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VOL. IV. CHARLOTTE, N. C., FRIDAY JUNE 10, 1892. NO. 182

## TWO WONDERS.

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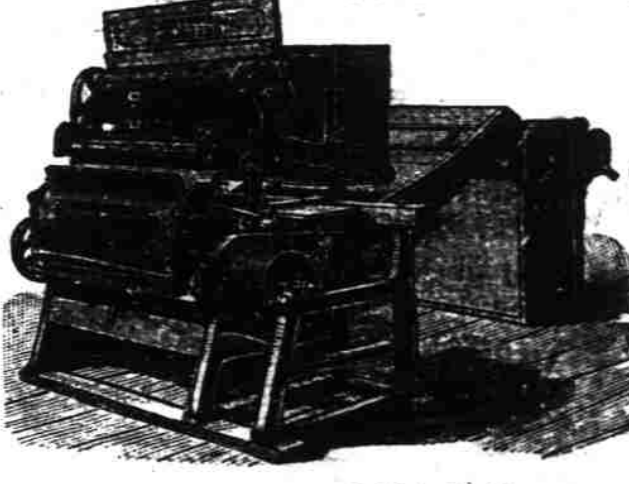
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### GOOD ROADS.

Being a Part of an Address Delivered at the Southern Inter-State Exposition, 1891, by Col. Wharton J. Green, of Fayetteville, N. C.

I deem myself favored by the Committee in the assignment of text today, however poorly the task of handling it may be discharged. Favored because it is a subject in which I am and have long been deeply interested, and all should be who appreciate community progress and material development. The dual branch of the subject is, to my thinking, correlative, if not synonymous, so intimately blended are they. Of a surety, one is a sequence of the other. Good roads good farming, good farming good roads. The shipshod follows with as unerring certainty. No other old-time saw than "like begets like." Tidiness is not only taking, it is catching; and so likewise the present as regards the last, and so the objective that fits the road is apt to fit the farm contiguous. The general traveler is prone to see in the one index of the other, and any observation of this and other lands conforms to that conclusion. A late writer has said that the art of road making is a lost art and it died with the Roman Empire. Certain it is that no other people have ever carried it to such a state of perfection. The nineteenth century is prone to give itself airs over Stephenson's new fangled road, consisting simply of two parallel iron steel rails, which now permeates the remotest parts of the civilized globe, and which, under the conjoint influence of fire, wood and water, gives rate of speed ten times greater than as ever thought of before. Undoubtedly it is a marvellous development; but all things considered, it may be doubted whether it is as much as was the great integral system of military roads whose initial point was the seven-hilled city on the Tiber, and which came into being some score centuries bygone, the product of the hand of man that ever built roads or led men, ever excepting the "Anglo-Saxon," kindred races the two in essential and manly regards. Yes, of all road builders, the men Rome takes undisputed precedence. These made the roads and the roads made Rome, Imperial, and with unspared sway. Wherever a Roman

legion went, and wherein, in the then known world, did they not go, they left a royal highway behind them. Over hills and rivers and mountains and desert and morass, those invincible soldiers became willing road workers (or to be more exact overseers of roads), with the sole end in view of Rome's supremacy. And so it resulted, for inexorable nature confirmed the edict by the road builders fulfilled.

And what roads they were to be sure! Not mud and slush and brash and corduroy, such as some of us recall when running after the Yankees in the sixties, or as was occasionally the case, there was a right-about S, the running was reversed. No, their were roads even in the remotest parts, from the pillars Hercules to "farthest Ind," that would reflect credit on the purloins of modern capitals, solid, substantial, enduring, and oft wide enough for a phalanx to march abreast.

Perhaps the wonder may grow the less when it is taken into account that their limitless slaves, captives and convicts performed the manual part, and these stern task-masters the head or directing simply. This great integral system of unparalleled roadways was not only a most potential factor in the subjugation of other states and holding them in subjection by rapid marching troops; but it played a far more amiable and beneficent part in the feeding of the great central head. The victualling of great armies has ever been one of the most trying problems with which their commanders have had to deal. The provisioning of overgrown villages like New York, Philadelphia and Chicago, even with their endless miles of railroad and steam water communication, causes all who give the subject thought to stand in mute bewilderment. How, then, in the name of all that is marvellous, could a city situated on a little creek, dubbed river by courtesy, doubling the conjoint populations of all three of these, be kept alive a single year or a single month, some twenty centuries before the birth of James Watt and Fulton and Stephenson? Without her roads she never could have reached half her mammoth size; or if she had, would have died of inanition or starvation long before effeminacy set in and the Goth and Vandal put

in an appearance. There's my panegyric upon the efficacy of roads and roads of the right sort. There was the people and there, everywhere, their magic highways. They had the best, the very best.

