

M

P13195

800

REMARKS

—OF—

Governor Wm. A. MacCorkle

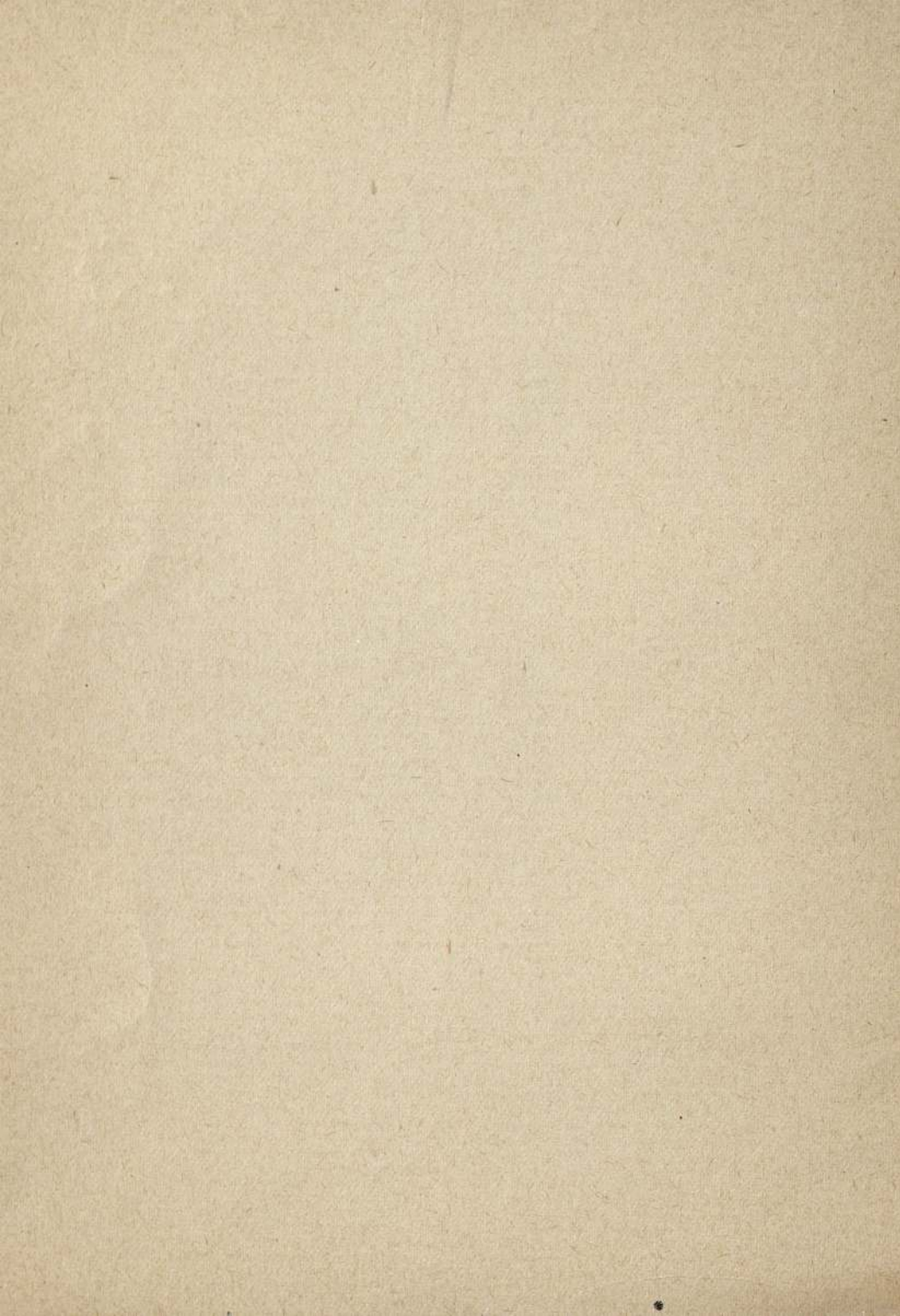
AT

OLD POINT COMFORT

VIRGINIA.

SEPTEMBER 9,

1893.



[NOTE.]

