Richmond Dispatch.

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THURSDAY MORNING.....SEPTEMBER 3, 1863.

EVACUATION OF KNOXVILLE.—The town of Knoxville, Tenn., was evacuated by our troops on Monday, and on Tuesday was occupied by the Yankee forces under Burnside. The Yankees came in so soon after the evacuation that they captured two or three trains of cars which had been left there by our troops.

We hear nothing of the locality to which Gen. Buckner's command retreated. It is supposed that the burning of a bridge on the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad prevented the removal of the cars noticed above as being captured. This feat was doubtless performed by the tories with which East Tennessee abounds.

FROM FREDERICKSBURG.—The Yankees are still on the banks of the Rappahannock, opposite Fredericksburg. They were seen yesterday cutting away the undergrowth in front of the rifle pits on Scotts Hill, which they occupied when Burnside and Hooker were in Stafford, and it is supposed they again intend to make the Stafford hills bristle with siege guns. Their cavalry can be seen patroling up and down the river bank all day long. The larger portion of their force is above Falmouth, near the fords, where they crossed under Hooker to meet their last disaster in that neighborhood.

One monitor and three large gunboats passed up the Rappahannock about 10 o'clock Tuesday night, supposed to be on the lookout for the captured steamers "Satellite" and "Reliance." Passengers on the down train, on the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railroad, while at Hamilton's Crossing, about 12 o'clock yesterday, heard heavy firing in the direction of Port Royal. It commenced about 4 o'clock in the morning, and was believed to be the gunboats attempting to prevent our men from taking the machinery out of the steamers captured by Lt. Wood. As we have a force on the spot, a severe engagement is likely to have taken place.

We learn that the guns from the Satellite and Reliance had been taken out and put in position for a fight, and that they were available for an action with gunboats.

A passenger reports that Tuesday morning a large force of Yankees were seen moving down their side of the river towards Port Royal, and it is probable they were to aid in the recapture of the gunboats. Two of our pickets at Port Royal were captured by the enemy Tuesday night.

THE BATTLE AT THE WHITE SULPHUR.—We learn from passengers who came through from Millboro' yesterday that the Yankee force which was repulsed by Gen. Jones has retreated to Beverly, in Randolph county. We have some further particulars of the battle of the 26th ult:

The opposing forces met at the point where the Anthony's Creek road enters the White Sulphur or Kanawha Turnpike, near two miles east of the Springs. The Yankees, chiefly cavalry, numbered, it is estimated, 3,000; our own force considerably less. The fight commenced at 9 o'clock Wednesday morning. The Yankees, if anything, had the advantage of position. The combat continued until dark without a change of position, and was renewed early Thursday, when the enemy, making a fruitless charge, retreated precipitately. Our loss in killed and wounded 160, the enemy's some 400, including prisoners. The enemy charged our men several times on Wednesday, but were repulsed. The ground of the fight involved a small settlement, whose inhabitants fled, losing by the destruction of their property enough to subject them to suffering. Mr. Miller, well known as a merchant at Dry Creek, lost his dwelling house and kitchen, which were set on fire by a shell. In his house was consumed all his money, which was in notes, two gold watches, and his furniture, clothing, &c., his family saving nothing, having left precipitately to escape the dangers of the fight—their house being between the two armies. Colonel Patton, by his gallantry, well won the title to promotion, which we are sure will be duly acknowledged. This brave officer was wounded early in the war at the battle of Scary, in Kanawha, and it was feared at the time mortally, the ball entering the shoulder. He was a long time disabled from it.

FROM NORTHERN VIRGINIA.—Passengers who arrived by the Central train yesterday afternoon report nothing new from Gen. Lee's army.

Winchester is clear of the enemy, who are no nearer than Martinsburg.

THE LADIES OF WINCHESTER.—A wounded soldier just arrived from Winchester, requests that the sincere and heartfelt thanks of himself and a number of his comrades of the sick and wounded Confederates from Gettysburg, be tendered to the ladies of Winchester for their kind attentions to them while in hospital there. Their ministrations to our brave soldiers left there are said to have been constant and devoted. They came like angels among the sufferers, promoting their comfort and cheering their spirits by their own bright faces and their brighter hopes. The ladies of Winchester have been subjected to severe trials during this war—the waves of battle have rolled destructively over their town—and under the trying excitement of its occupation by turns of their own and the enemy's troops, they have felt terribly the horrors of war. Their example of a constancy and charity is worthy alike of admiration and emulation.

