

THE RICHMOND DISPATCH.

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1901.

Dispatch mail subscribers receiving their papers irregularly would do us a favor by making complaint to this office.

LEE DISTRICT FUNDS.

The owners of the land in Lee District are asking the City Council for an issue of \$300,000 of bonds, the proceeds to be used to give that section those improvements which must exist before it is inhabited.

That territory, by an extension of the city boundaries, was taken in eight years ago. The city sought to annex; the county opposed the movement. The object in view, of course, was to provide for the growth of the city. Apart from that consideration, no private interests could ever have induced the Council to recommend, nor the Legislature to annex. Has it contributed to the growth of the city in point of either population or wealth? No; not yet.

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Now the question is, How ought the Legislature to deal with the situation? We would have the State dispose of her holdings—the prospect is not bright now, but the time may yet come when a road can be built—but we want the State to get all she can for them.

Which saw farthest? Last May, in a colloquy on the floor of the Senate, in which Senators Hale and Spooner became involved, the latter asked the former this question:

"Has the Senator any suspicion in his mind that the pledge made in the resolution passed by Congress as to the temporary character of our occupation in Cuba is not to be kept?"

Mr. Hale replied frankly that he had, whereupon Mr. Spooner intimated that Mr. Hale was a pessimist, thus provoking from Mr. Hale the following acknowledgment of the soft impeachment:

"Now, let me say to the Senator I think there are very powerful influences in this country—I think they are largely located in New York city, I think they are largely speculative and connected with money-making enterprises that are determined that we shall never give up Cuba."

Then, so far as Mr. Spooner was concerned, the colloquy ended, with the declaration that—"It will never turn out, my friend from Maine (Mr. Hale), that any man in any country can point to the Teller resolution and say, with truth that it was a legislative blunder."

The Teller resolution, which is one of the Cuban resolutions, solemnly obligates this country to leave the government and control of Cuba to its people as a sovereign and independent nation, when pacification of the island shall have been accomplished.

Which would it appear saw farther into the future, Mr. Hale or Mr. Spooner; and in view of recent developments what must be Mr. Spooner's feelings when he reflects upon his championship of Federal legislative veracity in respect of Cuba?

Office-holding delegates. We do not, says the Petersburg Index-Appal, agree with the Dispatch and some other contemporaries that we should look to office-holders for "our best," most talented, and most capable men for the convention.

Cannot bind. Connecticut is to have a constitutional convention, and the New England papers are discussing in connection therewith a question that is also up in Virginia—that is, the question of the right of the Legislature to bind the convention.

The Boston Transcript, having stated that the "inviolability of the town is carefully conserved by the legislative provision that the convention shall not be empowered to embody in the Constitution any article whereby 'any town may or cease to exist as a separate town,'" the Hartford Courant replies that the provision that "the convention shall not" is absolutely void.

And then the Courant, which is Republican, adds that such Democratic journals as the Hartford Times and New Haven Register at once conceded that the Courant was strictly right when it said that the convention, once under way, could not be bound by any vote of the Legislature.

Exactly. A legislature, in calling a constitutional convention into existence, may handicap it by assuming to make provisions for its guidance, the rejection of which would be unpopular. Such provisions may, by injecting questions into the canvass for members of the convention, result in the committal of the candidates to the legislative policy. Thus the Legislature may carry its point. The

convention may abdicate its sovereign power as to this or that issue raised by the legislative provisions, but should it not choose so to do who is to coerce it? Constitutional conventions have in times past abdicated their right to override legislative mandates and left issues raised by legislative "provisions" to be determined by the courts. But that does not affect the principle of inherent sovereignty of conventions.

THE FREDERICKSBURG STOCK.

The twelve months last past witnessed amazing changes in railroad organizations in this country. There is now a united financial force controlling several of the great trunk lines, which were formerly competitors for business, and which were rate-cutters on occasions. Rate-cutting among them is known no more. Consequently their bonds and stocks have taken a great rise.

Those gifted geniuses, who had the presence to see that all this was coming about, ought to be rich; their knowledge could have been turned into millions. A few had that foresight, or rather a few had that opportunity to inform themselves, but the masses were uninformed; the secret was jealously guarded.

We see it all now, but less than a year ago we were in darkness. Even while Virginia was arranging to sell her interest in the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac railroad a "combine" was being formed, which took away allies north of the Potomac that the Seaboard relied upon. If the Seaboard were now to build a road from Richmond to Washington it could make no better transfer rates at the latter city than it can make here!

We believe the charter for a new road to Washington was sought in good faith; the press of Richmond urged it in good faith, and our community enthusiastically backed the movement, believing that it would result in the long-desired competing roads between this city and Washington and New York. As things stand, there can be no competition North or West of Washington, and we doubt if any capitalists can be found who will put their money in a purely local road. Meanwhile, the Seaboard company and the various other lines now using the Fredericksburg road are said to have bought a controlling interest in that road. Meanwhile, too, the State has suffered no loss!

Now the question is, How ought the Legislature to deal with the situation? We would have the State dispose of her holdings—the prospect is not bright now, but the time may yet come when a road can be built—but we want the State to get all she can for them. With the light before it a year ago the Legislature fixed a minimum price on this stock. That was looked upon as a prudential exercise of power. It would seem that if the status quo can be resumed—and we guess it can—it would be well to give authority for the sale of these shares "at an advanced price."

