

EDUCATING THE SLAVE—A FORGOTTEN CHAPTER OF CIVIL WAR HISTORY

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IN the installment of the biography of Edwin Miller Wheelock which appeared in the November issue, 1926, of the *Open Court*, we followed the subject of our narrative, and his associate in the supervision of negro labor under General Banks during the crop season of 1863, in their unique journeys of inspection through the plantations, the account ending as Vicksburg and Port Hudson fell and the opening of the Mississippi divided the Confederacy into two parts. The story of those momentous episodes in the terrific struggle had occupied the installment in the March number, 1926, and in the issues of February and July, 1922, March, August and September, 1923, March and July, 1924, and April and September, 1925, we had led up to those surpassingly interesting events, carrying the recital through the anti-slavery agitation and the early years of the Civil War to the emancipation of the slaves by the proclamation of President Lincoln.

With the grandiose plan for cutting the Confederacy in twain fully consummated, the military command in the Department of the Gulf could turn its attention whole-heartedly to pressing internal problems. A comprehensive scheme for the management of plantation labor was evolved, which will form the subject of the next chapter of this biography, and there was put into effect—for the first time we believe, in any age, under such circumstances—a humane experiment for the enlightenment of the enfranchised negro slaves. It is this last experiment, rich with human interest, and with which the name of our minister is intimately bound up, that must engage us chiefly in the present installment. It is a story which well deserves to be perpetuated but which our annals have left almost wholly unchronicled, and upon which even the histories of education in Louisi-

ana—so far, at least, as those works have been accessible to the present writer—are regrettably silent.

With the fall of Port Hudson and the removal of the Confederate menace to the lower Mississippi, the dramatic and spectacular fade from the history of the Department of the Gulf, and with the dramatic and spectacular there fades out also the figure of Geo. H. Hepworth, who now returned to his home and pulpit in Boston that he might exploit by books and lectures his first-hand knowledge of the exciting episodes in the conquest of the Mississippi.

In December, 1864, it is true, Hepworth's name flares up like a dying ember in our record, for we find among the loose papers of our subject the original of a petition in Hepworth's heavy hand, addressed to the Commanding General of the Department of the Gulf, suggesting the "detail" of our minister to the pastorship of the Unitarian church at New Orleans. The Unitarian ministers who signed the petition—thirty-three in number, including no less a personage than Edward Everett Hale—had learned, as we read, of "a movement for the reorganization of the religious societies of New Orleans on the basis of loyalty to the United States Government", and as they believed the meager congregation then worshipping in the Unitarian church would make no effort to re-establish the society upon its ancient foundations because of prejudices of a purely political character, notwithstanding there were a sufficient number of Unitarians in New Orleans to form an influential society, these gentlemen urged the designation of some "chaplain or other officer belonging to our denomination to labor in this providential field." The signers expressed the belief that the movement would be of "great practical benefit to the community in the development of Union sentiment", and they suggested the name of our minister as that "of a man in whom we have full confidence".

It is a safe inference that this petition was not prepared with the knowledge of him whom it chiefly concerned, and as nothing came of the movement we may conclude that the petition was never presented and remained among the papers of Mr. Wheelock merely as a testimonial of the esteem in which he was held by the Unitarian ministers of New England.

The place of Geo. H. Hepworth as an associate of our minister in work for the negro was taken by an individual of very different character and we stay the current of our story long enough for a swift glance at the life of this capable and eminently worthy man.

Born at Newton, Pennsylvania, in 1816, thirteen years before our minister, Benjamin Rush Plumly was named for that Benjamin Rush who had in 1775, with Benjamin Franklin, established the first society for the abolition of slavery in America, and his name-sake in the nineteenth century was, therefore, dedicated from before his birth, by the anti-slavery feeling of his parents, to the great cause.

