

THE CHRONICLE

D. F. WRIGHT, M. D., Editor.

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CLARKSVILLE: 1:1: OCT. 7, 1876.

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC TICKET

FOR PRESIDENT.

SAMUEL J. TILDEN,

OF New York.

FOR VICE-PRESIDENT.

THOS. A. HENDRICKS,

OF Indiana.

ELECTORS.

For the State at Large.

W. M. BATE, of Davidson.

E. A. JAMES, of Hamilton.

Congressional Districts.

1st—H. H. INGERSOLL, of Greene.

2d—W. J. CLIFT, of Warren.

3d—R. H. HARRISON, of Smith.

4th—EDMOND COOPER, of Bedford.

5th—J. H. HARRISON, of Wayne.

6th—JOHN H. MOORE, of Hickman.

7th—G. A. ENGLISH, of Lincoln.

8th—W. SMITH, of Clinton.

9th—J. W. CLARK, of Shelby.

DEMOCRATIC STATE TICKET.

FOR GOVERNOR.

JAMES D. PORTER.

FOR CONGRESS.

JOHN F. HOUSE,

OF Montgomery County.

FOR REPRESENTATIVE.

CHARLES G. SMITH,

OF Montgomery County.

FOR FLOATER.

COL. N. BRANDON,

OF Stewart County.

FOR STATE SENATOR.

A. E. GARNER,

OF Robertson County.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

A recent proposition to sell the vacant Orphan Asylum and devote the money to the purpose of aiding the establishment of public schools in Tennessee, has directed our attention generally to the subject of public schools in the South and especially in Tennessee. It is understood that in the South when public schools are the subject of discussion it means the education of the negroes, and those who favor the one favor the other—we are most decidedly in favor of both public schools, and of the education of our colored population, but in this article we propose to treat of the history of the school question in the South, reserving the main question, with all its difficulties financial and otherwise, for future consideration. As regards the Orphan Asylum, we do not look upon the present time as favorable to its sale, the depression in real property rendering it unlikely that it would now fetch enough to be of any appreciable aid towards the enterprise.

The Radical party claims to be especially the champion of negro education, and it is one of its charges against the Democratic party that it is opposed to any such enterprise and desires to keep the negro in the bondage which renders it necessary to impose, we might reply, that the bondage which ignorance imposes on the negro is a bondage to the radical carpet-bagger and scoundrel, whom he would soon learn to appreciate at their true value if he got his eyes opened, but at present we propose to examine the claims of the radical party to be considered the educator of the negro.

The sincerity with which that party puts forward this claim should be best tested by examining the condition of the negro as to education in those States where the radical party bore sway from the time of the war to the present day or nearly so.

If we were to give our own statements they would be rejected by radicals as the offspring of democratic prejudice against the republican party; we prefer, therefore, to take our statements from the observations of Mr. Nordhoff, a northern republican but an honest man, who travelled in the South last year for the purpose of investigating for himself the condition of that section so differently described by different parties.

Speaking of the negroes he says: "They are anxious to send their children to school, and the colored schools are more abundant in those States which I have seen than in any other. I find them, I think it may be said that the colored people, so far, have got their fair share of schools and school money. In such places as New Orleans, Mobile, Selma, and Montgomery, the colored schools are excellently managed and liberally provided for. By general consent of both colors, there are no mixed schools; nor would it be wise to force this anywhere. It must be remembered that in the Southern States had public schools before the war. The whites are unaccustomed to them, and enlightened and influential Democrats in Georgia have difficulty in obtaining appropriations for schools sufficient to place them on a sound basis. The poorer whites are still in doubt about the usefulness of a thorough public-school system. But wherever I have been the blacks have a fair share of school privileges. Democratic Georgia gives as much every year for the support of a colored university as for the support of the old State University, and in places like Mobile, where the schools are under Democratic control, I was surprised at the excellence of the colored schools, and the liberal manner in which they were maintained by the Democratic trustees."

From this, which is taken from his preliminary chapter, it will be inferred that whether white or black the school arrangements were not on a magnificent scale. How this came to be while the Republican party had the handling of the whole finances of the State shall appear first in Arkansas he says incidentally:

"Every neighborhood has a church and school for the colored people, and usually also school for the white children; but the school fund in Arkansas was sold and stolen, many of the schools are closed."

More fully in Louisiana:

"In the report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the management of school affairs in Plaquemine parish is thus mentioned: "A controlling portion of the school board could not resist the temptation to use their position as a means of political advancement, and a large portion of the school funds was expended for private and party purposes. Partridge and single funds from the State treasury, which were liberally increased by local taxation, the money

has been squandered or expended without even ordinary judgment."

"Access to the books and papers pertaining to the office of the treasurer was refused me on time to time upon frivolous pretexts, and finally, peremptorily and insultingly refused. Obstacles of every possible character were thrown in my way to prevent me from obtaining reliable information, the treasurer even attempting my imprisonment on the charge of larceny."

The result of a somewhat protracted investigation can be summed up in a few words. The accounts, as they appear in the remarkable documents before alluded to, are, in many cases, falsified by being 'raised,' fictitious claims are allowed and paid to fictitious persons; unworthy, incompetent, and dissipated teachers have, in some instances, been employed to perform political services of questionable honesty, and the public money expended to the last cent, leaving a heavy load of debt."

"Knowingly and intentionally I charge the then treasurer of the board with embezzlement, aided and abetted by the president and the parish judge who also was a member of the board, and am prepared to establish this before any competent tribunal."

