

328 E. Morgan St.
Raleigh, N.C.
Dec. 22nd 71

Judge Tourgee, -

Dear Sir, -

As a family we have known you long and well, through your books and your 'Notes' in the Inter-Ocean and as workers among that people whose wrongs you so bravely and truthfully picture we have felt more and more closely drawn to you - until you have come to seem more like a personal friend than a stranger. The feeling has increased since we have been living now for two years in your old home - and I have many times felt strongly moved to write to you of matters that I thought would prove of peculiar interest - because of your associations with this place, but hitherto I have refrained out of consideration of the fact that I knew you must be deluged

with communications of far greater importance. My father, Rev. A. H. Curtis — is Gen. Missy — for this state under the American Missy ~~Association~~ Association — and also has charge of the Cong. Church (colored) here in Raleigh. For ten years he worked among the colored people in Marion, Ala. teaching also for a time in the State Normal University there until it was abolished — by act of the Legislature — a fine school — but hated intensely by the whites who gladly availed themselves of the excuse of a disturbance between one of the students and the cadets of Howard University, to get rid of it. One of our best and most inoffensive boys was going quietly home one evening when he was crowded off the sidewalk — knocked down and pounded by twenty or more cadets — Finally he was obliged to fight for his life — and in escaping injured two of them slightly — The whole place was aroused and he would have been killed if we — the northern teachers and our family — had not

hidden him with greatest care for two days until we could smuggle him off through the woods — to a place where he could safely take the cars northward. We sent him to friends who helped him kindly — and today he is in one of our best colleges — under an assumed name — doing finely. He longs to visit his home in Mississippi, but dares not — for some of those who committed the outrage live in the same place — and he would not be safe even now. While he was in hiding — we had a call from our physician — a rough but kindly man — one of the Ku Klux band we were told who made the lives of our predecessors wretched years before — but who was very friendly to us. He made a slight excuse for calling — but the real object seemed to be to say — as he went — "If you care anything about that nigger you'd better get him out of this country as quick as possible, for his life is not worth a straw here." The boys — cadets he said were but very slightly hurt — but that made no

difference - "if a nigger scratched a white man in this place there's no hope for him." A little account sent by a member of our family to a friend got into a northern paper - was copied into our local paper - with such comments as you can imagine a furious southern editor would make - and these papers were scattered broadcast among the members of the legislature - and helped no doubt to abolish the school - altho' it had been quite a settled fact for some time. But it shows how unsafe it is even to speak of outrages to our friends - We find our work is injured rather than helped by it - Still it is hard to keep silent always. The State Normal was reestablished at Montgomery after the hardest kind of a struggle - and is now an immense and prosperous school. But Oh the awful things we used to see and hear of in Marion - and its surrounding country! The utter lack of justice for the black man - the frauds at election times - the way the whites ground down those who labored ^{for} them, and practiced a regular system of cheating them out of their wages -

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The accounts of whipping and cruelty on remote plantations - made us feel that their condition was but slightly better than in old slave times - One young woman who hired out to a white man did not plough just to suit him - and he tied her to a tree - stripped off her clothes and whipped her until he was tired out. Her poor old father told her she should not work for him longer, where upon the white man rode to town, got out a warrant for his arrest, and he was soon in the chain-gang - "for breaking a contract." Another ^{colored} man tied up a calf who was damaging his crop - and while ^{he was} making inquiries as to its owner a white man riding by recognized it as belonging to a neighbor, and informed him - that it was tied up in such a nigger's yard. Instead of removing it and paying damages as a man north would have done - the owner had the negro arrested

for stealing - he was sentenced, and sent to the chain-gang. He was kept there nearly three years ^{and then his family had to pay \$25.00 to get him out.} partly we think because he was a good blacksmith and was very useful to them. Mean while his family of ten struggled along and nearly starved at times. These are but slight specimens - The saddest phase of the whole sad problem to us, was that the great majority of the people in our mission - in the school - and community were so very white - and they suffered more a thousand times because of it. None of your writings affected us more than did your "White Christ" - for we have felt so keenly the terrible position in which these white blacks are placed. And their case seems peculiarly hopeless. What we saw and heard in Alabama was bad enough - but the tales that came to us from reliable sources in Louisiana and Mississippi were even worse. I did not intend to be so lengthy upon subjects that are so familiar to you - We were glad to learn Alabama

