

Prairie City Kansas
March 10' 1891

A. W. Tourgee
Mayvill N.Y. }

I have been reading your "Bystander's notes" for some time and I would like to write to you but I am not used to handling a pen. I know many things by experience but do not know how to arrange them for publication.

I was born near Jacksonville Illinois in 1840. I entered the army in 1861 Sept 5th and was discharged in June 1865. I was twice wounded and spent 5 months in a Rebel Prison. My health was bad when I left the army and my doctor advised me to live in the South. This I was more willing to do because I hoped in some way to benefit or assist the freed Negroes by learning them to read &c

October 1st 1866 I located near Jackson Miss. I remained four years, in Dec 1870 going into Louisiana for one year. Then into Alabama for six years. In January 1878 I located in Greenville South Carolina where I remained eight years going to Gainesville

Florida in 1886. I left Florida in December 1890 and came to Kansas to look after an estate of a deceased brother. I lived among and associated with the ^{negroes} for over twenty-four years.

I think I know as much about them as men who sit at their desks (and write) a thousand miles away.

I have voted the Republican ^{ticket} at every election and every negro could have done so if he wished. The only trouble I ever saw at an election was among the negroes themselves and that was caused by alcohol. Not half the negroes who live outside of towns will vote at all, and those who do vote always vote as "Ole' Mars" or "Young Mars" boys. I have put Republican tickets in the hands of negroes and begged them to go and vote but they would not until they had showed them to their old master who of course ^{carried} them ~~away~~.

I am anxious for the success of the Republican party and I know that your "notes" are doing it an injury at least out here in the west. Fifteen years ago the people would have believed what you write but that day is passed. These false statements are driving thinking men from our party.

The negroes in the South have more liberties now than they have in Chicago or New York

The young negroes under 30 years old are less reliable than the old slaves. Those who have attended the Public Schools are the worst of the lot lazy, trifling, & dissipated. They cannot learn but they can imitate. If a negro is raised by a good white family - he will have the manner and even the speech of the whites. but if raised with other negroes exclusively he is no more than the brute.

Well I am only bothering you - but I do hope you are not writing in the interest of the Democrat party -
You are making votes for them out here.

Respectfully
A. B. Ellis