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WEDNESDAY.....FEB. 26, 1902.

CLAY AND LEE WARDS.

Mr. Wallace is entitled to the gratitude of this community for piloting through the Legislature the bill dividing Clay Ward. That ward has one fourth of the population of Richmond, but has only one sixth of the members of the City Council. Upon a basis of white voters, exclusively, the disproportion against Clay Ward is greater still. For a long time the injustice done that portion of the city has excited the indignation of all just-minded persons who have given the subject thoughtful consideration.

Should the Wallace bill receive executive approval, Richmond will have seven wards, instead of six, but the City Council will be vested with the power to increase the number. And that it surely should do. Under a restricted suffrage there will be no rhyme or reason in continuing Jackson Ward as a "black belt." The city could be divided into ten wards, and Jackson Ward, as it is known now, could and should be obliterated from the city map. If desired, the name might be preserved by fixing it upon a portion of the existing ward with much new territory added. By the way, we are not sure that the ward was named after "Old Hickory" or Stonewall Jackson either. Certain it is that Jackson street, a great thoroughfare in that ward, was named after another Jackson—a very worthy gentleman, who owned a vast area of land in the Jackson Ward section, and who for fifty years served as a clerk in the office of the Auditor of Public Accounts of Virginia.

When the Wallace bill becomes a law the City Council will have to provide for transferring voters' names, when requested, from the registration books of Clay Ward to those of Lee Ward, and also will have to establish such new voting precincts as may be needed. Some of the voting precincts in the old ward are intolerably large, with the result that it is difficult to poll the vote satisfactorily at primaries. A change—a reform—in that matter is much needed. No precinct ought to be excessively large. Each should be of such moderate size that the vote may be easily polled and counted in due time.

With the increase of Richmond's wards from six to seven the membership of our Board of Aldermen will be twenty-one instead of eighteen, while the Common Council will be increased from thirty to thirty-five. The public interests will suffer nothing from this change; on the contrary, beneficial results in several directions may be expected to flow from the division of Clay Ward.

It is not in the country only that public school-houses are shabby looking, ill-ventilated, uncomfortable, and untidy. The truth is that few, very few, of our public buildings are tastefully and tidily kept. The State Capitol, the City Hall here, and most of the court-houses and court-rooms in Virginia are cases in point. Our "womenfolks" would do better than we men do, if they had these matters in charge.

NESTS FOR FIRE BUGS.

Our merchants would do well to be more careful about exposing piles of trash paper in cellars and alleys. Such a practice invites arson, and it ought to be abandoned. As things stand, there are scores of places here where a "fire-bug," or mischievous boy, may drop a match and start a serious conflagration. It would be well for the police and firemen to be instructed to call house-owners' attention to the danger these combustible piles create.

"Owing to previous engagements" Senator Martin could not accept the President's invitation to take Mr. Tillman's place at the White House dinner to Prince Henry. An invitation to the White House is not regarded by him as a command. Evidently Mr. Martin is not prepared to endorse the President's course towards the belligerent South Carolinians.

ELECTING STATE SENATORS.

It is understood that the question of electing State senators for biennial terms will come up to-day in the Constitutional Convention's Committee on Legislation, to which it was referred, on motion of Mr. Flood, when the convention had under consideration the committee's report.

As our readers know, the proposition was somewhat in the nature of a surprise to the convention, and Mr. Flood's motion was for the purpose of preventing hasty action, and affording the members time for serious thought as to the wisdom of taking such a revolutionary step.

We use the words "revolutionary step" advisedly; for biennial terms for senators and the consequent abolition of the rotation system would involve a radical departure from a feature of our government which has obtained since its formation, and had the unqualified endorsement of the chief architects and builders of our republican structure. It would mean the doing away with all checks to the evils of ill-considered legislation, and legislation dictated by impulse rather than reason. It would make the General Assembly unicameral, except in name, and in a sense amount to setting up a mass-meeting, instead of a deliberative government.

