

BANQUET TO COM. WILLIAMS, OF THE TREN'T.

Very Graphic Account of the seizure of Mason and Slidell by Mail Officer Williams.

[From the London Post, Dec. 14.] An interesting meeting was held on Thursday evening at the Royal Western Yacht Club of England, at Millbay, Plymouth.

Commander Williams, R. N., who was the mail agent on board the Trent when she was stopped by the federal war steamer San Jacinto, and Messrs. Slidell and Mason, the Confederate Commissioners, taken from her, is a member of the Royal Western Yacht Club.

When it became known how ably he had acted on that trying occasion, some of his brother members thought it would be well to entertain the gallant officer at dinner at the club, on his return to his home at Stoke Newington.

No sooner was the suggestion made than it was adopted, and very soon quite a number of names were entered for the dinner at the club dining room could accommodate.

Commander Williams having accepted the invitation the dinner was fixed for Thursday. It took place in the club dining room, and was attended by about fifty gentlemen.

The Chairman.—The next toast which I have the honor of proposing to you is, "The health of our gallant and worthy guest, Commander Williams"—(great cheering)—who has kindly accepted the invitation of the members and subscribers of the Royal Western Yacht Club, who were desirous of inviting him to dinner as a mark of their admiration of his conduct on the occasion of the late insult offered to the British flag on board of the royal mail steamship Trent. (Applause.)

Commander Williams, who upon rising was received with enthusiastic applause, which was again and again renewed, said:—Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice-Chairman, gentlemen, and brother members of this the Royal Western Yacht Club, it is not with the feelings of arrogance and presumption which Mr. Fairfax has thought proper to impute to me that I will now endeavor, as well as severe illness will permit me, to convey to your minds the deeply seated gratitude that I feel not only to the chairman for the complimentary language and to partial language used by him, whom I have ever found for the last four or five years my kind and considerate friend, but also from the manner in which the mention of my name has been received by you—many of whom are old and tried friends of mine, and many whose faces I have never met before.

Therefore I take it to be not so much a personal matter, but a national matter—(hear, hear)—that you have taken this opportunity of throwing around my shoulders the mantle of your approbation. (Renewed applause.) Gentlemen, if I fail to convey to you—if I fail to convey to you from the poverty of my language the throbbings that swell up from the well of my heart, I beg you to believe that I am sincere in all that I shall say. (Bravo, and hear, hear.) The compliment was never looked for by me. ["We believe it, Williams."] I will endeavor to be as little egotistical as possible, but in the present instance it may be necessary that I should speak, in some measure of myself, in consequence of what has been said about me in the New York papers, and which has been referred to by Punch.

The New York papers have thought proper to allude to me in unvarnished language, and which I fear has been contained by Mr. Fairfax. Before I say one word about Mr. Fairfax, or the proceedings which took place on board the Trent, and which, perhaps, you would like to hear from my own lips—"We should," and applause—and the manner in which the Trent was boarded, I crave your indulgence to allow me to refer to notes. I am not a practised speaker. I have never had to speak on any occasion like the present, and, therefore, I must crave your indulgence to allow me to refer to notes which I have this day made, from extracts taken from different papers, in order that I might not omit any portion of such evidence as I should wish to lay before you. I throw myself on your indulgence. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) I believe at all events, that I have on my side truth and power. To convince you of that trust—I cannot give you the chapter and verse of these extracts that I am going to read to you, because I have neither had time, nor have I had the heart to put myself to the task of taking any notes of the particulars of the dates in such papers. (Cheers.) But I read in the dates the opinions of the Americans—I mean the Northern portion of the Union, the Federal States. In alluding to the attack on the Trent it says:—"If the act itself is justifiable the manner in which it was performed is unexceptionable." (Oh! and derisive laughter.) As to the manner in which it was performed. I was, at the time Captain Moir came to me to say that a suspicious vessel was ahead, on the main deck, with a pipe in my mouth reading the "Essays and Reviews." I did not then think for one moment that such an atrocious thing would have been done as that which was enacted by the gallant officers of the San Jacinto to take us prisoners of war, contrary and in violation of international law, the so-called Commissioners from the Confederate States. The argument that appeared or presented itself to my mind—the argument of the moment—as a flash of lightning, was that if a slave, a fugitive slave, once succeeds in putting his foot in a free State—putting aside Great Britain—that that slave from that moment was free from his bondage.—(Enthusiastic cheering.) The manner in which it is performed is "unexceptionable." Shortly after the San Jacinto was seen, a very few minutes

