Huron Signal.

WEEKLY EDITION.

W.T. COX, Editor and Proprietor.] "The Greatest Possible Good to the Greatest Possible Number."

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The Interview with Jeff. Davis.

Col. Jaques and "Edmund Kirke" in Richmond.

The following narration makes a part of an article in the September number of *The Atlantic Monthly*, and of a closing chapter of a new volume entitled "Down in Tennessee," by Edmund Kirke, about to be published by Sheldon:

IN RICHMOND.

The next morning, after breakfast, which we took in our room with Mr. Javins, we indited a note—of which the following is a copy—to the Confederate Secretary of State:

SPOTTSWOOD HOUSE, RICHMOND, VA., July 17, 1864.

"Hon. J. P. BENJAMIN, *Sec'y of State, etc.*

"DEAR SIR,—The undersigned respectfully solicit an interview with President Davis.

They visit Richmond only as private citizens and have no official character or authority; but they are acquainted with the views of the United States Government and with the sentiments of the Northern people, relative to an adjustment of the differences existing between the North and South, and earnestly hope that a free interchange of views between President Davis and themselves may open the way to such *official* negotiations as will result in restoring PEACE to the two sections of our distracted country.

"They therefore ask an interview with the President and, awaiting your reply, are

"Truly and respectfully yours."

This was signed by both of us; and when the Judge called, as he had appointed, we sent it—together with a commendatory letter I had received on setting out, from a near relative of Mr. Davis—to the Rebel Secretary. In half an hour Judge Ould returned, saying: "Mr. Benjamin sends you his compliments, and will be happy to see you at the State Department."

We found the Secretary—a short, plump, oily little man in black, with a keen black eye, a Jew face, a yellow skin, curly black hair, closely-trimmed black whiskers, and a ponderous gold watch-chain—in the north-west room of the "United States" Custom-House. Over the door of this room were the words, "State Department," and about its walls were hung a few maps and battle-plans. In one corner was a tier of shelves filled with books,—among which I noticed Headley's "History," Lossing's "Pictorial," Parton's "Butler," Greeley's "American Conflict," a complete set of the "Rebellion Record," and a dozen numbers and several bound volumes of the "Atlantic Monthly,"—and in the centre of the apartment was a black-walnut table, covered with green cloth, and filled with a multitude of "State Papers." At this table sat the Secretary. He rose as we entered, and, as Judge Ould introduced us, took our hands and said:

'I am glad, very glad, to meet you, gentlemen. I have read your note, and'—bowing to me—'the letter you bring from——. Your errand commands my respect and sympathy. Pray be seated.'

As we took the proffered seats, the Colonel, drawing off his 'duster,' and displaying his uniform, said:

'We thank you for this cordial reception, Mr. Benjamin. We trust you will be as glad to hear us as you are to see us.'

'No doubt I shall be, for you come to talk of peace. Peace is what we all want.'

'It is, indeed; and for that reason we have come to see Mr. Davis. Can we see him, Sir?'

'Do you bring any overtures to him from your Government?'

'No, Sir. We bring no overtures and have no authority from our Government. We state that in our note. We would be glad, however, to know what terms will be acceptable to Mr. Davis. If they at all harmonize with Mr. Lincoln's views, we will report them to him, and so open the door for official negotiations.'

'Are you acquainted with Mr. Lincoln's views?'

'One of us is, fully.'

'Did Mr. Lincoln, *in any way*, authorise you to come here?'

'No, Sir. We came with his pass, but not by his request. We say distinctly, we have no official or unofficial authority. We come as men and Christians, not as diplomatists, hoping, in a frank talk with Mr. Davis, to discover some way by which this war may be stopped.'

'Well, gentlemen, I will repeat what you say to the President, and if he follows my advice—and I think he will,—he will meet you. He will be at church this afternoon; so, suppose you call here at nine this evening. If anything should occur in the meantime to prevent his seeing you, I will let you know through Judge Ould.'

Throughout this interview the manner of the Secretary was cordial; but with the cordiality was a strange constraint and diffidence, almost amounting to timidity, which struck both my companion and myself. Contrasting his manner with the quiet dignity of the Colonel, I almost fancied our position reversed,—that, instead of our being in his power, the Secretary was in ours, and momently expected to hear some unwelcome sentence from our lips. There is something, after all, in moral power. Mr. Benjamin does not possess it, nor is he a great man. He has a keen, shrewd, ready intellect, but not the *stamina* to originate, or even to execute any great good or great wickedness.

After a day spent in our room, conversing with the Judge, or watching the passers-by in the streets,—I would like to tell who they were, and how they looked; but such information is, just now, contraband,—we called again, at nine o'clock, at the State Department.

Mr. Benjamin occupied his previous seat at the table, and at his right sat a spare, thin-featured man, with iron-gray hair and beard, and a clear, gray eye, full of life and vigor.—He had a broad, massive forehead, and a mouth and chin denoting great energy and strength of will. His face was emaciated, and much wrinkled, but his features were good, especially his eyes,—though one of them bore a scar, apparently made by some sharp instrument. He wore a suit of grayish-brown, evidently of foreign manufacture, and, as he rose, I saw that he was about five feet ten inches high, with a slight stoop in the shoulders. His manners were simple, easy, and most fascinating; and there was an indescribable charm in his voice, as he extended his hand and said to us:

'I am glad to see you, gentlemen. You are very welcome to Richmond.'

