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THE RAILROAD QUESTION.

We surrender much of our space to-day to communications. The resolutions of the Stokes county meeting are specially important to the people of Wilmington, and to the sections all along the line of the proposed road. We have several times directed attention to the necessity of completing as early a day the railroad from the Carolina Central to Fayetteville, and of extending the Western Railroad from the present terminus at the Gulf to Greensboro, and thence to Ore Knob by way of Walnut Cove and Mt. Airy.

The policy of our people in the past has been too much inclined to favor the towns and cities of other States to the exclusion of our own. If the trade that has gone to Richmond, Petersburg and Norfolk, on the North of us, and to Charleston, from the Southern counties, had been distributed among our large commercial towns, Wilmington to-day would have 40,000 inhabitants, and Morehead, Newbern and other places, could boast from three to ten times their present population.

OCEAN MAIL SERVICE.

Our correspondent, "DIRECT TRADE," whose communication is printed in this issue of the STAR, discusses a subject which may become of vital importance to Wilmington in the near future. As we understand the question there are two bills now before Congress providing for subsidies to ocean steamships carrying our mails. One proposes to subsidize lines only from New York and New Orleans; the other, more general in its character, proposes, as suggested by our correspondent, to give all seaport cities an equal chance.

The general bill, it seems to us, is the one in which the people of the South should interest themselves. Whether it prove a direct benefit to New Orleans, or Savannah, or Charleston, or Wilmington, or Norfolk, it appears to be more favorable to Southern interests than the bill which restricts the subsidy to New York and New Orleans. We cannot see how this latter bill can prove beneficial to Wilmington, or Charleston, or Savannah. It will no doubt add to the commercial importance of the two great cities named, and indirectly the country at large may be benefited in an infinitesimal degree. But why not support the measure that promises the greatest benefit to our own section?

When the STAR first referred to the question of primary elections it was careful to say that their merits should be discussed without reference to the claims or schemes of any man. It took the ground that the old system as conducted had proved to a great extent a failure, it would be perhaps judicious to try some other, and that the Virginia plan had worked well. As to Mr. Turner and any plans he might have to further his own personal ends, the STAR had nothing whatever to do. If the people of his county desired him to represent them, then their wishes should be paramount, but that the merits of the primary election system should not be involved in any way with his aspirations or manoeuvrings.

We refer to this now, because some of our exchanges appear to think that Mr. Turner is the author of the primary election plan, and that papers that advocate it are in some way involved with him in advancing his claims, or are deluded by his ambitious schemes. The system the STAR advocates is to elect delegates by ballot. In other words, that primary elections should be held in every township, to choose, say five or more, delegates to the county convention—that these delegates should be instructed, or otherwise, for whom to vote. At first we favored the plan adopted in Virginia last year of electing delegates who were committed to some particular candidate. But, upon reflection, we have modified our first view, and are willing to our advocacy of the primary plan to leave the matter entirely with the people of each township. They can instruct or not as they may think best.

We are glad to see that some of our best exchanges are not unfavorable to this plan. If the system is adopted generally it will work well, we feel satisfied. It will bring out a class of men who have stood aloof from conventions because they were indisposed to participate in scenes of contention and rivalry. They will attend a voting place, however, and quietly deposit their ballot. If our brethren doubt this, let them interview that class of intelligent men—substantial men, who have not been found among the managers of conventions heretofore, and ask them if they would not attend a township polling place and vote for delegates. We venture to say that five out of six of this class will readily assent to the question. We know gentlemen of decided intellectual cleverness and high moral worth who will not attend conventions, but who say that they would be glad of the opportunity of voting for delegates to represent their wishes.

A better class of men would generally be selected for offices if delegates were thus chosen. When all the intelligent men of a community become interested, as they would be, in the elections held to choose delegates, we may be sure that the delegates themselves will feel their responsibility and will vote for the best men, as a rule, whether they are instructed or not.

