

railroads, and drew his conclusions about their condition from what he knew of our manners and customs, would suppose that we had—the most comfortable and elegant railroad cars in the world; that the art of getting over great distances with a minimum of fatigue and inconvenience had been carried to a point of perfection amongst us such as is nowhere else witnessed. We have infused into the art of hotel-keeping a completeness and finish which before our day were unknown. Before the appearance of our great hotels, such accommodation as they now furnish to travellers was only attainable in Europe by persons of very great wealth. People of moderate means never sat down to such meals, in such rooms, or enjoyed or thought of enjoying such a variety of conveniences as were supplied before the war in nearly every city in this country for a sum which all but the poorest could afford to pay and did pay. And it is only within the last seven years that the English and French have thought of imitating us in this. The Lord Warden Hotel, Westminster Hotel, and Palace Hotel, and Grand Hotel, and Hotel du Louvre, are all copies of American models, though we admit they have in some respects improved on the originals. In like manner we were the first to do away completely with all distinctions of dress, and set everybody to “dress like a gentleman.” This, we believe, is the only country in the world (the remark is, at least, true of the Northern States) in which there is not and never has been a costume peculiar to peasants and farmers or to persons of a certain condition in life. Every man, woman, and child amongst us dresses very nearly like every other man, woman, and child—that is, when they have their best clothes on. In the cities, of course, some wear richer material and indulge in a more fashionable cut, but it may be laid down as a general rule that there is no very marked difference in appearance between a mechanic in his best suit and a clergyman or a judge or a wealthy merchant in his. All dress well—better than any other people, as a whole, ever dressed—and, if anything, too extravagantly.

In like manner we have indulged in such hackney coaches as were never seen in any other country. The genuine American “hack,” as it is to be found from Maine to California, a sort of modernized “glass coach,” such as people went to court in in Queen Anne’s day, surpasses with all its faults any other vehicle of a similar class in the world. It is warmer, better upholstered, more gorgeous to behold, better horsed, driven by a better-dressed rowdy, and costs more than the hack of any other country. It is, in fact, very much such a vehicle as noblemen in the Old World drive about in, barring the dirt. It is, of course, enormously expensive, unnecessarily heavy, and has one horse too many; but then, for some reason or other, the public has never shown a disposition to be content with anything less. We doubt very much whether the cab or fiacre, in which well-to-do people of the middle classes in London and Paris are content to go to parties and the theatre, would, if introduced here, meet with complete success. The hack would still flourish for many a day as the time-honored “carriage” of the American citizen.

The American barber’s shop, too, is one of the most marked signs of democratic *exigence*. Nowhere else does a man who wants to be shaved find himself surrounded during the operation with so much buhl, ormolu, upholstery, and mirrors, and stretched on so easy a chair, and relieved of his beard with so much skill and consideration, and scoured with so many unguents, and “vivifiers,” and “invigorators,” and “purifiers.” Anybody who has tried the resources of foreign shaving-shops knows what a barbarous and disgusting process shaving in them is—how coarse, and clumsy, and tedious, and uncomfortable. And the reason is that, in Europe, a small portion of the men have valets to shave them, and a very large portion like to imitate them, and pretend they have valets; so that nearly all shave in their own dressing-rooms, and leave the public barbers to the ignoble crowd. Here, on the other hand, every citizen in any of our large cities, who can raise ten or fifteen cents, can enjoy very much the same luxury which the European dandy enjoys when he gets out of bed, puts on his dressing-gown, and gets his John or his Thomas to put his chin in order for the day, to say nothing of the “Bay rum,” of the virtues of which we doubt if any “bloated aristocrat” has any idea.

Now, why is it that while so much of what is the luxury of the few

in other countries is here made the comfort of the many; while our people are, in some respects, the most self-indulgent in the world, the least trained in self-denial, they are content, or have to be content with railroad accommodation which may, with propriety and accuracy, be called piggish? How does it happen that while a hotel-keeper ransacks earth and air to provide dainties for anybody who can muster two or three dollars a day for his board and lodging, untold gold cannot find for anybody, on any railroad in the country, a window that opens easily, a stove that warms his feet, a place in which a woman or a decent man can be secure from the presence of rowdies and the squirting of tobacco juice? What is the reason that the average American citizen finds himself, on coming down to the railroad from his palatial hotel, dumped into a small room, dirty as a cattle-pen, close as an oven, and with as little provision for comfort as a police station? Why, when you go on a long journey on any of our great lines, is it impossible to find a seat that is not an instrument of mild torture, in which people’s elbows and knees are protected from hard angles of wood, and in which a weary woman can find a place to lean her weary head against? Why, when she is able to sit up no longer, has she to throw herself on the bony shoulder of her “male protector,” and snatch a little fitful sleep in postures that are as ludicrous as they are uncomfortable? Why is the American “refreshment saloon” a repulsive den, in which the food is literally thrown to the guests, and gobbled with almost as little profit for soul or body as if it were burnt in honor of Jupiter?