ARMY AGENCY.—Mr. A. S. Buford, who has been appointed Army Agent for Virginia, has opened a depot in Shockoe Slip, near the Columbian Hotel. The friends of the Virginia troops are requested to send their contributions for them to the Virginia depot, and Mr. Buford will have them promptly forwarded at the expense of the State. He will do this we are assured without the least delay. The name of the company, regiment, brigade, and corps, should be marked on the barrels. All contributions, whether to individuals or for the [illegible] should be forwarded from city [illegible] to this depot.

DAILY DISPATCH.

VOL. XXV. RICHMOND, VA., THURSDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 3, 1863. NO. [illegible]

THE SEIGE OF CHARLESTON.

The general impression communicated both by the Charleston papers and by the Yankee correspondents from the scene is that some night this week the iron-clads intend attempting to burst through the obstructions and get into the inner harbor. The letter bag of the United States gunboat Ottawa, with letters to friends at home, dated as late as the 29th instant, floated ashore on Saturday night, and is in possession of our officers. The *Mercury* says:

By letters from the Captain (Lt. Commanding Wm. Whitney) to his wife, and by those of other officers, we are informed that the Yankees have entertained the idea of breaking up our harbor obstructions by night operations, and actually made the attempt last Wednesday night with their monitors and two gunboats, of which the Ottawa was one. "Violent squalls of rain and wind" are given as a reason for their having turned back before reaching the obstructions, of which our Yankee neighbors have apparently so wholesome a dread and so high an estimate. The attempt, they say, was to be made again on the night of the 29th instant, (Saturday,) and, as it was not done, it is to be presumed stormy weather again intervened, between the monitors and our obstructions which stand intact. From this effusion we learn, as was anticipated, that very many of their officers in the fleet "are breaking down and being sent home continually, from the incessant wear and tear on them in this hot climate." It appears, in the attempt to destroy our obstructions, the Passaic got aground, and was near being abandoned by her crew. The Ottowa has thrown 80,000 pounds of shot and shell, and burned 11,000 pounds of powder.

The *Courier*, of Monday, gives us a history of the operations of the enemy on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. During Friday night and Saturday the shelling from the enemy's land batteries was unusually slow, our James Island batteries, however, keeping up a constant and vigorous fire in reply. It says:

Until yesterday no formidable attack has been made on Fort Sumter since the attack of the monitors on Sunday morning, the 26th inst. That attack was short in duration, but the fire very accurate, and owing to causes we trust now removed, very dangerous. It may not be indiscreet to mention in general terms the fact that had the fire been continued in all probability the magazine would have soon been made unsafe, or had an early renewal of the attack taken place the fort might have been blown up. The monitors, however, drew off. Seven days have since elapsed, and the powder since then placed beyond danger.

About half-past four yesterday afternoon battery Cheves opened on a side wheel steamship transport loaded with troops. The troops were landed at Oyster Point. The enemy were also observed landing heavy guns from a propeller.

The firing Sunday afternoon was kept up regularly between the enemy's batteries and Fort Moultrie, batteries Cheves, Haskell and Wagner. The Yankees are reported working continually and cautiously on an advanced battery at the rifle pits, and yesterday afternoon kept up a steady fire from one Parrott gun. Later in the day, however, they had succeeded in getting two more in position, and at last accounts had opened a heavy fire on battery Wagner from three Parrott guns.

Out of a little over eight hundred shots from the four Yankee batteries fired at Fort Sumter yesterday, hardly one hundred struck the fort, all the rest falling short, showing a proof that the enemy's guns are losing their efficiency.

The enemy, it is reported, has mounted new guns on his batteries Nos. 1, 2, and Gadberry Hill. Two of these guns are believed to be three hundred pounder Parrotts. He has also mounted a very heavy gun in battery at Gadberry Hill.

There has been no change of importance in the position or number of vessels in the fleet. Very heavy firing commenced at nine o'clock last night and still continued at the hour of closing our report at 12 o'clock.

THE PLAN FOR PASSING FORT SUMTER—THE NAVY MUST NOW DO THE WORK.

The New York *Herald* contains a four-column letter containing the latest Northern news from Charleston. We extract some portions of it:

It is certain that no serious offensive powers are left to the rebels in Fort Sumter, and the passage of the fort by our iron clads is entirely practicable, without much danger from its fire. At all events, we have inflicted enough damage upon the fort to justify us in regarding it as practically reduced, and incapable of inflicting serious harm upon a fleet. If the navy cannot now pass the work, we may as well regard that arm of the service as of little value. The long looked for moment will soon arrive when a second attempt to pass it by our iron-clads will be made. The first, on the 7th of April last, by the squadron under Admiral Dupont, although one of brilliant dash, boldness, and vigor, failed for reasons well known to the public. They were not owing to any lack of courage, skill, or determination on his part, or on the part of the gallant officers who so manfully supported him, but solely to the vessels themselves, several individuals to the contrary notwithstanding. Of this no one who knows the circumstances of the case can doubt.

