

COMMUNICATED.

Articles inserted under this head are written by correspondents. We shall be glad to publish communications of merit, but do not hold ourselves responsible for their sentiments.

Whither are we Drifting?

This is a question which we may well ponder. When we take into consideration the events that are daily transpiring through the actions of those high in authority, and more especially is the question pressed upon our consideration as we read such a document as the letter of "A Planter," published in a late edition of one of the journals of this city...

with the restlessness and actual withdrawal of some from the church, produced a conviction in the minds of the white and remaining colored official members, of the necessity of a reconstruction of affairs, and consequently a meeting was held by them on the 13th March last.

This state of things have existed for the last seven months with very gratifying results; the church re-established and improved, her flourishing Sabbath school made the grateful recipients, in money, books, and paper, from both white and colored friends, and the pecuniary embarrassments which would have been saddled upon us by a pay clergyman in these times of financial straits, is providentially obviated by the gratuitous services of a missionary pastor.

In conclusion, this congregation regrets that the A. M. E. Church should suffer themselves to be made a tool of to intercept their brethren. They would, however, with no ill feeling, inform their white and colored friends whose sympathy they crave, that they are not merged into the A. M. E. Church, and although most unjustly ejected from their legitimate place of worship, yet, in the quiet discharge of duty, they may be found every Sabbath for the present in the Normal School, awaiting the farther openings of Divine Providence, and holding to the principles of their agreement in good faith.

OLD TRINITY.

Mass Meeting.

To the Editor of the Leader. A mass meeting of the colored citizens of St. Stephen's District was held on the 14th instant. Mr. J. Jefferson officiated as chairman; Mr. L. C. Thomas, as secretary.

THE LEADER. CHARLESTON, S. C., Saturday, October 21, 1865.

Authorized Agents: William Dart, Paul Poinsett, Samuel L. Bennett, of Charleston; Wm. B. Nash, Columbia; Dean Dudley, Boston, Mass.; Rev. A. Waddle, Savannah.

Our Country.

LAST week we attempted to show that this is not a white man's country, nor a white man's government—that there is nothing in the Constitution to justify any such assertion; and, furthermore, that the black man was recognized as part of the government at the time the Constitution was adopted.

We have now the highest authority for saying that this is our country. Not a white man's, nor a black man's, nor any other man's country, but a country founded upon the principles of equality.

The President said many other things which are worth reading. He has taken the only practical stand, and we claim that he will not go back upon his record. There is no positive ground for believing that his re-organization scheme is to be strictly adhered to.

We have never doubted his thorough and persistent hostility to the institution of slavery, and because of his soundness on that part of the consequences of the war, he cannot greatly err in his efforts to restore peace, harmony and union among the sister States.

The great changes resulting from the war having produced a state of derangement in the Methodist E. Churches South in this city, the pastors having abandoned their charges, an agent of the African M. E. Church sounding the tocsin of the disloyalty of said church and her consequent annihilation, and no colored ordained man amongst them to administer at her altars,—these perplexing circumstances, together

ments. The wisdom and patriotism of the nation should be consulted in reference to the policy to be adopted, when the President shall see fit to change. We are confident of a change, because satisfied that the present policy is a failure. No cause can long prevail unless founded in absolute justice to all men.

The Island Lands.

That these islands are valuable for the production of cotton, no one will question. But that a question of great interest as to the future rightful possession of these lands is now pending, many are painfully aware.

General Sherman's Special Order set apart these lands for the benefit of freedmen that had been left to take care of themselves. The freedmen accepted these lands with the understanding that they were to be kept in possession of them.

An experiment is being tried here in reference to the employment of free labor, and the ability of the colored race to take care of themselves. Sufficient time has not been given to demonstrate the feasibility of the former, or establish the fact of the latter, to the minds of all men; and we say let the experiment go on.

General Howard has arrived in Charleston for the purpose of investigating the subject, with full powers to issue any necessary orders that may be mutually satisfactory to the freedmen and the former owners.

War Department, Adjutant-General's Office, Washington, Oct. 9, 1865.

GENERAL ORDERS No. 145.—Whereas certain tracts of lands situated on the south coast of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida; at the time for the most part vacant, were set apart by Maj-Gen. W. T. Sherman's Special Field Order No. 15, for the benefit of refugees and freedmen that had congregated by operations of war, or had been left to take care of themselves by their former owners; and whereas an expectation was thereby created that they would be able to retain possession of said lands; and whereas a large number of the former owners are earnestly soliciting a restoration of the same, and promising to absorb the labor and care of the freedmen, it is ordered that Major-General Howard, Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, proceed to the several above named States, and endeavor to effect an arrangement mutually satisfactory to the freedmen and land-owners, and make a report, and, in case a mutually satisfactory arrangement can be effected, he is duly empowered and directed to issue such orders as may become necessary after a full and careful investigation of the interests of the parties concerned.