Now you shall hear which of the great, governing enlightened people of the nineteenth century has the worst, the very worst. Don't fret or fume for being told that it's the great Western branch of the greatest of all races—"The Anglo Saxon" (modesty forbids the addition "American.") In railroads and inland steamboats, printing presses and baby carriages, big taverns and big brogarts, and a few other of the elements of material development and stupendosity, we can easily distance the combined world. But oh, how wofully behind are we on "the King's Highway." The excuse for being laggard here is at first blush plausible, viz: immensity of national domain, newness of national existence, and consequent sparseness of population. This, of course, extenuates the non-construction so far of a network of Appian ways to supersede our mud cut, gully-washed, hog-wallow, rickety-bridged cow-paths. But it does not justify us in longer toleration of those last in many, very many localities. Aboriginal inertness or terrapin progress will do for aborigines. It doesn't suit the genius of the age. Let it be added as stimulant and for our encouragement, that only about a century ago "the King's highways," in the King's own country (she that we are proud to call mother), and which are to-day the best in the world, were then in as woful a plight as our's are to-day. Think of the mail coach and six, requiring six days in winter to make the round trip from Edinburg to Glasgow, only forty-four miles apart. To-day I dare say that it could be done by like conveyance in as many hours. And here is where the cheapening effect of good roads come in. Observe speed, on emergency, ten times greater than on the eighteenth century road, not railroad in either case; double or treble the traction capacity of a team; thus enabling one horse or mule to do the work of two, and with more ease and comfort to the poor brute; add wear and tear to the turnout, and increased comfort to the driver or passenger, and without adding other incentives, methinks that the economist and the philanthropist will concur in the propriety of stage or wagon-road improvement.

Doubtless the wonderful change for the better in English roads is mainly due to Telford, Rennie and Macadam, brainy engineers each, all of whom gave the subject the attention it deserved, and that imports their undivided and entire attention. To Americans that brawny old Scotchman, Macadam, is best known of them all, and perhaps, deservedly so, as his system has been more generally adopted on this side of the Atlantic than any other. Let us hope the day will soon come that wherever granite grows old Moe's road will follow.

It is astonishing by what humble agencies the grandest results are oft achieved. Certainly no country, since the "Dark Age" eclipse, has produced such a galaxy of transcendent intellectual giants in every department of mental measurement as has our oradle land. Philosophy, theology, poetry, politics, eloquence, patriotic heroism, and last, and perhaps, the least, the throat cutting faculty on the wholesale scale, have each and all produced undoubted Titans. And yet were I called upon off hand to name her greatest benefactors; I much incline to think that four men, whose very names have almost passed into oblivion outside of the scientific world, would be the greatest that would first follow the martyr patriot, John Hampden. Here they are: Jenner, Watt, Macadam, Postgate. Let us hope that none are beyond recall. Posterity is under bonds to each which posterity can never cancel. Fame or fortune was foreign to the five, or at least, as primary inspiration or aspiration. The old Scotch road builder has not been forgotten in the estimate of merit. His countryman Watt, congener on a kindred line of thought—locomotion—called into being a subtle and submissive agent to do man's bidding, known as steam, more potential, more beneficent, more far-reaching than the monsters worked in fancy by the Arab gamin, Alladdin, or the German delver, Faust. Two country doctors the others, one of whom, Dr. Jenner, slew the dragon "Small Pox," a thousand millions of times more terrible than that by the good St. George overthrown. The other, Dr. Postgate, slew a kindred monster by man's cupidly engendered, known as Food

Adulteration. The Buckingham Squire Hampden needs no comment.