This, the second attempt, is under more favorable circumstances. Sumter is out of the way, or at least so weak as to inspire little fear. Fort Moultrie can be passed at a distance of nearly, if not quite, a mile, and her fire and that of battery Bee should not be very dangerous to the monitors. Battery Gregg, with her single gun, is of little account. What is most to be feared is the obstructions and torpedoes. The enemy have unquestionably been busily engaged in perfecting their very effective system of obstructions and submarine defences since our occupation of this island, with a view of meeting a contingency now presented by the defenceless condition of Fort Sumter. Then they have Fort Johnson, the new batteries near it, the Middle Ground battery, and others which I cannot locate, with the rams, upon which they place much reliance. But all this is to be more definitely settled, probably, before this will reach you, and it is useless to indulge in further speculations on the subject.

What Admiral Dahlgren's plans are I do not profess to know; but I have reason to fear that he is losing most valuable time by his delay. Every moment now is worth a year in ordinary times—a fact which the rebels recognize, as they are strengthening and enlarging their old batteries, building new ones, and mounting heavier guns at points where they will be terribly effective against the navy if it ever attempts to move towards Charleston. A few days' more delay may ruin the entire campaign. Sumter was reduced because it was in the way of the navy; but Admiral Dahlgren has as yet made no advance towards completing the work which Gen. Gillmore has so gloriously begun. The army is unable to do more. Gen. Gillmore has performed his part of the contract, and it now remains for the navy to enter upon and perform its part of the work. A week's delay may enable the rebels to replace Fort Sumter by new batteries within the harbor, which will make the capture of Charleston as far off as it was before we fired the first shot against it. There is a deep feeling of fear growing on shore that the fruits of our glorious triumph will be permitted to slip from our grasp by inexplicable procrastination on the part of the navy. I cannot explain this seeming want of energy on the part of the naval authorities. They may be able to do it; but some better reasons must be given than those already in circulation, or the country will feel far from satisfied with the results of naval operations in this quarter.

A SECRET INFERNAL MACHINE VISITS THE NEW INCORPORATION.

On Thursday night last, about 10 o'clock, while [illegible] to the work of the [illegible] supply [illegible] the depot.

channel and towards his ship, the new Ironsides. He watched it closely as it neared him, and soon saw enough to excite his suspicion that all was not right. When she had come within speaking distance he hailed her and asked what vessel it was. The reply came, "Ay, ay, sir; all right." As this was not the proper answer to be given by any of our vessels he hailed again. The next answer was, "A live Yankee from Port Royal." He was then satisfied that she was a rebel vessel, and he called all hands to quarters.—The strange vessel continued to move towards the Ironsides, and attempted to cross her bows or explode a torpedo against her sides. But she failed in the latter attempt, and only succeeded in getting foul of the frigate's ram, which stopped her for a moment. She finally got off and started rapidly towards Fort Moultrie. Several guns were fired from the frigate at her, but it was thought none struck the audacious vessel, as she went off flying.

THE SWAMP ANGEL SPEAKS TO CHARLESTON.

In a finely constructed battery, in the marsh to our left, is a gun which bears upon the rebel city of Charleston. Of its calibre and precise location I shall write in due time; but at present I desire only to mention it as firing the first shot against Charleston. It was fired on Friday night a number of times at the city; but whether the projectiles reached their mark is a question of some doubt.

It is reported that the fire bells of Charleston vigorously rang for some time during the night, either to call the citizens and military to arms or to rouse the Fire Department. I give the report as I received it in regard to the alarm; but I do not vouch for its correctness. We shall doubtless hear of this gun again as playing an important part in the tragedy now enacting.

CHANGE OF THE GARRISON IN SUMTER.

The Charleston correspondent of the Savannah *Republican* furnishes an interesting letter from there on the 25th ult. He predicts that the city of Charleston will shortly be shelled in preference to its defensive works. The following is an extract from the letter:

The noble and gallant garrison of Fort Sumter—the 1st regiment South Carolina regulars, Col. Alfred Rhett—after their long, arduous, and successful services, were, with the exception of one company, relieved tonight. Their places are supplied by a force of picked men detached from the 27th and 28th Georgia regiments, respectively commanded by Captain Edwards, of the 27th, and Worthe., of the 28th, the latter being senior officer. I was among these gallant veterans as they rendezvoused on the wharf to-night, preparatory to their departure on the steamer, and I may say, without exaggeration, that a finer and more resolute body of troops is not to be found in the world. Most of them volunteered for this particular service, and they seem delighted at the idea of defending the old ruin to which they are ordered, especially as there is some intention of an assault by the enemy in barges. It is understood, I believe, that Col. Rhett is to remain in command of the fort.

