

A Jaunt through Eastern North Carolina

FIFTH LETTER.

BY COL. FRED A. OLDS.

The last letter in the series telling the story of the April tour through the great North Carolina sounds and along the vast stretch of beach which forms the outer boundary of the State and through the quietest of the old towns, ends with the visit to Roanoke Island and that vicinity. While we were at the island the Wright brothers made their appearance at Nag's Head, so secretly that very few people knew it, and went to work to arrange for the flying machine, which are heavier than air, and not of the balloon kind, such as Beachey used so successfully at the Jamestown Exposition grounds last summer. The Wrights are from Dayton, Ohio, and there are two of them, very daring fellows. Anybody can make a balloon which will float, of course, and some which will steer pretty well, and a boy out West, barely 14 years old, has a combination of balloon, bicycle, rudder and propeller, with which he makes fine ascensions, but the Wrights make the real thing, the true flying ship. They built a big rough hewn, about 100 feet long, 10 feet wide, very near life saving station No. 35. They could not have found a lonelier place in North Carolina, particularly at this season of the year. They "flew" to the great delight of the hundreds of people who gathered to see them. The Wright brothers went ten miles out to sea, came back and managed their machine, high or low, with consummate ease. They are profoundly suspicious of everybody who gets near their place, but they will talk with them and they wanted to know at once who he was, whether he was a newspaper man, etc. They have a big secret for which the world is searching. All foreign governments want it, but the patriotic gentlemen are going to give your Uncle Sam the first chance, and they are right. It was Tennyson who foretold the airship fighting in the "forty blue," grasping, dropping bombs, etc., but he was merely saying along with Jules Verne, that delightful French story teller, and both of them thought they were only romancing. Everything Verne said has come true and even more and now Tennyson is about to turn out to be a prophet, for it is gravely said that France and Germany are getting ready to guard their frontiers by means of flyers in the air.

The run up to Elizabeth City, through the muddy water, the red mud, the rolling sea, and the High Water Creek, which is as strange a craft as piles in any water, took us along under gasoline and sail. John H. Small is a man might be called the "Father of the Inland Waterway" scheme, which means so much for everybody. Anyway a good sized steamer named for him has been plying between Roanoke Island and Elizabeth City, but it did not have enough business to justify its use, so it lies idle at Manteo and its forty horsepower engine has been installed in the Creek. The trip up to Elizabeth City was uneventful, but it was hoisted the ropes or "sheets," as the sailors call them, smashed to pieces most of the windows on the port side, and made us skip about in very lively fashion in the cabin and under broken glass. Rain began to fall and our friends on the island were thinking that we were making rough weather of it.

Elizabeth City is a beautiful place, but a cold rain dampened it somewhat. We were called to the call on that venerable and much beloved man, Col. Richard B. Creecy, the oldest editor in these United States, now 84 years of age and kept at home, but sprightly of mind if not of body, and he has very dry things indeed. He is the oldest living student of the University of North Carolina and says he had a letter from a friend who occupies second place on that list, suggesting that he hurry up and die so that his name could be at the top. Colonel Creecy declines to do any such thing just now but is holding on very bravely. He looks very suspiciously at persons who claim to be 90 years of age, and says that he has never known one over that age, by official record, to die in his part of the State. His own record is straight and is in the family Bible. His recollections go a great way back. For a time he was called about being taken up the country once by his parents and stopping at the then noted home of the great Willie Jones, the revolutionary patriot and patron of John Paul Jones, who was the first United States admiral. At that time Mr. Jones' mind was weak, and he was pottering around in the yard in front of his home, sweeping it with a broom. Colonel Creecy writes a little for the papers now and then, but he keeps in touch with the world through his daughters, whose devotion to him is beautiful. He has a large family. He gave me the address of a man who is to give me a block of the tree under which the first Assembly met in North Carolina. The tree was destroyed a few years ago but some of the wood was preserved and a piece of it is to be placed in the Hall of History.

