THE DISPATCH.

BY COWARDIN & ELLYSON.

CASH—INVARIABLY IN ADVANCE.

The DAILY DISPATCH is delivered to subscribers at FIFTEEN CENTS per week, payable to the carriers weekly. Mailed at $6 per annum; $3 for six months; 75c. per month for a shorter period.
The SEMI-WEEKLY DISPATCH at $3 per annum, or $1.50 for six months.
The WEEKLY DISPATCH at $2 per annum.

DAILY DISPATCH.

VOL. XLIX. RICHMOND, VA., TUESDAY MORNING, MARCH 7, 1876. NO. 58.

THE DISPATCH.

TERMS OF ADVERTISING:

CASH—INVARIABLY IN ADVANCE.

One square, one insertion	$0 75
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Richmond Dispatch.

THE CIRCULATION OF THE DISPATCH IS LARGER THAN THE COMBINED CIRCULATION OF ALL THE OTHER DAILY NEWSPAPERS OF THE CITY.

TUESDAY.....MARCH 7, 1876.

WEATHER REPORT.

PROBABILITIES TO-DAY.—*Washington*, March 6, 1876.—For New England and the Middle and South Atlantic States, increasing cloudiness, southeast to southwest winds, slight changes in temperature, and falling barometer, followed by rain during Tuesday.

THE WEATHER YESTERDAY and on Sunday was clear, mild, and pleasant.

THERMOMETER YESTERDAY: 6 A. M., 42; 9 A. M., 52; 12 M., 73; 3 P. M., 72; 6 P. M., 68; midnight, 56.

LOCAL MATTERS.

THE COMMON COUNCIL.

THE DANVILLE AND YORK RIVER CONNECTION SUBJECT POSTPONED—MR. JOSEPH R. ANDERSON UNANIMOUSLY CHOSEN PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL—HOW MONROE PARK IS TO BE LIGHTED—ANNUAL REPORT OF THE WATERING COMMITTEE—THE PROBABLE EXTENSION OF THE PUMP-HOUSE—FRAMED BUILDINGS—THE APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE PASSED, AND THE DEAD-LOCK REMOVED—HAS THE COUNCIL THE RIGHT TO PENSION A RETIRED POLICEMAN?—THE CITY ATTORNEY SAYS NO, BUT THE COUNCIL MEANS TO PAY HIM, &c., &c., &c.

The regular meeting of the Common Council was held in the Council chamber at 8 P. M. yesterday. Present at roll-call: Messrs. Christian, Curtis, Davis of Madison Ward, Davis of Marshall Ward, Foster, Gilman, Higgins, Jenkins, Johnson, Lauer, Manson, Metzger, Newell, Oliver, Straus, Tower, Charles E. Whitlock, Robert H. Whitlock, and Wingfield.

The Council was called to order by Mr. Davis of Madison Ward, and on his motion Mr. M. L. Straus was invited to preside.

MORE FRAMED BUILDINGS.

Mr. Straus, from the Joint Committee on the Fire Department, presented a resolution giving permission to the following persons to erect framed buildings in the city: F. W. Wagner, wood- and coal-house corner Brook avenue and Duval streets; John C. Wilson, dwelling adjoining No. 509 Twenty-seventh street; William H. Gwathmey, school-house, N street between Thirty-first and Thirty-second streets; A. A. Kershaw, addition to residence corner Cumberland and City streets; Calvin Robertson, dwelling corner Eighteenth and Venable streets.

The committee also presented a resolution rejecting the petitions of B. F. Turner, stable on alley between St. James and Adams streets; E. Holzinger, shed on lot corner City and Second streets; Bell & Bowles, carpenter-shop on lot in rear of old Spotswood Hotel site.

The resolutions were agreed to.

THE DANVILLE AND YORK RIVER CONNECTION.

On motion of Mr. Christian the general order of business was temporarily suspended. Mr. Christian suggested that it would be well to postpone the consideration of the matter in controversy in regard to the Danville and York River connection, because Mr. Enders, who had just retained counsel in the case, had not been able to possess his counsel with all the facts.

Mr. Davis of Madison Ward suggested that the Council had better have a special meeting.

Mr. Christian's motion was agreed to.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT.

On motion of Mr. Christian the Council next proceeded to elect a permanent president.

Mr. Christian nominated General Joseph R. Anderson, and paid him a high compliment.

The nomination was seconded by Messrs. Curtis and Straus; and the roll being called, General Anderson was unanimously elected president.

On motion of Mr. Curtis it was ordered that a committee of three be appointed to wait upon General Anderson and inform him of his election.

The Chair appointed Messrs. Curtis, Charles E. Whitlock, and Christian.

The committee retired, and after a brief absence returned and escorted the newly-elected President to the chair.

Mr. Straus handed the gavel to Mr. Anderson, and informed him that it was with very great pleasure that he yielded him the very honorable position of presiding officer.

