

30 Blackstone Bldg  
Cleveland, O.

Cleveland, O., Sept. 26, 1889.

Hon. A. W. Lougee,  
Mayville, N.Y.

My dear Sir:—

I do not know that I ever acknowledged receipt of your kindly letter in answer to the one in which I thanked you for a compliment paid. I found in your letter not only great pleasure but much encouragement. I think with you that the colored people ought to erect a monument to John Brown, and I hope to see it done, though hardly for some years. Recent developments seem to indicate that they are learning to act unitedly; <sup>in</sup> a few more years, say a decade, they may have attained, as a class, that pitch of enlightenment, that degree of confidence in themselves, which will make it possible to carry out successfully such an enterprise; the examples set by their white fellow-citizens in the matter of the Washington and Grant monuments is not exactly an inspiring one.

I take the liberty of sending you a copy of the October "Atlantic," which contains one of my stories, which if you read it, I hope you may think the best of the series. I think I have about used up the old Negro who serves as mouthpiece, and I shall drop him in future stories, as well as much of

the dialect. The punishment of tying the stolen meat around the thief's neck was a real incident of slavery - in fact I think it hardly possible to imagine anything cruel or detestable that did not have its counterpart in that institution. The setting of that incident is of course pure fiction. I tried in this story to get out of the realm of superstition into the region of feeling and passion - with what degree of success the story itself can testify.

I presume you saw an article of mine in the "Independent" in June; that paper has accepted from me a Southern story dealing with a tragic incident, not of slavery exactly, but showing the fruits of slavery. It is not in dialect, and while it has a moral, I tried to write as an artist and not as a preacher. I had a humorous dialect story in the June "Overland", a rather out-of-the-way publication which it hardly pays to write for.

I read with much interest your stirring weekly letters in the Inter-Ocean. I sincerely hope some of the Southern fire-eaters read them and profit by them. Recent events do not show, however, that the Southern whites have learned much; they certainly have not forgotten how to insult and oppress the Negro, and they still possess their old-time facility with the shot-gun and the cowhide. I see no remedy for the disease but for the colored people to learn to defend themselves.

I have had some thoughts of collecting in book form the stories I have published in the Atlantic, with some others I think as good, which have seen daylight elsewhere. If you have time to answer this letter, perhaps you would be kind enough to advise me from your own experience, whether such a book would be likely to pay for itself, or whether it would be of sufficient value as an advertisement to justify me in paying for it. I have been writing a good deal this summer, among other things a novel which I shall try to inflict on the public sooner or later. With kindest regards, I am yours very respectfully, Chas. W. Chesnut.

P.S. ———

You said to me that you thought the fact of color would hurt me in literature - the knowledge of the fact rather. Perhaps it might with the public. It has not with the Independent - on the contrary I think it has helped me with <sup>that</sup> journal, I do not think it has hurt me with the Atlantic. The editors of both journals are aware of my connection with the colored race. The road to success in literature is not, I imagine, an easy one and perhaps, if I have the patience and the industry to pursue it, the fact of color may in the course of time prove to be a distinction instead of a disadvantage.

Yours, etc.

C. W. Chesnut.