

VANCE'S LETTER BOOK.

Interesting Extracts From the Correspondence of North Carolina's Famous War Governor--Showing How Nobly the Man Battled for the Rights of His State and the Comfort of His Troops in the Field and in Prison.

Messenger Bureau, Park Hotel, Raleigh, N. C., June 12, (Special Correspondence.)

What a mine of information is to be found in Governor Vance's letter books. His sturdiness, his love for his "North Carolinians" are visible as one looks over the pages.

Here is a typical letter. It is dated July 5, 1864:

"General Whiting: Some six weeks ago I addressed a letter to the secretary of D. L. Russell, Jr., county commissioner for Brunswick. No answer has yet been received and I learn that young Russell has been ordered by you into camp. Mr. Russell was dismissed the service, was not a conscript until he was enrolled. Previous to his enrollment he received this appointment, which made him a state officer, necessary to the due administration of the laws." In accordance with the act of congress and the resolutions of the legislature of this state, I have given him a certificate of exemption. This I cannot rescind from, and especially in favor of a government which will not answer a respectful letter on the subject. I therefore notify you that your offer to arrest Mr. Russell or to disturb him in the discharge of his official duties will be taken as a deliberate and unwarranted usurpation of authority and will be resisted accordingly."

Governor Vance wrote Secretary of War Seddon the following letter: "I have waited anxiously for a reply to my letter in regard to the exemption of Daniel L. Russell, Jr., as an officer of this state. None has been received, but I am told General Whiting has orders to conscript him immediately. I simply wish to inform you that I cannot and will not submit to this being done without resisting it by every means at my command."

General Whiting replied on the 8th, saying: "Your letter of the 5th has been forwarded to the war department and in regard to considering the manner in which you have addressed me, you will permit me to inform you that I do not admit the propriety of your animadverting to me upon the government of the confederate states or its conduct of its correspondence. My own correspondence with the authorities of the state of North Carolina has been carried on not only with courtesy, as may be seen from the record, but with an entire deference to your wishes in the case of Mr. Russell very much beyond the deserts of that individual in his attempts to evade service."

[The court-martial, it seems, was for Russell's striking an officer.] General Whiting wrote a letter, dated July 4th, which was delayed in the mails. In this he said: "The war department has assembled there I fancy will be totally inadequate to resist a land attack on Fort Fisher, which seems to be the point of real danger. In view of all the facts in the case, of which I presume the commanding general keeps you sufficiently informed, I respectfully submit that General Lee should spare a few veterans as a nucleus for the raw troops defending Wilmington, notwithstanding the pressure upon his forces. Except for the moral effect involved in losing our capital, I cannot see that Richmond itself is of any greater importance to us now than Wilmington. To leave it entirely in the hands of militia except the garrison I deem extremely injudicious."

General Whiting informed Governor Vance that the men employed at the salt works on the "sounds" near Wilmington, were traitors. He wanted them all removed and sent to the army and slaves or free negroes put on the works, which were in charge of D. G. Worth. Finally, November 16, 1864, to this Governor Vance replied: "The men shall not be conscripted. Inform General Bragg that you have my orders to retain the men and to send as many as necessary to remove the property. If he prevents you by force, let me know immediately." He also telegraphed General Bragg: "I learn with surprise that you have seized my salt hands and refuse to permit them to return to the sound to remove property. This is altogether different treatment from what I expected and I inform you candidly I shall resist by every means in my power. The men are by the laws of our state not subject to conscription." General Bragg informed General Whiting that the latter had not understood his order, and so all the state property was removed.

The following letter to Vance from General R. E. Lee bears date of August 23, 1864: "I have frequently been called upon to mention the services of North Carolina soldiers in the army of Northern Virginia, but their gallantry and conduct were never more deserving of admiration than in the engagement at Reams Station, on the 25th instant. The brigades of Generals Cook, MacBride and Lane, the last under the temporary command of General Connor, advanced through a thick abatis of felled trees, under a heavy fire of musketry and artillery, and carried the enemy's works with a steady courage that elicited the warm commendation of their corps and division commanders and the admiration of the army. On the same occasion the brigade of General Barringer bore a conspicuous part in the operations of the cavalry which were not less distinguished for boldness and heroism than those of the infantry. If the men who remain in North Carolina share the spirit of those they have sent to the field, as I doubt not they do, her defence may be surely entrusted to their hands."