There has been no shelling of the city since Sunday night, and many are of the opinion that one of the guns burst in the last attempt, and that the circumstance has deterred them from a renewal of the bombardment. Certain it is, that the last gun fired gave forth a very peculiar report, and nothing was heard of the shell in the city. Notwithstanding the cessation of the fire, what has already been done has pretty effectually moved off the down town population. The streets have been crowded with baggage wagons since Friday night, and all who had anywhere to go to, and some who had not, have "changed their base," either to the upper portion of the city or to the country. Fortunately, there are many vacant houses up town, and there has been no serious difficulty in procuring accommodations in that quarter. The race course, I learn, has become quite a populous little village, many of the poorer people having fled there for safety from the shells.

The weather is still unsettled, and the frequent showers anything but comfortable to the troops who are bivouacing on the island.

The Atlanta *Confederacy* learns from a credible source that since the damage sustained by Fort Sumter, General Beauregard sent a commission composed of Engineers to examine its condition and report whether it was capable of defence. They proceeded to the fort, and after a thorough examination, (the fort being under fire at the time,) reported that it was susceptible of defence for an indefinite period. General Beauregard then called for volunteers to defend that fortification. To this call there was an immediate response from more men than was necessary. The following is an official order relative to the garrison of Sumter:

HEAD'QRS DEP'T S. C., GA., AND FLA.,
Charleston, S. C., Aug. 27, 1863.

General: The Commanding General has witnessed with genuine pride and satisfaction the defence made of Fort Sumter by Col. Rhett, his officers, and the men of the First Regiment of South Carolina regular artillery, noble fruits of the discipline, application to their duties, and the soldierly bearing of officers and men, and of the *organization* of the regiment. In the annals of war no stouter defence was ever made and no work ever before encountered as formidable a bombardment as that under which Fort Sumter has been successfully held.

Respectfully, your ob't serv't,
(Signed,) THOMAS JORDAN,
Chief of Staff.

To *Brig. Gen. Ripley*, commanding first Military District, S. C., Charleston, S. C.

WHAT GEN. TOOMBS SAYS ABOUT RECONSTRUCTION.—We find the following letter from General Robert Toombs in the last number of the Sumter *Republican:*

WASHINGTON, GA., Aug. 17, 1863.

My Dear Sir: Your letter of the 15th instant, asking my authority to contradict the report that "I am in favor of reconstruction," was received this evening. I can conceive of no extremity to which my country could be reduced in which I would for a single moment entertain any proposition for any union with the North on any terms whatever.—When all else is lost, I prefer to unite with the thousands of our own countrymen who have found honorable deaths, if not graves, on the battle-field. Use this letter as you please. Very truly, your friend, &c.,

R. TOOMBS.

Dr. *A. Bees*, Americus, Ga.

YANKEE FAITHLESSNESS.—The *Central Presbyterian* says that several of our chaplains who remained at Gettysburg to comfort our wounded and bury our dead are now retained at Fort Norfolk as prisoners. Among them are Paul C. Morton and Harvey Gilmore, chaplains in Ewell's corps. Rev. T. D. Witherspoon, chaplain of the 42d Mississippi, was returning to Virginia more than three weeks since with the body of his Colonel, R. H. Miller, and after passing Baltimore safely, and with a paper from the commanding officer at Fort McHenry giving him leave to come on, he was yet detained at Fortress Monroe just as the flag of truce boat was leaving, and sent to Fort Norfolk as a prisoner.

Captain Walker, (formerly of Louisville,) of Burnes's Artillery battery, of Morgan's command, was shot and killed in Atlanta, Ga., on Thursday night last, by a man named Bachelor.

Mrs. Gen. Jno. H. Morgan and Mrs. Gen. B. B. Buckner have been sojourning at the Yellow Sulphur Springs for some days, and are now at Coyner's.

During the firing at Chattanooga on Friday shells passed through the Baptist and Methodist Churches.

Mr. Pons, the French Vice-Consul, resident at Mobile, died in that city on the 6th inst.

LETTER FROM HON. WM. C. RIVES.

The following is a letter from Hon. Wm. C. Rives to Mr. R. B. Doane, of Lynchburg. It will be read with the deepest interest;

MY DEAR SIR: I learn from you with great regret, that some of our fellow-citizens are a good deal discouraged by recent events in our military operations, while you yourself, I am glad to see, retain your accustomed erectness and buoyancy of spirit. Are we not, in some degree, the *spoiled children* of that marvellous good fortune, which, by the gracious providence of God, has, for the most part, attended us since the commencement of this gigantic conflict? And have not our very successes, long continued as they have been, unstrung our minds for the discipline of those occasional reverses, which none can hope to escape amid the inexorable vicissitudes of war?