Now that there has been time to think, we cannot but believe that the committee will report adversely to any change in the existing order. But if, perchance, it shall prove that we are mistaken, we shall still have hopes that the convention itself will stick to the old and tried system. If it does not, it will run counter to popular judgment, not to say popular demand. For, since the matter has come to be understood throughout the State, the strongest sort of sentiment against a change has developed.

As a senatorial bull-baiter, Mr. Spooner is an unqualified success. No one could have wielded the red rag more skilfully than he did last Saturday to draw Tillman to the attack, nor with more startling results, as the event proved.—Petersburg Index-Appeal.

Precisely. Tillman walked right into the trap old man Spooner set for him. Previously he had been dealing in innuendoes, but Spooner with malice aforethought caused him to speak out.

All the striking railroad employees in Italy who owe that nation military service have been ordered to rejoin their regiments. Thus they not only will be taken out of the ranks of the strikers, but may be made to operate trains and tracks. At least that is the evident purpose of the government, but we doubt not the government will "come up against" some men who will prefer rather to take their chances before a court-martial than break with their unions.

General Joe Wheeler says there were more persons killed in the Galveston horror than in all the battles on this Continent, except those in the four years' conflict beginning in 1861. With the introduction of long-range guns, when battles begin at a range of one and a quarter miles, he argues, the death rate is comparatively small. Indeed, "the danger in modern warfare is little greater than that of dodging around street-cars in Philadelphia. In the future, battles will be at a distance of one and a half miles on level stretches of country, and nearer, perhaps, in hilly positions," the General concludes.

TERCENTENARY QUESTION.

The defeat in committee of the Jamestown Tercentenary Celebration plan endorsed by the Richmond Chamber of Commerce, and which provides for intrusting the details of the commemoration to a commission with a view to making the affair State-wide, ought not to discourage our people. They should carry the matter to the floor of the General Assembly, with the determination to fight it out to the bitter end. The pursuance of that course they owe not only to themselves, but to the State at large. The amendment to the Norfolk bill, which engrafts a commission feature on that measure, was a clever coup, and will doubtless make, at first blush, as favorable impression upon the public as it appears to have made upon the committee. From the theoretical view-point, the now mixed plan proposition of Norfolk is a most generous concession to the demand that all interests and localities should have due consideration in apportioning the features of the celebration. Practically, however, it means that Norfolk is to be the "whole show." We have no quarrel with our Norfolk friends over this question. We cannot but admire their pugnacity and applaud their tenacity. But, manifestly, the object sought to be attained by the commission scheme, pure and simple, could not be attained under a combination thereof with the provisions of the Norfolk bill. The two plans are antagonistic. In the last analysis of the case, if the Norfolk measure wins out, whether with or without the commission amendment, the commemoration must prove an affair local, to all intents and purposes, to Norfolk. Only by pooling interests in the hands of such a commission as Richmond proposes can we expect to arouse in the State the wide-spread sympathy with the movement for the celebration which will render it a credit to Virginia and commensurate with the importance of the event to be commemorated. Only by subordinating local ambition and pride to State pride can we hope to excite the interest in the matter throughout the country which will assure our getting that Federal assistance which is so desirable, not to say absolutely necessary. This, we believe, can be demonstrated by a thorough threshing out before the Legislature of the conflicting propositions in all their phases. And when it shall have been demonstrated, there will be no excuse for the General Assembly's not adopting the Richmond commission plan. So, we repeat, there is no reason why our people should be discouraged.

One remedy suggested for obesity is to eat as little bread as possible. Another is to eat no meat. From which we may infer that the surest way to reduce flesh is not to eat either.—The Petersburg Index-Appeal.

It might be better still to saw wood and eat nuthin'.

A Philadelphian who recently returned from Mexico tells of the shipment north of a Mexican burro as a present for his boy. The donkey was transported without difficulty until the region to which burros are indigenous had been left behind. A change of cars was made at a small northerly junction. It was in charge of a particulary dense freight agent. Having an hour to wait, and thinking the donkey needed water, Mr. L—— went to the freight office. Outside stood the agent beside the burro, studying his waybill in deep perplexity.

