

Correspondence.

To the Editor of the Protestant.

Sir.—My attention having been directed to an article, headed "Index Prohibitory," which appeared in the Protestant of the 30th ult., and in which you allude to St. Dunstan's College and the Catholic Institute. I feel that, in justice to those institutions, with both of which I am closely connected, I am obliged to make a few observations in order to remove the false impressions which the article in question may tend to create.

As a Protestant journalist, you are at liberty, as a matter of course, to exhibit the doctrines of our Church in the most odious light possible, without giving any Catholic the opportunity of defending them in your columns, even should he desire to do so; but when you attack our local institutions and our principles regarding Education, I think that the case becomes altered, and that in justice to us you are obliged to afford us an opportunity of replying.

For this reason I presume that you will be just and honorable enough to publish in your journal this communication, as well as whatever else I may consider necessary to write on the subject. That the "Index" concerning which you have written exists, is true. It is also true that the writings of Voltaire, Rousseau, and many other infidel, heterodox and immoral writers have been placed thereon, and prohibited to be read. But it is a question of importance to inquire whether these writings are prohibited absolutely and everywhere. Had you, Sir, been better acquainted with the teaching and discipline of the "Roman Church," regarding which you venture to write so dogmatically, you would have known that the prohibitions of the "Index" are not in force here, and you would not have shown your unacquaintance with Catholic phraseology by asking the young men of the Catholic Institute if they "obtained an indulgence" for the gratification of their humor in perusing "The Tale of a Tub."

That the students of St. Dunstan's College are not so restricted with regard to the authors which they are permitted to read as you have insinuated, is evident from the fact that they have within their reach some three thousand volumes of the choicest works on history, literature, philosophy and the sciences, including some of those works which you say are on the "Index," but which they have been permitted to peruse without having obtained an "indulgence" for that purpose. We shall be happy to afford you an opportunity of satisfying yourself by our own demonstration, regarding the truth of this assertion, at any time you please to honor us with a visit. Perhaps I may be permitted to express the hope that you, Sir, will be kind enough, in consequence of the lively note which you appear to manifest for the development of the noble faculties of the mind, to give the public some information regarding the number of historical, literary, philosophical and other works which the Government, influenced by the laudable desire of perfecting our system of Education, and developing, to their fullest extent, the intellectual faculties of the youth of the Colony, have placed at the disposal of the students of their respective institutions, the Prince of Wales College.

The right of the Pope to prohibit the reading of books dangerous to faith or morals, is a consequence of his spiritual authority; and I presume, Sir, that you will not deny that it is a duty incumbent on those who have the charge of others to see that those under their care imbibed nothing which may be to them dangerous or fatal. The Sovereign Pontiff in placing bad books on the "Index," wished to guard the faithful from danger, and I cannot understand why they should be censured for placing on the black list the immoral and infidel writings of Voltaire, Rousseau &c. hoc genus omne. From the fact of a book being placed on the "Index" we are not to conclude that every thing contained in them is condemned, but rather that the whole thereof is not approved of. One error, one false principle in a whole work is sufficient to have it placed on the "Index." You may consider this very liberal on the part of the Pope; but on reference to your Bible you will find the following:—"He, therefore, that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." And again:—"Whoever shall keep the whole law but offend in one point, is become guilty of all." I doubt not but the doctrine contained in these texts from Holy Writ may be questioned, "to use your own words," by not a few liberal minds.

