Richmond Dispatch.

FRIDAY MORNING.....MARCH 21, 1862

The Policy of Great Britain Towards the Confederate States.

The foreign Secretary of Great Britain, Earl Russell, has never let slip an opportunity, since this war began, of dilating upon the sacred regard of Great Britain for treaty obligations, and the rights of neutrality. If we might credit the assertions of that gentleman, the Government which he represents is, and always has been, the most harmless, quiet, and unobtrusive Government that ever existed. It would be, according to him, a crime sufficient to draw down the wrath of Heaven, manifested in a manner that should be as a sign and a marvel to all future ages and generations of men, should the power of Great Britain be exerted to raise the blockade by means of which the Yankees hope to crush the "Rebels" of the seceded States. To so great a pitch has this sudden passion for justice ascended, that the foreign minister hesitates not to abandon the policy formerly inaugurated by the treaty of Paris, founded on common sense and concurred in by all the nations of the civilized world. A blockade to be respected, says that treaty, must be effectual. The English gloss upon that text was ostentatiously published to the world, in advance of the present blockade. If as many as three vessels ran it, it was to be considered ineffectual. It is very certain that instead of three, at least three hundred have run it, yet so superstitious is Earl Russell's reverence for neutrality, especially when its only effect is to injure a slaveholding people, who are the rivals of the British empire in the production of cotton, that he gulps down his own words with a readiness which shows that the process is natural, and rather pleasant than the contrary.

In spite of the declarations of the English Foreign Secretary, the world will be able to see at a glance that his boasted *neutrality* is, so far as we are concerned, nothing more nor less than hostility of a most deadly and most active character in disguise. The Yankees, by their superior fleet, have free access to the ports of Great Britain. They buy and bring here, for our subjugation or destruction, everything in the shape of munitions and arms that the workshops and laboratories of Great Britain afford. They obtain in vast quantities powder, saltpetre, sulphur, Armstrong guns, Enfield rifles, and whatever else they have a need for. We, having no ships, have no means of obtaining these things. The ports are closed to us as effectually as though a prohibition had been laid by a special act of Parliament. We submit that it is a very one-sided species of neutrality that gives every advantage to one party, and imposes every sort of obstacle on the other. If two parties engage in a fight with nothing but their hands, and while they are in the very heat of the conflict a by-stander hands one of them a sword, with which he dispatches his antagonist, the law will hardly hold such by-stander guiltless, let him protest as loudly as he may that he is entirely neutral. If there had been any intention on the part of the British Government to observe a real neutrality, an order in Council would have forbidden the sale of all warlike stores, munitions, and weapons to both parties. It would never have permitted the one to take advantage of its superiority in ships to furnish themselves with what the other could not obtain.

It has been charged by the newspapers of the Confederacy that Earl Russell has made a compact with Seward, by virtue of which the latter is engaged to send as much cotton to England as she wants, provided the British Government raise not the blockade in the *interim*. There are strong reasons to believe that this charge is just. Indeed, if the reports received from France be true, it might be established in a court of justice. These reports bear, that, up to the 23d of January, the Emperor retained in his speech to the Chambers, delivered on the 27th, a paragraph in which he expressed his determination to disregard the blockade. On that day, however, he received a communication from Earl Russell which induced him to strike it out.—Now, we maintain that no communication but one satisfying the Emperor that he could obtain a plenty of cotton, without breaking the blockade, could possibly have had the effect this one is represented to have had; and Earl Russell could have been authorized to make none such unless he had been tampered with by Seward. Admitting that this compact with Seward be real, it is difficult to imagine a more infamous transaction. The Foreign Secretary perfectly well knows that all the cotton thus received must be obtained by plundering those to whom it rightfully belongs. He places Great Britain, therefore, in the attitude of what is called in the vocabulary of slang, "a *fence*;" that is to say, a receiver of stolen goods. The Yankees are to overrun our country, murder our citizens, burn our houses, and seize our cotton; and upon the success of an enterprise conducted in this spirit Earl Russell stakes his chance of obtaining the supplies requisite for the English looms! Is not this making Great Britain a party to this war? Is she not made to say to the Yankee pirates, "burn, murder, rob, exterminate these people, and seize their effects; we will buy all you can steal?" What difference is there between the attitude of Great Britain at present, as she is represented by her Foreign Secretary, and those respectable gentlemen in Havana and Matanzas, who, in the good old days that existed before Tacon laid his heavy hand upon them, stood as factors between the pirates and the public, and sold at round prices upon land the silks and laces of which they had plundered the ships at sea? Was such an insult ever before given to a nation conferred by the very Minister giving it to be a "belligerent power?" Did the representative of a great nation ever before offer such a bonus to murder and piracy? "Go," says Russell to Seward, "plunder these rebels and send the spoils here; we will give you the highest market price for them."