The confederate engineer bureau notified Governor Vance that the Wilmington and Manchester railway was a main line of communication which the government must keep open, and said it must have to relay its track ten miles of rail, from the Wilmington, Charlotte and Rutherford railway. This drew a spiky letter from President Robert H. Cowan, of the latter road, who wrote Governor Vance that the Wilmington and Manchester road ought to have been left to rest supplies as it owned a large interest in a steamship company. He added: "I suppose, therefore, that if the managers of the Wilmington and Manchester railroad cannot do the work of the government, that you pass the road over to me and my directors, with proper authority in the premises, and will guarantee it shall be done. If you have authority to take ten miles of my road, you have authority to take it all. If you have authority to take my road and give it to the Wilmington and Manchester, you have authority to take that road and give it to me. If that road cannot do your work I can. I refer you to Hon. George Davis and Major Robert Strange, of General Barringer's staff, for anything you may want to know about me."

In a letter dated two days later President Cowan wrote the governor: "If the confederate government will not accept this proposition, I respectfully suggest that you let it go to South Carolina after those roads which it is always going to take up, but never

does." Governor Vance notified General Gilmer that he would not surrender the road unless the legislature consented, as the entire road was mortgaged to the state.

Under date of September 22, 1864, Vance wrote Secretary of War Seddon: "I learn that Lieutenant Colonel W. H. Cowles, First North Carolina Cavalry, has been recommended for brigadier of Chambliss' brigade by his superiors. I beg leave most cordially and earnestly to second the recommendation of this gallant and most accomplished young officer. In addition to rewarding merit and promoting the good of the service, the promotion of Lieutenant Colonel Cowles would furnish great evidence to our people of the intention of the war department to promote North Carolinians, when deserving, to the command of troops from other states to which we have submitted, reversed, so long."

Governor Vance wrote Governor Seymour, of New York, a letter in which he asked the latter to distribute among North Carolina prisoners in New York state \$200,000 sterling, this being sent in three bills of exchange on Collier & Co., of Liverpool, the state's agents. In a letter to Governor Seymour expressed admiration for the latter's high character and humanity.

October 28, 1864, Governor Vance wrote Robert M. Ould, confederate commissioner for the exchange of prisoners. "You give me the gratifying information that arrangements have been made for supplying our prisoners north with necessary comforts for the winter and that we would be allowed to purchase supplies in the northern cities. I desire immediately to make arrangements for supplying the troops of this state which can do so very readily, having funds in Europe. If I can have an agent north I should greatly prefer having my brother, General Vance, for this purpose, if the authorities will consent. He is now at Fort Delaware, and his health is daily giving way from his confinement. As it seems that he cannot be exchanged I would be much obliged if our government would grant him this privilege and procure the consent of the enemy. No better man could be found to dispense the bounty of North Carolina and the confederate government."

November 15th Governor Vance wrote President Davis: "I deem it my duty to address you in regard to the situation at Wilmington. I have just returned from a visit to the works here that city and find them in excellent condition so far as I am able to judge. There seems to be nothing wanting but troops. If attacked in strong force I humbly conceive that their capture is inevitable unless strengthened by at least two brigades of veteran troops. The militia assembled there I fancy will be totally inadequate to resist a land attack on Fort Fisher, which seems to be the point of real danger. In view of all the facts in the case, of which I presume the commanding general keeps you sufficiently informed, I respectfully submit that General Lee should spare a few veterans as a nucleus for the raw troops defending Wilmington, notwithstanding the pressure upon his forces. Except for the moral effect involved in losing our capital, I cannot see that Richmond itself is of any greater importance to us now than Wilmington. To leave it entirely in the hands of militia except the garrison I deem extremely injudicious."

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December 27, 1864, Governor Vance was at Wilmington when that city was attacked. He writes a letter to Mrs. James Spence, of Liverpool, England, in which he thanks her for presiding over the North Carolina stall at a "confederate bazaar" at Liverpool. He says: "Now that this city is attacked and there is a possibility at least of our only available seaport being closed, I cannot longer delay the pleasurable task of thanking you, even though the roar of artillery shakes the city as I write. You and your colleagues in this are but the sisters of those who here this day are dressing the wounds and wiping away the death damp from the brows of perishing soldiers. I cannot adequately praise and bless this sisterhood of charity, mercy which lends a brightness and a glory to civilization or give you an idea of what it has done for our devoted soldiery." This letter is dated "Headquarters Forces of North Carolina, Wilmington."

