

IN RADICAL DAYS.

Chester Negro Tells of Time When He Was a Senator.

How Wade Hampton redeemed the State in carpetbagging days in South Carolina formed the topic of a rare interview with Greene Coleman, of Charlotte, yesterday, when the aged negro, once a State senator, wearing a high beaver hat and Prince Albert coat, was in the seventh zenith of negro heaven in the halls of the old South Carolina State house at Columbia, says the Charlotte Observer.

"Them was days when de nigger was in his glory fo sure," remarked Coleman, as he related with a relish, recollections of 1875 and '76 when the carpetbaggers and the niggers held the State of South Carolina at their mercy; when the corridors of the State house at Columbia reeked with drunken statesmen, when thousands of dollars worth of liquors and cordials and choice cigars were kept constantly on tap at the State house for the hundred or more nigger senators and 'statesmen' and their carpetbagging friends, who conducted a reign of terror second only to the days of the Roman upheaval.

The skies were overcast with dark ominous clouds of social and political unrest back there in '75 and '76 when Wade Hampton stepped in and redeemed the fair name of the Palmetto State, with the cooperation of native whites and the since-famous "red-shirts" whose loyalty and devotion to their intrepid leader and in-born courage within their blood-red shirts turned out every negro from a statesman's berth, stopped the looting of the State treasury, bridled graft and bribes and again made South Carolina righteous and unashamed.

And Greene Coleman, then a resident of Chester, S. C., and a typical negro of his day and time in intelligence and moral stamina, was elected to office by his henchmen and nigger voters, to represent Chester in the State legislature. The old negro tells about it with rare frankness.

He described in his own inimitable way how the niggers and carpetbaggers ran rampant with the people's money and with their voting power, appropriations for anything under the sun being as readily obtained as a match with which to light a twenty-cent cigar purchased at the expense of the commonwealth. There were maybe, he says, 150 niggers in the halls of the State legislature back there in '75 and '76, and every one of them felt that it was a wonderful time for the black race. And they made every minute of it count because deep in their hearts they knew a day of reckoning would come, and when it did—they realized the negro would be no more in the exalted places so rudely usurped by the power of men who stripped the State of all it held dear and sold themselves to the highest bidders.

Votes were sold openly and without shame, ten, twenty, thirty, at a time some for as high as a hundred dollars and others as low as five and ten dollars, according to the amount of graft the niggers had been told were available. Greene Coleman admitted without a touch of shame or remorse, that the highest price he ever obtained for his vote in the South Carolina State house was \$100 in United States currency, and it was a "heap sight of money" to a nigger brought up on a plantation in those days.

Then the former Chester negro told of the silent, mysterious, awe-inspiring activities of the Ku-Klux-Klan and the terrible way in which one after another negro senators and lawmakers of the day before disappeared as if the earth had opened and swallowed them, until the fear of the wrath of God or some unseen, unknown force turned craven the nigger heart and his little stock of courage oozed through his skin until it left him weak, hollow eyed and shivering on the threshold of frantic despair.

"We took our meals with the white carpetbaggers at the hotel near the State house in Columbia and slept there too, when we got any sleep because there was gambling going on all night and games of chance for money and such things, but we mixed with the white folks all the time and at night we had carriages and spans of horses to draw us about town or wherever we wanted to go with our beaver hats and our good clothes. Oh, boss, things come easy in those days.

"Yas sir, boss, I done sold my votes many en many a time for most cash in sight but the highest bid ever I got was \$100, en I tucks it in my jeans like all de rest. I didn't care no moah for South Carolina den what I could git outen it, jes like all of de white folks en niggers in power dem days. We had good liquor too in our desks and out in de halls where we could ask folks to take some with us, en we had pages fer to wait on us like we was lords of the land."

Coleman described in the negro vernacular of the appearance on the

political horizon of Gen. Wade Hampton, twice governor of South Carolina, and how Hampton's mighty power and stalwart personality cleared the atmosphere within a few months, drove the carpetbaggers to cover and the Ku-Klux-Klan made inroads into the ranks of the pilferers of statehood and one by one the dark senators and lawmakers disappeared as if by magic, leaving no word, writing no regrets, telling no

tales, but always that mysterious, inexplicable silence, after the warning, and some never even told their associates of those grewsome warnings of the fate that lay before them.

"I done got scared unto death," said Greene, in relating his own experiences. "I done see dem disappear like dey go up in smoke, one by one, 'til they begin whispering 'bout de Ku-Klux getting dis one en dat. Den one day I goes to mah room in

de hotel whar we all stay and dere I finds a note to dis nigger a tellin' him dat if he 'spects ter live en breave he better got so fer way dat dey can't tell him from black smoke. Boss, did I stay dere in mah glory en recompense? Did I? No, siree, boss man, jes tuk de fust means of locomotion dis nigger finds en en takes mahself back younder ter Chester. En den I didn't stop. I keeps right on goin', boss 'til I gits across de

line. I 'spects ef I done staid dere anodder night dem red shirts or dem Ku-Klux done kotch me fo sure."

