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LANDRETHS'
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POETRY.

A Darwinian Rodent.

There was a rat who learned to read, and had a thoughtful mind—
To science and philosophy his tastes were all inclined;
For novels, news, and politics, a like he thought them vain.
Hesitated all tales of scandal, Josh Billings, and Mark Twain;
And even the last dispatches from the bloody fields of war
To him were dull and stupid as the jokes on another's floor.
The books he took delight in were written by wise men, sir;
For Darwin was his favorite, and next was Herbert Spencer.
Of these he read, on these he thought, and pondered o'er the mystery
Of the struggle for existence in the realms of natural history.
How hoofs and claws, and wings and tails, by use are slowly gained—
Races on each other preying till a balance is maintained;
The survival of the fittest, and, since first the world began,
The gradual development of man, monkey, and ape.
He pondered deep, he reasoned well, and then he plainly saw
That rats and mice are rats and mice, but by this simple law:
'Tis the cats that prey upon them from youth to hoary age.
That have checked their onward progress in the rat-and-mousey-strage;
And could the cats be rid of, again their race might grow.
As the avalanche develops from the rolling ball of snow.
So he called a grand convention of the rats and of the mice,
And, having them assembled, thus he gave them his advice:
"Come hither, all ye mice and rats,
Who spend your lives in fear of cats,
And listen to a plan I've got,
By which we may exalt our lot:
Just let us get a little bell,
And tie it round each cat's neck well;
Then we can hear them when they're coming,
And run into our holes a-humming.
Then when cats can't catch rats to eat,
They'll soon find out that grass is sweet;
When they eat grass they'll lose their claws,
And hoofs will grow out on their paws;
Their feline teeth will soon drop out,
And in their place incisors sprout,
And when they've eaten it a heap
They'll all turn into little sheep.
Then no more cats will be so nice
For all the little rats and mice;
For, as is well known to you all,
It's living in holes that keeps us small;
But then we all may take our ease
And live about just where we please,
And 'tis as plain as any figger
We all will grow a great deal bigger;
In fact, I think there is no reason
Why we may not grow a foot or two,
Thus, say acquiring size and strength,
We'll eat those nation-cats at length,
And, living but on blood and brains,
As lions do, we'll all have brains.
And grow so fierce and carnivorous
That even men themselves will fear us.
For, if, in spite of all the cats,
There are so many mice and rats,
The plain we all are fitted for
Great Nature's interminable war;
And may, if once we turn the scales,
Develop to the size of whales.
So do not doubt me by a look,
For all is proved in Darwin's book.
It only needs to bell the cats—
The rest will follow—bet your hats."
Then rose an old grandfather rat, who listened with attention:
"Let unanimous approval be the sense of this convention.
Heaven bless our fellow-rodent, who, with super-rat ambition,
Has solved the problem how we may exalt our low condition,
And circumvent the feline race, and make it come to pass
That, like Nebuchanezzar, they shall all be sent to grass.
Sure our children in his honor many monuments shall raise,
And our sculptors wrap his image, and our poets sing his praise;
And children shall be named for him like sands along the seas—
More numerous than George Washingtons, and likewise Robert Lees.
Meanwhile the crowning glory that a mortal rat can ask,
To put the bells upon the cats, shall be his radiant task.
Then the learned rat looked thoughtful, but a wild hurrah arose,
To ratify this pleasant scheme of vengeance on their foes;
When, midst their loud rejoicings, alas! it must be told,
A cat sprang in upon them, like a wolf upon the flock.
Fast for their holes they scampered, but, all she was too quick;
She lit upon that learned rat, like many a hundred brick.
Oh, fearful cat-astrophe! oh, fatal turn of fate!
His fate was as the June-bug's o'er taken by the duck.
Then the hall was all deserted in the twinkling of an eye,
And the rat and mouse convention stood adjourned sine die.

Letter from Rev. John W. Davis.

The following letter was written for the *Orphan's Friend* at Oxford, and published in that journal some weeks ago—but it will prove interesting and instructive to such of our little friends as have not heretofore read it:
Soochow, CHINA, SEPT. 6, 1880.
Master Joe Woodell—My dear Young Friend:
I like very much to get letters, and I suppose that you do too. I know about the Asylum, for I read the *Orphan's Friend*, and I asked Miss Anderson, who is a friend of mine, to send me the names of some of the boys in the Asylum. Among others she sent me yours, and I now write you a letter. I am a missionary in the city of Soochow, China. This is a very large city, and there are as many people in Soochow and the villages within ten miles of the city, as there are in the whole State of North Carolina. There are thousands of little boys and girls in Soochow. The boys go to school, and most of them study pretty well. Each boy is a class by himself. When he recites his lesson

Navigation of the Yarkin.

