

BLACK RECONSTRUCTION

AN ESSAY TOWARD A HISTORY OF THE PART
WHICH BLACK FOLK PLAYED IN THE ATTEMPT
TO RECONSTRUCT DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA,
1860-1880

BY

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XVI. BACK TOWARD SLAVERY

How civil war in the South began again—indeed had never ceased; and how black Prometheus bound to the Rock of Ages by hate, hurt and humiliation, has his vitals eaten out as they grow,
yet lives and fights

It must be remembered and never forgotten that the civil war in the South which overthrew Reconstruction was a determined effort to reduce black labor as nearly as possible to a condition of unlimited exploitation and build a new class of capitalists on this foundation. The wage of the Negro worker, despite the war amendments, was to be reduced to the level of bare subsistence by taxation, peonage, caste, and every method of discrimination. This program had to be carried out in open defiance of the clear letter of the law.

The lawlessness in the South since the Civil War has varied in its phases. First, it was that kind of disregard for law which follows all war. Then it became a labor war, an attempt on the part of impoverished capitalists and landholders to force laborers to work on the capitalist's own terms. From this, it changed to a war between laborers, white and black men fighting for the same jobs. Afterward, the white laborer joined the white landholder and capitalist and beat the black laborer into subjection through secret organizations and the rise of a new doctrine of race hatred.

It is always difficult to stop war, and doubly difficult to stop a civil war. Inevitably, when men have long been trained to violence and murder, the habit projects itself into civil life after peace, and there is crime and disorder and social upheaval, as we who live in the backwash of World War know too well. But in the case of civil war, where the contending parties must rest face to face after peace, there can be no quick and perfect peace. When to all this you add a servile and disadvantaged race, who represent the cause of war and who afterwards are left near naked to their enemies, war may go on more secretly, more spasmodically, and yet as truly as before the peace. This was the case in the South after Lee's surrender.

Emancipation loosed the finer feelings of some Southerners toward Negroes. They felt the fall of a burden—and expressed it. The nightmare was at last over. They need no longer apologize to the world

for a system they were powerless to change or reconstruct. It had been changed and they were glad.

But Emancipation left the planters poor, and with no method of earning a living, except by exploiting black labor on their only remaining capital—their land. This underlying economic urge was naturally far stronger than the philanthropic, and motivated the mass of Southerners.

Carl Schurz said: "Some planters held back their former slaves on their plantations by brute force. Armed bands of white men patrolled the county roads to drive back the Negroes wandering about. Dead bodies of murdered Negroes were found on and near the highways and byways. Gruesome reports came from the hospitals—reports of colored men and women whose ears had been cut off, whose skulls had been broken by blows, whose bodies had been slashed by knives or lacerated with scourges. A number of such cases, I had occasion to examine myself. A veritable reign of terror prevailed in many parts of the South."¹

Many testified that the Southern people seemed to have transferred their wrath at the Federal Government to the colored people. The disorder and utter lack of control was widespread. Governor Sharkey of Mississippi found an unprecedented amount of lawlessness in 1866. Mrs. Smedes, a Southern white woman, tells of incidents in Mississippi involving both whites and Negroes.

"At this time, incendiary fires were common. There was not much law in the land. We heard of the gin-houses and cotton houses that were burned in all directions. One day as Thomas came back from a business journey, the smoldering ruin of his gin-house met his eyes. The building was itself valuable and necessary. All the cotton that he owned was consumed in it. He had not a dollar. He had to borrow the money to buy a postage stamp, not only during this year, but during many years to come. It was a time of deepest gloom. Thomas had been wounded to the bottom of his affectionate heart by the perfidy of the [white] man who had brought this on his house. In the midst of the grinding poverty that now fell in full force on him, he heard of the reckless extravagance of this man on the money that should have been used to meet these debts."²

Bands of Confederate soldiers roamed in some states: "There have been a number of complaints made to Captain Glavis by citizens of Wayne, Green, and Sampson Counties of numerous robberies and acts of violence by a band of late rebel soldiers, who are inhabitants of Wynn County. They are said to be headed by one Frank Coley."³

"Some eight weeks ago, several returned rebel soldiers from Pitt County went into the village of Washington and commenced shooting

and beating Union men. Several assaults were made, and at least one Union man was publicly whipped in the streets, and some Negroes were wounded. One of the party was badly wounded by a person whom they attacked. On their return, they met on the public highway a Negro. They first castrated him, and afterwards murdered him in cold blood.”⁴

In Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, it was said in 1866: “The life of a Negro is not worth much there. I have seen one who was shot in the leg while he was riding a mule, because the ruffian thought it more trouble to ask him to get off the mule than to shoot him. There is a very large class of such people in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. I had expected to find Texas in a much worse condition, but I found it much safer there than in Alabama and Mississippi. Particularly in Alabama, the people have been rendered desperate. The crops for the past year have been very poor. The rust and the army worm have destroyed their cotton crops, and there is much want and suffering among the people.”⁵

“An argument frequently employed in justifying the outrages on the freedmen is that the whites were goaded into it by the evils of Negro domination. The argument holds good in part, but only in part, for unhappily, the outrages were committed before the suffrage was conferred upon the blacks; before such a step was even favored by any considerable number of Northern people.”⁶

Clara Barton, who visited Andersonville, Georgia, in 1866, tells the story of a colored wife of 18, whom her husband, a blacksmith, brought to her, walking 30 or 40 miles. “I took his wife into my tent and examined her back: she was a young bright-colored woman, a little darker than he, with a fair, patient face, with nothing sulky in her look; I found across her back twelve lashes or gashes, partly healed and partly not, some of them cut into the bone. She must have been whipped with a lash half as large as my little finger—it may have been larger; and one of these lashes was from eight to ten inches in length; and the flesh had been cut completely out most of the way. It had been a curling whip; it had curled around her arms, cut inside the arm, over the back, and the same on the other side. There were twelve of those long lashes, partly healed and partly not; she could not bear her clothing on her at that time, except thrown loosely over her shoulders; she had got strong enough so as to be able to walk, but she was feeble and must have been unable to work before that occurred; she was in no condition to work.” She had been “bucked and gagged” by her employer, thrown on her face, and lashed on her back; so that, when her husband found her, he said she was “a gore of blood.” The offense was that, in the last months of pregnancy, she

had proved unable to do the task of spinning which was given her.⁷

“There was in those Southern states which I have visited for some years after the war, and up to the year 1868, or in some cases 1870, much disorder, and a condition of lawlessness toward the blacks—a disposition, greatest in the more distant and obscure regions—to trample them underfoot, to deny them equal rights, and to injure or kill them on slight or no provocations. The tremendous change in the social arrangements of the Southern whites had suffered a defeat which was sore to bear, and on top of this, they saw their slaves—their most valuable and cherished property—taken away and made free, and not only free, but their political equals. One needs to go into the far South to know what this really meant, and what deep resentment and irritation it inevitably bred.”⁸

The unrest and bitterness of post-war lawlessness were gradually transmuted into economic pressure. Systematic effort was made by the owners to put the Negro to work, and equally determined effort by the poor whites to keep him from work which competed with them or threatened their future work and income. Cotton and other crops were high in price, and hard work would soon restore something of the losses of war. The planters offered the ex-slave, therefore, a labor contract, and were surprised when he refused. He had to refuse. The plantation laborer, under the conditions offered, would still be a slave, with small chance to rise to the position of independent farmer, or even of free modern laborer.

