

they consider religious and distinguish between them and such problems as are ethical, or philosophical, or psychological, or historical. Religion should not be another name for a fog. Too many men of science are willing to treat religion—or avoid it—as if it were just that, another name for a fog. Intellectual honesty, clear thinking and the desire to combat cynicism and pessimism in the young should unite to produce a truly scientific attitude toward religion and a scientific method of dealing with its proper and special problems.

## A KNIGHT-ERRANT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE GULF

EPISODE IN THE LIFE OF EDWIN MILLER WHEELOCK

BY CHARLES KASSEL

**I**N earlier issues of the present magazine, we followed the career of the author of *Proteus* from his Harvard days as a student of law and theology, in the middle years of the last century, to his appointment as Deputy Superintendent of Negro Labor with the Northern armies at New Orleans on February 20th, 1863.

The interval had been filled with experiences of a noteworthy character. His pulpit at Dover, New Hampshire, largely influenced by the teachings of Theodore Parker, had been dedicated to a gospel unusually liberal, for that time, even in the case of a Unitarian ministry, and his deliverances upon negro slavery had been as vigorous and outspoken as any word of Parker himself.

The raid at Harper's Ferry, with the execution of John Brown, had evoked from the lips of the young minister as remarkable an utterance as can be found in the literature of that crisis, tracing in bold outline, with unerring finger, the course of events to follow. When, at last, the emancipation proclamation of President Lincoln bound the North definitely and irrevocably to the cause of negro freedom, he saw the fulfilment of his cherished hopes, and from

that time onward he was no longer a mere preacher of heroic conduct but he was a soldier in the ranks, sharing literally the duty and danger of the great adventure.

Hitherto his contributions to all subjects with which he had dealt had been purely intellectual. Musing over the pages of *Proteus*, and of the companion pieces in the same strain and style which appeared in the February issue, 1920, and July issue, 1922, of *The Open Court*, the casual reader might easily recognize that the author was a scholar and thinker, with philosophic and poetic gifts of a high order, but it would never suggest itself that a nature so contemplative could possess also the fiery qualities of the crusader, fitting him for an impressive role as the champion of freedom.

The installments of the present biography, published in the February and July issues, 1922, the March, August, and December issues, 1923, the March and July issues, 1924, and the April issue, 1925, have sufficiently revealed the utter devotion of Edwin Miller Wheelock to the thought of the national redemption from the stain of human slavery. Others, however, had spoken with equal earnestness and equal eloquence and only with less exact insight into the nature of the strange and striking events awaiting their turn on the stage of action. Even the passionate feeling of our minister that the whole crisis was a gesture of Providence in a divinely-ordered plan for the nation's good was not alien to other breasts. The rare and unique thing was that a prophet of an event, exchanging the pulpit for the soldier's tent, should find it given into his hands to aid so signally in the fulfilment of his own prediction.

It was, in fact, one of the romantic things in which the history of the period abounds. That an abolitionist preacher, setting forth at a distance of several thousand miles, a body of principles with regard to an enslaved and dependent population should, by a singular turn of fate, become the instrument for applying those principles on the ground was something almost bizarre. It was sufficiently extraordinary that the task should be doing at all but that it should be doing by a Northern anti-slavery clergyman, whose very presence on the soil two years before might have been the signal for a hanging, smacked of the unreal. He might have been pictured to the imagination of Northern children as a mailed knight, like those of old, faring with his armed followers through a hostile land to right the wrongs of an oppressed and broken race.

Southern thought in these sober days looks back kindly and even sympathetically upon such incidents in the great struggle. They

bear the impress of a generous enthusiasm which all men respect and they stand far apart from those acts of military desolation during the war, and oppression after its close, which even yet rankle in Southern bosoms.

It was during the winter of 1861-62 that the national government definitely resolved upon the conquest of Mobile, New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Galveston, if special military effort could accomplish the result, and in the plan was embraced the acquisition of the lower Mississippi in general and of Texas. The Department of the Gulf, which is to figure prominently in this biography during the ensuing chapters, was created to embrace all these points and Benjamin F. Butler was named the first Commanding General.

New Orleans, the emporium of Southern commerce, and the radiating center of tremendous influences favorable to the Confederacy, was taken in a celebrated exploit. David Glasgow Farragut, a naval captain unknown to fame, bound to the South by birth and strong family ties, sailed with a Federal fleet for New Orleans when the expedition against that place was organized. The city had known him as an obscure youth, wandering with eager eyes its busy streets, and it is a striking commentary upon the romance of history that this unknown boy was one day to stand as a conqueror before its gates with its people and its property wholly at his mercy.

