

The Charlotte Observer.

J. F. CALDWELL, Publisher. D. A. TOMPKINS, Editor.

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PUBLISHERS' ANNOUNCEMENT

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MONDAY, MAY 24, 1909.

OVERDOING THE PRIMARY.

In the nomination of municipal and county officers the direct primary is an almost ideal method. But when the primary system is made applicable to State or even district offices serious objections present themselves.

The present primary system for nominating candidates for State offices at the meeting of the State committee on Friday night received a severe castigation. Judge Duke declared that the system had resulted in building up an office trust in the State of Virginia, that it was entrenched and that it was impossible for a poor man to stand for any office within the gift of the people.

"Senator Stratford declared that the scheme had been devised for a specific purpose and that it had signally failed to accomplish what was intended, the objects of the system apparently thriving under it.

"The members of Congress from this State are believed to be a unit for the system, said a member of the committee, as it practically precludes any person from considering the matter of running against them.

"People throughout the State are disgusted with the system, said a gentleman who has been in much of the State during the last three months, and who is in close touch with one of the candidates for an office at the hands of the people.

Experience has everywhere shown that the effect of the State-wide primary is to put an enormous premium upon political machinery and no small premium upon money also. A man who is neither an insider nor fat of pocket can with extreme difficulty impress himself on the large and widely scattered electorate. Conditions existing in practically every Southern State where the primary decides all candidates are well enough described by a recent declaration of The Charlotte News and Courier that John C. Calhoun if alive to-day could not defeat a single one among South Carolina's noble army of 'Department Congressmen'.

The Democratic party of North Carolina has never tried the State primary under the inwholesome conditions which the State primary as an institution breeds, but it has had sufficient experience to induce a strong spirit of caution about plunging in any deeper.

NOT INFALLIBLE, OF COURSE.

Agreeing with The Observer that Bancroft's conclusions upon American history, North Carolina history included, are well worthy of respect, The Norfolk Landmark proceeds, nevertheless, to cite an alleged inaccuracy. Both Bancroft and Fiske have done Lord Dunmore 'the serious though unintentional injustice' of representing him as the burner of Norfolk during the revolutionary war.

We are willing to agree with The Landmark that Bancroft overlooked a vitally important record on this point, though, as The Landmark knows, it was his practice to spare neither time nor expense in searching out every record which might exist. Absolute infallibility nobody ever claimed for him or any other historian. The maxim 'false in one thing, false in everything' does not apply here; there is, consequently, no ground for argument.

IN ANTI-SHAKESPEARIANA.

Those people who persistently profess to find in Shakespeare's plays, evidence of Baconian authorship, have as their latest representative Mr. William Stone Booth, of Cambridge, Mass. His conclusions are stated with some fulness by a writer in Collier's Weekly.

Mr. Booth takes from the First Folio edition of Shakespeare the prefatory lines 'To the Reader,' printed opposite Shakespeare's portrait and supposed to have been written by Ben Jonson. Rare Ben, according to the Booth theory, was in Bacon's confidence and assisted both the literary deception and the hidden devices which reveal the real author. These lines Mr. Booth discovers to be woven through with the name 'Francis Bacon,' not by the simple valentine plan of making first letters in each line spell out the name but by methodically scattering significant letters throughout the text. To explain the alleged device would cost overmuch of our space, enough to say that Mr. Booth duly spells out the name. Now The New York Sun, taking the same verses and the same cipher respects every letter reserved for Francis Bacon's acrostic and spells out the acrostic of Theodore Roosevelt. In the whole First Folio Mr. Booth finds about two hundred of these hidden signatures. Doubtless any one asserting Rooseveltian authorship of Shakespeare could find just as many.