Mr. Anderson thanked the Council very gratefully for the compliment paid him, and it was with a pleasure that he could say that the important acts of the Council met with his approbation and sanction. He had been a resident of the city thirty years, and for twenty-five years he had the honor of holding a seat in the Council. In the past, as now, the Council was made up of the leading citizens of Richmond, both professional men, merchants, and manufacturers. He recognized many of his old acquaintances and friends still in the Council, and it was a pleasure to him to know that so many willing hearts were still left to discharge the important duties devolving upon this body.

ANNUAL MESSAGE OF THE MAYOR.

The sergeant-at-arms laid before the Council the annual message of his Honor Mayor Keiley.

On motion of Mr. Christian, the message was received and ordered to be printed with the annual reports.

STREETS GENERALLY.

Mr. Charles E. Whitlock, from the Committee on Streets, presented the following joint resolution:

Resolved (the Board of Aldermen concurring), That the Committee on Streets Generally are hereby empowered to arbitrate the claim of B. A. Brauer and J. F. Wolf *vs.* The City for alleged damage to their property upon the following basis: The Committee on Streets shall select one referee and the claimants shall select one referee (with authority to said referees in case of disagreement to select a third referee), who shall carefully examine the facts and merits of the whole matter, and decide—*first*, whether it is liable at all; and *second*, if they find that the city is liable, then to ascertain and award the amount of damage to be paid to each of the claimants, which said finding shall be binding upon all parties interested and a final termination of the matter, and be certified to the Auditor for payment.

The committee also presented resolutions allowing Joseph Augustine to erect a frame stand corner Main and Tenth streets; rejecting the petition of B. W. Green for connecting with city sewer; and appropriating $1,500 from the street fund for widening Fourteenth street from Cary to Dock street.

The resolutions were agreed to.

RELIEF OF THE POOR.

Mr. Straus, from the Committee for the Relief of the Poor, presented the monthly report of the number of inmates received, discharged, and died at the city almshouse during the month of February, 1876. Also, the quantity of wood, coke, meal, coffins, and burials furnished to the indigent outside of the almshouse, together with the services rendered by the city ambulance for the same period.

LIGHT.

Mr. Higgins, from the Committee on Light, presented the following:

Resolved (the Board of Aldermen concurring), That the lamps in Monroe Square (except those immediately on the line of the main thoroughfare in said square) shall be lighted only from May 1st to October 15th in each year; and that the Chief of Police be instructed accordingly.

Agreed to.

CITY WATER-WORKS.

Mr. Straus, from the Committee on Water, submitted the annual report of the superintendent of the City Water-Works. Since the last report the pumping- and supply-mains from both reservoirs have been completed, and the upper reservoir has so far advanced in its progress that in a few weeks of the early spring this important part of our water-works will have reached completion. The new pumps have been almost incessantly at work supplying, through the upper reservoir, the highest portions of the city, while the old pumps have been as constantantly at work keeping up the supply to the lower sections. By reference to the report of the superintendent for 1871 it will be seen that the average daily consumption was 2,393,334 gallons, with a maximum pumping capacity of 3,500,000 gallons. The new pumps were put into operation September, 1874, and by adding 3,080,000 gallons have a total capacity of 7,580,000 gallons, when the consumption was 3,482,805 gallons. As long as this rate of supply and consumption continued the storage was sufficient to carry us through the interruptions referred to; but what will be the condition of the works in a year or two hence if the present rate of increasing consumption continues? The superintendent's present report shows a daily consumption for January of 5,000,000 gal ons. The maximum pumping capacity is 7,580,000 gallons. If the increase of next summer over the consumption of the winter is at a corresponding rate of last year, it is easy to see how small a margin will be left in the pumping capacity. The committee feel reluctant to represent such a prospect ahead when we have scarcely completed the extension of the works already ordered. The committee prefer to meet this question of the future of the works, and make it a matter of record at this time. We are not willing to leave to our successors any sudden consideration of our necessities, which shall appear to shift the burden of providing for them to their shoulders, and we therefore unhesitatingly urge this matter upon the consideration of the Councils. The importance of having telegraphic communications from all parts of the works with the city office induces the committee to recommend that a line be laid and the necessary apparatus purchased, &c.

The report was received.

THE APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE

Common Council ordinance making appropriations for the year 1876, with the amendments proposed by the Board of Aldermen, was taken up.

The amendments proposed by the Board were to—

Strike out from the appropriation to discount and interest $3,000 and add the same to streets.

Strike out $3,000 from "paving sidewalks" and add the same to roller and crusher pay-rolls.

Strike out $4,500 for new engine-house and add the same to contingent fund.

Mr. Purcell opposed the amendments.

Messrs. Christian, Curtis, R. H. Whitlock, and Towers addressed the Council in favor of the amendments.

