Richmond Dispatch.

BY COWARDIN & HAMMERSLEY.

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MONDAY MORNING.....JAN. 7 1861.

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THE NATIONAL CRISIS.

Commander Stewart on Secession—Taking of the Georgia Forts—Views of the Governor of Missouri—Daylight Breaking—The Evacuation of Fort Moultrie—Meetings in Virginia—Fortifications of the Southern States, &c., &c.

Commander Charles Stewart, U. S. N., of the Philadelphia Navy-Yard, has written a letter against secession, and in favor of the North repealing her Liberty bills.

Hon. Waitman T. Willey, of Monongalia county, candidate of the Opposition party in Virginia for Lieutenant Governor in 1859, has written a letter opposing disunion. He alludes to the position of Western Virginia in that event, and adds:

"I am for Virginia as she is and was, as our fathers created her—one and indivisible. I have deprecated recent manifestations of a desire for her dismemberment. Let her be integral forever. But if we are to be dragged into secession or disunion, because a mere outside appendage of a Southern Confederacy, defenceless and exposed as we must be by our geographical position, to all the wrong and contumely that may be heaped upon us, our oppression may become intolerable; and I, for one, will be ready to accept the only alternative."

The Richland Volunteers, numbering 100 men, and the Darlington Guards, numbering 50 men, arrived in Charleston on Thursday, and were detailed for duty.

TAKING OF THE GEORGIA FORTS—CAPTURE AND SURRENDER OF THE REVENUE CUTTER DOBBIN.

The Savannah News, of Friday morning gives the following particulars of the occupation of the Georgia forts by State troops. It gives Maj. Anderson's movement and the failure of the President to remand him, as the cause which induced the Governor to take the step:

At eight o'clock yesterday morning, the steamer Sampson left with the detachments allotted to elsewhere in this morning's paper, for Fort Pulaski, Col. Henry R. Jackson, and to the Governor, accompanied by Maj. H. M. Davenport, had preceded these companies, and had demanded of Mr. Thomas Hennessy keeper of the Fort, the keys, which he, having no power to resist, promptly delivered to the authorized agent of the Governor of Georgia. When the boat reached the landing on Cockspur Island the troops were debarked and marched to the Fort, which was taken possession of, in pursuance of orders of the Governor of the State, by Col. A. R. Lawton, commanding officer.

On the passage down, the Sampson passed the revenue cutter J. C. Dobbin, with the United States colors Union down, and the Palmetto flag flying at her peak.

Shortly after the arrival of the steamer at Cockspur, a party of gentlemen presented themselves at the Fort, and made a tender to Col. Lawton of the Cutter, which they had captured, and which was then aground. Col. Lawton, not recognizing the unlawful capture of the Dobbin, authorized Capt. Scriven, of the Savannah Volunteer Guards, to take possession of her in the name of the State of Georgia, with instructions to turn her over to the Governor, which he did.

The occupation of Fort Pulaski, by authority of the Governor of the State, was a prudential measure, designed to guard against the commission of any lawless act by an exasperated people, and at the same time to prevent its occupancy by forces hostile to us, and it will be sustained by our people to any amount of reinforcements necessary to hold it against attack from any quarter.

The cutter Dobbin, it appears, had been taken possession of without any State authority whatever, and on application of Mr. Boston, Collector of the port, for her release, Gov. Brown promptly granted it, in the following letter:

SIR: The Revenue Cutter J. C. Dobbin, which was seized by some unauthorized person or persons unknown to me, has, under the order given by me to C. I. Lawton, now in command of Fort Pulaski, to protect Government property against injury, been recaptured, and is now aground near Fort Pulaski. You will please send a revenue officer and have her put into your custody to-night, and I will have her hauled off to-morrow morning and delivered to you at such place as you may designate. I much regret the lawless seizure of the vessel, and beg leave to assure you that I shall from time to time give such orders as will protect the Custom-House and other property belonging to the Federal Government till the action of this State is determined by the Convention of her people.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF GOV. JACKSON, OF MISSOURI.

ST. LOUIS, Jan. 4—Governor Jackson's inaugural address was almost exclusively devoted to the discussion of Federal relations.—He says the destiny of the slaveholding States are identical, and Missouri would best consult her own interests and the interests of the whole country by a timely declaration of her determination to stand by her sister slaveholding States, in whose wrongs she participates and with whose institutions her people sympathize.

Missouri will remain in the Union so long as there is a hope of maintaining the guarantees of the Constitution; but if the Northern States are determined to put the slaveholding States on the footing of inequality, by preventing the entrance of slaves into the Territories; admitting no more slave States; or persisting in nullifying or perverting the Constitution in reference to slave property, then they themselves practically abandon the Union, and cannot expect the South to submit to such a Government.

