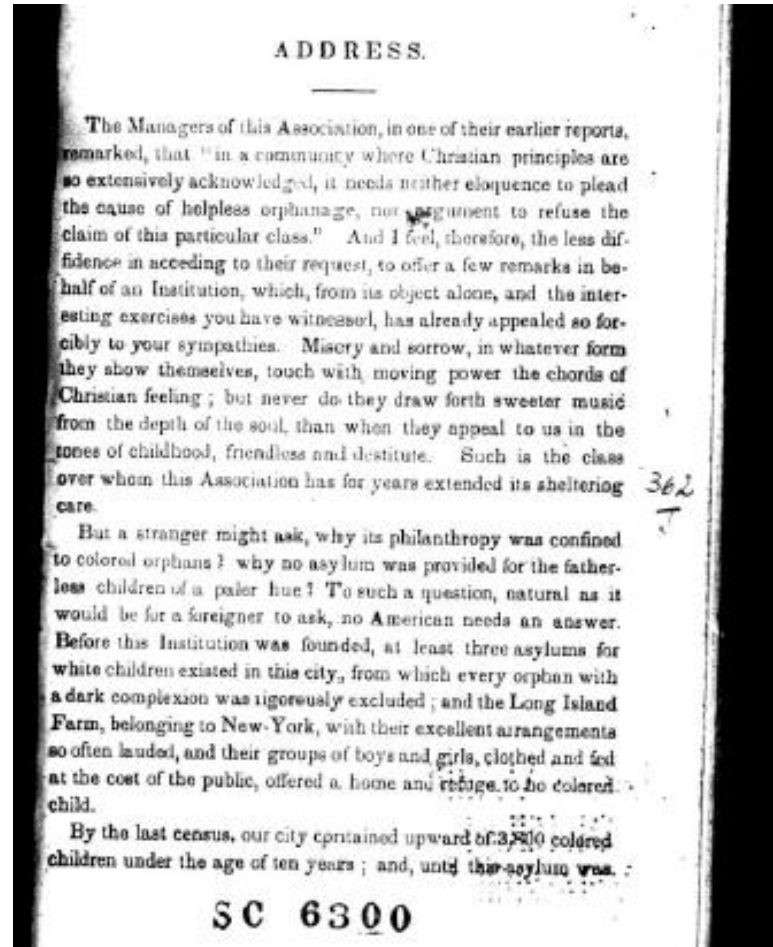
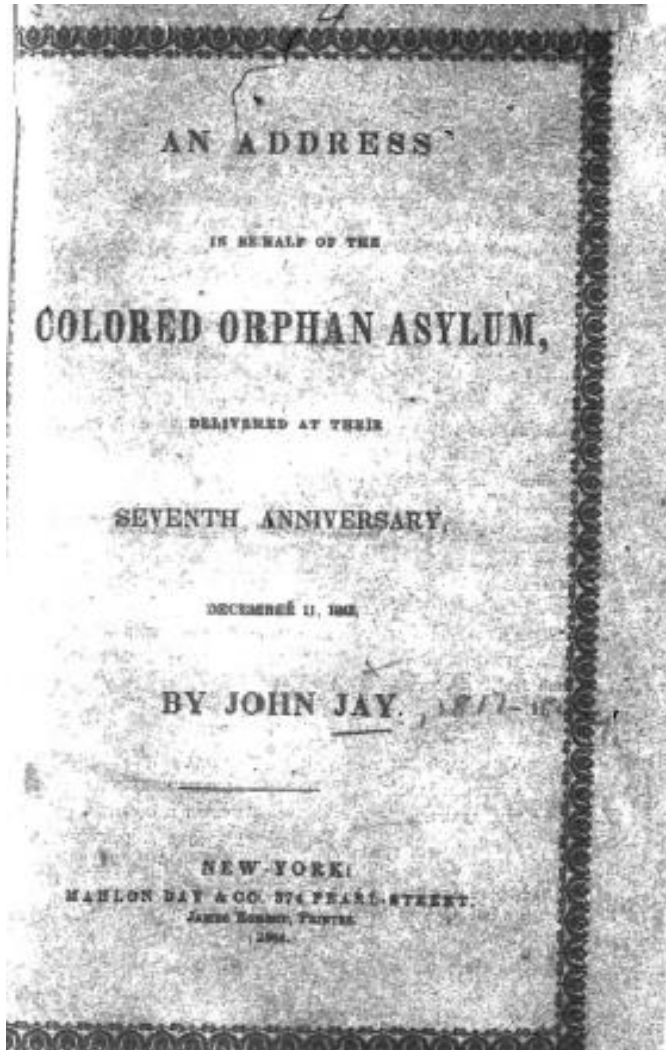


