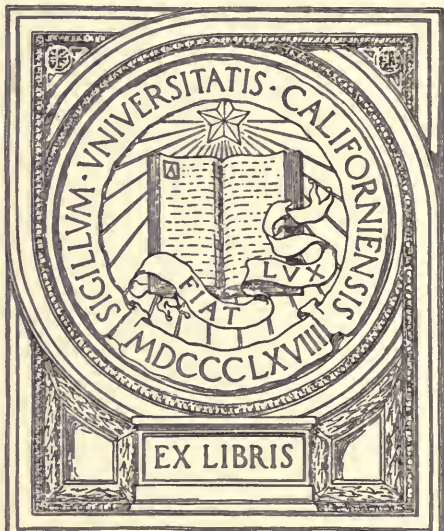


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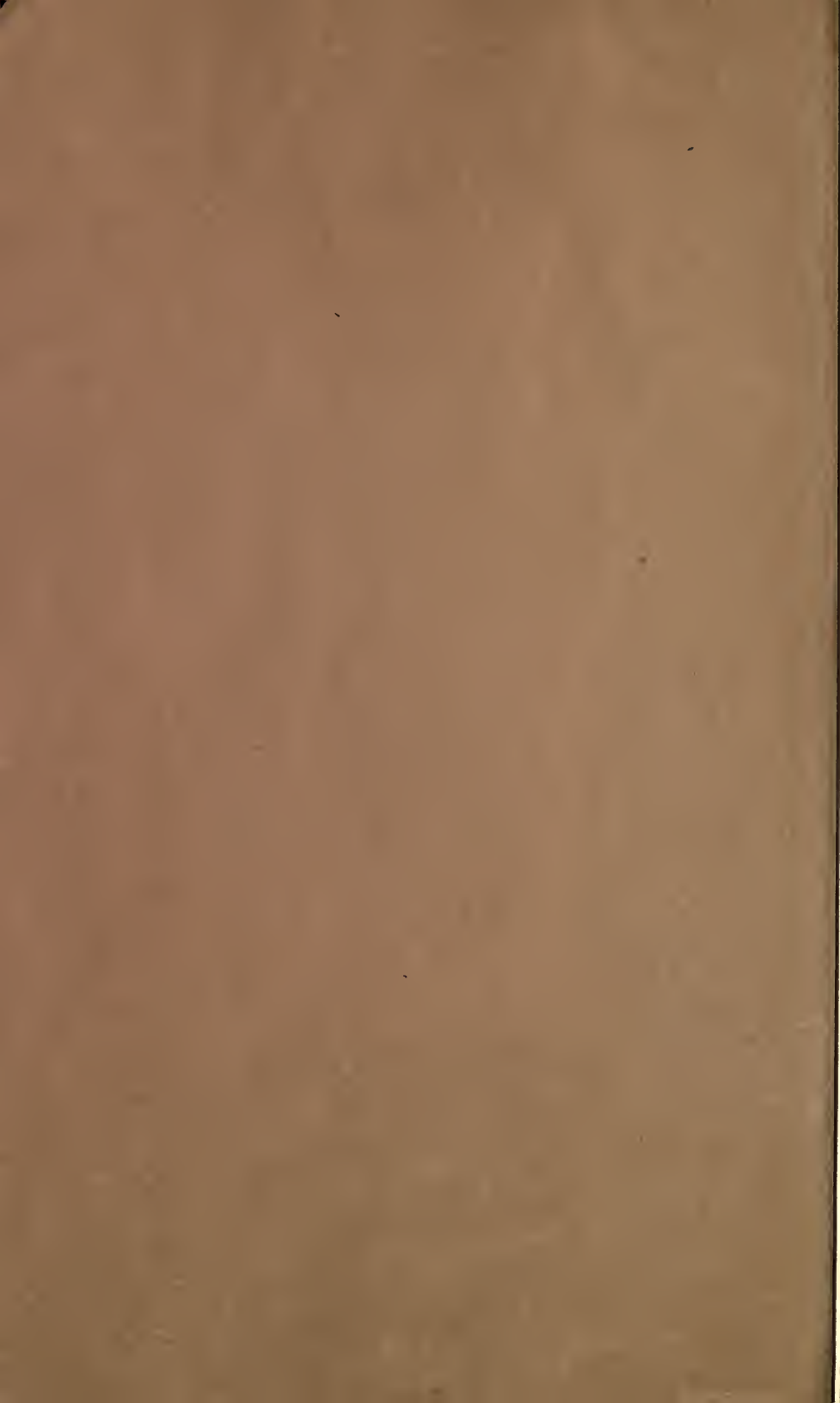


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THE NEGRO QUESTION.

BY GEORGE W. CABLE.

THE QUESTION.

I.

The matter that is made the subject of this paper is not to day the most prominent, but it is the gravest, in American affairs. It is one upon which, of late years, as we might say, much inattention has been carefully bestowed. It has become a dreaded question. We are not politically indolent. We are dealing courageously with many serious problems. We admit that no nation has yet so shaken wrong and oppression from its skirts that it may safely or honorably sit down in a state of mercantile and æsthetical pre-occupation. And yet the matter that gives us daily the profoundest unrest goes daily by default. (The Nation's bitter experiences with it in years past, the baffling complications that men more cunning than wise have woven around it, its proneness to swallow up all other questions and the eruptions of rancor and strife that attend every least sign of its spontaneous re-opening, have made it such a weariness and offence to the great majority, and especially to our commercial impatience, that the public mind in large part eagerly accepts the dangerous comfort of postponement.)

What is this question? Superficially it is whether a certain seven millions of the people, one-ninth of the whole, dwelling in and natives to the Southern States of the Union, and by law an undifferentiated part of the Nation, have or have not the same full measure of the American citizen's rights that they would have were they entirely of European instead of wholly or partly African descent.) The seven millions concerning whom the question is asked, answer as with one voice, that they have not. Millions in the Northern States, and thousands in the Southern, of whites, make the same reply. While other millions of whites,

in North and South, respond not so often with a flat contradiction as with a declaration far more disconcerting. For the "Southerner" speaks truly when he retorts that nowhere in the entire Union, either North or South, are the disadvantages of being a black, or partly black, man confined entirely to the relations of domestic life and private society; but that in every part there is a portion, at least, of the community that does not claim for, or even willingly yield to, the negro, the whole calendar of American rights in the same far-reaching amplitude and sacredness that they do for, or to, the white man. The Southern white man points to thousands of Northern and Western factories, counting-rooms, schools, hotels, churches and guilds, and these attest the truth of his countercharge. Nowhere in the United States is there a whole community from which the black man, after his physical, mental and moral character have been duly weighed, if they be weighed at all, is not liable to suffer an unexplained discount for mere color and race, which he would have to suffer publicly in no other country of the enlightened world. This being the fact, then, in varying degrees according to locality, what does it prove? Only that this cannot be the real point of issue between North and South, and that this superficial definition is not the true one.

Putting aside mere differences of degree, the question is not, Are these things so? but, Ought they so to be? To this a large majority in the Northern States from all classes, with a small minority of the Southern whites, also from all ranks of life, and the whole seven million blacks, irrespective of party leanings, answer No. On the other hand, a large majority of the whites in the Southern States—large as to the white population of those States, but a very small minority in the Nation at large—answer a vehement "Yes; these things should and shall be so."

