THE FREEDMEN

Work of the Freedmen's Union Commission.

AN INTERESTING REPORT

The following report, just submitted to the Pennsylvania Branch of the American Freedmen's Union Commission, gives a most gratifying view of the progress of the work of educating the freedmen. The increase of the schools under the charge of this Commission, from 50 to 152, speaks lastly of the increasing thirst of the colored people as the South for knowledge:

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MAY, 1869.

When we closed our school last season we had 50 teachers in the field. The freedmen did not contribute towards the support of the schools, and we constantly supplied them with boxes of clothing in answer to earnest appeals for help.

When our teachers returned home for the summer vacation, we ascertained that it was the judgement of the most experienced that to the end of sending down supplies to relieve physical suffering was passed, and that our rule for the future must be that the freedmen must contribute towards the support of the schools, and no clothing be sent. For some time there was constant difficulty, particularly where they had received such assistance, but the decided firmness we have never been compelled to enforce, of withdrawing the school unless they paid their portion of the expense, has had the desired effect, and we find they are more regular, and value the privilege of coming to school more than they did when it was entirely free.

We have had since January 152 teachers working under our Society. The freedmen have contributed largely towards the support of the schools, and we have assisted them in building, and with the assistance of the Freedmen's Bureau, have been enabled to double our schools on less money than we expended last season. In some instances we have only supplied $5 or $10 per month towards the teacher's salary; in others have only furnished books; but in no instance have the freedmen failed to their interest and appreciation of the blessings conferred upon them by their Northern friends. Every month more of them are going out from our Normal Schools to teach their people the instruction they have just received.

Everywhere Sunday Schools are an important item in the work, and through the generosity of our friends, Testaments and other books have been enabled to supply them with bibles, tracts, hymns, &c. The demand for the Sunday Schools was unavoidably delayed, and in that department we have not accomplished as much as we wished, but in the main the work of elevating the freedmen from paupers to self-supporting citizens we to likewise have met with flattering tions. What was begun last October as an experiment! we can now look upon as a success. They do value the schools, and are willing to work and sacrifice money, comfort in some instances, and appear anxious to improve the opportunity now offered them of an easy education.

On last Sunday a class of thirteen children of from ten to fourteen years of age opened Sunday School by reading from the 14th to the 18th verse of that precious treasure you sent us in our box, "Christ's Sermon on the Mount." Among the "Blessed are the poor in spirit." When I came here, little more than three months ago, I found these children pouting over their spelling lesson now, by the blessing of God, they can read for themselves the teachings of that blessed volume.

My school now numbers seventy-eight, and an average daily attendance of forty-five. I open nine hours daily, six in the day school and three at night.

And now, in conclusion, permit me to offer Holy Thirty Dollars, to be used as you see with heartfelt thanks, and the assurance that our daily prayer is that He who doeth not his sparrow fall to the ground will bless His notice will reward them, and that we may come with His eternal.

With every sentiment of gratitude for your devotion to our cause, I am respectfully yours,

DILLIN GORDON, C. C.

Miss Landon, at St. Helena, S. C., writes, May 1, 1869:

My schools continued by work to be irregular in their attendance, yet their interest seems unabated, and many, after their regular hours, tell me they run all the way (four or five miles), being in such a hurry to get to school.

The Christmas hymns were received, for which many thanks. Our scholars have been learning "O, little town of Bethlehem!" now beautiful list! Our Christmas hymns will be most useful in Sunday school. I shall try in some way to get a library and music book for our day school next year.

I have just received two barrels of good, substantial clothing from friends in Vermont, to distribute at my discretion. There are several mamas of calico, muslin, &c.; two dozen spools of cotton, needles and pins—all for the girls to learn to sew upon. Work is scarce, and we encouraged in being fed and clothed who can in any way take care of themselves, and all the children are most anxious to learn. I shall find something for them to do, whether it is anything I really want done or not. They are so willing they are earning what they receive, and I intend, as far as I can, they shall get it honestly. I want to earn their own living is the best and the only way to get along in life. Hoping to hear from you very soon,

Very truly, yours, S. M. LANDON.

From a letter of the Rev. Robert Marlin, who was a slave until freed by the Emancipation Proclamation:

LEXINGTON, K. C., March 18, 1869.—Since I last wrote to you, I am truly glad to say, I have on my school-roll upwards of one hundred scholars in a day that I don't have from two to three applicants. One day last week a very old white friend came by my school-house and said, he knew if I could not teach his children, as he was very poor and nasty, and could not get his children educated. Mrs. Jackson, my heart was moved with compassion for the poor white man, thought what the Master said, "The last should be first, and the first should be last." I told him, in answer, that my school was so very large that it would be impossible for me to teach his children.

I have three sessions a day, and you know my hands are full all the time. The children are now on dismiss. My friends, I am in the cause of the Commission. Your young,

BOURNE F. MARTIN.

