

Braddock, Allegheny Co., Pa., Aug. 1, 1837.

Albion W. Tourgee, Esq.,

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Esteemed Sir:-

Some time ago, my wife and I read, with intense interest, your remarkably powerful book "A Fool's Errand." The perusal of the volume had the effect of much increasing our respect and admiration for you, which before, I assure you, had not been inconsiderable. My wife ~~was~~ was at one time a subscriber to "The Continent", and I although I saw little of that periodical ^{el} knew it to be deserving of the greatest success and approbation which could possibly come to it, and we were sorry indeed when you found it necessary to discontinue its publication. Since we read "A Fool's Errand," I have with great interest examined the contents of several numbers of "The Continent" for the year 1836, which my wife brought with her when we went to "housekeeping." Lesser than before, because of my better acquaintance with your capabilities and powers, I have sorrowed because of the fact that you could not continue to express through a publication of your own your ideas at right. I have seen from various sources attacks upon you, and in former times, I wondered why it should please anyone to so harshly assail you; now, I know that when you were with the target of hatred, you were merely receiving the abuse which in this world so full of passions and prejudices is always sure to be directed against men who have moral courage; whose transient devotion to principle calls forth the unmitigated praise of the right thinking, but which receives scant ap-

prevail from the careless and indifferent and excites the wrath of those who by reason of education, circumstances or surroundings have been led to entertain wrong ideas and to advocate these ideas with bitterness. I seem to employ flattery, and I feel sure you will believe I speak in all sincerity when I tell you now that in my opinion, you are one of the great Americans of the present time, a man whom every true lover of liberty, every genuine friend of justice, every earnest defender of human equality, should delight to honor. No ordinary man could have written "A Fool's Errand; none but a master mind, a keenly discerning intellect, could have observed so closely and concluded so logically as did you in this book. On every page you exhibit wonderful knowledge of human nature, power to analyze the secret thoughts, feelings, hatreds of men and make these and their motives appear clear as sunlight to the reader. I am thankful indeed that I have read "A Fool's Errand," which is beyond doubt one of the truly great books of the nineteenth century, and one of the greatest books of all the ages, however it may be disparaged by prejudiced, warped minds, devoid of ability to criticize with even the least measure of justice. I hope to be able to read your other works at no distant date, and we shall not consider our library complete until it contain the works of Albin K. Turgess, along with those of Dr. Lewis, another great and good man— who possessed indomitable zeal in the advocacy of rightful doctrines concerning hygiene and physiology and who had an earnest and rightful interest in the advancement of moral purity, one of the most vitally important questions to be considered at the present time. With Dr. Lewis's works you are doubtless familiar; and I

am sure you could only be pleased to know of their occupying, with your own books, an honored place in the libraries of many homes. Mrs. Jackson's "Ransom," which powerfully condemns the iniquitous treatment of the unfortunate California Indians by our, so-called, Christian government, is also a favorite book of ours, one which we think worthy to be placed ^{with} "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "A Fool's Errand" in the libraries of all lovers of right, justice and liberty.

After having read "A Fool's Errand," I can but conclude that the reconstruction plan pursued by our government toward the rebellious states, fashioned by the mighty brains of the "Wise Men" who figured as great statesmen at that period of time, was a monumental folly, an egregious blunder in reality inexcusable; it was the offspring of ignorance and the ignorance which beget it was inexcusable. The "Wise Men" (many times during our perusal of "A Fool's Errand" your forceful sarcasm and irony caused a thrill of pleasure to pass through me) were guilty indeed when they, disregarding all warning counsel, and assuming knowledge which they were far from possessing, attempted to legislate upon a matter with which they were not fitted by careful study or familiarity to cope. The condemnation which you bestowed upon them in "A Fool's Errand" ^{is invited} and every unprejudiced, rational mind could only rejoice that you wrote as you did. It would be scarcely possible to criticize with too great severity a government which after having tardily recognized weak and ignorant and helpless subjects from one form of slavery, would forsake them, commanding them to find strength, despite their utter lack of strength, to battle against a more cruel

more fiendish, more revolting form of bondage, which the future, with terrible certainty was to bring to them. That the government refused to believe that this new bondage existed, that it skeptically ignored the evidences of it which were constantly appearing, that it attempted to quiet its fears by declaring that the negro, having been freed, should "look out for himself", are matters of history, so clearly proven in your book, for which every true lover of liberty should blush with shame. The slavery of the African race must ever remain a damning blot upon the fame of our land, the contemplation of which must cause a shudder from the right thinking. And the description of the Freedmen, so called, when they stood in such sore need of a sustaining arm, used as a matter of cruelty in the eyes of those who view history carefully and impartially, whatever may be the opinions of the careless and the prejudiced. With all my heart, I want to thank you for having written "A Fool's Errand." It gave me so much a clearer idea of the topic of which it treats than I could possibly have received from any other source. Can you tell me what the sale of the good book has been? I hope hundreds of thousands of copies have been sold.

Perhaps those who laughed at you in '86 because of your advocacy of Robert T. Lincoln for the presidency will be a little surprised at the significant result of the "Blade's" column vote, recently published, in which Mr. Lincoln stood third, despite the fact that he is in no sense a candidate, in no degree a politician, but is modestly confining himself to his law practice in Illinois and making no attempt to attract attention. I believe that if the republi-

can party can win with any man in the ^{year} 1888, it can go forward to victory with Robert T. Lincoln as its standard-bearer. I do not believe it can be successful with the brilliant and ambitious James G. Blaine, despite the fact of his wonderful magnetism and apparent hold upon the affections of a large majority of the republican party; and with John Sherman, defeat and not victory would be the result, I fear. But the nomination of Mr. Lincoln would mean a united party. How an unprejudiced, ^{man} favoring reform (not blinded by party affiliations) can endorse Mr. Cleveland for 1888, I cannot understand, for Mr. Cleveland has practically deserted his professed principles with regard to civil service reform, and is, (in hopes of a re-nomination, I fear) if not openly favoring, at least tacitly sanctioning the Jacksonian policy, "To the victor belongs the spoils."

Will you think me presumptuous if I ask for a photograph of yourself? We much desire to have one. If you have in your possession no likeness, do you know that we could obtain one from some photographer before whom you have not? We should gladly communicate with such a photographer if we know where he could be found.

Sincerely your friend, admirer and well-wisher,

