



## *An episode of the Trent Affair*

*By Virginia Mason*

James Murray Mason was born on November 3, 1798, in Fairfax County, Virginia. A secessionist, Mason was a Virginia delegate to the provisional Confederate Congress. His term of service in the Confederate Congress was very short, for on August 29<sup>th</sup>, he was appointed by the President to be “Special Commissioner of the Confederate States of America, near the Government of Her Majesty, the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland”.

“It was thought important he should be in London at as early a day as possible, so he lost no time in arranging his affairs for his absence and on September 25<sup>th</sup> reported in Richmond ready to sail. In taking leave of his family, he gave them but few directions, said he relied confidently upon Mrs. Mason's discretion to guide her and her daughters in any emergency that might arise; and felt fully assured they would be well and kindly cared for by his friends in Richmond, as well as by those in Winchester. He expressed the wish that the family silver should be given into the public treasury, to be melted into coin, if there should ever be need for it and urged, as his last request, that his wife and daughters would never allow themselves to be within the enemies lines, but would make whatever sacrifices might be required to enable them to go, if necessary, from place to place until they reached the last village in the Confederacy. When urged to take with him one of his daughters, whose companionship, and whose assistance as an amanuensis was thought to be indispensable to his comfort, he said nothing could induce him to incur for his wife or daughters any possible risk of capture. “Moreover”,

said he, "the boys need their mother near them in case they should be wounded, and turning to his daughters he added, "You, girls, will be of more value to me if you are with your mother to aid, to cheer and to comfort her, than you could possibly be in any other way, no matter how great a pleasure your presence with me could ever prove". For his own safety he had no fear, nor had he any apprehensions or doubts as to the triumphant success of the Confederate Government in establishing and maintaining its independence. This confident assurance is evinced in all his letters and dispatches. Extracts from them tell the story of the next four years.

"CHARLESTON, S. C., October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1861.

"My Very Dear Wife: I expect to dispatch this to-morrow as my last missive before going. The hope now is of getting off to-morrow night under a plan of increased safety the *Nashville* is abandoned because of the difficulty of getting out, arising from the draft of water incident to her size. She will go, how ever, on account of the Government and take the risk, probably tonight. We have, by authority of the Government chartered a smaller, but very safe steamer, called the *Gordon*, to take us either to Nassau (an island of the Bahamas off the coast of Florida), or to Havana, at our option. There is no risk of our being seen by the enemy as we go out, as we can run close to shore, and her speed is our security at sea. She can reach Havana in 70 hours, and then we go by the regular line of British steamers, the largest class of packets. I think thus, after much delay, we are on the right track but nothing is to be said of all this, until you hear that we are off, as you shall do by earliest telegram".

"FRIDAY, October 11th, 1861.

"There has intervened the usual delay in getting a steamer ready, but now writing to you at 5 o'clock p. m., we are assured that we shall be off to-night as soon as the moon goes down at midnight, and we have made all preparations accordingly. Our boat is a strong "Line Steamer" well known in these waters as the fastest afloat, and we have chartered her, by authority of the Government at \$10,000 to place us in Havana; so you see how valuable we are considered. Mr. Slidell's family and Mrs. Eustis accompany us, still I am satisfied that I did not take either of the girls, although, probably no real risk, I could not dismiss apprehensions. Trescott will telegraph you of our safe departure through the State Department. I am perfectly well and leave the country in high hope and buoyant. Again, my dear wife, invoking the care and blessing of Heaven on you and our dear children, I am, as ever, most affectionately yours,"

"J. M. MASON".

"AT SEA, OFF THE SOUTHERN END OF THE ISLAND OF ABAGO. (ONE OF THE BAHAMAS), October 14th, 1861.

"Here we are, my dear wife, on the deep blue sea clear of all the Yankees. We ran the blockade in splendid style on Saturday morning at 1 a. m. a dark, rainy night such as the enemy thought no sinner would be abroad in, passed within sight of the lights of the blockading squadron, but I presume without being observed by them, as we made no noise that we were aware of; we had a light, rapid steamer and she went by under press

of steam. So it was, we got clear, and now, having run about 600 miles, are within four hours of Nassau (island of New Providence, Bahama), a British possession, which will be our first stopping place the steamer being under our control for the voyage. (You will see the Bahama group on the map immediately off the coast of Florida.) We stop at Nassau to learn about the English line of steamers, and where we had better join the next packet thence to Havana, which is not more than 12 hours run, and where (stopping a few hours at Nassau) we expect to be on Wednesday, the 16th. Could we have ordered everything it could not have been more propitious first, in the dark, rainy night to get out and since in the finest, calmest weather, our little egg-shell of a bark delights in. The first day out we had a spirited breeze, since then, the sea has been as calm and smooth as a lake, and yet so continues. The long heavy swell, however, which belongs to old ocean, made everybody on board sick, even including Slidell, but myself. I have never felt the slightest qualm, but had a good appetite and a clear head all the time. We have with us Mrs. Slidell and three daughters and son, aged 15, and Mrs. Eustis. The ladies did not appear for 24 hours and hardly yet have their feet under them. The sun is rather hot in these latitudes, but even in the absence of a breeze, the rapid motion of the boat gives us a fine and cool air. We shall take the first English steamer we can find for England, but we may have to wait for some days in Cuba for her departure. Should this detention occur, we shall go out into the country to avoid risk of sickness in Havana, although, it is said that at this season the place is healthy. But having run the blockade successfully everything else is plain sailing, because under any foreign flag we are safe from molestation. Mr. Trescott promised to send you a telegram through the Department of State, and to write you by mail of Sunday if we got safely out, so that I am flattering myself you and our dear circle have heard, long ere this of our success. You must tell me in your next letter when you heard of our departure and what? I am curious to know how far those we left on shore could judge of our safety we had no one to send back. I write this to keep you au-courant of our movements across the ocean, and I shall finish it at Havana to go back by the steamer, lately the *Gordon*, now, the *Theodora*. To confuse the enemy, they change names here with little scruple.

“WEDNESDAY, October 16th, off the coast of Cuba.

“We stopped at Nassau on Monday afternoon and found no steamer running thence except to New York made the coast of Cuba at 10 a. m. this morning, and soon fell in with a small Spanish steamer of war, whom we boarded and there learned that we were just too late for the English steamer, and should have to wait there three weeks.

“We shall land at a small town, called Cardenas, about 100 miles down the coast from Havana, and to avoid risk of fever shall go into the high and cool lands. At any rate, we are safe from the Yankees and henceforth under a foreign flag.

I have penciled this to go back by the *Theodora*, the nom de guerre of the *Gordon*. It will assure you and our dear children of my safety and will bear to you the love and affection of, my dear wife.

Yours ever,

“T. M. MASON”.

"CARDENAS, CUBA, October 18th, 1861.

"My Dear Wife: Landed safely at last, and have the Yankees at defiance. We got here the day before yesterday, escorted in from sea by a Spanish man-of-war we found cruising off the coast, and who, finding- that we were (we sent aboard to him), offered that grateful courtesy. I wrote you of my voyage fully from sea, and left it on board the ship. I shall send this to meet her at Havana, whither she proceeded after landing us. We have been received here with great kindness and hospitality. The local Governor and the principal men of the city have called on us, and tendered us every civility. We had determined to go to Havana (100 miles off) at once, but a Mr. Cazanova, who married a Virginia girl, hearing by dispatch to him by telegraph, on his plantation, of our arrival, hastened to town, and has, in the kindest and most urgent manner, insisted upon the whole party (some 15 in number), becoming his guests during our stay on the island, and to carry it out engaged a special train of cars to carry us within two miles of his house. A plain unassuming gentleman, who has spent much time in the United States. We accept, of course, and I think I shall remain there two or three days and then go to Havana or rather to some healthy place in its vicinity. The weather here is rather warm, the thermometer ranging from 96 to 98, and mosquitoes *ad libitum*, but I was never in better health, and it is said, the island is free from fever. We shall have full time for reconnaissance, as the British steamer, only making monthly trips, does not leave here until the 9th of November. Everything, as you may suppose, is new, or rather strange, and to our eyes "outrés", but the people know our mission and accost us kindly and without ceremony on the street, wishing us every success in our struggle at home and a safe voyage. If a chance offers to a Southern port, I will write again before we sail.

"Best love to all our dear circle.

"Yours, my dear wife, always,

"J. M. MASON".

"HAVANA, October 29th, 1861.

"My Dear Wife: I have a chance to write to you and to the dear circle at home, by a small vessel to sail to-day, and it is thought will get into some port in the Confederate States. Still at Havana, and although everything is new, yet the intolerable heat forbids any enjoyment of it; the thermometer in the day 98 and 100, but the nights endurable; to walk a few hundred yards disables you for the day but there is little temptation to walk, the streets are so narrow and the sidewalks don't allow two persons to pass narrow balconies over the streets are so near that persons in opposite houses can converse without raising the voice. We have been received here with marked attention by the inhabitants, all of whose sympathies are with the Confederate States, from the Captain-General down. As an evidence, the ladies of Havana got up a large silk Confederate flag and presented it to the ship that brought us here, and under which, floating from the masthead, she sailed out of the harbor on her way home; we, of course, have not heard of her since, but our prayers for her safety went with her. The name, you will recollect, is the *Theodora*; look for her arrival.

"As I wrote you from Cardenas, we went thence to the plantation of Mr. Cazanova, a very large sugar estate, where we were most sumptuously entertained from Saturday until Tuesday then came here. The Cazanovas are people of great wealth, and, from our

experience, of profuse hospitality the estate, we were told, yields 2,000 hogsheads of sugar, and he has two coffee plantations adjoining, besides other estates in the island; carriages, horses, and negroes without stint. There are many planters here of inordinate wealth saw on the estate 20 or 30 negroes just from Africa and plenty of Coolies (Chinese) as much slaves as the Africans. The gay season in Havana is just beginning, and we are invited to balls innumerable; the Slidells don't go because they are in mourning, and I declined on many pretexts, the true cause, the heat. We called, of course, on the Captain-General, by appointment. He returned the call by a card. He begged we would command him for anything we desired. The fruit here is certainly exquisite; on the plantation especially, we enjoyed it. The usage is, in the morning about seven, a cup of coffee, and after that oranges; breakfast a *Id fourchette* at 10 o'clock, stews, haricots, fish, etc., etc., and claret; at 1 o'clock lunch of fruit all pulled fresh from the trees, pine apples in perfection, oranges of every shape and flavor, and delicious bananas, guavas, yuccas, and a long catalogue of others, the beverage cocoanut water, from the cocoanut fruit; dinner at five, and very *recherché*; and a dozen servants.

"We are to sail from here on the 6th of November, to meet the English steamer at St. Thomas, an island of the British West Indies, some 800 miles off, and shall reach London about the 28th. I wrote a few days since, to your sister Anne by a steamer sailing for New York, and after I get to London, and have an address, will write to Henry about our affairs. Then too, my dear wife, I shall hope to have some accounts from home, for which, Heaven knows how much I long.

