

Washington D.C. June 26th, 1892

Judge A. W. Tourgee:-

I am a stranger to you, but I am full to the bursting point on the subject of the wretched policy and mismanagement of average northern republicans. They are so densely & willfully ignorant of the true state of the country, so careless of the liberties of their white brethren (omitting the blacks,) so easily led astray by the cunning clap-net & catchwords of the enemy, so besotted in the fond delusion of a "conciliation" that is wholly one-sided, toward creatures incapable of appreciating it, that I am ashamed to rank them as fellow-republicans. This canvass demands plain talk, yet it also demands cunning, effective literary work. It wants a popular series of articles, beginning with mild brilliancy and humor, - submissive as Mark Antony's beginning was, - and developing into the real wealth of satirical ^{truth} and sarcastic power that the whole situation abounds with. It needs a course of unanswerable hits based on true feeling & conscience, like the Bigelow Papers, that will pierce the hard crusty shell of false and ignorant ideas that our untraveled Yankees have put on. There is ample material for it. Perhaps even now the weapons are being forged in different literary workshops. Some one may take up the mantle of Lowell and win back thousands of apostate votes. A new writer, or a known writer under a temporary alias, could gain future laurels and do much good.

Your recently-printed views on the danger of negro revolt made some of my conceited republican fellow-clerks denounce you as a crank. I was some what excited at that remark, and replied:

"Mr. Tourgee knows just what he is talking about and you know nothing about it. You are not qualified to call any man a crank on that subject till you have lived there for years, as I have, and become acquainted with the different classes in the South. Negro uprisings always have been the bugbear of the South, as they are today. All their well-drilled military companies have no other thought or purpose. There is no higher idea of patriotism there, than to put down the negro by force and fraud and maintain local democracy in office. You can say what you like about Mr. Tourgee, but I tell you he understands the case aright, and you not at all."

One great reason why I held Harrison vastly above Blaine was because he did his best, with Spooner, Lodge + others, to protect national elections from wrong, while Blaine joined the milk-and-water party of submission that raised the false cry of "force-bill".

I read the "Fool's Errand" when it was new. In spite of its lessons I afterward went to South Florida with my family. After five years of it, I think I know the cracker, the southern politician, the old race of ex-rebels, the present race of young rebels (not ex-), the spiteful women, the impracticable negro element, the timid Yankee

eager to protect his democracy, and the other elements of the Solid state of Florida. I was adjt- & afterward commander of U.S. Grant Post No. 10. G. A. R. (Orlando) For one year after that, I was at Tallahassee, that center of election frauds and rebel prejudice. There I procured from the U.S. govt- nearly 40 headstones for unmarked graves of Union soldiers. I set them with my own hands in the city cemetery of Tallahassee. Not one white republican there would come and help me. The only help I had was a lame negro, survivor of Banks' Red River disaster.

My family is still in the far south, for I am too poor to bring them to me, and my services here do not yet bring me a fair amount.

For two years I have been wanting to write a series of short, homespun "letters to a megwump", or "doughface," as familiar talk from a southern republican to an old acquaintance who has gone foolish and turned against all he used to know, - concealing my identity for prudent reasons. Is there an opening? Is there propriety in the plan? Is there an influential paper that would use such?

I have also cogitated upon some general plan for enlightening the self-satisfied northern voter on the real destruction of liberty in the south, the abandonment of American citizens to outrage and oppression, and the prevailing worship of Jeff Davis & his cause; - by a concerted and

4

united mass of testimony from those who have gone from northern communities and lived there, and whose testimony is not without great weight. Perhaps it is impracticable or too late. Perhaps the canvass had better be fought out on issues not half so portentous, lest the democrats should say "bloody-shirt", and cause all cowardly northern sentimentalists to skulk away from our standard as they have done heretofore.

I am in a non-political office and my employer does not want any of his men to be too prominent partisans. Still I would like to render any quiet individual aid that I can. If you have anything to suggest, I should be pleased to hear from you.

Very Respectfully,

A. W. Barber,

Dept. of Labor.

Washington D.C.