

The Journal of Industry.

SUBSCRIPTION, 50 CENTS PER-ANNUM.

Our Motto: "God will Help those who Help Themselves."

{ SINGLE COPY, 3 CENTS.

VOL. 1.

RALEIGH, N. C., APRIL 1879.

NO. 1.

LETTER FROM REV. C. H. WILEY.

THE DEBT WHICH THE WHITE PEOPLE OF THE SOUTH OWE TO THEIR FORMER SLAVES.

The Intellectual, Industrial and Spiritual Condition of the Colored People Dispassionately Considered.

A SOLUTION OF THE SOUTHERN PROBLEM.

GREENSBORO, N. C., June 30, 1865.
MY DEAR BROTHER: Affliction in my family and my own bad health have prevented me from replying sooner to your favor of the 14th instant, received more than a week ago.

Your communication is interesting and timely, relating as it does to one of the most important subjects that ever came before any people, and one which has for some time engaged my earnest and prayerful attention.

You ask what is to be done for the education and religious training of the Negro of the Southern States; and I regard your suggestions as worthy of consideration, while I regret that you did not furnish me with a more detailed account of your interesting and instructive experience in the schools of British Guiana.

I trust it will be in my power to meet you, as you request, and in the mean time, you will please to avail yourself of the first safe opportunity of sending to me the public documents in relation to the Mission Schools in the West Indies and Demerara, to which you refer.

But before we discuss the details of any plan for the instruction of the colored race of the South,

A GREAT PRELIMINARY QUESTION, environed with prejudices, will have to be settled; and to this grand purpose the energies of the pious and right thinking among us should at once be directed.

It seems to be doubted by many whether the white population of our region should take any active part in the instruction of their colored neighbors, and while this apparently difficult question is capable of an easy solution, if properly considered, a discussion of the subject in a spirit of candor, kindness, and dispassionate, will be productive of a great benefit.

It has long seemed to me that the great majority of

THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN INTERESTED IN SLAVERY

in our country have been misunderstood or misrepresented by those who have assumed to be their representative men in church and State; and that the difficulties in the way of right judgment and of right action, in regard to the negro, did not originate in the hearts and minds of masters as a body, but in the theories, purposes and passions of controversialists, religious and political. I have been myself a slave owner of the third or fourth descent, and, like many, was a master to my pecuniary loss; and inheriting a charge in the way of servants, from which I could not in conscience free myself, I can feel, and do feel, for the honor and interests of those who have owned slaves. And although I have advocated reforms which were not carried out, I have no reproaches to make against any class, and feel that my profound regard for their reputation and their interests entitles me to address them with a freedom worthy of my own kind wishes and of what I conceive to be their honest natures.

I have a strong desire to talk plainly with them concerning

OUR COMMON DUTIES IN THIS GREAT CRISIS;

and I avail myself of the opportunity afforded by your letter, of laying before them a few leading facts and considerations, with the hope of dispelling what I consider fatal delusions, and of directing their thoughts in the right channels.

There are persons at the South who consider themselves relieved of all responsibility for the spiritual and physical well being of the colored people in their midst, for the following reasons, to-wit: First, By the sudden emancipation of the blacks, without consulting the wishes of their former owners. Secondly, By a supposed unwillingness on the part of the negroes to receive suggestions and instructions from those who have been their masters; and, Thirdly, By the agitation of exciting

questions in regard to what should be the political status of the free blacks, and by the interference of persons from other States, who come into our midst as teachers, with strong prejudices against the whites.

These pleas are specious, but,

APPEALING TO OUR PASSIONS AND NOT OUR JUDGMENTS, they will not justify the inaction proffered on them.

It may well be doubted whether the white race of the South is not itself largely and directly responsible for the sudden termination of slavery; and what I allege on this subject is not offered as a reproach for actions in which all of us are more or less implicated, but as a dispassionate reference to facts which it is our duty to consider if we would come to just conclusions on the subject discussed.

