

Flogging in Wake County.
It is shameful to know that a bill has been passed by the legislature which gives to brutal guards and bullies the right to flog a helpless and defenseless prisoner. It had been hoped that such barbarism had passed from North Carolina. But listen to this story from the Raleigh Times:

Before the prison investigating committee Wednesday a young white boy of eighteen years, whose offense was that he had been convicted of public drunkenness, bared his body and showed the members blisters which are described as being "two by two" inches in size. These sores were the results of a flogging administered on the county roads twelve days ago by Guard Vassey Thompson, while Superintendent Miller, who had ordered the punishment, stood by and saw it administered.

Previously Guard G. E. Belcher had testified that the whipping given Jacobs for "refusal to work" had been an "exceedingly light one."

It is bad enough to consider that flogging of prisoners, which has been abolished in Russia, the home of the knout; which has gone out of use in practically every so-called civilized country and in most of the United States, is still permitted in five or six states of the old south, North Carolina being one of them.

It is hard enough to think that a white man—boy, rather—whose offense was a misdemeanor, should have been treated as no humane master treats a dog, and in the way that advocates of such punishment justify on the theory that "nothing else appeals to a nigger." It is humiliating to learn again that in Wake county, in which it had been thought flogging had fallen under the ban of the law, the practice still continues.

But such a consideration is incidental and of no account beside the startling fact which the investigation brought to light, that during the rush of bills in the early days of the general assembly there was passed a law which authorized the prison authorities of Wake county to flog the prisoners in their charge.

In the Nipper case and in the Mincher case the Supreme Court has sustained verdicts of guilty based upon assaults made on helpless prisoners in the name of punishment. The practice was frowned upon by the courts in this county. Now we learn that it has been authorized by the general assembly, and Superintendent Miller remarked that he "thought Mr. Bunn had introduced the bill for us."

We knew that many a bill of evil import would slip through the legislative machinery in those early days of confusion incident to the haste to "beat the amendments." If Mr. Bunn introduced this bill by mistake, he should hasten to rectify his error by securing its repeal. If he introduced it knowing what it was, he should stand forth boldly and justify his action. In either event there should be further action taken in the light of day concerning a bill under the authority of which two-inch blisters are raised on a white skin and remain there a red accusation twelve days after the "punishment" was inflicted.

Laws like this, when they are passed in a corner, are in contempt of the very first impression of "representative government."

And what seems more outrageous still is that a man can be sent to the roads for a misdemeanor—that getting drunk should be branded as a crime. Getting drunk might some day be called a crime, but now it is not. Here is a state that for years—hundreds of them—legalized the sale of whiskey, made it a respectable business and threw the arm of the law around it to protect. The sale of whiskey made the drunkard and after the state had graduated him it comes in and says its products are criminals and they must go to the roads because of the disease to which the state not only exposed them but aided and abetted them in catching. It should not be forgotten that under the same pretense a man might be called a criminal if he took typhoid fever after being exposed to it.

Strange how far fanaticism will run. Just now in the bone-dry bill there is a fluttering of dry bones. Those who were so blind they would not see now comprehend the fact that maybe there are two sides to all questions, and one a reasonable side. The National bill passed by Congress is the limit—and put across to show extremists what is possible.

The Ground Hog made good, but a blood-bound is in pursuit.

A Big Probe.

Now that the government feels it has made the newspaper manufacturers come in to camp and cease their extortion, it is proposed to have a gigantic probe into the food question. The food question, like the paper question, is easy. It cannot be so easily controlled, because food comes from so many sources, but the prices we now pay are simply the result of the fancy of those who make them.

There has never been any reason why certain kinds of food should advance in price. The egg situation has doubtless been controlled by the cold storage people. The eastern war has had something to do with it, but prices are beyond all reason. Whether the government could bring them down is problematical, but having had such good success with the paper situation the hope is that Uncle Sam will go to it. President Wilson is said to favor the probe.

A Competent Man.

It is said that E. L. Travis, of the Corporation Commission, is slated for a position with the interstate commerce commission if the bill to increase the membership passes. Travis is one of the best corporation men in this state. He knows the game and would prove a most valuable member of the larger commission. As Chairman of the State Corporation Commission he has done wonders.

A Long Belief Of Ours.
This editor has for many years insisted that the convict had some rights—and if he didn't his people had. We are glad, therefore, to see the Hickory Daily Record go into print in this fashion:

Also we believe that the state should provide for the dependent families of convicts, not only as a matter of right, but to prevent these dependents from becoming charges on the local communities. The wages of the convicts should be given to their families after the expense of maintenance is deducted.