Arguing from analogy, one might fairly expect that in whatever way the Emperor of Russia travelled on railroads in Europe, Tom, Dick, and Harry would, with of course certain modifications, travel here. These gentlemen live at their hotels very much as he lives; drive about in much such carriages as he does; receive much the same kind of attention from the public valets; and have very much his notions of what comfort is. Now the Emperor of Russia, when he travels, has a special train, one car, we suppose like the saloon of a steamboat, in which he sits in a comfortable chair, walks about, or lies down on a sofa. Another carriage is a dining-room, in which he sits down at a well-furnished table to a good dinner, cooked on the train, and he takes this meal with his suite as easily and comfortably as if he were seated in the Winter Palace. Another car is a bedroom in which he can go to bed if he likes. Now, how is it that, with our enormous lines of railroad, our love of luxury, our riches, our power of organization, our inventiveness, our mania for travelling, we have as yet made no approach to the conversion of the railroad car into what it ought to be, and will be yet—a hotel on wheels? And not only this, but we have hardly carried it one degree beyond the common baggage-wagon. A square box, with the rudest kind of windows for the admission of the light—with no constant means of ventilation or of heating the feet—with no protection for the knees or elbows from the hard wood—with no more space for each passenger than is sufficient for a small person to squeeze into—with no provision for change of posture or of place—no arrangement for the supply of any refreshments except pop-corn, apples, and candy, is just the means of locomotion which we might expect an intelligent Red Indian to devise, if we once got him to acknowledge the necessity for any railroads at all. The answers to all these questions we must attempt hereafter.

EDUCATION IN THE LATE REBEL STATES.

THE spirit of the great question of reconstruction is, when divested of all side issues, simply this: Will “the South,” when re-admitted, be true to the Union, and will the Union men and negroes residing in the late rebellious States be allowed to remain undisturbed in their rights as citizens?

Passing over the promises of loyalty from people whose most frequent utterances at present, whether in the press, on the rostrum, or from the pulpit, are thinly disguised threats to renew rebellion, we would direct observation to the vigorous and apparently well-organized efforts now made in the Southern States to prevent the blacks from exercising their civil rights, by hindering them from learning to read—a subject appealing in many ways to the sympathy and sense of the North.

From the Vicksburg correspondence of the *Memphis Post*, dated

February 28, 1866, we learn that, according to the report of the Freedmen's Bureau of Mississippi, this petty persecution has been carried on with great energy in every part of the State. There are only eleven places in all the State that report schools for freedmen, and the fact that there are so few is certainly not owing to the want of vigorous efforts by the Bureau. In Columbus, the difficulties interposed by the citizens were so many that the schools were very soon closed. Many of the citizens informed their servants that if they sent their children to school, they, the servants, could not retain their places. In fact, this opposition to educating colored people has been uniform through the State, and is evidently organized with ability and sustained with strength. "In several places," continues the report, "the colored people have been allowed to hold *religious* meetings in basements of churches, or in old church buildings that were forsaken by the whites; but whenever they attempted to use these buildings for *schools* the white people have uniformly opposed it," except at Aberdeen, in which place, to its honor be it said, the town council actually encourages the schools. In most of the towns the municipal government is openly hostile to teaching the blacks. The following items of information on this subject are very significant:

"At Oxford the scheme has been rendered totally impracticable by the presence of Rev. Dr. Waddell, president of the Memphis University of Mississippi. The people have driven out from their place the missionary sent there, though he was a Southern man. They have fired four shots at an old Episcopal minister at Okolona, because he was teaching the colored people."

Every species of petty trick or prevarication is resorted to by the families employing negroes to prevent the latter from learning. "Colored persons are engaged as apologies for teachers; the family *promises* to teach; anything is resorted to rather than employ the hated Yankee school-teacher." But it requires only a limited knowledge of human nature to perceive that this opposition to teaching the blacks is the surest of all means to ensure their learning. Few persons are aware of a very singular fact, that within little more than a year the relations between the whites and the blacks in the Southern States, as regards the ability to read and write, are almost reversed. From the muster-rolls of the Union troops of Tennessee it is shown that in that State only one *white* man in eight, nine, or ten, according to his place of residence, can sign his own name; and this, according to General Benjamin F. Butler, who has examined sixty thousand names on similar rolls, is true of all the late rebel States. As the Union men of the South were generally more intelligent and better educated than the rebels, it is evident that this estimate is a very favorable one for the entire white population. In fact, there is not a country in Europe where the peasantry are so illiterate as the native whites of our Southern States—Ireland perhaps excepted, but not Russia or Italy. A paragraph has of late appeared in many American newspapers, lamenting the extreme ignorance of the French peasantry, from which it appears that in France from one-half to two-thirds of the people are unable to read or write. That is to say, the most illiterate Frenchmen are three times better educated than the white native Americans of our Southern States, or, at worst, are fifty per cent. higher in the scale of education! And it is a mistake to suppose that these ignorant Americans are all necessarily poor. In fact, there are very few *poor* whites there, since most of them have as much land as would make any Yankee rich unless he were extremely lazy. Even in Virginia it is a very common thing to find men owning from one to five thousand acres of excellent land who cannot sign their names to a deed.

