

# North Carolina Argus.

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WADESBOROUGH, N. C., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1863.

[WHOLE NO. 216.]

## From the Charleston Courier. MILITARY EXECUTION.

KINSTON, N. C., January 15, 1863.

Since my last the monotony of Kinston life has been relieved by one of those terrible scenes incident to army organization, and, unfortunately, of too frequent occurrence—a military execution. A morbid curiosity to seek and witness whatever revolting is common to all nations that have been hardened by the associations of camp; and accordingly when a mournful cortege consisting of a rude wagon drawn by a pair of mules, a sad looking prisoner with his hands tied behind him, and a dozen troopers as a guard, passed through the streets, it soon gathered in its train a motley crowd of black and white, who followed in procession to the place of execution.

The name of the culprit was Michael Bryant, of the 63d Regiment of North Carolina Cavalry; his age, about thirty-six; and his offence, desertion—not, however, to the ranks of the enemy. Arrested he was duly tried by a Court Martial, and it being necessary that an example should be made to check a growing evil in the army, he was sentenced to be "shot to death." It was not until the morning of his execution that the poor fellow became aware of the day or hour that was to terminate his career, but he had evidently been prepared for the crisis, and when the fact was announced, it fell upon a heart, nerved to brave death come in what shape it might. And this composure never left him.

Reaching the place of execution, which was in a field adjoining the encampment of his old command, the cortege halted in front of an ominous-looking black coffin, behind which was a stake. The guard alighted, and the prisoner, strong and buoyant as if he was the least among the actors of the drama, also leaped lightly from the vehicle and took his seat upon the narrow box that was so soon to enclose him forever. An officer then advanced and bound him by the arms firmly with his back to the stake. I now had opportunity, of observing the prisoner more closely. He was clad in an every day suit of citizens' clothes, with his pantaloons carelessly tucked in the top of his boots, and as he sat there, watching the preparations for the tragedy, looking upon the faces of his old comrades with whom he had been associated in camp and field, alone and helpless, with the agony of death so near, and eternity already opening to his vision, the acutest observer would have failed to detect the faintest indications of tremor on his person. Stern, strong, calm as a statue he waited until the regiment, on foot, was filed into position before him.

After a lapse of five or six minutes, came the squad of twelve, who were to act as his executioners, and stood twelve paces distant. The Adjutant of the Regiment then advanced and read the verdict of the court martial. This done, one of the guard approached to tie a handkerchief over the face of the prisoner. Then, for the first time, did I notice anything in his bearing which seemed to indicate that he was not already totally dead to feeling. A glance of his eyes to the Heavens, as if he was invoking Divine mercy, a barely perceptible change of countenance, and an expression of unutterable sadness, told of a fearful struggle that was going on within. A moment's pause, and the officer in command, in a low tone, gave the order, "Ready! aim!" (twelve rifles, six with blank cartridges, were bearing on the prisoner's heart, and the click of the twelve trigger's left but a second between life and death,) fire!

Hardly had the smothered word issued from the lips when the body of the unfortunate man, pierced by six balls, shrunk convulsively from the shock, the head dropped upon the breast, and a deep sigh told of an ebbing life. The Surgeon of the regiment now advanced to feel the pulse, and at the same instant the Colonel exclaimed, "Attention!" Half a minute had already elapsed, but at that word the dying man raised his bandaged head, and, as if he was piercing through the darkness to take a long last look at the fading world, slowly turned it from side to side. Then dropping it upon his breast, it rested there for several seconds, while the awe-stricken spectators looked on with a silence that was disturbed only by the rustling wind. Again it arose and fell, and again, and again, until finally the short spasmodic gasps, succeeded by a deathlike repose, showed that the soul of the deserter had returned to

the God who gave it.

On examining the body, I found that one ball had entered at the base of the neck, two the left and three the right side. The coffin was then opened, the body enclosed, and, in half an hour, all that remained of Michael Bryant was six feet under ground.

The following General Order on the subject has been published to-day:

HEADQUARTERS CAVALRY BRIGADE,  
January 15, 1863.

### [GENERAL ORDER]

It becomes the painful duty of the General Commanding to announce to his brigade that yesterday, the 14th inst., in accordance with the sentence of the Court Martial, Michael Bryant Company D, Sixty third Regiment North Carolina Cavalry, was shot to death for desertion. He did not desert to the enemy. He committed no greater offence than scores of his brigade, now at their homes, are committing. Impressed with the sacredness of the cause we are defending, and the fact that success depends upon the individual exertion of every soldier engaged in its behalf, the General Commanding wishes it to be understood that he will spare no effort in bringing to trial all the base and cowardly traitors who, without the shadow of authority or excuse, have absented themselves from their commands. All officers and good citizens are requested to assist in arresting these men so that they can be punished as the law directs. By order of  
Brig. Gen. B. H. ROBERTSON.