We have gone further, and go further. We believe that if a man has no family he should, for the protection of Society, if not himself, be allowed to earn a wage and have it placed to his credit. He should be allowed so much real money for each day he served the State, if the State was the beneficiary of his sweat and blood, and when he finally left the institution he should be made the proud possessor of his earnings. If a life prisoner, then he should have the right to elect what he would do with his own money—and let him take an interest in earning it. Let there be fines and forfeitures for misbehavior—let him pay the bill in coin rather than in lashes on his bared back.

We all know, and all of us must admit, that when the convict comes out of prison he has nothing in God's world but a reputation that is bad; a convict's name, and he has the wherewithal to take him fifty miles from the place of his humiliation and his debasement. Suppose he had earned, by honest labor, a hundred dollars or two hundred dollars, and it was his. He could easily go to some distant country and there take his place as an honest man. The stain of the stripes in their snake-like hideousness would not starr him in the face—if it was in him he could be born again. But no matter what good resolutions were passed by the man in his narrow cell behind the grated bars—no matter what he told himself he would do when once outside the Walled City—the path of least resistance must be his, and with empty pocket and dishonored name, no friend, no helping hand, a wanderer branded as Cain was branded, he seeks again to do his fellow man. In his heart is a desire to play for even. In his mind may be a grand dream of a better and purer life; but empty handed, branded, disgraced, with no money and with no character, what will he do?

What will he do? He will rob the first man he sees. He will become again a burglar or a murderer or a seducer, because before him is nothing; he cannot see what he has to gain, and surely he has lost all.

But let that man have the money he has earned, and in earning it in the silent hours of his solitude he has figured out a road, he has a fixed purpose, and that idea will possess him and not the wonder where will his next meal be served and how can he obtain it.

Thousands of men in this world live by the help of a friend, of only a few dollars, have gotten on their feet—not criminals, but men who were down and out, and no man was ever as much down and out as the man who has been branded as a felon and who has been forced to wear the stripes and do time for his state.

Let all convicts earn their money, and after paying their way turn it over to them. The state should hide its face in shame if it dares propose that it wants to take the sweat and blood of a human being whom it has shackled and fettered. All the state can ask is that the criminal shall not molest Society. And it is up to the state to take that intellectual cripple, confine him, keep him restrained from his depredations and then, if he earns money, give him what he earns. Shocking indeed is the proposition that a parent should divide with the daughter the price she receives for her soul, but more shocking is the proposition that an ogre state should demand the entire proceeds. And this is what North Carolina does, and other states do. There is here certainly room for reform.

Don't seem to be any more open formula medical bills introduced. Looks like they ought to come again.

Captain Koenig.

"That is at least an interesting tale," says the Virginian-Pilot, "which the engineer on one of the trans-Atlantic liners is reported to have told upon the recent arrival of his ship at New York. While in Plymouth, England, he says, he saw a number of captured German submarines and learned a great deal about the extent of the captures. A total of four hundred of the German underwater craft, he was informed, has been netted by the British since the war began, and of these he saw one hundred and eighty-seven congregated at Plymouth, chained together and surrounded by a network of chains, buoys and wharves. Among the latter was the Deutschland, and he is confident that Captain Koenig and his crew are prisoners in England. If the tale is even measurably true, it may help to explain the apparent confidence with which the British admiralty has met Germany's resumption of indiscriminate warfare on merchant shipping."

Very interesting, but the most interesting to us is the part that suggests that Captain Koenig and his crew still live. We had a sort of admiration for Koenig's apparent audacity. The chances are that England has a lot of prisoners and ships.

Marking the Way.

A bill has been introduced in the legislature requiring the county commissioners of each county to put up appropriate signboards telling the distances and indicating the curves and one thing and another. We wish there would be a law passed requiring the private enterprises putting up signs to tell the truth about the distance. On the roads leading into this town are signs saying "Seven miles to Greensboro," and you drive along about three miles and see another sign reading "Eight miles to Greensboro." This confuses the man who is in a hurry. They seem to have been "pied," as a printer would say—all mixed up, the men planting them putting up the first one they struck. These are for advertising purposes, but even an advertisement should not be misleading.

