GOSSIP OF STATE CAPITAL

BY COL. FRED A. OLDS.

Raleigh, July 29.—From what your correspondent has seen and gathered it seems very reasonable to say that this is going to be a "bumper" crop year for North Carolina. The corn crop is already practically made in the greater portion of the State and it will most certainly be a record-breaker. The year, from the start, has been favorable and crops were planted earlier than usual; marked attention was paid to the preparation of the ground; weeds have been kept down and there was no diminution in the amount of fertilizers used, added to this being the fact that a great many of the farmers have learned valuable pointers as to the best use of fertilizers. For much of this information and for the general improvement along agricultural lines there are three prime causes. First, the admirable bulletins of the Agricultural Department; second, the farmers' institutes, and third, the Agricultural and Mechanical College, the students of which go into all parts of the State. What is now done is only a beginning of what will be done in a few years, for there are not a fifth of the agricultural students at this college there ought to be and it is the set purpose of Governor Glenn to bring about an increase in their number. Of course, there are sections in the State, here and there, where but little progress has been made, but the leavening of the lump [illegible]

In this interval between the encampments of the National Guard of the State it may be well to make some comment upon that force. There were some delays and drawbacks at the encampment of the First Regiment at Camp Glenn, Morehead City, due to the fact that it was so late in the season before the War Department decided to make the allowance of funds for the camp improvements, but after this there will hardly be any more trouble. The most important thing about the troops is not their drill, which is a minor matter, but rifle practice, which is a requisite. Up to this year it can truly be said that only trifling attention has been paid to shooting, the volunteers being in very marked comparison to the regulars in this respect, the United States regulars being, as a body, the best shooting troops on earth, while the North Carolina volunteers have been to a great degree unacquainted with the possibilities of the rifles they carried. The First Regiment shot at eighteen targets and at all the ranges from 200 yards to a thousand, as well as at skirmish targets. The best record made was by a Salisbury Guardsman, 205 out of a possible 250 for everything. The pits at the rifle range are to be built out of concrete and the range itself is to be made complete in every way. The camp grounds are to be enclosed with wire fence and sown in grass so as to give such a turf as there is on the drill fields. Everything else is very good indeed, as your correspondent saw upon inspection and the Third Regiment will find things in better shape than ever before. Second only in importance to the shooting is the discipline of the men, that is, their conduct on travel and in camp. There has been for a great many years a very wide gulf between the militia and the regulars, but this is now being bridged. It is very evident that there are very great impending changes in the militia system in this country. These things come along almost insensibly. The failure of the old system in 1898 when the war with Spain came and when modern conditions had to be applied was lamentable, and it was really worthless. It is now very clear that the volunteers must be mixed thoroughly with the regulars and must be under regular command as to the larger bodies. Year by year the War Department will spend more and more money upon the National Guard, and the English or territorial system is only now at its beginning. It went into effect last April in England and it will certainly come here in a year or two.

Not many people have an idea of the inside workings of the Republican party. There are not over five Republican leaders in North Carolina and from Greensboro east the dominant force is Civil Service national committeeman. If you go to any well-informed Democrat and tell him such and such a thing about the Republican party in this State he will ask you directly [illegible] "How do you know about it." Tom [illegible] succeeded [illegible] in the [illegible] Judge Pritchard is out of politics now and his power is broken [illegible] as long as he lives [illegible] is consulted yet on [illegible] point.

The report [illegible] has been stated [illegible] this remark applying to the local white Republicans [illegible] of the State [illegible] eager to get [illegible] can here, as [illegible] which is the [illegible] and also State [illegible] where the State is [illegible] on that side of the [illegible] Leak, the negro [illegible] says his people in North Carolina have lost all confidence in [illegible] the white Republicans and that their vote will at least be divided here. An Illinois negro [illegible] said stated that while a lot of his race in this State were very angry towards Taft and all the Roosevelt part of the party [illegible] the whole south would go in line to election day and vote the Republican ticket as a unit. He spoke about Indiana and said that there the conditions were very different and that the blacks were not Taft being led by the Governor who is a very bitter anti-Taft man. It will certainly be a new thing in American politics if the negroes in the West and North in any large numbers vote for Bryan, or for anybody save an ultra Republican, but strange things sometimes happen. It is very certain that neither of the political parties in this State is seeking the negro vote. The Democrats are very courteous and offhand about this, but the Republicans rather boast that they do not care a fig for the negroes any longer. Naturally, the negroes hear of this. It is to be remarked that the negroes talk mighty little politics where any white people can hear them. They may have views, but if so they only express them to each other.