You say that there is no charge more confidently preferred against the Roman Catholic Church than that she has exercised her influence to repress freedom of thought and the expression of private opinion. That such a charge is made, is indeed true; but it is equally as true that it is unjustly made. The services of the Pope to letters—to borrow the words of an illustrious writer of our day—are forgotten, whilst the restrictions imposed by him on the press are made a matter of reproach. A Committee of divines was appointed by the Council of Trent to form a list of bad or dangerous books; who, having failed to complete the task assigned them before the close of the Council, were allowed to continue their labours, and ordered to submit them to the Pope for approval. The list of books is daily increasing, the reading or retention of which is prohibited under ecclesiastical censures; and although this discipline is regarded by contrary usage in most countries, it seems to give coloring to the charge that the Pope is hostile to the liberty of the press. In justice to them I must observe that their sole object has been to restrain the press within the limits of the civil law; and that the licentiousness which sends forth impious and corrupt books, to poison the minds of youth, is that which our late venerable Pontiff visited with unqualified censure. Liberty of the press, considered as a civil right, does not suppose freedom from moral restraint, or impunity from civil penalties for its abuse. Its chief value, is a civil point of view, is to give free expression to public sentiment in regard to the management of public affairs, by rulers and other officers, and thus to prevent oppression, or procure its remedy, by exposing it to general censure. The exercise of such liberty for the true interests of the country, is nowhere opposed to the spirit of discipline of the Church. It is well known that the Pope has permitted the publication at Rome of works on civil polity, which, on account of their liberal and patriotic principles, were proscribed in several European States; and that at all times, they have shown themselves disposed to favour the oppressed, rather than to side with their oppressors. Intemperate and seditious works could, of course, be sanctioned by the rulers of the Church, who are bound to sustain established order, and promote peace; but these are not included in the true notion of liberty of the press. In all that regards science, literature, philosophy, and the arts, the utmost freedom of the press may be enjoyed, with no limit but the caution of not advancing on holy ground. The golden age of Spanish literature was precisely that in which the laws of the Index were strictly enforced. How can it be pretended that science is impeded in her legitimate progress, because she is warned not to displace the landmarks of religion? A vast space is open to research and improvement, without encroaching on the realm of faith. If Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, and Milton's Paradise Lost, are found on the list of prohibited books, it is because the philosopher astutely undermined the doctrine of the spiritual nature of the soul, and the poet exhibited Christ according to the fancy of the Ariens, and made of Lucifer a hero. Let an uneducated reader, misled by great names, should imbibed fatal error, the books were proscribed; but even in countries where the discipline prevails leave to read them is easily obtained. The Pope has at all times respected the meditations of true philosophy, and honored the inspirations of the Muses, always saving the truth of what God has revealed.

The decrees of the Pope proscribing certain books as containing false doctrines, are for us the warnings of a father against what might pervert the understanding and corrupt the hearts of his children. Independently of them, we are naturally bound to shun whatever is dangerous to our faith or morals. The youth who, uneducated in the great evidences of revelation, familiarizes himself with Paine's Age of Reason, exposes himself to the manifest danger of infidelity. The female who, with morbid curiosity, peruses an obscene tale, liable to lose that purity of heart which is her greatest treasure. In proportion to our information and moral habits, the dangers may be diminished; but it is beyond a doubt, that to the reading of bad books may be traced the infidelity and corruption of innumerable individuals. The restrictions which the Pope imposed would be unjust, if arbitrary; and unreasonably, if those for whom they were intended did not already recognize their pastoral authority; but this being recognized, nothing is more reasonable and just than to turn away the steps from noxious passages, by proscribing what-

*The work of Spalding, entitled "I don't drink wine," in which the right of a nation to depose a pope, is supported by the authority of St. Thomas Aquinas, is his letter to the Bishop of Rome, was published in 1791, and was the subject of a papal bull, appointing Cardinal Ruffo, Apostolic Treasurer. Pius VI. was succeeded in his pontificate, by the election of Pius VII. who was elected on the 30th of June, 1800.

ever is contrary to sound doctrine. At all events, the precedent of the proscription of books was given by the Apostles, when the vast collection of works of magic, belonging to converts from the 19th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Will the readers of Scripture charge the Apostles with hostility to knowledge? The moral restraints resulting from our discipline serve to avert many of the evils with which the licentiousness of the press deluges the world. The paucity of the broken heart, when its shame has been revealed—the desolation of families, whose sorrows have wrung on the public ear—the tortures of high-minded patriots, writing under the columns of reckless rival—the fury of a populace incited to arson and bloodshed by incendiary publications, and the struggles and convulsions of parties, which almost threaten the dissolution of society, are no imaginary evils. Even Voltaire did not hesitate to declare that the press had become one of the scourges of society. "La presse, il le faut accuser, est devenue un des fléaux de la société, et un brigandage intolérable."

It is evident, therefore, that the Pope, in proscribing bad books—only performed a duty which they owed to religion and society—a duty which will be performed not only by clergymen who are faithful to their obligations, but also by public journalists who desire to aid in protecting innocents and youth from the baneful effects of the unwholesome and polluted matter which too frequently disgraces the publications of the present day.

On a future occasion I will reply more directly to your charge against the Pope of repressing freedom of thought. In the meantime I have the honor to be, Sir, Your obedient and humble servant, A. McDONALD.

St. Dunstan's College, Dec. 10, 1861.

FOR THE EXAMINER. MR. EDITOR.—Excuse me for again troubling you in reference to "Probus," who, as I have stated in my last communication, appears in the Standard of the 29th ult. with a tissue of falsehoods to which any honest man might well blush to see his name appended.