While a military execution, especially where the victim is one who has been an associate, is a terrible spectacle to witness, the time seems to have arrived when our Generals acting in concert, have determined to resort to the bloody necessity as often as circumstances may demand. Desertions have become an every day occurrence, and commands are being rapidly decimated from this cause alone. Straggling on the field is hereafter to be made punishable with death, and on the absentee, without leave, will fall the same awful doom. A general order on this subject, prepared in the forcible language of Major Samuel W. Melton of York District, the Assistant Adjutant General of General G. W. Smith, Chief of this Department, has been published, and there is no doubt that from the vigorous measures provided, we shall reap beneficial results.

The following are the opening paragraphs of the order: Our victories have with few exceptions been rendered fruitless, the war prolonged and thousands of lives sacrificed by the cowardly and disgraceful habit of straggling; and the straggler has become a traitor and an enemy to his country, more deadly and despicable than the vilest among the horde of invaders.

We are about to enter upon a campaign desperate in the comparison of numbers, and all important to the cause, in which every man, without exception, must do his duty. An appeal to the brave and constant is uncalled for. The coward and straggler will abandon his post at his peril.

Then follows the various orders, one of which is, that "in every instance where an officer or man on the battle field refuses to return promptly to his post, the provost guard is authorized, and the members thereof are hereby peremptorily commanded, to fire upon him. If he escape the fire of the guard, he will be brought to summary trial, and if found guilty of being absent without proper authority, will be punished with death."

THE FINDING OF THE GENERAL COURT MARTIAL.—The following are some of the findings of the General Court martial held at the Headquarters, Richmond, for the present month.

Private Jeremiah E. Moore, company I, 45th North Carolina regiment, charge, absent without leave, to be sent back to his regiment, and put at hard labor for one month; private William F. Jordan, company H, 43d North Carolina, charge, desertion, to receive thirty nine lashes on his bare back, and to be branded in the left hand with the letter D, in the presence of the brigade, and to be put at hard labor on the public works for three months with ball and chain weighing twelve pounds, attached to the left leg; private L. B. Seymour, company E, 50th North Carolina, charge, desertion, to receive thirty-nine lashes on his bare back every three month for the period of

the war, to be branded in the left hand with the letter D, and to be put to hard labor in Richmond with ball and chain, for the balance of the war; private Andrew Miller, company F, 32d North Carolina, charge, desertion, acquitted; private George Sams, company F, 45th North Carolina, charge, desertion, found not guilty of desertion, but guilty of absence without leave, sentenced to hard, labor with ball and chain every alternate ten days for sixty days, to be in solitary confinement in the intervals, and to forfeit two months pay; private James Hill, company A, 45th North Carolina, charge, desertion, found not guilty of desertion, but guilty of absence without leave sentenced to twenty-five days hard labor with ball and chain, or block and chain and seven days solitary confinement on bread and water; private John Warwick, company B, 43d North Carolina, charge, desertion, to receive thirty-nine lashes on his bare back, in presence of the brigade to which he belongs and that he then be sent to Richmond and put to his trade, shoe-making, for the balance of the war, wearing at the same time a ball and chain; private Lorenzo D. Williams, company F, 45th North Carolina troops charge, desertion, but guilty of absence without leave, sentenced to hard labor with ball and chain every alternate ten days for sixty days and to be in close confinement in the intervals, private John S. Wilson, company F, 45th North Carolina, charge, desertion; the court adjudged him of unsound mind, and recommends his discharge from the service; David Holly, company D, 50th North Carolina; charge, desertion; sentenced to receive fifty lashes on his bare back; and to be branded in the left hand with the letter D, in presence of the brigade to which he belonged, and to be in close confinement for thirty days the first and last ten days on bread and water; private Bryant Knott, company D, 55th North Carolina, charge, absent without leave; to forfeit all pay now due him and to be in close confinement for thirty days, the first and last ten on bread and water, private George W. Nelson, company D, 45th North Carolina, absent without leave; to thirty days close confinement, the first and last ten on bread and water; private Milton Fulp, company B, 45th North Carolina, charge, absent without leave; to fourteen days solitary confinement on bread and water, to be bucked-at the beginning of each week of this time in the presence of his Regiment on dress parade; private John W. Earles, company G, 50th North Carolina, charge, desertion; to receive twenty lashes on his bare back, to be branded in the left hand with the letter D, and to be in solitary confinement on bread and water for fourteen days; Lieutenant John, Davis, 32d North Carolina, charge, conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline, and disobedience of orders, to be reprimanded by his Colonel in the presence of the officers of the regiment to which he belongs; private William Watter, charged with being absent without leave, to hard labour for six months with ball and chain, and to be bucked every Sunday during this time in presence of his regiment, either at inspection or dress parade; private B. Harden, company I, 50th North Carolina, charged with being absent without leave, to fourteen days solitary confinement on bread and water, private Jasper Thomas, company F, 50th North Carolina, charged with desertion, to receive thirty-nine lashes on his bare back, to be branded in the left hand with the letter D, and to be put at hard labour for six months on Government work with ball and chain; private George H. Montford of Captain William D. Dabney's heavy artillery, charged with being absent without leave, and conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline, acquitted; Lieutenant Jesse I. Ferguson, charged with disobedience of orders, and conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline, to be suspended from command and pay for one month.