We left Elizabeth City on "Betsey," as Colonel Creecy lovingly terms it, for Norfolk, running through a very fertile country, and presently struck the section where so much truck is produced. The Norfolk and Southern road, like the Atlantic Coast Line, is a great developer, as the people along both lines know very well, and it has done much for the Elizabeth City section. We were in Virginia without knowing it, no boundary stone being in view, though to be sure these run along the line. The writer recalled a very amusing remark made many years ago by a boy, now a well-known young lawyer, who was making his first visit to Norfolk in the writer's charge. He said to me, "I can tell the minute we strike Virginia." When he was asked how he would know this he replied, artlessly, "My geography tells me, for it says Virginia is red." The little fellow meant that in his geography Virginia was marked in red and he thought the color of the land was such. It was really cruel to deceive him. This is only a sample of the ideas children get set in their minds. We rolled into Norfolk and at the new station of the Norfolk and Southern there was in view some of the big construction work of the Tidewater Railway, that wonderful system which H. H. Rogers, multi-millionaire and friend of Mark Twain, built from the West to Norfolk, and which means a great deal for a city which already has such vast advantages, so many railroads, deep water and such splendid steamship connections. It may be said in passing that Norfolk is very largely a North Carolina town. North Carolina push and

in South Mills. They don't have to. Their speed is regulated by that of the water in the canal and by the boats on the latter. This means that nobody runs. This town used to be a very busy place, but the Virginia couples from Norfolk and hundreds of Virginians have been married there. They didn't use the canal in getting there, either, for if they had the more they would have simply skipped along the shore in a buggy and rounded up the whole outfit. That would have been dead easy. No indeed. The fond lover got a buggy and the fastest horse on the coast and made quick time alongside the canal to South Mills, where there were ready both preachers and magistrates to tie the knots with neatness and dispatch, one of these being the eastern equivalent of our gentlemanly friend, Mr. Charles, a Scotch fellow, whose one object in life is to be able to say he has married 10,000 people. But since the building of the railway to Elizabeth City the latter has been considered more fashionable by Virginia sloppers and the preachers and magistrates of the peace do what may be termed a land office business. Never a day passes without a runaway match, and perhaps in some more or less prudent maiden may take the invitation and elope with her lover and thus change places.

At South Mills there is another card lock and from this we dropped into the low level of the Pasquotank river. There we began to really see swamps and the beauty of the banks and of the stream was beyond praise. At each bend there was a vista ahead of us which exceeded in grace and beauty the one we had but lately seen. The banks were covered with vines and tender greenery of every kind and with the golden glow of the yellow jessamine accepting them here and there, were so rarely lovely that they did not seem to be old. The water was of color so deep as to appear black, thanks to the juniper which strains it, and the slope so steep, so mixed as to water and land, and the human being, the great and small, bald eagles, etc., all the way from Orion plantation on the Cape Fear river, and we were struck by this was a real swamp, so much talked of, pitiful by comparison. Here and there were "runways" back into the forest, covered with logs, along which timber was brought to the water, and in Elizabeth City. Some very fine timber was seen and at one point there was a picturesque ferry across the river, with clustered people and striking effects of the water in the foreground, the broadened and there was a vision of big buildings to the southward. We were near Elizabeth City and a little beyond the "Guide" made that port and made fast at one of the wharves of the Norfolk and Southern Railway. We had come through solely by water from Old Point to North Carolina, and after 5 o'clock before we reached Elizabeth City. The canal has always been of more or less importance and now under the coming regime of the State, and with profits, assume a value they have never before had in the public mind. It must be remembered that in a few years vessels but little smaller than regular ocean-going vessels will be able to enter New York without entering the ocean at the way down through the Chesapeake bay and the canal above it and then through this canal or the Albemarle and Pamlico sounds and can go even farther southward than Beaufort through the quiet water ways, cutting across by the way to the westward, and so on into South Carolina. It is quite within the possibilities that there will be an inland water-way all the way to Florida in the coming years, and the Government is already planning to build a canal from the land water-way in the State, as already provided for and as further planned will be told.