And this was the man who was President of the United States, under Franklin Pierce, and who is now the heart, soul and brains of the Southern Confederacy!

His manner put me entirely at my ease,—the Colonel would be at his if he stood before Cæsar,—and I replied:

'We thank you, Mr. Davis. It is not often that you meet men of our clothes and our principles in Richmond.'

'Not often—not so often as I could wish; and I trust your coming may lead to a more frequent and a more friendly intercourse between the North and the South.'

'We sincerely hope it may.'

'Mr. Benjamin tells me that you have asked to see me to—'

And he paused, as if desiring we should finish the sentence. The Colonel replied:

'Yes, Sir. We have asked this interview, in the hope that you may suggest some way by which this war may be stopped. Our people want peace,—your people do, and your Congress has recently said that *you* do. We have come to ask how it can be brought about.'

'In a very simple way. Withdraw your armies from our territory, and peace will come of itself. We do not seek to subjugate you. We are not waging an offensive war, except so far as it is offensive defensive,—that is, so far as we are forced to invade you to prevent you invading us. Let us alone, and peace will come at once.'

'But we cannot let you alone so long as you repudiate the Union. That is the one thing the Northern people will not surrender.'

'I know. You would deny to us what you exact for yourselves,—the right of self-government.'

'No, Sir,' I remarked. 'We would deny you no natural right. But we think Union essential to peace; and, Mr. Davis, *could* two people, with the same language, separated by only an imaginary line, live at peace with each other? Would not disputes constantly arise and cause almost constant war between them?'

'Undoubtedly,—with this generation. You have sown such bitterness at the South; you have put such an ocean of blood between the two sections, that I despair of seeing any harmony in my time. Our children may forget this war, but *we* cannot.'

'I think the bitterness you speak of, Sir,' said the Colonel, 'does not really exist. *We* meet and talk here as friends; our soldiers meet and fraternize with each other; and I feel sure that if the Union were restored a more friendly feeling would arise between us than has ever existed. The war has made us know and respect each other better than before. This is the view of very many Southern men; I have had it from many of them—your leading citizens.'

'They are mistaken,' replied Mr. Davis.—'They do not understand Southern sentiment. How can we feel anything but bitterness towards men who deny us our rights? If you enter my house and drive me out of it, am I not your natural enemy?'

'You put the case too strongly. But we cannot fight for ever; the war must end at some time; we must finally agree upon something; can we not agree now, and stop this frightful carnage? We are both Christian men, Mr. Davis. Can *you*, as a Christian man, leave untried any means that may lead to peace?'

'No, I cannot. I desire peace as much as you do. I deplore bloodshed as much as you do; but I feel that not one drop of the blood shed in this war is on *my* hands,—I can look up to my God and say this. I tried all in my power to avert this war. I saw it coming, and for twelve years I worked night and day to prevent it, but I could not. The North was mad and blind; it would not let us govern ourselves, and so the war came, and now it must go on till the last man falls in his tracks, and his children seize his musket and fight our battle, *unless you acknowledge our right to self government.* We are not fighting for slavery. We are fighting for Independence, and that, or extermination, we *will* have.'

'And there are, at least, four and a half millions of us left; so you see you have a work before you,' said Mr. Benjamin, with a decided sneer.

'We have no wish to exterminate you,' answered the Colonel. 'I believe what I have said—that there is no bitterness between the Northern and Southern people. The North, I know loved the South. When peace comes, it will pour money and means into your hands to repair the waste caused by the war; and it would now welcome you back, and forgive you all the loss and bloodshed you have caused. But we *must* crush your armies and exterminate your government. And is not that already nearly done? You are wholly without money, and at the end of your resources. Grant has shut you up in Richmond. Sherman is before Atlanta. Had you not, then, better accept honorable terms while you can retain your prestige and save the pride of the Southern people?'

Mr. Davis smiled.

'I respect your earnestness, Colonel, but do not seem to understand the situation. We are not exactly shut up in Richmond. If your papers tell the truth, it is your capital that is in danger, not ours. Some weeks ago, Grant crossed the Rapidan to whip Lee, and take Richmond. Lee drove him in the first battle, and then Grant executed what your people call a 'brilliant flank movement,' and fought Lee again. Lee drove him a second time, and then Grant made another 'flank movement;' and so they kept on,—Lee whipping, and Grant flanking,—until Grant got where he is now. And what is the net result? Grant has lost seventy-five or eighty thousand men—*more than Lee had at the onset,*—and is no nearer taking Richmond than at the first; and Lee, whose front has never been broken, holds him completely in check, and has men enough to spare to invade Maryland and threaten Washington! Sherman, to be sure, is before Atlanta; but suppose he is, and suppose he takes it? You know that the farther he goes from his base of supplies, the weaker he grows, and the more disastrous defeat will be to him. And defeat may come. So, in a military view, I should certainly say our position was better than yours.

'As to money: we are richer than you are. You smile; but, admit that our paper is worth nothing,—it answers as a circulating medium, and we hold it all ourselves. If every dollar of it were lost, we should, as we have no foreign debt, be none the poorer. But, it *is* worth something; it has the solid basis of a large cotton crop, while yours rests on nothing, and you owe all the world. As to resources: we do not lack for arms or ammunition, and we have still a wide territory from which to gather supplies, So, you see, we are not in extremities. But, if we were, — if we were without money, without food, without weapons,—if our whole country were desolated, and our armies crushed and disbanded,—could *we*, without giving up our manhood, give up our right to govern ourselves?—Would *you* not rather die, and feel yourself a man, than live, and be subject to a foreign power?'

