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5-6 Letter to Mr. Page March 22, 1899

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MARCH 22, 1899

Box No. 7
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PC # 6

My dear Mr. Page:

March 22, 1899

I have been reading the March Atlantic, and have not found a dull line in it. The contrast between slavery struggling for existence in an essentially free democracy, and liberty struggling vainly for life in a despotism, is strongly marked in Mrs. Howe's Reminiscences of Prince Kropotkin and autobiography. The dialect story is one of the sort ~~that~~ ~~make~~ ~~me~~ ~~feel~~ ~~of~~ ~~southern~~ ~~stones~~ that make me feel it my duty to ^{try to} write (a different sort, and yet I did not lay it down without a tear of genuine ~~em~~ ~~otion~~ ~~the~~ ~~addressing~~ ~~pages~~ ~~more~~ ~~interesting~~ for two reasons - because of the very handsome characterization of my book, and the announcement that you are ~~to~~ ~~write~~ ~~in~~ ~~series~~

on the race problem.

I have known for some days that you were in the South, and I guessed that you had gone down there to see if you could help pour oil on the troubled waters in North Carolina. I hope your labors have not been in vain. Others have been trying to do something in the same line. I have a letter in my pocket from a colored man who holds a minor office at Washington, but who is an influential citizen at his home in North Carolina, and a member of the board of directors of ~~the State~~ ~~College~~ an Agricultural & Mechanical College. He has been down there four times since Christmas, ~~to do what~~ he could with "where he spent some time" he says, "dealing with that d— wild legislature. Of course

I am not compelled to go back there to live, but feel that is my duty to do anything I can for those poor negroes who cannot help themselves.

I read the other day a letter from a colored woman, a North Carolinian who lives in Washington. In it she says:

"I have no further use for U.C. Never again will I sing her praises. She has fallen so low that she can never be redeemed in my estimation. — expresses the hope that the cooler judgment of wiser heads will prevail and that ~~there will be~~ ~~no~~ ~~legislation~~ ~~will~~ ~~be~~ ~~made~~ ~~a~~ ~~gainst~~ ~~the~~ ~~negro~~ ~~whom~~ ~~will~~ ~~be~~ ~~hurtful~~ ~~to~~ ~~him~~. But I entertain no such hope. I believe they are capable of anything which will humiliate self respecting colored people."

~~A. J. [unclear]~~ This letter was written
 This was

#4
In another letter received yesterday,
~~sent~~ from Wilmington, the writer
characterizes the town as a place
"where no negro can enjoy the
blessed privilege of free speech
and a free press, and where
every organization, whether
social, political or industrial,
undertaken by our race, must
needs meet with opposition from
the whites, incited by jealousy
and envy. If we did not
read of "better times in other
climes" we would indeed
be enduring a living death.

It would be a great privilege
for me to talk with you about
what you heard and saw
there, and I hope to have it
ere many months. I know
your views in general on these sub-
jects, and have no doubt that
you have heard a great deal

1899

indications it seems
that such is to be the
order of the day for some
time to come, ^{with difficulty to come} ~~of~~ more
outrageously unjust and
unconstitutional law than
the franchise amendment
proposed in N.C. But I could
write on the subject for a week,
& I therefore refrain; and I
am really wasting time, for
I know that whatever personal
or editorial influence you may
have will be thrown in on
the side of justice and equity.
I will say, however, that the Su-
preme Court of the U.S. is in
my opinion a dangerous
place for a colored man to ~~the~~
~~seek~~ seek justice. He may
go there with ^{mained} rights; he is apt
to come away with none at
all, and with an adverse decision
shutting out even the
hope of any future protection.

there; for the doctrine of stare
decisis is as strongly entrenched
there as the hopeless ^{superiority}
of the Anglo-Saxon is in the
Southern States.

Your house have turned down
my novel "Kena" in great shape
They have condemned the ~~plot~~
its development, ~~and~~ find the
distinctions on which it is
based ~~unimportant~~, and
have predicted for it nothing
but failure. I have not
I slept with that story for
ten years without falling in love
with it and believing ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ it,
and I should feel very unhappy
about it if it came back
without your having read it
— ~~and~~ ^{if} you have not.
The fact that ^{in the rough} it met with
your approval, was my chief in-
centive in re-writing it. Whether
I took the wrong tack in any

revision I don't know, perhaps
I did; but if you find time,
I should like you to read it
— even if it is already
disposed of — in order that
I may be able to discuss it
with you when I see you
again. If the distinctions
on which that story is based
are so unimportant as to
foredoom to failure any story
based on them, then I have
yet to find my metrics as a
story writer, for they are my
strong card, I firmly believe.

~~I see an Atlantic ad. appearing~~
I see an Atlantic ad. appearing
in the New York Age; the editor
is a manly man, and not
afraid to speak out what he has
to say, ^{if sometimes a little interpreted}. The people he represents
so well are finding eyes as well
as voices, and they have only to see
them to see that in the Atlantic they have
a staunch friend, ~~which I feel~~
(over)

at a time when they need friends more than ever.
Sincerely yours,