after the vessel was descried, we hoisted our ensign. It was not responded to. As we approached the San Jacinto a shot was fired across our bows. I appeal to you now—to you officers of the army and navy—is it usual for a neutral power, when wishing to speak with another vessel, to fire a shot across her bows to order her to heave to? (No, no, certainly not.) We proceeded slowly. We put her helm a starboard and approached her. We were not half a cable's length from her; I would say she stopped—except that she had steering way—when a shell was fired across her bows—(shame)—and that is the way which it has been thought proper to style as un-exceptionable. (Ironical laughter.) I make them a present of that. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) Captain Wilkes says:—"In the process of arrest he was glad to say every thing was conducted properly, and nothing occurred which did not do honor to the American navy." (Oh! oh!) I will not dilate upon that. If they think that honor, let them hug it to their souls; but God forbid that her Britannic Majesty's navy should hug as honor such an act to their souls. (Bravo, and repeated applause.) Now, gentlemen, I approach a subject with great diffidence, for it personally affects my honor, it personally affects my character.—(Hear, hear.) Before I say one word regarding the notes which I have before me, I will tell you the manner in which Mr. Fairfax and I parted. (Hear.) Mr. Fairfax came to me on the main deck, hat in hand, and said:—"Sir, I have a painful duty to perform, and if in the excitement of the moment I have said aught that by possibility—I don't say that is word by word what he said, but it is the substance—(hear, and "That's all we want")—if I have said aught that by possibility can be construed into a personal offence or an insult towards you, I must humbly beg your pardon, sir, for I never meant it." I replied, "Mr. Fairfax, I have had a painful scene to witness—a scene of degradation to my country's flag. (Hear, hear.) I do not deny that my feelings have been greatly excited, but if by any gesture I have done aught to offend you, as a man, there is my hand, sir, and I crave your forgiveness." (Applause.) I ask you now, gentlemen, that Mr. Fairfax—I do not say that he has said so—but I say he has countenanced it in the American papers, he has countenanced the expression, "Gasconade." [Loud cries, "Have they dared?" and shame, shame.] He, Mr. Fairfax, says "that my manner was so violent he was compelled to request Captain Moir to remove me from the deck"—[oh! oh!—] and "that there was no union existing between Captain Moir and myself." Gentlemen, I utterly deny that there ever occurred one single instance of a want of unity between Captain Moir and myself—[bravo, and "That's a refutation,"]—and I am proud to have this opportunity of saying that I can bear testimony to the high character of Captain Moir—(cheers)—the most gallant sailor, the most urbane gentleman, with all the courtesies of life to endear him to those with whom he is associated, it has ever been my lot to meet in this world. (Repeated cheers.) I confess that I have been advised to speak at no length on account of my health. But I cannot help it, let the consequences be what they may. (Hear, hear.) I must explain to you what has never yet appeared in the public papers. (Hear, hear.) It is said by the American papers—but I cannot put my hand on it now, though I have read it over and over again—it is said, "That Captain Wilkes could not have received instructions from his government at Washington, for that he was on his return from the Western Coast of Africa, wending his way through the Bahama Channel to New York."—What do you think? I do not know whether it has come before your notice at all; but what do you believe? How will you put trust in the veracity of such men who will write such things, when on the 16th of October I saw the San Jacinto off St. Thomas? I cannot remember now whether it was on the night of the 16th or the morning of the 17th. I went on my way to Mexico, going to Havana, Vera Cruz, Tampico. On my return to Havana, on the 16th of November, I found that the San Jacinto had been to Havana from St. Thomas; that she had coaled there, and that two of her officers, passing themselves off as Southerners in their hearts, had lunched with Mr. Slidell and family, and extracted from them their intended movements. (Sensation; "Hear, hear," and "That never came out before." "Bravo.") I again say that I am going to approach a subject with great diffidence. I am going to speak of Mrs. Slidell and her daughters. (Hear, hear, and "Cheers for them.") I tell you, sir, that Miss Slidell branded one of the officers to his face with his infamy, having been her father's guest not ten days before. ("Disgraceful," and "Bravo for Miss Slidell.") No words of mine shall pass my lips on a political point. I have no political feelings. I do as I am ordered. Mr. Fairfax denied that the mariners made a rush towards Miss Slidell at the charge, with fixed bayonets. I believe when I lay my hand on my heart (suing the action to the word) and say, and hope for mercy in the day of judgment, it is true that they did so. (Hear, hear.) Miss Slidell—and no girl in this world has been pained more at the mention of her name in the public papers than she has been by the manner in which some persons have alluded to it, not pained by their having stated the manner in which she acted—(cheers) but some of the public papers described her as having slapped Mr. Fairfax's face. (Cries of "Serve him right if she did," and "Bravo.") She did strike Mr. Fairfax. ("Loud cheers for her then.") She did strike Mr. Fairfax—(cheers)—but she did