Behind the shelter of its powerful forts New Orleans had pursued the even tenor of its way, dreaming itself impregnable to attack. The designs of the Federal government were not unknown, but in 1815, it was recalled, the British had been unable to pass a single fort on the Mississippi, and the idea was flouted that what the British had failed to do in that early day the Federals could accomplish now that the forts had been so greatly strengthened. What actually happened was the bitterest disillusion, perhaps, on the part of the South, throughout the whole course of the war, and the blow was a vital one for it led to the surrender of the Confederate fleet in Mobile Bay and at length to the fall of Mobile.

Says Alece Fortier, Professor of Romance Languages at Tulane University, in his interesting *History of Louisiana*:

"Farragut was on his way. He silenced easily the Chalmette batteries on either side of the river and reached New Orleans on April 25th. He had accomplished one of the most wonderful feats that history mentions, passing two strong forts and immediately after destroying a hostile fleet. By his capture of New Orleans

Farragut acquired a renown that has placed him on a level with the greatest naval commanders."

On May 1st, 1862, Captain Farragut delivered the control of the city to General Butler, and between that date and the displacement of Butler by Banks in December, New Orleans lay prostrate and helpless, suffering such humiliation and indignity as came to no other spot in all the South. The controversy which centered about Butler and his deeds in his own day raged for many years and the flattering, almost worshipful attitude reflected in the intensely interesting but hopelessly partisan, *General Butler at New Orleans*, by James Parton, published originally in 1863, is found now and then in the historic literature of calmer and soberer days. Large deductions must be made from the blindly partial account of the brilliant Parton, but it is impossible, nonetheless, to follow the story of these months without the feeling that, though ill-fitted to be a conqueror, as even the Northern historians admit, General Butler was a man of real ability. He reached for his ends with the directness of a Cromwell and the efficiency of his administration is shown most convincingly by his rescue of New Orleans from the scourge of yellow fever, which almost annually before had made the place a charnel-house.

Among the acts of Butler during his command of the Gulf Department was one which served as a harbinger of important Federal activities in a direction highly interesting to us. The slaves had not yet been freed but General Butler had been accustomed to regard the negroes as contraband of war. As runaway slaves, therefore, gathered about his camps in increasing numbers he determined upon their status as enemy property useful in war which had come under Federal control and made the first approach toward the solution of a problem destined to loom ever larger by putting the "contrabands" to work under regulations looking to their well-being and just compensation. This was the germ of what under the administration of Banks was to stir up a hornet's nest in the abolition centers of the North and East.

It was late in 1862 that General Nathaniel P. Banks, then in command of the defenses of the city of Washington, was quietly placed in charge of a strong expedition secretly forming for important work at New Orleans and which from the name of its commander has become known as the Banks' Expedition. Of this expedition the regiment of which our own minister was chaplain formed a part. Preceding the great body of his army, Banks

arrived at New Orleans about the middle of December, relieving General Butler, whose removal had been determined upon at Washington, and by February 20th, when, as we have seen, our chaplain was detailed as Deputy Superintendent of Negro Labor, the new Commanding General had become fairly familiar with the situation confronting him and was ready to lay a firm hand upon the problems that pressed for solution.

But a few weeks, however, had intervened between the removal of General Butler and the effective date of the Emancipation Proclamation, and the New Year, which should see the negro slave freed for all time, found General Banks newly placed in the Department. It would have been difficult in any event under such circumstances, and upon such short notice, to formulate a policy for dealing with the slaves, but the problem was complicated in the case of General Banks by the inheritance of ill-feeling which Butler had bequeathed to him. The hanging of Mumford, the odious "woman order," the shackling and imprisonment of Southern men and women, had made the Federal soldier an object of peculiar hatred at New Orleans, and the obloquy with which the Northern name was thus invested made it the more difficult to deal adequately and justly with the sphynx-like problem of slave labor.

Through the genius of Farragut and the military efforts of Butler thirteen parishes in Louisiana, including that in which New Orleans was situated, had become territory of the United States on January 1st, 1863, when the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect, and as the immediate design of the Proclamation was to free the slaves in those areas controlled by the Confederacy, and as it was prudent to preserve the status of the act of emancipation as being purely a military measure, it was expressly provided that these parishes of Louisiana were to be exempt from its operation.