As a cipher-monger Mr. Booth, like Ignatius Donnelly and the rest, need not be taken very seriously. These attempts to riddle out Shakespearean authorship resemble the attempts of various other cranks to find significant combinations of numbers, letters or what not in the Bible—especially in the Book of Daniel. But by dint of lusty muck-raking the Collier's writer, Mr. Wm. Leavitt Stoddard, may make some devout Shakespeareans just a trifle less devout. Here are the principal observations which he submits about Stratford's immortal son:

"What is commonly accepted as the facts of the life of William Shakespeare (note the spelling of the Stratford man's name) is mentioned in a list of actors in the Lord Chamberlain's company. In 1607 he entered into a contract to purchase New Place. His name appears from 1598 on in various legal documents, one of which is an application for a grant of coat armor to his father. His name further appears on assessors' books and the parish register, from which we may safely deduce that he was a taxpayer and a property holder. About 1610 he is thought to have retired to Stratford. In 1616 he died.

"On April 26 Shakespeare was interred, say two biographers in chorus, 'in the parish church, and honored with a tomb in the chancel, not as a poet, but as proprietor of limes. His grave was covered with a flat stone, bearing the inscription known to all 'Good friend, for Jesus' sake, etc.'—artless indeed, but adapted to the capacity of the sextons whose names have ascertained no evidence that a court would admit other than tradition, and some one's say-so, concerning the incidents of his life, his personal friends, or his career. As an actor the ghost in 'Hamlet' seems to have been his best part. Of his handwriting we have nothing but a signature, and the words 'by words' by me.

"Can it be that those who spell it 'Shakespeare' (there are 35 spellings in all, we believe) are unwittingly lending aid and comfort to the Baconian heresy? But this is a side issue. Mr. Stoddard insists that Bacon, in the opinion of such diverse and competent judges as Macaulay and Shelley, was by natural gifts a poet as well as a philosopher and a jurist. But how account for Bacon's concealment of his authorship? This the writer seeks to do in a fashion made familiar by fellow-Baconians:

"If Mr. Taft, instead of playing golf had written musical comedies, he would not wish to be known as their author, for we are a practical people and would never select a musician to the office of President. Bacon could not have attained or maintained the dignity of the chancellor, if he had been recognized by the people as a writer for the theatre in a time when actors and dramatists were among the lowest social orders. Simply then, because it would have ruined the career of an English public man to acknowledge poetical and dramatic prowess, it may be that Bacon used the common name of Shakespeare as a mask. An actor bearing the same name was got, let us suppose, to aid the deception. Ingenious Ben Jonson, at one time Bacon's literary assistant without doubt willingly helped. He at least, as we have seen, lent his name."

Between them Messrs. Booth and Stoddard produce a very ingenious and entertaining argument. But a convincing argument on this side of this question we have not yet seen. While the theory of Shakespearean authorship is open to some objections, every other theory that has been advanced is open to many more.

The Duke of Norfolk sold a painting for \$330,000 and used the money for buying a sixty-acre park in Sheffield which he will dedicate to public use. That was a splendid benefaction, but it cost the donor very little. The original cost of the painting was insignificant in comparison with the price the duke secured for it. Nevertheless it was a generous thing to do; many persons would have refused to put so much money in a park for the public, even if they could have done so without any real sacrifice personally.

The strike against negro firemen on the Georgia Railroad, with popular demonstrations against the negro firemen at various points, is much to be regretted. One of the South's just boasts in connection with the so-called race question has been that the negro is given an equal chance for his livelihood which he does not enjoy in the North.

We would like to know if the Philadelphia woman who has just celebrated her 16th birthday can remember the time when there was an honest administration of the affairs of that city.

SENATOR LODGE'S LOGIC.

In a speech in the Senate a few days ago Senator Lodge, of Massachusetts, made this statement in reference to the declaration of the Republican party through its platform on the question of tariff revision:

"Nobody ever pledged me to revise the tariff downward or to revise it upward. What we are pledged to is a revision, and I suppose we are here to revise in view of the interests of the whole country. It is wise to reduce rates, then reduce them; if it is wiser to give greater protection we should do that, and if it is wiser to keep them as they are then that should be done."