"God bless and preserve you all is the prayer of yours, my dear wife, ever,

"T. M. MASON.

"UNITED STATES SHIP *SAN JACINTO*,

"Off the Capes of Virginia, Nov. 15, 1861.

"My Very Dear Wife: The date of this will show you that we have been captured and are on the way to New York the ship will put into Hampton Roads for coal. Captain Wilkes has been good enough to say that he will give this to the officers at Fort Monroe to take the chances of being sent to Norfolk by any flag of truce that may offer. We left Havana on the 7th inst. on board a British mail steamer bound for England, and on the next day, this ship fell in with us at sea, and Captain Wilkes, the commander, it seems, felt himself authorized to demand us from the English captain, and here we are. As to all questions arising from the circumstances attending our capture, it would not become me to discuss them here, as my letter will, of course pass under inspection. Mr. Eustis, Slidell, Macfarland and myself were taken, the ladies proceeded on the voyage to England. Of course, there will be all sorts of conjecture in the newspapers concerning our capture and its consequences, but I have only to say, my dear wife, that you should not permit your mind to be affected by them, and draw no other inference from my silence concerning them except that I, of necessity, write under restraint. In the meantime I assure you and our dear ones at home that I was never in better health in my life, and in no manner depressed, as I beg you will not be. We have been treated with every possible courtesy by Captain Wilkes and his officers, and are guests in the cabin. I suppose we shall get to New York on Sunday or Monday next, the 17th or 18th, and in due time presume the papers will tell what disposition is made of us.

"I do not know whether I can write to you, but, if allowed, will do so, and may have it in my power to tell you through what channel you can write. Macfarland will attend to your affairs, and have no care about mine, which are ample. I have one great consolation always present that while I am deprived of the power of watching over and advising you, I feel entire reliance upon the efficiency and excellence of our children and the kind friends around you. Should you find the means of writing to me let me have full details of domestic, but nothing of public affairs. I can only add, my dear wife, my prayers for your safety and that of our loved ones at home.

"Yours most affectionately,

"J. M. MASON.

"My love to Anna, Kate, and all our circle and friends".

"FORT WARREN, 29th November, 1861.

"My Very Dear Wife: An officer returning South on parole enables me to write you more at length. Your first anxiety, I know, is for my health and comfort; you and our dear children may be assured of both.

"We four have two rooms and a closet attached, good beds and are allowed to get from Boston anything we want, and also have a good servant. We mess with the Maryland prisoners and officers of the army and navy confined here; and I have never met a finer body of gentlemen. Our table is superintended by a committee of the mess; and besides, supplies ad libitum and daily from Boston, everything that is good and homelike comes to us from Baltimore, fine hams by the dozen, turkeys, saddles of mutton, and canvasbacks. Indeed we have a better daily table than any hotel affords and whatever wine or other luxuries we choose. We are at entire liberty in the building, which is very large, no espionage, and allowed to walk at pleasure within ample limits in the enclosure. Colonel Dimmick, who commands, and the officers under him always courteous and kind. I have supplied myself from Boston abundantly with warm clothing and have, therefore, really nothing to complain of personally but the loss of liberty. We have a daily boat from Boston, seven miles off, which brings us all the newspapers and frequent letters from as far south as Maryland. My anxieties now are for the dear ones at home. In late letters I told you how to write to me, enclosing your letter open to General Benjamin Huger, Norfolk. Not a word have I had since yours to me at Charleston, of 30th September. I have had kind notes and offers of any personal service from friends in Boston; and strangers in the States around send frequent supplies of turkeys and poultry to the prisoners. It is pretty hard, to be sure, to be seized and shut up, but beyond that nothing oppressive has been shown. In my last letter, I sent you some postage stamps of the United States to be put on your letters, send me a few of the Confederate States to be used on mine. Tell me of Kate and her children and whether Dorsey has heard anything of his concerns at home and where my boys are? And what you hear of \*George? My best regards to our kind friends at home.

"Of course, I can say nothing beyond personal matters.

"Always hope for the best and pay no regard to the speculations and tracasseries of the Northern press. Commending you and our dear ones, each by name, to the kind care of Him who watches over all, "I am, my dear wife, ever yours,

"J. M. M".

“FORT WARREN, 3d December, 1861.

"My Very Dear Wife: Your letter of the 21st November, with those of our dear children, came to me two days ago never were tidings from home more welcome. They not only assure me of your safety and welfare, but were all in the right spirit for the times. Before this, I hope, you will have received my two letters from here, and had your anxieties removed concerning what might pertain to my health and comfort. Indeed I have nothing but the detention of my person to complain of; no privilege consistent with that is refused. That, to be sure, comprises a great deal to one who never before, since manhood, was under restraint. Indeed you might look the world over, and you would find nowhere, in the same space, a finer body of gentlemen assembled, and we are allowed free intercourse. Besides army and navy officers, we have here, I think, 23 members of the Maryland Legislature, the Mayor of Baltimore, and the Police Commissioners of that city, of whom your cousin Charles Howard is one, and with him, his son F. Key Howard so have no concern about my health or want of society. We have all the newspapers daily, and any books we want are tendered us from Boston. I must close there is a rule about the length of letters which I may have already transcended. Tell the girls they must consider my letters equally addressed to them, including M., with thanks for her kind and affectionate note. My best regards to our kind friends in Winchester.

“Ever, my dear wife, yours,

“J. M. M.

“In my late letters I endorsed my name as prisoner, etc., on the envelope, it was to substitute a postage stamp in Virginia; send me some. Don t think of joining me; even were it possible to get here, you would hardly be allowed to see me, certainly not to remain with me”.

“FORT WARREN, 12th December, 1861.

“I was gratified yesterday, my dear wife, by the receipt of yours of the 2d inst. with one from Johnny. Tell him, with my best love, that I congratulate him upon the good fortune he so richly has merited. I have little to tell you of the short and simple annals of our prison house, except that we are allowed to make ourselves very comfortable indoors, and, so far, the weather has not been inclement outside. We have ample space for walking and, as I have told you, a most agreeable set of gentlemen, our fellow-sojourners. Mr. Falkner has been allowed to go to Virginia on parole he has promised to see you at Selma and tell you of my surroundings. Can t you be a little more explicit about home matters? Do you get gas and coal? And if not have you good supplies of wood? And what substitute for gas? I get frequent notes from Teko, there being no interdict to the mail in the U.S. and the surveillance of no moment in her letters. You must give my best regards to each one of the servants and tell them how much gratified I am by your accounts of them, particularly to William, for his offer to join me here. We have here all the troops taken at Hatteras, N. C., and amongst them many whom we employ, for a perquisite, as attendants. The one with our party is very attentive and valuable. Send me extracts from Jemmy's letters so far as to show his spirit and temper, nothing farther. My best love to our dear daughters, each and every one. Let one, at least

of them write whenever you do and this should be, at least, once a week; I do not suppose such frequency would be objected to.

“Ever, my dear wife, yours,

"J. M. M.

“Since writing the above, I have received dear V.'s and L. 's letters of the 21st November, sent through Mr. Dallas, but not a line from him. Thank V. and L. with my love”.

The next letter announces his release from prison, for which happy event he was indebted to the interference of the English Government.

“FORT WARREN, January 1st, 1862.

"My Dear Wife: Time before leaving the Fort for but a line. We are just going on board a steamer, to be placed, at sea, on board a British steamer for England. I am in perfect health and buoyant will write by first chance as you all must.

“God bless you all.

“J. M. M”.

This capture of the Commissioners, or as the incident is commonly known, the “*Trent* Affair”, attracted, at the time, world-wide attention and interest, because it involved important questions of international law, the persons captured having been as much under the protection of the English flag while passengers on board an English mail steamer as they would have been in the streets of London. Consequently, the arrest was considered in England to be an insult to the English Government, and as soon as the “*Trent*” reached England and reported the affair to the Government, a special dispatch was sent, by the sloop-of-war “*Rinaldo*”, to the British Minister at Washington (Lord Lyons), instructing him to demand that the four gentlemen, thus taken prisoners, should be immediately released and placed again under British protection. The scope of this narrative does not admit of any description of the excitement caused, by this incident, in both the United States and England. Mr. Mason left, among his private papers, a detailed account of his experience from the time of his departure from Charleston to his arrival in London. It has never before been published, and is now carefully copied from the original paper:

“In September, 1861, pursuant to authority of a law of the Confederate States of America, I was appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, as Special Commissioner to the Government of England. John Slidell, Esq., of Louisiana, was at the same time, and in like manner, appointed Special Commissioner to France. The Commissioners were invested with the usual diplomatic powers of Ministers Plenipotentiary. At that time the ports of the Confederate States were under close blockade by the enemy. In order to facilitate their getting out of the country, the Government purchased at Charleston in South Carolina a fast steamer, which had theretofore run between that port and New York as a mail packet, called the *Nashville*.



and put her in command of Captain Pegram of the navy, with a naval crew. She was unarmed, the object being, as far as practicable, to ensure speed.

“Mr. Slidell and I met at Richmond on the 24th of September in that year (1861), and, after receiving our respective instructions, proceeded to Charleston to embark, where we arrived on the 2d of October. Mr. Slidell was here joined by his family, consisting of Mrs. Slidell, two daughters, and son, a boy of 12 or 13 years of age, and also by George Eustis of Louisiana, who, with Mrs. Eustis, was to accompany him as Secretary of Legation. James E. Macfarland of Virginia, accompanied me as Secretary of Legation to England. After much consultation with the naval officers and others best acquainted with the harbour of Charleston, we determined that the *Nashville*, from her draught, made our safe passage of the bar, except under the most favourable concurrence of wind and tide, very uncertain. The harbour was at that time blockaded by three steamers, a frigate and sloop of war, all in full sight from the city, and some six or seven miles distant. Under these circumstances, as the Government had a great object in getting the Commissioners successfully off, Mr. Slidell and I advised that, in lieu of the *Nashville*, we should be allowed to charter the steamer *Gordon*. A small riverboat of unusual speed, to take us to one of the West Indian Islands, where we could meet the West Indian mail steamer for England. This was acceded to by the Government, and the *Gordon* was chartered accordingly to take us with our suites to Nassau, and if required to Havana, at the price of \$10,000, the Government guaranteeing her at the value of \$60,000 out and back. She drew but seven feet of water, was in all respects well found, and we were satisfied that the contract was fair and reasonable. The arrangement thus made, everything was hastened for our departure, and very soon the ship was reported ready. We embarked on the night of the 12th of October; it had been a clear and bright day, the moon, which shone in the earlier part of the night, would disappear below the horizon at midnight.