January 3, 1865, Governor Vance telegraphed Governor Bragg: "Can I with safety disband the Home Guard for a few weeks? They have to be reorganized under the new law and I think this as good a time as any."

The confederate government appears from the tenor of scores of letters, to have treated North Carolina most unfavorably in the matter of running the

blockade, and actually forced the state to seek a halt interest in its own blockade runner, "Advance." It is further shown that this blockade runner was forced to take out and bring in cargoes for private parties and there are more or less broad hints of speculation. All this Governor Vance protested and chafed like a lion. Then the "Advance" was captured by a blockading vessel. She was using coal from the mine then known as the "Egypt" mine. On the 28th of December Secretary of the Navy Mallory wrote Governor Vance a letter which produced the following replies: "I have received your letter with enclosures relative to the loss of the Advance received. I stated that the loss of the Advance was due to the appropriation of her coal for the steamers of the government. I made this statement of which you complain, deliberately and with authority which I regard as reliable, and you have been sustained by the facts. To the common heap of coal the Advance contributed, and yet when she came to sail the government had taken all the coal and she had to go with North Carolina coal. The coal was actually applied to her use, and you are just as I charged. I call your attention to the certificate of Mr. Savage, collector of the port of Wilmington, showing there was no gold on the Advance when she was captured. I do not think it fair to appear in an article in the Richmond Sentinel, said to have been written under the auspices of the navy department, in which it was alleged that there was a large amount of gold on this vessel, the non-appearance of which was supposed to account in part for her capture. Like you, sir, I do not care to discuss the policy of our government in regard to our armed cruisers and blockade runners generally. If I did I might cite the recent formidable attack upon Wilmington, from which alone we were delivered by the providence of God, as a full confirmation of my opinions. [Governor Vance had protested against the sending out from Wilmington of the Tallahassee, declaring it only irritable and not a blockade runner on this state.] I might also cite the three vessels which lately entered Wilmington, from which alone we were not of greater benefit to the confederacy, even though it was the enterprise of 'gamblers' than the destruction of all the enemy's vessels at sea mentioned in the list you enclose. My opposition to the policy of this government is not based upon anything factional, or any regard for the interest of men who have been making fortunes by running the blockade, whether native or foreign. I never made objection to their being placed under such restrictions as the government thought proper, but why a state struggling for its troops in the public service should meet with no more favor than a blockade gambler passes my comprehension."

January 7th Governor Vance wrote President Davis this letter: "I beg leave most cordially to join in the recommendation which I take for granted has been made by your officers, of Colonel William Lamb, commanding Fort Fisher, for promotion. I was near by during the recent attack on the defenses of Wilmington, and people and soldiers alike were enthusiastic in praise of his skill and gallantry. President Davis, the other reports have done justice to his soldierly qualities. I mainly desire to assure you that our people would gladly see him made a brigadier general for North Carolina, though not a citizen thereof."

General Whiting wrote Governor Vance January 4, 1865, that he needed as large a force of free negroes as possible to work on the forts, and that he desired to let the slaves return to their masters. He suggested "an enrolled corps of 1,500 free negroes, properly organized in companies according to regulations, entitled to furlough, fed clothed and paid." With these he would guarantee the exemption of slave labor.

This state after the government had broken up its salt works, hired an engineer and cars to haul salt from Saltville, Va. The board of public works of Virginia coolly seized this train. The legislature of this state promptly adopted a resolution denouncing this and Governor Vance notified Governor Spence that he had forbidden the exportation of articles of Virginia upon North Carolina railways.

January 17th Secretary of War Seddon was notified by Vance that the North Carolina state had purchased the purchase of \$200,000 worth of cotton or tobacco and its shipment for the relief of prisoners of war in northern prisons, "who are in great suffering and want."

Colonel Peter Mallett, commanding conscripts, reported to December 1, 1864, that there were in the state exempt from military service 5,133 state officers and 7,885 by reason of disability.

