

NORTH CAROLINA— A STORY OF TRIUMPHANT DEMOCRACY

A newspaper reporter once asked Jay Gould to tell him how he attained his amazing success. Mr. Gould replied: "The story is very simple. It is contained in three words—AUDACITY, AUDACITY, AUDACITY."

Your Chairman has made a special request of me, an active worker in the ranks of Tar Heel Democracy, to tell you on this occasion the story of the amazing progress of the State of North Carolina during the past few years. I could emulate the example of the famous wizard of Wall Street and say to this audience, "The story is very simple. It can be told in three words—EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION." But my friends, when you go to "Gopher Prairie" for your speaker and draw up plans and specifications for his address, you must content yourselves with the "Main Street" wisdom of "Ezra Stowbody," the banker, and if you grow weary of the flow of his conversation, just send your bill for damages to the distinguished editor of the Atlanta Constitution, and to the President of the Retail Merchants Association.

There is no magic in the story of the progress of the Old North State. There were no great discoveries of gold or oil or coal in this territory. North Carolina just worked out its own salvation by utilizing the forces within itself. Bancroft, the historian, once wrote "North Carolina is the freest of the free." A prominent Tar Heel wit, seeing this quotation, took out his pencil and made the quotation read "North Carolina is the freest of the free and the slowest of the slow." The Tar Heel State, as some of you know from the geographies that you studied, used to be noted for its "tar, pitch and turpentine," and in the minds of its foreign-born historians was pictured as a narrow strip of poor land over which aristocratic gentlemen from Charleston were compelled to pass in making their annual visits to their aristocratic relatives in Virginia. Indeed some of our own Tar Heel people were pleased to describe the State as a "vale of hu-

mility lying between two mountains of conceit." It is my purpose tonight to look back over the history of the state and tell you, as briefly as possible, the story of how this "Rip Van Winkle of the South" arose from his slumbers, shook off the shackles that bound him hand and foot, and in the course of a very few years stood forth in the public mind and in the newspapers of the country as a joint owner with the State of Georgia of the proud title of the "Empire State of the South."

"Hell, Calomel and Democracy"

The Old North State throughout all of her history has been the home of democracy. In the early days these plain people were firm in their faith in "hell, calomel and democracy." The wise saws of old Nathaniel Macon, the greatest Tar Heel democrat of his time, constituted the choicest food for their political thought. "Hold elections every year"—"Don't live near enough to your neighbor to hear his dog bark"—"Poor land is the best neighbor"—"Pay as you go," and other words of wisdom quoted from the speeches of Nathaniel Macon always brought hearty "AMENS" in any political gathering. Fed up on this old-fashioned democracy, the Old North State almost ceased to function and about the beginning of this century lay prostrate, poor and ignorant. Her people were divided into sections that fought each other. Members of families were divided against each other and almost every man was for himself. Thousands of progressive young men in the eighties and nineties left the state in disgust to seek their fortunes in more progressive states to the north and to the south of us. Education of the masses was almost impossible because practically nobody wanted it. The rich refused to be taxed to educate the poor and, in many sections, the poor even gloried in their ignorance.

Demagoguery stalked abroad. The votes of 120,000 ignorant negroes had thrown the government of the State into the hands of the Populists and Republicans. In some sections white teachers in public schools were compelled to receive their certificates from negro Superintendents of Education. Negro policemen in some of the towns of the eastern part of the State arrested white men and brought them to trial before negro ma-

This address was delivered at the annual meeting of the Retail Merchants Association at Atlanta, Georgia, January 28, 1924.

gistrates. Over large areas men slept on their guns, and riot and bloodshed were frequent occurrences. Finally, full fledged revolution in the eastern part of the State broke out and "To your tents, O Israel, your bullets to-night, your ballots tomorrow" was flashed from the watch towers of the "Red Shirts" in the early evening of November 7, 1898. Thousands of white men irrespective of political affiliations, in an "uprising of almost the entire people," says a prominent leader of the times, seized the reins of power and once for all put an end to fear of negro domination by the passage of the Suffrage Amendment to the State Constitution, which required for all voters "educational qualification," but for a period of eight years allowed white men, who voted prior to 1867 or who were descended from such voters, to exercise the right of suffrage.

