

The True Democrat

ELRIE ROBINSON,
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Editors.

Official Journal of the Parish of West Feliciana, the Towns of Bayou Sara and St. Francisville, and of the School Board.

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THE CHILDREN'S TAX.

At this season of the year, it has become the custom for Louisiana newspapers to begin pleading with the suffragans to pay their poll tax and so maintain their eligibility to vote. Ingenuity is drawn upon for the best means to appeal to the voter in the way of exhortation or reminder. Several years ago, growing weary of thus pouring an endless stream of water through a sieve—for those citizens fully impressed with their duty always pay the poll tax without solicitation—we determined to abandon the task, saying that the man who does not pay his poll tax is not likely to vote for the benefit of his state.

And we have refrained from urging the matter at all. The consequence is that the thoughtful voter has paid, the politicians have urged on the reluctant or the dilatory, and the residue became squaw men. But a friend suggests that the other side of the question counterbalances all other considerations, and that is, since the poll taxes are devoted to the support of the public schools, it is vitally necessary that as many polls be accounted for as possible in order to swell the school funds.

Even so. We stand corrected, repentant and converted. FOR THE CHILDREN'S SAKE the poll tax must be collected. The schools need every cent that can be raised in this manner, and for this reason, if for no other, it becomes an imperative duty that the tax be paid. As he reads these lines let every man assure himself whether he has attended to this duty, let every woman, whether mother, wife, sister or daughter, by a timely inquiry, and even some urging or coaxing if need be, see that the male members of her family do not neglect this requirement to the exercise of the suffrage, and incidentally the support of the schools.

We trust that it will not be indiscreet to urge upon the teachers also the desirability of their explaining to their pupils how considerably the interests of the schools are involved by the payment of the poll tax, how the new desks and other needed equipment are in a measure contingent upon it, and leave it to the children to push the matter, where it will do the most good. We have long thought that if children could be enlisted in the crusade for poll tax payment that the law requiring same would have its most powerful ally. Children are persistent, not easily discouraged or rebuffed, quickly enthused, and if they once understood that indisputably THE POLL TAX IS THE CHILDREN'S TAX, is for them, and them alone, they would rise to the occasion and help in the work for its collection.

PAYING A DEBT.

A tendency in some journals of national circulation is to depreciate the efforts making for the relief of Belgian sufferers, by the intimation that charity should begin at home. Without making the obvious retort that neither should charity remain at home, it is better to quote the words of Jesus when he said, "The poor ye have always with you" in reply to the plea of Judas concerning the waste of the precious ointment. The Saturday Evening Post has a cartoon drawing a contrast between the Christmas ship bound for Belgium, and the street wail who wishes she were "a refuggee." There will always be street wails, until the millennium perhaps, and if they alone would be taken into consideration many things would stop. Belgium's need is supreme, now, hence it cannot wait. The obligation to the buffer state should be felt and repaid now while her need is so great.

We should like to have a truce declared in national politics—a general agreement to leave it exactly as it is for the next five years, without a new federal election or a new federal law, meantime devoting all the intelligence and energy we can muster to local government.—Saturday Evening Post.

We are glad to see the Post so good a Democrat, but how about the Republicans, and what would become of the Progressives fighting for a place in the sun, if it be only in Louisiana?

The sudden death of Jos. E. Generally removes a strong member from the Probe Commission, with the added probability that the new member chosen by his colleagues will be more of a likeness to them.

FAULTS OF HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION.

Homestead exemption is undoubtedly a feature of the law primarily designed for the protection of the wife and children of a family, and indeed for the man's protection against himself and the consequences of his own debts. The law plans that when a man has gone beyond his means, and misfortune has overtaken him, that his all shall not be swept away from him, but he shall still keep a moderate home—the homestead—that his family may have a roof overhead and a hearth by which to sit. It has long been seen and known that this benevolent provision of the law is frequently made an instrument of dishonesty, permitting the defrauding of creditors. In some states, the law has been repealed entirely. In others, the exemption is \$300 or \$500, and in none is it so high as in Louisiana—\$2,000. There can be no doubt that the idea that a property-owner can hold back anything at all from his creditors has a demoralizing effect upon a man's innate honesty, not only as regards his own actions but his view of the conduct of others. A man is excused for doing that for the sake of his wife and children, which he could not be excused for doing merely for himself. In like manner, the honest instincts of women are undermined, as is always the case when the sex is shielded rather than strengthened.

But the homestead law, as the Baton Rouge Chronicle points out, is besides an actual detriment to the small landowner. If his property comes within the legal exemption, then he has absolutely no means of obtaining credit.

"As he cannot pledge his possessions for debt," says the Chronicle, "he must go to the money lender who takes chances in return for exorbitant interest charges. One exponent of the repeal declares that if the finest plantations were divided into fifty acre farms being worth just \$2,000 paid for, but the settler possessing little working capital, as is invariably the case, the exemption laws would prevent each from getting enough credit to live through the season and in less than a year all would be tenantless. This is a serious matter, and possibly deserves the full measure of discussion, which it is receiving."

UNSETTLED.