February 1, 1865, Governor Vance wrote General Bradley T. Johnson the following letter: "Most distressing accounts reach me of the suffering and destitution of the Yankee prisoners under your charge in the prison at Salisbury. If the half he tells me is correct, our humanity and will provoke severe retaliation. I hope, however, it is not so bad as represented, but let it be so I hereby tender you any aid in my power to afford to make their condition more tolerable. I know the great scarcity of food which prevails, but shelter and warmth can certainly be provided and I can spare you some clothing if the Yankees will deliver as much to North Carolina troops in northern prisons. Please let me hear from you." February 8th General Johnson C. Breckinridge secretary of war, wrote that this letter had been forwarded to him and that he had directed an inspection to be made of the prison and had given such instructions to the inspecting officer as would enable him to stop the evils complained of. The day Governor Vance received the following letter from Captain G. W. Booth: "General Johnson has been absent for over a week and I will give you a short statement of the progress of the work established at this place was contemplated for confederate prisoners only, buildings and sufficient ground being purchased for that purpose. About the 5th of November 1864, a large number of prisoners of war, some 8,000, were suddenly sent here. The government having no other place to send them. The grounds were enlarged and such preparations as could be made were arranged for their reception. A short time after their arrival tents were erected and they were all under shelter of some sort. The number of prisoners confined here has reached as high a figure as 10,000. When sent here they were in extremely bad condition. Wood

in sufficient quantity is issued them. Only two days have they been without food, and then unavoidable circumstances prevented its issue. The issue of wood is regulated in a measure by the weather. In extreme days they receive more than when the weather is mild. As evidence that they have plenty, they offer to sell their soap, to the sutler wood for his store, in exchange for tobacco. He informs me that more is offered him than he buys or has use for. The matter of food receives the earnest attention of the commanding officers. The prisoners regularly receive one pound of good bread, one pint soup, besides small issues of meat or sordum--some times small quantities of both. As to clothing their condition is truly deplorable, most of them having been prisoners some six or nine months. The commissary department cannot issue clothing to them, and none has been received at this post from the north. General Johnson in a communication to the commissary of exchange Ould, in the early part of January, called attention to their condition in this respect, and sent forth in the fullest terms and requested that his letter be forwarded to the federal authorities. Your generous proposition will no doubt be readily agreed to by the federal government. As soon as General Johnson returns I will lay your communication before him and he will do all he can to effect its consummation. Ten wells are in the prison, which afford them water. In addition they are permitted every day to bring water in barrels from a neighboring creek. No stream of water runs through this prison, and the water is not pure. But a removal of prisoners to Columbia is contemplated and all improvements, buildings, etc., have been prohibited by General Winder. General York, who has visited most of the prisoners, says that the arrangements for the lack of transportation and the damages to the railways of late the energy of the officers of the commissary and quartermaster's departments has been objected to no means tests, but the prisoners have not suffered for food or rations. An inspector from your excellency will receive every facility to visit the prison. There is a postscript to this letter, which says: "Since writing the above a telegram has been received from Richmond, which, etc., have been shipped from Richmond and federal officers are now on their way here to superintend their distribution." The guarding of these prisoners was done by Senior Reserves. Captain Booth's letter showed you they were well supplied as to food and fuel, but they suffer for clothes and shelter. General Winder proposes to remove the buildings to be erected here. A large per cent have therefore lived in holes in the ground. Were I to attempt to erect barracks, spring would come on before they could be finished, and they would try to get tents. Can you lend me or procure for me in Raleigh 150 or 200 wall tents? If so pray send them on at once. I recently visited Richmond for the main purpose of pressing on our authorities our views on ourselves and these people, laying before them the terrible suffering and mortality among them. I have purchased from the federal officer for distributing goods in Richmond 3,500 blankets, which will be here tomorrow. With the tents their condition would be tolerable, but I think can relieve it save speedy exchange. I have from Vice President Stephens that General Grant is willing to receive from me 3,500 a week. I urge the immediate delivery of all prisoners in North Carolina to South Carolina. If not the prisoners of Florence will have to be marched through the country to Raleigh, which will expose you people to more deprivations than from the march of a hostile column. I beg you to join with me in urging the confederate authorities to consent to an immediate delivery of these prisoners at the most convenient point. Grant proposes to take his men and deliver ours, both parties to be on parole. I think he never will consent to this, but we must let our men go back to our army. On this our authorities may stick, but we ought to agree to it at once. The prisoners here eat our rations and keep men out of the field to guard them. The present business of the state will be better to send them home at once on parole. But the men we get back will go home, reinvigorating the population for the war, work, help to raise provisions and in case of emergency desert to the enemy by guile."