But how does this small minority maintain itself? It does so owing to the familiar fact that, although by our scheme of government there is a constant appeal to the majority of the whole people, the same scheme provides, also, for the defence of local interests against rash actions of national majorities by a parallel counter-appeal (constantly through its Senate and at times in other ways) to the majority, not of the people *en masse*

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but of the States in their corporate capacity. Now a very large minority in the Northern States, whose own private declaration would be against a difference between white men's rights and other men's rights, nevertheless refuse now, as they refused before the Civil War, to answer with a plain yes or no, but maintain, with the Southern white-rule party, that whether these things ought so to be or not is a question that every State must be allowed to answer for, and to, itself alone; thus so altering the voice of the Nation, when it speaks by States, as virtually to nullify that negative answer which would be given by a majority of the whole people. In the Civil Rights bill the verdict of the States was once given against all race discrimination in all matters of public rights whatsoever, and for confining it within that true domain—of private choice—to which the judgment of other Christian nations consigns it. But the Civil Rights bill, never practically effective in the communities whose upper ranks were hostile to it, has lately perished in the National Supreme Court, and the Senate majority that passed it was long ago lost by revolutions in the Southern States. Thus, by a fundamental provision in the National Government, intended for the very purpose of protecting the weak from the strong, a small national minority is enabled to withstand the pressure of an immense majority.

Whether this is by a right or wrong use of the provision is an inseparable part of the open question. The weak are protected from the strong, but the still weaker are delivered into the hands of the strong. Seven millions of the Nation, mostly poor, ignorant and degraded, are left for the definition and enjoyment of rights, worth more than safety or property, to the judgment of some ten other millions of unquestioned intelligence and virtue, but whose intelligence and virtue were not materially less when, with a courage and prowess never surpassed, they drenched their own land with their own blood to keep these darker millions in slavery. However, be it a use or an abuse of the Nation's scheme of order; be it right or wrong; this is politically the stronghold of the conservative party in the Southern States; and it is made stronger still, steel-clad and turreted, as it were, with the tremendous advantage of the *status quo*—that established order of things which, good or bad, until it becomes intolerable to them-

selves, men will never attack with an energy equal to that with which it is defended.

But political strength is little by itself. The military maxim, that no defences are strong without force enough in them to occupy their line, is true of civil affairs. Entrenchment in the letter of a constitution avails little with the people at large on either side of a question, unless the line of that entrenchment is occupied by a living conviction of being in the right. The most ultra-Southern position on the negro question has an element of strength close akin to this. To be right is the only real necessity; but where is the community that will not make and defend with treasure and blood the assumption that what is necessary is right? "Southerners," in the political sense of the term, may sometimes lack a clear, firm-founded belief that they are right; they may have no more than a restless confidence that others are as wrong as they; but they have at least a profound conviction that they are moved by an imminent, unremitting, imperative necessity. Not that this is all; hundreds of thousands of them, incapacitated by this very conviction from falling into sympathy with the best modern thought, have been taught, and are learning and teaching, not only on the hustings, but in school, in college, at the fireside, through the daily press, in the social circle and in church, that in their attitude on the negro question they are legally, morally and entirely right.

II.

Now, specifically, what are these things that the majority of a free nation says ought not to be, while a sectional majority triumphantly maintains they must, will, ought to and shall be? Give an example of an actual grievance. One commonly esteemed the very least on the list is this: Suppose a man, his wife and their child, decent in person, dress and deportment, but visibly of African or mixed blood, to take passage on a railway train from some city of the Eastern States, as Boston, or of the Western, as Chicago. They will be thrown publicly into company with many others, for an ordinary American railway passenger coach seats fifty persons, and a sleeping-car accommodates twenty-five; and they will receive the same treatment from railway employés and passengers as if, being otherwise just what

they are, they were of pure European descent. Only they will be much less likely than white persons to seek, or be offered, new acquaintanceships. Arriving in New York, Philadelphia, or any other Northern city, they will easily find accommodations in some hotel of such grade as they would be likely to choose if, exactly as they are, they were white. They may chance upon a house that will refuse, on account of their color, to receive them; but such action, if made known, will be likely to receive a wide public reprobation, and scant applause even from the press of the Southern States. If the travelers choose to continue their journey through the night, they will be free to hire and occupy berths in a sleeping-car and to use all its accessories—basins, towels, pillows, etc.—without the least chance of molestation in act or speech from any one of the passengers or employés, let such passengers or employés be from any State of the Union, Northern or Southern.

But, on reaching the Southern States, the three travelers will find themselves at every turn under special and offensive restrictions, laid upon them not for any demerit of person, dress or manners, but solely and avowedly on account of the African tincture in their blood, however slight that may be. They may still be enjoying the comforts of the sleeping-car, by virtue of the ticket bought in a Northern State and not yet fully redeemed. But they will find that while in one Southern State they may still ride in an ordinary first-class railway coach without hindrance, in another they will find themselves turned away from the door of one coach and required to limit themselves to another, equal, it may be, to the first in appointments, and inferior only in the social rank of its occupants. They may protest that in America there are no public distinctions of social rank; but this will avail them nothing. They may object that the passengers in the car from which they are excluded are not of one, but palpably of many and widely different social ranks, and that in the car to which they are assigned are people not of their grade only but of all sorts; they will be told with great plainness that there is but one kind of negro. They will be told that they are assigned equal but separate accommodation because the presence of a person of wholly, or partly, African blood in the same railway

car on terms of social equality with the white passengers is to those white passengers an intolerable offence; and if the husband and father replies that it is itself the height of vulgarity to raise the question of private social rank among strangers in railway cars, he will be fortunate if he is only thrust without more ado into the "colored car," and not kicked and beaten by two or three white men whose superior gentility has been insulted, and he and his wife and child put off at the next station to appeal in vain to the courts. For in court he will find that railway companies are even required by the laws of the State to maintain this ignominious separation of all who betray an African tincture, refined or unrefined, clean or unclean, from the presence of the white passengers in the first-class cars, be those passengers ever so promiscuous a throng.

Such is an example of one of the least grievances of the colored man under the present régime in the Southern States; and so dull is the common perception of wrongs committed at a distance, that hundreds of thousands of intelligent, generous, sensitive people in the Northern States are daily confessing their inability to see any serious hardship in such a case, if only the "colored car" be really equal in its appointments to the one in which only white people of every sort are admitted; as if a permanent ignominious distinction on account of ancestry, made in public, by strangers and in the enjoyment of common public rights were not an insult or an injury unless joined to some bodily discomfort. Let it be plainly understood that though at least scores of thousands are intelligent and genteel, yet the vast majority of colored people in the United States are neither refined in mind nor very decent in person. Their race has never had "a white man's chance." In America it has been under the iron yoke of a slavery that allowed no distinction of worth to cross race lines; and in Africa it has had to contend for the mastery of wild nature on a continent so unconquerable that for thousands of years the white race has striven in vain to subdue it, and is only now at last strong enough to pierce it, enriched, enlightened and equipped by the long conquest of two others less impregnable. For all that is known the black is "an inferior race," though how, or how permanently inferior, remains un-

proved. But the core of the colored man's grievance is that the individual, in matters of right that do not justly go by race, is treated, whether man or child, without regard to person, dress, behavior, character or aspirations, in public and by law, as though the African tincture, much or little, were itself stupidity, squalor and vice. But let us see whether the grievance grows.