The result was a situation altogether unique but as troublesome and distressing as it was unusual. The military were forbidden to restore runaway slaves, whether in loyal or Confederate territory, and yet no measure had been devised at Washington for disposing of the refugees who left the plantations in hordes and besieged the Federal army posts. Of these the number was constantly increasing. From every quarter of the compass the blacks came, men, women and children, until the task of caring for their needs became one of almost insuperable difficulty. Meanwhile the plantations were threatened with ruin and the problem of preserving the crops seemed impossible to solve.

To compel the return of the negroes to the plantations under their old masters was out of the question. Had the inclination existed for such a step there was no power in the Commanding General to adopt and enforce it. To force the negroes into other work under the supervision of the military was no less unauthorized, since they were no part of the army of occupation and were not even regarded as part of the conquered population. Nor could they be told to shift for themselves, since they were not enfranchised as were the slaves in disloyal territory, and to turn them loose upon their own resources among a prostrate and starving people was utterly unthinkable.

It was apparent to General Banks that something must speedily be done. The numbers of the refugee blacks had grown until vice and disease were stalking in their midst and death was cutting them down at a frightful rate. There was little time, therefore, for searching out of methods and none at all for considerations of policy. Seizing upon the plan, therefore, of which the germ had been supplied by Butler, General Banks perfected a temporary agreement with the planters for compensating such laborers as could be induced to return to the plantations for the coming season under a system of military supervision which, as was hoped, would adequately safeguard the well-being of the negro while saving to the region its priceless harvests.

The plan was intended merely to bridge over the crop season of 1863, leaving the problem in its larger aspects for future solution. It was a measure of expediency, and while received with some misgiving here and there in army circles, no murmur of protest was heard. The more elaborate plan which became known later as the Labor System of General Banks was promulgated under a celebrated general order in the following year, and it was with this latter system that our own minister was more conspicuously associated. His appointment as Deputy Superintendent of Negro Labor early in 1863 had to do with the temporary and experimental arrangement for the crop season of 1863, and it was with that preliminary phase of the subject also that another name was associated which must engage our attention for a brief space.

George H. Hepworth belonged to an order of men often found in important epochs of history. Though by no means a thinker, and lacking the qualities of character which truly heroic natures possess, he had attained by dint of restless energy and a ready gift of speech to no unimportant station in life. Born in 1833, and therefore four

years the junior of our minister, he became in 1858 the pastor of the Church of the Unity at Boston—a Unitarian organization—retaining his connection with that church until 1870 when he took the pastorate of the Church of the Messiah in New York City, likewise a Unitarian body, and in 1873 left that church, announcing that he was no longer a believer in Unitarian doctrine and that he had become a convert to the orthodox Christian conception of the birth and nature of Jesus. He immediately organized an independent congregation known as “The Church of the Disciples,” which, however, he left in turn, several years later, to engage in journalistic work. He died in 1902.

It is evident that in the character and mentality of George H. Hepworth there was little depth. He thought largely upon the surface of things and his life was governed more by impulse than reason. Of his powers as a preacher no worthy memorials remain and the like is true of his literary and journalistic efforts. He attained a brief note in his day, but the measure of the man seems rightly drawn by the editor of Harper’s Magazine for October, 1870, who, in reviewing a small volume of sermons by this minister, remarked that the discourses were “without moral power.” He was not in truth a preacher. The attraction of the Unitarian church for him sprang chiefly from the Unitarian affiliation of so many of New England’s literary men. He was a journalist by instinct and in that direction his talents lay.

In November, 1862, pastor Hepworth sought and obtained from his congregation a leave of absence for nine months that he might accept the chaplaincy of the Forty-seventh Massachusetts Volunteers, which had been recruited originally to serve under General Banks in defense of the City of Washington but which had been diverted to the use of the same commander in the Gulf Department when the secret expedition was organized of which we have already spoken. This regiment embarked December 21, 1862, and arrived at New Orleans on New Year’s Day following.

The chaplaincy of this regiment Hepworth retained for a few weeks after its arrival at New Orleans, and then, feeling a desire for a position of larger scope, he appealed to General Banks, an old acquaintance one infers, who gave him a commission in the Fourth Louisiana Native Guards, a negro regiment, and detailed him as aide-de-camp.

