

object of the bureau being to make the blacks self-supporting. Number 9 forbade the removal of destitute refugees to points in the South where it was difficult to procure food or labor. Number 10 declared with emphasis that abandoned property of every description, including funds collected by tax and otherwise, or accruing from abandoned lands, be turned over to the authorized agents of the bureau. It further declared that no claim for the restoration of any such property would be entertained by district commanders; it predicted the speedy advent of the time when the Government would cease to supply physical necessities. In July full and accurate reports were demanded of the number of refugees and freedmen, anywhere and everywhere within reach of the assistant commissioners, whether self-supporting or not; of the amount and value of supplies of all kinds given out to them; of all lands held for their use and benefit, with every fact pertaining thereto; of the number of schools, scholars, and teachers under the direction of the commissioners; and of all officers and civilians on duty with and employed by them. At the same time plain directions were given respecting labor-contracts, the mode of securing their fulfillment, and the protection of the laborer in his wages; all courts and tribunals are declared opened to the injured negro: compulsory unpaid toll is pronounced intolerable; officers of the bureau are solemnly warned that no substitute or apology for slavery will be borne with for a moment, and that the principles, laws, and regulations of the bureau must be insisted on and observed.

From this it may be understood dimly what work was to be done, and what energy was employed in doing it. The intelligence, patience, courage, and independence of General Howard can not be too much praised. The chief of the bureau is a man of the right stamp. The function of a department like this can hardly be indicated in a newspaper article. It was four-fold.

1. To regulate labor. A system of contracts was agreed on as the best that could be devised. Employers were furnished with laborers, and the wages of the employed were secured by lien on the crops or something else. Agents established intelligence offices in the large towns, made a census of the people, and undertook to bring employers and employed together. In this way idle and improvident masses were broken up, and the working powers were distributed over the country. Abandoned houses and lands were rented to colored people or their employers, and thus rambling, drifting labor became fixed. Freedmen were, in many cases, employed by the Government in cultivating estates which it was judged imprudent to dispose of by rental or sale; and the proceeds of their toil went into the national treasury, or accumulated for the benefit of the black laborers. All these devices worked well so far as they worked at all. Gen. Howard says, "The success has been even greater than we could have anticipated." No pains were spared to promote industry. When benevolence had to be called in, it was turned into the least objectionable channel, used in the maintenance of industrial schools, and limited strictly to the hour and the species of need. "The consequence of all this labor and vigilance," to use again the language of Gen. Howard, "that the National Government is now obliged to keep and take care of fewer negroes than white people."

2. The bureau undertakes to promote education among the black people. This is a much harder task than the regulation of labor, because it requires a kind of material which neither the Southern country nor the Government can furnish. The hundreds—nay, thousands—of teachers of different grades that are demanded can be supplied only by large, educated communities. They must be very carefully selected, and the employment of them entails a heavy expense. The War Department is clearly incompetent to take in hand such a task as the engaging of an army of instructors for many states. The bureau accordingly confines its action here to the supply of accommodations, the cheapening of support, and the assurance of protection. It also appoints a superintendent of schools for each state, charged to exercise general supervision over all the schools under his care. All the rest must be given by the self-sacrificing spirit of the Northern people. They must choose the teachers, commission them, pay them, keep regulation of them, and be responsible for their utility. The establishment of the bureau, therefore, so far from dispensing with the services of the various Freedmen's Aid Societies among us, will immensely increase the work they endeavor to do, and by giving greatly enlarged facilities of operation, will render necessary greatly enlarged means of support. The function of these societies will be limited more and more to a single undertaking. They will be relieved of the duty of sending material aid to the freedmen in the shape of groceries and old clothes; but their educational duties will call for more perfect organizations, more numerous agencies, and more plethora of funds than they have possessed hitherto. True, the blacks are glad to do something in aid of the maintenance of their own schools when they can. Gen. Howard asserts that they attend most readily on those schools where they are obliged to pay the most. Still, it will be a very long time yet before the Northern people will be justified in withholding their liberal pecuniary aid toward this noble cause. Gen. Howard's calls for teachers are loud and urgent. But he has no money to pay them; they cannot be provided without remuneration; and unless the munificence of our people is more lavish than it has been hitherto, the progress made in educating the blacks will be very far indeed behind the mark of duty and opportunity.

3. The bureau has much to do in the way of simple relief. It must have orphan asylums, homes, and hospitals under its supervision, if not under its management. It must protect the outcast, feed the starving, provide refuge for the old, the abandoned, the infirm, and medical attendance for the wounded and sick. An immense task this, at present, requiring power, wisdom, and kindness in no common measure. The work is the harder because it must not be carried so far as to create imbecility, or to interfere with the natural action of social causes, the moment they are allowed to come into play.