Let us hear no more of British neutrality. It is a neutrality which does nobody any good but our enemies. It is of the same character with the Prussian neutrality during the Polish war of 1831. Whenever a Polish corps, retreating before their enemies, entered the Prussian territory, they were seized, disarmed, and kept as prisoners. When a Russian corps entered under the same circumstances, they were fed, cherished, protected from the Poles, and, as soon as there was no longer any danger, set at liberty to go again and fight against Poland. The neutrality of Prussia was altogether on one side, and so is the neutrality of Great Britain.

Yankee Profession and Yankee Practice.

The Yankees, of course, when they enter our country make the loudest professions of kindness and liberality to the inhabitants. It is one of the means by which they hope to lull us while they rivet the chains upon our limbs. What they will do, when they shall have succeeded in completely subduing us, let the world judge from the following well authenticated instance.

When the Yankees entered North Carolina, W... General issued a proclamation promising their Go... protection to all the inhabitants ... v. When they entered Pasquotank county, ... went to the house of ... h, Col. Jas. C. Johnson, and their property, ... collar of a large quantity of wines, liquors, and stock of wines, liquors, and other ... distinguished patr... ...er liquors, and ... rifled it, plundered his ... stock of wines, liquors, and other ...

actually stole and carried off the portrait of his father, Governor Johnston, of Revolutionary memory!

Men of the South! such is the treatment you may all expect at the hands of these marauding scoundrels. It happens that Col. Johnston was a patriot and an ardent defender of his country. But had he been otherwise, it would have made no difference. This is a war of plunder, and everything is plunder that comes in the way of the pirates. Lukewarmness, remissness in duty, even active partizanship with the enemy, cannot secure you. Plundered you must and will be, if you fall in their power. Let no man hope for any better fate. You have no hope but in resistance—resistance to the last—resistance to the death—and in that there is every hope. Let us all join our strength, and we shall become invincible. What motive can man have, that you have not? You fight for your wives, your children, your altars, your firesides, and all your earthly possessions. Who ever had more to fight for?

The New Secretary of War.

General George W. Randolph, the new Secretary of War, needs no introduction to our Virginia community. A grandson of Thomas Jefferson, his public and professional career have reflected no discredit even upon that illustrious name. As a lawyer, he has no superior at the bar of Virginia, and in forensic or legal debate, the strongest of our statesmen and advocates would find in him "a foeman worthy of their steel." We have listened with great admiration to his simple, unadorned, irresistible current of thought and logic, which flows on as smoothly, quietly, and powerfully as a great river. Dignity and simplicity are the characteristics of the style both of the lawyer and the man. If these were all Mr. Randolph's recommendations, however, we should never think of his being peculiarly qualified for Secretary of War.—Mr. Randolph, however, has received a military education, and during the present war has shown vast energy and aptitude in military organization, rising rapidly from the post of Captain of Artillery to that of General, until he has now been honored with his present most responsible and difficult position. He comes to the helm of the ship in a dark hour, with the roar of the breakers in hearing, and the eager waves throwing the spray and foam over her decks. But she has a stout-hearted crew on board, and the man who can rightly collect and apply their energies, will yet have the proud satisfaction of seeing her safe and afloat in the open sea, her broad flag kissed by favoring winds, and his own name honored and immortal.

FROM THE VALLEY.

The "Stonewall"—Ashby's Cavalry—Rumors of a Fight, &c.

[CORRESPONDENCE OF THE RICHMOND DISPATCH.]

WOODSTOCK, Shenandoah co., March 16.

Gen. Jackson, after remaining near Strasburg for three days, fell back to this place yesterday, a distance of twelve miles from the former. The enemy, with cavalry, artillery, and infantry, advanced to a small place called Middletown, midway between Winchester and Strasburg, on Thursday last, and were kept constantly annoyed by Ashby's cavalry, who captured several prisoners and wounded a number of others, with no loss on our side.

There is a rumor in camp this morning that the enemy, finding that our forces had fallen back, advanced to within two miles of Strasburg, to Cedar Creek, where Ashby is now fighting them. Two companies of rifles (one of them the Grayson Daredevils,) have just gone down to their support, and we look for a very lively time of it, as our forces have a very strong position there.

It is hard, indeed, to give up this beautiful and fertile country, the Valley of Virginia; but it is policy to contract our line of defence, and fall back where we can concentrate all our forces. Perhaps we will make Staunton our permanent rendezvous; but Gen. Jackson will take his time getting there, and all the troops in Yankeedom will scarcely make him swifter in his movements. The militia are coming in slowly, and a number of them, finding that they have got to serve, are volunteering.

Those who know that gallant officer and gentleman, Gen. Wm. B. Taliaferro, can with pride and pleasure congratulate the troops concentrated at Gloucester on their good fortune in securing him as commander. No kinder, braver or gallant officer ever led troops in the field. Success attend him wherever he goes is the sincere wish of his old command, the 2d Regt., and of these who know him. NED.

The Dreux Battalion.