On the other hand, the poor whites were determined to keep the blacks from access to the richer and better land from which slavery had driven the white peasants. A three-cornered battle ensued and increased lawless aggression. Recurrent crop failures due to the weather made more trouble, and at the same time, the wars of Europe, the Seven Weeks' War and the Franco-Prussian War, disturbed civilization.

In such an economic revolution, the cost of change and uplift ought to fall on the community, the nation, and the government. The plantation land should have gone to those who worked it, and the former owner should have been compensated in some part for a lost investment made with the social sanction of the nation. To this, should have been added economic opportunity and access to the land for the poor whites.

But such a possible outcome was frustrated by the economic selfishness of the North, and by the intransigent attitude of the vast majority of the planters. They did not believe in freedom for Negroes, and they sought to frustrate it by law, force, and deliberate cheating, and by arrogant demands for economic license and political power, such

as no sane nation could grant. This result was Federal Reconstruction.

A lawlessness which, in 1865-1868, was still spasmodic and episodic, now became organized, and its real underlying industrial causes obscured by political excuses and race hatred. Using a technique of mass and midnight murder, the South began widely organized aggression upon the Negroes.

"When Congress intervened by its reconstruction measures to defeat the reactionary program of the South, there swept over that section a crime-storm of devastating fury. Lawlessness and violence filled the land, and terror stalked abroad by day, and it burned and murdered by night. The Southern states had actually relapsed into barbarism. During that period, a new generation was conceived and born to the South of both races that was literally conceived in lawlessness, and born into crime-producing conditions. Lawlessness was its inheritance, and the red splotch of violence its birthmark."⁹

Armed guerrilla warfare killed thousands of Negroes; political riots were staged; their causes or occasions were always obscure, their results always certain: ten to one hundred times as many Negroes were killed as whites.

Then differences began to arise. Instead of driving the Negroes to work, bands of poor whites began to drive them from work. Private vengeance was taken upon prosperous and hard-working Negroes. A number of Negroes were employed in building the airline railroad between Atlanta and Charlotte. Disguised men went there, took the Negroes and whipped them, and forced them back to the farms to work. They were receiving money wages for working on the railroad.

A man from Ohio, living in Clarendon County, South Carolina, had his stock and business amounting to \$40,000 a year entirely destroyed. "There were a good many industrious men, who if they could get a start, would make crops of their own and become independent farmers. In every such case, where colored men could bring proper recommendations there of evidences of industry, he would take advances to them as well as to white men." The farmers about complained that in this way he was taking away laborers and making Negroes independent farmers. They whipped him; ruined his business; and drove him out of the state.¹⁰

In Choctaw County, Alabama, a colored man, Robert Fullerlove, lived. Masked men shot into his house and burned it. He and his neighbors were killed and driven away. "I have four hundred acres of land. I have about twenty head of cattle, little and big. I have an ox team, and in the lot of cattle there are seven milk cows. I have corn and fodder and hogs. I had a very fine crop of cotton planted and was going over it, when this last raid happened at my house.

I have lost my crop entirely, and it isn't worthwhile for me to stay. I am a hard-working man, and I love what I have worked for and earned."¹¹

Augustus Blair of Huntsville, Alabama, was a hard-working old black man, who had stayed at home during the war and helped to take care of the little white children. The Ku Klux came to his house; seized his son, and beat and maltreated him.

"He got so he could get about a little. I hired a wagon and fetched him here, but directly he came here he was taken down with a hemorrhage that came from stamping him on the stomach and breast. They stamped him all over the stomach and breast. In two weeks after he was examined in the court-room there, he died. Everybody that saw him said he couldn't live, and they were surprised that he lived so long. I had the doctors to tend to him. I owe forty or fifty dollars to Doctor Henry Benford; he asked me for the money on Saturday. After all this was done, I knew every man of them, and I came here and made complaint. Mr. Wager assisted me, and Jim Common, of Athens, told me to have them arrested before the grand jury. . . . I had a good deal of property down there. I had thirty head of hogs and four bales of cotton; I had four bales ginned and fetched my cotton there and sold it. They looked for me to go back. I left my wife and young child there. I didn't want to go away. I hadn't done anything, but I believe they would have treated me just the same way, and I went away. I left thirty head of hogs and one good milk cow; four bales of cotton, and my corn in the field. Jim Common told me to sue for it. I went down there and all my things were gone."¹²

These happenings were not confined to particular regions. They spread all over the South. In 1866, the first church for colored people was opened by the American Missionary Association at Memphis, Tennessee. It was burned with all the colored churches in Memphis in the riot that year.¹³

In the eighteen months ending June 30, 1867, General Canby reported 197 murders, and 548 cases of aggravated assault in North and South Carolina.

"In reference to South Carolina, the report of the joint select committee of the two houses of Congress of 1872 contains such a mass of revolting details that one cannot decide where to begin their citation or where to stop. Murders, or attempts to murder, are numerous. Whippings are without number. Probably the most cruel and cowardly of these last was the whipping of Elias Hill. He was a colored man who had from infancy been dwarfed in legs and arms. He was unable to use either. But he possessed an intelligent mind; had learned to read; and had acquired an unusual amount of knowledge

for one in his circumstances. He was a Baptist preacher. He was highly respected for his upright character. He was eminently religious, and was greatly revered by the people of his own race. It was on this ground that he was visited by the Ku Klux, brutally beaten and dragged from his house into the yard, where he was left in the cold at night, unable to walk or crawl."¹⁴

A report from South Carolina tells of 97 Negroes killed, and 146 shot and whipped. There are riots because of the arming of Negroes. White farmers who are displaced as tenants attack the Negro tenants. Negro churches are burned. In one community, four-fifths of the Negro men are sleeping out in the woods. Gins and ginhouses are burned in retaliation by Negroes. Colored women are whipped and raped by whites. In some cases, the white landholders try to protect Negroes, while the irresponsible poor whites lead the attack. In another community, eleven murders and more than 600 whippings have gone unnoticed, while there are seven cases of incendiary burnings. Negro artisans are stopped from following their trade, and the antagonism between poor whites and Negroes grows. Six Negro foundrymen are beaten and blacksmiths whipped.

