

[PER PONY EXPRESS.]

Letter from Washington.

[EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.]

[Continued from yesterday.]

WASHINGTON, April 20, 1861.

The Civil War—North and South Contrasted.

I shall be expected to say something in respect to the probable issue of the civil war, if it must come. Let me say at the beginning, that it cannot and will not be a war "for the subjugation of the South," but in *defense* of the Government and to prevent its subjugation by the South. It is the seceding States who rebel, and who seek to overturn the Government, which consequently must always have the advantage that belongs to him who stands on the defense only. The Government does not propose "invasion of the South," but only to retake its own property wherever it can, and to execute such of the laws of the United States *now* as will make it a necessity of existence that the remainder shall be voluntarily obeyed by the rebels by-and-bye. Thus, for instance, they will blockade the ports of the Seceding States, in order to prevent smuggling, and execute the revenue laws. Similar guards against smuggling will be instituted on the inland border and the waters traversing the loyal and disloyal States. These things done, and supplies cut off from the Seceding States, the latter must either return to their allegiance, retire from their assault upon the Constitution, or make offensive, *invasive* war against the Government. To do this they will need twice the force which the Government will need for successful defense. The call of the Government for 75,000 men, has already brought forth proffers of at least 200,000, and if they are needed, the States of the North alone can furnish and keep in the field half a million of men. Jefferson, after four months of recruiting, has an army of 25,000 men. True, the telegraph tells us that he will call for 150,000 more. This is simply a desperate brag, and betrays only his insanity or insincerity. Nothing can be better settled than that the Confederate States are wholly unable to raise any such force as thus proposed. Their utmost possible force of citizens able to bear arms, even for defense at home, is 300,000—or one-eighth their entire white population—and more than half of these must be kept at other pursuits of life, to say nothing of the force necessary to keep the slave population in subjection. As to arming, clothing and feeding any such force as 175,000 men, the proposition is simply absurd. Each soldier in campaign costs not less than \$600 per annum to the government employing him, which, multiplied by 175,000, gives an aggregate cost of \$105,000,000 annually, for this simple item! The confederate States have been able to raise \$15,000,000 even, only on forced loans, and moneyed men will not and cannot, be expected willingly to contribute their funds to the creation of a state of anarchy which destroys all property values, and makes the rich man poorer than the poor.

On the other hand, let me quote the late Secession organ, the N. Y. *Herald*, upon the strength of the North, as that authority, speaking against its own inclinations, must be admitted to tell no more than the truth. It says:

The Northern and Western States have an enrolled militia of nearly two and a half millions of men, most of whom are trained to the use of firearms, and can make a pretty good shot, and many of them are regularly drilled and disciplined in organized companies. These States have also abundance of munitions of war, and money enough at command to sustain a large force in the field. There exists, moreover, a perfect unanimity of feeling to make all these resources available to the service of the Government. It is true that half the men who are now hurrying on to Washington do not care who is President: many of them may be opposed to Mr. Lincoln and his party; but they do care for the integrity, the life, the permanency of the Republic, and in this sentiment all party predilections and prejudices are now submerged.

The North and the South are equal in courage. If either has superior endurance and coolness it is the North, whose climate makes the blood run slower, but the pulses in whose patriotic bosoms beat all the more fiercely and persistently when once aroused. The lion which will longest bear shaking by the mane is most terrible when at last excited beyond endurance—and so it will be, as some one has expressed it, when the people of the East go into battle "singing psalms," while dealing death. These are no words of menace. God save me in this unhappy hour of our country, from any disposition to do injustice, or to offer taunt to the people of any section. The issues of war nowadays are accurately measured by the amount of money which belligerents can respectively command. Cash is equivalent to numerical superiority in men and all else that makes an army terrible and invincible, for it supplies subsistence, munitions, perfection of engines of human destruction, and means of rapid transportation. The combatant who excels in the *means* of war and has equal skill in wielding them, must win in the end. This premise is universally admitted, and it relieves us at once of all doubt as to the issue of the impending contest. Concede, as we do, in the Seceding States, personal courage fully equal to that of the loyal States, and the former are still left in hopeless inferiority in all other respects. The Confederate States contain a white population of 2,500,000, or about one-eighth of the population of the Northern States. The latter can, if necessary, bring a force *eight times greater* into the field. All the Slave States together have a white population of only 8,000,000, against 19,000,000 in the North. Measured by numbers, the North is twice and a half as powerful, assuming all the Southern States to be a unit in sentiment and purpose. But this is impossible. Missouri in no contingency will join the Gulf Confederacy, neither will Delaware, nor Maryland, nor Western Virginia, nor Eastern Kentucky, nor Tennessee. In case of hostilities, the proper *surveillance* over the negro would compel at least one-half of the white males to remain at home as a local police, increasing the disparity to such a degree as to render it the height of foolhardiness for the South to venture upon the contest. They cannot be expected to overcome impossibilities, and they have no grievance calling for exhibitions of the stoicism which leads men sometimes to seek death rather than yield to the force of surrounding circumstances.