We accepted the hazards of civil war for the adjustment of social and political disputes; and we had reason to know from the warnings of the fathers of the Republic, and from all the lessons of history, that in such disputes nothing can be more uncertain than the arbitrament of the sword. Besides, we generally confessed that

SLAVERY, AS PRACTICED, NEEDED A REFORMATION,

and could not be tolerated by God among a Christian people without it; and yet, on one plea or another, we were indefinitely postponing these needed changes.

But admitting, for the sake of argument, that the whites of the South are in no way responsible for the present condition of things, it is perfectly clear that the negroes, as a race, had no part in producing it. They, as slaves, were the origin of the most tremendous conflict of arms known in history; and while those who bore a part in personal service were girt about with fire and sword,

THE BLACKS, AS A CLASS, REMAINED FAITHFUL TO THEIR MASTERS,

were docile, obedient and diligent in service. They did not counsel the efforts for their emancipation, nor aid in the same as a race; and thus their former masters cannot be relieved from responsibility to their servants by acts in which the latter had no part.

The negroes are free by the force of circumstances which they did not create; and

THE "CONFEDERATE" CONGRESS,

professing to represent their masters, had itself adopted measures which would have inevitably resulted in immediate emancipation. But whoever is responsible for their present condition, the negroes are not; and here they are, a lame and impotent race, sitting at the gates of

THOSE WHOM THEY HAVE CHERFULLY SERVED

for many generations. Silver and gold we have none to give; but shall we withhold those healing influences of which they are more in need and which we can so easily afford? It is an irksome task to teach the ignorant and the sensual; but is that a reply to the Divine command, "to go into all the world and teach all nations?" When we were interested in their labors we did not avoid their association; we were willing to live with hordes of them, and to be at great trouble in seeing to the performance of their wonted tasks. More than half our time was passed in personal association with them, we, acting, it is true, in the capacity of superiors; and when we are engaged in affording mental and moral instruction are we not then more righteously and truly than ever occupying the dignified place of governors? But think of the claim upon us from centuries of service, clumsy though they may have been, but of such services as the race were capable of making in our behalf! Here are the descendants of

THOSE WHO SOWED AND TILLED THE EARTH,

when our ancestors fought the seven years' war for Independence—of the men and women who nursed our fathers and mothers in infancy and sickness, who dug their graves and watered them with tears, and watched and prayed, and labored for their children. Here are people who, until a few weeks ago, were our property, descending from generation to generation, following our fortunes without complaint, knowing no homes or interests but those of their masters; among whom are persons who have stood by us in

danger, who have watched by our beds, and who have nursed us and our children.

To enhance their claims, the race is but few removed from the gloomy barbarism of Africa, and our own policy is partly responsible for its not having attained to a higher mental culture. I do not characterize this policy one way or another; I do not say whether it was right or wrong to forbid negroes to be taught to read, and to tolerate the separation of husband and wife, of mothers and their young children. I only desire to advert to the fact that our laws did discourage the education of slaves, and that they did permit a very loose system of co-habitation among the sexes.

If we owed then no special moral debt who will pretend that they have not upon us that general claim which all the ignorant races of the earth have upon the labors and prayers of the disciples of Christ—

A CLAIM ENHANCED

by the fact that it is infinitely easier for us to reach and instruct them than it is to go to the heathen of foreign lands, while we can labor at home, cheered with the society of our own race, enjoying all the comforts of civilization, and all the protections and privileges of a great and free government?

But, it is alleged, the negroes would rather be instructed by any others than by those among whom they have been slaves.

This is

A MERE SURMISE,

and an honest and conscientious people should at once test it by their action. The suspicion is natural, and yet the few developments that have already occurred seemed to indicate that it is without foundation.

Giving to all these facts and considerations their full weight, can any fair minded and conscientious man among us say that we are relieved from our obligations to take an active and special interest in the moral development of negroes?