Head for Business.

"Has your boy Josh a head for business?"

"Yep," replied Farmer Cornassel, "He's always talkin' about makin' money. I kind o' wish his hands was as good for work as his head is for business."—Baltimore Sun.

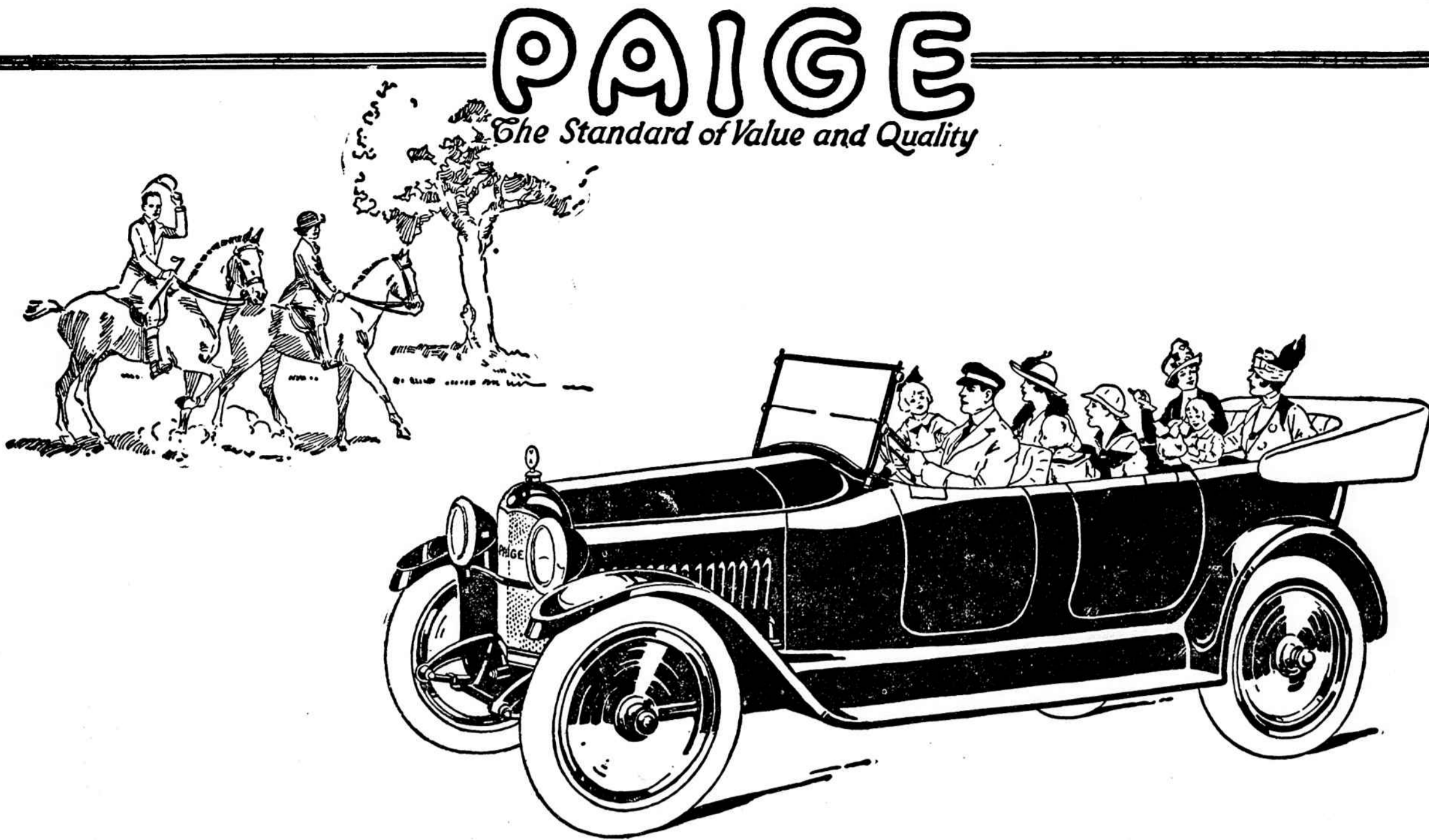
Painful Recollection.

"I suppose when you contemplate your books they recall many happy hours to you," said the bibliophile.

"I'm afraid not," answered Mr. Dubwaite.

"You surprise me."

"It's this way. Whenever I look at those books the first thought that occurs to me is the hard time I had paying the installments on them."—New York American.



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