

The State's Voice

"Peterson's Paper"

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AN EXPERIMENT AND MEDITATIONS THEREON

The Final Issue of the Voice as a State Paper

The publication of the *State's Voice* has been an interesting experience, or experiment, in several respects. First, it was conceded by the Raleigh newspaper men of 1932 that a paper of state-wide circulation was needed, but it was the consensus of opinion that such a paper could not be successfully published.

The editor made that test doubly hard by launching the *Voice* upon a highly intellectual basis with a confessed non-public appeal. It was his aim to secure as readers the people of the state who could follow and appreciate any intellectual discussion that might arise from any source, and contribute thereto.

Accordingly, he made the most feasible attempt open to him to secure a list of *thinking men*. Without capital, the course most apparently feasible was to solicit the professional men and other leading citizens of the towns of the state. A selection of the "thinking men" in country areas was out of the question because of the cost of the solicitation.

Well, if there are any "thinking men" in the state we have a considerable number of them on the *State's Voice* subscription list. Yet possibly the biggest disappointment has been the discovery of a surprising degree of "dumbness" among those who rank high in their communities. I am convinced that intellectuality has little to do with the rise of a man to either affluence or political distinction in North Carolina. But as I reconsider the matter I acknowledge that I had no reason to be surprised. As a student I was thoroughly aware that scarcely one man in ten could successfully follow where his text books led him and his teacher pulled or pushed him after planned preparation for the next step, while as a teacher of long experience I can count upon the fingers of the two hands the boys and girls, or young men and women, who demonstrated the possession of gray matter sufficient to justify the expectation that they would ever become more than absorbers of knowledge. Intellectual penetration, discrimination, analysis, and synthesis have been observed to be almost as scarce as hens' teeth. Ratiocination is a rare bird.

And the greater number of professional men and others who have risen to some degree of prominence in their communities were necessarily derived from the mere absorbers of knowledge, and in most cases, mighty slow absorbers at that. How can youths who with weary hours of toil fail to follow an easy text sufficiently well to secure more than a grade of 80 or 85, or even 90, be expected to develop into original thinkers or even successful followers of concentrated thinking? They just couldn't and haven't, whatever the number of years in school or to what height of supposed scholarship they have risen. On the other hand, on farms or in little stores or as a plain mechanic one can find men who never entered a high school class, not to mention college, who can think and do think. Of course, this is not to suggest that the tenth man who had propulsive power to carry him not only along pointed-out paths of the texts but into fields of original conception and association of ideas, is all the stronger for his educational opportunities. However, some of the men with the capacity suggested didn't care a flip for some of the things they were required to "take" in college and voluntarily made low grades.

Such a one was Dr. Spilman, whose letter is found in this issue. I recall one day that he was playing his flute, laid it down, and said he had to study his calculus. Five minutes later Bernard had his flute again. "I thought you were going to study your calculus," I said. "I tried the first problem," he replied, "and couldn't work it and so haven't a thing to do." He was perfectly satisfied to accept Prof. Luther Mills' prompt solution of such cases—give him one above the passing mark and let him go. Professor Mills knew that that young preacher would gain neither culture nor logic from a course in

Important to Subscribers.

This is the final number of the *Voice* as the *State's Voice*. After this issue the *Voice* will be taken to Lumberton and converted into a high class weekly.

Two reasons dictate this change. First, the state of the editor's health deprives him of the privilege of extending the circulation while gathering interesting material for the paper. In the second place, the *State's Voice* was started with a purpose. My purpose was to launch a paper that should be a medium for discussion of man-size subjects for and by man-sized people. The economic questions were principally in mind. The last two issues of the *Voice* indicated that the Editor had rounded up his discussions on that subject. That being the case, there is little reason why he should longer depend upon a clientele scattered all over the state.

Now, put those two things together and you have a two-fold and sufficient reason—Health does not permit the work of the first two years—no traveling at all for the last six months; and the work is really finished. I am willing to do two men's work when it is for a real purpose, and that purpose other than pecuniary profit, but not when that kind of work is not backed by a strong motive.