When we recollect, not merely the disparity of numbers and material wealth between us and our adversaries, but that they were in possession of the whole army and navy of the United States, the creation of the joint efforts and contributions of the entire Union for a period of seventy-odd years; that all those branches of manufacturing industry, most essential to the operations of war, had been long established and in full activity with them, and that at the same time they had the advantage of an open and unrestricted intercourse with the rest of the world to supply any deficiency which might exist in their resources; while, at the commencement of the war, we had not a ship or a soldier, were without the munitions of war, or any existing establishment for furnishing them, even to percussion caps, and cut off from all foreign supplies by the blockade of our whole coast—the extent and magnitude of what we have accomplished ought to be a matter of grateful astonishment to ourselves, as it is of special wonder to the other nations of the earth.—With all these odds against us, what a long and dazzling roll of victories have we furnished for the pen of the future historian of the war!

Virginia, embracing the seat of Government of the Confederacy, has been the selected object against which the most formidable and imposing enterprizes of the enemy have been directed. How "lame and impotent" the conclusion of all these vaunted expeditions, so often and so pomposly gotten up, for the capture of Richmond and the subjugation of Virginia, let Bethel, Manassas, Leesburg, in the first year of the war—the plains of Williamsburg, the bloody panorama of battle-fields around the beleagured capital, the blaze of successive victories with which Jackson lighted up the Valley of the Shenandoah from Harper's Ferry to Port Republic, Cedar Mountain, Manassas again, the closing and overwhelming discomfiture at Fredericksburg in the second year of the war, and the grand rout, after four days' continuous conflict, of Chancellorsville and Marye's Heights, in the present year, followed by the enemy's third expulsion from the Valley—let those memorable fields, with their solemn and fruthful voices, tell.

During this period, too, the army of Northern Virginia, under its illustrious leader, made two bold and successful incursions into the enemy's territory; levied contributions upon it; gave battle to his concentrated legions on his own soil, crippling and inflicting heavy losses upon him; and then returned at leisure to resume its attitude of calm defiance and proud invincibility at home. Such is a general outline of the history of the war on the Atlantic side of the Confederacy. Outskirts and fragmentary portions of territory have, in some instances, been temporarily and reluctantly abandoned to the enemy, as not justifying the attempt to defend them at the risk of the central and more important portions; but in no case has the heart or grand interior of the territory been yet penetrated.

In the Valley of the Mississippi the course of events has been more chequered by alternate good and bad fortune. Springfield, Columbus, Shiloh, and even Murfreesboro', were noble successes for us. Fort Donelson, Corinth, New Orleans, recall the remembrance of sad disasters; and to these has been recently added the loss of Vicksburg and Port Hudson. I have no disposition to extenuate the gravity of any of these disasters. But looking at them in their very worst aspect, there is nothing in any or all of them to give rise to a feeling of despondency. The enemy is as far as ever from the great object he had in view—the free and unmolested navigation of the Mississippi for commercial purposes. Its banks are still accessible for hundreds of miles, within our territory, to our sharpshooters and movable batteries, that can and will prevent the use of the river by trading vessels, and effectually interdict it to all practical commerce.—The inhabitants of the country are more roused than ever by the outrages of the enemy, and redoubled efforts will be made to render his local success bootless to him.—We have two powerful and noble armies under Johnston and Bragg on the eastern side of the river, which are strengthened daily both by the Confederate conscription and by the zealous co-operation of the adjacent State Governments; while on the western side of the river are the enterprising and indomitable commands of Price, of Kirby Smith, of Taylor, and of Magruder, to strike wherever the enemy may present himself.

When this situation is compared with the many unavoidable reverses and endless difficulties which our brave ancestors had to encounter, and so gloriously surmounted, in their struggle for independence, who does not feel his spirit rebuked at the slightest thought of discouragement under our present circumstances? Recollect the condition of Washington in the second year of the war of the Revolution, when, after successive and severe disasters on Long Island, at New York, at White Plains, and the loss of Fort Washington, on the Hudson, with its garrison, he was compelled to retreat through the Jerseys, "pushed," to use his own expressive language, "from place to place, till we were obliged to cross the Delaware with less than three thousand men fit for duty," and the reluctant confession was extorted from his firm and manly breast that unless "a new army can be speedily recruited the game is pretty nearly up"—even in this extremity there was no despondency, no discouragement. The pressure and magnitude of the dangers only supplied new energies of action, and stimulated to redoubled exertion, and in a few days the brilliant achievements of Trenton and Princeton redressed the balance of victory.

