

THE RICHMOND DISPATCH

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SUNDAY MARCH 2, 1902.

"SICKENING HORRORS."

The penitentiary condition is almost inconceivable to the human mind, and it would be difficult, indeed, to conceive of any penal institution being permitted to continue under such intolerable conditions.

For ten or twelve years pathetic and persistent appeals have been made to the General Assembly of Virginia to vote a sum of money sufficient to give more cell-room in the penitentiary. In every instance the appeal has been denied outright or else compliance with it indefinitely postponed.

The majority of members have not seriously questioned the fact that ours is the most densely-crowded State prison in any English-speaking land, but it remains apologetically silent that it is revenues of the State were too scanty to allow such an expenditure.

It is now impossible for the General Assembly to complain of lack of information. The officers of the penitentiary, physicians without number, legislators, ministers of the Gospel, legislative committee after committee, Governor after Governor, and the Constitutional Convention itself, and now the Le Cato Commission—all have declared, and with all possible emphasis—that present conditions at the penitentiary are a disgrace to Virginia.

It is likewise shown that it is hopelessly impracticable to talk about removing the penitentiary from Richmond, so vast would the expense be. To send so vast a number of convicts—able-bodied men—might be sent to work upon the public roads, but the odds are that most of them would be returned to the penitentiary during the winter months.

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CONSULAR SERVICE REFORM.

At various times for a generation "consular reform" has been agitated by the commercial bodies of the country, and on several occasions Congress in the shape of bills designed to reorganize and perfect the service.

The statement of Fighting Bob Evans that the New York, Sampson's ship, was in sight during the Santiago engagement, leads the South Boston News to conclude that "Bob must have been some distance off himself, or he could not have seen the New York."

The testimony of other witnesses as to the location of Sampson's ship, while the fighting was in progress, would seem to argue that the News's conclusion is not far from correct.

ROOSEVELT AND HANNA.

The friends of the President, or, rather, we would better say, his political managers, have been felicitating themselves upon a telegram recently sent out from Washington to the effect that Hanna assured Mr. Roosevelt soon after the latter entered the White House, that so far as he (Hanna) was concerned the track for the nomination in 1904 was clear.

Now, however, a "most reliable informant" comes forward with the declaration that he has read a letter written by Hanna to a devoted friend, in which the junior Ohio Senator acquiesced in the probability of his allowing his name to be put before the next Republican national convention.

To be specific, Hanna, according to our "most reliable informant," wrote that while it was yet too early to make a definite announcement of his candidacy, the time might be reached in due course of events, and then he would be pleased to rely upon the active services of his admirers and friends.

It would seem up to the Roosevelt boomers to reconcile two very conflicting outcroppings of the Republican Boss, or call their self felicitations off, and go to "hustling." Of course, it may be that Hanna's letter to his "devoted friend" was simply an adroit recourse to stave off the importunities of his host of zealous partisans; and it may be that his activity in extending his lines of influence, propitiating his enemies and attracting new sources of power, is exclusively in the interest of Mr. Roosevelt.

None the less, we are inclined to agree with the friends of the latter, who advise that it would be just as well for the Roosevelt forces to take counsel of skepticism on these points.

WAR-TIME LITERARY VENTURE.

The celebration in France of the centennial of Victor Hugo's birth reminds us of the fact that during the war between the States the old book firm of West & Johnson, of this city, got out an edition of his "Les Miserables." It was not an edition de luxe by any means, for it was printed from worn type, on coarse, common paper, with very low-grade ink, and was bound in paper.

All the circumstances, however, it was like the Confederate note, "the best our poor country could do," and the achievement was justly regarded as a great one. If the venture did not pay the publishers financially, it paid them through the knowledge of the widespread pleasure it bestowed. In the home, in the hospital, and in the camp, the volumes were literally devoured, and, perhaps, more people in the South read Victor Hugo during the war than ever read him before, or have read him since.

