Richmond Dispatch.

BY COWARDIN & HAMMERSLEY.

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SATURDAY MORNING.....JAN. 12 1861.

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Richmond Dispatch.

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THE NATIONAL CRISIS.

THE "ENGAGEMENT" AT CHARLESTON.

Full Particulars of the Firing into the Star of the West—The Capture of the Alabama Forts—From Charleston—Secession and Postage—Life at the Forts—Commercial Preparations for War, &c., &c.

The Charleston Courier, of Thursday, furnishes the particulars of the firing on the steamer Star of the West by the South Carolina troops. The troops had been notified fourteen hours in advance of the expected arrival of the steamer, and arrangements had been made to signal her. The account says:

SCENE IN THE CITY.

Early in the morning, between the hours of six and seven, the city was intensely excited at the expected reports of heavy ordnance in the harbor. "The Star of the West," was the exclamation of all. "One," "two," "three," "four" guns—the contest is begun. In a few minutes people from all parts of the city came from their homes, and were seen rushing out to the water's edge. The streets were soon thronged with eager men, hurrying towards the Battery and the wharves to ascertain all that could be learned of the noise made by the guns in the offing. The cannon, as long as they were discharged, went off in regular, deliberate succession, clearly evincing that in serving them the utmost military precision had been attained, and reflected great credit upon those managing them.

With the naked eye nothing of what was going on in the harbor could be discovered, and consequently the most intense excitement prevailed to find out what had caused the cessation of reports after seventeen or eighteen had been discharged.

It was not until half an hour or so that the populace, by this time fully aroused to the importance of the movement evidently made by our troops, was put in possession of the facts of the affair. In the meantime, crowds of people had gathered in the most convenient localities, for procuring information. The bulletin boards of the newspaper offices, the wharves and street corners, were filled with people, and every scrap of intelligence was greedily devoured.

NARRATION OF FACTS.

About six and a half o'clock, or thereabouts, the steamer General Clinch, Capt. Relyea, having discovered the approach of the Star of the West, signalled the fact to the occupants of the battery lately thrown up on the beach at Morris' Islands. This vessel, it is known, left her wharf sometime during the evening before, with a guard of eighty men from the ranks of the Palmetto Guards and the Irish Volunteers. The duty assigned them was to keep strict surveillance over the harbor, and to make such signals as had been agreed upon in the event of the approach of reinforcements to the fortress in possession of the United States troops, as well as to report the approach of any vessel that may appear in the offing.—In the early grey of the morning the guard-boat first described the steamer heading in from the sea, and with as much celerity as possible performed the remaining part of the task assigned her.

As soon as signalled, the entire camp on Morris' Island was astir. There was no need for the reveille beat to quarters. The men were already at their posts before the orders were given. For some minutes they remained in anxious suspense, ready for what every one believed sure to come, and that—a volley from the heavy guns of Sumter.

As soon as the Star of the West rounded the point, she took to what is termed "Ship Channel," inside the bar, and proceeded straight forward, until nearly opposite the work on Morris' Island, not more than three-quarters of a mile from the battery, and within excellent range of the guns. At this position of affairs the command was given to fire, and a ball was sent whizzing athwart the bows of the steamer. This significant hint to proceed no further was noticed in no other manner by the vessel than by displaying a large flag of the Federal Union. As soon as the Stars and Stripes were run up to the mast-head, the act of defiance was met with a succession of heavy shots from the fortification. The vessel continued on her way, with increased speed; but one or two shots taking effect, she concluded to advance no further, and this conclusion was hastened by the shots from Moultrie, which, though harmless and out of range of the steamer, still gave evidence that hotter work was on hand if further attempt was made to proceed.

The "Star of the West" was clearly made out as the name of the vessel, so that there was no mistake on this point. She was possessed of no armament. As soon as five or six shots had been fired upon her from Morris' Island, and as many more from Moultrie, it was evident that she would lower her colors to half-mast. She veered about so as to avoid any further messengers of this kind from the fortifications, which, with one or two more discharges, finally ceased.

THE DAMAGE DONE.

The steamer was very trifling, only two of about seventeen shots—all that was fired—took effect upon her. One struck the vessel about the forward part of the bow, the other amidships, in the vicinity of the wheel-house. No idea of the extent of damage done could be ascertained, indeed it could not have been known whether she had been struck at all had it not been for the heavy, dull sound, and subsequent crash, always accompanying the ball that "makes its mark" in a naval engagement. At all events she could not have been badly injured or disabled, for even while the firing continued she rounded to and started off seaward. As soon as this intention was shown, all firing was instantly suspended.

FORT SUMTER.

While the engagement lasted, no demonstration whatever was made by the command in possession of the frowning fortress—Sumter—except the opening of the port-holes and running out of the guns which bear upon Morris' Island and Moultrie. Major Anderson, however, prudently forbore to fire, and no doubt experienced great relief when he saw the vessel steaming out of the harbor.