Early associated with William Lloyd Garrison in the abolition movement, Plumly devoted himself likewise during the period before the war to literary pursuits, contributing prose and poetical sketches to the magazines. A narrative poem called *Abdel Hassan* which appeared in the January issue, 1860, of the *Atlantic Monthly*, is a sufficient proof of his noble imagination and exquisite gift of expression. When the Civil War broke out he obtained a place on the staff of General John C. Fremont, whose consistent friend in the latter's troubles he remained, as appears from the interesting account found in James Ford Rhodes' *History of the United States*, volume 3, page 479. Later, he served on the staff of General Banks at New Orleans, and it was in that connection our chaplain came into touch with him, although Bank's control of the Gulf Department ended when he was relieved of command in May, 1864, and Major Plumly continued under Bank's successors to render conspicuously useful service. After the war Major Plumly settled at Galveston, where for a time, too, our minister resided, and where their association continued, and he died at Galveston in 1887, leaving the world his debtor for several books he had found the leisure to write and publish before his death.

Major Plumly was a modest, tender, eminently just man. There was evidently a deep affection between him and the subject of our story and it is a sufficient token of the regard in which he was held by our minister that the little daughter born at New Orleans, November 1, 1866, but who died less than six months after, was christened Elsie Plumly Wheelock.

On August 29, 1863, as appears from the War Records, Series 1, Volume 26, Part 1, Page 64, Adjutant General Richard B. Irwin appointed Col. John S. Clark, Major B. Rush Plumly and Col. Geo. H. Hanks to regulate the enrollment, recruiting, employment and education of persons of color, and it was prescribed that "all questions concerning the enrollment of troops for the Corps D'Afrique, the regulation of labor or the government and education of negroes be referred to the decision of this Commission, subject to the approval

of the Commanding General of the Department". On October 29, 1863, Col. Clark, by order of the Commission, as appears from the instrument of appointment among our papers, designated "Lieut. Wheelock 4th Lou." as an Inspector of Schools, empowering him to visit all schools established by the authority of the Commission and report in writing weekly until further notice, with such suggestions as his personal observation might dictate, and he was instructed to report to Lieut. Stickney as the Superintendent of Schools.

The "4th Lou." was the Fourth Louisiana Native Guards. Mr. Wheelock had resigned as the chaplain of his regiment July 18th, 1863, and two days later had been appointed 1st Lieut. of 76th Regiment of United States Colored Infantry—evidently in the place of Lieut. Geo. H. Hepworth, who had resigned July 17th. This regiment, as we learn from the official army register, was organized originally during February and March, 1863, as the Fourth Regiment of Louisiana Native Guards, and on June 6th, 1863, its designation was changed to Fourth Regiment Infantry Corps D'Afrique, General Banks having on May 2nd preceding reorganized the regiments of colored troops which had been assembled by General Butler. The official title of this regiment was again changed on April 4, 1864, and the name adopted of "76th Regiment U. S. Colored Infantry", by which the regiment is known in the army records. The reference, therefore, to our subject as a lieutenant of "4th Lou." did not conflict with his designation in the records of the War Department as "1st Lieut. 76th U. S. C. Inf.", nor does his discharge from that regiment on December 31, 1865, as mentioned in that record, imply a relief from command, for on that date the entire regiment, as appears from the official army register, was mustered out. The entire matter of the connection of our minister with this regiment of colored troops is probably of small importance, as it is fair to suspect that the commission was largely honorary and served the purpose of conferring a salary while other work was being done.

It was in October, 1863, the month of the appointment as inspector of schools, that the first public schools for colored children were established by the Commission of Enrollment, and from that month until March following the work was probably in the experimental stage. On February 2, 1864, General Order No. 23, destined to much celebrity, had been promulgated by General Banks, and by the language of that order the negro was promised, not only food, clothing, medical attention and wages, but also instruction for his

children.

On March 22, 1864, experimental work having advanced sufficiently far to warrant the step, General Order No. 38 was issued by Major General Banks, creating a "Board of Education for Freedmen for the Department of the Gulf", with power to establish common schools, employ teachers, erect school houses and regulate the course of studies, and as an incident of their general powers the Board was given authority to levy and collect a school tax for the purpose of defraying the cost of the schools. Of the three members composing the personnel of the Board as named in the Order, one was Col. H. N. Frisbie, 22nd. Infantry, Corps D'Afrique, who, however, was relieved soon after his appointment and was succeeded by Major Plumly, which latter was made chairman of the Board by order of General Banks; and another was Isaac G. Hubbs, a civilian of New Orleans subsequently expelled from the Department of the Gulf by military order. The third member of the Board was our own minister.