An Observer, also, tired of the restriction placed on the development of his genius, was evidently repudiated the partnership, desiring of coming out on his own. I will, however, disappoint this pair of "yelping dogs," who appear to think they will be taken notice of by holding forth those who have assumed positions in the social scale to which they will know it is useless for them to aspire. In taking leave of those two almost heartless boys, whose names are so dreadfully affected by the visions of Ribon, I judge, &c. I am quite willing to allow them any consolation they can derive from their efforts to attain notoriety; at the same time I can inform them that I am quite ready to answer, to the best of my ability, any questions in reference to this "road jobbing," conducted in proper language, and emanating from persons whose character for veracity and candour is somewhat higher than that of "Probus" and "An Observer," and who are positioned with a guarantee for their conducting themselves with at least the semblance of propriety. Yours truly, ALEX. ROBERTSON.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EXAMINER. SIR.—For the last few weeks I have been considerably amused at observing a controversy, concerning "the Representation of the Third District of Queen's County," carried on by Mr. A. Robertson, of St. Peter's Road, and some creature under the signature of "Probus," who is assisted by another styling himself "An Observer," and who, in my opinion, is equally as unblushingly impudent a personage as "Probus" himself. That Mr. R. should trouble himself with, or notice the disgraceful effusions of pens wielded by such unscrupulous, insinuating and utterly worthless creatures, I am certainly surprised, as he must be well aware that such persons care not what they write, so long as they can even for a time appear under the disguise of anonymous scribbles.

The production of "Probus" and "An Observer" certainly are not worth replying to, and I should be very sorry to waste time in doing so, as Mr. Robertson has done, but justice demands a few words when a person of Mr. R.'s well-known and universally acknowledged character for honesty, a rightness and sincerity is so irreverently drawn before the public, to be slandered and falsely accused by such unprincipled and unscrupulously designing wretches as "Probus" and "An Observer." Their tastes appear to be at present peculiarly gratified at being allowed to vent their spleen in falsehoods and dark insinuations, but all the wretches can do in that respect will in no way injure Mr. R., whose character has been too long favourably known by his neighbors and the public at large, except a few such characters as "Probus" and "An Observer," who are never satisfied with the doing of any one, except they can find some to say how they shall do and say. But Mr. Robertson is a man of independent principles, and because he is, and chooses to stand up in favour of the party to which he has been attached for years, he of course must necessarily be made the butt of the lawyer-like special pleadings and false insinuations of "Probus" and his special friend "An Observer." But it is gratifying to know that the public are not so easily gulled, and that their silly productions will be sure to meet with the contempt and censure they so deservedly merit.

The controversy concerning the distribution of the road money, but as they have already said more about that than the whole was worth, I shall leave it to themselves, and proceed to notice briefly what the real cause was that led them to make themselves so ridiculous, as they have already done. Both "Probus" and his friend appear to be great friends of the present little-loving Government, and as a natural consequence, they are dissatisfied that they should be represented by liberal members. In their zeal, they would have the District cut up to suit themselves and a few more who, they would insinuate, are more respectable and enlightened than the rest of the Electors of the District, thus occupying their honesty of purpose in wishing to deprive the majority of a right to elect their own members. It is not a great pity but we had such discerning and honestly inclined persons for our law-makers? What a paradise our Island would soon become under their management.

Hoping that Mr. R. will for the future treat the productions of the champion of Dunastowne and Hill-borough River, as I shall do, with the contempt they merit, I shall now conclude, and trust I have not trespassed on your valuable time and space in giving the worthless alibid to a little to ramble over. Yours, &c. TRUTH.

Let 25, December 6, 1861.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EXAMINER. DEAR SIR.—Our roads are desperately bad—there having been little money granted for repairing them, and that little they laid out. Report says that the officers whose duty it is to attend to such matters generally arrange with some of the poorest people who may be in their debt to slide over the roads for some old account, and they pocket the money. Another matter we have to complain of is the way the Tories, after their usual method of mismanaging every thing they lay hands on, are humbugging us about the Mails. On last Wednesday we had a telegram stating that the steamer had left Town for here; and about the same time the Postmaster received instructions from the bogus Government to send the mails by a sailing vessel, his business having previously informed Mr. Crab that the Mails were to go by a little vessel, the "Champion," a trap that was never safe to cross the harbour in. Well, she, the said trap, left here on Wednesday afternoon, about three o'clock, with the Mails, no passengers venturing to go by her, although the wind and weather appeared favourable. The same afternoon the steamer arrived here, discharged and took in her usual freight and passengers, proceeded to Studia, and returned here next day without any Mails. On Friday morning, we are informed, a second Mail left the wharf by the Schooner Dove; in the afternoon she returned to the wharf with the Mails still on board, the Captain (Little Johnny) having forgot to get a box of matches before leaving, and under boxes having gone out of Town, told Johnny could not proceed without fireworks. Next time, the Champion returned to port with the Mails on board, which left here on Wednesday previously on which night there had been a stiff breeze in the Gulf, and it was known, from experience, that it was not safe to carry canvas on the trap, which, after drifting about the Gulf for about forty-eight hours, was glad to return to anchor, not caring what became of the Mails. The same afternoon (Friday) the Steamer again arrived from Town all right, discharged and took in her freight and passengers, and proceeded to Studia, the 120 packets still lying off the wharf