There is one encouraging feature in the news this morning. Germany and Austria will not sustain England if she goes to war without first going into the proposed Congress. Such a course would imperil all of the Austrian plans, and banish all hopes of an Anglo-Austrian alliance. Russia, in the meantime, is steadily preparing for the worst, and is constructing a railway so that she can throw her troops easily into southern Bulgaria and reach the Aegean sea. She proposes to read all of the treaty of peace between herself and Turkey to the Congress, but she reserves to herself the right to say what articles of the treaty shall be discussed. It is thought England will not yield. We believe she will, if the news about Germany and Austria's attitude, as given above, is trustworthy.

We learn from the Louisville Courier-Journal that Rev. Joseph J. Ridley, D. D., "a prominent Tennessee educator," died recently at Somerville. Dr. Ridley was born at Oxford, North Carolina, was a prominent minister of the Episcopal church, and was deeply pious and well educated. He was a brother of Judge Broomfield Ridley, of Tennessee, and, on his father's side, was a descendant of an English Lord. He was about 66 years of age. He married Miss Eliza S. Kingsbury, a sister of Gen. Charles P. Kingsbury, U. S. Army.

Pope Leo is represented as conservative in his policy. The statement that he is anxious for Italian unity, but demands ample assurances of the perfect freedom of the Holy See, confirms the representation. Cardinal Franohi says that the temporal power is not a dogma.

Our readers will remember the sensational dispatch we commented on at a time concerning one McCormick, a member agent of Secretary Schurz. He appeared at New Orleans with a wound through his cheek made by a ball, and reported that he had been shot at by an assassin in Alabama. We ventured to propose that the bloody-shirt flappers would endeavor to make capital out of it, by showing how lawless was the South, and so on. A few days ago it was announced that McCormick had been shot by a gentleman who had great provocation for so doing. This was, however, denied by both Secretary Schurz and the friends of McCormick. But, rascality cannot always keep veiled, nor can lying always triumph. McCormick is revealed in all his true colors as a base, insolent scoundrel, that caught only what he justly deserved.

Representative Herbert, of Alabama, has received letters from personal friends of his gentlemen of the highest character, who give a true account of the matter of the shooting. The letters received are independent of each other and written from different post offices. The Washington Post gives the facts as follows: "McCormick rode up to a Mrs. Snowden's residence, entered the house and asked for dinner. Mrs. Snowden, who is an old lady, very courteously informed him he could have his dinner if he would wait until it was prepared. McCormick began to comment offensively upon the Southern people and habits, and even gave specific directions about his dinner, at which the old lady became indignant and ordered him to leave, which he did after the discharge of considerable abusive language, and then rode to the residence of a son of Mrs. Snowden, but a short distance from the old lady's house, and there repeated his demand for dinner. Mrs. Snowden courteously consented to provide the meal and the ruffian McCormick entered the house. When inside he learned that Mr. Snowden was away from home and made indecent and insulting proposals to the lady. She turned and immediately upon hearing what had occurred he armed himself and started in pursuit of McCormick. The latter was overtaken at a stream and succeeded in making his escape by swimming across, but not until he had received a hurt leg wound in the cheek. McCormick, as soon as he was at a safe distance, sent the telegram stating that he had been slain. The letters further state that Mrs. Snowden was in a delicate condition at the time and the fright of the assault produced illness that may result fatally.

After reading the letters Mr. Herbert said: "I have been personally acquainted with the Snowdens for years and they are highly respectable people. This man, McCormick, has conducted himself in the most insolent and overbearing manner down in Alabama." Are we to accept McCormick as a specimen of the much vaunted civil service reform? The government appears to have a passion for scoundrels. That disreputable fellow, Jo Hester, so well known in this State, where he was born, seems to be a special favorite, of Mr. Hayes and his confidential advisers. Hester and McCormick are really twins born of the parturient Reform Administration.