By order of the President of the United States. E. D. TOWNSEND, Asst.-Adj.-Gen.

Cotton-Growing Convention.

Mr. A. Penfield has addressed a letter to Major-General Howard, Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, recommending a convention of the cotton growers of America, for the purpose of considering the many subjects connected with the cotton culture and the employment of freedmen.

General Howard, in reply, warmly approves of the proposition, because he thinks it would aid in the solution of many practical problems arising from the labor-question, and check the false notions that often prevail, that it is possible and politic to dispense with the freedmen.

We agree that such a convention for deliberation upon the growth of cotton, if conducted in the spirit of impartiality and fairness, would result in great good to all concerned; but if such convention is to assemble and exhaust its ingenuity in developing a scheme for the production of the largest amount of cotton at the least possible expense,—to secure forced contracts between the laborers and the planters giving to the planters unlimited power to use compulsory means to secure large and profitable crops,—such connection can result in no possible good to the nation or the people, but on the contrary, would induce positive injury to all concerned, and retard the progress of events which now seem to tend so surely to the recognition of the rights of labor and the claims of humanity.

Capital and labor have too long been in antagonism. Labor has too long suffered at the hands of capital not to be aroused to the importance of such a convention. All capital is indebted to labor for its value; it is but the accumulation of labor. Why, then, should not labor be consulted as to the best method to be adopted for the successful growth of cotton? The national cotton growing convention should be composed of laborers as well as capitalists. And if it calls for both classes to choose delegates to attend, we shall have confidence in its honesty and purity of purpose; while on the contrary, if it composed entirely of planters and capitalists, we shall watch its proceedings closely with a jealous eye to the welfare of labor.

Colleton District.

THE manner in which this model district is managed at the present time is a source of great satisfaction to all concerned. The friendly relations existing between both classes, and the general quietness and good order, commands the respect of all other districts throughout the State. And as this is of some importance at the present time, we are pleased to say a few words in relation to the present state of affairs.

While under command of other officers, it will be seen that either they did not understand how to administer justice to all, irrespective of color, or else the people have at last found the right man in the right place. Colonel J. C. Beecher, 35th C. T., who is in command of this district, assumed command immediately after Gen. Van Wyke, who was here but a short time, having relieved Gen. Hartwell, of the 55th Mass. Colored Troops, and if we are to credit the story going the rounds of the district, Hartwell was in favor with the first families, and parted from the colored people with no regrets on their part.

Col. Beecher is doing all that he can to improve the condition of all, and is ready at all time to go in person to any part of his district to remedy any evils that may exist. And from the manner in which the citizens go to and from headquarters, we are assured that the same feeling is entertained towards the Colonel that he has towards them.

If other parts of our State are as well conducted, there will be no cause to regret the change that placed General Bennett in charge of the Department, and Colonel Beecher in command of the 2nd Sub-District.

The Elections.

THE result of the election in Pennsylvania is very gratifying. The State Senate will consist of twenty Republicans, and thirteen Democrats; the House of Representatives will have sixty-six Republicans, and thirty-four Democrats, a clean working majority for the Union.

The result of the Virginia election is not yet fully known. The returns as far as heard from indicate the election of two of the candidates for Representatives in Congress, who can take the required oath. A. H. H. Stewart is also probably elected, although he has admitted that he could not take the oath.

In Ohio the vote is light, and the republican majorities are diminished—less of course than on a full vote. A majority of twenty-five thousand, enough to elect General Cox, is but about a third or a quarter of what the State can do.

Personal.

Hon. Gilbert Pillsbury, of the Freedmen's Bureau, is expected to arrive here to-day from the North. He will be gladly welcomed by the friends of human freedom.

Major-General O. O. Howard, Commissioner of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, arrived in this city on Tuesday. He is expected to address the freedmen and others, at Zion's Church, to-morrow afternoon.

DESTRUCTIVE FIRE.

A very destructive fire occurred in this city on the morning of the 18th instant, which left in ruins several of our largest and finest stores, and severely damaging others.

The fire originated in the rear of the store of W. H. Chafee, 41 Hayne Street, a wholesale grocery and liquor store, and rapidly spread until the adjoining buildings were consumed.

The "Courier" office was entirely destroyed. W. T. Burge & Co., dry-goods dealers, and Hartie, Calhoun, & Co., shoe and saddlery dealers, also had their stock destroyed.

Hon. Wm. D. Kelley, M. C., from Pennsylvania, has our thanks for favors received.

Gen. Gilmore, it is said, will succeed General Slocum in Mississippi.

Rev. R. H. Cain, of the A. M. E. Church, is now in Columbia for the purpose of organizing a church and society.

Allen Coffin will address the Sabbath School connected with the A. M. E. church, now worshipping at Trinity Church, Hasel St., on Sunday forenoon, 22nd inst.