It would appear from a report under date of May 25, 1864, made by the Board of Education, and which we shall have occasion to notice, that Col. Frisbie could not have been removed nor Isaac G. Hubbs expelled until after that date, since their names are signed with that of our minister. In the meanwhile, on April 1st, the schools established and conducted by the Commission of Enrollment had been transferred to the Board of Education, so that after the appointment of Maj. Plumly and the expulsion of Hubbs one of the most interesting experiments in history rested in the hands of Major Plumly and the subject of our biography.

"In Connecticut in 1833" we read in *Harper's Encyclopedia of United States History*, under the heading *Abolition*, "Miss Prudence Crandall of Canterbury opened a school for negro girls. The legislature by act of May 24, 1833, forbade the establishment of such schools and imprisoned Miss Crandall. Being set at liberty she was ostracised by her neighbors and her school broken up."

This incident from a forgotten era in the history of the North deserves a place, in justice to the Southern people, beside those discriminatory regulations enacted against the negro by the Northern states before the war, including separate accommodations for negroes on railroads and steamboats and negro seats in churches and theatres, which supplied to our minister the occasion for such fiery invective in his sermons upon slavery.

It cannot be matter for marvel that what had occurred in Connecticut should be repeated in Louisiana. The facts are compiled for us in a printed report of the Board of Education in 1864, evidently from the hand of our minister, to which we shall have occasion to refer more at length in later portions of this chapter. To teach the slave the art of reading and writing, we are told, was an offense under the statutes of Louisiana, as begetting a tendency to "excite insubordination among the servile class" and was punishable by "imprisonment at hard labor for not more than twenty-one years or by death at the discretion of the court". Notwithstanding the terror of this statute Mrs. Mary D. Brice of Ohio, a student of Antioch College, came to New Orleans with her husband in December 1858, to establish a school for negroes, and in September 1860, after many obstacles were met and overcome, the school was established. By June 1861, however, she had been forced under pressure of public opinion to suspend, and with her school thus deprived of a local habitation and a name Mrs. Brice stole around at night to the houses or resorts of her pupils and in that way carried forward her work. Upon the occupation of the city by the Federal forces the school was re-established and protected—not, as the author of our report observes, by any direct action but rather by the moral sentiment of the army, "for so timid and so prejudiced were many of our commanders that long after that time General Emory sent for Rev. Thomas Conway to admonish him not to advocate publicly the opening of the schools for colored children as it would be *very* dangerous." The school of Mrs. Brice, we learn, continued to thrive and subsequently passed under the Board of Education by whom Mrs. Brice was employed at the date of the report—an efficient and honored principal. We quote now from the same report:

"When in April, 1862, the guns of Farragut transferred the city of New Orleans from rebel to national rule no such thing as a public school for colored children was found in the schedule of the conquest. No such thing had ever existed in the Crescent City. Even that portion of the colored population who for generations had been wealthy and free were allowed no public schools, although taxed to support the school system of the city and state. Occasionally a small donation was made from the public fund to a school for orphans attached to the Colored Orphan Asylum.

"The children of the free colored people who were in good circumstances, known as "Creoles", generally of French or Spanish ex-

traction, when not educated abroad or at the North, or from fairness of complexion by occasional admission to the white schools, were quietly instructed at home or in a very few private schools of that class. Even these, although not contrary to law, were really under the ban of opinion, and were tolerated because of the freedom, wealth, respectability and light color of the parents, many of whom were nearly white and by blood. sympathy, slaveholding and other interests were allied to the whites rather than to the blacks. For the poor of the free colored people there was no school.

"In the face of all obstacles, however, a few of the free colored people of the poorer classes learned to read and write. Cases of like proficiency were found among the slaves, where some restless bondsman yearning for knowledge which somehow he coupled with liberty, hid himself from public notice to con over in secret and laboriously the magic letters. In other cases limited teaching of a slave was connived at by a master who found it convenient for his servants to read. Occasionally, also, the slave was instructed by some devout and sympathizing woman or some generous man who secretly violated the law and resisted opinion for the sake of justice and humanity. The single attempt, however, to afford instruction through a school to the poor of the colored people had been that of Mrs. Brice. The advent of the Federal army weakened slavery and suspended the pains and penalties of its bloody code and a few private teachers began to appear in response to the strong desire for instruction".