The Family Quarrel.
We wouldn't have had it happen for a slice of sow bosom as big as a tombstone in an epitaph graveyard. But the "blow has fell," Judge Clark of the Statesville Landmark has been to Raleigh, and he saw the pictures on the screen. Then he writes thus:

When the bill to grant suffrage to women in municipal elections was before the house of the legislature Representative Winston of Wake county, son of Judge R. W. Winston, read from manuscript an argument against the bill which attracted much attention. Thereupon Miss Martha Haywood of Raleigh, head of the feminist movement, wrote an open letter to Judge Winston asking for a copy of "your speech read on the floor of the house," and stating that it was the purpose of the suffrage league to circulate it as a campaign document for the cause. Why ask Judge Winston, who is not a member of the legislature, for the copy of the address read by his son? Trust a woman for a keen thrust. The clear inference was that Winston senior wrote the address for Winston junior; and the twist given to the thrust was that the address was so illogical that it will help instead of hurt the cause it was designed to hurt. Seeing that, the Winstons were wise enough to keep silence in all the languages they know—which is about all any poor man can do when the ladies get after him strong.

Now, we will not stand for this. We are in favor of woman suffrage. We have for many years—long before Bryan and Wilson came out for it—insisted that it should happen. Therefore we are no new convert, and the idol to us is sacred. But for Judge Clark of Statesville to intimate that Judge Bob Winston, that astute, that wonderfully clever lawyer, wrote something that would be a boom-crang—well, it won't do.

Whether the son made a bust we do not know, but we do know that if Judge Bob Winston ever took his pen in hand to write a screed the screed would be perfect. There would be nothing illogical. There would be nothing to disturb the crowd. It would be as smooth as sorghum molasses when the cane was ripe—it would be like a dose of castor oil administered with sarsaparilla. Judge Winston, Judge Bob Winston, never wrote a document that was illogical. He may have written things that some of us wouldn't write—but if he ever made up his mind that a man should be glorified or debased—well, it would happen.

While Miss Haywood, a remarkably bright woman, might have thought she was calling the old man, she was mistaken. The son, perhaps full of himself and ill advised, read his paper and its sounding expletives seemed passing fair to him. But had Old Man Bob blue penciled it—well, perhaps there wouldn't have been enough left of it to make hash for breakfast.

Isn't it about time something was being done about Easter Sunday? Seems that because eggs are so high the fact that Easter is on the way hasn't been mentioned. Many a woman will pay twenty dollars for an Easter hat and boycott the Easter egg.

Sometimes.

The Cleveland Star urges the creation of an office calling for an oil and gasoline inspector. Perhaps in these days they are needed, but in many states the oil inspector was nothing more than a cheap political job. In several states in the west oil inspectors receive twelve hundred a year and expenses, and the little inspecting they do isn't worth while. The oil is generally sold in cities, and a city inspector would be better than several state inspectors. The local dealer buys of a certain house, from a certain station. It would be an easy matter to inspect all the oil and gasoline brought to a city. It generally comes in large tanks and is very easily located. In these days of competition the big refineries see to it that their product is high class. The little local dealer who wants to cheat might reduce his gasoline with water; he might mix his oil; but a state inspector would not run into him once in a dozen years. However, there is always some new office to create—something to hand out to the patriot who whooped it up for his party. These offices created, it is noticeable, are always filled by the political party in power.

And as the Glorious Climate started off this morning—it rained. Of course a blizzard butting in doesn't count against any Glorious Climate, no matter where you go.

Old Man Bob.

Senator Bob LaFollette comes out to say that he is opposed to arming American merchant ships. Perhaps he is. LaFollette has too long been taken seriously by the people of America. He at one time organized the Progressive Party and thought, doubtless, he could be the head of it, and the evidence has always been that he wanted to be our President. Happily, he didn't win. He made a most conspicuous ass of himself in trying to talk once at Philadelphia, and Roosevelt stole his thunder. At least, Bob says Teddy did. That was a happy day. LaFollette is not the man to call long distance or short distance. He is simply one of those fellows who always brings a weather disturbance. He is ambitious for himself. He can talk; he has the long power—but he is not a man in whom the American people can find security. Glad to know that he keeps up his hot air, but gladder to know that no one takes him seriously. There was a day when the people thought him in earnest, but not now. To arm American ships is as essential as to carry a gun in a mining camp. If Germany or any other country proposes to shoot on sight, better have your "weepins" on your person.

The General Has Arrived.

General J. S. Carr has cabled his son in Durham of his safe arrival in Japan. The General is with the trade commission and will be absent for some months. All wish him a pleasant sojourn and a safe return trip. Then he will perhaps visit his California ranche—then back to his beloved state.