The passage of the Suffrage Amendment to the State Constitution was perhaps the greatest single blessing that ever came to the Old North State. It marked the dawn of a new day. It paved the way for great State-wide policies of to-day. It was not only a blessing to the white people but it was also a great blessing to the negro people. Out of the excitement and confusion and dissension of these stirring times, the form of one truly great man slowly emerged, standing neck and shoulders above his fellows.

Born out of the very loins of the people, a democrat of democrats, Charles B. Aycock stretched out his hand over this stormy sea of democracy and calmed its angry passions. It was this bold and fearless leader, with a passion for service to the State never before surpassed, who mounted the political arena in North Carolina and turned his back upon demagoguery and individualism and race hatred of the times, and boldly proclaimed the doctrine of "Peace on earth, good will towards men." He preached from every platform he could find in the State the great idea of Universal Education. Listen to his very words.

"I tell you men that from this very hour opposition to education will mark a man opposed to the theory of our Government, which is founded upon intelligence and virtue." "We will provide intelligence by a system of schools which is designed to reach every citizen, and there will be less of political

bitterness and race hatred." "The wealth of the State will increase as education of the people grows." "Industry will have a great outburst." Here speaks the inspired voice of Triumphant Democracy. To develop heroes, there must be occasions for heroism. In Charles B. Aycock the man and the occasion met. The old-fashioned disciples of Nathaniel Macon and the new-fashioned bullet-head statesman and the liquor people were amazed at the very audacity of Aycock's proposal to tax the white people to educate negro children and raised a great howl over the alleged injustice of taxing the rich to educate the children of the poor, and they organized to fight Governor Aycock to the finish.

But many young patriotic souls, like McIver and Joyner and Alderman and Tompkins, flocked to his rescue and helped Aycock to carry the message of universal education to the people, and soon the eloquence and earnestness of these hundreds of young advocates of universal education caught hold of the imagination of the plain people of North Carolina and, one by one, school houses in the east, school houses in the Piedmont Country and school houses in the west began to spring up on more than a thousand hills, and the Old North State began to vibrate with new life. And she has been vibrating ever since. In one way or another during this period the spirit and nature and character of the North Carolina people underwent changes that have made possible the amazing manifestation of present-day wealth and power and happiness. Finally in 1919 the people in ninety-nine out of the hundred counties of the State voted to put in their Constitution a mandate for a minimum six-months school for all the children of school age in every district in the State, and the State Legislature then followed this amendment with acts doubling the tax rate for public schools and making the attendance of all children of elementary school age compulsory.

Education Brings Factories

The crusade against ignorance in North Carolina brought a larger vision of the resources of the State to many of its people. Business men all over the State came to understand that it takes knowledge to develop power and that it takes power to develop organized industry. Digging something out of

the ground or cutting it from the forests and sending it to our educated neighbors of the North and selling it for ten cents, so that these smart people, with their superior knowledge, might run it through their machines and sell it back to us for one dollar, had just about bled the Old North State to death. Our people were, therefore, quick to grasp the idea of Aycock and Tompkins that successful manufacturing enterprises would necessarily follow in the wake of University Education.

North Carolina owes much to D. A. Tompkins, the early leader of industrial progress. To Tompkins it was clear that for a century we had been able to make cotton, tobacco and other things that serve as a basis for operating mills and factories, and that always conditions in North Carolina had been favorable to the manufacture of cotton and tobacco and furniture, but that these resources were not of much value, and North Carolina could not make much headway in industry, until men and women were at hand with the knowledge and skill to utilize them. One of the reasons why the value of all the manufactured products of North Carolina in 1900 was only \$40,000,000 per year was that we just did not have the people who knew how to manufacture except in a primitive manner and on a most limited scale. In looking back over the history of these times, it is easy to understand why young captains of industry, like Julian S. Carr, Geo. W. Watts and Erwin and Cannon and Cone and Cramer and Draper and the Fries and the Hanes and the Leaks and Steeles, all led fights in their respective districts for the imposition of local taxes upon themselves for the support of the public schools and for the issuance of bonds for the erection of school buildings.