"Has he had water and feed?" was asked the man.

"Do you own that there animal, sir?"

"Yes; have you fed and watered him?"

"I hain't done nothing but try him on this here bill."

"Why, what's the matter?"

"Matter is this here bill won't check. I'm a bureau short and a jackass over, and durn me if I can make it out."

The foregoing story is one to which a prize for excellence was recently awarded by one of our Philadelphia contemporaries. It is a pretty good story, but is quite an old one down here. Years ago it was used as a space-filler in some southern papers.

Washington is startled at the discovery of small-pox in unexpected places within its limits, and its health authorities are inclined to blame the physicians of the city to some extent for the outbreak. They charge the doctors with carelessness in the matter. One of them is quoted as saying that a number of members of the medical profession are not well informed as to the disease, and that "a physician who has had no experience with small-pox, is no more to be trusted to diagnose a case of that disease than can a doctor amputate a hip who has only read in books of the operation." We fear there is truth in this assertion, and possibly there is ground for the charge of carelessness on the part of the Washington doctors. It appears that one of the startling cases at the Federal capital was that of a woman from Philadelphia, who arrived at a Washington hotel January 28th, and was shortly after her arrival taken ill with symptoms more or less resembling those of small-pox. She had been taken ill on the train, and told a physician who was called that her illness was from eating lobster. An eruption broke out upon the patient's face and body, which the two attending physicians described as "shell-fish eruption," and no report of the case was made to the Health Department. There seems to have been both ignorance, or at least lack of experience, and carelessness in this case.

Current Comment.

General Grosvenor, of Ohio, declares that, with his latest breath, he will call the war of 1861-1865 "the war of the rebellion," and that he cannot endure having it styled "the civil war," or "the war between the States," which causes the New York Evening Post to remark that General Grant, almost with his latest breath—in the concluding paragraph of his "Personal Memoirs"—referred to the war of 1861-'65 as "the war between the States."

However, Grosvenor evidently thinks that he is a bigger man than was Grant—and no one cares a baubee what Grosvenor calls the war.

It is to be hoped that no one will mar the pleasure of Prince Henry's visit by telling him how much he is going to miss by not including Richmond and Virginia in his itinerary.

It begins to look as if the people of Virginia were taking real interest in the St. Louis Exposition.

Handicapped.

(Chicago Daily News.)

Mrs. Homer: Were you troubled by mal de mer while crossing the ocean?

Mrs. Neurich: No, indeed! I was so seasick all the way over that I didn't even have a chance to make his acquaintance.

Indefinite.

(Philadelphia Press.)

First Messenger Boy: Hello, "Thirty-four," got a message to deliver?

Second Ditto: Yep.

First Messenger Boy: How fer is it?

Second Ditto (taking out his dime novel): On'y about six chapters o' dis, "Feud o' de Scarlet Ranger, or de Man Wid de Red Flannel Eye."

In the Proper Mood.

(Baltimore American.)

"Mr. Writen cannot work to-day," telephoned the wife of the dramatic author, "because he has the grip and the medicine he has taken affected his brain so that he cannot utter three words that show any sense or connection."

"All right," answered the impresario. "Tell him to write me a libretto for another comic opera, and sketch the scenario for a dramatized novel before he recovers. And say, give him another dose of that medicine if he becomes rational before the work is finished."

Pleasant Remembrances.

(Boston Transcript.)

Stevens: Hadley fell down stairs the other day and followed it by falling over a wheelbarrow at the bottom of the flight."

Yardley: Gracious, what an experience!"

Stevens: Yes, Hadley says it was so like a ride in an auto that it brought back the pleasantest of remembrances."

To My Mother.

(Jane Atkins Hinson in Memphis Commercial-Appeal.)

Howl on ye winds with ceaseless moan
That sweep the dreary waste around;
I care not for your sullen tone,
Nor where your homeless guests are bound.

