Richmond Dispatch.

FRIDAY MORNING.....DEC. 27, 1861.

Death of Prince Albert—The Difficulty Between England and the United States.

Our advices from the North are to the 24th inst. The papers contain the latest news from Europe, received on the 22d. The death of Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria, is announced among the prominent items of intelligence. He died after a brief illness, of gastric fever, and the royal house of England is suddenly plunged into affliction, which temporarily diverts attention from affairs on this side of the Atlantic. We have, however, a statement that the British merchant marine had been warned by the Government that war with the United States was imminent. Further developments of the policy of the Lincoln Cabinet in regard to Messrs. Mason and Slidell, will be found in the telegraphic column.

From the North.

From passengers just arrived from the North via the Potomac, we learn that Federal troops fill the whole Maryland shore, 9,000 cavalry being in St. Mary's county; and yet there is a way of passing through the hands of the corruptible Sickles. They report that the shrewdest of the Yankees argue that "a war with England about two old men won't pay. No dollars and cents are in it." And, if they are not interrupted, they will soon have affairs in such condition that Virginia will speedily become their prey. They gloat over the rich prize of cotton stolen from South Carolina, and revel in imaginary bliss on the possession of the cities and farms of Virginia. Their only fear seems to be that, when they advance, the Virginians will "submit," and avoid confiscation. They say it is a "heavenly climate," from this specimen of a winter, and that they will never winter again in the North. They really seem vexed at the number of "disgusted exiles" returning from Richmond, and express a hope that the "bogus Secretaries of the South will treat the flying patriots more kindly." Seward is to be William the Conqueror.

These gentlemen from the North have furnished us with Baltimore papers of a recent date.

The *American*, of the 21st, says "the belief strengthens and deepens that there will be no war with England." The Fernandina expedition had been abandoned. General Sherman had ordered the Yankee reporters home from Port Royal. General Wright's brigade occupies Tybee Island.

The "two boys" sent North by the Secretary of War with Capt. Ricketts and the Rev. Mr. Mines, have given the Washington Government much valuable information concerning the batteries on the Potomac, the Confederate fortifications, troops, hospitals, &c., such as they never could have obtained, without meeting (by consent or otherwise) with Lincoln emissaries and pensioners in Richmond. The *American*, of the 21st, has a minute and extended account of their information, headed "Position of the Rebel Forces." "The boys" say they visited the Rebel fortifications northwest of Richmond, on which they saw mounted nearly twenty-five guns. "Muskets," say they "are so scarce that when the guard comes round at the prisons on relief, they come without guns, making one set do the whole duty." Further—"At Richmond it is believed that General Burnside's expedition is to move up the Potomac to attack and capture the rebel batteries on the right bank. As an indication of the existence of an *anti-war feeling*, they state that the proprietor of the Exchange Hotel said he would give five thousand dollars if the war was over." They say when they arrived in Richmond they were confined one night in the tobacco warehouse. Then "they were taken before Gen. Winder, and Mr. Benjamin, Secretary of War, who promptly ordered their discharges, and thence to be sent forward."

We are assured by passengers just arrived from beyond the Potomac, who have not been able to see any of our Cabinet, that a portion of Burnside's expedition, most of which is still at Annapolis, is destined to assail Norfolk, landing a force so as to attack the city in the rear. Another portion is to attack Newbern, N. C. This place they mean to occupy permanently—if they can.

It is also stated by these gentlemen that demonstrations are to be made against Augusta, Memphis, and Knoxville.

Brady's Rocket Regiment has proceeded to Washington. What is it for?

The *American* has a list of "Union Contributions" for the army, consisting of trifling donations of clothing and money. The latter in sums of two dollars and three dollars. This is a poor imitation of our "patriotic contributions" registered at the passport office, amounting to more than $100,000 per month.

Affairs on the Upper Potomac.

We have a letter confirming the report that Gen. Jackson crossed over and destroyed the locks and dams on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, thus cutting off very materially the supplies which were sent by this route to Washington. The Federal General, Kelly, is still at Romney, with about 5,000 men.—He occasionally sends out marauding parties, several hundred strong, to carry off provisions, burn barns, &c.

Our own army on the upper Potomac has comparatively few sick, and the cases, as a general rule, yield readily to medical treatment.

Postage Stamps and Treasury Notes.

While the postage stamps now in use have answered their purpose very well, and have relieved the community of a serious inconvenience, it is desirable to have them engraved in such a style as to defy any attempt at imitation. We are therefore gratified to learn that a contract has been made by the Postmaster General, with an accomplished steel engraver, who has located in this city, by which the public will soon be supplied with stamps of different denominations, executed in the best style of art. They will bear the likenesses of different statesmen of the South, and thus each denomination will be readily distinguished from the other. The same engraver is preparing the plates for a new issue of Confederate Treasury notes, to be printed on fine paper, which will supply the place of those now in circulation.

Congressman Ely at the Passport Office.

