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## From the 4th North Carolina.

CAROLINA NEAR ORANGE, VA.,  
April 7th, 1864.

April storm—Real comfort—Hopes brighter—Gov. Vance's visit—His Speech—a few points given—Reviews—Enthusiastic audiences—Music &c.—An agreeable change in the weather—Robin red-breast, &c.

For several days past the weather has been so unmercifully inclement that it has been impossible to do anything with satisfaction, except smoking and telling yarns as we gather round the cozy fires. Old citizens in this section say this is but the usual "April storm," which invariably visits this latitude between the first and middle of this month. I don't doubt it; to our own cost we have found it so for three successive springs. The first storm of this sort came on us while we were perched on Clark's mountain in April '62; the second, last spring at Fredericksburg, and the third here, below Orange; where next we can hardly say, and for my own part I'm not so intimate with the winters out here that I care much about giving them another such familiar shake at parting while my situation remains the same as it is at present. But we have no reason to complain,—indeed, we are thankful that it is so well with us. Instead of freezing on picket, or in old split and demoralized tents as we did last spring, now we can sit by our snug firesides and listen with feelings aglow with real pleasure at the wind raving around the corners of our shanty, or to the sleet and raindrops incessantly clattering on our clapboard roofs. This is comfort for you,—genuine, heart-felt comfort; far exceeding anything we have experienced since the beginning of the war. Things have certainly taken a turn for the better, the fact is self-evident. Our men are well clad, better than at any former period of the war, with shod, sickness is almost unheard of, our rations are abundant but coarse, principally meal and bacon, and a spirit of contented cheerfulness and buoyant hope pervades the army truly encouraging. We are gaining ground, there is no kind of doubt about it. We hear no complaints or grumbling; desertions, with rare exceptions, are numbered among the things that were, and the encouraging news from all points of the Confederacy, and from the North also, have breathed into our soldiers a confidence not easily shaken. All seem fully convinced that this summer will tell the tale, and though the hard blows pending are dreaded, yet the men seem eager for them to begin that they may be sponer over. Not one with whom I have conversed harbors in his breast a single misgiving about the result; and now, with the blessing of Providence, we can see, for the first time since the beginning of this bloody struggle, a light dawning ahead of us. My readers may think there is more fancy than fact about this assertion, but all will see for themselves ere another six months roll away, unless some unlooked for and terrible catastrophe befalls our arms.

But nothing has tended so much to inspire the troops with fresh zeal, or strengthen their faith in our cause, in the loyalty of those at home and in our ultimate and early triumph as the late visit of Governor Vance and his well-timed speeches. On the 26th ult. he addressed an enthusiastic audience in Daniels', and on Monday following another in this (Ramsour's) brigade. In the forenoon (Monday 28th ult.) the N. Carolina troops in Rode's division, consisting of two brigades, Ramsour's and Daniels', with the 1st and 3d N. C. regiments attached to Stewart's Virginia brigade, were mustered in an old field not far from camp where the Governor was put through