I care not for your wild embrace,
However cold and chill it be;
Then pour your torrents in my face,
'Tis not your rage that troubles me.

'Tis not the cheerless sky that casts
Upon my brow this gloomy shade;
Nor yet the fitful wintry blasts,
But thoughts of her whose form is laid

Beneath yon ancient turfy mound,
Wrapped in the folds of dreamless sleep,
Above whose grave the trees around
In reverence bow as if to weep.

'Tis this that bids my heart to fear
Those depths my tongue is weak to tell;
'Tis this that bids the briny tear
Beneath my heavy eyelids swell.

Ah, mother, in your blissful home,
Hear thou my cry in accents wild,
And come, if saints to earth e'er roam,
And guide aright thy thoughtless child.

You left me at a tender age
When I was thoughtless, young, and wild;
You little thought the tempest's rage
Would beat on your unsheltered child.

Since then I've borne the withering sneer,
The taunting frown of heartless foes;
I'm doomed to stem each sea of care,
And sip each briny wave that flows.

Wasted Opportunities.

(Roanoke Times.)

Perhaps the saddest harvest, and generally speaking the greatest harvest, that it falls to the lot of mankind to reap is that springing from the seed of idleness sown. There is seen on every hand the young man with exceptional capabilities, a strong constitution and unlimited opportunities, sowing broadcast the seeds of idleness; the years of his youth and vigor ruthlessly slipping through his fingers without employing a moment for self-improvement. All the time his crop is growing, a crop to quickly mature, and ere two score of milestones have been passed along the journey of life he is called to stop and reap his harvest. He has never calculated the profits to be derived therefrom; all he knows is that the bloom and blossom were beautiful; but now that he is called to the harvest, he takes in his hand the sheaves one by one; they are singularly light in weight, and he reaps and gathers and threshes and from it he obtains his harvest of barren regrets. It has never been permitted the human eye to see beyond the confines of its present existence; not even the dashing of the waves upon eternity's shore has come back to him in the faintest echo; but if beyond there lies a stygian field where the human soul is forced to dwell amid the sorrows born of life's existence, perhaps the bitterest fruit upon which that soul must be fed would be that of wasted opportunities; the eternal and everlasting memory of what it could have been and could have done but did not.

MR. EASLEY, AGAIN.

REPLIES TO MR. WALLERSTEIN IN MATTER OF ANNEXATION.

THE ASSESSMENTS IN HENRICO.

They Are Now Upon a Lower Basis, and, Argues the Writer, They Would Be Increased Were Annexation Consummated—Question of the School Session—Statistics Relating to the Death Rate.

To the Public:

In discussing the merits of annexation I have carefully avoided personal allusions, not only because they are distasteful to me, but because I have no disposition to sink the discussion of a public question into any sort of a private controversy.

In a recent letter addressed to the editor of the Dispatch, signed by Mr. Joseph Wallerstein, the writer has alluded to me by name no less than fourteen times. If, therefore, I should in this instance depart from the rule I have adopted, I trust that it will not be misunderstood. The writer starts out with the assertion that "last fall Mr. John C. Easley delivered an address before the members of the Chamber of Commerce in this city," etc., and proceeds to take me to task for not answering an unsigned communication, which he says appeared in the Richmond newspapers "a very short time after that address." The facts are that on February 12, 1901, I appeared before the Chamber of Commerce, by invitation, to take part in the discussion of the question of annexation. The unsigned publication appeared in the Richmond Dispatch of November 19, 1901, more than nine months later, and I fail to see that I was called upon to reply. But in letting the communication pass unnoticed, I can assure him that I did not do so because I considered its statements incontrovertible.

UPON A LOWER BASIS.