He opposes coercion, and says the project of maintaining the Government by force may lead to a consolidated despotism, but never to Union. Our Government is based upon justice, equality—and the first drop of blood shed in a war of aggression upon Sovereign States will result in the overthrow of the entire Federal system. He says he has not abandoned all hope of the preservation of the Union, and he believed that, by prudence and well-directed efforts, an adjustment alike honorable to both sections can be effected. He is opposed to congressional conventions, and says the South can rely only upon constitutional guaranties, and, to effect this end, he advises the calling of a Southern Convention to agree upon such amendments of the Constitution as would secure her just rights, and submit them to the Northern States for their action. He advises the calling of a State Convention to ascertain the will of the people on the subject; and also advises a thorough organization of the State militia to repel invasion and protect property and the lives of citizens. He recommends the legalization of the suspension of specie payments by the banks.

DAYLIGHT BREAKING.

Under the head of "Daylight Breaking," the Washington Star, of Saturday afternoon, says:

The Committee on the part of the border States, Mr. Crittenden, chairman, held its second meeting last night, and at 12 o'clock adopted the following propositions:

Recommending a repeal of all Personal Liberty bills.

An efficient amending of the fugitive slave law, preventing kidnapping, equalizing commissioner's fees, &c.

That the Constitution be so amended as to prohibit any interference with slavery in any of the States.

That Congress shall not abolish slavery in the dock-yards, &c., nor in the District of Columbia, without consent of Maryland, and the consent of the inhabitants of the District, nor without compensation.

That Congress shall not interfere with the inter-State slave trade.

That there shall be a perpetual prohibition of the African slave trade.

That the line of 36 30 shall be run through all the existing territory of the United States, and in all north of that line slavery shall be prohibited; south of that line neither Congress nor territorial Legislature shall hereafter pass any law abolishing, prohibiting, or in any manner interfering with African slavery; and when any Territory containing sufficient population for one member of Congress in any area of 60 000 square miles shall apply for admission as a State, it shall be admitted with or without slavery as its Constitution may determine.

The Committee represented at its meeting Maryland, Virginia, Missouri, North Carolina, Texas, Kentucky, Ohio, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Delaware, Arkansas, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

This report was agreed to under circumstances leading to the hope that it will be accepted by overwhelming majorities of all the parties into which Congress is divided.

MORE SEIZURES OF FORTS.

The progress of the disintegration of the Union by the movements in the Southern States is both steady and rapid. The United States forts and arsenals are being taken possession of by State troops in most of the States, which thus anticipate the period of their own secession. The following is a telegram from Mobile, Friday:

The United States arsenal and forts at Mobile, on the 4th, were taken by the Alabama troops.

The forts contained 75 000 stand of arms, 1,500 boxes of powder, 300,000 rounds of musket cartridges, and other munitions of war.

No resistance was made by those in charge of the forts and arsenals.

Fort Morgan was taken the night before, and is now garrisoned by 200 men.

On the same day 150 men took possession of the U. S. Arsenal at Mt. Vernon, Ala., by order of the Governor.

A MEETING OF "MINUTE" LADIES.

A meeting of "matrons" took place in Burke county, Ga., on the 24th ult. As it is seldom an opportunity is given of recording the proceedings of the ladies in council, we give the following account of the meeting:

After a short conversational preliminary, defining the mode of procedure, the assembly was organized by conferring the honor of the chair upon Mrs. Margaret Jones, and associating as Vice Presidents, Mrs. Charlotte Byne, Mrs. Jane Holmes, Mrs. Mary Mandell and Mrs. Col. I. Carter, and as Secretary, Mrs. Col. Ashton.

The object of the meeting was announced with much effect, and after a calm deliberation of the dark crisis now pending, Mrs. James W. Jones presented the following preamble and resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

While our liege lords are gallantly bearing the ensigns of our Father's Patriotism and Southern nationality in our protection, and in the defence of their honor, we ask only the privilege of tendering a testimonial of their chivalry, by being permitted to weave our Southern devotion in the coronet of their many glory.

Heroism and love of country, in the darkest eras of man's humiliation, and in the proudest periods of his sublimest grandeur, has ever been one of woman's life-breathing virtues.

Therefore, we need advance no argument in justification of this appeal to our noble hearted Southern sisters; but here direct their admiration to the annals of every history, which teem with the illustrious examples of woman's heroism and her devotion to principle and to country, worthy our imitation in this portentous crisis of our political history.

