

EXCERPT FROM *THE SOUTH SINCE THE WAR*: 1

Travel Narrative

Author(s): Andrews, Sidney

Date: 1865

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The journalist Sidney Andrews was born in Massachusetts in 1834 and spent much of his youth in Dixon, Illinois. As a young man, he edited the *Daily Courier* in Alton, Illinois, where Elijah Lovejoy had once tried to set up an abolitionist press, with fatal results. During the Civil War, Andrews moved to Washington, D.C., and began writing journalistic pieces under the pen name of Dixon.

In the fall of 1865, following the Confederate surrender, Andrews spent fourteen weeks traveling in the Carolinas and Georgia. His aim was to report on the progress of Reconstruction policies and on the various state conventions taking place in southern states, and to provide a general picture of conditions and attitudes in the postwar South. His essays were published as they were written in the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Boston Advertiser*, and collected in the 1866 volume *The South since the War*.

Already in 1865, Andrews could see that President Andrew Johnson's leniency toward southern rebels was frustrating northern hopes for a thoroughgoing reconstruction of the region's economy and racial practices. In "The Situation with Respect to the Negro," Andrews detailed his conversations with a number of white Southerners whose racial attitudes boded ill for emancipated African Americans. The end of the essay suggests the coming racial violence that would be used everywhere in the South to keep freed people in submission.

PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENT

Excerpt from *The South Since the War*, by Sidney Andrews

III.

The Situation With Respect To The Negro.

Orangeburg C. H., September 9, 1865.

Recalling how persistently the whites of this State have claimed, for twenty-five years, to be the negro's special friends, and seeing, as the traveller does, how these whites treat this poor black, one cannot help praying that he may be saved from his friends in future. Yet this cannot be. Talk never so

plausibly and eloquently as any one may of colonization or deportation, the inexorable fact remains, that the negro is in South Carolina, and must remain here till God pleases to call him away. The problem involved in his future must be met on the soil of which he is native; and any attempt to solve it elsewhere than in the house of these his so-called special friends will be futile.

The work of the North, in respect to South Carolina, is twofold: the white man must be taught what the negro's rights are, and the negro must be taught to wait patiently and wisely for the full recognition of those rights in his own old home. He waited so long in the house of bondage for the birthright of freedom, that waiting is weary work for him now; yet there is nothing else for him and us, — nothing but faith, and labor, and waiting, and, finally, rest in victory.

The city negro and the country negro are as much unlike as two races. So, too, the city white man and the country white man differ much from each other. The latter, however, is just what he chooses to be, while the country negro is just what slavery and his late owners have made him. Tell me what you will derogatory of the country negro, and very likely I shall assent to most of the language you use. He is very often, and perhaps generally, idle, vicious, improvident, negligent, and unfit to care well for his interests. In himself, he is a hard, coarse, unlovely fact, and no amount of idealizing can make him otherwise. Yet, for all that, he is worth quite as much as the average country white.

The negro, one may say, is made by his master. I even doubt if he is, in many cases, morally responsible for his acts. With him there is no theft when he takes small property from the white; there is, of course, crime in the eye of the law, but there is none in the design or consciousness of the negro. Has not every day of his existence taught him that robbery is no crime? So, too, if this uncouth freedman, just from the plantation, falls into a passion and half kills somebody, you will utterly fail in your effort to make him understand that he has committed a grave crime. Has not his whole life been witness of just such right and lawful outrage on humanity? This language may indicate a bad state of affairs; but it points out certain conditions with respect to the negro that must be taken into account by any one undertaking to deal with him as a freedman.

Everybody talks about the negro, at all hours of the day, and under all circumstances. One might in truth say — using the elegant language of opposition orators in Congress — that "the people have got nigger on the brain." Let conversation begin where it will, it ends with Sambo.

I scarcely talk with any white man who fails to tell me how anxious many of the negroes are to return to their old homes. In coming up from Charleston I heard of not less than eleven in this condition, and mention has been made to me here in Orangeburg of at least a score. The first curious circumstance is, that none of them are allowed to return; and the second is, that I

can't find any of those desirous of returning. I presume I have asked over a hundred negroes here and in Charleston if they wanted to go back and live with their old masters as slaves, or if they knew any negro who did desire to return to that condition, and I have yet to find the first one who hesitates an instant in answering "No."