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They have no munitions of war, except their small arms and a few cannon; nor have they a single manufactory of arms or a powder mill, in all the Seceded States. They cannot arm themselves efficiently, therefore, however brave, especially when the Federal Government commands the sea, and blockades all their ports. Neither do they manufacture a yard of cloth suitable for soldiers' clothing, or raise a pound of food for their rations. They must be supplied with these from the North, if at all; and the granaries of the Northwest, which are ready to pour forth their treasures like water to feed our Southern brethren, free of cost if they need it, and are friends, will be sealed to them by war as closely as a vice. Even for its own safety from starvation, the Cotton States must this year devote all their slave labor to the raising of food, while the North has stores enough on hand to keep the wolf from the door, though no crop is raised during the summer campaign.

But it is in money that the disloyal States are weakest. They spend the price of the cotton crop always before it is raised, and have no funds of any consequence to fall back upon. Every bank in South Carolina is broken, and the first bugle-note of war broke down Southern State stocks and bank stocks so terribly that they are a drug at any price. While over \$100,000,000 has been freely tendered to the United States Government within the last week, the \$15,000,000 loan of the "Confederate States" cannot be got rid of to voluntary purchasers. The moment a State secedes, her credit is ruined—for secession becomes repudiation by ultimately rendering her *unable* to pay her debts. A people who trample on the Constitution they have sworn to support, will not hesitate in throwing off a debt whenever it is found a burden. Mississippi and Florida, even for slighter temptation, blasted their financial reputations long years ago, and the stain is so deep and damning as to cast a shadow over its associates. It is a warning. Neither the Confederate States nor its individual members can have any credit abroad, and every dollar of available means in the hands of its people at home must be exhausted in a very brief time. It is a terrible reflection in times like these that the wealth of the seceding States consists chiefly of lands and negroes, and war renders both these species of property almost valueless, while they are *entirely* so for war purposes. The disloyal States can get no money except by spoliation, which will soon exhaust itself.

Again, the loyal States have an immense advantage in the fact that they hold the commerce and command the sea, so that the Confederate States are quite at their mercy in their numerous vulnerable points of attack upon the coast. They need 200,000 men as a defense against 10,000 on board a well-appointed fleet. One day this force could threaten Norfolk, the next Wilmington, the next Charleston, the next Savannah; then Florida, Mobile, New Orleans and Galveston. No one could tell where the blow was to be struck, and consequently every menaced point would have to be well guarded. Such a fleet and force could in six months put the whole South in a perfect frenzy, by constantly hovering upon their coast with hostile demonstrations. And yet, with the mercantile marine of New York and Boston at their disposal.

Government could precipitate 100,000 men upon any required point. A dozen points could be threatened at the same moment, and having thus the command of the sea in the hands of the North, the South, having no navy, nor ships, nor sailors, could not defend themselves with even ten times their present number. They have more than 5,000 miles of frontier line to protect: what folly then to talk of invading the North. Would to Heaven that wise counsels might stay the mad passions of the rebel conspirators, and avert them from the destruction towards whose brink they rush. There is one door of escape left open for them—the Congress to meet in July. The *Herald*, (I quote it because its views will not be supposed to be those of a partisan Republican,) speaking of the President, says:

But he has chosen to cut the Gordian knot: *the North responds with startling unanimity*; and we must deal with these solemn facts of war which are before us. We presume that Virginia and the other Border Slave States will come up with the representatives of the North to Congress in July, and that their object in coming will be a treaty of peace. In this connection the resolute policy of Mr. Lincoln and Gen. Scott, and the significant co-operation and enthusiasm of the North, may operate powerfully in behalf of peace with the beleaguered Southern Confederacy.