Whatever may be the standpoints from which the assessors in Richmond and Henrico construe the law relative to their respective duties, the fact remains that the assessments in Henrico are upon a lower basis than they are in Richmond, and any territory annexed to Richmond will, in 1905, necessarily be assessed by the accessors for the city of Richmond; and as the law requires assessments to be uniform, those in the annexed territory must be increased to correspond. Any increase in the assessment carries with it an increase in both State and city taxes, without reference to the rate. In my letter of February 11, 1902, as an offset to a balance of $100,000 on hand, I quoted estimates of the cost of a partial list of Richmond's present urgent needs (for which no provision has been made) amounting to about $1,500,000, and suggested that it was like "owning a dime and lacking food and raiment." Mr. Wallerstein thinks "it is like owning a dime and having two dimes with which to pay." I confess that I do not understand the "hocus pocus" science of finance by which this conclusion is reached.

The gentleman thinks "the size of a debt is not a disturbing factor to individual or corporation, if assets are plentiful."

When the debt bears a high rate of interest, and a large portion of the assets are not only unproductive, but burdensome, I consider it a very "disturbing factor."

In speaking of per capita cost of maintenance, we are told that New York spends annually, $31.62; Boston, $34.39; Jersey City, $19.82; Cincinnati, $18.62; Richmond, $14.43, and, if it were material to the issue, I might add, Manchester, $6.59.

THE SCHOOL SESSION.

In stating that annexation would reduce the school session in Henrico to three or four months, unless additional taxes be levied to replace the funds taken from Henrico by Richmond, I gave the estimates of officials, who are in positions to know, and I do not see that Mr. Wallerstein's supposition "that those left can be easily conducted for nine months" is any offset.

It is taken as a great hardship that "industrial plants" just outside of Richmond date their letter heads Richmond, instead of Henrico. Doesn't Mr. Wallerstein know that a firm's letter head usually bears its post-office address, and that Richmond is the name of their nearest post-office. Surely he doesn't wish to restrict the use of the name of a government post-office, as if it were copyrighted. For every man who lives in Henrico and finds employment in Richmond I venture to say that I can point him to one who lives in Richmond and finds employment in some of the numerous manufactories in Henrico—such as the Locomotive-Works, Cedar-Works, Hub- and Spoke-Works, the numerous fertilizer factories, brick plants, brewery, etc. Thirty thousand people live in Henrico, buy supplies and trade in Richmond, and to say that the "benefits" are "altogether on one side" is a system of reasoning beyond my comprehension.

SUB-COMMITTEE'S PLAN.

In speaking of the sub-committee's plan of annexation, Mr. Wallerstein says: "I believe that a majority of citizens in the proposed annexed districts, when they properly understand what we propose, will, almost to a man, favor it." The better the people of both Richmond and Henrico understand the sub-committee's plan, the more I shall be pleased, and as an evidence of his confidence, he might insert a provision, referring the question to a vote of the property-owners within the radius of annexation. The claim that Richmond extends police and fire protection to Henrico or that she is able to do so, must be intended as a bit of grim humor. The claim has been frequently made that Richmond's debt can be liquidated by a sale of the gas- and water-works. I do not think this is true, unless there is coupled with the sale, an exclusive monopoly for furnishing these necessities at a fixed price. If Richmond is reduced to the necessity of selling monopolies, and is willing to bind her people in a sort of financial slavery, she might have raised considerable revenue by selling to one corporation the exclusive right to operate street railways; to another the exclusive telephone privileges, and to another the exclusive right to furnish electric lights and power, and so on without limit; provided, of course, the terms were sufficiently elastic as to their right to change. And, I dare say, a toll-gate on Main street would pay handsomely. That trafficking in the rights of the people has been even thought of is suggestive of conditions for which we were not prepared.

BONDS OF THE CITY.

