

Greensboro, N.C.

April 19, 1892.

Hon. A. W. Tourgee.

Dear Sir: Your letter of April 12 recd. to-day. Of course, after reading it, and carefully considering its points, it would be worse than folly for me to think of printing a book. I thank you very much for taking the pains to make so elaborate an exposition; which, from a busy man, out of health, I could not have expected. Ordinarily, I would say nothing further; nor do I mean to do so now, so far as publishing my work is concerned. I simply desire, if I can, to set you right in some of your ideas concerning myself; realizing, at the same time, that more often

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than otherwise, one's estimate of himself, even of his inner motives of action, are quite likely to be erroneous.

I wish to say to you just how I was induced to write you my letter of the 2^d inst. You had written me last summer, showing sympathy. Your letter and sympathy were entirely unexpected, and I assure you both were appreciated, and I felt toward you a glow of kindness, which up to this time, has not diminished. I am fast verging upon old age, being, last month, fifty-six years of age. You are not far behind me, so far as age is concerned. With me, many of the arduities of younger years are dimmed, or have entirely died

out, I do not wish to remember the differences I have had with other men and will forget them, if they will permit.

I have now reached that part of your late letter wherein you say that I am somewhat inclined to suspect the motives of others, or rather your motives. Now, if you think this, you are entirely wrong. Your suggestion caused an unpleasant vibration in my heart and I was sorry that you thought it necessary to make it. If I was to suspect the motive of any advice you should choose to give, I would not have written to you at all; for I would have believed, beforehand, that your answer would be insincere. I think my principal trouble in life has been that I have been too apt to be unsuspecting

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of the motives of others, and my faith in others has caused me many bitter disappointments. The worst of it is, that even after the experiences of a long life, I still occasionally slip and fall, as a consequence of leaning too heavily upon a rotten staff. At any rate, this is the estimate I have formed of my own character. You ought to give me credit for having some natural sense and reasoning power. So when you ask me to remember that you are not envious of any success I might have, you seem to lose sight of the fact that you yourself have pronounced my intellectual qualities to be logical, lucid, etc. These very qualities, if they exist, would teach me that a successful author, like yourself, could not be envious of the crude work of one who has

none of the aspirations and none of the pride of the triumphant literary man, whose reputation alone sells his books.

With me it is no "first" book, but the only book. I did not expect, if it could be published, any particular "fame or credit," nor any especial "profit." I did hope it might produce "moral effect"—not perhaps in the North, but in North Carolina; and whenever I have thought of the possible effect of the publication, it has always been in connection with the idea of setting history right in North Carolina. And I do not deny that it would afford me pleasure to hear the howl that would be raised. Hence the pictures of Holdens, Smith, Boyd, Badger, and the others, would be useful to revive interest in the Kukklex days, and to consequently

arouse the rebel yell. I presume
 you understand me. If I had the
 means, I would indulge in the
 luxury of publishing the book and
 would profusely illustrate it, not
 only with portraits, but ^{with} Court houses,
 dwellings, death-processions, stump-
 speakings and subject-illustrations of
 all sorts. My want of means denies
 me that luxury: then if nobody would
 buy, I would give the book away;
 and whether you think so, or not, I
 believe that thousands of the people of
 North Carolina would read and re-
 read the volume; and it would fur-
 nish material for many a stump
 speech. It would be reward enough
 for me could I get the work before
 the plain people of this State; who are
 beginning to think for themselves, and
 are learning to read, in large numbers,
 among the younger ones, growing
 to manhood and womanhood.

I even believe that, if I could print the book as I want to, I could sell enough copies, in this State, to pay the expense of it. I would not hope to have it circulate extensively in the North - certainly not through the agency of the Republican party; which I know to be uninterested in the Southern question, as well as you know it. I know, further, that the Republican party is quite another party from what it was in the days of Lincoln and Sumner and Grant. Clarkson is the leader now.

I now refer to the last page of your letter, whereon you say that no man on earth could give any Southern Republican a good audience in the Academy of Music at 50 c. a head, &c. I am not such an idiot as to suppose so. But if you will refer to my letter of the 2^d inst. you will see that this proposition was not made this year, or last year, but in 1880,

when "A Fool's Errand" was having its great run; and the proposition was based upon the interest excited by that book. The one who made it was a wide-awake, energetic, business man. He would not make it now. The interest has abated. The Southern Republican now has no friends - and is regarded rather as a nuisance. In the opinion of many Northern Republican magnates, he has no right to exist - except to furnish delegates to Republican nominating Conventions.

I now dismiss the subject, and ask pardon for encroaching. Oh will take you but a few minutes to read this letter. Perhaps it will please you to know that I do not suspect your motives - I hope so. And I hope further that you may have good health and happiness.

I send you my name and that of J. W. Hardew (who was here a few days since) as members of the National Citizens' Rights Association, with

two postage stamps for certificates
of membership, to be sent to me at
Greensboro, and to him at Graham.

Perhaps I ought not to have sent to
California for the certificates.

Yours very truly,
Wm. S. Ball