## The London Times on the President's Message.

[From the London Times of December 19th.]

We have had in our time Royal speeches that were admirably ambiguous, but the message of President Buchanan certainly surpasses any of them. The document which, temporarily, at least, threatens the Republic, seems to have deprived the First Magistrate of the determination which belongs to his office, and to his individual character. The Constitution of the United States, as understood by the great body of citizens, entrusts very large powers to the statesman who is chosen President. He is invested with an authority far more extensive than that which belongs to an English Premier, and almost approaching in character to that of a Roman Dictator. He is elected by the delegates of every State to carry on the Federal executive for four years; in spite, possibly, of an opposing Congress, and in spite, too, of any subsequent change in popular opinion. No many and equally does not his vote on any bill he pleases. In foreign affairs he is almost supreme, for, though the Senate have a co-ordinate authority which there is no parallel in our system, yet their action is necessarily far less continuous and effective than that of the House of Commons. More than this, the President is expected to be a man of self-reliance, to have his own opinions, and to carry them boldly into practice.

Besides this, the Union, the personal character of the Presidents has had the greatest influence on the course of events; the acts of their terms of office are popularly and justly attributed to them; their maxims and dicta are constantly cited, and their line of policy, when the Federal Legislature is not restricted by his Cabinet would exhibit the features of every party in the State. We can well conceive, then, that the message of Mr. Buchanan has given dissatisfaction both to the Southerners and their opponents. Of the politicians who have held the office of President, Mr. Buchanan is known as somewhat of a lawyer, Mr. Buchanan is looked upon as possessing the most vigorous mind. He is one of the few eminent men who have in later times attained to the highest office in the Republic. He was always outspoken and uncompromising, and before his elevation might have been reckoned an extreme politician. One would expect that such a man would enunciate some clear doctrine, and take some decided course in a crisis like the present. When General Jackson was President, South Carolina pursued a particular game to which it seems to be now proceeding so successfully. Jackson brought the "Nullifiers" to reason by the threat of using the Federal forces against them. On the present occasion, either the South has no cause for dissatisfaction, or the North has not acted in the spirit of the Constitution. In either case the President, who is the Chief Magistrate and the sworn guardian of the Union, would seem bound to express his opinion boldly, and use all the means in his power to curb the head-strong and bring the unjust to a sense of their wrong-doing.

But the message is apparently an evasion of all responsibility. The President knows that his term of office is near its close, and he is determined to take no steps which can embarrass his successor, or give either party in the power of saying that he complicated matters, and made reconciliation impossible. Perhaps this course may be the wisest in the end. There are times when the most masterly policy is to do nothing, and Mr. Buchanan may be right in preferring non-intervention. But, though the policy of the President may prove worthy of his reputation, it is impossible to praise the document in which he propounds it. The message is not only vacillatory, but contradictory. Not only does it announce that the Executive is powerless to control either of the contending parties, and preserve the most cherished possession of the American people, but it at once charges the Southern States with a political crime, and declares that they may be justified in their conduct. It is, in fact, quite in character with the document to beg the question at issue. Mr. Buchanan, whose opinions are said to be strongly in favor of preserving the Union, and who may possibly have leant towards the use of force, has, we presume, been forced to adopt a milder tone by the remonstrances of his Southern advisers. It is well known that, at least, two of the Cabinet are extreme Southerners, and disposed to further secession, should the North persist in its Abolitionist legislation. After several days of lively debates, the message has been brought into its present form, and, as is usually the case, the emendations and corrections have left it weak in purpose, and almost contradictable in argument.

First we have a declaration of opinion in which the Governor of Georgia himself might agree. Why is it, asks Mr. Buchanan, that while the country is eminently prosperous in all its material interests, the Union, the source of these blessings, is threatened with destruction? The cause, he answers, is to be found in the long-continued and intemperate interference of the Northern people with the question of slavery at the South, which has given rise to servile insurrection, and inspired the slaves with vague notions of freedom.

In it says the President, "a deep-seated hostility to slavery exists in the North. What part of Schuylkill county is there? What are the names and residences of the witnesses in whose presence the assassin of Miss Bavor confessed the murder? Was the alleged confession made in the form of individual making it to his fellow, or was he under the influence of delirium? These are important questions; will your correspondent please answer them, or, if he knows his ignorance of the peculiarities to which I have referred? That Hallner was executed for the murder shortly after the delivery of the confession is true, and that he was innocent of the crime is believed by many. Was the confession recanted and hanged on, but at Pottsville, instead of Reading, and charged home with the murder referred to, as we say, Sir V, and has been

## The Resignation of Secretary Floyd.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT.

The following is the correspondence which passed between Secretary Floyd and the President on the occasion of the resignation of the former:

SECRETARY FLOYD TO THE PRESIDENT.

WAR DEPARTMENT, December 29, 1860.

SIR: On the morning of the 27th inst, I read the following paper to you in the presence of the Cabinet:

COUNCIL CHAMBER, EXECUTIVE MANSION.