We left Elizabeth City at night-fall and went to old Edenton, that most classic place in all North Carolina, of a pilgrimage this year or in the near future of both the Colonial Dames and the Daughters of the Revolution. Our train stopped on the very edge of the town, and the next day went to a hotel for the night. The next day was Sunday and Easter Day with the clouds all gone by the sunshine brilliant and everything just as one would expect to see it on the coast. The poet's poem, in the olden days about the English Easter, generally so gloomy, wherein the poet declared, in allusion to his lady-love and the people, that he would go to the town again, and to meet such friends as Mr. John G. Wood, the owner of "Hayes," Dr. Richard Dillard, who has done so much to bring out the history of the old town, and Mr. W. D. Pruden, and others, and to have a hand-shake with Rev. Mr. Drane, the rector of the beautiful Episcopal church, which will before long be able to celebrate the second centenary of the founding of the quaint little Cheshire churchyard near the railway station has been cleared of the little trees of Paradise which stood so thickly within it. The Episcopal church, which is the oldest in the town, which is however new. The old bell was melted in 1861 and formed part of the four cannon in the "Bell Battery," as it was known, which went to the Confederates from Edenton. The writer had the pleasure of making an Easter talk to the Sunday school children in the church and of attending service there and of sitting in Governor Johnston's pew, with Mr. and Mrs. Wood, and Mr. Alfred Hayward, of Haw River, who had gone to Edenton a day or two before we arrived. All of us walked over "Hayes" for dinner in fact spent the afternoon there. At every turn there were historical places. The Norfolk and Southern Railway runs through the grounds of "Hayes," a couple of hundred years ago, the great mansion, Mr. Wood remarked that while \$10,000 had been paid for the right-of-way, he would gladly return the money to have the road go elsewhere. The "Hayes" place, as a place "held in trust," not only for Edenton but for all North Carolina. This is a very noble spirit for it is all his own, the gift of his father's will, and he has no other children, who was the richest man in the South when the civil war broke out. One might almost say of the town of Edenton, that like "Hayes" it is held in trust for North Carolina, so full is it of colonial memories. Work on the railway stopped last autumn very abruptly when the panic came. We observed that the bridge, or trestle, 3-1/2 miles is to cross Albemarle sound there, has been built one some hundred yards from each shore. It has been intimated that the money will be forthcoming to finish this bridge, which will stop the fan from blowing the sound, but that seems

ple ridicule this idea. What is needed here is keeping the inlet open, mainly Hatteras, where there is a 1-1/2 feet of water. This upper Albemarle sound is very muddy and the Roanoke river does the mischief, bringing down a torrent of mud. This river where it enters into the sound is only 200 yards wide; has a current of 7 miles an hour and is 40 feet deep.

"Hayes" the most beautiful colonial estate in North Carolina, with the house perfectly preserved, was named for Sir Walter Raleigh's English home. Memorials of the past are in every room and hallway. Johnston was reared by the Marquis of Anandale, a Scotch title, but never took it. He was the last of his race and died in May, 1855, directly after the war had come to an end. He was a very strong Union man and quarreled with the man who wanted to be his heir, namely General Joseph Johnston Pettigrew, because the latter insisted on going to the Confederate service. Mr. Johnston had vast influence with such men as his devoted friend John Stanly and also Edward Stanly, the latter having been a member of the governor at Newbern of those counties which were under Federal control, and was able to obtain kindnesses for Confederate friends when the latter were prisoners or in other trouble.

"Hayes" there was a good deal of talk about the fisheries. The Wood fishery is not this year operating on its fine beach, but is using pond or Dutch nets and still nets. These Dutch nets were brought in by a Dutchman thirty years ago. Edenton bay, really part of Albemarle sound, is very wide, and very fine to look at, despite the color of the water, and becomes very stormy in a gale. "Hayes" thoroughly English. It looks out upon this bay and as we walked through the grounds, all laid off in triangles, and into the old graveyard, we seemed to have drifted very far back into the past. There are enormous cypress trees, cedars, oaks, elms, cherry trees, etc. In the old graveyard, from which the body of James Wilson, the great Pennsylvanian, was removed last year, a white marble slab has been placed over the grave.

