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Alaska—From the Missionary Standpoint

By David Owen Ghormley, D.D., Tacoma, Washington.

One of two things is necessary in a profitable mission field, a great population or resources which will bring people. Alaska has both.

Her native population is estimated at twenty-five thousand souls,—sufficient to interest the Church in their salvation, were there no contingent reasons for giving them the gospel.

Her unlimited commercial resources will attract an increasing population for many years. Under these conditions Alaska is a most interesting missionary field. The combination is peculiar. The natives must be evangelized—the new-comers must have the gospel or be allowed the license of sin in a country where law and order are not as carefully observed as they should be.

In Alaska two races different in every way must be evangelized. The native looks upon the country as his. Every inroad of the incoming population limits his opportunities and he does not understand how to adjust himself to the new conditions. Unfortunately the natives have not been protected in their rights as they expected, and instead of the freedom they once enjoyed find themselves creatures of uncongenial conditions.

This state of affairs has been brought about by the whites, who are supposed to be Christian. Under such conditions it is difficult to convince the native that he should become a Christian. However, the native must be evangelized if Alaska is saved. He is everywhere, a factor in the commercial, economic and moral forces of the country. He cannot be eliminated, therefore must be evangelized.

It is said the natives are a dying race. If that be true it behooves the present generation to give the gospel to a people for whom Christ died. While it is true that



KA-NAYS, NINETY-SEVEN YEARS OLD.

Once a dreaded warrior, now a convert to Christianity.
Port Tongass, fifty-four miles south of Saxman.

many die, it is also true that they are being absorbed. The number of intermarriages is our proof. How important therefore that the natives know Christ.

Board for Freedmen

EDWARD P. COWAN, D.D., SECRETARY.

Oases in a Moral Desert

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

It is said that the wells which are being sunk in the African desert are creating or enlarging oases, and widening the circle of their verdure. Each well affords life to a large number of date palms, and these wells have made it possible for a million more people to find homes and support there.

The religious and educational work among the Southern negroes is creating similar moral oases, and it is interesting and encouraging to watch the development of such spots of health and blessing and nobler life.

A Group of Four

In Georgia, for example, there are within a radius of not many miles four places where our Freedmen's Board is assisting earnest and intelligent workers to uplift and rightly educate the colored people. It is only forty years since these people were flung out into liberty, and the most of them without the knowledge of a letter or a trade, and as helpless as children. As an old man in South Carolina said to me, "When the war ended I had four children, but I wasn't any more than a baby. I did not know anything."

1. Washington, Ga.

To-day at Washington, Ga., there is a thriving school held in a brick building, which the Board was able to purchase at a reduced price, and near by is a plain frame church. Here Rev. Mr. Harris and wife have been exerting a quiet but ever widening influence over the people of their race. The training in sewing and domestic work, in typesetting and printing, is a most help-

ful adjunct of the substantial education they are giving these children. When the Roman Catholic day school for negro children (an infrequent institution in the South) was closed, the larger number immediately entered our school—so good was its reputation. Brother Harris is anxious to obtain funds to build a girls' dormitory, for which there is ample ground, so that the outlying farming district can send in their children, and also that the girls may be taught housework, cleanliness, and given a thorough education, which in many cases is now impossible. So marked is the influence of this school that the white people of the best sort, the white Presbyterian minister especially, unsolicited, express their confidence and regard.

2. Union Point, Ga.

Westward and southward at Union Point Mr. LeConte and his wife are creating another oasis which grows more and more fair. He has built in the negro section of this little town a neat frame church, as yet unsealed, to which children come four and five miles from the outlying country. He has built himself a pleasant home, and is planning a simple and inexpensive building as a girls' dormitory, as in his own house he has now a few girl boarders, and he wishes to reach the unschooled farming regions at a distance. Here also a careful and prudent work, a wise and tactful and upright life has won a good reputation among the whites, and made them his friends. Church and school are slowly pushing their verdure of morality and intelligence out into the barren life around, and the negroes of the vicinity are learning to appreciate a purer and more earnest and useful way of living.

3. Augusta, Ga.

Southward lies Augusta, a most pleasant city, with its famous hotels, its broad streets and shady parks. But most interesting to many of us is that beehive of educational and religious work, Haines Institute, over which the queen bee (but not like most queen bees, inert and waited upon), Miss Laney, hovers and toils. It reminds you of a beehive with its hum of active scholars—more than six hundred—filling the attractive McGregor Hall, that wise and generous gift of the elect lady whose name it bears. Yet even this large and convenient building is not sufficient, for there is a primary or kindergarten room—the “Grand” room, as Miss Laney calls it—where there are grandchildren of some of the first pupils of the Institute. And what a strong, elevating influence this great school is exerting. In its laboratory, where of course the instruction must be simple and limited, yet most useful, Prof. Turner is doing an inestimable work. He is giving those bright youth a knowledge of the necessary facts of chemistry, of botany, of growth of plant and quality of soil. From this Institute there go out teachers for the lower and higher schools, and how important it is that they shall possess some thorough knowledge of chemical facts so as to inform and benefit the people among whom they dwell.