The following stirring appeal to the first battalion Louisiana volunteers, in camp on the Peninsula, on the 25th of February, by Major J. M. Beard, commanding, has been sent to us by a gentleman of this city for publication:

I cannot permit this auspicious occasion to pass without a brief allusion to a subject fraught with interest to every member of this battalion. When it became necessary one year ago that the South, by the prowess of her sons, should make good the declaration of her final separation from the tyrannical majorities of the North, volunteers were found in every State eager to arm and strike for the defence of their native soil. Although no decisive blow had yet been struck, the members composing this corps offered their services as companies almost simultaneously. Then the storm was just gathering; its indistinct muttering were heard along the border. Now it has burst with all its fury. Our fair fields and villages are devastated, and our sanctuaries are polluted by the ruthless invader. Your's have the honor to have been the first volunteer organization in the field from your State, and, by a strange fatality, your brave and accomplished leader, the lamented Dreux, was the first hero martyr who fell for the cause of Louisiana. This little blood which flowed from the ghastly wound of this noble Creole on the morning of the 8th of July last, *baptized* this "the Dreux Battalion," in the history of this war. You have not yet avenged his death; your twelve months' enlistment will soon expire. Will you be content, my comrades, to lay down your arms and retire to your homes without striking a blow for vengeance, and at a time when the fate of your country hangs trembling in the balance? Can the men of New Orleans return to meet the reproachful glance of the grief-stricken partner of your dead leader, because you have disappointed the hopes of a corps to which his name and genius has given such a reputation? I cannot believe that you will. Every consideration urges you to preserve your organization. The perilous condition of your country should warn you not to withdraw your services even for a brief period, and leave her destinies in the keeping of untrained and undisciplined recruits. You have in your *material* a happy mingling of the gallant, impetuous, and generous Creoles, with the not less brave and determined Anglo-Saxon. You have, by a pleasing coincidence, representatives from the cotton districts of Red River, the sugar regions of the Mississippi, and the immense commercial interests of your metropolis; and as these great sources of wealth and power in your State mutually sustain and support each other so your intercourse has been marked by kind feeling, cordial friendship, and commendable rivalry. You may never expect to enjoy such pleasant relations, outside of your own corps, in undergoing the arduous trials of camp life; nor will you find comrades whom you would prefer in the excitement of a "charge," and the dangers of a hand-to-hand conflict. There may be those among you who desire, in a laudable spirit, to make up organizations in other arms of the service. Let them do so. This will not prevent you from retaining your organization, in which, being perfected by many months of experience, you are ready to do immediate and efficient service. You have among your number intelligent and patriotic men, whom you can elect to any position which you may desire to honor them. If you prefer to do so, you can displace *all* your company and field officers, and elevate from the *ranks* worthy men to succeed them.

The unfaltering zeal and untiring energy of the veterans of '76, whose footsteps were marked with blood on the soil, perhaps, upon which you now stand, should nerve you to any sacrifices which may be demanded of their descendants. Representing, as you do, the best blood of Louisiana, your honor forbids that you should quit the field until you have aided to retrieve the disasters at Somerset, Fort Henry, Roanoke, and Donelson.

In conclusion, I appeal to you, by those patriotic impulses which first prompted you to take up arms, by the memory of your Revolutionary sires, by *all* that is noble and generous in your natures, to stand to your posts while your country is menaced by a foe, and hand down to history a brilliant name for "Dreux's Battalion."

LOCAL MATTERS.

Arrests by the Provost Marshal's Force.—The neighborhood of 17th and Cary streets bears no enviable reputation. Assistant Provost Marshal, G. W. Alexander, having been informed that it was at times unsafe for citizens to pass in that neighborhood without being insulted, or their senses shocked by obscene conduct, produced mostly by intemperance, and it was also said to be the harbor of fugitives, Wednesday night, at 11 o'clock, the Provost Guard, 120 strong, were under arms. The detachment from below, commanded by Lt. Turner, C. S. A., the remainder of the guard, with the police, under Marshal Alexander in person, met at 18th and Main, surrounded the block of buildings between 17th and 18th, Cary, and the alley parallel to Main. The police force then entered each house in detail. Some of the scenes were revolting. Every male in the block was arrested and confined in the jail till morning, when they had a hearing by Marshal Alexander, assisted by Lts. Turner, Emack, and Semple.—The liquor found thus was poured into the streets, barrels were taken to the receiving store, and receipts given. Deserters were yesterday sent to their regiments. Shirkers from militia duty handled, and some very bad characters detained. The squad of prisoners arrested amounted to 80. Many were provided with British Consul papers; these were released after being identified. Lieut. Turner, C. S. A., and Mr. James Thomas, of the 1st Maryland regiment, deserve much credit for their energy and coolness. Yesterday, besides several soldiers arrested for drunkenness, Reuben T. Sale, an itinerant orator; William Thom, a German; and Saul Eaton, sewing machine man, were taken in custody on charges, the nature of which were not learned by us on inquiry.