The letter your correspondent wrote The Observer about a trip to New York City and some of the odd things seen there has brought about no little comment, not only by The New York Sun, editorially, but in the press generally, and a letter has come from one New Yorker, saying that he wishes me to come there as his guest and see the "Slums" after midnight and witness some of the terrors of city life. I have been through the "Slums" with a veteran newspaper man and a detective and have seen those poor cattle, for they are more like cattle than human beings, herded together and many of them living about the life of a North Carolina hog; penned up and not having as much freedom as cattle. As I was riding along through some of our wide stretches of unoccupied country, which seemed to beg people to come and live in it, till it and make it fruitful, I thought of a half million or more wretched folk in New York who ought to be out here in the open living the life of women, men and children. All this herded population could be put in North Carolina without hardly making a show, so vast are the areas here open to thrifty people, and yet these unfortunates will live there and die before their time, never knowing or caring of the world outside. The poorest North Carolinian, who has enough ground for a garden patch, and any sort of a roof over his head, and with God's own sunshine upon him and real people living around him, has a vast advantage over those pitiful folk who dwell in the congested districts of cities like New York, and who do not really live, as we know life, but merely exist.

I was coming down the stairs from the State Library one afternoon this week with our genial friend, Capt. Miles O'Reilly Sherrill, and he called attention to the fact that his half-leg was hurting him. The other half he left on one of the Virginia battlefields, and the wooden limb which takes its place did not suit exactly. He went on to say that in 1866 the State made a gift, through an act of the Legislature, of legs and arms to those of its soldiers who had lost them in battle and that now another issue of the kind ought to be made. He went on to say that he believed there were only about 1,000 in the State who had bought limbs of this kind. Your correspondent ventured to suggest to him to try a new tack and make application to the Secretary of War for a new leg. He jumped at the idea and said he would do that very thing and that he would write General Wright and ask for the proper blank on which to make the application. It will be interesting to know what becomes of this. Our good friend Uncle Sam does so many fine things that who knows whether he will not make an issue of this kind, and if he can do so to Captain Sherrill then the various and sundry other gentlemen who are minus limbs can come in.

The fact that Governor Glenn is to make a speech at the Virginia Chautauqua at Purcellville brings up the fact that North Carolina has no Chautauqua and never has had one and it is said to be the only State in the Union which is without such a feature.

Much has been made of the fact that Governor Glenn is in very great request as a speaker, and that future Western audiences are often invited upon hearing name to go upon the lecture platform. He is a great favorite, man and home lover, as he intended to be, and people do not care about making these long tours and be away from home for extended periods. Yet he loves dearly to speak and is certainly one of the best orators in the South. He is well liked in all the sections of the country where he has been heard and his reputation has grown. Like all Governors who do things, he has made enemies while in office, but this much is certain that enmities towards Governors are not of long duration, usually, while friendships hold on. Such has been the result of the observations of your correspondent, who year after year has heard many bitter things said against various Governors, yet, in a trifling space of time these will all be forgotten.

The Governor will go out of office somewhere about the 10th of January and his last public function will be the introduction of Mr. Kitchin, his successor, of course, his speech on that occasion will be a brief one, as it ought to be, but it will contain a point or two of more than passing interest. Governor Glenn has had an administration not unmarked by stress and storm and the two great features have been railway matters and those regarding temperance. He won out in both points. He was a 2-1-cent per mile man from the start and Senator Graham, represented his views in that branch of the Legislature, so the Governor cannot fairly be put down as one of the extremists in rate reduction. He is interested in General Education, too, and about the 23d of October that big question is to be adjudicated. I be the Inter-State commerce commission unless it shall go higher up to the Supreme Court of the United States. It is the most interesting test case of this character on the docket and hence it attracts attention in other States than this. The corporation commission, which is looking after North Carolina's interests, has good lawyers and will put up its best fight.

Some one was asking the other day whether Secretary of War Wright was a Democrat or a Republican, that is, as to his present status. One gentleman said he thought him a Democrat and this brought on the statement from another that he was personally a Republican, that he could not sit in the cabinet of the Republican President without being on that side of the fence and that otherwise he would be like a fish out of water.