The first schools were established, as we have seen, in October, 1863. The work was begun, as has been stated, by the Commission of Enrollment created by order of Major General Banks. The Board of Education organized in pursuance of the promise made by General Banks in the "Labor Order" took over on April the 1st the schools conducted by the Commission of Enrollment, and the report from which we have quoted was the report of the Board of Education for the year 1864, embracing the nine months of its work, and a printed copy of which, bearing the signature of Maj. Plumly as Chairman and of Lieut. Wheelock as Secretary, is in our hands.

The schools transferred from the Commission of Enrollment were, as we learn, employing 23 teachers with an average attendance of 1422 pupils. There were by that time a few colored schools in the city under the auspices of benevolent societies, but one by one these were taken over by the Board of Education. A schedule for weekly reports of teachers was prepared and issued and from these

reports tabulated statements for each month were made up. A system of inspection was instituted by which each department of the schools in the city and its vicinity was visited weekly and examined while the more distant schools received visits and examinations monthly.

Gen. Banks was not permitted to supervise the progress of the experiment so auspiciously begun. In May, 1864, he was relieved of the command of the Department of the Gulf and one of the last acts of his administration was an approval of the report of the Board of Education dated May 25, 1864, to which we have referred in another connection, signed, as we have seen by Col. Frisbie and Isaac Hubbs, and the original of which is before the present writer. Frisbie and Hubbs, as we know, lost very soon after all connection with the educational system and it is probable they had from the beginning merely a perfunctory relation with the Board. The report itself is plainly the work of our minister, whose signature it also bears and by whom, it is safe to assume, all the work had been done, and by whom, doubtless, it continued to be done until the appointment of Major Plumly as Chairman gave to the Board the invaluable aid of that gentleman's judgment and talents.

It is a tribute to the thoroughness and industry of our minister that as early as May 25th he could report 90 teachers in the employ of the Board actively engaged in 49 schools with an average attendance of 5200 pupils and with a maximum of about 300 more. Of these teachers, as we discover, 38 were laboring in the city of New Orleans and 52 in the various country parishes within the lines. It is a noteworthy circumstance, too, in the report of May 25th, and indeed instantly challenges attention, that the indebtedness incurred for April and May for the conduct of the schools, and the estimate of the funds which would be required for June, are absurdly low, and wholly out of proportion with the cost of education in these days. The Board, it would seem, had built no school houses but had extemporized for school purposes such vacant buildings as could be found and which with small repairs could be made to answer, but nonetheless the amount actually incurred per pupil spoke of a watchfulness in expenditure which did credit to the conscientiousness of those who administered the system.

For the month of April, we read, the amount incurred had been six thousand dollars, for the month of May eleven thousand five hundred dollars, and the estimate for June was about twelve thous-

and dollars—an average per student of about two dollars per month; and this included the cost of books purchased in New York by Hubbs and all expense incurred in establishing, furnishing and supporting schools, excluding alone the cost of constructing new houses where that was done. The devotedness, efficiency and absence of extravagance involved in these figures requires no commentary.

The most interesting paragraphs, however, are those concerning the character and antecedents of the teachers. "The Board takes pleasure in stating that thus far the supply of loyal teachers from Louisiana has proved adequate to the demand and will doubtless so continue. In thus giving the preference to Southern teachers whenever such could be obtained the Board has gained an unexpectedly strong moral support to their enterprise and they also believe that they have in this respect rightly interpreted the spirit of Order No. 38 and the expressed wishes of the Commanding General. . . . The more intelligent of the planters also are comprehending that whatever contents and dignifies their labor is a reciprocal benefit to themselves and the instances are continually increasing where the planters not only willingly but cordially aid the Board in the location of schools upon their plantations."

These last quotations imply a back-ground of hostile feeling on the part of the native population and local interests which may easily be conceived, and there must have been something innately noble and inspiring in the attitude and labors of the man which could win over those alien in sympathy to an experiment so radically opposed to the whole current of their thought. Our minister, however, was in his natural element here. The work he was doing was properly the work of an apostle and missionary and in the crusade he was waging against the ignorance and degradation of the blacks his own earnestness and unselfishness could kindle the fires of enthusiasm where such a thing seemed hopeless before. It is little to be wondered at that neither the Southern women nor the planters themselves could resist the moving appeal he must have made for their cooperation.

