

Washington June 22^d 1850
Hon Wesley Shannon

My dear Sir: I don't know when I received any news which gratified me more, than ~~the~~ did that, that our first Assembly had concluded, by law, the introduction of free Negroes. There is no truth more plain, than that the legislator should not seek to legislate temporarily. It is his duty to take a higher stand. He is called upon to mark the future, and, looking down through the vista of ~~the~~ coming years, legislates alike for the generations present and to come. In the act referred to, is to be seen, in my judgment, the far-sighted forecast, that will guide the legislator to eminence, and the state which he helps command, to greatness and glory.

It is no new thing to me, to meditate upon the condition of the races. They are as wide apart in their advancement in greatness and civilization, as they are in their physical formation. Whether their moral condition is the result of any ~~natural~~ ^{natural} superiority of one race over the other, or whether it proceeds from accident, or whether it grows out of a long series of usurpations of one race over the other, is not material for us to consider, in our legislative deliberations for Oregon. The legislator ~~must~~ deal with things as they are, and not with them as they ought, or might be. He must pass his laws,

with a direct reference to men and things, as without the existence of these, there would be no need of laws. And I take it, that there is nothing more plain, in moral ethics, than, that an act whose results and tendencies ^{more} vice, upon the whole, productive of evil than good, is a wrong act, and cannot be justified. This law applies alike to private and legislative acts. In course of this ^{proposition} is equally true; and a legislator is not at liberty to omit an act, within the scope of his powers, and which he has the ability to perform, if the results of that act, in the progress and duration of his state, will be promotive of his good. Laying aside, then, the question of constitutionality of an act which prohibits the incoming of a free negro who may be a free citizen of one of the states of the Union, which is a disputed point, the only thing to ~~be~~ ^{live} it, in my judgment, to justify such a law, is whether the law, so enforced, will be promotive of the good of our territory. Upon that question, I am very clear, and so were a majority of the Assembly, or they would not have passed the act.

It is very generally admitted, that the existence of negro slavery is the only essentially weak point in our government. But it is equally clear, to my mind, that the existence of so many of the African race, in a free ~~state~~, ^{Condition} in this country, as are now held

in servitude, cannot be quite, if not more, ^{an} an affront to the Republic. That the one is a real weakness, is beyond question, and that the other would be more so, ^{if he} I think there is little doubt. We can doubt, ~~it~~, ^{reflects} upon the laws of population, that the time is as sure to come as fate, that there will be a commulsion in this country, growing out of the existence of the African race among us. It may be delayed for centuries, so the time is dictated, is much shorter. Come when that ^{time} will, the result will either be the extirpation ^{North American} of one of the races, or the expulsion of ours from the continent. I hold, that it is quite clear, that the white and black races cannot, and ^{live} not ~~live~~ together in a state of equality. The one must be servant or master. This, tho' not theoretically true, in the free states, yet practically it is. And it probably is true, that the slaves in the southern states are better clothed and better fed, and enjoy quite as much of the comforts of life, as the blacks of the north. The institution of slavery is a curse, but one which was entailed. It was ^{reaped} from meant, and must exist by force, till the country can be rid of it in a way that shall redound to its glory. And existing as it does, we are called upon, by every consideration of duty, to protect ourselves from its evils. Is such the tendency of the law we are considering? If it is, let it stand - let it be strengthened

In all the free States, in 1790, there were 27,109 colored persons; in 1800, 47,154
 1810, 78,241, 1820, 99,281, 1830, 137,499, and
 in 1840, 170,728. In all the States and Territories in 1840, there were 386,293, colored persons. Taking from 386,293, 170,728, ~~number of~~
 have left, 215,565. This latter, are the number of free colored persons, in the southern States and Territories, in 1840. This number of free colored persons, in the free states, in 1840, were distributed as follows: in Maine 1,355, N.H. 530, Mass 8,669, R.I. 3,238, Conn. 8,
 105, Vt. 730, W. 50,027, N.J. 21,044, Penn. 47,
 854, Ohio, 17,342, Ind. 7,165, Ills 3,598, Mich.
 707, Wis. 185, and Iowas, 172.

In 1840, the number of slaves in the United States were 2,487,355, while the white population was 14,189,705, making 17,068,
 353, total population of the United States. This shows
 but a little over five an a half whites to one black
 in the United States. In the free states, the white
 population was 9,554,068, while in the slave
 states, it was but 4,632,637. The free colored population
 of the free states, in 1840, being 170,728, there
 were, at that time, ^{nearly} one colored man to every fifty five
 whites in the northern states. It is also seen, that in
 the slave states, in 1840 there were not two

Whitis to are blacto!