and get into a more healthful climate - but still more to escape from scenes that were often heart-rending - and from an atmosphere that seemed saturated with crime and misery. I think it speaks well for the way in which Papalind those ten years there - that when he left he was presented with a testimonial signed by a large number of the most prominent business and professional men of the place expressing their appreciation of the good work he had done among them - their great regret that he must leave - and the assurance that their prayers and best wishes would accompany him to his new field of labor. He appreciated it - yet it was a little funny too - for but few of them had had the courage to show their professed interest by calling on us during our long stay there. The men were quite friendly when we met them, but their wives and daughters were not not so ready to be. It was a lonely unnatural

life that we led there - yet we are told that none of the missionaries in our Association had received such kindly treatment anywhere. We were pleased to find in coming into N. Carolina, more decidedly black negroes than we had found in the Gulf States. Of course we have not been here long enough to be capable of forming much of an opinion as yet - still it seems to us that the white as well as colored people are much superior in most respects to those farther south, and there seems to be less of injustice, cruelty and fraud, practiced about here - although there is far too much as it is. We notice an independence among the negroes - a self-respect that is surprising - and we observe an equally surprising consideration shown them on the part of the whites in regard to many matters. We were astonished to find seven of the most prominent white physicians of the city giving daily lectures in the medical department of Shaw University - which you will remember in its earliest struggle for existence. These men constitute its medical faculty - no doubt their large salaries are the main object with them - and yet they show great pride in the achievements of their students - and

3.

declare that ^{the} scholarship of those who pass the very severe state examination is equal to those in any medical school in the country. Not long ago Edward Johnson - principal of the colored public school - who has been studying law at Shaw - passed a very severe oral examination and was admitted to the bar. There were twenty or thirty young white men examined with him - and it was rather mortifying to them to have him answer so promptly the questions many of them failed on. The lawyers plied him with the most difficult questions they could - but he came out grandly - and the Chief Justice complimented him highly at its close - and wished him success. Johnson has published a book - "History of the Negro Race in America" which has been adopted by all the colored schools of the state - and by others elsewhere - He is a member of our church - and a fine young man. That he is capable of accomplishing much is shown by the fact that he studied law - and wrote this book - while teaching. Dr. Tupper whom you will remember - has built up a fine school - with very good buildings

and is still an indefatigable worker -
although getting to be an old man -
I was interested to hear from his son -
(a student in Hamilton College) when
home on a vacation, that in his little
boyhood, he was frequently trotted on your
knee - and played with your little daughter.
At the time of Gov. Tomlin's death last summer
a great ado was made over him - but not
a word is heard nowadays concerning
his memory. I heard him give an address
to a great ^{colored} audience when he was presenting
prizes to medical students at Shaw - and
it was pitiful to think how they applauded
his remarks - and the loud and angry
murmurs and talk - afterwards -
He told them how he loved them - and
rejoiced at their success etc - etc - etc -
And he said that they thought they had
suffered - and had hard times - but if
they could know how the white race had
suffered - what thralldom - what misery
they had endured in their struggle
upward - they would think their sufferings
nothing as compared to these. And
then he pictured graphically the Tower
of London - and what people had suffered
in it - and talked a long time in that
strain - I think it was he also - who
reminded them of the great blessing
it was to them - not to be left in heathen
darkness in Africa - but brought to a
Christian land - enlightened - uplifted

and prepared for good citizenship!
etc - Possibly however I am confounding
his remarks with those of Dr Haygood's -
whom I have heard talk in such a way.
The latter however, is undoubtedly doing
much for the colored people. You can imagine
how pleasant it is for them however to listen
to such talk! There is nothing however
of that cringing manner - that servile
fear of the white race shows here - as
compared to what we found further South.
That is just being replaced by an
independence and arrogances that
is being carried too far - naturally.
It is trying to us as workers to find
how willing they are to get all the
money possible - from northern friends -
but how anxious they are to manage
all their schools and churches for
themselves - Of course this is a natural
feeling - I mean the latter - and it
would be all right, if they were ready
to go alone - but so few of them are
as yet! There is a constant, growing
desire on their part to take the places
of white northern teachers in all
the schools under our Association -
and I doubt not it is the same
with many others. It is sad to see
those who are totally unfit - so confident
that they are fully equipped to fill the