I spoke of this difficulty I have in finding a single negro who loved slavery better than he does freedom to an intelligent gentleman whom I met here last evening, — a member of the Rhett family. "I am surprised to hear that," said he; "but I suppose it's because you are from the North, and the negro don't dare to tell you his real feeling." I asked if the blacks don't generally consider Northern men their friends. "O yes," he answered, "and that's the very reason why you can't find out what they think."

They deserve better treatment than they get at our hands in Orangeburg, at least; and I am told that what I see here is a forecast of what I shall see in all parts of the State. Theoretically, and in the intent of Congress, the Freedmen's Bureau stands as the next friend of the blacks; practically, and in the custom of the country, it appears to stand too often as their next enemy. That General Saxton is their good friend does not need to be asserted. Very likely the district commissioners under him are wise and humane men, and unquestionably the general regulations for the State are meant to secure justice to the freedmen.

The trouble arises from the fact that it is impossible for the State Commissioner or his chief deputies to personally know all, or even half, their various local agents. Take the case right in hand. Head-quarters for this district are thirty miles below here; and the ranking officer of the bureau has, probably, agents in at least forty different towns, the majority of whom are doubtless lieutenants from the volunteer forces of the army. They are detailed for this duty by the military commander of the post or the district, — sometimes after consultation with the district commissioner, but quite generally without. As the post garrisons are constantly changing, there may be a new agent of the bureau once a month in each town of the district; and I need not add, that the probabilities are that half the aggregate number on duty at any given time are wholly unfit for the work intrusted to them.

Again, take the case right in hand. The acting agent here at present is a lieutenant from a New York regiment. He is detailed by the colonel commanding, and has been on duty several weeks. Yet he never has seen the district commissioner of the bureau. His duties are to examine, and approve or disapprove, all contracts between the planters and the negroes, and to hear and determine all cases of complaint or grievance arising between the negroes themselves, or between the whites and the negroes. He treats me courteously, but he has no sympathy with the poor and lowly; and his ideas of justice are of the bar-room order, — might makes right. He doesn't really intend to outrage the rights of the negroes, but he has very little idea that they have any rights except such as the planters choose to give them. His position, of course, is a difficult one; and he brings to it a head more or

less muddled with liquor, a rough and coarse manner, a dictatorial and impatient temper, a most remarkable ability for cursing, and a hearty contempt for "the whole d—n pack o' niggers." I speak from the observation of a good deal of time spent in and around his office.

I found Charleston full of country negroes. Whites of all classes concur in saying that there is a general impression throughout the back districts that lands are to be given the freed people on the sea-coast; and this, I am told, renders them uneasy and unreliable as plantation hands. Whites of all classes also concur in saying that they will not work.

"I lost sixteen niggers," said a Charleston gentleman; "but I don't mind it, for they were always a nuisance, and you'll find them so in less than a year." I asked, as usual, what they are now doing. Two or three of the men went into the army, one of the women had gone North as a cook, another is chambermaid on a steamer, and he found three of the men at work on one wharf the other day. "But," said I, laughing, "I thought the free negro would n't work." "O well, this is only a temporary state of affairs, and they'll all be idle before winter; and I don't look for nothing else when cold weather comes but to have them all asking me to take them back; but I sha'n't do it. I would n't give ten cents apiece for them."

Many of the private soldiers on duty here tell me that the planters generally overreach the negroes on every possible occasion; and my observation among such as I have seen in town tends to confirm this assertion to a considerable extent.