In every period of the revolutionary contest a large portion of our territory was overrun and occupied by the enemy. In the South, Greene was compelled to retire before Cornwallis, as Washington had done before the Howes in the North. Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, each and all of them, east of the Blue Mountains, were overrun for a time by the armies of the enemy, while all the chief cities in the North and in the South—Boston, Newport, New York, Philadelphia, Richmond, Norfolk, Wilmington, Charleston, and Savannah—were all, for a longer or shorter period, in his possession. But if the country was overrun, the hearts of the people were not overawed.—With them and their trusted servants, whether in the council or in the field, there was no despair of the republic. They felt as Washington, when most oppressed by the complicated difficulties of his situation, expressed himself in the sincerity of his heart, in writing to his brother: "Under a full persuasion of the justice of our cause, I cannot entertain an idea that it will finally sink, though it may remain for a time under a cloud."

All history proves that a brave and uncorrupted people, determined to be free, never can be subdued by the insolent superiority of force and numbers, however disproportioned. What availed the countless Persian hordes of Darius and Xerxes, when confronted, in many a field made classic and holy ground by their discomfiture, with the proud spirit of freedom and the noble self-devotion of the small but undaunted commonwealths of Greece? If ever a people had apparent cause for despondency, it was the people of Rome when Hannibal with his Carthaginian hosts, after three successive victories on the Ticino, the Trebia, and Trasimene, in his triumphal march towards the Capital, almost annihilated the Roman army in a fourth at Cannæ, leaving more than forty thousand Romans stretched upon the field, including one of the Consuls in command, many other of the highest rank and consideration. But amid the contemplation of so terrible a reality, the spirit of the Roman people rose [illegible] ed. When the survivors [illegible] not even had been the [illegible] approached the city, with the news of the army, the Senate and magistrates of the people, we are told by one of their great historians, went out to meet him and thanked him for not having despaired of the Commonwealth. And in the end it was not Rome, but Carthage, that perished in the conflict.

So, too, when we come down to the period of modern history. Is it possible to conceive a struggle more unequal in numbers, armament, and every material resource than that, in the 16th century, between the seven insurgent provinces of the Netherlands, beginning with two of them only, and the whole weight and power of the Spanish monarchy in its meridian of splendor, when, in addition to the resources of its large dominions in Italy, the Netherlands, and the Peninsula, including Portugal, it wielded the riches of America and the Indies united! And yet by the indomitable courage and perseverance of the inhabitants, animated with the spirit of civil and religious liberty, and in spite of calamities and disasters which tried to the uttermost the heroic stuff of which they were made, leaving to them often no other resource than, by cutting their dykes, to call in the aid of that destructive element it had cost them ages of labor and toil to shut out, they redeemed their native land from the remorseless surges of a despotism more ferocious than the sea, triumphantly established their independence, and constituted a renowned Commonwealth, which, for two hundred years, proudly held its place in the first rank of the powers of Europe.

If we wish further to see what prodigies an undismayed spirit of national independence, battling upon its own soil for its hearths and its altars, is capable of accomplishing against the odds of force and numbers, look at the example of the same people, under the third William of Orange, magnanimously bidding defiance to the united and powerful armies of Louis XIV., of France, and Charles II., of England; look at Prussia, under Frederick II., in the memorable seven years' war, successfully contending against almost all the powers of Continental Europe—Austria, France, the German States, Sweden, and Russia—all banded together at the same moment in the invasion of her territory; look, again, at the miracles of successful valor accomplished some thirty years later by the people of revolutionary France, in the enthusiasm of liberty and in vindication of the right of a national self-government, against a second and more formidable combination of all Europe, both insular and continental.

What any of these people accomplished we are capable of accomplishing. We have the same love of liberty; we have the same devotion to our native land; we have the same martial ardor; we have the same, and even greater, motives to exert every faculty for our deliverance. With the most of them, the great stake involved was national independence and political rights. With us, in addition to all this, everything precious to the human affections, everything sacred to the human heart, is at issue. From the ruthless spirit in which this war has been waged by our adversaries; from the specimens we have had of their infamous pro-consular Governments in parts of our territory occupied by them; from the appeals they are now making to the vindictive and brutal passions of an uncivilized race, as their allies in this unholy crusade against us, it is impossible for the imagination to picture a fate more horrible than ours would be if we were once subjected to their power. I know no language which, in that case, could adequately paint the depth of our degradation and extremity of our wretchedness, unless it be those burning lines of an English poet, in which he gave vent to his feelings of horror and indignation when deprecating the iron rule of a vulgar and hypocritical tyranny in his own land:

Come the eleventh plague rather than this should be;
Come sink us rather in the sea;
Come rather pestilence and reap us down;
Come God's sword, rather than our own.
Let rather Roman come again,
Or Saxon, Norman, or the Dane.
In all the bonds we ever bore,
We grieved, we sighed, we wept; we never blushed before.

