

**THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU.** The spirit in which Gen. Howard has undertaken the important and difficult work, entrusted to him in connection with the freedmen of the South, is shown in the following extracts from his letter of advice to the Assistant Commissioners. It is very evident that Gen. Howard thoroughly comprehends the duties and responsibilities of his position and enters upon them with the single purpose of assuring the to white and blacks equally the full benefit of the new condition of things as far as possible without the intervention of military authority or arbitrary constraint of any kind. He says :

"You must do all that behooves the government in answering the question, "What shall we do with the negro?" All the disturbing elements of the old system of industry and society are around you. Passions may sometimes be excited as old prejudices give way, but the Almighty cares for the nation, and the nation will care for you. Do your duty wisely, faithfully, fearlessly, conscientiously—endeavoring neither to overdo nor underdo. Do not forget that the less government consistent with assured security of life and liberty and property, the better. The constraints and exactions of military law are neither normal nor congenial to the American spirit, and your exercise of them must be only to assure to all the liberty for which they were evoked. Assure yourself, and be able to assure others, how much better than the old things of slavery will be the new things of equal liberty to all. Virtuous intelligence and industry assure the stability and prosperity of a people—your work has specially to do with these fundamental principles. Do not start ill-devised schemes ; let your sub-officers be men absolutely above corruption and prejudice—let them be men who propose to do simple justice."

In his further instructions to the Assistant Commissioners, Gen. Howard says :

"No fixed rate of wages will be prescribed for a district, but in order to regulate fair wages in given individual cases, the agent should have in mind the minimum rates for his own guidance. By careful inquiry as to the hire of an able-bodied man when his pay went to his master, he will have an appropriate test of the value of his labor. He must of course, consider the entire change in his circumstances, and be sure that the laborer has due protection against avarice and extortion. Wages had better be secured by a lien on the crops or land. Employes are desired to enter into a written agreement with their employers, setting forth their stated wages, or securing an interest in the crop or land or both, in order to enforce the fulfilment of contracts on both sides. No general rule is laid down ; the Assistant Commissioner must use the privileges and authority he already has. No agent is authorized to tolerate compulsory, unpaid labor, except for the legal punishment of crime. Suffering may result to some extent, but suffering is preferable to slavery, and is to some degree the necessary consequence of events. In all his action the officer should never forget that no establishment for slavery, like apprenticeship, without proper consent, or peonage, that is, holding people for debt, or confining them without their consent to the land by any system, will be tolerated."