The editor of a country newspaper was asked: "Can you tell me what the weather will be next month?" and in reply he said: "It is my belief that the weather next month will be very much like your subscription."

Wonderful to relate, the subscriber guessed the answer, "Unsettled," and came in and paid up, putting his account in more certain trim than the weather. Of course this is a fairy story, or some other pleasure of the imagination. The average subscriber would say "So be it," and let it go at that, knowing that unsettled weather and unsettled bills are incidental to all seasons.

Mr. W. S. Scanland, editor and owner of the Bossier Banner has a unique record. He went into the newspaper business April 9, 1854, over sixty years ago, and has published the Bossier Banner under its original name continuously without a break since its first number was issued July 1, 1860, and has personally supervised every issue week by week, except during his service in the Confederate army from April 1, 1862, until Lee's surrender. Besides his continuous service, Mr. Scanland has one of the neatest papers in Louisiana, its typographical appearance being almost perfect. He only shows the old man by his tendency to abstract reminiscence, which detracts from the timeliness of his editorial work. But in case of party or state need the veteran editor is ready with a forceful pen.

FACING LIFE'S SHOTS.

The story is told of a captured Zonave, who was held in front of a company of German soldiers advancing against a position where the enemy was hidden. The supposition was that the latter would not fire on account of endangering the Zonave, but he called to them to fire, regardless of him, and so he fell, a victim but a hero.

He was a hero, and of such as he, martial songs are sung, but in every day life how often one sees the same, and no panegyrics are uttered save that one of "Well done" uttered at heaven's gates. It may be a father who labors unto death for an unheeding, careless family; sometimes it is a mother, who bears with patient smile the heaviest of burdens that would be light if divided. Who has not seen an elder sister to whom falls the lot of receiving the blows of ill fortune, shielding her loved ones from what so heavily falls upon her?

Saints these are called and usually recognized as such, but no less heroes, though unknown to fame.

"And the rod they bear so calm
In heaven will prove an angel's palm."

The New Orleans Item shows that what the States treats as something kept as a dark secret, namely, the Interstate Bank's participation in the successful bond bid was published in the Item so long ago as last December.

PLUCKING SUCCESS FROM DISASTER.

The daily press, last week, noted at length the release from the penitentiary of Wyatt H. Ingram, sentenced in 1905 for 12 years for his defalcations in connection with the Hibernia Bank and Trust Co. of New Orleans. He was released in five years under the operation of the "double good time" clause of the law. Ingram's career in prison is an inspiration to all prisoners, and even to more fortunate men outside the bars. It shows that he had a great deal of grit in his composition to enable him to retrieve his reputation, and bring order out of the chaos into which his life was thrown. He was a model prisoner, and as hospital steward at Angola, though his duties comprised nursing both white and black convicts, he shrank from no hardships that would benefit his charges. He studied medicine, and on leaving prison has found employment in a large hospital in a mining town in Colorado.

Ingram's influence over the other convicts was good. He taught some of them to read and write, encouraged others to improve themselves.

When the hospital system of the penitentiary was changed in 1912, and a central hospital established at the Walls, Ingram was selected to serve under Dr. L. G. Stirling. There Ingram found intermittent leisure and practice for his medical studies. It is said that while at Angola he discovered a successful treatment for mumps. An unusual case of recovery in the Walls, brought about principally by Ingram's nursing, was that of a negro who lay unconscious for six weeks as the result of a blow on the head. Ingram fed him through the nose with a rubber tube and nursed him back to health.

In a word, the entire record is cheering—that a man could rebuild his life out of its ruins, amidst the humiliations incident to his lot, and the poignant sorrows that fell upon him.

GETTING WHAT ONE WANTS.

A clever story in a current periodical is entitled "You get what you want," and the author contends that people always do get what they want, if they want it sufficiently to subordinate everything else in life to it. This is probably true, granting a few premises such as health, strength, and some natural ability. A man for instance sets out to become rich. The chances all are that if he bends every energy of his being to the task, steels his brain and heart to consider nothing but gain, then if he possess shrewdness and hardiness, there is little doubt that he will become wealthy. That the price paid is frequently too high can be judged by the stunted personality of many persons one sees. They know only the state of the market, and think only in terms of dollars and cents.

But if one gets what one wants, and even if that be good, must, to gain it, ride over every obstacle regardless of all other considerations, then it is best not to want any one thing too much.

THE GOOD FARMER.

Said a farmer the other day: "My boy made 126 bushels of corn on his prize acre this year, having sowed it in rye last fall, followed by six loads of stable manure and 600 pounds of fertilizer. He has waked me up so I'll never again be satisfied with the low average yields I used to make. I know now that I don't have to run all over the plantation to make a little corn." Incidentally he has also learned a lesson about hand labor. The 126-bushel yield was made without a hoe being put into the field. The land was simply well prepared and then cultivated five times.—The Progressive Farmer.

"Isn't your wife a clipper?"
"She's more. She's a revenue cutter."
—Judge.

PLAN AS WELL AS PLOW.