It is now believed that there will be a compromise in the matter of army pay. The Banning bill will not be adopted save with an increase, whilst the old pay roll will be razed considerably. The General gets \$17,000. Banning's bill proposes \$10,000. It is thought it will be placed at \$12,000, and the pay of other officers in proportion. We are glad to see any reduction, and only regret that there is no prospect of cutting the Army down to about 10,000 men. Senator Spencer, carpet-bagger from Alabama, is Chairman of the Senate Military Committee. He is a "yellow citizen" of magnificent ideas, if not of "credit and renown." He wants the army increased to 40,000 men. Can't he be switched off the Senate track some way? He is anxious to prepare for the campaign of 1880, when the army will be large enough to distribute some 3,000 in each Southern State.

The exposures of the thieves in South Carolina continue. The Committee on Frauds has reported upon the frauds committed in 1878. The sum of \$80,000 was received by Moses, Cardozo and others in order to secure the passage of a bill through the Legislature to pay the claims of the South Carolina and Bank Company. By the time the committee completes its work perhaps the New York Sun will be willing to admit that the investigation is not "a sham."

Infidel Bob Ingersoll was charged by the Chicago Times with having refused to pay his board at some place at which he lectured. Bob comes to the front with a flat denial and pronounces it "an orthodox lie." He says in the Washington Post, with decided emphasis and point: "The truth is that a minister killing from Chicago, probably a correspondent of the Times, answered me in Providence and then ran away without paying his bill. The doing of such things is so common on a tour of peripatetic evangelists that my name is supposed to be substituted to make the story seem wonderful. I pay my own bills. I am not a believer, in a vicarious atonement."

The Board met in special session yesterday morning, present, John G. Wagner, Esq., Chairman, and Commissioners Sanders, Worth, Aikin, and Holmes. The Clerk of the Auditing Committee was instructed to correspond with Dr. Grissom, Superintendent of the Insane Asylum, with reference to the balance due by the State for keeping insane persons in the county. The following amounts having been received from the State Treasurer for keeping a part of the county insane up to the 31st of January, 1878, the same was ordered received by the Board, and spread on the minutes, and the clerk was instructed to turn over the State warrants for the said amounts to the County Treasurer, viz: Mag. Bradley, \$30.37; J. W. Moore, \$180.37; J. R. Fairson, \$30.97; Julia Moseley, \$80.37; Emily L. Smith, \$33.23; Mitchell Moore, \$55.38; Rhoda Lovett, \$55.38.

Petitions in regard to repairs on the County Poor House were referred to the Committee on Public Buildings, with power to act. Petitions from various citizens praying that the road from Rock Hill, Oakley and Jones Chapel, to the county main road be kept open, was referred for report to a committee consisting of the Chairman and Commissioner Sanders. The Board adjourned, subject to the call of the Chairman.

Recovery of the Body of an Unknown Drowned Man. The body of a drowned man was found floating in what is known as Hospital Cove, about three miles below this city, on Sunday afternoon last, by Mr. Thomas Clark, and at the instance of Coroner Hewlett, who was notified, the body was yesterday towed up to Barnet Mill dock, in the northern portion of the city, where an inquest was held on it yesterday afternoon. The body was that of an unknown man who had apparently been in the water some four or five months, as it was badly decomposed, very little flesh remaining on the bones. Mrs. Thomas Turney, whose husband is a well known bricklayer and plasterer of this city, has been, unaccountably absent for the past seven weeks, was present for the purpose of seeing if the remains were those of Turney. Upon examining the teeth, the only means of identification, she stated that she was convinced that the body was not that of her husband. The mutilated condition of the remains, and even of the clothing, rendered it impossible to say whether the body was that of a seaman or not. The jury rendered a verdict to the effect that the deceased was a person to them unknown, and that he came to his death from causes to them unknown.