Hon. Henry Wilson, of Mass., in his great speech at Yonkers, N. Y., Oct. 9, made use of the following in answer as to how he would treat the Southern people.

I have never had a feeling of bitterness against those people. I knew their blood was fairly poisoned by the sting of slavery. I want none of their blood or property, but I do want justice and humanity to prevail.

I do want these colored wards of ours to be free and to enjoy their civil rights. I want nothing for the past, but I want security for the future. You want it. We all want it, and if we are wise and prudent, and keep the power in our own hands, we have capacity enough calmly to compare opinions and secure results.

It is for you to do now as you have done in the past; as you did in the gloom of 1856, 1860, and 1864; give the wealth and power of the great State of New York to the support of the government and the indorsement of the great principles that underlie it—doing this, you strike strong and hearty and ever memorable blows for the divine cause of liberty and humanity the wide world over.

O. D. KINSMAN, Asst.-Adj. Gen.

The Negro Prodigy.

THE New York papers are noticing the musical performances of a blind colored boy, who is giving performances in that city upon the piano. We take from the Herald an article upon him. The well-known character of that paper is a guaranty that it would admit no more in praise of the negro than it was absolutely compelled to.

"Blind Tom is a veritable wonder. Many believe because of the peculiar position of the negro boy that some little aptitude for music has been magnified, from charitable or interested motives, into genius, and an ignorant facility on the piano-forte into first-class manipulation. Such belief has no foundation in fact. The boy has positive genius, or never from out the darkness of his mind could spring such powers of delicate and tender expression or such a keen comprehension of the beauties of the musical art.

Blind, with a mind almost vacant, with a person so awkward, so disproportioned, so opposed to the idea of the dwelling-place of a soul, awake to the refined influence of divine harmony, he executes the composition of great minds with an intelligence and a kindred sentiment which many artists of education who attempt them cannot reach. Memory and imitativeness are the two organs by which he accomplishes the extraordinary results to which we have listened with wonder and admiration. He learns the difficult pieces which he plays by hearing them from the hands of another. His memory is wonderfully retentive, so that after a second hearing he repeats correctly the most complicated passages. He seems to have comprehended at once the system of fingering; and although he sometimes outrages the laws, his substitution is always ingenious and effective. By his imitative power he seizes the style of each performer, and by the combination of memory and imitation, he is enabled to reproduce immediately any composition that he hears for the first time, absolutely correct in form, the leading time, absolutely correct in form, the leading time, he can tell the name of every note in dispersed chords or the most confused discords, beginning with the lower note and naming each in succession. His wonderful perception and his ability of tones suggested to his teacher to adopt a system of the alphabet to the tones, so that Tom could read anything on a card as fast as his teacher's fingers can move over the keys. It is a matter of astonishment to hear this blind negro boy play a sonnet of Behovon, also Gottschalk's "Last Hope," with all the refined sentiment, the pathos, and abandon, which the composition requires, and to listen as he plays Thalberg's "Home, Sweet Home," with its so well sustained theme, and its delicate manipulations so finely rendered. He has a large repertoire, to which he is constantly adding, and he plays all that he knows with a sentiment and *con brio* which indicate that his heart and all his mind are in his work.

Blind negro Tom is a study as well as a wonder, and every time we hear him we gain some additional insight into his character; but where the light of music comes from, where all else is so dark, is one of those mysteries of Providence which we seek in vain to unravel.

Last evening he was kind enough to perform one of his most beautiful and difficult compositions, after which Tom performed it with entire satisfaction, and amid the greatest enthusiasm.

He plays nightly at Dolworth Hall, and public attention is beginning to be directed toward him. When it is fully aroused thousands will flock to listen to the most remarkable phenomenon of this or any other age.

A New Issue.—The following colloquy took place in the office of a well-known friend of the freedmen, near Charleston, not long since.

Freedman.—Colonel, I ain't going up dar any more, 'cos dat man say he going to kill me if I cum dar 'gin.

Col.—Well, Henry, if you will go back and let him shoot you, then I will hang him, and that will stop killing on both sides.

Freedman.—Wall, Colonel, you see that won't do, as I want to be dar to see him hang.

Col.—Well, can't you get a man to take your place?

Freedman.—I don't tink dat I can; but I'll ax de boys on de farm. Perhaps some of dem goes.

Col.—Well, send the man up there; and if he gets killed then I'll hang the man that kills him, and all will be satisfied.

Freedman.—All but de man dat gets killed—Any way, I'll ax dem.

The complainant departed, quite satisfied that justice would be done.

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Items of Special Interest.

Colored people in Alexandria are hereafter to be treated like white people, not arrested if after ten o'clock at night, nor be deprived of fowling-pieces. A shot taken from a negro has been restored to him.

