

He returned to Pittsburg in the midst of the Presidential campaign resulting in the election of General Harrison. Finding political feeling high, as it is always on such occasions, he speedily received the infection, and threw himself forward in the political arena. Early in 1843 he became too well aware, by sad experience, of the inability of the colored people to bring their inflicted wrongs and injustices before the public, in consequence of not having a press willing at all times to espouse their cause. In many many instances, a paper which would publish an article derogatory to their interest on one day, if applied to on the next to publish for some colored person an answer or correction, the applicant would either be told certain expressions must be modified, the article is not respectful to the parties, or refuse entirely, on the plea that "it would not be politic."

With these impediments he knew their progress would be retarded, and to this end he began, unassisted, a weekly sheet under the title of the *Mystery*, devoted to the interest and the elevation of his race. Success followed the movement; the first issue was one thousand in the city; its circulation rapidly increased.—For more than one year he conducted it as editor. After sustaining it solely for nine months, he transferred the proprietorship to a committee of six gentlemen, he, meanwhile, continuing as editor for nearly four years.

It was well conducted, and held no mean position in the community, especially where it originated. The learned and lamented Dr. James McCune Smith, of New York, said it was "one of the best papers ever published among the colored people of the United States."

The editorials of his journal elicited praises even from its enemies, and were frequently transferred to their columns. His description of the great fire of 1844, in Pittsburg, which laid a great portion of that manufacturing city in ruins, was extensively quoted by papers throughout the country. The original matter, so frequently copied, was sufficient to determine the status of his paper.

During the Mexican war he bore his part in the field against the knights of the quill, for his stand against the Polk administration was so decided that on more than one occasion the subject was strongly combated.

Much good was done through the influence of this little sheet, and it is indispensible that to its influence originated the Avery Fund. Once, on the subject of female education, through the columns of his paper, he argued that "men were never raised in social position above the level of women; therefore men could not be elevated without woman's elevation; further, that among the nations of the world where women were kept in ignorance, great philosophers or statesmen failed to be produced, as a general rule. And under the then existing state of female education among the Americans of African descent, the hope of seeing them equal with the more favored class of citizens would be without proper basis.

After reading his editorial on the social requirements of the colored people, it is said that the Rev. Charles Avery determined to do something tangible for them. The reverend gentlemen, after consulting some of the most prominent colored men, among whom was the Rev. John Peck, established a school for males and females. This was the first step towards that which is now known as Avery's College, at the head of which was placed, as senior professor, Martin A. Freeman, M. A. (now professor of mathematics in the University of Liberia). He was succeeded by George B. Vashon, M. A., a most accomplished scholar. The Rev. Mr. Avery did not stop in the work so well begun. He died in 1858, bequeathing in his will "one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the education and elevation of the free colored people of the United States and Canada, and one hundred and fifty thousand for the enlightenment and civilization of the African race on the continent of Africa," all in trust to the American Missionary Association of New York city; making in all a grand bequest of three hundred thousand dollars, exclusive of the college. We do not claim more than is evident—that the *Mystery* deserves the credit of having brought these wants before the public, and one humanitarian responded to the call most liberally.

While he was editor, on the centennial anniversary of Benjamin Franklin's birthday, he received from the committee an invitation, among the editorial corps, to attend an entertainment given by the Pittsburg Typographical Society at the Exchange Hotel. At the head of this, as President of the occasion, was an honorable ex commissioner to Europe under President Tyler, and the position of Vice-President was filled by a judge of the County Court. This mark of courtesy to him, in the days when slavery held her carnival over the land, will serve to indicate the standing of his paper, and the respect in which the ability and character of the man were held in Pittsburg.

It happened, in the warmth of his zeal for the freedom of the enslaved, that he, through the columns of his paper, charged a certain colored man with treachery to his race by assisting the slave-catchers, who at that time frequented Pennsylvania and other free States. The accused entered a suit for libel, through advice, probably, of some of his accomplices, who were whites, as it is evident his calling would preclude the possibility of the individual to think himself aggrieved.

The presiding judge, before whom the case was tried, having no sympathy with abolitionists, and less with that class of negroes represented by Martin Delany, took great pains to impress upon the minds of the jury, in his charge to them, the extent of the offence of libel. After their verdict of guilty was rendered, a fine of two hundred dollars, together with the cost of prosecution, which amounted to about two hundred and fifty dollars, was imposed. In view of a fine so unusually high for that which was considered a just exposure of an evil which then existed to the detriment of one class of the inhabitants, an appeal was immediately made by the press of Pittsburg for a public subscription, in order that it might be borne in common, instead of allowing it to rest solely upon this faithful sentinel. A subscription list was opened at the office of the *Pittsburg Daily Dispatch*, which led off first in the appeal.

The chivalric governor, Joseph Ritner, was in office then,—him for whom freedom's sweetest bard invoked his muse to link his name with immortality. About one week after the suit, and before the sum could be raised, the governor remitted the fine. This was occasioned through a petition originating with his able counsel, the late William E. Austin, which was signed not only by all of the lawyers of the court, but it is said by the bench of judges, thus leaving the costs only to be paid by him.