It may be said in passing that "Hayes" is the noblest colonial memorial we have. Biltmore, at Asheville, is the most splendid and the most modern buildings and ideas. The railway trains are taken across the sound now on the great transfer barge Garrett, which is a fine spread on sheets of cloth which have been moistened with olive oil, and allowed to remain a day or more. Then they are replaced with fresh flowers. After several layers have been treated the silk is extracted from the cloth by heavy pressure, put in bottles and finally decanted.

F. M.—What was the controversy between Venezuela and Great Britain which was treated by President Cleveland's famous Monroe doctrine message?

A.—A dispute of long standing, involving many claims and counter claims, regarding title to a large area of the frontier of British Guiana and Venezuela.

R. R.—To learn value of stamps, show them to a dealer. Your coin is not rare.

H. R. S.—The 1853 quarter, if genuine and without arrows or rays, is worth \$2 to \$3. There are coin dealers in every city.

E. G. H.—Is there any such church as "Omiah" in this country, or any history of such a church?

A.—The Omiah church is a sect of the high priestly heresy only to be found growing wild in the mountains. Now the culture is being carried on in almost every county in the western portion of the State, and with profits. The Legislature of North Carolina two years ago placed its stamp of approval on the culture of ginseng and passed a law making it a felony punishable by imprisonment to steal ginseng from the land under cultivation. In Buncombe and Henderson counties there are large ginseng beds that are paying a net profit on the investment.

Recently W. L. Sandridge, who came to North Carolina from Missouri, and engaged in newspaper work, being a former editor of the Bryson City Times, published at Bryson City, in Swain county, abandoned the newspaper field for the more pleasant and presumably profitable pastime of cultivating ginseng. It is learned here that Sandridge now has a growing ginseng "farm" near Bryson City, where he and another person have planted about one and one-half acres in "seng," expecting to make their first shipment this year.

The dried roots of the ginseng plant are sold for shipment to China. The grower receives about \$7 per pound, the present market value. It is estimated that an acre of mature ginseng will yield between \$15 and \$20,000. A. Harrison, of Franklin, also has a very valuable ginseng "farm" which will, it is said, in a few years, yield him a greater income than the best farm in Macon county.

The Question Box

F. B. K.—What was the longest run of the battleship Oregon around South America in 1897?

A.—From San Francisco to Callao, 4,600 miles, which she made in sixteen days. The trip from San Francisco to Key West was made in six days. Stops were made for coal at Callao, Puntas Arenas, Rio and Bridgetown.

F. D.—How wide is the Isthmus of Panama at its narrowest point?

A.—Opposite the bay of Santa Blas, about 11 miles.

G. L. C.—What does "Patent" mean?

A.—It means that the inventor claims the protection of the government during the time that the patent office is investigating his petition for letters patent. It is a warning to would-be infringers.

H. D. B.—Was Charleston, W. Va., ever known as Charleston? (2) Which was the largest area, Fairmount Park in Philadelphia or Forest Park in St. Louis?

A.—Charleston was incorporated as Charleston in 1794. (2) Forest Park contained 1,370 acres; Fairmount Park 3,353 acres.

E. W. M.—Of what race of people was the Lord? (2) What is the horoscope of one born April 18th?

A.—Jesus was a Jew. (2) Good reascener and leader, difficult to force make good lawyer, teacher, etc.

Horace.—What are the three leading events in the history of the United States?

A.—The Louisiana purchase, which extended the territory of the United States to the Pacific; the war with England (1812) which gave us independence on the seas, and the civil war, which established nationality and the permanence of a democratic form of government.

