

IMPRESSIONS OF NEW KINGSTREE.

MR. JAMES HENRY RICE, JR., FINDS PHENOMENAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT FOR THE LAST FOUR YEARS.

Asked for his impressions of New Kingstree by a Richmond man, Mr. James Henry Rice, Jr., the well-known newspaper man who is now representing the Columbia State in the tour of the Clemson cars, responded as follows:

"What are my impressions of Kingstree, and what do I think of the advance made within four years?"

"I was so much amazed—so stunned, bewildered, knocked silly by all that has come upon me in this municipality, that there is difficulty in analyzing the impression, and scarcely less difficulty in telling in plain language what I have seen.

"The development of Kingstree, from one of the deadest towns, in a business sense, I ever did see, into one of the liveliest communities in the whole State of South Carolina, is certainly a remarkable achievement, no matter how it was brought about; and when I am informed by the leading citizens of the community, by Dr. D. C. Scott, Mr. J. A. Kelley and others, that Kingstree is practically out of debt and that all the bonds for the erection of the modern school building and other public enterprises were taken at home and that these bonds have been already retired, the wonder grows into the class of miracle.

"The people of Kingstree are guilty of having done this thing; the evidence is overwhelming, but I am not yet clear as to what started up this furious activity.

"No matter what started it up, Kingstree has become a town that must be taken seriously. Hereafter no account of eastern South Carolina can disregard Kingstree. Its position is assured.

"The Atlantic Coast Line railroad has built the best station on its line in South Carolina here, and has placed it at the foot of Main street. To meet this Main street has been extended to the railroad from above and a new line of brick stores has been begun below.

"Mr. Philip H. Stoll Saturday drove me down to the new residence section where a town, completely new and modern, has been built, the houses ranking with fine houses anywhere. Three years ago this was an old field and the rabbits had burrows in the grass.

"Turning back is Mr. Thorn's splendid residence. Lighted by electric lights and acetylene gas, built on modern lines after a trained architect's designs, it is a home worthy of any community.

"The new graded school building, costing something like \$12,000 and constructed of handsome brick, is equal to the best of its class in South Carolina, and on every hand there are new residences, all of them improvements on the class of buildings which were thought to be good enough for old Kingstree in the 'bear, dead days' when folks slept late in the mornings.

"The old jail has been torn down just before it fell in on some hapless prisoner and the new one is strong enough to hold any kind of prisoner. The new hotel is going to be an addition and a much needed addition to the town—I had almost said city. It will have forty rooms, be provided with water, baths, lavatories, lights, and all modern comforts. A fire, which must have been sent by Providence, caught the old rat-traps by the court house and

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burned them down. Piles of brick, freshly baked, show that something will be going on in this burnt lot at once.

"Nothing can ever wipe out the sentiment attaching to the old bridge over Black river—too many folks did their courting there for that to pass away—but the new structure, which will cost \$5,000, is of solid steel and is being built by the American Bridge Co., the hill having been graded down on the town side, so as to make a level approach. It was established a passage-way through the swamp which may be relied on in any weather. No other town in the Pee Dee, except Conway, has such an achievement to its credit.

"I am told that bonds for electric lights have already been voted and that sewerage and waterworks will follow. I believe they will; I am ready to believe anything now about Kingstree—frankly, the thing has upset my calculations.

"That the situation is ideal for drainage and for the building of a town of any size I always knew; the health never gave concern to those who had taken trouble to look into the facts.

"From end to end the town is filled with new buildings—brick altogether in the business area—they must all be brick now, I understand, and that is right.

"The drug stores used to be shops; they are city drug stores now and creditable to the place. I stood in one of the large stores Saturday and watched the trade come and go. A pretty cashier sat on a raised desk in the centre and looked after the delivery just as they do in large city stores. Everything was rush and bustle. The jam was unpleasant and cash was changing hands fast. Four years ago, at about the same time of the year, I stood for two hours in the same store and talked to the proprietor, being interrupted once or twice by a customer coming in to buy a cigar.

"The County Record was housed in a small wooden building then; I find it in a large brick building now and even that is getting too small for the crowding business of the paper. Live town, live paper—same old story, and the story should have many encores.