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Founded, no provision existed for those of them who, in the helpless and tender age of infancy, might be left desolate and alone; and then, such was the force of prejudice, that no dwelling could be hired by the managers for the accommodation of the orphans, and it became necessary for them to purchase. But I will not dwell upon this painful subject, for we are met to-night, not to consider the conduct of those who oppress the poor, but those who relieve them—not of those who drive the colored people from asylums and schools, and Theological Seminaries—who deprive them of their natural rights—who depress their political and social condition, and darken their intellectual and moral life; but we are met to encourage and assist those whose example is "lovely and of good report"—who act the part, not of the priest and Levite, but of the good Samaritan—who extend to this afflicted people, not only kindly sympathy, but real assistance—who gather the colored orphans from the recesses of sorrow, and mayhap of crime, and become to them as parents, verifying to them the words of Scripture—"When thy father and thy mother forsake thee, the Lord taketh thee up."

The progress of this Association is interesting and useful, as showing how much may be accomplished by steady perseverance and Christian diligence, in every work of practical benevolence. It was organized in 1836, under adverse circumstances; and, before the arrival of its first anniversary, 29 orphan children had been blessed with its fostering care. Another year rolled by, and swelled the number of its beneficiaries; while two unexpected legacies increased its means for their support. A third anniversary brought cause for grief, in the death of nine children, eight of whom had been long suffering from the deleterious influences of neglect, unwholesome food, and impure air; but the sorrow of the Managers was lessened by the thought, that, however wretched had been their former life, their parting days were clothed with lightness, and that they had been mercifully removed to that better home where the wicked cease from troubling. The fourth year found them with new cause for thankfulness, in

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the perfect health of the Institution and its evidently increasing usefulness, present and prospective; \$13,000 having been contributed as a building fund, to provide a new habitation for those who still occupied an ill-contrived and crowded tenement. In their fifth report they acknowledge, with gratitude, that the Father of all the families of the earth had not left himself without a witness that he is mindful of the feeblest and most neglected of his creatures; and they notice an interesting fact, which, as an illustration of the text adduced in connection with it, is so pleasing that I will quote it in their own simple words:

"About two months since, it was necessary that the sum of \$100 should be procured at once, to meet bills due to two mechanics, who would not have needed immediate payment, had not their families been visited with sickness. An effort was made to collect donations, which amounted only to \$18. The Secretary had addressed an urgent appeal to a friend, to whom the Institution was already indebted; it had not, however, been sent, when a letter was received from the same individual, enclosing \$100. 'And it shall come to pass that before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.'"

The sixth anniversary met the Managers rejoicing in the kind Providence which had spared their large family from injury by a fire which had in part consumed their building, and for the sympathy and assistance which were freely offered in their temporary distress. They had the pleasure, also, of acknowledging the appropriation, by the Corporation of the city of New-York, of twenty lots of ground lying on the 5th avenue, 43rd and 44th streets, upon which they proposed to erect a substantial edifice, which should be, in its proportions, simple and harmonious, and in its details unornamented and appropriate, sufficient for the accommodation of 150 children.

Thus the seventh anniversary finds their family of 74 children in the occupation of their commodious building, completely finished, planned with admirable judgment, and peculiarly adapted to their wants; and with great truth may they say that the pres-

ent establishment, in addition to its extreme comforts and conveniences, presents the delightful spectacle of a household pervaded by that spirit of order, industry, obedience, and love, which indicates the prevalence of practical Christian principle.

