

spiritual development, as the African negro, must depend not on learning to read and write, but on the amount of familiar intercourse which they enjoy with individuals of a more advanced race. So long as they herd together in large gangs, and rarely come into contact with any whites save their owner and overseer, they can profit little by their imitative faculty, and can not even make much progress in mastering the English language, that powerful instrument of thought and of the communication of ideas, which they are gaining in exchange for the limited vocabulary of their native tribes. Yet, even in this part of Georgia, the negroes are very far from stationary, and each generation is acquiring habits of greater cleanliness and propriety of behavior, while some are learning mechanical arts, and every year many of them becoming converts to Christianity.

Although the Baptist and Methodist missionaries have been the most active in this important work, the Episcopalians have not been idle, especially since Dr. Elliott became Bishop of Georgia, and brought his talents, zeal, and energy to the task. As he found that the negroes in general had no faith in the efficacy of baptism except by complete immersion, he performed the ceremony as they desired. Indeed, according to the old English rubric, all persons were required to be immersed in baptism, except when they were sick, so that to lose converts by not complying with this popular notion of the slaves, would hardly have been justifiable. It may be true that the poor negroes cherish a superstitious belief that the washing out of every taint of sin depends mainly on the particular manner of performing the rite, and the principal charm to the black women in the ceremony of total immersion consists in decking themselves out in white robes, like brides, and having their shoes trimmed with silver. They well know that the waters of the Altamaha are chilly, and that they and the officiating minister run no small risk of catching cold, but to this penance they most cheerfully submit.

Of dancing and music the negroes are passionately fond. On the Hopeton plantation above twenty violins have been silenced by the Methodist missionaries, yet it is notorious that the slaves were not given to drink or intemperance in their merry-makings.