Benzonia, Mich. May 20th 97

Hon A.W. Tourjee

My Dear Judge

I think I wrote you a letter from Va. in 93 or 94 but your poor health & rush of writing caused it to be overlooked. I passed near your home Dec 15 1892 en route to Va. and would have called on you but you had written that you were not sure of being home "about the 15". I spent 3 yrs in Accomac Co. Va. in the oyster business. I raised and marketed nearly 6000 bushels of oysters that cost 11 to 15¢ per bu. and at the price of 92 would have sold for 75¢ to 100 per bus. but because the northern factories were shut down in consequence of tariff agitation & change I only got from 15 to 47¢ per bu. and got nothing for my 3 yrs. work but experience. I learned the oyster business and like it very much. But there was no money in anything there. I told the truckmen & farmers that they cut their own throats in electing Cleveland & his free trade policy. I did not give up my republican principles. The Eastern Sho. was not injured by the armies and has a few Repn citizens. I got acquainted with many of old Gov. Wise's relatives and many old confed. soldiers. The common people say it was the rich men's war but the poor mens fight. The poor whites did the fighting for the rich men's niggers. Most of them are entirely satisfied with the result. Some who were officers have been expatriated are not & should

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I have enjoyed your articles in Inter Ocean for yrs. and read all your books I could get. I congratulate you on your appointment to Bordeaux, and trust you will enjoy the climate & the rest and hope you may be built up for many more years of usefulness. I hope you may not forget the Inter Ocean readers entirely. Your article this week is timely & true. The time may & must come when southern school books & educators will be brought to face unvarnished truth. You remember how at the first of the war the southern papers used to revile Abr.m Lincoln & call him a cot, imbecile &c & the northern copperheads called him a tyrant & our soldiers hirelings. A man who had a file of these papers to show to the southerns & their sympathizers now and courage too, would have lots of fun in stirring up their gall, but his life would be in jeapordy. I told some of them, they need not worry about nigger equality, for they admitted it in their almost universal intercourse with negro women. Some of your satires must have cut them to the quick, but they dont read. They dont want to read both sides. Uncle Tom's Cabin & Fools Errand ought to be sown broad-cast among them. I had the story of Solm Northrup, 12 yrs a slave, with me in Va. and received corroboration some of it from southern persons. Booker T. Wash.n Hampton Institute, Howard College & education in time will bring about better days to the negroes. The whites usually hate to see them get ahead in the world. Caste is powerful as it is unjust & unchristian. (over)

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The statement of these facts of cruelty to slaves & to our prisoners at Andersonville is galling to them but is true. I dont believe in throwing up such things, but they are so touchy about us not holding up the bloody shirt when it is they who do it, that I say truth will come out some day. They were brave for a mistaken cause and brag about it. No fallen cause was ever treated as magnanimously as they were.

I sent you a copy of the Theodore Weld pamphlet "Am slavery as it is" or "testimony of a thousand witnesses" which you have in safe keeping for reference. If you do not wish to take it abroad, I would like it returned or else put in some library where it will do the most good. You are welcome to it as long as you want it. Although almost too busy probably to read this yet I would like an acknowledgement & circular about your books to get some more of them into our Tp. Library.

May God bless you and go with you and may I get to talk with yet some time.

Yours very sincerely

J. W. Van Deman

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