with the Mails on board. The steamer again returned from Studia this evening. When she left Studia the steamer craft had not arrived with the Mails, which should have been there on Wednesday evening last, and have passed ere this through different parts of the other Provinces, only for the bungling of the wonderfully good people who ordered the 28th of this month to be kept as a holiday, while they themselves kept their shops and offices open, and all their helps at work. I am, Sir, a poor old man who never minds any body's business so long as I can get well to dig, THOMAS WATERSON.

Saturday evening, Nov. 30, 1861.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EXAMINER. SIR—I was much amused on reading "Aurora's" last contribution to your columns. That gentleman or lady is very angry at you, Sir, and, in his or her foolish mode of expressing his or her displeasure, it will, perhaps, be more convenient to her or his indignation. It will, however, be more convenient to assume that "Aurora" belongs to the male sex, though the contribution in question bears strong internal evidence of having been written by a red-haired, sharp-tongued scolding lady on the shady side of forty. Such outrageous scolding is very undignified, and does not at all become the gravity and respectability of a writer on public affairs. Petulant effusions such as that of "Aurora's" are indeed scarcely admissible, and are apt to bring down upon their authors the ridicule and contempt of those whom they are intended to annihilate. School-boys may be excused when they give vent to their angry feelings by "calling names"; but hold! I do the many little fellows an injustice, it is only the ill-natured and spiteful among the girls who resort to the practice, but when a grown-up man descends to such a school-girl trick, he falls far below our anger, and becomes too insignificant for contempt.

But "Aurora" in his letter not only forgets his good manners, his grammar, his English, but even his common sense. "I have endeavoured," says "Aurora," "to present the truth, regardless of style or any other ornament." He may perhaps tell us, when he gets a little cooler, how he presents truth, and to whom, and also how long it is since style became an ornament. Will he have the goodness to inform us how a letter contrives to make its appearance in a newspaper, and why he scolded you because his did not succeed in performing that truly wonderful and unparalleled feat? I would also like to be informed as to the best manner of setting down principles, and if he would show me how to submit implicitly with proper grace and resignation, I would be eternally grateful. If it would not be too much trouble, and too great a condescension, he might too give your readers a little instruction in the right use of the words shall, will, this, these, those, &c., as his use of them does very considerably from that of any authority which I have access to.

"Aurora" asserts that I, in the unfortunate letter in which I had the presumption to offer him a little good advice, stated what is not truth. Nor, if he will consult any lady or gentleman of average intelligence, he will find that he has been labouring under a most ridiculous mistake. The writer does not know whether "Aurora" is acquainted with the people of New London or not. He never lifted his foot on New London soil, or ever slept under a New London roof. How a man of your correspondent's erudition could have fallen into such an error as to understand "Observer" to have said that he ever did either the one or the other, is past the comprehension of your

Haughty servant, OBSERVER.