Such is a rapid sketch of the history of the Colored Orphan Association. \$20,000 has been paid for the building, which is now free from debt—although \$1400 are yet due for the current expenses of the last year; and when that is paid, every addition to the funds of the Institution will have a direct tendency to increase its usefulness.

Orphans and half-orphans are received within its walls, who are between the ages of 4 and 9; and, when they are dismissed, they are not thrown back upon the world, but are indentured to persons living in the country, who annually thereafter report to the Managers of the conduct of their charge—and the reports thus far received are extremely satisfactory and encouraging. Nothing more than elementary instruction in the branches of knowledge is given in the asylum; but sound principles, and habits of industry, obedience, economy and order are impressed upon the children, from the day of their entrance to that of their departure. Their system combines moral, physical and intellectual education, and is peculiarly excellent from its admirable government and discipline—a feature of primary importance in our democratic country. The infant mind is the most delicate structure of Almighty handiwork, and no office is more honorable and important than that of a Teacher—by whom the plant soul and tender conscience may be cast in moulds of truth. Her chief duty—so often, alas! neglected—is to train the child to fulfil its immortal destiny; and as performed in this Institution, it is not a spiritless drudgery, but a delightful task—the constant association between the teacher and the pupil begetting love and confidence, while the daily development of the youthful energies and affections gratefully rewards her toil.

Mental improvement is but a small part of education. The school-master may walk abroad, and polished vice may follow in

his footsteps. As some one has well observed, we want a race, not of Newtons, but of men—of men early taught to know their origin and their destiny; early taught to practice the duties they owe to themselves, their neighbors and their God. That book which teaches all these—which is the great store-house of moral principles—the book that never lies—designed for all ages, all classes, all conditions—is read to the colored orphans day by day; and on each Sunday, in the Sabbath-School, they are instructed in its precepts, and taught to exhibit in their conduct the great beauty of youthful piety.

And I now ask you if no relation exists between this Association and our large country? if the American people have no interest in the noiseless proceedings of this retired asylum? The seventy children now in this course of virtuous training were born in other scenes—were rescued from the haunts of wretchedness and vice, in which they would have received a very different education. Now, they are growing up to become useful members of society, and exert a happy influence in their several walks—then, many of them were in a course of training to people our almshouses and our prisons, and swell the guilt and misery that so frightfully abounds in our crowded cities. Mr. Wilson, the experienced agent of the State Prison at Sing-Sing, has said, "whatever may be the fact in other countries, there can be little doubt that education and early application to some kind of business would have a powerful tendency to decrease crime. From my own intimacy with criminals," he adds, "I have found that a large majority of convictions may be traced to the formation of bad habits in early life, and to the total neglect on the part of their parents or guardians in giving them education and confining them to some regular system of business."

A great statesman has said, that in politics as in architecture, the ruin is greatest when it commences with the foundation, and so impossible is it in after years to supply the want of early education, that the aristocratic governments of Europe have of late years carefully attended to the youth of the lower classes. In

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Russia, every parish has a school open to all classes under the direction of the clergyman. In Sweden, gratuitous education is given to the poor, and not one of 1000 is unable to read. In Denmark, children of all poor persons are educated gratuitously; and parents are bound, under a penalty, to send them to school until they have passed the age of 14 years. In Mecklenburg and Prussia, all children capable of going to school are obliged to go; and in Berlin, the period of children being sent to school regularly commences at the beginning of the child's seventh year, and terminates when the child, according to the testimony of the minister, has acquired the knowledge necessary for his station in life. In Saxony, the local poor-commission supports free schools; and in Bavaria, the children of the poor are, without favor, kept to the practice of the public school, religious instruction, industry-schools, and learning a trade. That duty which the despotic governments of the Old World have performed, and which the democratic government of our boasted Republic has so much neglected, toward this depressed class, the Managers of this asylum, to the extent of their ability, have voluntarily and most faithfully fulfilled.

