

THE DAILY JOURNAL.

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA.

WILMINGTON, N. C., FRIDAY, DEC. 19, 1862.

CEASE, SAW AND CONQUERED. BANKS and FORREST came, saw, plundered, got whipped and "skedaddled."

They came up like hungry wolves, marking their path by desolation. Ruined homes, desolated farms, wrecked buildings, burned bridges, stolen negroes mark their track.

They plundered helpless women and children—they have been driven back by far inferior numbers of armed men. They have shown themselves to be robbers and Vandals, lacking even in the courage that history ascribes to those scourges of the Roman Empire, or popular opinion connects with the image of the bold highwayman.

But perhaps, after all; the Abolition forces did what they were sent for—carrying out their programme in full, desolating the country, exhausting its resources and hoping to make men partisans of submission by causing them to feel the miseries attendant upon a war waged for independence. In this they will not succeed, while they will embitter the feelings of all and make them even more adverse than ever to the reconstruction of a Union that would join them by an unnatural bond to a people that they have seen guilty of such atrocities, and from whom they have suffered so many wrongs.

But although the Yankees have disappeared from the front of our forces near Goldsboro', there is no certainty as to where they have gone. Some even go so far as to think that they may bend their way in this direction. We do not think so. They will never attempt such a march by land unless indeed they be crazy, and BANKS is not crazy, although no match for GUSTAVUS W. SMITH in military knowledge or capacity.

After all the flourish of trumpets made over the BANKS' expedition, we are inclined to think that, in coming to Beaufort harbor it reached the point for which it was intended to sail, but that in failing to reach Goldsboro', it did not reach the point aimed at, and failed to accomplish the main object in view.

But they have done much injury to private property both belonging to individuals and to corporations, and in doing so they have no doubt carried out one part of their programme.

We expect to hear something of them soon. At present it is doubtful whether they are going to Newbern, Beaufort or ———. We hope the latter place may receive them before they do much more harm. We trust that their final destination may be their immediate destination.

P. S.—Since writing the above, we have semi-official information that the enemy beat a rapid retreat towards Newbern on night before last. It is supposed their next effort will be to take Wilmington. We are sure when the attempt is made, they will meet with a warm reception, equally as warm as at Kinston and Goldsboro', if not a little more so. They have made their boast that they would occupy this place on the 25th inst. We shall see.

THE YANKEES are informed, so they say—that the roads leading to Wilmington from the sea coast are all mined, or filled with masked batteries. They propose to get over this by putting Confederate prisoners in front and making them point out the situation of such mines or other works, or at any rate run the risk of the explosion or draw the fire of the battery.

Now that is a proposition that would disgrace a Tartar or a Hindoo, and yet it is gravely made and shamelessly avowed through the columns of a leading New York paper, an organ and supporter of the Lincoln administration and presumed to reflect its views and to be aware of its policy.

We have nothing to say about the mines or batteries alluded to. We can't quite inform our Yankee contemporaries, but no doubt if they attempt to march upon Wilmington, they will find out whether or not they have been correctly informed. They may possibly find also that the taking of prisoners is a game that two can play at.

We don't want to see the enemy attack the Cape Fear, but if they will come, we opine they will find some little opposition. There will be an unwillingness to let them come in which may result in keeping them "out in the cold." Wilmington may be taken—that is the fortune of war, but that it will ever be surrendered we do not believe.

We learn that on yesterday morning about an hour before day, the Steamer Kate McLaurin, with some sixty passengers on board and a heavy freight, sunk in the Cape Fear River about two miles below Elizabeth-town.

So far as we can learn, the accident occurred from some neglect to the working of the pumps.

The steamer was run up to the bank, where she lay with her lower deck completely under water. All the passengers got safely to shore, though with some difficulty. A large proportion of the freight consisted of salt, which was melted, and we suppose lost. The baggage of the passengers was generally wet and damaged. The loss will probably exceed twenty thousand dollars.

The election held yesterday for Commissioners of Town resulted in the choice of the following gentlemen, being the ticket advertised in the Journal:—Alfred Martin, S. D. Wallace, Wm. A. Wright, O. G. Parsley, B. G. Worth, Miles Costin, C. D. Ellis.

Owing to the public excitement in reference to the war, the vote was exceedingly small.

