting orders.

The steamship City of Manchester anchored at Quarantine on Saturday evening, and sailed on Sunday morning, at nine o'clock, for Liverpool and Queenstown.

The Long Island steamers, bound East, which were detained on Saturday by the fog, left yesterday morning at five o'clock.

The exports of breadstuffs from this port to Europe continue to increase, and last week reached the enormous amount of 1,463,106 bushels of grain and 86,114 barrels of flour.

A vessel arrived at Boston on the 6th inst. from Gonaives, with fifty-five bags of cotton, grown on the island of Hayti.

IMPORTANT FROM THE SOUTH—DISAFFECTION ON THE ADVANCE.—The South is portentous with significant signs of disaffection with government and disorganization and demoralization in the army. Our late news from Southern papers enlightens us as to many facts touching this question. In North Carolina especially we find that discontent among her soldiers is rife, and that in one case an officer, Colonel Singletary, has been court martialed, broken of his command and pay for two months, and that he has accordingly resigned his commission, upon the ground that his regiment, which is now "considerably disaffected and demoralized, will hardly be worth commanding" at the expiration of two months. In addition to this, we have information showing that the people throughout the whole State of North Carolina are discontented with the despotism under which they chafe and groan, and are anxious to be rid of it. If the government, then, would give them aid and comfort, protection, arms and alms, we might soon see North Carolina wheeling into line with the other loyal States of the Union. Nor is it to North Carolina alone that the spirit of discontent is confined. We recognise it at New Orleans, as developed in the late "conspiracy" against the rebel government. It is manifested in Tennessee through the recent victory of Parson Brownlow. We hear of it in Arkansas, in the intelligence which we publish to-day of the discovery of a secret organization against rebel despotism, which, it seems, has ramified through several counties. All these signs mark an approaching retrogression to the good old Union and the honored flag that has floated above it on land and sea for three quarters of a century; and if our government only avails itself, with vigor, of these signs of the times in the rebel States, the solution of our difficulty may be nearer at hand than we imagine.

Important by the Africa—The Case of Mason and Slidell Settled in Advance by the English Government.

The news received by the Africa, though not bearing directly on the affair of the Trent, is yet of a nature to dispel any uneasiness with regard to the course that the English government will pursue in reference to it. The Edinburg *Scotsman*—an old established journal, and generally reliable in its statements—has a story which, if true, completely settles the Mason and Slidell difficulty. It says that on the arrival of the James Adger in Southampton, ostensibly for the purpose of refitting, the British government, having reason to suspect that the real object of her presence in British waters was the seizure of the West India mail steamer, then due, and, as it was supposed, with the rebel Commissioners on board, issued orders to the British war steamer Phæton to watch her movements and protect against her any vessel bearing the British flag. This assumption, we need not say, was entirely unfounded, as it is notorious that the James Adger was sent over to capture the Nashville; and, failing in that object, she has since returned home, and is now at Philadelphia.

The British Foreign Office seems to have proceeded in this matter on the slightest possible evidence. A few chance expressions that dropped from some of the crew of the James Adger appear to have been the chief, if not the only, ground for its action. After remaining a few days in port, attracted, as the story runs, by the hospitalities of the place—a fact in itself sufficient, one would think, to refute the suspicions entertained in regard to the object of his instructions—the American captain put to sea, but, encountering a severe gale on the South coast, was forced to anchor at Calshott. The mail steamer had in the meanwhile arrived a couple of days before her time—her captain, and no doubt the captain of the James Adger, both unconscious of the supposed hostile relations in which the activity of the rebel agents in London had been placing them.

The zeal of these latter has, however, been productive of a result which they had not calculated upon. The raising of a difficulty in the case of the James Adger has had the effect of prejudging that of the Trent, and binding the British law officers by their own declarations. It appears that in consequence of the facts above narrated a correspondence was opened between the authorities in Downing street and our Minister, Mr. Adams, in which the latter disclaimed, as he well might do, all knowledge of the instructions alleged to have been given to the former vessel. In the course of this correspondence it was ascertained to be the opinion of the British law officers that "*according to the interpretation of the law, as laid down in former decisions, the relations of Great Britain to the American belligerents were perhaps such that there might have been fair legal grounds for the American cruiser seizing the mail steamer as a prize even in British waters, if it could have been shown that she knowingly harbored the persons and property of enemies of the United States, in the shape of the delegates and their despatches.*"