“We were all on board, attended by a large party of friends the sky during the night had become overcast with clouds at 12 o'clock precisely the order was given to cast loose from the moorings, friends exchanged a hasty, and anxious farewell, with many an earnest wish for a prosperous voyage, and we were off. The absence of the moon and the presence of the clouds made it very dark, and to add to our good fortune, it began to rain, an accessory we had not counted on to facilitate our escape. The name of the steamer had been changed after the charter from the *Gordon* to the *Theodora*, a practice much resorted to by those who run the blockade to puzzle any curious enquirer. The steamer proceeded at a moderate rate, keeping Fort Sumter between her and the enemy, for the first three miles, and during this time every arrangement was made to preserve perfect stillness and quiet all lights were carefully extinguished: we were seated on the deck, *malgré* the rain, and before passing Fort Sumter even our cigars were relinquished. Our speed had gradually increased as we advanced, and after passing the Fort the little *Theodora* was put to her utmost power. Although it continued to rain hard, there was little or no wind. The lights on board the blockading ships came presently more and more distinctly before us, at first in front, then abreast, and then astern. We had passed the blockading squadron, and manifestly without being observed or heard. Captain Lockwood, commanding the *Theodora*, and the pilots, said that we had passed within a mile and a half of the nearest ship, being enabled to hug the shore by reason of our light draught. It was a moment of intense excitement and anxiety, though comparatively but a moment. In less than an hour after we had passed Fort Sumter we were far beyond the reach of the blockaders, and had retired comfortably and

confidently to our berths, nor did we hear anything more of the enemy from that quarter. Our plan being to intercept the British West Indian mail at the nearest island where it touched, we steered direct for Nassau and arrived off the port on the afternoon of the 14th. Communicating with the shore, we learned that the mail steamers did not touch at that island, nor could we reach them at a point nearer than Havana. Thus without landing, and after but short delay, we proceeded on our voyage across the Bahamas banks to Cardenas, the nearest port in the Island of Cuba. Passing over the Bahamas banks, we sailed for some 80 miles, with no land in sight, and with the water ranging from only seven to eight or nine feet deep; and this phenomenon was the more striking, because the coral bottom of uniform white made the water appear of unusual transparency, and of less than its real depth thus we had for a long distance a full view of the bottom of the sea. At daylight on the morning of the 16th, we had the coast of Cuba in view, distance some 8 or 10 miles, and in view also, a steamer about midway between us and the coast, steering west along the coast, and distance some four or five miles. She was soon made out to be a ship of war, and under the Spanish flag each vessel continuing on its course, she would soon have left us, but in a very short time the stranger put about and made directly to intercept us. This was the first steamer we had seen since we left Charleston, nor indeed had we met with any sail, except an occasional little schooner. A hurried consultation was held whether we should change our course, or wait his coming nearer, but the nautical men on board were so confident from his build, and other evidences, that he was bona-fide a Spaniard that we boldly diverged from our course to meet him and ran up the Confederate flag.

“When the two ships were in less than a mile of each other, the stranger again altered his course west-wardly. On this indication our flag was dipped, a salutation that was immediately returned, when we made a signal that we desired to speak him. The two ships then approached each other slowly, shutting off steam, when about 100 yards apart. Mr. Slidell, who spoke the Spanish language, accompanied by Mr. Eustis, then went aboard. They returned in a short time and reported that it was a small Spanish war steamer cruising as a *Guarda Costa*, commanded by a young officer who had the manner and deportment of an urbane and accomplished gentleman that the Spanish captain reported that so far as he knew there was no Federal cruiser off the island. Mr. Slidell told him who we were, our mission and that we were bound for Cardenas as the nearest port in Cuba, but that, if he, the Spaniard, was bound for Havana, then some 100 miles distant, and would give us convoy we would go on to that port. The officer very courteously expressed his regret that his orders would not carry him so far down the coast, but that he would, with great pleasure, accompany and give us safe convoy to Cardenas an offer that Mr. Slidell accepted, and the *Guarda Costa* accordingly passed ahead and we followed in his wake, without further incident to Cardenas. We anchored off the town of Cardenas in the afternoon of the 16th of October, and very soon were boarded by an officer from the Custom House, who said, according to port regulations neither passenger nor baggage could be landed with out a permit from the Captain-General at Havana. He was very civil and polite after learning who we were. We told him that we had no cargo, that there was nothing to land but the Commissioners with their families and suites with their baggage still he persisted that nothing could be landed but under a permit from Havana, and very courteously offered immediately to communicate by telegraph with the authorities at Havana, expressing his belief that an answer could be received in time to enable the party to land and sleep on shore, and he took his departure. It was soon understood in the city who were on board the steamer

just arrived under the Confederate flag, and very soon several gentlemen came off in boats bringing with them very acceptable baskets of the tropical fruits.

“They learned our difficulty about landing, but said it was at least but a mere matter of form; that the permit would, of course, come from Havana, and that in advance of it we might safely land in our ship's boats, taking with us only such small parcels of baggage as might be convenient for the toilet of the night, and thus could not be questioned by Custom House regulation. The ladies of the party caught eagerly at the suggestion they were very tired of the voyage and the discomforts of our small steamer, and, as they expressed it, could not resist the temptation of the ample apartments of the promised hotel with its accessories.

“They determined to go, and took little account of Custom- House etiquette of course, some of the gentlemen went with them. They conformed to the observances suggested so far as to take with them only small traveling bags and other like appendages which could be carried in the hands of their attendants. I did not choose to make any issue with the Custom-House regulations and, therefore, remained on board. Cardenas is comparatively a new town, with a good harbour and about 100 miles distant from Havana, with which it communicates by railroad. Our steamer *Theodora*. after landing us, proceeded to Havana, and our plan was, after resting for a day or two at Cardenas, to go to Havana and wait there the sailing of the West India mail steamer for England.

“The local Governor of Cardenas called upon us the day after our arrival, and was very civil and courteous in his proffer of hospilities, indeed we found the whole population of the city earnestly and warmly enlisted in the interests of the South. After remaining three days in Cardenas, we accepted the urgent and kind invitation of Mr. Cazanova to visit him at his plantation, which we could reach by a railroad, distant about 30 miles, on our way to Havana. This young gentleman it seemed, had been in the United States, and on one occasion a guest at a party at Mr. Slidell's in Washington, and upon the small claim so presented by him his earnestness could not be resisted. On the following day, we found, that to make the excursion entirely agreeable to the ladies, he had provided a special train to leave at such hour as they might indicate. Arriving at the station, which was on the plantation, we found any number of *volantes* and saddle horses awaiting us. The Senora Cazanova, I found was a young lady from Frederick County in Maryland, married within the year, and whose sister was the wife of a near relative of mine in that State. It was a large sugar plantation of some 300 slaves, one of several that belonged to the father of our host, the old gentleman lived principally in Havana. We spent three days with great pleasure and interest, informing ourselves in plantation life and sugar planting in Cuba, and on the 22d, we went to Havana.

“The West India mail line from England to Mexico we learned, touched Havana and was due on the return trip to England, on the 7th of November. Mr. Crawford, the British Consul, was the agent for this line at Havana, and we took our passage and registered our names, accordingly, with him. I should remark here that we were indebted to this gentleman for many acts of courtesy and hospitality. In the absence of any resident officer of the Confederate Government he called, on our part, upon the Count de Serrano, the Captain-General of Cuba, and expressed our desire to call upon, and tender to him our respects. The answer was that the Captain-General would receive us with pleasure the next day at 2 o'clock, but that for reasons that we could appreciate, it could only be in unofficial form. Mr. Slidell and I, with our respective secretaries, called, accordingly, the next day at the Palace at the hour named and were very kindly

received the conversation was only on general subjects including the progress and prospects of the war in regard to which, although not directly expressed, it was manifest that his sympathies were with us. The following day the visit was returned by his card. About the close of this month (October) the USS *San Jacinto*, Captain Wilkes, arrived at Havana and anchored in the harbour it was said that she called for coal she remained some two or three days and sailed, it was said, for the United States. This ship was on her return from the coast of Africa, where she had been some two or three years, as part of the squadron on that coast. Captain Wilkes had been sent out, some six or eight months before, to relieve the officers in command of that squadron, and to bring this ship home. Our presence in Havana and our mission to Europe as well as our purpose to embark in the mail steamer which was to leave Havana on the 7th of November was well known in the city.

“We knew it had been spoken of and commented on by the Consul of the United States at Havana and thus would, of course, reach the ear of Captain Wilkes, beside which I had visits at my hotel from two of the officers of that ship. Of course, in conversation with these gentlemen, I imparted nothing touching our plans or purposes but, in the manner above noted, it became fully known to Captain Wilkes that we were to embark in the mail steamer for England via St. Thomas on the 7th of November. When he sailed, some seven or eight days previous, it was announced in continuation of his voyage he had gone direct to the United States, nor did he leave behind a suspicion or intimation of a purpose to waylay us.

“We left Havana on the morning of the 7th of November in the English Royal Mail Steamer *The Trent*. Captain Moir, for Southampton, England, via the Island of St. Thomas. The *Trent* had touched only at Havana on her way from Vera Cruz in Mexico there were some 80 passengers, most of them Englishmen or from the English Colonies. On the following day, the 8th, when passing along the old Bahama channel, the usual and direct course of the voyage, in sight of and about 10 miles distant from the coast of Cuba, about mid-day a steamer was made out from the deck, distant in the haze some five or six miles without motion and directly across our path.

“As we advanced, the Captain and others, observing through their glasses, declared her a war steamer she lay perfectly motionless with steam shut off and showed no flag. The Captain, eyeing her closely, reported that she lay in mid-channel in a position apparently taken to cut us off and that she must mean mischief this was said to Mr. Slidell and myself, whom he had drawn aside on deck for the purpose. We continued directly on our course and without change of speed, when within a mile or a mile and a half the Captain of the *Trent* displayed his flag at the main and peak, very soon after which a shot was fired by the *San Jacinto* across our bow the flag of the *Trent*. which had been continued up for several minutes and then lowered, was again raised, the *Trent* never checking her speed, or changing her course when about a quarter of a mile distant, a shell was thrown from the *San Jacinto* again across her bow, which struck the water and exploded a short distance from her.

“Captain Moir then slackened his speed and shut off steam within speaking distance of the *San Jacinto*. He hailed and enquired: What do you want? The answer was: We send a boat aboard. During this time, I was sitting aft on the quarter deck waiting events, most of the passengers were on deck amid-ship, and amongst them were seated Mr. Slidell and his family. I sat still observing the movements on board the *San Jacinto*. I should have stated above that the *San Jacinto* hoisted the United States flag for the first time when she fired the first shot. A boat put off from the *San Jacinto* and from the

side opposite to us as she came around the stern of the ship, I saw that she was a large boat with a crew of some 20 men armed with cutlasses and pistols in their belts, I thought then for the first time with Captain Moir, that she meant mischief.

