ADDRESS OF THE

American Freedmen's Aid Commission.

This organization has been called into existence by an obvious necessity. Its primary purpose is to simplify and give national unity to the operations comprehensively known as the Freedmen's Aid Move-Co-extensive with the country, it includes in its composition all the State Freedmen's Associations

already established, and their auxiliaries, with proviaion for the addition of such others as may hereafter be formed.

Its ultimate object is indicated by its name— Freedmen's Aid Commission. It is to aid the new-ly-liberated blacks to overcome the difficulties of their new position; to assist them in the trials of their transition state; to help (in cooperation with the Government's Bureau) to place them in a condition in which further help shall not be needed. The measures on which it depends for the accom-

plishment of its object are chiefly the provision of material supplies for the relief of extreme physical vant, and the maintenance in service of competent teachers to give instruction in rudimentary learning.

For the purpose of procuring these supplies and supporting these teachers; of purchasing the books, slates, stationery and other accompaniments needed in the work of instruction; the Commission relies upon the liberality and patriotism of the American people. The adequacy of the measures described to the end proposed has been abundantly proven. The ele-vating effect of the Freedmen's School, wherever established, has been immediate and palpable. Its in-

direct influence upon the people around has been quite as striking as its direct action upon its immediate pupils. The lessons of the school are repeated in the cabin; the effect upon the cabin reacts upon the school; and thus the two, by their mutual action and reaction, improve and elevate each other-to the benefft of all concerned. In proof of this, and illustration as well, we refer to the history and results of every Freedmen's establishment in the Southern States. In South Carolina, where the work was first begun,

and where its subjects were among the least promising, the results have been such as to convince the most skeptical. Herds of human chattels, impelled by force, have been converted into communities of

human beings, regulated by law. Ten thousand ignorant blacks, degraded to the lowest point within the power of slavery, have been lifted up to a condition of comparative intelligence. These now constitute a self-supporting, law-shiding, wealth-producing community; and one more orderly, or better behaved, may not easily be found. While the able-bodied among them have helped to fight our battles in the field, others, not fit for military duty, have raised food and forage for the army; the children, meanwhile, being in the schools, fitting themselves for the graver responsibilities yet in reserve for them. Receiving wages for their labor, many of these peo-ple have acquired property, and some of them comparative wealth. A few have become planters on their own account. A Freedman's Bank has been established in Beaufort, in which, on the first of July, six months after it was started, upwards of \$150,000 were placed on deposit by men who but a little while ago were plantation slaves. It is noticeable—as was

As slaves, their needs were comprised in a few articles, absolutely necessary to maintain existence. Now they are indefinitely extended by the opportuni-ties and desires which are furnished and stimulated by freedom. Stores have been established among them Northern capital, at which goods are sold, amounting, in the course of the year, to hundreds of thousand of dollars. A single one of these stores, established by a gentleman in Boston for the benefit of a single neighborhood, sold goods in the last year amounting \$90,000. What has been said of the Freedmen's enterprise in South Carolina may be asserted with equal truth of every other similar undertaking in the Southern States. In a late authenticated report from the Freed-

to be expected—that in proportion as these freedmen rise in the scale of civilization, they acquire its wants.

men's Bureau, it is stated that " in Mississippi, nearly 10,000 acres of land are being worked exclusively by freedmen on their own account. At Davis's Bend, the families are organized into a laboring community, They bave with an allotted portion of land for each. established courts for themselves, choosing the officers at large; and the decisions of the judge have been carried into effect by the superintendent of the colony. The plan has worked well, and the people take great interest in their elections. They choose their best men; and they have recently elected a school board to serve six months. Their industry has been stimulated by their own ambition, without the control of

white men, or threat of punishment. Physicians who practise among them receive their pay as among whites. The shopkeepers are colored. The Govern

It is not claimed that all the improvement noticesble in the condition of Southern blacks is due

Freedmen's Aid Associations. The necessities, the

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ment rations are being repaid by crops.

