Ans-2/14 901

Tribune Building, Room 91,

New York, Feb. 15, 1901.

Mr. John S. Phillips,

Dear Mr. Phillips:

Thinking over the conversation I had with you these thoughts came into my mind, and as they seemed in line with your work in hand I send them to you. If they be of any use in suggesting ideas profitable or helpful to you in the performance of your task I will be amply repaid for the labor of writing you:

In the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia during the Civil War both the Federal and Confederate armies were constantly marching up and down, and the path of an invading or retreating army is always marked by greater or less destruction. This section, as well as the country to the east of the Blue Ridge extending eastward to the Potomac River, had been marched over, fought over, and burned over until the soil beneath one's feet and the air we breathed was about all that was left to us, and even these were poisoned with the taint of destruction -- the work of fire and sword.

The counties of Loudoun and Fauquier -- at least the portion between the Blue Ridge and the Bull Run Mountains -- in November, 1864, was the scene of operations in an attempt to dislodge or annihilate Mosby and his band. (See the Reports in the War Records for that period, published by the U. S.

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Government). This whole section of country down to the Potomac River was laid waste by the Federal forces under Generals Custer and Merritt. Closing in on what was supposed to be Mosby's stronghold, they poured in through the Gaps of the Blue Ridge; crossed the Potomac from the Maryland shore, and coming up from the camps in Fairfax, overran the country. It was thought, as a Federal General expressed it, "there was no escape for Mosby and his Men." The country was thoroughly gone over -- barns, stables, buildings of all kinds, haystacks wheat and straw -- everything capable of sustaining life was burned or destroyed; horses, cattle and stock were killed or carried off; everything threatened was accomplished except the chief object of the expedition -- the capture or destruction of Mosby and his Men -- who remained there until after the surrender of Gen. Lee.

The close of the War consequently found this section in a condition better imagined than described. Yet the people did not lose heart, they went to work -- under very discouraging prospects it is true, and with little or no means.

An old friend of mine who owned nearly two thousand acres of land, from which the only revenue then to be derived was in the shape of taxes to the State -- making him a poorer instead of a richer man. He went to Baltimore and borrowed money, giving a mortgage on his land. With this money he purchased a lot of horses at a Government sale, (the condemned

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army horses and mules were then being sold at auction, as the Government had no further use for them). These he put out to rest and graze on his waste land, and when they were in good condition he sold them to the farmers around who had lost all their stock during the War. In this way he was enabled to get a new start in life.

Major Richards, of Mosby's command, at the close of the War took up the study of law and is now a Judge in Louisville, Ky. So with many young men of the South who never before had been taught or felt the necessity of work, when the struggle ended they laid down their arms and took their position in the army of workers in some trade or profession.

The Negroes.--In old slave days for the negro there was no incentive to thrift or economy. It was the same to him whether he worked or played in one sense; his wants were supplied; his rations were dealt out to him; clothes were provided. If he was sick he received attention. Shelter, food and clothes he regarded as nothing -- the master provided such for him and there was nothing further to trouble him. Is it surprising then that when the negro was set free his changed condition in life should work no magical transformation in his general and habits? He did not possess the intelligence or instinct of the animal, or even the ant or bee, to lay up something in time of plenty for days of scarcity, and when thrown on his own resources he was like a child. There are

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certain characteristics of the negro which are innate or inborn, and there are other traits, or as I might term them, individualisms; but aside from these, the negro, being of an imitative nature, receives his education in a great measure from his surroundings. Where he had a shiftless master the negro naturally drifted along with the current; but where the master was thrifty and industrious the negro followed his example. I think you will find, as a general rule, that those slaves who had thrifty masters fared best; many settled down to work and now they or their descendants possess little homes of their own. I know of numerous instances of this kind.

With best wishes for your success, I remain

Yours very truly,

J. D. Williamson

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