

# WEEKLY POSSE

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## ORIGINAL

### SKETCHES OF NORTH CAROLINA.

No. 1.—NEW-BERNE.

*Melius est petere fontes quam sentire rivulos.*

BARON DE GRAFFENREID, the founder of New-Berne, was born in Berne, a city of Switzerland, whence the name of New-Berne; and we pray you whenever you have occasion to write the name of this goodly village, to stick to its nomenclature, for "it is a fair village, of the old block," and as we shall see in the sequel it bespeaks its origin when written in bold relief—New-Berne. So lend us your arm, gentle reader, and let us accompany Alexandre Dumars to the city of Berne in Switzerland, and visit our progenitors, and read our history and origin in the eyes of the quiet inhabitants of that goodly city. It is a warm but pleasant day, and our fellow-traveller enters the ancient city of Berne with the complacent feeling which we bespeak from you as we journey on. Berne the stately, Berne the sad, Berne the aged, seemed today to have arrayed herself in festal robes and jewels. She had strewn her women in her streets as a beale scatters roses over her ball dress. Her sombre and vaulted arcades jutting over the ground floor of her houses, were animated by the crowd that passed gaily along, rejoicing with its gay colors, the demi-tint of gray stone; and here and there, rendering still more apparent, the liveliness of the stately shades that intersected each other in every direction, were groups of young men, with small leather caps, flowing hair collars turned back, and blue surtouts plaited on the hips. German students were these, who, at a short distance off, you might have imagined belonged to the university of Leipzig or Jena. They stood about, talking with immoveable countenances, or walked soberly along, two by two, with pipes in their mouths, and wearing tobacco pouches ornamented with a federal cross. At seeing all this we cried Bravo! from the windows, and clapped our hands, as we might have done in the theater when the rising *exodus* discovered so advantageously concerted scene; then lighting our cigars in token of brotherhood we saluted forth and accosted two of these young men by enquiring the way to the Cathedral. Instead of pointing out the direction with the finger, as a busy Parisian would have done, but hardy adventurers are said to have first put their feet upon American soil, near the spot where the store of Mr. John Brissington, lately stood on Craven st. After proceeding about a hundred steps, he stopped before one of those complicated clocks, to the decoration of which, a mechanie of the fifteenth century would sometimes consecrate his whole life. Our guide smiled, and said, "If you will wait a moment, you will hear the clock strike." As he spoke, a cock that surrounded the little steeple, flapped his wings, and crowed three times. Immediately, figures of the four Evangelists, issued one by one, from a niche, and each struck a bell with the hammer he held in his hand. Finally, while the hour was striking, and simultaneously with the sound of the first stroke, a small door beneath the steeple opened, and a strange procession began to appear, moving in a semicircle around the base of the monument, retiring by an opposite door, that stood on them, just as the striking of the hour terminated. We had already been much struck by the veneration which the Bernese seemed to evince for Bears. While entering the city the previous evening, by the gate Fribourg, we observed that the portal was guarded by the colossal statues of two of these animals. During the short walk we had taken this morning, we passed on our left, a fountain, surmounted by a Bear, arrayed in the armour of a knight, holding a battle-axe in his paw, and at his feet a cub, habited like a page, standing on his hind feet, and eating a bunch of grapes. We had also seen on the sculptured pediment of a monument, in the Place des Greniers, two bears supporting the shield of the town, like two unicorns upholding a feudal blazon; moreover, one of them was pouring from a cornucopia, the treasures of commerce, amid a group of maidens; while the other was graciously extending a paw in token of alliance, to a warrior dressed like a Roman of the time of Louis XV. And now we had just seen a procession of bears, some playing on all kinds of musical instruments, and others gravely marching to the music, with carabiniers at a shoulder, emerge from and enter the bowls of a clock! Deeming the cause sufficient, we here gave vent to an irresistible burst of laughter. Our guides accustomed to the sight, laughed to see us laugh, and far from being offended, seemed delighted with our good spirits. We enquired why these animals—not hitherto regarded as models of grace or politeness—were variously multiplied in Berne; and whether the citizens had any motive for admiring them beyond the quality of their hair and their meat? They answered that Bears were the patrons of Berne. I then recollect that there was St. Urs' in the Swiss calendar; but I had always supposed him to belong to the biped species, although his name might warrant a different conclusion; and I suggested to our guide, in a civil way, that St. Urs was the patron of Solome and not of Berne. He replied that owing to his little acquaintance with the French language, he had called Bears the patrons instead of the sponsores of the city; and to the latter title they had an uncontested right, as they had given the city its name. He proceeded to state how this event took place. The city of Berne was founded in the year 1191, by Berthold V. Duke of Toeringen. When it was built, surrounded by walls, and enclosed by gates, he busied himself to find a name for it, with the same solicitude, as a mother seeks a name for her first-born. As, however, he was unable to decide this important matter without assistance, he invited all the nobility of the environs to a grand dinner, at which the question was gravely discussed. The feast lasted three days—but at the expiration of the time nothing had been concluded on. One of the guests then proposed, that on the morrow, they should have a grand hunt in the neighboring mountains, and the name of the first animal slain, should be bestowed upon the city. The proposal was approved, and at break of day the whole company set forward on the expedition. After an hour's chase,