When Mr. Ely (exchanged for Mr. Faulkner) called at the office for his passport, a hearty laugh occurred over the *brown paper* on which it was printed, and which had been contracted for by the superintendent of public printing. He asked if it was Southern manufacture. The passport officer replied in the affirmative, and suggested that he should exhibit the specimen in the North, and say that although crude in its origin, we would refine upon it, and never cease striving for independence until we could make as good paper as the Yankees. The Yankee M. C. said he had no doubt we would arrive at the dignity of *white paper*.

A Stray Cur in the Federal Kennel.

We take pleasure in announcing that the claim of "Mr. Foster, of North Carolina" to a seat in the Federal House of Representatives has been rejected by that incomparable body of Yankee sneaks and negro stealers. The Northern papers inform us that it is regarded as a just rebuke of an attempt to gain a seat by taking advantage of the peculiar condition of public affairs, without having been chosen by any number of citizens anywhere to represent them." This is a plain instance of Satan rebuking sin; but it hits the nail on the head, nevertheless.

Commercial Speculations.

It is suspected that some of the patriotic merchants who have been so successful in "putting through" their friends to the North have negotiated large sales of cotton. They *buy* it for 7 cents, and *sell* for 38 cents. *How* it is delivered, and *who* delivers it, is another story

The Battle of Alleghany Mountain—Winter "Comforts" of Our Troops—General Loring's Special Order.

Our correspondent "T. S.," to whom we are indebted for a graphic description of the battle of Alleghany Mountain, heretofore published, writes from Col. Johnson's camp, under date of 17th inst, that "our victory was, indeed, a brilliant one, and probably the hardest fought battle of the war. The enemy's loss was very severe, and although they carried off many wagon loads of dead and wounded, and left many dead bodies upon the field, yet we continue to find their dead behind logs and in the crevices of the rocks every day since the battle. So fatal was the fire of our troops, that nearly all the dead enemy found were shot through the head or breast." The writer adds:

We have a very hard time of it upon these mountains, yet we bear it without a murmur. Isolated from the balance of the world, deprived of every comfort, and doomed to the most desolate spot in North America, we are still ready to suffer even more for our noble Commonwealth, and our dearest rights. Our homes are in possession of the enemy, and as we have no sutler at this post, we are unable even to procure a pipe, much less the comforts of life. Just think of men sleeping in the open air, on the bare ground, upon the summit of Alleghany, in the latter part of December! We do this thing nightly since the battle. Last night I slept behind a log, the wind blowing a hurricane, the keen blast piercing through my blanket and clothing, and chilling every drop of my blood. Our men bear all these privations cheerfully, and express a firm determination to fight the war through. It is true we would prefer being sent to some point where we could purchase necessary supplies, and were under marching orders; but the conflict of the 13th has changed the order, and we will probably now have to winter on Alleghany.

The congratulatory order of Col. Johnson to his troops has already been published, and we have now received the following, issued by Gen. Loring, on the day after the fight:

HDQRS. ARMY OF N. W.,
STAUNTON, VA., December 14, 1861.

Order No. 9.—The General commanding learns, with great gratification, of the splendid achievement on the 13th instant, of the troops under Col. E. Johnson, on the summit of Alleghany. With only 1,200 effective men he met and repulsed the enemy, 5,000 strong, with heavy loss, after a hotly contested battle of seven hours' duration.

Mourning the loss of our gallant comrades who have fallen, he deeply sympathizes with the honorable wounded, and offers his sincere thanks to the officers and soldiers of the command for their brilliant victory.

By order of Gen. Loring.

J. M. BARTON, A. A. A. G.

Lord Lyons and the Lincoln Government.

Intelligence received in official quarters represents that Lord Lyons has made a demand upon the Lincoln Government for the immediate restoration of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, and that the demand met with a peremptory refusal. We give the statement as we received it, preferring to await positive developments before placing implicit faith in any report.

Killed and Wounded of the Sixth South Carolina Regiment.

We learn from official sources that the killed in this regiment at the bloody ambuscade at Drainsville amounted to 17; wounded, 48. Total 65.

FROM NORFOLK.

Christmas at Norfolk—Congressman Ely—The Murderer of Coffee—Negro Hiring—Ladies' Fair, &c.

[SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE OF THE DISPATCH.]

NORFOLK, Dec. 26, 1861.

Yesterday was, comparatively, a quiet day in Norfolk. With very few exceptions, the stores were closed, and a large number of persons attended church. On some of the streets, as usual at Christmas, a number of boys were engaged in firing off "pop-crackers," as they are called here. Occasionally the discharge of pistols was heard; but owing to the high price of powder, the firing of guns, pistols, &c., was much less frequent than on former occasions.

Mr. Ely, the Federal prisoner, of whom much has been said, and who was exchanged for Mr. Faulkner, passed through this city yesterday, en route for the land of Yankee notions. He went down to Fort Monroe, yesterday afternoon, by flag of truce.

