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MONDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1912.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD'S OPPORTUNITY.

All men make mistakes. Human judgment and human motives are never infallible. Error is often the beginning of wisdom. But, when big and honest men make a mistake, and realize the fact, they are the first to admit the mistake, and to seize every opportunity to correct it. The three dominant members of the new Administrative Board have made a grave mistake. They have clouded a new and hopeful era of Richmond's municipal affairs by proposing an appointment that is not justified by the test of efficiency. They have selected for the important office of Building Inspector a man whose ability and training do not fit him for the place. The Times-Dispatch, inspired by the single desire to see this office wisely filled and the standard of efficiency made the sole standard for municipal appointments, has presented the facts that prove the proposed incumbent unfit for the place. It has spoken plainly and clearly. It believes that the majority of citizens agrees with its contention. The board has made a mistake.

Will these three members of the board prove themselves big enough and honest enough to acknowledge the mistake, and correct it while there is time? The appointment is not yet official. It lies within the power of the board to inaugurate its control by doing a brave and manly act. It can rise above small politics and personal motives. It can inspire men who are giving mind and body to help Richmond with new faith and fresh courage. Such an act will do more to establish the board in the hearts of the community than a thousand barterings. It will demand the sacrifice of small pride and petty vanity. But it will be infinitely worth while. The opportunity for reparation is still open. The responsibility can never be shifted. Happy are the men who can undo their mistakes. Are Whittet and Folkes and Hirschberg big enough?

WILSON AND VIRGINIA'S BILL OF RIGHTS.

In his speech at Staunton President-Elect Wilson, in his allusion to the Virginia Bill of Rights (Declaration), his affirmation of belief in it and his interpretation of what it means, had obviously especially in his mind Articles III. and IV. of the original treaty, as he said: "There has been no discovery of new liberty; it was there all the time." It was in truth proclaimed for all time, as Bancroft, the historian, has set forth so eloquently in his eulogy of Mason's immortal document and the work of the Virginia Convention of 1776, which reads in part:

"Other colonies had framed bills of rights in reference to their relations with Britain. Virginia moved from charters and customs to primal principles, from a narrow altercation about facts to the contemplation of immutable truth. She summoned the eternal laws of man's being to protest against all tyranny. The English petition of rights in 1688 was historic and retrospective, the Virginia declaration came out of the heart of nature and announced governing principles for all people in all future times. It was the voice of reason going forth to speak a new political world into being. At the bar of humanity Virginia gave the name and fame of her sons as hostages that her public life should show a likeness to the highest ideas of right and equal freedom among men."

Yet this was the heritage upon which the Underwood Convention and the last Constitutional Convention presumed to lay the desecrating hand of mutilation, happily, however, sparing the primal principles and the immutable truth to which Bancroft and Mr. Wilson referred. It were well that on great public occasions like that at Staunton the people, not only of Virginia, but of the whole nation, be reminded of what the Virginia Bill of Rights means and be enjoined to believe in it.

THE FARMER'S WINTER.

A farm journal recently closed its list of "Things to Be Done in January" with this striking suggestion: "See that you have plenty of wood to make the house warm and comfortable, and plenty of light for the evening. Provide games, books and music for the family. Keep healthy, amused and cheerful."

This hits at an element in rural life just as important as doubling the corn crop. It is aimed at doubling the happiness of the isolated and winter-bound farmer. It recognizes that he is a man even before he is a farmer, and that he needs comfort and recreation. If this hint were developed in all its possibilities, it would do much to solve the problem of keeping the young man on the farm, and reducing the abnormal insanity rate observed in farm women.