In Edgefield and Laurens Counties, South Carolina, there were organized bands of "regulators"—armed men, who make it their business to traverse these counties and maltreat Negroes without any avowed definite purpose in view. They treat the Negroes, in many instances, in the most horrible and atrocious manner, even to maiming them, cutting their ears off, etc. In one case, two citizens of one of these counties testified against these parties, and were instantly compelled to leave the county, barely escaping with their lives. The citizens are bound in honor, by an understanding or compact among them, not to testify against these regulators; so that it is impossible to get evidence against them unless the Negro gives it.¹⁵

The report of the Ku Klux investigation published in 1871 said of South Carolina that "in the nine counties covered by the investigation for a period of approximately six months, the Ku Klux Klan lynched and murdered 35 men, whipped 262 men and women, otherwise outraged, shot, mutilated, burned out, etc., 101 persons. It committed two cases of sex offenses against Negro women. During this time, the Negroes killed four men, beat one man, committed sixteen other outrages, but no case of torture. No case is found of a white woman seduced or raped by a Negro."

The reasons given for the Ku Klux outrages were significantly varied: the victims should suffer in revenge for killing, and for some cases of arson; they were Republicans; they were radical; they had attempted to hold elections; they were carrying arms; they were

“niggers”; they were “damn niggers”; they boasted that they would own land; they should be made to recant Republican principles; and they should give desired information.

In Georgia, in 1868, disturbances are reported in the Northwest section, where the poor whites are in the majority. Negroes were whipped for debt, for associating with white women, and for trying to vote. In the cotton belt, where the Negroes outnumber the whites, three white members of the legislature were killed, and there were insurrections and riots, culminating in the one at Camilla. In this case, 300 Republicans, mostly Negroes, with music and banner, were marching to hold a public meeting. They were met by the sheriff and told that they could not meet. A riot ensued, where eight or nine Negroes were killed, and twenty to forty wounded. No whites were killed.

The Negro Secretary of State, Jonathan Gibbs, in Florida, when called before a committee of Congress in 1871, reported 153 murders in Jackson County in that state.¹⁶

Conditions in Texas were particularly bad. In 1869, in thirty counties, there was no civil government, and in others, very imperfect organizations. During Sheridan's command of the state there were nine murders a month. If he owned both hell and Texas, Sheridan said upon one occasion, he would rent out Texas and live in hell—a statement which was repeated over the country for a generation. Benjamin F. Wade added to this that he was told by a native, “All that Texas needs to make it a paradise is water and good society.” “Yes,” answered Wade, “that's all they need in hell.”¹⁷

A committee of the Constitutional Convention of 1868 on partial returns said that 1,035 men had been murdered in Texas since the close of the war, and a Federal attorney said that the number might have been two thousand. The Secretary of State reports to the Texas Senate that 905 homicides had taken place in the two years ending in 1870, and he believed that if all the facts were known, the total would be 1,500. In 1870, after the new state government was organized, it was officially reported that 2,970 persons charged with murder were evading arrest in the state, and two to seven murders were often attributed to the same individual.

From war, turmoil, poverty, forced labor and economic rivalry of labor groups, there came again in the South the domination of the secret order, which systematized the effort to subordinate the Negro.

The method of force which hides itself in secrecy is a method as old as humanity. The kind of thing that men are afraid or ashamed to do openly, and by day, they accomplish secretly, masked, and at night. The method has certain advantages. It uses Fear to cast out

Fear; it dares things at which open method hesitates; it may with a certain impunity attack the high and the low; it need hesitate at no outrage of maiming or murder; it shields itself in the mob mind and then throws over all a veil of darkness which becomes glamor. It attracts people who otherwise could not be reached. It harnesses the mob.

How is it that men who want certain things done by brute force can so often depend upon the mob? Total depravity, human hate and *Schadenfreude*, do not explain fully the mob spirit in America. Before the wide eyes of the mob is ever the Shape of Fear. Back of the writhing, yelling, cruel-eyed demons who break, destroy, maim and lynch and burn at the stake, is a knot, large or small, of normal human beings, and these human beings at heart are desperately afraid of something. Of what? Of many things, but usually of losing their jobs, being declassed, degraded, or actually disgraced; of losing their hopes, their savings, their plans for their children; of the actual pangs of hunger, of dirt, of crime. And of all this, most ubiquitous in modern industrial society is that fear of unemployment.

It is its nucleus of ordinary men that continually gives the mob its initial and awful impetus. Around this nucleus, to be sure, gather snowball-wise all manner of flotsam, filth and human garbage, and every lewdness of alcohol and current fashion. But all this is the horrible covering of this inner nucleus of Fear.

How then is the mob to be met and quelled? If it represents public opinion, even passing, passionate public opinion, it cannot permanently be put down by a police which public opinion appoints and pays. Three methods of quelling the mob are at hand: the first, by proving to its human, honest nucleus that the Fear is false, ill-grounded, unnecessary; or secondly, if its Fear is true or apparently or partially true, by attacking the fearful thing openly either by the organized police power or by frank civil war as did Mussolini and George Washington; or thirdly, by secret, hidden and underground ways, the method of the Ku Klux Klan.

Why do we not take the first way? Because this is a world that believes in War and Ignorance, and has no hope in our day of realizing an intelligent majority of men and Peace on Earth. There are many, many exceptions, but, in general, it is true that there is scarcely a bishop in Christendom, a priest in the church, a president, governor, mayor, or legislator in the United States, a college professor or public school teacher, who does not in the end stand by War and Ignorance as the main method for the settlement of our pressing human problems. And this despite the fact that they may deny it with their mouths every day.

But here again, open civil war is difficult, costly, and hard to guide. The Right toward which it aims must be made obvious, even if it is wrong. In 1918, in order to win the war, we had to make Germans into Huns. In order to win, the South had to make Negroes into thieves, monsters and idiots. Tomorrow, we must make Latins, South-eastern Europeans, Turks and other Asiatics into actual "lesser breeds without the law." Some seem to see today anti-Christ in Catholicism; and in Jews, international plotters of the Protocol; and in "the rising tide of color," a threat to all civilization and human culture. Even if these things were true, it would be difficult to bring the truth clearly before the ignorant mob and guide it toward the overthrow of evil. But if these be half true or wholly false, the mob can only be stirred to action by wholesale lying, and this is difficult and costly, and may be successfully answered; or by secret underground whispering, the methods of night and mask, the psychology of vague and unknown ill, the innuendo that cannot be answered, for it is not openly published.

Secret organization had long been a method of fastening dictatorship upon the South. It was seen in Louisiana early in the nineteenth century, and helped in the annexation of Texas; it was widespread in Kansas. Senator Douglass called the whole secession movement "the result of an enormous conspiracy." Charles Sumner said: "Not in all history, ancient and modern, is there any record of conspiracy so vast, so wicked, ranging over such spaces, both in time and history."

