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THE MERRIMACK, long on the stocks at Portsmouth being made into an iron-clad marine ram, turns out, we fear, to be anything else than what she was expected to be.

IT APPEARS that the affair is too heavy and draws too much water. After this had been discovered on floating her, while attempting to shore her up again, she caught upon the blocks and received a considerable strain.

WE ARE ONLY the more confirmed in the correctness of what we said some days ago—that if instead of the vast amount of money thrown away on the Merrimack, the same money had been spent on the class of gunboats suited to the waters of Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds, we would have little fears for Roanoke Island, and feel more confidence of being able to give a good account of Burnside's expedition.

MELANCHOLY ACCIDENT.—A lad by the name of Joseph Thomas, son of David W. and Margaret J. Forlaw, of Duplin county, aged 13 years, was accidentally killed on the 4th inst., by the falling of a tree.

THE LINCOLN Naval Commander in the Gulf has a queer name—Captain Farragut.

MR. MICHAEL CORCORAN, Colonel of the 69th Regiment N. Y. V., must begin by this time to regard himself as a truly afflicted individual. He seems destined to be hung. We shouldn't be at all surprised to learn that he had fulfilled his destiny.

POOR FELLOW, no sooner is he out of one scrape than he is in another. First, he, Wilcox and others were "elected" to be hung in retaliation for our privates, threatened with the fate of pirates. Well, the privates are admitted to all the rights of prisoners of war, and the rope is taken from Michael Corcoran's neck, but to be almost immediately replaced.

TO OPPOSE to these interests and influences preventing any action on the part of England, Lord Palmerston should take the position of intervention, which would probably amount to a war with the North, might urge the absolute necessities of the Empire, in order to sustain the vital interests of its trade and commerce.

WE THINK we may venture to assert, without fear of contradiction (except from the Fayetteville Observer, which will contradict anything we may say) that the weather is far from pleasant—that it is damp and underfoot.

WHAT HAS BEEN done towards placing impediments in the channel at Roanoke Island is more than we can say. The fear is not that the enemy can land there and take our batteries, nor even that they can shell them out, but the danger is that they may be able to pass them at a distance of fully a mile, and batteries firing at rapidly moving boats at this distance, may or may not effect any thing. It is a mere chance. Roanoke Island itself is not worth holding, save as the key to Albemarle sound.

MR. BADOE'S attempt to repeal the Stay Law has failed in the Convention. So will all the attempts of these conventional legislators if the truly conservative members of the Convention will only act up to their feelings and convictions. A little nerve is actually needed now to save the State.

WHY SHOULD Hamilton Fish, abolition Ex-Governor of New York, and Bishop Ames, abolition Methodist Bishop (and the abolition persons are more than the abolition politicians) why should these two hostile, abolition, Sewardite, hypocritical spies be allowed to traverse the South in all directions under the plea of humanity—of looking after the Lincoln prisoners.

AMONG the subjects of taxation at the North we find that the article of "gas" occupies at not inferior position. Surely if the New York papers are taxed in proportion to the "gas" they let off it will ruin them, and if the whole North hordes lists for taxation the amount of "gas" it exceeds there will be an immense amount of revenue realized.

THE question of questions now is—"When will the North Carolina State Convention adjourn?" This is a standing question—one that we feel bound to press. The Convention has no right to legislate, yet it does legislate. It prints economy, yet it costs five hundred dollars a day. Why should not the Convention adjourn next week?

IN EUROPE, represented to us governmentally by England, France and Spain, there appear to be two parties—not the same in each country, but having the same bearings and attitude towards us. Even in official or quasi official circles the quality exists.

IN England the Cabinet itself is far from a unit—Earl Russell and Lord Palmerston do not agree, save to disagree, although the first is Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the latter is Prime Minister. Palmerston, with all his faults is a man, and Earl Russell is or was—Lord John Russell, the son of the former and brother or uncle of the present Duke of Bedford—a high aristocrat with liberal professions always on his lips and large promises of Reform always made, and their fulfillment always indefinitely postponed.

AMONG the English people, outside of governmental circles, there is a difference. The long and persistent habits of thought and mental training of the people have been such as to make the idea of slavery the black "Bogy" of all the grown up children in Britain, with which their nurses, political, ecclesiastical and social, fight them into propriety. From the white checked Evangelical Earl of Shaftesbury to the lowest village rafter, from the perfumed circle of the handsome Duchesses of Sutherland, from whose domains thousands of mere whites were turned homeless, to the prim tea-table of the aged and blue-eyed virgin annuitant, who provides buttered toast and other fat things, for the Reverend Urethens Howl, and starves and maltreats the orphan child bound to her from the work-house, slavery has always been a pet abomination.