The subject of the navigation of the Yarkin river has been again brought up by the *Reidsville Times*, whose editor has been interviewing Mr. Frank Brown on the subject. Mr. Brown gives him this information:
"Two years ago through Senator Ransom, Mr. Brown got an appropriation of twenty thousand dollars from the government to that end, and last session an appropriation of twenty thousand more was made. Now he has had one set of working boats made, a derrick boat with a capacity of lifting three tons, a quarter boat forty-five feet, for the hands to stay in, that will take care of thirty men, stone boats and transfer boats. He will begin work early in the spring, right at the railroad bridge, six miles from Salisbury, and provided he can put on three sets of working boats at points along the river fifteen to twenty miles apart, he will have the river navigable to near the Shoals, sixty-one miles, in about two years time. Mr. C. B. Phillips, of Norfolk Va., is the engineer in charge. This will open up transportation for hundreds of tons of the sweetest hay from the meadows along the river that now are shut out from market and hay compresses will be put right up. Besides this three cotton factories are already in progress to be built, and there are of iron, coal, and lime deposits equal to any in Virginia or Georgia. It will set going too a big thing in the barrel stave business. A Philadelphia party sometime ago bought land on the Yarkin with the view of going into this business, and so soon as the river is navigable the splendid timber will be turned into handsome profit."
"The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government" is the title of the book by Mr. Jefferson Davis, and on which he has been engaged for the last five years. The work is to be issued by the Appletons, of New York, in two large volumes, at \$5 each, and is expected to be out in ninety days. The South, and indeed the world will read with interest a work from so high a source, and it will indeed be a valuable contribution to history, emanating as it does from one so eminently connected with the greatest revolution of modern times. But shall the record of North Carolina in that contest be lost? Shall the heroic deeds of her sons perish? Have we not enough of State pride to make the effort to preserve and perpetuate them? Are not their surviving comrades sufficiently interested to engage in the undertaking? The unwritten history of that war embodies those acts of sacrifice, of suffering and of daring that would illuminate the name of any people with a halo of imperishable glory. Shall it be consigned to the womb of oblivion? Then, can we not devise some method by which a historical organization may be instituted and established to perform this great and patriotic work? We believe it could and would be done if the movement were inaugurated. Will not the ex-Confederates of North Carolina enter into the work heartily? We believe they will. *The News & Observer* would gladly give publicity to their answers.—*News & Observer.*

MISCELLANEOUS.

How our Cities are Growing.

We have now the returns of the population of all our cities which contain ten thousand inhabitants and over. There are 245 such cities, and their total population in 1880 was 11,100,291.
In 1870 we had 184 cities with a population of ten thousand and over, and their aggregate population was 7,672,293. These cities have therefore increased in number 61 within the ten years, and they contain 3,427,998 more inhabitants.
Our total gain in population since 1870 has been 11,594,183, and nearly a third of this increase has been in the cities. If we included all the municipalities, those of between eight and ten thousand inhabitants as well as those of greater size, we should probably find that our total urban population in 1880 was over eleven and a half millions, and toward three and three-quarters million more than in 1870. This would make the increase in the cities fully one-third of the whole increase of population in the Union.
The cities contained about 8,000,000 in 1870, to 11,500,000 in 1880. They therefore have been increasing in inhabitants far more rapidly than the rest of the country. While the general gain has been only about twenty-five per cent, that in the cities has been about forty-five per cent.
And this growth of the cities at the expense of the country generally has been becoming marked during the whole of the last fifty years. In 1830 our total urban population was only about one-sixteenth of the whole. In 1850 it had grown to be one-eighth. In 1870 it was one-fifth; and in 1880, out of about fifty millions of inhabitants, more than eleven and a half millions lived in the cities.
If the cities go on increasing during the next ten years at the same ratio which the last ten years have shown, and the country as a whole advances in population at the same rate, we shall find more than sixteen millions in the cities, to about forty-eight or forty-nine millions in the rest of the country.
A like tendency to build up the towns at the expense of the country appears in the figures we are obtaining of the German census taken late last year. It is a modern tendency, and shall we not call it a modern evil likely to have portentous consequences?—*New York Sun.*

Berlin Letter.

(Regular Correspondence.)
BERLIN, Prussia, Jan. 3rd, 1881.
In virtue of the elaborate statistical statement resulting from a census to which the German Empire has recently been subjected, Berlin is now entitled to take the third place in the list of European capitals, as far as the number of her inhabitants is concerned. The old Prussian Residenz, which has become the capital of United Germany by the force of circumstances rather than through any special fitness for that supremely influential position, has nearly doubled her population within fourteen years, and is at the present moment, roughly speaking, the dwelling-place of eleven hundred thousand human beings. In many respects, however, the moral and physical condition of its designs are sadly in ar-

The Curse of Revenue Officers—Remedy for the Evil.