Coming up in the ears from Charleston I had for seatmate part of the way one of the delegates to the Convention which meets at Columbia next week. He was a very courteous and agreeable gentleman, past middle age, and late the owner of twenty-two negroes. He was good enough to instruct me at some length in respect to the character of the negro. "You Northern people are utterly mistaken in supposing anything can be done with these negroes in a free condition. They can't be governed except with the whip. Now on my plantation there was n't much whipping, say once a fortnight; but the negroes knew they would be whipped if they did n't behave themselves, and the fear of the lash kept them in good order." He went on to explain what a good home they always had; laying stress on the fact that they never were obliged to think for themselves, but were always tenderly cared for, both in health and sickness; "and yet these niggers all left me the day after the Federals got into Charleston!" I asked where they now are; and he replied that he had n't seen anybody but his old cook since they ran away; but he believed they were all at work except two, who had died. Yet I am told constantly that these ungrateful wretches, the negroes, cannot possibly live as free people.

Yesterday morning while I sat in the office of the agent of the Freedmen's Bureau there came in, with a score of other men, a planter living in this district, but some sixteen miles from town. He had a woful tale of an as-

sault upon himself by one of his "niggers," — "a boy who I brought up, and who's allers had a good home down ter my place." While the boy was coming in from the street the man turned to me and explained, "It never don't do no good to show favor to a nigger, for they's the most ongrate-fullest creeturs in the world." The dreadful assault consisted in throwing a hatchet at the white man by one of a crowd of negroes who were having a dispute among themselves, and suddenly discovered, in the early evening, somebody sneaking along by the fence. The boy said it was n't a hatchet, but a bit of brick; and added, that the man was so far away that no one could tell whether he was white or black, and that he did n't throw the brick till after he called out and told the man to go away. I followed the negro out after he had received his lecture from the officer, and had some talk with him. "D—n him," said he, referring to his employer, "he never done nufin all his d—n life but beat me and kick me and knock me down; an' I hopes I git eben with him some day."

Riding with an ex-Confederate major, we stopped at a house for water. The owner of the property, which was a very handsome one, was absent; and it was in charge of a dozen negroes, former slaves of the proprietor.

"Now here," said the late officer, "here is a place where the negroes always had the pleasantest sort of a home, — everything to eat and drink and wear, and a most kind master and mistress."

Pompey, aged about twelve, came to bring us the water.

"Pompey," said the Major, "Pompey, how do you like your freedom?"

He hung his head, and answered, "Dun know, mawssa."

"O, well, speak right out; don't be afraid; tell us just how it is now," said he again.

Whereupon Pompey: "Likes to be free man, sah; but we 's all workin' on yer like we did afore."

"That's right, Pompey," said I; "keep on working; don't be a lazy boy."

"It won't do," said the Major; "he'll grow up idle and impudent and worthless, like all the rest."

"No, sah," answered Pompey, "I 's free nigger now, and I 's goin' to work."

There is much talk among the country people about a rising of the blacks. A planter who stopped here last night, and who lives twelve miles to the west, told me that it was believed in his neighborhood that they had guns and pistols hid in the timber, and were organizing to use them. His ideas were not very clear about the matter; but he appeared to think they would make serious trouble after the crops are gathered. Another man, living in Union district, told the company, with evident pleasure, that they 'd been able to keep control of the niggers up to his section till 'bout three weeks ago; he 'lowed thar 'd bin some lickin', but no more 'n was good fur the

fellows. Now the Federals had come in, and the negroes were in a state of glad excitement, and everybody feared there would be bloody business right away.

A thing that much shocks me is the prevalent indifference to the negro's fate and life. It is a sad, but solemn fact, that three fourths of the native whites consider him a nuisance, and would gladly be rid of his presence, even at the expense of his existence. And this is face of the fact that all the planters are complaining about the insufficiency of labor. Thus, in Charleston, a merchant told me, with relishing detail, a story to the effect that, soon after the promulgation of the order against wearing Confederate buttons, a negro soldier doing duty in the city halted a young man, informed him of the regulations, and told him that if he was seen on the street again wearing the obnoxious buttons, he would probably be arrested; whereupon the hopeful scion of the Charleston aristocracy whipped out a large knife, seized the negro by the beard, and cut his throat. The soldier died in about a week; but nothing had been done with the man who killed him. So, too, a man who seems to be acting as stage-agent here says "a d—d big black buck nigger" was shot near Lewisville about three weeks ago; and the citizens all shield the man who shot him, and sanction his course. All the talk of men about the hotel indicates that it is held to be an evidence of smartness, rather than otherwise, to kill a freedman; and I have not found a man here who seems to believe that it is a sin against Divine law.