The Public Roads. There has been a considerable stir in magisterial circles during the past week or two in reference to public roads in this county, or rather one or two particular roads in Cape Fear Township. A few days ago Murphy Ward, a well known colored man of Cape Fear Township, was bound over in the sum of \$50 for his appearance at Court for removing a footway erected at the instance of Mr. T. R. Williams, overseer of the road in question. Yesterday Mr. Williams was arraigned before Justice Harris on the charge of obstructing a public road in Cape Fear Township, leading to what is known as Jones Chapel, and he was required to give bond in the sum of \$50 for his appearance at the next term of the Criminal Court; while Edward Jones, colored, was arraigned before Justice Hall, on complaint of Mr. Williams, for cutting away a footway over Nessler's Creek, being the same allegation upon which Murphy Ward was bound over, and bond was required to enter into the same at Court.

Fire on Shipboard. The German barque Ceres, Capt. Doelner, which cleared from this port for London on Saturday last, with a cargo of 3,923 barrels of resin, made a narrow escape from being destroyed by fire on Sunday afternoon, while lying outside of the rip awaiting a favorable opportunity to go to sea. The fire broke out in the sails room, adjoining the cabin, and had attained considerable headway when discovered. The hatches were all immediately battened down, and at an opportune moment the steamer Passport came alongside, when a hose was made in the deck above the room in which the fire was raging, and the hose from the Passport's engine inserted therein, by which means the flames were soon subdued and the threatened danger past. The damage consisted principally in the burning of some ten or twelve bales of resin, but will not cause any detention of the vessel. The origin of the fire is unknown.

A Shrewd Rogue. Among the cases tried at the recent term of Columbus Superior Court was that of a colored individual by the name of Ed. Johnson, charged with stealing a hog from one of his female neighbors. It appeared in evidence that the woman, seeing upon suspicion, went to the house of Johnson, upon missing the hog, to see if she could discover any trace of it. Johnson, getting an inkling of the proposed visit, got together the feet, entrails, etc., of the hog, which he had just finished butchering, and placed them in the middle of his bed, covering them up nicely and putting his child on them, with instructions to grunt and play the sick when the woman should come in. The latter, however, was not so easily deceived, and was discovered the trick Johnson had attempted to play upon her, whereupon he was arrested for the robbery.

Mysterious Disappearance. Thomas Turney, a good bricklayer and plasterer, of low, chubby build, baldhead, fair complexion, blue eyes, and blind in his left eye, left his home in this city seven weeks ago, ostensibly to visit Maxwell's in Sampson county, since which time nothing has been heard from him, except a rumor that he had left the man he was at work with at the place mentioned. Any information as to his whereabouts will be thankfully received by his distressed wife, Mrs. Margaret C. Turney, Wilmington. State papers are requested to copy.

The Carolina Farmer. We are this week in receipt of the March number of the Carolina Farmer, an agricultural journal published in Wilmington, N. C., by Wm. H. Bernard. It is filled with timely suggestions to our farmers, and is a complete compendium of the practical experiments and experiences of some of our best and most successful planters, and should be a part of the household effects of every farmer who desires to improve his condition, add to his stock of agricultural lore, and turn to his advantage the knowledge of others. We improve ourselves chiefly by reading and a comparison of our ideas, and we are happy to see that our farmers are beginning to appreciate this fact. As a consequence, the old time prejudices against "book farming," as it is sometimes sneeringly called, are rapidly losing ground, and those who will fully shut their eyes to the progressive improvements in agricultural matters, and cling to their old fogy manners and customs, are being lost sight of and left far behind in the race of life. To those wishing to keep well abreast of the times we can cheerfully recommend the Carolina Farmer as one of the best agricultural journals extant. Subscription \$1 per year or \$1 for six months.

A Tribute to Gen. Branch. In the seventeenth book of the Iliad—"Popes"—is a tribute by Atides to Patroclus, after he was slain by Hector, before the walls of Troy: "Oh guard these relics, to your charge assigned, How shall the merits of the dead in mind! How skilled he was in each obliging art; The midst man's fare and the gentlest heart; He was, as I but fate decreed his end; In death a hero, as in life a friend."