An Interesting Letter.
Mr. Alfred B. Williams, the well known Virginia newspaper man, writing from Washington to the New York Times, appears to have his memory with him, and writes this exceptionally interesting article. He assumes that men should never change their minds—a false proposition. However, the letter is worth reproducing, and we give it space on this page, as follows:

Some mournful and cynical amusement may be obtained by contrast of the positions on the question of peace or war of some individuals and newspapers in 1898 and this present year of 1917.

In 1898 we were in trouble with Spain. The government of that country had done us no direct harm; had not insulted us or injured any considerable number of our citizens. The immediate provocation we had to face was the destruction of the American ship of war, Maine, lying in Havana harbor on a mission not exactly friendly. The Spanish government disavowed responsibility for this crime in the most solemn way. Incidentally, after eighteen years of investigation we have failed to fasten the guilt of it on anybody. Some of those who now assail the public ear with shrieks for peace and dismal wailings of the horrors of war and the wickedness of it then crowded the air with howls and clamorings and bellowings for war—for war on the instant and without parley. There was no talk then of submission of the issue to the people. President McKinley was denounced as a coward because he hesitated to hurl us into a conflict for which the event proved us to be pitifully unprepared and for which we had but the thinnest of pretexts. William Jennings Bryan hurried from Nebraska to Washington to urge democratic members of the Congress to support the war measures. There was quite a race between Colonel Roosevelt and Mr. Bryan to get into uniform first, and each strove to organize a regiment more bloodthirsty and more intent than the other on slaughter and on being slaughtered.

Those of us who, in these lush and lovely times, are afflicted with long memories or carry the inconvenient burden of knowledge of recent history are left to marvel and to grin. We cannot see that the blowing up of the Maine was more of an offense against our dignity and honor than the stealthy murder of our citizens of all ages and both sexes using the seas for their own peaceful and lawful purposes, some of them children in arms and not responsible for their own movements or presence. We cannot understand why the hearts that were roused to glorious indignation and the duty of interposition by the wrongs of the Cubans find nothing to excite their protests in the fate of the Belgians or the Serbians or Armenians.

So we are left to surmise whether, if there had been a considerable Spanish-American vote or an indefinite sum of Spanish money available, there would have been an American-Spanish war. We are left to guess whether the theory that Mr. Wilson was re-elected by the "he kept us out of war" slogan appealed to and impressed the eager imagination of a chronically and laboriously conspicuous citizen and persuaded him that an attitude of servile and whimpering crouching would mean a nimble leap to the White House. We are left to wonder whether those who were so desperately intent on having us force a quarrel on a weak nation and now are so fervently anxious to shirk, at any cost of lives or honor or welfare, combat with a formidable force can realize that they are trying to put this republic in the position of a cowardly and truculent bully, quick to seek cause of offense and to strike while dealing with a small power, cringing miserably and whining abjectly of love for peace when confronting a dangerous one.

ALFRED B. WILLIAMS.
Washington, Feb. 20, 1917.

Mr. Williams has certainly presented a strong story, and while it can be answered by saying "a wise man changes his mind, but a fool never," that answer is hardly permissible, or, at least, not final.

Those Who Have the Price.

From Palm Beach came the glad tidings of great joy, reported through the special bureau of the New York Herald, that Mrs. Oelrichs took a bath. Now, this may seem strange to the man who has been wrestling with a plumber and pipes burst in the past several weeks of cold weather, but we get it straight. In order that we may not get it wrong let us quote:

Mrs. Hermann Oelrichs took her first ocean dip this morning. Her bathing suit was of black soft satin with horizontal stripes of same material and color. She wore a black taffeta cape lined in lavender silk, and carried a black and white striped silk parasol. Her shoes were of material and color to match the suit. Mrs. Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte said of Mrs. Oelrichs' bathing attire: "This is the most striking bathing suit that I have seen this season."

Now think of this. How many of the sin-stained mortal sons of men—and women, too, God bless 'em, let us say—have taken a bath some time this winter, and yet how many have had it telegraphed to New York that the bath had been taken?

We understand full well, or think we do, that Mrs. Oelrichs needed a bath, but just why this should be the subject of a big headline and why it should be regarded as news we would like to have a little more information. But it really happened. And to know that Mrs. Oelrichs took a bath—well, the City Planner may feel that his coming south has in a way been vindicated.

Naturally the Kaiser would like to stop the war, but why should he stop? If he is to get nothing, why not go the limit? Human lives are not counted by the men who conduct war. Napoleon figured results.