As one of the advocates of the charter in question we wish the fact to be made clear to everybody that the State has not lost, and need not lose, a dollar by the legislation on this subject; but quite the contrary.

DEFENDS PLUMBERS.

The plumbers have found a defender. Much has been said in the way of abuse of this very useful class of fellow-citizens, but not until yesterday had we found any one challenging the accuracy of the oft-repeated accusations as to the prodigality of their charges and the imminence of their incomes.

In the New York Sun a correspondent, who says he is a plumber, denies that his fellows are such mercenaries as they are generally represented to be, or that they make extravagant profits upon their work. He is of the opinion that the best way to find out if plumbers make so very much money is to look up the number of wealthy plumbers in New York—not those rich beyond the dreams of avarice, but those worth \$100,000. After going over the list he says the investigator probably will find that "rich plumbers exist only in the imagination of the writers of fiction."

"The real truth is that people only employ a plumber when they are compelled to, then they beat him down in his charges as low as possible, and after seem never willing to pay his bill. "If you want to hear a genuine tale of woe just talk with any plumber about the amount of money he has been beat out of, and then if you are, as I suppose, a person of considerable feeling, your heart will go out to that plumber, and your voice ever after be raised in his defence."

"It may be well to add that these mechanics have so little capital as a class that it was not for their credits with supply houses to per cent. of them would have to go out of business."

The so-called "humorous paragrapher" is largely responsible for the libel so persistently circulated against the plumbers, but no doubt he has built upon a belief which he found existing in the public mind.

The gas inspector and the plumber are two men whom all Americans feel at liberty to abuse. We have here reproduced the defence of the plumber, and for the gas man, we may say, on our own account, that he has no earthly interest in making an overcharge. As for the gas-meter itself, we are told that though it may frequently fail to record all the gas consumed, rarely, or never, can it register gas which does not pass through it.

We have found, too, that, as in the matter of bygone weather, most people have short and slippery memories with respect to last year's gas bills, with which they are prone to compare this year's charges. So, too, they sometimes forget to mention that they are now using gas-stoves—a thing with which they were unacquainted in the halcyon days of low gas bills.

TAXATION.

The Stanton News thinks that one of the evils the constitutional convention should consider is that of "double taxation," about which there is, it says, a great deal of complaint.

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Lines by Mr. Rylan. Walkerton, King and Queen Co., Va. To the Editor of the Dispatch:

The following lines were written by Mr. Josiah Ryland when he was principal of the Stevensville Academy, in 1826, and many of the King and Queen people, as well as others, will be interested in seeing them in print.

O, age of varnish, cant and shame, That waneeth nothing but a name! King William throws the gauntlet down in peerless Bessie Blanche Brown!

Come to the rescue, King and Queen! Produce thy walker, Dora Deane! Unfur the banner of the sun; Make way, make way, for Fenelon! And let the glory of the day Burst forth ardent in Ora May!

O, who the matchless grace shall tell Of her of Woodville, Floss Rochelle! But Bessie, Dora, Floss, make way! For the last Pearl of the skies, With wavy hair and azure eyes, Appears on earth a Peri bright.

To glad our eyes and charm our sight, Here, for a while, Dame Fortune's Wheel, Exhausted by its maddening reel, Rests attendant, while new names are found.

O' would be grace and empty sound, When "Woman's Rights" to laws attain, And girls go courting, might and main, When Bloomer pants become the rage, And high-heeled gaiters strut the stage!

When boys no longer wear the lasses' But maidens court them to their faces, O, what the luckless wights shall save From anguish, or an early grave?

For girls (from number) nut, of course, To back the best of us on horse! O Fenelon, my son, my art undone! Fly for thy life, while now thou may'st, Or cut thy throat with prudent haste.

Old times restore the reign Of Polly Nancy, Sakej, Jane, Jimima, Phoebe, Ann, Eliza, Abigail, Venus, Eloisa, Away with varnish cant and gloss! Away with Bessie, Dora, Floss! No longer with such babies bore us.

If earth with babes must be replenished, 'Till the last settlement is finished, Do give them honest Christian names, As Matthew, Thomas, Andrew, James, Daniel, Ezekiel, Peter, Paul— Apostles, prophets, martyrs, all. Such names our grandfathers honored long.

On author's page, in poet's song— Such names were towers of strength in the Baltimore Sun.

When men for Liberty did bleed— Such were the Watchwords of an hour When men staked all for Freedom's flower. But know the time of bronze returns, And honest cheek with flushes burns. Cant affectation, gloss, begone! 'Old times,' old times, return, return.

Those in Danger. (Charlottesville Progress.) We have never taken any stock in the frequently expressed opinion that the constitutional convention would prove a political graveyard for those who served in it, regardless of the action of such convention. It is easy to understand why the convention might very properly become a morgue for those representatives who disregard the wishes of their constituents, just as it is possible for any representative to "kill himself" by ignoring the views and sentiments of those who have honored him. But that any member of that convention who does his duty honestly and conscientiously—who seeks to know and do the will of the people—should suffer in the estimation

The Non-Irritating Cathartic. Easy to take, easy to operate— Hood's Pills

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