In the thirteen parishes exempt from the operation of the Emancipation Proclamation the problem of protecting the negroes on the

plantations was, as we have seen, pressing upon the attention of the Commanding General, and he accordingly deputed ex-chaplain Hepworth to visit the plantations and report upon the treatment of the negroes and upon ways and means of meeting the problem which arose from the relation of the planters and their laborers under the military rule of that territory. It was in connection with that mission that our own minister was appointed deputy.

The venture was not of long life so far as concerned Superintendent Hepworth's connection with the work. He returned after a few months to his pastorate in Boston, using the material he had amassed, traveling as he did with notebook constantly in hand, to launch a series of war lectures and to give forth a book called *Whip, Hoar, and Sword; or the Gulf Department in '63*, to which we shall have occasion to refer at length.

The connection of George H. Hepworth with the work of negro relief in Louisiana was not calculated to prepossess the extreme abolitionists in favor of General Banks' measures. He was distinctly in bad odor with the abolitionist reformers. John Brown was now a name to conjure with, but when a meeting was called to be held at Tremont Temple, November 19, 1859, very shortly after the arrest of Brown, at which were announced to speak John A. Andrew, subsequently Governor of Massachusetts, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Rev. Jacob Manning of the old South Church, and Wendall Phillips, Hepworth, who was also to have spoken, "ignobly retracted his promise to be present," so the *Liberator* of November 25, 1859, reports, and couched his refusal in a condemnatory tone "to the equal disgust and contempt of those present." The incident is dealt with at page 59 of Susan Hayes Ward's, *George H. Hepworth*, published by E. P. Dutton & Co., in 1903, where the card of explanation appears published by him on the morning of the 19th and the extracts from his Thanksgiving Day sermon—all calculated to deepen the discredit in which he found himself when the nation came to occupy, as our own minister predicted would be the case, the very ground on which John Brown had planted himself in his crusade at Harper's Ferry.

George H. Hepworth was a man of generous impulses when they were not overshadowed by his love of distinction and public applause, but he had nothing of the prophet's ken and the prophet's self-abnegation, and those sublime intuitions which come to a lofty spiritual nature he could never claim. He had read very poorly indeed the signs of the times and the awkward position into which



his fears had betrayed him when he disappointed the public at the John Brown meeting was a continuous taunt and pointing of the finger on the part of the abolitionists. It was to redeem himself, in some measure, as seems likely, from this discredit, that he asked for the leave of absence and took up the chaplaincy of the Forty-seventh Massachusetts, and so assiduously devoted himself, after his return, to war-work.

A confusion difficult to resolve with the data available appears to surround the respective connections of George H. Hepworth and our own minister with the preliminary experiment of General Banks upon the subject of negro labor. In *Whip, Hoe, and Sword*, the inference is conveyed that the conduct of the enterprise had been confided into the hands of the author of that work, and in Ward's *George H. Hepworth*, page 74, the claim is made that the execution of the plan was committed to Lieutenant Hepworth and Adjutant Eli C. Kingsley of the Forty-seventh Massachusetts. In the report of the first month's work, appearing at page 75 of the biography by Ward, Hepworth claims sole responsibility for the outcome of the venture. The appointment of Chaplain Wheelock as "Deputy Superintendent" would suggest that Lieutenant Hepworth had not been given such a task to perform single-handed and alone. The exact language of the order of General Banks, moreover, appointed "E. M. Wheelock as one of the superintendents of negro education and labor in this department," as quoted in a communication of our own minister to which we shall have occasion later to refer, and in a letter of General Banks published in the *Liberator* on February 24, 1865, the statement is made that he employed "Rev. G. H. Hepworth, the chaplain of one of the Boston regiments and Rev. E. M. Wheelock, commissioning them as Lieutenants in Corps d'Afrique that they might have authority to visit and investigate."

Just what were the relative positions toward one another of the two chaplains at the outset of the work may be difficult to decide. The matter is one merely of incidental interest since between the two gentlemen themselves no shadow of controversy or suggestion of conflicting authority ever arose. The question, moreover, is not of special importance, since, as we have explained, the phase of the enterprise with which Lieutenant Hepworth was connected represented merely the early period of its history when the commanding general was feeling his way toward definite conclusions, and no need would exist even for this passing reference to the subject were it not that in the biography of Hepworth by Susan Hayes Ward the

author associates the name of her hero with the Labor System of General Banks in a manner to suggest that the destiny of the entire enterprise throughout all its history had been lodged in his hands, and omits to say that his labors in that work were confined to the first few months of its history and that the Department of the Gulf had ceased to know him long before the enterprise had taken on the proportions and importance which made it the subject of discussion and controversy.

