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VOL. XXX LOUISBURG, N. C., FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 1900. NUMBER 10.

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Sunday School at 9:30 A. M. GEO. S. BAKER, Supt.
Preaching at 11 A. M., and 8 P. M. every Sunday.
Prayer meeting Wednesday night.
M. T. PLYLER. Pastor.

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MR. AYCOCK'S SPEECH

Before the Convention on Accepting the Nomination for Governor.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Convention:

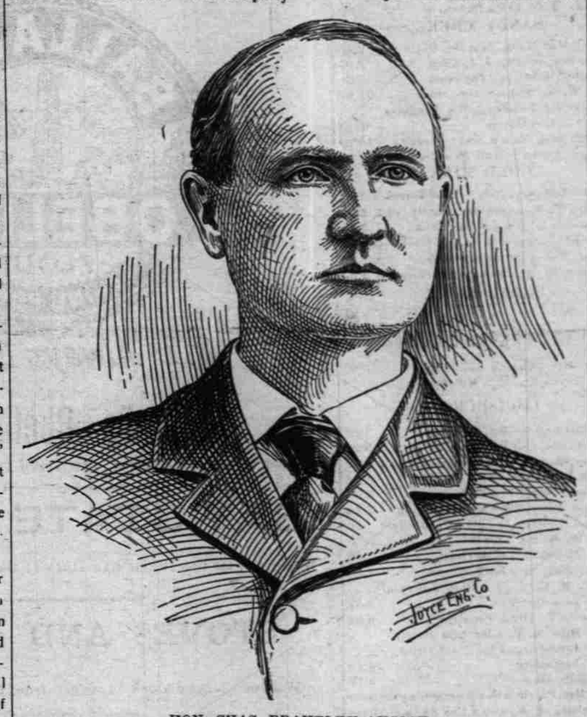
The language of gratitude ought to be brief, for inadequacy of speech is never so apparent as when it seeks to convey a sense of obligation. I am grateful to you and to the people whom you represent. I cannot tell you how deeply so. My past life and service to the State have so little justified the great confidence which you show in me to-day that I am made humbly anxious for all the rest of my life to approve to your judgment the action of your affections. This nomination has not come to me unsought, but I can say with truth that I have s ught it in honorable fashion and it has come to me free from the taint of contrivance and combination. For the office of Governor itself, dignified and honorable as it is, made glorious by the records of a long line of the State's greatest and best men, I have not wished, but I have earnestly desired that manifestation of affction on the part of the people of North Carolina which finds its expression in election to the Governorship. This unanimous nomination is a joy to me, because the good-will of my fellow citizens has ever been a thing of delight to me. When I consider the character, the ability, the service, the fitness of the gentlemen who were named in connection with this nomination, any one of whom would have done honor to the State, I am oppressed with the consciousness of my obligation to you, and with fear of my inability to meet the demands which your kindness makes upon me. But the fight is not mine, nor shall I claim the victory when it is won. The contest this year is to be made by the people of North Carolina and the personality of men will count for little.

The question for settlement is of the utmost importance. It touches the race question and deals with conditions. For thirty years our political battles have been fought from time to time along race lines, while we have sought in vain to make the theory of universal suffrage work out good government and private virtue. We have found by actual trial that it cannot be done. Senator Cullom tells us in his report of the Hawaiian Commission that "the American idea of universal suffrage presupposes that the body of citizens who are to exercise it in a free and independent manner have by inheritance or education such knowledge and appreciation of the responsibilities of free suffrage and of a full participation in the sovereignty of the country as to be able to maintain a Republican form of government."