'From your stand-point there is force in what you say,' replied the Colonel. 'But we did not come here to argue with you, Mr. Davis. We came, hoping to find some honorable way to peace, and I am grieved to hear you say what you do. When I have seen your young men dying on the battle-field, and your old men, women and children starving in their homes, I have felt I could risk my life to save them. For that reason I am here; and I am grieved,—grieved,—that there is no hope.'

'I know your motives, Colonel Jacques, and I honor you for them; but what can I do more than I am doing? I would give my poor life, gladly if it would bring peace and good-will to the two countries; but it would not. It is with your own people you should labor. It is they who desolate our homes, burn our wheat fields, break the wheels of wagons carrying away our women and children, and destroy supplies meant for our sick and wounded. At your door lies all the misery and the crime of this war, and it is a fearful,—fearful account.'

'Not all of it, Mr. Davis. I admit a fearful account, but it is not all at our door. The passions of both sides are aroused. Unarmed men are hanged, prisoners are shot down in cold blood, by yourselves. Elements of barbarism are entering the war from both sides, that should make us—you and me,—as Christian men—shudder to think of. In God's name, then, let us stop it. Let us do something, concede something, to bring about peace. You cannot expect with your four and a half millions, as Mr. Benjamin says you have, to hold out forever against twenty millions.'

Again Mr. Davis smiled.

'Do you suppose there are twenty millions at the North determined to crush us?'

'I do,—to crush your *Government.* A small number of our people, a very small number, are your friends,—Secessionists.—The rest differ about measures and candidates, but are united in the determination to sustain the Union. Whoever is elected in November, he *must* be committed to a vigorous prosecution of the war.'

Mr. Davis still looking incredulous, I remarked—

'It is so, Sir. Whoever tells you otherwise, deceives you. I think I know Northern sentiment, and I assure you it is so. You know we have a system of lyceum-lecturing in our large towns. At the close of these lectures, it is the custom of the people to come upon the platform and talk with the lecturer. This gives him an excellent opportunity of learning public sentiment. Last winter I lectured before nearly a hundred of such associations, all over the North,—from Dubuque to Bangor,—and I took pains to ascertain the feeling of the people. I found a unanimous determination to crush the rebellion and save the Union at every sacrifice. The majority are in favor of Mr. Lincoln, and nearly all of those opposed to him because they think he does not fight you with enough vigor.—The radical Republicans, who go for slave-suffrage and thorough confiscation, are those who will defeat him if he is defeated. But if he is defeated before the people, the House will elect a worse man—worse I mean for you. It is more radical than he is,—you can see that from Mr. Ashley's reconstruction bill,—and the people are more radical than the House. Mr. Lincoln, I know, is about to call out five hundred thousand more men, and I don't see how you *can* resist much longer; but if you do, you will only deepen the radical feeling of the Northern people. They would now give you fair, honorable, *generous* terms; but let them suffer much more, let there be a dead man in every house as there is now in every village and they will give you *no* terms,—they will insist on hanging every rebel south of—— Pardon my terms. I mean no offence.'

'You give no offence,' he replied, smiling very pleasantly. 'I wouldn't have you pick your words. This is a frank, and I like you the better for saying what you think. Go on.'

'I was merely going to add, that let the Northern people once really feel the war—they do not feel it yet—and they will insist on hanging every one of your leaders.'

'Well, admitting all you say, I can't see how it affects our position. There are some things worse than hanging or extermination. We reckon giving up the right of self-government one of those things.'

'By self-government you mean disunion—Southern Independence.'

'Yes.'

'And slavery, you say, is no longer an element in the contest?'

'No, it is not. It never was an essential element. It was only a means of bringing other conflicting elements to an earlier culmination. It fired the musket which was already capped and loaded. There are essential differences between the North and the South, that will, however this war may end, make them two nations.'

'You ask me to say what I think. Will you allow me to say that I know the South pretty well, and never observed those differences?'

'Then you have not used your eyes. My sight is poorer than yours, but I have seen them for years.'

The laugh was upon me, and Mr. Benjamin enjoyed it

'Well, Sir, be that as it may, if I understand you, the dispute between your government and ours is narrowed down to this: Union or Disunion.'

'Yes; or, to put it in other words, Independence or Subjugation.'

'Then the two governments are irreconcilably apart. They have no alternative but to fight it out. But, it is not so with the people. They are tired of fighting and want peace; and as they bear all the burden and suffering of the war, is it not right they should have peace, and have it on such terms as they like?'

'I don't understand you; be a little more explicit.'

'Well. Suppose the two governments should agree to something like this: To go to the people with two propositions; say: Peace, with Disunion and Southern Independence, as your proposition, and: Peace, with Union, Emancipation, No Confiscation, and Universal Amnesty as ours. Let the citizens of all the United States (as they existed before the war) vote 'Yes,' or 'No,' on these two propositions, at a special election within sixty days. If a majority vote Disunion, our government to be bound by it, and to let you go in peace. If a majority vote Union, yours to be bound by it, and to stay in peace. The two governments can contract in this way and the people, though constitutionally unable to decide on peace or war, can elect which of any two propositions shall govern their rulers. Let Lee and Grant, meanwhile, agree to an armistice. This would sheath the sword; and, if once sheathed, it would never again be drawn by this generation.'