At page 75 of Ward's work, as we have seen, appears what is described as "The report of Mr. Hepworth's First Month's Work"—a highly interesting document addressed to General Banks from which we shall quote at length shortly—and this report bears date the 24th of March, 1863, thus linking up with Mr. Wheelock's appointment as Deputy Superintendent on February 20, 1863, a few days more than a month preceding. In the letter from General Banks in an earlier paragraph, the date of the organization of the work is given as January 30, 1863, and the appointment of Chaplains Hepworth and Wheelock is referred to as having been subsequently made.

About January 17th, Mr. Wheelock had been ordered to Concord, New Hampshire, on business for his regiment, as disclosed by the original furlough among his papers, and, as appears from the original letter of the Adjutant General's office of the State of New Hampshire, he reported at State Headquarters on February 3rd, and was instructed to return to his regiment within thirty days from that date. His appointment as Deputy Superintendent of Negro Labor on February 20th suggests that he may have reached New Orleans by that date, but his return in any event could not have been delayed beyond March 3rd under the terms of his furlough and in "the first month's work" embraced in the report of Lieutenant Hepworth our subject must very largely have shared.

Such being the case, it is matter for surprise that no mention is made by Mr. Hepworth in this report of the share of his co-adjutor. Nor does the official biography of Hepworth do better, although there Mr. Wheelock is referred to as having been "an assistant" in the work and by that much improves upon the ungenerous silence of Hepworth. The same sin of omission characterizes *Whip, Hoe, and Sword*, descriptive of the experiences encountered in these labors. For scores of pages the author descants upon his adventures and dangers without so much as the mention of our minister's name and nowhere in the work is the official connection of Mr.

Wheelock with the work referred to. One might have inferred, indeed, that the labors and dangers described by Hepworth he had performed and encountered unaided and alone were it not for the parenthetical explanation in an inconspicuous place in the work, "When I say *I*, I mean *we*, for my friend Wheelock shared these luminous experiences."

The biographer of Hepworth might claim the excuse of ignorance, since her book bears manifest evidence of the haste with which it was put together. The very omission of any reference to the after-history of the Labor System, with which our minister was so conspicuously associated, is a sufficient token of the writer's unfamiliarity with the subject, and the mention of Mr. Wheelock at page 80 as "the chaplain of a *Vermont* regiment" proves the inattention of the author of that work to historic details. For Chaplain Hepworth himself there is not the excuse of ignorance. This deliberate exclusion of his friend and helper from conspicuous mention sprang from the vanity and self-importance of the man. It is a just retribution that his book, while enjoying an ephemeral and doubtless profitable popularity in its day, faded quickly out of public notice, and even in the more exhaustive bibliographies covering the literatures of the period, mention of the book is rarely found. In the clash, of opinion, moreover, during 1864-65, when the Labor System of General Banks was under a raging fire of criticism, it was to our minister's words and not to those of George H. Hepworth that reference was currently made.

Thus much prefaced for the sake of historic justice, we may quote the report of Lieutenant Hepworth of the first month's work for negro relief in the Department of the Gulf—a report interesting in itself and which gives an excellent sidelight upon the difficulties confronting the military command in Louisiana.

"In obedience to your request I have attempted to carry into effect your plan respecting the relation between the planters and the negroes. I have visited every Provost Marshal between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, and ascertained, with some degree of accuracy, the facts concerning the fugitive negroes in this Department. As I feared would be the case, I found their condition to be most deplorable. Indeed, so bad was it that I am sure it would have been the cause of some dreadful epidemic had no remedy been provided. The negroes have been crowding within our lines every day in every possible state of destitution. Some have brought bundles on their heads containing their little all, but most have come

with nothing but what they wore. It has been quite impossible to furnish them all with proper places to live in, so they have been allowed to build huts for themselves or to occupy certain deserted houses while rations have been served upon which they have subsisted.

“Still the necessary change in their mode of living, and the habits, arising partly from their idleness and partly from their proximity to our camp, which have been contracted have already begun to exhibit fatal results. It is not only clearly an act of humanity but also a positive necessity for Government to provide some remedy for this alarmingly increasing evil.