On passing into a third Southern State, the three travelers, though still holders of first-class tickets, will be required to confine themselves to the so-called second-class car, a place never much better than a dram shop. When the train stops for meals, and the passengers, men, women and children, the rough, the polished, all throng into one common eating-room to receive a common fare and attention, those three must eat in the kitchen or go hungry. Nor can they even await the coming of a train, in some railway stations, except in a separate "colored waiting-room." If they tarry in some Southern city they will encounter the most harassing and whimsical treatment of their most ordinary public rights as American citizens. They may ride in any street car, however crowded, seated beside, or even crammed in among, white men or women of any, or every, station of life; but at the platform of the railway train, or at the threshold of any theatre, or concert, or lecture hall, they will be directed to the most undesirable part of the house and compelled to take that or nothing. They will find that the word "public" rarely means public to them; that they may not even draw books from the public libraries or use their reading rooms.

Should the harried and exasperated man be so fierce or indiscreet as to quarrel with, and strike, some white man, he will stand several chances to a white man's one of being killed on the spot. If neither killed nor half-killed, but brought into court, he will have ninety-nine chances in a hundred of confronting a jury from which, either by, or else in spite of, legal provision, men of African tincture have been wholly or almost wholly excluded. If sent to prison he must come under a penal system which the report of the National Commissioner of Prisons officially pronounces "a blot upon civilization." He will find the population of the State prisons often nine-tenths colored, divided into chain-gangs, farmed out to private hands, even subleased, and worked

in the mines, quarries, in railway construction and on turnpikes, under cordons of Winchester rifles; veritable quarry slaves. He will find most of the few white convicts under this system suffering the same outrages; but he will also find that the system itself disappears wherever this general attitude toward the black race disappears, and that where it and its outrages continue, the race line in prison is obliterated only when the criminal becomes a negotiable commodity and it costs the lessee money to maintain the absurd distinction. He would find the number of colored men within those deadly cordons out of all proportion to the colored population outside, as compared with the percentages of blacks in and out of prison in States not under this régime. There are State prisons in which he would find the colored convicts serving sentences whose average is nearly twice that of the white convicts in the same places for the same crimes.* In the same or other prisons he would find colored youths and boys by scores, almost by hundreds, consorting with older criminals, and under sentences of seven, ten, twenty years, while the State Legislatures vote down year after year the efforts of a few courageous and humane men either to establish reformatories for colored youth, or to introduce the element of reform into their so-called penitentiaries. Should he some day escape alive across the dead-line of Winchesters, he will be hunted with bloodhounds.

But suppose he commits no offence against person or property; he will make another list of discoveries. He will find that no select school, under "Southern" auspices, will receive his child. That if he sends the child to a public school it must be, as required by law, to a school exclusively for colored children, even if his child is seven times more white than colored. Though his child be gentle, well-behaved, cleanly and decorously dressed, and the colored school so situated as to be naturally and properly the choice of the veriest riff-raff of the school population, he will have no more liberty than before; he will be told again, "We know but one kind of negro." The child's father and mother may themselves be professional instructors; but however highly trained; of whatever reputation for moral and religious character; however talented as teachers or disciplinarians; holding the

* See "The Silent South," *Century Magazine*, September, 1885.

diploma of whatever college or university, Wellesley, Vassar, Yale, Cornell; and of whatever age or experience, they will find themselves shut out by law from becoming teachers in any public school for white children, whether belonging to, and filled from, the "best neighborhood," or in, and for, the lowest quarters of alleys and shanties. They will presently learn that in many hundreds of Southern school-districts where the populations are too sparse and poor to admit of separate schools for the two races, the children of both are being brought up in ignorance of the very alphabet rather than let them enjoy a common public right under a common roof. They will find that this separation is not really based on any incapacity of children to distinguish between public and private social relations; but that the same separation is enforced among adults; and that while every Southern State is lamenting its inability to make anything like an adequate outlay for public education, and hundreds of thousands of colored children are growing up in absolute illiteracy largely for lack of teachers and school-houses, an expensive isolation of race from race is kept up even in the normal schools and teachers' institutes. Even in the house of worship and the divinity school they would find themselves pursued by the same invidious distinctions and separations that had followed them at every step, and would follow and attend them still to, and in, the very almshouse and insane asylum.

III.

And then they would make one more discovery. They would find that not only were they victims of bolder infractions of the most obvious common rights of humanity than are offered to any people elsewhere in Christendom, save only the Chinaman in the far West, but that to make the oppression more exasperating still, there is not a single feature of it in any one State, though justifiable on the plea of stern necessity, that does not stand condemned by its absence, under the same or yet more pronounced conditions, in some other State. Sometimes even one part of a State will utterly stultify the attitude held in another part. In Virginia or South Carolina a colored person of decent appearance or behavior may sit in any first-class railway car, but in Georgia the law forbids it, and in Kentucky the

law leaves him to the caprice of railway managements, some of which accord and others withhold the right. In some States he is allowed in the jury box, in some he is kept out by the letters of statutes, and in some by evasions of them; while in Tennessee some counties admit him to jury duty and others exclude him from it. In one or two Southern cities, the teachers in colored public schools must be white. In certain others they must be colored; and in still others they may be either. In Louisiana certain railway trains and steamboats run side by side, within a mile of one another, where in the trains a negro or mulatto may sit where he will, and on the boats he must confine himself to a separate quarter called the "freedman's bureau."

The Civil Rights bill was fought for years and finally destroyed, with the plea that it infringed the right of common carriers and entertainers to use their own best judgment in distributing their passengers and guests with an equitable consideration for the comfort of all. In fact, it only forbade distributions that, so far from consulting the common comfort, humor the demand of one crudely self-assorted private social class for an invariable, ignominious isolation or exclusion of another. Yet the same States and persons who so effectually made this plea, either allow and encourage its use as a cover for this tyrannous inequity, or else themselves ignore their own plea, usurp the judgment of common carriers and entertainers, and force them by law to make this race distribution, whether they deem it best or not.

And yet again, all over the South there are scattered colleges, academies and tributary grammar schools, established and maintained at the expense of individuals and societies in the Northern States, for the education, at low rates of tuition and living, of the aspiring poor, without hindrance as to race or sex. For more than twenty years these establishments have flourished and been a boon to the African-American, as well as to the almost equally noted "poor whites" of the Southern mountain regions, sand-hills and "pauper counties," and through both these classes to the ultra-Southern white man of the towns and plantations—a boon the national value of which neither he nor one in a thousand of its hundreds of thousands of Northern supporters has an adequate conception, else these establishments would receive

seven times their present pecuniary support. These institutions have graduated some hundreds of colored students as physicians and lawyers. At one time lately they had more than eight hundred divinity students, nearly all of them colored. Their pupils of all grades aggregate over seventeen thousand, and the sixteen thousand colored teachers in the public schools of the South have come almost entirely from them. But now in these institutions there is a complete ignoring of those race distinctions in the enjoyment of common public rights so religiously enforced on every side beyond their borders; and yet none of those unnamable disasters have come to or from them which the advocates of these onerous public distinctions and separations predict and dread. On scores of Southern hilltops these schools stand out almost totally without companions or competitors in their peculiar field, so many refutations, visible and complete, of the idea that any interest requires the colored American citizen to be limited in any of the civil rights that would be his without question if the same man were white. Virtually, the whole guild of educators in the Southern States, from once regarding these institutions with unqualified condemnation and enmity, are now becoming their friends and, in some notable cases, their converts. So widely have the larger colleges demonstrated their unique beneficence that in some cases Southern State Governments, actively hostile to the privileges of civil liberty they teach and apply, are making small annual appropriations in contribution toward their support. So bristling with inconsistencies, good and bad, would our three travelers find this tyrannous and utterly unrepugnant régime. Nowhere else in enlightened lands and in this day do so many millions see their own fellow-citizens so play football with their simplest public rights; for the larger part of the Southern white people do with these laws of their own making what they please, keeping or breaking them as convenient.