The course of the experiment is reflected in a communication entitled *Education of the Freedmen* which appeared under the initials "E. M. W." in the *New Orleans Times*, on September 2, 1864, and which was quoted in the *Liberator* of the issue of September 23rd. A few paragraphs from that communication will suffice to show the growing confidence of our minister in the outcome of the venture.

"The country schools are prosperous and thronged and although they have been in being but a few months they are rapidly demonstrating the capacity of the African to receive our civilization. The children who eight weeks ago were beginning the alphabet are now reading in the first readers and solving with facility problems in the primary rules of arithmetic.

"The ages of the scholars range from five to eighteen, with several grown persons of both sexes, servants, teamsters and seamstresses who manage to save an hour or two from daily toil and devote it to gaining the elements of knowledge. About one half of these children, prior to last October, did not know their letters.

"The different members of the Board have frequently and thoroughly visited these schools and are conversant with the teachers and their methods of instruction.

"Certainly the general cleanliness of the children is to be remarked. Their parents are poor—most of them very poor—owning not even themselves until that ever memorable day in April 1862, when the serfdom of Louisiana vanished in the smoke of Farragut's guns—yet the little ones always enter the school room with their brown faces and hands shinningly clean and with shoes and clothing often woefully patched yet painstakingly neat.

"The pupils display great eagerness for knowledge and facility of acquisition. Their perceptive faculties are particularly good—too much so, perhaps, as in the reflective faculty and memory they seem somewhat deficient. No severity of discipline is used or required, the threat of expulsion from the privileges of instruction being sufficient to tame the most mounting spirit. The weekly reports of the teachers show that the number of instances of absence and tardiness are less than and the average daily attendance fully equal to that in the white schools.

"No school buildings have been built but such quarters as could be devised on the spur of the moment have been obtained; such as confiscated houses, the attics of untenanted stores and in two instances the basements of churches. These latter were grudgingly given or rather not given at all but taken.

"In organizing these schools many obstacles were met with and one after another overcome. The prejudices of the people were actively enlisted against the education of "niggers". It was thought impossible to procure teachers except from the North. Yet the true hearted women of New Orleans came forward promptly for the

work and quietly bore the load of calumny and sneers and social proscription that fell to their lot. Louisiana has furnished for the work seventy-five earnest and laborious teachers. All honor to them! The history of the state would be poorly written should it omit their names.

"A far better day is dawning here. The progressive triumphs of our arms have purified the political atmosphere. Many who were blind now see; and the community are perceiving that as the negro, bond or free, must still furnish the labor of the South, it is better to have that labor instructed than brutalized and to spend in schools in order to save in prisons.

"In these schools careful attention has been paid to the correct vocalization of the elementary sounds; pupils have been trained to a clearness and purity of tone creditable to Anglo-Saxon voices. The advanced classes have finished the primary books of reading and geography and are now reading the third and fourth readers with facility. They have acquired the knowledge of arithmetic as far as long division and fractions, the multiplication tables, the use of outline maps, and can write with commendable neatness.

"Such are the general features of these schools. If they were now closed, the work of self instruction with the more advanced classes could go on and nothing could eradicate the knowledge they have thus gained.

"Three years ago it was a crime to teach that race. Now they read the testament and the newspapers. They are learning the geography of the world. They are gaining the knowledge of figures with which to do the business of Labor and Life. They are singing the songs of Union and Freedom. They show a healthy mentality and have made it appear to reasonable minds that they are very much like the rest of mankind and are thus entitled to a fair chance in the world.

"The result of this new departure of human experience will be a general resurrection of body and mind through the worn and wasted South. Our military expeditions do the pioneer work of blasting the rock and felling the forest and education follows to sow the grain and raise the golden harvest. The most glorious work is now going forward—to lift up the freedmen with instruction, counsel, culture. The day of antagonism is over and that of befriending begins. Beyond the advancing lines of our forces follow the pacific army of teachers and civilizers; and the school house takes the place of the

whipping post and scourge.”

