

NEWS WITHOUT
BIAS. VIEWS
WITHOUT PREJUDICE

THE ADVANCE

OFFICIAL PAPER
OF CURRITUCK
COUNTY

VOL 1 ELIZABETH CITY, NORTH CAROLINA, TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 1913 NO. 12

NOT GUILTY IS THE VERDICT OF JURY IN STOKLEY CASE

Jury Brought in Verdict Saturday at Half Past Five After a Day of Deliberation. Crowds in Sympathy With Stokley.

Murden Stokely is a free man. With his father and sister he is back again in the home at Chapanoke — a home already haunted by the specter of shame and over which hung last week the shadow of further calamity. It was at half past five o'clock Saturday afternoon when the court house bell sounded forth the news that the jury that had heard the case of Murden Stokely was ready to render its verdict.

The clanging of the bell brought the thronging crowds waiting on the street into the court room. There everybody waited with bated breath while the usual formalities were gone through with. As the foreman of the jury stood to announce the verdict solemn silence reigned supreme. The judge faced the jury. The lawyers present listened with stained faces. Murden Stokely stood with unraised hand shrinking from the blow that might fall upon him. The boy was reasonably calm and quiet when the trial began. But the terrible arraignment of the prosecuting attorneys on Saturday shook his composure. All day he sat with head bowed and hidden. And he was still shaken Saturday evening.

Not guilty! The crowd in the packed court room drew a breath of great relief and, though the sheriff was stationed at the door to prevent any demonstration there was an irrepressible murmur of approbation.

The prisoner and the group of relatives around him sat for a second speechless and motionless with relief. Then came realization that the dread ordeal was over the father, son and erring sister were locked together in a long embrace tears of silent joy streaming down their cheeks while the eyes of many spectators were wet. The crowd in the court room surged toward the bar. Those who succeeded in reaching it eagerly stretched out their hands to shake young Stokely's in congratulation.

But for three days the stricken family had had their grief and shame aired before strangers. They were eager for the solace and shelter of the roof of friends. They lost no time, then, in making their way out of the court room and were soon in the homes of relatives who had sheltered the unfortunate girl and had stood by the family through the trial. They went back to Chapanoke Sunday, the father driving over the road that with Murden Stokely, he had last traveled on that black night when he came to Elizabeth City seeking his daughter's seducer. The rest of the family went on the 11:35 train.

So ended one of the most terrific legal battles ever waged in Pasquotank courthouse.

This case began last Wednesday when it was shown that Annie Belle Stokely left home on Saturday, February 22nd. On the Sunday following word was brought to her father and brother that the girl was in Elizabeth City and had given birth to a child of which she claimed Fenton Towe to be the father. Mr. Stokely and Murden knew that Towe had been paying the girl attention for two years. They learned that he had gone to Norfolk and at Chap-

okane station waited for him Sunday night until the coming of the midnight train. Learning by a phone message that he had stopped in Elizabeth City they got a horse and buggy and with Mr. Bagley came to Elizabeth City, getting here about three o'clock in the morning. Murden found Towe and told him that the elder Stokely wanted to see him at Armstrong's stables. There Stokely and Murden testified that the father asked Towe to marry his daughter and that the young man refused with an oath to promise to do so; whereupon Murden Stokely whipped out a 32 calibre revolver and shot Towe dead with a bullet in his brain.

By last Thursday evening all the testimony had been taken and Hallett Ward had opened the argument for the state. Mr. Ward was hardly up to his standard of effectiveness, though making a strong speech.

Judge Ward and Mr. Aydlett followed for the defense on Friday morning. Both speakers were at their best and put up a hard fight for their client. The ADVANCE did not have a reporter in the court room during the first three speeches, however, and cannot indicate the line of argument followed by these attorneys.

I. M. Meekins made the second speech for the prosecution. He spoke in his characteristic and entertaining style and with his usual vigor and vehemence, emphasizing the fact that Towe's guilt rested upon the unsupported testimony of Annie Belle Stokely, arguing that the crime was premeditated and urging the jury to bring in a verdict against Stokely in order that law might be upheld and in order that life might not be held cheap in Pasquotank county. Mr. Meekins stressed the value of life, quoting the words of Satan, "All that a man hath will he give for his life," as scriptural authority for the ground which he took when he said that he would rather see a loved one dishonored than dead.