The treasurer of the school board here mentioned was also at the same time State Senator and member of the police-jury (supervisor). Mahoney who was president of the school board, was at the same time member of the Assembly and police-jury.

I find that in a great many parishes the members of the Legislature are members and officers of the school board. As the latter office is not salaried, I was duly enough not to present in holding it, until an intelligent colored man, a Republican and an office-holder, explained to me that in this way the politicians are made political engines throughout the State. The Senators or Representatives, being also officers of the school board, appoint the teachers, and select men who are their own political adherents, and who, living among the colored people, help to keep their forms allured."

"In this parish," said the man to me, "we have many more colored schools than white, but it is a fact that most of the teachers are ignorant, or lazy, or, sometimes, drunkards. They are appointed by our Senator and Representatives, and their work is not to be instructed the pupils in the minor morals by eating at the same table with them."

So that if education does not proceed at as rapid a rate as in the North, much is done and everything is hopeful.

And now we ask our readers to run their eyes over this succession of extracts and notice that, first, wherever the Radical party were in control of everything the school fund was stolen and popular education was practically absent.

That in exact proportion as the Democratic party acquired influence, education of the freedmen's children became efficient and in the two States in which the Democratic party is predominant and in them only is a fair systematic and applied to that purpose without stealage. We are collecting materials for a history of the education question in Tennessee and the other States in detail than the above which will appear in our next, enough has already been demonstrated to show how little ground the Radical party makes its claim (as it did in Congress last session) to have the whole matter of the education of the freedmen turned over to it, on account of the alleged incompetency and indisposition of the Democratic party in the South to deal with it.

Mr. Nordhoff's next report is from Mississippi—his first step in enquiring for the public school system there was unfruitful; here it is in his own language:

"Knowing that I am interested in schools, some one in New Orleans sent me a letter of introduction to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction here—a colored man named Cardozo. On asking for him I found he had gone to Vicksburg to look after an indictment found against him; when I myself went there I discovered that Cardozo was not merely indicted, but, as an indictment Republican told me, 'he might as well be dead.' For embezzlement and fraud, and likely, if justice is done, presently to be sent to State-prison. What a lovely and improving sight for the children of the State, white and black!"

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In Alabama the white people were regarding now when Mr. Nordhoff was there (May 1875); and as a result things were working much better between black and white:

"Alabama was not in the old times famous for schools, but it is now better provided than Mississippi, or even Arkansas. In Mobile, Selma, and some other places an admirable school system is found for both colors. In Selma, ten per cent of the city revenues is spent in an admirably managed council, for school purposes, and divided among both colors. Mobile, Montgomery, Selma, Birmingham, and Huntsville, all have graded schools for both colors, and at Huntsville there is a colored normal school. The State superintendent divides one hundred thousand and a half cents per head for all the children in the State; and, besides, the poll-tax is given to the school-fund in each county. Unfortunately the poll-tax has not been fully collected."

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"In the towns and villages the colored people have a prosperous look; they dress neatly, they commonly live in frame houses. On the whole, their condition appears to me very comfortable and satisfactory. They have everywhere in the State, I am told, their fair proportion of schools, and here in Raleigh the colored school system is the best in the State. There are 329,869 children between six and twenty-one years, according to the school census of 1874, of whom 242,708 are white, and 87,161 are black. There were in that year 4020 public schools open, attended by 119,083 white and 55,000 colored children, under 2108 white and 767 colored teachers. I believe whites teach in some of the colored schools. The schools cost during the year \$275,000. At Raleigh there is an excellent colored academy, and this is in part supported by contributions from citizens of other States. There were, in 1874, 2550 white and 990 colored schools."

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There is still in many counties some prejudice against colored schools, but it constantly decreases, and you will notice that more than twice as many colored children attend schools in 1874 as in 1873. Atlanta has a colored university, and the Legislature appropriates yearly toward its support \$8,000—the same amount which is given to the State University. The governor and superintendent of schools both desire that this appropriation should be diverted to a colored normal school, and there is some ignorant prejudice in Atlanta against the teachers in the university, on the ground of their sitting at table with the colored students, which is thought to be "social equality." It is not denied, however, that the school does good work; and I imagine the teachers are best instructed the pupils in the minor morals by eating at the same table with them."

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"Alabama was not in the old times famous for schools, but it is now better provided than Mississippi, or even Arkansas. In Mobile, Selma, and some other places an admirable school system is found for both colors. In Selma, ten per cent of the city revenues is spent in an admirably managed council, for school purposes, and divided among both colors. Mobile, Montgomery, Selma, Birmingham, and Huntsville, all have graded schools for both colors, and at Huntsville there is a colored normal school. The State superintendent divides one hundred thousand and a half cents per head for all the children in the State; and, besides, the poll-tax is given to the school-fund in each county. Unfortunately the poll-tax has not been fully collected."

In North Carolina the Democratic party has since 1870 been predominant, and here the state of education and all other matters seem much more satisfactory.

"In the towns and villages the colored people have a prosperous look; they dress neatly, they commonly live in frame houses. On the whole, their condition appears to me very comfortable and satisfactory. They have everywhere in the State, I am told, their fair proportion of schools, and here in Raleigh the colored school system is the best in the State. There are 329,869 children between six and twenty-one years, according to the school census of 1874, of whom 242,708 are white, and