The individual charged with shooting and killing Coffee, on Monday, appeared before the Mayor on Tuesday, and after an investigation of the case, was discharged on giving bail in the sum of $1,000.

The troublesome business of hiring servants, removing furniture, and changing places of residence, has already commenced. The custom of making these changes during the Christmas holidays and at the first of the year causes much inconvenience and trouble, and it would be wise to change the time, say to the first of October. Such an arrangement is greatly desired by many persons in our city, and it is not improbable that suitable measures will be taken at no distant day to effect the proposed improvement.

A number of ladies of our city are preparing to hold a fair, the proceeds of which will be used for the benefit of the Sixth Regiment of Virginia Volunteers. The fair, I learn, will be opened this evening in Johnson's Hall.

Concerts are being held in the Opera House for the benefit of the poor. By this means a number of Amateur Minstrels and others are contributing greatly to the relief of the needy and the suffering.

There is a handsome display of artillery in our streets to-day. Officers, men, horses, arms, and carriages all looked well, and passed no doubt very creditably the close inspection given them by that veteran artillerist, Major General Huger, who, with his able assistants, are actively engaged in completing the defences of this section of the State.

After a long spell of clear, bright weather, clouds have overspread the sky, and snow is predicted by the weather wise. The atmosphere, however, seems too mild and damp for snow; but we shall no doubt have rain very shortly, which is greatly needed at this time.

[Correspondence of the Richmond Dispatch.]

Affairs in Fincastle.

FINCASTLE, VA., Dec. 22, 1861.

Refugees from the Western counties are coming to, and going through this place, almost daily, being driven from their happy homes by the Hessians of the North.

It is reported that the Yankees are now at Lewisburg—some say they are certainly at Meadow Bluff. Even if there, it is thought they will come on no farther. The timid express fears, but the people generally have every confidence in the Government, and believe that the withdrawal of our troops from the West is for the best.

The dull monotony which usually prevails has recently been disturbed by the trial of Dinguid Riddlesbarger for the homicide of William Anderson, both citizens of our county.

It having been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the said William Anderson attempted to cowhide Mr. Riddlesburger, and without sufficient justification, and that Mr. R. had slew him in self-defence, he was unanimously and honorably acquitted. The prisoner received the congratulations of all present; and, being a volunteer, is now at liberty to rejoin his company, recently in the Northwest.

On the Saturday previous a difficulty originated between two of our citizens, Mr. Woodville Bowyer and Dr. W. Gibbon Carter. Mr. Bowyer addressed to Dr. Carter a challenge. Dr Carter, so far from either accepting or refusing said challenge, went before a justice of the peace and stated that he was afraid Mr. Bowyer would inflict upon him bodily injury, and, therefore, desired a warrant for his arrest.

This was granted according to law, and, Mr B. now being under bonds, Dr. C. frequents the streets as usual. QUILL.

DEATH OF A GALLANT SOLDIER.—Maj. Frank R. Bloom, of Macon, Aid to Gen. Henry R. Jackson, died on the night of the 19th inst., of pneumonia, at Macon, Ga. He distinguished himself at Sewell's Point and at Greenbrier; and was possessed of all the generous qualities and greatness of soul, which characterize the true patriot and soldier, and in the community in which he lived no man was more beloved or had more devoted friends.

A NOVEL DUEL.—In New Orleans, a few days ago, a challenge was sent and accepted by one gentleman to another. The seconds of the parties had a conference, and decided that, in view of the demand at this time for the preservation of every Southerner's life to expel the invading Yankees from our soil, deadly weapons should be laid aside, and that the combatants should settle their difficulty *a la* Heenan and Sayers. The fight is to come off in a few days

A bill has been introduced in the Tennessee Legislature authorizing the Governor to take possession of all the salt in store, on ship board or held for sale in the State, for public use and for other purposes.

The *Southern Rural Gentleman*, of Grenada, Miss., has suspended publication.

THE MASON-SLIDELL AFFAIR.

THE BRITISH ULTIMATUM.

The English North American Fleet Ordered to Boston.

&c., &c., &c.

We have received a large number of Northern papers, and from their columns obtain much that is interesting and new concerning the all-absorbing topic which is now agitating the public mind—that is, the arrest of Mason and Slidell. Many of our extracts are taken from papers of the 20th instant, which lose none of their interest; for, though in our last issue we copied from Northern journals of the 21st, yet papers of the 20th have entirely failed to reach us before our present issue:

[Special Correspondence of the Maryland News Sheet.]

THE MASON-SLIDELL AFFAIR—LORD LYONS'S DISPATCHES.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20.—It is currently reported among the English residents here, that the tenor of Lord Lyons's dispatches received by the Europa is very simple. He is instructed to demand the absolute delivery of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, and their secretaries. The question will be discussed afterwards. The gun-boat Landrill, which sailed Tuesday for New York, has dispatches to Admiral Milne, directing him to repair at once with a large fleet to Boston harbor to receive the Southern Commissioners. The fleet will be composed of about 45 vessels.