THE FEELING AT CASTLE PINCKNEY.

At Castle Pinckney, under command of Col. Pettigrew, the ardor of the men knew no bounds. The greatest eagerness was shown by all to have a shot at the stranger, with the intention of bringing out the fire of Fort Sumter. The guns of the Castle were all manned simply upon the spontaneous movement of the men themselves. Each sprang to his post, without command of the officer in charge. It was with the greatest difficulty that he could restrain them from firing; and it was not until a peremptory order to that effect was given that they held themselves aloof from the batteries. The eagerness at Fort Moultrie and Johnson was equally great—though the garrison at the former were gratified in the privilege of a number of harmless shots. Better luck to them next time.

WHO FIRED THE FIRST SHOT?

Since the event of the crisis, much curiosity has been excited to learn the man who fired the first shot. After diligent inquiry, we believe it is settled that the honor belongs to the Washington Light Infantry. Though this corps is not stationed in the entrenchments on Morris' Island, from which the first gun was fired, still, a single representative of the corps, we are informed, was at one of the guns, and to him belongs the honor of the deed. We believe the name of the gentleman is Lieut. J. L. Branch.

THE CITY.

After all the facts of the affair in the harbor had become generally known throughout the city, the excitement in nowise abated.—Several companies of troops, never before in actual service, were called out and sent to different localities, where their presence might be needed, and every precaution was taken by the energetic administration to secure all points that might be useful.

In the streets, military uniforms were numerous. Old and young assumed the "cloth of war," and took their places in the ranks.—War, actual war, seemed inevitable; but with the thousand and one rumors that flew about, nothing could be set down as certain.

THE FLAG OF TRUCE.

Towards eleven o'clock, a boat from Fort Sumter, bearing an officer in full uniform, with a white flag, was seen to approach the city. The officer was met at the wharf by one or two gentlemen, and was suffered in quietness to land. He gave his name as Lieut. Hall, U. S. A., bearer of dispatches from Maj. Anderson, commanding Fort Sumter, to the Governor of South Carolina, and inquired the way to the Governor's quarters. Under the guidance of several gentlemen the Lieutenant was taken to the City Hall, followed by an immense, though orderly and excited throng—attracted by curiosity to learn the object of his mission.

After arriving at the City Hall, it was found that the Governor did not occupy any portion of the building, and after a delay of several minutes to learn where the Executive could be found, the officer was joined by a gentleman in military habit, who undertook to give him conduct.

While waiting at this point, the crowd outside increased at a tremendous rate. The Court-room was filled; the stairs were filled, and even the street was densely thronged, though not the slightest indignity, either by word or deed, was inflicted upon the representative of the United States. In perfect security he was allowed to take his way to the Governor, with whom he afterwards remained for over two hours.

The object of the mission not being known, created great excitement among the people—so much so that many of them lingered in the vicinity of the Gubernatorial quarters until after 2 o'clock, at which time Mr. Hall ended his interview. He was then escorted to a carriage, and driven, in company with two Aids of the Governor, to the wharf, where he re-embarked for the fort.

The correspondence between Major Anderson and Gov. Pickens has been published by telegraph; but as a part of the history of the important event, we publish in full the letter of the last-named gentleman, of which only a sketch came over the wires:

THE GOVERNOR'S LETTER.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA,
EXECUTIVE OFFICE HEADQUARTERS,
Charleston, 9th January, 1861.

SIR: Your letter has been received. In it you make certain statements which very plainly show that you have not been duly informed by your Government of the precise relations which now exist between it and the State of South Carolina. Official information has been communicated to the Government of the United States that the political connection heretofore existing between the State of South Carolina and the States which were known as the United States had ceased; and that the State of South Carolina had resumed all the powers it had delegated to the United States under the compact known as the Constitution of the United States. The right which the State of South Carolina possessed to change the political relations which she had held with the other States, under the Constitution of the United States, has been solemnly asserted by the people of this State in Convention, and now does not admit of discussion.

In anticipation of the Ordinance of Secession, of which the President of the United States had official notification, it was understood by him that sending any reinforcements of troops to the United States in the harbor of Charleston would be regarded by the constituted authorities of the State of South Carolina as an act of hostility, and at the same time it was understood by him that any change in the occupation of the forts in the harbor of Charleston, would, in like manner, be regarded as an act of hostility. Either or both of these events occurring during the period in which the State of South Carolina constituted a part of the United States, was then distinctly notified to the President of the United States as an act or acts of hostility, because either or both would be regarded, and could only be intended to dispute the right of the State of South Carolina to that political independence which she has always asserted and will always retain.