EXCERPT FROM *THE SOUTH SINCE THE WAR: 2*

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One of the aims of the Freedmen's Bureau, or, to use the full name, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, was land redistribution. If the large plantations of the slave South were broken up into small parcels and distributed to freed people, it was thought, this would not only ensure the economic independence of African Americans but also deter the reinstituting of the South's plantation economy.

The idea of redistribution seemed especially suited to the Sea Islands of the Carolinas and Georgia, whose plantations and slaves had been abandoned early in the war. But President Andrew Johnson's leniency toward the defeated Confederacy, together with a national reluctance to deprive slaveholders of their land and property, thwarted most attempts to give newly freed African Americans the land that would guarantee their freedom and economic progress.

The journalist Sidney Andrews spent fourteen weeks traveling in the Carolinas and Georgia in the fall of 1865, recording his impressions of the progress of early Reconstruction policies. His pieces were published in the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Boston Advertiser* and collected in 1866 in *The South since the War*, one of the earliest accounts of life in the postwar South. In "Life and Labor in the South Carolina Low-Country," Andrews details how early land reform in the South was being frustrated by lax government policies, poor administration, and the racial attitudes of white Southerners.

PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENT

Excerpt from *The South Since the War*, by Sidney Andrews

XXII.

Life And Labor In The South Carolina Low-Country.

Charleston, October 21, 1865.

Let no man come into the Carolinas this fall or winter for a so-called pleasure-trip. Since the first week in September I have travelled over most of the stage and railway routes in the two States; and I assure you that, though I may have found some profit, I have not found very much pleasure.

The railroads are worn out, and there is not a single line in either State that should not be relaid with new iron at the earliest possible day. Half the freight cars are fit for a few months more service, but the other half and all the passenger coaches were ready months ago for condemnation; though I suppose they must be used another half-year at least, because the various companies are unable to buy new stock. The engines seem generally in rather worse order than the cars, and a careful inspection of almost any one of them is calculated to vividly impress the traveller with the uncertainty of life. That delays and accidents are numerous follows as a matter of course. It must be said, however, that the accidents do not very frequently result in loss of life or serious injury of person. The average rate of railway speed is about nine miles per hour in South Carolina, and about eleven miles per hour in North Carolina. The cost of travel is about seven and a half cents per mile; on one road it is only six cents, and on another it is about eleven cents.

The late election passed off without any serious disturbance. With respect to Governor, the vote of Charleston stands,—James L. Orr, 785; Wade Hampton, 661. An effort was made to get the latter to run against Orr; but, at the last moment, he declined doing so. Had he been a candidate, I think he would have received three fourths of the vote of this district.

The city elected two senators and twenty representatives for the Legislature. The delegation is, generally speaking, weak; yet it is in one sense very strong, for it italicizes the fact that the people are disposed to break away from the old leaders and take up new men. Judge Lesesne, who has been senator for a number of years, is defeated by a heavy majority, though he is an estimate gentleman of much influence in State affairs. With three or four exceptions, the representatives are without legislative experience. They were mostly nominated by the "Workingmen's Association," and of course there is considerable disgust at the result among the so-called aristocracy of the city. In respect to the matter of Unionism, it is only to be said that some of them were Union men from the beginning to the end, some were original Secessionists, and some were men who took sides as little as possible. In a word, the result is only significant as marking the triumph of the common people against the upper classes.

The city election takes place in less than a fortnight. As yet very little has been said about it, "but I expect this d—d 'Workingmen's Association' will carry the day," complained one gentleman with whom I spoke. There is only one candidate in the field for Mayor,—Mr. P. G. Gilliard, an ex-Rebel colonel, who lost an arm in the war. The present incumbent of the office, Mr. Charles Macbeth, who has been in it for many years, "killed himself," as I am told by several persons, by moving in the late Convention to admit negro testimony to the courts—"though why it should kill him," says one of the legislators elect, "when we all know we've got to come to it in less than six months, I can't see."