The vote being taken by ayes and noes, the first amendment was adopted by the following vote:

AYES.—Messrs. Babcock, Christian, Curtis, Charles T. Davis, T. Wiley Davis, Foster, Gilman, Jenkins, Johnson, Klein, Lauer, Manson, Metzger, Newell, Oliver, Pulliam, Tower, Charles E. Whitlock, R. H. Whitlock, Wingfield, and Anderson—24.

NOES.—Messrs. Davenport, Higgins, Purcell, and Straus—4.

The other amendments were agreed to.

FROM THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN.

Board of Aldermen amendatory ordinance concerning sinks, cess-pools, &c., was taken up and passed.

Board joint resolution granting permits for the erection of framed dwellings was taken up and concurred in by the Common Council.

THE PENSIONED POLICEMAN.

The City Attorney, to whom was referred the resolution appropriating $30 per month for six months to William Gardner, a retired policeman, reported that in his opinion the Council had not the authority to legally make the appropriation. The question, however, was a new one, and the Attorney states that it can be easily settled by the courts.

Mr. Pulliam explained that it was on his motion that the matter had been referred to the City Attorney.

Mr. Davis of Madison Ward said he was opposed to violating the city charter, and he would therefore move to strike out $360 to pensions and add it to the sum appropriated to discount and interest.

Mr. Jenkins moved to lay the opinion of the City Attorney and the resolution giving Mr. Gardner thirty dollars per month on the table. Agreed to.

Mr. Davenport presented a resolution to employ Mr. Gardner on the police force, and give him some light work to do.

Mr. R. H. Whitlock said that he didn't want to get around the matter in that way. If this $360 was to be given to this gentleman he hoped that it would be done by a direct vote.

Mr. Davis of Madison Ward moved to refer the resolution to the Board of Police Commissioners. Lost.

The motion to table the resolution was then reconsidered, and the resolution passed after all. So Mr. Gardner will continue to get his pay.

RESOLUTIONS, ETC.

By Mr. Whitlock: A joint resolution that hereafter when any street which is now graded or may be hereafter graded, &c., shall be done under section 25 of chapter 3 of the city charter. Referred to the Committee on Ordinances.

By the same: A resolution for report of cost, &c., of all work on streets except repairs, which they recommend to be done during the next twelve months. Referred.

By Mr. Newell: A resolution for the grading of Twenty-third street from Venable to Marshall. Referred.

By Mr. Christian: A resolution as to the practicability of providing an armory for the First regiment, &c. Referred.

By same: A resolution authorizing the Mayor to make a deed conveying a certain lot of land near Oakwood to the congregation of Beth Ahaba, &c. Agreed to.

By Mr. Purcell: A resolution to repair Twelfth street at its intersection with Franklin. Referred.

By same: A resolution as to what expenses of the city can be curtailed, &c. Referred to the Committee on Retrenchment and Reform.

Mr. Davis of Marshall Ward laid before the Council a communication from the Mayor announcing the death of Mr. James R. Dowell, superintendent of fire-alarm and police-telegraph, &c.

Mr. Davis also presented a resolution calling for an ordinance to regulate election, salary, &c., of superintendent of fire-alarm and police-telegraph.

By Mr. Tower: A resolution for an amendment to the rules of the Council, and providing for the printing of 150 copies, &c. Referred to Committee on Rules.

By Mr. R. H. Whitlock: A resolution authoring the Committee on Fire-Alarm and Police-Telegraph to advertise for a superintendent, &c. Tabled.

By Mr. Johnson: A resolution fixing one dollar and a half per day for cemetery laborers instead of one dollar, as at present. Rejected.

On motion of Mr. Pulliam the Council adjourned at 9 o'clock.

QUICK TIME.—The fine three-masted schooner Ellenora Van Dusen, Captain Godfrey, which arrived at this port on Sunday from Boston, made the trip from wharf to wharf in exactly four days. This is perhaps the best time ever made by a sailing vessel between the two ports.

MAYOR KEILEY'S ANNUAL MESSAGE.

A REVIEW OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT DURING THE PAST YEAR.

THE FINANCES.

"WE HAVE SOMETHING OF VALUE TO SHOW FOR EVERY DOLLAR OF OUR DEBT."

RICHMOND'S HEALTH.

A SKETCH OF THE CHARITIES AND PRISONS.

STREET IMPROVEMENTS.

THE MAYOR RECOMMENDS THAT THE COMMITTEES ON STREETS, WATER, AND GAS ACT IN CONCERT WHEN THE BED OF A STREET IS TO BE OPENED—THE GAS, FIRE, AND POLICE DEPARTMENTS—THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS—WHAT THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY HAS DONE FOR RICHMOND—IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATIONS—CONCLUSION, ETC., ETC.

As customary on the first Monday in March, Mayor Keiley sent in his annual message to the City Council yesterday evening. The full text of the document will be found below. The message will be printed and bound in the Annual Reports:

MAYOR'S OFFICE,
RICHMOND, March 1, 1876.