It is significant that J. B. Duke, the greatest captain of industry that North Carolina has ever produced, said: "Trinity College, founded by my father, shall become the most heavily endowed college in America." It is equally significant that R. J. Reynolds, the next greatest captain of industry that North Carolina has produced, showered his wealth upon the public schools and high schools of his home town, the main location of his factories. In the early days of our great industrial progress in North Carolina, these young captains of industry made frequent calls upon the schools and colleges of the

State for help, and always the response from our schools and colleges was prompt and the supply of trained men and women was ample. Today our home people are familiar with textile production, electrical installation and operation, all kinds of dyeing and other chemical processes used in manufacturing; and we have a big army of men and women who know the last word in cotton mill work and in the manufacture of tobacco and in the manufacture of furniture and in many other lines of industry. No manufacturing problem is too complex and none is too difficult for this great army of workers to master. We need not be surprised, therefore, that as the fruits of this happy combination of universal education and organized industry has come one of the most amazing stories of industrial progress in the history of the world.

Changes in Twenty Years

It is significant that during this period our people voluntarily increased their taxes for universal education from \$1,000,000 in 1900 to \$23,000,000 in 1923, and the value of our school property, during the same period, increased from about \$1,000,000 to \$35,000,000. In 1900 North Carolina had about thirty high schools; in 1923 the number had increased to four hundred and seventy-five. In 1900 the high school enrollment was about 2,000; in 1923 it had increased to 48,000. In 1900 the State appropriated to educational institutions \$8,000 for permanent improvements for a two-year period and \$23,500 for yearly maintenance, while in 1923 the State appropriated \$7,000,000 for permanent improvements for a two year period and \$1,748,000 for yearly maintenance. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that in 1900 29.4 persons out of every one hundred in North Carolina were unable to read and write, while twenty years later this percentage was reduced to 13.1 and the number of white people unable to read and write in North Carolina was only 7.2 persons out of every one hundred. And we need not be surprised when we see it heralded in the newspapers from Maine to California that North Carolina has reached the top in the manufacture of tobacco, is second only to Massachusetts in the value of the products of her cotton

mills, is second to Michigan in the manufacture of furniture, and the total value of all manufactured products turned out in the State has grown from \$40,000,000 a year to more than a billion dollars a year, and that the assessed value of property listed for taxation has increased from about \$306,000,000 in 1900 to about three billion dollars in 1920. But while it is undoubtedly true that the great idea of universal education has been the basic factor in our progress, other factors and other ideas have helped to hasten the development of our resources and to make certain our future prosperity.

Public Health

One of these additional factors is the great idea of public health and its promotion by the entire State. The men and women who were directing the campaign for universal education were quick to see that unnecessary sickness and preventable disease constituted a very serious handicap to their efforts, so they joined hands with the public health authorities of the State for a greater forward movement for State-wide sanitation and State-wide cure of disease and State-wide prevention of disease.

On account of its geographical location North Carolina is especially susceptible to two semi-tropical diseases, malaria and hook worm disease. And, on account of its predominating rural population, typhoid fever and other fecal borne diseases have largely affected public health. And, on account of ignorance and poverty of the masses of the people, three-fourths of the school children had bad teeth, and a large percentage of the grown people had pellagra. Again North Carolina had luck in finding the right leader at the right time, and in July, 1909, Dr. W. S. Rankin, another brilliant young son of democracy, with a clear-cut vision of a greater State, entered upon his duties as secretary of the State Board of Health and began his great constructive work that, because of its achievements and innovations, has won both National and international recognition. Just a few months ago a special mission from the League of Nations came to inspect Dr. Rankin's work for sanitation and health in North Carolina.

With the advent of Dr. Rankin as Secretary of the State Board of Health, an in-

tensive campaign was begun throughout the entire State to interest the people in sanitation and public health, and into all parts of the State speakers were sent to tell the plain facts about health conditions and how to remedy them. These educational addresses were made to conferences of county superintendents of schools, to gatherings of school teachers, to the State Federation of Women's Clubs, to the State Press Association, and a special Sunday in April of each year was set aside as Sanitation Sunday so that the ministers and churches might do their part in the crusade against filth and disease. The first efforts in the eradication of hook worm disease were to interest school teachers in the disease and through their assistance examine and treat the school children and thereby reach the communities in which these children resided. With a State appropriation of only \$10,500 a year, it required immense self-sacrifice and zeal and energy on the part of Dr. Rankin and his associates to carry out this great work. But, step by step, progress was made and the next two years showed rapid advances in sanitation and health work.