CANNOT our State exchanges be sent to us by some route or routes? As for instance, why cannot the Raleigh papers be sent either by way of Charlotte and Columbia, and so reach us from the South, or by the stage to Fayetteville, and so by the steamers or by the sulky

mail, which goes three times a week. Or why can't we get even the Fayetteville papers. We think, indeed we feel confident that our isolation will soon cease, our road be repaired, and our communications restored, but just now, as the thing stands, "our sufferings is intolerable."

THE Iron Steamer *Cornubia* with government stores, shoes, blankets, medicines and iron plates, has arrived at a Confederate port.

By this arrival the *London Index* of the 30th of October and 6th of November have been received. We have no time to-day to make extracts, but will endeavor to do so at the earliest moment. The *Index* is strongly Southern in its tone.

TO BE TRIED.—Nicholas Smith, a Norfolk merchant, charged with bringing Yankee goods in the Confederacy in violation of law, imprisoned for several days past in this city, by order of Brig. Gen. French, was sent to Petersburg yesterday under guard to be tried for the offence alleged against him.

Richmond Dispatch, 13th inst.

AN ENGLISH OPINION OF BUTLER'S ROLE IN NEW ORLEANS. [From the *London Times*.]

Nothing is more clearer in law and ethics than that an oath extorted by unlawful coercion is void. It is a horrible outrage for a wretch like this Butler, who probably has never in his life done one act of manhood, to drive up the whole population, under the muzzle of cannon and under threats of being utterly despoiled, to commit a sort of white perjury. These people had all no doubt taken the oath of allegiance to the government of their choice, and they have now swallowed by force an allegiance to a government they hate. Even Butler cannot suppose that an oath thus extorted can give him any further right, moral or legal, over these people. It is a senseless humiliation and a useless insult—no more. It is only an act of tyranny but an act of tyranny without an advantage. The Northern people ought to be ashamed of themselves for keeping this stupid ruffian in such a post. While this miserable creature is in command, New Orleans can serve for no other cause but as a warning in all Southern cities what submission to the North involves.

THE ENGLISH PRESS ON MEDIATION IN AMERICAN AFFAIRS. [From the *London Times*.]

The world is now acquainted with the motives which have prompted one government (France) to propose and the other (England) to decline an intervention in the American quarrel. The general purport of Lord Russell's answer is that, though a time may come when an offer of mediation may serve the cause of humanity, that time has not yet come. That this is true, no one in this country will doubt. All of us feel that the proposal of the armistice by England would just now be used by the war party in America to excite the passions of the people and to regain the power which is rapidly passing from them. The peaceful proposals of the two powers would be rejected in an insolent dispatch from Washington. Nothing then would be left but either to abstain completely, whatever might be the miseries brought on America or herself by the war, or else to adopt a tone and a conduct in our next interference which might compromise us seriously. The course which the Queen's ministers have chosen will, we think, satisfy not only the English public, but even the reflecting men in France, and the Emperor himself.

[From the *London News*.]

The course which appears best in the eyes of the British Government is, to watch carefully the progress of opinion in America, and to take advantage of the first favorable opportunity offered by a change to tender friendly counsel. We think that, with the exception of a few thoughtless people who would plunge us into a war, people of all opinions will think that this is the best answer that could have been made by the British Government without entering unnecessarily upon a discussion of the merits of the case. An acceptance of the French proposition at the present time, perhaps at any time, would embark us in a dark and difficult course, of which no one could predict the issue. The American case itself is one which the wisest minister might well desire to be excused from taking in hand.

[From the *London Review*.]

Mediation would be equivalent to recognition of the South, and to a declaration of war with the North.—The benevolent profession of putting a stop to useless bloodshed could scarcely be disconnected from the avowed intention of obtaining cotton for European looms.—The suffering occasioned by the blockade may, perhaps, hereafter justify forcible intervention; but English opinion is almost unanimous in holding that the time has not yet arrived for overruling international law on the ground of expediency.

THE GROWING DISCONTENT IN THE NORTH—THE PROMISES OF THE YANKEES TO TAKE RICHMOND—THE PROSPECT—THE WINTER CAMPAIGN.

[From the *London Times*.]