“At your suggestion, I carried into effect the proposition which you made to the planters by which you promise to use all legitimate measures to induce the negro to return to his plantation and secure his services for the planter during the coming season on condition that the planter would bind himself to pay the negro a stipulated sum per month, to treat him properly and to feed and clothe him, the planter punishing the negro only through the military authorities and the negro having redress for any actual wrong through the same tribunal. I confess that I, at first, entertained serious misgiving as to the practical value of the plan. I feared to give any inducement to the negro to return to his plantation for very obvious reasons.

“I did not at first see how he could be properly protected nor did I understand how the proposition could be carried out in good faith by either party. I feared, moreover, that the negro would get the impression that the Government is unfriendly to him and unwilling to help him in his efforts to be free. It seemed to me that in carrying out the plan I might seem to be thrusting back into slavery a man who had proved his desire for freedom by running away from his master and his home.

“Determined, however, to put the matter to its practical test, and trusting more to your sagacity and reputation as a humane man than to mine own inexperience, I went to Thibodeaux to commence the work. I found there some five hundred negroes, most of whom were in a state of great excitement. They were huddled together in a few rude huts of their own construction with no floors and a roof open to every shower. A few of the men had found work on the roads or the levee. Some of the women were earning a few picayunes by washing for the soldiers but most were living in necessary idleness and getting into bad ways.

"I had them called together and told them that the Government was friendly to them but that it expected them to work for a living. I assured them that they would be protected against any of the outrages of which they complained and then asked if they were willing to return to their plantations. They told me that they did not wish to live in idleness: that they would be glad to go to work. None of them showed any reluctance to go upon some Government plantation though all showed a great unwillingness to return to their old masters. I again assured them that they should be treated in every respect as hired hands and then found that nearly all cheerfully assented to my proposition.

"To my great regret I found an alarming mortality among the children caused by the unfavorable locations which had been chosen for their huts and by their mode of living.

"I then visited Napoleonville where I found that forty-seven planters had already entered into the arrangement and that the plan promised good results both for the planter and the negro. In no case has any compulsion been used. The negro was strictly told that he must either work upon the plantations for a given sum as wages or upon the levee and roads for his rations only.

"From Napoleonville I went to Donaldsville and thence to Baton Rouge. At the latter place, I found about twelve hundred negroes who, though everything was done for their comfort which was practicable, were in a deplorable condition. They seemed to live in a sort of community regardless of the laws of virtue and cleanliness. I was informed by the Superintendent that he has had under his charge an average of about a thousand and that since December last one hundred and seventy-two have died. This terrible percentage of mortality proves conclusively that some measures must be taken at once to change their condition. If left to themselves they will inevitably breed pestilence. I telegraphed to Lieutenant Hanks who will see that most of them are placed upon Government plantations.

"Having accomplished this much, I determined to visit the plantations to which the negroes had returned, to hold conference with the planters and negroes and thus ascertain the real merits of the plan. I have visited some sixty to seventy plantations, remaining upon each one a sufficient time, and I have to say that all my doubts have fled. I am confident that the plan is not only satisfactory for the planter and the negro but also it really affords the black man an experience which will do much to fit him for the freedom for which he is destined if the war continues. It insures a crop for the com-

ing season; it saves the Government the expense of feeding the negro; and by remunerating him for his labor it teaches him the use of money and the value of his services. It, moreover, takes a peculiar sting from slavery by its tendency to elevate the black man to the position of the white laborer. As you have yourself very happily expressed it, it gives the slave his future. He is vastly more comfortable in his plantation hut with his family about him and protected by the Government than he can possibly be in any position which we can afford him while the war continues.

"I think the negro understands this himself. I have talked with several thousand and I find them far more intelligent and better aware of the position of affairs than I have been led to expect. I have no doubt that the negroes in this Department, reposing confidence in the Government, will remain cheerfully upon the plantations during the present season, trusting in Providence for that future of freedom to which I know they are all looking.

"I hope you will allow me to conclude by saying that our country should be grateful to you for this humane movement. I am sure that if the plan is carried out in the spirit and with the largeness of view with which it was conceived, the black man, nominally a slave today as much as ever, in the parishes of this Department, will have as great facilities offered himself or fitting himself for freedom as are offered in any other part of our country.

"Thanking you for the confidence you have reposed in me by allowing me the honor of putting the plan to its practical test, I remain, your obedient servant, George H. Hepworth."

This report abundantly shows that the work under way was concerned chiefly with the agricultural needs of the region during the current crop year. The matter of negro education, which was of surpassing importance, is without mention in the report, for that great and difficult work awaited an abler and more patient head and hand in the following year.