Whatever would have been, during the continuance of this State while a member of the United States, an act of hostility, became much more so when the State of South Carolina had dissolved all connection with the Government of the United States. After the secession of the State of South Carolina, Fort Sumter continued in the possession of the troops of the United States. How that fort is at this time in the possession of the troops of the United States, it is not now necessary to discuss. It will suffice to say that the occupancy of that fort has been regarded by the State of South Carolina as the first act of positive hostility committed by the troops of the United States within the limits of this State, and was in this light regarded as so unequivocal that it occasioned the termination of the negotiation then pending at Washington between the Commissioners of the State of South Carolina and the President of the United States.

The attempt to reinforce the troops now in Fort Sumter, or to re-take and resume possession of the forts within the waters of this State, which you abandoned, after spiking the guns placed there, and doing otherwise much damage, cannot be regarded by the authorities of the State as indicative of any other purpose than the coercion of the State by the armed forces of your Government. To repel such an attempt, is too plainly a duty to allow it to be discussed; and while defending its waters, the authorities of the State have been careful to conduct the affairs of the State so that no act, however necessary for its defence, should lead to a useless waste of life. Special agents, therefore, have been off the Bar, to warn all approaching vessels, if armed or unarmed, and having troops to reinforce the fort on board, not to enter the harbor of Charleston, and special orders have been given to the commanders of all the forts and batteries not to fire at such vessels until a shot was fired across their bow, which would warn them of the prohibition of the State.—Under these circumstances, the Star of the West, it is understood, this morning attempted to enter this harbor with troops on board, and having been notified that she could not enter, was fired into. The act is perfectly justified by me. In regard to your threat in regard to vessels in the harbor, it is only necessary to say that you must judge of your responsibility. Your position in this harbor has been tolerated by the authorities of the State, and while the act of which you complain is in perfect consistency with the rights and duties of the State, it is not perceived how far the conduct which you propose to adopt can find a parallel in the history of any country, or be reconciled with any other purpose of your Government than that of imposing upon this State the condition of a conquered province.

Signed, F. W. PICKENS.

ENDORSEMENT OF THE ACT BY THE LEGISLATURE.

The following resolutions were adopted by the South Carolina House of Delegates on receiving the correspondence from the Governor:

Resolved, That this General Assembly looks upon any attempt to reinforce the troops now in possession of Fort Sumter, as an act of open and undisguised hostility on the part of the Government of the United States.

Resolved, further, That this General Assembly learns, with pride and pleasure, of the successful resistance of this day, by the troops of this State, acting under orders of the Governor, to an attempt to reinforce Fort Sumter.

Resolved, further, That this General Assembly entirely approves and endorses the communication of the Governor this day made to Major Anderson.

Resolved, further, That this General Assembly pledges itself to an earnest, vigorous, and unhesitating support of the Governor in every measure adopted by him in defence of the honor and safety of the State.

ARREST FOR TREASON.

The Charleston Mercury, of Thursday, says:

J. N. Merriman, Collector of the port of Georgetown, S. C., was on Monday last arrested by the people of Georgetown on a charge of treason against the State. A letter was found written by him and addressed to Mr. Buchanan, stating that he (Merriman) had just cleared vessels in the name of the United States, and that he would continue to do so. The letter calls upon the President to send a boat and men to collect the Federal revenue, and informs him of the progress made in the construction of the works near Georgetown, and promises to keep him posted from time to time in relation to the same. The letter is signed by his initials, J. N. M. When arrested, he acknowledged having written it. Lopee, his deputy, was also arrested. He said he had been in the habit of writing out Merriman's letters, but had not done so in this case, as he considered it treason. Both have been committed for trial.

THE CAPTURE OF THE ALABAMA FORTS.

The Mobile News, of Saturday last, gives the following account of the capture, by Alabama troops, of the Federal forts within her limits:

The movement of the Mobile companies on Mount Vernon Arsenal up the river and Fort Morgan down the Bay, kept the city in a ferment of excited interest yesterday, and it was not until late in the day that intelligence arrived that both those points of Federal occupation and defence were in the hands of the soldiery of the State of Alabama. The sudden stroke of policy in Alabama, the *coup d'etat* and *coup de guerre*, was quietly and effectively carried out in this wise: Acting under the Governor's orders, at eleven o'clock on Thursday night, the following companies detailed for that service embarked on a steamer for Fort Morgan: the "Cadets," Capt. Sands; the "Fusiliers," Lieutenant Emrick commanding; the "Independent Rifles," Capt. Stikes, and the "Artillery," Capt. Ketchum. Steaming down the bay they arrived at the Fort about 3 o'clock and quietly occupied it, its only garrison being an Ordnance Sergeant and his family, and a laborer or so. The Fort is now held by the greater porton of the force which took possession, about two hundred men being under arms. The works are being put in more defensible condition.