Stern experience alone can teach how vital to the farmhouse are lights and fuel. Nothing adds more to the general happiness, yet strangely enough, these simple adjuncts to comfort are often neglected by the farmer. Lamps and fire-wood come under the head of chores, disagreeable necessities, but not money-making, and therefore to be treated with a slighting hand. Cold halls, cold bedrooms, cold dining-rooms—these are accepted parts of the weary winter, when Nature refuses to do her share of providing warmth and light. Evil-smelling and eye-ruining lamps are endured without thought of how much real pleasure could be gained if there were only light enough to find it by. As a result of this apathy, everybody goes to bed, and the profitable evenings are wasted. Yet, if most farmers spent a peaceful hour reading even a dry government report, they might reasonably gain information worth twenty times the trouble and expense of light and warmth.

Games, books and music are no longer luxuries to the American farmer. He can secure them all at small cost. Magazines reach him promptly at the same rate as elsewhere. A neighborhood club would distribute to its members the latest fiction or more serious matter. The phonograph is ready to provide very decent substitutes for vaudeville or grand opera. In fact, there is no reason why the ordinary farmer of moderate means should not make his castle as cozy and comfortable as the city home. When he does, he will raise as fine crops in the winter as at other times.

TRUST THE PEOPLE.

The text of Woodrow Wilson's Virginia addresses was simply a repetition of his belief in the people and his promise to act as their servant. Virginia is glad to hear her ancient doctrines repeated, even if they have not always served as guides to her representatives. A little plain speaking will not hurt, for if the present methods of political control are to be changed they cannot be done by mere suavity and vague generalization. A fighting President will have to fight. He will have to break loose from a good many traditions. He will, in the end, find that his sole enduring support is the principle laid down in the Bill of Rights that when the people decide they want a change they have an inalienable right to demand the change.

We are glad that Mr. Wilson has such faith in Virginia standards that he uses them as a guide by which to square his conduct. The real Virginia standards have served admirably in the past as true touchstones of popular government. They have been blurred by new interpretations, distorted by self-seekers, degenerated sometimes into self-complacent platitudes and served as cloaks for personal government. But, stripped of all confusion, the real Virginia standard is the rule of the people as against the rule of special privilege and private graft. It means democracy.

Mr. Wilson is not deceived either as to the present issue in American politics nor as to the methods to be used in meeting it. He knows that service to the rank and file is the demand of the rank and file. He is seeking the fundamental basis of justice and mercy. He is not deriving his sustenance from the preferred few. His faith is in the people, and his appeal is to the people. Virginia is proud that her son comes to the mother State asking her support on grounds that she has ever cherished in her heart.

A COLD IN THE POCKET.

The woes of a cold in the head, or any kind of plain or assorted cold, are beyond the powers of mere words to describe. No anathema maranatha could ever send the insidious grippe germ into any place of torture even faintly worthy of its horrid crimes. It assaults the body and prostrates the soul. It takes savor out of food and ozone out of the air. It makes living a travesty and death a boon. It produces blues "that are so thick they are black." It is surely some cousin to original sin.

But if these things be too deep for sane utterance, the economics of the cold in the pocket is yet open to calm discussion. By this we mean the price paid by a man suffering from any of the multiplied forms of influenza, grippe, bronchitis, tonsilitis, or plain cold, is not only in suffering, but also in actual money. The economic waste of a winter of colds in a city like Richmond must be one of the biggest bills the people foot. During six months probably every inhabitant of the community has one or more colds. They last from two days all the way to the full six months. During that time he, or she, is, in fact, unfit for work, although the chief iniquity of grippe is that it never makes you quite ill enough to justify a complete abstention from toil. Then, with blurred mind and aching body, the victims slouch through the days. They are inefficient, cross, liable to make mistakes. They fail to perform expected duties and tangle up whole establishments, simply because they are too wretched to do things properly. They drive trade away by ill manners and get on the nerves of fellow-workers. They quarrel and shirk. The whole city pays the price of having its work done by half-sick men.

Of course, the added expense of doctors and medicine and foods and tonics must be added. The wear and tear on families and nurses adds another item of expense. All in all, society pays a heavy penalty for taking cold. The new ideas of human efficiency should set about finding a remedy for colds and a means of killing the germ. The battle against tuberculosis is more spectacular, but for contributing to the peace and comfort and income of mankind we can imagine nothing more worthy than a crusade against colds.