not do it with the vulgarity of gesture which has been attributed to her. Miss Slidell was with her father in the cabin, with her arm encircling his neck, and she wished to be taken to prison with her father. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Fairfax attempted to get into the cabin—I do not say forcibly; for I do not say a word against Mr. Fairfax, so far as his manner is concerned—he attempted to get her away by inducements. In her agony, then, she did strike him in the face three times. I wish that Miss Slidell's little knuckles had struck me in the face. I should like to have the mark for ever. (Oh! and laughter.) It has been argued in the public papers that if Captain Moir and I—I am not finding fault with the papers, I am finding fault with the letters which have appeared in the local papers; I am not finding fault with the feelings of the country, for the general voice of the country has thrown over me what you have done this night, as I said before, the mantle of your approbation, which is dear to me. (Applause.) It has been argued whether we should not have done our duty more clearly if we had refused a passage to these so-called commissioners from the Southern States. Now on this point I have a very strong opinion. I know that there are at this table members of the legal profession, but I am not going to offer any opinion of my own. I am going to offer to you notice a fact of which I am perfectly cognizant, and which occurred in the year 1833—either at the latter end of the year 1833 or the beginning of the year 1834. At that time Donna Maria was on the throne of Portugal. In 1833 Dom Miguel was expelled from that country, and yet a noted agent of Dom Miguel applied to the Peninsula and Oriental Company for a passage to Lisbon in the Tagus steamer. The passage was refused. That agent prosecuted the company. I do not mean to say that this is decidedly a point in support, but a fortiori it strengthens my argument. He prosecuted the company for having refused him a passage, and after along hearing the political agent was cast, but the only plea on which he was cast was the plea of the company that if they had not refused him they would have been refused admittance to the Tagus, and, consequently, have been subjected to a prosecution, collectively and individually, by passengers who had paid their money to be taken to Lisbon. A fortiori I say that it is a case in point (Hear, hear.) It shows that Capt. Moir had no right or power whatever to refuse these so-called Confederate Commissioners passage to England. (Cheers.) Moreover, so far from any disunion between Captain Moir and myself, I should have had nothing to do officially with either accepting or refusing them as passengers. (Hear, hear.) But I should have offered my advice most strenuously to Captain Moir that he would have been subjected to a prosecution if he should refuse to take them. But I hold myself personally responsible for everything that was done. (Cheers.) If what was done was wrong I am willing to bear it. (Cheers.) If what was done was right, he and I acted together. (Loud applause.) The Hampshire Advertiser says, "That I stepped out of my proper position, and presumed to make myself a diplomatic character"—that I was merely a deliverer of her Majesty's letters. [Oh.] Well, I am not ashamed to be a deliverer of her Majesty's letters. [Much applause, and cries of "Well done."] I have not shirked my duty to my country. I have served twenty-eight years under the pennant in my own service, and I am too old to undergo the expense of commanding a ship, even if I had the interest to get the appointment to one. I accepted my present appointment in order to educate my orphan boy—his nephew. The young gentleman was sitting by his side, and the remarks occasioned continued outbursts of applause of an enthusiastic character. I thank you for allowing him to be present and sit by my side. Although some may blame me for it, I tender you my most humble thanks. (Cheers.) Well, I must speak of Mrs. Slidell. You may be aware that these ladies were under my charge for three weeks—three weeks of close intercourse on board a ship with ladies under your charge gives you a greater insight into their character and their feelings than casual intimacy on shore. [Hear, hear.] Whatever other people may say of Mrs. Slidell and her daughters, I assure you that so far as my humble judgment goes they were thoroughly well bred ladies. (Applause.) Now, what will you think of this? When I landed I was sent up to London in a special train. I and previously recommended Mrs. Slidell and her daughters to a hotel in London, believing it to be a quiet hotel, and where they might get apartments en suite. [Hear.] Well: I was sent in a special train to report the circumstances to the government. On the day after I had arrived in London I was engaged at the foreign office with Lord Palmerston and the Lords of the Admiralty until a late hour. I say then that on the day after I dined with Mrs. Slidell. I am somewhat diffident in telling you what took place. You will hardly believe that a gentleman of the Northern States, aye, a so-called gentleman, had called upon Mrs. Slidell that afternoon, and, as if the feelings were not harrowed enough by being separated from their father and protector, some demon must come to make the ranking in their hearts more bitter by telling them the decision the law officers of the crown. He said he came to offer his condolence (!) and to inform them that the law officers of the crown had decided "that the seizure of her husband was not contrary to international law." [Loud cries of disgraceful and shameful.] Gentlemen I was enabled to tell Mrs. Slidell—and perhaps