February 12th General Bradley T. Johnson, commanding Salisbury prison, wrote the governor this letter: "I acknowledge personally your liberality offered before Christmas and therefore forbade any buildings to be erected here. A large per cent have therefore lived in holes in the ground. Were I to attempt to erect barracks, spring would come on before they could be finished, and they would try to get tents. Can you lend me or procure for me in Raleigh 150 or 200 wall tents? If so pray send them on at once. I recently visited Richmond for the main purpose of pressing on our authorities our views on ourselves and these people, laying before them the terrible suffering and mortality among them. I have purchased from the federal officer for distributing goods in Richmond 3,500 blankets, which will be here tomorrow. With the tents their condition would be tolerable, but I think can relieve it save speedy exchange. I have from Vice President Stephens that General Grant is willing to receive from me 3,500 a week. I urge the immediate delivery of all prisoners in North Carolina to South Carolina. If not the prisoners of Florence will have to be marched through the country to Raleigh, which will expose you people to more deprivations than from the march of a hostile column. I beg you to join with me in urging the confederate authorities to consent to an immediate delivery of these prisoners at the most convenient point. Grant proposes to take his men and deliver ours, both parties to be on parole. I think he never will consent to this, but we must let our men go back to our army. On this our authorities may stick, but we ought to agree to it at once. The prisoners here eat our rations and keep men out of the field to guard them. The present business of the state will be better to send them home at once on parole. But the men we get back will go home, reinvigorating the population for the war, work, help to raise provisions and in case of emergency desert to the enemy by guile."

The last twenty pages of this letter book of 1864-5 are crowded with important things. On the 29th of 1865, General Lee calls on Governor Vance to give General Bragg every man possible. The governor telegraphs that he has called out every man liable to duty in the state. General Lee calls on him to destroy provisions. Vance replies that he cannot do this without a cavalry force. He telegraphs to General Bragg on the 25th at Magnolia, "Please inform me of progress of enemy. I desire to move stores and am waiting for information."

February 14th Vance issued his proclamation announcing the fall of Wilmington and also the failure of the "peace conference which met at Fort Monroe. February 28th he wrote to John White, North Carolina commissioner at London, that Wilmington was captured and blockade running stopped. He then said: "Nothing remains but to close up our affairs and wait for a change. What funds we have in England should be placed in safety to aid in the final settlement of our indebtedness in Europe. The 'West India' I leave you to dispose of in any way deemed best, consulting Mr. Flanner and Mr. Collie. You may also relieve Mr. Flanner of his agency from this date. Mr. Collie who bears this will give you the military news. It is bad enough, God knows."

February 26th the legislature adopted a resolution opposing the policy of arming slaves as soldiers.

February 24th Major Hoge of the confederate war department arrived with a request from Commissary General St. John that the state lend the government all its reserve supplies of provisions, or their sale. The governor at once issued a call to the people of the

state, urging that every citizen who could do so should pledge himself to furnish the rations of one soldier for six months, without designating any particular soldier, and suggesting the immediate delivery of eighty pounds of meat and 180 pounds of flour, or their equivalent in beef or meal, to the nearest commissary agent.

General Joseph E. Johnston March 1st expressed a desire to change the gauge of the North Carolina railroad to five feet. Governor Vance that day telegraphed him "How far do you wish to bring the wide gauge? I do not want it further extended unless it is of great necessity requires it." He also telegraphed Major General Gilmer at Charlotte: "How far do you wish to alter the gauge of the North Carolina road? I object to its being done east of Salisbury, unless the connection broken with the west."

General J. E. Johnston replied "The change of gauge was ordered by the war department. It is made by an officer who is under my orders." The next day General Johnston sent another telegram: "I find that the war department but General Bourgeois ordered the widening of the railroad. I consider the extension of this work to Danville a military necessity." General Gilmer telegraphed: "It is important to alter the gauge at Greensboro and Danville. I beg you will intercede for the extension of the railroad. I agree with General Johnston in thinking it imperative that the widening of the gauge should continue to Danville if possible."