Let 17, Dec. 2, 1861.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EXAMINER. SIR.—In looking over the Protestant of the 33rd (1) ult., which was accidentally put into my hands a few days ago, I observed a very flattering compliment paid to the Protestant portion of the community for the edifying manner in which they observed the Governor's Holiday. This is all well enough; there is nothing more natural than to see a journal, which is indebted for its very existence to popular prejudice, endeavor to pay the very highest compliment to the man who is the cause of its existence, and to bring his name before the public. But it cannot help occurring to the mind of an actor, and a man of letters, in his zeal to flatter his subscribers, was very unfortunate in the selection of the subject which he chose for his fulsome adulation. It may probably have been the case, that the different services on that day were attended by the other portion of our Protestant population, composed partly of those of steady habits, and partly of those of a more dissipated and dissipated character, and that, although I am inclined to believe that the zealous presence was thoroughly discharging a goodly number of empty pews. Be this as it may, the less that is said of the manner in which a majority of the younger portion passed the day of "Thanksgiving," the better for their own reputation. However, I would willingly have allowed this empty ridiculous praise to pass into oblivion, did not Mr. Laird, in the unbounded goodness of his heart, feel anxious to bring his article to a close, as it were suddenly inspired with a new mission. He becomes the censor of the actions of his Catholic fellow-citizens, and as a consequence of this, mercilessly punishes down upon them, like a bird of prey, upbraiding them for their violation of the Governor's Holiday. He then indignantly asks, "Have they no reason to be thankful?" How forcibly this reminds me of the reader of a notorious character mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures, who occasionally may be "Thanksgiving" in the following strain:—"O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men," &c. Luke 18. 11.

Passing over this, although suggestive of many remarks, I will proceed to give Mr. Laird a little instruction, which he seems sadly in want, and briefly explain to him how it is that Catholics do not conform to the Governor's Proclamation, when they are not of any other in his position, see fit to issue an order, commanding such a day to be kept holy. The doctrine of Catholics on this point is, if I am correctly informed, that the Church and the Church only, has the power to institute festivals, that temporal potentates, when they imitate her, usurp a power to which they have no claim; and that consequently the faithful are obliged to keep no days holy, except those commanded to be so kept by the Church. This is I understand, the doctrine of all Catholics. Even Mr. Laird, however, unfortunately blinded by prejudice or ignorance, is able to perceive the difference between spiritual and temporal authority. Catholics are strictly commanded by the Church to obey the temporal power in all things regarding the government and well-being of the state, of which they are subjects, but when that power attempts to intrude on the spiritual power, they know that their obligation to obey ceases in its particular case, but they must nevertheless continue their allegiance in other matters. Thus there is an insuperable barrier between Church and State, and so far as regards Catholics, that barrier will continue, in spite of all efforts made to the contrary.

This explanation ought to be sufficient to convince Mr. Laird of the harmlessness of his unbecoming attack against his Catholic fellow citizens; but lest his curiosity should prompt him to require further into the practices of Catholics, I will inform him that, as regards means of Thanksgiving, they are incomparably in advance of any other denomination throughout the world. Instead of having but one day of "Thanksgiving" in the whole course of the year, Catholics have in each season three days, called Ember Days, which are particularly set aside by the Church to return thanks to the Giver of all good gifts for the innumerable favors which He daily confers on man, and to give thanks for the redemption of the soul, and for the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, a sacrifice of infinite value, and one of the principal ends for which this sacrifice is offered is to acknowledge their gratitude to their Creator for all His blessings, graces and favors, including, of course, the inestimable blessing of an abundant harvest. Here I cannot help remarking how quietly, how unostentatiously Catholics perform this duty, so innumerable as they do not think it necessary to parade themselves before the public at the corners of streets, after the manner of certain parties of old, whose practices are, I am sorry to say, in a fair way of being revived at the present day. Mr. Laird will now see, I trust, on a comparison with the means which Catholics possess, how infinitesimally small his miserable one day is, and what a poor pitiable speck it presents, even when compared with the influence of a Governor's Proclamation. I hope that for the future he will be a little more prudent in his observations on passing events, particularly on those which may provoke unfavorable comparisons. My reason for entering at such length into the matter will be gleaned, much better than I can express it, from the following extract, taken from Grattan's celebrated invective against Corry:—"On any other occasion I should think myself justified in treating with silent contempt any thing which might fall from that honorable member, but there are times when the insignificance of the accuser is lost in the magnitude of the accusation."

Yours truly, QUINUS.

December 13th, 1861.

THE CIVIL WAR IN THE STATES. THE AMERICAN QUESTION.

The London Saturday Review thus sums up a very able article on this question:—"The war between the Northern and Southern States admits of no legitimate admission to the cause of either belligerent. The Confederates are fighting for slavery, and their enemies

are fighting, not for abolition, but for conquest. A partition must be a definite war, though he may be unable to perform a definite accomplishment, but a dispassionate foreigner contemplating the American struggle is at a loss even for a result which he can fairly consider desirable. The triumph of the South would, for the time, tend to establish more firmly the monstrous system which slave-holding sophists have developed, from an accident into a permanent social law. On the other hand, the most complete victory which the Free States could achieve, would, as Lord Russell observed, only revive, to be crushed by the Union, the old and insoluble problem of slavery."