At the banquet which was a part of the exercises celebrating the great event of the opening of the Chesapeake and Ohio Steamship Company, held at the Hygeia Hotel, Old Point Comfort, Virginia, on September 9th, 1893, there were present about four hundred of the most prominent importers, shippers and newspaper men of the West and South.

Mr. M. E. Ingalls presided and opened the exercises with a very able speech.

Ex-Gov. Lee responded for Virginia.

Mr. Mayor Ellyson, for the City of Richmond.

Col. Brent Arnold, President of the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, for the City of Cincinnati.

Mr. Charles Ballard, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Louisville, for the City of Louisville.

Mr. W. P. Walker, of Cincinnati, for the Chesapeake and Ohio Steamship Company.

Mr. C. A. Jennings, for the city of Chicago.

Mr. Tunison, of the Cincinnati Tribune, and Mr. Hotchkiss of the C. & O., furnished the banquet with some magnificent vocal music.

To the toast of "West Virginia," Governor MacCorkle responded.

In deference to the kindly requests of some friends interested in the South and West, he has hurriedly written out the substantial heads of his address.

REMARKS

—OF—

Governor Wm. A. MacCorkle.

—OF—

WEST VIRGINIA.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen:—

Your Chairman in kindly compliment, has assigned to me the toast of West Virginia.

Whilst I appreciate the vast benefits to my state flowing from the opening of this Steamship Company, still, the subject is broader and wider than the confines of my State, even richly endowed by nature as she is.

This day marks an era in Southern and Western commercial relations. In storm and sunshine the old and wise men of the State have striven to bind together the South and West by a direct foreign trade through the ports of the South. Heretofore they have failed.

Some one has said that the old men of the South reminded him of the Hidalgos of Spain looking out from their broken porticoes over the summer sea and waiting for the return of the lost Armada.

Could he who wrote these words be here today, he would see these old men rising from their enforced rest and looking again eagerly to the sea, where, even their old eyes, weary and dim with the long years of hopeless waiting, can see the sheen of the sails of a gallant fleet bringing back to their sunny land the glory and riches so long departed.

These old men saw one port in the South holding a greater export trade than New York and New England combined, and they lived to see the sails from Southern ports fold their white wings and take flight from every sea.

The splendid exercises of today fitly commemorate the opening of an era which will see the Southern ports again take their places on the maps of the world's commerce. And it is passing strange that this combination of western product and southern export trade, for which the South has contended for one hundred years in Congress Hall and convention, should be really inaugurated by the great executive ability and vigorous energy of a son of New England, the distinguished gentleman who presides at the head of the table.

Only a few years ago he took charge of the Chesapeake and Ohio road. He found it a broken and worn system, with poor connections, badly equipped trains, an insufficient service and a languishing surrounding country. Today, under his vigorous personality, you see the finest trains in this great country, a splendid road-bed, connections from Lake to Sea, a perfect service, and a prosperous surrounding country.

He has surrounded himself with vigorous and able men in close touch with the people and the times, and the enterprise inaugurated today is the consummation of his labor for the South and West.

When I speak of the South and West, I do not mean

to be sectional and unpatriotic. When I discuss the North it is not from any spirit of partisanship or sectionalism. All patriots, whether north or south, should glory in the commercial greatness of the North. What I wish to assert is, that the day is now on us, when the South and West should join together in the great contest for markets rightly belonging to them. That great contest for commercial supremacy between the combined West and South, and against the North, is surely coming. Every interest of the South and West is together. Their every hope is intertwined. Nature has laid them in the same great physical system and in the same parallels of latitude. She has wrought her work so that the cheapest and quickest communication for the West with the Nations of the earth lies through the sunny waves and deep ports of the South. The certainty of vastly increasing manufacturing in the West, the inevitable lowering of tariff duties, will also compel the western producer to hunt new and foreign markets, and in these markets, he must compete with the producer of the North. To thus compete and live, he can not go to market by circuitous routes, as every mile of increased route is equivalent to added cost of production. Necessity absolutely demands that the West should become more and more a manufacturing section, whilst at the same time, her vastly increasing agricultural production and the inevitable settling and equalizing of prices demand, that the West herself, armed cap-a-pie enter the markets of the world. To succeed, she must herself directly enter these markets unhampered by northern middle men or manacled by long transportation tolls. Tonight, I declare to you, that within thirty years the empire of manufacturing must be with the men listening to my voice. The cheapness of fuel and raw material, the marvelous abundance of