March 3rd Governor Vance telegraphed General Gilmer: "I positively object to widening gauge coming east of Salisbury, unless I am permitted the same control over the arrangement which the law gives me over the North Carolina roads." That very day the governor wrote General Gilmer his reasons for objecting to the change of gauge east of Salisbury. They were: "I object to the connection with the west, where I must remove my stores and public records in case Raleigh is threatened, compelling me to break bulk twice and leaving me no power of controlling transportation in the hands of the state. The change of gauge on the road, 2nd, should Sherman's route, most likely, unite with Schofield and advance upon Greensboro from this direction all of the rolling stock in North Carolina crowded upon Greensboro for safe, having the road open behind it. I do not understand that it is the interest of North Carolina to make the sacrifice of her own property to save that of South Carolina. I cannot see how the extending of the wide gauge to Greensboro is a military necessity. The rolling stock of the state it seems to me is amply sufficient to transport everything desired between Salisbury and Greensboro, and by widening the gauge so far you will render idle as much stock as you would gain an enganger of 300 horses. Until further reasons are assigned therefor I must adhere to my objection."

March 3rd Governor Vance telegraphed General Bragg at Goldsboro: "I have no objection to your taking the rolling stock of the state it seems to me is amply sufficient to transport everything desired between Salisbury and Greensboro, and by widening the gauge so far you will render idle as much stock as you would gain an enganger of 300 horses. Until further reasons are assigned therefor I must adhere to my objection."

March 8th General Joe Johnston telegraphed Governor Vance: "I make a prudent movement to meet the my threatening your capital I need fifty additional wagons and teams to transport supplies to meet the emergency. Can you assist me in having them collected in the vicinity of Raleigh and Smithfield at the earliest possible moment." Governor Vance replied: "I can have fifty wagons, mostly two-horse, by this day week, if you will give authority to impress a few county wagons for post duty. The state has no authority to impress. March 8th he telegraphed the commandant at Fayetteville: "You have taken the liberty of impressing my wagons without my permission. I send them back for state goods and notify you to keep your hands off them."

Under date of February 24th General R. E. Lee wrote the governor: "The state of despondency that now prevails among our people is producing a bad effect upon the troops. Desertions are becoming very frequent and there is good reason to believe that they are occasioned to a considerable extent by letters written to the soldiers by their friends at home. In the last two weeks several hundreds have deserted from Hill's corps and as the divisions from which the greatest number of desertions have taken place are composed chiefly of troops from North Carolina they furnish a corresponding proportion of deserters. I think some good can be accomplished by the efforts of influential citizens to change public sentiment and cheer the spirits of the people. It has been discovered that independent persons represent to their friends in the army that our cause is hopeless and that they had better provide for themselves. They state that the number of deserters is so large in the several counties that there is no danger to be apprehended from the home guards. The deserters generally take their arms with them. The greater number are from regiments from the western part of the state. So far as the despondency of the people occasions the desertions, I know of no other means of removing it than by the counsel and exhortation of prominent citizens. If they would explain to the people that the cause is not hopeless, that the situation of affairs, which is so critical to the enemy as well as to ourselves; that he has drawn his troops from every other quarter to accomplish his designs against Richmond and his defeat now would result in leaving nearly all our territory open to us; that the great result can be accomplished if all will work diligently and zealously, and that his successes are far less valuable in fact than in appearance, I think our sorely-ried people would be induced to make one more effort, to bear their sufferings a little longer, and regain some of the spirit that marked the first two years of the war. If they will I feel confident that with the blessing of God what seems to be our greatest danger will prove the means of deliverance and safety. I trust you will do all in your power to help us in this great emergency."

March 2nd Governor Vance re-

plied, saying: "Yours has been received giving me the distressing news of the increase of desertion from our armies. I had heard from other sources of this defection of our troops and was already too well aware that the cause of it was to be found in the general public despondency. I inaugurated a series of public meetings in this state by my recent proclamation, for the purpose of reviving public sentiment, and though many have been held and many more will be held, yet the near and triumphant approach of the enemy has so alarmed the timid and so engendered the loyal in preparation for his coming that a fear they will hardly have their proper effect. I have myself been so busy in trying to organize my militia and secure my vast public stores that I have only been able to address the people at two or three points. Rest assured, however, that I am fully alive to the importance of the crisis and whatever man can do in my situation shall be done. I shall now order out the home guard in every county and keep it at work arresting deserters. In many counties, however, they are necessarily inflicted from the great number of the deserters and the natural fear of the destruction of their property, etc. If you could send me as many as two regiments of cavalry, by quartering them in the midst of these disaffected districts and arranging upon them the deserters, they could not only arrest many but could recruit themselves and horses, restore confidence and inspire with courage the local forces. I earnestly recommend your action, general and anxious to think your efforts not weaken your army. I think our people will respond liberally to the appeal for supplies which I have just published this morning at the instance of the secretary of war. The first answer made to it, two hours after its appearance in the morning papers, was from a poor widow of this city, who, hard pressed to live in these distressing times, as I know she is, came yet to offer me two pieces of bacon and a barrel of meal. I think your efforts on the sacred altar of our country hallow our cause and I hope will secure God's blessing upon it."