The detachment detailed for the seizure of the Mt. Vernon U. S. Arsenal, located forty-five miles up the river, consisted of the "Mobile Rifles," Capt. Woodruff; the "Washington Light Infantry," Capt. Gracie, and the "Gardes Lafayette," Capt. Bellor. They embarked about the same time as the detachment for Fort Morgan. They arrived at the Arsenal about daybreak, and being provided with ladders for the purpose escaladed the walls of the premises at three different points simultaneously, and formed around the armory in the center. The garrison, consisting of a squad of about thirteen soldiers and as many Government employees, of course made no resistance, being captured before they knew of the presence of an enemy. Had they not been taken by surprise, however, and had they been so disposed, they might have given some trouble and shed some blood, as the arsenal is defensible against musketry, and their number was more than a third of that of their assailants. The arsenal contains 20,000 stand of arms, 1,500 barrels (*not kegs*) of powder, 300,000 rounds of cartridge and other munitions. It is now held by thirty men of the "Washington Light Infantry," who are having pleasant pic-nic duty, we suspect.

LIFE IN THE FORTS.

She Savannah Republican, of Tuesday, publishes the following letter:

FORT PULASKI, Tuesday, Jan. 8.

The work of the fort goes on rapidly; the guns are being overhauled, and will soon be in a condition to do effectual service.

The Chatham Artillery have had an offer from a lady in Savannah, whose husband is a member of the corps, to come down and act as nurse if her services are needed. Her letter was read in the quarters last night, and was received with three hearty cheers, and a letter of acceptance moved to be written her to that effect. Another lady sent us a splendid fruit cake, iced over, and the word "Secession" wrought in with sugar; still another, whose name is unknown, sent us a package of lint. There may be similar instances of kindness towards the other corps, but as I have no opportunity of finding it out, I do not mention them.

It is impossible to imagine a gayer and more animated scene than the fort is during the day; the men rapidly passing to and fro doing the various duties assigned them; the labor is severe, and one would suppose that by night nature would claim her rest, but up to tatoo, which is beaten at 9 o'clock at night, every quarter resounds with gay sounds and shouts that come from many hearts. The "Marseilaise," "Dixie's Land," "Mickey, are you drunk?" "Rap Slap," and other songs with like euphonious names, ring out upon the night. But after tatoo all is still and silent as death.

A schooner arrived last night, having on board a very large quantity of powder, and it is being put in the magazine to-day.

On Thursday there will be a relief sent down, and such soldiers as are compelled to go home will return. There are twenty from the Hatmen Artillery who will return, and their places will be filled from town.

If anything of importance occurs, I will try and advise you. Very truly, BARRAKER.

P. S.—I learn by letters from town to-day that some consternation has been produced by the construction of Commandant Hartlow's order in regard to any one found asleep on his post. The order simply stated that the exigencies of the times required that strict military discipline should be observed, and the penalty of being caught asleep was death, by the articles of war; but none of us anticipate the execution of such an order; in fact, the men are to alert at every duty that it will never be deserved. B.

THE FORTS AT KEY WEST.

The Charleston Mercury is appealing to the people of Florida to seize the forts and other Government property at Key West and Pensacola. It says:

"These forts can command the whole Gulf trade; and should Mr Buchanan carry out what appears to be his present plan, he certainly must desire to hold possession of these forts. He may thus, with the assistance of war steamers, block up the whole Gulf; but let Florida hold these forts and the entire aspect of affairs is changed. Such vessels in time of war will have no port of entry, and must be supplied in every way from a very long distance, and that at sea; while the commerce of the North in the Gulf will fall an easy prey to our bold privateers, and California gold will pay all such little expenses on our part. We leave the matter for the reflection and decision of the people of Florida."

THE STEAMER JOSEPH WHITNEY WITH TROOPS FOR THE SOUTH.

The Boston Traveller, of Wednesday, thus notices the announcement we had by telegraph of the steamer Joseph Whitney having been chartered to carry troops from Boston to the South:

It is announced that the detachment of United States troops now stationed at Fort Winthrop, in this harbor, have received orders to be in readiness to go South. They number seventy men. An agent of the General Government was in town yesterday, and chartered the steamer Joseph Whitney, of the Baltimore line, as a transport for the troops.

The Herald says:

"We understand proposals were previously made to engage the propellers forming the line between Boston and Charleston, but owing to the pecuniary interest held in these propellers by Charleston capitalists, it was deemed *not advisable*."

It is stated that the company at Fort Winthrop are light artillery men.

The Boston Transcript says that the Whitney cleared for Norfolk, though her destination is understood to be the Coast of Florida.

FROM CHARLESTON.

The following weather item is from the Charleston Courier:

The mild weather of the past few days has produced its effect upon vegetation. Green buds have made their appearance on the trees, and fig trees, always most forward to welcome the warm breath of spring, are covered with tender sprouts.

The Columbia (S. C.) Guardian furnishes the following:

The news announcing the action of Florida, although expected, produced a great excitement on Monday night. On yesterday morning the ringing of the city bell "Secession," and the firing of cannon, by direction of the city authorities, announced the glad tidings to our citizens.