Though assigned a retired part in the great drama of human life, yet our interest and our honor are identified with the welfare and prosperity of the Commonwealth. We therefore beseech you, by your pride and affection, by your counsel and encouragement, to cheer our husbands, brothers and sons to noble and patriotic deeds. Anathematize with a woman's scorn the hesitancy of timidity and the sumerfuge of cowardice; declare that Southern women cannot forget the proud history of their section, nor will forget the grandeur of its origin, or be blind to the splendid of its destiny.

Resolved, That we earnestly and confidently importune our sisters of the Southern states to league with us in excluding from our sympathies and affections every person so lost to the pride of birthright and the integrity of State, as to countenance the act, or even connive at the idea, of submission to Northern aggression and insult.

Resolved, That our honor, our interest and our social position, demand immediate secession from the abolition States of this demoralized and debased Union.

Resolved, That Southern women will never consent to mingle with a people whose standard of religious and social sentiment is below the basis of chivalry, virtue and Christianity, and whose tastes, whose sympathies, whose education and whose associations are discordant with every grace which adorns our sex!

A committee of young ladies presented the following, which was adopted:

Resolved, That we, the young ladies of Burke, do reject, with haughty scorn and proud disdain, all civilities from any gentleman who refuses or neglects to join the ranks of any Southern State that shall, in her sovereign capacity, withdraw her allegiance from this unconstitutional Confederacy; holding it to be self-evident that a dastard's glove can never win a woman's love, nor defend her honor.

The following was presented by Mrs. Col. I. Carter, and received with a joyous outburst of applause:

Resolved, That the ladies of Burke county do render their warmest sympathies and pledge their love and devotion to the proud, gallant, chivalrous and "Free People" of South Carolina, for the fearless and heroic act of December 20th, 1860, which has opened a page in the history of human greatness that the pride of man shall herald through all time, and woman's noblest and noblest affections embalm for all eternity.

COUNTY MEETINGS IN VIRGINIA.

At a meeting at Madison Court-House last week, $700 were subscribed to purchase arms, and among the other resolutions the following were adopted:

That it is the duty of Virginia, in view of the danger that threatens her, forthwith to dissolve her connection with the existing Federal Government, and assume the position of an independent State.

That she should immediately thereafter invite every slaveholding State to co-operate with her in the formation of a Southern Confederacy prior to the 4th of March next.

That each State upon assuming the position of a separate, independent, sovereign State, is entitled to her due share of the public property, including the Territories of the United States, and is justly liable for her proportion of the public debt; and if not done before, immediately after the formation of a Southern Confederacy, these rights should be demanded, and if not yielded, should be enforced; and the obligation to pay the proper share of the public debt assumed.

At a meeting in Marion county last week, resolutions were adopted favoring the call of a Convention, and—

That as Virginians, we hold to the institutions of Virginia, and are determined to perpetuate and defend the same until all constitutional measures shall be exhausted, then we claim the privilege of adopting our own manner of redress.

That this meeting recommend to the Legislature of the State of Virginia to make no appropriations towards bearing the expenses of Northern or Southern delegates who may be sent to us to incense the feelings of our fellow citizens against conservative measures.

THE EVACUATION OF FORT MOULTRIE.

A letter from one of the officers of Major Anderson's command thus describes leaving Fort Moultrie:

Major Anderson took one of his officers aside about six P. M. on the 26th, and told him in about twenty minutes he should make the attempt to reach Fort Sumter. The attempt was a dangerous one. Two steamboats lay off the fort with troops and guns, and these boats would have run him down in a moment, had they been aware of the movement. Major Anderson left orders to fire into the Nina steamboat if she molested his men, and a 32-pounder was loaded up for that purpose.—Fort Moultrie is always surrounded by paid spies and members of the vigilance committee, but they did not interfere, and probably did not understand what the command was doing. The troops sprang into the boats and the men pulled with a will. Half way the hostile steamboat approached rapidly with a ship in tow. It was a glorious moonlight night, and very clear. The steamboat passed within a hundred yards, but probably took the boats to contain workmen returning from Fort Sumter. Sumter was reached at last in safety.—An exclamation of surprise came from the bricklayers on the wharf. One of them shouted "Hurrah for the Union." He was hurried in and made to keep quiet. In the meantime, the officers who remained in Fort Moultrie held the lanyards of the guns in their hands ready to fire upon the steamboat, if it molested the boats. The boats were sent back. The remainder of the command embarked and reached Sumter in safety, though one boat passed almost under the bow of the Nina.

THE GOVERNOR OF MICHIGAN ADVOCATING COERCION.

DETROIT, Jan 4—Gov. Blair, in his inaugural address, says in reference to South Carolina, that he presumes, if it could be done properly, the country generally would be willing to let the restless little nation of South Carolina retire forever. But it cannot be done without the destruction of the Confederacy, and self-preservation will compel us to *resist* it.