I was strolling in front of the Raney Library a few or so ago, chatting with Secretary E. D. W. Connor, of the State Historical commission, and our talk was about the State buildings which were within view, these including the Capitol, Agricultural Building and State Library and Supreme Court. It will be difficult to find a sharper or uglier contrast in architecture than that between the two last-named buildings and the stately Capitol, which, completed sixty-eight years ago, yet stands as a model of architectural grace. The Supreme Court building and the Agricultural Building are simply buildings; that is all. They are rough brick and mortar, without any attempted design, and they are certainly unworthy of the State. Mr. Connor said that there ought to be some sort of a commission to look after buildings and see that there was some unity of design and purpose as to them. Some good architect ought to come here; study the Capitol and these other buildings and arrange a scheme of design, this to include another building which is very much needed—a hall of records, where the priceless things the State has in its custody can be stored without danger from fire or other loss. Convicts built the Supreme Court Building and the Agricultural Building was simply a hotel partly done over. Neither building has any merits whatever, except as to contents.

The next Legislature ought not to even have to be asked to provide a Hall of Records; it ought to be glad of the opportunity to erect such a monument to itself and show its public spirit, but if necessary a campaign will be made to bring about the construction of such a building.

Mention has been made of the fact that the writer secured a very large and attractive picture of the North Carolina-built ram "Albemarle" fighting half a dozen vessels of the Federal fleet in 1864. The picture certainly shows a stirring scene, and the little vessel looks like a pigmy among the big ones. This picture has been placed near the relics of the ram, including funnel, armor, etc., and by the pictures illustrating its construction and its destruction, which are a loan from the Century Publishing Company to the writer. Thus, little by little, material is being gathered here and put before the public, and this has tended more than anything else to illustrate North Carolina.

Pictures have been made of the seal of Albemarle which was used by the Province for some time, and a lady, noted as a painter of arms, etc., is to make a very large copy of this in the proper colors. The seal is also being engraved and will be used on the envelopes and paper of the State historical commission, and it will also be illustrated in Captain Ashe's very thorough new history of North Carolina.

It is a matter of congratulation that business is picking up in the State and that the thrill of this is already being felt from the mountains to the sea. Great crops will be a factor in this quickening. The tobacco crop is better than that last season and will be fully as large. It totaled 110,000,000 pounds, and North Carolina goes to the very front as a producer and as a manufacturer of leaf in various forms.

The year has been the hardest the cotton mills in this State have ever known. This has been a worse panic by far than that of fifteen years ago, though the latter was world-wide and this one is confined to the United States. Ex-Governor Aycock said to me very frankly that while the panic of 1893 was world-wide and, therefore, not at all due or chargeable to either the Republicans or the Democrats, to President Cleveland or anybody else, quite the contrary is the case as to the present panic, which he positively says is due to Republicans and their management alone, and he adds that that party must bear the burden of the whole thing. But this apart. The fact remains that the cotton mill men have been hit harder than anybody else, worse even than the lumbermen and they have been kept on the ragged edge for several months, nor has the situation lightened much. What they have gone through with in the way of holding stock, being kept out of their money, making goods from material which costs more than the goods made, and what they have done in the way of keeping on going, so as to help their employes, is quite beyond telling. A lot of it was pure heroism and nothing else. Some day their people will appreciate this.

Governor Glenn's idea of having the public hearings of pardon applications is a capital one. Perhaps no governor has had more such applications than he, as, of course, with the growth of population comes the growth of crime, and the Council of State has sat with him to hear cases which involved questions of high importance. Governors have different views about pardons. One Governor, for example, would never give out any reason as to them, but now everything is made public, whether the pardon be refused or granted.

The Republicans in this State talk incessantly about the gains they are making. Here at Raleigh they talk about their Young Men's Club and its great membership. A very prominent Democrat remarked a day or so ago that he was quite willing to bet its club could not produce fifty or even twenty-five men who had been affiliated with the Democrats in the past. As a matter of fact a lot of the members are not young men at all.

If one goes in a certain county and asks Republicans about the news there, he will be very sure to talk about gains somewhere else, naming some county or other, but when Democrats be the latter are asked about the state they will show that the claims are hot air. In other words, the "gains" are always further on, and this goes to show that nine-tenths of the Republican claims about North Carolina politics are mere claims, idle dreams and that sort of thing.

The farmers' institutes now in progress are being better attended than ever and the head director, Dr. Tait Butler, is very much pleased at the interest shown. Two or three years ago the attendance was light and interest languid, but there is a turn of the tide. The wives of farmers are being cheered and improved by the meetings which are held for them. In a great many country households the cooking has been very poor and there have been many unsanitary things, not to speak of ignorance of labor saving contrivances, and all sorts of household help, and so life has been in the main, not unmixed with hardships which need never have existed.