At first blush it may seem to some an unnecessary task to impart such branches of education, but a little consideration will convince you that such facts can be of great profit and blessing, especially in regions where a knowledge of soils and plant life is not only rare, but necessary for profitable farming. As an illustration of such benefits I may cite the talk which Prof. Turner gives at Farmers' Institutes on soil and fertilizers, and household chemistry and economy.

If some liberal man or woman would give generously to this department, and endow it with greater resources, a work of unspeakable usefulness might be carried on and the desert made to blossom as the rose.

In its small industrial building Haines

Institute is doing a special work. Here carpentry in all its branches is taught, also printing, sewing, etc. Recently the chairs of the Government building were sent to this school to be re-seated with cane, and the work of the boys was entirely satisfactory.

I received a very plain hint from the teacher in charge of this department that a jig-saw was greatly needed to complete the resources of the shop, which possesses electric power, and I shall be glad if some generous person, who believes in the industrial education, will immediately supply this want. Attached to the dynamo it will help the scholars to produce even nicer tables, chairs, bureaus and bookcases than those they are now turning out.

But the quiet influence of this school, as in our others, is in its cleanliness, sweeping, washing, cooking, the education which makes the difference between a home and a hovel. And round about this Institute you can see in the neat houses rising more and more in the scale of paint and good repair (a universal lack among the ordinary whites as well as the blacks in the South) the beneficial influence of the training and example of this useful school.

Go into these homes, not only Presbyterian, but of other denominations—for our school has trained and pervaded all churches—and you will find an attractive and elevating home life, truly admirable when you realize that within a generation many of these people were not called upon even to buy their own clothes.

Now if this influence or power had been obtained at a great cost, if salaries were as high and generous as they are at Hampton and Tuskegee, one would feel that the result was worth it all. But when it appears that often our teachers are called away by larger wages, either in other cities or public work, or remain because they are willing to sacrifice personal interest for their race, it is significant of a spirit and result worthy of our highest praise.

4. Keyesville, Ga.

Come with me toward Savannah, and leaving the train at Waynesboro, a thriving

ing little city, drive out ten miles into a region where the negroes are to the whites as ten to one. Here Brother Phelps, a few miles from Keyesville, has obtained nearly forty acres of fertile land, erected a well-painted and attractive frame church (within it is still somewhat incomplete), and using his own resources has also built a very attractive home. With his wife's aid he carries on a school in the church, but he is rightly desirous of erecting a school building, by which he can morally and mentally uplift his people. From time to time he holds Farmers' Institutes, at which addresses are made by some of the white friends of Waynesboro and Augusta, and by such a scientific man as Prof. Turner, of Haines Institute, which teach the farmers the simple yet necessary facts of farming, domestic economy and self-help. Many of these negroes own their own farms and work diligently, but the Northern farmer has no comprehension of the absolute ignorance prevalent among these negroes, and even among the whites in many sections of the South.

Brother Phelps possesses the confidence of the best whites of the neighboring towns, and so long as he is careful to retain and increase this, he will do a great work for his people. It is a region where Christianity is misunderstood, for many negro preachers are illiterate, selfish, immoral and intemperate. Their influence upon their people is to degrade the Gospel and all true virtue, and the quiet, energetic work which Brother Phelps and his wife are carrying on in this region is beginning to create new ideas of religion, of home, of personal manhood and womanhood. Brother Phelps is admirably fitted for this work, and has in his wife an

unusually sympathetic and intelligent and devoted helper. Obtaining his education with her assistance, and as a shoemaker pushing on from the alphabet to his graduation at Biddle, where he toiled at his bench while he studied, he has no foolish ideas of education, but if he walks always with Christ, will be an example, guide and friend to many a boy or girl born in those homes of ignorance, yet capable of a strong industrious life.

Already that neighborhood feels the stir of better ideas and more blessed purposes. Already the tiny oasis is creeping out on the desert life of those people, and if he can broaden his work by a good, plain building, and add a complete industrial scheme, he can be a power for good in a region now ignorant and asleep.

It is in this way that the Freedmen's Board, through its devoted ministers and teachers, is trying to transform this people. And it is most gratifying to learn from their white neighbors that our ministers and schools and congregations are, scarcely without exception, regarded as a blessing and as elevating and useful.

But every oasis emphasizes the desert and makes the work more appealing and necessary. Much land remains unpossessed. The fields are white for the harvest.

As he lay dying, Cecil Rhodes, oppressed with the greatness of Africa and its needs, repeated with a sigh Tennyson's words:

"So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done."

But we who see how much has been done feel Caleb's courage, and are called upon to go up and possess the land for our Saviour and these immortal souls.

Mrs. Boggs

Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, Easter morning, April 19th, the silver cord was loosed, and the immortal spirit of Mrs. Virginia P. Boggs took its flight for the eternal world. Little by little the earthly house of her tabernacle was dissolved, and with a glorious hope and unshaken trust in

her Redeemer she entered the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Mrs. Boggs some nine years ago came into the office of the Freedmen's Board as a volunteer worker. A little later her services were found to be indispensable, and she became assistant to Mrs. Coulter, and after assistant