OUR HOME TOWN.

The best way to get travelling men to boost their home town is to make them so proud of it they cannot keep from boosting. The best way to convince outsiders that there is a Greater Richmond is to make a Greater Richmond, not to talk about it. Mayor Ainslie, in his admirably pertinent and truth-telling address at the Chamber of Commerce banquet, pointed out that the traveling man not only does good work by advertising Richmond to the outer world, but that he can come home and tell Richmond in what ways the outer world is better than Richmond. He can boost Richmond at home by a few plain truths about how it can be improved.

The traveling man has the reputation of being a great talker. Naturally he has to talk a good bit. But he is also just about the keenest observer and most acute critic of municipal progress that exists. He sees many towns. He gets a standard of comparison and a big perspective. He gets out of the rut of complacency, and he knows what it means to meet competition. Therefore, no matter how he loves his home town, he is distinctly aware of its shortcomings. When he praises its achievements, he wants to praise what it actually has done, and not what it thinks it has done.

The Mayor further emphasized that a clean, safe, well equipped city to live in is the real aim of constructive citizens. The traveling man and the home-dweller can ask two things of his town. First, that it must put into action such measures as will make for material prosperity and for the satisfactory handling of the business he brings to it. It must stand back of his assertions with the cold facts. It must guarantee him the right kind of commercial methods and the best form of municipal government. Second, it must furnish his family a good place in which to live and develop. Schools, libraries, health, streets, recreation—these are what the Mayor mentions as some of the needs for a home. They are certainly some of the things that make life livable. If a city does not fulfil these needs, can a traveling man be a real booster? For instance, how often do the salesmen who go out from Richmond have to explain and apologize because it is the only city of its size in the United States that does not possess a public library?

The Mayor wisely put the nub of the matter in one sentence, "I had rather provide the best place for people to live in with a population of 135,000, than to have a population of 200,000 with much left undone that would add to their comfort and safety." In the last analysis it is not size of population or bank clearings that makes a great city. It is what the population does with the bank clearings to get a spacious, happy, well-ordered life.

AMATEUR ATHLETICS FOR RICHMOND.

Richmond should have an amateur athletic association for the development of outdoor and indoor games. We doubt whether there is a city of the same size in the United States where so little is done to interest young men in active physical exercise for health and recreation. In summer we have a little amateur baseball. In winter there is some attempt at organized bowling. The Y. M. C. A. has a few class leagues for indoor baseball and basketball. There was a little football outside of the colleges. The church recreation centers have their own games. This is the total. Is it any wonder that a good many active young men can find nothing better to do than parade Broad Street?

For this reason, we are peculiarly glad to welcome the suggestion of Frank S. Tousey, director of the Christ Church Association, that a big mass meeting of all clubs, organizations and individuals interested in amateur athletics be held for the purpose of discussing the situation, arousing sentiment, formulating a tentative plan for an athletic league of some kind, and pushing an indoor track meet to be held on February 22. To find out how many are prepared to co-operate in this new plan, the backers have published blanks to be filled in by prospective competitors, giving the probable entries in the events. This is a good beginning. Let the track meet be the opening of a new era of amateur athletics in Richmond. There are enough institutions already doing something to form a real nucleus for a big controlling body.

But success in athletics means work. The mere proposal of an excellent plan does nothing. Somebody has to get behind and push. Mr. Tousey cannot achieve a Richmond Athletic Association all by himself. He should receive the energetic support of every young man, or old one, who wants to do something constructive in building up the civic life of his own town. We can have an indoor track meet and a second meet outdoors in May. We can have basketball games and bowling. We can begin in a small way and grow into big things. But we must have concerted, unselfish co-operation.

