

THE  
BROTHERHOOD  
OF  
LIBERTY:

OR  
OUR DAY IN COURT.

INCLUDING THE NAVASSA CASE.

BY REV. W. M. ALEXANDER.

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A few days later, it was officially reported that Mr. John P. Poe, who had been appointed by a previous Legislature to codify the Laws, had omitted the word *white* in the Bastardy act, and that the Legislature had adopted his digest. Thus, in a novel way, that immoral law was expunged.

#### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Committee to whom had been referred the matter of securing a high school and other educational facilities for the colored citizens of Maryland, first secured the cooperation of leading colored men in every section of the city. They then went before the educational committee of the City Council and made their complaint in the form of a petition. In a short time an ordinance was offered to appropriate sufficient funds to erect a high school and two primary schools, one in northwest and one in northeast Baltimore. After many visits to the educational committee, the ordinance was passed, appropriating money for three schools. But the Mayor of the city vetoed the appropriation on the ground that it would increase taxation. However, he stated to our committee that if the Council would pass an ordinance for a high school only, he would sign it. Our committee again waited upon the educational committee and requested them to accede to the Mayor's proposition, which they did; and a high school building was subsequently erected, at a cost of \$25,000. The curriculum was so arranged as to make the school equal in every way to the State Normal School for whites. This high school is now in operation. The first pupils were graduated in 1889. The exercises took place in Ford's Opera House. The orations and essays delivered by the pupils were pronounced excellent by competent judges, both colored and white; and many white persons were heard to express the regret that Maryland had not provided for the higher education of colored youth before. The certificates were presented to the

graduates by the Mayor, Hon. F. C. Latrobe, who paid a glowing compliment to them and the colored people generally on the progress they had made. The orator of the occasion was Dr. Wm. H. Weaver, who delivered a brilliant address on the education of colored youth. The Opera House was packed with an appreciative audience, estimated at between two and three thousand persons.

The next graduating exercises were held at the National Training School hall, on Courtland St. There were only two graduates, one lady and one gentleman, both of whom spoke. The oration was delivered by H. S. Cummings, Esq., member of the Maryland bar, and the certificates were presented to the graduates by Hon. W. C. Davidson, Mayor of the city. The large audience at these graduating exercises also, expressed the appreciation that the colored people of Baltimore have for higher education.

Having obtained a high school for the higher education of the youth and as a means of producing colored teachers, the Secretary turned his attention toward securing a primary school for the colored children of north-west Baltimore, where there was no such school. The matter was laid before the officers of the Patterson Ave. Baptist Church, of which the Secretary was Pastor, with the result that the Church decided to open a day school in their building for the accommodation of the people who desired to educate their children. In a short time about three hundred pupils were in attendance. The Church furnished the room and fuel and the parents of the pupils paid the teachers. The principal of this school was Miss Henrietta Hueless, assisted by Miss Ida Johnson Rollins and Mrs. M. E. Alexander, the Pastor's wife. Finding that this school could not accommodate the pupils whose parents desired their education, the Pastor and officers of the Church draw up a petition to the Mayor and City Council for a public school building in that community. The cooperation of the pastors and leading

men of northwest Baltimore and other sections of the city was secured, and the petition presented to Mayor Latrobe, who pledged his word to do what he could to secure an appropriation for the establishment of the school.

After repeated visits to the educational committee of the City Council, the appropriation was made and the school building erected at a cost of about \$25,000. While it was in course of erection, a protest was made to the Mayor and City Council, from white citizens in that vicinity, on the plea that the location of the building would diminish the value of property. Every possible effort was made to prevent the colored people from occupying this site. The pastor and officers of the Patterson Avenue Church again called a meeting which was largely attended by the people in the locality and leading colored men from every section of the city. At this meeting, resolutions were passed, appealing to the Mayor, the City Council and other citizens of Baltimore, to prevent this building from being taken away from the colored children and given to the whites, as was the intention of those who protested against it. At this meeting a sentiment was created which secured the cooperation of white ministers and other citizens interested in the education of our people. A resolution was passed in the Baptist Ministers' Meeting, on motion of Rev. Dr. A. J. Rowland, protesting against depriving the colored citizens of this school. Finally the effort to transfer the school was abandoned. The school was opened in September, 1889, under the management of colored teachers, this being the first public school in Baltimore city ever managed by teachers of our own race. A large number of the teachers were those who had graduated from the high and grammar school in the spring of 1889.

During the agitation for this school, some of the white citizens expressed the fear that there would not be pupils

enough in the community to fill all the rooms in the building, which were twelve in number. This doubt was soon settled. When the school was opened, it was over-crowded in less than three days. Three hundred children were turned away who could not be admitted. This emphatic expression, on the part of colored people in behalf of the education of their children, was very encouraging to the friends who had for years advocated increased educational facilities for the colored citizens. The agitation also opened the eyes of many colored people in the city of Baltimore, who previously did not seem to realize the importance of educating their children.

#### *SECOND GENERAL MEETING*

The second Convention was held at Douglass Institute, on November 23, 1886. The Report of the Board was read. It recited the progress that had been made by the Brotherhood since the last meeting, the public sentiment it had created throughout the country among the colored people and the result of the sentiment in the bettering of the condition of our people generally. At that meeting, Rev. J. C. Allen was elected President, Benjamin Weaver Vice President, W. M. Alexander re-elected Secretary, and Rev. A. Brown Treasurer. Board of Managers: J. C. Allen, Benjamin Weaver, W. M. Alexander, A. Brown, Harvey Johnson, Wm. H. Weaver, W. C. Lawson.

The object of this meeting was to arouse the people and keep them posted as to the work of the Brotherhood, and the importance of giving it their support. The hall was well-filled with members and friends of the cause. The orator of the occasion was Joseph S. Davis, Esq., one of the colored lawyers, who had been recently admitted to the Baltimore Bar. The session lasted only one evening, but had the effect of awakening a lively interest in the work of the Brotherhood. Lawyer Davis's speech was published in the New York "Age."