But their discoveries would still go on. They would hear these oppressions justified by Southern white people of the highest standing, and—more's the shame—by Northern tourists in the South, on the ground that the people upon whom they are laid are a dull, vicious, unclean race, contact with which would be

physically, intellectually and morally offensive and mischievous to a higher race. And when they might ask why the lines of limited rights are not drawn around the conspicuously dull, vicious and unclean of both races for the protection of the opposite sort in both, they would come face to face upon the amazing assumption that the lowest white man is somehow a little too good for even so much contact with the highest black as may be necessary for a common enjoyment of public rights; and, therefore, that no excellence, moral, mental or physical, inborn or attained, can buy for a "man of color" from these separationists any distinction between the restrictions of his civil liberty and those of the stupidest and squalidest of his race, or bring him one step nearer to the enjoyment of the rights of a white man; or, if at all, then only as a matter of the white man's voluntary condescension and with the right disguised as a personal privilege. They would find that the race line is not a line of physical, moral or intellectual excellence at all. Stranger yet, they would learn that no proportion of white men's blood in their own veins, unless it washes out the very memory of their African tincture, can get them abatement of those deprivations decreed for a dull, vicious and unclean race, but that—men, women and children alike—hundreds and thousands of mixed race are thus daily and publicly punished by their brothers for the sins of their fathers. They would find the race line not a race line at all.

They would find that the mere contact of race with race is not the matter objected to, but only any and every sort of contact on an equal footing. They would find that what no money, no fame, no personal excellence and no fractional preponderance of European blood can buy, can nevertheless be bought instantly and without one of these things by the simple surrender of the attitude of public equality. They would find that the entire essence of the offense, any and every where where the race line is insisted on, is the apparition of the colored man or woman as his or her own master; that masterhood is all that all this tyranny is intended to preserve, and that the moment the relation of master and servant is visibly established between race and race there is the hush of peace.

"What is that negro—what is that mulattress—doing in here?"

asks one private individual of another in some public place, and the other replies :

“That’s nothing ; he is the servant of that white man just behind him ; she is the nurse of those children in front of her.”

“Oh, all right.” And the “cordial relation” is restored. Such conversation, or equivalent soliloquy, occurs in the South a hundred times a day.

The surrender of this one point by the colored man or woman buys more than peace—it buys amity ; an amity clouded only by a slight but distinct and constant air and tone of command on the one part, a very gross and imperfect attitude of deference on the other, and the perpetual unrest that always accompanies forcible possession of anything. But since no people ever compelled another to pay too much for peace without somehow paying too much for it themselves, the master-caste tolerates, with unsurpassed supineness and unconsciousness, a more indolent, inefficient, slovenly, unclean, untrustworthy, ill-mannered, noisy, disrespectful, disputatious, and yet servile domestic and public menial service than is tolerated by any other enlightened people. Such is but one of the smallest of many payments which an intelligent and refined community has to make for maintaining the lines of master and servant-hood on caste instead of on individual ambition and capacity, and for the forcible equalization of millions of unequal individuals under one common public disdain. Other and greater payments and losses there are, moral, political, industrial, commercial, as we shall see when we turn, as now we must, to the other half of this task, and answer the two impatient questions that jostle each other for precedence as they spring from this still incomplete statement of the condition of affairs.

TWO FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AT WAR.

The two questions are these : If the case is so plain, then, in the first place, how can the millions of intelligent and virtuous white people of the South make such a political, not to say such a moral, mistake ? And, in the second place, how can the overwhelming millions of the North, after spending the frightful costs they spent in the war of '61-'65, tolerate this emasculation of the American freedom which that war is supposed to have secured to all alike ?

THE ANSWER.

I.

As to the Southern people the answer is that, although the Southern master-class now cordially and unanimously admit the folly of slave-holding, yet the fundamental article of political faith on which slavery rested has not been displaced. As to the people of the North the answer is simpler still : the Union is saved.

The Northern cause in our civil war was not primarily the abolition of slavery, although many a Northern soldier and captain fought mainly for this and cared for no other issue while this remained. The Southern cause was not merely for disunion, though many a Southern soldier and captain would never have taken up the sword to defend slave-holding stripped of the disguise of State sovereignty. The Northern cause was pre-eminently the National unity. Emancipation—the emancipation of the negroes—was not what the North fought for, but only what it fought with. The right to secede was not what the South fought for, but only what it fought with. The great majority of the Southern white people loved the Union and consented to its destruction only when there seemed to be no other way to save slavery ; the great bulk of the North consented to destroy slavery only when there seemed no other way to save the Union. To put in peril the Union on one side and slavery on the other was enough, when nothing else was enough, to drench one of the greatest and happiest lands on earth with the blood of hundreds of thousands of her own children. Now, what thing of supreme value rested on this Union, and what on this slavery, that they should have been defended at such cost? There rested on, or more truly there underlay, each a fundamental principle, conceived to be absolutely essential to the safety, order, peace, fortune and honor of society ; and these two principles were antagonistic.

They were more than antagonistic ; they were antipodal and irreconcilable. No people that hold either of these ideas as cardinal in their political creed will ever allow the other to be forced upon them from without so long as blood and lives will buy deliverance. Both were brought from the mother country when America was originally colonized, and both have their advocates

in greater or less number in the Northern States, in the Southern, and wherever there is any freedom of thought and speech.

The common subject of the two is the great lower mass of society. The leading thought of the one is that mass's elevation, of the other its subjugation. The one declares the only permanent safety of public society, and its highest development, to require the constant elevation of the lower, and thus of the whole mass, by the free self-government of all under one common code of equal civil rights. It came from England, but it was practically, successfully, beneficently applied on a national scale first in the United States, and Americans claim the right to call it, and it pre-eminently, the American idea, promulgated and established, not by Northerners or Southerners, one greatly more than another, but by the unsectional majority of a whole new Nation born of the idea. The other principle declares public safety and highest development to require the subjugation of the lower mass under the arbitrary protective supremacy of an untitled but hereditary privileged class, a civil caste. Not, as it is commonly miscalled, an aristocracy, for within one race it takes in all ranks of society, not an aristocracy, for an aristocracy exists, presumably, at least, with the wide consent of all classes, and men in any rank of life may have some hope to attain to it by extraordinary merit and service; but a caste, not the embodiment of a modern European idea, but the resuscitation of an ancient Asiatic one.