highest positions as teachers and leaders. It is amusing to us - this constant fear on the part of Southern whites that the education of the ^{negroes} ~~whites~~ will tend to make them want to assimilate very closely with us - marry us - and all that - for we see the tendency to draw apart - and be a people by themselves - as far as social relations are concerned, growing stronger every year we remain south. I would not have you think we complain of the lack of appreciation among the colored people. We can have unbounded patience with them. This "sufficiency unto themselves" is confined more to the cities. It is touching in my father's work - in looking after schools and churches in the back woods to see the hunger and thirst for light - for education - for a higher and nobler religion - to see how warmly the ignorant masses appreciate their northern friends. That matter of "social equality" is a hard one to deal with. In Alabama - our mission home was on a large plantation just out of town - and quite retired. We had our colored people all around us - and could do about as we pleased - without fear of being molested - but here in the city - we have to exercise great caution.

Yet in spite of the fact that we stand up to our principles at all times - and are loyal to our work we have received much courtesy and kindly attention - and count at least fifty of the best white people as friends. Many call out of curiosity - but most seem satisfied that we are not dangerous - and in times of trial and sickness we find them very sympathetic and kind. Of course this friendship is shown mainly by the older people - few of the younger ones caring to risk their social standing in the slightest degree by association with my brother and I. We do not mind, although it is rather an unnatural life for young people to lead, for we find very few who are congenial. It is in regard to this point, that I was slightest disappointed in the "Fool's Errand" and "Bricks without straw" - to think you should allow your charming heroines to marry Southern men - even if they were so thoroughly reconstructed - apparently.

I wonder if a Southern man could be reconstructed sufficiently to make a Northern woman of strong views perfectly happy? Could there be that sympathy of tastes and congeniality without which marriage must be a failure - between persons brought up with such distinctly differing views upon most subjects? I can easily believe that it might be possible to love a Southern man, but I don't see how I could marry one, feeling as I do. It is fortunate perhaps that there is no probability of my being put to the test. It is a lonely life for a little Yankee girl - but I keep very busy and happy with my household duties - painting, and music, and writing a little for the press. I am not ambitious in the latter last pursuit - but my small efforts are more kindly received than I have dared to hope - and there is much to inspire both pen and brush - in my surroundings.

You may recall giving some lectures at Lakeside three summers ago, I believe. At the close of one of them my brother Ernest had the great pleasure of

meeting you - While chatting with other friends - you placed your hand on his head - and scanning his face keenly and critically - made some remark - to the effect that you thought that boy would make his mark in the world. We should not have heard of this - for our Ernest ~~is~~ possesses that rare quality in a youth - modesty - to a large degree - but he was so pleased with this opinion coming from you that he confided it to his mother - who was still more pleased, for she had had reason to feel that he would do some grand and good work in the world - judging from the promise he gave - and she had especially consecrated him to the Lord's work from his birth. Can you imagine what we feel - now that he has had two years of medical study at Ann Arbor - was looking forward to joining his brother in Japan, as a medical missionary - and was developing so fine a character that our hearts were rejoicing over him - to know that he is slowly but steadily sinking under that fatal malady Bright's disease - and the physician's gaze

us no hope that he can remain so long with us - as the disease is well advanced - and consumption is rapidly setting in? It is an almost overwhelming sorrow - yet we have the comfort of knowing that he is ready to go to the better country when the time comes - and that he faces the situation with a patient steadiness and heroism that is unusually in one so young. I thought you would be interested to know this - if you recalled the incident. May I ask a favor? I am preparing an autographless calendar for my only other brother, a young missionary in Japan - (no number 27 - missionaries in our family) - and am very anxious to have his relatives and the friends of his college and seminary days show in it - that as he daily removes a new leaf, he may be pleasantly surprised by the discovery of an unexpected but familiar name - would you kindly write a word of greeting or cheer - or even your name upon the enclosed sheet - and return to me? I know it would give him great pleasure to find the name of one whom he knows and admires so much through his books - among others whom he honors so highly - I always despise autograph seekers - but for my brother's delight and cheer in a far country, I find it a pleasant task - if you can thus oblige me I shall be very grateful - With the warm

Sincerely yours
M. W. B. D.