A FIELD DAY IN THE HOUSE.

DEFALCATIONS IN THE ACCOUNTS OF GEN. O. O. HOWARD.

Debates on the Salary Bill and on the Condition of the Navy—A Lively Tilt Between Mr. Cox and Gen. Hawley—Four Millions Voted to Strengthen our Naval Force—The Salary Bill Recommitted.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 12.—In the House today the Senate bill removing political disabilities from Thomas S. Bocock, E. J. Harvey, and Daniel Trigg of Virginia, and John H. Reagan, of Texas, was taken from the table and passed.

Mr. Holman (Dem., Ind.) offered a resolution directing the Secretary of War to report whether any payments have been made by his Department to the Illinois Central Railroad Company for the transportation of troops or supplies of the United States since the 1st of January, 1866, and requiring like information as to other roads, in all of which land grants had been made. Adopted.

Mr. Duell (Rep., N. Y.) presented petitions from a large number of business men all over the country, for the repeal of the Bankrupt law. Referred.

Mr. Cox (Dem., N. Y.) presented a petition of the Grand Division of the Sons of Temperance of Eastern New York, representing 15,000 members, for a commission of inquiry concerning the use of the liquor traffic. Referred.

EXPLANATION IN GEN. HOWARD'S ACCOUNTS.

The Speaker laid before the House a communication from the Secretary of War calling attention to certain defalcations in the accounts of Gen. O. O. Howard, of the Freedmen's Bureau. At the request of Mr. Wood (Dem., N. Y.) the letter was read in extenso. It states that the defalcations were discovered in 1870, and states that the Secretary of War would say Gen. Howard tried a military court of inquiry were it not that most of the matters were barred by the statute of limitations.

At the conclusion of the reading Mr. Wood moved a resolution that the letter of the Secretary of War, with the accompanying reports relating to the defalcation, &c., of Gen. O. O. Howard, be referred to the Committee on Military Affairs, with instructions to report a resolution providing for the trial by military court-martial of Gen. Howard, if any of the alleged offenses of the army had not been barred therein.

SMOKING OFF INVESTIGATION.

Mr. Dawes (Rep., Mass.) moved to amend the resolution by striking out the clause relative to referring the letter of the Secretary of War to the Committee on Military Affairs, and by inserting in lieu thereof a clause referring the letter to the Committee on Ways and Means, with instructions to report a bill providing for the trial by military court-martial of Gen. Howard, if any of the alleged offenses of the army had not been barred therein.

Mr. Dawes said that he had not desired to shield Gen. Howard, but he objected to the resolution being adopted without any hearing. It seemed a fact that the defalcation of Gen. Howard, if any, had occurred and that there was no authority of law for it.

Mr. Blair (Dem., N. Y.) objected to debate.

The question was taken on Mr. Dawes's amendment, and it was agreed to, by yeas 124 to nays 14, as follows:

Mr. Dawes said that he had not desired to shield Gen. Howard, but he objected to the resolution being adopted without any hearing. It seems as a fact that the defalcation of Gen. Howard, if any, had occurred and that there was no authority of law for it.

SHIELDING THE DEFAULTER.

Mr. Dawes, Mr. Speaker, I do not know strong the proof may appear, it is sufficient for us to use the words charged defalcation.

Mr. Wood, the Secretary of War submitted these papers to the Attorney-General, and the Attorney-General gave his official opinion that Gen. Howard was liable to be tried by court-martial and should be satisfied, but that there were some technical difficulty owing to the lapse of time.

Mr. Dawes—All that may be, but the proper thing is for the Committee on Military Affairs to reach these facts. I move to insert the word "referred" before the word "defalcations."

Mr. Wood—It is a very small matter, and I will not detain the House with discussing it. It is enough for me to say that if that side of the House takes the responsibility of shielding this man it may do so.

Mr. Dawes—This side of the House will take the responsibility of doing right.

Mr. Wood—It has done so.

Mr. Dawes—But it will take the responsibility of passing judgment after conviction, not before.

The resolution, amended by inserting the word "referred" and striking out the instructions, was adopted.

THE SALARY BILL.

The House then resumed the consideration of the resolution in regard to salaries.

Mr. Nesmith (Dem., Oregon) said that he came to Congress instructed to vote for the repeal of the salary bill, but when he witnessed the attacks that had been made on the gentleman from New York (Mr. Cox) for having drawn pay from the date of his predecessor's death up to the date of his qualification, he was ashamed to vote to act, as he himself was in the same position.