That one of these irreconcilable ideas should by-and-by become all-dominant in the formation of public society in one region, and its opposite in the other region, is due to original differences in the conditions under which the colonies were settled. In the South, the corner-stone of the social structure was made the plantation idea—wide lands, an accomplished few, and their rapid aggrandizement by the fostering oversight and employment of an unskilled many. In the North, it was the village and town idea—the notion of farm and factory, skilled labor, an intelligent many, and ultimate wealth through an assured public tranquillity. Nothing could be more natural than for African slavery, once introduced, to flourish and spread under the one idea, and languish and die under the other. It is high time to be done saying that the South retained slavery and the North renounced it merely be-

cause to the one it was, and to the other it was not, lucrative. It was inevitable that the most conspicuous feature of one civilization should become the public schoolhouse, and of the other the slave yard. Who could wish to raise the equally idle and offensive question of praise and blame? When Northerners came South by thousands and made their dwelling there, ninety-nine hundredths of them fell into our Southern error up to the eyes, and there is nothing to prove that had the plantation idea, to the exclusion of the village idea, been planted in all the colonies, we should not by this time have had a West Indian civilization from Florida to Oregon. But it was not to be so. Wherever the farm village became the germinal unit of social organization, there was developed in its most comprehensive integrity, that American idea of our Northern and Southern fathers, the representative self-government of the whole people by the constant free consent of all to the frequently reconsidered choice of the majority.

Such a scheme can be safe only when it includes inherently the continual and diligent elevation of that lower mass which human society everywhere is constantly precipitating. But slave-holding on any large scale could not make even a show of public safety without the continual and diligent debasement of its enslaved lower millions. Wherever it prevailed it was bound by the natural necessities of its own existence to undermine and corrode the National scheme. It mistaught the new generations of the white South that the slave-holding fathers of the Republic were approvers and advocates of that sad practice, which by their true histories we know they would gladly have destroyed. It mistaught us to construe the right of a uniform government of all by all, not as a common and inalienable right of man, but as a privilege that became a right only by a people's merit, and which our forefathers bought with the blood of the Revolution in 1776-'83, and which our slaves did not and should not be allowed to acquire. It mistaught us to seek prosperity in the concentration instead of the diffusion of wealth, to seek public safety in a state of siege rather than in a state of peace; it gave us subjects instead of fellow-citizens, and falsely threatened us with the utter shipwreck of public and private society if we dared accord civil power to the degraded millions to whom we had forbidden patriotism. Thus, it

could not help but misteach us also to subordinate to its preservation the maintenance of a National union with those Northern communities to whose whole scheme of order slave-holding was intolerable, and to rise at length against the will of the majority and dissolve the Union when that majority refused to give slave-holding the National sanction.

The other system taught the inherent right of all human society to self-government. It taught the impersonal civil equality of all. It admitted that the private, personal inequality of individuals is inevitable, necessary, right and good ; but condemned its misuse to set up arbitrary public inequalities. It declared public equality to be, on the one hand, the only true and adequate counterpoise against private inequalities, and, on the other, the best protector and promotor of just private inequalities against unjust. It held that virtue, intelligence and wealth are their own sufficient advantage, and need for self-protection no arbitrary civil preponderance ; that their powers of self-protection are never inadequate save when by forgetting equity they mass and exasperate ignorance, vice and poverty against them. It insisted that there is no safe protection but self-protection ; that poverty needs at least as much civil equipment for self-protection as property needs ; that the right and liberty to acquire intelligence, virtue and wealth are just as precious as the right and liberty to maintain them, and need quite as much self-protection ; that the secret of public order and highest prosperity is the common and equal right of all lawfully to acquire as well as retain every equitable means of self-aggrandizement, and that this right is assured to all only through the consent of all to the choice of the majority frequently appealed to without respect of persons. And last, it truly taught that a government founded on these principles and holding them essential to public peace and safety might comfortably bear the proximity of alien neighbors, whose ideas of right and order were not implacably hostile ; but that it had no power to abide unless it could put down any internal mutiny against that choice of the majority which was, as it were, the Nation's first commandment.

The war was fought and the Union saved. Fought as it was, on the issue of the consent of all to the choice of the majority,

the conviction forced its way that the strife would never end in peace until the liberty of self-government was guaranteed to the entire people, and slavery, as standing for the doctrine of public safety by subjugation, destroyed. Hence, first, emancipation, and then, enfranchisement. And now even the Union saved is not the full measure of the Nation's triumphs; but, saved once by arms, it seems at length to have achieved a better and fuller salvation still; for the people of the once seceded States, with a sincerity that no generous mind can question, have returned to their old love of this saved Union, and the great North, from East to utmost West, full of elation, and feeling what one may call the onus of the winning side, cries "Enough!" and asks no more.

II.

Thus stands the matter to-day. Old foes are clasping hands on fields where once they met in battle, and touching glasses across the banqueting board, pledging long life to the Union and prosperity to the new South, but at every feast there is one empty seat.

Why should one seat be ever empty, and every guest afraid to look that way? Because the Southern white man swears upon his father's sword that none but a ghost shall ever sit there. And a ghost is there; the ghost of that old heresy of public safety by the mass's subjugation. This is what the Northern people cannot understand. This is what makes the Southern white man an enigma to all the world beside, if not also to himself. To-day the pride with which he boasts himself a citizen of the United States and the sincerity with which he declares for free government as the only safe government cannot be doubted; to-morrow comes an explosion, followed by such a misinterpretation of what free government requires and forbids that it is hard to identify him with the nineteenth century. Emancipation destroyed domestic bondage; enfranchisement, as nearly as its mere decree can, has abolished public servitude; how, then, does this old un-American, undemocratic idea of subjugation, which our British mother country and Europe as well, are so fast repudiating—how does it remain? Was it not founded in these two forms of slavery? The mistake lies just there: They were founded in it, and removing them has not removed it.

It has always been hard for the North to understand the alacrity with which the ex-slaveholder learned to condemn as a moral and economic error that slavery in defense of which he endured four years of desolating war. But it was genuine, and here is the explanation: He believed personal enslavement essential to subjugation. Emancipation at one stroke proved it was not. But it proved no more. Unfortunately for the whole Nation there was already before emancipation came, a defined status, a peculiar niche, waiting for freed negroes. They were nothing new. Nor was it new to lose personal ownership in one's slave. When, under emancipation, no one else could own him, we quickly saw he was not lost at all. There he stood, beggar to us for room for the sole of his foot, the land and all its appliances ours, and he, by the stress of his daily needs, captive to the land. The moment he fell to work of his own free will, we saw that emancipation was even more ours than his; public order stood fast, our homes were safe, our firesides uninvaded; he still served, we still ruled; all need of holding him in private bondage was disproved, and when the notion of necessity vanished the notion of right vanished with it. Emancipation had destroyed private, but it had hardly disturbed public subjugation. The ex-slave was not a free man; he was only a free negro.

Then the winners of the war saw that the great issue which had jeopardized the Union was not settled. The Government's foundation principle was not re-established, and could not be while millions of the country's population were without a voice as to who should rule, who should judge and what should be law. But, as we have seen, the absolute civil equality of privately and socially unequal men was not the whole American idea. It was counterbalanced by an enlarged application of the same principle in the absolute equality of unequal States in the Federal Union, one of the greatest willing concessions ever made by stronger political bodies to weaker ones in the history of government. Now manifestly this great concession of equality among the unequal States becomes inordinate, unjust and dangerous when millions of the people in one geographical section, native to the soil, of native parentage, having ties of interest and sympathy with no other land, are arbitrarily denied that political equality within the

States which obtains elsewhere throughout the Union. This would make us two countries. But we cannot be two merely federated countries without changing our whole plan of government; and we cannot be one without a common foundation. Hence the freedman's enfranchisement. It was given him not only because enfranchisement was his only true emancipation, but also because it was, and is, impossible to withhold it and carry on American government on American ground principles. Neither the Nation's honor nor its safety could allow the restoration of revolted States to their autonomy with their populations divided by lines of status abhorrent to the whole National structure.