“My first impression was to provide for the safety of our papers. I accordingly called to Mr. Macfarland and asked him to take the dispatch bag which contained my public papers, credentials, instructions, etc., and which was in my state-room, and deliver it to the mail agent of the steamer, to tell him what it was and ask him to lock it up in his mail-room, and I told him at the same time to make the same suggestion to Mr. Slidell. I was seated on the quarter-deck at some distance from the rest of the passengers and thus this direction was unobserved and unheard. Before the boat from the *San Jacinto* reached our ship, Commander Williams of the Royal Navy, who had charge of the mails on board, came to me where I was seated and reported that he had the dispatch bags of Mr. Slidell and myself locked up in his mail-room. Of which said he, I have the key in my pocket and whatever their objects may be they must pass over my body before they enter that room. I told him in a few words that the bags contained the public papers of Mr. Slidell and myself and requested, if we were separated from them, that he would see to their delivery to some one of the Commissioners of the Confederate States, Messrs. Yancey, Rost, and Mann, who were then in London, which he promised faithfully to do. On our arrival at London, we found the bags with their contents unharmed in the possession of those gentlemen. When the boat from the *San Jacinto* reached the *Trent*, the boarding officer alone came on board, leaving the crew in the boat, and ascended to the upper deck where the passengers were assembled amidship. I could see from where I was seated that he was holding a conversation with our Captain, though I could not hear what was said. Mr. Slidell was sitting- a little apart from the group in which were the ladies of his family, and from the glances interchanged between them I suspected that we were the subjects of discussion.

“Very soon Mr. Slidell rose and advancing toward the officer said in a tone that reached my ear, I am Mr. Slidell. I then immediately advanced to the group and near the boarding officer. At that moment he was in a discussion, somewhat excited on the part of the latter, with Captain Moir. When near to him, he addressed me by name but with a manner perfectly respectful. He said, Mr. Mason, I am Lieutenant Fairfax of the United States ship *San Jacinto*. and I am ordered by Captain Wilkes, who commands the ship, to take you with Mr. Slidell, Mr. Eustis, and Mr. Macfarland, and to carry you on board his ship. My reply, Very well, sir, execute your orders. He said, Will you go with me? My answer, certainly not unless compelled by force greater than I can overcome. I know my rights I am under the protection of a neutral flag and will be taken from that protection only by force. The Lieutenant said, I trust, sir, you will not require me to use force upon your person it would be the most painful act of my life to do so. My reply, You must decide that for yourself, I can only repeat that I will not leave this ship unless compelled by a force which I can not overcome. As I have said the whole deportment of the Lieutenant was respectful and forbearing. During our colloquy, which was overheard by the passengers, they became very much excited and interjected many angry and defiant remarks. I had not heard the earlier conversation with our Captain (presently referred to), but whilst this conversation proceeded, more than once interposed his protest in the most decided manner, expressing his regret that his ship was unarmed, declaring that were it otherwise Captain Wilkes would never dare so great an outrage upon his flag. Commander Williams too, the mail agent, advanced to Lieutenant Fairfax and addressed him pretty nearly as follows, in a calm and deliberate

manner: I am an officer, sir, of the Royal Navy, as you will see from my uniform, and thus the only immediate representative of my Government on board this ship - in that character and speaking for my Government, I denounce your act, and that of your commanding officer as an infamous act of piracy. I am going directly to England and shall so report it to my Government. Mr. Slidell bore his part in the conversation pretty much of the same tenor as mine.

“To end the scene, I said to the Lieutenant, It is idle to prolong this conversation I have told you my determination, to which I adhere. You have abundant force at hand and it rests with you to use it. As I have said we were on the upperdeck the state-rooms were on the deck next below, and on that deck also was the gangway at the side of the ship. The Lieutenant descended to the lower deck to communicate with his boat. I went down also to go to my stateroom. Mr. Slidell, with his family, also went down about the same time, and we were followed by most if not all the passengers. Before I left the upper deck, I observed two other large boats each with a crew of some 20 or 25 men, armed, and in one of them a squadron of marines passing from the *San Jacinto* to our ship. It appeared afterwards from the report of Lieutenant Fairfax, that apprehending resistance, he had, by signal, called for this additional force. When we reached the lower deck, Mr. Slidell went with Mrs. Slidell into his state room which was near amidship and in full view of those standing by, he remained there arranging with Mrs. Slidell matters that might be useful to her in Europe in the event of their abrupt separation.

“The Lieutenant in the meantime had called on board and stationed on the lower deck in front of us some 20 or 30 sailors, armed with pistols and cutlasses, with the squad of marines having- muskets with bayonets fixed; the residue of his force remained alongside in their boats. Seeing our removal thus inevitable I asked the Lieutenant if I might go to my state room and put up such portions of my luggage as was out of the trunks he replied, at once, and courteously, in the affirmative. I was absent but a few minutes when I returned I found Mr. Slidell still in his stateroom, where he appeared to be in conversation with Mrs. Slidell at the end farthest from the door. His eldest daughter (quite a young lady), stood in the doorway with her arms extended grasping each postern, thus obstructing the entrance, whilst the Lieutenant stood in her front earnestly but respectfully remonstrating with her and asking permission to pass. I paused for a moment at the door and said to her I thought she had better go into the state-room and leave the difficulty to be settled by her father and myself, but the faithful daughter stood equally silent and unmoved, in the vain hope that she could thus protect her father she appeared not to hear a word that was addressed to her. To end the distressing scene Mr. Slidell had gotten out of a window which opened on the deck in the rear of and unseen by his daughter.

“The Lieutenant then said, Gentlemen, I hope you will now go with me. I replied, I have only to reiterate what I said at first, I will not leave the ship unless compelled by force greater than I can overcome. The Lieutenant then took hold of my person, as did three or four of his men by his order, and by like order they laid hands upon Mr. Slidell. We then said we had no alternative but to yield to force and would accompany him; those having hold of us released their grasp and we proceeded to the gangway (our Secretaries, Messrs. Eustis and Macfarland, expressing their purpose to be guided by us, went with us), accompanied by the Lieutenant. Miss Slidell was not aware that her father had left the stateroom, which she thought she still guarded, until she saw him moving off in custody when, with a distressing cry, she fell into the arms of her mother. As we moved off to the gangway, our fellow passengers, who were vehemently excited

and were venting bitter execrations at what was passing, pressed upon us in a body, when the marines presented their guns at a charge as if to intercept them the movement was so marked that I paused and said a word or two to them expressive of our thanks for the interest they manifested in our behalf, and pointing out to them the hopelessness of any attempt at interference on their part.

We descended the steps of the gangway and got into the boat, which by order of Lieutenant Fairfax (who remained on board the *Trent*), at once pushed off and rowed for the *San Jacinto*. As we left the ship, the Lieutenant said to us he would see that our baggage was all sent on board. Arriving at the *San Jacinto* we had to clamber up by the elects, at the side of the ship, with the aid of the pendant ropes, which, as the sea was a little rough, and not being practised mariners, we found no easy task. As we stepped on the deck, Captain Wilkes, who was standing near the gangway touched his hat and said, Captain Wilkes, gentlemen, who commands this ship will you please to walk into the cabin. We found the men at quarters, the guns run out with tompions off, and everything ready for action. I replied to Captain Wilkes's invitation: We are brought on board this ship by your order, and against our will, and of course must abide your direction. He again said, Please to walk into the cabin. The cabin was on the upper deck, and we entered it attended by the Captain. He said, "Gentlemen, I wish to make you as comfortable as I can on board my ship, but regret to say there are but two state-rooms, which can be occupied by Mr. Slidell and Mr. Mason. Mr. Eustis and Mr. Macfarland will find accommodations in the wardroom, where we will do the best for them we can.

"He then called in his steward and said, Steward, you will understand that the cabin and all the stores belonging to it, are at the command of these gentlemen, and you will obey their orders accordingly. He then left the cabin and we remained in it. Through the windows of the cabin, we could see the passengers of the *Trent*, clustered on deck, at the side of the ship, and the boats flying between after some time Captain Wilkes again came in, and said, Gentlemen, your baggage has been brought on board; will you please to come on deck and see if it is all right? or if any stores that you desire to have, are left behind. On examination we found the baggage all there, but some little parcels of our stores were not this was reported to Captain Wilkes, when a boat with an officer, bearing a memorandum from us, was dispatched to bring them and they were brought accordingly. I should state also that on leaving the *Trent*. Captain Moir desired the officer commanding the boat to enquire of Captain Wilkes, whether he should send any stores for the convenience of the passengers taken away and what? I did not hear the reply of Captain Wilkes, but there was sent from the *Trent* amongst other things, some dozens of sherry, with pitchers and basins, and other conveniences for the toilet. I note these humble appendages, as the narrative may hereafter refer to them. Learning that everything we desired was on board, Captain Wilkes gave the order for the ship to proceed on her course, and the *Trent* was allowed to depart.

"I subjoin, in a note, a letter addressed to Captain Wilkes, soon after we were taken on his ship, by my fellow voyagers and myself, containing a narrative of the facts attending- our capture, with his reply. We thought it safe to put this on record contemporaneously the concluding paragraph, requesting that he would send it, with his report to his Government was tentative only, but successful as shown by his reply. His official reports, however, of the affair showed no material discrepancy between the version of the boarding officer and our own.

“The two ships proceeded on their way in opposite directions, ours proceeding to the northward. We made the land first on the coast of Georgia, and ran in, within two or three miles, continuing up the coast; the reader may imagine our feeling, at the near view of our Southern soil from the deck of our prison ship. The coast was low and penetrated everywhere by inlets and conduits from the sea the weather was calm, the sea tranquil, and our ship proceeded at no great speed, at from two to three miles from the land. At one time we could make out a small steamer, proceeding inland up and parallel with the coast. In the occasional depressions of the land, we could see her hull, but her course was generally indicated by her smoke. At another time we passed very near and spoke a British war steamer, going in an opposite direction; she was reported as her Majesty's ship *The Steady*. We were standing on deck and heard the hail and reply another trying incident to a captive, especially to one made a prisoner in a manner insulting to the flag which *The Steady* bore and here by way of episode, and not as a prophet after the fact, which I challenge the rather, as I vouch a witness. Walking to and fro on the decks of the *San Jacinto* with Mr. Macfarland, on the day after our capture, I reasoned out each subsequent event as it afterwards happened. My knowledge of the principles of public law, assured me that the act" of Captain Wilkes could never be sustained, and I felt equally certain, that the demand of England would be categorical, and with no room for evasion.

"I said to Mr. Macfarland, the report of this occurrence in England, to be made when the *Trent* arrives, will produce a profound sensation. A sentiment of public indignation will be aroused, which nothing can resist, and no ministry could live an hour, which did not fully respond to it. I said it would be made by England a very grave occasion that a note would be written at the Foreign Office to the British Minister at Washington, setting forth the facts and requiring immediate reparation and further, that the Minister would be instructed by an unofficial note to notify the Secretary of State of an early day, limited for the answer with further instructions, if the demand was not unconditionally complied with, that he should demand his passports, and return with his Legation, forthwith to England; that the note would be expressed in the most courteous terms, but would be borne by a messenger of the highest grade in diplomatic intercourse. That the demand for reparation would be, that the wrong-doer should put things back where he found them, when the wrong was committed, which of course would require that we should be put back under the British flag. History will tell the rest.