"This seems to be the true solution of the problem as between the Northern and Southern States. At the outset, the feeling in England, and in these Colonies, was altogether in favour of the North; but when it was found that statesmen at Washington and the whole press of the Northern States could breathe only fire and fury against England, the sentiment became completely changed. It has been said, that a man may like a friend very much; but that his affection will cool if he finds the friend insulting his mother. Just so in this case—the good mother—glorious old England—has been grievously insulted by the grandchild of those who revolted against her in 1776 and the latest insult is by far the greatest and the most galling to our North American cousins have lost their heads and good will, and are pushing matters to an extreme that will render Englishmen unwilling to believe they are derived from "the good old stock," or are worthy of bearing the name of Anglo-Saxons."

THE ARREST OF SLIDELL AND MASON. An article in the Boston Traveller, on the capture of Messrs. Slidell and Mason, concludes as follows:—"Most sincerely do we hope that the English government and the English nation will take a moderate view of what has been done, and not attribute it to any desire on our side to quarrel with them. There is no such desire among the American people, who are not a nation of lunatics—and none but lunatics could think of seeking a war with England at a time when their powers were taxed to encounter a mighty Goliath, over the armies of which no English soldier might have been obtained in a war that has lasted more than seven months. Were England to unite with the Confederates, and to send her fleets to act in concert with their armies, the independence of the Confederacy would be established in a few weeks from the coming of those fleets. The blockade of the South would cease at once, as our ships have to assemble in force, and our army at Fort Royal would have to re-assemble and return to the North, unless it should prefer to be shut up between a British fleet and a Southern army. Our whole coast would be blockaded; and while we should not be able to obtain a bale of cotton, and our mills would lie idle, England would get all the cotton she would require, and having the markets of the world to supply, she would have no difficulty in getting money for herself and for her allies. It is well to think of these things, as the reverse of that fine piece of which we have been contemplating for a week, and the rich luxury of which appear to have dazzled most eyes. People seem to think that which they desire shall not happen, cannot happen. Their faith removes mountains of doubt, but it does not cast them into the sea. We of the North believe secession to be nonsense, and we never dreamed that it could be favoured anywhere out of South Carolina and Bedlam, her sister; nor our belief and convictions have not prevented secession from becoming a fact as big as it is ugly. May we not erelong see the same mistake now in respect to England? We made last November with respect to the South? The matter is worth thinking of, nor should we give reason for saying that our eagle ought to be taken down, and its place be centred on the ostrich, a bird that thinks that danger does not exist which it cannot see."

THE NORTHERN NAVAL EXPEDITION. A New York correspondent of the New Brunswick gives some curious facts in connection with the recent naval expedition against the South. He says the expedition cost the country over \$900,000, besides the military. After sailing four vessels put back badly damaged. The Ocean Express, 1000 tons, laden with guns, ammunition, and Government Stores, is a total wreck. The Winfield Scott, with 450 troops on board, foundered. Two other transports have not been heard from, besides some smaller craft. Two gun-boats are on shore in Beaufort river. The Confederates have secured 500 prisoners from the wreck of the Federal fleet. And what are the facts of all these magnificent victories which the Northerners say are the most brilliant, and for which Commodore Dupont will be made an Admiral? Two mud forts each of Port Royal harbor, called Walker and Beaufort, are taken. Fort Walker is on Hilton Island, which is a sand bank, 12 miles from Beaufort; and if they succeed in effecting a landing on the mainland, they will have to travel that distance through swamps and quagmires. It is hardly possible for individuals to pick their way—infantry, artillery and munitions of war. Fort Beaufort is on the opposite side, on an island; it is impossible to reach Beaufort from this Fort without going up Beaufort river; in attempting which, two gun boats have run ashore. The river is only eight feet deep, and spilled across the beach, and the distance below the town. The Federal army has not landed a single soldier upon the mainland. The magnificent exploits of this expedition have been the capture of two mud Forts! The base of future operations in South Carolina are two Island sandbanks!!