[Special Washington dispatch to the New York Tribune.]

OPINIONS IN WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON, December 21.—Captain Seymour, messenger to Lord Lyons, came here direct from Boston, in an express train, at an expense of $170. Mr. Adams sent no courier; but the dispatch agent at Boston put the bag in charge of a Captain of the Twenty-second Massachusetts Regiment, who did not get here till this morning. At 1 o'clock, Lord Lyons called on the Secretary of State, who was then at the Capitol. He called again at three o'clock. The communication which he made is yet a secret. No Cabinet meeting has been held on the subject.

The general feeling of the city is less warlike than at first, and people talk coolly of sending the Confederate Commissioners, if it can be done without a sacrifice of honor, back, rather than to engage at this time in a foreign war. The report that members of the Cabinet entertain a similar view of the question gains currency and finds belief. But, while it is not true that such a conclusion has been arrived at in Cabinet meeting on the one hand, it is untrue on the other hand that the determination not to surrender under any circumstances, or for any consideration, is absolute—that, while the Government will do nothing to provoke hostility, it will guard well the national honor.

Should arbitration be proposed, it may be accepted; should a sufficient consideration for the surrender of Slidell and Mason be offered, it may be made.

A prominent member of the Government stated in conversation this evening that Lord Lyons would not demand his passports, that Mason and Slidell would not be given up, and that there was no probability of a war with England. The Rinaldo, which left Halifax on the arrival of the Europa, it was thought for the purpose of communicating with the squadron, is reported at Annapolis awaiting the embarkation of Lord Lyons, should he wish to go to England.

Englishmen here continue confident of war between the two countries. This opinion, however, is based upon no official communication, and while it excites some unpleasant feeling carries no weight. Several Englishmen now serving in our army—among them Col. Havelock and Capt. Stewart—have, it is declared, signified their intention to resign should further complication ensue. In other cases painful evidences of sudden hostility to our cause have been shown. The general feeling, however, appears to be a sincere regret at what they regard the inevitable issue.

Mr. Adams's dispatches have little to say touching the affair of the Trent he having received no communication on the subject from the British Government. On the case of the Nashville he had made representations, but had received no reply.

THE TRENT AFFAIR IN ENGLAND.

Private letters from England (of which many have reached Washington) speak of the excitement there as intense, reminding the Americans there of the feeling of the North after Fort Sumter fell.

Our correspondent, under date of December 4th, speaks of seeing a newly painted cab, on Oxford street, with the British and Confederate flags crossed on a panel, and little secession flags for sale on the street. At the adelphi theatre, controlled by Dion Boucicault, where the Octoroon was playing, the Stars and Stripes which had floated there were wrapped round the staff, and the Stars and Bars displayed. The Tories were urging on the popular feeling in the hope of getting power, and the Whigs were striving to outdo them in order to retain it.

The London *Times*, at first doubtful as to our right, having changed front after it had learned the opinion of the law officers of the Crown, journals, large and small, except two or three Irish ones, rivaled each other in fierce anti-American articles.

[Special Washington Despatch to the New York Herald.]

THE MASON AND SLIDELL AFFAIR.

An absurd rumor has circulated to-day that the Government last evening decided to surrender Mason and Slidell, is without any foundation whatever. Up to eleven o'clock last night Lord Lyons had made no communication from his Government to the President or Secretary of State relative to the seizure of the traitors, Mason and Slidell.

The French Minister gave a dinner this evening. The British, Spanish, Russian, and other ministers were present. In conversation the tables were rather turned upon the French Minister that he had received no instructions from his Government on the Mason and Slidell affair, since France has remained as the chosen ally of England. This was pleasantly done, but the French Minister did not relish the joke.

The President has important private letters, that will have great weight in the summing up of this tri-colorous imbroglio, Senator Sumner, chairman of the Committee on Finance interrupted the proceedings of the Senate to-day by moving that the body go into executive session to consider important business, communicated by special messenger of the President. The motion prevailed. The message contained highly important documents concerning our foreign relations, but having no reference to the Mason and Slidell affair. It concerns the tripartite expedition to the Gulf, which is after all of more importance to this government than anything now agitating the public mind in this country. The message was ordered to be printed. The Mason and Slidell affair is only employed by the British government as a pretext while they employ their forces in another direction to destroy our power and strengthen their own.

[Special Dispatch of the New York World.]

THE BRITISH DISPATCHES—A BRITISH WAR STEAMER REPORTED AT ANNAPOLIS.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 19.—An extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet was held to day and the views of the British Government relative to the seizure of Mason and Slidell on board the Trent were laid before it. Soon after an executive session of the Senate took place at the request of Senator Sumner, the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, and rumor has been busy in attributing its secret session to the consideration of the all important subject. The interest manifested in the pending diplomacy is very great, though accompanied with not the least excitement. The intimations which are to be heard in influential though not official circles lead to the belief that there will be some peaceful solution of the troubles, and, of course, no foreign war. Idle rumors prevail in many circles, but as they are not based on the least shadow of fact, I refrain from telegraphing them. It is stated, however, that a British war steamer is now at Annapolis ready to take Lord Lyons to England should his diplomatic relations cease. It is believed that Lord Lyons has not yet made any official communications to the Secretary of State on the affair of the Trent. A number of private letters have been received from England representing the excitement as intense, but the speculations on the subject are similar to those indulged in by the press of that country.