Commenting on this, The Chicago Record-Herald says it has a fine sound, but the Massachusetts Senator is disingenuous.

The tariff plank in the Republican platform was adopted because of public pressure for a revision of the tariff downward. It was in answer to that demand and to appease the people that the tariff plank was adopted. Senator Lodge well knows that no member of the convention which adopted the platform would have dared at the time to explain the tariff plank to mean what he and some other Republicans now claim for it. He knows that such a party declaration would not have satisfied those of its members who were demanding tariff revision, and to satisfy whom and keep them in the party a declaration for revision was made. If it was purposely worded in such a way as to lead those of the party demanding tariff revision to believe it complied with their demands when it really meant something very different, in fact just the opposite, then Senator Lodge confesses to the practice of a fraud on a large proportion of the members of his party.

The agitation for tariff revision was entirely for a lowering of the duties contained in the Dingley bill, and there was much of this agitation in the Senator's own State and in reference to certain articles. Senator Lodge surely does not contend that those agitators in his own State were simply clamoring for changes in those schedules, whether upward or downward as would seem best to the members of Congress when they took up the matter of revising the present tariff. To make such claim would be to stultify himself and the men of his State who helped force the declaration for tariff revision on their party. The Massachusetts Senator cannot claim that the tariff revision plank was put in the platform because of the demand of any persons for a revision upward of the tariff, that in adopting that plank an effort was made to satisfy persons who were demanding an increase in the rates of the Dingley bill.

If the stand-patters undertake in this way to defeat the pledge of their party as it is understood by many who helped to make the platform and by the public generally they will add to the discontent within the party and strengthen the hands of the Democrats to a greater extent than had their party simply refused to take any action regarding the tariff, and in the end, they will do the people a greater service by hastening real tariff reform.

Speaker Cannon knows he is safe in calling himself the servant of the House, for it is a case where the servant is the boss, and nobody knows it better than he. If the House does not know it, just let it try to boss its servant and it will find it out mighty quick.

If the consumer does not take the trouble to lay his side of the question before Congress in this tariff contest he surely cannot expect the producer to do it for him, and there are no other interested parties.

"A snake was killed in Kink street in Charlotte the other day. We suppose it was a king snake," says The Anderson Mail. How do you know it wasn't a water moccasin?—Columbia Record.

We believe there is now enough water in Charlotte harbor to allow moccasins to swim around.

If everybody were to pay as they go more people would know whether their road led and they would receive more and heartier God-speeds from their fellow-travelers.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

United States Army Men Accept Apology From Mr. R. F. Stokes and All is at Peace.

To the Editor of The Observer: We read Mr. Stokes' letter in this morning's paper with a sense of gratification at the manly acknowledgment of his unintentional reference to the United States flag and soldiers.

We were almost sure that Mr. Stokes made his remarks without intentionally offering an offense to his country's flag and its defenders; but under the circumstances we could not allow such words to pass unnoticed.

We take pleasure in publicly announcing our acceptance of the apology Mr. Stokes so freely offers, and we sincerely trust that anything we may have said in our letter of protest, will not remain as a reminder of the article referred to.

J. WETZEL, HOMER W. MASON, HOSEA H. HIGHTOWER, EARL JOHNSTON, Local Recruiting Party, EDWARD SPENCER.

Would Be Excusable, at Least.

Richmond News Leader. "We don't want to brag," says The Charlotte Observer. No doubt, no doubt. But just can't help it when the anniversary of the Charlotte Declaration comes around.

The Natural Inference.

Anderson, S. C., Daily Mail. President Taft has appointed a Democrat to the Federal judgeship in North Carolina. Which shows you what kind of Republicans they have in North Carolina.

Masterly Self-Regression.

Danville Register. If the North Carolina Republicans develop any real enthusiasm over Mr. Taft's visit, the fact has been carefully concealed.

