

STREET, SOMERSET,

February 12th, 1895.

TO THE HON. SEC. OF THE

**"Society for the Recognition of the Brotherhood of Man."**

Dear Dr. DARBY,

After much anxious deliberation I have finally decided to withdraw from the "Society for the Recognition of the Brotherhood of Man." Few decisions have cost me a more painful struggle. The divergence of view amongst us as to the lines on which the movement is to be conducted, is to myself and some of my colleagues so vital, that united working is no longer possible. There must be "in essentials unity."

The trouble has arisen, I believe, from the fact that no statement of the intended objects and methods of the young society was formulated before we began to enrol members. The omission was met at first by a series of widely circulated addresses "to those who interest themselves in the future of the Coloured Races," to "the remnant of the Anti-Slavery workers," &c.: and by personal explanations made at our various meetings. Our original invitation to Miss Ida B. Wells, asks her to help us set on foot a "new *emancipation* movement"; and the Society was repeatedly referred to as an extension of the too-soon-abandoned Anti-Slavery movement "for protecting the rights of the coloured members of our human family everywhere," and for eradicating "*the Slavery of CASTE.*"

The fact was almost immediately recognised that some were joining us, who, though they agreed to our declaration of principles, were known not to be in accord with the specific application of these principles regarded by the founders of the Society as essential to the practical success of their efforts.

This caused us grave uneasiness, and at the first meeting of the Society (August 11th, 1893), in order as we hoped, to effectually prevent any recurrence of such misunderstandings in future—the series of Resolutions or Requirements was unanimously adopted, which have ever since been appended to the declaration forms on the front page of the Society's Organ, our late Hon. Sec., Mr. Celestine Edwards, being especially earnest as to the necessity of the stand taken.

In these Resolutions it was plainly stated that so grave were the evils arising from the system of Race-separation that members of the S.R.B.M. would be required to refrain from *all complicity in the system* whether in their personal capacity, or by consenting to membership in Societies in whose Constitution provision was made for separation on the ground of race or colour.

We regarded this system as a white man's *organised repudiation* of the brotherhood of the darker races, a scheme so tyrannous and *immoral* that it became our duty to withstand it in the most practical and positive manner, giving it NO QUARTER.

But our position was not a negative one only, we wished to *promote* brotherly fellowship and sympathy between white and dark races everywhere, throughout their social, civil and religious life; believing that only by such untrammelled intermingling in the common affairs of life could the fires of prejudice be extinguished and the obliterated sense of brotherhood fully restored.

As to the Order of Good Templars which you tell us you have recently rejoined—when in the year 1887 the white American Good Templars demanded, as the price of reunion, the consent of our English Order to the insertion of clauses in the Constitution providing for *separation of races*—that where "*necessary to overcome difficulties arising from difference of race*" (see Constitution of International Supreme Lodge, Article I., section 8) a double network of Lodges covering the same area should be allowed, thus giving an acknowledged place to the unbrotherly conspiracy within this great fraternity, many persons, myself among the number, refused to consent, choosing rather to carry on our temperance work alone, than become consenting parties to such a concession of *principle* as we felt it to be.

It is just in such ways that this system, this demand for separation made by white races, worms its way into new and ever wider fields, till in America hardly a church or a society of the white race but has its *caste* arrangements for its coloured members.

For a Society such as the S.R.B.M., professing a defence of Brotherhood, and especially of that of the dark races, to yet fail to uphold the standard of absolute non-complicity, is to forfeit our confidence and our approval. I cannot myself see it *brotherly* to excuse or tolerate compliance with those unjust and unbrotherly demands of the strong against the weak, whether they be to meet the convenience of individuals or of societies.

These "Requirements" which to some of you seem so narrow and uncharitable, to me seem but the uncompromising *stand for principle* in the face of a gigantic tyranny.

Until the S.R.B.M. is prepared to take a much stronger and more practical ground on this caste question than its present officers see their way to, I must stand aside.

I purpose reverting to former methods of advocating this reform, probably reviving the little paper ANTI-CASTE, and inviting those who support its views to help me in disseminating them to the best of our ability, and as the funds contributed may allow. In the matter of lectures by representatives of dark races and friends of their cause, &c., doubtless we can sometimes co-operate.

I remain,

"Yours for the fraternization of the entire human family,"

CATHERINE IMPEY.