"The evidence taken by the Congressional committee which visited Kansas in 1856, furnished the most incontestable proof of the power and extent of those oathbound orders. . . . The different lodges were connected together by an effective organization, it embraced great numbers of the citizens of Missouri, and was extended into other slave states and into the territory. Its avowed purpose was not only to extend slavery into Kansas, but also into other territories of the United States. This dangerous society was controlled by men who avowed their purpose to extend slavery at all hazards."¹⁸

The renewed use of the secret orders to fasten the dictatorship of property over labor upon the South began in New Orleans in 1865, when the rebel armies were disbanded and began to return to the city. First, apparently, appeared the "Southern Cross," determined to drive out the new Northern capitalist, and reduce the Negroes to slavery. Governor Wells said in 1866: "Should the secret associations now organizing rapidly be able to regain the ascendancy which made it [New Orleans] a living hell for years before the rebellion, I shudder at the consequences."

Meantime, a larger and more inclusive secret order had been started in Tennessee known as the Ku Klux Klan. Tennessee, Alabama,

Texas, Arkansas and North Carolina, soon fell under its action by the same methods. The new technique of the plan solidified the various objects and efforts, and provided a new unity through emphasizing the importance of race.

The race element was emphasized in order that property-holders could get the support of the majority of white laborers and make it more possible to exploit Negro labor. But the race philosophy came as a new and terrible thing to make labor unity or labor class-consciousness impossible. So long as the Southern white laborers could be induced to prefer poverty to equality with the Negro, just so long was a labor movement in the South made impossible.

Some excuse the rise of the Ku Klux and the White League and the Knights of the White Camellia in the South with the plea that they were the answer to Negro suffrage, and that the Union Leagues started among Negroes were the cause of secret orders among whites. There is no historic foundation for this. The Union League in the North was the movement of Northern white aristocracy, including most of the rich and well-to-do, against defeatism and the menace of the copperhead. Its powerful and influential social clubs in New York, Philadelphia, and elsewhere, exist to this day. This Union League movement influenced the labor vote in the North. It came to the South with the carpetbaggers and used the Northern technique. It employed among Negroes some ceremonies and secrecy, but it never contemplated murder and force. By no stretch of imagination could it be called an organization similar to or provocative of the Ku Klux Klan.

The carpetbaggers organized the Negro voters and offered them more in wages and privileges than the whites. The logical answer of the planters, in a free industrial democracy, would have been to meet these offers by better ones. They chose instead force and secret revolution. It was not, then, the organization of Union Leagues that caused the Ku Klux Klan; it was the determination to deprive the Negroes, by force, of any real weapon for economic bargaining.

Their use of the ballot from 1868 to 1872 aroused the property-holders to a frenzy of protest, but it also attracted certain elements of white labor, and bade fair, with reform and efficiency, to build a Southern labor party.

There was but one way to break up this threatened coalition, and that was to unite poor and rich whites by the shibboleth of race, and despite divergent economic interests. The work of secret orders in 1868-1872 frustrated any mass movement toward union of white and black labor.

Before 1874, the turmoil of Louisiana blazed the way. The New

Orleans riot in 1866, which stirred the nation and influenced a presidential election, was due primarily to the fact that the head of a secret order was also Chief of Police. The Knights of the White Camellia came into prominence after Negro enfranchisement and were especially aimed at excluding Negroes from voting by terrorism and killing the leaders.

The presidential election of 1868 spurred the planters and their allies to deliberate activity. They saw a chance to nullify the vote of black labor, unite with Northern copperhead Democracy and capture the government. Frank Blair egged them on to revolution.

"The testimony shows that over 2,000 persons were killed, wounded, and otherwise injured in Louisiana within a few weeks prior to the Presidential election in November, 1868; that half the state was overrun by violence; and that midnight raids, secret murders, and open riot kept the people in constant terror until the Republicans surrendered all claim. . . . But the most remarkable case is that of St. Landry, a planting parish on the river Teche. Here the Republicans had a registered majority of 1,071 votes. In the spring of 1868 they carried the parish by 678. In the fall they gave Grant no vote, not one—while the Democrats cast 4,787, the full vote of the parish, for Seymour and Blair. Here occurred one of the bloodiest riots on record, in which the Ku Klux killed and wounded over 200 Republicans, hunting and chasing them for two days and nights through fields and swamps. Thirteen captives were taken from the jail and shot. A pile of twenty-five dead bodies was found half-buried in the woods. Having conquered the Republicans and killed and driven off the white leaders, the Ku Klux captured the masses, marked them with badges of red flannel, enrolled them in clubs, made them vote the Democratic ticket, and then gave them a certificate of the fact."¹⁹

"In the parish of St. Bernard, a Negro was killed; a black mob killed a white man. Three steamboats filled with armed ruffians left New Orleans for the scene of the riot. Before the trouble could be composed, a dozen or fifteen men were slain."²⁰

"Frightful conditions prevailed up the Red River around Shreveport, in Caddo and Bossier Parishes, a trading center for Texas, Arkansas, and the Indian Nations. A United States army officer on duty in this place saw two or three men shot down in the street in front of a store in which he sat. He picked up the bodies of eight men who had been killed in one night. Never had he heard of any one being punished for murder in that country."²¹

"One hundred and twenty corpses were found in the woods or were taken out of Red River after a 'Negro hunt' in Bossier parish."²²

"For ten days prior to the election of November, the streets were

filled with men carrying shot guns, rifles, pistols, and knives. A band of 'Sicilian cutthroats' called the 'Innocents' made up largely of fruit dealers, fishermen, oystermen and other elements drawn from the markets, roamed the city, hunting Negroes. Soon no one could be found in the streets. Then the ruffians entered the houses to drive out the blacks, shooting them like rabbits as they ran. A colored man feared to sleep two nights in the same place."²³

"This bloody club had 2,000 members. There were more than 70 other clubs in New Orleans bearing such names as the 'Seymour Southrons,' the 'Seymour Infantas,' the 'Seymour Tigers,' the 'Blair Knights,' the 'Swamp Fox Rangers,' the 'Hancock Club,' and the 'Rousseau Guards.' Their appearance in parades led to riots in which many were killed and injured."²⁴

"Disorder extended to other parts of Louisiana. In one month, said General Hatch, of the Freedman's Bureau, 297 persons were slain in the parishes adjacent to New Orleans."²⁵

During election time, the gun stores of New Orleans were thronged with buyers, and the price of Colt's revolvers doubled.

A local paper said: "Thad Stevens is dead; the prayers of the righteous have at last removed the congressional curse. May old Brownlow, Butler and all such political monsters follow the example of their illustrious predecessor."