Mr. Meekins was followed by W. M. Bond for the defense. Mr. Bond said that he was feeling unwell; but spoke at considerable length and with no whit less than his usual energy notwithstanding. He urged that the defense was not basing the plea for Stokely's acquittal on any unwritten law nor asking the jury to bring in its verdict in defiance of law. But the defense held, he said, that the evidence showed that Stokely, when he committed the act, was not in mental condition to be responsible for the deed. He brought out with considerable force the fact that no witness for the state had been willing to swear to a belief in Stokely's sanity just after the crime was committed. He urged consideration of the expert testimony of Dr. McMullan who had sworn that in his opinion the boy was not himself when he committed the crime. Mr. Bond's was the final argument for the defense.

Solicitor Ehringhaus closed the case for the state. He spoke quietly and was heard with closest attention by the jurors. He reviewed the testimony in the case, especially that of the defense; and contended that even if there were only the evidence

(Continued on Page Three)



Where The Bible Conference is to be Held

SLUMBERLAND IS PRESENTED TO-NIGHT

Biggest Production Ever Staged Here Plays Two Nights.

Amid the applause of chaperones, a newspaper man and a few invited critics, the first dress rehearsal of "Slumberland" the big musical show was held at the Auditorium last night, and every one witnessing the practice was agreeably surprised. Even the performers were unable to conceal their wonderment at the massiveness of the play and the hosts of groups that were constantly on and off the stage almost ceaselessly. The director of "Slumberland" has indeed fulfilled his promise to give to Elizabeth City the "biggest and best" musical entertainment ever attempted here as last night's rehearsal as a show, eclipsed anything ever seen here before, and will surely surprise those who are fortunate enough to secure good reservations for seats.

There are so many different diversions from the regular theatrical performance included in "Slumberland" that it is hard to describe exactly what the show will be like. Enough to state, that there is nothing ever given like it, full of surprises in costumes, action and singing, some thing extraordinary and interesting that will keep the audience guessing what will come next, and the very next musical number will be so different from the one proceeding it that the audience will be unable to remember one half of the performance after it is over.

Even those taking parts, have not seen all of the play and will not get a chance to see it as the play will not go on in its entirety until the first night's performance. The play is simply too enormous to try to give a full rehearsal, the system is to rehearse it in sections until the play is ready for presentation. "Slumberland" will be repeated on Wednesday night for the same price of admission.

MISSIONARY RALLY

A Missionary Rally will be held in Blackwell Memorial Church Wednesday night. Rev. E. L. Wells and Rev. A. A. Butler will be present and will make addresses on this occasion.

HIGH SCHOOL BOYS DECLAIM AT ELON

Twenty Contestants For Declaimers Media on The Rostron.

Elon College, N. C., March 21—Elon College was happy to-day to entertain some twenty promising young men from as many forward-looking High Schools in the State in the third annual inter-scholastic declaimers' contest. The preliminary contest was held at one o'clock this afternoon and each of the contestants spoke before a committee consisting of Rev. E. M. Carter, Rev. W. S. Hales, and Prof. A. Liggett Lincoln. A large number of auditors heard the preliminary contest in which were the following contestants:

- Program of the Preliminary Contest**
- Jamestown High School, David Coletrane, Jamestown, N. C. Subject: John Adams on the Declaration.
 - Hawfields High School, Albert Gibson, Mebane, N. C. Subject: Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death.
 - Pikeville High School, Charles I. Taylor, Pikeville, N. C. Subject: The New South.
 - Churchland High School, Clarence F. Spangh, Linwood, N. C. Subject: Mother, Home and Heaven.
 - Oxford Graded School, Thomas L. Pace, Oxford, N. C. Subject: The Face on the Floor.
 - East Durham High School, Earnest S. Boothe, East Durham, N. C. Subject: The Centralization in the United States.
 - Concord Public School, Joseph Hawthorn, Concord, N. C. Subject: The Grave of My Country.
 - Fremont High School, Leland Aycock, Fremont, N. C. Subject: The Lance of Kanana.
 - Yadkin College High School, C. R. Leonard, Yadkin College, N. C. Subject: Our Country's Call for Men.
 - Aycock Graded School, Miss Nellie Brooks, Haw River, N. C. Subject: Asleep at the Switch.
 - Mebane High School, J. Frank Warren, Mebane, N. C. Subject: When the Evening Shadows Lengthen.
 - Monroe High School, Ware Pointer, Monroe, N. C. Subject: The American Flag.
 - Durham High School, Victor S. Bryant, Jr., Durham, N. C.