Our experience has taught us that the negro has not such knowledge either by inheritance or education. The whole people of North Carolina have undoubtedly come to this conclusion. All parties have in different ways and to different extents recognized the incapacity of the negro for government. In 1875 the people changed the Constitution at the instance of the Democratic party, and authorized the Legislature to provide for the government of the counties. Under that constitution the legislature ture provided a system of county government by which the justices of the peace in the various counties were appointed by the Legislature and not elected by the people. These justices in turn chose the county commissioners who appointed the various school committees and passed upon the bonds of the county officers chosen by the people. The counties of Western North Carolina gave up their much loved right of local government in order to relieve their brethren of the East from the intolerable burden of negro government. For twenty years the Republican party waged unceasing warfare upon us against the form of county government adopted by the Democratic party. They appealed to that desire which has already characterized our people to participate in the selection of the officers closest to them. When the Populist party came into existence it joined with the Republicans upon this issue and together they won a victory over the Democracy. They came into power with the distinct pledge to restore to the people local self government and indeed the act changing the old system is entitled, "An Act to restore to the people of North Carolina local self government," and yet coming into power as they did upon this distinct pledge they were afraid to trust the negro with the government and put in the statute a provision for the appointment by a Judge of the Superior court of two additional county commissioners, and clothed these two with more power than the other three chosen by the people possessed. Fear of negro rule compelled the Republicans and Populists to introduce for the first time in North Carolina since the Democratic party abolished it under the leadership of that true hearted and great North Carolinian, Gevernor David S. Reid, a government by free-holders, for this act distinctly provides that the two additional commissioners shall only be appointed upon the application of 200 citizens, 100 of whom shall be freeholders. The Republicans and Populists themselves thereby to some extent restricted suffrage to those who owned land in order to escape from the unbearable burden of negro rule in the Eastern counties. Is there any Republican, is there any Populist, who will deny that this provision was put in the statute as a safe guard against the evil of negro suffrage; will any of them pretend that any such provision would ever have been made if only white men could vote? They thereby confess, and they have put this confession in the form of a statute and written it in the law books of North Carolina forever, that the negro where he predominates in numbers cannot be trusted to govern. They themselves declared his unfitness and published his incapacity.

Again in 1897 there came into the Executive chair in North Carolina a man, who in a public speech had declared that he was not a friend to the white man nor a friend of the negro, but a friend of Man. With his advent to power the negro naturally forgot the days when he was regarded as a savage and with expectant joy listened to the inaugural address which was to usher in that new and glorious day of political equality, but before that address closed we hear this friend of MAN warning the Legislature not to turn the cities of the State over to the "ignorant and propertyless elements," and thereby this friend of MAN declared that fond as he was of universal mankind he realized that the negro is incapable of governing the cities in which he predominates, for surely it will not be contended by anybody that Governor Russell had other reference than to the negroes when he spoke of the "ignorant and propertyless elements." And the Legislature of 1897, violent as it was, determined as it showed itself to be to break all its ties with the past and to repeal all Democratic legislation, followed the advice of the Governor to the extent of providing for the appointment by the Governor in the cities of Newbern and Wilmington additional aldermen to those selected by the people. This act of the Legislature and this act of Governor Russell came before the Supreme court of North Carolina in the case of Harris Vs. Wright from Wilmington, and that body sustained the legislation and recognized alike the unfitness of the negro to rule and the right of the State to protect itself against his incompetency. Every judge on that bench knew that as a matter of fact legislation was passed to discriminate against the incapacity of the negro and yet the opinion of the court does not mention the 15th amendment nor declare the act unconstitutional. So I may be permitted to observe in passing that the courts know many things as facts which it can never know judicially. Further confirmation of the unfitness of the negro to govern may be found in the open letter which Senator Butler addressed to the people of North Carolina just before the election in 1898, in which he pledged the Populist candidates for the Legislature to introduce bills providing a special form of county government for certain Eastern counties where necessary.

In what Eastern counties did Senator Butler suppose a special form of county government was necessary and why was it necessary? Plainly he meant in those Eastern counties where the negro predominated and because of the unfitness of the negro to rule. A more recent and convincing evidence can be offered. Senator Pritchard in his speech delivered in the United States Senate on January 22, 1900 uses this language, "in the very nature of things it (negro domination) cannot be. From the earliest dawn of civilization to this good hour the great white race has given to the world its history, its philosophy, its laws, its government, and its christianity, and it will continue to do so." In a recent speech delivered in Goldsboro by Maj. H. L. Grant before the Republican convention of Wayne county he declared "that the negro could not longer hold office and that for 20 years he had fought to put down the idea of negro supremacy; that while the negro under the constitution has a right to hold office public sentiment was stronger than law, and public sentiment was opposed to the negro holding office." Indeed it has become the fashion among Republicans and Populists to assert the unfitness of the negro to rule, but when they use the word rule, they confine it to holding office; when we say that the negro is unfit to rule we carry it one step further and convey the correct idea that he is unfit to vote. The causes which have brought about this consensus of opinion have in large measure forced themselves on public attention within the last few years. We have had but two periods of Republican rule in North Carolina, from 1868 to 1870, and from 1896 to 1898. That party contains a large number of respectable white men, but the negro constitutes over two-thirds of its voting strength. Government can never be better nor wiser than the average of the virtue and intelligence of the party that governs. The Republicans insist that we have never had negro rule in North Carolina; that the Republican party elects white men to office, and that this fact gives us a government by white men. Governor Russell in his message to the Legislature vindicates himself against the charge of appointing negroes to office and proudly boasts that out of 818 appointments made by him not more than eight were negroes. He misses the point which we made against him and his party, it is not alone that Governor Russell put the eight negroes in office, and his party a thousand more, but that the 125,000 negroes put HIM in office over the votes of WHITE men—it is the party