The negro's prospects in the South Carolina low-country are not flattering. The situation is in many respects already against him; and the Presidential order, under which General Howard is now here, is full of evil and woful portent.

Further observation of the agents of the Freedmen's Bureau, and of the way in which they do the business intrusted to them, confirms me more strongly in the opinion I expressed six weeks ago,—that at least half of them are wholly unfit for the positions they occupy. They cannot be trusted to administer justice between the planters and the freedmen, for they too generally side with the former, even in cases where the right course is not difficult to choose.

Official reports from Marion, Darlington, and Williamsburg Districts represent the negroes as quiet, well-disposed, and generally at work for mere starvation wages. My own observations in these three districts pretty fairly confirm these reports, and furnish some clew to the bearing of the whites.

I had opportunity to see many intelligent "fellows," as the workingmen are invariably called by the planters. The first complaint of all the whites is that the negroes will not work, that they are constantly violating their contracts, &c., &c. I asked the "fellows" about this. "Well, you see, boss," said one of them, "de fust dif'culty about de matter be dis yer, we gits no meat; and de secon' is, dat we gits de fum-tyin' too much." The whole case was epigrammatically stated in that sentence.

While we stopped a couple of hours at one station on the railroad for water, I strolled off to the house of a planter who had a dozen "fellows" and as many more women and children on his place. Men and women were at work in the cornfield, as he was smoking in his piazza,—everything in the nature of a porch being called a "piazza." He received me courteously enough, and asked me to "have a pipe," which I declined. "Did I come up from the kears?" he inquired. I told him I did. He had "heerd," he said, "that the kears was in trouble. 'Pears like they are in trouble most every day," he continued; "my neegurs is allus stoppin' in their work to run off and see what's the matter with 'em." That launched him into the usual stream. "Know much about neegurs, mister?" he queried. I told him I had never lived in the South. "Wall then, mister, ye don't know much about 'em." And he proceeded to enlighten me at some length. Incidentally I asked him how he fed them. "Corn and rice and such game as they can git," said he. Afterwards, while speaking on general subjects, I asked if there was much meat to be had for the white families. "O yes," he replied, "right smart o' meat yer abouts." Still later in the conversation I remarked, "I think you said you don't give the negroes much meat." "Jes so, mister; don't give neegurs bacon this year like we used to." "Why so?" said I; "I believe you said there was right smart of it in the country." He seemed a little puzzled at the turn of conversation, and suddenly "called to mind" that he had an engagement with a neighbor at about that hour. He invited me to walk with him, and

also invited me to "turn in and lie out with us" if I ever came through the country.

At Florence I found a most intelligent negro carpenter who lived three miles out of town, but came in every day to his work. He had been traveling through the district lately,—in connection with the league, I judged. "What is the real cause of trouble between the plantation negroes and their employers?" said I. "Well, sah," he answered, "there's a many masters as wants to git de colored peoples away, ye see; an' dey's got de contrac's an' dey can't do it, ye see, lawful; so dey 'buses dem, an' jerks 'em up by de two fums, an' don't give 'em de bacon, an' calls on 'em to do work in de night time an' Sun'ay, till de colored people dey gits oneasy an' goes off."

In the cars, between the Santee and this city, I asked a man who was loudly complaining about his "niggers" if the planters generally gave their hands full allowance of bacon this fall. "Many of 'em don't give out any at all," said he, somewhat snappishly. So, too, while we lunched at the river, I asked of a countryman who got on at Kingstree, "I suppose now you give your negroes better meat than this?" alluding to some on the table. Hav n't guv 'em any at all fur nigh on two months." "How's that?" said I; "I don't see how you get much work out of them unless you give them meat." He answered that there wasn't much in the country, and that the contracts didn't bind them to give the negroes meat. And so, too, the man on whose left I sat at dinner at the hotel to-day told his neighbor on the right of a row he had been having with the officers of his district about giving meat to his negroes; "an' he said I must let 'em have it twice a week," he remarked in conclusion.

