



THE
ASSEMBLY
HERALD

Vol. 12 No. 2

FEBRUARY

The Official
Publication
of the Presby-
terian Church
in the U.S.A.

1906

in England, proving the inability of the Great Eastern to cross the Atlantic, just as she had reached our shores. When Hopeful can see the development and elevation of the boys and girls under the patient care of a Satterfield, a Smith, a Lucy Laney, a Sanders, an Amos, or many another, he smiles at the despondency which is unmoved by such signs of progress, after centuries of slavery and degradation.

Perhaps Doubtful repeats the remark that education and progress make the negro insolent and unwilling to be a hewer of wood. But Hopeful gently reminds him that this has been the stock argument against all popular education, against any elevation, as much used against the Irish, the Hunga-

rians as against the black. Education is a peril, and all the more should it be surrounded with moral influence; but ignorance will not create industrious habits, or repress vice, passion, lawlessness and crime.

Then Doubtful may enumerate the instances of increased violence and of viciousness since slavery was abolished and look despondently at the future. But Hopeful waves his hand again toward the peaceful and industrious thousands, and reminds us that no people is fit for liberty without moral education, and that even these sporadic cases, so truly exceptional, call Christians to seek the regeneration and elevation of this race for the safety of all.

A White Woman's Handshake

By Rev. S. J. Fisher, D.D.

"We've heard a heap that was 'ligious and liftin.' It helps me to rear up my chillen every time a white woman shakes my hand." Such was the remark of a negro woman at the close of a Mothers' Meeting held in Tennessee among the negroes. What a revelation it is of the craving these poor hearts have for the truths and counsels which they soon recognize are religious and uplifting! It is no little thing to give these ignorant souls glimpses of a better and higher life; and how true it is, as was said long ago: "Where there is no vision the people perish!" Deeply suggestive also is the declaration that the kindly handshake of the white woman gives courage and incentive to train her children. For sympathy is a great power. It stimulates to renewed effort. It inspires with the feeling of kinship and responsibility. The handshake wakens to better ideals and creates a noble ambition. It stirred this humble negro mother to long and strive that her children might grow up to purity and loveliness of life. It taught her that the best thing she could give her children was an upright character, a true heart, an honest life. Just as Harlan Page's hand on John B. Gough's shoulder helped him to struggle from a

drunkard's life, so the kindness and sympathy of the white man toward the negro is a call to a better life. And thus the work our Church is carrying on among the freedmen gives every member a chance to speak uplifting words, and show an interest in these humble natures. Through our missionaries and teachers each one of us can inspire these ignorant and groping souls with better longings and holy desires. You shake these toilworn, dusky hands; you let fall into these untaught minds some quickening counsel; when you give and pray that this work among the freedmen may be carried on and you make its missionaries your fellow-workers. Nothing is more cheering than the multiplied instances of negro parents who have learned to desire better things for their children and of sons and daughters who have returned from our schools, from the counsel and influence of our teachers with new desires for purity, and an ambition for an honest and useful life. Situated as they are—burdened, hampered, limited as they are—it will be many years before these negroes shall not need the blessed help and encouragement and counsel of our missions to the freedmen.