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C. H. Mc Donald

LETTER OF
JOHN J. DAVIS
TO
HON. SEP. HALL



West Virginia



JANUARY 5th, 1914

Letter of John J. Davis to Hon. Sep. Hall

CLARKSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA,

January 5th, 1914.

Hon. Sep. Hall,

My Dear Sir:

An answer to your letter of the 31st ult. has been delayed owing to other engagements. This is the only apology I can offer for what might seem to be an inexcusable neglect and lack of courtesy.

It is a matter of some historical interest to know that until the Convention of 1829-30, Virginia never attempted to change or alter the State Constitution adopted in 1776, and that prior to the late war and the division of the State, there were only two attempts to amend that Constitution. It is not necessary to go back to the convention of August 1st, 1774, or to the convention of March 20th, 1775, as these conventions did not frame constitutions, but they directed the affairs of the colony, and had much to do with the future destiny of its people. They, like the convention of 1776, were revolutionary bodies. The convention which met in the City of Williamsburg on Monday, May 6th, 1776, framed the first written constitution of a free State in the annals of the world. Edmund Pendleton was elected or chosen Presiden of that convention. The last meeting ever attempted by the House of Burgesses was on the 6th of

May, 1776. The record or journal of the proceedings of that body on that date simply recites that

“Several members met, but did neither proceed to business nor adjourn, as a house of Burgesses.”

William Wirt Henry, in his life of Patrick Henry, says:

“On October 7th, 1776, the first assembly under the new constitution met in Williamsburg, consisting of a Senate elected by the people, and the members of the late Convention as a House of Delegates.”

The Convention passed the following ordinances:

“A Declaration of Rights; the Constitution or Form of Government; prescribing the oaths of office; erecting salt works; enabling magistrates and officers to continue the administration of justice, and for settling the general mode of proceedings in criminal cases; arranging counties in districts, for electing senators, and ascertaining their *wages*; establishing a mode of punishment for the enemies of America in the colony; establishing a mode of making tobacco payments during the discontinuance of the inspection law; providing for the expenses of the delegates to the General Congress; making it a felony to counterfeit continental paper currency; providing for the better defence of the frontiers of the colony; and establishing a Board of Commissioners to superintend and direct the naval affairs of the colony.”

The Declaration of Rights was adopted on the 12th day of June, twenty-two days in advance of the Declaration of Independance of the United Colonies in Philadelphia. The plan of government for the Colony of Virginia was adopted

on the 29th day of June, five days before the Declaration of Independence.

Under the Constitution of 1776, suffrage was limited to white male citizens, aged twenty-one years, who were possessed of a certain freehold or estate in land. During the interregnum before the adoption of this constitution, the Ordinance of the convention of 1775, providing for the election of delegates to the convention of 1776, extended the right of suffrage to free white men, inhabitants of Fincastle and West Augusta, in possession of the requisite quantity of land, and claiming freeholds therein, though they should have obtained no patents or legal titles to their lands. Thus the right of suffrage stood when the constitution was adopted. In 1723, free negroes, indians, and mulattoes, might vote at elections, but by the acts of that year they were disqualified. By the act of 1735, the right of suffrage was confined to freeholders of a hundred acres of land unsettled, or twenty-five acres of improved land, and all freeholders in towns, but with a right to vote only in the county where the land or a greater part of it lay. All this, however, is history with which you are familiar and therefore is perhaps not germane to what you wish to know. In none of these several acts, or in the constitution of 1776, is there mention of the basis upon which representation should be apportioned. It is possible that in the legislation between 1776, and the amendment of the Constitution by the Convention of 1829-30, the basis for the apportionment of representation was fixed, for in the constitution as amended by that convention we find an apportionment made for the delegates and senators, and also a provision declaring that:

“The whole number of members to which this state may at any time be entitled in the house of

representatives of the United States, shall be apportioned as nearly as may be among the several counties, cities, boroughs and towns of the state, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years and excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other persons."

I have not had time to look back at the several acts passed after 1776, and prior to 1829, to see if such apportionment applied to the election of delegates and senators to the General Assembly of Virginia, but the inequality in the apportionment of representation was one of the grievances complained of by the western part of the State.

