

WEST-CAROLINA RECORD.

THE STRONGEST BULWARK OF OUR COUNTRY—THE POPULAR HEART.

CARPENTER & GRAYSON, EDITORS.

CLENDENIN & CARPENTER, PUBLISHERS.

VOL. I.

RUTHERFORDTON, N. C., JULY 12, 1873.

NO. 22.

WEST-CAROLINA RECORD.

RUTHERFORDTON, N. C.

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The Toast for Labor.

Here's to the man with the horny hand,
Who tugs at the breathing bellows;
Where anvils ring, in every land,
He's loved by all good fellows.

And here's to him that goes a-field,
And through the globe is ploughing,
Or, with strong arms the axe doth wield,
While ancient oaks are bowing.

Here's to the delver in the mine,
The sailors on the ocean,
With those of every craft and line
Who work with true devotion.

Our love for her who toils in gloom,
Where cranks and wheels are clanking;
Bereft is she of Nature's bloom,
Yet God in patience thanking.

A curse to him who sneers at toil,
And shuns his share of labor;
The knave that robs his native soil,
While leaning on his neighbor.

Soon may this truth be brought to earth,
Grow more and more in favor;
There is no wealth but owes its worth
To handicraft and labor.

Then pledge the founders of our wealth—
The builders of our nation;
We know their worth, and now their health
Drink we with acclamation.

Illusions.

A gentleman who had lately lost his wife, looking out the window in the dusk of the evening, saw her sitting in a garden chair. He called one of his daughters and asked her to look out into the garden. "Why," she said, "mother is sitting there." Another daughter was called, and she experienced the same illusion. Then the gentleman went out into the garden, and found that a garden-dress of his wife had been placed over the seat in such a position as to produce the illusion which had deceived himself and his daughters. During the last weeks of the long vacation I went alone to Blackpool, in Lancaster. There I took lodgings in a house facing the sea. My sitting-room was on the ground floor. On a warm autumn night I was reading with the window open, but the blind was down and was waving to and fro in the wind. It happened I was reading a book on demonology; moreover, I had been startled earlier in the evening by prolonged shrieks from an upper room in the house, where my landlady's sister, who was very ill, had had an hysterical fit. I had just read to the end of a long and particularly horrible narrative when I was disturbed by the beating of the curtain—the wind having risen some—and I got up to close the window. As I turned round for the purpose, the curtain rose gently and disclosed a startling object. A fearful face was there, black, long and hideous, and surmounted by two monstrous horns. Its eyes, large and bright, gleamed horribly, and a month garnished with immense teeth grinned at me. Then the curtain slowly descended. But I knew the horrible thing was there, I waited, by no means comfortably, while the curtain fluttered about, showing parts of the black monster. At last it rose again so as to disclose the whole face. But the face had lost its horror for me. For the horns were gone. Instead of the two nearly upright horns which before had shown black and frightful against the light background of sea and sky, there were sloped ears as unmistakably asinine as I felt myself at the moment. When I went to the window (which before I felt unable to approach) I saw that several stray donkeys were wandering through the front gardens of the row of houses to which my lodgings belonged. It is possible that the inquisitive gentleman who had looked in at window was attracted by the flapping

curtain, which he may have taken for something edible. "If so," I remarked to myself, "two of your kind have been deceived tonight." A friend of mine told me he had been disturbed two nights running by a sound as of an army tramping down a road which passed some two hundred yards from his house; he found the third night (I had suggested an experimental test as to the place whence the sound came) that the noise was produced by a clock in the next house, the clock having been newly placed against the party wall. We all know Carlisle's story of the ghostly voice heard each evening of a low-spirited man—a voice as of one, in likeful dumps, proclaiming, "Once I was hap-happy, but now I am miserable"—and how the ghost resolved itself into a rusty kitchen jack. There is a case of a lady who began to think herself the victim of some delusion, and perhaps threatened by approaching illness, because each night, about a quarter of an hour after she had gone to bed, she heard a hideous din in the neighborhood of the house, or else (she was uncertain which) in some distant room. The noise was in reality the slightest possible creak—within a few feet of her pillow, however—and produced by the door of a wardrobe which she closed every night before getting into bed. The door, about a quarter of an hour after being closed, recovered its position of rest, slightly beyond which it had been pushed in closing. In another case the crawling of a snail across a window produced sounds which were mistaken for the strains of loud but distant music.

The Isthmian Ship Canal.

