

**PRIVATE LETTERS OF PARMENAS
TAYLOR TURNLEY ON THE CHARACTER
OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL
GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES,
AND THE ANTAGONISM OF PURITANS
TO CHRISTIANITY, &C**

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Private letters of Parmenas Taylor Turnley on the character of the constitutional government of the United States, and the antagonism of Puritans to Christianity, &c by Parmenas Taylor Turnley & Cinderella L. Turnley

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PARMENAS TAYLOR TURNLEY & CINDERELLA L. TURNLEY

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PRIVATE LETTERS
OF
PARMENAS TAYLOR TURNLEY,

(TOGETHER WITH SOME LETTERS OF HIS FATHER
AND GRANDFATHER.)

ON THE
CHARACTER OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT OF
THE UNITED STATES, AND THE ANTAGONISM OF
PURITANS TO CHRISTIANITY, &c.

Collected, Arranged, and Printed for Private Circulation only,
among Relatives of the Family,

BY HIS SISTER,
CINDERELLA L. TURNLEY.

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INTRODUCTION.

A NATION which uses involuntary labour strives more to “*preserve*” than to “*acquire* ;” while, a nation using only free labour, strives more to “*acquire*” than to “*preserve*.” Commerce, more than all else, tends to unite nations. It makes them, step by step, dependent on each other, and therefore, it makes them friends. One community needs to buy that which another creates; while the latter needs to *sell* what the former does not have nor create. Hence, commerce is progressive,—the small beginning leads to the moderate,—the moderate to the great,—the great to the greatest; and, so long as the *principle* of mutual exchange or interchange is observed, communities or nations thus dealing with each other are friends, and are united by strong ties of mutual good-will. But, not so with *individuals* in a commercial community. The spirit of commerce makes *enemies* of *individuals* in the same community. More especially is this the case where the same people or nation are plainly divided into two distinct classes of vocations—one being purely commercial, the other being purely agricultural, or creative. Wherever a people move *only* by the spirit of trade (or commerce), they soon learn to make a traffic of the most

worthy of all human virtues! This is not only to be regretted, it is absolutely shocking, but none the less true. We have thus seen in the history of nations—purely commercial—that even the smallest dues of humanity are to be obtained for a price; and are, in fact, an article of commerce. It is true, the sense of trade which commerce (left alone) produces in the minds of its votaries approaches a very high sense of *exact justice*. That is, they will never *rob* outright, nor outside of a *rule of trade*. Neither will they ever contribute *charity*, nor stop to think for a moment of the *necessities* of any other class of humanity, *unless* such consideration comes within their commercial rule, and will benefit the trade. On the other hand, a community or a nation purely agricultural, or one to which *trade* is either unknown or prohibited, may rob outright, yet such community may have high regard for moral virtues, and may *favour* and *practice* the most charitable intercourse with each other, and with other communities. Hence we find that *hospitality* is much more rarely met with in commercial cities and marts of trade, than in the most remote frontiers, even, of a rude farming people.

In the collection of letters which follow, this characteristic of the distinct classes of people composing the United States is set forth. And also the tendency of the two classes of people in opposite directions as regards the American form and system of Government.

The North-Eastern or Puritan States of America have never given much thought to the mere *preservation* of any established system, but have looked almost entirely to acquisition, either of wealth, numbers, or physical

development. On the other hand, the purely agricultural States have always given mainly their attention to *preservation*, letting any increase or acquisition be of secondary consideration. This spirit, in the two classes of people was and is *pre-existing*, and is independent of every accidental cause. But both tendencies have been, and are yet, constantly strengthened by the vocations or pursuits each respectively adopted. That is, the spirit *to acquire* in the North has been constantly increased by the food it lives on, which is, and ever has been, commerce and manufactures; while the spirit to preserve, and not to acquire, in the South, has been as constantly growing, by reason of their purely *creating* or agricultural pursuits.