Mr. Lamar (Dem., Miss.) defended the increased salary bill, and argued that the public cause against it had been produced partly by misrepresentation and partly by a misapprehension of the facts. He announced his intention, however, to vote for the bill reported by the Committee.

Mr. Hill (Dem., Ga.) regarded the question before the House as a very peculiar one. This bill was a direct attempt to compel members under a decide what his own compensation should be regardless of the will of the people.

AN IMPORTANT OMISSION.

Mr. Burchard (Rep., Ill.) thought that the pending motions to refer with instructions omitted an important point, that was as to when the bill should take effect, if it should be in force to apply. He said that numbers would not defeat themselves if they did not make the law to reflect from the commencement of the Congress.

Mr. Orth (Rep., Ind.) said he had offered this amendment, which was a thing over, because it was a matter of doubt whether there was a quorum present. It seemed to him that the House would never arrive at any conclusion. He thought that four propositions had been developed by public opinion—first, that the next congress should be elected; second, that the salary should never again be restored; third, that the franking privilege of members of Congress should never be restored, whatever else might be done in regard to distributing public documents; and fourth, that the salary of members should be substantially what it was when it was fixed last. At this he provided for the first three, and he hoped for the fourth.

Mr. Morrison (Rep., N. Y.) asked Mr. Orth whether his proposition made any provision for

GIVING BACK PAY INTO THE TREASURY.

Mr. Orth replied that it did not. He said that he was prepared to give no objection to let the law date back, but as a matter of compromise he thought it better to let the reduction commence with and after the passage of the law. He believed that that would meet with the approval of the people and would be in conformity with the previous history of Congress in that it would not reduce the salary of people were as low as it had. To a reduction of the direct salary as of that of members, but it could not be applied to that of the present term. He modified his proposition so as not to touch the salary of Supreme Court Judges. It would apply, however, to the salaries of the Cabinet. It applied to Senators, only to what were known as public officers.

Mr. Banks (Rep., Ind.) hoped the previous question would not be seconded. The discussion should be continued until the people were informed that the House understood it as well as he.

A CLEAN SWEEP DEMANDED.

Mr. Monroe (Rep., Ohio) said his position in regard to the salary bill was this. He believed that the true thing for the House to do was to repeal it completely and as thoroughly as it had passed it, and consistently with the Constitution the act of March 3, 1873. That was the object which he would like to accomplish if he could. He had disapproved the policy of raising salaries at that time and had voted against it. He was of the same opinion still. He hoped to see the law totally repealed. He thought that was the simplest course, the right course and the course which would best satisfy the country. Such being his conviction, he should vote against the motion to refer.

MR. BURCHARD'S PROPOSITION.

The House now came to a vote on the two pending propositions. The first was that offered by Mr. Burchard (Rep., Ill.) to recommit the bill with instructions to strike out the second and third sections and substitute for them the following:

"That from and after the passage of this act the compensation of Senators, Representatives and Delegates in Congress shall be at the rate of $5,000 per annum, payable quarterly, and in addition thereto the actual individual mileage of Senators, Representatives, and Delegates in Congress, to be ascertained and reported at the first session of each Congress, and reported in writing by each Senator, Representative, and Delegate.

"That the compensation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall be $12,000 in addition to his salary as a Representative, including his mileage, and of the Vice-President the same amount with the allowance for traveling expenses as herein provided.

"That all laws and parts of laws inconsistent with the provisions of this act are hereby repealed."

MR. ORTH'S SUBSTITUTE.

For these instructions Mr. Orth (Rep., Ind.) offered a substitute as follows:

"That the select committee report a bill repealing the salary act so far as the same can be done under the Constitution, excepting the judges of the supreme court, and ascertain the average amount of salary, mileage, and all other allowances exclusive of any credit for the use of the franking privilege paid to Senators, members, delegates, and delegates in the forty-first Congress, and report a bill determining the compensation of Senators, Representatives, and Delegates in the forty-third Congress hereafter at the amount as near as practicable to ascertained with the necessary traveling expenses, and restoring all other salaries as they were before the passage of that act.

THE BILL RECOMMITTED.

The previous question was seconded, 132 to 12½, and the main question was ordered.