Hustings Court, Judge Lyons presiding.—The time of this Court yesterday was occupied in the trial of one William R. Miller, formerly a Lieutenant in one of the Virginia regiments, who, about November last, was cashiered for some offence, and who, shortly thereafter, migrated to this city, where he conceived the idea of raising the wind by pretending to be a Lieutenant Colonel. He was successful in his imposture to the extent of swindling Messrs. King & Lambeth, the well known carriage manufacturing firm, of about $497 in money, and a buggy and saddle, which he got in exchange for a forged pay-roll, which he signed and palmed off on them as Lieut. Colonel. King & Lambeth soon found out the cheat, and recovered the greater portion of their funds and property. Mr. Smith, an assistant paymaster in the Confederate service, had, prior to the operation with K. & L., been so deceived by the sleek and plausible appearance and representations of the pretended Lieut. Colonel, as to advance him a month's pay as such. Mr. Smith was induced to do so because prisoner had been introduced to him by a young Baltimorean, named Tormey, as "Colonel Miller," and no case of false representation on the part of anybody claiming to be an officer had before occurred to induce a suspicion of the trick.

Prisoner was defended by N. A. Sturdivant and A. Judson Crane, Esqs., and prosecuted with his usual ability by Littleton Tazewell, Esq., Attorney for the Commonwealth.

After the evidence and arguments of counsel were heard, the case was given to the jury, who returned a verdict of guilty, and ascertained the term of his confinement in the Penitentiary at three years. The prisoner moved the Court to set aside the verdict, as contrary to the law and the evidence, and grant a new trial, which was refused. Time was allowed until to day to file a bill of exceptions.

The trial of James P. Neagle, for shooting a child, will commence this morning.

Mayor's Court, Yesterday.—There were but few cases before the Mayor yesterday. Offenders are deterred from indulging their inclinations for mischief by reason of a wholesome dread they entertain of the military guard of the Provost Marshal. Drunkenness is at a discount, and even fugacious darkies, usually impudent, obstinate, trifling, and indifferent to considerations of an ordinary nature, bow to the supremacy of the law when it is enforced by the aid of the bayonet. Very few of them are now caught prowling around in out-of-the-way places, pickers up of unconsidered trifles. Edward Keeling, who was apprehended some two weeks since for feloniously aiding and abetting Richard Wright in stabbing and cutting Frederick Smith, and breaking open the house of Mary Walden, was brought up yesterday from jail, to which he was again remanded by the Mayor until the 26th inst., in order to allow the officers time to apprehend one of his accomplices.

The Whiskey Embargo.—We have received the proceedings of a largely attended meeting of the Free and Easy Society, held a few nights ago at the Odd Blotez Hall, to take into consideration the late stoppage of the sale of whiskey by the proclamation of martial law. Colonel Horn presided, and Mr. Rye acted as secretary. The following resolutions, reported by a committee, were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That in view of the proclamation of martial law, and the complete embargo upon the sale of whiskey, which has deprived us of our ancient luxury of getting drunk when we please, we fear the most pernicious consequences, and we do hereby denounce it as as evil, altogether intolerable, and grievous to be borne.

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to wait upon the President, whose duty it shall be to represent to him that a vast number of loyal men are suffering the terrors of famine in consequence of his ill-considered proclamation, and to beseech him to modify it, at least so far as the groceries are concerned.

Resolved, That another committee be appointed to visit the hospitals, to inquire whether there are not more men there now than at any previous period; which if found to be the case, will prove that no whiskey at all is more injurious than a little once in a while.

Resolved, That another committee be appointed, to visit Gen. Winder, and ask him if this law was really made for gentlemen and vagabonds, or for vagabonds alone.

Resolved, That we deeply sympathize, as brothers in affliction, with the various barkeepers, grocers, and other small dealers in whiskey, whose business has thus been felled at a single blow; and that, as a mark of our respect, copies of these proceedings shall be sent to them, if living, and to their assigns, if dead.

After some suggestions as to whether it would be proper to make speeches on the occasion, it was decided that, under the peculiar circumstances of solemnity, it would be better to adjourn. And the meeting forthwith dissolved.

River and Harbor Defence—We are far from assuming that by any possible combination of circumstances likely to be formed, that the Yankee desperadoes, with their iron-clad gunboats, could ever make their way up James river to this city. Should our authorities ever consider such a state of things as likely to occur, we submit for their consideration some of the requisites for successful river and harbor defence, premising that the writer of the propositions is not unknown to fame in naval annals:

1. The first requisite to a battery commanding a channel is, that the battery itself shall be barricaded by sunken vessels; piles driven well down and secured together by chain cables, or, where heavy trees can be procured, as the live oak of the South, by tier upon tier of the latter; but the first is the speediest and most effectual and makes the best barricade.

2 The battery should always be bomb-proof, otherwise, as at Roanoke Island, the sweep of shot and shell will compel the men to keep under cover, and prevent them from inflicting any serious injury upon the enemy. Protected by a bomb-proof, the only exposure is through the embrasures, and thus in comparative safety the guns may be worked.