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BY THE constitution of North Carolina, the legislative authority of the State is vested in two distinct branches—a Senate and House of Commons. Without repealing this, without doing to repeal or change or abrogate this, the Convention now in session at Raleigh presumes to exercise the power, and exert the authority thus constitutionally vested in the Senate and House of Commons.

THEY assert that by the very act of legislating on any particular matter, they, the "Sovereign Convention," repeal and set aside the constitutional enactment, *pro tanto*,—so far as they go,—and no farther, but that in regard to all other matters the constitutional enactment remains intact.

THERE is this little difficulty about all this.—According to the Constitution, neither the Convention nor any other body save and except the two branches of the General Assembly, has any right to legislate. If, in order to get round this, the Convention takes the ground that it is above the Constitution and the General Assembly, it evidently leaves on record among the laws of the State, railroad charters, tax bills and other "ordinances" of equal if not superior authority with the Constitution of the State itself, ordinances which, as only a Convention could enact them, will require a Convention to repeal or modify them. The longer it is in session the more it stultifies itself.

IT IS very serious, like a mule, it refuses to die. We call upon all the members of the Convention who are tired of this farcical tragedy or tragical farce, to leave Raleigh, and leave the would-be Governors, Senators, et cetera, et cetera, in their glory. Let the people see who is or who are at the bottom of this usurpation.—We say to the true States Rights men of all or of any former political party—come out from among them! Adjoin! Let the office-seekers sit alone and the State will know them.

SLAVES every day make or attempt to make their escape to the Lincoln blockades. Any slave caught so attempting, ought to be hung on the nearest hand to the point where caught. Any white man convicted of aiding or abetting, ought to share his fate. Things of this kind must be stopped by some acts of apparent necessity. The country can better afford to say for a few examples than it can to allow its citizens to be betrayed and plundered.

THESE are really nothing new from the Burnside fleet. It is certainly at Hatteras and Pamlico Sound.—Some of its heavier vessels have failed to get in over the swash, no doubt, but all that could get in no doubt have done so. It may threaten several points in order to distract the attention of our forces, but it is hardly probable that it can afford to divide its strength. It will concentrate all its available power upon some one position. We think that position—the position to be first attacked will be Roanoke Island, but we cannot say so from any information of course. We do not think the affair will amount to much strategically, although it may distress and injure our people. The primary object of all these movements is to create a diversion—to draw away our forces from the frontier in Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri. The North is simply fighting for boundaries. It does not even hope to hold any State south of our Northern line, which is the famous thirty-sixth thirty.

THE Cincinnati Enquirer of a late date contains the following statement in reference to the imports into New York during the past year, as compared with the year next preceding:

Table with 4 columns: Year, Total value, Imports from the Confederacy, and Imports from the North.

THE following additional instructions, in reference to improvements of private property for military purposes, are issued for the information and guidance of officers and agents of the War Department.

AN officer appointing agents to make improvements, will, in all cases, furnish to such agents written evidence of their authority to act; and agents, whenever required by parties interested, will exhibit the orders or authority under which they are acting.

AGENTS who make improvements, will, in all cases, give to the owner of the property improved, or his agent, a certificate of the character and extent of the improvement; and they will, moreover, return to the officer of this Department, from whom they derive their authority, a statement of all property improved by them, with the names of the owners. An abstract of these statements will be forwarded to this office by the officer to whom they are returned.

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WE stated in our last, that a communication making grave complaint against the conduct of an impressing officer, which had been addressed to us, had been handed over to the Quartermaster General. We did this because we thought it better to seek redress for wrongs than to rest with simply complaining of them.

WE are gratified to state that Col. Myers has not disappointed our confidence, and has promptly ordered an investigation. If the facts stated by our correspondent shall be established—and from his character, we do not doubt it—the government agent will be made to feel the impropriety of so grossly abusing his official trust to the injury of citizens whose appointments were innocent mistakes, and whose gross misconduct it is a public duty to expose, that they may be superseded.

IN this connection we present certain instructions issued as long ago as last November, by the Q. M. General. They show the desire which is felt by that officer to protect citizens from imposition and to secure their appointments were innocent mistakes, and whose gross misconduct it is a public duty to expose, that they may be superseded.