That ships are sooner or later to cross the Isthmus connecting North and South America, at some point, there is not a shadow of doubt. That the tide of commerce between Europe and the Eastern shores of North and South America on the one hand, and China, Japan, the East Indies, and Eastern Africa on the other (a commerce, by the way, which, great as it is and long as it has continued, is but a beginning compared to what it will be before the close of the next half century), is to continue to be deflected ten thousand miles out of its direct course by a few miles more or less of mountain and rock is entirely inconsistent with the spirit of the age. It is only a question of time and money. Money is the Archimedean fulcrum upon which, if modern engineering can rest its lever, it can, perhaps, hardly move the world, but it can move anything in the world.

What pecuniary interests demand pecuniary resources will not fail to accomplish. And it is not a question of so very much money after all. A hundred millions of dollars sounds pretty large, but one gets used to hearing it; and the people of this country have expended that amount in killing each other, in fifty days.

By whom it is to be constructed? It is very easy to answer by whom it ought to be constructed. Secretary Fish is said to have stated that this country is competent for the enterprise without European assistance, and it needed no such announcement to make the fact patent to all that we not only can, but ought to construct a ship canal across the Isthmus. Both commercial and political reasons make it imperative that the American nation should own and control the great highway between the two oceans.

Mr. James C. Medeley, in a letter to *Engineering*, evincing a careful consideration of the subject, compares some of the routes talked of, and recommends a route across the Isthmus of Panama, near where the existing railway now crosses, entering the

Pacific by the Rio Grande, a little to the north of the town of Panama, where the railway now terminates. It would necessitate a cutting for several miles, with a summit depth of about 180 feet, rapidly decreasing in depth from the summit each way, and still require about eighty feet of lockage. A canal about the size of the Suez canal is estimated to cost, even at excessive prices for construction, about one hundred millions of dollars, the major-portion of which would be for the deep cutting and the locks. But is it not questionable whether locks are advisable? They are certainly not desirable, and when we consider that the work is for all time, and will be of increased utility with each succeeding year, anything that increases the expense, or diminishes the facility of operating it, should be avoided, even at a very largely increased cost of original construction. If a canal can be constructed at all, it can be and should be constructed without locks.—*American Artisan*.

Simmons' Sorrow.

"Frank Clive," the humorist of the *Buffalo Courier*, like so many other emulative farceurs of the press, is going the way of the Danbury News man, and this is his style of telling what Mr. Simmons is a man of several sorrows, yet he has frequently said that the saddest hour of his existence occurred during his ninth year. It was on the occasion of his introduction of his Aunt Plummer's tortoise-shell cat to a scrubby cur, for which he had just swapped his jack-knife and his entire stock of wares. A trifling misunderstanding between the animals resulted in the ruin of one quartette stand, six house plants, two china vases and one cat. Simmons contemplated the havoc with profound grief. The same noble emotion that wrung tears from the manly heart of Alexander the Great swelled the bosom of the juvenile Simmons, and he refused to be comforted because there were no more cats about those premises for his dog to worry. To add to his unhappiness, none of the heartless household sympathized with him; and while he was engaged in a painfully exciting interview with the paternal Simmons in the woodshed, Aunt Plummer, by a copious libation of hot water, induced the dog to go away from Simmons', leaving only a lock of his hair as a souvenir. It was a generous lock. In fact, the dog didn't carry off any hair to speak of. Simmons' sorrow was never quite assuaged until he had privately demonstrated, by experiment, that Aunt Plummer's next cat couldn't swim with more than two or three bricks tied to her neck. Although Simmons is president of a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, the sufferings of the brute creation do not affect him as painfully as they did in his youth.

Business Rents.

The New York correspondent of the Boston Journal ascribes the diminution of spring business there to the tremendous rentals that have to be paid. It is stated that the rents demanded on Broadway range between \$4,000 and \$10,000; and that, because no ordinary business can add this to its general expenses and leave a profit, there are now 100 business places, including some of the most desirable on Broadway, vacant on that street between the City Hall and Fourteenth street. This state of affairs has already cured itself in part. Astor has just leased one store for \$8,500, for which he asked \$12,000, to the 1st of May. Another similar brought but one-sixth of the first price. One that had commanded \$2,000 was finally leased for \$600, and still another fell from \$3,000 to \$1,000. Other like examples are given.

The Mining of Coal.

WHAT IT COSTS.