He denies that the Personal Liberty bills have prevented the execution of the Fugitive Slave law in a single instance. The law had always been enforced by the Courts on an appeal being taken. He invites judicial scrutiny into State legislation—and is willing to abide the result. But he is unwilling that his State should be humiliated by a compliance in threats and of violence and war.

He recommends the State Legislature to manifest its loyalty to Michigan, and proffer the President the use of the whole military power of the State to sustain the integrity of the Union.

MORE EXECUTIONS IN ALABAMA.

The Montgomery (Ala.) Advertiser, of the 30th ult., says:

Two negroes, and a white man named Williamson, were hung at Autaugaville on Wednesday of last week. Also, at the same place, on the following Saturday, another negro was sent to that "bourne from whence," &c. All these unfortunate human beings were connected with the recent insurrectionary plot discovered in that county, and the evidence being strong against them, their lives have had to pay the forfeit. Those who belong to the vigilance committee of Autaugaville, we understand, are the oldest and most respectable, as well as the coolest and most humane men of the county, and would not have committed any act which the circumstances of the case did not imperatively demand.

FROM FLORIDA.

The Fernandina Floridian, of the 2d inst., says that the entire vote of the city (223,) was cast for Joseph Finegan and Gen Cooper, "the straight-out, immediate, anti-compromise, now and forever secession candidate." Gov. Perry had passed through en route for his home in Alabama, having purchased in his late trip to the North 1,000 Maynard rifles, and 5,000 Minnie muskets, for the use of the State.

A plan is on foot to take possession of Fort Clinch, in the vicinity of Fernandina, and arm it with guns from the fort at St. Augustine.

COMMODORE KEARNEY WILL NOT RESIGN.

Commodore Kearney, second on the Naval list, who sent in his resignation a few days since, has revoked it. In a private letter he says:

"Since the course pursued by Charlestonians, I have changed my views in regard to matters in that quarter and elsewhere, and I have asked to be allowed to withdraw my letter of resignation in the Navy."

FORTIFICATIONS IN THE SOUTHERN STATES.

Subjoined is a list of fortifications, taken from Col. Totten's report made to Congress a few years ago, giving the cost of each and the number of guns they severally mount:

Table of Navy-Yards and Principal Forts South of Mason and Dixon's Line, showing the Position, Cost and Strength of Each:

WHERE LOCATED.	Cost.	Men	Pat. Guns
Fort McHenry, Baltimore	$146 000	350	74
*Fort Carroll, Baltimore	135 000	800	159
Fort Delaware, Delaware river, Del.	539,000	750	151
Fort Madison, Annapolis, Md.	16 000	150	31
Fort Severn, Maryland	6 000	60	14
Fort Washington, Potomac river	575,000	400	88
Fort Monroe, Old Point Comfort	2 460,000	2,450	371
Fort Calhoun, Hmp'n R'ds, Norfolk	1,664 000	1 120	274
Fort Macon, Beaufort, N. C.	460 000	300	61
Fort Johnson, Cape Fear, Wilmington, N. C.	5 000	60	10
Fort Caswell, Oak Island, N. C	571 000	400	81
Fort Sumter, Charleston, S C	677 000	653	145
Castle Pinckney, do. do	45 000	100	25
Fort Moultrie, do. do	75 000	300	54
Fort Pulaski, Savannah, Ga	923 000	800	150
Fort Jackson, do. do	80 000	70	14
Fort Marion, St. Augustine, Fla.	51,000	100	25
Fort Taylor, Key West	.....	1 000	185
Fort Jefferson, Tortugas	.....	1 500	298
Fort Barancas, Pensacola	315 000	250	49
Redoubt, Pensacola	89 000		26
Fort Pickens, Pensacola	759 000	1,200	212
Fort McRee, Pensacola	384 000	650	151
Fort Morgan, Mobile	1,212,000	700	132
Fort St. Philip, Mouth Mississippi river	143 000	600	124
Fort Jackson, Mouth Mississippi river	817 000	600	150
Fort Pike, Rigolets, La	472 000	300	49
Fort Macomb, Chef Menteur, La	447,000	300	49
Fort Livingston, Barataria Bay, La	342 000	300	52

* Incomplete.

In addition to these are incomplete works at Ship Island, Mississippi river; Georgetown, S. C; Port Royal Roads, S C; Types Islands, Savannah; Galveston, Brazos, Santiago, and Matagorda Bay, Texas. The guns which were lately stopped at Pittsburg, were designed for those at Galveston and Ship Island.

Hampton Roads is the great naval depot station and rendezvous of the Southern coasts.

Pensacola is very strong, and the only good harbor for vessels-of-war, and the only naval depot on the Gulf. The fortresses at Key West and Tortugas, on the southern point of Florida, are among the most powerful in the world, and every vessel that crosses the Gulf passes within sight of both.