Northern men often ask perplexedly if the freedman's enfranchisement was not, as to the South, premature and inexpedient; while Southern men as often call it the one vindictive act of the conqueror, as foolish as it was cruel. It was cruel. Not by intention, and, it may be, unavoidably, but certainly it was not cruel for its haste, but for its tardiness. Had enfranchisement come into effect, as emancipation did, while the smoke of the war's last shot was still in the air, when force still ruled unquestioned and civil order and system had not yet superseded martial law, the agonies, the shame and the incalculable losses of the Reconstruction period that followed might have been spared the South and the Nation. Instead there came two unlucky postponements, the slow doling out of re-enfranchisement to the best intelligence of Southern white society and the delay of the freedman's enfranchisement—his civil emancipation—until the "Old South," instead of reorganizing public society in harmony with the National idea, largely returned to its entrenchments in the notion of exclusive white rule. Then, too late to avert a new strike, and as little more than a defensive offset, the freedman was invested with citizenship and the experiment begun of trying to establish a form of public order, wherein, under a political equality accorded by all citizens, to all citizens, new and old, intelligence and virtue would be so free to combine, and ignorance and vice feel so free to divide, as to insure the majority's free choice of rulers of at least enough intelligence and virtue to secure safety, order and progress. This experiment, the North believed, would succeed, and since this was

the organic embodiment of the American idea for which it had just shed seas of blood, it stands to reason the North would not have allowed it to fail. But the Old South, still bleeding from her thousand wounds, but as brave as when she fired her first gun, believed not only that the experiment would fail, but also that it was dangerous and dishonorable. And to-day, both in North and South, a widespread impression prevails that this is the experiment which was tried and did in fact fail. Whereas it is just what the Old South never allowed to be tried.

This is the whole secret of the Negro Question's vital force to-day. And yet the struggle in the Southern States has never been by the blacks for and by the whites against a black supremacy, but only for and against an arbitrary pure white supremacy. From the very first until this day, in all the freedman's intellectual crudity, he has held fast to the one true, National doctrine of the absence of privilege and the rule of all by all, through the common and steadfast consent of all to the free and frequent choice of the majority. He has never rejected white men's political fellowship or leadership because it was white, but only and always when it was unsound in this doctrine. His party has never been a purely black party in fact or principle. The "solid black vote" is only by outside pressure solidified about a principle of American liberty, which is itself against solidity and destroys the political solidity of classes wherever it has free play. But the "solid white vote"—which is not solid by including all whites, but because no colored man can truly enter its ranks, much less its councils, without accepting an emasculated emancipation—the solid white vote is solid, not by outside pressure but by inherent principle. Solid twice over; first, in each State, from sincere motives of self-preservation, solid in keeping the old servile class, by arbitrary classification, servile; and then solid again by a tacit league of Southern States around the assumed right of each State separately to postpone a true and complete emancipation as long as the fear remains that, with full American liberty—this and no more—to all alike, the freedman would himself usurp the arbitrary domination now held over him and plunder and destroy society.

So, then, the Southern question at its root is simply whether

there is any real ground sufficient to justify this fear and the attitude taken against it. Only remove this fear, which rests on a majority of the whole white South despite all its splendid, well-proved courage, and the question of right, in law and in morals, will vanish along with the notion of necessity.

Whoever attempts to remove this apprehension must meet it in two forms: First, fear of a hopeless wreck of public government by a complete supremacy of the lower mass; and second, fear of a yet more dreadful wreck of private society in a deluge of social equality.

III.

Now, as to public government, the freedman, whatever may be said of his mistakes, has never shown an intentional preference for anarchy. Had he such a bent he would have betrayed something of it when our civil war offered as wide an opportunity for its indulgence as any millions in bondage ever had. He has shown at least as prompt a choice for peace and order as any "lower million" ever showed. The vices said to be his in inordinate degree are only such as always go with degradation, and especially with a degraded status; and when, in Reconstruction years, he held power to make and unmake laws, amid all his degradation, all the efforts to confine him still to an arbitrary servile status, and all his vicious special legislation, he never removed the penalties from anything that the world at large calls a crime. Neither did he ever show any serious disposition to establish race rule. The whole spirit of his emancipation and enfranchisement, and his whole struggle, was, and is, to put race rule of all sorts under foot, and set up the common rule of all. The fear of anarchy in the Southern States, then, is only that perfectly natural and largely excusable fear that besets the upper ranks of society everywhere, and often successfully tempts them to commit inequitable usurpations; and yet a fear of which no amount of power or privilege ever relieves them—the fear that the stupid, the destitute, and the vicious will combine against them and rule by sheer weight of numbers.

Majority rule is an unfortunate term, in that it falsely implies this very thing; whereas its mission in human affairs is to remove precisely this danger. In fact a minority always rules. At least

it always can. All the great majority ever strives for is the power to choose by what, and what kind of, a minority it shall be ruled. What that choosing majority shall consist of, and hence the wisdom and public safety of its choice, will depend mainly upon the attitude of those who hold, against the power of mere numbers, the far greater powers of intelligence, of virtue and of wealth. If these claim, by virtue of their own self-estimate, an arbitrary right to rule and say who shall rule, the lower elements of society will be bound together by a just sense of grievance, and a well-grounded reciprocation of distrust, the forced rule will continue only till it can be overturned, and while it lasts will be attended by largely uncounted but enormous losses, moral and material, to all ranks of society. But if the wise, the upright, the wealthy, command the courage of our American fathers to claim for all men a common political equality, without rank, station or privilege, and give their full and free adherence to government by the consent of all to the rule of a minority, the choice of the majority frequently appealed to without respect of persons, then ignorance, destitution, and vice will not combine to make the choosing majority. They cannot. They carry in themselves the very principle of disintegration. Without the outside pressure of common and sore grievance, they have no lasting powers of cohesion. The minority always may rule. It need never rule by force, if it will rule by equity. This is the faith of our fathers of the Revolution, and no community in America that has built squarely and only upon it has found it unwise or unsafe.

This is asserted with all the terrible misrule of Reconstruction days in full remembrance. For, first be it said again, that sad history came not by a reign of equal rights and majority rule, but through an attempt to establish them while the greater part of the wealth and intelligence of the region involved held out sincerely, steadfastly, and desperately against them, and for the preservation of unequal privileges and class domination. The Reconstruction party, even with all its taxing, stealing and defrauding, and with the upper ranks of society at war as fiercely against its best principles as against its bad practices, planted the whole South with public schools for the poor and illiterate of both races, welcomed and cherished the missionaries of higher educa-

tion, and, when it fell, left them still both systems, with the master-class converted to a belief in their use and necessity. The history of Reconstruction dispassionately viewed, is a final, triumphant proof that all our American scheme needs to make it safe and good, in the South as elsewhere, is consent to it and participation in it by the law-abiding, intelligent portions of the people, with one common freedom, in and between high life and low, to combine, in civil matters, against ignorance and vice, in high life and low, across, yet without disturbing, the lines of race or any other private rank or predilection.