“We proceeded slowly up the coast, the weather continuing calm, our first stopping place being in the midst of the blockading fleet off Charleston, just one month after we had successfully evaded it we could see our noble flag flying over Fort Sumter, the spires of the Churches in view of the unaided eye, and with glasses, every part of the city could be made out. It was a sore trial to be thus near, without the means, even of communication. Commodore Wilkes visited the flagship, then the *Congress* which was very near to us. On his return, he reported the battle which had occurred but three days before, in the harbour of Port Royal at Hilton Head, between the enemy's fleet and our extemporised defenses at that point. The *Congress* was one of the largest frigates in the Yankee Navy had borne a conspicuous part in the action and, as Captain Wilkes reported, had sustained the heaviest loss in killed and wounded, yet there she lay, as buoyant, and apparently as unharmed, as if she had never received a shot, although she had received a great many from guns of heavy caliber at short distance. I remarked this to Captain Wilkes, who said that such large ships were so strongly built, that they could stand a great deal of battering. Yet this same ship a few months afterwards was sunk in



Hampton Roads, by a few well directed shots, from the ironclad *Merrimac* carrying down with her, more than a 100 of her killed and wounded. We remained off Charleston a few hours, and then proceeding North, still in calm weather, entered the Capes of Virginia, and anchored in the midst of a Yankee fleet off Fortress Monroe, on the evening of the 15th of November. We put in here, it was said, for coal, and here for the first time since our capture, Captain Wilkes had the opportunity of communicating with his Government. He sent off dispatches, as we understood, immediately on his arrival, by a special messenger.

“We anchored near the Fortress and the Captain landed soon after our arrival. General Wool I knew, was then in command there, and General Huger in command at Norfolk, then in our possession on the opposite side of the roads. Our arrival would bring the first news of our capture, and I was very anxious, as far as I could, to relieve the apprehensions of my family. I asked Captain Wilkes if there would be any objection to his bearing a letter from me, to my wife, to be delivered to General Wool with a request that he would send it by a flag, over to Norfolk, with a note to General Huger that of course, both the letter and note, should contain nothing but information of what had occurred, and be open for their perusal. Captain W. assented to it, and the notes were written accordingly. He brought a civil message back from General Wool, that the letter and note should be sent over to Norfolk the next day, and that this was done, was shown by subsequent information, that on the day that General Huger received them, he communicated their contents by telegraph, to President Davis at Richmond, and a letter in reply, from Mrs. Mason to me at Fort Warren, showed that mine to her had been received, in regular course of mail.

“I should here remark, that from the time of our capture, the deportment of Captain Wilkes toward us, was of marked attention and courtesy thus when landing for the first time at Fortress Monroe, he asked if there was anything to be procured there which we would like to have, in the way of stores or otherwise? During his absence, we had directed the Steward to order some barrels of oysters, to be sent on board for us, which was done, and when we asked for the bills, were told that Captain Wilkes had directed them to be paid by his Purser. It is due to Captain Wilkes to say this, considering the relations we held to each other.

“We had no communication with, nor did we see any person from the shore. Having obtained a supply of coal, the ship proceeded on the next day to New York, the destination announced to us, when we were taken on board. We had still calm and smooth weather, and we entered the bay of New York at an early hour in the evening the night was dark and rainy Mr. Slidell and I were seated in the cabin about 9 o clock playing a game of backgammon, when the headway of the ship was suddenly stopped, and Captain Wilkes immediately left the cabin, and went on deck. We continued undisturbed at our backgammon. Very soon afterwards Captain Wilkes returned to the cabin, and the ship again got under weigh. He reported, Gentlemen, we are not to land at New York a steamer from the city has intercepted us with an order from the Secretary of State, that you be taken to, and landed at Fort Warren, in the harbour of Boston, and the ship has changed her course accordingly. He further told us, that a deputy marshal from New York, with an assistant, had been placed on board to accompany us. We received the communication without remark, and continued our backgammon it amounted only to imprisonment at Fort Warren, instead of Fort Lafayette, about which we were indifferent.

“Proceeding still northward, and eastward, up the coast, in the next two days, the barometer with other marine prognostics showed evident signs of unsettled weather, and it became too, most uncomfortably cold, there being no fire, or means of making one, in the cabin. To remedy this, Captain Wilkes supplied the cabin with hot shot, the largest he had on board, heated to a red heat in the furnaces of the ship, and brought in resting in large tubs of sand, it was a good device, and by renewing them from time to time the cabin was kept comfortable. Our Captain, proceeding along this inhospitable, and in winter, tempestuous coast, with great caution, on the 20th put into Newport, Rhode Island, to avoid an impending gale from the northeast, and we laid there at anchor that night, and part of the next day. Here again Captain Wilkes availed himself of the opportunity to replenish his stores, and provided for our comforts in the cabin by a stove put up there, although to admit it, it was necessary to cut a hole in the roof to provide a way for the stove pipe. This stove was a great addition to our comfort, for the weather had become extremely cold. It is again due to Captain Wilkes to say that he was really sedulous, and left nothing undone to contribute to our comfort, or to make our condition as agreeable as was consistent with our position.

“He gave us the entire command of the cabin, and of the quarter deck, asking that we would not consider the ordinary rules of the ship, as extended to us those rules were, that lights were to be extinguished at a certain hour, and that none should smoke on the quarter-deck. He begged that we would continue our whist at our pleasure at night, in the cabin, and smoke our cigars where we pleased on the deck. I desire to do full justice to Captain Wilkes, and the rather as his act in our capture will be condemned in the history of the times. I have said that he gave to Mr. Slidell and myself the only two staterooms connected with his cabin the largest was that which he occupied. I protested earnestly against displacing him, and we were promised at last by having a curtain extended across, so as to divide it in half, he occupying that part which contained his secretary and wardrobe I had his bed, and he resorted to a cot, swung at night in the cabin. As a host, he certainly had a care for his guests. We lay off Newport in the stream. Captain Wilkes landed, but we of course had no communication with the shore. We sailed again on the 21st; the weather still dark and lowering, keeping near the coast. On the evening of the 22d, there being every indication of a gale, we put into Holmes hole, or Martha's Vineyard, in Massachusetts, and anchored for the night. This anchorage is completely land-locked, and is a favorite resort in doubtful weather for vessels on that coast.

“We found a large fleet of small craft at anchor, and during the night they were joined by many others. In some way, it became known that the Southern envoys, recently captured on the high seas, were on board the newly-arrived man-of-war. Immediately all the vessels were decorated with their flags a salute was fired from the shore, and a deputation waited on Captain Wilkes, tendering their congratulations, and with them more substantial evidences in the form of supplies. Having taken on board a pilot, we again got under weigh. About daylight, on the morning of the 23d, in due time we rounded Cape Cod, and soon after dark on the same day, anchored off Fort Warren, in Boston harbour, Captain Wilkes telling us that he would land at the Fort in the morning, and learn what orders would be taken for our reception. The harbour of Boston is a roadstead open to the sea, from which the city is some 10 or 12 miles distant. In the estuary are many islands, on one of which, distant about eight miles from the city, is situated Fort Warren. It is one of the largest fortresses on the seaboard of the

United States, and occupies nearly the entire island, there being but a small fringe of shore outside the walls of the fortress.

“Being direct from Havana, we had amongst our stores intended for use in Europe, several thousand sugars, which we thought it possible the authorities might require should be landed in Boston, either to pass through the Custom-House, or as it might be, confiscated. We stated the matter frankly to Captain Wilkes, who said at once, they should be taken, as they really were, as part of our luggage, and that he would see to it.

“On the next morning when we assembled at breakfast in the cabin about 9 o'clock, the captain reported that he had landed soon after sunrise, and had an interview with Colonel Dimmick, the commanding officer of the fortress, and that it was arranged that a steamer should be sent at 10 o'clock to take us to the fort in charge of an officer to attend us. He reported further in reference to our questions about the sugars, that Colonel Dimmick said he would make no inquiry about our stores, but whatever was landed with us from his ship would be treated as belonging to us.

“Before leaving the *San Jacinto*, I must return to the marshal of New York, who had been put on board when we were intercepted, entering the harbour of New York. We had not seen or heard of him or his assistant, after their presence on board had been reported to us we learned, however, afterwards, through our secretaries, that they became very seasick after getting to sea, and seldom appeared on deck. After Captain Wilkes announced their coming on board, we asked whether we were to consider ourselves as transferred to their custody? To which he replied, Certainly not; why they were put on board I do not know. They brought an order requiring me to receive them. I told them, however, they could have nothing to do with you gentlemen, whilst you were on board my ship. Nor did I ever see them, or hear farther of them whilst we remained on board. On the morning of the 24th of November, a small steamer put off from Fort Warren, and ran alongside the ship. Our baggage and stores had all been got ready, and at 10 o'clock A. M., we left the ship for Fort Warren. Lieutenant Fairfax attended us, and on board the steamer, Lieutenant Buell, of the Army of the United States, was introduced as the officer to receive us. On landing we were conducted through a sally port into the fortress, and thence to the quarters of the commanding officer, Colonel Dimmick.

“It was Sunday when we landed at Fort Warren, and arriving at the Colonel's quarters, it was reported that he was at church but that an officer had gone to summon him. He appeared very soon, and apologized for his absence by saying he thought the service would be over before we landed. We learned afterwards that the public worship which the Colonel had attended was held every Sunday in a room appropriated for the purpose, one of the prisoners of State officiating who was a clergyman named North.

He lived in Jefferson County, Virginia, near Harper's Ferry, on a farm which he owned, and had been captured some time before, in a foray of the enemy's cavalry. Nothing was alleged against him, but that he lived in a suspicious neighborhood. He was a plain and unsophisticated man, had committed no offence whatever against any person or State, yet he was taken from his family, carried more than 500 miles from home, imprisoned without cause, and released, even without apology. I attended his service one Sunday, and found that amidst all this, he made no distinction in his prayers between friends and enemies.

“Colonel Dimmick received us with great courtesy, said he had given orders, early in the morning, to have our quarters got ready, but found, as the rooms had to be scrubbed, it might not be quite dry, and begged that we would occupy his quarters until ours were

ready. Colonel Dimmick was an officer of the old army, and was in everything thoroughly a gentleman. Whilst thus installed in the Colonel's quarters, *fecce itterum crispinus*. the New York marshal again appeared. Colonel Dimmick, as if by no means satisfied with his errand, announced that the marshal of New York was at the door, and said he was ordered to search our baggage. Said he, Gentlemen, I hope you will understand that I have nothing to do with it. We told him by all means to admit the marshal. I then, for the first time, saw him, a common and vulgar-looking man, exhibiting the shy subserviency which became the office he had to discharge.