That Richmond city 4's are worth 107 1-2 in the hands of individuals is not surprising. They are exempt from the city's tax of $1.40, which makes them equivalent to a 5.4 per cent. investment. The bonds of the city are limited by law to 18 per cent. of the assessed value of her real estate. They are a first lien on all of the real estate in Richmond. Why shouldn't they be good? All bonds secured on real estate to the amount of only 18 per cent. of its actual value are equally good, whether they are drawn by a millionaire or a bankrupt, and to offer this as an argument is like clutching at a straw. But there is one remarkable fact about these 4 per cent. bonds that are now worth 107 1-2 in the hands of individuals, and it is this: When these bonds were disposed of by the city of Richmond they sold down as low as 91; and, in fact, I am informed that Richmond's bonds, when issued and put upon the market by the city, have usually sold below par, her 6's and 8's selling as low as 70 to 80. But upon this point I am not thoroughly informed, and since Mr. Wallerstein claims sources of information unknown to me, he may be able to inform the public just what Richmond has realized in cash from the sale of her various issues of bonds, which go to make up her debt of $7,227,382, and show what rate of interest Richmond is paying on the money actually received from the sale of these bonds. It may prove interesting reading. We know that the average interest is about 5 1-4 per cent. on the par value of the bonds, but what rate is this on the money actually received by the city, and what difference would it make, in principal and interest, in favor of the city in all of these years, if these bonds could have been sold at par? Of course, it is only fair to make proper allowance for conditions existing immediately after the civil war, but I think he can trust the people to do that, and I do not ask for a disclosure further back than the civil war.

I have been accused of dealing in generalities, because I have shown that Richmond's net per capita debt is $78.77, while the average net per capita debt of every city in the United States, with more than 30,000 population, is only $17.56. I stated that there were 134 of these cities, and as Mr. Wallerstein has a list of them, and they are all known to the general public, I do not think the charge is well founded. However, I shall endeavor to be specific, hereafter, in stating my reasons for opposing annexation, and if there is room to complain of "generalities," it will be my misfortune.

NOT A NECESSITY.

We are opposed to the present wholesale plan of annexation, because it is in no sense a legitimate public necessity, and it will prove so burdensome and oppressive to the people of Henrico that its accomplishment will mean confiscation to a large proportion of her people. A city does not require more room until it needs it for the purpose of enlarging, and even then its right to take should be limited by its ability to improve. Enlarging a city should mean something more than the mere extension of an imaginary line, so that the property holder will be given some consideration for the increased taxes he will be required to pay. Richmond has not improved anything like all of the territory she now has, and she is not in a position to do justice to more. Her bond limit has been practically reached, her present pressing needs, other than annual expenses, call for about one and one half million dollars. Of her 116.2 miles of streets only 24.4 miles are paved, 6.5 miles macadamized, 57 miles simply graveled (a method employed in making country roads), and 28.3 miles are absolutely unimproved. There are 59 miles of curbing to be put down, 70 miles of sidewalks to be laid, besides many miles of water mains, gas mains, culverts, and sewers to be extended. There are about 15,000 houses in Richmond (exclusive of stables, &c.) and there are now within the city limits 154,696 feet of vacant land, suitable for building allowing twenty-five feet to the house, which is a fair average; this gives room for 6,200 houses, or room on which to build a city more than one-third the size of the present city of Richmond.

ABOUT CONGESTION.

And still we hear about congestion, in face of the fact that there has been a decrease in the population of three out of Richmond's six wards within the last ten years. According to the present mileage of streets per acre in Richmond, the proposed new territory would contain 183 miles of streets. The sum of $300,000 which they proposed to spend on this vast area is about sufficient to give six miles of streets with first-class city improvements. Now we can see why "the motion appointing the sub-committee was recast so as to leave out the inquiry concerning future improvements." It might be embarrassing to know the cost of improving the territory they proposed to annex. So they generously offer out of our own funds to give us in the next three years the equivalent of first-class city improvements for one-thirtieth part, and for the other twenty-nine thirtieths, we can enjoy the privilege of dating our letter-heads "Richmond, Va." If they continued the improvements annually at this rate (which they do not offer to do), it would take ninety years to improve the entire territory. The present plan of annexation embraces sections of country not suitable for building, as well as hundreds upon hundreds of acres of sparsely-settled farming lands, and if Richmond wanted to do so, it would be impossible for her to give these people city improvements within the next hundred years. The tax collected by the city on this property would be increased at once 86 per cent., and in a very short time it would be further increased to about three and a half times that now paid to the county (the difference between 43 cents on the $100 and $1.40 on the $100), even if the assessments are not increased.