The question was first taken on substituting Mr. Orth's proposition, and it was adopted without the yeas and nays. So the bill was recommitted to the special committee with the instructions proposed by Mr. Orth, and it was agreed that when the bill shall be reported back it will be considered under the five-minute rule.

The House then went into Committee of the Whole, Mr. Tyner (Rep., Ind.) in the chair, and took up the bill appropriating $4,000,000 for

EXTRAORDINARY EXPENSES OF THE NAVY.

In the course of a discussion Mr. Cox (Dem., N. Y.) said that there was not fight enough in the House to kill a mouse. That had been proved the other day on the belligerency question. The diplomacy of the Government was not up to the popular sentiment. The flag of the country had been draggled in the dust through our diplomacy. One thing, however, was certain, and that was that the navy ought to be better and stronger than it was. The city of New York to-day was at the mercy of any of the European iron-clads that might choose to enter that harbor. It could close up the business and destroy the property of that city. By some peculiar refinement of naval architecture and naval warfare that city was to-day at the mercy of even so mean and contemptible a power as Spain.

Mr. Kellogg (Rep., Conn.)—Is it a good time, then, for going to war? [Laughter.]

A LITTLE OF THE OLD SPIRIT WANTED.

Mr. Cox—I am not speaking of going to war. I am speaking of the inadequacy of the navy, irrespective of our diplomacy. When we get all our diplomacy published we may have an opportunity to understand the business. We will find that the Administration has not come up to the sentiment of the people. There is no question of the fact that the House is pusillanimous before all the world. On the old principle that the flag of the country covers the ship, we have not shown the first scintilla of the patriotic spirit; but I will vote at all times to strengthen the navy from other considerations. Even if we had the pluck we have not got the guns to go inside the harbor of Santiago de Cuba and take the Virginius thence. We want a stronger navy—a better spirit—a little of the old spirit which belonged to the country in the better days of the republic.

MR. HALE'S REPLY.

Mr. Hale (Rep., Me.) said it was gratifying to witness the conversion of the gentleman from New York (Mr. Cox). He had in his memory the constant attacks made by that gentleman hitherto on all the naval appropriation bills. He congratulated the House and the country that that gentleman was to-day in favor of good and fair, liberal and noble appropriations, but there was a monstrous inconsistency in the gentleman's cry for war. He had started out by declaring that the House was pusillanimous, that the Administration was lacking in proper sentiment, and that if it had been guided by a better spirit it would have proceeded to take the Virginius out of the harbor of Santiago de Cuba and bring her into American waters. At the same time that he (Cox) was thus urging and hounding on to war, he had said what was not in accordance with the facts, but which was all the more inconsistent in him. He said that a single Spanish frigate could blockade our ports, could bombard our towns, and could burn down million's and millions of property. If that is so, is he believes it is so, what is the sense of his unfettered cry for war? Sir, the best thing about the Appropriation bill and the conduct of the Secretary of the Navy in this emergency is that all its naval preparation is an argument not for war but for peace. To be well prepared in an emergency, and to slow to the world that we will not rush to it, if such is put upon us, is the best protection against insult.

GEN. HAWLEY INDIGNANT.

Mr. Hawley (Rep., Conn.) said that he had listened with indignant start to the remarks of the gentleman from New York (Mr. Cox), who had dared to tell the House that it was pusillanimous and had not energy enough to kill a mouse, and that the flag of the country had been draggled in the dust. He had no admiration for that cheap sort of bravery; but he would resort to any remarks that would be most galling to men who had seen fit to ask that gentleman why, when there was a grand country a few years back to plunge into a fight on the one side or the other, and it was not material on which side, he had not gone in? Did that gentleman know what war is? Had he ever seen cannon balls go through men by his side, and had he seen men mangled and utterly disfigured around him? Did he know what war was? If he did, why had he got up here and ranted as he had done? I say, continued Mr. Hawley, that a man is guilty before God and his country who dares stand here and trifle with this great question of peace and who does not know what war is, or, if he does, then at the time the more guilty. I knew a man once who was extremely anxious to get into one of these little fights. The war had been progressing about a year and a half, and he had been assigned to fancy duty at some staff post, and complained that he never saw a fight. We started an expedition, and gave this gallant Colonel the command of it. He came suddenly upon the enemy, and the Confederates opened

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THE VIRGINIUS MASSACRE.

