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WHOLE No 11766

THE COAST EXCURSION.

A Successful Run—Illustrations By Contrast—A Delightful Season—Points of Interest—The Big Guns.

The annual excursion from Forest Hill contemplating, as it does, a much needed outing from steady application to daily labors for the year, came off on Friday and Saturday, the 5th and 6th. This year a trip to the coasts of our State was provided under the auspices of the Ladies' Aid Society of Forest Hill M E Church and under the direct supervision of Mr. W R O'lell.

All the legitimate wants of the inner man were provided for under the management of Messrs. Robbins and Ritz.

Schedule time found the jolly group, not uncomfortably crowded, whirling towards the aqueous borders of the proud Old North State.

As we sped along some new face would be met. Commodore Schley was not visible but Sly old John Barleycorn put in his appearance. It was not his very worst face at all, but he just enriched the occasion by certain addenda to what is generally desired in a first class excursion. For instance, for a few to be drunk shows by contrast the admirableness of sobriety; a few first class fools makes the crowns of wisdom sparkle the more brightly; the "class" words that "Old John" makes roll with the trucks of the train augments the gracefulness of Sunday School language; a few obstreperous incorrigibles make you look around and see how many are acting so nicely as if to be bending their efforts to make life sweet and joyous to the rest; a few pistols about remind the brave who forgot to arm themselves in these war times that should the Spaniards be met, shooting irons could be borrowed for the defense of the women and children of the group. In short a display of the tail end of civilization marks the distance to its head and shows the splendid proportions of the body, and many a thoughtful youth, we trust, imbibed new incentives to the beautiful in character as presented by contrast.

The management of the excursion was doubtless such as to effect the greatest amount of pleasurable success, yet if in the future whiskey cannot be separated from its victims it might be well to try to separate both from those who are discouraged from these splendid enterprises by the annoyance, lest patronage be withdrawn. A Chapel Hill friend by the writer's side said, "It seems to me it must be a rather bad article of liquor you Concord folks have." We simply replied that liquors, like coons, all look alike.

But enough of this. It was a splendid trip, unattended by accident or adversity. We arrived at about 2 30 p. m., making the trip in little more than 9 hours. However many are entirely conversant with our eastern coast, there are yet very many that are not and they form but slight conceptions of what is being missed in not visiting our Atlantic borders. To those who have seen only the piedmont and mountainous sections, the long stretches of level land from Goldsboro to Wilmington, afford keen delight. Those who are accustomed to the creek and river banks only are amazed at the expanse of the swamps that the vision cannot measure, all covered with rich green salt-

water grass, that could it be utilized as hay would be the envy of the ordinary farmer. These swamps are intersected and netted with creeks and lagoons, all the picture of malarial breeding, miasmatic impurity, yet the briny tides render them harmless. As you cross this boggy space on the piling railroad and arrive at Ocean View the watery main so grand and majestic spreads out before you but it is disappointing that the eye can appropriate so little for soon the vision stops where the liquid and the vapor forms of water blend with no line of demarkation.

But when you've been peppered with the cinders all day and smoked till you fancy yourself to be summer bacon, what a pleasure to gambo in the surf and be made to feel again like answering to your own name.

Some of our party returned to Wilmington at 6 to take in some of the city; others waited for the high tide bathing at night and returned to the city at 11 o'clock, while some remained to breathe all the night the inspiring saline atmosphere and revel in the surf yet Saturday, where they enjoyed the frying powers of old "Sol" like a herring turned on a griddle over a gasoline flame.

The "City of Wilmington" steamed up at 9 o'clock Saturday morning and all who wanted a sail got aboard. Many took the Carolina Beach line, but the writer followed the scent of Ritz's coffee and sandwiches and went all the way. The day was perfect—the breezes gentle, the sun's rays tempered with hazy clouds, the group in good spirits and somebody always kind enough to answer the questions of the learner.

Old Brunswick, settled in 1716, is comely and beautiful only as seen by the light of history and fancy. St. Philip's church, erected in 1748, and still standing, could not be visited to the chagrin of the writer. Fort Fisher, the sturdy defender of our last and longest open eastern port, is gazed upon with almost the awe of sacredness. But why call it a fort if the gigantic walls like many-storied mansions are called Forts Monroe and Delaware? Fort Fisher seems to be a continuation of earthworks for a frontage of two miles, and might be passed unnoticed by one not familiar with common fortifications. New Inlet is now closed with a gigantic rock wall and the strength of the fortifications will doubtless be at Fort Caswell hereafter. At Southport we met our friend the Rev. Shaw, but recently moved from our county, and also the genial Brother Taylor, of the Southport Standard. The town has a peculiar charm from its groves of live oak and its swampland and cleanly shores. There we glanced over old Fort Johnston and saw the only remaining cannon used in the great struggle of the 60's.

But Fort Caswell is yet the point of crowning interest. It too is but earthworks that conceal the formidableness of their contents. Since the Spanish conflict has been a certainty there has been no night nor Sunday to check the preparations here till Cervera's fleet went the way of McInty. We were assured that the four 8-inch guns there with the mines and torpedoes were ample for any ordinary attack, but the work goes on, and we were shown the parapet on which are to rest the two mighty guns that now

lie on four truck cars at Wilmington. These two mighty war dogs are 36 feet 10 inches long and weigh 120,000 pounds apiece. We suppose they would measure at least 12 feet in circumference from breech to pivot. They will carry a 12-inch shell and are calculated to pierce a heavy armored vessel 12 miles off. No one is allowed to visit these forts.

Bell Buoy was very entertaining to our sight-seers, but the waves were so gentle that it did not indicate that there was a fire about. This is the imaginary line that separates the ocean from the bay or river's mouth.

We passed some 10 miles out, then the daisy boat cut a circular figure and returned to Bell Buoy, where she whirled eastward and capered along south of Ball Head Island known formerly as Smith's Island. We were soon on our way back and we scrutinized more closely the United States quarantine station. It is a couple of neat little cottages erected on piles in mid stream. It now has in custody a Norwegian sail boat from Brazil, and if no fever develops within the 10 days of quarantine she will pass up to the city and be loaded.

The system of jetties by which the channel of the river is kept open is also a little wonder. At one point a United States vessel is all the time keeping the sediment out of the channel by a way peculiar enough. It lets down a hose or tube and sucks up the mud into the boat till a load is gathered when it's eams off and unloads, repeating the process all the while.

The half is not told but the reader is tired. The return was uneventful too. Four cruel freight trains kept us on the side track near Greensboro and we arrived home on the Sabbath day.

The writer tenders sincere thanks to the management of the excursion for many courtesies and carries the most pleasant recollections of the much needed and most pleasurable jaunt.

PERSONAL POINTERS.

—Engineer Walter Parish is at home on a visit.

—Editor J B Sherrill spent Sunday in Marion with his family.

—Mr. P B Fetzer spent Sunday at Corriher's Springs.

—Mr. C M Thompson, of Lexington, was here today on business.

—Miss Nora Rogers, of Enochville spent today at the home of Mr. Z E Scott.

—Miss Rose Harris returned this morning from a visit to Corriher's springs.

—Mrs. Will Shoemaker returned this morning from Mt. Pleasant where she has been visiting at the home of Mr. W S Hartsell.

—Mr. H McNamara and wife went over to Mt. Pleasant Sunday evening to spend the day with relatives there.

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