3. Every water battery should, where the face of the country will admit, be covered by an inland protecting battery, by which, should our men be driven from the first, the enemy may be prevented from landing.

Frustrated.—The prisoners in the city jail recently made another attempt to enlarge their area of freedom, but the plan was frustrated by a timely discovery. One was found in the hole under the jail, which had been used on a former occasion by the prisoners as an avenue of escape. It is now securely blocked up with granite, and all danger of escape thereby has been avoided.

Recaptured.—Geo. W. Twells and Julius Roth, two of the prisoners who escaped from the county jail on Monday night, were recaptured yesterday at Hanovertown Ferry, by Mr. Albert D. Wicker, and delivered up to the Provost Marshal in this city. All of the stampeders will doubtless be arrested.

C. S. District Court.—The trial of E. F. Husted, for an offence in connection with the Patent laws, took place yesterday. The jury failed to agree upon a verdict, and the accused was admitted to bail in the sum of $300 for his appearance next term.

Personal.—Gen. Geo. W. Randolph, the new Secretary of War, is expected in Richmond to-day.

Uniforms of Officers.—We have seen in the streets many an officer wearing on his coat, to show his rank, the badge adopted by the United States Government. Some others, for fear people might mistake their rank, wear, in friendly neighborhoods, the C. S. and U. S. badges. We think this is wrong. Officers ought to adopt exclusively our Southern badges, which are as follows:

On the sleeve of the tunic, rank is distinguished by an ornament of gold braid, extending around the seam of the cuff and up the outside of the arm to the bend of the elbow. To be of one braid for lieutenants, two for captains, three for field officers, and four for general officers. The braid to be one-eighth of an inch in width.

On the front part of the collar of the tunic the rank of the officer will be distinguished as follows:

General Officers—A wreath, with three stars enclosed, embroidered in gold. The edge of the wreath to be three fourths of an inch from the front edge of the collar; the stars to be arranged horizontally; the centre one to be one and one-fourth inches in exterior diameter, and the others three fourths of an inch.

Colonels—Three stars, embroidered in gold, arranged horizontally, and dividing equally the vertical space of the collar. Each star to be one and one-fourth inches in exterior diameter; the front star to be three-fourths of an inch from the edge of the collar.

Lieutenant Colonel—Two stars, of same material, size and arrangement as for a Colonel.

Major—One star, to be placed three-fourths of an inch from edge of collar, and dividing equally the vertical space.

Captain—Three horizontal bars, embroidered in gold; each one-half inch in width; the upper bar to be three inches in length; the front edge of the bars to incline to correspond with the angle of the collar, and to be three-fourths of an inch from the edge; the line of the back edges to be vertical!

First Lieutenant—Two horizontal bars of the same material and size as for captains, and dividing equally the vertical space of collar.

Second Lieutenants—One horizontal bar of the same material and size as for the centre bar of captain, and dividing equally the vertical space of collar.

For the information of tailors having uniforms to make, we extracted the above from the General Orders No. 9 of the Adjutant and Inspector General.

Sturdivant's Battery.—Young gentlemen who desire to enter the artillery service, would do well to unite with Sturdivant's Battery, a company lately organized in this city, and under marching orders. This command is made up entirely of young Virginians, of character and respectability, and is well officered. Camp life is rendered agreeable, or otherwise by the associations it induces, and a great good is gained when one is assured that the hours of duty will be passed with men of the right kind. That assurance every man will have who joins this command. No substitutes have been enlisted therein. The company has nearly attained the maximum fixed by law, and those who wish to unite with it would do well to apply early.

Boggs's Battalion of Light Artillery.—Several of the companies of this command have been subjected to the slight confusion that has pervaded all the companies recruiting, since the Governor's recent proclamations. But, we are pleased to know, the battalion is now getting on finely and bids fair to be organized in due time. It promises to be a very desirable command, and will be second to none in its equipments. As none of the companies of this battalion are receiving substitutes, the prospect is that their complement of men will be obtained from the class of patriotic men, that will meet public expectation.

First Regiment Virginia Volunteers.—This regiment was at Orange Court-House on Wednesday. Their baggage was brought down to the Central Depot yesterday, and the belief was thereby induced that they would soon pass through Richmond to some other post of duty.

Merited Compliment.—Some of the personal friends of Sergeant-Major F. W. Tichenor, of the Wise Legion, have presented to that gentleman a handsome and costly saddle; a compliment which is duly appreciated by the worthy recipient.

Wrong Name.—It was Charles Cornel, and not Parnell, who was pardoned out of the Penitentiary on Wednesday by the Governor. Prisoner had served four out of the five years for which he was sent up, as stated by us yesterday.

The Board of Exemption still continues in session at the City Hall. They meet every day at 10 o'clock. Certificates are obtained from Mr. Robert Howard, Clerk of the Board.

