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October 31st, 1903.

Robert C. Ogden, Esq.,
Firm of Jno. Wanamaker,
New York City.

My dear Mr. Ogden :-

I appreciate very much the letter you had the kindness to write ^{me} after our conference ⁱⁿ Dr. Frissell's office. I have delayed acknowledging the same for the reason that I wanted to say, soberly and dispassionately, a few things, which while they may have been said to you before and perhaps better said, no less represent the sentiments of the best element of the Negro in this country. You will of course understand that this is with no desire to change your opinion, but simply to give my personal views on the question as I see it.

You said in your letter, and also in our hurried conversation last Friday that you made that contest in the Union League Club solely and absolutely in the interest of the Negroes in the South. This I have never doubted. I am too well acquainted with the personal sacrifices of time, energy, and means, to ever doubt or call into question your motives.

For myself, I cannot believe that an honest and careful investigation of Southern conditions as they relate to the franchise of the Negro is going to jeopardize his condition, or in any way add to the already too heavy burden which he is now obliged to carry. We have no record of any case where the condoning, or covering or shielding of wrong doing or wrong doers has ever produced permanent

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good results; and you will find that the Negro is perfectly willing that the searchlight of investigation of his treatment in the South, legally and otherwise, be turned on, and that he will gladly abide by the consequences.

I think it is positively wrong for the North to stand quietly by, and allow the South, for the sake of pacifying and allaying sectional feeling, to nullify the very acts of the constitution which the South by their merciless legislative enactments forced the North to pass to prevent a worse slavery than had existed before the war.

I have a great many Southern friends, sincere Christian gentlemen, for whom I have the highest regard and whose opinions on many questions I unhesitatingly accept, and I know there are thousands of others, but I am convinced after years of close contact and careful observation that the South cannot be trusted with the Negro problem. They have never seen it from a purely altruistic point of view, and when it comes to this question, they are very aggressive. When one point has been gained they have immediately gone for another with greater vehemence. This was, as you know, the direct cause of the Civil War. It was not the oppression of the North, but the indomitable aggression of the South in insisting that the institution of slavery should be carried into Northern territory: If this aggressiveness were confined solely to political matters, it would not be quite so unbearable, but the fact is, it extends to every phase of life affecting the Negro. You will notice that the sentiment in favor of dividing the school funds is as strong today as was the sentiment a few years ago in favor of preventing the Negro, (not as an illiterate factor, but as a Negro) from voting. If the North continues to maintain its present pacifying attitude toward

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the South, Mississippi will undoubtedly find a way to divide the school taxes, and every state South of the Mason and Dixon line will follow suit.

We know that the sentiment of the North has ever been a sort of brake on the South's conduct toward the Negro. The South has always sought the good opinion and approval of the North in its acts. All of the literature on this subject that has emanated from that section since the war has aimed to convince the North that the South knew best how to handle the Negro question. In this they have so far succeeded that while all of the North does not openly endorse the South's actions, a large and increasing proportion are silently acquiescing in the wholesale, legal, but nevertheless unchristian conduct of taking from the black man most of his political and civil privileges, and woefully curtailing in many instances his educational opportunities.

We are largely in the hands of our friends and have little or no means of defence. When the acts of those who have always stood by us, to whom people are accustomed to look as authority on these questions, seem actively to approve of schemes which were conceived and executed savagely and solely for the purpose of suppressing and oppressing a helpless people, they cannot but serve to cheapen Negro life not only in the minds of the South but of the country generally, and to emphasize the all too prevalent belief that the darkness of the Negro's face is an index to what is in his head and heart. I think also that for a person who is so closely connected with Hampton and Tuskegee and who has always championed the peculiar ideas for which these two institutions stand, to actively oppose any effort looking toward the amelioration of the present suffrage con-

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ditions, was rather unfortunate and has without doubt strengthened that class of colored people in their belief that Dr. Booker T. Washington with his white friends and ardent supporters is willing to yield every right and privilege of his people that they may be merely efficient hewers of wood and drawers of water.

This is the most trying period for the Negro and the burden is much heavier for the educated than for the uneducated. It is, therefore, I think, of the utmost importance that the constructive forces representing the best intelligence and conscience of the South, of which you spoke, should as far as possible work in harmony with the best and most conservative element of the Negro, if they would accomplish the best results. You will remember that in our conference Dr. Washington felt as strongly as I did on this question, and I think that if he has erred on any side, it has been on that of conservatism, and that is undoubtedly the cause of most of the criticism he is receiving today at the hands of his own people.

I have written this frankly because I felt sure that you would not have me do otherwise.

Again assuring you of my firm belief in your loyalty to my race, and with apologies for so long a letter, I am,

Very sincerely,

(Signed) R. R. Moton.