The Y. M. C. A. should take an active part in forming such a league. That is the very ideal of much of its work. In other towns the Y. M. C. A. holds invitation track meets of its own, and so stimulates a healthy interest in athletics. There are three big preparatory schools here. There is a college. There are four crack military organizations. There are two flourishing church institutions. There are scores of old university track men and athletes. The University of Virginia alone must have athletic alumni enough in Richmond to put out a fine team. There are four newspapers, with sporting writers eager to help a good cause. Can all of these forces join to make sports in Richmond a real factor in our life? Where is the good red blood of youth?

They say Richmond makes all the baseball nuts for the National League. It also makes some extra fine baseball fans.

On the Spur of the Moment

By Roy K. Moulton

The Old Home Made Santa.

When granddad hooked his cotton whiskers on
And pulled his old fur cap down o'er his ears,
Us kids all knew it was the same old con;
The one he'd sprung on us for many years.
But still, it didn't seem that we could get
Accustomed to him in those togs, because,
In the excitement, we would clean forget
He was granddad and not real Santa Claus.

The old red coat with fur around the edge,
The one that served the same job every year,
The bells as he drove up in his old sledge
Conspired to make us youngsters shake with fear.
We knew it was old granddad all the while,
But then it seemed to be agin' the laws
To fail to shiver in the ague style
At anything that looked like Santa Claus.

Us younger kids would sit around the tree
A holdin' hands, when Santa bustled in,
A-looking at the presents and, Oh Gee,
A-wonderin' if he would e'er begin
To pass around the things a-hangin' there.
And how we'd hate to see him even pause
To say "Good Evening," but we didn't dare
To speak a single word to Santa Claus.

Mosquito netting bags full to the top
Of good things that we'd waited for a year,
But Santa Claus would always have to stop
And talk to us awhile on "Christmas cheer."
But when the first kid's name he'd loudly shout
That kid would answer "here" with trembling jaws,
And wouldn't know just what he was about,
He was so doggoned skeered of Santa Claus.

We didn't have much in those olden days,
No high falutin' stuff that cost a lot;
No autos and no gems with brilliant rays,
But we were always pleased with what we got.
It's not the same now as it used to be,
And, as the years roll by, we love to pause,
And try once more in memory to see,
Our old granddad, our home-made Santa Claus.

From the Hickeyville Clarion.

There is a new electric clock in the Huttel Hickeyville. By gravy, it seems as though time flies fast enough without runnin' it by electricity.

The new trimmer at Miss Amy Pringle's millinery emporium expects to go on the stage soon and marry some steel magnate or other. She says there is more fun trimmin' millionaires than trimmin' hats. I see in the papers where a feller in Baraboo, Wis., dropped dead while getting on a train. By jing, the people in our vicinity dies of old age waitin' for a train to come along. No funerals lately. The financial stringency makes folks work so hard to make a livin' that they don't have time to die. Foldin' chairs, for funerals, dances and other social functions for rent, inquire Amos Butts, also livery, feed and sales stables.

It is not known who will run for sheriff in our county next, and everybody at present writing is engaged in running away from him. Elmer Jones got a knockdown to the new trimmer. Ah, there, Elmer! Miss Amy Pringle says all the best waltzers are Daughters of the Revolution. Willie Tumms has the mumps. Seems as if that kid had enough cheek without that. Walks are some slickerish to-day. Uncle Ezra Harkins fell down on his face, and if it hadn't been for his whiskers he would have received some bumps, which luckily he escaped. Before he could get up, however, his whiskers froze fast to the ice, and the boys had to borrow a crosscut saw from Tibbitt's store to release him.

Mrs. Ansel Hanks keeps boarders. But not very long. Whoever saw an Indian with whiskers? Anson Frisby, our banker, spent Thanksgiving and ten shillin' down to the city. Mrs. Frisby has got a new dress made outen mercenary silk.

Voice of the People

Competency and the Administrative Board.