A SPIRITED GIRL.—The Columbus (Ga.) *Times* says the following extract from a letter of a Savannah girl (not all unknown to fame) is too good to be immersed in the private portfolio for which it was intended:

Do you believe that instead of feeling frightened I feel quite brave, and I think if I only had the strength of my heart in my hand I would make a little hero during this war. On the day that the engagement was going on at Port Royal, and everything around us was one wild scene of confusion for fear of an attack on Savannah, I seated myself in the midst of all and made a Confederate flag for the express purpose of having it safely in their faces when they landed. If they come upon us by land, they will have to pass this very door, and an split of everything but *cheins*, I intend to wave my banner. I intend to be the first Savannah girl to dare them, and to show them that the South has not only brave men but brave women also. Now it makes my blood boil when I hear of a cowardly act done by any one bearing the name of *man!* There were some in Savannah who, during the fight at Port Royal, became alarmed for fear their courage might be put to the test, and as they would much rather run than fight, and could not do so well if they wore a hat and boots, preferred the more modest attire of females, and took to bonnets and slippers. Since then I have considered our uniform disgraced for ever, if we do not prove to the world that *all* who wear this modest disguise are not cowards. To set the rest of the gentler sex an example, I have volunteered to exchange my hat and slippers for the boots and breeches of the next man who had rather run than fight, and promise, too, that I never will disgrace it by cowardly conduct. If the men prove cowards at a time like this, it is high time for the women to show what they can do; and if they cannot depend on them for protection, show them that they have bravery enough to meet them at their own doors, if they cannot follow them to the battle-field.

I think that every woman should prove a true Spartan to the cause of liberty, and when history shall bear record of the deeds of 1861, it will reflect upon them no disgrace, but give them credit for following the example of their mothers of '76.

THE POWDER MILL EXPLOSION NEAR NEW ORLEANS.—The N. O. *Bulletin*, of the 10th instant, has the following particulars of the recent powder mill explosion opposite that city:

So far as we could learn there were but 3000 pounds of powder lost, yet the force generated was enormous. Where one of the buildings stood it is said that a great depression was made in the solid earth. The mills were going at the time, and five employees were instantly killed, viz: Jno Holden, David Oraddock, James Freeman, Charles Roe, and David Farrier. A soldier happened to be sitting in front of one of the doors at the time and was badly injured; the flesh was blown from a portion of his head, and it was feared that his skull was fractured.

The bodies of the victims were blown to great distances, and their members scattered about. The clothing was entirely blown from all of them. One body fell at the distance of about 170 yards from the mill, and then glanced along the surface of the ground for 20 or 30 feet, until it was dashed full against a fence.

The cause of the disaster remains a mystery, though the inquest, which was about to take place when we left, may throw some light on it. There is, however, we believe, no suspicion of any foul play about it. Mr. Curtis, one of the proprietors, was on the premises himself at the time, and the mills had been in full operation for several days and nights without intermission, and consequently no opportunity was given to carry malicious designs into execution.

The cause of the second explosion is found evidently in the fact that the wind was setting full and strong from the mill when the first explosion occurred upon the other, and the heat, if not the flame itself, was conveyed to the remaining powder with great intensity.

Apart from the fearful loss of life, the great loss is in the machinery, which was blown to atoms. The copper balls used in the cylinder to grind the powder were scattered in every direction. Probably most of them will be lost. One of them penetrated the window of a neighboring kitchen, but fortunately did no damage.

Adjutant A. E. Jackson, of Col. Powell's regiment Tennessee volunteers, died in Rutherford county, Tennessee, on the 6th inst.

Report says that Parson Brownlow was serenaded for an entire night, by a Yankee brass band, on his arrival in Nashville.

CONFEDERATE CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION.

SENATE.

THURSDAY, March 20th, 1862.

The Senate met at 12 o'clock, pursuant to adjournment. Prayer by the Rev Dr. J. L. BURROWS, of the Baptist Church.

Mr. HILL, of Ga., presented a communication which he had received from the Methodist Conference of Georgia—a large and respectable body—accompanied by a preamble and resolution, which, on his motion, were referred to the Committee on Military Affairs. The resolutions express gratitude to Almighty God for his kind interposition in behalf of the South; recommend a weekly prayer meeting; repudiate the reconstruction of the "Union," and object to a reduction of the pay of Chaplains in the army.

SUSPENSION OF THE TARIFF.

Mr BARNWELL, of S. C., from the Committee of Finance, reported back the resolution proposing to suspend the collection of duties on foreign imports during the existing war, and asked to be discharged from the further consideration of the same, and that it be laid upon the table for the present.

Mr SIMMS, of La., intimated that at some future day he would call up the matter, and press action upon it, by introducing a bill to carry out the object of the resolution.

The resolution was then laid upon the table for the present.

ROANOKE ISLAND.

On motion of Mr. DAVIS, of N. C., the Secretary of War was requested to furnish an official report of the affair at Roanoke Island.

The Senate then went into secret legislative session.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

THURSDAY, March 20, 1862.

House met at 12 o'clock, and was opened with prayer by Rev. Dr. Doggett. Journal of yesterday read and approved.