NORTH EASTERN CAROLINA GATHERED IN BIG BIBLE CONFERENCE THIS WEEK

Great Themes will be Considered and Notable Speakers will Discuss them in First Annual Session of This Conference

The First Annual Session of the Northeastern North Carolina Bible Conference convenes with the First Baptist Church on Thursday night the 27th. This meeting brings to the city an array of eminent religious and literary talent which is not surpassed in the South. Educators, preachers, missionaries and prominent laymen from nearly every section, of the South, will bring to the audiences each day the most forceful and eloquent addresses possible on their several subjects.

There is promised to those who attend this conference a rich treat from the various gifted speakers who will discuss the numerous topics laid down in the well arranged program.

Rev. L. T. Reed, the pastor, and his board of twelve deacons are back of this conference, which will hereafter be an annual feature each spring of the work of the First Baptist Church.

Fifteen prominent speakers from different sections of the Southland will be here besides the local corps of ministers and workers. A specialist in Young People's work will conduct an extra service for the young people of the city, an expert lady worker will be here to hold some special meetings for the ladies. On Saturday afternoon from five to seven the Ladies' Aid Society of the church will tender a reception to the visiting speakers and workers.

A competent committee on the reception, the board of fifteen church ushers, and eight boy pages will handle the visitors and look after the comfort of the crowds who will attend.

- Subject: The Old North State.
- High Point High School, S. A. Perry, High Point, N. C. Subject: The Perils of the Nation.
 - Robersonville High School, William Gray, Robersonville, N. C. Subject: Uncle Peter and the Gray Mule.
 - Madison Graded School, Gordon D. Gibson, Madison, N. C. Subject: Liberty Under Law.
 - Winston City Public School, Gordon Ambler, Winston-Salem, N. C. Subject: Secret of Lincoln's Power.
 - Bethany High School, W. J. B. Pruitt, Summerfield, N. C. Subject: The South and Her Problems.
 - Friendship High School, LaFayette Iseley, Burlington, N. C. Subject: Beyond the Alps Lies Italy.

The final contest was participated in by the following eight young men, whose subjects are given above: E. S. Boothe, C. F. Spangh, C. R. Leonard, Ware Pointer, Albert Gibson, Leland Aycock, William Gray, and G. D. Gibson. The judges in the final contest were Prof. N. F. Brannock, Dr. W. Wicker, and Prof. W. P. Lawrence. The College Band furnished music for the occasion, and Messrs. R. A. Campbell and V. P. Heatwole gave a cornet duet, which was encored vigorously. The judges declared Mr. Earnest S. Boothe, winner and Dr. Wicker presented him the handsome gold medal which is always awarded the winner in this intellectual contest. Roxboro and Coolemees High Schools were not represented on account of train connection.

UNION MEETING AT SOUTH MILLS

Boat to Leave Flora's Wharf Friday and Saturday

The Camden and Currituck Union will hold its regular session with Ebenezer Baptist Church at South Mills this week.

R. T. Bryant, long a missionary in the heart of China will be a distinguished visitor at this meeting of the Union and everybody within reach should be sure to hear his address on foreign missions.

Mr. M. G. Wright will run a boat from Elizabeth City, for the accommodation of those here who desire to attend the Union. This boat will leave Flora's dock at half past eight on each morning and returning will reach Elizabeth City in the evening.

CALLED TO CHRIST'S CHURCH

The membership of Christ's Church (Episcopal) have called Rev. Mr. Ashby of Virginia to be rector. Mr. Ashby will pay a visit to Elizabeth City some time this week for the purpose of inspecting the field with a view to accepting the call.

OUR AWFUL AUNT AT CAMDEN C. H.

The Camden Amateur Theatrical Company will present a play entitled, "Our Awful Aunt," in Camden Court House on the evening of March 29th, and it will begin at 8:00 o'clock sharp.

The play is given for the benefit of the Woman's Betterment Society. It is spicy and is calculated to entertain all who may attend.

Admission, 15 cents for adults and 10 cents for children.

SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOMS COMPLETED

Corinth Baptist Church has recently added a number of attractive Sunday School rooms to its building and these rooms are now complete. They were erected at a cost of about one thousand dollars and practically no outstanding debt is to be left on the church, the money having been raised almost as fast as the work progressed.

Mr. S. S. Davis, superintendent of the Sunday School, has been one of the leading spirits in the movement for these new Sunday school rooms.

HAD HAND MASHED

Ed Brinson, an employee of the Crystal Ice and Coal Company got his hand caught into some machinery, while he was engaged in oiling it Sunday morning, and had it crushed.

All of the bones in the hand were mashed to pieces and the bones in the arm were broken twice. Dr. O. McMullan rendered the surgical aid, and the injured man is getting along fairly well. The physician has not yet decided if amputation is necessary.