To the Editor of The Times-Dispatch:

Sir,—Anent J. E. Butler and the Administrative Board, why all this clamor about competency at this late date? If a competent board was elected, can it not elect a competent man as Building Inspector? Ah! there is the rub. Mr. Beck says, "It was on my record as Building Inspector that I went before the people and was elected to the Administrative Board." Mr. Beck may as well say that, because he is a competent civil engineer and architect, as a Building Inspector should be, that, therefore, he is qualified to drive a locomotive. The two offices require different qualifications. For any legislative office from State Legislature to the United States Senate, I would stand an examination with Mr. Beck of two hours a day for two months without fear, but I would not stand an examination with him as Building Inspector one hour a day for one month. If Mr. Beck thinks that the qualifications displayed as Building Inspector qualify him for the Administrative Board, he may as well resign the office at once, for all the use that he would be on said board would be as engineer and architect, and the board can hire one for $10 a day and thus save money. Mr. Butler submit to an examination, indeed! Not until the Administrative Board does the same. They are supposed to be competent. Their selection of a Building Inspector is supposed to be wise until the inspector's work proves otherwise.

No elective officer of the State or city is required, before election, to prove his competency by an examination. They generally prove their fitness by fooling the voters, and that is easy to do.

How many officers of this State, from the Governor up, would be in office to-day were they required to prove their fitness before a competent board? A large number of all State legislators were elected simply because they were lawyers, regardless of other considerations and qualifications.

Now, because a lawyer manipulates the law, and thereby gains wealth, no more proves him a political economist than it proves a man a biologist, because he buys eggs at 17 cents a dozen and sells the mat 35 cents a dozen, and thereby accumulates a fortune.

Let us get at the crux of the whole matter. The workingman, as the term is generally understood (for largely the world is divided into three classes, viz., workingmen, beggarmen and thieves, and there is no other way of making a living except one of those ways) only gets the scraps at the party feast (and then he is not qualified for even the small scrap of the office he gets), and when a workingman, by his shrewdness, gets hold of a plum, the fight begins, and he generally loses out.

Now a word to the pious people who object to Mr. Butler holding the office of Building Inspector because they assert that he is a drunkard.

Nothing is. No man is. All is becoming. "The great mountains, the contemplation of which makes pure and solemn the secret thought of man and appall with the majesty of God," are becoming plains. It has required all these years for Tom Paine, the stay-maker, to grow into the colossus that now overshadows Washington. Who is this man Butler? All that we know of him with the faintest adumbration of certainty, is that, like every other son of Adam's misery and Eve's vanity, he is a son of the Most Highest. And shall he find no place of repentance, though he seek it carefully with tears?

Respectfully,
FRANK SMITH.
1212 E. Franklin Street, City.

Joys of Rural Virginia.

To the Editor of The Times-Dispatch:

Sir,—Any one, whether a stranger or native born, who will visit those hospitable counties of King William and King and Queen will be cordially received and royally entertained with the best the season can afford, at any time of the year. But especially let them land there, as I did, about the last of November, the height of corn-shucking season and beginning of hog-killing time. O, my! The chines and chitlings, the sausage and souse, and the (misnamed) spareribs—there was nothing spare about these ribs until I had finished with them. Then, too, the crackling pone and buttermilk! No eating better, no food more fattening. No people know better how to prepare it than those housewives and their healthy daughters, and they deal out with a liberal hand plenty of "sop"—good, greasy gravy. It left a good taste in the mouth, without any bad effects—dyspepsia, and so on.

The corn-shucking carries my thoughts back many years—to corn-shucking on the old Virginia plantations, when a large pile of corn was put at the big barn door. All the negroes of the neighborhood were "invited," and would sure come—a bright moonlight night; the great pile of corn would vanish as they would shuck and sing—sing to beat the band all ragtime songs—

"My ole miss promise me,
When she die, she'd set me free,
My ole miss dead and gone;
Left poor Sambo shucking corn."

"Christmas come but onst a year;
Evy nigger gits his sher."

and many more too numerous to mention. Yet they linger on memory's faded page.