Efforts had been made at various times for a convention to amend the Constitution of 1776, but without success. The people west of the Blue Ridge were in favor of a white basis of representation exclusively. The people east of the Blue Ridge favored the *mixed* or compound basis. The former wanted manhood suffrage, while the latter clung to the requirement then in vogue of freehold suffrage. James Monroe was made President of the Convention, ¹⁸²⁹ but owing to ill health resigned in December, and Philip P. Barbour, of Orange, was elected President in his stead. "There were giants in those days," who were members of that Convention:—James Madison, Philip P. Barbour, John Randolph, Charles Fenton Mercer, James Monroe, Philip Doddridge, Alexander Campbell, Eugenius Wilson, Lewis Summers, Edwin S. Duncan, Adam See, John Laidley, Littleton W. Tazewell, and many others, men noted for their ability. When the question of calling a convention to amend the constitution of 1776 was submitted, 21,896 voted for, and 16,640 against a convention. The convention organized

on the 5th day of October, 1829. On the 24th day of October, the Committee on the Legislative Department of the Government, reported a series of twelve resolutions, the first being as follows:

“Resolved, That in the apportionment of representation in the House of Delegates, regard should be had to the white population exclusively.”

Mr. Green, of Culpepper, moved to strike out the word “exclusively” and insert in lieu thereof the words “and taxation combined.”

On the 31st, Mr. Scott, of Fauquier, proposed to amend the resolution as amended by Mr. Green, so that it would read as follows:

“Resolved, That in the apportionment of representation in the House of Delegates, regard should be had to the white population and taxation combined, and in the Senate to white population exclusively.”

Then followed one of the greatest debates on the resolution as amended, of which there is any record. On the 27th, Judge Abel P. Upshur, of Northampton, opened the debate in favor of the resolution as amended by Mr. Green. Philip Doddridge, of Brooke, followed in opposition to the amendment,—favoring the original resolution. After the question had been debated three weeks, Mr. Leigh, of Chesterfield, proposed a substitute to the effect that representation in the House of Delegates should be apportioned on what was called the *Federal number*, consisting of the free whites, together with three-fifths of the slaves. This was rejected by a vote of forty-nine to forty-seven, a victory for the advocates of the white basis. Subsequently both the Green and Scott amendments were rejected. The

main question was not voted on until the 20th of December. In the meantime, there was a revulsion of sentiment, and the original resolution was rejected by a vote of forty-eight to forty-eight. On the same day the convention, by a vote of fifty-five to forty-one, adopted the following as a compromise:

“Resolved: That the representation in the House of Delegates and the Senate shall be apportioned as follows: There shall be thirteen senators west of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and nineteen east of those mountains.

There shall be in the House of Delegates one hundred and twenty-seven members, of whom twenty-nine shall be elected from the District West of the Alleghany Mountains; twenty-four from the Valley between the Alleghany and Blue Ridge; forty from the Blue Ridge to the head of tidewater, and thirty-four thence to the country below.”

This compromise gave to the tidewater section and the “country below” a majority of the representation in the House of Delegates, and an undue proportion of the apportionment if the same had been fixed *upon the white basis*, as contended for by the Valley and the Trans-Alleghany portion of the State. So unjust and unfair was this apportionment to the Valley and the Trans-Alleghany section, that Robert B. Taylor, a member of the convention from the district composed of the Counties of Norfolk, Princess Anne, Nansemond and the Borough of Norfolk, whose constituents had instructed him to vote for the compromise, resigned his seat in that body, and in his letter of resignation placed in the hands of the President of the Convention, he took occasion to say, in giving his reasons for resigning, that

“Believing, that the measure I am instructed to support, is hostile to free institutions; destructive of equality of rights among our citizens; and the introduction of a principle, that a minority, on account of wealth, shall rule the majority of the qualified voters of the State, I should be guilty of moral treason against the liberty of my native land, if I allowed myself to be the instrument by which this mischief is effected.”

The Convention of 1829-30, made but few changes in the Constitution of 1776, and did not change the right of suffrage accorded to freeholders by the Constitution of 1776, but it extended the right to reversioners and remaindermen of freehold estates and leaseholds for a term of not less than five years of an annual value of twenty dollars;

“and every such citizen, (white males twenty-one years old and upwards) who for twelve months next preceding has been a housekeeper and head of a family within the county, city, town, borough or election district where he may offer to vote, and shall have been assessed with a part of the revenue of the Commonwealth within the preceding year and actually paid the same,—and no other persons,—shall be qualified to vote for members of the General Assembly in the county, city, town or borough respectively, wherein such land shall lie, or such housekeeper and head of a family shall live.”