A man who got on the cars at Marion "'lowed" he had been in jail for "whippin' a nigger,—bin in fifteen days, sir; was there ever such a d—d outrage!" he exclaimed. No one disputing him, he went on to say, "But I larnt a trick wuth two o' his'n," alluding, I suppose, to the officer who sent him to jail." I jest strings 'em up by the thumbs for 'bout half an hour, an' then they are d—d glad to go to work." Another man whom I saw in the contract office at Florence had strung a woman up by the thumbs, and also whipped her, for which he also went to jail.

I infer from a:l I saw and heard while in the northeastern section, that the negroes at work in the pines are more generally contented than those on plantations anywhere in the State. There is more variety in the turpentine and rosin business than in cotton-growing; and though the work may be harder for one or two days in any given week, there are other days in which there is but little to do. The yield of rosin this season will be very small.

The negro's situation in the other districts of the so-called low-country is not so good as in those already named. From Georgetown there are many complaints that he is turbulent and "rebellious," and these are made the pretext for treating him with much severity. A gentleman from the town of

that name tells me of a case in which a negro was cruelly beaten over the head and shoulders with a large club for insisting that an examination of his contract would show that he was under no obligation to perform certain work required of him. In the upper part of Charleston District the planters are quietly holding meetings at which they pass resolutions not to sell land to negroes, and not to hire negroes unless they can show a "consent-paper" from their former owner. In Beaufort District they not only refuse to sell land to negroes, but also refuse to rent it to them; and many black men have been told that they would be shot if they leased land and undertook to work for themselves. From Colleton District there are complaints that our own soldiers are being used as negro-drivers; and an old man from near St. George's showed me what he claimed was the wound of a bayonet, inflicted upon him by a soldier because he would not obey his orders in regard to the performance of a certain piece of work.

I have no hesitation in saying that the negro troops ought at once to be removed from the interior and put in garrison on the coast. I believe that the two Massachusetts regiments, and perhaps one New York regiment, have done their duty well, creditably to the States they represent, and honorably to the flag they bear; but, generally, the black regiments are wretchedly officered, and unless discipline is well kept up the presence of the negro soldiery is sadly demoralizing to the resident negroes. These have troubles enough without bearing those brought upon them by soldiers of their own race who are ruled by rude and rough and lawless white officers.

Not a little of the discontent among the blacks of ??, Charleston, and Colleton Districts, and some of the hostility of the whites toward the negroes in these districts, has, I am confident, been engendered by the presence of these badly officered negro troops. If their removal seems a concession to notorious and unrepentant Rebels, it is yet a concession demanded by the interests of the only loyal population in the three districts.

All these low-country districts are filled with negroes from the up-country, — not with negroes raised there, but with those taken up there during the war. Many of them have drifted down here in search of freedom, but a large proportion have, after the summer's work, been turned away from the plantations, and sent hither to live by begging or stealing. The cruelty of the old planters in this regard is shocking, and the tales told of the conduct of some of them would be past belief if they were not well authenticated.

The better class of planters in the districts hereabouts very much fear serious difficulty before spring with these homeless and wandering negroes. Hunger will lead, they say, to theft, and theft will lead to organizations of white men for protection of property; and these organizations will lead to conflicts between the negroes and the lower class of whites, in which the negroes will be worsted. That such an issue of the present condition of affairs is possible, I can very easily see; that it is probable, I do not incline to believe; that the majority of the large planters will seek to prevent it, I am quite certain.

If a "war of the races" is brought on in South Carolina, it can have but one result, unless the United States troops are made a third party to it. "We'ns smart nuff t' hold 'r own," said a scowling but intelligent negro to me at Orangeburg. And they are. Moreover, the whites of all these low-country districts know that fact, too.

Immigration is held to be the panacea for all present evils and troubles. One of the representatives elect from this city will make strong efforts to secure legislative action at the coming session of the General Assembly in favor of a bill granting State aid to foreign immigrants. The Yankee is not wanted here, except by the enlightened few; but Germans who will consent to take a secondary position will be welcomed. Yet even they, with their liberal and democratic ideas, are likely to encounter serious opposition during the next two or three years at least.