Another happy effect which this institution and others like it must have, is the kindly feeling it elicits on the part of the colored people toward ourselves. Our General and State Governments have, with rare exceptions, long pursued toward them a cruel and selfish policy, as unwise as it has been wicked. They are scattered over the face of our wide territory by thousands, and tens of thousands; and the natural tendency of the course of our rulers has been to make every colored man their foe. I say not that this is the universal result, but that this is the tendency of their policy; and wherever it has not been the result, it is attributable more to the mild and forgiving disposition of the oppressed, than to any kindness on the part of the oppressor. It is societies like this that are to counteract this baneful influence, by touching their hearts with the refreshing balm of Christian consolation—by showing them that there are some who sympa-

thize with their sorrows, and who are anxious to elevate and improve their condition—and who, to this purpose, devote their time, their substance, and their talents.

The character of the work in which these managers are engaged, it is possible that some may undervalue. I trust there are none such within this assembly—that there are none present who will not accord with the language of the Managers, that “when they remember their own obligations to the common Creator and Redeemer, their relations to these children as fellow-subjects of the same universal Governor, and fellow-heirs of the same immortality, they are assured that the dignity and importance of the enterprise is not lessened because its subjects are those whose earthly inheritance has been scorn, sorrow and neglect.”

They have rightly argued. We are the equal children of a common Father, who loves us all alike. This is not our abiding city, nor our constant resting-place; but our true life, our more real existence, our eternal destiny, is beyond the grave. Here, by a mysterious Providence, we are strangely mingled, and our unequal lots are blended by a rule so incomprehensible that human reason may never fathom it. But we have learnt that man's true character depends not upon the position which he occupies, but on the manner in which he performs its duties—that, as upon the stage of mimic representation, the monarch may be hissed and the lackey applauded, so upon the stage of life, the trappings of royalty, the splendor of riches, the dignity of place, weigh not a feather in God's judgment, save as increasing our responsibilities—that, at his bar, the soul, divested of this mortal body, and stripped of its externals, will appear in its own nakedness, and stand or fall by its own character. Remembering this, you can appreciate the dignity of every work which concerns the elevation of the human race, whatever the humility of its condition—whatever the color of the skin; and you can, without a feeling of anger, indulge the sincerest pity for those whose narrow vision, regarding only the exterior casket, is unable to re-

cognize the jewel it enshrines; and who dream not that beneath the complexion they so much dislike, beats a soul which the Almighty Father, in his own image, has created, and the Eternal Son, in his own person, has redeemed—a spirit, in comparison with which worlds are valueless, which shall outlive the sun which rideth in glory, and the moon and stars which rule the night; and that, when this earth and all that it contains—its stately temples, its gorgeous palaces, its heaps of riches—shall have been dissolved, leaving not a wreck behind—when time itself shall have been annihilated, and untold ages shall have rolled by with no years to mark their progress, nor centuries to chronicle their eternal passage, this soul, now so neglected and debased, so trampled upon and despised, having exchanged its earthly tabernacle for a robe of light—having put off corruption, and being clothed with immortality, shall stand in the courts of Heaven, amid an innumerable company of angels, to enjoy happiness of which the ear hath not heard, nor the heart of man conceived, for ever and ever.

It is rightly thought a high and honorable task to instruct those who are to occupy stations of rank and influence—to mould the young heart, and direct the youthful energies of the apparent heir to Royalty, the expectant sovereign of a mighty empire. But if the bare expectancy of earthly honors, liable to be defeated by a thousand accidents, or to be appropriated by some stronger hand, can so dignify the education of youth, what new glory is added to it, when the pupil is regarded as the sure inheritor of an actual crown, with a title which earth and Hell cannot defeat, if only the possessor will hold it fast!

Even the expectancy of worldly wealth, of a few thousands of dollars, confers importance upon the rich man's child. The colored orphans before you, have already waiting for them, heavenly mansions, prepared by an Almighty Father before the world was. There are laid up for them treasures which moth cannot corrupt, and no thieves can steal; and, in a few fleeting years, those whom you have gathered from the homes of wretch-