'The plan is altogether impracticable. If the South were only one State, it might work, but, as it is, if one Southern State objected to emancipation, it would nullify the whole thing, for you are aware the people of Virginia cannot vote slavery out of South Carolina, or the people of South Carolina vote it out of Virginia.'

'But three-fourths of the States can amend the Constitution. Let it be done in that way—in *any* way, so that it be done by the people. I am not a statesman or a politician, and I do not just know how such a plan could be carried out; but you get the idea—that the PEOPLE shall decide the question.'

'That the *majority* shall decide it you mean. We seceded to rid ourselves of the rule of the majority, and this would subject us to it again.'

'But the majority must rule finally, either with bullets or ballots.'

'I am not so sure of that. Neither current events nor history shows that the majority rules, or ever did rule. The contrary, I think, is true. Why, sir, the man who shall go before the Southern people with such a proposition—with *any* proposition which implied that the North was to have a voice in determining the domestic relations of the South—could not live here a day! He would be hanged to the first tree, without judge or jury.'

'Allow me to doubt that. I think it more likely he would be hanged if he let the Southern people know that the majority could not rule.' I replied smiling.

'I have no fear of that,' rejoined Mr. Davis, also smiling most good-humoredly. 'I give you leave to proclaim it from every house-top in the South.'

'But, seriously, Sir, you let the majority rule in a single State; why not let it rule in the whole country?'

'Because the States are independent and sovereign. the country is not. It is only a confederation of States; or rather it *was*; it is now *two* confederations.'

'Then we are not a *people*—we are only a political partnership?'

'That is all.'

Your very name, Sir, '*United* States' implies that,' said Mr. Benjamin. 'But, tell me, are the terms you have named—Emancipation, No Confiscation, and Universal Amnesty—the terms which Mr. Lincoln authorised you to offer us?'

'No, Sir. Mr. Lincoln did not authorize me to offer you any terms. But I *think* both he and the Northern people, for the sake of peace, would assent to some such conditions.'

'They are *very* generous,' replied Mr. Davis, for the first time during the interview showing some angry feeling. 'But Amnesty, Sir, applies to criminals. We have committed no crime. Confiscation is of no account unless you can enforce it; and Emancipation! You have already emancipated nearly two millions of our slaves, and if you take care of them, you may emancipate the rest. I had a few of them when the war begun. I was of some use to them; they never were of any to me. Against their will you emancipated them; and you may 'emancipate' every negro in the Confederacy, but we will be free! We will govern ourselves! We *will* do it, if we have to see every plantation sacked, and every Southern city in flames!'

'I see, Mr. Davis, it is useless to continue this conversation,' I replied; 'and you will pardon us if we have seemed to press our views with too much pertinacity. We love the old flag; and that must be our apology for intruding upon you at all.'

'You have not intruded upon me,' he replied, resuming his usual manner. 'I am glad to have met you, both. I once loved the old flag as well as you do. I would have died for it; but now it is to me only the emblem of oppression.'

'I hope the day may never come, Mr. Davis, when I say that,' said the Colonel.

A half hour's conversation on other topics—not of public interest—ensued, and then we rose to go. As we did so the Rebel President gave me his hand, and, bidding me a kindly 'good bye,' expressed the hope of seeing me again in Richmond in happier times—when peace should have returned—but with the Colonel his parting was particularly cordial. Taking his hand in both of his he said to him:

'Colonel, I respect your character and your motives, and I wish you well—I wish you every good wish I can wish you consistently with the interests of the Confederacy.'

The quiet, straightforward bearing, and magnificent moral courage of our 'fighting parson' had evidently impressed Mr. Davis very favorably.

As we were leaving the room he added:

'Say to Mr. Lincoln from me, that I shall at any time be pleased to receive proposals for peace on the basis of our independence. It will be useless to approach me with any other."

Huron Signal.

GODERICH, C. W., AUG. 26, 1864.

FORESHADOWINGS OF PEACE.

There are indications, numerous and suggestive, that the American Nation ardently desires a return to the blessings of Peace. The *people* are at last awakening to a sense of their danger, as the great ship of State, once so buoyant and hopeful, totters and reels as she approaches, by ever-narrowing circles, the maelstrom of financial ruin and political anarchy. At the outset, a great war was looked forward to as to a right royal pageant in which patriotism might blaze forth, and out of which the nation would come crowned with glory, inured to arms and a standing terror to any European nation which should dare, thenceforth, to cross her path. But, alas, alas, the tinsel has worn off, the frippery has crumbled into dust, the vain-glorious boastings of amateur statesmen have come to nought, and now, after nearly four years of strife, the people—those who pay the taxes and spill the precious blood—are sorrowfully pondering over the awful calamities of war. When the parlor-patriot parson demands more *blood*, the wife trembles for the loved husband of her youth, as she gazes upon the doubly-widowed matron whose *all* on this side the grave has fed the Juggernaut of Slaughter—when the relentless iron hand of Mr. Lincoln's draft is laid upon the city, the town, the hamlet hidden away among the green hills, aged patriarchs bend their heads lower and lower still in sorrow as they ask themselves the awful question, "Which shall be the next of our dear ones to be led like lambs to the slaughter?" The War Monster, gorged to repletion, has grown from small beginnings into an insatiable tyrant which, not unlike the fabled dragon, stalks boldly through the land devouring whole villages in its course. No room for tawdry display now, no time for holiday pageantry—the recruit of last week is hurried to the front with fiend-like alacrity and this week all that is left of the strong young man is a heap of bones daintly picked by Southern buzzards.—Where is the man so blunted to all feeling, so callous to every sentiment of humanity, that he does not feel inclined to cry out, "In the name of God—in the name of outraged Christianity—in the name of all we hold sacred, can *nothing* be done to stop this butchery between brethren!"