Another document of which the original in faded ink is before us, bearing date October 27th, 1864, and signed by our minister as Lieutenant and Secretary of the Board of Education, gives evidence of the care and scruple which moved his every act where Southern feeling and Southern property rights were concerned. Among the buildings assigned for school purposes to the Board of Education was one at 194 Dumaine Street occupied at one time, it is evident, by a New Orleans family, and which had probably been seized by the military forces for the purpose of assignment to the Board of Education. The instrument we have is an inventory of personal property found in this residence, carefully receipted and containing a promise of return to “Captain N. S. Constable, a. q. m.” in as good condition as when received, wear and tear excepted. Aside from the more valuable articles a “foot-furnace” is listed—an interesting memento of those days—and even the mouse-trap and “one tin can” are not overlooked by the conscientious Lieutenant and Secretary. Whatever abuses might have existed elsewhere there could surely have been no ground for complaint against the Board of Education on the score of disregard for property rights of the dispossessed Southerners.

Returning now to the printed report of the Board of Education for 1864, we remark some highly interesting facts and statistics. There were in existence, for example, at the close of the year, 95 schools for colored children with 162 teachers and 9571 pupils, representing, the author of the report observes an average monthly increase of 10 schools, 15 teachers and 805 pupils, and, in addition, over 2,000 colored adults of both sexes had received instruction in the night schools and Sunday schools conducted under the auspices of the Board. Of the colored children of school age within the lines of Federal military occupation in Louisiana—estimated at something over 20,000—no less than 11,000 were in actual attendance.

Something of the difficulty of establishing and maintaining schools in the country parishes may be deduced from the fact that on June 27th, 1864, General Banks was compelled to issue a circular calling attention to the refusal of planters and other persons to board teachers, resulting thus in the denial of the facilities of education to children of negro laborers and the consequent discontent of the parents. The circular notified the recalcitrants that whenever provision for teachers was required by the Board it must be accorded except where

the circumstances made it greatly inconvenient.

In the endeavor to provide accomodation for scholars and teachers every makeshift was employed: "Cabins, sheds, and unused houses were appropraited, roughly repaired, furnished with a cheap stove for the winter, a window or two for light and air", and the school started. Where board and lodging for the teachers could not be secured "a weatherproof shelter of some kind—very poor at best—was obtained, some simple furniture provided and a teacher sent who was willing to undergo the privations—often hardships—of boarding themselves in addition to enduring the fatigues of a school.

It was not a life to be envied and wonder grows as we read that devoted women could be found who were willing to undertake so ungrateful a task in the face of such forbidding obstacles. "Compelled to live on the coarsest diet of corn bread and bacon" says the report, "often no tea, coffee, butter, eggs or flour; separated by miles of bad roads from the nearest provision store; refused credit because she is a negro teacher; unable to pay cash because the Government is unavoidably in arrears; subjected to the jeers and hatred of her neighbors; cut off from society, with infrequent and irregular mails; swamped in mud—the school shed a-drip and her quarters little better; raided occasionally by rebels, her school broken up and herself insulted, banished or run off to rebeldom; under all this it is really surprising how some of those brave women manage to live, much more how they are able to render the service they do as teachers."

The Federal officers were by no means a unit upon the subject of negro education and the provost marshals were frequently indifferent or hostile. This subject is dealt with at page 8 of the report and the narrative is well worthy of quotation, not only as showing the prejudice against negro education which prevailed even among the Northern officers but because of the highly interesting sidelight we get upon the actual conditions surrounding the teachers.

"In a parish, some distance from New Orleans, a building was procured, an energetic teacher sent, scholars gathered and the work begun. The first week brought no report. It came subsequently, as follows: 'Arrived. Found a place to live a mile and half from the school-shed. Dreadful people, dirty and vulgar, but the best I can do. Went about gathering scholars, have forty. Did well enough till it rained, since then have walked three miles a day, ankle deep in thick black mud that pulls off my shoes. Nothing to eat but strong

pork and sour bread. Insulted for being a 'nigger teacher.' Can't buy anything on credit and haven't a cent of money. The schoolshed has no floor, and the rains sweep clean across it, through the places where the windows should be. I have to huddle the children first in one corner and then in another to keep them from drowning or swamping. The Provost Marshal won't help me. Says 'he don't believe in nigger teachers—didn't 'list to help them'. The children come rain or shine, plunging through the mud—some of them as far as I do. Pretty pictures they are. What shall I do? If it will ever stop raining I can get along."

