

THE THANKSGIVING CONTRIBUTION.

We take for granted that all our readers are aware of the proposed arrangement to have collections taken in all the churches on the approaching National Thanksgiving, to be devoted to the relief of the suffering and needy among the freed people. It is earnestly hoped and desired that this arrangement should be carried into effect everywhere. The strong appeal of the American Freedmen's Aid Commission (which appeared in the *Liberator* two weeks since) states the necessity of the case in clear, simple, forcible words. In two States,—Georgia and Alabama,—the destitution and lack of food are such that, without prompt and efficient succor, *seventy thousand* persons must die of starvation this winter! This statement is made in the aforesaid appeal; it is no idle, impulsive, haphazard talk, but is deliberately made by a responsible and well-known association, having agents in all parts of the late slaveholding States, whose reports are the warrant and evidence of the truth of the statements made. But in other States, also, there is extensive destitution. The whole number who will depend upon charitable relief this winter, *to save them from death by starvation*, does not, probably, fall much below *ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND!* Nor is it strange that, in the sudden and complete breaking-up of all the social and commercial arrangements of the Southern States, the amount of destitution and suffering should be very great. This is always the result of long and desolating war. But, added to that, in the present instance, are all the causes growing out of the jealous and angry feelings of the slaveholders towards their former slaves,—as shown in the refusal of great numbers to employ them at all, and of still greater numbers to give them any fair wages for their labor. If, out of three and a half millions of slaves, of all ages and conditions of health, and both sexes, suddenly thrown upon their own capacity to help themselves, and in the face of every manner of obstacle put in their way by the spite of their old masters and others, only one hundred thousand are thrown upon charity for a time, it will surely be deemed cause of surprise as well as of thankfulness. As to whether the policy of the government has, or has not, affected their circumstances unfavorably, we cannot say. Possibly it has done so. Yet, in the most favorable circumstances possible, it cannot be doubted that very extensive and severe suffering must have occurred. At all events, the people of the North cannot, and they certainly will not, sit contentedly still, with knowledge of the actual and prospective want of food, and absolute necessities of life among the Southern freed people, without vigorous efforts to supply the want.

It is to be remembered, too, how many old and young persons there must be, among three and a half millions of laboring people, who would be entirely unable, in any circumstances, to obtain their own living,—even if they were placed amongst friends. Many of these would have no one to whom they could look for support, and so become, in the best circumstances, a public charge. From many of these their natural supporters have been taken away by the deaths of their sons, husbands, fathers, in the war,—some in the Union armies, others forced into the service of the rebels.

Therefore let every man, every woman, every child, at the North this winter constantly remember their destitute fellow-creatures, old and young, among the freed people. Let every religious society through the country make its contribution,—if not on Thanksgiving day, then at an early day,—in such form as suits it best, and consecrate it, with thankful hearts to God for the ability to relieve misery, to the rescue of those at the South for whose long-protracted wrongs and poverty the North is largely answerable. Every channel of relief is now ready and open. Let us, every one, recognize our duty to send the needed relief. —M.