Educational bulletins sent out from Dr. Rankin's office increased from 10,000 per year to 40,000. Articles on health conditions were carried almost daily by the newspapers. The educational work through the Board of Health, through the agency of public schools and colleges, was tremendously increased and public interest was aroused, and the legislative appropriation was more than doubled. Then came special drives against hook worm disease, against pellagra and against typhoid fever and against malaria and against tuberculosis through active cooperation of the health authorities and educational forces of the State with most remarkable results. In ten years the hook worm disease in North Carolina has become rare. Malaria is making a last stand in a few Eastern swamps yet undrained. Typhoid fever and small-pox have been almost entirely eliminated from the State. A death rate of 69.6 per thousand population from typhoid fever in nine years was reduced to 12.5 per thousand, or a reduction showing a saving of six hundred lives per year and a decrease of 6,000 cases of typhoid fever per year. Tuberculosis, which holds a place

throughout the world as one of the major causes of death, showed a drop of one thousand cases in six years, from 1914 to 1921. All in all, in the five years from 1916 to 1921, we cut down the number of deaths in North Carolina a total of 4979 per year, although during these five years the population was rapidly increasing.

Cradles vs. Coffins

You have no doubt heard, my friends, that in proportion to her population there are more cradles and fewer coffins used in North Carolina than in any other State in the Union. In the twenty years from 1903, the date of the first outburst of indigestion against hookworm disease, the yearly appropriation for public health and money raised by public taxation increased from \$2,000 per year to \$387,000 per year, or a multiplication of the expenditure of public money for public health of 193 times. So far as I have been able to learn, there has not been found a single intelligent voter in North Carolina seriously opposing this expenditure of public money. Experience has shown that for every death in a population group there are seven hundred days of sickness, and economists have calculated the average sickness at \$2.00 per day and the economic value of the average life is \$4,000. By a little calculation some idea may be obtained of the economic saving to the State brought about by the reduction in the death rate and the prevention of sickness in North Carolina during the past five years. Is it worth while to save for the State the lives of 5,000 of its people every year? Is it worth while for the State to save its people from 3,500,000 days of sickness each year? Is it worth while for the State to expend \$387,000 to make a saving each year of \$27,000,000? Is it worth while for any state to organize itself for action and lav the strong arm of the State on every school girl and on every school boy of the State and, as near as possible, safeguard him from disease and guarantee to him a sound mind in a sound body?

JOHN SPRUNT HILL

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VERSIFICATION IN THE CLASSROOM

WHY, of all things under heaven, teach versification?

That, I imagine, is a question which many of the readers of the title of this article will ask. They will protest that versification can scarcely play even a small part in the lives of boys and girls; that it has no bearing upon their future vocations; that it is, in brief, another of the "frills" of education, pleasant perhaps to the teacher, distinctly the reverse to the student, and of no practical use to anybody.

However, I believe that there are sound reasons for including the writing of verse in our curricula. Examine books of literary selections, such as we use in our literature classes, and you will find that a very large percentage of these selections are poetry. Versification, therefore, should prove a distinct aid in the teaching of appreciation, for it is a well established fact that we come to recognize the successes of others when we ourselves have tried the same things. Even though our trials have been failures, the result is the same. All over the world, for instance, boys and girls are studying music, instrumental or vocal. How many of these will attain a platform popularity? How many parents, as optimistic as parents are, hope for such popularity for their offspring? Very few. But they do hope that the most rudimentary knowledge of music will provide opportunity for a certain degree of self-expression and a genuine appreciation of one of the great arts. If this reasoning be logical for music, why is it not logical for poetry which Matthew Arnold calls "the most perfect speech of man"? The young person who struggles with the problems of meter and stanza, form and figure of speech, may never become a poet. He may even—and here is a possible danger—thoroughly detest the task before him. But I have found that, generally speaking, he comes more quickly to a love of poetry and an understanding of it by reason of his own experiments.

Another reason, corollary to the first, is the possibility of the development of an artistic sense in the young writer. We are hearing so much these days about education being