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FROM THE JOURNAL OF COMMERCE. FOREIGN INTERVENTION.—The foreign news received during the past few days cannot but lead to the gravest solicitude for the future. The tone of the French news is even more unpleasant than that from England, while it is evident that a strong pressure will be brought upon both Governments to induce them not only to recognize the Southern Confederacy but to interfere by force to raise the blockade.

WE cannot but feel the melancholy fact that America is regarded in Europe as a weakened power, with whom it is possible to deal as with an inferior. No Government has yet taken this view, but public sentiment is strengthening in that direction, and it will require great caution and moderation to prevent such action on the part of England and France as will make it necessary for America to assert her dignity and prove her power.

THE London Observer is entitled to no credit, and we are not inclined to place any reliance on the "late intelligence" which comes from that office, where the Southern agents seem to hold council. Despatches are easily made up for a departing steamer, to produce an effect on this country, and the despatch appears to be of that kind.

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BY TELEGRAPH.

FOR THE JOURNAL.

FORT HENRY CAPTURED BY THE FEDERALS.—CONFEDERATE RETREATING TO FORT DONELSON. NASHVILLE, TENN., Feb. 7, 1862. A special dispatch to the Union and American, dated Clarksville, Feb. 7, 2 o'clock, a. m., says that Fort Henry has fallen in the hands of the enemy, and our forces are retreating to Fort Donelson. The enemy's gun-boats are at Nashville on the Tennessee river, and the bridge at that place has been destroyed by the Federals. No further particulars.

COMMUNICATION CUT OFF BETWEEN COLUMBUS AND BOWLING GREEN. MEMPHIS, TENN., Feb. 7, 1862. Fort Henry was captured on yesterday by the Federals, after two hours fighting. The Federals have advanced and destroyed the Tennessee river bridge, cutting off communication between Columbus and Bowling Green. No particulars yet received.

PRISONERS FROM NEW ORLEANS. NEW ORLEANS, LA., Feb. 7, 1862. Four hundred and ninety-two prisoners left this city yesterday evening for North Carolina, to be exchanged.

TRIBUTE OF RESPECT. At a meeting of Capt. Emmett's Co. (E) 2d Regiment N. C. S. T., for the purpose of forming resolutions relative to the death of R. T. Aman and H. D. Costin, both of said Company, Sargt. J. W. Stokley called to the attention of Sargt. J. R. Jenkins was requested to act as Secretary.

On motion of Corp'l D. B. Jarvis, a committee of five were appointed, viz: S. Jarvis, S. Reid, J. G. Harris, J. H. Kelley, and J. R. Williams; after a short consultation, the following resolutions were adopted: Resolved, That whereas it hath pleased the all-wise Providence to take away from our beloved brethren in arms, Aman and H. D. Costin, although we deeply deplore the loss, at the same time we humbly submit to the decrees of the all-wise God, and in His will we have our refuge.

Resolved, That in losing our dear friends and our brave warriors, it shall cause a dark cloud of sorrow to overshadow this our place, where we were wont to see them smile upon us as their usual companions, with cheerful hearts and willing minds, they always accomplished their duties as true and faithful soldiers, had they lived they would have been brilliant examples to many others.

Resolved, That we send our heartfelt sympathies to their dear relatives and friends, hoping that they may bear the loss with true patience, thinking with us, that their dying has gained them a new and a happy home. Resolved, That we wear the usual badge of mourning thirty days, and send a copy of this to their bereaved friends, and to the Wilmington Journal requesting it to publish the same.

On motion, the resolutions were adopted. J. R. JENKINS, Secretary. J. W. STOKLEY, Chairman.

THE BRAVE TEXAS SOLDIERS.—WHITTING'S SPECIAL ORDER.—In our summary of Northern falsehoods published a few days since, there was an account of a "skirmish" on the Occoquan, in which ten Texas were said to have been "surprised and killed, and one taken prisoner," at the house of Mrs. Lee, at Colchester, by fifty Yankees. It is not very surprising that men who exhibited the cowardice of these fifty Yankees should be about it. The account of the "skirmish" was a mere fabrication, and the brave Texas soldiers were surrounded at dead of night in Mrs. Lee's house, by fifty or more of the enemy, and summoned to surrender. They opened fire and drove off the cowards, three of whom were left dead on the ground; one mortally wounded, died soon after, living long enough, however, to tell his story; and some of their wounded they carried away. Only one Texan was at all hurt, and that by a slight flesh wound.

The prisoners taken by the enemy was a Mr. Patterson, residing at the time in another house, not far from Mrs. Lee's; an inoffensive citizen, who had been on his place since the war began; who had no connection with the Texans, nor any share in their conflict. He was dragged from his house, and from the account given by the Yankee papers, no doubt paraded as a trophy of their "victory."