HON. CHAS. BRANTLEY AYCOCK,
Nominee of the Democratic Convention for Governor.

behind the office-holder that governs and not the office-holder himself. There is no man in the whole State to-day more certainly conscious than Governor Russell that he has failed of his purpose because he had behind him the negroes of the State and not the white men. We had a white man for Governor in 1870 when counties were declared in a state of insurrection; when innocent men were arrested without warrant by military cutthroats; when the writ of habeas corpus was suspended and the judiciary was exhausted. We had a white man for Governor in 1898 when negroes became intollerably insolent; when ladies were insulted on the public streets; when burglary in our chief city became an every night occurrence; when "sleep lay down armed and the villainous centre-bits ground on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights;" when more guns and pistols were sold in the State than had been the twenty preceding years, when lawlessness walked the State like a pestilence and the Governor and our two Senators were afraid to speak in a city of 25,000 inhabitants. It is the negro behind the officer and not the officer only that constitutes negro government. Mayor Grant now repudiates Congressman White and draws the color line against negro office holding, but it has not been two years since a Republican convention composed in part of white men applauded to the echo the declaration of White that the industry of negro office-holding had but fairly begun. We have taught them much in the past two years in the University of white Supremacy, we will graduate them in August next with a diploma that will entitle them to form a genuine white man's party. Then we shall have no more revolutions in Wilmington; we shall have no more dead and wounded negroes on the streets because we shall have good government in the State and peace everywhere. The Governor of the State and the Senators will not be afraid to speak anywhere, for freedom of speech will become the common possession of the humblest of us. Life and property and liberty from the mountains to the sea shall rest secure in the guardianship of the law. But to do this we must disfranchise the negro. This movement comes from the people. Politicians have been afraid of it and have hesitated, but the great mass of white men in the State are now demanding and have demanded that the matter be settled once and for all. To do so is both desirable and necessary—desirable because it sets the white man free to move along faster than he can go when retarded by the slower movement of the negro—necessary because we must have good order and peace while we work out the industrial, commercial, intellectual and moral development of the State. The amendment to the Constitution is presented in solution of the problem. It i plain and simple. It proceeds along wise lines. It is carefully and thoughtfully drawn. It stays inside of the XV amendment and nevertheless, accomplishes its purpose. It adopts the suggestion of Senator Cullom and demands the "existence of sufficient intelligence either by 'inheritance or education.'" as a necessary qualification for voting—it requires of the negro the qualification by education because he has it not by inheritance and demands of the white man only that he possesses it by inheritance—it does not sweep the field of expedients to disfranchise the negro which is held constitutional in the Mississippi case, but seizes upon his educational unfitness and saves the whites from participation therein by boldly recognizing the claim of their hereditary fitness. The amendment makes a distinction between a white man and a negro, but it does so on the ground that the white man has a knowledge by inheritance which the negro has not. Has the white man such superior knowledge? Will any man deny it? Will Senator Pritchard deny it? Hear what he said in his recent speech in the Senate: "It is absurd to contend that there is any danger of negro domination in North Carolina. In the very nature of things it cannot be. From the earliest dawn of civilization to this good hour the great white race has given to the world its history, its philosophy, its laws, its government, and its Christianity, and it will continue to do so." Why unless the white man is superior? Will Senator Butler deny it? Ask the Caucasian, evidently named in honor of the great race. Will Governor Russell deny it? Surely he will not assert that unlettered white men are no better than "savages." If then it be true that unlettered white men have a knowledge of government superior to that possessed by unlettered negroes I want to know if Senators Butler and Pritchard and Governor Russell want the Supreme Court to hold that the XV amendment demands a LIE. The Democratic party knows the truth—it is certain that the unlettered white man is more capable of government than the negro. It is so certain of it that it has put its opinion in writing—has printed it in the law of 1899—has submitted it to the people and it now challenges any white man in North Carolina to deny it. Republicans are professing a special love for the poor and unlettered white man, but at the same time they assert that the law can make no distinction between him and the negro. The Democratic party takes the true, bold ground that a white man is superior to a negro and that the law of man will follow the law of God in recognition of it. If we are wrong about this, then God pity us for that sense of superiority which beats with our blood and boastfully exclaims with St. Paul "I am free born."