Mr. KILGORE, of Kentucky, announced the presence of his colleague, Hon. Mr. BURNS, of Kentucky, who appeared and took the oath.

A message was received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate insists upon its disagreement to the House amendment to the bill fixing the pay and mileage of members, asking a committee of conference between the two Houses, and informing the House that Messrs. Barnett, Barnwell, and Wigfall were appointed upon the part of the Senate.

Mr. GARLAND, of Arkansas, moved that a like committee be appointed on the part of the House. Agreed to.

Mr. PUGH, from the Committee on Military Affairs, reported back the following bill, which was engrossed, read a third time, and passed:

An Act to provide for ascertaining and detailing Artisans and Mechanics from the Confederate States Army.

SEC. 1. *Be it enacted by the Congress of the Confederate States of America*, That the Secretary of War is hereby authorized and required forthwith to establish regulations for ascertaining the names and occupations of all the artizans and mechanics in the army of the Confederate States.

SEC. 2. *Be it further enacted*, That when discovery is made of said artizans and mechanics, the Secretary of War shall provide for securing the services of such persons as he may select in their respective trades, to the Government of the Confederate States in such work and labor as may be deemed important in the military movements or operations of the army and navy, and also in other work and labor needed by the Government, in or out of the army and navy, in the prosecution of the existing war. And where such artizans and mechanics shall be detached from their commands and employed with their consent in the workshops, ship yards, or other places for the Government work, the Secretary shall allow them reasonable compensation, and when said artizans and mechanics shall cease to be employed as aforesaid, they shall be returned to their respective commands, and again enter on military duty. And when said artizans and mechanics shall be detailed on work and labor necessary to the operations or movements of the army to which they may be attached, they shall be paid a sum not exceeding fifty cents per day in addition to the pay and allowance now allowed by law for such times as they may be so detailed.

Mr. PUGH also reported a bill to allow the President to increase his personal staff, which, after a third reading, was adopted.

Mr. MILES, from the same committee, reported back a bill for the organization of a corps for working nitre cases and establishing nitre beds. The bill was engrossed, read a third time, and passed.

The unfinished business of yesterday—the bill entitled an act to carry into effect the sixth section of the first article of the Constitution, allowing Cabinet ministers seats upon the floor of Congress, with the privilege of discussing measures pertaining to the business of their respective Departments—was taken up, and the amendment of Mr. KENNER, of Louisiana, adding the words, "during the continuance of the present war," was adopted. The bill was then ordered to its engrossment, when

Mr. DAVIS, of Miss., obtained the floor and opposed the measure in a speech of considerable length. At the conclusion of his remarks,

Mr. DARGAN, of Ala., called the question, which being put to the House, was negatived.

Mr. KNIGHT, of Georgia, explained the reasons which influenced the Provisional Congress in incorporating the provision into the Constitution. The bill reported from the Judiciary Committee merely proposed to carry out the Constitution.

Mr. MACHEN, of Ky., and Mr. RUSSELL, of Va., advocated the bill, and at the conclusion of Mr. RUSSELL's remarks,

Mr. FOOTE, of Tenn., moved that the House go into secret session, which being seconded, the Speaker ordered the floor to be cleared.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA.

SENATE.

THURSDAY, March 20, 1862.

The Senate was called to order at 11 o'clock A. M., the PRESIDENT in the Chair.

A communication from the House of Delegates was read, announcing the passage of sundry bills.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. COGHILL, from the Committee for Courts of Justice, reported a bill prohibiting free negroes from engaging in the business of buying, for the purpose of sale, any agricultural product, or other article, without permission of the county Courts; a bill in relation to auditing the claims of the army and navy of Virginia; a joint resolution concerning stocks and bonds of the State held by citizens of the United States.

Mr. CARSON, from the Committee on Military Affairs, reported a bill concerning exemptions from military duty.

RESOLUTIONS.

Mr THOMAS, of Henry, offered the following joint resolution:

Whereas, it appears that the Sheriff elected for the county of Franklin has farmed his office, and is himself now in the service of the Confederate States: Be it, therefore,

Resolved, by the General Assembly, That the Governor of the Commonwealth, if in his opinion the interest of the State will be thereby promoted, may exempt from military duty one Deputy Sheriff in said county, in addition to the one already authorized by law to be exempt.

On motion of Mr. THOMAS, the rules were suspended and the resolution adopted, and the same ordered to be communicated to the House.

Mr. DAY offered the following resolution, which was adopted:

Resolved, That a special committee inquire into the expediency of authorizing the sale of certain property belonging to the Lower Parish Church, in Nansemond county.

Committee—Messrs. Day, Johnston, and McKenney.

COUPON BONDS.