But to return from pardonable digression. It is admitted by all judicious and fair-minded men that something must be done in the way of road improvement to place us on the plane of progress now reached by enlightened European nations. Up to this time we have been content with the old-fashioned "road-working" of our grandfathers, which competent critics, by common consent, denounce as the most extravagant, useless, inoperative system looking to the end that could well be devised. First, as to extravagance. Without specific data, it is nevertheless safe to assume that the adult male population of our State, coming within the militia or road working age, is in the neighborhood of two hundred thousand. Assuming further that this large army of bread-winners are employed in this public service five days in the year, and that their labor, in ordinary avocations, is intrinsically worth one dollar a day, not to speak of loss by being called off at critical seasons of the crop year, and we have a grand total as road-tax of one million of dollars per annum, a sum largely in excess of all of our other State taxes combined, and about one-twelfth of our quota to the Federal government under a kindred system of senseless robbery collection and lavish appropriation. What are the results accruing? About the same as under the old militia plan for making men proficient in the "school of the soldier" by an hour's farical drill with corn-stalks in the course of a year. A kindred parade of earnest, brawny men, bent on work but with no set purpose in view, and but rarely a competent directing head. Sum total *nil, nil, nothing*, or next thing to it, a few abnormal ruts or hog-wallows filled with pipe-top and loose sand, and a ditch or gully bridged with fence rails, the whole liable to be washed out again the first returning shower. "Is the game worth the candle?" Abolish the present absolute road working law, or we will never have roads. Some may say it's better than nothing. I say nay, for as long as it continues we will have this "Thus much and nothing more."

If you ask for a substitute my reply is the penitentiary. Work the convicts on our county roads, inasmuch as there will soon be no more railroads to give them employment, and they can be better utilized in that field than any other, and not be brought in conflict or competition with honest and legitimate labor. Let them be employed under competent direction and upon a general plan adopted by prize or under-experts, with modifications adapted to different locations, and "the institution" can by such a well digested plan be made self-sustaining, the people relieved of most of this oppressive and idiotic road tax, and their material development enhanced as by no other suggestible process. Two or three well constructed roads running through each county, with well selected terminals and an eye to interlapping or continuous connection with those of contiguous counties, would do more for individual, municipal and commonwealth development than would a double cotton crop or a fat gold or silver mine in each Congressional district. This is not fanfaronade. They are the words of soberness and truth. The whole system proposed should be placed under the supervision of a thoroughly competent or efficient engineer, with salary attached to the office sufficient to command the services of such. Such an one, in a word, as England found when she gave her national job to old John McAdam.

Apropos! a brief synopsis of his general outline will not be out of place in this connection. Of course in its entirety it is practicable only in rocky localities: "For the foundation of a road it is not necessary to lay a substratum of large stones, pavement, &c., as it is a matter of indifference whether the substratum be hard or soft; and if any preference is due it is to the latter. The metal for the roads must consist of broken stones (granite, flint or whinstone is by far the best); these must in no cases exceed six ounces in weight, and stones from one to two ounces are to be preferred. The large stones in the road are to be loosened to the side, where they are to be broken into pieces of the regulation weight; and the road is then to be smoothed with a rake, so that the earth may settle down into the holes from which the large stones are removed. The broken metal is then to be carefully spread over it; and as this operation is of great importance to the future quality of the road, the metal is not to be laid on in shovelfuls to the requisite depth, but to be

scattered in shovelful after shovelful, till a depth of from six to ten inches, according to the quality of the road, has been obtained. The road is to have a fall from the middle to the sides of about one foot in sixty, and ditches are to be dug on the field-side of the fences to a depth of a few inches below the level of the road." See how very precise the old fellow was.

But there are sections in our State, notably the seaboard, where these essentials are wanting. What then? The plank-road long since proved an expensive failure; asphalt, or other artificial material used for paving cities is too expensive to be thought of on extended country lines; and hence the problem looks unsovable at first glance, if we look for roads after the Macadam pattern or of kindred excellence. But we live in an age when man's ingenuity is usually adequate to man's necessities. My reliance is on that subtle, wonder-working science called Chemistry, operating upon the three most abundant components of the material universe as bases, viz., clay, sand and water, to find a combination of ingredients which will turn out at smallest cost the requisite material for successful road building. And what a field of competition for inventors! The man who can produce the requisite substitute and enter the field of competition against Dame Nature in more favored localities for road building, has an almost assured fortune that will rival that of the nabobs of the earth. You have the basis materials, gentlemen, as they occur to me. Combine these with others of nature's products—naphtha, stone, oil, or what you will—to turn out requisite products and prediction is reality, whether it gives the world the plain, simple road of Macadam, or the more elaborate recondite one of Telford Mother's title. A better than either if better be, will better do. In absence of that better, either of the others will do. Some of the most essential ingredients are given; supply the others, ye delvers of the unknown, and rival Alladdin or Monte Christo in splendor and display.