"Who ever has attempted to march through the adhesive mud of this delta, under a Louisiana rain-storm, will realize the accuracy of that report. It is one of a score.

"Another class of obstacles is fairly indicated by the following extract from the report of a country teacher:

"I have, in vain, attempted to form a night school. I never dared take more than two pupils, because some of the officers are so opposed to the instruction of negroes. One used to let his dogs loose after supper to bite the night-scholars, till I told him I would kill them if they bit my pupils. A great many would come to night-school only they are afraid."

"I had rather not contend with such people; but in a short time there will be another Provost Marshal here, and probably I can keep night school. Capt. ——— never interfered with the school, but he don't approve of it, and allows others in his house to annoy it."

"Where the parish Provost Marshal is indifferent or opposed to negro education, the annoyance, and even peril of teachers, is often great, from the remains of that class from which slave drivers and negro hunters sprang, a class that does not seem to be numbered and that hastens its own destruction with the madness of men pre-ordained to perish. This class hates the district schools with all the virulence of ignorance and complexional caste.

"In Thibodeaux the school house has been broken open, on successive nights, for months past, the furniture defaced, the books destroyed and the house made untenable by nuisance. Bricks and missiles have been hurled through the windows, greatly risking limb and life, and making general commotion. Complaint after complaint has not afforded relief or protection.

"General Cameron kindly and promptly sent a guard, on one or two occasions; but as the detection and arrest of the cowardly as-

sailants depends upon the disposition and vigilance of the parish Provost Marshal, the outrages continue."

That despite the increasing number of planters who accepted the new regime and entered sincerely into cooperation with the efforts of the Board of Education there were many still secretly antagonistic appears very plainly from this report. In the case of the country schools indeed, more removed from the protection of the military, raids were not infrequent.

"A Provost Marshal reported a large number of children in one locality in his parish, but no school, and very little possibility of establishing one, owing to the hostility of the residents and the proximity of the rebels.

"We resolved to try it. A young lady born in Louisiana, late of slaveholding associations, agreed to attempt the opening of the school. She managed to locate herself in the district, and there began her missionary visits to collect the children, alone, on foot, through mud and dust, rain and heat, to the several plantations. She succeeded in assembling seventy scholars, in spite of the usual protest of opposers, that they were either under or over the age.

"Her school flourished until, by a sudden irruption of rebels, the small Federal force was captured, or expelled, the post robbed, one of our best men killed, the school scattered, and the teacher driven to New Orleans.

"She reported to the Board, and was offered a situation in the city. 'Oh, no', said she with spirit. 'I don't lose my little children. I'm going back with the flag.' The flag went and the teacher with it. At the last account she had reassembled sixty of her pupils, and was doing well.

"In another instance, a school had been established by consent of the manager, upon the plantation of a gentleman of Northern extraction, said to be a Unionist, but who, to some extent, is an absentee proprietor. Upon his return he complained of the school and demanded its removal. By a singular coincidence in time with this demand, the rebels visited the plantation.

"The principal of the school, a brave woman, who has lived all her life in New Orleans, states with positiveness, of her own knowledge, that the rebels, upon the occasion of their visit, were hospitably entertained by the planter, possibly in conformity with the Christian injunction 'love thine enemies'. They came to the school, warning the teacher to desist from 'nigger teaching' and were about to en-

force their warning. The teacher defied and shamed them, so that they left. On a day or two following they returned, broke up the school, borrowed a buggy, captured the teachers, and prepared to leave with them to Dixie, amid the clapping of hands and general acclamation of the lady spectators. The more timid of the two teachers was alarmed and distressed, but the principal chided her companion for her fears, and vented her scorn in no measured terms. Laughing at her spirit, they ordered the girls into the buggy and set out, a black man driving, and a Confederate Captain and Lieutenant riding on either side of the vehicle.

"The colored people were greatly agitated at the prospect of the rebels taking their teachers, and gladly obeyed the principal's injunction to 'ring the bell' and alarm our pickets. The sympathizing and vigilant Africans had already sent a messenger to the pickets, but he was stopped and ordered back by somebody.