AS TO ASSESSMENTS.

But those who calculate on no increase in assessments are cherishing a vain delusion, and when assessments are increased, as they must be to be uniform, it means that the city will collect from five to six times the tax now paid to the county, to say nothing of an increase in that paid to the State, by reason of the increased assessments. At this rate how long will it take the tax-gatherer to absorb the entire value of this property, and why should any of these people be required to contribute their all to the upbuilding of Richmond? I deny that annexation is a "legitimate necessity of the situation," and if a necessity at all, it is only so for the purpose of raising money, and to raise money upon other peoples' property, without giving them an equivalent, is in opposition to the spirit of free institutions, and as tyrannical as the arbitrary ukase of a Czar. There is no principle of equity upon which it can be defended.

THEORY OF TAXATION.

The levying of taxes is only justified upon the ground of public necessity, and the law which requires that it shall be uniform implies that its benefits shall be equal. For every dollar paid in taxes, the tax-payer has a right to expect value received, and any government, municipal or otherwise, which collects taxes out of proportion to benefits conferred, is by so much unjust and oppressive. The people of Henrico are not tempted by the sophistry that "there would be a heavy advance in the value of county property within the radius of annexation." They know the argument in favor of equal advantage to be spurious, and the advocates for annexation, being loth to rest their cause entirely upon "taxable valuation," which some of them have confessed to be the "real advantage" which they seek, they now fall back upon the pretence, "that better protection may be given to the health conditions within the present limits of the city of Richmond, as well as the surrounding territory within the annexed district," a tender consideration they profess for our health. Having failed to convince the reason, they appeal to the imagination of the people, and attempt to frighten them into submission by flaunting a scarecrow, which the most cursory examination reveals as a counterfeit. Suppose the health conditions in Henrico are not better than they are in Richmond, how can they be improved by betterments, which the city of Richmond is unable to make? If United States statistics are admitted as evidences, we have nothing to fear from the health record. Nor can they complain of our meeting them upon ground of their own choosing; but in doing so we wish to emphasize the fact that Richmond is the aggressor, and Henrico is in defence of her rights.

THE DEATH RATE.

According to government statistics, taken from reports for 1901, there is no city in the United States as large as Richmond, with so large a death rate per thousand, except New Orleans; there is no city in the United States as large as Richmond with so large a death rate per thousand from typhoid-fever, except Pittsburg and Allegheny, Pa., (practically one city); there is no city in the United States as large as Richmond with so large a death rate per thousand from malaria, except New Orleans and Memphis.

Richmond's death rate per thousand from typhoid-fever is twice as great as that of Philadelphia, Baltimore, San Francisco, Cincinnati, New Orleans, Minneapolis, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Denver, Toledo, Columbus, Los Angeles, Memphis, Portland, Grand Rapids, and Dayton; three times as great as that of St. Louis, Boston, Buffalo, Providence, Worcester, Syracuse, New Haven, Paterson, Omaha, and Scranton; four times as great as that of New York, Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Newark, Jersey City, Rochester, Fall River, Lowell, Cambridge, and St. Paul, and twelve times as great as that of St. Joseph, Mo.