“We at once gave him our keys, and requested our secretaries to point out to him our trunks, lying in the hall. He returned the keys soon after; of course he found no papers, and I must do him the justice to say that his examination was conducted with due regard to our assurance that our baggage contained nothing worthy of search. Whilst at the Colonel's quarters, Lieutenant Buell, who was the executive officer, told us the rules required that we should deposit with him all money, drafts, or cheques, in our possession; that we were allowed each to retain 20 dollars, which we might expend as we pleased, without account, and when expended, he was authorized to give us each 20 dollars more. He said that whatever we deposited would be placed to our credit on his books, which would always be open to our inspection. In truth, we had very little money, not more than 2 or 300 dollars between the two Commissioners and the two secretaries. Our funds were all in bills upon England. We complied, however, with his demand, which was made in a manner respectful and deferential. We remained in the Colonel's quarters an hour or two, until it was reported to us that our apartment was ready for us, when Colonel Dimmick led the way to accompany us. Soon after leaving his door, we were greeted by our fellow-prisoners in crowds, who were assembled to intercept us on the way. I recognized among them a body of old and attached personal friends, chiefly from Maryland, with a few from other States. The room to which we were conducted was one of a series built of officers quarters. The fortress was circular in form, and along the inner walls a number of stone houses were erected, extending well around the inside of the fort, intended as barracks for the garrison. We found in the fort some 1,300 prisoners, of whom about 120 were called prisoners of State, meaning those who were arrested for political reasons; some 8 or 900 prisoners of war, including officers recently before captured at Fort Hatteras, in North Carolina, with other military and naval officers captured during the war.

“Of the State prisoners were some 20 or 30 members of the Legislature of Maryland, who had been arrested on the first day of the meeting of that body, to prevent a quorum assembling. Mr. Slidell and I found in this class of prisoners a number of old and valued friends, by whom we were most cordially welcomed. Our quarters consisted of a single room about 18 feet square, having a small bed in each corner, and attached to it a small closet, which contained our luggage, with the furniture for a very simple toilet. Leading from this closet was a recess in the walls of the fort, terminated by a loop hole. This accessory of space enabled us to have some shelves put up for other storage, to the relief of our sleeping room. That room was our only apartment, where we received company by day and slept at night, but restricted as such quarters were, we soon found that we were far better off than the rest of our fellow-prisoners, who were crowded eight or nine together, in a room of like size as ours. Under the regulations of the prison we were allowed the freest intercourse with each other during the day, and to visit at pleasure the range of buildings in which we were lodged, being altogether on one side of the fortress, and in front of these buildings, in a space three hundred feet long, by 30 feet wide,

guarded by a line of sentinels, we were allowed to take exercise; thus our communication with each was unrestricted during the day.

“Retreat was beat at five o clock, and then each prisoner was required to retire to his quarters, not again to leave them until the next day, to ensure both of which an officer visited each room after retreat, and a sentinel was placed at the door. The commanding officer, however, would give special permits to visit at night until 10 o clock, when it was required that all lights should be extinguished. A special exemption, however, was extended to our room, where visitors were allowed to remain,, and the lights to burn until n o clock this was done, not at our request, but at the suggestion of some of our fellow-prisoners, who joined us at whist in the evening. Most of our fellow-prisoners had been in the fortress for some time, and were thus domesticated. They were allowed, as we were, only the prison fare, which, in perpetuam memoriam to the credit of the Government of the United States, I record here from the memorandum given to me there:

**RATIONS TO THE PRISONERS AT FORT WARREN. PER DIEM:**

“Twenty-two ounces of flour, 12 ounces bacon, one and a half ounces coffee, two ounces sugar, one ounce salt, one gill vinegar, and one-half pound potatoes. But some 30 or 40 of them had formed a mess, and the Colonel had kindly assigned them a large room in the barracks, as a mess-room detached from our other quarters. As newcomers, we were invited to join this mess. The room was large enough to accommodate the tables, and, being oblong, to allow the cooking to be done at the farther end. So whatever the supposed annoyance of the cooking, our dinners were served hot. Our predecessors had obtained cooks, with their attendants from Boston, and with the markets in which city they had established a daily, and well constructed intercourse. A steamer came every day to the fort from Boston bringing the mails and supplies for the garrison, which bore equally, orders from the prisoners sanctioned by the executive officer. Our table was thus well supplied, but not alone from the markets at Boston; almost every day our fellow-prisoners from Baltimore received large stores from their families and friends there, including all the delicacies of the season, canvasback ducks, terrapins, and oysters from the waters of the Chesapeake, and in great profusion.

“Our friends in Baltimore sent like welcome presents to Mr. Slidell and me, and as Christmas approached, he and I received a very large box filled with the viands appropriate to that festival, from ladies in Hagerstown, and the adjoining county in Maryland. And here I must record, too, that a lady of Portland, in Maine (whose name I may give in a note when the war is over), sent to me for our Christmas dinner, a very large box, filled with the like material everything that could make a substantial and luxurious dinner was in that box, and in quantity to serve a hundred men so abundant was it that, after taking out a few things, the rest was turned over to the North Carolina troops. This excellent lady I have never seen but once. Some four or five years before, being at Boston, I had gone with General Pierce, then late President of the United States, and a little party, to visit the White Mountains in New Hampshire. There we met this lady and spent the evening in her company, introduced by General Pierce. In a very kind note accompanying the box, she referred to the acquaintance thus formed, expressed her sympathy in my captivity, and on behalf of herself and other ladies of Portland, whom she named, asked our acceptance of the contents of the box, to improve our Christmas dinner. Our life in the fortress, of course, afforded no great variety of

incident we were allowed to receive letters passing under the inspection of our jailers, and thus I heard two or three times from home. Being also allowed to receive the newspapers, we had every day the daily journals from Boston, New York and Philadelphia, with the English papers and periodicals. Our prison life was, of course monotonous; now and then we could welcome a newcomer, but very seldom could we take leave of one departing.

“On the first day of December, the Congress of the United States met, and on that first day, the House of Representatives, by a unanimous vote, adopted a resolution requesting the President to have the writer of this memoir by name placed in a dungeon, and treated as a felon there to remain as a hostage, to answer for the life of a Federal officer then held as a hostage in the Confederate States, in like manner, to answer for the life of a captain of a Confederate privateer, who had been tried and convicted as a pirate in the Federal Courts at Philadelphia. Such was my first greeting by the Federal authorities as their prisoner. On the second day of the session, a like resolution was unanimously passed by the House, on behalf of Mr. Slidell. Such was the spirit of the mob at our capture, and the House of Representatives was the excerpt of the mob. This, of course, will pass into history it resulted that it was at last a mob extravagance. The President, so far as we knew, took no account of it, nor did we hear anything more of it. I record it here as an exemplar of those entrusted with power by the people. Another incident should be noted: The State prisoners were one day formally notified by the Governor of the fortress to be in their rooms at a given hour to hear an order from the Secretary of State, William H. Seward, a name that would go with infamy to posterity, were it not rescued from such elevation by contempt.

“The order was one prohibiting the prisoners from having any communication with counsel, upon pain of such communication being made the cause of prolonged imprisonment. Time glided on. I never doubted what the action of England must be upon our capture from my knowledge of public law, I was satisfied and said so to those around me, however anxious England might be to avoid a quarrel, this must be made a fighting issue, and that no diplomatic delays would be allowed. It was an unmixed question of national honor. England had never been recreant. I was satisfied that the demand would be that the wrongdoer would be required to repair the wrong, that is to say, that the prisoners should be put back under the safeguard of the British flag. All this was a subject of daily discussion in our prison circles as my fellow-prisoners will warrant, should this ever meet their eye. I never doubted what England would do what the United States would do when the demand was made, was a theme for more extended speculation.

“The official report of the capture brought a highly commendatory letter to Captain Wilkes from the Secretary of the Navy, who said the act had the Emphatic approbation of the Department. The press of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, each vied with the other in laudation of the act in capturing the Rebel emissaries. Captain Wilkes was feted at Boston and at New York, where he paused in his progress. and the House of Representatives passed a resolution voting him a sword, and the thanks of Congress. History will record the events attending this capture as a most extraordinary lapse in the career of a civilized nation an instance where statesmen and Juris consults betrayed their country to administer to the passions of a mob. Edward Everett, who will be known in the history of that country as one who aspired to be both jurist and statesman, following the example of others, who assumed to be of like grade, wrote for the newspapers vindicating on principles of public law, the act of Captain Wilkes. He cited only from

the text-writers, and even into them did not go skin deep, but in his anxiety to sustain the act he falsified history, it will be immaterial to posterity, whether from ignorance or design. Considering Yankee ethics, he would choose it to be ascribed to the latter. Colonel Laurens, of South Carolina, had been sent by the Continental Congress as Minister to Holland, and was captured at sea by a British man-of-war he was taken to England and confined in the Tower as a state prisoner until the end of the war a period of more than two years.

“The news papers seized upon this as a precedent, assuming without examination that the captured ship was under the Dutch flag. Mr. Everett, in an elaborate vindication of the act of Captain Wilkes, justified it on this precedent. It was shown afterwards by clear proof, from historical documents that the ship from which Colonel Laurens was taken belonged to the Revolutionary Colonies, and was under the flag of the Continental Congress. This was immediately fully exposed in the public journals of the day, and yet Mr. Everett, the soi-disant jurist and statesman, remained silent. This gentleman had been minister to England, Senator of the United States for Massachusetts, and Secretary of State of the United States. He was followed by sundry others of the best known public men in the North, in like manner vindicating and justifying the capture, amongst whom I enumerate General Lewis Call, of Michigan, and Mr. Beecher Lawrence, Rhode Island, who had undertaken to be an editor of and commentator on Chancellor Kent's treatise on International Law. Such is Yankee character it was all surrendered at the first summons from England.

“Our prison life, afforded, of course, but little variety we breakfasted at nine, and after that took exercise in walking up and down the limited space allotted to us in the area of the fortress, but in this, although girded round by sentinels, we were allowed freely to intermingle and to talk without reserve. During this period, our only apartment was put in order by a servant in bad weather, to enable this operation to be performed, we alternated with our neighbors in the occupation of our apartments. About 12 o'clock the steamer arrived with the mails from Boston. They occupied us for an hour or two after that, we inter-visited, had a glass of toddy, talked over and speculated on the news. Our dinner was at three, and thanks to the sedulous and provident care of our friends in Maryland, we always had the materials for a good one. After dinner, again exercise until retreat was beaten at 5 o'clock, when, as I have said, we were all required to repair to our quarters, there to be inspected. We had the means of making tea in our respective apartments, and made it the occasion of a social gathering. After tea, whist for those who were so inclined, until the hour came to extinguish the lights. The fort was garrisoned by some 500 or 600 new levies, officers and all, from Massachusetts, to whom the technical term raw was peculiarly appropriate. The fortress had just been finished had hardly a gun mounted, and certainly not a man capable of firing one.

We all prayed earnestly that the Yankees would refuse to surrender us nor was this on our own part particularly disinterested, knowing as we did that the war with England to follow such a refusal would speedily terminate the war with the South.