Here we have the case of the Trent fairly and distinctly settled in our favor. There can be no question as to the existence of all the conditions required above as being necessary to constitute the right of seizure. The captain of the Trent could not plead ignorance of the quality and mission of Messrs. Mason and Slidell when he took them on board. They were the objects of repeated public ovations at Havana, and were presented to the Captain General by the British Consul himself. But, even were this not so, it will be found, when the case comes to be further discussed, that ignorance of their character would constitute no ground of exemption from seizure. That principle has been laid down by some of the ablest writers on international law, and is in conformity with the precedents established by England herself. The question, if any, will turn on the pacific and unbelligerent objects of the parties seized. If simple passengers, placing themselves under the protection of the British flag, we should undoubtedly be exceeding our rights in arresting them. The address of Jefferson Davis to the rebel Congress, however, settles that issue. He has removed the only really doubtful point in the controversy by proclaiming the official character of his emissaries.

Thus all the anxiety and suspense occasioned amongst timid people by Captain Wilkes' bold act may be considered as terminated in advance of a knowledge of its effect at the other side. The London *Times* and the tory journals generally have, we presume, on receipt of the news, made a great show of indignation over it; but their ravings will have no sort of influence on the conduct of the British government. We have now an opinion from the law officers of the crown in support of the view taken by that officer of his duty, and we need trouble ourselves but little about the law of the newspapers. If, as Mr. Layard, the Under Secretary of State, assures us, the sympathies of the great body of the English people are with us, the bold and manly course taken by our officer on his own responsibility will increase their respect for our pluck, and their indisposition to meddle with us.

An Abolition Bible—What Are We Coming to?

Several of our pious contemporaries of the Satanic abolition school are particularly unctuous over a very remarkable "prophecy" which they aver has lately been exhumed from the pages of the Old Testament by an eminent divine in Boston. This wonderful prophecy is said to be in the fourth chapter of Haggai, and from it we cut the following choice *morceau*:—

And lo, behold, because of the sin of the South, her mighty men shall be as babes, her gates shall be destroyed utterly, * * * yea, utterly destroyed shall be her gates, and her rice fields shall be wasted, and her slaves set free.

It would be a curious fact to find out if some one could tell us whether this was invented by the editors of the *Independent*, or if it were the work of the Rev. Horace Greeley, extemporized as a little pious exercise in the intervals between the arranging of his gambling affairs. Probably the latter. A few years since Mr. Anson Burlingame—who is just now airing his abolitionism off in the Flowery Land among the Celestials—made a blasphemous speech in Congress that perhaps may afford a key to the new prophecy. In this speech he declared that the Boston abolitionists whom he represented—and who probably are as Simon Pure a stripe as the Beechers, the Greeleys and the Cheevers of these parts—would never be content "till they had an anti-slavery constitution, an anti-slavery Bible, and an anti-slavery God!" Now it seems very likely that this remarkable prophecy about South Carolina niggers and rice fields is part of a chapter from the first instalment of the long promised "anti-slavery Bible." This and other circumstances—some of which we shall refer to presently—would seem to indicate that the said "Bible" is in an advanced stage of progress, and forms part of a combined English and American abolition scheme to create a revolution among us, destroy the government and the country, and at the same time pollute the morals of the people by corrupting the fountain of Holy Writ. A striking evidence of the depravity that follows such courses, and the retributive justice seen in the authors themselves, being the first to fall under their own malign influence, is exhibited just now in the melancholy position of two of the leaders of the school. One of them, who is a stated preacher of the Gospel, has commenced an active agency in the circulation of immoral publications, by advertising them widely in the columns of his own religious journal. The other, who formerly preached so long as he could find audiences to listen to him, has latterly gone into the lottery business, and is also running about the city and offering to make gambling bets with everybody he meets. He even approached us with his immoral schemes, when he well knew, or might have known, that we had conscientious scruples against every species of gambling.