MILITARY AND NAVAL FORCES READY FOR ORDERS.

Now that rumor is so busy with the alleged movements southward of United States troops and naval vessels, it may not be out of place to give a statement of the forces likely to be ordered for hostile service in South Carolina. If soldiers be required, Governor's Island, N. Y., Carlisle, Pa., and the Navy-Yards will be the first places from which reinforcements may be taken. The 500 troops stationed at Fort Monroe, Fayetteville, N. C., Augusta, Key West, Barancas and Baton Rouge, would not be removed. The available men, then, for military duty are nearly as follows:

	Men.
Governor's Island	250
Carlisle	200
Brooklyn Navy Yard	40
Philadelphia Navy-Yard	30
Boston Navy-Yard	40
Portsmouth (N. H.) Navy-Yard	20
Total	580

West Point, Fort Hamilton, Fort Adams and Fort Independence could also spare some men, but the above list includes only those who might be sent away at once, without seriously interfering with the routine duty of the Northern stations.

Relative to the navy, very erroneous impressions prevailed as to what vessels would first be called on. The Brooklyn, Macedonian, and Dolphin, regular men-of-war, are, to be sure, in commission, and manned, but only the latter, we believe, could enter Charleston, in the harbor of which there are only thirteen feet of water, as the Brooklyn, fitted out, cannot float in less than sixteen feet at the least, while the Macedonian requires twenty.

From this fact it would seem that the announcement of these ships being ordered in readiness was premature. There are, however, sufficient craft at the different yards, of the requisite draft, to form a somewhat formidable fleet. We subjoin a list of them.

Vessels.	Guns.	Officers and Men.	Tons
Brig Dolphin	6	100	259
Harriet Lane	5	90	about 310
Steamer Water Witch	2	60	about 378
Steamer Crawford	2	50	about 240
Steamer Crusader	4	110	about 400
Steamer Wyandotte	4	100	about 380
Total	23	510	1 757

We have included the Crusader and Wyandotte, of the Home Squadron, because they are now at Pensacola, where they have just undergone an overhauling, and a pretty reliable correspondent informs us that they are not to return to their stations immediately. The Mohawk, also, is "in and out" at Key West every day or two, and like her sister gun-boats, could be ordered, in an hour, by telegraph, to any given place. Naval vessels drawing over fourteen feet of water, to the number of a dozen, perhaps, are susceptible of speedy equipment; but, as already stated, we mention only those actually ready.—*N. Y. Times.*

HONORS TO MAJOR ANDERSON AND SECRETARIES HOLT AND STANTON.

SENECA FALLS, Jan. 3.—Seneca Falls is firing a hundred guns in honor of Major Anderson, of Fort Sumter, and Secretaries Holt and Stanton, for their gallant and patriotic services in the cause of Liberty and the Union.

WAVERLEY, N. Y., Jan 3.—One hundred guns were fired here yesterday in honor of Major Anderson. A large banner was displayed across the street with the inscription: "For President in 1861, Major Anderson."—A company of Minute Men was organized by the people, regardless of party.

BOSTON, Jan. 3.—Gov. Banks presided at a dinner of Cadets last night, and made an eloquent speech, closing with the following sentiment:

"The gallant Major Anderson, of Fort Sumter: May the people give him the honor he deserves and God give the United States Government courage to back him."

Other speeches and sentiments were given, and the festival was one of universal interest and enthusiasm.

REVOLTING ASSASSINATION IN KENTUCKY.—*Three Persons Murdered in Cold Blood.*—From the Louisville papers of Wednesday, we learn the particulars of three horrible murders perpetrated in the vicinity of that city, Monday night, which are scarcely paralleled in the history of the "Dark and Bloody Ground."—The Journal says:

Three persons—Jesse, William and Russell Hill—were assassinated at their homes, in the vicinity of Lost Island, six or seven miles from this city, on Monday night last. The assassins, supposed to have been five or six in number, committed the first deed of murder at the residence of Wm. Hill, the first attack having been made upon Jesse Hill, whose body was literally riddled with bullets; and to make the assurance of the murder doubly sure, the corpse was horribly cut and mutilated with a knife. An attack was then made upon Wm. Hill, who was in bed at the time with an invalid wife, and he, too, was mercilessly murdered at his wife's side. The party then repaired to the residence of Russell Hill, in the same vicinity, and succeeded, after considerable maneuvering, in getting him into their power, and he, too, was sacrificed to the rapacious appetite for blood. Wm. Hill was thirty-three years of age, and left a family.—Russell Hill, a brother of Wm Hill, was about twenty-five years of age, and also left a wife and child. Jesse Hill, the first victim, was a single man, about twenty-two years old, and a cousin to William and Russell Hill.