Everything considered,

IT IS REALLY SURPRISING

how little extravagance the sudden and tremendous change in the condition of the blacks has caused in their conduct; and while they are made to know that they are not indebted to their former masters for their freedom, and there are circumstances and agitations tending to foster national antipathies, the negroes are still docile, and under the circumstances, could not, with human passions and infirmity, display less indisposition to receive kindly suggestions and efforts for their good on the part of their former owners.

The third reason urged against systematic action on the part of the whites of the South, in behalf of the negroes, is an argument in the other way.

The political agitations and the foreign interference which excite so much apprehension are permitted by God to warn us of

OUR DANGER AND OUR DUTY,

and if we neglect the latter, we can hardly magnify the greatness of the former.

In times past these very considerations were urged as reasons for not reforming slavery by conforming its laws and practices to the known conscience of masters; and our leaders interposed our pride between our actions and our consciences, causing us to put off the day of reformation until slavery should be beyond the reach of political intrigue, and wholly exempted from foreign intermeddling or dictation.

These agitations and this interference were formerly, as now, but

WARNINGS FROM A RIGHTEOUS PROVIDER,

who admits of no excuse for the non-performance of a known duty, and as we did so for years to misinterpret their obvious import, the bolt fell at last and suddenly, and slavery was wholly abolished with all its imperfections on its head, and masters left to be judged by the world, not by what were their intentions, but by their public actions.

But the righteous Arbitrator has, no doubt, seen good designs in many hearts—at all events, he has most mercifully opened a still broader and easier field of usefulness and honor to the master.

He has left the negroes in the midst of their former owners, almost wholly dependent on them for even the most

elementary instruction; a docile and helpless people, forming, as it were, a great mass of shapeless and plastic clay, to test the artistic skill and energy of a race which claims that the world has never done it justice.

No other race can have the access to, or the facility for, shaping the character of the blacks of the South, afforded by a kind Providence to their former proprietors, and while

THE STERN DEMANDS OF DUTY require immediate and systematic efforts to turn the glorious opportunities to the fullest account, the imperious claims of interest and honor lead in the same direction.

We have professed to be the best friends of the blacks—we still have opportunities of proving our assertion. We have insisted that no others so well understood or appreciated the character and wants of the negroes. This is true, and it greatly enhances our present obligations.

The negro has for generations regarded us as his moral superior, and his natural teacher and guardian; if we will go forward in the paths of duty we will nobly prove this moral superiority, for the teacher is ever the leader of his pupil; and we still insure for ourselves that kindly deference from the more ignorant race which will preserve the harmony of society, and promote the best interests of all its classes.

And this is the only effectual way to shut out foreign interference, and to arrest dangerous political agitations.

If we believe in an Almighty and just God, we must know that

THE COURSE OF DUTY IS THE PATH OF SAFETY;

and indeed will not worldly philosophy plainly teach us that if we would not have the negroes trained by others we must ourselves furnish them with good instructions? Does not our common sense inform us that an ignorant and helpless, but free race in our midst, large in numbers, neglected by us and easily led, furnishes one of the most dangerous openings for permanent political strife? Does not universal experience exemplify and explain the force of the Divine allusion to the eagles and the carcass?

I would implore our Southern friends to discard their prejudices, and look at us in their clear light.

We can perform a glorious mission, and if we do not we will fall to a dread abyss. There is no intermediate position for us—there is no place and no time for the neutral. We must either do as we should do or be as we are. Let us no longer listen to those who would delude us with the plea that this is not the favorable time—this slogan has plunged us into one deep pit, and now it would lure us on to a still profounder abyss.

It is a perversion of the obvious teachings of Providence to permit the agitations of which the negro is still the cause, to deter us from making efforts for his moral advancement, and when those who are

HIS NATURAL FRIENDS,

and who have most power to do good for him, are making the best use of their opportunities, will not the door be shut upon agitators and agitations?