For half a century the North has been purely free labouring; while the South has been using mixed labour, that is, part free and part slave labour. The slave labour thus used is that of the African heathen (to the manor born, though the descendant of the imported African of the last century). About one-fourth of the labourers in the South are the African; the other half being free, white Christians. A wise man once said that "the human family on earth appeared to be at war with each other;" but he did not tell us what the cause of this conflict or enmity is. Every one is thus left to speculate on this *cause* of conflict, according to his own capacity to reason about such things; and, in exercising this privilege we hold to the theory that a constant strife exists in all countries, and all ages, between two species of occupation or labour; one class of people being *creative* only, the other transforming and exchanging only. Between these

two, then, there is a conflict since the world began, and will be, so long as man continues to act on the stage. If man would live by his own labour, and not by that of another, this conflict would cease; but this will only be when the millennium shall break upon us. This remark is not meant to apply to guardians nor masters, nor to him who uses serf or slave labour; but it is meant to apply to those who seek to live off the products of others, who have no claims to their protection from want, and who try to divert into their own coffers an undue amount of the profits, to the detriment of the producer.

The present conflict of war and blood, going on in the United States is nothing more nor less than the last and final effort of a purely agricultural people to sustain themselves against a long-continued and systematic effort of a purely commercial and manufacturing people to *depress* the agricultural—curtail the agriculturalists' profits, and enhance those of the commercialists and manufacturer. This conflict had to come, one day, to America, just as it has come to all nations. Of course, a thousand causes are assigned for the conflict coming when and as it did, still the *true* cause is most generally lost sight of, at least by those whose personal interest blind the mind's eye.

The following letters were written at a time, and under circumstances which were most favourable to see things in a proper light, and while I was then too young to understand or feel much interest in the very important subjects treated off; yet, at a riper age, I have not failed to read them with great care and the liveliest interest. The proof of great sagacity and sound judg-

ment of the writer is now being daily exhibited to the world, in the million and a half of soldiers under arms, in deadly conflict in America, where all was peace and quiet when these letters were written!

Twenty millions of people in one section are trying to crush out, and *extinguish*, if possible, ten millions in the other section! The existence of slavery in one section is assigned as the cause of this blood! Yet the very North people who thus assert slavery to be the cause, actually brought it to America, used it as long as it was profitable, and then sold it out to the Southern people, for value received in gold! The same North people have continued to live on the sweat and blood of the Negro, in the shape of most exorbitant tariffs and "coasting-trade" perquisites for half a century; and now, when the owners of those Negroes roused themselves to allow no further exactions, this slave-labour becomes all at once very odious in the eyes of those who were quite content to use it—so long as they could abuse it! The *true friends* to the African Negro—(*slave or free*)—are the Southern people. I am a native of a Slave State, yet never owned one; my family, for four generations back, were all natives of Slave States, yet never owned them; personal pecuniary interest, therefore, cannot be said to influence *my* feelings one way or the other; and, in collecting and printing the private letters of a brother, my only apology is, that I desire all my family relatives—who are utterly surprised at the colossal proportions of this most inhuman and vindictive war, in which they are shedding their blood freely—may also know some of the most distant but secret motives which has prompted to its gradual com-

mencement for nearly half a century. My own opinion is, that so far from African slavery being the cause of this war, it has actually prevented it for twenty years! I most sincerely believe that, if the *whole* of southern labour had been white free labour, that they would have *rebelled long, long ago*, against the undue exactions of Northern cupidity, tariffs, and coasting dues; but the poor Negro having broad shoulders and a hardy constitution has been the quiet pack-horse; with none to take his part, his owner preferred to move along quietly, suffering the excessive exactions to fall on his slave rather than make complaints which might lead to open rupture. And the six millions and half of *non-slaveowners in the Slave States* also strove for peace for a quarter of a century. But this quiet conservative mass in the South have every one of them jumped to their own rescue when every species of imposition, every epithet that could be spoken and written in the North against the character of the Southern people have completely taken possession of Northern minds. The Southern Christians now see their danger and condition, and what greater dangers they have escaped by "*secession.*" Hence it was only the sweat and blood of the Negro that kept off the conflict. His sweat and blood would *again* bring a temporary peace, if the South would only acquiesce in Northern tariffs, Northern shipping dues, and Northern dictation, as to all legislation in *agricultural States*,—then would peace come to-morrow. On the other hand, if there were not a slave on earth; if there were nothing but the white free labour in the South, and the South yet *persist* in throwing off those tariffs, and claim to do her own legislation, then