LORD LYONS AND THE GOVERNMENT.

The Washington *Star*, of Thursday afternoon, says "up to noon to-day the State Department had received no communication from Lord Lyons with reference to the affair of the Trent. Many unfounded rumors to the contrary are afloat. The stories afloat alluding to what Lord Lyons proposes to write to this Government are not worth the paper on which they are written.

[From the Tribune, of Dec. 23d.]

THE WAY TO DO IT.

It seems as if there need be no serious difficulty in settling the Mason and Slidell case. According to the advices which reach us from England the act of Capt. Wilkes is pronounced by the advisers of the Government regular and in conformity with the law of nations up to the point of the removal of the Confederate Commissioners from the deck of the mail steamer. The stoppage in *transitu* and the search were entirely in accordance with the dicta of Stowell and other British authorities; but the Trent should, it seems, have been brought into port and the question of contraband passengers submitted to the decision of a court of admiralty.

Now, if this turns out to be the theory of the British Government, the whole case admits of a very easy and pacific settlement. Let Captain Wilkes proceed to Boston in the San Jacinto, let him take Messrs. Mason and Slidell on board, proceed with them to the Bahama channel, and restore the *status quo* by placing them on the deck of the Trent, with an ample apology for his irregular proceeding. The honor of the British flag and the nice technicalities of the law being thus satisfied, let him bring the Trent and the Confederate Commissioners into port, and the whole matter may then be regularly adjudicated.

[From the Boston Courier.]

AN APOLOGY, BUT NO SURRENDER.

Now, if we have committed a technical trespass under the pressure of most urgent and irresistible motives, let us follow the magnanimous example of England, and say so in the dignified phraseology and "large utterance" of diplomacy. A powerful nation can always afford to be magnanimous. England ought not, and we believe will not, ask anything more. Her Ministers must know that to demand the surrender of Mason and Slidell would be simply to demand an impossibility. This would be a humiliation to which the country could not be expected to submit.

[From the New York World, Dec. 20.]

THE WAR PEELING IN CANADA.

The news from England relative to the warlike preparations, going on there, on account of the late alleged insult to the British flag, has aroused the good people of Canada to the highest pitch of excitement, and led them to take steps for the immediate arming of the citizens and organizing a strong military force for the protection of the frontier from invasion, and such offensive measures as may hereafter be deemed advisable in case of a rupture between the United States and Great Britain. In Toronto, especially, the warlike aspect of affairs has caused the utmost activity to prevail among the sedentary militia and members of the volunteer companies. The only topic of conversation in the streets and in the bar rooms, for some days past, has been the prospect of a war with the Northern States of the Union. New volunteer companies are being organized in every direction, and their words and actions are drill, drill, drill. The utmost degree of loyalty to the British government in the impending difficulty is manifested by Canadians of every rank. The Volunteer Rifle company of Toronto, after their drill of Tuesday night, paraded the streets, headed by a band of fifes and drums, playing the popular air of "Dixie's Land." The Montreal *Commercial Advertiser* says that for some time past, the Federal government has been assembling a large number of troops along the Canadian frontier; also, that the fortifications at Sacketts Harbor are being put in a state of repair with all possible dispatch, the men working on Sundays as well as week days. These movements it considers as a menace to Canada, and the Canadians are therefore bound to prepare for the worst. They feel assured that Canada will receive the assistance of the whole power of the British Empire; therefore should the U. States determine to prefer war rather than make reparation for the alleged outrage on the Trent, the discussion on the subject will occupy the entire winter. As soon as navigation opens in the spring, they consider that Canada would be safe from invasion, for then, as they contend, the gun-boat fleet would be able to take and keep possession of the Lakes. This fleet, says a Canadian journal, now numbers two hundred and twenty vessels, from 100 to 200 feet long, drawing from 4 to 9 feet water, and carrying from 2 to 6 heavy guns, chiefly 68-pounders, and all propelled by steam. There are also one hundred and eight steam mortar boats, the whole of which can pass up the St. Lawrence canals, and a large portion up to Rideau. Such a force, independent of the blockade of the seaboard and the pressure of the Confederates on their side, will find the Northern army plenty of employment without invading Canada, which will then be covered by the largest British army ever arrayed on this continent.

MR. VALLANDIGHAM'S MISTAKE.

[From the Cincinnati Enquirer.]