But to the new text of the new Bible. There are two or three little circumstances that make it improbable that the above quotation can be in the fourth or any other chapter of the Prophet Haggai. In the first place, the book contains only two chapters, and, secondly, the word "rice" does not occur in the Bible at all. Rice is supposed to have had its origin in Eastern lands, either on the banks of the Nile, in Ethiopia, near the Euphrates, or in India, and possibly it may have been an article of food in the days of the ancient Hebrew lawgivers; but neither Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, nor any of the minor prophets has ever mentioned this Oriental esculent. The inspired writers, we know, recorded simply the naked truth. They were utterly incapable of invention or misrepresentation. But with the abolitionists all things are possible, and we are glad to be able to throw some light on the path of these new prophets. A noted abolition leader in England—one John Cassell by name—an ambitious grocer, who has made some money in vending tea, molasses, soap and putty, has lately commenced the publication of the Bible in numbers, one of which is before us. We find in the ninth chapter of Exodus, and the thirty-second verse, the word "rice." By looking at any correct copy of the Bible it will be seen that the word "rice" does not occur in the chapter at all. As it will be several years before this work is all finished, at the rate it is now appearing, in numbers, there will be abundance of time to make any further interpolations in matters relating to Southern slavery, rice plantations, cotton culture, &c., &c.; and who knows how far they mean to go? Do they intend to give us Fremont's proclamation, an account of the rout of the rebels at Port Royal, or the race of the "Little Villain" from Bull run, with the disaster to the wagon which he is so reluctant to pay for?

Some may be disposed to look on this new version of the Bible as a mere literary curiosity; but we see it in a far graver light. Some two hundred and sixty years ago Theodore Beza and others issued an English translation of the Bible that is known to Biblical students and book collectors as the "Breeches Bible." In the third chapter of Genesis the first pair are represented as sewing fig leaves together and making themselves "breeches." There is still another edition of the Bible where the word "vinegar" appears instead of "vineyard." This is known as the "Vinegar Bible." Now, by the aid of the abolitionists and an ambitious grocer, whose legitimate business is to deal in rice, coffee and sugar, we have a "Rice Bible." See Exodus, chapter nine, verse thirty-two. What shall we see next? When will there dawn upon a benighted world a complete edition of the long expected "Anti-Slavery Bible?" As yet we have only some select portions. When completed we shall probably have all the chapters of the Prophet Haggai, and perhaps a new book from the Prophet Horace, in which he will give us his ideas of lotteries, gambling, &c., &c. Besides these additions we shall, no doubt, be treated to some refreshing alterations and interpolations, with accounts of rice plantations, South Carolina niggers and Yankee fleets. It is useless to anticipate; but probably we may see something like the the following:—"Is Sumner also among the prophets?" "And Lincoln said unto Davis, 'Thou art the man.'"

A BRITISH POSTAL GRIEVANCE.—It is a cause of great complaint among our merchants and others that letters to and from Great Britain, not fully prepaid, are charged with the full rate on delivery, just as if there had been no prepayment whatever. Considering that, where stamps have been put on at all, the underpayment has, in all probability, been accidental, this system is clearly inequitable. We saw a letter a few days ago with seventeen British shilling stamps, on it, upon which the receiver had to pay the full postage, because the package was a quarter of an ounce over the weight which the stamps would have paid for. This, however, is according to the treaty between the United States and England; but we submit it to the consideration of the Postmaster General to propose that the treaty should be amended in this particular. It operates badly on both sides of the Atlantic, and England would surely agree to change underpaid letters from the United States [illegible] the extra postage only, in consideration [illegible] our doing the same towards letters fr[illegible] Great Britain.

The Case of the Nashville in England.

By the arrival of the Africa we have some interesting details about the burning of the Harvey Birch by the Confederate steamer Nashville, details which correct errors in previous intelligence. It appears that, so far from the vessel destroyed being in British waters at the time of her capture, she was in north latitude 49 6, and west longitude 9 52, in seventy-five fathoms water, and some four degrees at sea, southwest of the Land's End. No point, therefore, can be raised about her being in neutral waters. Equally untrue is it that the captain of the Nashville had no commission, as Captain Nelson is alleged to have stated. On the contrary, Captain Pegram holds not merely a privateer's commission, but a commission as Lieutenant in the Confederate Navy, like the captain of the Sumter. Had he no commission, he and his crew would be hanged as pirates. What Captain Nelson probably meant was that the captain of the Nashville held no commission from any recognized or legitimate government. As England, however, has recognized, not indeed the independence of the Southern confederacy, but its rights of belligerency, and has proclaimed complete neutrality between "the American belligerents," as the London *Times* designates the United States government and the rebels, thus putting them on an equal footing, it follows, as a consequence, that the British government, to be consistent, must permit the Nashville to refit at her ports, as she did in the case of the James Adger, or would in the case of any United States ship-of-war. But refitting merely for sea, and converting the Nashville into a ship-of-war in a British port, are totally different things, and it remains to be seen whether the latter will be allowed, which is a far greater indulgence than the James Adger claimed, and is also prohibited in the Queen's proclamation. "Strict impartiality," which is the true position of a neutral, would seem to forbid the reconstruction of the Nashville for warlike purposes. It is true England might make the matter appear equal by offering our government the same permission; but it would be only appearance; for the United States do not require to have their ships-of-war built or reconstructed in British ports. They have their own ports and mechanics to rely upon.