TALKING ABOUT THE TWENTIETH

What Outside Newspapers Have to Say About the Great Occasion and Matters Connected With It.

"This is the one day we don't celebrate.—Charlotte News and Courier.

Of course, in future Charlotte will have the visit of the President to celebrate on the 20th of May. This visit is no myth.—Charlotte News and Courier.

Great is Charlotte, N. C., and Elder Caldwell is its prophet. Hurrah for the Mecklenburg Declaration, whether it happened or not!—Washington Herald.

Now that Taft puts his seal of authenticity upon the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson's opinion will have to be revised.—Washington Post.

Colonel Hemphill, of The Charlotte News and Courier, insists that the Mecklenburg Declaration is a myth. Nevertheless it will be celebrated as a historic reality long after Colonel Hemphill has become a beautiful memory.—Nashville Banner.

As a State that formulated a Declaration of Independence and made it stick, Grand Old Texas on this beautiful sun-kissed May 20 extends her felicitations to Mecklenburg county, North Carolina, where the happy people are celebrating the first Declaration of Independence that was ever made on American soil.—Houston Post.

Whenever the Presidents of the United States visit Southern cities it seems to be a special part of the programme to take them to the leading negro school. The latest instance is in Charlotte where President Taft will speak at the Mecklenburg celebration to-day. After that he is to address a negro school. If he did not know that we had white schools in the South the action of those in charge of presidential receptions would lead to the idea that only the negroes were interested in education.—Montgomery Advertiser.

There will not be as many of us as we hoped, but as aforesaid,

"Our hand is small but true and tried. The British soldier trembles. When Marlton's name is told."

We think it a very nice thing for Charleston to be represented at the celebration of the Myth in Charlotte. To all outward appearances it will be just as if it were all real, and there will be in all the South a finer town than Charlotte.—Charlotte News and Courier.

Providence did not smile on the presidential celebration of The Myth. With the exception of the torrential rains of last August, such a downpour as there was in Charlotte yesterday has not been seen in this section in many years. The rain spoiled the celebration so far as the spectacular part of it was concerned, but it did not spoil the good humor of the people nor dampen their enthusiasm in any respect, and the Taft smile proved contagious even under the lowering clouds.—Columbia Record.

The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence is a good enough event for celebration in North Carolina, and on the present occasion there is not only a considerable collection of Governors, but the presence of the President. The evidence, however, that the action of the Continental Congress in this city July 4 was anticipated in the North Carolina town is extremely weak. There was undoubtedly a meeting of Colonial patriots at which the tyrant George III was properly decried, but meetings of that sort occurred at the time in many localities. There is no detailed contemporaneous record of the assemblage, and there is reasonable ground for supposing that in after years the recollections of what occurred there were confused with the knowledge of what occurred later in Philadelphia.—Philadelphia Record.

The ever-present and ever-attractive sentimentality of the South found expression at Charlotte yesterday in Mrs. Stonewall Jackson's greeting of President Taft. Next to Lee, no one is more enshrined in the hearts of Southern men than the sturdy general who paraded the Virginia Military Institute cadets at the hanging of John Brown, and later fought so magnificently from Bull Run until his death on the field of Chancellorsville at the age of forty. That his widow should, forty years later, welcome an Ohio President so gracefully and warmly as the "great harmonizer of all our hearts," is welcome proof of the softening passage of the time. Not more so, however, than the recent presentation to the battleship Mississippi of the silver service marked with the portrait of Jefferson Davis. But few have protested, no one has waved the "bloody shirt," as would have been the case had there been such an incident twenty years ago. Where else in history is there a duplicate of this spectacle—this honoring of a defeated traitor and a rebel in this semi-official, if not official, way, after so short a lapse of time, and this without any change in the national belief that Jefferson Davis' cause was morally wrong and the occasion of a fearful loss to the nation? Truly, Americans desire the title of the most magnanimous of peoples.—New York Evening Post.