We think Mr. Vallandigham made a mistake in introducing the resolution he did to stand by the administration in defending the arrest of Mason and Slidell. His motives in the first place are liable to misconstruction, and he of course gets no credit for patriotic motives. Even the paper in this city which threatened with the gallows any one who should falter in supporting the administration in resisting the demands of England, is among the first to abuse Mr. V. for offering a resolution pledging Congress to stand by the President in this new emergency. In the next place a matter of such grave importance should not be taken in charge by a member of the opposition. As the responsibility of the course to be pursued in this emergency will rest with the administration, the special friends of the administration in Congress should take their own way and time in determining what should be done. Then, again, Mr. V. made a grave mistake in supposing the Republican leaders are governed by any fixed policy beyond what is wrapped up in the neg.o. They went off half cocked, as did also the Secretary of the Navy, in saying anything about the arrest of Mason and Slidell. The matter should have been kept under consideration and no declaration made of an official opinion unless the Government intended at all hazards to maintain the justice and propriety of the arrest. Neither the Administration nor Congress is now, in view of the temper of the British public, ready to say what should be done in the new emergency. Had they been fit for their places they would not be in a position where they may be compelled to undergo the humiliation of undoing their own work on the demand of a foreign power. Not knowing their own minds, and having a fugacious policy, Mr. V. made a mistake in supposing they would stand by any position they had before assumed.

[Special dispatch to the Baltimore News Sheet.]

SAILING OF THE AFRICA WITH DISPATCHES FOR ENGLAND.

NEW YORK, Dec. 20.—The Africa sailed at 6 o'clock this morning for Liverpool.

Captain Seymour, the Queen's messenger and bearer of dispatches for his Government, and a bearer of dispatches to our Minister, Mr Adams, went out in her. Dispatches from Lord Lyons to Admiral Milne were also placed aboard the British gunboat Landrill, which sailed immediately for Bermuda.

[Extract from an editorial in the News Sheet, of the 21st.]

"We are enabled to give what we believe to be the correct tenor of the dispatches of the British Government to Lord Lyons. It will be noticed that the demand is restricted for the present to the surrender of the Southern Commissioners on board a British vessel; and that a dispatch has been sent to Admiral Milne directing him to proceed at once to Boston harbor with a fleet of forty-five vessels. We have every reason to believe that the statement which we have given is correct in every particular."

The New York *Times* in an article counsels the Government to lay an embargo on ship timber against Great Britain in retaliation for her embargo against the exportation of arms and munitions of war.

The Baltimore *News Sheet*, of the 20th inst., has a long editorial on the subject of the arrest of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, from which we take the following extract:

The affair of the Trent occupies so largely the attention of the European press, and is, moreover, regarded as so serious a provocation to war that we continue to republish from the English journals such articles as may serve best to indicate the present temper of the English people towards the United States. That the British Government is prepared to go to war on this question is as certain as that it deprecates a resort to hostilities if the appeal to arms can be avoided without lowering the dignity of the flag. It is also equally clear that on this as well as the general course of policy which is to be pursued with regard to American affairs the Governments of France and England are acting in perfect accord.

The impression seems to be gaining ground in political circles that Messrs. Mason and Slidell will be given up. The New York *Times*—good authority upon matters relating to Secretary Seward's Department—states that a Cabinet meeting was held on Tuesday last, where, in the absence of Lord Lyon's dispatches, the question was informally considered. The conclusion reached was that there must be no quarrel with England—in other words, that the demands of the British Government should be complied with. The reasons given for restoring Messrs. Mason and Slidell to the deck of a British vessel are curious enough. "The Government is probably satisfied," says the correspondent of the *Times*, "that this clamor for a war with England originates with and is propagated by sympathisers with the Southern rebellion."

As none of the journals have openly advocated "war with England," but many have declared emphatically that Messrs. Mason and Slidell would never be surrendered—among these being the New York *Times*, the *World*, the *Herald*, the Philadelphia *Press*, and the Baltimore *American*—the natural inference is that these papers, by theory of "no surrender," which means war and nothing else, are open to suspicion as sympathizers with the Southern rebellion. However this may be, the facts remain that the Government has concluded to yield the point at issue, although the language in which the *Times's* correspondent couches the announcement leaves it to be understood that this course has been adopted, not so much to satisfy England as to disappoint those who sympathize with the Southern cause. The artifice of words has rarely been more discreetly employed. The Washington correspondent of the Philadelphia *Inquirer* also states that the question will be amicably settled.

On the other hand, the correspondent of the New York *Tribune* asserts that it is "sure that the Government "has decided to return Mason and Slidell." So likewise asserts the correspondent of the *Herald*, who writes on what purports to be "the highest authority," that "the possibility of their surrender, under any circumstances, does not now exist; that the President is immovable on this point." Nevertheless, and in spite of the oracular outgivings of the *Tribune* and the *Herald*, the current belief is that the Commissioners will be restored, and that promptly. Further confirmation of the intention of the Government to release them may be found in the dispatch which is said to have been received at New York yesterday by Secretary Chase, announcing that the Trent affair "will be amicably settled."

LATEST SOUTHERN NEWS.