On the margin of the copy which we have, and opposite to these lines is written Gen. Branch. This copy of the poem belonged to Col. Wm. J. Hoke, of Lincoln, and the handwriting on the margin is "H. H." Both the men sacrificed their lives on the Confederate cause. Gen. Branch was killed on the field, and Colonel Hoke died after the war from wounds received in battle. This marginal note is a silent tribute from one gallant soldier to his noble comrade in arms.

Why let your Baby suffer, and perhaps die, when a bottle of Dr. Bull's Baby Syrup would once relieve it and effect a cure. Price 25 cents.

The U. S. Government received, in 1877, in revenue on tobacco in the United States, \$868,583.41. Think of that when you say there are no heavy taxes.

Gov. Vance's mother is better.

FOR THE STAR.

Col. Edward Cantwell, Wilmington, N. C., March 18. Editor Star: A convention of exporters, and others interested in the foreign trade of the United States, was recently held at Washington City, and they adopted a Memorial to Congress, and a Bill which I am requested to call to your attention. The bill proposes to encourage the establishment of lines of steamers from all the Atlantic ports, or any one of them, by authorizing the Postmaster General to contract with any responsible American citizen, for carrying the mails of the United States between any such port and foreign countries. The memorial proposes to authorize the Postmaster General to make such contracts. Copies of the memorial and bill are now being circulated in the city and through the County for general endorsement. Will a gentleman, who is interested in the material interests of the whole Atlantic coast, the restoration of American commerce, and the prosperity and greatness of the port of Wilmington. The Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, of which our distinguished Representative, Hon. A. M. Waddell, is Chairman, have already endorsed the plan of subsidizing lines of American steamers by offering mileage compensation for the carriage of the mails from New York and New Orleans to Brazil, which ensures their speedy passage to the Cape of Good Hope; such facilities will give an immense impetus to the commerce of those cities. The empire of Brazil contains a population of thirty or forty millions of people, and has a commerce of two hundred million dollars worth of foreign products and fabrics, all of which are grown or can be produced in the United States, more than a third of them being most cheaply brought in the Mississippi Valley, in striking reach and distance of our Central Railroad, and which ought to be purchased there and shipped thence by Wilmington. The total annual exports of the United States to Brazil are about eight million dollars. The rest of the trade of that magnificent country goes to France, Germany and England. No wonder American commerce languishes, and our flag is superiorly and likely to recede south of our ports by foreigners.

It is gratifying to see our State represented in Congress by gentlemen of large and liberal views of national interest, and the passage of the bill recommended by Col. Waddell will contribute largely to the wealth and development of the commercial and manufacturing interests of the West and North. The present affords us of Wilmington such a State a splendid opportunity not likely to recur soon of advancing our special interests. The plan recommended and approved by the Exporters Convention, if adopted by Congress, I am advised, lead to the early establishment of a line of steamers between Wilmington and Havana, similar to that which some may recollect to have yielded such profits to one or two houses in Charleston before the war. Now the Havana steamer line has failed at New York. Before the war Savannah and Charleston had lines which were immensely profitable. The New York line is too long for profitable carriage by sea. The Southern route is shorter, and less expensive, and the Wilmington route has advantages no other can offer. The steamers are ready, and we want only an intelligent and resolute forecast connected with the river, bar, and western railroad communications, all entering at this point, and a fair opportunity of competing with New York for the West India trade, which once bestowed here, and can be regained, to make the sacrifices and trials of the past twenty years for nothing. It is a grand opportunity, available for creating here within ten years a city worthy of the name and an honor to our State.

Very respectfully, EDWARD CANTWELL.