I have already alluded to the presence in this city of General Howard. The following is the order under which he is acting:—

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

General Order, No. 145.

Whereas, certain tracts of land situated on the coast of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, at the time for the most part vacant, were set apart, by Major-General W. T. Sherman's Special Field Order, No. 15, for the benefit of refugees and freedmen that had been congregated by the 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 the restoration of the same, and promising to absorb the labor and care for 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 the land-owners, and make 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,
Assistant Adjutant-General.

The publication of this order has produced considerable excitement and anticipative satisfaction among the rebellious portion of this community, and much anxiety among the friends of the freedmen. That the original intention of government in setting apart the Sea Islands was to either give or sell them to the freedmen I sincerely believe. That the negroes were al-

lowed to receive the impression that this was the purpose of the government is beyond all question. That General Saxton colonized them in vast numbers on those islands, with this understanding on his part and theirs, is matter of record. If the faith of the nation was ever impliedly pledged to anything, it was to the assurance that the colored people should have a home there, — as witness the famous order of General Sherman, approved by the Secretary of War, and practically indorsed for nearly nine months by all branches of the government:—

Head-quarters Military Division of the Mississippi,
In the Field, Savannah, Ga., January 16, 1865.

Special Field Order, No. 15.

I. The islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned ricefields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. John's River, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the negroes now made free by the acts of war and the proclamation of the President of the United States.

II. At Beaufort, Hilton Head, Savannah, Fernandina, St. Augustine, and Jacksonville the blacks may remain in their chosen or accustomed vocations; but on the islands and in the settlements hereafter to be established no white person whatever, unless military officers and soldiers detailed for duty, will be permitted to reside; and the sole and exclusive management of affairs will be left to the freed people themselves, subject only to the United States military authority and the acts of Congress. By the laws of war, and orders of the President of the United States, the negro is free, and must be dealt with as such. He cannot be subjected to conscription or forced military service, save by the written orders of the highest military authority of the Department, under such regulations as the President or Congress may prescribe. Domestic servants, blacksmiths, carpenters, and other mechanics will be free to select their own work and residence, but the young and able-bodied negroes must be encouraged to enlist as soldiers in the service of the United States, to contribute their share toward maintaining their freedom and securing their rights as citizens of the United States.

III. Whenever three respectable negroes, heads of families, shall desire to settle on land, and shall have selected for that purpose an island or a locality clearly defined, within the limits above designated, the Inspector of Settlements and Plantations will himself, or by such subordinate officer as he may appoint, give them a license to settle such island or district, and afford them such assistance as he can to enable them to establish a peaceable agricultural settlement. The three parties named will subdivide the land, under the supervision of the Inspector, among themselves and such other as may choose to settle near them, so that each family shall have a plot of not more than (40) forty acres of tillable ground, and when it borders on some water channel, with not more than eight hundred feet of water front, in the possession of which land the military authorities will afford

them protection, until such time as they can protect themselves, or until Congress shall regulate their title. The Quartermaster may, on the requisition of the Inspector of Settlements and Plantations, place at the disposal of the Inspector, one or more of the captured steamers, to ply between the settlements and one or more of the commercial points heretofore named in orders, to afford the settlers the opportunity to supply their necessary wants, and to sell the products of their land and labor.

IV. Whenever a negro has enlisted in the military service of the United States, he may locate his family in any one of the settlements at pleasure, and acquire a homestead, and all other rights and privileges of a settler, as though present in person. In like manner, negroes may settle their families and engage on board the gunboats, or in fishing, or in the navigation of the inland waters, without losing any claim to land or other advantage derived from this system. But no one, unless an actual settler as above defined, or unless absent on government service, will be entitled to claim any right to land or property in any settlement by virtue of these orders.