From Miss Martha Schofield, at Aiken, S. C., who is assisted by Miss Mary Verbryke:

We send the monthly report, which three will find inclosed. It is very gratifying to us that the attendance diminishes so little, although it is now the hottest season of the year, and the labor of the children would be of great benefit to their parents.

Our visitors have been numerous from all parts of the country except the *Southerners of Aiken*. Many of them made contributions to our school, which enabled us to have a very pleasant and profitable May day exhibition last Saturday. We sent to Charleston for candy, ordered cakes and bread here, and that morning Miss Taylor and self used over one hundred loaves in making sandwiches. At 11 o'clock about 180 children formed in procession, and we marched to a shady oak grove, singing on the way, and happy as young lambs deserved to be. They amused themselves playing, talking and having a good time, till the bell summoned them to form one large ring; then sitting down on the ground until we helped each child to a sandwich, which could hardly be called anything else, and candy for dessert. It was a novel sight, and the white visitors seemed to enjoy it greatly. At three o'clock the exercises began—singing, reading, spelling, arithmetic, geography, &c. Interspersed with pieces, dialogues, &c. Nearly all of their parents were there. As it was to interest them and show what their children could do, they, too, shared the dinner. Nice baker's bread is really swallowed by throats mostly used to corn meal.

It was a day long to be remembered, so full of happiness to them and so also, although our fatigue was sufficient to make us glad to ride home with some of the boys in a fine new car. This of course was the event of the last two weeks, although the pleasure received from them was out of school hours. Wish some of you could have enjoyed it with us.

I propose returning here in the fall, and so long as you will keep me, instead holding the same position under the honored Branch, which I hope to represent. Four years I have not lessened my interest or created a single desire to quit the field while there is any need of work and so great an opportunity for usefulness. It is painful to see so many teachers sent under our Branch—hope they all enjoy it as we do.

With kind regards from both, I remain, M. SCHOFIELD.

Letters from some of the children in the Maryland schools:

OAKVILLE, St. Mary's county, Md., *Dear Friends in Philadelphia*—I am truly thankful to you and the friends for the presents you sent me, but I must say that I am most thankful for the good you have done us by sending us teachers and exciting school-houses for us. We cannot tell how much good it has done, and it will do us not only the colored people, but it has done the white people good. Sometimes the white people come and see the white children title. They say: "Oh! why are you not as school? Why can't you do as well as the white? Why can't you get ahead of you?" So we have to answer the question ourselves. We learn themselves. Our schools are getting on finely, and everybody is delighted with the school-house. I have gone to school, whenever the school was open, and I have learned a great deal. I hope to see you, if you will see my writings. When I first started for school, some of the white people said, "If ever I set my foot in the school I will be killed;" but God took care of us. The prejudice is wearing out a great deal. Some of the white people are now coming to our school. We have a very large school, and when you have done your duty, you will see the good work here on earth, may He take you all home to Heaven with Him forever, is my prayer.

I remain, truly, your friend, GUSTAVES BROWN.

Please correct all my mistakes; I write in a great hurry.

From his Mother:

My Dear Friend—I am happy to write you a few lines to thank you up North for what you all have done for me and my children. They have been going to school ever since the school was opened. My children are I would think when they went to school they would be killed before they would let them go, the rebels, but God took care of them, and now all of my children can read and write. Where can I find for this? The friends up North who have sent the teachers down here to teach the poor people. The white people of the South would not have done so. Please remember me to them, thank God, the day has come now, and I have lived to see it. I am not able to write, but I learned how to read the Bible. What a great thing it is to me to read the Bible, and sing on the Sabbath School! I can take my Bible in my hand and read the laws of my God. I thank God for all my children can read. Where can I find for this? The friends up North for all they have done for me and my children. Be kind to the people. The white people of the South would not have done so. Please remember me to them, thank God, the day has come now, and I have lived to see it. I am not able to write, but I learned how to read the Bible. What a great thing it is to me to read the Bible, and sing on the Sabbath School! I can take my Bible in my hand and read the laws of my God. I thank God for all my children can read. Up North. And now I will thank all the friends up North for all they have done for me, and pray that God will take care of them, and at last, when you all are done your work here, that you may be all ready to come to rest in Heaven at God's right hand, there to live with Him forever. I must close my letter, by remaining your friend,

SARAH ANNA BROWN.

Another one writes: "We want to send you all some present this summer, if we live. If my mamy lives to fall we want to dry some and send them out to you all. We feel ourselves indebted to you for the good you have done to us turn you all something for your kindness to all of us."

In reviewing our year's work we must humbly and earnestly present it to our country and to God as one of the most cheering and hopeful opportunity now offered them of an easy education.

On last Sunday a class of thirteen children of from ten to fourteen years of age opened Sunday School by reading from the 14th to the 18th verse of that precious treasure you sent us in our box, "Christ's Sermon on the Mount." Among the "Blessed are the poor in spirit." When I came here, little more than three months ago, I found these children pouting over their spelling lesson now, by the blessing of God, they can read for themselves the teachings of that blessed volume.

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