To the City Council:

Gentlemen,—I have the honor to transmit herewith the reports of the heads of departments of the city government for the fiscal year ending January 31, 1876; and, conforming to the requirements of the charter, beg to add such recommendations as seem to me of value.

It is a subject of great satisfaction that I may renew my claim of exceptional honesty, faithfulness, and capacity for the general administration of the city; and as it would be my duty to investigate and correct, if blame was imputable, it is no less my duty to praise where truth requires it. We are passing through a season of universal suspiciousness and universal criticism of official conduct—a period unhappily, also, whose widespread corruption and dishonesty justifies this distrust; still, but in a single instance has there been even a suggestion of maladministration in Richmond, and an investigation, protracted for weeks, to which the whole community was invited to contribute by public advertisement, failed to fix upon any public officer a solitary stain of fraud, or warrant the suspicion of the corrupt use of a dollar of the public funds by any party or for any purpose.

FINANCE.

The estimate of receipts for the year, exclusive of the proceeds of bills payable and the sale of bonds, was $982,015; the actual receipts, exclusive of those items, were $992,915. The total income from all sources was one million five hundred and twelve thousand three hundred and eighty-seven dollars ($1,512,387); the total disbursements (including bills payable, $269,160, and the new reservoir, $196,084) were one million four hundred and eighty thousand five hundred and eighty-eight dollars ($1,480,588), leaving a treasury balance on hand February 1, 1876, of $31,799, against which sundry unexpended appropriations and bills payable, amounting to $17,930, are chargeable, making the actual surplus carried over to the next year $13,869. The total bonded debt February 1, 1875, was $4,239,727.97; issued during the year, $257,600; deduct bonds paid and cancelled, $64,782.50; net increase, $192 817.50; bonded debt February 1, 1876, $4,432,545.47.

Under act of Assemly passed April 16, 1874, the city is inhibited from increasing its debt beyond eighteen per cent. of the assessed value of its real estate, and all further issues are declared void. The city assessment of 1874 made the value of the real estate of Richmond $29,166,979. In the fall of last year an assessment was made, under State law, affixing the value at $29,093,546, and the depreciation in the value of real property has been such during the last two years, that many well-informed persons believe this estimate to be at least a million dollars too high. But taking the State assessment to be correct, the utmost limit of bond-issue will be reached at $4,876,838. It should be our constant care to recede from, rather than approach, this maximum. A few years ago a proposition to place a mortgage of eighteen per cent. on all the realty of any city in the Union would be looked on as the most grevious oppression; but immediately after the war an epidemic of municipal extravagance broke out, and for the construction of costly parks, magnificent public buildings, expensive pavements, and the like, a municipal debt was created whose amount is simply appalling. The total municipal (city, town, and county) indebtedness of the United States in 1870 was $328,244,520. To-day the aggregate debts of the cities of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Brooklyn, and Baltimore alone, surpass this enormous sum by three millions of dollars, and the entire municipal indebtedness of the country at this time is over six hundred millions of dollars ($600,000,000), a sum more than three times the debt of the cities of England. It has required all the firmness and conservatism of the best citizens of Richmond having charge of her interests to save her from falling into this current, and to restrict her expenditures to works of necessity. We have no costly parks, and need none. We have the worst city hall in the United States, and it serves its purpose, nevertheless. We have no history of ruinous experiments with shoddy pavement to record and regret, and pay for. In a word, we have something of value to show for every dollar of our debt, and, what is better, a wholesome public sentiment that upholds those who stand for economy and retrenchment. Experience everywhere shows that municipal extravagance not only imposes burdens, heavy now and to become intolerable, but that it breeds knavery and enthrones corruption. The public funds enrich a few and debauch many, and the many are used to maintain and enlarge the power of the few.

I believe we have escaped these evils, and hope we shall continue to avoid them.

As president of the Board of Commissioners of the Sinking Fund I forward my report herewith. It will be seen that we have paid off during the past year the interest on the public debt promptly as it fell due, and paid up every matured bond of the city, and have on hand, in cash, $26,121.04; in registered bonds, $20,200—total, $46,321.04.

The unpaid matured debt outstanding February 1st was $11,100, and there will mature during the fiscal year but $12,650. The Board have advertised that they will pay no more interest on the matured obligation, and I directed the Auditor to give personal notice on the 1st of January to all holders who were accessible. Up to January, 1881, the Sinking Fund will easily meet all maturing obligations and have a surplus to help in retiring the large bonded debt which will then mature.

The only floating debt of the city, strictly so called, is represented by a note of $3,985.20 given for the enlargement of Seabrook's warehouse, which will mature in May, and is provided for out of the Contingent Fund. Since the Sinking Fund was organized, in the summer of 1874, its first redemption of bonds being in July of that year, it paid off up to January, 1876, past-due bonds amounting to $70,645, and during the month of January of this year $18,600, and is ready to pay every matured bond of the city, amounting to $11,100 more, on presentation.