The above prisoners are mostly confined in Castle Thunder, and the commandant of the post will proceed at once to carry out the sentences.

In the Senate, on Thursday, the ten regiment bill was considered on its second reading and rejected years 18, nays 27.

### BLANKS.

OF ALL KINDS, GOTTEN UP AND FOR SALE at the Argus Office.

HON. A. OAKLEY HALL delivered an address before the Democratic Association at New York, on the 20th inst.

In the course of his address he said: "The war period has practically ended, and we are now in a period of conciliation." (Great applause, and cries of "Peace! peace!") "There had been nothing but interference with the Generals in the field, and there had not been a military man at the head of the armies. How could the North ever expect to succeed in a military point of view, against Jefferson Davis. (Cheers.) If the white man of the North cannot save the Republic, then I would rather have the white man of the North subjugated by the white man of the South, than to owe the salvation of the North to the negro." (Immense applause, after which three cheers for the last sentiment were given.)

### MONTGOMERY COUNTY.

The following Card from Mr. Wooley, the Senator from Moor and Montgomery, and Mr. Barringer, the Commoner from Montgomery, effectually puts to rest the report that a movement, looking to a reconstruction of the old Union, was about to be made in that county:

RALEIGH, N. C., Jan. 22, 1863.

W. W. HOLDEN: Sir—We see in the papers of this city, an extract from an article in the Wadesboro' Argus, stating that it was rumored that certain persons in Montgomery county were in favor of a reconstruction of the Union, and that certain persons were expected to address them in public meeting.

We feel authorized to state that said rumor is entirely false and slanderous as to the citizens of Montgomery county, and excepting a mere squad, not enough to form a corporal's guard, there are no people more loyal and patriotic than the citizens of Montgomery; and they are the very last people who would be in favor of a reconstruction of the Union, under any circumstances whatever.

Montgomery county, out of a voting population of between nine hundred and a thousand, has sent about eight hundred able bodied soldiers to the army, and has lost many of her best sons on the bloody field, in the defence of our country.

Yours truly,

C. W. WOOLEY,  
E. G. BARRINGER,

IN CHARACTER.—It is our deliberate opinion, formed after some observation, that nine-tenths of the speculators and extortioners in the country were original secessionists. Many of them were bankrupts, and they have availed themselves of the condition of the times and the necessities of the poor, to amass fortunes. A friend writing us from the army, says:

"My wife writes me that she has to pay \$30 per barrel for flour, and gets it from the man who raised the first secession flag in our neighborhood. He is a fine looking man, but has been pronounced physically unable to perform military duty.

This individual, like hundreds of the same stamp, is strong and healthy enough to speculate, but he is weak in the back when called upon to fight in a war which he aided in bringing on.

[Raleigh Standard.]

The Greenville Banner says: "We have a score of idle boys about this town, who do nothing but spin street yarn from morning till night."

If that's so, they will be in a fair way to "stretch hemp" when they grow up, says the Chattanooga Rebel.

### FAIR NOTICE.

FORWARD ALL PERSONS AGAINST TRADING for a Note given to JOHN RUSCOE, for the Rent of the MANSION HOUSE (in Wadesborough, N. C.) also the Furniture, and hire of Two Negroes. Said note became due the 1st of January, 1861. It is signed by S. H. ROBESON and John Evans. My reason for advertising the note, is, that I have a large discount to offer in payment, and am ready and anxious for a settlement, and have been for a considerable time; but being in the service of my country, I am not at liberty, at all times, to attend to private matters. S. H. ROBESON, Jan. 23, 1863. Camp near Adams Run, S. C.