The coup d'état failed, and the Reconstruction government was established. But although conditions during the next two years showed improvement, General Mower, in command in New Orleans, said in 1869 that the country around Winnsboro in Franklin Parish was "infested by a gang of desperadoes and thieves" who totally defied the civil authorities.

All this was a challenge to the North and to democratic government. The response was only half-hearted. The North recoiled from force, and force alone could dislodge the planters and allied capitalists and firmly fasten labor government on the South. The North hesitated. Did it want labor government in the South? Should black rule white, even if it could?

To enforce the Fifteenth Amendment, a Federal law was passed May 31, 1870, after a long debate. There was an all-night session in the Senate, May 21; conferences between the two Houses, and finally, the bill became a law May 31. The law made minute provisions to protect by Federal action all citizens in the civil and political rights guaranteed by the Constitution. It enumerated 26 misdemeanors, 5 felonies, and 87 crimes. The punishments varied from \$500 fine and one year's imprisonment, to \$5,000 fine and ten years' punishment.

It was the intention of this law to protect the Negro in using his

right to vote and this protection was to be carried out through Federal officials. It was known that the Southern whites were keeping the Negro from voting by methods which local officials and state courts could not touch. Witnesses were afraid to testify, and juries did not return verdicts, even on clear evidence. Registration was hindered, voters were bribed and intimidated, Negroes and white men were killed. The law brought the whole power of the government, militia, land and naval forces, and courts to bear upon persons who, by bribery or threat, sought to influence the Negro voter or to deprive him of his political rights. Meantime, the Ku Klux Klan, organized in Tennessee in 1865, became so widespread that in 1871 Congress appointed a Joint Committee to investigate it. This committee investigated conditions from April, 1871, to February 9, 1872, and issued a voluminous report in twelve volumes, covering most of the Southern states. This formed a tremendous and invaluable picture of the situation in the South at that time. A Federal election law was passed February 28, 1871, which provided for a national registration of voters—a necessary and inevitable step to rescue national democracy from local particularism and possible fraud. Such a law is still needed and still lacking.

President Grant was appealed to in March, 1871, for military aid to suppress violence in South Carolina. He recommended legislation, and as a result, the Ku Klux Klan enforcement law of April 20, 1871, was passed. It strengthened the act of 1870 and was designed to destroy conspiracies against the Fourteenth or Fifteenth Amendments. It empowered the President to suspend the writ of habeas corpus "when in his judgment the public safety shall require it." The President by proclamation of May 3, 1871, called the attention of the nation to this act, and said that it had been made necessary by persistent violations of the rights of citizens of the United States. He recognized the responsibility placed on him, and did not wish to use these extraordinary powers. But it was his duty to make it known that when it was necessary, he would use them. As a matter of fact, he only once suspended the writ of habeas corpus, in the case of certain lawless counties in South Carolina. The actual military forces at his disposal at this time were limited, amounting to only about nine thousand troops, or one-third of the army in the whole South.

To emphasize his wish to be fair to the South, Grant urged the removal of all political disabilities of former Confederates in December, 1871. A bill for this purpose had passed the House, but failed in the Senate, because Sumner tried to couple with it his Civil Rights bill, and the Northern Democrats voted against it. It finally passed Congress in May, 1872, with the Civil Rights feature omitted. Also, in

1872, the Ku Klux Klan law expired by limitation, and was not extended.

Meantime, in Tennessee, North Carolina and Texas, the writ of habeas corpus had been suspended in the summer of 1870 by the governors, and in 1871, United States courts were filled with Ku Klux cases. In Mississippi, 640 persons were indicted under these enforcement laws, and 200 arrested, but not a single one convicted. President Grant declared that in some of the counties of South Carolina two-thirds of the whites were organized and armed. In all, during 1870-1897, 5,172 cases were tried in the South, and 2,200 in the North. Of these, 5,046 were dismissed, 1,432 convicted, 903 acquitted. The testimony was overwhelming, but conviction was impossible in the South. With 1872, new forms of violence took the place of old—intimidation, threats and fraud. There were judicial discrimination, force and actual civil war. Federal officials were kept busy, and the President tried in vain to execute the Force Acts.

The election of 1872 and the panic of 1873 changed the face of affairs. The labor governments built on Negro votes had kept Grant in office, since the only alternative offered the Negroes was to vote for their own disfranchisement. The Northern reform movement had begun to unite itself with Big Business and Super-Finance, and to sympathize with the Southern planters. The planters had won this sympathy by denouncing the carpetbaggers as the cause of Southern corruption, and thus compelling these representatives of Northern capital either to unite with the planters or leave the South. The labor vote was divided along the color line, and the freedmen submerged beneath a wave of race prejudice and economic rivalry. The time was now ripe for open war on the labor of the Black Belt.

Seven states had been "redeemed" from labor domination under the leadership of carpetbaggers and scalawags; *i.e.*, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Arkansas and Texas. This had been accomplished by unifying the white majority and suppressing the Negro vote by intimidation or economic pressure. It was now planned to move on the states where the Negro majority was such that only force could dislodge them.

Four states in 1874 remained under Reconstruction governments: Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Florida. It is said that consultations among white leaders took place throughout the South, and that in May, 1874, forty men assembled on Magazine Street, New Orleans, to arrange for the final drive. They represented all of the secret organizations. They consulted during May and June, and in July the "White League" was organized, under five comparatively unknown leaders, who were the chosen agents for the secret combina-

tions. In less than sixty days after the formation of the New Orleans central of the White League, it spread to the furthest parts of the state, had before the end of the year 40,000 members, and was extending in all directions through the South.

In Mississippi, the White League began organized work in 1874. Seven organized armed groups were formed in Vicksburg to control the city election. The charge here was extravagance in building school-houses and "too many niggers in office." Armed companies patrolled the city, and yet there was perfect order at the polls. Voters were thus intimidated and kept at home while in the surrounding counties some 200 Negroes were killed. At Clinton, in 1875, another blow was struck when a mass meeting and barbecue was being held by the colored people. Five hundred armed white men assembled, food and wagons were destroyed, mules and horses stolen, hundreds of Negro homes searched, and fugitives driven away.

Grant wrote to the Senate, January 13, 1875, regarding the condition of Louisiana. He said:

"On the 13th of April [1873] . . . a butchery of citizens was committed at Colfax, which in blood-thirstiness and barbarity is hardly surpassed by any acts of savage warfare. . . . Insuperable obstructions were thrown in the way of punishing these murderers, and the so-called conservative papers of the state not only justified the massacre but denounced as Federal tyranny and despotism the attempt of the United States officers to bring them to justice."²⁶

Concerning Mississippi, President Grant said: "As to the state election of 1875, Mississippi is governed today by officials chosen through fraud and violence, such as would scarcely be accredited to savages."²⁷

In 1874, the President was asked for Federal troops in Mississippi and South Carolina. The President refused to send extra troops, and the result was the Vicksburg riot in Mississippi, where many were killed. Afterward, troops were sent there. In 1876, he promised South Carolina every aid on account of the Hamburg riot. He tried in February, 1875, to secure the passage of a bill to protect voters in United States elections, but it did not pass. Nevertheless, before the election of 1876, the House of Representatives asked him to enforce the remaining provisions of the Force Act with the utmost vigor. Grant kept appealing to the Southern people to stop this situation of their own initiative and make the exercise of his power unnecessary.