each in the West, the great advantages of climate and locality, the nearness to the great staples of the South, must all bear their fruition. The first cotton mill west of the great eastern divide, began its song within the lives of men here tonight, and that the East can not compete with you is today attested by the silent mills of New England. I stand here pleading for a united South and West. I ask no bond of politics, but the stronger and better tie of commerce and trade. I speak with reason, when I say that the West will soon become the manufacturing centre of the world. The North and East are today entirely dependent upon manufacturing, and they manufacture the very articles which the West can manufacture cheaper and better. This will bring about year by year a less exchange of products between these sections. The West, not needing the products of the North, for she will herself be manufacturing them, must herself be a competitor of the North in every market of the world. She will need the readiest access to those markets independent of her great rival. To carry on this commercial war, she must have the great and peculiar staples of the South, and this fact, irrespective of deep and close and direct southern ports will surely unite the South and West, and make one dependent upon the other. Therefore why should the West strengthen the arms of her great rival, by giving to the north her export trade. The consequence of this direct export trade to the South and West is incalculable. New markets for our direct exportation means importation of foreign lands to us, and that importation must be as free from undue burdens and charges as the exportation. Today, every bale of cotton, every bushel of wheat, every hoghead of tobacco, and every product of the West and South, goes to its ultimate market burdened with the charges of north-

ern merchants and shippers, and every dollar in money and every article of commerce, resulting from the sales of those exports, pays its exchange to the cities of the North.

New York and New England conduct eight tenths of the export trade, although nearly all those exports by which the imports are purchased, are furnished by the South and West. You lend to the North eighty-five per cent. of every hundred dollars of her trading capital and get not a cent in return. Should this not cease? Should not we of the West and South be our own shippers and salesmen and money changers? Should the Giant be longer bound and should not the locks be allowed to grow? Can any reason be shown why we should longer give toll to our competitors? Nay, Verily. Therefore if the West is true to itself it will avail itself of its cheapest and safest route to the best markets and that route is through the Southern Atlantic ports.

Trade naturally follows the parallels of latitude, and, Newport News and not New York, is the natural harbor and outlet for the upper South, Southwest and Middle West. This harbor, by all the laws of nature and rules of trade, should command the middle Atlantic coast. For depth of water, facility of ingress and egress, nothing on the coast compares with it.

Take your map, see how it lies. It is right on the great Divide, right midway of the coast. The lines dividing the agricultural states of the South and West, and the manufacturing states of the North, unite here. Here is the dividing line between the consumer and producer. Look at the country naturally tributary to New York, and then, the country tributary to Newport News. New York has naturally only the valley of the Hudson. Newport News has an empire naturally tributary to her. Directly out from this port and

in the same latitude and in direct lines of communication, lie, first the Virginias, with their wealth of mine and field, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, middle and southern Illinois, the great central west, the upper portions of Alabama, North Carolina and Eastern Tennessee.

Tell me, why a grain merchant or a manufacturer from the middle West should go to New York? Why should the grand empire dominated by St. Louis and Cincinnati, go to New York instead of Newport News? The waving fields of the great valleys of the middle Mississippi and Ohio rivers, are tributary to this port, and every law of trade economics demands that the product of this rich region, with its limitless possibilities of mine and field and manufactory, should be distributed to the people of the earth through this port.

Nature so designed it. Before the artificial influences of trade had their effect, Charleston, a middle Atlantic port, had more commerce than all of New England and New York. These natural advantages went down upon the discovery of the water thermometer, the increased knowledge of the Gulf Stream, and the energy, wealth and packet ships of the North.

These conditions have now changed. The vast importance of this direct exportation for the South and West, and the great advantage of the Southern ports for that trade is now appreciated by those able to avail themselves of these advantages.

To this port the mileage to the shipper is less. Here there are no lighterage charges. The rate to the shipper north of the Ohio is three cents less than to New York. South of the Ohio it is five cents less. From central Kentucky it is five cents less. On cotton from the Memphis district, it is eight cents less, and in this port the steamer is in blue water whilst the New

York steamer has just began threading the devious way inside.