“Time glided on the - of December we saw by the papers that the first news of our arrest was received in England, when the *Trent* arrived, and that it made a profound sensation. It struck the public mind of England at once as an insult to her flag and to her national honor. By the next arrival, three days afterwards, we learned that the packet had been detained at Queenstown one day to receive a Queen's messenger, that on landing at New York he had proceeded at once by a special train to Washington, and speculation was rife as to the character of the dispatch he bore to the British Minister. I

never doubted the character of the demand, and, as evidence, here record the fact, that I laid a wager of 50 barrels of corn with my fellow-prisoner, Charles J. Faulkner, Esq., of Berkeley County, Virginia, that the demand would be to replace the prisoners under the British flag and that demand would be peremptory, in terms to admit of no delay. Mr. Faulkner had been the Minister of the United States in France; had been arrested on his return from that mission a few months before, and was confined at Fort Warren. He was released before the intelligence came from England, but I won the bet, as doubtless he will acknowledge should we ever meet again. We remained in suspense some five or six days, when the papers brought us the demand of Lord Russell from the Foreign Office, that we, with our secretaries, should be delivered to Lord Lyons, the British Minister, with the reply of Mr. Seward, Secretary of State, complying with it, though filled with reasons to show why he should not, and when he would not comply.

“On the first day of January, 1862, returning from breakfast between 9 and 10 o'clock, I was met by Colonel Dimmick, who told me that a messenger had arrived from the Department of State, who desired a private interview with Mr. Slidell and myself. I said to him: Very well where shall the interview be held? We have but our sleeping apartment, which is just now in a state of disorder. The Colonel replied: You shall have it, if you please, at my quarters. and calling up the messenger at the same time, who stood near, introduced him as Mr. Webster, from the Department of State. We were near my apartment and I said I would go in and have it hastily prepared to receive us. Mr. Slidell had not yet left it. The Mr. Webster thus introduced told me at first, in reply to a question, that he was a clerk in the Department of State; subsequently he told our secretaries that he was a deputy marshal in the District of Columbia. When alone with Mr. Slidell in our apartment he said that he was sent by the Secretary of State to take us, with our secretaries by name, from the fort, and to take us out 40 miles to sea, where he would meet a ship, on board of which he was to place us, adding that the hour of 12 was fixed for the rendezvous at sea, and he hoped, therefore, that we would lose no time in getting off. We asked him if his orders, or his directions, for our guidance were in writing? He said no, his orders were entirely verbal, that he had nothing in writing. We asked him where at sea we were to meet the ship? He replied that he was not at liberty to say, but that he would meet it at the distance of 40 miles. He said he had brought a steamer from Boston to conduct us, apologizing that it was only a tug. by saying that it was the only steamer to be chartered in Boston, when he arrived the night before. It was reported to us by our secretaries that this emissary from Washington told them, whilst on board the tug, that he had no orders in writing from Mr. Seward, but was directed verbally when he arrived at Boston to report himself there to the commander of the Navy Yard, who would furnish him with a steamer to take off the prisoners, and that he must not disclose his errand to any one except the commanding officer at Fort Warren. This reserve was doubtless due, in the opinion of the Secretary, to his fears that, if our intended release was known in Boston it might excite an emeute. I should add further that we found on board the tug as a guard of honor, a corporal with six marines. Colonel Dimmick, commander of the fortress, attended us to the wharf, where we embarked, and took a respectful and kind leave of us where we went on board the tug and I have here great pleasure in recording the fact that this officer, whilst strictly regardful of the duties of his position, was always considerate, kind and respectful, and omitted nothing which he could properly do, which would contribute to the comfort of the prisoners in his charge. As we passed out of the fort, our fellow-prisoners ranged themselves in line to



witness our departure. They were restrained from other manifestation than a cordial good bye, God bless you; their tone of voice spoke the rest.

“Some time before our release, some 400 of the prisoners of war from North Carolina had been paroled, and embarked in a ship sent to receive them off the fort. By special permission of Colonel Dimmick, their comrades, along with the prisoners of state, were allowed to go to the ramparts to witness their departure. As their ship moved off we all gave them a parting salute of three cheers. We looked to the same indulgence to those we left behind at our departure, but not a man appeared on the ramparts. We heard afterwards incidentally that some evidences of disaffection were manifested by the garrison, in consequence of our release, and this may have disinclined the Colonel to permit a cheer from the ramparts. The weather was very rough on our passage, across an arm of the sea to Provincetown, in Massachusetts, some 40 miles from Fort Warren, and the waves made a clear passage over the deck of our little tug. As we entered the harbor we saw a war [steamer under the British flag, lying at anchor, ranging alongside. The emissary having us in charge went on board, as he said, to inquire whether that was the ship on board which he was to deliver us returning, he reported it was right, and we were at liberty to go on board. We did so, and were most courteously received on the quarter-deck by Captain Hewett, of Her Majesty's ship the *Rinaldo*.

“The manner of placing us on board this ship from a small tug. in charge of a corporal's guard of marines, was one of designed and marked indignity, the conception of Mr. Secretary Seward. It was observed, of course, by Captain Hewett, who told us he had been ordered by Lord Lyons to await our reception where we found him, and that he had been looking out for us all day, but that when our steamer approached it did not enter into his mind that his guests were to be so delivered. It was a steamer of moderate size, carrying but 13 guns, and, of course, but of limited accommodation. We were conducted at once to the cabin on the deck below, where the captain told us his own state-room, opening into the cabin, and that of his first lieutenant into the ward-room, were placed at the disposal of the two commissioners and that of our two secretaries, one could have a cot swung in the cabin, and the other be well provided for forward.

“We protested earnestly against this arrangement so far as it dislocated the captain and his lieutenant, but he persisted that he must be allowed to make the provision he thought proper for his own guests. It resulted that Mr. Slidell, as the senior, was assigned to the cabin stateroom, I to the first lieutenant's. Mr. Eustis had a cot swung in the cabin, and Mr. Macfarland to the berth of one of outward-room officers. Captain Hewett then showed us his orders from Lord Lyons, his ship at the time lying at New York they were that he should proceed at once to Provincetown, Massachusetts, and there remain until we arrived. That we should be received in a manner due to private gentlemen of distinction, but without any formal distinction. That as soon as on board we should get under weight and take us to any neutral port we might elect, but we were not to be taken to any port either in the United or Confederate States. Thus the anchor was weighed as soon as we attained the deck, and the ship then moved out of the harbour to sea. We at once requested to be taken to Halifax, where, without detention, we could re-embark on a Cunard mail steamer for England, and it was so decided. Captain Hewett then begged that we would consider his cabin as our own, and announced the dinner hour at 6 o'clock. His steward had orders to consider our commands as his, and we were thus placed entirely at home. We had a very good and very pleasant dinner, with ample variety of excellent wine.

“On coming aboard we observed a large supply of fresh provision, including poultry and game, hanging in the after-rigging. Just released from prison, speeding on the way to our mission, and surrounded by cordial and hospitable hosts, everything looked bright. We retired to bed about 11 o'clock. The captain told us as we parted that he feared we would have a rough night, that the barometer had been falling all day and yet continued to fall, that we had fairly got to sea, and were in a stiff gale. I took little account of it, and turned in, and was soon fast asleep, losing in the act only the most bright and hopeful visions.

“An hour or two before day I waked up, finding myself thoroughly wet and exceedingly cold. The door of the stateroom admitted a dim light from the lantern swung in the ward room. When fairly roused, I found the water trickling upon me rapidly from above. My attention was attracted by a regurgitating sound of water on the cabin floor. I looked down and saw the clothes I had taken off and deposited on a chair, with my boots, making their gyrations over the floor with the motion of the ship, in six or eight inches of water. Not well accustomed to the incidents of sea life, I was at some loss to know what was the matter it was certain only that I was very wet and cold, with the water pouring upon me from above, and several inches deep on the cabin floor. I leaned over the berth, and, as opportunity offered in the ebb and flow of the tide, rescued my clothes piece by piece from the flood below, wrung out the water as well as I could and put them beside me in the driest part of my berth. The rolling and tossing of the ship, with the incessant roar of the wind heard from above, recalled the captain's prediction that we were to have a rough night but what was I to do? Very wet and getting wetter, and very cold and getting colder. Whilst pondering on my condition, I heard some one in the adjoining apartment, and calling to him brought in the wardroom steward. I asked him what was the matter? He replied, in a tone which seemed earnestly intent on shifting the responsibility, that it was blowing a fearful gale and the ship was straining very hard, and that some of the seams had opened on deck, which let the water in below that he was very sorry, but there was no way of stopping it.

“It must be remembered that we were in a northern latitude on the night of the 1st of January, no fire, and the thermometer far below the freezing point. It took little time to determine that I could not remain where I was; the steward brought me some outer clothing from the lieutenant's stores, with some dry blankets. I got up, keeping my feet out of the water with his aid, and wrapped in these habiliments I found my way into the cabin. The cabin floor was on a higher level than the wardroom, and its broad and ample lockers well supplied with morocco cushions, of every length and breadth. I laid down on the floor, and with the aid of the cushions, the steward supplied me with a comfortable bed, wedged in by other cushions to keep me in place against the rolling of the ship. At every half hour the captain, lieutenant, or sailing-master came in to consult the barometer, which, as they reported, continued to fall. They reported further that it was blowing a hard gale, with very thick weather and snow. At the usual breakfast hour no table could be spread, and while I lay on the floor, the steward brought me a cup of coffee, with a piece of bread and a dish of Irish stew in sea phrase, lobsouse the former the cabin, the latter the forecabin name, meaning a hash of mutton stewed with sundry condiments, more savory than refined, the principal ingredient the proscribed onion. I had no relish for lobsouse, but refreshed by the coffee and bread, and wrapped in the warm overcoats of the officers, made my way to the deck, and there was a spectacle that I presume could find its parallel only in the most dreary wastes of the Arctic Ocean.

“Upon the uniform basis of a hoarse and continuous roar, the wind actually howled and shrieked the ship everywhere coated thickly with ice, not a sail was set, nor could one be set, every part of the rigging was a conglomerate mass of ice, which was increased in thickness every moment by the heavy spray of the sea, of which every drop froze directly where it fell. The ample store of provisions, which I have commemorated on a preceding page, in the rigging, had all gone as an offering to Neptune or other monsters of the deep. The boats hanging in the davits had disappeared, stove, and carried away during the night. The foretopsail under a double reef, the only sail on the ship carried away, and the bulwarks followed, stove in. The sea presented no appearance, even, of undulation, but its surface seemed erected into large upright cones, seething and foaming at the apex. The deck, even then, was coated with ice, certainly some two or three inches thick, and there was no walking without the aid of those having better sea-legs than I. The forecastle presented the appearance of a magnificent cave, or grotto, the roof of which was sustained by massive stalactites, and the guns were covered by a uniform, continuous sheet of thick ice, nothing of the guns or its carriage visible in the appropriate outlines. For four days and nights we struggled with that storm the ship all the time under steam.