But the opponents of the amendment attack it on another ground. They say that every child who comes of age after 1908 white and black must be able to read and write before he can vote. This is true. The amendment does so provide. We recognize and provide for the God given and hereditary superiority of the white man and of all white children now 13 years of age, but for the future as to all under 13 we call on them to assert that superiority of which we boast by learning to read and write. The schools are open and will be for four or more months every year from now to 1908. The white child under 13 who will not learn to read and write in the next eight years will be without excuse. But we are told that there are orphan children in the land. And there are. But the State and the Masonic Fraternity support the Orphanage at Oxford and they stand with open arms inviting orphan children to enter the doors of that noble institution. The Odd Fellow Orphanage at Goldsboro is open for the sons and daughters of Odd Fellows and the township in which I have the happiness to live in its public Graded School teachers without money and without price, but not, thank God, without a blessing, the orphans assembled there. The Baptist Orphanage at Thomasville with its 170 pupils follows the Master and preaches the Gospel to the poor while it teaches to read and write. Barium Springs and the Thompson Orphanage and the Friends' Orphanage near High Point attest the interest of Presbyterians and Episcopalians and Friends in the education of poor orphans, while the Methodists are opening in this beautiful city a home and school for those whom they owe a duty. The State Charity and Philanthropy and Christianity all stand ready to aid our boast of superiority.

The man who seeks in the face of these provisions to encourage illiteracy is a public enemy and deserves the contempt of all mankind. I have heard Republican speakers grow eloquent on the impossiblity of the poor white children learning to read and write in eight years. The man who makes such a speech has no such opinion of the incapacity of his own children as to suppose that they cannot learn to read and write in 8 years. I would that I could reach the heart of every illiterate poor man in North Carolina and give him assurance that his children are as bright and capable as those of the demagogue who seeks to encourage him not to educate his children. I would assure him that those demagogues have their own children in school while seeking to keep those of the poor and illiterate out, their purpose being to gain a start in life for their children ahead of those whom they seek to mislead.

Gentlemen of the convention, this clause of on amendment does not weaken but strengthens it. In your speeches to the people, in your talks with them on the streets and farms and by the fireside do not hesitate to discuss this section. I tell you that the prosperity and the glory of our grand old State are to be more advanced by this clause than by any other one thing. Speak the truth, "tell it in Gath, publish it in the streets of Askelon" that universal education of the white children of North Carolina will send us forward with a bound in the race with the world. Life is a mighty combat and the people who go into it best equipped will be sure to win. Massachusetts has grown rich while we have remained poor and complained of her riches. She educated while we remained ignorant. If she has grown rich out of us it is because she knew how to do so and we did not know how to prevent it. With the adoption of our Amendment after 1908 there will be no State in the Union with a larger porcentage of boys and girls who can read and write and no State will rush forward with more celerity or certainty than conservative old North Carolina. The day of the miserable demagogue who seeks to perpetuate illiteracy in the State will then have happily passed forever.