There are hundreds of thousands in the Southern States who would promptly concede all this in theory and in practice, but for the second form of their fear: the belief that there would result a confusion of the races in private society, followed by intellectual and moral debasement and by a mongrel posterity. Unless this can be shown to be an empty fear, our Southern problem cannot be solved.

IV.

The mere ambiguity of a term here has cost much loss. The double meaning of the words "social" and "society" seems to have been a real drawback on the progress of political ideas among the white people of the South. The clear and definite term, civil equality, they have made synonymous with the very vague and indefinite term, social equality, and then turned and totally misapplied it to the sacred domains of private society. If the idea of civil equality had rightly any such application, their horror would certainly be just. To a forced private social equality the rest of the world has the same aversion; but it knows and feels that such a thing is as impossible in fact as it is monstrous in thought. Americans, in general, know by a century's experience, that civil equality makes no such proposal, bears no such results. They know that public society—civil society—comprises one distinct group of mutual relations, and private society entirely another, and that it is simply and only evil to confuse the two. They see that public society comprises all those relations that are impersonal, unselective, and in which all men, of whatever personal inequality, should stand equal. They recognize that private society is its opposite hemisphere; that it is personal, selective, assortive, ig-

nores civil equality without violating it, and forms itself entirely upon mutual private preferences and affinities. They agree that civil status has of right no special value in private society, and that their private social status has rightly no special value in their public social—i.e., their merely civil—relations. Even the Southern freedman is perfectly clear on these points; and Northern minds are often puzzled to know why the whites of our Southern States, almost alone, should be beset by a confusion of ideas that costs them all the tremendous differences, spiritual and material, between a state of truce and a state of peace.

But the matter has a very natural explanation. Slavery was both public and private, domestic as well as civil. By the plantation system the members of the master-class were almost constantly brought into closer contact with slaves than with their social equals. The defensive line of private society in its upper ranks was an attenuated one; hence there was a constant, well-grounded fear that social confusion—for we may cast aside the term “social equality” as preposterous—that social confusion would be wrought by the powerful temptation of close and continual contact between two classes—the upper powerful and bold, the under helpless and sensual, and neither one socially responsible to the other either publicly or privately. It had already brought about the utter confusion of race and corruption of society in the West Indies and in Mexico, and the only escape from a similar fate seemed to our Southern master-class to be to annihilate and forget the boundaries between public right and private choice, and treat the appearance anywhere of any one visibly of African tincture and not visibly a servant, as an assault upon the purity of private society, to be repelled on the instant without question of law or authority, as one would fight fire. Now, under slavery, though confessedly inadequate, this was after all the only way; and all that the whites in the Southern States have overlooked is that the conditions are changed, and that this policy has become unspeakably worse than useless. Dissimilar races are not inclined to mix spontaneously. The common enjoyment of equal civil rights never mixed two such races; it has always been some oppressive distinction between them that, by holding out temptations to vice instead of rewards to virtue, has

done it; and because slavery is the foulest of oppressions it makes the mixture of races in morally foulest form. Race fusion is not essential to National unity; such unity requires only civil and political, not private social, homogeneity. The contact of superior and inferior is not of necessity degrading; it is the kind of contact that degrades or elevates; and public equality—equal public rights, common public liberty, equal mutual responsibility—this is the great essential to beneficent contact across the lines of physical, intellectual and moral difference, and the greatest safeguard of private society that human law or custom can provide.

V.

Thus we see that, so far from a complete emancipation of the freedman bringing those results in the Southern States which the white people there so justly abhor, but so needlessly fear, it is the only safe and effectual preventive of those results, and final cure of a state of inflammation which nothing but the remaining vestiges of an incompletely abolished slavery perpetuate. The abolition of the present state of siege rests with the Southern white man. He can abolish it if he will with safety and at once. The results will not be the return of Reconstruction days, nor the incoming of any sort of black rule, nor the supremacy of the lower mass—either white, black or mixed; nor the confusion of ranks and races in private society; nor the thronging of black children into white public schools, which never happened even in the worst Reconstruction days; nor any attendance at all of colored children in white schools or of white in colored, save where exclusion would work needless hardship; nor any new necessity to teach children—what they already know so well—that the public school relation is not a private social relation; nor any greater or less necessity for parents to oversee their children's choice of companions in school or out; nor a tenth as much or as mischievous play-mating of white and colored children as there was in the days of slavery; nor any new obstruction of civil or criminal justice; nor any need of submitting to any sort of offensive contact from a colored person, that it would be right to resent if he were white. But seven dark American-born millions would find themselves freed from their present constant liability to public legalized indignity. They would find themselves, for the first time in their

history, holding a patent, with the seal of public approval, for all the aspirations of citizenship and all the public rewards of virtue and intelligence. Not merely would their million voters find themselves admitted to, and faithfully counted at, the polls--whether they are already or not is not here discussed—but they would find themselves, as never before, at liberty to choose between political parties. These are some of the good—and there need be no ill—changes that will come whenever a majority of the Southern whites are willing to vote for them.

There is a vague hope, much commoner in the North than in the South, that somehow, if everybody will sit still, "time" will bring these changes. A large mercantile element, especially, would have the South "let politics alone." It is too busy to understand that whatever people lets politics alone is doomed. There are things that mere time can do, but only vigorous agitation can be trusted to change the fundamental convictions on which a people has built society. Time may do it at last, but it is likely to make bloody work of it. For either foundation idea on which society may build must, if let alone, multiply upon itself. The elevation idea brings safety, and safety constantly commends and intensifies itself and the elevation idea. The subjugation idea brings danger, and the sense of danger constantly intensifies the subjugation idea. It may be counted on for such lighter things as the removal of animosities and suspicions, and this in our Nation's case it has done. Neither North nor South now holds, or suspects the other of holding, any grudge for the late war. But trusting time to do more than this is but trusting to luck, and trusting to luck is a crime.

What is luck doing? Here is the exclusive white party in the Southern States calling itself, and itself only, "The South," praying the Nation to hold off, not merely its interference, but its counsel—even its notice—while it, not removes, but refines, polishes, decorates, and disguises to its own and the Nation's eyes, this corner-stone of all its own and the true South's, the whole South's woes; pleading the inability of any but itself to "understand the negro," when in fact itself has had to correct more, and more radical mistakes about the negro since the war than all the Nation beside; failing still, more than twenty years since Recon-

struction began and more than ten since its era closed, to offer any definition of the freedman's needs and desires which he can accept; making daily statements of his preferences which the one hundred newspapers published for his patronage, and by himself, daily and unanimously repudiate; trying to settle affairs on the one only false principle of public social order that keeps them unsettled; proposing to settle upon a *sine qua non* that shuts out of its councils the whole opposite side of the only matter in question; and holding out for a settlement which, whether effected or not, can but perpetuate a disturbance of inter-state equality fatal to the Nation's peace—a settlement which is no more than a refusal to settle at all.