opportunities, the sufferings, even, incidental to the condition of freedom, have been sure allies in the work of education. Nor would we derogate from the credit due to the Freedmen's Bureau for much of the progress that has lately been made in this good work. On the contrary, we join heartily in the testimony generally

borne to the usefulness of this department of the Government, and are ready to do what we can to strengthen the hands of the gentleman who is head. But that we do not over estimate the efficacy of our own instrumentalities, we have that gentleman's emphatic testimony. In a recent published letter, addressed to this Commission, he says: "Education underlies every hope of success for the freedmen. Everything depends on the youth and the children being thoroughly instructed in every industrial pur-suit. Through education, embracing moral and religious training, the fearful prejudice and hostility against the blacks can be overcome. They themselves will be able to demand and receive both privileges and rights that we now have difficulty to guar-Therefore, I carnestly entreat benevolent associations to leave no stone unturned to give them the opportunities for gaining knowledge."

In dwelling at such length upon the importance of education, we would not be understood as depreciating the necessity of physical relief. Such relief, for a little while, at least, is imperatively called for. The period of transition from Slavery to Freedom is, under any circumstances, embarrassed with difficulties; but when it occurs amid the desolation of war, and with a people despised and hated, the difficulties must of necessity be greatly aggravated. threatens to bring upon the The coming winter Added to the many

freedmen extreme suffering. other causes of this, is the restoration to their former owners of abandoned lands and confiscated estates. This will deprive thousands of confiding loyal people This will deprive thousands of confiding loyal people of homes, and of the fruits of their industry, on which they were depending for support.

A condition of things such as this makes appeals to the humanity and sense of justice of the people, which cannot be allowed to go unfeeded. These people must be helped in this their trying hour. Much of this help must come from the North. It is the work left to us from the war. It is necessary in additional contents of the people o

country, the full blessings of emancipation. sure step in the way of reconstruction. It is sential to the proper reorganization-civil, social and individual-of Southern society, and to the interests and honor of the nation. All classes of people are interested in the success of this work, and we invoke the aid of all. We call

to restore to the blacks and whites, and to the whole

work left to us from the war.

the people, and upon the churches to contribute liberally to its support. We call upon the editors of newspapers—religious or accular, literary or political—to give us the benefit of their assistance. As conservators of the public weal, this matter concerns them intimately. We call upon merchants and man-ufacturers—upon artisans and capitalists—for their hearty cooperation: for this is a work which has its well-defined commercial aspects, not less than its phi-lanthropic attractions. We call upon all classes of lanthropic attractions. invoking them by their gratitude for services people, rendered, and their shame for wrongs inflicted, to aid in this great work of humanity and justice. Let it be remembered that these people—slaves by our concurrence—came forward in the nation's trial hour, and by their bravery helped to turn the tide of battle in our favor. Shall we repay such generosity with neglect and indifference? The thought of such base-ness is not for a moment to be endured! What has already been done in this behalf forbids any such apprehension. During the past year, one thousand teachers have been maintained among the freedmen, giving instruction to 100,000 pupils. Sunday schools, evening schools and industrial schools have been established

in addition, while not less than twenty asylums have on maintained for the benefit of colored orphans. These are encouraging facts, but they are but the beginning of what needs to be done. The number of teachers and schools should be multiplied seven-fold, and the other instrumentalities in proportion; and that without delay. For the means of doing this we look to the people. No further argument need to be added. The case once fairly understood and fully appreciated, the desired results will be sure to follow.

We cannot suppose that such an opportunity for the

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advantageous investment of large will escape the attention of the many good men of ample means and generous purposes, who constantly illustrate the annals of philanthropy with wise and no ble benefactions. Probably in no other direction can the benevolent now look with just expectations of so prompt and gratifying returns for means invested, The eager zeat with which these rapidly rising mil-lions seize upon every aid to betterment, their unprecodented and almost incredible desire to be taught all useful learning, indicate a soil ready for good seed, as soil is rarely ready, and from which no wise husbandman can well retrain his open hand. Contributions may be addressed to George C. Ward, Treasurer, 56 Wall street, New York. Correspondence may be addressed to the Secretary, at the General Office, in Washington.

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