There is another and greater reason which will surely bring about the comingling and intertwining of Southern and Western interests.

There is a great market which is the patrimony, and which should be under the absolute control of the South and West. The nearest road thereto is through the southern Atlantic ports. That market is Central and South America, and one of the royal roads thereto is through the deep waters of this port. Here is to us a greater and more accessible market than Europe, and we should tolerate therein no tradesman, save our own.

Everything, its vast and varied products, its nearness to us, the eternal laws of trade, the very winds and currents of the sea, demand that the South and West should dominate this southern market. For us not to do so is to sell our birthright for a mess of pottage. The broad bosom of the inter-American seas should only bear American sails and its waves should only be vexed by American keels. By controlling this market you will have a trade territory within whose limits the sun is always ripening the growing grain; where in the providence of nature the gentle rain is ever falling to refresh the land; and where the frosts of winter are constantly mellowing the earth for the husbandmen. For this rich southern market the economy of nature has provided all of the things for which men in all ages have sought. That economy has wisely left out a place for the workshop in the South American land, and has given to us of the Northern Continent its highest development. Here, merchants of the West and South, are empires for trade and kingdoms for gain. Never had merchants

spread before their eyes more alluring fields for commerce.

Here are all climates, all soils, and all zones. Here are illimitable plains of rich and alluvial lands; boundless forests of rich and ornamental woods; mountains of copper ores and quicksilver; mines of gold and silver, and lead, diamonds and precious stones; dyes, rich spices, rare gems; indigo, quinine and drugs; wool, hides fiber and India rubber; coffee, sugar, cocoa, tobacco and fruit.

When studying this great question, a few days since I was amazed when, from the Great Master of ocean currents, I learned what the laws of nature had done to aid commercial trade between South America and the southern and lower middle Atlantic ports of our continent.

The Amazon is the great river outlet for South America, as the Mississippi is the outlet for Central North America.

The great receptacle for these rivers is the basin of the Gulf of Mexico and Carribbean sea. The equatorial current and the gulf stream make the real mouth of the Amazon just outside of the southern coast of the United States. By the influence of the gulf stream a vessel sailing from the mouth of the Amazon to Europe must pass by the shores of the southern states and through the waters of southern ports.

With the opening of the Nicaraguan Canal across the Isthmus, the whole commerce of the North, and of Europe, must pass right by this port and the Southern Atlantic ports to get to China or the East Indies. By reason of the trade winds and currents of the Atlantic this port must be a half way house from the Gulf to New York, to England and Europe and to the ports in Africa, South America and India. Commodore Maury says:

"In the Amazonian trade, the winds for us are fair to go and fair to come. And we of the Atlantic sea coast are the only people for whom they are feasible both ways.

The voyage from the capes of Virginia or from Charleston to the Amazon, is the most certain voyage, as to the length of time, that is between any of the ports in the Atlantic ocean."

I but faintly give the reasons why the physical conditions, the wind and the sea and its currents, place into the hands of the South and West, the markets of South America.

This is the natural market of the South and West, and they should outsell both the North and England therein, and the only competitors with this port in this market, should be Norfolk or New Orleans.

This is no question for debate, for if the merchants and manufacturers of the West and South expect to continue their rate of prosperity they must look to, and take charge of, this South American trade. If we hesitate now you will again witness the vigor and energy of the North turning upside down the laws of trade. Her vim and energy in the nineteenth century placed the mouth of the Mississippi at New York, and that same power, unless we are true to ourselves, will in the twentieth century, roll the waves of the Amazon into its great harbor.

Every true American glories in the greatness of New York, and she will always be a great importing city, but in this contest, I am for the South and West.

In the short time Mr. Chairman necessarily allotted to me by your courtesy, I can but touch the threshold of the great argument, but if the West and South are but true to themselves I can with prophetic vision look out on the broad waters of this bay and see it

crowded with the vessels of every clime and ocean and country, carrying to the nations of the earth, the product of your fertile plains, and busy workshops. The West and South will feel the impulse given by these markets, and this direct commerce. Cities will spring up like magic, railroads will be built, steamships launched, trade accelerated, and nations not knowing freedom will learn from our merchants that commerce and freedom walk hand in hand, one and inseparable. There is no freeman like commerce.