4. The last and perhaps the most arduous labor undertaken by the bureau—a labor which nevertheless it does not shrink from, but meets manfully—is that of securing justice to the freedmen. The military power is all the time relaxing; and, at the best, the military power is but a precarious reliance here. Officers and soldiers are seldom mindful of black men's rights, and the worst injustice is often perpetrated by the representatives of the War Department. Gen. Howard has established courts, in which the testimony of freedmen is received. Work enough have these courts to do; right bravely and unflinchingly they do it. Injustice dies hard; but it dies. We could cite many cases, did our limits

permit, to illustrate the manner in which they labor night and day, at maintaining the freedman's rights. The bureau will honestly aid the Government in keeping its solemn promise of freedom to the black race. It tries to bring families together, to invest the marriage right with solemnity, to discourage libertinism and infidelity. It discourages the custom of appointing children without their parents' consent; a custom which opens a way for the return of slavery under a more insidious and fatal form. It attempts to break up, so far as it can do so, the unnatural relations incident to the old order of things, and to substitute the new order of social human existence. Having this work before it, the bureau keeps clear of all political affiliations, promulgates no political theories, lends itself to no political movements. Its duty is the very simple one of promoting the social regeneration of the South by relieving want, developing industry, extending the advantages of education, and securing impartial justice for all men; and this duty it performs in an eminently sagacious, direct, practical, business-like, and thorough manner. Gen. Howard is opposed to the establishment of the bureau as a permanent institution. His use he regards as provisional merely: he looks forward to the time when it shall be no more wanted, and he labors to hasten that time.

It is needless to say, after what we have written, that we are abundantly satisfied with the result of this new experiment thus far. Considering the brief period of its trial in the summer months, the confusion it had to face, the difficulties it had to encounter, its lack of pecuniary resources, the vagueness of its responsibility and power, it must be pronounced a great success. If it continues as it has begun, it will contribute largely to the social regeneration of the country.

## THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU.

WHEN Major-General Howard came to Richmond, last spring, with the Army of the Tennessee, there came to him a telegram from Washington, bidding him report immediately to the Secretary of War. He straightway left his command, and, on arriving in Washington, was made chief of the newly-formed "Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands," which was organized under the War Department. Gen. Howard was not an anti-slavery man when he war broke out, and he had resided for several months in a Southern state. But the war thoroughly converted him. As a soldier, he traversed Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and the Carolinas. The four years of the war were spent by him mostly in the South; he saw black people in hundreds; he was in constant intercourse with them. He saw their former masters, too; visited the plantations, observed their condition, and made himself familiar with all the kinds of work that slavery did. When the new position was offered him, he was prepared to accept it intelligently, honestly, and with all the devotion of a clear Christian heart.

The work to be done was vast and indefinite, as the title of the bureau intimates; and it lay all before him, not so much as staked out. There was no organization Congress had made no appropriation of money. The necessary officers, agents, clerks, commissioners had to be detailed from the army, because such already received salaries. Gen. Howard took pains to secure for his purposes men whom he knew to be friends of the black people. Sub-districts were mapped out corresponding to the military sub-districts; military officers were appointed sub-agents; and use was made of the military government already established at the South.

"Orders" issued from the new bureau in swift succession. Circular Number 1 announced his appointment and headquarters. Circular Number 2, dated at Washington May 10th, declares his intention to assign commissioners to the several districts, specifies their authority and function, directs that all applications for relief be made to them; strikes the key-note of the chief's purposes as regards labor, education, and moral influence; and enumerates the beneficence of the North to supply the instrumentalities which the Government had neglected to provide. Number 3 (May 22) orders that the abandoned lands then under cultivation by freedmen should be retained in their possession until the crops then growing should be fairly secured for their benefit, and should in no case be restored to disloyal persons by any military authority. Number 4 calls a special meeting of officers and teachers at Washington. Number 5 contains the revised plans for the conduct of the general work. Order Number 4, from Vicksburg, proclaimed the intention of the bureau to provide school-houses and quarters, and supply of rations at Government prices, for the teachers whom the different societies at the North should send, and promised to render as much aid beside as might be practicable. Number 8 (June 20) specified the rations which would be issued to adult refugees and freedmen who had no employment from Government, and no means of self-subsistence; the rations to be issued for short periods of time, not exceeding seven days, and to be stopped the moment actual necessity ceases; the