

Mayville-on-Chautauqua, N.Y.

Nov 23rd, 1893.

Chas. W. Chestnutt Esq.

Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Sir:

I have yours of the 21st.

Perhaps no man was ever so morbidly sensitive about advising another to put money into anything as I. I have had a perfect horror of doing so, all my life. I am willing to give any one my opinion, and explain the reasons of it, but beyond that I would not go if I knew a man could get the Kohinoor for five cents.

I have myself no sort of doubt that the enterprise in hand, is going to be a great success in every way; and that belief is based wholly on the peculiar conditions which attach to it at the present time. Under ordinary circumstances, I should say that with \$50,000, at my back, I might safely start such a thing, and with careful management, work it up to success. I should only believe this, however, because of my confidence,

1--In my own power to command and hold the attention of the public.

2--In the practice of the strictest and most careful economy.

3--In the efficacy of certain methods, and the avoidance of certain mistakes which are usually made in such matters,--the result of experience and long observation.

Yet with this confidence, I should by no means have been desirous of trying the experiment even with such a capital provided, and should have expected it to require at least 5 years of tremendous exertion and the most rigid economy, to secure success, and I doubt if

I could have been induced to undertake it at all.

Now, I have no sort of doubt that by the use of \$2,000 or \$3,000 in circulars and postage, I can secure a circulation of 10,000 and a sale of stock (aside from the Promoter's stock) of \$30,000 within 30 days, and get a circulation of 50,000 and a capitalization of \$100,000 within a year.

What makes this difference?

1--The well nigh universal conviction among <sup>the</sup> colored people that this is the only possible method of getting the ear of the white people by which alone any effective betterment of present conditions is to be hoped for.

2--The wide spread alarm among the best classes of white people at the present tendencies.

3--The intimate connection in the Democratic party between a debased citizenship, the repeal of election laws and free-trade.

4--The universal desire among the white people of the North who believe in justice and liberty, that the colored people should do something evidently wise and striking thing, looking toward a solution of their ~~differeances~~ difficulties and an equal desire to assist in promoting the same. And I may also add an almost equally general conviction that something of the kind will be done.

On what do these convictions rest?

1--Upon a remarkable change which has recently taken place in colored sentiment, showing an almost universal conviction that something must be done, and that nothing can be done, except in connection with the white sentiment that is in their favor.

2--The letters and sentiments, the hopes and fears, of the members of the National Citizens Rights Association.

I believe the colored people can and will take \$25,000, in stock and give us 10,000 subscribers. I have no doubt the members of the Association will give us three dollars for every dollar thus taken, and five subscribers who are white citizens and believe in justice for every colored man put on our list. And I believe this can be done within 90 days and with an expenditure of less than \$5,000.

I do not believe there is any man who can do it but me; and I could not but for a strange combination of circumstances which are partly the result of my unremitting exertion and unyielding faith, and partly the result of concurring conditions over which I had no control.

In order to do this must certainly and readily, I ought to be able to say in the circulars I am about to put out, that a colored man or a company of colored men, were the first to act by taking one half the Promoter's stock, 1,000 shares of \$25. each for \$25,000.

This I am going to say; and it is going to be true to the letter when I do say it, *for I shall hold back white subscribers until it is true, if necessary*  
 I do not care whether one or two, or ten or twenty or a hundred do it; whether they pay it all down or pay \$500, and secure the balance in 30 and 60 days; but it must be done squarely and made reasonably secure. If this is done, three of the seven directors for the first year will be colored men; and if the man who secures this desideratum is a man of good literary ability, character, and is one with whom I can get along with personally, he can be Associate Editor if he desires. As such, he will not be required to leave any business he may now be engaged in for about one year; but should write something every now and then to let the readers get acquainted with

him. After that, it will require his whole time.

Now, whether you can or wish to make such an arrangement or not is purely a matter for you to decide. If you should telegraph me that you would do it, I should act on your statement and say in the circular I am getting ready to send to Cincinnati, to the colored convention there, next Tuesday, that a little group of colored men have taken one-half this stock. If not I shall wait until some one does.

I should be glad to have you come down and stay over Sunday with me, though I never talk business on that day, no matter how pressing it may be. I can give you Saturday evening, however, though I do not know as I could say much more. You might see some thousands of letters each of which has been a grain in the conclusions, I have reached.

Very sincerely yours,