

Melville, Jun 5 to.

V. D. U. S

Dec 23/90

To the Hon. Judge Tourgee.

Dear Sir. Several years since I read your book "A Fool's Errand" with much interest, believing it to be a truthful delineation of the circumstances of a terrible difficulty. I thought it also detected the note of real earnestness, and of sympathy for the oppressed. What little I have had opportunity to read of yours since that time, has confirmed my opinion of your love of justice and right doing. Nevertheless, who is always ready to applaud a good work and acknowledge the worth and power of the really great workmen, I have not abdicated my my own little

throned of reason, and consequently
refuse to accept any doctrine
from any source upon the mere
authority of great names unsupplemented
by sound logic and consistent
reasoning. This habit, aided by the
clear teaching of other men, has led
me to regard as false some of the
ideas since held in common with
the vast majority. I therefore take
the liberty of trespassing on your time,
in order to point out some errors
in matters which deeply interest you,
as a man of affairs, a teacher and
a lover of justice. You seem to have
a peculiar interest in the colored man,
arising most likely from your belief
that of all men, they are most de-
pressed and degraded. If I am right
about your motives I shall be glad of
that evidence of your warm heart.

The actions however of those who are
moved mainly by feeling, often result
disastrously to those they wish to benefit,
unless the means be properly adjusted to
accomplish the end. Mankind are to
aptly believe to mistake immediate
circumstances, which are mingled with
causes, for the ultimate cause of things,
and hence they quarrel with people
or events which are really set in motion
by remote causes. To illustrate: men
in the midst of a dense crowd fight
and quarrel with each other because
they are forced to step on each others
toes; the real cause of the trouble,
the thoughtless, or selfish, pressure of
those on the outskirts of the crowd
meets with little condemnation or resent-
ment. This principle, ^{or proposition} I have attempted
to illustrate applies I believe with
even greater force to social aggregates.

been to particular bodies of men.
Our men quarrel with each other
without sufficient reason, simply because
they happen to meet; and nations fight
their neighbours not because they have
the best of reasons for enmity, but because
they are in close proximity. The line
of thought suggested to you is that,
those, or at least some of those, with
whom you are antagonistic, are in reality
your friends and potential coworkers
in reform. Believe in the colored
man possessing all his rights, every one
of them. But the way to get them
established, is by working for the
welfare and rights of all men,
wherever men do dwell. The reason
why the colored man is not the social
and political equal of his white
brother, is not merely because of
bourbon democracy, but because
of a fundamental injustice ~~XX~~

which produces all sorts of evils,
just as impure air, or vile conditions
breeds a hundred different diseases.
What produced the slave owning aris-
tocracy? Was it not the desire ~~of~~
~~expressly~~ to secure the result of other
men's labor; to reap without sowing?
And what ~~part~~ animal the ex-
slaveholder of to day is the same
principle. The same idea that
possesses all men who are lusty
for power! If you want to elevate
the ~~slave~~ freed men, you must
work for the abolition of all in-
justice North or South; in the
Old World as well as in the New.
One of the primary causes of other
evils, is I think the gross injustice
which denies men their equal
rights to the earth. A right

that is necessarily included in the equal right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness.

All wealth results from the union of two forces labor and land. Capital though often confused with land, is simply a tool which labor uses to enable it to produce more wealth. So labor can be exerted with out land, and hence if labor does not possess free access to land, labor is not free to exert itself and retain the natural and just reward of that exertion. Of course I am not saying, that if labor does not possess land, it cannot be exerted. The slave was free to exert all the power he pleased provided it was apparent that such exertion would inure to the benefit of some one else. But the slave was not truly

free to exert his powers for his own benefit. He could get work and a living, but the conditions imposed were not natural, they were imposed by the ignorance & greed of other men. So in our civilized society of to day where it is said men are perfectly free; men can get work and get a living of some kind. But the conditions imposed, are not altogether natural, they are imposed by a wrongful system which confers on some men power to give or withhold the opportunity to labor, leaving those who possess nothing but their power to work, no alternative but to accept terms from some one who controls the elements of production. Both natural law and revealed religion teach the necessity of work. But in addition to the primeval curse, the wickedness of man

has imposed a curse far more bitter than the original one. Our modern curse is, that if you do not possess the means to buy an opportunity to freely produce, you must ask of some fellow worm the precious boon of being allowed to use your own hands in order to satisfy the direct needs, and give up to one man or some men a part of the produce of your labor on condition of being allowed to use your own powers. This process takes on the appearance of a free contract because the laborer has some little power to withhold his labor at times, and because he is not obliged always to accept a particular task master. But in reality such men are no more free than a shipwrecked mariner would be free ~~to~~ refuse succour on ignominious or unjust terms, when

reduced to the worst straits. When one man or one set of men must go to work in a few weeks or starve, and another set of men have wealth enough to supply every desire for years, how can there be a fair contract between them. I am no socialist and do not believe it to be the province of individuals or governments to supply people with work. Nature supplies every man with work when she gives him a stomach; she also supplies him with the means of gratifying his desires by furnishing land. Then possessed of hands & brain, and allowed free access to the earth, men possess both the ability and means to gratify their legitimate

needs; without the permission of government or individuals can these find work for themselves. This is the primary and fundamental liberty that all men need, freedom to produce, freedom to retain their natural product, or freely exchange it with the whole world. When this principle is established there will be no menacing plutocracy, no irreconcilable Bourbons, no Solid South or North. No arrogant capitalists, nor servile mendicants begging to be used, even at the risk of life, limb, or soul. There are other wrongs, other monopolies beside that of land but they are the fruit of the primary evil. I hope to see all abolished and earnestly entreat your consideration of them all. Excuse my lengthy letter and believe I am sincerely for reform
Yours Truly. Rowland T. Hill