Our age has evolved a wizard who far transcends in accomplishment what Friar Bacon did in vulgar fancy, who "Weaves his garland of the lightning's wing," and enables man to talk to his fellow man across a continent, or to bottle up his thoughts in embodied words so that future generations may hear them as they fall to his fellows by word of mouth. These are but a tithe of his marvels. But let him come down from the clouds and light on earth and furnish a substitute at normal cost for one of its most essential road-making components, even rock, the eternal rock, and his previous miracles are eclipsed in utility to his terrestrial brothers. The conversion of black carbon into its concentrated, crystallized purity, known as diamond, has been the dream of ages and of sages. When practically discovered, if ever, the diamond's value will have ceased to be. The problem submitted is no dream, no child of idle fancy, and when solved will be worth a thousand or ten thousand "Koh-i noors" for man's good and for practical utility. Until it is, let engineering skill make most of the crude, natural materials at hand in quarters where rock does not exist. Out of these they can make better roads than now exist.

### Congressional Convention Called for Lumberton, August 10.

The members of the executive committee of the sixth congressional district met at the Hotel Richmond at Rockingham Tuesday at 1 o'clock and decided upon Lumberton as the place and August 10th as the time for the congressional convention. There was a tie vote between Lumberton and Rockingham for the place of meeting, but decided in favor of Lumberton on the second ballot as that place had not had the convention in ten years. Lumberton has two good hotels and a fish fry will be on the bill of fare August 10th.

### Mississippi Floods.

NEW ORLEANS, JUNE 3.—The levee in front of the Bell Chase plantation on the right bank, fifteen miles below the city, caved in early this morning and in a few minutes a crevasse fifty-four feet wide and six feet deep was raging. The break will cause a great loss to many planters on the lower coast.

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### MR. DIXON HELD TO ANSWER.

#### What He Says with Respect to the Charge Against Him.

The Rev. Thos. Dixon, Jr., formerly of North Carolina and now of New York, seems to have become involved in a law suit there upon a charge of libel. A special from New York states that he was held in \$1,000 bail in the Jefferson Market Court on a charge of criminal libel preferred by Excise Commissioner Joseph Koch, who claims that the reverend gentleman libelled him criminally in one of his recent sensational sermons.

Speaking of the action taken against him by Commissioner Koch, the Rev. Mr. Dixon is quoted as saying: "I have set out on a twenty five years' fight against Tammany Hall. I do not mind this affair. I was a lawyer before I was a minister, and I know the law of libel. I wrote the prelude to my last Sunday's sermon two weeks or more ago. At that time, I believe, the indictment against Koch had not been dismissed. But, at any rate, I meant that he stood indicted in the public mind, and I stand by it."

I never printed the 'Talk' in a 'pamphlet or circular.' It was sent out by a news agency, as all of my sermons are. Why, this man Koch was drunk at his own trial and rolled on the floor.

### Griffith's Items.

For the Mecklenburg Times.  
Miss Fannie Yarborough returned home last Friday from a visit to friends and relatives in Charlotte.  
Miss Katie Kirkpatrick spent last Friday and Saturday with Miss Minnie Yarborough.  
We are glad to learn that Mrs. J. C. Brown of Sharon, who has been very sick, is fast improving.  
We have just learned that L. H. Robinson, who has been quite sick with pneumonia is a little better.  
The Rev. G. R. White will preach at his church (Ebenezer) next Sabbath at Bank's chapel at 3 o'clock.  
Misses Anna Porter and Minnie Bingham of Hebron are visiting Mrs. J. Hugh Griffith this week.  
The Rev. J. C. Boyd will preach at Steel Creek A. R. P. Church next Sabbath.  
Mrs. Isaac Weaver of Shopton is visiting relatives here this week.  
Itch on human and horses and all animals cured in 30 minutes by Woolord's Sanitary Lotion. This never fails. Sold by Burwell & Dunn.