It is generally known that a feud has existed for some time between the Hills and certain other persons in the neighborhood, and that there had been more than one hostile meeting recently between the parties. It is presumed that the terrible tragedy of Monday night is the sequel to former troubles, and individuals connected with the recent affrays in the vicinity are supposed to have been active participants in the horrid tragedy detailed above. Last evening Jefferson Rogers and Hercules Walker, the latter a city policeman, were taken into custody, on the charge of complicity in the murders. Others are implicated in the affair, and will no doubt be arrested.

ROMANCE OF A DEATH-BED.—In East Boston, recently, a dying maiden of twenty was married to her betrothed. Before her dissolution she said that she had only one earthly wish ungratified—she desired to be united to him who had loved her so long and truly, and the hope of being his in Heaven. He could deny her nothing—he married death! Bolstered up by pillows, and supported in the embrace of her mother, she was united to her lover. Her feeble voice was hardly audible in responding to the questions of the marriage ceremony. She was his, and said she would die without regret. From then until she passed away, she was unable to speak above a whisper.

Letter from Col. F. H. Smith to a Friend, on the Questions of the Day.

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE, December 13th, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR: When the correspondent of the Richmond *Dispatch* represented me as favoring a "Southern Confederacy," he was as unjust to me as I think he was to Major Preston when he stated that that gentleman expressed his "satisfaction with the Union as it is." My position may be enunciated in two general propositions:

1. I not only prefer, but am most earnestly *anxious*, to preserve and perpetuate the *Constitutional Union* under which we live.

2. I am no less determined to vindicate the constitutional rights, and to preserve inviolate the honor and character of my beloved mother Commonwealth—Virginia.

The two propositions, though seemingly paradoxical, are perfectly consistent, and are based upon the fundamental principles which underlie our Federal Union.

No constitutional right of a single State can be trampled upon by the Federal Government, or by one of the States which compose it, without impairing the Union itself. Its security, peace and perpetuity, are all involved in the jealous vigilance with which each separate State guards its constitutional rights; while submission to oppression and wrong would not only enslave the State upon which they were visited, but impair the honor and safety of the Union to which she belongs.

I am sure you fully endorse both propositions, and are the last person in Virginia who would repudiate either.

How, now, shall we practically apply them in the present crisis! Here many of us differ, and we differ, too, from day to day; for, what seemed to be the best course yesterday, (so rapidly does the current of public affairs culminate,) would not do to-day.

There is no question between us of the South in reference to the bill of grievances.

Our constitutional compact has not only been violated in letter, but in spirit; and we find those who have been the chief agents in the work of violation now riding into power and taking possession of the Federal Government, that they may, by the forms of the Constitution, still further trample upon our constitutional rights. Here we are all agreed.—We have been wronged.—grievously so.

Shall we submit? Never; no, never! We would be unworthy of our fathers, who counted not the cost, but freely pledged life, fortune and honor, rather than submit to wrong—to oppression.

Then we must seek redress. In what way? It seems to me, now, that if the Southern States had gone into Conference last spring and drawn up a bill of grievances, and presented an *ultimatum*, present difficulties might have been obviated. I did not think so then, but the course of affairs since has led me to the conclusion that Virginia erred in refusing this Conference. If nothing else had been secured, unity in the Presidential contest might have been promoted.

But this failed. Now, it does seem to me, that we in Virginia are estopped from complaint against South Carolina for her separate action, after refusing to go into Conference with her.

We may think she has acted precipitately, or rashly, or selfishly; but we refused to counsel with her, and left her, in the hour of common peril, to take counsel of herself. Whether she acted wisely or unwisely—for the best interest of the South or not—for or against our own interest, she has acted—the Southern States acting in concert with her are about to act, and we in Virginia are irresistibly, by the force of circumstances, to shape our course, not by the consideration of what might have been best, if South Carolina had not seceded, or matters had not gone so far, but by facts as they are; and as she would not breast the storm, and lead others who would have gladly followed her proud flag, she must be content to shape her action as may be best in the forced circumstances by which she is at present surrounded.

It seems to me she is compelled to meet this crisis, and have questions at issue settled; and the point is, how she may do this, with less damage to herself and her peculiar interests. Some advise that we remain in the Union and make a solemn demand upon the North for redress. But what avail will be the weak cry of Virginia, stripped of the united strength of her sister Southern States? Or what could Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Tennessee do, when their power in the Federal Union has been paralyzed by the secession of the cotton States?

Or admit that redress were secured, how could she remain in a Union, overpowered as she would be by the united sentiment of the North, without additional constitutional guarantees? And could she get them? I trow not.