President Taft was in Charlotte, N. C., yesterday, and participated with the North Carolinians in the celebration of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. Most of us have heard of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, but few of us are acquainted with it, or the conditions under which the declaration was made. It is alleged that the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence antedates the formal Declaration of Independence which we celebrate annually on July 4, by at least a year, and comprises a number of resolutions adopted at a meeting of the citizens of Mecklenburg county, N. C., in May, 1775. The Mecklenburg Declaration has been a subject of historical controversy from the time that it was first made public, and this controversy has given birth to a literature which sharply questions the authenticity of the declaration. There are the circumstances surrounding the declaration: in the spring of 1775, Col. Adam Alexander called upon the people of Mecklenburg county to appoint delegates to a convention to devise ways and means to assist their brethren in Boston. The delegates met in Charlotte on May the 10th after a free and full discussion of the various objects for which the convention had been called.

a declaration of independence was drawn up and adopted.

As to the genuineness of the declaration, it appears that on April 30, 1818, a copy of the alleged declaration was published in The Raleigh Register, and the Legislature of North Carolina appointed a special committee to investigate the document expressed at the time, of its validity; and the report so far satisfied the people that May 20 was made a State holiday. The historian, Bancroft, accepted the declaration as an authentic document.—Roanoke Times.

Beginning Tuesday and ending their three days' celebration to-day, Charlotte, N. C., and the County of Mecklenburg challenge general attention in their attempt to give the so-called Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence a definite status as part of American history. The presence of President Taft to-day at the crowning exercises of the celebration lends additional interest and significance to the belated honors accorded to the signers of the alleged declaration. Certainly it is an interesting and notable fact if, as the Charlotteans and Mecklenburgers seem to believe, a Declaration of Independence was really adopted in Charlotte, May 19-20, 1775, antedating the declaration at Philadelphia more than a year. That President Taft's presence and participation in the celebration will tend to give the story of the supposed declaration a standing in history is also true.

And yet, despite the brilliant gala events and the three days of parades, pageants, speeches and song, the old doubts as to the authenticity of the famous declaration will not down. Thomas Jefferson in his letter to John Adams marshaled many and strong reasons in support of his opinion that the declaration was spurious. Many of his arguments have never been satisfactorily answered—probably never can be. Furthermore, historical evidence recently discovered, goes a great way in confirming the correctness of Jefferson's belief. Henry Hoyt, of the Harvard Law School, two years ago, in his book on the Mecklenburg Declaration, clearly established by the aid of evidence not available to Jefferson of the mythical character of the facts upon which the believers in that document rest their case. Some resolutions were adopted on May 21, 1775, in Charlotte by the committee of safety, but these, when examined, fall far short of the honors claimed for the declaration.

But the myth-makers and not the myth destroyers have their innings to-day. It will be interesting to note what President Taft in his address to-day will have to say on this mooted question in American history.—New York World.

There seems to be abundant evidence going to show that the Mecklenburg (North Carolina) Declaration of Independence was adopted more than a year ahead of the Philadelphia Declaration, which has since been spelled with a capital letter. The Mecklenburg ordinance was passed May 20, 1775, while that of Philadelphia was passed July 4, 1776. The Mecklenburg pronouncement professed to speak only for the people of one single county. That county was willing to throw off the yoke of bondage and take the consequences. The Philadelphia Declaration professed to speak for all of the colonies. Which was the more heroic?

Not less than two histories, and possibly a greater number, have been written of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. One by Dr. W. E. Fitch, formerly of Savannah, and the other by Mr. James H. Moore, now an editorial writer on The Macon Telegraph, and formerly editor of a newspaper in Charlotte. Both Dr. Fitch and Mr. Moore present quite a sufficiency of authenticated proof to show beyond the peradventure of a doubt that the initiative for American independence was taken at Mecklenburg, and that the Philadelphia declaration followed along the trail that had been already blazed.