An old dilapidated spring wagon, a small shaggy mule tugging along, such as are often seen in the coal country, on the front seat perched a boy, alongside of the boy a grimy miner with lamp on cap, in the rear of the wagon another grimy miner sitting in the bottom of the wagon, resting something in his lap, all bearing the black sooty evidence of recent toil in the underground, treacherous recesses of the coal mine. The mule pulls as if the load was very heavy, and well it may, for underneath that coarse, gray blanket, with his head resting in the lap of the grimy, smooty, but warm-hearted miner, lays stiff and cold the body of a man, who but a few hours before was full of life and health, working cheerfully in those dark chambers, thinking perhaps of the wife and seven little ones at home who will welcome him at eventide when he returns from his work, knowing that though grimy he may be, those little ones will welcome him with a warmth seldom found in the homes of the high-born and wealthy, his blood flows in their veins and the tie is strong. It is his first day in the mine, and he does not dream of danger, the engine is laboring heavily, the machinery is rattling noisily, the win rope is running over the pulleys, one car is descending and another is ascending, the cars cannot be seen, but the winding rope tells this, he has occasion to cross the apex of the slope, he is warned of the danger of crossing while the rope is in motion, but he has crossed before, and has become callous to danger, time presses, and he attempts to cross, he has nearly crossed, but no he is not yet out of danger, those shiny nails in the soles of his brogans have slipped on the rail, he staggers and clutches the air for something to hold on to, but, oh God! there is nothing but vacancy, he clutches in vain, underneath him the swiftly moving rope, the fast revolving pulleys above him, nothing to save, what an agony there is in those two seconds, a lifetime of thought crowded into an instant of time, who can tell what were those thoughts, were they of the wife and little ones at home, or were they of the incomprehensible, that boundless eternity, none knows save one; he cannot save himself, he falls, he clutches the fatal rope and in a twinkling is caught in the pulley and thrown out a lifeless mass of mangled flesh and broken bones, and the body, which a moment before contained the breath of life, lies inanimate upon the damp floor of the coal mine. The day is waning, and the wife and little ones will soon expect their bread-winner. Can we imagine childish voices asking, perhaps frequently, "How soon will papa come?" but, alas, he will come no more to you. Even now the messenger is coming to tell you of his sad fate. The dilapidated wagon, the shaggy mule, the boy, the miners, the coarse gray blanket covering the body of him you loved best, is nearing your quiet home. Little do you dream of your loss, and who can tell the agony of that wife and those children who full of joy were looking for the return of the husband and father.

Let us here drop the curtain and hope that He who has numbered the hairs of our heads and knoweth when a sparrow falls, will not desert the widow and the orphans in this their time of need.

Readers, this is no fancy sketch, it is what the writer knows to have occurred. It is occurring every day in some portion of the coal region. It is "what it costs to mine coal."

Do we think that we are paying too much for our coal, let us remember the anguish of the wife and little ones who see the husband and father go out in the

morning but know not whether he will return at night.—*Ec*.

The Marriage of Great Men.

Byron married Miss Milbank to get money to pay his debts. It turned out to be a bad shift.

Robert Burns married a farm girl with whom he fell in love while they worked together in the plow field. He was irregular in his life, and committed the most serious mistakes in conducting his domestic affairs.

Milton married the daughter of a country squire, but lived with her but a short time. He was an austere, exacting, literary recluse, while she was a rosy, romping country lass that could not endure the restraint imposed upon her, so they separated. Subsequently, however, she returned, and they lived tolerable happy.

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were cousins, and about the only example in the long line of English monarchs wherein the marital vows were sacredly observed, and sincere affection existed.

Shakespeare loved and wedded a farmer's daughter. She was faithful to her vows, but we can hardly say the same of the great bard himself. Like most of the great poets, he showed too little discrimination in bestowing his affections upon the other sex.

Washington married a woman with two children. It is enough to say that she was worthy of him, and they lived as married folks should—in perfect harmony.

John Adams married the daughter of a Presbyterian clergyman. Her father objected, on account of John's being a lawyer—he had a bad opinion of the morals of the profession.

John Howard, the great philanthropist married his nurse. She was altogether beneath him in social life and intellectual capacity, and besides this was fifty-two years old, while he was but twenty-five. He would not take "No" for an answer, and they were married and lived happily together until she died, which occurred two years afterward.

Peter the Great, of Russia, married a peasant. She made an excellent wife and sagacious Empress.

Humboldt married a poor girl because he loved her. Of course they were happy.

It is not generally known that Andrew Jackson married a lady whose husband was still living. She was an uneducated but amiable woman, was most devoutly attached to the old warrior and statesman.

John C. Calhoun married his cousin, and their children fortunately were neither diseased or idiots, but they do not evince the talent of the great State Rights advocate.

Influence of Newspapers.

Small is the sum that is required to patronize a newspaper, and amply rewarded is its patron, I care not how humble and unpretending the gazette which he takes. It is next to impossible to fill a sheet with printed matter without putting something that is worth the Subscription price. I well remember what a marked difference there was between those of my school-mates who had, and those who had not, access to newspapers. Other things being equal, the first were always decidedly superior to the last, in debate composition, and general intelligence.—*Daniel Webster*.

A little girl being asked what dust was, replied that it was "mud" with the juice squeezed out.

The married ladies in a western city have formed a Come Home husband club. It is about four feet long, and has a brush at the end of it.