The date of the first issue of the paper in its new form cannot now be definitely stated. When issued it will be continued to *State's Voice* subscribers during the duration of their subscription. The new form of the *Voice* will have an editorial page that will probably appeal more strongly to the average subscriber of the present *State's Voice* than do the contents of the former paper. It will discuss State topics in a sprightly way that was not included in the purpose of the *State's Voice*. Accordingly it is hoped that many hundreds of our present intelligent subscribers will continue as subscribers under the new regime.

calculus, especially if he had learned how to pursue a mathematical problem to its lair in the earlier branches. Oh, there was no question about B. W. Spilman's ability to learn mathematics! He simply preferred to be picking up various 2's and 3's, 7's and 11's, on his own hook and to project with them. He has kept up the scheme for 45 years and the resultant is scholarship plus an ingenuity capable of meeting almost every kind of intellectual emergency.

Many a poor fellow, if he picked up a *two* and a *three*, forgot that he had them about his person and of course never conceived of the possibility of tinkering with them to see what combinations he could make. Poor saps then, and poor saps now, even though they may have sought knowledge in the schools till awarded the Ph.D. degree as a result of absorption. An original idea would astound one of the ilk.

But enough of that. I have made a living through the very depths of the depression with the *Voice*. But I hardly believe anybody else could have done so. In the first place, few could have done the work I have done, and in the second, it is doubtful if another who could have done it would have.

And I have enjoyed the work, though the triple task has been quite taxing. In the first place, I have written enough editorials for the *Dunn Dispatch*, as payment for the printing of the *Voice* to make a thousand-page volume. In addition, I have written enough for the *Voice* itself to fill several such volumes, and have read proof by the hundreds of galleys. In addition to the writing I went through fifty counties of the state, introducing the paper to my "thinking

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Look At Your Label

Some Interesting Side-Light On Two Kinds of Folk

With this final issue of the *State's Voice* as such, your subscription date appears on the label and in case of subscribers receiving wrapped papers it will be found in pencil on the paper.

Please look at the dates. If you are paid ahead, count upon receiving the paper in its new form for the full extent of your subscription.

If your subscription is as much as three months in arrears, please send arrearage at rate of a dollar a year, or sufficient to extend it in advance if you wish to continue the subscription to the new paper, which will probably please you as well as the former form or better. If your subscription has expired within two or three months and you wish your paper discontinued, please drop us a card and do that if you wish to continue and are not ready to pay right now.

The state of the publisher's health the last six months, during which, up to a few weeks ago, he was confined to his home, led us to allow many subscriptions to run over the expiration date, as it was hoped that a representative would visit the various subscription groups at a later season and we did not wish the list to be broken.

Two Kind of Folk

Frequently we placed good men upon our list when it was not convenient at the moment for them to pay, with the promise that the subscription would be paid for later. There seems to be two kind of them. For example, the editor visited Fair Bluff during the very peak of the hard times in 1933. A good physician told him to send the paper and he would pay for it. No representative of the paper had the privilege of visiting Fair Bluff since nor do we believe that the physician was sent any statement of subscription dues. Three weeks ago we received a two-dollar check from that physician.

Another Kind — In another lovely village about the same time, we put on a man under the same circumstances and treated him the same way. About the time we received the two-dollar check from the Fair Bluff physician, we received a note from the other subscriber mentioned. He stated that he did not read anything but the Bible, that he had never read a single copy of the *Voice* and asked that it be sent no longer. Of course, we were surprised that he should not have discovered the Golden Rule in his Bible reading.

Now, there are scores of apparently good men put on the list in the same way and scores whom the representative of the paper failed to see on visits to their towns and whose names were continued on the list till the next visit, which illness has prevented.

All such subscribers have their chance to choose the ilk they will be classed with—whether with Dr. Waddell or with the Bible reader. Some mighty big names appear in the list of those who are to make the choice. If they prefer to play the cheap skate, we are perfectly willing to let them do so.