The Hamburg company of "Minute Men," and "Cherokee pond Company," of Edgefield, both left Hamburg this morning, on the down eight o'clock train, for Charleston. Both companies numbered about 200 men.

DISPATCH FROM CHARLESTON.

CHARLESTON, Jan. 10, P. M.—The dispatches received here that the United States sloop-of-war Brooklyn is coming here with an armed force, has created an intense excitement.

Great preparations are making in the harbor for active warfare. A large steamer, called the Marion, of the Charleston and New York line, has been purchased by South Carolina, and ordered to be razeed for a man-of-war, her upper cabins to be taken off, and armament supplied. The buoys in the harbor have been removed.

The Brooklyn will no doubt be fired into when she makes her appearance, and it is expected that Fort Sumter will open on the South Carolina fortifications, when the fight will become general.

The people are preparing for it and for the worst. It is evident from the present determined hostile attitude of the people, that the Brooklyn cannot come in without a great fight. Major Anderson will doubtless protect her with the guns of Fort Sumter. He only pledged himself not to prevent communication between the authorities of South Carolina and the forts now in possession of the State till Lieut. Talbott came back.

A steam tug called the "Aid," Lieutenant Hamilton, formerly of the Federal Navy, commanding, left the wharf to-night for a reconnoitre. She mounted one gun.

There is much talk of sending to Savannah for steam tugs to be used as gun boats.

COMMERCIAL PREPARATIONS FOR CIVIL WAR.

Several of the Marine Insurance Companies of New York city, says the Commercial, have already adopted the "War Clause" in their policies, viz:

"*Warranted free from seizure or detention arising from the acts of any seceding or revolting State.*"

The subject will come before the Board of Underwriters to-morrow, when they will probably agree upon this clause; if so, all the companies will unite in the same restriction. We learn also that the companies have generally advanced their rates one hundred per cent. on risks from this port to Charleston—To ports in the Gulf of Mexico, the same advance will probably be demanded.

FLORIDA.

Before the secession ordinance was adopted in Florida, Mr. Edmund Ruffin, of Virginia, addressed the Convention.

Bishop Rutledge, of the Diocese of Florida, has handed to the Treasurer of the State of Florida an obligation to pay $500 to assist in defraying the expenses of the State, so soon as the Convention passes the Ordinance of Secession.

MEETING IN BALTIMORE.

A very large Union meeting was held at Baltimore on Thursday evening. Among the most distinguished speakers was Hon. Reverdy Johnson. He made a legal argument of great length against the right of secession—He also thought it necessary that time should be had to afford an opportunity to the Northern States to make the concessions which will guarantee to all the States their rights. The North was the aggressor and to blame, and the South was not blameless. But the time would come when all the difficulties could be healed, and peace and prosperity be restored. Mr. Johnson spoke at length, and his remarks were so protracted that but a faint idea of them can be given, so late was the hour when he concluded. Throughout he was frequently interrupted by applause, and once or twice by confusion on the floor.

At the conclusion of his remarks three cheers were given for Gov. Hicks, three for Major Anderson, three groans for President Buchanan and three groans for South Carolina.

Resolutions were adopted expressive of a desire for a compromise for the settlement of existing difficulties on a constitutional basis, and that such of the Northern States as have passed Personal Liberty bills shall repeal the same.

VIRGINIA.

The Norfolk Day Book says that a gentleman of that city has just received a letter from his son at the University of Virginia, asking if he shall pay his board for the next six months; that the young men at the University were rapidly enlisting in the various military organizations of the State, and making every preparation to leave in case the State needed their services.

The United States Marines still maintain their position at Fort Washington, without further reinforcements. Maj. Terrett has been relieved from the command of the fortress by Capt. Taylor, of the Marine Corps. Capt. Taylor is a native of Alexandria, Va.

There was a mass meeting at Nottoway Court-House, Va., on Tuesday. Although the mud was deep and the weather inclement, the attendance was very large. The Rev Edward Martin, of the Presbyterian Church, and Dr. Campbell, both made eloquent speeches in favor of arming the county, and $5,000 was subsequently raised in the form of county bonds. The Nottoway troop, numbering fifty-two, were on parade. A rifle company is to be organized at Blacks and Whites Saturday.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA.

[*EXTRA SESSION.*]

SENATE.

FRIDAY, Jan. 11th.

The Senate was called to order at 12 o'clock by the President.

Prayer by Rev. Dr. J. L. BURROWS, of the Baptist Church.

