

- 14 -

The merits and demerits of that Institution have been too much discussed to be of any interest here, and the subject may be dropped with the single remark that however great the benefit to the white population and to the country generally, from the abolition of slavery, it is certain for the time being that it has ruined the large landed proprietor, and obliterated that class from which the educated gentry of the South mostly spring, and who formed its ruling power. They are gone and cannot be replaced, except by a process so long and tedious, that the North, now the ruling power, does not comprehend and seems impatient to believe it necessary. That process is a system of education both for whites and blacks. The ignorance of both is widespread, and to a Northern man, incomprehensible. The simple art of reading and writing, in which more than one half the population are still deficient, is the smallest part of the education the people of the South have to achieve before they are prepared for a government founded on universal suffrage, which will in its rule come up to the standard of a peaceful and just Government. The habit of thought and the way of living to adapt them to the high responsibilities of self government, have yet to be acquired. The climate, and the difference in color of the races, to say nothing of the former relations of master and slave are great obstacles in the way of acquiring those habits and ways of life.

The adoption of the Massachusetts restriction on the qualification of voters would be an entering wedge to the accomplishment of this object if it were possible to persuade the politicians to consent to it. That qualification, as I understand it requires as a condition of voting, that every man shall be able to write his name and read the constitution of the United States. This would place the Government of the old slave states, for the time being, in the hands of the educated citizen, now, about one half of the number entitled to