

President Wright

Chapel

December 9, 1926

I hope you have been reading the papers and keeping up with current events. If so, you have noticed recently that a statue has been given to the state, representing, or supposed to be representing, Virginia Dare. I haven't seen this piece of art. I understand it is the work of a woman sculptor. I have been told that it is a beautiful piece of work. The newspaper people and various and sundry other people who have seen it have written, - certainly, not very complimentary articles about it. That set me to thinking and gives me the theme that I want to talk to you about this morning.

It seems to be one of the characteristics of the people of North Carolina to find fault with everything that is done. I wonder if you ever thought about that. Here is something that is done and it doesn't exactly suit me, and so I condemn it world without end; and here is something that is done, and it doesn't exactly suit you, and you condemn it world without end. I am wondering if that is a good thing. I am sure if the state ever reaches to real greatness in the highest sense of the word, and gets to the point so that all of the people of the state, with one accord, will approve it, that we will certainly have almost a perfect state in which to live. A certain amount of criticism is unquestionably good for people, there is no doubt about that. There is one good side to this, at least, it shows that our people are thinking and that they have opinions and that is good for people, but I am wondering if we wouldn't get farther if we tried to find the good instead of trying to find the opposite. All through your life you are going to find something in the world that you can find fault with. I dare say, if you tried with all the energy you have, that you possibly would find some little thing in your own life that you could find fault with. Probably you might find some big thing in your own life that you could find fault with. I believe a person gets

more out of life if he gets on the other side, and as we go along from day to day if we look for the good, if we look for the things that we can approve, if we see the beautiful rose instead of sticking our fingers on the thorns. Practically every rose has a number of thorns just below it, and we can really complain greatly of how the thorns prick our hands, or we can get the aroma and see the beauty and really enjoy the flower. It is an opportunity we have and it is not only true about the rose, it is true about almost everything.

I do not believe that the people are mean and ill at heart. I believe the majority of folks are good at heart, and that they really want to do the worth while thing. I have faith in people and when something goes wrong, somehow I just get a little bit more out of it, if I try to see not the wrong, but the other side. When we say something goes wrong, we mean that it goes contrary to what we wanted or expected, and sometimes the thing that we want or the thing that we expect really isn't the best.

I should like to see the good people of this old state really begin to look for the beautiful and the worth while and occasionally, at least, to praise a person for having done well. I am going to see that representation of Virginia Dare. Of course, it is just a mere concept carved into stone, because we don't know anything about Virginia Dare. All we know is that she was the granddaughter of White who headed the colony that settled on Roanoke Island, and that she was subsequently christened. We know she lived nine days, and we know according to traditions that she has had nine lives, but all we know is that the little child lived for a little while, and then not only Virginia Dare, but the colony, passed on into darkness, and we know not how nor where they disappeared. It is all shut down in darkness and no man knows. We know that this little girl was the first child born of white parents on this continent. The record tells us that, and that she was named Virginia because she was born in the colony of

Virginia, or supposed to be a possession at that time. So here comes an artist and puts something up to commemorate this first white child born in America, and out of her concept she makes what all admit is a beautiful piece of statuary, and we find fault with it, because it doesn't conform to our individual ideas of what the artist ought to have conceived. We are not willing to let the artist have her concept and place it in stone. We are an interesting people, we love to complain. I believe we would get more out of life if we said nice things. I believe we would get farther in life and I am sure we would be happier, if we looked on the bright side. There is enough darkness and gloom. There are enough cloudy, rainy days in one's life. There is enough of the dark side that comes into every human soul, and how much happier we would be if we looked at the silver lining around the clouds and enjoyed the beauty of the world in which we live if we picked out the things in human life that are worth while and magnified them. Our newspapers are doing the same kind of thing. Some man does something or some woman does something that is really worth while and we make a short notice of it, almost nothing. And some other person does something, maybe it is a heinous crime, and it is given a large headline, much notoriety. Here's a criminal who breaks out of prison and hides away and the newspapers are full of it, day after day, - big headlines. Here's a person who stays at his post of duty day in and day out and renders a really and truly great service to his state and country, and we hardly ever hear about it. We have such people in North Carolina. The State Treasurer in this state has been there, I believe, approximately twenty years, and his records are absolutely clean and straight. Auditor after auditor has gone over the records, and everything Ben Lacey has done has been done in keeping with the rules of honesty, and never a word of commendation. Occasionally you will see some headline, perhaps, like when he was in New York a year ago, and he was attacked with heart trouble, you will find a headline like that about him. It isn't Mr. Lacey

I am talking about. It is the man who sticks to his post of duty and renders a real service to his state or country, there is but little said about it, but if he has broken out of the penitentiary, he is advertised. We would get more, it seems to me, out of this world, by looking at those who are doing the right thing and giving them our best thought and our best attention and enjoy the worth while things in life instead of groaning over the things that are not what they should be. There is more joy in the sunshine of life than in the storms that come only occasionally. I hope we will look at the sunshine.