The discontent of the Northern people are, however, only beginning. The feelings indicated by the rise in gold and exchange, by the cessation of immoderate boasts, and by the calmness which the prospect of European intervention is discussed, are likely to extend during the ensuing winter. Until within a week of our latest news the public were amused by continual reports of a speedy advance of McClellan. The drama of "On to Richmond" was to be performed a second time in the season of 1862; only this time the march was not to be from the point of a promontory in the Atlantic, but along the valleys and over the hills of Virginia. The new Federal levies were to be hurled across the Alleghanies, and to close the campaign by the capture of the enemy's capital. But as the season advances these expectations seem to be again passing away. Of course, we cannot know what acts of military folly the impatience of the people and the weakness of the Washington Cabinet may urge General McClellan, but this we do not know, that no General with ordinary knowledge of his profession would advance in such a country, at such a season, with a force in such a condition.

We must refer our readers to our American news for the means of judging what are the chances of a Federal victory over Gen. Lee before the winter closes in.—And it is not so much to our own correspondence that we would direct his attention as to the extracts from the *New York World* and the *New York Times*, the latter a strongly Republican journal, and till lately a noisy asserter of the 90 days' theory. The state of the army, the weariness and disgust of the officers, the demoralization of the men, the want of common necessities, the deficient clothing and bedding and the consequent difficulty of an advance, are told with a candor which is itself a sign of the times. Then the prospects of a winter campaign may be understood from the description given of the country and the weather. The rainy season had begun, and there were in the last half of October heavy rains nearly every other day. "These narrow mountain roads and defiles," says the *World*, "difficult of passage in the best weather, are almost impassable in wet weather, and if our troops move and

now have a fight it will need as it always does after a battle, a re-issue of supplies to make up for losses."—"The army," says the same writer, "will be sunk at most irretrievably in demoralization if it stands still until another season. With all our immense levies, six months hence will not find us practically a whit stronger than we are now."

The Abolitionist *New York Times* is equal depending. "All patriotism seems eaten out of the hearts of the regular army men," is its comment on the dislike which the best officers notoriously feel for the war. Of the men it is said that "plunder, license, abandonment of self-respect, and general demoralization are sufficiently wide spread to be alarming." And the accounts given in the *World* of the material deficiencies of the army are fully corroborated.

All these things combined give us reason to hope that the light of reason and humanity is dawning again in America after a long observation. It is not that General McClellan's army is unable to take the field, and that the men of whom it is composed are quarrelling, plundering and deserting in presence of a victorious enemy, but it is that men dare to speak out, and tell us that all this is going on, and that there is little hope of its amendment. Evidently the reaction from the frenzy of the past eighteen months has begun, and we may cherish some hope that the worst is past.

From the *Lynchburg Republican*.

High Prices, and Legislative Prohibitions.

We observe that the South Carolina Legislature is attempting a very absurd and a very impossible thing. It is attempting to regulate the prices of marketable commodities by legislative enactments. Since the war commenced we have observed very closely the effect of all such legislation, both on the part of the States and the Confederate authorities, and we have yet to see a single instance in which the evil which it was sought to cure was not great intensified. Some time last year the Governor of Georgia authorized the seizure of all the salt in the hands of speculators, and prohibited its transportation from the State under heavy penalties.—We endorsed the act, because we thought, without reflection, that it would be of service to the people, but it was just the reverse; the trade in salt was broken up in Georgia, the article became higher and scarcer, and the people were the sufferers. The Provost Marshal of Richmond attempted to fix the price of such articles as butter, eggs, poultry, beef, &c., in that market, and the consequence was that the hucksters refused to supply the market at those prices, the people became the sufferers, and the Provost Marshal had to annul his arbitrary ordinance. For a long time the Confederate authorities attempted to fix the price of wheat, flour, sugar, provender, &c., purchased for the use of the government. The people would not sell at those prices, speculation ceased, and the government had to resort to impressment for supplies. They soon found that this was not only a system of public plunder on the part of the government, but that it failed to furnish them the necessary supplies. The result was that the absurdity of making and controlling prices was abandoned by the government authorities, and now they come into market with the people upon terms of fair competition. We might allude to numerous other instances in which State, corporation and Confederate authorities, have attempted to regulate and control the prices of articles of consumption, but the same inevitable failure has attended them all, and the evil been vastly increased by the remedy. And such in the very nature of things will infallibly be the result of such arbitrary and foolish legislation.