The National Crisis.—A communication from the House of Delegates was read, informing the Senate of the passage of the following resolutions:

1 *Resolved by the General Assembly of Virginia*, That in view of the imminent danger of civil war, this Assembly, in behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia, ask respectfully, on the one hand, of the President of the United States, and, on the other of the authorities of each of the Southern States, to the end that, if possible, peace may yet be preserved, that they will respectfully communicate assurances in response hereto to the General Assembly of Virginia, now in session, and that the *status quo* of all movements tending to occasion collision, and concerning the forts and arsenals of the nation, shall, on either hand, be strictly maintained for the present, except to repel any actual aggressive attempts.

2 That the Governor of the Commonwealth be requested to communicate these resolutions by telegraph immediately, to the President of the United States, and to each of the Governors of the Southern States.

Mr. PAXTON moved to commit the resolutions to the Committee on Federal Relations.

Mr. JOHNSON hoped that the resolutions would be acted upon speedily and promptly. He called for the yeas and nays on Mr. PAXTON's motion.

Mr. STUART briefly advocated prompt action. The proposed reference would be equivalent to a vote of rejection. The nature of the case demands that there should not be an hour's delay.

Mr. PAXTON presented his objections to the resolutions. He understood them to signify that the seceding States should allow the forts and arsenals within their limits to remain in the possession of the Federal Government.

Mr. DICKINSON, of Prince Edward, said he would give the resolutions his cordial support. They do not compromit the interest or honor of Virginia. Surely, in an hour like this, it becomes every patriot and every Christian, before he commits his country to the horrors of civil war, to exhaust all honorable means for preventing it. There was everything to gain and nothing to lose by the adoption of the resolutions. As brave and magnanimous men—for brave men are always magnanimous—let us endeavor to avoid strife, by all honorable means. His constituents, though ready for war, desired peace. Mr. D. appealed to the Senate to adopt the resolutions unanimously.

Mr. PAXTON reiterated his objections to the resolutions.

Mr. COGHILL said that no possible good could result from the adoption of the resolutions. The Southern States may be lulled into a false security. Let us take time for reflection and deliberation.

Mr. WICKHAM remarked, that it seemed as if certain Senators were only willing for delay when propositions were introduced for peace. He argued in favor of prompt action. Called attention to the fact that Lt. Talbot had proceeded to Washington for orders, and that if this Senate desired that these orders should be of a pacific character, it is important that Virginia should step forward, and request the President to stay his hand.

Mr. COGHILL again addressed the Senate in opposition to the resolutions.

Mr. CLAIBORNE read a substitute, which he proposed to offer at the proper time, following the language of the pending resolutions, except the appeal by Virginia to her sister States of the South. They had committed no act of aggression, nor could commit any. South Carolina, though sinned against in the extreme, has acted with forbearance. Mr. C. avowed himself in favor of preserving the peace, and the Union, if possible.

Mr. AUGUST declared that no man desired more earnestly than himself to preserve the peace and to see the national banner wave in unimpaired brilliancy and equality; but he desired neither peace nor a continuance of the Union, if done at the expense of the honor of Virginia. This Legislature has already, by the resolutions adopted on Tuesday, sent a request to the Federal Government to stay its hand. Could any message be more productive of peace than that?

Mr. AUGUST commented on the clause, "for the present," as indefinite, and indicated other objections to the adoption of the resolutions, until, at least, they were considered by a committee.

Mr. NASH expressed the belief that the pending resolutions were not only inconsistent with, but antagonistic to those adopted on Tuesday, against coercion. It was, therefore, unbecoming the prestige and dignity of Virginia to adopt them. If he could understand them as a proposition for peace, he would be recreant to his constituents in failing to vote for them; but, believing that their adoption would embolden the Federal Government, he felt bound to vote for the motion to commit.

The debate was further continued by Messrs. THOMAS of H., and RIVES, in favor of the resolutions, and Mr. ISBELL against them.

The vote was then taken with the following result:

YEAS.—Messrs August, Brannon, Bruce, Carson, Claiborne, Coghill, Day, Douglass, Early, Finney, Gatewood, Isbell, Layne, Logan, Lynch, Nash, Paxton, Pennybacker, Richmond, Thompson—20.

NAYS.—Messrs. Armstrong, Caldwell, Carraway, Jr., Carter, Crutcher, Dickinson of Pr. Edward, French, Greever, Hubbard, Johnson, Marshall, Massie, McKenney, Neal, Newman, Pate, Rives, Stuart, Thomas of Fairfax, Thomas of Henry, Townes, Urquhart, and Wickham—26.

Mr. CLAIBORNE then offered his substitute, as follows:

1st. That the General Assembly of Virginia ask of the President of the United States, in view of the imminent danger of civil war, an assurance of the inviolate preservation of the *status quo* for 60 days, except to repel hostile aggressions on all questions of difference between the General Government and the seceding States.

2d. That the Governor be requested to telegraph, immediately, this resolution to the President of the United States.