"Last, but far from the least, is the concrete stone cotton storage warehouse near the depot, which has been recently built. This building is a handsome piece of architecture with a storage capacity of 3,000 bales of cotton. Such buildings are a new departure in South Carolina and Kingstree deserves all the more credit for her pioneer enterprise. With her corn cribs plentifully stored and a place to house the cotton she holds for good prices, the South can snap her fingers at Wall street and roll up wealth undreamed of in the philosophy of our forefathers.

"There are few relics of the old times left and they are going fast. As I said to you at the outset—I am hardly in a

proper frame of mind to express myself. To tell the plain truth would sound so like willful exaggeration that I almost hesitate to speak out, and not to tell it is to do injustice to your progressive community.

"Your community deserves all the good things that are coming to you, and there will be nothing this community will be willing to let go by now, since it has tasted the sweets of growing.

"The development of eastern South Carolina is the dream of my life—before my eyes night and day—and when one comes on this sort of thing, the heart beats fast and the dreams come true.

"Kingstree was always an idyllic community socially, as everybody knew that had the happiness of its acquaintance. In that regard it needed no improvement and I trust it will have none—the old was good enough, and you can not paint the lily with hope of improving its delicate tracery of veins and leaf.

"Kingstree is now worthy to be the county seat of the great county of Williamsburg, and this outburst of activity in construction, this burst of speed in the race of progress, is an earnest of achievement too great to be measured by human forecast.

"I am charmed beyond expression; to Mr and Mrs and Miss Kingstree, I take off my hat. They have done a thing worth doing and nobody ever did a thing better."

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THE GROUND HOG APPEARED

And There Will be Bad Weather According to the Old Dutch Legend.

"The weather bureau has predicted some cold and disagreeable weather this month and the forecast must be good this time," said a ground hog believer Saturday, "for the ground hog saw his shadow and went a scurrying back to his hole, there to remain for six weeks yet."

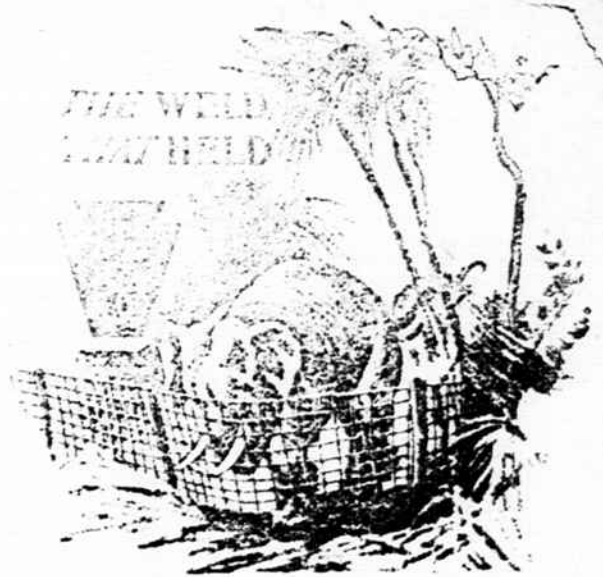
It appeared that there might be a compromise with the barometer, for the sun had shone for only a short while early in the morning when the skies became cloudy and shut out the rays of the fire ball. But again in the afternoon, the skies cleared and again did the sun shine brightly, and the ground hog seeing his shadow on the damp earth became frightened and back he hurried to his underground cavern and will remain there for six weeks yet, when he will again come into the living world and no matter whether the sun shines or not that day he will have overcome his first scare and determine not to be frightened any more—and the winter will be over.

So its wood and coal for six weeks. Overcoats will have to stand a little more wear and the farmers up in Pennsylvania and Maryland will sit around fires for some time yet before they can put a hand to the plow. Children will play on the hills with their sleds and sleigh bells will jingle with merriment, for the ground hog is now fast asleep in his hole and will sleep for over 40 days to come. For as the German legend goes, "If Candlemas day be bright and fair the ground hog will return to his lair."

And yesterday was Candlemas day and it was fair in the early morn and late in the afternoon.

The Dutch weather prophets and our government prognosticators have agreed, and when such a seldom thing happens their joint prediction must have some weight about it. So when it gets cold and disagreeable, don't place all the blame on the weather man, for the ground hog has half interest, having leased his monopoly for 40 days.—The State.

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