Already the Bermuda and the Fingal have been allowed to carry arms and ammunition to the rebels from England, under the pretence of trading to the West Indies, and it is believed that both these vessels belong to the Confederate government. The Fingal is represented as iron clad, and is now at Charleston. By this mail from England we learn that the Adriatic steamship is being prepared for the same destiny in an English port. The British government may connive at these vessels, pretending to be ignorant of their character; but the case of the Nashville is entirely different. She is openly and above board a rebel steamer, and audaciously claims as a right to be converted into a vessel-of-war in a British port for the purpose of preying upon American commerce on the high seas. The government, it appears, hesitates as to its course, and has not yet decided what it will do. Meantime the police are keeping watch on the Nashville. Telegraphic messages have been going back and forward. Groups of politicians discuss the knotty points, and great excitement prevails. We shall soon see what is the real complexion of British neutrality. The London *Observer* hints that in case of any violation of the laws of strict neutrality by the Nashville while in British ports, the courts, on the representation of the American Minister, might be moved to action, as in the case of the seizure of two Sicilian ships by the government of Naples in 1858, and more recently in the case of the issue of Kossuth notes. What might be done, however, is one thing, and what will be done is another.

But there is another point to be settled, and that is whether Capt. Pegram, by the laws of war, had a right to take prisoners in irons into a neutral port. It is said he surrendered them to the American Consul; but they were in custody in British waters; and it appears that even in England "the arrival of the vessel at Southampton under the circumstances, and her landing prisoners of war, are looked upon by many persons as an infraction of the Queen's proclamation of neutrality." The next arrival from England will be looked forward to with great interest by the American people. The news will furnish us with a decided test of what we may expect hereafter at the hands of the British government.

AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS WITH THE REBELS.—We learn, from the communications which are passing between the government and the families of our officers and soldiers now in prison at the South, as well as by our despatches from Washington and Boston, that the government is taking into serious consideration a general exchange of prisoners with the rebels, or rather a mutual release on parole of the prisoners which we hold—an equal number to be released by the rebels. If this measure is carried out we shall probably soon have all our soldiers who are now in confinement back again in their homes.

This intention on the part of the government is being adopted as a matter of humanity; but it is rendered the more desirable from the horrible treatment which our officers and men are receiving in Southern prison houses. It would hardly be believed that in any civilized community prisoners of war could be treated as our soldiers are by the rebels; and one wonders how any of our race could submit their fellow citizens, as well as their fellow beings, to the brutal discipline of the Southern jails. Many of the prisoners are half starved, naked and deprived of the ordinary decencies of life. They are compelled to dwell in filth and disease. Some of our officers, high in rank, who have been accustomed to every comfort, have been denied the privilege of changing their linen for three weeks together, and they are limited to the miserable diet of bread and water, with the relish of a pint of thin soup a day.

In the face of these facts it is time that government should make an effort to relieve our prisoners from their barbarous jailors. When the rebellion is over the rebels afterwards captured and held to account can receive their deserts.

CAUCUS OF THE ABOLITION MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.—The caucus of the republican members of Congress, called by a two days' notice on Saturday evening last, in the hall of the House of Representatives, proved a complete failure. Only twelve of the radicals assembled, and the caucus was adjourned to this evening. We hope it will prove an equal abortion again.