Meanwhile, over a million American citizens, with their wives and children, suffer a suspension of their full citizenship, and are virtually subjects and not citizens, peasants instead of freemen. They cannot seize their rights by force, and the Nation would never allow it if they could. But they are learning one of the worst lessons class rule can teach them—exclusive, even morbid, pre-occupation in their rights as a class, and inattention to the general affairs of their communities, their States and the Nation. Meanwhile, too, the present one-sided effort at settlement by subjugation is not only debasing to the under mass, but corrupting to the upper. For it teaches these to set aside questions of right and wrong for questions of expediency; to wink at and at times to defend and turn to account evasions, even bold infractions, of their own laws, when done to preserve arbitrary class domination; to vote confessedly for bad men and measures as against better, rather than jeopardize the white man's solid party, and exclusive power; to regard virtue and intelligence, vice and ignorance, as going by race, and to extenuate and let go unprosecuted the most frightful crimes against the under class, lest that class, being avenged, should gather a boldness inconsistent with its arbitrarily fixed status; and these results are contrary to our own and to all good government.

VI.

There is now going on in several parts of the South a remarkable development of material wealth. Mills, mines, furnaces, quarries, railways are multiplying rapidly. The eye that

cannot see the value of this aggrandizement must be dull indeed. But many an eye, in North and South, and to the South's loss, is crediting it with values that it has not. To many the "New South" we long for means only this industrial and commercial expansion, and our eager mercantile spirit forgets that even for making a people rich in goods a civil order on sound foundations is of greater value than coal or metals, or spindles and looms. May the South grow rich! But every wise friend of the South will wish besides to see wealth built upon public provisions for securing through it that general beneficence without which it is not really wealth. He would not wish those American States a wealth like that which once was Spain's. He would not wish to see their society more diligent for those conditions that concentrate wealth than for those that disseminate it. Yet he must see it. That is the situation, despite the assurances of a host of well-meaning flatterers that a New South is laying the foundations of a permanent prosperity. They cannot be laid on the old plantation idea, and much of that which is loosely called the New South to-day is farthest from it—it is only the Old South re-adapting the old plantation idea to a peasant labor and mineral products. Said a mine owner of the far North lately; "We shall never fear their competition till they get rid of that idea." A lasting prosperity cannot be hoped for without a disseminated wealth, and public social conditions to keep it from congestion. But this dissemination cannot be got save by a disseminated intelligence, nor intelligence be disseminated without a disseminated education, nor this be brought to any high value, without liberty, responsibility, private inequality, public equality, self-regard, virtue, aspirations and their rewards.

Many ask if this new material development at the South will not naturally be followed by adequate public provisions for this dissemination by-and-by. There is but one safe answer: That it has never so happened in America. From our furthest East to our furthest West, whenever a community has established social order in the idea of the elevation of the masses, it has planned, not for education and liberty to follow from wealth and intelligence, but for wealth and intelligence to follow from education and liberty; and the community whose intelligent few do

not make the mass's elevation by public education and equal public liberty the corner-stone of a projected wealth, is not more likely to provide it after wealth is achieved and mostly in their own hands.

Our American public school idea—American at least in contrast with any dissimilar notion—is that a provision for public education adequate for the whole people, is not a benevolent concession but a paying investment, constantly and absolutely essential to confirm the safety of a safe scheme of government. The maintenance and growth of public education in the Southern States, as first established principally under reconstruction rule, sadly insufficient as it still is, is mainly due to the partial triumph of this idea in the minds of the Southern whites, and its eager acceptance, with or without discordant conditions, by the intelligent blacks, and in no region is rightly attributable to an exceptionable increase of wealth. Much less is it attributable, as is often conjectured, to the influx of Northern capital and capitalists, bringing Northern ideas with them. It ought to go without saying, that immigration, with or without capital, will always try to assimilate itself to the state of society into which it comes. Every impulse of commerce is not to disturb any vexed issue until such issue throws itself immediately across the path. It never purposely molests a question of social order. So it is in the South.

Certain public men in both North and South have of late years made, with the kindest intentions, an unfortunate misuse of statistical facts to make it appear that public society in the South is doing, not all that should be done, but all it can do, for the establishment of permanent safety and harmony, through the elevation of the lower masses especially, in the matter of public education. In truth, these facts do not prove the statement they are called upon to prove, and do the Southern States no kindness in lulling them to a belief in it. It is said, for instance, that certain Southern States are now spending more annually for public education, in proportion to their taxable wealth, than certain Northern States noted for the completeness of their public school systems. Mississippi may thus be compared with Massachusetts. But really the comparison is a sad injustice to the Southern

State, for a century of public education has helped to make Massachusetts so rich that she is able to spend annually twenty dollars per head upon the children in her public schools, while Mississippi, laying a heavier tax, spends upon hers but two dollars per head. Manifestly it is unfair to compare a State whose public school system is new with any whose system is old. The public school property of Ohio, whose population is one million, is over twice as great as that of ten States of the new South, whose population is three and a half times as large.* And yet one does not need to go as far as the "new West" to find States whose tax-payers spend far more for public education than Southern communities thus far see the wisdom or need of investing. With one-third more wealth than Virginia, and but one-tenth the percentage of illiteracy, Iowa spends over four times as much per year for public instruction. With one-fourth less wealth than Alabama, and but one-fourteenth the percentage of illiteracy, Nebraska spends three and a half times as much per year for public instruction. With about the same wealth as North Carolina and less than one-eighth the percentage of illiteracy, Kansas spends over five times as much per year for public education. If the comparison be moved westward again into new regions, the Territory of Dakota is seen making an "expenditure in the year per capita on average attendance in the public schools" of \$25.77, being more than the sum of the like per capita expenditures by Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, North Carolina, Alabama and Georgia combined. In Colorado it is about the same as in Dakota, while in Nevada it is much greater and in Arizona twice as large. As to comparative wealth, the taxable wealth of Dakota in 1880, at least, was but one two-thousandth part of that of the six States with which it is compared.

Now what is the real truth in these facts? That the full establishment of this American public school idea and of that elevation idea of which it is an exponent, and which has had so much to do toward making the people of the Northern States the wealthiest people in the world, waits in the South not mainly an

* See Report of United States Commissioner of Education, 1883-'84, page 21, last column of table.

increase of wealth but rather the simple consent of the Southern white man to see society's best and earliest safety, the quickest, greatest and most lasting aggrandizement in that public equality of all men, that national citizenship, wider than race and far wider than the lines of private society, which makes the elevation of the masses, by everything that tends to moral, æsthetical and intellectual education, in school and out of school, the most urgent and fruitful investment of public wealth and trust. Just this sincere confession. All the rest will follow. The black man will not merely be tolerated in his civil and political rights as now sometimes he is and sometimes he is not; but he will be welcomed into, and encouraged and urged to a true understanding, valuation and acceptance of every public duty and responsibility of citizenship, according to his actual personal ability to respond.

To effect this is not the herculean and dangerous task it is sometimes said to be. (The North has 20,000,000 foreign immigrants to Americanize, and only this way to do it. The South, for all her drawbacks, has this comparative advantage; that her lower mass, however ignorant and debased, is as yet wholly American in its notions of order and government. All that is wanting is to more completely Americanize her upper class, a class that is already ruling and will still rule when the change is made; that wants to rule wisely and prosperously, and that has no conscious intention of being un-American. Only this: To bring the men of best blood and best brain in the South to-day, not to a new and strange doctrine, but back to the faith of their fathers. Let but this be done, and there may be far less cry of Peace, Peace, than now, but there will be a peace and a union between the Nation's two great historic sections such as they have not seen since Virginia's Washington laid down his sword, and her Jefferson his pen.)

We are indebted to the courtesy of the *New York Tribune* for this thoughtful presentation of the Negro question.

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