Our Southern exchanges furnish us the following items of interest:

FROM THE POTOMAC—SINKING OF A YANKEE VESSEL BY A CONFEDERATE BATTERY.

From the Fredericksburg *Recorder*, of the 24th inst. we take the following:

The only item of striking moment from this line that we can gather is the fact that on Sunday evening about dusk, Capt. Cook's battery, than which there is none more efficient in the Southern service, opened near Mathias' Point on an upward bound three masted vessel, (merchantman,) and in some five or six shots succeeded in sinking her.—Our informant was not able to say whether the crew was saved, but is certain as to the sinking of the vessel.

Shortly after this occurrence the Freeborn came steaming down, and opened upon the battery but after some fifteen or twenty well directed shots from Cook's battery she was induced to retreat in good order to the Maryland shore.

We learn in a conversation with soldiers on furlough from Evansport, that, on Sunday a large steamer attempted to pass up but that she was fired upon by our rifled guns and forced to put back down the stream.

On Sunday morning a small vessel managed to pass down, though she was fired at some twenty or more times.

Yesterday everything was quiet as far as we could hear, at Evansport and also at Aquia Creek.

OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE WOODSONVILLE FIGHT

The following order of Major General Hardee, giving a report of the recent fight near Woodsonville, is in most admirable taste.—It expresses much in few words, and is as modest as it is eloquent:

HEADQUARTERS CENTRAL ARMY KY.
Bowling Green, Dec. 21, 1861.

Special Order No. 64—On the 17th instant, our forces under brigadier Gen. Hindman, partially engaged a superior force of the enemy near Woodsonville. In the action we sustained a loss of four killed and nine wounded. The enemy was driven back and lost about fifty killed and seven prisoners. The conduct of our troops was marked by righteous valor. In charging the enemy, Col. Terry of the Texas Rangers, was killed in the hour of the victory. His regiment deplore the loss of a brave and beloved commander,—the army one of its ablest officers.

The General commanding returns his thanks to Brig. Gen. Hindman and his command, for their conduct in the initiative of the campaign in Kentucky, and he hails the brilliant courage shown in the affair as a bright augury of more valor when the actual hour comes for striking a decisive blow.

By order of MAJ. GEN. HARDEE.

D. H. White, Act. A. A. Gen.

THE YANKEE STONE FLEET OFF CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA.

From the Charleston *Courier*, of the 21st, inst., we extract the following:

On Thursday last Federal vessels kept arriving off this harbor during the entire day, and on Friday morning not less than twenty-three of all classes were in sight. As well as could be noticed with a spy glass from a distance of three or four miles, there were some four gun-boats, one large steamer which looked like a frigate, and the balance appeared to be mostly sailing vessels. One of their steamers was stationed to the Northeast of the Bar, near the Rattlesnake Shoal, and the remainder of their fleet was near the old ship bar. During Thursday night and Friday morning, with the weather calm, the sea smooth, and a moonlight night, they succeeded in sinking some seven hulks, consisting of two ships and five barks.

This is the first step in the Lincoln programme to try and permanently blockade this port. The hulks lay on their sides with a list aport, some of them having already been stripped of their canvas, and others had their sails flying loose. A small steamer of very light draft was seen moving actively about, and she was supposed to be the tug used to place the vessels in position previous to sinking. They had, it is thought, about 15 old vessels to sink, which, if placed in single file, and allowing the large amount of 200 feet obstructing capacity to each vessel, the whole will block a space about 3,000 feet.

The latest reports from the bar last evening say that the enemy had sunk 15 vessels, and from appearances it is inferred that all their hulks which have been brought here up to this time have been made use of, and that those now remaining outside are blockaders.

FROM TYBEE ISLAND.

We copy the following from the Savannah *News*, of the 23d inst.:

The only news we have from Tybee is by the Ida. On Saturday the wind blew fresh from the Northeast and the sea ran high. During Saturday forenoon two large Federal sailing vessels endeavored to come in from the North. They were sailing directly on the North breakers, when a Federal frigate inside fired guns to warn them off, but the wind being high, they probably did not hear the report of the guns of the frigate. One of them went ashore on the North breakers, and it is doubtful if she can be got off. The other ship stood off, and we have not heard what became of her.

By the Ida, which again arrived from Fort Pulaski last night, we learn that the Federal vessel ashore on the North breaker is in a bad position. She thumped heavily on Sunday morning, and the sea being high there was very little prospect of their being able to get her off. A Federal tug endeavored to approach her yesterday, but was compelled to abandon the attempt. Our pilots say that she will be lost, as no vessel that ever got on that shoal has ever been saved.

There has been quite a gale at sea during the last few days.

FROM TEXAS—THE ENEMY OFF THE COAST, &C.

From the Galveston *Civilian*, of the 12th inst., we take the annexed items:

From the indications there are a number of vessels in this vicinity and to the westward. They amused themselves on Sunday night by sending up fire balloons, I suppose, to gratify their penchant for "gassing." It is probable they will strike first on the Rio Grande, although all portions of the coast should be watched.