Jeff Thompson tells the editor of the Logansville Journal that the only people in the South who wish to do any more fighting are those who didn't do any when they had a chance.

The Freedmen's Bureau in Washington have received the letter in full of Governor Sharkey, of Mississippi, in which he takes the ground that by the action of the late Convention, in its amendments to the State Constitution and its recognition that slavery has ceased to exist, negroes are secured the rights of testifying and suing and being sued in any court of justice in the State.

Anna E. Dickinson spoke in New Haven on Tuesday night to a crowded audience. Three hundred tried to obtain tickets, but were unable. She will speak there twice more during the coming winter.

Governor Brownlow in his message complains bitterly of the conduct of the colored soldiers and free negroes in Tennessee. It is hardly to be expected that they will get on peaceably with people who hate them and have such violent passions and such savage vindictiveness as Governor Brownlow has.

An association has been formed in Washington to present a course of winter lectures from Wendell Phillips, H. W. Beecher, Dr. Chapin, and men of positive opinions on questions of negro suffrage and other kindred topics.

Governor Andrew of Massachusetts has accepted the presidency of the American Land Co. and Emigration Agency, the object of which is to send the New England element into the South.

Carl Schurz is going to start a radical journal in St. Louis.

The negroes in Richmond are getting up the "Negro Tobacco Association," capital \$10,000, for the benefit of manufacturing tobacco. They have \$7,000 of it already subscribed.

There are exciting times in the Tennessee Legislature on the negro franchise question.

Facts are developing the ability, as well as the disposition, of the negro to maintain his manhood. Out of the amount of \$8,000,000 of Government bonds subscribed for in Eastern Virginia, more than three millions have been taken by freedmen; and that the remaining five millions have been taken by Northern men doing business in this State; and, so far as the records go, not one dollar by a white native Virginian.

The colored people talk of starting newspapers in Mobile and in St. Louis.

The President has pardoned General B. G. Humphreys, so as to make him eligible to the governorship of Mississippi, to which he is probably elected.

Gov. Andrew said in his speech in Hartford, that he should not leave Massachusetts. He is "too intense Yankee to bear transplanting."

The President has ordered the withdrawal of colored troops in Kentucky, and the suspension of martial law in that State.

SACRED CONCERN.—The ladies of the African M. E. Church in this city have given two concerts this week, both of which were well attended. The performances were given in Zion's Church, under the direction of McCaillin. The pieces were well executed, and gave good satisfaction to the audiences.

At the first concert, held on Tuesday evening, an interesting address was delivered by Rev. E. J. Adams, after which Rev. Mr. Meacham, of Florida, entertained the audience with some well-timed remarks.

Near the close of the second concert, on Thursday evening, Rev. Mr. Cain made an address. He then introduced successively T. Hurley, Allen Coffin, and Edwin Coombs, Esq., all from Massachusetts, who made brief speeches in praise of the concert, and congratulatory of the auspices under which they were given.

CALL FOR A CONVENTION.—The colored people have called a mass meeting, at Zion's Church, next Thursday evening, as will be seen by advertisement, to make arrangements for calling a State Convention.

THE STATE ELECTION.—The result is not yet fully known, but, as far as heard from, the returns give a majority in favor of James L. Orr for Governor, and W. D. Porter for Lieutenant Governor. The entire ticket of the Working Men's Party was elected. The election in this city was very quiet, the number of votes cast being less than one-half of the usual number polled before the war.

ECLIPSE.—The eclipse of the sun on Thursday last was beautiful. The moon, in the centre of the sun intercepting the light of that body, produced a fine display.

JUSTICE ADVANCING.—Last week the Mayor of the City of Washington notified the trustees of the Colored Schools, by letter, that he was ready to pay whatever was due them, and at the same time asking if either of them was the author of an article in the New York Tribune, stating that he was ready to pay over \$10,000.

The trustees declined to answer officially, but stated privately that they knew nothing of the article until their attention was called to it by the Mayor himself. The Mayor then refused to pay over the money promised until the question had been answered. He has since changed his mind, and paid them \$8,000, whereupon A. G. Riddle, one of the best lawyers of the city, has brought a suit against him for \$12,000, the balance still due.

It is not often that professed politicians open up frankly that they are animated by patriotism rather than patriotism, in their struggles for power. The naive confession of Mr. Purdy, the Grand Sachem of Tammany, is therefore refreshing. He says, and he ought to know.

"What the Democratic party chiefly needs is power. It is a very thankless and cheerless office to be confined to the business of standing outside of the farm fence and finding fault with those who are in possession of the house and grounds, fruit and orchards, cattle, stock, and provisions. You may talk more sense, know more moral law, be more fluent in argument, and have the most solid conviction of your own wisdom, personal elevation and ability, but if you can't get in and get the other fellows out, it is all vanity and vexation of spirit."