If the Border Slave States cannot at present act with the Northern States in this great crisis, neutrality is their policy; and we think they will adopt it, to escape the destructive visitation of this civil war upon themselves; and the field of warlike operations being thus confined to the seceded States, their reduction or destruction appears almost inevitable. Beyond a year or two of an exhausting civil war, they cannot hold out without losing the monopoly of the cotton culture; for if our Southern supplies of cotton fall beyond a year or two, they may be raised in other parts of the world, to supply the world's necessities.

The same journal, arguing that the Border Slave States will not rush into the whirlpool of civil war, but will arrange for a position of armed neutrality, has the following:

We are inclined to this opinion from the fact that Secession and full co-operation with the Montgomery government would not only throw the brunt of the war upon Virginia and the Border Slave States, in making them the field of battle, but in bringing down the Canadian fugitive slave line to the borders of Virginia, she would risk a grand stampede and demoralization of her slaves, which might only end with the destruction of her two hundred millions of cash involved in her slave property. And so with Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri. The Union indispec-

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sable to the safety of their slave property in this crisis of civil war. Let Virginia secede, and let Gen. Jeff. Davis establish his military headquarters at Richmond, as it is said he expects to do, and, amidst the confusion of contending armies within her borders, Virginia will hazard the additional calamities of a ruinous demoralization of her negroes.

If the Border States haply take this position, the war at worst will be a short one; if they, on the other hand, unite with the Confederate States, or allow a Southern force to cross their soil to invade the capital, Virginia will become the battle ground, and will necessarily be devastated by fire and sword, while her slave population will in 30 days be entirely beyond its borders either South or North. Virginia neutral, and the war becomes little more than a blockade of the Southern ports; Virginia active in hostility, and no man can estimate the baptism of horrors through which our country must pass. The bonds of the Northern States to-day are almost as good as before the war panic broke out, and many of them are at a high premium. The stocks of Virginia have gone to 50 per cent. already, and holders have not the least idea that they are worth a cent except the State keeps out of a fratricidal war. It is Jeff. Davis's purpose to have the war on her soil, if he is to have it at all, for his own dominions are barren of food. He must move his army to a theatre where food can be seized, or he must disband. So, too, if he can transfer the war to Virginia, Davis probably thinks there will be peace at home, and that cotton can be cultivated there next summer. In that he is greatly mistaken; for if he attempts its invasion, he will be repelled by invasion. If he comes towards this capital he will be attacked in the rear, while chivalrous Virginia will suffer the sack of her cities, the desolation of her fields, the liberation of her negroes, and see all her interests completely blasted by the military despot. Of all the States that have seceded, or threaten to secede, Virginia is the most vulnerable and exposed. The United States holding Fort Monroe, completely cuts off her communi-

cation with the sea. From this port expeditions may penetrate by water far into the interior. On the North, Washington will soon be a fortified camp of 25,000 men. On the West, she will be threatened by her own free territory, and by Ohio and Pennsylvania. Between all these forces she will be ground to powder—eaten up by those who professed to come to her aid, and commanded at every turn by the overwhelming forces of the United States.

But Jeff. Davis threatens our commerce with privateers. The threat is perfectly idle. His letters of marque will be laughed to scorn, and every man who accepts one will be treated as a pirate wherever found. The Southern ports will all be blockaded by the United States, and there will be no port in the world to which they can carry a prize for condemnation. Every naval power of the world, too, will be compelled to aid us in sweeping these piratical craft from the seas. The only danger of this piratical proclamation of Davis is that it may provoke the inroad of scores of John Brown crusaders into the Southern States, for the express purpose of setting free the Southern slaves and arming them against the Southern rebels. The "property" of the South is much more open to assault than even the commerce of the Northern States. No letters of marque and reprisal will be needed to make the war effective. Heaven save the land from so fearful and demoniac a retaliation! but if forced to the death struggle, men will strike at that point of their assailant's person which is most exposed.

Even the dastardly N. Y. *Express*, which has been the least manly of all the opponents of the Administration, has wheeled into its support. As another evidence of the overwhelming unanimity of sentiment at the North, I take from the journal in question the following:

Not another gun, cannon, revolver or pound of powder should be permitted to go to the seceding States. The President of the United States, through his revenue officers, should instantly estop their exportations, and States should stop their inter-transit trade. *The port of Charleston ought to be instantly blockaded.* There may be no law for it, but South Carolina has put herself out of the protection of any law of ours. She does not respect us, and we cannot be expected to respect her.