The South did not listen. Rather, it took note of the strong liberal opposition to Grant in the North, and counted on these liberals to favor withdrawal of that same protection of Southern labor which, in alliance with Northern business, they had helped institute in 1867. On the other hand, the South sensed the willingness of Big Business,

threatened by liberal revolt, labor upheaval and state interference, to make new alliance with organized Southern capital if assured that the tariff, banks and national debt, and above all, the new freedom of corporations, would not be subjected to mass attack. Such a double bargain was more than agreeable to Southern leaders.

During the last session of the 43rd Congress in 1875, another Federal election bill, drawn so as to put Congress in control of the national elections, was introduced. The Speaker of the House, James G. Blaine, prevented its passage. He was candidate for the Republican nomination in 1876, and was afraid that the bill might defeat him. He told Lynch, the colored representative from Mississippi, that the passage of the bill would defeat the Republican Party throughout the country. But he was confident, on the other hand, that if a Solid South resulted from the failure to pass the bill, it would make a Solid North in opposition.

It did nothing of the sort. It did not prevent a South solidified by the determination to exploit disfranchised Negroes and it did leave a North hesitating between democracy with black voters and plutocracy with white supremacy.

In South Carolina, the situation was a little more difficult for the mob because of the efforts at reform that were being made by the Republicans. Despite Chamberlain's administration and the efforts at reform, the Democrats determined to carry the election of 1876 by force.

Hampton, shortly after the war, went to Mississippi to look after his large planting interests in the Yazoo Delta. He returned to South Carolina in 1876 at the earnest solicitation of Butler and Gary, former Confederate generals. Their plan of campaign was clear. "Every Democrat must feel honor bound to control the vote of at least one Negro, by intimidation, purchase, keeping him away or as each individual may determine, how he may best accomplish it.

"Never threaten a man individually. If he deserves to be threatened, the necessities of the times require that he should die. A dead Radical is very harmless—a threatened Radical or one driven off by threats from the scene of his operations is often very troublesome, sometimes dangerous, always vindictive.

"In the month of September, we ought to begin to organize Negro clubs, or pretend that we have organized them, and write letters from different parts of the county giving the facts of organization out from prudential reasons, the names of the Negroes are to be withheld. Those who join are to be taken on probation and are not to be taken

into full fellowship until they have proven their sincerity by voting our ticket.”²⁸

Riots and labor troubles ensued. Addressing the Senate on August 1, 1876, on “the late disgraceful and brutal slaughter of unoffending men at the town of Hamburg, South Carolina,” President Grant said: “Murders and massacres of innocent men for opinion’s sake, or on account of color, have been of too recent date and of too frequent occurrence to require recapitulation or testimony here. All are familiar with their horrible details, the only wonder being that so many justify them or apologize for them.”²⁹ “The scene at Hamburg,” he wrote to the Governor of South Carolina, “as cruel, bloodthirsty, wanton, unprovoked, and as uncalled for as it was, is only a repetition of the course that has been pursued in other states within the last few years, notably in Mississippi and Louisiana.” In September there was a race riot in Aiken County, where an unknown number of Negroes were killed; some said fifteen, some said 125. Federal troops intervened.

“No one ever knew how many were killed, but the best informed men estimate that between eighty and 125 lost their lives. In Charleston County, Negroes in October killed five white men and wounded sixteen others.”³⁰

Meantime, deliberate fraud carried the election of 1876. There was cheating, intimidation, bribery, and repeating in voting, especially in Edgefield and Laurens County. At Edgefield, several hundred armed men were ready to take possession of the Court House, and Negroes were kept from voting.

When a Negro leader, with several hundred followers, marched to the Court House to vote, the white leader “ordered his men to pack the steps and corridors so that entrance would be impossible.” When the Negroes protested to General Ruger, he asked Gary to let the Negroes vote. Gary refused, and was reported to have replied:

“By God, sir, I’ll not do it. I will keep the compact I made with you this morning that white men and Negroes should vote at separate boxes.”³¹

Gary’s doctrine of voting “early and often” changed the Republican majority of 2,300 in Edgefield to a Democratic majority of 3,900, thus giving Hampton a claim to the office of governor. It was Edgefield’s majority alone which gave to Hampton a chance to claim to have been elected—the opportunity which he utilized so well.

“It will be recalled that the tissue ballots were used in the heavy Negro counties for the purpose of having the white men to vote several tickets at once by folding them all together in a way to have them drop apart in the boxes. The law provided on closing the polls that if there were more ballots found in the box than there were names

on the poll lists the ballots should be returned to the box and one of the managers should draw out the excess to be destroyed. It is needless to say that the Democratic white manager did the drawing and the Negroes used to be very much surprised that he always drew a thick Republican ticket to be burned.

"We all went on each other's bonds, and it became a joke, causing great amusement, that Creighton Matheny, who did not own ten dollars' worth of property, had signed bonds to the extent of \$20,000. In truth the whole performance was a perfunctory and in many respects a laughable travesty on law, for if they had attempted to put us in jail I am sure few or none of us would have acquiesced; and we would have probably killed every obnoxious radical in the court room and town and gone to Texas or some other hiding place. In an hour we had departed and gathering up our camp followers were on our way home."³²

In Laurens County, the Democratic majority was 1,112 as against a Republican majority of 1,077 in 1874.

"To catch the unwary Negro, the Democrats counterfeited the Union Republican ticket in various ways. Some ballots were headed by the picture of Hayes and Wheeler but carried the name of no presidential candidate. Instead it carried the name of Hampton for Governor, along with Republican County candidates."³³

In this way, Wade Hampton became Governor of South Carolina, but with the specific promise to protect the Negro in his political rights. After 1877, this Southern gentleman made no attempt to keep the promise. Seventeen Republican representatives in the legislature from Charleston were expelled, and Democrats replaced them in special elections. Thereafter, all sorts of fraud and intimidation kept the South Carolina Negro from voting.

A white South Carolinian, who went through the period and was violently partisan, says of the election of 1876: "It is not now denied, but admitted and claimed, by the successful party, that the canvass was systematically conducted with the view to find occasions to apply force and violence. The occasions came, and the methods adopted had their perfect work. The result is known, but must be stated here for historical purposes purely. By a system of violence and coercion, ranging through all possible grades, from urgent persuasion to mob violence, the election was won by Democrats."