And, by the by, the Confederate soldier derived pleasure, or rather fun, from the enterprise in another way than by reading the books. With his never-failing sense of humor he soon transformed "Les Miserables" into "Lee's Miserables," and applied the latter to himself and his companions.

THE NEW WARD.

The policy recommended by the Dispatch, and also by City Attorney Pollard, to cure the defects in the Wallace bill, has been adopted and will be enacted into law.

Thus the boundaries of Clay Ward will remain undisturbed until the registration and polling places are established. And the present members from Clay Ward will serve their terms out, but on April 10th Democratic nominations may be made for both wards, and on the fourth Thursday in May our candidates will be elected, and on the 1st day of July they will take their seats in the Board of Aldermen and Common Council. In other words, conditions with respect to the City Council, Board of Fire Commissioners and Police Commissioners will remain in statu quo until the new council goes into office. Then Clay Ward and Lee Ward, each, will have full ward representation. We are gratified to be able to record this much progress; but instead of seven wards Richmond should have ten—each with a population of about 9,000.

We are looking forward to that day, but do not expect its arrival until the new Constitution has been completed and there has been a registration of the voters under the new suffrage article. When that happy time comes, there need be no Jackson Ward-I, e., no "Black Belt"—in this city.

Hon John H. Reagan, of Texas, is reported ill and threatened with pneumonia. He is the last surviving member of the Confederate Cabinet, in which he was Postmaster-General. He has been since the war between the States, as he was before that period, a member of the Federal Congress, and has since the war also been Federal Senator from Texas. He is now chairman of the Texas railroad commission. We trust he will escape the pneumonia, and soon recover.

The New York World points out that Roland B. Molineux has just begun his fourth year as a prisoner charged with murder, and that it is possible that three years hence he may still be a prisoner and be neither finally convicted nor cleared of the crime of which he is accused. The fact must impress upon him forcibly what is meant by "the law's delay."

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humanities and courtesies and principles of justice, and repudiates cruelty and savagery. The philosophy and principles of modern warfare are applicable to all the differences that arise between human beings. It is the part of the victor to resort to the blows, or of what is next to resort to strong language and insults.

When the first gun is fired the war begins, and no one can say what will follow. When the first offensive is spoken the consequences are all sure of them. The only hope is that higher standards of propriety and ideals of respectability are more and more exerting their restraining and enlightening influences. And decency and good sense and humanity are more opposing themselves to the use of poisoned arrows and insulting words, that make themselves felt and work their misery after the conflict is over.

The reform aimed at is that of placing the consular service outside of party politics and making merit and ability to discharge the duties of the position to consult the claims to appointment and retention in office. The consular office is the product of commercial necessity. A consul is a commercial and business agent, stationed abroad for the purpose of protecting and advancing the interests of the merchants and shippers of the country he represents. In order to discharge his trust intelligently he should be a man of business bent, should be familiar with the language of the people to whom he is accredited, and should understand their commercial and trade customs.

Even where we have in the beginning the business bent or education, the other desirable, not to say essential, conditions, are impossible of realization, under a short or political tenure. Moreover, the consul who is given his post as a political pension, the continuance of which is dependent upon his party's lease of power, or the pull of some other man on the dispenser of personal patronage, has no incentive to perform his duties, save in a perfunctory way, and no encouragement to equip himself thoroughly for consular work. He never so conscientiously in the matter of cultivating trade relations between the country he represents and that in which he is stationed, he is not likely to look very far beyond the possibility of being superseded upon the first change in the home administration.

The Dispatch has long favored consular reform along the lines above indicated; and we sincerely hope that it will not be further delayed. What with our steady commercial expansion, the necessity for the reform is becoming more pressing every day. Nor in respect of representation abroad would we stop at securing a trained consular service. As we have stated more than once in previous discussions of the matter, we would have our diplomats go through a "school of diplomacy," commencing with consulships, secretaryships of legations, competent tutelage in the State Department, &c. Several bad diplomatic "breaks" we have made in late years, as well as the certainty that our dealings with foreign nations are destined to become more intricate as time goes by, make it manifest that to that complexion it must come if we would safeguard against serious international friction and being outwitted in important treaty negotiations.