Mr. Myers (Rep., Pa.) said that when the Secretary of the Navy urged upon Congress that our navy should be made ready to meet any duty, some gentlemen contended that it was strong enough, and that no emergency was likely to call for adding to its efficiency. He suddenly that emergency came, and all Mr. Cox had to prove a lesson for the future. The massacre of the Virginius's passengers naturally aroused the indignation of the American people. It was done in defiance of the law of nations and of civilization, in violation of our treaty with Spain, and with a haste and disregard of the proceedings of our courts utterly unjustifiable. Not only was the Virginius an American vessel, properly registered and cleared, flying the American flag, unrestedly and illegally captured on the high seas, beyond the jurisdiction of Spain, but the seizure of the telegram sent by Gen. Sickles to Secretary Fish, stating that it was the property of the Vice-President the same amount with an allowance for traveling expenses as herein provided.

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LIFE IN THE METROPOLIS.

DASHES HERE AND THERE BY THE SUN'S REPORTERS.

Another Distinguished Physician Gone.

The funeral services over the remains of Dr. William C. Roberts, Vice-President of the New York Academy of Medicine, were performed yesterday morning in St. Mark's Church, Second avenue and Tenth street. The Rev. Dr. J. H. Bylanee officiated. The pall bearers were Drs. N. G. Griffin, H. M. Smith, Samuel L. Purple, William H. Price, Timothy H. Cheesman, Abraham De Boise, and Samuel Hall. The coffin was covered by black cloth, and ornamented with six heavy silver handles and a plate with the words: "William Corrie Roberts, born 1809, died Dec. 9, 1873." Among the mourners were Austin Flint, President of the Academy of Medicine, and fifty associate members; H. G. Stebbins and Salem H. Wales, Commissioners of Parks; Dr. Elisha Harris and Mr. Hamilton Fish. The quartette choir sang, "I would not live always," after which the Episcopal burial service was read. There followed an eloquent eulogy by the pastor, after which a last opportunity was given to look at the remains before their interment at Flushing, Long Island.

Dr. Roberts was for forty years a practising physician of this city. He was born in London, and came to this country when fourteen years of age. He studied and began the practice of medicine under Dr. Valentine Mott. He was a graduate of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. He was an enthusiastic worker in his profession, particularly in obstetrical science, which he made a special study. He continued his practice up to within a week of his death. He was at one time editor of a medical periodical, *The Analyst*, which was unsparing in its denunciation of all kinds of quackery. At the age of twenty-five Dr. Roberts married Matilda, daughter of the Hon. Martin Hoffman, and niece of the Matilda Hoffman of whom Washington Irving was an admirer. At the time of his death Dr. Roberts was surgeon to the Central Park Police. On Wednesday of last week he made an official visit to the Park, but soon returned, complaining of pains in the heart. He lingered until Tuesday.

The Britton Investigation.

District Attorney Britton was cross-examined yesterday by Judge Morris on the charge of neglecting to prosecute the men implicated in the election frauds of 1871. The only apparent effect was to bring on a war of words between Mr. Britton and the counsel, Gen. Tracy, on the one side, and Judge Morris and Col. Davis on the other. Mr. Britton, when asked why he had not employed counsel in the prosecution of the election frauds when it was offered by the Committee of Seventy-five, answered that he supposed Col. Davis was meant, and he did not deem him a proper person to give aid, as the Colonel had sold out the Committee of Seventy-five, and on certain occasions was intoxicated. Then Col. Davis rose and expostulated, and Mr. Britton was requested by the Judge to confine his remarks to the point. Mr. Britton admitted that the case of Campbell, the police clerk in the First District, who was accused of putting five hundred fictitious names in the poll list, was dropped because the Supreme Court had decided such poll lists had been destroyed, and he had not thought the third of enough importance to warrant the prosecution, especially as Campbell was for a long time sick with small pox. He supposed Judge Morris had exhausted the case.

Gen. Tracy—It gave Campbell the small pox to see Judge Morris coming for him.

Mr. Britton—If that tried Campbell he had run away as soon as he learned that an indictment had been found against him. Assistant District Attorney E. M. Cullen said that he was not tried because the evidence was not sufficient to convict private detectives, and he was directed by Mr. Britton's chief clerk, said that bench warrants had been issued for the arrest of the men named in three similar