

# Kinsman Public Schools,

KINSMAN, OHIO.

JAS. J. H. HAMILTON, - Principal.

October 11, 1890.

Hon. W. H. Tourgee,

Dear Sir:-

Pardon me for intruding upon your time and patience, but a short time ago Messrs. Ginn & Co. of Boston requested me to review Mr. D. H. Montgomery's "Leading Facts of American History". I did so, criticised it quite severely in some respects, especially challenging both the accuracy and the impartiality of the author's treatment of the negro in his account of "Carpet-bag" rule in the South. He calls "carpet baggers" "greedy adventurers" who "used the ignorant freedmen"

as their tools to carry out their own selfish purposes", and defines 'Carpet-baggers' as "Northern politicians who went South after the war (with no baggage or property except a carpet bag) for the purpose of getting office and plunder". 'Scalawags' are stated to be "those Southerners who joined the 'Carpet-baggers' in their schemes". The negro legislators are held up to scorn as "beasts so ignorant that they did not even know the letters of the alphabet." The Ku-Klux business is evidently approved of, and the suppression of the negro vote receives no word of censure, but it is stated that, "like the white man, he [the negro] has the liberty to make himself what he chooses." This sort of talk makes

2

# Kinsman Public Schools,

KINSMAN, OHIO.

JAS. J. H. HAMILTON, - Principal.

my blood boil, Our school text-books are full of just such "dough-faced" cringing to the treason-loving, nigger-whipping south. I could not stand it, and expressed my opinion very forcibly in the matter, denying the fairness of the whole and the truth of much. I held that an "impartial" historian would either <sup>have</sup> said nothing about the ignorance of the negroes, or else have stated the infamous fact that the brave, chivalrous whites had made it a felony for any one to teach a negro to read. I denied that the "Carpet-bag" governments were as corrupt as those which followed them. I defended the "Carpet-baggers", stating

that I had the pleasure of personal acquaintance with a number of them and that they were representatives of the best life of the north; that they were in nearly every case brave Union soldiers, and were brave, honest, and in many cases heroic. I demanded proof that any "Northern politician had gone south after the war (with no property or baggage except a carpet-bag) for the purpose of getting office and plunder." I held that "Carpet-baggers" and "Scalawags" brought upon themselves the hatred and slanders of the ex-Rebels because of their adherence to the Republican Party, and that now these slanders were being echoed by a textbook intended for our schools.

I challenged the impartiality of the account of the Electoral Contest of 1876-7. I stated that there was a wide spread plot of the Democrats to seize the government and seat Tilden by force of arms,

# Kinsman Public Schools,

KINSMAN, OHIO.

JAS. J. H. HAMILTON, - Principal.

and that they were prevented or deterred from this because, as one of them once said to me, "We were afraid of old Grant."

Of course the publishers and author defend their position and ask for evidence, etc. I have replied at length, but wish to be better fortified in case of further controversy.

Being an ardent admirer of your writings on the subject and of your position as a fearless defender of the negro, I venture to address you as being better acquainted with the facts in the case than perhaps any other man. Am I not right in

claiming that all Republicans of northern birth who took part in the affairs of the south after the war were called "Carpet-baggers" by the southerners, and that all southerners who affiliated with the Republicans

party were called "scalawags" - whether they were of high or low degree? Was not Gen. Longstreet called a "scalawag" as well as any "cracker."

Mr. Montgomery says that "In 1868 the total debt of S. Carolina was about \$5,000,000. Under four years of "Carpet bag" government, or rather misgovernment, the debt was increased to no less than \$30,000,000. Much of the debt represented simply what was stolen from the people of the state" I have not questioned this statement, but can you refer me to data to disprove it or explain the increase of debt otherwise than as "Carpet bag" steals? What was the character of the legislation of the Rebel legislatures set up after the war before the re-construction acts was passed by Congress - especially as that legislation affected the negro? Is there not a total absence of local home-rule all through the south, such as we have in the North - each township, county, etc., electing its own local officers? Finally do you know anything

4  
**Kinsman Public Schools,**

KINSMAN, OHIO.

JAS. J. H. HAMILTON, - Principal.

about a Democratic plot to seize the Government in 1877 and seat Tilden by force of arms? Was it not openly talked of in S. Carolina, Kentucky and other States? Did not these States boast that they had 10,000 men each, ready to march upon Washington and seize the Government. Can you give me any direct and positive evidence on this point, in regard to either Southern or Northern States?

As to the Ku Klux, did they not in many cases strip and flog women as well as men? Can you name any particular cases?

Can you give any instances of their flogging or shooting white men? May I ask of the account of the attempt to bind Col. Serrousse and his friends the <sup>into a Holy Error,</sup>

judge on the bridge and burn the bridge, is not a chapter of actual history? If so, do you care to mention names and place, and date?

My apology for this long intrusion is your well-known advocacy of the rights of the negro; and may I hope I am not asking too much of your generosity to assist in purifying our school text books in this respect.

With esteem, I am,

Yours, very respectfully,

J. W. Hamilton