In the foregoing remarks, it has been assumed that the enemy's forces were, in number, much greater than ours. This has, undoubtedly, heretofore been the fact. But I am firmly persuaded that, notwithstanding the immense difference in the actual population of the two countries, we shall henceforward have an army in the field at all times fully equal in numbers to theirs; and that, surely, is all we need desire. The energies of the South are just beginning to be thoroughly aroused. We already see a proposition in the Legislature of Alabama to extend the limits of the military age below eighteen years to sixteen, and above forty-five to sixty. This was the old Spartan rule, and prevailed a long time in England, until the institution of standing armies, and her insular situation, made her careless with regard to the military organization of the mass of her population. But our circumstances may well justify a recurrence to the ancient rule, so far, at least, as to call out the supplementary classes for local defence. The spirit of the people, there can be no doubt, would nobly respond to such a call, while the demands of the crisis, appealing to the instinctive courage of men, and enforced by the pleading loveliness of woman, will keep our active army full within the limits of the age heretofore prescribed for it.

The situation of our adversary presents a very different picture. The popular fervor for the war, first kindled, and for some time kept up by delusive pretexts, is abated and abating. The difficulties and general repugnance opposed to their recent draft have converted it into very little more than a barren mockery. No large accessions to their army, already much reduced by the expiration of enlistments and casualties of war, can now be had by force or by persuasion. The cordial support of public opinion, in the present age of the world, is indispensable to the effective prosecution of every war. Great as has been the amount of prejudice and delusion and bad feeling among the people of the North towards us, happily "reason has not fled to brutish breasts." Many of them now see that the present war is, almost without disguise, a war for the extermination or degradation of the white race by the installation of the blacks in virtual dominion over them, and in such a war they have no motive of sympathy or interest to engage them. Others, profiting, at last, of the sagacious lessons of Chatham, Burke, Fox, and that noble band of patriots and statesmen in England who manfully opposed the war upon the American Colonies from the start, begin to see that the triumph of lawless despotism over the independence of the South would be equally fatal to their remnant of constitutional liberty at home. From the operation of these and other causes the military, with the moral strength of the North in this contest, will go on decreasing, while ours will as certainly increase.

On whatever side I look, then, I see no omen of discouragement, but, on the contrary, new grounds of assurance, with regard to the ultimate and certain triumph of the great cause in which we are embarked. We may have occasional reverses in the future, as we have had them in the past. These are often salutary trials of our constancy and faith, and needful admonitions to increased vigilence and exertion. Even heroic Charleston, for whose fate every bosom is now yearning with anxiety, may fall under the extraordinary means concentrated for her destruction. But if she does it will be in a blaze of glory that will irradiate the remotest corner of the Confederacy, and light the way to retributive victories elsewhere, while she herself will be destined to rise again with increased splendor from her ashes. The capture of Athens by the Persians ushered in the glorious days of Salamis and Platæa, and when reoccupied, strengthened and adorned by the pious hands of her children, she was more than ever the envy and admiration of the world. No local or occasional disaster can check the onward progress of a great cause, blessed with the approving smiles of Heaven, and sustained by stout hearts with unceasing vigilance and unshaking faith.

I remain, truly and faithfully, your friend,
W. C. RIVES.

Francis R. Doane, Esq., member of the House of Delegates of Va., Lynchburg.

LOCAL MA[illegible]

[illegible] Halyburton presiding, was [illegible] most of yesterday's session on the case of T. H. Ellett, who applies for a discharge from Captain Hayward's company of cavalry, on the ground that he had furnished a substitute. It appears that he left Captain Hayward's company and joined Captain Mayo's company, (Mayo's Guard,) and Capt. Hayward had him arrested. The case was argued by Mr. John S. Caskie for the petitioner, and Mr. Raleigh T. Daniel for the Government. The Court took time to consider of its decision, and continued the case until Friday.

G. W. Yarbrough was discharged from the military service on the ground that he was a mail contractor.

Martin Laughnane was discharged from the military service on the ground that he had been subsequently transferred by the War Department to the general service.

The cases of Frank Livingston, Michael Roseberry, James Johnson, and Julius Jobe, who ask to be discharged under writs of *habeas corpus*, were continued until to-day, and that of Wm. L. Forrester was continued until Friday.