The placing in the criminal insane department at the penitentiary here of a young man of Raleigh, barely 21 years of age, furnishes material for a story with a moral to it. The boy had been reared by relatives who were devoted to him, whose father since his earliest childhood having lived a great distance from here and he being motherless, but he was one of the easily persuaded sort, listening to every wind which blows, and presently there was a marriage with a girl, utterly devoid of character, and all the attendant complications. His loving kinfolk got him clear of this and set him on the right path again. He had a decent position; when along came a trifling hobo who persuaded him that the North was the place one ought to be and that life here was dull indeed and pay poor compared to what it is in the great cities. So the young fellow drew out his money from the bank and the hobo persuaded him to beat his way on a train. They were "riding the rods" on the Seaboard Air Line near Weldon, when suddenly there was a bump and the poor wretch, so easily led, was thrown down and one hand cut off. Through the gloom of the night he walked into Weldon, a mile away, and entered a hotel door, holding up his bloody arm and crying out to the roomful of people what he had done and how he was ruined. Thanks to the kindness of officials of another road he was taken to a hospital, and blood poisoning having set in, his arm had to be amputated high up. His mind gave way, and as soon as he was able to be moved he was brought to the hospital for the insane here, from which he escaped. Then he wandered near and far, finally drifting here again and being sent to the county home, where he attacked and almost killed the superintendent. The jail was his next place and from there, as a dangerous criminal-lunatic, he was passed on, perhaps forever, to the annex at the west end of the vast pile of the penitentiary buildings, this containing those people who must not mix with the world at all, neither with the world of reason nor with that of unreason, since no man knows what they will do nor when they will strike. These people, the criminal insane, have their own world and certainly lead a life apart. It is a small world, too, limited to the wing referred to and to a little yard in its rear for purposes of recreation. This is where they may be seen by the convicts, but never be mingled with. The whole story of the young fellow is pitiful in the extreme and shows the fate which but too often befalls those wayward youths who think the world their own, and that they only have to follow their own impulses, and heed only the advice of those least qualified to give it, never thinking of the broken hearts and saddened lives they leave behind them.

It is learned from a member of the State board of public improvements that rather more than a third of all the State revenues go to State-aided institutions, of which there are forty-eight.

BUNCOMBE'S JAIL COMPLETED.

Lacks Only Window Screens to Make It Ready For Prisoners—Three Murder Cases to Be Tried This Term of Court—Watershed Litigation is Compromised.

Special to The Observer.

Asheville, Aug. 2.—Buncombe county's new jail is now practically complete. It was expected that the prisoners would be removed from the old jail to the new structure next week, but it was found that a certain style of window screen would have to be ordered and some delay will result. With the exception of the screens the jail is complete.

With the occupancy of the new jail the gallows, which is now stored in the basement of the court house and which since its construction eight years ago has sent eight men to death, will no longer be needed and in all probability will be sold. The gallows was built to hang the two Emma burglars, Johnson and Foster. Afterwards it was sent to Salisbury, where three men were executed, and also to Statesville, where a negro was hanged. Peter Smith, of Madison, was also hanged on this scaffold. The last deadly work that the gallows performed was the hanging of a negro here several months ago. In the new jail a trap has been constructed and in the future if there are any executions this will be used.

Superior Court for the trial of criminal cases will convene here Monday with Judge Ward presiding. The term will hold for two weeks. There are more than 100 new cases set for trial in addition to a number of holdovers. There are three homicide cases, including the case of Joe Lance charged with the death of a little girl at Skyland during the last Christmas holidays; Allison, charged with the killing of young Roberts, of Charlotte, several months ago, and Schoolfield Miller, a negro, charged with the murder of another negro named Will Forney near Biltmore some time ago. There are also 13 "crinkling" cases and about 50 larceny cases.