The success of this suit, however, served to embolden the slave-hunters; and again did this faithful sentinel give the alarm; but this time his language, while it unmistakably pointed to the guilty party; was carefully chosen, in order to avoid litigation. These, determined to drive him from his post, so formidable to them, still so valiantly held by him, again entered suit against him. Their former success established no precedent for the second.

In the prosecution of this case, another jurist sat in judgment the term of the pro-slavery judge having expired. In his charge to the jury, the eminent judge, William B. McClure, made special reference to the position of the defendant, to his efforts in behalf of his race, and his usefulness in the community. Then, addressing himself more pointedly to the jury, he added: "I am very well acquainted with Mr. Delany, and have a high respect for him. I regard him as a gentleman, and a very useful citizen. No Pittsburger, at least, will believe him capable of willingly doing injustice to any one, especially his own race. I cannot, myself, after a careful examination, see in this case anything to justify a verdict against the defendant." This resulted in a verdict of acquittal without the jury leaving the box.

On another occasion he was the recipient of forensic compliment, facetiously given, because also of the source whence it emanated, and because he was not present at the court to suggest the remarks of the attorney in the midst of the pleading.

A highly respected colored man was under trial, charged with a serious offence. His counsel, an influential lawyer, Cornelius Danagh, Esq., afterwards Attorney General of the State, under Governor William T. Johnson, of Pennsylvania, declared the prosecution as arising from prejudice of color against his client. The prosecution was conducted by the late

Colonel Samuel W. Black, who served under General McClellan, and fell in the seven days' fight before Richmond.

"They tell you," said he, in his peculiarly forcible style, "that we have brought on this prosecution through prejudice of color. I deny it; neither does the learned counsel believe it. Look at Martin Delany, of this city, whom everybody knows, and the gentleman knows only to respect him. Would any person in this community make such a charge against him? Could such a prosecution be gotten up against him? No, it could not, and the learned counsel knows it could not, and Delany is blacker than a whole generation of the color of the defendant, boiled down to a quart."

It is probable that no portion of this reference to him pleased him better than that which alluded to his blackness.

While conducting the paper, another production of his elicited much discussion, and to which he still holds,—that of the population of the world. He claims that two thirds are colored, and the remainder white; that there are but three original races—Mongolian, Ethiopian or African, and Caucasian or European, as yellow, black, and white, naming them in the order as given in the genealogy of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, all others being but offspring, either pure or mixed, of the other three, as the Indian or American race of geography, being pure Mongolian, and the Malay being a mixture of the three, Mongolian, African and Caucasian, the people of the last varying in complexion and other characteristics from pure African, through Mongolian, to pure Caucasian.

On the appearance of this article, containing the above novel declaration of the preponderance of numbers of the colored races in the world, a learned officer of the University was waited upon in the city, on one occasion, and earnestly inquired of concerning the correctness of the statement, desiring, if it were incorrect, to contradict it at once. It was never contradicted.

After the return of Mr. Frederick Douglass from England, in the summer of 1846, he visited Pittsburg, where he concluded to form a copartnership in a printing establishment with him. Disposing of his interest in the *Mystery*, we next find him aiding, by means of his talents and energy, the sustaining of a paper issuing from Rochester, N. Y., known as the *North Star*, the early name of the subsequent Frederick Douglass paper.—To advance the interest of this, he traveled, holding meetings and lecturing, so as to obtain subscribers, and endeavored to effect a permanent establishment of a newspaper, as a general organ of the colored people, on a secure basis, by raising an endowment for it, being convinced that this alone would insure its successful continuance.

The winter of 1848-9 found him in the eastern part of Pennsylvania, taking part in anti-slavery meetings and conventions, ably seconded by the eloquent Charles L. Remond, to whom, he says, the anti-slavery cause of New England is much indebted for the breaking down of the prejudice, which once existed on the land and water transportations, against colored persons.

One of the means resorted to—so zealous were the colored people to sustain the rising *North Star*—was the holding of fairs in Philadelphia, supported by a number of the most influential colored ladies of that city. At the first of these, December, 1848, it was that William and Ellen Craft, now in England, the first victims selected under the atrocious Fugitive Slave Law (enacted later), made their appearance, and under circumstances so peculiar as to become historic on both sides of the Atlantic. They were introduced by him to the visitors at the fair in an appropriate address, and in such a way that their mode of escape was carefully concealed, but which was afterwards communicated to the *Liberator* by an anti-slavery man. Through this their whereabouts became known to Dr. Collins, of Macon, Ga., and as soon as the enactment was completed, a few years after, he immediately, through his agents sent north, placed all Boston under obligations to arrest them.

Hundred of special or assistant marshals were appointed in the midst of a government which thundered her volleys of welcome to the Hungarian governor, a fugitive from Austrian tyranny! And now, in all our broad free America, there was no place of security from Southern slavery for these.

For four long days these obsequious marshals, whom the slave power doubtless rewarded in after years with starvation and death in their loathsome prisons, prowled around the dwelling in which the brave Craft resided, till at length that lion-hearted reformer and ever devoted friend of the negro, Wendell Phillips, persuaded the daring fugitive, all things being prepared, to take passage on a vessel, his wife being already on board; and thus they escaped to England, where they were received under the auspices of the Baroness Wentworth, and are now enjoying a fair share of prosperity and all the advantages of British citizenship.

Concluded next week.