There is one other provision of the Amendment to which I must advert and that is the payment of the poll tax by March 1st of election years as a condition to voting. The largest part of the poll tax goes to public education under the Constitution. If our boys are to be educated as a condition precedent to voting after 1908, then no man who will not contribute to that end ought to vote. Nearly all white persons liable to poll tax pay it now. If the negro wants to vote it is no hardship on him that he should be required to pay his tax to the support of those schools in which his race gets more than it pays of the public fund. The various provisions of the Amendment work together for good to all men. We are going to carry them through to success. The fight is on. We unfurl anew the old banner of Democracy. We inscribe thereon white supremacy and its perpetuation. Under that banner we shall win and when we shall have won we will have peace in the land. There will be rest from political bitterness and race antagonism. Industry will have a great outburst. Freed from the necessity of voting according to our color we shall have intellectual freedom. Error will come face to face with truth and shall suffer that final crushing which the post denies to truth. With freedom of thought will come independence of action and publice questions will stand or fall in the court of reason and not of passion. To these great ends I beg your unceasing activity during the present campaign. Let your work be with zeal and earnestness. Remember that the peace of the State is at stake. Do not forget that the safety of our women is dependent upon it. Ladies refugeed from Wilmington in 1898 as they did before the advance of Sherman in 1865. The county in which we are assembled is named in honor of a woman, Esther Wake. The city in which we are is named for that gallant gentleman whose most famous act among his many great and illustrious deeds is that he spread his cloak upon the ground on order that his Queen might walk dryshod. In North Carolina in every home there is a queen, wife, sister, mother or daughter, and in her name I demand your allegiance and service.

It is by no accident that the first child born of English parentage in America was a girl—the event was both a prophecy and an inspiration—a prophecy in foretelling that modesty which, characterizing North Carolinians, has, found its chief pleasure in doing things rather than in proclaiming them when done—an inspiration to all North Carolina white men to forever regard the protection of the womanhood of the State as the first duty which God in the birth of Virginia Dare laid upon us for all time. In the performance of this delightful duty the North Carolina Democracy claims no monopoly, but is willing and anxious to share with our Republican and Populist friends the glory of achieving it by establishing permanent white supremacy—there is work for us all and in the language of Admiral Schley, glory enough to go all around. If the Democratic party has seen with quicker, clearer vision the necessity for this Amendment than either of the other parties, the fact has grown out of environment and gives us no right to boast over those of our race belonging to other parties who seeing it now shall join with us in perfecting the good work. Let the adoption of the Amendment furnish us the occasion for a better understanding one with another, and while restoring to white men the rightful superiority which God gave them, let us in the assurance of better government learn, "not toleration only, but respect as well for the views of those opposing us. In coming together for the common good we shall forget the asperities of past years and shall go forward into the 20th Century a united people, striving with zeal and in generous rivalry for the material, intellectual and moral upbuilding of the State. May the era of good feeling among us be the outcome of this contest. Then we shall learn, if we do not already know, that while universal suffrage is a failure universal justice is the perpetual decree of Almighty God, and that we are entrusted with power not for our good alone, but for the negro as well. We hold our title to power by the tenure of service to God, and if we fail to administer equal and exact justice to the negro whom we deprive of suffrage we shall in the fulness of time lose power ourselves, for we must know that the God who is Love trusts no people with authority for the purpose of enabling them to do injustice to the weak. We do well to rejoice in our strength and to take delight in our power, but we will do better still when we come fully to know that our right to rule has been transmitted to us by our fathers through centuries of toil and sacrifice, suffering and death—and their work through all these centuries has been a striving to execute judgment in righteousness. That must likewise be our aim: that our labor. Can you wonder then, my friends, that I feel weighed down by the honor which you have done me? The task is great and I am weak. To be the first Governor of North Carolina under the new order in the State may bring honor, but it may bring the disgrace of failing rightly to interpret and adequately to express the high ideals and the noble purposes which I am certain thrill the hearts of North Carolinians as the sun of the 20th Century begins to brighten the eastern skies. The morning of the new century calls. There is work to be done—the old, old combat between freedom and force is even now upon us and the mighty roar of traffic and industry cannot drown the tremendous din of that conflict. Our industries are to be multiplied, our commerce increased. We are to have an educational awakening that shall reach every son and daughter of North Carolina. We may not grow in numbers as rapidly as some others States, but we shall multiply many times the effective power of the State in the next ten years by the strength which comes from the wide diffusion of knowledge.

It is my happiness to have been nominated by you for the Governorship of that State in which these things are done. I shall come to that great office, if elected, with an honest desire to serve faithfully and well. I shall have no enemies to punish and no private ends to gain. I shall be the servant of the whole people of the State—are you rich and powerful, then I shall meet you as your equals for surely he who has garnered this harvest of hearts has a goodly heritage and possesses a power which only folly can dissipate—are you poor? still I am your equal, possessing no other riches than the love of my friends. I shall respect the rights of property and rejoice in prosperity, but I shall not forget that they who toil constitute not only the largest class of our people, but from their labors can spare little time to urge their views upon those whom they have chosen to serve them.

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