The reason of this is obvious upon a moment's reflection. Nine tenths of the people have mistaken the cause of high prices. They seem to think it is some arbitrary and tyrannical tariff of charges fixed by a merciless set of speculators and extortioners. If it were not for the speculators, say they, prices of everything would run low. There never was a greater mistake upon earth. They put the cart before the horse. They might just as well denounce the ridiculous proposition that vultures drew the carriage, for it is a demonstrable fact that were it not for the high prices there would be no speculation! Make sugar ten or twenty cents a pound, and there will not be another barrel brought to Virginia during the war, and never another speculator engaged in the trade. Fix the price of salt at five dollars per sack, and not another speculator will go after it, and the people will have to do without it. Cut down the price of calico to ten or twenty cents per yard, and not another yard will run the blockade. Fix the price of shoes at three or five dollars, and not another pair will be made. Fix the price of wood at five dollars per cord, and nobody will sell. Reduce butter to twenty-five cents per pound, and we will have to eat greasewood bread for five years to come. In short, put down high prices, and you will pull down speculators; and put down speculators, and you will impoverish the markets and starve and freeze the people.

These truths are so self-evident, that it seems astonishing they should fail to secure the sanction of the least observant and thoughtless amongst us. No man speculates for the mere pleasure of the thing. He speculates to make money, and he will speculate on those things of which he can make the most money. This is human nature and common sense. It has been so from the beginning of commerce, and will be so to the end of time, in peace and in war. Destroy speculation, and you at once sweep the white sails of commerce from the seas, and arrest the course of trade upon the land. Every man would have to be his own merchant, his own salesman, his own manufacturer and his own banker. High prices therefore, make speculators, and if we are asked what makes high prices, we answer emphatically the war, and its concomitants. High prices, great profits, and immense fortunes attend all wars conducted upon paper issues. Prices have gone up *pari passu* with the increase of the currency and the demands of trade, and they will come down in the same ratio precisely as the currency is curtailed after the war, and the demands of trade cease, and not before. The war has made paper money abundant—far too much so for ordinary trade, and it has made nearly everything scarce and in greater demand. Had we no war we should have no blockade, and without the blockade we should get calicoes at twenty cents per yard, instead of two dollars. The war has made salt scarce by cutting us off from various abundant sources of supply, and salt is now selling at the fabulous prices of seventy and eighty cents per pound. This is too high, no doubt, and there is as little doubt that those who make salt have extorted upon the people and made fortunes. But supply and demand are fundamental laws which control all trade, and while, like any other wholesome laws, they may be, and doubtless are, abused to the injury of the people, it is equally as certain that no law can control or correct the evil, any more than it can affect the laws of gravitation.

Free trade is the best law and the only law which can regulate the prices and govern commerce; and the legislator who attempts to tinker with and upset the fundamental principles of all political economy, and reverse or arrest the natural course of things under an ordinary or extraordinary state of circumstances, only renders himself ridiculous and multiplies the evils which he seeks to remedy.

From the *Chicago Times*.

A Fatal Chapter in Criminal History.

The criminal court at Castrin, in Pomerania, (Prussia) has for a fortnight been occupied with a case which may be said to be without a precedent in the annals of Prussian crime. A workman named Karl Maasch has been accused of having been concerned in the commission of thirteen murders and many hundred robberies, of which he confesses himself guilty. The number of his transgressions is, however, probably far greater than that indicated in the crowded list already made out against him. Among modern criminals, Dumollard alone, who was executed some months ago in France, can be compared in the enormity of his crimes with the monster Maasch. Not only was Maasch, like Dumollard, guilty of the most cold-blooded cruelty in the numerous murders which he seemed to take a fiendish delight in perpetrating, but the hideous manner in which he treated the still warm bodies of his female victims sinks him far below the level of the savage or the brute.

Karl Maasch was, it appears, the leader of a band of wretches, consisting of himself, his brother Martin, his mother, an old but active woman, and two laborers named Liebeg and Kohlshmidt; and all these persons were placed at the bar. Their burglaries and murders had for five years kept in almost continual alarm the population around Söldlin Pyritz, Laasburg and Stargardt. One of the most horrifying atrocities which they committed was on a night in May, 1861, when Karl Maasch and some of his band broke forcibly into the house of a miller named Ranngart, at Carsdorf, murdered the miller and his wife, his daughter, two sons, and a maid, and robbed the house of everything that was portable and valuable, including, it is believed, a considerable sum of money. The murders, too, were committed in a manner so atrocious as to arouse the population into a frenzy, and the most persevering exertions were made to obtain a clue to the guilty parties.