That cry is going forth. A great change is being wrought in men's minds throughout the Northern States. The logic of *events* is more potent than the interested patriotism of shoddy politicians, and the host of army contractors and villainous brokers who have literally fattened on the blood of the Nation. The pulpit sighs and prays for *peace*—the Press, mighty engine that it is for good or evil, demands an armistice and a Convention of the States, to see if, by any means, almost, a stop can be put to the carnage. And if the people once arise in their might and exclaim, "It is enough—unfurl the white flag—let us return to reason!" the Administration *must* make a virtue of necessity and agree to a suspension of hostilities. This devastating war must draw to a close some time, The carnage is too frightful to last, as did some of the ancient struggles, for twenty or thirty years. In the end diplomacy must step in—why not now as well as at any future period? On this point the New York *Herald*, which is a pretty correct exponent of popular feeling, says:

"Modern war is not a mere bull-dog fight, in which the combatants rend and maim each other until one of them is totally exhausted or some humane bystander interferes and chokes them off. War is now the ally of diplomacy. It is simply a display of force, in order to secure a certain object. It is the strongest argument advanced to convince an opponent. When civilized people carry on a war they pause at every stage to observe and consider the effect which their martial logic has upon their adversaries. At the least sign of weakness or of yielding they again bring up their verbal arguments and try to secure a satisfactory settlement. If they succeed, the war ends. If they fail, the war goes on to another stage. If the parties are so evenly matched that neither can obtain any marked advantage in the field, the result is a compromise. Those of our readers who have attentively watched the progress of the Crimean, the Italian and the Danish wars will recall this systematic combination of fighting and diplomacy.

"Now, we claim to be a civilised nation, and to conduct our wars in a civilised manner. The war of 1812 and the Mexican war were certainly thus conducted; but during the present war we have not yet had any recourse to diplomacy. On the contrary, this imbecile administration has set its foot down upon any attempt to negotiate with the rebels. President Lincoln fears, doubtless, that such an attempt would be regarded as an endorsement of the peace party and a recognition of the independence of the Confederacy. How groundless such fears are is evident from the fact that negotiation is now a part of war.—For example, if the President could make any proposition which the rebel people would approve, and the rebel leaders reject, he would divide and weaken the enemy more than by a hundred victories in the field. If, by a conference with the leading rebels, the President could end the war and restore the Union at once, he would show himself a greater man than if he carried on his campaigns until every Southern soldier slept under the sod. This is the only true view of the war. Any other view of it degrades it to the level of a combat between wild beasts. Thus it is that truces and armistices and conventions have come to be regarded as legitimate war measures. They are, of course, designed to end in peace. When, therefore, we urge upon the President to offer an armistice of six months and call a convention of States, we urge it as a war measure, and we regard it as the best war measure yet brought forward."

Should the present movement bring about an armistice and conference of delegates from all the states of the old Union, permanent peace may be the result; but we are bound to admit the fact that the South is still unsubdued in every sense of the term, and that there is every reason to believe that *Independence* is the sole condition upon which it will accept peace. That once conceded, it is willing to cease hostilities at any moment. In proof of this determination on the part of the Southern people, we cite the remarkable conversation between Mr. Davis and certain Northern men, which will be found *in extenso* in another part of to-day's *Signal*. Mr. Davis knows the temper of his people well—knows what they have suffered, and what they are willing to suffer, unless the North acknowledges their hardly-won independence. In this respect there is no reason for doubt. The question, then, is, will the Northern people allow themselves to be slaughtered in the evidently vain struggle to deprive their brethren of the South of that which they declare they will fight and bleed for to the very last, if necessary?

PEACE IN EUROPE.

By late advices we learn that Peace has been restored between the belligerents of Europe. As we anticipated at the outset, Denmark, unaided, has been utterly powerless in the grasp of her powerful enemies, Austria and Prussia. In accordance with the preliminary treaty of peace signed on the 1st of the present month, the king of Denmark is to cede all his right to the Duchies of Schleswig, Holstein, Lauenburg, as well as the islands pertaining to them. It will be remembered that at the London Conference, held about a month ago, the king of Denmark had it in his power to secure peace on terms much more favorable to himself, but being sustained, perhaps, by a lingering hope of aid from England, he had determined upon one more struggle, the result of which was most unfortunate for the poor Danes, who are now definitively shorn of a large portion of what they considered their soil. Whether the conquered Duchies are to be annexed to Prussia or handed over to the Prince of Augustenburg, has not been determined, and it has even been hinted by English and German papers that the robbers will ultimately quarrel over the division of the spoils.

THE AMERICAN WAR.

