

## Transcribed Excerpts from “Startling Revelations from the Department of South Carolina,” 1864

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I will also add a word in respect to the general management of the plantations. These plantations are monopolized by Northern speculators to the almost entire exclusion of the freedmen, who are made the mere serfs of these lords of the soil. On the plantations, the highest price paid to colored laborers, to my knowledge, is thirty cents a day, they subsisting themselves. Many have told me that they have worked all the year, producing from three hundred pounds to five hundred pounds of cotton, and have received only from \$5 to \$15 for their years toil. They who plant a small patch for themselves, are often denied the use of mules and necessary implements unless they will plant the same amount, gratuitously, for the superintendent; and in some cases they have been driven off the plantations because they would not work on the agent's terms. I have met with hundreds of these poor laborers, and all say they have never received the amount of wages secured to them by act of Congress, \* viz: \$8 per month for men, and \$4 per month for women.

[Note : \*This pay was promised, however by the Commander of the post.]

Colored laborers, on the wharf at Beaufort, get out \$8 per month, and not fully paid at that, while white men, doing the same work, get from \$30 to \$50 per month.

Capt. Isaac Simmons, Black Isaac, as he is called, is a pilot, and the best in those waters, and who has more brains than nine-tenths of the whites, gets only \$45 a month, while the white pilot gets from \$60 to \$75; a wicked and oppressive discrimination against the black man.

Under this unrighteous and oppressive treatment, universal sadness is written on every countenance. Many have told me their present condition under these "Buchramen," as they call them, is worse than under their old masters; proving to them what "Old Massa" told them, that the Yankees were not their

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friends. Cheating these people is in proportion to their ignorance, and as a consequence universal ill-will prevails among them towards the whole horde of plunderers who have come down there, not for the good of the freedmen, but for their own profit. The cry of these suffering people comes up: "Pay us for our labor, and treat us as free men and women, giving us an equal chance in the participation of the soil, and we will buy our own lands, keep our own store, and relieve the Freedmen's Association of the benevolent task of drawing on the charities of our real friends in the North, for donations for our benefit, which we never receive as a free gift, as the donors designed."