

# INTELLIGENCER.

## Anderson, S. C.

### LETTER FROM HON. B. F. PERRY.

In response to an invitation from a Masonic Committee, to deliver an address before a Lodge at Cedar Falls, Greenville District, on Saturday last, "on the duty which all men (citizens, Christians and Masons) owe to themselves, their God, and their country, in this their hour of trial and disappointment," the Hon. B. F. PERRY has written an admirable letter, containing practical ideas and suggestions as to the course to be pursued in these times of perplexity and difficulties. We have only room for a few extracts:

But the death struggle is over! The Federal Union must be restored and slavery abolished. The military authorities have already abolished slavery. An amendment to the Federal Constitution has passed both houses of Congress, abolishing slavery and has been ratified by the Legislatures of twenty-two States. Five more States will secure its adoption. I have no doubt they will be obtained. Likewise the Southern States are required to re-form their Constitutions and abolish slavery before they will be permitted to be represented in Congress. Until this is done the country will be held in military subjection. Hence there is no hope, no possibility of the continuance of this institution. The oath of allegiance which we are required to take binds us individually to set our slaves free. His excellency President Johnson has issued his amnesty proclamation, and it becomes the duty of all to whom it applies to take the oath and demean themselves as true and loyal citizens. The excepted classes may swear allegiance and apply for pardon. The Confederacy being dissolved, all oaths to that Government are annulled. The Government which protects you is entitled to your obedience. This is the behest of Christ himself: "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."

It is to be hoped that the benign spirit of the American Republic will yet prompt a general amnesty to all who have erred in this great rebellion. After acknowledging the Southern States as a belligerent for four years, and exchanging prisoners with them, it would seem strange, now that they are conquered, to execute their leaders and generals as traitors!

A great Republic like the Federal Union, all powerful, and spreading over a whole continent, can afford to be magnanimous and forgiving. She can feel none of the selfish, personal, revengeful spirit of a monarchy in *laesæ majestatis*. The Southern States have already been punished in pride, feeling and honor for their rebellion. They are amply punished by their pecuniary losses. Two thousand millions of their wealth and capital have been sunk in trying to sustain the Confederacy! And now four millions of

of their slaves are set free, worth two thousand millions of dollars more! This punishment, too, has mainly fallen on those who were most active and forward in organizing secession. They thought that Disunion would be the protection of their property! It has proved, as I always said it would, "the death knell of slavery."

It is to be hoped, however, that the loss of slavery will not effect so seriously as is generally supposed, the prosperity and happiness of the Southern States. The poor negro will be the greatest sufferer. Thousands will perish annually from cold and hunger and disease, induced by idleness, vice and want of forethought in providing for the future. Instead of increasing rapidly, as the negro heretofore has in the Southern States, the race will henceforth diminish as the Indian has in proximity to the white man.

The abolition of slavery will require a reformation of our State Constitution, and a re-organization of our State Government. A Convention of loyal citizens will be ordered by the Federal authorities for this purpose. When this is done it will be the duty of all good citizens to lend their aid in the accomplishment of this great work. None should refuse. Heretofore slavery has been the bone of contention between the North and the South. This is now removed, and the future may be peaceful and quiet. There never were two peoples more necessary to each other than the North and the South. Instead of rival interests, their interests are dependent. This is a bond of Union.

The natural consequence of four years spent by our people in war and revolution is their demoralization! Plunder and open robbery have been of too frequent occurrence. It must be suppressed.—The well disposed should unite for this purpose. It is a mistake to suppose we have no law in the land, and no magistrates to enforce the law. In other States the Federal authorities have invited the public functionaries to take the oath of allegiance and continue in the discharge of their official duties. No doubt the same course is desirable in South Carolina.

The abstraction of labor from agriculture, and a succession of bad crops for two years past, have reduced the country almost to starvation. It is the duty of those who have provisions to share with others who have not. The soldier who has been absent, experiencing all the hazards and hardships of war, should not on his return, find his wife and little ones in want of bread. The greatest economy possible should be practised in our living, in order to assist the needy and starving. Idleness should be banished from the land, and the idler regarded as an enemy to society. He should receive no countenance from any one. Shut your doors against stragglers and loafers. Arrest all raiders, robbers, and persons seeking government stores, and commit them to jail.

The country, at present, is without a currency, our banks are doing no business, and their bills are at a discount, which excludes their circulation. It is a most

remarkable circumstance, that a country so rich as the Southern States are, should be without money or a medium of exchange. This evil may be remedied by the sale of the cotton still in the Southern States. Every planter and holder of cotton should make a sale of it as soon as possible. This will bring an abundance of money into the country, and give us a currency with which to pay our taxes and our debts.

The condition of the Southern States is indeed one of deep distress and humiliation. After a gallant struggle for four years and the loss of a hundred thousand of her bravest sons on the battle-field, the South has been conquered and subdued! Her effort at independence and self-government has signally failed! The country has been ravaged and desolated, and is now filled with mourning widows and orphan children! Everywhere there is a scarcity of the absolute necessities of life. But we must not despair of the future. I have always said, through life, and endeavored to impress it on others, that the Southern States were better off in the Union than out of it! I still adhere to that opinion, so far as our future peace, prosperity and happiness are concerned. If we had gained our independence, other family feuds would have sprung up, and States would have seceded again, until each had become a petty nationality. Continued wars would have ensued, and our history would have been that of the heptarchy of England!

The future, to my mind, is not so gloomy as many suppose. The loss of slavery may prove to be no loss at all. The planter's net profits will be greater than they ever were. Instead of being invested in the purchase of more negroes, as heretofore, they will be spent in substantial improvements, enriching himself and his country. Our habits of industry and economy, and those of our children, will be improved. The negro will be the greatest sufferer by emancipation.

There are many persons who seem to be alarmed at the magnitude of the Federal debt, and the burthen of taxation which it will be necessary to impose, in order to pay that debt. But this does not appal me. The resources of the Republic, and the energy of the American people are beyond all calculation. It is said that the vacant lands belonging to the United States will pay the national debt twice over when brought into market. The entire loss of the Confederate debt will work great individual hardship. Many wealthy persons have invested their entire estates in Confederate bonds. But still the property thus sold remains in the country. It has changed ownership. That is all. Our national wealth remains the same. The gigantic war, which is just over, shows the power and resources of the country. Peace, industry and prudence, will soon produce a return of prosperity. Let us all devote ourselves to our respective occupations with renewed energy and zeal, and the future may yet be bright and glorious.

I am, with great respect and esteem,  
yours, &c.,

B. F. PERRY.