A Dreary Drama.—Chas. Coulling, who had served six years in the State prison for robbing the Portsmouth Post-Office, and was pardoned on Tuesday by the President, was sent to Camp Lee as a conscript yesterday. During his stay in prison he had written a drama founded on his experience and treatment as a convict for six long years, which covered some fifty pages of manuscript. The "play" is gotten up with a good deal of ability, considering that the author could only write a few lines at a time, and had his attention pretty equally divided between writing and hiding what he had written in his bed and other out of the way places in his cell, to keep it from the vigilant eyes of the turnkeys.

Prison Record.—At the Libby Prison yesterday there were 4,211 prisoners, including 178 officers, 27 surgeons, and 9 chaplains. The prison is getting so full that yesterday afternoon 24 citizen prisoners and 5 Yankee deserters were transferred to Castle Thunder.

At Castle Thunder, Hinson Hatch, of the 3d North Carolina regiment, was committed on the charge of being implicated in the murder of Adjutant Mallett, a few days since, near Scottsville, Va. Lafayette Dennis was also sent there charged with raising a company to aid the Yankees in Kentucky.

A Woman Shot.—On Tuesday last Alfred Winston shot Mrs. Elizabeth Lucas, on the Brook Turnpike. The circumstances, as we learn them, are these: Winston had a cow in a lot near Mrs. Lucas, which she had turned out, when some words ensued, which resulted in Winston's drawing a pistol and firing on Mrs. Lucas. The ball entered the side of her head, inflicting a wound which is considered of a dangerous character. W. has been arrested.

Robbery.—Yesterday morning while Mrs. Mary FicRey's little son was returning to the C. S. Clothing Bureau some work which his mother had just finished, he was overtaken by a negro fellow who represented that he had been sent by Mrs. F. for two pairs of the pants which he had in the bundle, and that he could continue on with the rest. It is hardly necessary to say that the whole story was a falsehood, and that the negro has not been heard of since.

From Tennessee.

The news from Bragg's army continues of a speculative and uncertain character. From the Chattanooga *Rebel*, of the 26th and 27th, we extract the following items:

The reports which reach us from the region of Bridgeport are conflicting. Some assert the crossing of Rosecrans, while others say that he is engaged rebuilding the main railroad bridge. The probabilities are, however, that no movement has occurred in that quarter of consequence.

All quiet opposite.

When the armies of Rosecrans and Burnside are concentrated, and half a dozen of our Confederate armies, more or less, are combined against them, the heaviest battle of the war may be anticipated somewhere between Bridgeport and Knoxville. Much greater confidence is now felt in our ability to meet the invasion.

It is reported that in Col. Dibrell's late fight at Sparta with the enemy the notorious cavalry General Minty was killed.

Rosecrans stopped over night at the residence of Mr. Rankin, in Sequatchie Valley, on last Thursday night.

Parties from Lookout Peak report that some twenty or thirty heavy brass siege pieces have been planted by the enemy in the bend encircling the city. They can be seen, it is said, with a good marine glass.

The Yankee loss was upwards of fifty during the cannonade on Friday.

Persons out from Nashville say that the Unionists there think of nothing, talk of nothing, and hope for nothing, but the possession of East Tennessee.

A gentleman who came through the lines recently, from Nashville, reports that Andrew Johnson and Parson Brownlow have left that city, announcing their intention to accompany the Federal army into East Tennessee.

A duel took place a few mornings since near Graysville station, between a well-known Tennessee field General and a Surgeon of distinction in the army, also from Tennessee. We have not learned the particulars and withhold the names of the combatants.

The enemy is still actively engaged on the opposite bank of the river. The axe of the sappers and miners can be distinctly heard by our pickets in the stillness of the night. They are as busy as beavers during the night, and altogether invisible through the day.

The impression prevails that if a general engagement takes place at all, it will occur in upper East Tennessee, between this point and Knoxville.

Members of the Signal Corps report the enemy's pickets on the Island opposite Raccoon mountain, about four miles below the city. Five companies of Yankee cavalry were seen from the same point moving about on the river flats opposite the mouth of Chickamauga yesterday.

The Knoxville *Chronicle* says:

We heard from Kingston, [illegible] to the effect that there was no Federal [illegible] forty-five miles of that place. [illegible] tion from various points [illegible] higher up, leads us to believe [illegible] is now in the region [illegible]

We know that the great [illegible] the key of the whole [illegible] of communication, is [illegible] the river there [illegible]

The [illegible] as a rendezvous [illegible] have been taken in [illegible] on [illegible]

The Yankees have [illegible] [illegible]