A. J. K.—How are oils extracted from flowers?

A.—A thin layer of freshly plucked flowers is spread on sheets of cloth which have been moistened with olive oil, and allowed to remain a day or more. Then they are replaced with fresh flowers. After several layers have been treated the silk is extracted from the cloth by heavy pressure, put in bottles and finally decanted.

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Nunla.—Where are Canadian coins minted?

A.—At Ottawa. Previous to this year they were struck in England.

L. F. D.—Please tell me how to clean oil paintings?

A.—Take a raw potato, cut off a piece and rub the freshly cut end over the painting. As soon as the potato darkens use a fresh slice. After doing this wipe carefully with a cloth wrung out of clear water.

S. D. A.—Is any information available as to the educational facilities here for the benefit of the common people of Russia?

A.—Official figures show that there are 17,000,000 children in Russia between the ages of 6 and 19 who have no educational advantages whatever.

Sue.—Who are president and secretary of the Carnegie fund?

A.—Charles L. Taylor and F. M. Wilmont, respectively, both of Pittsburgh.

Anxious.—Would you deem it a wise investment for a laboring man of limited means to take a course in seamanship and thereby obtain a position as salaried man?

A.—All depends on things not told. First is the matter of age. If you are young and have the education and taste that would lead you to be able to sell goods, and have reasonable assurance that you can get and hold a position when fitted for it, it would be worth trying for. An employer would not be likely to promote a position merely on the strength of a diploma, however, and after securing the position a man must make good right straight along, notwithstanding the beautiful promises of other conditions to comply with before a man can earn a big salary.

G. W. C.—Was D. L. Moody an ordained minister, and if so of what church? (2) Print a sketch of the life of Rev. George C. Cates? (3) By what denomination was the first Protestant church organized?

A.—Mr. Moody was an evangelist, not ordained. (2) No reference to the name is found. (3) The name Protestant was first given to the followers of Luther, and afterwards included Calvinists and other sects separated from the See of Rome. Lutheranism sprang up in 1517.

S. M. B.—Look in the advertising columns for names of poultry fanciers.

J. R. B.—Who is the present Emperor of Germany, and what relation is he to William I the Great?

A.—William II, the present Emperor, succeeded his father, William I, in 1888. He was not known as "the Great" however.

H. W. R.—Has the capital of Alaska been changed from Sitka to Juneau?

A.—Not yet, but it will be eventually.

J. K. H.—What is the address of P. C. Knox, of Pennsylvania? (2) What causes an eclipse of the sun? (3) When will the next total eclipse occur? (4) How many warships has the United States? (5) What is a two-cent piece of 1864 worth? (6) What are the seven wonders of the world? (7) When was St. Augustine, Fla., founded? (8) The presence of somebody which interests in rays. (1) June 8th, 1913. (2) Twenty-seven battleships, 20 cruisers, 55 torpedo boats and 16 torpedo boat destroyers. (3) Two cents. (4) Egyptian pyramids, Mausolus' tomb, temple of Diana at Ephesus, Babylonian hanging gardens, colosseum at Rhodes, statue of Jupiter Olympus, Ptolemy's watch tower. (7) In 1655.

G. R. E.—Your coins are not rare. Any money exchange will buy the Spanish coin, which is of small value.

J. J. G.—Do you consider ours the best government on earth? (2) Are there 10-day men of such power as we had previous to 1860? (3) Was Bonaparte great, powerful or ambitious?

A.—Sure. There's no question about it, even if we voters sometimes forget to apply that vigilance which is ever the best friend of liberty. (2) Power is relative. We have stronger men and more of them than in any previous age; we have also shoals of idiots, the men whom they have to contend with. Things are more complex now; we have fewer specialists in proportion to the whole. (3) Bonaparte was certainly ambitious, and for a time was great and powerful.

M. M. D.—One born October 17th should be mechanically inventive, have great foresight and fine intuitions. July 27th, unambitious, fond of nature. This latter need not discourage, however, being the purest of folders.

L. K.—The first battle of the Mexican war was fought at Palo Alto, May 8th, 1846.

ANNIE OAKLEY

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