Cotton is not and should not be Louisiana's main agricultural dependence. No farmer should risk his prosperity and his fortune on the cast of a single die. Farming is not a gambler's game; it is a science, and scientifically conducted, its results may be foretold almost with mathematical precision. Because it has not been so conducted will explain such asinine remedies as the enactment of laws to prohibit the planting of cotton for a stated period, etc., which have been proposed by political "farmers."

Let the farmer beware of such advice. His relief must come out of his own brains and efforts and not by crowding the statute books with freak legislation, concocted by men who are interested more in the farmer's vote than in his real welfare. It requires brains as well as brawn to be a farmer. In achieving success planning is just as essential as plowing.

And so, the size of the cotton crop for 1915 should be regulated not by law, but by the normal operation of the farmer's brains. The important question for him to determine is, not how much cotton should he plant, but whether cotton shall be merely a surplus crop or his main dependence. He may safely plant all the cotton he is able to cultivate thoroughly, if food and forage crops, live stock and hogs and poultry and dairying interests are all abundantly cared for first.

NOT DEFENCELESS.

There is a serene quality about every statement made by President Wilson, that gives the unfailing impression that he has carefully deliberated upon the facts before giving his opinion. Hence it is distinctly reassuring to know that after a calm review of things as they are that he does not consider this country unprepared to defend itself in case of attack. Most persons, who believe that to the United States would come the call, "Next!" should the spirit of militarism in the present European war prevail, have a creepy sort of feeling that the "Next!" would find the country unprepared. But the President thinks there is not the slightest reason for goose-flesh. While this country, so long as it entertains its present ideals and ambitions, will never become "a military camp" as he expresses it, its navy will be kept adequate for its protection by sea, and its fearless citizens will be ready to protect it by land.

The President does see the necessity—not for forced military service, which is repugnant to our institutions, but for the people in general to become conversant with the manual and use of arms. He believes in military training in schools and in the National Guards.

Listen, to his calm, rational suggestions—which are more like a father talking to his sons than the chief of a great nation to his constituents. He says:

"We must depend in every time of national peril, in the future as in the past, not upon a standing army, nor yet upon a reserve army, but upon a citizenry trained and accustomed to arms. It will be right enough, right American policy, based upon our accustomed principles and practices, to provide a system by which every citizen who will volunteer for the training may be made familiar with the use of modern arms, the rudiments of drill and maneuver, and the maintenance and sanitation of camps. We should encourage such training and make it a means of discipline which our young men will learn to value. It is right that we should provide it not only, but that we should make it as attractive as possible, and so induce our young men to undergo it at such times as they can command a little freedom and can seek the physical development they need, for mere health's sake, if for nothing more. Every means by which such things can be stimulated is legitimate, and such a method smacks of true American ideas."

SYNOPSIS OF THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO CONGRESS.

"Markets of Central and South America can be turned to the United States and what interests us now is our duty and opportunity."

"We have grossly erred in the way in which we have stunted and hindered the development of our merchant marine. The time and circumstances are extraordinary and so must our efforts be also."

"Safeguard the resources of the national domain and encourage the use of the navigable waters outside that domain for the generation of power."

"A large measure of self-government to the people of the Philippines."

"Open the gates of trade to the United States by passage of the shipping bill pending in both houses. It is not a question of the government monopolizing the field, but one of providing means of gaining trade."

"Show good faith in adopting the rural credits bill, already ratified by Great Britain and Germany."

"Provide means for charting and surveying the coasts of the United States and Alaska, thereby conserving lives and shipping."

"Provide for economy in public expenditures. The duty is manifest and imperative."

"As to national defense, the policy of the United States is settled against a large standing army. A nation of peace has no need to be alarmed by sensationalists. We shall not turn America into a military camp. Congress should encourage military training in schools. The national guard should be developed and strengthened. The country has been misinformed as to the matter of the nation's defenses. The United States has not been negligent. Powerful navy proper, and it is ours."

"Great tasks of and duties of peace challenge our best powers and invite us to build what will last with all the finest gifts of constructive wisdom we possess."

"England, said Sir George Paish, 'has been spending about \$400,000,000 annually for armaments and defense. When the war is over England will be able to reduce its annual expense on defenses, and in a few years this saving will repay us for the expenses now incurred. The policy of nations will be peaceful and not aggressive, and when this war ends militarism will have been suppressed in Europe.'"

Trust everybody, but take the precaution to have your own scales handy.

Do not despise a man because he's not a college graduate. He may be long on common sense.

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FOR SALE—Creole Onion Plants, 10c per 100, 90c per 1000. AMADEE S. LEONARD. (28N 4)

WANTED—A three hundred acre tract of land. Seller to give particulars as to location, price per acre, water supply, and improvements, etc. W. K. DOUGLAS, Agent, Wilcox, La.

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Antique mahogany furniture wanted. Address A. A. S., 1448 La. Avenue, New Orleans, La. 3

FOR SALE—Red Rust Proof Seed Oats, Pea Vine and Lespedeza Hay and Seed. JAS. P. BOWMAN.

FOR SALE—25 high grade South-down Ewes, bred to registered ram. \$3 each. PARKER STOCK FARM.

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