a grand review in the most imposing and warlike manner imaginable. I should add that Johnson's (formerly Iverson's) brigade also belongs to this Division, but at present is absent on detached service at where I must not say, the news might be contraband. Well, the review closed at noon; it was said the musicians had blown off five years of their allotted time, but no matter, the occasion demanded an effort and we cheerfully made it. But we were not done yet; the troops under arms, together with large numbers from other commands who hoped to hear the eccentric and popular Governor speak, or at least get a peep at him,—all were marched to the 30th N. C. camp, where a stand had been prepared for the occasion, and around which the immense multitude gathered in regular military order. The stand was located in a small hollow, three sides of which descend gradually to the centre, thus forming a kind of natural amphitheatre which was literally jammed with human souls from the base to the summit. Perhaps a dozen ladies were present, some on horseback and others in ambulances; but these unsuspecting and modest visitors, though thrice welcome to the audience, were, nevertheless, a serious stumbling block to the speaker when relating some of his most appropriate and best anecdotes; some of which to my certain knowledge he paraphrased, mutilated, struck out and substituted words out of regard to the sensibilities of the gentler ones who composed a small though not insignificant portion of his audience; and these few, when they belong to the upper circles, as all intelligent ladies do, always have a very nice perception of the meaning and application of words in whatever sense they may be used. The speaker knew this of course and spiced his stories accordingly, the result of which, in some instances, was extremely ludicrous, as the reader may well imagine. After some stirring music from the 4th N. C. and 10th Va. bands (both of which had endeavored to blow each other's horns off on review) the Governor ascended the stage amid the deafening shouts of the assembled hosts. On the platform by his side sat Gens. Ewell, Rodes, Ed. Johnson, Early, Stuart, and a score of others of lesser grade, while in the compact audience officers of every rank, without distinction of party or State, were scattered profusely. At the meeting in Daniel's brigade Lee honored the occasion with his presence, and some say A. P. Hill also. But to resume: when order was restored the speaker began, as is his custom, with some of his drolleries, very unexpected it is true to many of his hearers, but then it fixed attention and that was his aim. He said he did not know how he could make his voice reach so many; it was like the large family he once heard of, all of whom never had the measles, the disease always gave out before it got round. All I have to say is, if some of you get more than your share, you must divide with your less fortunate companions when you assemble around your camp-fires for a social chat. (We've done it V—) Fellow soldiers, (he continued) but, perhaps you think I have no right to say "Fellow Soldiers," since I was a soldier once myself and shirked out of it on a little flourish which you kindly gave me, and for which I'm profoundly grateful. (Guess we'll extend it one of these days.) Well, if you will not allow me to call you "fellow soldiers" I know what I can call you, and it will be all right; (then raising his voice he exclaimed) Fellow-Tar-Heels! (Great laughter.) Tar Heels! not misnamed either, for you always stick when the pinch comes. (Prolonged applause.) Fellow Tar Heels; I have left a herd of croakers, grumblers and growlers, and shirkers to pay a visit to the Confederacy. You are the Confederacy—you, the soldiers from whatever State, for I am happy to see many here to-day who are not Tar Heels, though your honor is none the less bright. This visit to the army of Northern Virginia has given me more real pleasure—has done me more good than anything I ever did in my life, except getting married. (Laughter.) I now face the living wall which has so long and so nobly defended our homes and our fire-sides, and proud am I to see it, after so many storms and fierce battles, yet staunch, defiant and I believe I may safely add, impregnable. He continued in this eloquent strain nearly an hour, during which the vast audience was so still, and wrapped in such close attention that we could almost hear our own hearts beat. It is impossible to describe the speech, much less the effect. But the Governor, in this sublime oratory, felt evidently somewhat like a fish out of water; so, descending from his exalted position, he continued more on the colloquial style, with occasional outbursts of genuine eloquence. He brought the soldiers to be

patient, to stand firm through one more campaign, and, with God's blessing, we would have peace, as he firmly believed. He condemned desertion and deserters in the strongest possible terms. "For a conscript who had never smelt gunpowder, to desert, he thought, might be excusable, but for an old veteran who carried scars, honorable scars—for him to desert was the unpardonable sin. How inconsiderate, how criminal, to doom himself and his posterity to irretrievable disgrace! How can a true soldier feel, who has been induced by some evil-minded individual, or by the complaints and murmurings of relatives and friends, to desert his colors and his comrades in arms,—I say, how can he feel while skulking in the woods at home, dodging and hiding from a militia officer! A militia officer!" He said there were men in N. C. who who made a great deal of fuss, they considered that their right, but when the test came they were always found on the right side. They were like an old fellow down in North Carolina who once tried to evade the "Dog-tax-law." It may look a little green to some of you, but it is true, nevertheless, that we used to have a law in our parts by which dogs were taxed five dollars per head; and one day a seedy old customer went before the magistrate to make his returns. All went off smoothly; so many cattle, so many horses, so many acres of land, etc., and lastly, one dog. When all was down he turned to leave, chuckling in himself over his cunning in fooling the magistrate out of five dollars tax for another dog which he had not given in. "Hello," says the squire to his departing friend—"You must swear to this return." "What's that you say?" "Must swear to this." "Must swear to it, must I?" "Yes, you must swear to it." "Have to swear to it, hey?" (Feigning great surprise) "Well since I must swear to it, just put me down another dog if you please." (A roar of laughter followed this anecdote; the reader can see the application.) "Well," continued the speaker, "I am aware that N. C. has been stigmatized as the 'nest of deserters,' 'a harbor for traitors' and all that, and I am sorry to say that there was once a shade of truth connected with these assertions, but when the whole truth is made public it will be found that N. C. is not more deserving of these detesting epithets than some of her sister States."