Cor. of the News and Observer.
In the last gubernatorial election (1880) the Democratic party lost, on the vote of 1876, in the county of Mecklenburg, 759 votes; in the county of Gaston, 651; total, 1,853 votes.
A few more such disasters and the Democratic party will lose the majority of the popular vote in 1882, and thereby put in office six Republican Superior court Judges; and if we lose the Legislature also, the voice of Ransom will no more be heard in the Senate, ringing out its clarion eloquence.
The loss in these counties is due to the patronage and oppression of the federal revenue service. In Gaston there are numerous distilleries, and some in Lincoln and Mecklenburg, and afford positions for marshals, collectors, storekeepers, gaugers and detectives, paying from \$2.00 to \$1.00 per day, and with these they buy the young and active Democrats of these counties. It would make us blush to name some who have sold out principles and character for this paltry mess of pottage. The distillers are bought by allowing them to cheat the government in a shameless and outrageous manner. It matters not what they do, so that their influence and whiskey are used for the Republican party.
In addition to this, every one of these officers and distillers are assessed from ten to twenty per cent. on their salaries for a campaign fund, and in western North Carolina they raised in this way about ten thousand dollars. Something has to be done to counteract or destroy this great Radical power. The remedy, I suppose, is to prohibit the distillation of grain and this will extirpate the revenue service. "Othello's occupation will be gone." No distilleries, no revenue officers; no Radical engine of corruption. Those who must have spirits can use brandy, and these only run a short while in the summer, and take but few officers.
I don't wish to prolong this article, but only write a brief suggestion, which our legislators can amplify and digest. I merely add that corn is worth more in Gaston than in the metropolis of Charlotte, made so by the distilleries. The poor have these high prices to pay, and are ready to join the Democratic party in stopping these distilleries. Let our legislators ponder over this matter seriously.
GASTON.

Gen. Stewart L. Woodford, United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, in his lecture on "The New South," in New York, on the 13th, among other things, said: "As to the material resources of the South," "its States occupy 960,000 square miles, which is more than one-fourth of the area of the United States. From 1860 to 1880 the South has held its own in regard to population. Agriculture is the principal Southern interest, and there were defects in Southern farming, which were caused by the former system of slavery and expensive methods of tillage. Freedom, however, has brought with it a degree of economy, and the men of the North will be astonished at the wealth which is gradually being developed in that region. The mineral resources of western Virginia, eastern Kansas, eastern Tennessee, the western Carolinas, northwestern Georgia, Arkansas and Mississippi will yet equal those of Pennsylvania, the great iron producer. The colored people of the South are gradually becoming farmers, and the small white farmers are increasing in number. Large estates are being divided up into a system which constitutes the true strength of the nation. As to the protection of the negro in his personal rights, this is now secured him at the South as much as any poor man in the North."

A Stupid Phrase.

We find in our esteemed contemporary, the *Boston Herald*, some talk about "ceasing to patronize a newspaper," and also about "newspaper patronage."
It is a stupid phrase. We do not consider that anybody patronizes a newspaper when he buys it; or that the newspaper is under any obligations to any one who either purchases a copy or inserts an advertisement. If it is a wise and sound newspaper, the purchaser or the advertiser gets the full value of his money and the account is even between them.
The only situation in which the word patronage can be properly used in such a case, is where the newspaper is mean and worthless and the man pays for his copy or for his advertisement more than the thing is really worth. In that sort of circumstances there may be patronage in the base sense of the word—the sense in which the *Herald* employs it.
The idea of patronage contains in it something of servility. It has no place in the American republic. It ought to be repudiated and detested by every self-respecting newspaper and every self-respecting citizen.—*New York Sun.*
We subscribe to the doctrine laid down by the *Sun*. The man who takes our paper must do so on his own motion, and when it suits him to discontinue it, we consider that we have no right to know his reasons for so doing and never seek to know. It is our business to make the best newspaper we can for the money charged for it, and we expect no one to buy it on the ground of obliging us. It is a purely business affair wherein there is no recognized favoritism.

Political.

In view of the fact that the average Congressman is continually grumbling at the cost of conducting the affairs of the government, but, with characteristic inconsistency, he never fails to augment that expense without any compunction, save on occasions preceding election, it will not prove wholly uninteresting to note the amount paid for a single item—that of the government printing office for the past year. For the last fiscal year the expenses of the printing establishment were \$2,000,000. This seems a great deal of money to pay for the printing and binding of public documents. Of this amount the *Congressional Record* cost about \$130,000, and the arranging of a particularly worthless index to the bond volumes of the same has cost \$45,000. Each house of Congress orders "additional copies" of pretty much every work which the Government Printer has been instructed to furnish. This variety of Congressional literature known as "the picture-book" class is the most expensive to the Government. It is that which Congress orders with the greatest recklessness. Hence, the year's lithographing and engraving has cost \$340,000, and much of this sum has been spent in filling orders for additional copies. If the public documents distributed by Congressmen are worth anything to anybody, the recipients of this species of literature should pay the cost of production. If they are of small value, their expensive and gratuitous circulation should be stopped.—*Winston Republican.*

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The Dispatch we recently printed to the effect that the United States Supreme Court had decided the Florida railroad cases, affirming the validity of the bonds issued by the company and the subject of that litigation, is not void of interest to North Carolinians. The decision ends the controversy over the Florida railroad bonds, in which it was supposed that the Western North Carolina Railroad and the State of North Carolina were interested, and cuts us off from all hope of realizing anything from that source.—*News & Observer.*