V. In order to carry out this system of settlement, a general officer will be detailed as Inspector of Settlements and Plantations, whose duty it shall be to visit the settlements, to regulate their police and general management, and who will furnish personally to each head of a family, subject to the approval of the President of the United States, a possessory title in writing, giving as near as possible the description of boundaries; and who shall adjust all claims or conflicts that may arise under the same, subject to the like approval, treating such titles altogether as possessory. The same general officer will also be charged with the enlistment and organization of the negro recruits, and protecting their interests while absent from their settlements; and will be governed by the rules and regulations prescribed by the War Department for such purposes.

VI. Brigadier-General R. Saxton is hereby appointed Inspector of Settlements and Plantations, and will at once enter on the performance of his duties. No change is intended or desired in the settlement now on Beaufort Island, nor will any rights to property heretofore acquired be affected thereby.

By order of Major-General W. T. Sherman.

L. M. Dayton,
Assistant Adjutant-General.

If this order means anything, it means that the government intended to give the negroes "an expectation that they would be able to retain possession of said lands"; and if the President's order of the 9th does not break the implied national pledge, then everybody in Charleston fails to comprehend its spirit and purpose.

The ex-Rebel owners of the islands are quite ready to make promises, which one in five may perhaps keep. Yet I talked with one this forenoon who doesn't believe a free negro will work, who expects to have control of his

land by Christmas or New Year's, and who is already devising ways to get rid of the negroes upon it. The city property of the most virulent Rebels is being restored to them as fast as possible under executive orders; and the common conclusion of all classes that General Howard must find a "satisfactory arrangement" is held to be justified by the action in respect to other property. In a word, the interpretation of the order is, that he is to make the best terms he can for the freedmen, and then surrender the islands to their former owners. If anything better than this results from his mission, the people of Charleston will have a new grievance, and the freedman and his resident friends a new cause for rejoicing, and for thankfulness to Him whose promises are yea and amen unto all men.

Three days ago General Howard went down to Edisto Island in company with a representative of the old owners thereof. They were met at a church by over two thousand freedmen, and a long and painfully interesting meeting was held. To say that the negroes were overwhelmed with sorrow and dissatisfaction is to state a fact in sober phrase. General Howard explained to them with careful and sympathetic words what he believed to be the wishes of the President, and asked them to appoint a committee to consider the terms proposed by the planters. This they did; and while the committee were in consultation, the assembly sang several of the most touching and mournful of the negro songs, and were addressed in broken and tearful words by some of their own preachers. The scarcely concealed spirit of all was that the government had deceived them, and it required the most earnest efforts of General Howard and his associates to keep this spirit from finding stormy outbreak. The result of the conference between representative Whaley and the Freedmen's Committee does not promise a speedy reconciliation of the negroes to their removal from the lands. They say that they will not, under any circumstances, work with overseers as heretofore, which is what the planters propose. Some few of them seemed willing to work for fair wages, but the great body were anxious to rent or buy the lands, to which the planters will not consent.

General Howard has represented the difficulties of the case to the President in strong terms. I am sure he will do his hard task with all possible consideration for the interests of the freedmen. He has issued some orders in the premises, the main features of which are, that the agents of the bureau on the several islands are to constitute boards of supervisors representing the government, the planters, and the freedmen; and that no lands occupied by negroes are to be restored till the planters engage to give the freedmen all the crops of this year, secure them in their homes, and pay them fair wages for the work of the coming year.

I have no idea this bargain will or can be carried out, because, first, the planters will not agree to their part of it; and, second, the negroes will not give up the islands on such terms. The South-Carolinians are reasonably well disposed toward the government, because they know the folly of further resistance to it; but their general hostility and antipathy to the negro is

something remarkable to see. The planters believe they ought to have their old estates, and they also believe the President means that they shall have them; and hence the "fair terms" which they propose are such as will neither satisfy the freedmen nor the friends of the freedmen. The negroes, on the other hand, almost universally believe that the islands have been given to them, and they are not likely to very readily relinquish that belief. They long ago lost all faith in their old masters. An attempt to force them from the islands at present, or to compel them to the acceptance of the terms proposed by the planters, will overthrow their faith in the government, and then there will be—bloodshed.