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WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, W. V., August 26, 1863.

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With this explanation, we proceed to give you a candid statement of what we believe to be the sentiment of the Southern people in regard to the subject to which you refer.

What opinion may have prevailed in the past in regard to African slavery, or the right of a State to secede from the Union, we believe we express the almost unanimous judgment of the Southern people when we declare that they consider that those questions were decided by the war, and that it is their intention, in good faith, to abide by that decision. At the close of the war the Southern people laid down their arms and sought to resume their former relations with the United States Government, and they returned to their peaceful pursuits with a sincere purpose to fulfill their duties under the Constitution of the United States which they had sworn to support. If their action in these particulars had been met in a spirit of frankness and cordiality, we believe that these old irritations would have passed away, and the wounds inflicted by the war would in a great measure have been healed. As far as we are advised, the people of the South entertain no unfriendly feeling toward the Government of the United States, but they complain that their rights under the Constitution are withheld from them in the administration thereof.

The idea that the Southern people are hostile to the negroes, and would oppress them if it were in their power to do so is entirely unfounded. They have grown up in our midst, and we have been accustomed from our childhood to look upon them with kindness. The change in the relations of the two races has wrought no change in our feeling toward them. They still constitute the important part of our laboring population. Without their labor the land of the South would be comparatively unproductive. Without the employment which Southern agriculture affords they would be destitute of the means of subsistence, and become paupers, dependent upon public charity.

Self-interest, even if there were no higher motives, would therefore prompt the whites of the South to extend to the negroes care and protection. The important fact that the two races are, under existing circumstances, necessary to each other, is gradually becoming apparent to both; and we believe, but for influences external to stir up the passions of the negroes the relations of the two races would soon adjust themselves on a basis of kindness and advantage.

It is true that the people of the South, together with the people of the North and West, are, for obvious reasons, opposed to any system of laws which would place the political power of the country in the hands of the negro race. But the opposition springs from no feeling of enmity, but from a deep-seated conviction that at present the negroes have neither the intelligence nor the qualifications which are necessary to make them safe depositaries of political power. They would inevitably become the victims of demagogues, who, for selfish purposes, would lead them to the serious injury of the public.

The great want of the South is peace. The people earnestly desire tranquility and the restoration of the Union. They deplore disorder and excitement as the most serious obstacle to their prosperity.

They ask a restoration of the Constitution. They desire relief from oppressive misrule. Above all, they would appeal to their countrymen from the people of the Southern States of that which has just been regarded as the birthright of every American, the right of self-government. Establish these on a firm basis, and we can safely promise that they will faithfully obey the Constitution and laws of the United States, treat the negro with kindness and humanity, and fulfill every duty incumbent upon peaceful citizens loyal to the Constitution of their country.

We believe the above contains a succinct reply to the general topics embraced in your letter, and we venture to say, on behalf of the Southern people and of the officers and soldiers of the late Confederate Army, that they will concur in all the sentiments which we have expressed.

Appreciating the patriotic motives which have prompted your letter, and reciprocating your expressions of kind regard, we have the honor to be, very respectfully and truly,

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