There has of late been something of an effort on the part of certain publications to disparage the importance of the Mecklenburg Declaration, but we strongly suspect that it has been undertaken more in a spirit of jest than in an effort to keep the records straight. Why there should be a desire to joke about a matter of such historical interest we do not pretend to say or understand. But the facts with relation to the Mecklenburg affair are so clearly set forth, and so conclusively proven by documents that it is not possible to comprehend a serious attack upon the authenticity of it. Rather, it would seem, the critics had been flippant.

The anniversary of the Mecklenburg Declaration is being celebrated this week, and President Taft will be the principal speaker to-day. It is understood that he prepared a speech embodying the historical facts as they have been authenticated. This speech, giving his authorities, should set at rest the newspaper stories of the "Mecklenburg Myth."—Savannah News.

Yesterday was celebrated at Charlotte, North Carolina, the seat of government of Mecklenburg county, the day of some other, anniversary of a declaration of independence from the tyrannical government of George, King of England. Being of peaceful disposition we refrain from either affirming or denying the historic accuracy of the celebration, we do but affirm the fact of it. But if forced upon the witness stand and required, against our will, to testify in the case of Mecklenburg declaration against the editor-in-chief of The Charlotte News and Courier, we would be compelled to develop as a witness for the prosecution. The charge is libel, and it is of record that for days, weeks, months and years, The News and Courier has insistently, persistently, vindictively and cruelly assailed the Declaration of Independence which was celebrated yesterday, as a "myth." The printed record will also show that every effort was made by that newspaper to frighten from Charlotte the President of the United States. He was threatened with ridicule and condemnation for contributing by his presence to the fastening upon history of a ludicrous anachronism.

We kept out of their way, but as the fateful Twentieth of May approached, we imagined that the horrors of the crime against truth which was—according to his belief—about to be perpetuated at Charlotte would cause the Charleston editor to take to a paddling boat and escape amid the sand dunes of the barren coast from the shouting and the thunder of the press reports from Charlotte. Just as our sympathy was silently

(Continues on Page Nine.)

The Little-Long Co. DEPARTMENT STORES CHARLOTTE, N.C.

Millinery

This department is experiencing the biggest business of any season since its existence. The up-to-date methods and system employed, combined with durability, beauty and style, is the secret of this phenomenal increase. Every new idea in hats or accessories is found in this centre of correctness.

Coat Suits

This ever popular section has been crowded and to its utmost since the opening of the season and reduced prices of last week, and the still deepening on certain lots this week, means to the ladies of Charlotte and neighboring towns an unprecedented saving.

Third Floor Trade Street

Here you find a most complete ready-to-wear selection. All the newest in Lingerie, Batiste, Lawn, Linen, Silk Waists, trimmed in every new style. Muslin Underwear in every conceivable style, piled in mountains of whiteness for Monday's selling. a full line of Princess Slips. And a little motherly talk about the Children's Ready-Made Dresses: You get them here neatly and sweetly trimmed, and perfect fitting, and when you consider cost of material and work and worry, it's cheaper to buy them made than to make them. Wash Skirts are on this floor, White and Colored, qualities and a great selection.

Also Ladies' Gauze Vests, extra values 10, 15, 25 and Complete line Ladies' perfect fitting Union Suits 50c. and \$1.00 Children's Rompers, Baby Caps, Nurses' Aprons.

Miscellaneous Specials

Extra values in Towels Monday at 9, 12, 15 and Shell Hair Ornaments 10, 15 and Extra quality Table Damask 48c. to \$1.25 35c. quality All-Linen Suitings 25c. Extra values in fine Laces at 5 and 10c. Another shipment Solid Colored Plaid Voiles 12 1/2c.

The Little-Long Co. DEPARTMENT STORES CHARLOTTE, N.C.