The Federals have seized upon a portion of the Weldon road, near Richmond, and have contrived to hold it, notwithstanding the desperate efforts of the Confederates to drive them from the position. The Confederates are running trains regularly over the Railway from Richmond to Culpepper, and it is apparent that they are masters of the country between Richmond and the Potomac. On the Upper Potomac they have taken possession of all the fords and are carrying things pretty much as the please. The Confederates, under Forrest, dashed into Memphis, Tennessee, on the 21st, and did much damage besides carrying off considerable quantities of booty. Preparations are being made in Ohio to resist the coming draft. We have no definite news from Atlanta. The Federals are advancing from Pensacola towards Mobile, and a land campaign is expected. It was rumored in New York on the 24th that the Government had decided to send five commissioners—three Democrats and two Republicans—to Richmond, to arrange preliminaries for peace. Beyond accounts of desultory skirmishes there is nothing further worth reporting.

The Examination of Teachers.

To the Editor of the 'Huron Signal.'

SIR—I wish to occupy a small space in your columns with some remarks upon the following statement in your report of the recent Examination of School Teachers:—

"The Board of Examiners was, we believe, very strict, no certificates being granted to inefficient or evidently slovenly candidates."

I take it, Sir, that you have not yourself verified the above report by giving your own personal attention to the Examination, because you say you *believe*—thereby implying that you are not positive that it was of an unusually strict character. I am aware that it is quite unreasonable to expect Editors of country journals to keep a staff of reporters, such as it would be necessary to do, in order to make their reports of these matters faultless, and therefore, as a general thing, I rest satisfied with their trifling imperfections. The question of Education, however, is one of such vast consequence and importance, that you will pardon me if I seem, in my remarks, to be a little more exacting than ordinarily.

We have established in our glorious land what I consider the most liberal, complete, and efficient system of *Common School* education that the world has ever seen. "The People" are entrusted with almost the whole management of it; indeed, I may say the whole management—for it is but their *delegated* authority that performs those acts which it is inexpedient or impossible for them to perform themselves. It is our duty, then, as well as our privilege, to watch closely the workings of the system, and to guard, as well as we can, against imperfections creeping into it, especially any the cause of which may spring from our own actions. Among the delegated acts spoken of—and perhaps the most important among them—is that of declaring what persons are, and what are not, qualified to teach. This power is necessarily delegated to some of those few in the community whose acquirements are such, that they are themselves qualified to judge; and we should therefore expect that in any Examination they would be "very strict," and that no candidate would be turned off upon the community as a qualified teacher who really is not what he is represented. The law governing the action of the County Boards of Public Instruction in this matter, is such that one would be inclined to think that no candidate could get a certificate which he did not deserve; and I think I may say that with anything like proper discretion and care on the part of the Board, no candidate could procure a certificate which his qualifications do not fit him to hold He could not, at least, providing the gentlemen composing the County Board of Public Instruction are themselves properly qualified judges of his deserts—qualified, I mean, both in an educational and moral point of view, and acting, in their capacity as Examiners without fear, favor, or affection. Don't, Mr. Editor, think that I intend to cast a slur upon the character of any one connected with the Board of Public Instruction for the County of Huron. No doubt they are all honorable men. But the most honorable men are sometimes misled and hoodwinked, and I think a few facts that I have to state will show the public that "some one has blundered" or done something worse in the matter of the late "very strict" Examination.

We have in our School Section a Teacher to whom the County Board has just granted a first class certificate "*during pleasure.*" This certificate should be a pledge or guarantee to the public that the holder of it can, among other things, (to quote the words of the School Act) "read with ease, intelligence and expression," and is "familiar with the principles of reading and pronunciation" that he knows the "common rules of orthography" and is "able to parse any sentence in prose or poetry" and to "write grammatically with correct spelling and punctuation."

Our teacher's certificate, I say, should be a guaranty of his proficiency in the above branches of learning. They are, in fact, as you will perceive, the very groundwork of all sound scholarship, and the distinguished Educationists who framed our noble school system have very justly recognised them as such by making them a portion of the qualifications of *second class* teachers. To the great discredit of the Board of Public Instruction in these Counties, however, *our* first-class teacher is entirely deficient in them, as a few of his errors which I will quote must show to any one who understands the branches mentioned himself. In pronunciation he taught his pupils to call the word "Socrates" *Socraits*, (I may mention, however, that he has lately received new light on this point, but he held a first-class certificate while he taught the above) "Arithmetic" (the noun) he invariably styles *Arith-mettic*, "Derivative" *Deryvatiue*, "scourge" *sorge*, "contrary" *contrary*, "programme" *programmy*, (in three syllables) "formidable" *formidayble*. I could quote a number of other *common words* which he teaches his pupils to speak improperly, but the foregoing are enough to show the barbarisms of his pronunciation. As for his punctuation and orthography there are writings of his extant that show him to be utterly deficient in these branches of learning. In a manuscript written not more than six weeks ago, he divided the word ingratitude *ingr-atitude*. These few *facts*, which could easily be multiplied, will suffice as specimens to prove my position. Now, I would ask you, sir, is it not lowering the standard of education in these counties to grant such a man a certificate at all, much more so a first class certificate. The only conclusion that I can to under consideration of the above facts is that the United Counties Board of Public Instruction ir either "inefficient and slovenly," or the members composing it are incapable of performing the duties they have been appointed to do. It was not, sir, I assure you, a matter of surprise to me when I heard that at the recent examination a candidate for a first-class certificate, on his being presented with but a second-class one, tore in pieces the document, then and there, in the presence of the Board, and declared contemptuously that he would never submit himself to be examined any more by them.