It provided also that all votes should be given openly, or *viva voce*, and not by ballot.

When this amended Constitution was submitted to the people for ratification or rejection, 26,055 votes were cast for it and 15,563 votes were cast against it. The people west of the Blue Ridge were opposed to the Constitution,

not having secured the white basis of representation and "manhood suffrage," and these counties cast 6,110 votes for the Constitution and 13,337 against it. Its adoption instead of allaying only intensified the sectional feeling between eastern Virginia and the valley and West of the Alleghanies which, since 1829, had been growing both in population and wealth, and as they grew in this respect, jealousy of the power held by the eastern section in the government of the State, grew proportionately, and a struggle began. The east, in protection of its slave interests, held stubbornly to its balance of power, as the west was practically non-slavholding and largely anti-slavery. Resolutions providing for a reapportionment of State representation on a white suffrage basis, with a view to giving the west a share in the government in proportion to its population, were defeated each Assembly from 1841 by solid eastern majorities. With each defeat the spirit of the people of the western sections, the Valley and the trans-Alleghanies,—became more determined and talk of dismemberment of the State became current. (Similar talk had been indulged in by the section below tide-water when the Governor of the State, just after the Nat Turner insurrection, suggested there should be legislation in relation to the removal of the free negroes from the State, and recommended that steps be taken looking to the gradual abolition of slavery.) Conditions on the vexed questions at issue between the east and west remaining thus unchanged, a debate took place in the Franklin Society of Lexington in 1847, on this question:

"Should the people of Western Virginia delay any longer in taking steps to bring about a division of the State."

The debate lasted from January 30th, 1847, to April

24th, 1847. The discussion hinged on the slavery question and John Letcher, according to a biographical sketch of him which appeared sometime ago in one volume of the "John P. Branch Historical Papers," made three speeches urging action to bring about dismemberment of the State to remove negro slavery from the western section. Dr. Henry Ruffner, President of Washington College, was also on the same side with Letcher. Afterwards,—in September, 1847, Letcher, with a number of other citizens, wrote to Dr. Ruffner asking him to publish his "not only able but unanswerable argument in favor of a removal of the negro population from western Virginia," adding,

"We cannot expect that you will be able to furnish us with the speech as it was delivered, nor is it our wish that you confine yourself to the views then expressed. Our desire is to have the whole argument in favor of the proposition presented to to the public in a perspicuous and condensed form."

Dr. Ruffner, complied with this request, adding:

"As we are nearly all slaveholders, and none of us approve of the principles and measures of the sect of abolitionists, we think that no one can be offended with us for offering to the people an argument whose sole object is to show that the prosperity of our West Virginia,—if not of east Virginia also,—would be promoted by gradually removing the institution of slavery, in a manner consistent with the rights and interests of slaveholders."

Attached to the request for publication of this address, were the names of eleven prominent citizens of Lexington, including that of John Letcher.

You doubtless remember how his participation in procuring the publication of this pamphlet,—known as the

“Ruffner Pamphlet,” came home to plague Mr. Letcher when he thereafter became a candidate for the nomination for Governor, and how nearly it came to defeating him for the nomination.

In pursuance of an act of the General Assembly, passed March 4th, 1850, the people in the State, in the month of April following, voted on the question: “Shall there be a Convention to amend the Constitution of this Commonwealth.” The election resulted in a large majority in favor of a convention. Delegates to the convention were elected on the 4th Thursday in August, and the convention assembled in the City of Richmond, on Monday, October 14th, 1850. The bill passed by the Legislature in 1850, providing for a Constitutional Convention, provided that:

“members were to be apportioned on the so-called Mixed Basis, i. e., one delegate for every 13,151 white inhabitants, and every \$7,000.24 taxes paid into the State Treasury. This gave the east, with all her slave property, 76 delegates and the west 59. The Trans-Alleghany made a vigorous fight against the adoption of ratification of the bill, but the Valley went solidly with the east for it.”

(See Ambler’s Sectionalism in Virginia, 260.)

