

Refined Meanness.

The city of Chicago has a contract with the street railways by which the companies pay to the city 55 per cent of the gross receipts. The ostensible purpose of this agreement is to provide a fund for the construction of a subway; but it is one of the meanest tricks ever perpetrated upon a purblind public. For it is nothing less than a moral outrage that a great and wealthy city should levy a uniform per capita tax upon the people who use the street cars, compelling the errand boy, cash girl and scrub woman to pay the same amount of tax to the city that it does the richest man who uses the street cars. And, like all ill-gotten gains, the accumulated fund—which now amounts to nearly fourteen million dollars—is making trouble for the city. A subway plan submitted to the voters has been voted down; and the accumulated fund stands as a constant temptation to politicians. Various propositions have been made for its disposal. One is that the city should use the fund for the establishment of bus lines to relieve the present congestion. Another is that the fund should be used to pension street car employees. This, it would seem, is the limit in petty foolishness—or worse. In the first place, the city had no right to compel the patrons of the street cars to pay for the construction of a subway that would increase the value of adjacent lands, thus enabling the owners of those lands to secure a larger income, without being obliged to pay for the improvement. In the second place, the city has no right to use the money so contributed for pensioning the street car employees. Pensions are deferred wages; and if the companies should pay their men at all, they should pay the pensions as well. The fact that the pension proposition has been made by a mayor who is seeking re-election may explain why it was made. S. O.

**Justice Frederick L. Siddons.**

In appointing to the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia Frederick L. Siddons in place of Daniel Thew Wright, resigned, President Wilson has performed for the District a service of unusual value. Judge Siddons is not merely an able lawyer, but like his former law partner, Jackson H. Ralston, is well known as a fundamental democrat. Men of his stamp are entirely too rare on the Federal Bench. In this case the change from reactionary and despotic Judge Wright to Judge Siddons is particularly inspiring. Should all vacancies be filled in this manner, there would soon be an increase of public confidence in the Federal judiciary. S. D.

Susan Look Avery.

The passing of Susan Look Avery, who died the first of February at the age of ninety-eight, marks the close of a beautiful life. Lacking but two years of a century, it was devoted throughout its long span to the service of mankind. Some minds are so intense and so circumscribed that they are capable of but one great passion; and when the cause which they espouse has triumphed they are unable to interest themselves in succeeding movements. William Lloyd Garrison II. used to say that the people slowest to grasp the truth of the land question were those who had been most active in the anti-slavery movement. This was not so of Mrs. Avery. Her mind was so evenly balanced that it grasped liberty and justice in the abstract, and applied them to each concrete case as it arose. She was an Abolitionist in Kentucky during the stormy days before the Civil War. She espoused the suffrage movement when its friends were few and feeble. She took up the Greenback and Populist movements in an effort to loosen the clutch of Privilege. And when that great apostle of the new democracy, Henry George, launched a movement to restore man's birthright in the earth it met with the same quick and enthusiastic response as did the call of Garrison, Phillips and Whittier a half century before. Fortunate are they whose well-tempered lives lead them with clear mind and stout heart to the closing shadows of a century; most fortunate are they whose ideals and aspirations are so sane and just that their love of humanity palls not, and their hand of service grows not weary. S. O.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

SINGLETAX CAMPAIGN IN HENDERSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

Chicago, February 2, 1915.

The price of land in Henderson county has gone up so high that a young couple starting in life is practically barred from ever getting a home. Land purchased at fifty dollars an acre a quarter of a century ago is now held at one hundred and fifty. This price attaches to the soil even if improvements and buildings are not reckoned; which proves that the price is due to the pressure of population and the increasing demand for mere space. Mr. William T. Weir, the leading Singletaxer in this county, says that fully half the farms are worked by tenants, and that the proportion of such renters is increasing. The only way to get even a small farm is to take it on a mortgage, and then spend most of your life in paying off the debt, meanwhile carrying the taxes on the property as if you were the full owner of it. Mortgages are increasing, and farmers who own and work their farms feel that something is wrong but do not know what it is.