Mr. JOHNSTON called up the following joint resolution, offered by him yesterday, and which laid over under the rules:

Whereas, C. W. Purcell & Co., prior to the 26th of June, 1861, in pursuance of their licensed privilege as brokers, were in the habit of purchasing the coupon bonds of the State held in the city of New York, causing the said bonds to be cancelled, and in that condition, to avoid risk, transmitting the same to the city of Richmond, where, in pursuance of an arrangement with the Second Auditor, a new bond would be issued in lieu of the one so cancelled and delivered to the Second Auditor; and whereas, it is represented that the said C. W. Purcell & Co., about the 26th of June, 1861, made several purchases of bonds in New York, which were cancelled as before said, but before they were delivered and converted into new stock the Convention of Virginia passed an ordinance suspending the payment of interest on all bonds held by residents of the United States prior to the 26th of June, 1861, which was construed to prohibit the conversion of certain bonds purchased and held by the said C. W. Purcell & Co., which remain in their hands and subject to waste and destruction; and whereas, the said C. W. Purcell & Co., without at this time seeking to obtain the interest due on said bonds, but merely to have the evidence of said arrangement perpetuated; it is

Resolved, by the General Assembly, That the Second Auditor be and is hereby authorized to convert all such bonds so held by C. W. Purcell & Co. into the registered debt of the State or other coupon bonds, specifying on the records of his office on what occasion the same are converted, and that the interest thereon be suspended during the war, unless ordered by the General Assembly.

Mr. BRANCH moved to amend the resolution by adding the following:—"And the bonds authorized hereby shall express upon its face that the principal and interest of this bond is not to be paid until ordered by the Legislature." The amendment was lost.

On motion of Mr. JOHNSTON, the words, "or other coupon bonds," were stricken out of the resolution.

On motion of Mr. NELSON, the resolution was further amended by adding the following to the closing paragraph, "and endorse the same on the several coupons."

Mr. BRANCH moved to refer the resolution to the Committee of Finance, but subsequently withdrew it. Mr. NEWMAN renewed the motion, and it prevailed.

EXEMPTIONS.

Mr. NASH moved to take up the following joint resolution offered by him yesterday, which lay over under the rules:

Resolved, by the General Assembly, That one white ferryman, who is the only ferryman over a water course where a legal ferry is established, over which the Confederate States mail is carried, shall be exempt from military duty under the Proclamation of the Governor of 10th March, 1862.

The motion to take up was agreed to, and the question being upon its adoption, it was lost.

BILL REPORTED.

Mr. DAY, from a special committee, reported "a bill providing for the sale of certain property of the Lower Church of Nansemond," which was read a first and second time and ordered to be engrossed.

BILL REJECTED.

On motion of Mr. ISBELL, a bill for the relief of John Avis, of Jefferson county, was taken up, and the question being upon the passage of the same, the bill was lost.

BILLS PASSED.

A bill authorizing the County Court of Powhatan county to re-assess the Huguenot Springs, property of A. S. Wooldridge, (called up and advocated by Mr. NASH.) A bill authorising the payment of a certain sum of money to George Cooper, for services as Clerk of the 115th Virginia Regiment, (called up by Mr. BRANCH.)

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

On motion of Mr. NASH, the joint order of the day, having for its object the election of State officers, was taken up, and the following candidates declared elected:

Superintendent of the Penitentiary—CHARLES BIRD, of Hampshire.

Second Auditor.—HENRY W. THOMAS, of Fairfax.

Having proceeded thus far in said election, on motion of Mr. FRASER, it was resolved, with the concurrence of the House of Delegates, that the Senate postpone the further execution of the joint order of the day until to-morrow, at 12 o'clock M.

SPECIAL REPORTS.

Mr. ROBERTSON, from a special committee, reported the following bills: Abolishing the Board of Public Works; Abolishing vaccine agents or appointments; Abolishing the office of Superintendent of Weights and Measures.

On motion, the Senate adjourned.

HOUSE OF DELEGATES.

THURSDAY, March 20, 1862.

An act imposing taxes for the support of the Government was laid on the table.

On motion of Mr EDMUNDS, it was

Resolved, That the Committee of Courts of Justice inquire what legislation, if any, is necessary to carry into effect the Constitution adopted by the Convention on the 5th December, 1861, should the said Constitution be ratified by the voters of the Commonwealth and that they report by bill or otherwise.

On motion of Mr. EDMUNDS, it was

Resolved, That the Committee of Courts of Justice inquire into the expediency of reporting a bill providing annual meetings of the General Assembly in the event of the ratification of the Constitution adopted by the Convention, on the 5th day of December, 1861.

Mr. MATTHEWS offered the following, which was adopted:

Resolved, by the General Assembly of Virginia, That the Printer of the Court of Appeals at Lewisburg be exempted from the operation of the Proclamation of the Governor, calling out the entire militia of the State.

Mr. KEIM submitted the following, which was laid over under the rules:

Resolved, by the General Assembly, That in addition to the exemptions heretofore authorized by law, the following named classes of persons shall be exempt from military service: Agents, owners and masters of freight boats, owners, agents, captains, mates, drivers, and boat hands of packet boats and boat builders on the James River and Kanawha Canal.

On motion of