But why should I attempt to go farther in giving the outlines of a speech which consumed two hours in its delivery? I began with the intention of giving only the most important points as I could call them to mind from memory, but I find that all are important alike. And the length of my letter already admonishes me that I had best wind up. With this laudable object in view I will begin by stating that the Governor concluded with a touching and eloquent appeal to the feelings of his hearers. He felt confident the end was drawing nigh—that our enemies had staked all on this summer's campaign, and that if our brave soldiers were only favored with success by an overruling and all-wise Providence, peace would surely follow first; then the ratification of treaties and foreign recognition and finally our triumphal march home; happy greetings, joyous meetings and bliss inexpressible, almost inconceivable awaited the soldier who is faithful to the end.

He was done, and as the speaker took his seat three loud and prolonged cheers were given for the Governor of the Old North State, followed by lively and stirring music from the bands. This visit of our Executive and his speeches are worth a corps of troops to us. The North Carolinians feel their bosoms burn with pride when they remember what a champion they have, and how ably and powerfully he has vindicated the name and honor of our mother State and her sons.

After half an hour's intermission, during which hearty and cordial congratulations were exchanged, introductions given, music, &c., Gen. Early was called for. He responded in a few appropriate remarks, the gist of which was, the hope that our present Governor might be re-elected to serve another term. (Before this nothing had been said in anywise connected with the subject. Rodes and Johnson responded briefly to the clamorous calls made from all quarters, after which came Gen. Ewell's turn, but the hero of Manassas, being rather disinclined, shuffled his cork leg off just in time to escape the necessity of making a harangue to his "mules,"—as the soldiers of his command are sometimes designated, and not altogether inaptly either, judging from the size of the knapsacks many of them carry and the labor they perform.

The sun was taking his last lingering peep over the Blue Ridge as we returned

to camp, and since then his rays have seldom cheered us. Snow, sleet, wind and rain have been storming us day and night until we had almost given up the hope of balmy spring's return. But last evening the dark, murky clouds, as if frightened at some hideous spectre in the frigid zones, chased each other southward in a race for a more genial clime. Perhaps the abomination lately set up in Yankee land, known as miscegenation (new name for amalgamation) had something to do with the scare in the elements; be that as it may, by the time the sun went down not a cloud was visible; instead of boisterous winds a perfect calm prevailed, and when thick darkness came on the stars seemed to hold a kind of jubilee over the vanquished and retreating storms of winter; and to-day the undimmed rays of the broad sun re-animated the whole face of nature. Our camp looks bright and cheerful, the soldiers are unusually merry and full of fun, while flocks of old robin red breasts trot about on the ground, occasionally stopping to turn up their white ringed eyes and ivory bills in an independent, saucy way, as much as to say as plain as words could express it "Touch me if you dare."

Assigns of a move except an order to send surplus baggage to the rear, which is generally pretty good evidence of a storm brewing. Active preparations are making over the river, under Grant's directions, for the coming onslaught, which will be such a shock as has never been felt nor witnessed on this continent; it will be the dying gasp of the old government and perhaps the birth of more than a single new one. NAT.

## THE FOURTH YEAR OF THE WAR.

To-day we enter upon the fourth year of the war—dating from the bombardment of Fort Sumter. We have withstood three years the onsets of a foe mighty in numbers, boundless in resources, desperately pertinacious and remorselessly cruel. More than two millions of men on land and a navy equal to half a million more, with the most approved machinery of war, and at an outlay of several thousand millions of dollars, have furiously striven to overwhelm and "crush" us. At the outset, so ignorant were our foes of the spirit and strength of our people, that they confidently expected to consummate in three months and with a force less than the numbers they have actually had slain in battle what the frantic efforts of three years have only served to show they can never accomplish, in any number of years and with any hosts they can muster. That, mainly from their uncontested command of the water, they have won important advantages, in this long period, is not to be denied—but that they have fallen infinitely short of their confident expectations and swaggering promises, that they have disappointed egregiously the lookers-on in other countries, that they have gained greatly less than we ourselves apprehended, are facts equally undeniable.