The substitute was adopted by the following vote:

YEAS.—Messrs. August, Brannon, Bruce, Carson, Claiborne, Coghill, Day, Douglass, Early, Finney, Gatewood, Greever, Isbell, Layne, Logan, Lynch, Nash, Neeson, Newman, Pate, Paxton, Pennybacker, Richmond and Thomson—24.

NAYS.—Messrs. Armstrong, Caldwell, Carraway, Carter, Crutcher, French, Hubbard, Johnson, Marshall, Massie, McKenney, Neal, Newman, Rives, Stuart, Thomas of F., Thomas of H., Townes, Urquhart and Wickham—20.

Mr. THOMAS asked what is to become of us after the sixty days have expired. He infinitely preferred that no resolution should be adopted but that of Mr CLAIBORNE.

The subject was finally referred to a select committee, consisting of Messrs. Armstrong, Brannon, Newman, Paxton, Thomas of F., Thompson and Lynch.

Bills Reported.—Mr. COGHILL reported a bill changing the times for holding the Circuit Courts of the city of Williamsburg and county of Henrico.

Mr. AUGUST reported a bill to authorize the County Courts to arm the militia of their respective counties and provide means therefor.

Mr. THOMAS, of Henry, presented a substitute for the Convention bill reported yesterday by a special committee.

On motion of Mr. DICKINSON, of Prince Edward, the bill providing for the call of a Convention was made the order of the day for to-morrow, (12th inst.,) at half-past 12 o'clock.

Galt's Jefferson.—A communication from Mr. Galt, inviting the members of the Legislature to attend an exhibition of his Statue of Jefferson, was read, and the invitation accepted.

Resolutions of Inquiry.—The appropriate committees were instructed to inquire into the expediency of sending propositions, viz: By Mr. Coghill, of providing for the deposit of the revenue in some one of the Banks in the different divisions of the State; by the same, of repealing the law requiring the branch Banks to redeem their notes at the parent Banks, etc.; by Mr. Isbell, of authorizing the Governor to deposit muskets and ammunition at certain places, and under certain restrictions, etc., (designated in the resolutions;) by Mr. French, of a general stay law; by Mr. Neeson, of reporting bill 426 of last session; by Mr. Marshall, of providing for the voluntary enslavement of Clara and her children, in the county of Rappahannock; by Mr. Lynch, of erecting a magazine or arsenal at or near Lynchburg; by Mr. August, of extending the boundaries of the city of Richmond.—Several resolutions to inquire into the expediency of refunding taxes were adopted, memorials, etc., presented, after which,

On motion of Mr. THOMAS, the Senate adjourned.

HOUSE OF DELEGATES.

FRIDAY, Jan. 11, 1861.

The House was called to order at 12 o'clock M., by Speaker CRUTCHFIELD, and opened with prayer by Rev. J. A. DUNCAN, of the M. E. Church.

Bills Reported.—Bills were reported from committees as follows: By Mr Magruder, a bill releasing the Commonwealth's claim to a certain island in Chesapeake Bay to Edward L. Poulson; a bill for the relief of Edward McCabe, of Harper's Ferry; a bill to amend an act passed March 30, 1860, entitled "an act making regulations concerning licenses;" a bill to amend an act passed April 6th, 1858, entitled "an act to amend and re-enact an act entitled an act for regulating foreign life insurance companies within this Commonwealth, passed March 6th, 1856;" by Mr. Chapman, a bill to incorporate the Arnoldsburg and Sandy Turnpike Company; a bill to extend the improvement of the Little Kanawha River to the falls thereof, in the county of Braxton; and a bill to incorporate the Lynchburg and North Carolina Railroad Company.

Petitions, &c.—The following petitions, &c., were presented and referred: By Mr Christian, the petition of B. M. Smith, of Prince Edward, for relief from the payment of a fine inadvertently incurred; by Mr Kaufman, the petition of Col. E. E. Shryock and others, asking that compensation be paid the drummer and fifer for services rendered to the 51st Regiment of Virginia Militia; by the same, the petition of Capt. James Long and others, asking that leave be given to Henry Guard to peddle some articles without license; by Mr. Orgain, the application of Paul A. Farley, for the refunding of a pedlar's license.

Application Refused.—The Committee on Military Affairs asked to be discharged from the further consideration of the petition of Capt. James Kinney, of the Rockingham Rifles, the same having been considered and rejected.

The Convention Bill.—Mr. KEEN, of Pittsylvania, offered the following amendment to the first section of the bill providing for a call of a State Convention; all pending amendments being withdrawn to enable him to do so:

At the same time, the said Commissioners shall open a separate poll to take the sense of the qualified voters as to whether any action of said convention dissolving our connection with the Federal Union or changing the organic law of the State shall be submitted to the people for ratification or rejection; and in order to ascertain the sense of the voters upon the question aforesaid the said officers shall cause to be kept a poll, to be head thus: "Upon the question of referring action to the people for their decision," which said poll book shall have two columns, one headed "For referring to the people," and the other "Against referring to the people;" and the names of those who vote for the former shall be written under the former head, and those who vote for the latter under the latter heading. When the said officers meet as aforesaid, they shall ascertain and make return of the number of persons voting for each of the propositions, and shall forthwith send to the Clerk of their respective counties or corporations a copy thereof, whose duty it shall be to transmit immediately a copy thereof to the President of the Convention at Richmond, and also to the Governor of the Commonwealth.