“We never saw the sun by day, or the moon or stars by night, and thus had no observation to determine our position. During the whole period the barometer continued to fall. The sailing-master estimated by his dead reckoning that we had passed to the eastward of Halifax, but in the uncertainty and absence of any observation it was too hazardous an attempt to approach the land. More than 20 of the crew were frost bitten in their fingers and toes, but the captain held on his course, determined to make good his port in Halifax. We had more than once remonstrated and urged him to give it up, there being nothing to indicate that the gale would abate. On the morning of the 5th of January, things were dark and gloomy as ever, and the captain told us that he had determined, if he got no observations at meridian, he would bear away for Bermuda. At 12 o'clock he came into the cabin and said: Gentlemen, I am happy to inform you that the ship has altered her course and we are heading due south, direct for Bermuda.

“To this happy change I believe we were more indebted to the diminished quantity of our coal than to any diminution in the persevering purpose of Captain Hewett. We ran some 300 miles before we got within the benign influence of the Gulf Stream, and the gale followed us to the borders of the gulf. As we advanced into it, the temperature of the air became milder, but it required hot water from the furnaces, liberally distributed over the deck for several hours, to thaw the compact masses of ice. The sun once more shone out brightly, and all the officers except the captain were busily engaged exercising themselves with shovel, pick-axe and other implements, in breaking the masses of ice and throwing it overboard.

“It took several hours to get the ship free of ice, but we had passed beyond the region of the gale, and when this was done, with a bright sun, a gentle breeze and a dry ship, we seemed to enter upon a new life. Then, for the first time, the captain told us of the perils we had passed. It seems that when off the Bay of Fundy, during the midst of the gale, the tiller-rope broke, and a few minutes afterwards the preventer rope, the adjutant of the tiller, broke also, from the great pressure on the wheel. There was nothing then left by which the ship could be kept on her course but the foretopsail, and that blew away. Fortunately, we were all fast asleep and unconscious of our condition. It seems that it took more than an hour to get a new rope adjusted on the wheel, and in the meantime, our ship drifted ad libitum. The captain reported that when the ship came

again under command of the helm, he found by his soundings that he was in 30- fathom water, indicating the dangerous proximity of St. George's banks, at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy. Having had no observation, he could only guess at his actual position, and after a few moments pause, whether he should seek to extricate himself by wearing ship, or by forcing her ahead by the power of steam, he determined on the latter, and in a short time again found him self out of soundings.

“We had a pleasant run after this to Bermuda, where we arrived on the 9th of January. We made the land soon after daylight; there was quite a breeze blowing, and we approached it cautiously and slowly. The island presented a high and mountainous outline, with a narrow fringe of coast, against which the surf broke in cooling sheets of foam. A pilot boarded us some three or four miles off, in the form of a dark brown mulatto, in sailor's garb with a broad, weather-beaten straw hat. The ship was given up to him as the pilot, and he guided us slowly but securely into a large land-locked bay. As we approached, telegraphic signals were interchanged between the ship and the Admiral's residence on shore. They apprised him of the name of the ship and of our presence on board. Captain Hewett landed to pay his respects to the Admiral, and the ship continued her way to the Government docks inside the Mole. We passed very near the Admiral's ship of 90 guns, the *Nile*. lying at anchor in the bay.

“The signals had apprised her, too, of our arrival. As we passed, the band mustered on the quarterdeck, with the officers grouped around. It struck up the air Dixie Land, then supposed to be the national air of the Confederates. Mr. Slidell and I, standing apart on the deck, acknowledged the compliment by waving our caps, and the salute was returned in like manner by the officers of the *Nile*. Soon after we made fast within the Mole, the captain and senior lieutenants of the *Nile* came on board to make their congratulatory respects, with an earnest invitation to us to visit their ship. We did so the next morning before sailing, and were most kindly and hospitably received. This civility was an earnest of the sympathy and good feeling we met with every where from the British naval officers.

“We had requested Captain Hewett to say to the Admiral that we should be very much obliged if he would expedite us on our way to England, either by sending us direct if he could spare a ship from the station, or if not, then that we should go as early as practicable to the Island of St. Thomas, where we could intercept the Royal Mail Steam Line from Mexico to Havana. We knew that this line in regular course left St. Thomas on the 13th, but was often delayed a day to make connection with an associate line from South America. Captain Hewett had been good enough to say that, in default of a more suitable arrangement, he would, with the Admiral's permission, have his ship coaled during the night and pursue his voyage with us on the next day (the 10th). The sea was calm in those latitudes, and he felt assured that he could make the run in four days, which would put us at St. Thomas on the 14th, and thus enable us without detention to proceed to England, provided the mail steamer should, as sometimes happened, have been detained a day. Captain Hewett returned from his visit to the Admiral about 3 p. m. He reported first an invitation from the Admiral, that we should dine with him that evening, at seven, and spend the night ashore next, that he had but one steamer, then at Bermuda, which he could offer us to go to England, the *Racer*. Captain Lyons, and that she could be got ready for us in three days, but if we preferred taking the chance of hitting the mail steamer at St. Thomas, he would give an order to

Captain Hewett accordingly. The *Racer*, we found, was a small steamer and a slow one and would probably require 20 days to get to England.

“Captain Hewett, whose earnest kindness I have renewed pleasure in recording, although his ship was much shattered by the gale we had left, said, if we chose to go with him, he would have his coal replenished during the night, get off at an early hour on the next day, and would engage to have us at St. Thomas in the forenoon of the 14th. We accepted the latter course, which he telegraphed to the Admiral, and the order was issued accordingly. Immediately a large force was put to coal the ship, which was successfully concluded between 10 and no clock on the morning of the 10th. We were visited during our stay by the naval officers on the station ashore and afloat, with most kind and hospitable invitations to dine, and so forth. And now for our visit to Admiral Milne. He had a beautiful official residence on shore, with cultivated grounds, shrubberies, etc., and gave us a cordial welcome. We found a party of the officials of the island assembled. The Admiral was very kind and gracious in his disposition to make the best provision in his power for our comfort. He had given the necessary orders and employed all the necessary force to have the *Rinaldo* ready for departure at an early hour on the following day. We were told on taking leave that we were to be quartered for the night at the house of Mrs. Robinson, not far off, which had been provided for us. Arriving there about midnight, we found a good-looking country house, and our hostess, a sturdy but well mannered negro woman. Lights were burning, and she expecting us. Counting up the party of four, she said she had but three chambers, but the fourth gentleman was to stay with Mrs. Philips. Of this latter lady we had never heard, but her house was near by, and Mr. Eustis and Macfarland cast lots which should be the guest of Mrs. Philips.

“It fell upon Macfarland, and he moved off in the dark, to hunt up his hostess and claim his position. We had clean and commodious chambers, with excellent beds, neatness, propriety, and every proper observance due to our comfort, including baths, abundance of water and towels. It was the first night in which we had slept in a quiet bed, hard and fast on the land, and we enjoyed it accordingly. The breakfast table, the next morning, was of most inviting aspect, abundantly supplied with fish, vegetables, and fruit and delicious coffee, the table service of silver. On taking leave, we offered ample remuneration to our landlady, which she civilly but peremptorily declined, saying that we were the guests of the Admiral, and not hers. We had to content ourselves, therefore, with distributing silver coin to the little negroes, her children.

“What we saw of the Island of Bermuda the first week in January, would show it a delightful climate. Thermometer from 75 to 80, the heat tempered by the breezes from the sea. Roses and flowers of every hue blooming everywhere, birds singing and the sky without a cloud. We embarked in the Admiral's boat about 10 o'clock on the morning of the 10th of January to return to our ship. We were conducted to the boats at a landing by an artificial stairway, in a beautiful land-locked little bay, trenching from the ocean deeply into the island. The ever green foliage on all sides came down to the water's edge, the depths ranging from 10 to 20 feet the bottom of coral, perfectly white, and the water so transparent that you saw the bottom as though no fluid was interposed. On the way to our ship we visited, by invitation, the Admiral's ship, the *Nile*, were most courteously and hospitably received, and after inspecting her throughout, her officers, in a parting glass, drank to our safe arrival in Old England. We weighed anchor and stood out from Bermuda in the forenoon of the 10th of January. Our hospitable captain had

fully replenished his larder, the sea was calm, and we had a prosperous run to St. Thomas. Rounding the headland of the beautiful bay, on the precipitous sides of which the town, seemed suspended, we came to anchor, about 10 o'clock on the morning of the 14th, near the Royal mail steamer, the *La Plata*. which, as we had hoped, had been detained a day by the failure of her South American associate. The United States war steamer *Iroquois* was there, also at anchor, and near her at anchor was the British war steamer *Cadmus*. Our arrival by this route was of course entirely unexpected. The captain of the latter ship came on board, and after a very kind salutation, told us that our arrival would relieve him from the very annoying duty of following and watching the Yankee man-of-war; that he had been following him through those seas for some weeks; that he should lie where he was, after the *La Plata* sailed, unless the Yankee weighed anchor, when if he does, you may rely that I shall follow him, to prevent another *Trent* affair.

“Although so far advanced in the winter, the weather was intensely warm, and we were habited in linen jackets, with straw hats. Communicating with the *La Plata*, we learned that she would sail in a few hours, and because of the heat I did not go ashore. Mr. Macfarland and Eustis, however, did so, and brought us an ample supply of fruit, for which St. Thomas is celebrated, for the voyage. Pineapples, oranges, bananas, in short, all the fruits of the tropics, in addition to which some ladies of the island, hearing of our arrival, sent off servants with large baskets of fruit and flowers, and a kind note of welcome. When the time arrived for our departure, Captain Hewett, having previously sent our baggage, himself accompanied us on board the *La Plata* in his gig. All the officers of the ship assembled in the cabin to take leave; their adieus, over a glass of champagne, with the earnestly expressed hope that we should meet again, were kind and sincere. The *La Plata* weighed anchor about 2 P. M., and we were off for England.

“This ship was the same, on the Royal Mail Line, sailing in connection with the *Trent*, which would have received us on her voyage out before, had we not been captured, and which conveyed Mrs. Slidell, with the other ladies of our party, after that event. Captain Weller, commanding the ship, was in every thing courteous and cordial, and by his direction we had excellent staterooms. When we sailed from Havana our passage was paid through to England, which he informed us was taken in full of further demand, besides which courtesy, our purses being low, he advanced to me all the money required by the party for contingencies, for my cheque upon a banker. Should there be any who object to the apparently light character of these reminiscences, I will remit him to himself under like circumstances. Our ship was not crowded, but amongst the passengers were several educated and intelligent gentlemen, including the Governor of Martinique, returning home on a leave of absence. We had thus a pleasant party. We had a fine ship; her flushed deck, 300 feet long by 30 feet wide, gave us for exercise the same space that we had been allowed at Fort Warren.

“The weather, though somewhat boisterous as we advanced on the voyage, was, on the whole, passable for a winter month, and we arrived at Southampton on the 20th of January, after the usual passage of 14 days. Soon after landing I proceeded to London, on the same day, and took quarters at Fenton's Hotel, St. James Street.

*From: “James Murray Mason: The Public Life and Diplomatic Correspondence with Some Personal History” by Virginia Mason (His Daughter)  
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