The object of the caucus was to discuss the emancipation measure now pending in Congress, and it was hoped that resolutions would be adopted censuring the President for his conservative policy. The fact that the meeting was only attended by a dozen men is the very best endorsement the patriotic course of the President could receive. The abolitionists may as well make up their minds at once that the Satanic policy cannot be carried either by force or fraud. The people are against them. A caucus of the republican members of Congress is a very unusual proceeding; but never was a party caucus so little called for as now, when all parties are rallying to the support of the government in carrying on the war of the Union. The conservative republicans feel that it would be an insult to the democratic representatives to lend themselves to this party movement at a crisis in this nation's history when unanimity is essential to the public safety, and mere party measures cannot be sustained. If the radicals should even succeed in carrying their obnoxious bills by a majority, it is certain the President would give them a quietus by his veto; and there can be little doubt that when the abolitionists come before the people for re-election they will be sure to receive a quietus which will put them to sleep for the remainder of their lives. We have obtained reliable intelligence even from New England, where we have commissioners ascertaining the public sentiment, that the emancipation measures will not be sustained by the people; and if the administration should adopt them it would be shattered to pieces like a potter's vessel. And what, we ask, would become of the authors of such revolutionary measures?

What these fanatical politicians are seeking to do would have the effect of driving the nation back to barbarism. No modern civilized nation carries on war in the fashion which they propose. When the British government, in 1856, solicited the United States to become a party to the treaty of Paris, as regards privateering, the reply of our government was that if the humane and enlightened rule was applied to the sea which in all civilized countries is now applied to the land, that the private property of an enemy is exempt from capture, the United States would agree to the change. This shows what the position of our government and of all the governments of Europe was then upon the question of capturing an enemy's private property on land. Do the revolutionary radicals desire to commit the nation to barbarities which would deprive us of the sympathy and countenance of the civilized world? But the constitution of the United States absolutely prohibits the proposed confiscation in the case of domestic insurrection. If the abolitionists in Congress will pass an act which abolishes the constitution and dissolves the bonds of the Union, then, we ask, for what is it that the nation is now shedding its blood and treasure?

THE IRISH FAMINE AND EMIGRATION TO AMERICA.—The failure of the potato crop, which threatens Ireland with another famine not less disastrous than that of 1847–8, will result in another great exodus of its population. The popular mind will be turned to emigration as the only panacea within individual reach in the midst of the terrible distress that is likely so soon to overtake that country. The majority of the Irish peasantry, it is true, will be utterly unable to raise sufficient money to carry them to America; but hundreds of thousands will, with the scanty means at their disposal, and the assistance of friends already here, succeed in making their way to the land of the free and the home of the brave. For some months past there has been a large decrease in the number of immigrants arriving at this and other Northern ports; but we may now look forward to a sensible and continued increase in the tide of immigration. The idea has gone abroad that this is a bad time to come to the United States, for the reason that employment is said to be hardly obtainable. But this requires correction. There never was a period when an active body and a strong arm were so sure of employment as at present. All the avenues of industry are open to both the skilled and unskilled laborer, and agriculture is universally flourishing, while most of our manufactures are in brisk demand. Moreover, there is the army open to all, in which a private's daily pay is equal to many a laborer's week's wages in Ireland, besides good rations, camp and clothing. We can readily absorb the surplus population of Ireland or any other country. Our resources are so vast that all who come will find ample field for honest industry; and in a hundred years time, and with a hundred millions more people, it will be said, as now, the more the better.

THE COTTON QUESTION AND THE BLOCKADE.—One of the first measures of the rebel government was to prohibit the export of cotton, and to declare that not a pound of it should go to supply the wants of Europe. This was a stroke to compel England to force our blockade and thus get her into a war with this country. Failing to accomplish this, even by the suave whisperings of the rebel Commissioners, we find that orders are issued now to burn all the cotton on the approach of the Union troops. Apart from the uselessness of this proceeding, it will only have the effect of showing what the object of the rebel States is, and it will convince the governments of Europe that they are determined that they shall have no cotton, unless they consent to be driven into our domestic quarrel.

Such a spirit will hardly help the chances of recognition by foreign governments.

THE NAVAL CORDON AROUND REBELLION.—By the following list of footholds seized by our troops on the coast of the rebellious States, it will be seen how extensive a cordon is drawn around them on the seaboard:—

Southwest Passes	Louisiana.
Ship Island	Mississippi.
Santa Rosa Island	Florida.
Fort Pickens	Florida.
Key West	Florida.
Tortugas	Florida.
Tybee Island	Georgia.
Port Royal	South Carolina.
Hatteras	North Carolina.
Fortress Monroe	Virginia.
Newport News	Virginia.

All that is wanted to complete the circle of fire around the scorpion, and compel it to sting itself to death, is the departure of Burnside's, Butler's and the Mississippi expeditions.