Many threats were made by the rebel officers against the negro driver for his tardy pace, which he could not be induced to hasten.

"When some miles on the way, nearing the rebel pickets, the brave girl, who never lost her presence of mind, seeing the case hopeless and rescue impossible, except by delay, and happening to observe a weak spot in the harness, snatched the lines from the driver's hands and struck the horse smartly. His sudden start broke the harness. During the delay and the hard swearing of the rebel officers, our pickets came up with the party, the rebels escaping. The teachers were restored, the school removed from the domain of the loyal planter to a confiscated plantation near by, where it has since been raided and broken up, possibly by the same influence. The teachers aver, and cannot be convinced to the contrary, that the rebels raided the school and captured them by collusion with the planter, whose hostility to negro education, and to the policy of progress, may have induced him to overstep the easy barrier of quasi-loyalty.

"While the teachers in the city and towns are not subjected to the same sort of annoyance and outrage, they are still the objects of scorn and vituperation, from many of their early friends, who refuse to recognize them on the street, and place them under the social ban for accepting the new order of things."

In this report, as in that of May 25th, the most interesting passage, and one which reflects peculiar credit upon the wisdom and freedom from prejudice of the Board of Education, is that reiterating the determination of the Board to employ Southern women as

teachers, and the quotations we make from this remarkable documents may fitly end with that passage:

“The cases cited and many others have seemed to justify the Board in the adoption of the policy expressed in a previous report, and since adhered to—that of employing, not exclusively, but mainly, Southern women teachers. They understand the negro. They have a complete knowledge of the people. Their Southern origin and education fit them to combat the prejudices of their former friends and associates against negro education.

“If these women are willing to forego the hatred of race, the hostility of caste, the prejudice of education; if they are ready to bear the jeers and contempt of friends and kindred, and the practical exclusion from circles that hitherto have received them gladly, surely they are entitled to the first consideration. Therefore, of the one hundred and sixty-two teachers in the employ of the Board, in December last, one hundred and thirty are of Southern origin, thirty-two from the West and the North. It has been our aim to select the most capable and worthy, but we have not been unmindful of those whose loyal antecedents and consequent sufferings from the rebellion entitle them to sympathy and aid.

“Whenever colored teachers, with the requisite ability, have presented themselves, we have made no distinction whatever”.

Lost as were these minor problems in the larger issues of the war as the conflict approached its climax, recognition was not wholly wanting at the North of the fine and disinterested work which was doing in Louisiana for negro education. Of the particular report with which we have been dealing a discriminating study appeared in the *North American Review* for October, 1865. “In the State of Louisiana”, says this article, “under General Banks’ much abused but really humane and intelligent arrangements, the military government assessed a local tax and established a system of education for the slaves. The Board of Education established under this order went steadily to work and extended its operations with the extension of the national domain in Louisiana. So steady and comprehensive was its work and so well sustained by the authorities, that the State of Louisiana, in the number of schools and the number of scholars, has been and probably still is in advance of all states lately in rebellion. It is hoped that no changes of administration may make any fatal change in a system that has thus far worked so well”.

If it is possible to overstress the importance, it is certainly not

possible to overstress the human interest, of the labors of our minister and his associates as they are reflected in the report we have had before us. In this day, when the education of the negro in the rudiments of learning is a principle universally accepted, the dubiousness of the thing in the eyes of the general public during the war period can not well be conceived. Nothing less than the invincible confidence of earnest natures like that of the Dover minister in the teachableness of the slaves would have sufficed to support the experiment.

In the case of Mr. Wheelock, moreover, the work held a peculiar and powerful interest. It represented an opportunity for putting to practical test the lofty principles to which he had committed himself so unreservedly in the sermons before the war. Of all aspects of the slave system none had seemed so black in his eyes, and none had been denounced by him with such fire and passion, as the hopeless ignorance to which it consigned its victims. He must therefore have regarded it as a providential thing that in the hour of military victory the task of undoing this great wrong, and of demonstrating the capacity of the negro to receive and appropriate knowledge, should have fallen so largely to his hands. A sacred office he evidently felt himself performing, and no unprejudiced mind can rise from a study of the work without the feeling that the task was more than worthily fulfilled.