The following is an extract from a letter to the Houston *Telegraph*, dated Fort Stockton, Nov. 23:

Since writing the above we reached this place by a night march of over twenty miles, having marched yesterday thirty miles. At noon yesterday had express that 7,000 Federals had landed at Guaymas, and were to invade Texas via Chihuahua, and that the Governor there had orders from Mexico not to offer any resistance to their march. "We are not ordered to do the same, and shall offer resistance wherever we meet them." Major Raquet, with Hardeman's and Croson's companies, and Lieut. Reilly's artillery, were three days ago pushed on rapidly in advance, at Fort Davis. Lieut. Colonel Scurry is close in the rear with his detachment of my regiment.

THE ARKANSAS CONSPIRATORS.

We learn that the Little Rock *Journal*, of the 17th, that the seventy-eight prisoners, whose arrest in Searcy county we have noticed, were brought before the military board, and after an investigation were all released. They protested their devotion to the Confederacy, and claimed that the organization contemplated no more criminal intent than to insure them against the hostilities of an invading army. The leaders, it was evident, contemplated criminal interior designs, but their followers were in the dark as to what was proposed. They forthwith formed themselves into a company, elected their officers from those who had arrested and escorted them as a guard from their native county, and were sworn into the service of the Confederate States "for and during the war." The *Journal* says that the scene which followed their release, the touching remarks of the Governor, and their solemn enlistment into the Confederate service was a very affective and impressive one.

LATER FROM KENTUCKY.

The Columbus (Ky.) *Confederate News*, of the 20th instant, says:

A friend, just from Owensboro, has called upon us, from whom we learn that the Northern troops, under command of Tom Crittenden, Jim Jackson and Col. Burbridge, have left Henderson, Owensboro, and Hartford, and have concentrated at Calhoun, on Green river. Our informant says they speak of moving toward Hopkinsville, but from indications which he saw, his opinion is that they purpose going into winter quarters. They have 8 or 10 pieces of artillery, and about 6,000 men, all told.

LINCOLN VANDALS AT EDDYVILLE, KY.

The Bowling Green *Courier*, of the 23d, says:

A band of Lincoln vandals, led by P. D. Yeiser, landed at Eddyville on the 19th inst., and, true to their infamous instincts, forthwith set about gratifying their thieving propensities. They entered the office of R. H. Cobb, Esq., and destroyed his desks, papers, and everything else of a destructible character. They knocked a large hole in his vault, but failed in their efforts to open his safe. They destroyed everything in the office of Robert Cobb, who is now first Lieutenant in Capt. Lyons's artillery company at Bowling Green. They then made a descent upon the grocery establishments, and after getting heartily drunk they loaded their gun-boat and steamed away in search of other prey.

This fellow Yeiser swears hugely, and threatens the desolation of the entire Cumberland border.

ATTEMPT AT BRIDGE BURNING—THE INCENDIARY HUNG.

The Rome (Ga.) *Southerner* says an attempt was made to burn the bridge across Pettet's Creek, on the State Road, one and a half miles above Cartersville, on Monday night, the 23d inst., by a man—whose name we did not learn—from East Tennessee. He had been seen about there several days, and had excited considerable suspicion—so much so that he was watched. They saw him pour alcohol on the bridge, and was in the act of setting fire to it when caught. He had lit a match for that purpose. He owned up, and was hanged on Tuesday in Cassville.

ARKANSAS INTELLIGENCE.

Seventy-seven additional persons arrived at Little Rock on the 14th, who had been captured in Searcy county. They were a part of the gang of conspirators whose nest was discovered and broken up in Van Buren county a short time ago. The *Journal* states that the foul conspiracy (which was the work of a fanatical old free-will Baptist preacher, aided by a few hoary-headed old sinners, who have been long living in crime and wickedness among the barrens of the Northern border counties,) has been promptly broken up by the vigilance and prompt action of the loyal citizens of those counties.

ACCIDENT ON THE SAVANNAH RAILROAD.—About 2 o'clock yesterday morning, a collision occurred on the Charleston and Savannah Railroad, between two freight trains, in which, we regret to say, the popular and obliging Conductor, Mr. Bradley, had his left arm seriously injured. The collision occurred at Adams Run. Both trains were running on the same schedule towards Charleston, but the one in the rear running faster than the forward one, which showed no light in the hindmost car, was the cause of the accident. Mr. Conductor Bradley was the only person seriously injured; a few others were slightly scratched. Two of the cars were broken up and the engine, which ran into the forward train, was disabled.—*Charleston Mercury, 23rd.*

The Clarksville (Tenn.) *Herald* has suspended publication till after the war. The editor has laid aside the pen for the sword, which he intends to wield till victory perches upon the banner of the Southern Confederacy.

It is said that August Belmont, the great millionaire and banker, has ordered the sale of his real estate in New York, and does not intend to return to this country.

James I. Gregg,