The Hopeful Sign.
The Wilmington Star perhaps writes more industrial stuff than any other paper in the state. While we are exploding expletives concerning things far distant; while other papers are chewing the rag over politics; while statesmen are wondering if there is a chance for them, the busy Star at Wilmington twinkles for the industrial end of things. In a recent issue it brought out plainly the hope of the South in the matter of railway construction; showed us that the whole set of Atlantic states would soon be double tracked and said that President Harrison of the Southern predicted greater things for this section of the country than the wildest man had dreamed.

All of this sounds good. We have Chambers of Commerce here and there and they are after some local hobby. We have newspapers with an axe to grind, and perhaps if no other axe the business office, and we all get too busy to write and talk and insist that the South is to be the great section of the United States. In this endeavor the Star of Wilmington points the way.

Twenty-five years ago, when we struck this bloomin' state and took charge of a newspaper, we were an enthusiastic boomer. We went to Asheville to a convention, and after a hard fight put through a resolution, written by it and offered by R. B. Boone, then a Durham lawyer and now, we think, of Oklahoma, that there was no South, no East, no West, no North, but this was a common country under a common flag.

To get that resolution through required wonderful tact. The late Colonel Burgwyn made a wonderful speech—Governor Fowle didn't know—and in Committee he was afraid that because a Yankee from the west or from somewhere had dared to be so presumptuous and audacious as to proclaim that it was a common country shocked him and he said so. That only a quarter of a century ago. Then there were but a handful of cotton mills in the South; then the railways were running their jim crow trains and it took two or three days to get to New Orleans if you had good luck; then the North hadn't mixed as it has mixed today.

There is no question—and this is not handed out to be courteous to present company—but what the South is destined to be the greatest and biggest part of the United States. Growing every year by leaps and bounds; increasing her wealth by the countless millions and attracting capital from all over the world. And among the group of Southern States, each one rich and containing inexhaustible treasure, North Carolina, we make bold to say, stands foremost. She has her beach and her majestic mountains. She has minerals such as are found nowhere else in the bosom of Mother Earth, and she has resources in agriculture that some day will surprise the world. Her fruits always take first premium, no matter where exhibited. She has gold and has produced and can produce more of the precious metal than any other state or section, side the Pacific coast. She has forests; she has climate that is not excelled—and why we all sit down here and wait for curious men to discover what we have, instead of exploiting to the limit our natural advantages, we do not know. We confess that as a publisher we have not done our full duty. The Wilmington Star, as we said in the beginning, sets us all an excellent example and we should get next and get busy.

If Greensboro doesn't have a baseball team—well, Greensboro will have a baseball team, and that perhaps is all there is about it.

The Food Situation.

It certainly does look like this United States government could take a hand and make some laws that would relieve any food situation. In Boston the other day hundreds of competent women marched to the State House with the figures to show the governor that thousands of merchants in that city had their warehouses filled with food supplies, but refused to sell except at exorbitant prices. Children are hungry and some are starving in this land of ours. Women lead the fight—truculent men are afraid to move.

The question will finally be settled, but why wait for the finality? If the audacious tradesmen can buy all in sight and store it and demand any price his conscience will allow, how long will it be until the pillars of his temple fall? How long before famished hordes rush upon his warehouses and empty them and burn them and leave him destitute himself? How long before a revolution? How long before law will be unheeded and mob violence will suggest to even well-ordered minds that self-preservation is the thing?

It is all right for a man to buy a stock of goods and sell at his own price, but for a combination of men to purchase all in sight, store in warehouses until they groan, and say to impoverished people pay us our price or starve—that isn't going to work long. And before the people, in their majesty and their might, must go back to the primal law, why not make written laws governing such conditions?

It has not been long, as we consider time, that these last human hyenas and vultures have held the road. That their days are short there is no doubt, but rather than a revolution of blood and fire, why not the government write some laws and say, as was said to the proud waves: Thus far, and no farther?

Seems a fierce old world when women are forced to go out on a bread riot and fight for enough food to feed their starving children. Something is radically wrong if this must needs happen.

Merchants Fined.

In Lynchburg some thirteen merchants were recently arrested for working children in their stores—children under sixteen years of age. They were fined \$25 each. Of course this was vindication of the fellow who wails against child labor. But when merchants cannot employ children to do chores the consumer of his goods will pay more freight. And when a child must wait until he is grown before he can earn a dime of his own—well, there is such a thing as running something good into the ground.