a shout of victory was heard; the huntsmen rushed to the spot, and learned that one of the Duke's archers had brought down a stag. Berthold was much disappointed that the skill of his servitor should have been wasted on so ignoble a beast; and vowed that he would never give to his good and well fortified town, the name of an animal noted for its cowardice. The chase was therefore renewed, and towards night the hunters encountered a Bear. He thanked heaven it was a creature that could not compromise the honor of man or city; he was therefore destroyed without mercy, and the new capital was baptized in his blood. To this day a stone erected about a quarter of a league from Berne, confirms the authority of this tradition, the following inscription in old German:—"Erst Bair, Fuer Fan"—that is, "Here the first Bear was slain."

In the year 1708 six thousand Palatines who had been persecuted by their prince, mainly on account of their adherence to Protestantism, and whose country had been plundered by French army which had crossed the Rhine for that purpose, from the continent, and sought refuge and protection in England, under Queen Ann. Louis Mitchell had been previously employed by the Canton of Berne, in Switzerland, to select a location or tract of land in this country, to which they might send a colony; he directed his researches mainly to the country which now constitutes the present State of Pennsylvania, and as many of the German descendants who originally settled the town of New-Berne, subsequently removed to that State, there can be but little doubt, that they may have found among the Germans there, some most interesting relics and reminiscences of the early settlement of this section of the State. It was determined to send the Palatine refugees to America, as their necessities compelled them to live in tents far from the city of London. The Lords Proprietors of Carolina, therefore, agreed with Christopher de Graffenreid and Louis Mitchell, that ten thousand acres of land should be allotted to them, in a body, between the Neuse and Cape Fear rivers, and Mitchell and de Graffenreid agreed to bring over six hundred and fifty persons, or one hundred families of them, for a stipulated sum, and settle them in the province of Carolina. In the month of December, A. D. 1709, they arrived, and landed at the confluence of Neuse and Trent rivers. There is a reminiscence, but a faint one, of this memorable event. These persecuted, but hardy adventurers are said to have first put their feet upon American soil, near the spot where the store of Mr. John Brissington, lately stood on Craven st. A small ranch ran through the lots, now the property of the Merchants Bank of New Berne, and Mr. James Riggs, and entered the Trent river, near the spot designated above, and at its mouth was the *longue* then used by the little colony; between this branch and a cypress gut or pond which made up into land, at the foot of Broad street, covering the lots to the south, rose a bluff of ground, which was then well known as the famous Council Bluff of the Indians; and to a citizen of New-Berne, he feels a just pride in the early history of the town, the contemplation of the ruin and destruction by the late fire of the magnificent Live Oak tree, which crowned the summit of this bluff, and beneath whose umbreous foliage many a grave at a fearful council was held by the Indians, must bring with it feelings of disconsolate sadness. It was an ancient times the great landmark of the colony this tree was planted too by the Indians, and it stood in lone and silent majesty, but hardly any record of it is to be found, throughout the length and breadth of the whole town, and that is a long process, which has sprung from the root of its ancestors, near the foot of Broad street. We utter fit the prayer—Woodman spare that *cypress*—Upon this eligible site, at the junction of the Neuse and Trent rivers, De Graffenreid and Mitchell landed the Palatines, six hundred and fifty in number, and founded our town, which in honor of the ancient city of Berne, his birth-place, he called New-Berne. The inhabitants of the ancient city of Europe, were called Old Bears, whilst the good citizens of its newborn American daughter, we designated as the *New or Young Cubs*. We rather opine it will sound strangely in the "epitope" of the polished inhabitants of this modern town, to find out that their *designatio* is *Young Cubs*, and not modern *Athleans*. *Mus est petere fontes*. Well, Bears are not such bad and uncouth animals as one would suppose, since we have found out that they too, are our spurs; like Duke Berthold, we begin to have an affection for them. We don't mean one of your rough, spilsh Brie's creek, or "Fossum Neck" bears, but tame good natured bear, such as the Bernese had a liking for.

And here is your young cub, too, Mr. Editor, "The Nuberman." Fray, where did you get that name! I have any subscribers in Berne in Switzerland, they will not laugh at your name, but as they'll it they will smoke and whiff and puff with reddest energy and gravity. It is all wrong—we do speak *ex cathedra*, or as one accustomed to *rogue* or *authority*; but if we divine your meaning in the adoption of the name, it should be the New-Bernese. The old bears will all you so, and if it ever fails to your happy lot, fix your eyes upon the fair form and countenance of a lovely Bernese, she will make you feel that is so. Why should we not have a Bear moment as they have in the city of our sires. *Ji* to think of a colossal monument at the foot of Craven street, where the Palatines landed, and in commemoration of that great event, a huge Br rampart, sucking one of his paws.

The last that goes to the tavern first for the love of company, will at last go there for the love of liquor. Remember that, young man.

Evil spirits exist, and dwell in evil men. They desire in them, urge to action, and both plot and contrive all the means to the commission of evil.

Why are military officers all literary?—Because they are so fond of review.

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