Messrs. KEEN and BALL supported the amendment, advocating the policy which it proposed as essential to a strict adherance to the principle of republicanism and popular rights, which is its essence.

Mr. DUCKWALL offered the following as an amendment to the amendment offered by Mr. KEEN:

Provided, however, That the vote so taken in each county or election district, respectively, shall be counted only as decisive of the popular voice of the electors of such county or election district, and as a popular instruction by the electors of such county or election district to their own delegate or delegates to the Convention.

Mr. NEWTON, of Hanover, advocated prompt action in the matter, and deprecated in a very eloquent manner the hampering of the Convention with any such restrictions as the proposed amendments would impose, if adopted. It would be competent for the Convention itself to do what is here proposed, if they saw fit—and they would be the best judges of the expediency of such a policy, acting in full view of the events which shall present themselves at that time. He regarded it as decidedly impolitic at this early stage to prescribe any principle of action for that body, when the developments of every succeeding hour may suggest—nay, make necessary, a total change of policy from that which now seems best.

Mr. COWAN vindicated the fidelity of the Northwest to the institutions of the South, and maintained that the people of that section were as ready to stand forth in defence of Southern rights as the East.

Mr. ANDERSON advocated immediate action, and urged the passage of the bill as reported by the committee.

Mr. KEEN rose to a point of order; but the Speaker decided that Mr. ANDERSON had the right to proceed, the pending question opening the whole subject to debate.

Mr. ANDERSON resumed and concluded his remarks in advocacy of the bill.

Mr. CAPERTON, of Monroe, obtained the floor, but gave way to Mr. KEEN, who desired to make a personal explanation.

Mr. KEEN concluded his personal explanation, by some remarks in opposition to the amendment to his amendment, offered by Mr. DUCKWALL, and gave way to Mr CAPERTON.

Mr. CAPERTON said, the friends of the amendment argued as if the people were dependent on the Legislature for the privilege of expressing their will. The Legislature had no power to control the action of a sovereign body. All it can do is to furnish a mode, a convenient mode, for making known their wishes. If this was the only mode by which their will could be communicated, it would be important to confer. But they could make known their will in a variety of modes. The people could communicate their wishes to their Delegates. The difference is only as to the convenience of the mode proposed and the other modes suggested. The mode contemplated in the amendment is most convenient, but are the advantages sufficient to compensate for the injurious effects which such a provision would have? He appeals to those who will unite with him in an honest and persevering effort to save the Union, to say whether the effect may not be far better than proposed, which ought to be to impress upon the Northern mind that, in the contingency of a refusal to accord such guarantees as we think important to our safety Virginia is intended, and has prepared to sever her connection from them. The inference from this amendment, should it be adopted, would be, that Virginia was not prepared to say even that in any contingency would she dissolve the Union.

Mr. RIVES said the discussion had taken a very wide range, embracing the Constitution, Union, and other miscellaneous topics. He had heard a great deal of the "Union;" but had heard but little of the Constitution, and our rights under it, in connection therewith. He offered, in the way of argument, a proposition that when the people came to vote on the question of a Convention, they should indicate whether they were willing or not to stay in the Union under Lincoln.

Mr. EVANS, of Middlesex, said enough time had been consumed already in discussion, and he would, therefore, call the previous question.

The call being sustained, the SPEAKER stated the main question, which was on the adoption of Mr DUCKWALL's amendment to the amendment of Mr. KEEN. It was defeated. The question recurring on the adoption of Mr. KEEN's amendment, he called the yeas and nays, which were ordered, with the following result:

YEAS.—Messrs. Alderson, Arnold, Ball, Bentley, Bibbie, Booker, Boreman, Brown, Cassin, Christian, Coleman, Collier, Cowan, Crane, Crump, Davis, Dickenson, Edmunston, Ferguson, Ferrill, Fleming, D. Gibson, C. H. Gilmer, Goodwin, Hanna, Harrison, Haymond, Hockley, Hoffman, Holliday, Hopkins, Hurtt, Jett, Johnson, Knotts, Kyle, Leftwich, Locke, Lockridge, Magruder, J. G. Martin, Thos. Martin, Wm. Martin, Massie, Matthews, McCruder, M. Kinney, McKenzie, D. Miller, Morris, Myers, Patterson, Phelps, Porter, Preston, Prestow, Randolph, Reid, Richardson, Riddick, Windham Robert