edness and the haunts of sin—whom your charity has clothed, and fed, and warmed—and whom your Christian benevolence has instructed in the knowledge of their origin and their destiny, shall be called home to receive the crown and reward, of which, but for your instruction, they might never have heard; and which, without your guidance, they might never have attained. That such a work of benevolence as this can be performed without bringing a reward to those engaged in it, is a moral impossibility. We are told that it is more blessed to give than to receive; and whoever has performed an act of charity, has proved its truth. An officer in the British army, who was a man of the world, and a lover of pleasure, was once asked by some of his free companions, what was the greatest pleasure he had ever felt. After pausing a while, he replied: "When we were on our march in Ireland, in a very hot day, I called at a cabin by the road-side and asked for a little water. The woman brought me a cup of milk. I gave her a piece of silver; and the joy which that poor creature expressed gave me the greatest pleasure I ever had in my life." "Now," says Wesley, by whom this story was related in one of his sermons, "if the doing good gave so much pleasure to one who acted from natural generosity, how much more must it give to one who does it on a nobler principle—the pure love of God and his neighbor."

Those who have established and assisted, and who may hereafter sustain the Colored Orphan Asylum, may, to the close of their lives, reflect with delight upon the good they were instrumental in accomplishing; and which they may reasonably anticipate will, with the growth and settlement in life of their children, and their transmission to their descendants of the principles and habits here acquired, increase and multiply, and extend from generation to generation, until the end of time.

No day passes, says the Roman moralist, without leaving a line behind *sulla dies sine linea*—and if this is true of this world, it is far more true of the next. The records of earth and the memories of men are treacherous and imperfect. Crimes are commit-

ted, of which, sometimes, no monument remains; and good deeds are done in secret, of which the public know nothing. But there is a Journal which is faithfully kept—a recording angel that never lies; and day by day, and year by year, and century by century, he inscribes in the book of God's remembrance our thoughts, words, and deeds; and the day is coming when, in the presence of assembled multitudes, that book shall be opened, and by that record will we be judged; and blessed will be those to whose credit shall then appear works of charity like those performed from pure motives of benevolence; and great will be the astonishment of those who, by their disinterested efforts, their personal attention, their willing contributions, are now cherishing the fatherless and the orphan, to learn in that day, for they can not now appreciate it, that it was God himself whom they were befriending; that the Eternal Judge upon his throne—He who weigheth the mountains in a scale, and the hills in a balance—who elevated the stars in the firmament, and guides them in their courses—the creator, the preserver, and benefactor of all—the glory of Heaven, the vanquisher of Death, the subduer of Hell—hath been, in his condescension, the object of their bounty, the receiver of their slightest gifts.

You have already heard that the building of the Colored Orphan Association will accommodate 150 children, and that their present number is only 70. Eighty more friendless and destitute are now pining amid want and sickness, in miserable tenements and damp cellars, exposed to the frosts and snows of winter, whom your charity may enable the managers to remove to their comfortable asylum, and feed and clothe, nurture and educate. Eighty mortal beings may, through your instrumentality, be rescued from vice and crime, and trained in the path of virtue, to become useful during their own lives, and transmit worthy examples and pure principles to generations yet unborn.

This work of benevolence, begun seven years ago with so much zeal, and carried on with so much faithful diligence almost to completion, be it yours to finish. An opportunity like

this, for doing good, is not always offered. The willing hand of charity, extended to relieve the beggar, is often stayed by the fear that the gift will be misapplied, or will help to confirm pauperism. The ready contribution for the extension of Christianity is sometimes conscientiously withheld, from the likelihood that it may aid in the propagation of destructive heresies; but no such objections have place here. No enterprise could be more benignly benevolent, more pure and holy, more strictly in accordance with the command of Christ to cherish the fatherless and feed his lambs. As Christians, as philanthropists, as patriots, we ask your aid. By your love toward God—by your regard for man—by your attachment to your country, we appeal to you for support.

Human life is the journey of a day, and a similar opportunity in your transitory course, may never occur again. Seize then, with thankfulness, the present moment to contribute largely and liberally to the Colored Orphan Association, and crowd their spacious asylum with homeless, friendless orphans—the beneficiaries of your bounty: and be assured that, by aiding in so excellent a charity, you will secure a blessing for yourselves that in no hour of your future existence will the thought of the bounty thus expended, cause a sigh of regret, and that the day is soon coming when the remembrance of it shall bring to your souls unutterable joy as you listen to the gracious words, "I was naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. For whatsoever ye have done unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."