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DISAPPOINTED.

And He Gives the Convention a Scolding. To the Editor of the Dispatch: Having been confined to the house by snow, sleet, ice, and rain, during the past week, I have had a good opportunity to read the proceedings of the Constitutional Convention as reported in the Daily Dispatch, and I have come to the conclusion that a large majority of its members lack "back-bone" and independence.

They are afraid of their own shadows, and especially are they afraid of dogs, least they get bit by them, and they are also very much afraid of whiskey, fearing it may cause their death should they take the other side to the latter question. It will be hard to tell which way the tree will fall. But should the Constitution be rejected by a vote of the people, they will be afraid of meeting the ghost of a "winner" at the polls. But there is one thing they are not afraid of, and that is to spend the people's money in fixing big salaries and waiving time of patriotism, but this is not an age of patriotism, that is all forgotten, and belongs to the patriots of the past age were "old fogies." We live now in a more advanced and enlightened age, when offices can be made for our friends, with big salaries attached, and these friends when they get in office, his benefactor gets in a hard place by a little "wire pulling."

But, the men who are so awfully afraid of being killed by a dog, now will they answer the 20,000 petitioners, their wives, and daughters, and their sweethearts, and friends? When they get back home! It will be an awful day of reckoning with some of them, and that we had a recorded vote on these questions.

The Constitution seems to regulate all dangerous and frightful questions to the Legislature. Now what will the Legislature do as the several States are required by the Constitution, and has passed the Senate by a two-thirds vote on two several days, and will doubtless pass its third reading and go to the Secretary of State to-morrow. For eight years the manager of the Virginia Edition has been making this charge. It was easily manifest with the experience with the first special session of 1894 that the innovations bound up in a special session were failures pure and simple. The new Constitution proposed that the special session should be limited to three days, and that none other than revenue and appropriation bills shall be considered at such session unless the Governor shall by special written message recommend other subjects and matters.

The special session fell under the administration of John M. Stone. It was inadequate in the matter of time, and in view of imperative demands for legislation which could not wait until the regular session, it was held during the administration of Anselm J. McLaurin. The same conditions that confronted Governor Stone confronted Governor McLaurin in the matter of limitations of time, and he extended the session.

The third special session began January 7, 1902, and confronted by the same conditions which confronted his predecessors, Governor Stone and McLaurin, Governor Longino extended the session. The Legislature of Mississippi do not believe the idea of being made to sleep on a Procrustean bed. They do not want to be stretched limb from limb, so to speak, in a constitutional straightjacket if they are to have the session saved off if the bed is too short for them. This is about what special sessions look like. It gives a Governor autocratic power which should be vested in the people, who are the sovereigns, and ought to be by petition or otherwise of instructing their servants chosen to legislate for them. As matters stand, every member of the Legislature and every tax-payer in Mississippi might have legislation on a given subject, and if the Governor should refuse to heed the will of the people, no legislation could be had until a regular session, which means the election of a new Legislature which meets two years remote from any special session. The Legislature should be put in the hands of one man, and the Legislature of the State of Mississippi by submitting this amendment to the people to restore to themselves that vested right of which they were robbed by the Constitutional Convention of 1890.

GOOD ROADS.

A Financial Plan for Securing Them. To the Editor of the Dispatch: To have a great deal said in the Virginia papers late in the year, about good roads and the best way to get them, and I would like to, through your columns, suggest a plan to which I have given a great deal of thought.