The steady improvement in the popularity and price of our securities is largely due to the confidence of the public that this fund will be faithfully accumulated and administered, and more largely to the legislative restriction which limits the debt.

HEALTH.

The Board of Health reports a more satisfactory condition of the public health than has been exhibited for several years past, and anticipates even better results in the future from a larger knowledge of hygienic principles, and a more general conformity to hygienic laws. The following table of statistics, compiled from the reports of the past five years, will be found of interest:

	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875
Births	1626	1776	1789	1899	1854
Marriages—White	276	325	338	266	262
Marriages—Colored	221	242	252	290	197
Total	497	567	590	556	459
Deaths—White	668	814	977	727	663
Deaths—Colored	884	900	1060	864	924
Total	1552	1714	2037	1591	1587

The table of still-births show the remarkable fact that the proportion to the aggregate births is one in nine among the colored, one in *eighteen* among the whites. It will be observed, too, that the colored deaths are largely out of proportion to the white deaths. If the estimate of population made by the Board of Health—to wit, whites 41,490, blacks 31,146—be correct, the death rate is 15.97 to each 1,000 of white population, and 29.66 to each 1,000 of black, or nearly twice as great! The hardness of the times is exhibited in the decline in marriages, the number being less than for any year since the organization of the Board of Health.

The alarming mortality among infants shows no abatement. Out of 1,587 deaths in 1875, 714, or forty-five per cent. of the whole, were under three years of age! As reform in sewerage, in ventilation, in the arrangement and purification of the inner drainage of dwellings, and like appliances for health, progresses, it is reasonable to suppose that this large mortality in a class which, by reason of its feebler constitution has the least power of resisting disease, will abate.

I concur in recommending the adoption of an ordinance rigidly excluding from the city such manufacturing enterprises as are necessarily prejudicial to the health or comfort of the community. The noxious gases evolved by the processes of a fertilizing mill sometimes prove a nuisance to a whole neighborhood. More than once we have been compelled, on this account, to dismiss the pupils of the Bethel school, on Twentieth street; and there are other parts of the city equally disturbed. If the nuisance is intolerable to those who have to pass but a few hours within its range, it must be far worse to those who are compelled to live constantly therein. And while it is true that the remedy, by presentment, is open to the sufferers, it is rarely that an individual is willing to undertake the trouble and encounter the opposition of such a course. An ordinance making it the *duty* of the Board of Health to present such cases to the grand jury would, I have no doubt, effect the reform, and either banish these establishments from the corporate limits, or force them to deodorize thoroughly their materials.

The "policing" of the streets is now partly under the control of the City Engineer and partly under the Board of Health. It should be under one management, and, both because of the nature and purpose of the work and because of the large demands on the engineer's department, I think the Board of Health should control it. In my last message I called attention to the trifling and ineffective appliances for excluding the sewer gases from dwelling houses—an evil the more grievous as we increase the use of interior water arrangements. This appliance is simply a column of a few inches in height in a bent tube, and its total inadequacy is known to every housekeeper. Evils like this the Board proposes to cure by an inspector of buildings, to whom all plans for erections and improvements should be submitted, and I do not doubt that the appointment of such an officer, whose compensation should be exclusively furnished by fees from the parties having the work done, would prove of great service to the city.

The freedom of the city from epidemics was noteworthy. A melancholy exception was furnished at the close of the year in the appearance of small-pox, imported from an interior county of the State, and of which eight persons became the victims. Of these six recovered, and owing to prompt disinfection the further spread of the disease was effectually prevented. The discrepancy between the return of the Board of Health and that of the superintendent of the hospital as to the number of victims is accounted for by the fact that the health report concludes with December 31st, while the report of the superintendent closes with January 31st, and there were four new cases in January.

It would be well if all the public reports closed with the fiscal year.

CHARITY AND PRISONS.

The Almshouse.—The report of the superintendent is accompanied by the numerous and interesting tables which are annually furnished from that office, containing a great variety of valuable and instructive matter. The inmates cared for during the year were 1,014 in number—an increase of 202 over the preceding year. This increase is chiefly due to the large number of transient inmates, or tramps, who have been cared for, amounting to 153.

The gross expenses of the year were $34,245.64, of which $5,111.43 were paid for construction and repairs. The daily average of inmates was 240, so that the annual cost of each inmate was $121.39. The subsistence account proper shows the cost of each inmate to have been $47.22 per annum, or a fraction under thirteen cents per day.