What is the cause of this frightful death rate from typhoid fever in Richmond? That part of Richmond called "Africa," bordering on Shockoe creek (an open sewer), which lies between Richmond and the most populous parts of Henrico, and which is occupied by negroes, seems to have no such death-rate from this cause, as is shown by the fact that deaths from this disease in Richmond are only about one-half as great among the blacks as among the whites. And yet these negroes lack the better sanitary surroundings enjoyed by the whites, many of them using surface closets and drinking well water, while the whites, many of whom have every advantage, die in larger numbers from this dread disease. Richmond's experience in this particular is the reverse of most our southern cities, which goes to prove that the negroes are not immunes. It cannot be claimed that this death rate is due to density of population, when the blacks are more thickly ruddled together than the whites. Nor will it appear when you consider that Richmond has a population of 24.1 per acre, while New Orleans, with a larger death rate per thousand from general causes and malaria, has a population of 2.3 per acre. Pittsburg, with a larger death rate from typhoid-fever, has a population of 17.7 per acre, and Memphis, with a death-rate from malaria three times as great as any city its size in the United States, has a population of only 10 per acre. Upon the other hand, Jersey City, Covington, Ky., and Hoboken, N. J., with populations, respectively, of 26.7, 28.7, and 98.3 per acre, all have smaller death rates per 1,000 than Richmond, with her population of 24.1 per acre. Besides, no part of Richmond is so densely populated as the thickly settled portions of many of the large cities above-named. But, for the sake of argument, admit that Richmond is too densely populated, can annexation scatter her houses and relieve the situation? We repeat the question: What is the cause of this frightful death-rate from typhoid fever among the white people of Richmond? Let Richmond answer, and if she cannot, let her turn to the scientific investigations of other places and learn from them.

TYPHOID-FEVER.

The New York State Board of Health says: "Typhoid-fever is contracted by taking food or drink which contains living germs of the disease. Heat destroys their life, so cooked food does not carry it. * * * Infected water is the chief medium for causing typhoid-fever. Typhoid fever is a measure of the purity of a water supply. * * * Cities can command the quality of their water, and the disease should practically disappear from them." A fear sprnsibility rests somewhere. The Massachusetts State Board of Health says: "The death-rate from typhoid-fever in any large city or community of people may be considered an index of the purity of the public water supply." Massachusetts has proven the truth of this statement by reducing the average death rate from typhoid-fever in her principal cities from .82 to .27 per 100,000 by purifying the drinking water; and the experience of European cities is in line with that of Massachusetts. Typhoid-fever epidemics in Washington, D. C., have been traced directly to Cumberland, 184 miles above.

It is ridiculous for the annexationists to attempt to fasten upon Henrico the responsibility for the terrible death-rate in Richmond. The people of Richmond have a right to indulge a righteous indignation and to demand a speedy reckoning; but let them proceed rightly in the matter, place the responsibility where it belongs, and be not deceived by the attempt to make a scape-goat of Henrico.

Respectfully, JOHN C. EASLEY.

Why Lower the Tax?

(Fredericksburg Free Lance.)

Considerable has been said and written of late concerning the proposed plan of some members of the Constitutional Convention, having in view the reduction of the tax rate of the State. The Free Lance is in favor of any plan having for its object the running of the business of the Commonwealth on the most economic basis, but we seriously doubt the advisability of this proposed reduction in the tax rate. Now, to our reason, for we are always willing to give reasons for our doubts: In the first place, we do not believe that matters of taxation should be fixed for years to come by organic enactment. The conditions existing to-day will not exist twenty-five or thirty years hence. They will either be better or worse. If the former, then the tax ought to be lower; if the latter, then the tax must of necessity be higher. The whole taxation question should be left with the Legislature.

Then, again, we do not believe there is a demand for a reduction in our tax rate. There is a demand that the State's money be sent more judiciously, and that demand will be made just as much under a lower tax rate as under the present rate, should there be any reckless expenditures. The people want something for their money, and as long as they are getting their money's worth they will never kick. They only kick now, because they are not getting what belongs to them.

Then, we are considering the improvement of our public schools and public highways. Now, can these improvements be made without money, and how can we get the money by reducing taxation?

If the members of the convention want to please the people let them look well after these things and hurry up with their work. The new Constitution cannot be popularized in any better way.

Andrew Jackson's Education.

(Mobile Register.)

"O. K." is said to have been originally used by President Andrew Jackson as an abbreviation of "all correct," but that is doubtless an invention.—Richmond Dispatch. The denial should be unqualified. Jackson's letters, even those of his earliest manhood, show that he had received a good English education, as was to be expected, considering his childhood surroundings, his pious mother, his Scotch-Irish descent.

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