SIR: It is evident now, from the action of the commander of Fort Moultrie, that the solemn pledges of the Government have been violated by Major Anderson. In my judgement but one remedy is now left us by which to vindicate our honor and prevent civil war. It is in vain now to hope for confidence on the part of the people of South Carolina in any further pledges as to the action of the military. One remedy is left, and that is to withdraw the garrison from the harbor of Charleston altogether. I hope the President will allow me to make that order at once. This order, in my judgment, can alone prevent bloodshed and civil war.

JOHN B. FLOYD.

I then considered the honor of the Administration pledged to maintain the troops in the position they occupied, for such had been the assurances given to the gentlemen of South Carolina who had a right to speak for her. South Carolina, on the other hand, gave reciprocal pledges that no force should be brought by them against the troops or against the property of the United States. The sole object of both parties in these reciprocal pledges was to prevent a collision and the effusion of blood, in the hope that some means might be found for a peaceful accommodation of the existing troubles, and the two Houses of Congress having both raised committees looking to that object. Thus affairs stood, until the action of Major Anderson, taken, unfortunately, while the commissioners were on their way to this capital on a peaceful mission, looking to a reliance of their errand, has complicated matters in the existing manner. Our refusal, or even delay, to place affairs back as they stood, under our agreement, invites a collision, and must inevitably inaugurate civil war. I cannot consent to be the agent of such calamity.

I deeply regret that I feel myself under the necessity of tendering to you my resignation as Secretary of War, because I can no longer hold it under my convictions of patriotism nor with honor, subjected as I am to a violation of solemn pledges and plighted faith.

With the highest personal regard,

I am most truly yours,

JOHN B. FLOYD.

To his Excellency the President of the United States.

THE PRESIDENT'S REPLY.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 31, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR: I have received and accepted your resignation of the office of Secretary of War, and not wishing to impose upon you the task of performing its more irksome duties, which you have so kindly offered to do, I have authorized Postmaster General Holt to administer the affairs of the Department until your successor shall be appointed. Yours, very respectfully,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

Hon. John B. Floyd.

## IMPORTATIONS.

(Reported for the Press.)

CHARLESTON—Steamship Keystone State, Marshman—8 bales cotton 23 sacks rice N P Murphy & Co; 40 bales cotton Wertz Jessup & Moore; 50 tes rice Alexander Heron, & Co; 1 bale mdse A Whilden & Son; 18 bales do Mackey McDowell; 41 do E Salmon; 40 do do Massey, Collins & Co; 43 do J & F Baltz; 70 do Engle & Wolfe.

PASSENGERS ARRIVED.

In steamship Keystone State, from Charleston—Mrs Hurst and child, Miss Harney, G P Kirk, J K Kirk, Jr, Mrs Kirk, F Adler, W H Chester, D N Morris, L Notting, C A Child, E Dale, John Burtzdale, R Barnard, Daniel Morris, J H S Poor, R Saunderson, D W Semmieer, H F Cassell, J Stevens, H Arnold, S A Beach, 18 Rail, E G Renssieer, C Helfrich, L H Acton, and thirty-three in the steerage.

PHILADELPHIA BOARD OF TRADE.

JOSEPH C. GRUSE,
EDMUND J. SOUDER, } COMMITTEE OF THE MONTH.
GEORGE L. BUZBY,

LETTER BAGS

*At the Merchants' Exchange, Philadelphia.*

Ship Clyde, Perry ..... London, soon
Ship Indigo, Cook ..... Liverpool, soon
Bark Lone Star, McNabb ..... Kingston, Jam, soon

## MARINE, INTELLIGENCE.

PORT OF PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 2, 1861.

SUN RISES ..... 7 22—SUN SETS ..... 4 58
HIGH WATER ..... 5 40

ARRIVED.

U S M steamship Keystone State, Marshman, 50 hours from Hatteras Inlet, with mdse and passengers to Alex Heron, Jr, & Co. Off the Capes, passed ship Philadelphia, from Liverpool in the Bay. Off the Breakwater, bound down; at the Ledge, ship Tonawanda, for Liverpool, going down in tow of tug America.

CLEARED.

Brig Abby Ellen, Gilmore, Boresaux, Twells & Co.

SAILED.

Bark Sea Eagle, Kenney, for Barbadoes, left at 9 A M yesterday, in tow of tug America.

MEMORANDA.

Steamship Europe, Moodie, from Boston for Liverpool, passed Cape Race 30th ult.

Steamship De Soto, Johnson, from New York, at Havana 27th ult, for New Orleans.

Ship Neptune, Sprague, from Callao Oct 10, via Honolulu, Nov 29, with guano, at New York 31st ult.

Ship Kutusoff, Stait, iron New York for San Francisco, was at Rio Janeiro Nov 15.

Ship Edward Cunard, Edwards, from Penang and Singapore, arrived at New York yesterday.

Bark Cordelia, Roberts, sailed from Turks Island Dec 12 for Philadelphia.

Bark Oglethorpe, Holmes, at Shields 16th ult, from Harlepool.

Bark Wm Reynolds, Hewitt, ——— ——— ———