Others, considering the dissolution of the Union inevitable, are suggesting a Middle Confederacy. While I see no advantage in this arrangement, that could not be as fully secured in an united South, there are many serious objections to it. It increases our hostile frontier, while it weakens our means of defence. I could not favor such a diminution of our political *status*, except under the force of an overruling necessity.

My opinion is, that the safety of the Union depends upon an united South, on the common issue which has exposed us to the common peril.

Let the whole South act in concert. If South Carolina has proceeded so far that she cannot, in honor, counsel with us, let the other Southern States act together. If the country can be saved, without recourse to the *ultima ratio*, by all means save the country.—If this be impossible, then it is not worth while to argue upon the abstract right of secession—we will all act upon it—and if no constitutional power exists in the Federal Government, as Mr. Buchanan and his Attorney General think, to coerce, then we may secede peacefully, first settling the common debt and dividing the common property. My belief is, that when the North sees that the whole South is in *real earnest*; that the country is gone, unless they relent in their unfriendly attitude, they will submit to any conditions consistent with justice and right and honor.—We have assurance of this, in the large conservative element of the North, who have been all along fighting for us, and who have been at last overpowered by the combination of opposing elements.

We shall have the conscience of those Republicans, who have been misled and betrayed into their present associations, but who really desire to do justice and to avoid wrong; and the noisy clamor for "bread or blood" will frighten those who know no other appeal than that which springs from such a demand.

Now, can the South be brought to act thus in concert? I hope it may. I *think* there is patriotism enough in the South to do it.

Did ever a people bear as long as we have? Surely, surely, our patriotism has been tried, and it has not been found wanting.

We all desire to preserve this proud fabric of our National Union, and that we do so, is evident from the fact that we are willing to make such sacrifices for it.

Every fibre of our Southern heart has been stretched to preserve it, and if it falls, the united Southern voice can say—"*It was not I that did it.*"

My allegiance is due to my native State, Virginia. For weal or woe, my destiny is indissolubly united to hers. I submit to her decision, and most devoutly pray that she may be guided by the spirit of All Wisdom. I have written to you more fully, because you and my friends elsewhere have the right to know the sentiments of one holding so public a position as I do, and you are at liberty to make such use of this letter as may seem best and right.

I remain, most sincerely, your friend,

FRANCIS H. SMITH.

FATAL AFFRAY IN ELIZABETH CITY.—The municipal election at Elizabeth City, N. C, on Monday last, resulted in the choice of Dr. Rufus K. Speed over Mr. Cohoon, the present incumbent of the Mayoralty. The election was hotly contested, and was marked by a fatal affray at the polls, the following particulars of which were furnished the Norfolk Herald by a correspondent. The Messrs. Pooles are both young men and natives of Baltimore:

About 12 o'clock M., between Messrs. John W. and Walter C. Poole, and Julius C. Dashiell and Henry Culpepper and others, revolvers were freely used—seven or eight shots being fired, and causing a general stampede of persons around and near the polls. Culpepper received a mortal wound, the ball entering near the centre of his forehead and perforating the brain. Two balls passed through his hat. John W. Poole was shot at by Culpepper, and so closely that the powder took effect in his face. W. C. Poole was cut at by some one with a knife, ripping his coat open just in front of the abdomen. The affray is considered as growing out rather of an old feud, than of the election. The evidence before a Court of Investigation is very contradictory as to who fired the shot by which Culpepper was wounded. It matters but little, however, as public opinion generally excuses the killing of Culpepper, he having fired the first shot. The other parties named were, however, held to bail in the sum of $1,000 each. During the affray, Mr. Garner, editor of the Southron, was accidentally pushed from the stair-steps leading to the polls, and had his shoulder dislocated by the fall. Culpepper died from the effects of the wound.

DEATH OF PROF. SUDLER.—Thos. E. Sudler, many years ago a professor in St. John's College, at Annapolis, Md., died on the 31st ult. at Wilmington, Del. He was a graduate of West Point, at one time a professor in Dickinson College, and subsequently president of the Wesleyan Female College at Wilmington.

FROM WASHINGTON.

[SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE OF THE DISPATCH.]

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4, 1861.

This "day of National humiliation, fasting and prayer," is generally observed. The churches are all open, nearly all the stores are closed, and the city has a Sunday look.—On Pennsylvania Avenue there seems to be a crowd of men, boys and hacks. The restaurants are doing a good business. If one were a believer in omens, he would be comforted by the sunny sky which at mid-day succeeds the dark and foggy morning. The air is soft, warm, balmy. But the day is not over yet. No man can tell how the sun will go down.