John Letcher, who was in favor of the White Basis, was elected a member of the Convention and took his seat therein. East of the Blue Ridge, Henry A. Wise, of Accomac, was the only White Basis delegate elected, while west of that line none but white Basis men were elected. Mr. Letcher was courageous and outspoken in his advocacy of the cause of western Virginia, and in favor of the white basis. The convention adjourned on the 4th of November to await the result of the census, and reassembled on the

6th day of January, 1851, when the real work of reform began. On the 28th day of that month the Committee of the Executive Department reported, Mr. Letcher and John S. Carlisle submitting a minority report embodying the stand of the west on the questions involved. The basis of representation was the next question brought up, and a great debate began. The committee appointed to determine the proper basis disagreed by a vote of 12 to 12. This was regarded as a fight almost for existence on the part of the west. On March 1st, in Committee of the Whole, Mr. Letcher made his first great speech. He spoke from and of the west, and his speech was an expression of the thought and feeling of that section. I quote a brief part of it:

“I come here as one of the native-born sons of that great west to demand for my people nothing but what is right,—to demand at the hands of this convention those rights which will insure to the people of western Virginia that political equality and political power which is enjoyed by the people of eastern Virginia.”

He said if the doctrine of “interests” (meaning slave interests) was what guided the east, then “it is time for the west to separate” from the east. He pointed out the unfairness of the election of delegates to the convention, the west not getting its just share of representatives * * * and further said:

“The fact is that the gentlemen of the east have but one idea in their heads, and that is ‘negrology.’ They can never see beyond it; and to their peculiar notions regarding its perpetuation, everything must conform.”

He became somewhat sarcastic when he referred to the boasted superiority of the east. He presented figures to

disprove the claims of the east in regard to the protection of slave property under the white basis. In a bitter outburst the east was denounced because of its inconsistency on the subject of slavery, going back to 1816, in support of his argument. He also attacked the stand taken by the east *against money for internal improvements in the west*, because of the debt it would incur, and said that the State was already in debt \$8,700,000 for improvements in the east, and the east proposed to defer the payment of this amount for thirty or fifty years, by which time the west would have grown sufficiently to pay off the debt in taxes.

Following this he gave expression to these impassioned remarks:

“For what have we met?” He answered, “To amend the Constitution of the State.” Why so? Because it was objectionable to a majority of the people of the State. If a Constitution cannot be made agreeable to all the people, then it must be made agreeable to a majority of the people and a majority of their interests. And yet the easterners say there shall be no adoption of a Constitution not having in it the mixed basis. Are they thus to stifle popular want? Not a single man in the convention can say that he believes the mixed basis is wanted by a majority of the people of the State. And the power is sought to be retained in the hands of the minority, and a Constitution forced upon the majority against their consent. Do the gentlemen know with whom they are dealing? Do they believe that the western people are slaves,—that all sense of their rights has departed from them and that they have not the power, the will, and the determination to resist a tyrannical spirit like this? * * * * *

Let me tell the gentlemen that there is danger if this course is persevered in. * * * If they want

a division of the State, they are taking every effective means to bring about so sad a result."

In reply to statements that were made that all party lines were broken in the east on the mixed basis, Letcher said:

"I want to tell the gentlemen that party lines are down also in the west. I am ready to throw down the party flag, and trample it in the dust whenever it shall become necessary for me to degrade the western people in order to give my party the ascendancy in Virginia. If the party can only be maintained at the sacrifice of equality, you must get other hands to do the work, I will not do it for one."

Henry A. Wise, who was also a member of the convention, alone and single handed stood in tidewater Virginia as an advocate of the suffrage or white basis of representation. He alone among the members from that section championed the cause of the west. In an address delivered to the people of his district in May, 1850, announcing himself a candidate to represent them in the convention to revise the constitution, after declaring himself in favor of a liberal public school system, his grandson, in his biography of his grandfather says, that continuing his address, Mr. Wise further said:

"I hold that the only true element of representation in the legislature *is the will of the people*. That property, whether it consists of horses and lands, or carriages, or cash, or an ox, or a maid-servant, or a man-servant, or of anything that is a man's, *having no will* has no right as such to be represented; morally, the *owner* of it has the right only to have it *protected* by the constitution and the law. That representation ought to be fairly and equally as possible apportioned among the legal

voters of the state, those who are endowed by the Creator with reason, free-will, and conscience, and by the constitution with political entity, and the franchise of suffrage. That the will of the *majority* of legal voters, subject only to the constitutional guarantees of protection to minorities of persons and to property, ought to give the law to the State. That *minorities of persons* represented, and property unrepresented, are entitled to *constitutional guarantees of protection*, and the majority in convention is bound to provide them. That they can be easily provided and can be made ample and certain securities against all unequal burdens and oppressions upon a minority, or upon property. That our present representation in the legislature, —based as in part it is practically on *slaves*, who have no political voice or entity, on *carriages*, which are in many instances but extravagant luxuries, and on *licenses to sell whiskey*, which are human curses, —is not only fundamentally aristocratic and anti-republican, but *it has proven utterly futile and fallacious* in protecting the state *from an onerous debt of fifteen millions of dollars* for local works of minor importance or values to any, and of no profit to the tidewater region, whilst it degrades our brethren in the western portion of the State by its invidious inequality.”

We of today can scarcely realize the attitude of the people of Virginia on these questions of so much importance to the west as well as to the east, as late as the middle of the last century. With their dislike of innovation and their devotion to tradition, many of the leading men of the State regarded the views of Mr. Wise as worthy of the French Revolution. The Richmond Whig called him “a modern Jack Cade.”

The great question of representation transcended all others in importance in the convention which assembled in Richmond in August, 1850. Virginia with a fatuity that now seems inexplicable, clung to the mixed basis and the freehold suffrage. Scott, Stanard, Barbour, and other eastern champions contended that by the adoption of the white or suffrage basis, the west, which paid about one-third of the taxes, would be given the control; that property would fail to receive adequate protection, that a mere numerical majority would rule, instead of a majority in interest; and that the west would impose heavy taxes for the purpose of improvements, and would furthermore, overtax or abolish slavery, and extend the railroad between Winchester and Baltimore, thus carrying the trade of the valley and mountain region to the latter city.

On the 23rd of April, Wise began his great speech in the convention in favor of the white basis saying:

“Mr. President, for myself, personally, on this subject I have not one word to say. All personal considerations are overshadowed by the Coliseum of the State. What man,—what mere man, now living, is worthy to be considered,—to be weighed in the balance at this moment, when the crisis of our fate has come! and Virginia,—Virginia is in the scale? * * * What are local considerations, what is Trans-Alleghany, what is the valley, what is Piedmont, what is tidewater, what are these mere sectional conflicts compared with entire immeasurable interests of the State, as a whole State,—a State measured by herself in the past, a State that cannot be measured for the future? Now the question is whether in this moment of general rivalry among States, Virginia shall remain supine and dormant, or whether Virginia shall not reach

out her hands to take an empire more magnificent than that of the Caesars?" * * *

He referred to the speech of Upshur made twenty years before in the convention of 1829-30, and pointed out the injustice of the system by which a majority of ninety thousand white voters west of the mountains were denied an equal voice with the east, merely because the east paid an excess of \$132,000.00 of taxes and on three hundred and forty-eight thousand slaves, and declared that these men west of the mountains were their brother Virginians, and that it was wrong to distrust and humiliate them. In closing his speech he said:

"Give us an united people with one affection, one interest, one feeling and one impulse. If any people upon the face of God's earth ought to be inspired by the recollections and glories of the past, it is Virginia; for she has more than Greece or Rome to inspire her. With the glory of the past to inspire her, what might she not achieve? Give me for the people of Virginia free and universal education, give me free and equal suffrage, give me free and universal representation for our people, and who can foretell our destiny?"

Many men in the tidewater section regarded the new Constitution, which was adopted by an overwhelming vote of the people, a violation of the rights of the east, and some talked of a division of the State,—among whom was Littleton Waller Tazewell,—before they would surrender the mixed basis.

A writer in the Southern Literary Messenger, describing Wise's speech which occupied five days in its delivery, said:

“The effect of his speech was strikingly evident; and if the true test of an orator is in his power to convince a mixed audience of the truth of his own opinions, and to carry with him their attention and their sympathies, Henry A. Wise is one of the most eloquent men in Virginia. * * * He led the van of the western party, and perhaps contributed more than any other man to the success which that party achieved.”