March 9th General Lee replied to this letter as follows: "I return you my sincere thanks for the kind efforts in behalf of the army and the cause. I have read with pleasure and attention your proclamation and appeal to the people, as also extracts from your addresses. I trust you will infuse into your fellow citizens the spirit of resolution and patriotism which inspires your own action. I have now no cavalry to spare for the purpose you mention. I think the suggestion a very good one and regret I did not receive it earlier. I have sent a force of infantry under Brigadier General N. D. Johnston to guard the route of the Roanoke and operate as far as practicable in the adjacent counties to arrest deserters. Another detachment of 500 men under Colonel McAllister has been sent to Chatham and Moore counties, in which the bands of deserters are represented to be very numerous. They are instructed to take no prisoners among those deserters who resist with arms the civil or military authorities. I hope you will raise as large a force of local troops to co-operate with them as you can. I think the best course is the best with the class I have referred to. The immunity which these lawless organizations afford is a great cause of desertion and they cannot be too sternly dealt with. I hope you will be able to aid General Johnson in the needs all the reinforcements you can give him. If he can check the progress of General Sherman the effect would be of the greatest value. I hope the late success of General Bragg, near Kinross, will revive the spirits of the people and render your labor less arduous. The conduct of the widow whom you mention deserves the highest commendation. If all our people possess her spirit our success I should feel too assured."

The last letter in the book bears date March 17th and is to Secretary of War Breckinridge. It is as follows: "I have been informed that certain communications of the utmost importance to the success of the confederacy have been submitted to congress in secret session, by the president and the several heads of departments. I have also been informed that their nature was such as to render it entirely proper and indeed right that I as governor of North Carolina should be informed of their contents. I have therefore request a copy of said papers if not deemed inconsistent with the public good, and have sent the bearer, Major James H. Foote, A. G., to receive them should you deem it advisable to comply with my request."

THE SHIP'S BELL

It is Closely Identified With the Whole Career of the Ship

Lieutenant John M. Ellicott, U. S. N., writes an article for June St. Nicholas, on "What is Told by the Bell," in which he says:

Nothing in a ship becomes so closely identified with her throughout her whole career as the ship's bell. Officers and crew come and go; masts, decks, engines and boilers become old, and are replaced by new ones; but from the day that she first glides into the water the same ship's bell remains always a part of her, marking her progress all over the world, and finally going down with her in a deep grave at the bottom of the sea, or surviving her as a cherished souvenir of her existence and achievements. On a man-of-war the bell is usually inscribed with her name and the date of her launching; and, as it is probable that it may some day become a memento of a glorious history, the bell is often the subject of special care in casting or selection. Sometimes the hundreds of workmen who have built the great ship contribute each a silver coin to be melted and molded into a bell which shall be the token of their love for the object of their creation and their interest in her future career. Often the people of the place where the ship is built are named may present to her a magnificent bell appropriately ornamented and inscribed with words of good wish to the crew. Such a bell is usually presented with ceremony after the ship goes into commission.

Ship bells in general are made of bronze, like other bells. The addition of silver in their composition gives them a peculiarly clear and resonant tone. They are placed in such a position on the upper deck that they may be heard from one end of the ship to the other, and are usually near the mainmast or at the break of the fore-castle. One peculiarity exists in a ship's bell which is necessary on account of her motion at sea. The tongue is hung so that it can swing in only one direction. If it were not so the bell would be continually ringing as the ship rolled and pitched. The direction in which the tongue can swing is another important point. If it were athwartship the bell would ring at every heavy roll of the ship; and if it were fore and aft the bell would ring at every deep pitch; so the direction in which the tongue can swing is nearly half-way and between these two.