A BACKWOODS OBSERVER.

Huron, August 18, 1864.

News Items.

The Prince of Wales has made the usual application to become a mason.

Horse flesh as an article of food is growing more and more popular in Paris.

The Mormons will lay up a large stock of grain this year for future famines.

The graduating class of Beloit (Wis.) College, has gone to the war for 100 days.

Over 3,000,000 passengers are carried annually on the street railways of Chicago.

It is said the sailing vessels of the English navy will never be sent to sea again.

Spain will recognise the new Mexican Government.

Napoleon's first wife, Josephine, is to have a statue in Paris.

The Germans of Europe are refusing to use English coal.

An order in Council has passed, incorporating Ingersoll as a town, and the proclamation to that effect will issue immediately.

Company 5, Royal Canadian Rifles left Toronto for St. Johns, Nfld., on the 18th, accompanied by about 200 women and children.

A rattlesnake coiled under a cradle in which an infant was sleeping, at Kalamazoo, Mich., sprang up, bit the child, and it died the following day.

A new ferry passenger steamer is in course of erection at Sarnia for the G. T. R. Co. Her machinery is to be taken from the steamer St. Clair.

Blocks of a brilliant, crystallized white marble with veins of red, brown and blue, have been taken from a lately discovered bed on the St. Lawrence.

The Norfolk *Reformer* understands that Port Dover is to be one of the places honored with a visit from His Excellency, after the close of the Provincial Exhibition.

In consequence of Hon. I. Buchanan declining to contest the Burlington Division, the *Spectator* says "it has been deemed desirable to allow Dr. Smith to walk the course."

The *Planet* says an attempt was made "on Saturday night," to rob Baxter and Brown's flouring mill, Chatham. A young man named Wm. Young has been arrested on suspicion.

The London *Advertiser* says that on the night of the 18th Willis & Belton's lumber yard was on fire, evidently the work of an incendiary. About $1,000 worth of lumber was destroyed.

On the 17th Mr W. F. VanSickle, of Ancaster, was drowned in the Grand River, near Middleport while bathing. He was about 40 years of age and good swimmer, but was seized with a cramp.

Samuel Armstrong, long and well known in the village of Colborne, committed suicide by jumping from the wharf at the harbor, some time during the night of the 12th. His body was found the next morning.

The Barrie *Spirit*, of the 17th, says that a log dwelling in Vespra was struck by lightning on the 5th; the fluid passed through one end of the house, took off some of the roof and logs, and more or less stunned seven of the family.

"It is an ill wind that does nobody good." Humphrey's *Journal of Photography* says a call for more troops always makes the photographer's business "lively." "The fact that each one of our braves, before offering up his life on the alter of his country, has his picture taken, makes business for the operator, the stock dealer, and all others connected with them.

☞ The borers for Salt at Chatham have struck upon a vein of mineral water somewhat similiar to that at St. Catherines, at a depth of 565 feet. The mixture of salt, sulphur, and petrolium flows at the rate of 130 gallons per minute.

GREAT SWIMMING MATCH.—A swimming match recently took place in the British Channel between Mr. Herschell, of the French navy, and Capt. Saunders, an English man. The course was five measured miles at sea, with rather a high sea running. The Frenchman took the lead at first, and kept it a long time: but was ultimately passed by Captain Saunders. The distance was accomplished by the winner in one hour, fifty six minutes, and twenty-eight seconds.

ABE LINCOLN'S LATEST.—'Did you ever see a wild goose a floatin' on the ocean?' asked the President of the Secretary of the Treasury, in the words of the Old Zip Coon. 'Well,' answered the Secretary, 'I guess I have.' 'Why, then,' says Abe, 'you ought to know what it's like; but if you don't, I'll tell you between ourselves, mind, so don't you go tellin' nobody else. A wild goose a floatin' on the ocean is like the Union, and our trying to restore the Union is like swimmin' arter the goose—a wild goose, Chase. And, Chase, you know as well as I do that the end of a wild goose chase is a gone goose.'

WARNING TO CANADIANS!—Nine young men left Prescott a few weeks ago, full of hope and promise, to enlist in the ranks of the Federal army. Word has just been received, of the death of the *last of the nine!* There seems now an utter recklessness of human life in this war; and it is the most unaccountable madness for neutrals to interfere or assist in it.

THE COST OF AN EFFORT FOR FREEDOM.—The *Baltic Gazette* gives the following statistics relative to the late insurrection in Poland, chiefly derived from official sources.—During the 16 months of the struggle over 30,000 insurgents were killed or severely wounded; 361 were condemned to death by military tribunals, and 85,000 persons less compromised were transported to Siberia.—The war contributions levied were 6,000,000 of roubles in the kingdom of Poland, 3,000,000 in Lithuania, 2,000,000 in Volhynia, Podolia, and Kiew. The national government, on its side, raised the following sums:—6,000,000 in Poland, 3,000,000 in Lithuania. 2,000,000 in Volhynia, Podolia, and Kiew, 2,500,000 in Galicia, and about 1,000,000 in Posnania. The number of Poles who found an asylum abroad is estimed at 10,000.

British and Federal Debts Compared.

From the New York World.