It is conceded that to take quite a lot of money, and the question is how best to raise it, and next how to handle it in the best and most economical manner. I don't believe that there is a county in the State that has a sinking fund of \$50,000, or even \$30,000, in one year over and above its regular road fund to good advantage; and to put a sum like this in a county treasury would be too great a temptation for the best advantage. If this money was borrowed the county would have to increase its levy so as to meet the interest and establish a sinking fund to pay it at maturity, and this amount would have to be raised through good times and bad, no matter how great the burden might become. My plan is for each county, so to speak, to have a sinking fund to improve roads from itself, or rather make arrangements to pay interest and sinking fund on \$50,000 or \$100,000, and use this amount, interest and sinking fund, every year to put off the interest on the bonds until they are paid, instead of paying it to a bondholder. They would soon see that this would act like a sinking fund on the regular road fund, because every mile of road that is put off for a year would be added to the extra fund or fee to be expended in the betterment of the ordinary roads. By this plan, in a few years the regular road fund could either be reduced or part of it put on the permanent fund, and this way would sooner get all of the important roads in such shape that only a nominal sum would be required to keep them in repair. I believe from a long experience with public roads that in every county the roads ought to be put in not less than three classes:—The first class, which are generally merely passways that have to be kept open, but very little traveled; the second, which are the most important and fixed up first and best, and then the second class next best, and the third class, which are generally merely passways that have to be kept open, but very little traveled.

There is another feature in my plan that I think would be a good one, and that is, that the permanent road fund ought to be put in the hands of first-class men, elected or appointed for at least four years, so as not to have the plans and systems of the day changed every two or three years, as it is now done under our constant changing of county officers. I would like very much to hear from some of your other readers who are interested in the subject. H. B. Dublin, Va., February 18, 1902.

INJUSTICE TO PEOPLE IN WARREN

And Daughters of the Confederacy In Regard to the Anne Lee Grave. To the Editor of the Dispatch: A correspondent who has lately visited the spot, expresses regret that General Lee's daughter should sleep in a country burial ground, states that her grave is neglected, and intimates that the Daughters of the Confederacy are derelict in this matter. He also suggests that the remains should be removed to a more suitable place.

The facts in the case are as follows: When the fall of 1852 Miss Anne Carter Lee died at Jones's Spring, N. C., her father, General R. E. Lee, expressed the desire that she should rest among the people who had shown her so much respect in life. This wish was carried out, and she was buried in a vault in the cemetery of the town of Warren, Va. The monument was dedicated August 8, 1856, in the presence of an immense concourse of people. James Barron Hope read an original poem. Generals G. W. C. Lee and W. H. F. Lee were present as representatives of the family. The father could not be present owing to the bounds of his parole precluding his leaving Virginia, but he visited the grave in 1870, a few months before his death.

The monument and grave are in as perfect condition as the day they were dedicated. The Daughters of the Confederacy at Kirtrell visit the spot, twenty miles distant, place flowers upon the grave, and see that no unseemly shrub encroaches upon it. The first plan was to bury the grave in the cemetery, but this was decided to be impracticable owing to the fine, overarching cedars. It was thought best to restrain weeds and shrubs and leave the natural grasses as the only ones that would probably thrive upon the monument. It is a beautiful spot, and contains a good many other graves, and several other monuments. It is still used as a place of interment. All that can justly be said is that it is re-

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GOOD-ROADS AND SCHOOLS FIRST.

One Who Opposes an Appropriation for St. Louis Exposition. To the Editor of the Dispatch: We people up in Goodland are more than ready to contribute to the St. Louis Exposition. We are bitterly opposed to the Legislature's paying out our money for an exposition to be held a thousand miles from here, and leaving us with school-houses that are hardly weather-proof, and are a shame and disgrace to the State. Our roads, too, are new and always are, except during a few months in the year, in a dangerous condition and useless for hauling.

This is one condition as to schools and roads, and are a shame and disgrace to the State. Our roads, too, are new and always are, except during a few months in the year, in a dangerous condition and useless for hauling. This is one condition as to schools and roads, and are a shame and disgrace to the State. Our roads, too, are new and always are, except during a few months in the year, in a dangerous condition and useless for hauling.

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