I have been much struck with the great disparity between the death-rate of the colors at the almshouse. During the year the white inmates outnumbered the blacks thirty-five, yet while the white deaths were thirty-four the black deaths were 125. I satisfied myself, so far as inspection and the questioning of the sick could satisfy me, that this was not occasioned by any difference of food or any inattention to or neglect of the colored inmates, and on inviting the attention of the physician in charge to the excessive mortality, learned that he ascribed it:

1. To the excess of very young and very old inmates in the colored almshouse.

2. To the shockingly neglected condition in which the colored paupers are generally brought in.

I think the following table, which I have compiled from the official returns, will show that the first cause can have little operation on the result:

1875.	White.	Black.
Inmates	448	413
Admitted under five years	22	44
Admitted over fifty years	79	78
Total deaths	35	125
Deaths under five years	0	19
Deaths over fifty years	14	65

The admissions under five and over fifty were 223, of which 45.3 per cent. were whites and 54.7 per cent. blacks. In other words, there was but little inequality in the admissions at these periods; but the deaths under five and over fifty were 103, of which 18.5 per cent. were whites and 81.5 per cent. blacks. In other words, there was but little actual or relative excess in the young and old admissions of blacks, but there was a vast disparity in the mortality of such as were admitted.

If, then, either of these causes explains the great difference in the death-rate it must be the latter.

The efficient care and executive ability of Captain Bigger and his assistant, Captain W. J. Epps, their watchful attention to and intelligent conception of their duties are exhibited in the admirable management, the cleanliness, good order, economy, and method with which the almshouse is conducted, and the reasonable requirements of the inmates of such an institution are met.

Hospitals.—The hospital department of the city consists of the Almshouse Infirmary, the Small-Pox Hospital, and the use made for the care of lunatics of the Church Institute. An invaluable adjunct of the Almshouse Infirmary is the city ambulance, under the control of the superintendent. An electrical communication with the various station-houses and the Western Union telegraph-office enables the police to summon the ambulance readily. It is always accompanied by a surgeon with the needful appliances for immediate treatment, and after receiving such attention as is possible and useful on the spot, the patient is taken to his destination. The value of this arrangement is shown by the fact that during the year the ambulance was summoned to and attended 106 cases of sudden disease, wounds, accidents, &c.; of which 45 were those of parties removed in it to the almshouse for further treatment, the remainder being carried by it to their homes.

During the year 419 patients were treated in the hospital wards of the almshouse, of which 186 were cured, 105 relieved, and 82 died; in addition to which 365 cases were treated in the common wards. Forty-two surgical operations were performed, 31 cases resulting in cure and 7 in relief, the deaths being but 4—a proportion highly creditable to the skill and care of the physician in charge.

Besides this hospital relief, 5,323 prescriptions ordered by practising physicians have been furnished from the city dispensaries.

The City Hospital, which is only used for infectious diseases, and practically only for small-pox, was not opened during the year until December, when four patients were received, three white and one black. In January four more, all black, were admitted. Of these eight two died. The building is so rarely wanted that it is in no fit order for the uses to which it is devoted; but hereafter it will be cared for systematically, and at little expense.

By an arrangement entered into with Dr. J. D. Moncure in April of last year the Church Institute—an infirmary attached to the Medical College—has undertaken the charge of the insane of the city who cannot be cared for at the State asylums, or who are awaiting admission therein. By the contract made with Dr. Moncure these patients are cared for at the rate of five dollars per day for five or any smaller number, and seventy-five cents per day for each patient in excess of five. This matter was placed under the charge of a committee of the Council with directions to report monthly. I signed the joint resolution adopting this plan with reluctance, regarding the charge excessive, and I am still of the same opinion.

Under authority of the law, the Judge of the Hustings Court makes an allowance of one dollar a day for these lunatics, and the price paid under the peculiar form of our contract is not less—an aggregate largely in excess of the charge at any lunatic asylum with which I am acquainted. Already we have paid during the few months that this plan has been in operation $1,331 on this account, and a like burden is borne nowhere else in the Commonwealth. What makes the charge peculiarly excessive is the fact that much the larger portion of this outlay is for the care of imbeciles who require little medicine, attention, or watching, and no restraint. Twenty persons have been received in the Institute and charged to the city, and of these eight are still in the institution, whose aggregate stay amounts to 1,069 days, and whose cost has been nearly, if not quite, $1,000. As there is no hope of the cure of some of them, and as they are imbeciles, not lunatics, and therefore not receivable in the public asylums, this promises to be a perpetual and heavy charge on the city.

I recommend that an effort be made to secure better terms for the ensuing year, and failing that, that we undertake the care of the imbeciles at least at the almshouse.

The large number of able-bodied paupers, vagrants, and tramps which sought assistance the past year enforces the recommendation I have heretofore made, that some compulsory labor be introduced at the almshouse. The country is flooded with vagrants, the product of the dullness of business, and unhappily there is little prospect of a speedy decrease. Among many worthy objects of charity, there are not a few who choose begging as a substitute for work, and who are more ready to steal than labor. I have had some of these arrested and put in the chain-gang, and those who are not dishonest but merely lazy might be accommodated with less degrading labor, to their own profit and the relief of our citizens, at the almshouse.