Uncle Remus on Education. "As Uncle Remus came up White-bell street yesterday he met a little colored boy carrying a slate and a number of books. Some words passed between them, but their exact purport will never be known. They were unpleasant, for the attention of a wandering policeman was called to the matter by hearing the old man bawl out: "Don't you come foolin' longer in nigger. Youer flippin' yo' sass at de wrong color. You'n go rou'n' here an' sass dese white people, an' maybe dey'll stan' it, but wen you come a slingin' yo' jaw at a man 'at wuz gray 'en de fahmin' days gin out, yo' better go and git yo' hide greazed."

Charlotte Observer: It is said that Geo. Petzel, who is now in Salisbury jail, charged with poisoning his wife, about four miles from Mooreville, Ireddell county, is only about nineteen years of age and had been married about two years. He is represented as being a very handsome young man, with a fine, frank, open countenance. The case will come up, as already stated, in the April term of Rowan court. There is a large number in the State having names so nearly alike that the public frequently confound them. The following are the proper names of each: Weston; Main agents and conductors in Henry; North Western; East; South; from Greensboro to Salem; Western Railroad of North Carolina, from Fayetteville to Sanford. The Purim Ball, to be given by the Purim Society at the old meeting house, will be an elegant affair. Many of the gentlemen will appear in fancy costumes and masks. The costumes have nearly all been ordered from the North and will be the handsomest kind. Main agents and conductors in uniform need not pay anything for their tickets unless they want to. They are taken for policemen and are asked to "walk right in this way." The most remarkable occurrence of the year has taken place at a wood wagon to a yard just from the procession and unloaded his wood without ever looking towards the show, and he was not blind either.

Reidville Times: Never knew before that a hog's foreleg had holes in them when the devil is supposed to have entered them, and they now seem to me a long way off—there was prominent in the councils of this nation one who never doubted his own opinion after it had been formed, and the witty Senator from Nevada, now unhappily in his grave—the late James Nye—who was the delight of all circles, said that that gentleman never entertained but one doubt, which was whether he had created the Almighty or been himself created. Now, I do not ascribe so impious a doubt to the gentleman; but any one who knows his character and will carefully read the speech on which I have commented, will see that he lives as I have suspected for years that he did live, in the comforting conclusion that "foreknowledge absolute is his;" that in the embryo he was endowed with omniscience and infallibility, and released from the duty laid on other mortals of collecting, collating, and comparing facts in order to arrive at a just conclusion.

Mr. Williams F. Windsor was in Reidville last Saturday apparently in the usual line of duty. After getting home in the evening he went to the spring, and an old man himself, seeing an old woman lifting a heavy pall of water, he told her it was too heavy for her, and he held her up and helped her out her head, he fell back dead. He was an honest, good man, aged about sixty and lived near Lawsonville.

Salisbury Watchman: The people of Union (Lutheran) Church are about completing their new church building. It is about 49x70 feet, with a gallery in the end, and a handsome brick building. Mr. S. M. Withers, near Mill Bridge, has discovered a gold mine on his premises.

Charlotte Observer: Travel is lighter than it has been for a long time. We suppose that the originator of the world-famed Washington pie lives in our midst. It is a fact and Mr. J. B. Franklin, the author of the Washington pie, was in the Trade street, near Mill Bridge, on Saturday. He is a native of the State, and is now residing at Cowan's Ford, on the Catawba river, in this county, on the charge of violating the act against the sale of wine, beer, or whisky. He is in the city on Friday. He showed some unusually fine nuggets of native gold, one of which weighed nearly half an ounce.

Spirits Turpentine.

Dephain's Compound Brown- ing, who lives a few miles west of this place, ranges in the hills, very successful in raising fine turkeys. One of a few weeks he sold a lot of turkeys in the market at \$80 per hundred, and another lot at \$40.

Oxford Free Lance: On Tuesday last the Rev. J. B. Hartzell received a telegram announcing the serious illness of his wife, in Raleigh. On the evening of Mr. J. B. Hartzell, who resides about twelve miles from Oxford, was consumed by fire the past week.

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