In addition to the foregoing facts, furnished by high authority, we are enabled to present the special order of Brigadier-General Whitting, elicited by the bravery of the scouts on the occasion alluded to: HEADQUARTERS, NEAR DENVER, Camp Fisher, Jan. 30, 1862. Special Order, No. 29.

The Brigadier-General commanding congratulates the Texas Brigade for its gallant and successful defense of Fort Donelson, and for its brave and gallant conduct on the 28th instant, against a numerous scouting party of the enemy. These gallant men were in a house at Colchester, surrounded by a number of the enemy late at night. Though roused from their beds and summoned to surrender, they made fight and beat off the invaders, who left three of their dead on the ground and carried off several wounded. One who was wounded on the night of the 28th, reports the number at the house to have been eighty, supported by cavalry. One of the Prince William Cavalry, who witnessed the affair, confirms the statement.

Such conduct deserves praise and invites emulation, and is worthy of the success of the men who, many years ago, gallantly defended their cause at the Alamo. San Jacinto against an enemy as superior in number as cowardly. The gallant and successful defense of the 28th instant, against a numerous scouting party of the enemy. These gallant men were in a house at Colchester, surrounded by a number of the enemy late at night. Though roused from their beds and summoned to surrender, they made fight and beat off the invaders, who left three of their dead on the ground and carried off several wounded.

By order of Brig. Gen. Whiting. W. CHASE STRONG, A. D. C. Richmond Dispatch.

THE CONVENTION. This deliberative assembly of the sovereigns of our land has been in session ever since the 20th of May, with exception of the days when it was too hot to sit, sultry to mix up much, and the holidays, when it was the very time to mix. And after all this lengthy incubation and arduous labor, what has been the result? Has any person seen the little mouse run out? We confess we have not. Then what has this, the greatest, most powerful body to the people in their sovereign capacity done for the country? Where are the fruits so anxiously looked for, that they were the very life of liberty was to bring forth? Echo answers, where? The fact is, all the business necessary to be done could have been done in one month at the furthest. The people did not elect members to a convention to overhaul the constitution and change the whole organization of the government, and how long it took to do so.

They knew very well that this, a time of great national confusion, was not the time for revising the constitution. The proper time for such things is when men are quiet—when peace reigns throughout our country, and the minds of men are free to weigh and deliberate upon such responsible and weighty subjects. Not when war spreads its bloody mantle over our land, and a powerful enemy, urged on by deadly hatred and by the prospect of a rich booty, is throning at our gates, threatening us with the torch of the rebel, the knife of the assassin, and the torch of the incendiary. Such are not times of deliberation, especially such deliberation as is necessary for remodeling the constitution.

The truth is, the Convention has gone out of the way for business as an executive perpetuate itself. The people never intended or dreamed that they would take the business they are now occupied with. If such thing had been avowed on the stump, before the election, not a single advocate of the doctrine would now be harrying in Raleigh, at the expense of the people to the tune of "three dollars a day." But having once been elected, and now mostly of that class who have never been in power for the last year, and who never expect to again, they have pursued upon the good nature and patience of the people, till we fear, fortitude has ceased to be a virtue. The whole aim, object and scope of that Convention, as the people intended, could have been accomplished in two weeks. They passed the ordinance of secession the very day they were organized; and how long it took to do so, they are not likely to accommodate us with the story. Two weeks, says one of the body; and all must say that four weeks is the greatest plenty. But instead of doing the work for which the Convention was called, they have been fussing and growling over a speculation bill of Mr. Badger's, as if they could legislate as well from a man as from a man. They would come about the same speed legislating for the government of the world. The greatest speculation they could have gone into, and which would have saved many a dollar to the State, would have been to adjourn sine die. But no; they sit at Raleigh, smoke their cigars and drink whiskey, vote three millions of treasury notes to pay them their three dollars a day, and then talk about putting down a speculation, after seeing that the people in their own style, and that, too, at a time when the resources of the State should, above all others, be carefully and economically husbanded. And some of its members even say that such a wise and adjourn assembly as the Convention ought not to adjourn—that the State needs it with all its faults, and that it ought to be made a permanent institution, at least as long as the war lasts. Ah! you little fry, sport your presumption, exercise your bribe but ill gained power, drink your whiskey, smoke your cigars and have a "glorious time generally," but remember that for all these things the people will bring you to judgment.—Mountain Eagle, (Salem, Cleveland Co.)