THE LOTTERY OF DEATH AT RICHMOND.—Col. A. M. Wood, of the 14th New York Regiment, now a prisoner at Richmond, gives, in a private letter, a thrilling account of the drawing for the prisoners at Richmond, who are to stand before a scaffold against the condemned pirates at New York and Philadelphia. He had been at large upon his parole until the 10th instant, when he was summoned to Gen. Winder's quarters. On asking on what business he was wanted, Gen. Winder answered that he had a very unpleasant duty to perform, in fact the most unpleasant of his life, and handed to Col. Wood a paper, which proved to be Benjamin's order to draw lots among the Federal prisoners for a victim. The Col. went up to the office to the prison, where he found all his fellow-officers, 75 in number, drawn up to await the sad issue. The names of the officers, on separate slips of paper, having been put into a tin box, Gen. Winder requested the lion, Alfred Ely to draw from the box one name, who should be held in place of Smith, sentenced at Philadelphia. Mr. Ely, with evident emotion, treated the fatal slip, and amidst a death-like stillness, announced the name of Col. Wood. Thirteen other officers, including Col. Wood himself, were sent to the common jail at Richmond on the following day. Col. Wood says of the justice of himself and his fellow prisoners:—"You may rest assured that our fate depends upon that of the privaterans. I trust you will do all you can consistent with your duty to the Government, to relieve those officers who went forth to fight the battles of their country, from a position of peril and distress."

In reference to the above the Boston Journal has the following editorial:—"A barbarous edict lately issued by the rebel Secretary of War throws a new question before the public and the Government. One person from the second States has been tried in Philadelphia under our laws for piracy and found guilty, and a new trial of several others is pending in New York, there having been a disagreement of the jury on the first trial. Secretary Benjamin, therefore, orders an equal number of our highest officers, now held by the rebels as prisoners of war, to be selected by lot, to be set aside and treated precisely like the pirates. It is, at the Government is to be coerced from the legal administration of justice, under penalty of bloody retaliation. The country and the world will mark the barbarity of this threatened measure. The parties singled out do not stand upon anything like the same basis. The soldier who is captured on the battle-field is entitled to honorable treatment by the laws of modern warfare, and receives it everywhere, except among savages. A pirate is an outlaw. He knows when he enters upon his nefarious pursuit that the laws of every nation are against him. But when he is captured—as is the case with those under consideration—he has the benefit of a fair trial, counsel in his own choosing, and a jury of twelve honest men. If he is convicted, it is because the laws—which are the same in peace and in war—have been violated. The President can reprieve him, but the law, within its domain, must take its course. This rebel threat aims to arrest the whole machinery of our laws, because by the law Benjamin's order, our detained officers are, from the first, to be confined in the common reserved for prisoners accused of infamous crimes." and treated accordingly throughout. The administration of justice in this country is to be overthrown by the microcosms who have the lives of some of our citizens in their hands. The idea is preposterous, no matter how painful the alternative. But we do not believe the threat will be executed. The order was issued and Slidell had come out long before the order was issued. If it is carried out, it is started against its perpetrators most expected to be saved from provoked retaliation. The blood of Mason, Slidell and a Faulkner is not too good to wash out that of a

Cororan and a Lee. But we will not calculate upon such atrocities. No people will dare to touch the terrible responsibility of opening such flood-gates of vengeance and destruction. All the officers and guardians of the law have to do is to take their duty seriously and fearlessly, and the result will take care of itself.

CENSORSHIP OF THE PRESS IN THE NORTHERN STATES. The Washington correspondent of the Boston Courier, in a recent letter to that paper, speaks of the rigid censorship which the government maintains towards the members of the press who are at Washington, at heavy sacrifices to their employers. It seems that much that would interest the general reader, and afford nourishment for the curious as well as the suspicious portion of the community, is lost to the public, owing to the process through which letters intended for the press undergo. Every despatch has to pass through the hands of some government employee, while letters are elaborately diversified by the authors, lest some sentence or paragraph may have a damaging influence upon some member of the Cabinet, or head of a Bureau, who deems the protection of his own interests as transcendent above that of the mass of men in arms, who are considered as soldiers only so far as the press is necessary to defend their superiority. That a reasonable care is necessary to guard against the transmission of intelligence derogatory to the interests of the Government, there is no doubt; but when that censorship becomes so arbitrary that the suffering soldier cannot find a channel through which his grievances can be made public, it is time, the Courier thinks, the question of a "free press" should be fully discussed, as that the public may know where the real difficulty lies.