By 11 o'clock the pile of corn is shucked. All are summoned to the big kitchen, where there is a large iron pot full of beef stew, well seasoned with onions and red pepper. The "head man" of the plantation takes a few of his old and intimate friends around to the back door of the "great house," all with hats in hand and the politeness of a Chesterfield, tell Ole Marster "all de pile of corn is shucked up and de shucks put away." If old master is not strictly a temperance man, he hands them each a dram, which they enjoy, and wish old master and miss the "top of the season and good luck." After eating, then the plantation dance, with the fiddle and the bow, by an "expert." All colored damsels from adjacent farms would join in the dance and sing "Snowbird on the Ash Bank," "Ole Dan Tucker," "Ole Anty Kate, at Garden Gate."

No nation was ever so happy—no doctors' bills to pay, no rents due, no firewood to buy, all free—as the happy negro, who had the necessaries and somforts and some of the luxuries of life. When freedom came the negro was the most durable, the healthiest, happiest nation on earth. Some lived to great old age, were well cared for, and decently buried.

WM. H. TURPIN.

Straight Talk About Richmond Politics.

To the Editor of The Times-Dispatch:

Sir,—The Administrative Board's appointment of a Building Inspector is called a political choice. It is hard to imagine another motive for it; but it would be interesting to know why it is thought political. That it is held so by men who are reputed to be keen politicians does little credit to the political sense of the community, or, shall we say, to the political force of those who know better. Who is benefited by honest incapacity? Artisans and laborers should know that the injury likely to come to the city through incompetent management of this office will hurt them much more than they can gain by having a few of their number holding these places. Building in Richmond is taking on a new character, requiring much more technical knowledge than in the early days of this office—a knowledge that some good architects do not possess. Perhaps it is unfortunate that so much stress has been laid on the appointee's habits, or former habits; on his mistake, and on his discharge by Mr. Beck. This is likely to bring out some of that sentiment in favor of the attacked that is often proof against all reason, and these matters are not essential. It is enough that a man has been chosen to fill a position requiring certain technical knowledge that he is known to lack, and cannot be supposed fitted to acquire. It is such a choice as no well informed man would consider in his own affairs. If this be good politics, the city where it is found so shows but indifferent capacity to govern itself. A citizens' league, carefully started with good men, might do something to shape intelligent opinion and to give it political force.

EDWARD GRAY, JR.

December 28.

Abe Martin

Th' only polish some fellers ever git is on ther shoes. Next t' payin' fer a dead hoss ther halt nothin' a feller likes better'n hearin' his wife tell about somethin' mushy he did while sparkin'.

HAPPINESS DOES'NT ALWAYS RIDE IN AUTOMOBILES

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QUERIES & ANSWERS

Mary Jefferson.

Can you inform me whom Mary Jefferson, sister of the President, married, and whether there were children of the marriage? E. W. T.

John Bolling, of Chestnut Grove, who was the son of Major John Bolling, who was the son of Colonel John Bolling, of Cobbs. The children were: Martha, married Fielding Archer; John, married Miss Kennon; Edward, married Dolly Payne; Archibald, married Catharine Payne; Mary, married Edw. Archer; Robert, married Jane Payne.

Grain Journals.

Please give title and address of two publications devoted to the feed and grain trade. W. E. FOX.

American Hay, Flour and Feed Journal, New York City. Grain Dealers' Journal, Chicago.

Black Hawk.

Please tell me the location of the statue to Black Hawk, somewhere in the Middle West. Who made it, and when? E. H. KISTER.

It stands on Eagle Nest Bluff, above the Rock River, at Oregon, Ill. Lorado Taft cast it of cement on the spot where it stands. It was unveiled July 1, 1911. It is about fifty feet high, and is visible for miles, and represents Black Hawk in his blanket, with folded arms.

Mother Hubbard.

Is the age of the nursery song, "Mother Hubbard," known? MRS. T. N. H.

Approximately. All incidents in such poems must be instantly appreciable to the common people of the date of their production, or the poems fail. The appearance of the dog's pipe would locate the date of Mother Hubbard about the middle of the eighteenth century, along with King Cole. Some of the books profess to find Pitt and the French in the dog and the dame.

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