It has been charged by Rhodes and others that there was deliberate exaggeration and misrepresentation concerning these outbreaks and atrocities. This might have been true in some cases, but no one can read the mass of testimony in the various Congressional reports and other sources without being convinced of the organized disorder and

conspiracy that accompanied this revolution. The Majority Report of the Ku Klux Committee says:

“Obedient citizens they cannot be considered who, themselves, complaining of bad laws, excuse or encourage the masked and armed mobs that override all laws. Brave and magnanimous enemies, even they cannot be reckoned, who permit the remnants of rebellious feeling, the antagonisms of race, or the bitterness of political partisanship to degrade the soldiers of Lee and Johnston into the cowardly midnight prowlers and assassins who scourge and kill the poor and defenseless.”³⁴

And even the Minority Report admits that “we do not intend to deny that bodies of disguised men have in several states of the South been guilty of the most flagrant crimes.”³⁵

And this same Minority Report voices the object of the revolution: “But whenever that party shall go down, as go down it will at some time not long in the future, that will be the end of the political power of the Negro among white men on this continent. Men in the phrensy of political passions may shut their eyes to this fact now, but it will come at any time when the Negro shall cease to be a party necessity in the politics of this country. Thousands of Republicans, even now, hate him for his insolence and for his arrogance in the ready self-assertion of his new-found rights and privileges. The truly sincere and rational humanitarian looks with sorrow upon the future status of the poor, deluded Negro; for in the near state of things which is to come, when the two great parties which now exist shall have passed away, he sees either the exodus or the extinction of this disturbing element in the social and political condition of the more powerful race.”³⁶

Systematic effort was made during the whole period of Reconstruction to prevent Negroes from bearing arms. First, there was the demand that Negro Federal troops be immediately disbanded or moved from the South. Then the white militia searched Negro dwellings for arms and took them away.

“The militia organizations in the opposite country of South Carolina [Edgefield] were engaged in disarming the Negroes. This created great discontent among the latter, and in some instances, they had offered resistance. In previous inspecting tours in South Carolina much complaint reached me of the misconduct of these militia companies towards the blacks. Some of the latter of the most intelligent and well-disposed came to me and said: ‘What shall we do? These militia companies are heaping upon our people every sort of injury and insult unchecked. Our people are peaceably inclined and we are endeavoring

to inculcate good feeling; but we cannot bear this treatment much longer.' Many are beginning to say:

"'We have been patient long enough. We are free men now, and we have submitted to such usage as long as we can.' And again they ask: 'What shall we do?' I assured them that this conduct was not sanctioned by the United States military authorities, and that it would not be allowed."³⁷

While the Negro was in power, most of the Southern states organized Negro militia. In South Carolina, 96,000 were thus nominally enrolled, and others in Louisiana and Texas in the militia and in the police. Nevertheless, the Reconstruction governors were afraid to use these militia lest they start race war, and the effort to arm and equip them efficiently was silently opposed. Usually it resulted that disarmed and unsuspecting black people were set upon by white forces superior in numbers, armed and disciplined, and with little chance of self-defense.

Meantime, a new power appeared upon the scene, or rather an old power of government paralyzed by the Civil War began to re-assert itself, and effectively stopped Northern Federal dictatorship to enforce democracy in the South. This was the Supreme Court. Johnson had had no chance to make appointments to the Supreme Court, although he had long relied upon that court to overthrow Reconstruction. The court, however, hesitated before overwhelming public opinion.

In 1870, Northern Big Business designated two railroad and corporation lawyers from Pennsylvania and New York for appointment. It was charged that they were purposely put on the bench in order to reverse the Legal Tender decision, and protect the bondholders in collecting at par debts contracted when paper money was at a discount of 30% to 60%. At any rate, they, together with one other appointment made in 1872-1874, changed the complexion of the Supreme Court, and when Waite was appointed Chief Justice, over the protest of Charles Sumner, the reconstructed court was ready for the appeals concerning the laws to enforce the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.

It is significant that the very center of Northern capitalistic power, which protected and buttressed the new monopoly of Big Business, turned, and with the same gesture freed land and capital in the South from any fear of control by black and white labor.

Cases on appeal reached that tribunal in 1876. Reverdy Johnson, Henry Stanbery, and others had striven to bring this to pass. They relied upon the court to do what Democratic members of Congress had failed to accomplish—and the court, through a process of reasoning

very similar to that of Democratic legislators, deprived the enforcement legislation of nearly all its strength when it rendered its decisions in the cases of *United States vs. Reese* and *United States vs. Cruikshank*:

"The Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution does not confer the right of suffrage," the court concluded in the first case. "The power of Congress to legislate at all upon the subject of voting at state elections rests upon this Amendment and can be exercised by providing a punishment only when the wrongful refusal to receive the vote of a qualified elector at such election is because of his race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

In the *Cruikshank* case, the court declared that "The right of suffrage is not a necessary attribute of national citizenship; but that exemption from discrimination in the exercise of that right on account of race, etc., is. The right to vote in the States comes from the States; but the right of exemption from the prohibited discrimination comes from the United States. The first has not been granted or secured by the Constitution of the United States; but the last has been. . . . The Fourteenth Amendment prohibits a state from denying to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws, but this provision does not, any more than the one which preceded it, . . . add anything to the rights which one citizen has under the Constitution against another. The equality of the rights of citizens is a principle of republicanism. Every republican government is in duty bound to protect all its citizens in the enjoyment of this privilege if within its power. That duty was originally assumed by the state, and it still remains there. The only obligation resting upon the United States is to see that the states do not deny the right. This the amendment guarantees, but no more. The power of the national government is limited to the enforcement of the rights guaranteed."^{37a}

Both the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were thus made innocuous so far as the Negro was concerned, and the Fourteenth Amendment in particular became the chief refuge and bulwark of corporations. It was thus that finance and the power of wealth accomplished through the Supreme Court what it had not been able to do successfully through Congress.

In 1876 came the bargain between Big Business and the South. At first, there was the attempt at direct bribery, in Louisiana, Florida and South Carolina. In one case in one state, a majority of the Board was said to have been secured if Tilden would pay \$80,000. But this was rather too crude and direct. The work of Mr. Charles Foster, representative from the district of Rutherford Hayes in Ohio, was much more subtle and certain. Mr. Charles Foster, representative from Hayes' own district, stated in a speech in the Louisiana debate that

it would be the policy of Mr. Hayes, if inaugurated, to wipe out "sectional lines; that under him the flag should wave over states, not provinces, over freemen, not subjects."