From whence, then, did West Virginia learn the value to her, of a division of the State? Was it not from ~~her~~^{her} eastern brethren? The war furnished West Virginia *the opportunity for accomplishing a division by revolutionary methods.*

In 1816, a self-constituted convention assembled at the call of a number of gentlemen west of the Blue Ridge, to consider what steps should be taken to secure the calling of a convention to amend or frame a new constitution. The several counties were requested to send two delegates each to this convention, but only thirty-five were present. James Pindell, from this county, was one of the persons who attended as a delegate. The convention met in Staunton and proceeded to organize and elect its officers with all the formality required if the body had been legally called. The most important question considered by them was, naturally, the question of representation. A Committee was appointed which made a report setting out the injustice and inequality of apportioning representation upon a mixed basis, and as illustrating the injustice thus done to the western part of the State, the Committee in its report showed that the west with a white population of 212,036, had only four senators, while the east with a white population of only 162,717 had thirteen senators. Is it any wonder the people of the west

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felt aggrieved by such inequality and became more and more restless under such apparent tyranny?

In 1824, Mr. Jefferson published a letter on the subject in the Richmond *Enquirer*, in which he said:

“The exclusion of a majority of our freemen from the right of representation is merely arbitrary and an assumption of the minority over the majority. * * * In the representative privilege the equality of political rights is entirely prostrated by our constitution. Upon principle of right or reason can anyone justify the giving to every citizen of Warwick as much weight in the government as to twenty-two citizens of Loudoun?”

The steady growth of the mountain region further increased the inequality in representation, and at last Virginia by her unjust discrimination against the west, like “the base Judean, threw away the richest pearl in all *her* tribe.”

And now as to Augusta County and the district called West Augusta.

Up to 1738, the whole region west of the Blue Ridge constituted a part of Orange County, Virginia. On November 1st, 1738, however, the General Assembly of the Colony of Virginia, passed an act establishing the counties of Frederick and Augusta. The new Counties were so named in of honor of Frederick, Prince of Wales, son of George II, King of Great Britain, — father of George III, — and his wife Princess Augusta. The act separated all the territory west of the Blue Ridge and extending in other directions “to the limits of Virginia” from Orange County, and erected it into the two counties named. The line between them was “from the head spring of Hedgman’s river to the head spring of the river *Potomack*.” The County of Augusta was much the larger of the two counties. It embraced northward the

present counties of Rockingham and a part of Page; to the South it extended to the border of Virginia; and to the west and northwest, it extended over the whole territory claimed by Great Britain in those quarters. It included nearly all of West Virginia, the States of Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and, as claimed by Virginia, a part of Pennsylvania. (Waddell's Annals of Augusta County, 2nd Edition, page 35.)

By the erection of Botetourt County in 1767, and the legal recognition of West Augusta in 1776, Augusta County was shorn of much the larger part of her original territory. She was left parts of the present counties of Rockbridge, Bath and Alleghany, and all of Rockingham, Highland and Pendleton. The district of West Augusta seems to have been evolved, rather than created by law. Its existence was recognized by the legislature during the session which began October 7th, 1776, and erected the district into three counties, viz, Ohio, *Yohogania* and Monongalia. When the line was run between Virginia and Pennsylvania, the greater part of *Yohogania* fell within the territory of Pennsylvania, and the residue of said county was subsequently by an act of the legislature passed in 1785, added to the County of Ohio and *Yohogania* became extinct. See as to West Augusta, etc., 9 Vol. Henings Stat. at large, page 252.

West Augusta embraced all or nearly all of our State of West Virginia. Augusta County embraced the territory extending as it did from the Blue Ridge west and northwest to the Mississippi River, and to the lakes Michigan and Erie.

What an empire Virginia was, and what magnificent possibilities of wealth she possessed! Had she not been blinded by her devotion to her slave-interests, and curbed her ambition for power and dealt justly with her own sons living west of the mountains, her sun would still be the most re-

splendent, ^{and} in the midst of ^{the} galaxy of States, and her sons and daughters for generations yet to come could boast of the glorious heritage she transmitted to them. The land of Washington, Henry, Jefferson, George Mason, Lee and Jackson,—with all her mistakes and shortcomings, I love her still, and glory in her past achievements and renown.

“Be to her faults a little blind,
And to her virtues very kind.”

I have taxed your patience to read this long paper, but I thought by refreshing your memory as to facts, I am sure you are familiar with, you might find some grains of wheat in the bushel of chaff that would aid you in your consideration of the debt question.

Yours truly,

JOHN J. DAVIS.