you will pardon me if I repeat the expression here—(yes)—it was a—[infernal lie!]—"Oh," and a laugh—for I had just come from the foreign office, where I had learnt the decision of the law officers of the crown—(hear)—and which was diametrically opposite to what the man dared say. (Cheers.) Now, gentlemen, I have only one more subject that I know of on which to speak: The circumstances attending the federal marines rushing with the points of their bayonets at Miss Slidell. (Hear, hear.) It was at this point that she screamed, for her father snatched himself away from her—I do not mean snatched himself away rudely; but he snatched himself away from her to break the window of his cabin through which he thrust his body out. But the hole was so small that I hardly thought it would admit the circumference of his waist. It was then the lady screamed. I am charged by Mr. Fairfax, "that my manner was so violent that he was compelled to request Capt. Moir to remove me." (Nonsense.) But when the marines rushed on at the point of the bayonets—and I believe that it is not necessary that I should make solemn asseveration that it is true—[no, no]—when they rushed on the point of the bayonet, I had just time to put my body between their bayonets and Miss Slidell—[oh!—] and I said to them, and if Henry of Exeter were here! I would ask him for his absolution for it—[laughter]—I said to them, "Back you—poltroons." ["Bravo, and Capital." I need not ask you, gentlemen if I am acquitted of bullying. I bullied no one. [Hear, hear.] I need not ask you whether you acquit me now. I beg once more to express my thanks to you for the mantle of your approbation which you have thrown over my shoulders. Captain Williams then resumed his seat amidst repeated applause, but immediately rose again and said:—Allow me one moment. It is sufficient for me that I have received such approbation, but it may be satisfactory for you to know that I have received the approbation of my government. [Hear, hear, and cheers.]

BY TELEGRAPH.

TO JOURNAL READING ROOM.

HALIFAX, Jan. 6th. Steamer Bohemian from Liverpool 25th, via Londonderry 27th, arrived this afternoon.

English papers are still discussing Trent affair, in hopeful view that commissioners will be given up and war be thus averted. Pending receipt of news from America there was quite a lull in speculation on Anglo-American, question and result was being quietly awaited, prevailing opinion being in favor of peace. Papers were calculating chances of French despatch reaching Washington before Seward replies to Lyons and expresses hope it will arrive in time to influence reply, a number of gunboats ordered to the Mersey. Reported frigate "Algiers" stationed off straits of Gibraltar to prevent passage of privateers. Frigates "Liffey" and "Malpomono" were to leave Gibraltar 21st, for America.

London Times has critique on Secretary Chase's report, says extraordinary extension of the borrowing system exceeds anything in English History.

France was about to send reinforcements to squadron off Mexico, and North Western coast of American, also rumored squadron of observation was to be sent to the coast of America.

SPAIN. Madrid papers state that Spain sends six to seven thousand men to Mexico, Spanish squadron would sail in three divisions.

Lisbon, 26th.—Body of late King of Portugal to be disinterred and analyzed, public greatly excited, troops patrolling streets.

CHINA. Canton 15th.—Rebels near Ning Po, inhabitants fleeing to Shanghai, where alarm subsided. Reported from Kang Kou that braves attacked foreigners in the streets and houses, placards posted up threatening extirpation to Europeans.

Markets all closed during holidays, only one day's business since Asia left. On Tuesday cotton sold at 1-4 to 1-2 advance, nothing doing in breadstuffs and produce markets. Consols 90-7-8 to 91 1-8.

ARRIVAL OF THE CANADA.

HALIFAX, Jan. 8th.

The Canada left Liverpool at 3 p.m. on 25th, and Queenstown on 29th, she brought about 300 troops, a battery of artillery, and over one hundred tons military stores. Arrived at Halifax on the morning of Wednesday the 8th. 12 passengers and fifty thousand specie. Canadian steamer Hibernian from Liverpool 2, will take six or seven hundred troops, touching at St. John, N. B. to land them. Africa from Liverpool 4th for New York will also take troops landing them at Halifax.

The iron frigate Warrior had got her sails bent and was to be kept in readiness pending solution of American question. When Canada left Liverpool state of suspense prevailed as greatest anxiety was felt relative to advices per Africa then due in response to those from England by the Europa. Deputations from Sunday religious denominations including the congregational

on all sorts of possibilities. Larger farm owners may want to sell off a 30 or 40