Those who hold that the whole black race should be excluded from political rights, because some blacks are ignorant, have in the foregoing facts a hard nut to crack. Between white and black ignorance there is for political purposes no difference. Anybody to whom the latter is terrible, is bound to make provision for the former also, and is, in fact, logically precluded from talking of any electoral test whatever, except an intelligence test. While, too, the whites remain in contented ignorance, school-books, literally by the million, are being sent all over the Southern States and are purchased by, or given to, the "contrabands," and the reports recently submitted to Congress show that the books are not distributed in vain. If schools are broken up by town councils and put down by the influence of

the reverend Waddells of Secessionia, still the primer and the Bible are coned by the pine-knot light in the negro cabin or deep in the silent woods, for the *will* to learn is working in hundreds of thousands of simple minds, and they are still free enough to find the way easier than it was of old. Nothing is stranger than this persistent blindness of the late rebels to the fact that, so long as learning is a forbidden fruit, it will be sought for with a keen appetite. And it is sought for with such eagerness that it is no rash prediction to declare that in two years' time the South will present the extraordinary spectacle of an illiterate race claiming to be more refined and intelligent than one which can read and write!

CLERGYMEN'S SALARIES.

A PROMINENT religious journal, with abundant ability to procure information, and the strongest motives for ensuring its accuracy, publishes the following statement of the rates of compensation paid to clergymen in the State of Connecticut. The figures are taken from the minutes of the General Association. From these minutes it appears that three pastors have no pay whatever; one has \$100; one, \$200; one, \$300; nine have \$400; thirty-three, \$500; one hundred and four, \$1,000; forty, \$1,500; sixteen, \$2,000; four, \$2,500; and three, \$3,000 a year. No salary of more than three thousand is mentioned; the average remuneration in the several counties is given thus: in Windham Co., \$653; in Tolland Co., \$728; in Middlesex Co., \$819; in New London, \$848; in Litchfield, \$880; in Fairfield, \$1,044; in Hartford, \$1,060; in New Haven, \$1,127.

This statement respecting the condition of ministers of religion in New England, and, of all places, in Connecticut, the stronghold of New England orthodoxy, even where it excites no surprise, must awaken serious reflection on the religious state of the community. The largest salary mentioned in the table is insufficient for the support of a man and his family in days like these; and but three ministers receive that. Fifty-six receive what at the best is scarcely more than a pittance; and forty-six receive less than a pittance. These men must eat and drink, and have wherewithal they may be clothed, even if they are not over-anxious about such things. They must have a roof over their heads. They are generally, we may presume, married; at all events marriage is a privilege which cannot be refused them. They have families of children, large in proportion to the smallness of the stipend. They are, moreover, in most cases, educated men, whose mental furniture has cost money, and is so much capital invested in their profession. Their profession demands all their time, as at present conducted. It leaves no leisure for other means of obtaining a livelihood; and if it did leave leisure, it leaves no ability or aptitude for money-making pursuits. Its duties, by their very nature, disqualify men for practical affairs; they carry both mind and will far away into regions remote from every kind of market, even from the market of literature. Their time, their strength, their feelings, sympathies, efforts, even their flaccid purses, are incessantly and mercilessly drawn upon by all sorts of people, who make them do their work for them, and offer them no compensation, often not even gratitude, for important services. The poorest class in the community, they are the most pitifully fleeced class in the community.

It is urged that they are the most privileged class, too; that they are universally honored and beloved; that the best social position is cheerfully awarded to them as by right; that all doors are open to them; that they are admitted to intimacies such as no other class of men are indulged with; that they enjoy the distinction of being reckoned a purely disinterested and self-sacrificing order of men, whose reward is very certain in the next world and whose impecuniosity in this life is abundantly compensated by the wealth of good-will that is lavished upon them! All this is willingly conceded, so far as the social privilege and the parochial affections are concerned, but we cannot see the relevancy of such considerations to the case in hand, so long as all this social privilege and saintly fame amount to so much practical impoverishment. "Fair words butter no parsnips." In this case they cause the transfer of the parsnips to another man's mouth. A reputation for disinterestedness is a very fine thing, but it will not pay the shoe-maker, or the schoolmaster, or the stationer, and it goes a very little way towards paying the bookseller. It is fair, perhaps, that one's love for his neighbor should make him rich for the next world, but his neighbor's love for him should put something in his pocket for this world; and this precisely it fails to do.

The argument that, on the whole, ministers receive about as much as they are worth, is plausible at the first glance, but it has no force. For why are they not worth more? Simply because they have no means to make themselves worth more. Their natures are starved by their poverty.

Copyright of Nation is the property of Nation Company, L. P.. The copyright in an individual article may be maintained by the author in certain cases. Content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.