They might have overrun as the British did, and then have conquered us no more than they did. But, to the surprise of European spectators, they have come so far short of this as to have made advances only where the strength of the Confederacy was not put forth in resistance. It was impossible to defend all our wide borders, and invasion was easy. Many places intended originally to be defended, but really of minor importance, had to be abandoned to them, because their superior equipments and their navy enabled them to attack before we were ready for them. Such were Hatteras, Roanoke Island, Newbern, Port Royal, Fort Donelson and other incomplete and inadequately manned defences. New Orleans fell because its defences were not completed, and Vicksburg because it was entrusted to incompetent hands. These successes gave them the Mississippi River, and cut the Confederacy in two.—But to what practical advantage? They cannot use the Mississippi for commercial purposes, and the two divisions of the Confederacy fight as well as they did when one.—Their successes, indeed, have demonstrated even more forcibly than their failures the impossibility of accom-

plishing what they have undertaken; for they have shown that nothing seriously hurts us. So vast is our area, and so numerous the strategic and defensive points it furnishes, the loss of any only necessitates a change of position on our part, and leaves the enemy to contemplate the failure of all the calculations based upon the prospect of winning it.—The expected results of success have always eluded them, and the fruits of victory have turned to ashes on their lips. They have nowhere touched the vitals of the Confederacy, and never can; for the Confederacy has no one point in which its life is lodged. Every portion of it is instinct with existence—every mountain and valley and plain throbs with inextinguishable vitality. As long as ground enough is left to plant a battery or set a squadron in the field, the vital point of the Confederacy is not touched.

The question of most interest with us now is not whether the enemy can succeed in their undertaking—if, indeed, that ever was a question—but how much longer they will persist in the mad attempt. The impression generally prevails that the campaign which we are now entering is the last—that the death grapple has come, and the struggle must soon be over. The army makes no calculations. With grim humor and gay defiance worthy of the cavalier stock from which they come, our soldiers volunteer for "forty years or the war." But civilians indulge themselves in speculations, the failure of which cannot affect men who take none. Whether the fourth year of the war will be the final one depends mainly upon the incidents of the campaign. We leave out of view the possibility of other things always possible—such, for instance, as the long delayed, but inevitable, financial crash at the North, of which the upward tendency of gold there, in spite of all Chase's thimble-rigging, affords improving prospect—the counter revolution that has been hoped for, and of which the late outbreak in Illinois is prophetic—foreign intervention, rendered more likely of late by the hostile demonstration in Washington towards the European arrangements for Mexico; we leave these out of the calculation, and speak only of military contingencies. Our opinion is, that if the campaign is a successful one to us, it will end the war, though it may not bring immediate peace—peace settled by treaty and declared by proclamation. We do not see how it is possible for the enemy, if at the end of four years of such gigantic combat as we have had they find themselves no further advanced towards their object than they now are, to stand up before the world and insist upon continuing the contest. We do not see how the world, without shaming the civilization and common sense of the age, could permit it. Christian nations would be bound by the faith they hold and the humanity they profess to protest against it, and, if that did not avail, then to interpose to prevent it.—Yankee humbug could not longer deceive mankind as to the possibility of our subjugation, nor Yankee audacity persist in what would be so obviously absurd.

What is most to be feared, all in fact that is to be feared, is that advantages of such apparent importance may be gained by the enemy as will afford them a pretext for continuing the strife, and will enable them yet awhile longer to practice upon the credulity of other countries. This would give them a little longer respite from the humiliation of admitted defeat, and the more terrible consequences they will have to face among themselves, when the appalling fact strikes the mind of the masses that all this bloody and wasting war, this frightful sacrifice of human life, the blood and tears and anguish of a whole people, the nightmare of national debt, the prostration of national name and rank, the corruption of public morals, the sabver-