THE REPORTS OF THE SECRETARIES OF STATE. The Washington correspondent of the N. Y. Commercial Advertiser gives the following notice of the forthcoming reports of the several Secretaries of State:—"The forthcoming President's message, with its accompanying reports of Secretaries, will be the most important State paper issued on this continent, and will give such valuable information on the rebellion, and the important questions connected with or arising from it. Secretary Seward's report will give a sketch of so much of the official correspondence with foreign powers as it is proper to make public, touching the applications of the rebellious states for recognition. It will also narrate the measures taken to secure traitors at home, and to prevent reasonable correspondence with the enemy. Secretary Cameron will narrate the unexpected increase of our army, and make some important suggestions calculated to increase its usefulness, and to place the volunteers on an equal footing with the regulars. It is also rumored that they will boldly advocate the arming of slaves, and thus secure the support of the ultra-Republicans in Congress. Secretary Welles will show that the Navy Department has rendered that arm of the service useful, and will suggest additional naval strength, including iron plated vessels. Secretary Chase will present the most interesting chapter of the budget, narrating the scarcity with which capitalists and the people have replenished the treasury. His suggestions on the substitution of a national paper currency, bank notes, and on the sources from which the revenue is to be increased, will lead to protracted discussions in Congress and out of it, but all will approve of his plan for setting the negroes in conquered provinces at work, under the direction of Government officials."

THE FIGHT AT PENSACOLA. BALTIMORE, Nov. 30.—The American has received the following:—"The Richmond Dispatch gives the following from the Pensacola Observer of the 22d and 23d. That paper of the 22d thus announces the beginning of the fight:—"At 5 minutes past 10 o'clock this morning heavy and continuous fire commenced at the forts below. Which side commenced it we are unable yet to say. At 5 minutes past 11 o'clock a person just arrived from the Navy Yard that the fire was opened by Fort Pickens upon the Confederate steamer Tines, and was returned by our batteries and forts. The U. S. steamer Niagara is trying to cross the bar for the purpose of entering its harbor. The extramural towers is intense; business places are closed, and the tops of houses are covered with an excited population. The Observer of the 23d has the following: The firing from Fort Pickens during the morning was directed at the steamer Tines, with very little effect. The Tines came up last night, and with the exception of two or three little holes, made with rifle shot, is unharmed. The steamer Nelson was also in the engagement at the beginning. Only one shot struck her, and did but little damage. The Nelson went over to the main land and found the Florida regiment all right. In passing Billy Wilson's batteries she got a couple of shots, which were returned. The frigate Niagara tried hard to come in, but her reception was too warm, and she had to back out. The only loss of life we can learn of was a private of the Louisiana regiment and the wife of a sergeant of the Marine corps. Both were killed by shells in the yard. A great volley shot and fell into the yard, but did very little damage to the buildings. Our guns were worked all day, and must have told with terrible effect upon the other side. We think the greatest damage done was to one of the ships which ventured too near. The editor then proceeds with a tirade of abuse against the Yankees and Col. Brown in particular, and says:—"At 13 minutes to 11 o'clock this morning, the fire reopened, and still continues at a very high rate. People are not so much excited as yesterday, and we see every appearance of a determination to resist to the last extremity, if need be, but every one seems to place unlimited confidence in our success. The Montgomery Advertiser of the 24th says:—"For more than six months the garrisons of Fort Pickens and Pensacola vie with each other in making preparations for a desperate struggle. The suspense is now over, the day long wished for by our gallant volunteers has arrived, and the strength of our fortifications on each side is likely to be fully tested before either party will acknowledge defeat. Our works we judge are in condition to withstand the combined assault of the fort and the Yankee fleet. This will be no Hatteras or Port Royal affair. The Confederates are too strongly entrenched to entertain the idea of succumbing to anything like an equal force. How long the contest will last no one can tell, but when a cessation is announced we hope to be able to state that the flag of the Confederate States waves over the walls of Fort Pickens."

From the South.—The Mayor of Charleston, by proclamation, most earnestly appeals to the citizens of the city to assist the military and civic authorities in putting Charleston into a proper state of defence. A large number of laborers is called for in this proclamation. LATER. WASHINGTON, Dec. 2. Both branches of Congress were opened in due form at noon to-day. The President's Message will be delivered to-morrow. In the Senate Mr. Trumbull gave notice to introduce a Bill for confiscating the property of Rebels. In the House Mr. Lovejoy offered a resolution tendering the thanks of Congress to Capt. Wilkes for the arrest of Messrs. Mason and Slidell. Mr. Edgarton, of Ohio, moved a substitute that the President present Captain Wilkes with a gold medal, suitably embellished. The original Resolution was adopted. The following Resolution was unanimously adopted:—"Whereas Col. Corcoran, a prisoner at Richmond, has, after suffering other indignities, been confined in a cell as a convicted felon, therefore Resolved, that the President be requested similarly to confine Mr. Mason, now in custody at Fort Warren, until Col. Corcoran be treated as the United States have treated all prisoners taken by them." It is understood that the President and Cabinet fully endorse the act of Captain Wilkes.