We have become so accustomed to seeing large figures with the last two years that they have almost lost their power to create in men's minds the corresponding idea. In order to give us full appreciation of their meaning, it has become necessary to look at them in a relative manner, and compare them with numbers which were before regarded as large.

In order for us to fully appreciate the amount of our public debt, we must compare it with that of Great Britain, which is well-known to be the largest debt in the world.—We propose to show that, relatively, our public debt is much the larger. A large debt for a rich nation to pay may not be so much as a small debt for a poor nation to pay. Then let us see how we compare with England in wealth and public debt.

The British national debt was, on the 31st March last, 799,802,139 pounds sterling, or, reckoning five dollars to the pound, it was $3,999,010,695. The interest on that debt, which is 3 per cent., is $118,970,320. By official returns, the entire wealth and valuation of the nation was, on the 8th day of April, 1861, $21,500,000,000. Therefore the yearly interest is at the rate of one dollar for $362 59 of the valuation.

By the census of 1860 the entire wealth and valuation of the United States and territories, was $16,159,616,068 (including 4,000,000 of slaves at a southern valuation.) Our public debt, besides our state municipal debts and other liabilities, as we have before shown in these columns, will on the 4th of March next be more than $2,653,427,101, and it is all to be funded, and draw an interest of six per cent. in gold, which is $159,205,626. Therefore, the yearly interest payable in gold is at the rate of one dollar for $101.50 of the valuation, which is more than two and a half times larger than the debt of Great Britain.

With gold at 250, payable in United States currency, the rate of interest will make our debt relatively more than six and a quarter times larger than that of Great Britain! and that, too, as compared with the resources and valuation of the United States in 1860, as it then was, and as it is now.

The Dog who Saved a Ship.

A TRUE STORY.

A few years ago, a captain from Massachusetts, who was in Havre, in France, obtained there a fine little rat terrier, which he called "Neptune," as he was to make a companion of him in his voyages, and thought, I suppose, that the name of the old god of the sea would be appropriate for the little fellow. Little "Nep," soon learned to like the vessel, and he would run up ladders like a little sailor, though he could not come down without help. After the vessel had been at sea some weeks or months, when they began to approach land, before it could be seen by the men, Nep. would mount high up on the forward part of the ship, and snuff, and snuff, and bark, and show signs of joy. His keen scent enabled him to smell the land long before it could be seen. He would also detect the approach of another ship when he could not see it, in the same way.

When Nep. had been to sea with his master about two years, the *Hortensia* (that was the vessel's name) had been to New Orleans for a load of cotton, and was on her way out of the Gulf of Mexico into the Atlantic Ocean. For some days there had been squally weather with light baffling winds, and the vessel had not sailed very rapidly, but she was in a dangerous neighborhood, and a constant watch was necessary; for along the coast of Florida are long, low reefs, and islands, and bars, which cause the destruction of many a vessel. It had been the captain's watch in the early part of the night—that is, the captain with a few men remained upon the deck while the rest slept, then the others, at the sound of the bell, came upon deck, the mate took charge of the ship, the men who had been watching went below, and the captain, after telling his mate to call before three o'clock, went below and turned into his berth to sleep. Nep. lay at his master's state room door, for that was his sleeping place. There lies in the Florida Straits a large and dangerous rock called the Double Headed Shot Keys. A light house is built upon it that vessels may be kept from running upon it in the night. "Be sure to call me at three o'clock," said the captain, "as by that time we shall be up with the Double Headed Shot Keys, and sooner, if there is a change of weather."

The night wore on, and all was still but the splashing of the water: the mate went below to get something from his chest, sat down for a few minutes, and before he knew it was fast asleep; the men on deck receiving no orders supposed all was right, and one by one they too feel asleep; no one was awake but a small Spanish boy, whose turn it was to be at the wheel—that is the helm, where they steer the vessel. Meanwhile, the wind changed, a stiff breeze sprang up, the sails were filled, and the *Hortensia* plowed through the ocean briskly, straight towards the Double Headed Shot Keys. This little Spanish boy, half asleep at the helm, knew not of the danger, neither could he see ahead from where he stood, for the great sails concealed the view of the light house, but Nep. the good sailor that he was, had already discovered that land was near, he smelt it, and saw the light. He rushed down to his master's state-room and barked, and jumped up to him as he lay on his berth. "Get down! be still Nep!" said the sleepy captain. But Nep. would not be still—he only barked the louder. "Be still!" said the captain again, and he pushed the dog away. Again the faithful little fellow jumped up, pulled his master sleeve, and took hold of his arm with his teeth. Then the captain thoroughly roused, began to think something must be the matter. He sprang up, and Nep. ran forward, barking to the companion way; the captain's head no sooner came above the deck than he saw what was the matter. Right ahead was the fearful rock and the light-house, and the ship plunging toward it the rate of nine miles an hour! He seized the helm, the ship struggled, swung round, and when her course was shifted, she was so near the rock that they could have touched it with an oar; in three minutes she would have struck and been a wreck! The sleeping sailors were roused to their duty, and the astonished mate rose up from his nap on the chest to learn that but for the faithful dog the waves might already have closed over him.

Do you wonder that the captain thinks his dog is worth his weight in gold? He has been offered large sums of money for him. He does not go to sea now, Nep. went as long as his master did, and now he makes himself quietly useful at home by catching all the rats in the neighborhood. He is six years old, and may live to a good old age, [illegible] pet and admiration of all who know him.