The board of aldermen has formally ratified a compromise effected between Frank Weaver and Joan A. Nichols and the City of Asheville relative to the sale of the Dillingham watershed boundary for $8,000. This boundary of 3,000 acres and composing part of the city's magnificent watershed 20 miles from town, has been in the courts since 1903, when the city condemned the property for watershed purposes and placed a condemnation jury on it. The jury awarded the owners, Messrs. Weaver and Nichols, $4,000. The owners appealed from the award and brought suit in the courts on demurrer to the regularity of the proceedings. The case was heard in the Supreme court recently and the city won. The owners then brought suit in the courts on the merits of the case and this suit was pending when a compromise was effected, the City agreeing to pay $8,000 for a fee simple title. The city now has undisputed possession. The City of Asheville now owns about 10,000 acres of thickly timbered land as a watershed. The boundary is all fenced and neither beast nor man is permitted on the boundary. It is from this "shed" that the city brings its water supply by gravity line—a distance of 20 miles.

SUIT AGAINST COTTON MILL.

Employe of Elizabeth City Factory Who Was Hurt in Machinery Wants $6,000 Damages.

Special to The Observer.

Elizabeth City, Aug. 2.—A summons has been served on the officers of the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills that a suit for damages is to be brought against the mill by Mac Morrisette for injuries received while an employe of the mill in January, 1902. Aydlett & Ehringhaus are attorneys for Morrisette.

From information gained it seems that Morrisette, who has just recently become of age, while an employe of the mill in January, 1902, had his hand caught in the gear of a spinning frame, mutilating it so badly that an amputation was necessary, resulting in the loss of his thumb and index finger of the right hand. It is stated that the amount of damages to be claimed is $6,000.

The Elizabeth City Cotton Mills carried an employers' liability policy with the Fidelity and Casualty Company, of New York, who will have to defend the suit. The case will come up for hearing at the next term of court here in September.

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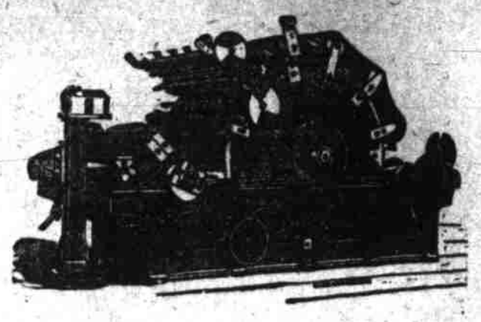

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MARION NEWS MATTERS.

Ed Lytle on Trial For Killing Pierce Burnett in July—Campaign Opened in McDowell by Congressman Crawford.

Special to The Observer.

Marion, Aug. 1.—Superior Court has been in session all this week and will continue for another week. The court has been engaged in the trial of criminal cases and its time will be entirely taken up next week in clearing the criminal docket. The only case of much importance taken up thus far is the trial of Ed Lytle for the murder of Pierce Burnett, the trial of which case is now in progress and will probably be concluded Monday. The defendant is being tried for murder in the second degree. The killing took place near Old Fort on the 3d of July. There were no eye-witnesses. The State, represented by Solicitor Spainhour is assisted by Messrs. Morgan and Morphew. The defendant is represented by Mr. Loche Craig and Pless & Winborne.

Congressman Crawford opened the campaign here Tuesday. He made a strong speech to a large audience during the noon recess of the court. Mr. Crawford was on his way home from Washington, where he had been on business.

The county executive committee was in session Monday and issued a call for a Democratic county convention to nominate county officers and to elect delegates to the senatorial convention. So far there has been a dearth of candidates. There has been only one announcement.

Mr. and Mrs. Locke Craig, of Asheville, are guests of Mr. and Mrs. J. Q. Gilkey this week. Miss Pearl Gardner, of Shelby, is the guest of Miss Marguerite Grant.

The foundations of the new Methodist church are being laid and work has been actively begun. A handsome church will soon be one of the attractions of this growing town.

THE FALLEN GODS.

Like a dead leaf that rolls along the ground,
Driven by a wind that wanders round and round,
I see my heart, with edges cut and curled,
Like a dead leaf that's driven without a sound.

Green faded into red, and red to brown;
Life to decay, and death the latest crown!
So is my life, and lacks the heart of power
Here to lift up the god that's fallen down.

Alas! why, in the days of mighty Jah,
Did I pull down thy pillars, Asherah?
Baal, where art thou? Egypt, even thou
Hadst faith for me beneath the wings of Pitah! —PHILLIP SAVAGE.

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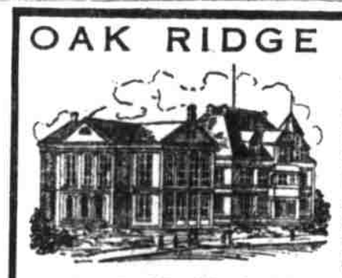

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