It seems that Mr. Buchanan has made up his mind to carry out coercion with a high hand and a strong arm. A dispatch appears in Brown's Hotel this morning, stating that the steam-frigate Brooklyn is about leaving Norfolk for Charleston. We may expect the Gulf Squadron to be actively at work blockading all the Southern ports. This is war.

The seizure of the forts at Savannah was done in consequence of a dispatch from high authority here informing the Governor of Georgia that an order had been issued by the War Department to throw Federal troops at once into them. This order was *seen* by the gentleman who sent the dispatch. Who believes that any of the States would have ceded the sites of the forts within their limits if they had dreamed the guns would ever be used to shoot down the very people they were intended to protect! This notion of the President's is not merely foolish—it is a high handed outrage. Violence provokes violence. He has chosen the worst possible method of destroying his own government, and defeating his purpose of saving the Union. In attempting to enforce the laws, he has violated the spirit and letter of the Constitution. Truly, his is a savage mode of securing the object of the Constitution, which was "a more perfect Union."

Coercion hastens secession. Anderson's occupation of Fort Sumter carried Georgia—the key of the position—the only one of the Gulf States which was at all doubtful. The advices received by Georgia members indicate a large majority for instant secession. With the departure of the Gulf State Senators ensues a force bill, authorizing the Government to raise 300,000 volunteers, and $200,000,000 will be voted to pay the expenses. The Government can't obtain the money, but the Northern States can, and will. As we of the South have rapidly united for defence, so the people of the North are rapidly uniting for offence. The thing is fated, it seems to me. All attempts to prevent disunion have hastened it.

Douglas' speech, yesterday, was pretty much on the line of the President's message—against secession and against coercion—neither fish nor flesh. How vain it is for a man to try to climb both sides of the sapling at a time like the present! Whatever Virginia's policy may be, it should be decided. It will not do to adopt a yea-nay policy. If the Old Dominion intends to submit to the Abolitionists, let her do so decisively; if she intends to resist, let her act promptly, unequivocally. ZED.

WASHINGTON Jan. 5th, 1861.

Another mild, beautiful, sunny day, brings crowds of vehicles and pedestrians out on the Avenue. One finds it hard to believe in impending war while the skies overhead and the faces underneath are so gay and smiling. The result of the Abolition caucus last night has not officially transpired, but I hear from two pretty good sources that the knaves are going to hack down—which means that they will give enough to satisfy men of the Winter Davis and Bristow submission school, reserving to themselves the inalienable right of all frightened and treacherous people, of snatching back their concessions the moment they get the Federal power into their hands. Mr. Crittenden understands their game, and will balk them. The question must be settled not by any mere "definition of finality," but by such a change in the Constitution as will place it forever beyond the power of mere majorities, sectional or unsectional, to trample upon the rights of minorities.

Massachusetts talks grandly about arming, and all that. In this connection, I wish you would publish the protest of Virginia to the Continental Congress, made at the time Cornwallis, after conquering Georgia and marching through South and North Carolina, devastating all before him, was about to invade the Old Dominion. In effect, this noble protest says to New England: "We were with you at Boston and at Quebec; we missed you at Savannah and at Guilford; we were alone at Trenton and Princeton, [think of that! Virginians, unaided, fighting and conquering hundreds of miles from home,] and now, when our Continental contingent is full, when Virginians are defending New Jersey against the British in New York; when we have 10,000 troops of our own in the field at home; when all our titheables are heavily taxed, and when the British forces are invading our borders, you refuse, after frequent appeals, to send any Continental troops to our assistance. Exhausted in fighting the battles of the country on every field from Canada to Georgia, we warn you that unless assistance be speedily given, we shall withdraw our contingent, and fight by ourselves and for ourselves alone"—The Continental Congress could not resist this appeal, (which you will find in Rives' Life of Madison,) and accordingly sent down the Virginia soldiers and one Pennsylvania regiment, which last (the Pennsylvania regiment) refused to go a step farther than Philadelphia unless they received the 6 months' pay in advance, and in specie at that.

It is on record that during the whole of the Revolutionary War, not one single New England company came south of the Potomac.—The New England troops enlisted for six months, and resigned before they could be of any service. The Virginia soldiers, both State and Continental, enlisted for three years.—Every rascal of the Yankees claimed pensions, and thus six thousand pensions were granted in New England for every thousand in Virginia. Furthermore, in this battle of Lexington, about which the Yankees brag so much, (seven men were killed and thirteen wounded,) it is a noticeable fact that at least a hundred of the men engaged in it rushed, after the battle was over, to the Magistrate's office and made affidavit that the British began the firing. The affidavits may be seen to this day. So it appears that these patriots desired the world to know that they were only defending themselves against assault and battery, and not fighting for the honor and independence of their country.

In the last war, their