But on the other hand, if the whites of the South stand aloof from a work manifestly laudable for the aid of Christian benevolence, they must expect to be laborers to enter the neglected field, and to find among these many who will aim to acquire cheaply a reputation for philanthropy by declaiming against the faults of others.

They must also be prepared to suffer the natural consequences of such an accumulation of moral malaria in their midst, and to endure a society afflicted with many serious disorders. Besides all this, the vast body of ignorant blacks will furnish a glorious opportunity for the enterprise of ambitious politicians; and the negroes, neglected by their natural guides at home, will rally under the standard of leaders who will easily persuade them that all their moral and social ills will find an infallible remedy in political changes.

In short, we have in the present condition of things at the South all the elements for social chaos, for pernicious agitations, for national animosity, for internecine war; and yet I think I can clearly discover a possibility of constructing from these materials a compact, conservative and prosperous society.

WHAT IS WANTING,

is simply the wisdom and the will to look at things aright, and to place each party in its proper place—for the whites to rise above the influence of prejudice and passion, and to prove their claim to mental superiority, by going forward unitedly, systematically and earnestly to the work of instructing their dependent and docile neighbors. The undertaking must be commensurate with the wants of those to be benefited—and it must embrace whatever relates to industrial habits, to social character, the mental development, and to spiritual regeneration. The instruction must comprehend all that the blacks need to know to enable them to be self-supporting, and to understand the great principles which concern their temporal and eternal welfare; and while the white race is thus engaged it will be destroying the seed beds of social and moral pestilence; will entitle itself to and will receive

THE LASTING RESPECT AND DEFERENCE OF THE BLACKS,

will be improving and elevating itself, and will be effectually blocking the way of false philanthropists, demagogues, and the whole pestiferous brood of selfish agitators.

I did not propose to say anything now in regard to special plans of instruction for the colored people; but it is proper that I should express my opinion on a single point, that there may be no injurious misapprehensions as to what you and I, and others who agree with us, propose. The blacks must be instructed together by themselves; and while religious principle does not require that the races should be mingled in an educational system, the attempt would be productive of a mitigated evil.

With affectionate regard,

I am truly yours,

C. H. WILEY.

To Rev. S. S. Murkland, Bethany Church, Iredell county, N. C.

Encouraging Words from Commissioner Polk.

RALEIGH, April 8, 1879.

MR. O. HUNTER, JR.:—Sir: Your favor of the 7th inst., asking me for a contribution to the columns of your paper, has just been received.

The duties of my office demand my attention, but I cannot withhold my commendation of an enterprise so laudable and worthy as the one you have inaugurated, and which your journal is designed to represent and promote.

You inform me that in the conduct of the paper, partisan politics and sectarianism will be eschewed, and that its best energies shall be devoted to the advancement of the material interests of your race. In this you have acted wisely. And I trust you will appreciate the admonition that, to secure the sympathy, aid and co-operation of the intelligent patriotic white men of the State, in promoting the declared objects of your Association, you must demonstrate by an unswerving adherence to this avowed that your sole and sincere purpose is to foster and advance the material welfare of your race through the legitimate influence of such an organization. Let the lofty and noble purpose of your Association be to elevate the aims and aspirations of your people, by inculcating ideas of economy, industry and homes, and unlike your brethren of the more Southern States, you will not be deluded into the great error of leaving the bountiful fruitful land of your birth for one abounding only in disappointment. With best wishes for your success in your undertaking.

I am, respectfully,

L. L. POLK, Com'r.

The Residence of John Randolph of Roanoke, Destroyed by Fire.

Norfolk, Virginia, 8th.

Information reached here to-day of the destruction by fire of the residence of John Randolph of Roanoke, in Charlotte county last night. The property was purchased by the late Hon. Wood Bowdoin of the Supreme Court of this State, from the heirs of John Randolph. The remains of Randolph are buried within a very short distance of the dwelling. The amount of the loss sustained by the fire has not been ascertained.