The Inter Ocean.

Chicago, July 7th, 1892.

Judge L. T. Bourgeois,

Mayville, N. Y.

My Dear Judge:—

I have just finished carefully reading the manuscript of "Bystander's Notes" received last evening, and after due and careful consideration have concluded to return it to you. I am as much in earnest on the Southern question as you or any one else, but I can see no possible good of the publication of this chapter of "Bystander" and I can see a considerable harm not to the white people but to the colored people themselves.

I confess I do not see the end of the colored problem in the South and am not prepared to take the position of a prophet and foretell what is to happen, but I am a great believer in the final triumph of the better elements of human nature, which constitute the better elements of our present civilization. Sad as the situation is in the South, terrible as the suffering that the long oppressed people have to bear from cruel prejudices, from unchristian greed, and the desire for power, still I believe things are improving even in the South, that gradually the spirit of the century is having its effect even on the negro hater, and that constitutional liberty is bound in time to triumph in the regions south of Mason & Dixon's line. I do not believe a bloody revolution would hasten it, nor do I believe that the talk about a bloody revolution is going to do any good. Your work in the "Bystander" certainly has been product-

ive of good in many ways and though sometimes too pessimistic for me I have published what you have said without always believing.

I think lately you have been studying this subject only from one side and you seem to have become soured at everybody except the members of the National Rights Association. Now I have great respect for the members of the National Rights Association and believe they are among the best people in the country, but I cannot ignore the fact that there are other people that are not members of the National Rights Association that are perhaps just as good and just as patriotic as those who have ~~not~~ assented to all the tenets of this respectable Association. But I think there is danger of your injuring the past work of the "Bystander" by giving expression to radical and more prophetic ideas. Now your article week before last on the editor was unjust to yourself and unjust to the editors as well. It was a manifestation of spleen because some of the newspapers had criticised you, and I must say was discreditable to the great work you are doing. Your statements were not correct as to editorial opinion and I think when you consider it you will say so yourself. No man is fit to be the editor of a paper that hopes in any way to lead or influence public opinion that cannot make a paper greater than himself. All editorial opinions that amount to anything are not the creation of a man shut up in his room, however great he may be, but are the result of the best thought of many men. Mr. Busbey rather favored not publishing it, but I told him we would do so and I would reply to it the next Saturday, but he went away on Tuesday and having dou-

ble work to do I had my hands full and consequently could give the matter no attention.

I write to you very frankly about this matter because I think that the "Bystander"s Notes" should be above any manifestation of spleen, above anything like reckless statements. There is absolutely no good in my judgment to be attained by prophesing or talking about a bloody insurrection in the South. If we were all to start in doing that there is no doubt but that we could create before two years a bloody insurrection in which thousands and thousands of blacks would be slaughtered, and those that survived have their condition ten times worse.

Now so far as I am concerned The Inter Ocean is not being published to make people more unhappy or more miserable, or to hasten the day of bloodshed, rapine and murder. The mission of The Inter Ocean is peace where peace is possible without the surrender of the right. There are a good many things in the South that give me great hope in regard to it. The Colored Training School such as Hampton and Tuskegee in Alabama are doing a great deal. They are not simply making teachers and preachers, but they are making farmers and mechanics. The Alliance is doing a good deal also. These Training Schools are elevating the men mentally and physically and teaching them a line of labor that will eventually give them commanding positions and will in time bring to their aid in the contest they are making organized skilled white labor, and when the negro occupies the position of a mechanic, a contractor, or builder, or of a farmer

The Inter Ocean.

—4—

Chicago, ...

who owns and controls his farm a great step is taken in solving this very dangerous problem. The Alliance ~~are~~ is doing a good work in splitting up the old Democratic party. The Alliance people will want the colored vote, and the Democratic party will want the colored vote, and when those two parties begin striving for the local offices the negro will be cultivated, and his political rights will have defenders.

This is the day of peaceful revolution. Such revolutions move slowly but they are surer and involve less real suffering than those that are achieved with the gun and bloodshed. I would be very sorry to have The Inter Ocean considered the organ and promoter of anything bordering a bloody revolution in the South, and I am free to say that I do not think you will do any good by agitating that subject. We all know that in the very nature of things political affairs cannot continue in the South as they are now always without disastrous results to our free institutions. It may be that they will continue and that those disastrous results will come, but I have no desire to be among those who would hasten the coming of those disastrous results. I prefer to do what I can to aid good people everywhere to develop humane sentiment, and saturate the South with the true Republican gospel and save the Republic to the negro and white alike. For these reasons I return you this number of "The Bystander" and hope that with most I have said you will when you consider the matter carefully agree.

Very Truly Yours,

Wm Penn Nixon

I have dictated this letter in the midst of interruptions & consequently you will find it quite disconnected but it conveys my idea

— See P.S. on next page

P. S.— I do not want to close this letter, however, before I say to you that the "Bystander" of last week in my judgment was a most excellent one. It was something not only for the statesman and politician to study but for thinking men of all kinds to read and ponder well. It ought to do much good.

W.P.H.