STREETS.

The total expenditure last year in this department was $103,516—a sum less by $727 than that of the year before. On street improvement proper the expenditure was $59,697.26, divided as follows: Marshall Ward, $6 321.19; Jefferson Ward, $15,378.05; Madison Ward, $2 783.27; Monroe Ward, $7,855.43; Clay Ward, $15,850.61; Jackson Ward, $11,508.71. During the year 9,296 feet of sewers were built, 47,178 yards of grading, 82,301 yards of gravelling, 11,495 square yards of granite guttering, 9,978 feet of new curbstones, 7,432 square yards of street paving, and 7,676 square yards of macadamizing, besides a large amount of repairs.

Thirteen thousand four hundred and fifty-seven square yards of new brick pavement have been laid against 3,560 the year before—the great bulk of the paving of this year being paid for by the property-owners. More than double the work of the year before was done on sewers, and as large an amount as heretofore on the general work of the streets, which are in a better condition than for several years past.

The City Engineer renews his recommendation of the adoption of some general plan of street improvement and sewer arrangement, and points to the considerations which warrant this suggestion. I am persuaded that the reluctance to respond to the many appeals which have been made in this direction arises—

1. From an apprehension of the cost of the proposed work.

2. From the fear that other matters of supposed superior claim might be neglected.

Neither seems to me well-founded. Take, for example, the matters of grade and boundary of streets, which have occasioned more complaint and cost to private individuals than anything connected with the city government since I have been among its officers, and consider at what little trouble and expense the street boundaries could have been authoritatively fixed, and the street grades established and recorded ten years ago. Even now, what confusion and outlay might be spared if a grade line could be adopted for the ungraded streets, and marked at the corner in some suitable and lasting manner, and the true boundary line similarly authenticated. Nor do I think the second objection more plausible. So far from obstructing, it would facilitate every projected improvement to have the way prepared, and the *data* on record, for conforming it to a general plan, which would embrace the entire section in which it was to be located. A comprehensive and matured plan to work by, does not involve the need of immediate and costly work.

Among the projected improvements in the matter of public thoroughfares I know of none of greater value than a proposed avenue crossing Broad street between Trinity church and the Bellevue school, and following in a northeasterly direction the line of the Valley to the plateau which forms the northeastern angle of the corporation line. The peculiar topography of Richmond so divides Church and Union Hills from the western part of the city that their people form, substantially, two communities. Such an avenue would open a large and flourishing and beautiful part of Richmond to general access, on a grade which would invite the construction of a street-railway thereon; would greatly enhance the value of property on both margins; would utilize a succession of worthless hillsides; would greatly facilitate communication between the two sections of Richmond, and would afford to the country people a means of entrance to the city, which at that point, is peculiarly desirable. The cost of the construction should be borne in part by the property immediately benefited, and in this connection I submit to the Council the propriety of adopting some general system by which improvements of an extensive character may in part be charged to the property peculiarly benefited. The details could not, of course, be expected here; but it seems to me that on the application of a fixed proportion of property-holders in number and value, and on the approval of the Council or the Committee on Streets, improvement bonds, redeemable from a fund assessed on the property benefited, might safely be issued for the whole or a portion of the cost of making any improvement. It cannot be difficult to frame an ordinance for this purpose which would have ample guaranties against an oppression of the citizen, and at the same time would secure most valuable results to the public, as well as to the improved neighborhood. I think it must be apparent that the time has come when general taxation will not suffice for the street improvement of Richmond. I have earnestly urged this unpopular view in several communications to the Council, and believe that its propriety will yet be generally acknowledged. Already the principle has been adopted in the matter of culverts and sidewalks, and it must ultimately have a wider application. All that is needed is to make that application gradually, and with a cautious regard to the ability of the people to bear the assessments. A city's beauty or convenience would be dearly purchased by the general oppression of its citizens. Cities are made for men, not men for cities.

Another recommendation which I beg to renew is the adopting of some plan by which the Gas, Water, and Street Committees can act in concert when the bed of a street is to be opened by either. It would be well also if the city would when laying water- or gas-pipes, or sewers, lay its connections at once to the line of the curbstone, and by this means insure the roadway from continual disturbance as each house makes its connections. It would be an additional convenience and a hardship to no one, if property-owners were required to make the house-connections at the same time, and thus at once restore the sidewalk and road-bed.

THE GAS WORKS.

I am glad to be able again to commend the excellent management, the economy, efficiency, and satisfactory results of this department of public administration.