The noblest detectives of Berlin were sent to aid the local police; but the only person to whom suspicion pointed as assistant who slept in the house, and who was the only one who escaped death, was at last set free, under the conviction that he was innocent. A strange incident, however, at length occurred. Two farm laborers, of the village of Warain, near Stargardt, were one morning walking together on their way to their work in the fields, when it came on to rain. For the sake of greater shelter against the wet, one of them proposed that they should proceed to their destination for the rest of the way by a path leading through the woods. This being agreed on, the peasants had not been ten minutes in the forest, when one of them espied at some distance through the trees the upper half of the body of a man sticking up out of the ground. Their hearts leaped to their mouths. One immediately started off with all the speed he could put forth, while the other, more self-possessed, retreated more slowly, keeping his eye fixed on the object in question, which gradually sank out of sight into the earth.

The peasants instantly made known to the owner of the estate the strange thing they had witnessed. The police was sent for, and a number of persons, with all dispatch, proceeded to the mysterious spot which was pointed out by the laborers. At first it seemed as though the men must have deceived themselves or were carrying on a practical joke; for at the spot indicated there appeared to be nothing like a hole in the earth, as the grass covered the ground all round about. On closer investigation, however, a slit was found in the grass in the form of a square. It was the top of a trap door covered with turf. On forcing this open and descending, a large cavity was discovered, from which, however, the late occupiers had already fled.

The hole itself, which was roofed with trees overlaid with turf, was divided into two rooms, the walls lined with boards—a stove, two or three beds, a ladder, victuals, and cooking utensils being present, and making a very snug underground dwelling. In addition to these articles, there were present quantities of objects identified as having been stolen from various homes in the neighboring country, in which burglaries, robberies and murders have been committed. Axes, firearms, and other weapons, as well as a considerable number of thieves tools, were likewise so found.

The police now found themselves on the right track. Various circumstances—the description given by the peasants of the occupiers of the cavern, as well as indications found in the cavern itself—led to the suspicion that the person so seen was none other than the notorious workman, Karl Frederick Maasch, who was conjectured to be the leader of the band of robbers who had so long infected the neighborhood. Against him and his crew the search was henceforth specially directed. Maasch had been for some time a laborer on the estate of Deason, near Pyritz, in which neighborhood he was born. He was never married, and had been published frequently for theft. He was a scoundrel of the lowest modes of life, and sprang from a family hereditarily criminal. He had fled from the place mentioned above on account of the discovery of new thefts committed by him, and had not been seen for several years. At first the efforts of the police to take him were completely foiled, and he was strenuously aided in his concealment by the rest of the band, consisting for the most part of his family.

His mother and brother (Martin) were together at Schonow, Pyritz, about six English miles from the retreat in the forest. They and Martin's wife were speedily seized and thrown into prison on suspicion.—In their dwelling were found an axe, on which traces of blood were still discovered, and a quantity of articles belonging to the same robberies as did those found in the hole in the woods; so that at length those who had committed the Baumgart murder were in the hands of justice, if we except their leader, Karl Maasch. On a microscopic examination of the three axes from the hole and the fourth found at the house of Martin, unmistakable traces of this horrid six-fold murder were perceived. On one axe, stuck a small portion of human brain; on all four, human hair, mingled with clotted blood. The hair agreed completely with that of the murdered persons, and that of the servant maid was identified with particular clearness.

On one of the axes there still clung red woollen threads, precisely similar to those of the material of which Mrs. Baumgart's night-cap was made, and which she wore on the night of the murder. Another axe still retained traces of the children's bedclothes. The wife of Martin sealed her guilt by hanging herself in prison, after having been accused of participating in the Baumgart murders. The principal party, however, still remained at large; he had been driven from the Söldlin country by the exertions made to capture him. What, however, the police could not achieve with the utmost endeavors was again left to be accomplished by a happy accident. One beautiful summer's evening a citizen of Frankfort on the Oder observed a drunken man in the public streets behaving himself in a very shameless manner. On addressing some words of indignant remonstrance to him, he received an answer of the very coarsest description, and was compelled to call a police sergeant.