

THE ADVANCE

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BY WAY OF BEGINNING

Last fall the ADVANCE began an agitation for the opening of the Y. M. C. A. this spring. At that time the city's big fair was on hand, the excitement of election time was in the air and by the time these had passed Christmas was drawing near, all of which meant that space in the ADVANCE was at a premium.

So the matter was dropped, but not without some results of the agitation then inaugurated. Some money was collected. Indeed, we understand that the amount still standing in unpaid pledges is now comparatively small—not large enough to prevent the immediate opening of the building if there were funds in hand for the expenses of the year.

The ADVANCE wants to know why the Y. M. C. A. may not be opened this spring. No doubt with the definite prospect of immediate opening practically all of the unpaid pledges could be pressed to collection. There are organizations of women in the city who stand ready to render very effective help toward the maintenance of this organization once they can be assured that the money which they raise will not go into the building without the building's being turned to the purpose for which it was designed. There is only needed an aggressive leader who will take the initiative in forming some plan for the immediate opening of the building to the young men of the city.

The ADVANCE points out that at this time the building could be opened at no great expense. Spring is just opening and we have ahead of us our long southern summer, during which time there will be no need of a heating system, and no expense for coal bills. We earnestly request that somebody come forward and take the lead in a movement to give Elizabeth City a Y. M. C. A. in the immediate future. The ADVANCE offers its columns and its support to such a movement. We hope that this editorial is but by way of beginning an agitation that shall not cease until the Young Men's Christian Association in Elizabeth City is an active organization.

Elizabeth City needs a Y. M. C. A. Pool rooms, restaurants and hotel lobbies are the only places of recreation open to them. The building stands as proof of the interest that Elizabeth City feels in the movement. The question now is, shall we see this building, erected with the people's money, pass out of the people's hands and fall of the object for which it was intended? Those who have invested their money in it should enter vigorous protest. The young men of the city should show themselves interested. All citizens should stand by a movement that has already cost so much time and money and sacrifice. The ADVANCE believes that men who have put their money into this building will not stand by and see themselves robbed of their interest in it. The ADVANCE knows that there are women interested who are anxious to make further effort and sacrifice in its behalf. The ADVANCE feels sure that the young men will pledge themselves to enroll as members in sufficient number to defray the maintenance expense of the first year—and with the building open and the organization active it will be ten times easier to raise money for it. There is wanted but one thing—a leader of enthusiasm in whom the people have unbounded confidence. Who will come forward in this crisis?

WORTH TRYING

In the brief discussion of the history, cause and prevention of malaria, given last week in these columns, the ADVANCE began its

campaign for better sanitation in Elizabeth City.

We begin this campaign with a discussion of malaria because we regard this disease as the first and most deadly foe to be met in improving health conditions in our city. Moreover, this section can not be successful in its efforts to bring homeseekers to settle here until the disease is eradicated. And as pointed out last week by Mr. Heermans, the future of Elizabeth City is largely dependent on the bringing of such immigrants as this into our section.

The ADVANCE knows that in undertaking a campaign for better sanitation in Elizabeth City it is butting up against a difficult proposition. Owing in some degree at least to the prevalence of this same malaria infection among us a great drowsiness comes over people who live long in our midst and they are as difficult to stir to enthusiasm as were the fabled lotos eaters of Greek mythology. They flee from its contagion as though it were a plague. They gird themselves with conservatism and fortify themselves with prejudice. Nevertheless, it seems that some escape infection. These are always agitating something and occasionally secure the passage of a progressive ordinance. But they do not seem to be in sufficient majority to insure the enforcement of these ordinances. Paper litters our streets, chickens run at will, vacant lots through the summer grow up in weeds not because there are no ordinances against these things but because public opinion slumbers and sleeps.

Because of the "conservatism" that has its stronghold in this section of the state it is true as a rule that our towns are not as well kept, as well paved and as clean as are the towns in the western part of the state. But something is happening in eastern North Carolina these days. Two years ago Wilmington, the second largest town in the state, had also the second highest death rate in the state. There came a young doctor there who is cleaning up the city and if it continues to improve at its present rate it may soon have the lowest death rate of any city in the state.

Now the ADVANCE man lived at Wilmington for approximately six years. He knows how dirty the town was, and that present conditions in Elizabeth City are not a circumstance to the insubstantial conditions that prevailed there. Now if Wilmington has waked up, why can't Elizabeth City clean up?

Better sanitation is coming all over the state sooner or later. Why not sooner in Elizabeth City? A campaign for health will stamp our town as one of the progressive cities of the State.

Some time ago, speaking of J. C. B. Ehringhaus, the ADVANCE said of him that he was the most promising, perhaps, among the younger lawyers of Elizabeth City. We want to take that "perhaps" off of the statement, if you please. In the Vann trial, and again in the Stokely case last week, the young solicitor measured up exceedingly well beside older and far more experienced lawyers. Indeed, we incline to the opinion that he made the best speech for the state.

Mr. Ehringhaus showed himself wise in the method of his prosecution. Knowing that the prisoner had the sympathy of the audience and of the jury, he did not make the mistake of calling the young man, sitting there with his sister's head on his shoulder, a cheap assassin; nor did he point to the boy's father, bowed with grief, as a common murderer. He also refrained from gross exaggerations which the jury might weigh and in calmer moment find wanting; but argued his case on the law and evidence. Another point in which he scored over his colleagues was in the matter of taking up the jury's and the court's time in personal flings at the opposing counsel—a sort of thing that may afford some personal satisfaction and win a laugh from the crowd, but which has no weight with a jury of any intelligence at all.

Every once in a while some one intimates that we ought to "rip some one up the back." Say they deserve it and they don't see it—pd.

why we don't do it. Friends, we are not in the roasting business. Apply at a crematory. If you have it in for some one, go to him and fight it out like a man. Don't try to mix the printer up in your grievances. He has troubles of his own. None of us poor mortals here below are perfect, not by a long shot, and other people may think that you yourself deserve special attention.

Fix up. The most humble cottage in our city can be made neat and attractive. A common board fence, without plane or paint, can be made neat. Don't tie up your gate with a fence post. You can get a fastener for ten cents or make one yourself in thirty minutes without a cent of cost. It takes no money to burn up the old rubbish, fix up broken fences and make your home look homelike. The busy and industrious find time to fix up their fences, but often the men who make little or no garden and let the yard resemble a last year's bird's nest, are those who have the most leisure time on their hands.

If the city spends five times as much to fight fires as it does to fight the preventable diseases, it follows that the life loss will be proportionately high as compared with the property loss. And this will be true from the dollars and cents standpoint alone, saying nothing of the sentimental side of either proposition. The money value of a human life is as easily computed as is that of a building; and the value of both to the community are as easily ascertained. Why, then, is it not good economy to save both lives and buildings from needless destruction?

This year every citizen should take a deep interest in the welfare of the city. If you sincerely believe that conditions are prevalent that need changing, don't be afraid to start something. This year the very best effort that is in every citizen should assert itself to the end that this town's advancement is sure and safe. The fellow who kicks is often the man who does his community the real service. There is a difference between a grouch and a good healthy kicker.

The leap year girl must again face the hard realities of life. She's back again in the parlor with the lamp turned low waiting for Willie.

A man who keeps constantly on the fence waiting to see which way to drop, makes even the fence weary.

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