What, the number of free blacks now in the free states, will appear by the census to be taken this year. It is generally understood, however, that since 1840 they have increased rapidly. Altho in 1840 there were but 707 in Michigan, there is now in one of the interior counties from six to seven hundred. What is true of this state, is true of most other free states, where the legislatures, or the people have not arranged themselves against their immigration. It is now, ~~the~~^{No} less frequent thing for whole colonies of ~~decharged~~, manumitted, ~~welched~~ beings to be sent from the slave states, and located in the free states. Many of the Southern states will not allow slaves to be set free, unless they are removed. When you consider the large number of free blacks in the ~~slave~~ states, ~~of~~^{their slaves} and reflect on the alarming increase of ~~theirs~~, you cannot fail to see, that the tide of black immigration to the free states, will rapidly increase, until our whole domain will become one common poor house, for this race of beings. The Northern states, generally, begin to grow alarmed, and there is, ~~now~~^{no doubt}, for such is the tendency, but in ten years, every free state will have upon its statute book the most stringent laws against the introduction of free negroes.

No man can fail to see, that the South must have some outlet for the impulsive-free population of her ~~slaves~~^{black} and so long as the gateways are open, the supplies, the refuse, ~~the~~^{the} being here will be turned over to us, to fill our almshouses, and degrade our honored and sturdy humanity. But if ~~that outlet~~^{the outlet} is closed, by the stern sentinels of the law, executed by a few ~~people~~^{top} ~~of the~~^{for the} citizens of their rights, and watchful ~~for~~^{of} the good of their State, Slavery will work out its own destiny, ~~deity~~^{deity} and suffocation of the two races, pent up in the Slave States, will follow, until the pains of travail will deliver, ~~God~~ Only knows how, this nation of the burden of Slavery, which now makes her ~~clumsy~~^{clumsy} to staggering, and drags down the energies of her nation. If the free states will adopt this policy, we will be rid of the complaints growing out of passing Years, and it will not be long, before the ~~Slave~~^{States} themselves will read their own troubles in the increase of Slavery, and seeing it, will groan & be deliaered with groans, what more but the dis-trressed can utter.

California is free - Oregon is free. We are the Pacific coast. Of what benefit could free negroes be to us? None. But who does not know, that there is a withering blight surrounding the negro. He is degraded, and will continue to be so - It proceeds from the caustic of the

White to the negro race. His presence beside
an Freeman, will bring a stigma upon labor, for
it is well known what an influence association
has upon the human mind. Let us then, as our first
Assembly nobly and wisely did, exclude this race
from among us, and build up a community
where labor shall not be associated with negroes,
and then, to plough the field, shall be an honor
to the white man who ploughs it. We have released
negros now - let us take care that no more come am-
ong us, I know not how to express my feelings of pleasure,
that we have started right, to the first Assembly be
it said, No more withering curse could befall us,
than to have negroes, slaves or free, forced upon us.

Here I should close, but I have one word, I
have opposed ^{thus far} all attempts to strike out the word "white"
in our land bill, I am fully satisfied, from infor-
mation I have, that if it should be, and the land bill
should pass, we should be overrun with a negro
population, White townships of land, I sometimes, counties
are now purchased, in the free states, upon which to col-
onize man unisted negroes. What would be the result,
should the United States give them land in Oregon? If
right would entitle them to the right to go and thence-
the, Hence I see it's a treacherous hazard. I know no other
cause, than to look after the interests of those who
left me here; and how would I do it, to allow them

and their posterity to be saddled with a weight
 of profligacy that would grind them to the dust,
 and introduce a race among them, who would
 do no honor to themselves, but would bring the
 very life of our country, man and labor, into desolation,
 and depredation? With Oregon I am allied for life
 and in death — for weal or for woe; and my great-
 est desire is, that I may live long, and be well, to combatte
 in her cause. Now, my dear Thomson, I must
 leave you. If you can read these hastily scribbled
 lines, you will learn my opinion of the law, for that
 law, ^{in favor of its} enactors, go down in the archives of the state,
 and when Africans and African Slavery, shall have
 left our shores, and the former shall be flourishing, if
 flourish they ever do, in their own country, let that law
 remain as a proud reminiscence of its makers.

I am, dear Sir, your friend and fellow
 citizen

Sam'l B. Thurstan