The consumption of gas during the year amounted to 77,139,402 cubic feet—an increase of nearly 3,000,000 feet over the year before, of which one million four hundred thousand represents an increase in public use. This enlarged production was realized from the consumption of 11,610 bushels *less* of coal than the preceding year—a result due partly to more effective carbonization, but largely to the superior richness of the coal. Forty-two public lamps have been added during the year, and four thousand two hundred and fifty-four feet of mains laid, making the total length of mains at present amount to forty-four miles one thousand and sixty-four feet. The total receipts were $181,703—a sum $5,300 in excess of the estimate for the year. The gross expenses were $134,678. The cash profit was $47,025, to which add the value of the gas consumed by the city at consumers' rates, and the aggregate profit of the works will be found to be $96,508. This satisfactory exhibit justified, in the judgment of the committee, a reduction in the charge for gas, and, as the Council is already aware, the same has been reduced to $2.50 per thousand feet. During the year sundry improvements have been made at the works, the simplest but most useful of which is a process for utilizing the gas-tar as fuel. Costly patented appliances are used elsewhere for this purpose; but we have found an arrangement not more intricate than a closed tank and a few feet of piping adequate to the end, and an almost valueless material has thus been converted into valuable fuel, to the saving of probably twenty-five per cent. on the cost of this item of the expense account.

The works are in excellent order. At the upper works advantage has been taken of the dull times and low price of labor to accumulate a large stock of material at low figures, and a much larger proportion of both manufacture and repair is accomplished there than heretofore. Attention is called by the superintendent to the bad condition of the holders at these works, which have been frequently patched and now require constant watching. It will be necessary at an early day to replace at least one of them, and probably, with the large holder at the lower works, one would suffice. If it should be necessary to substitute a new one, I suggest that it be located at the lower works, with the purpose, which I think should always be kept in view, of consolidating this whole department eventually at that point.

At the lower works a new office is manifestly required. The present building is an old and very contracted *dwelling-house*, and was never fit for its present use. The several wooden sheds at the works should also be substituted at as early a day as possible by more substantial structures, both for convenient use, and in order to diminish the risk of fire.

During the year a number of intelligent citizens, many of them experts, have visited our works, and their testimony has unanimously confirmed our estimate of the economy, efficiency, and excellent results of this department. The purity and high illuminating power of the gas have been maintained and even improved. The illuminating capacity of our gas from a four-foot burner averaged during the year 1874 14.6 candles; during 1875, 16.36 candles. Complaints have occasionally been made of the irregularity in the return of the meters; and the citizens should know that the city undertakes to test any meter suspected of inaccuracy by a simple and recognized standard in the presence of the consumer, if he desires it.

The inspector's department, as well as the operative branch of the works, deserves high praise for the faithfulness and courtesy with which its work has been done.

FIRE.

The annual report of the Chief Engineer of the Fire Department makes a satisfactory presentation of the condition and service of the force under his charge. During the year the department was called out more frequently than for many years past, but the average of loss was so trifling that the total foots us but $48 030; on which there was an insurance of $37,363.

I renew my recommendation of last year that the engine-house of Company D be surrendered to the police of the Third district, and new and suitable quarters provided for that efficient company. No one can inspect the house without a conviction of its total unfitness for its purpose, to say nothing of the impropriety of crowding the police and firemen in a space so manifestly inadequate to afford them any comfort. In addition to these considerations, heretofore presented, I desire to call attention to the necessity of a better distribution of the engine-houses, for which the proposed change offers, in part, an opportunity. We have four steamer companies, two hook-and-ladder companies, and two hose companies; and these constitute our entire force. Now, three of the steamers and both of the hook-and-ladder and one of the hose companies are located either directly on Broad street or within a few yards of it. When we recall the value of moments in the early stages of every fire, it seems unfair that almost the whole Fire Department should thus be placed on a single street, and that a street upon which fewer fires occur than upon any large thoroughfare (only one, as I remember, in ten years), its houses being mostly of brick, and its business less hazardous than the average business of the city.

A lot at a reasonable cost could be purchased in the southwestern portion of Monroe or the contiguous part of Clay Ward, and an engine-house erected thereon for the company, which would give needed protection to that valuable and growing portion of the city.

The appropriation of $35,000 for this department was exceeded by less than thirty dollars.

I may remark that the force is as conspicuous for its sobriety and good conduct as for its fidelity in the discharge of its duties.

During the year a new steamer has been purchased and a large hose-carriage with 800 feet of hose, completing the equipment of Company F; and a commodious engine-house erected on Main between Twentieth and Twenty-first streets for Company C—the only approximation to a suitable engine-house in the city.

POLICE.

The report of the Chief of Police presents the usual statistics from that department, to which is added a table showing the nativity of the officers and men; from which it appears that of the force, seventy-five are natives of the United States, and ten of all foreign countries. Of the natives of the United States sixty-three are Virginians—a proportion of natives without example in the police history of the United States. The other tables exhibit a gratifying improvement in the matter of time lost during the year, especially from sickness. In 1874 the loss was eleven hundred and fifteen days; the loss of 1875 was but six hundred and eighteen days—a difference of nearly five hundred days in favor of 1