Negotiations were entered into and conferences held. On the 26th of February, 1876, there were three conferences. The outcome was an agreement. The Republicans guaranteed that Mr. Hayes, when he became President, would by non-interference and the withdrawal of troops allow the planter-capitalists, under the name of Democrats, to control South Carolina and Louisiana. They also agreed to induce President Grant to adopt the same policy before the end of his term. This meant that Southern landholders and capitalists would be put in complete control of disfranchised black labor. The Democrats promised to "guarantee peace, good order, protection of the law to whites and blacks"; or, in other words, exploitation should be so quiet, orderly and legal, as to assure regular profit to Southern owners and Northern investors. This bargain was so raw and obvious that it must not yet be submitted to public opinion. In order, therefore, to avoid bringing up the issue in the United States Senate, before the cabinet was confirmed, and perhaps preventing the confirmation of persons favorable to this Southern policy, the Democrats agreed not to elect the long-term Louisiana Senator until March 10th.

Other details were arranged next day. The Democratic assurances were ratified by Governor Nicholls of Louisiana, and a copy was sent North. Louisiana was told that Grant had promised that as soon as the count should be completed, to rescind or modify all orders to enforce the laws in the South. Foster sent an unsigned draft of a letter to Brown and to Senator Gordon:

"The Democrats thought the letter might be 'fuller and stronger,' but agreed to it. An hour later, the same letter signed was received from Foster."

The Democratic legislature, protected by armed members of the White League, declared Nicholls Governor. He was eventually recognized by the President, and Louisiana became Democratic. Federal troops were withdrawn under Hayes. The force behind the dictatorship of labor in the South disappeared. The last act was to appoint a Kentuckian and a Georgian to the Supreme Court. The deed was done.

Negroes did not surrender the ballot easily or immediately. They continued to hold remnants of political power in South Carolina and Florida, Louisiana, in parts of North Carolina, in Texas, Tennessee and Virginia. Black Congressmen came out of the South until 1895 and black legislators served as late as 1896. But it was a losing battle, with public opinion, industry, wealth, and religion against them. Their own leaders decried "politics" and preached submission. All their

efforts toward manly self-assertion were distracted by defeatism and counsels of despair, backed by the powerful propaganda of a religion which taught meekness, sacrifice and humility.

But the decisive influence was the systematic and overwhelming economic pressure. Negroes who wanted work must not dabble in politics. Negroes who wanted to increase their income must not agitate the Negro problem. Positions of influence were only open to those Negroes who were certified as being "safe and sane," and their careers were closely scrutinized and passed upon. From 1880 onward, in order to earn a living, the American Negro was compelled to give up his political power.

There was an old remedy known since the eighteenth century, the colonization movement which had resulted in Liberia. In the first Negro convention held in Philadelphia in 1833, migration to Canada was discussed and recommended, and large numbers went there. In 1853, a convention at Rochester opposed emigration, but seceders called another convention, and this convention sent emissaries to Haiti, Africa and Central America. As a result, some two thousand Negroes went to Haiti.

The war stopped thoughts of emigration, except as Lincoln proposed it. After 1876, movements arose simultaneously in several states. The first conspicuous leader was Benjamin Singleton, a Negro undertaker in Tennessee, who took two colonies of 7,432 Negroes to Kansas. Henry Adams started an even greater movement in Louisiana, sending organizers into each state in the South. It claimed, by 1879, 92,800 members in Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi and Alabama. Altogether about 60,000 Negroes went to Kansas, two-thirds of whom were destitute when they arrived. Slow individual movements of Negroes from the South to the North kept up but there were no further mass movements until the World War.

Indeed, the whole matter of migration to escape the new régime in the South was complicated by the attitude of the North. Few Northern communities wanted Negro immigrants, and labor organizations opposed them, so that it was difficult to get work. Outside the United States, growing imperialism and the treatment of Liberia, Haiti and other small colored countries made emigration less attractive; and the United States government, by permitting the spreading of unfavorable reports and putting difficulties in the way of Negro travelers, has made colored migration to the West Indies and South America difficult even to this day.

The situation settled down to a new system and a new outlook in the South. The whole history of this post-Reconstruction development

is yet to be written, but a few words concerning it may close this chapter.

First, there was systematic disfranchisement of the Negro. He was kept from voting by force, by economic intimidation, by propaganda designed to lead him to believe that there was no salvation for him in political lines but that he must depend entirely upon thrift and the good will of his white employers. Then came the series of disfranchisement laws discriminating against poverty and ignorance and aimed at the situation of the colored laborer, while the white laborer escaped by deliberate conniving and through the "understanding" and "Grandfather" clauses. To make assurance doubly sure, the "White Primary" system was built on top of this, by which the "Democratic" party confined its membership to white voters of all parties. The "White Primary" was made by law and public pressure the real voting arena in practically all Southern states.

This brings us to the situation when Booker T. Washington became the leader of the Negro race and advised them to depend upon industrial education and work rather than politics. The better class of Southern Negroes stopped voting for a generation. Then with the shift of population toward the North, there comes the present situation when out of 12,000,000 Negroes, 3,000,000 are in the North and 9,000,000 in the South. Those in the North and in Border States vote. Those in the South are seriously restricted in their voting, and this restriction means that their political power is exercised by the white South, which gives the white South an extraordinary political influence as compared with the voters of the North and East.

The disfranchisement of Negroes in the South became nearly complete. In no other civilized and modern land has so great a group of people, most of whom were able to read and write, been allowed so small a voice in their own government. Every promise of eventual recognition of the intelligent Negro voter has been broken. In the former slave states, from Virginia to Texas, excepting Missouri, there are no Negro state officials; no Negro members of legislatures; no judges on the bench; and usually no jurors. There are no colored county officials of any sort. In the towns and cities, there are no colored administrative officers, no members of the city councils, no magistrates, no constables and very seldom even a policeman. In this way, at least eight million Negroes are left without effective voice in government, naked to the worst elements of the community.

Beyond this, caste has been revived in a modern civilized land. It was supposed to be a relic of barbarism and existent only in Asia. But it has grown up and has been carefully nurtured and put on a legal basis with religious and moral sanctions in the South. First, it

was presented and defended as "race" separation, but it was never mere race separation. It was always domination of blacks by white officials, white police and laws and ordinances made by white men. The schools were separate but the colored schools were controlled by white officials who decided how much or rather how little should be spent upon them; who decided what could be taught and what textbooks used and the sort of subservient teachers they wanted. In travel, separation compelled colored passengers to pay first-class fare for second- or third-class accommodations, and to endure on street cars and trains discrimination of all sorts. Ghettos were built up in nearly all Southern cities, not always sharply defined but pretty definite, and in these, Negroes must live, and in them white vice and crime might find shelter and Negro delinquency go unpunished. Little attention was paid to lighting, sewerage and paving in these quarters.

Besides this, a determined psychology of caste was built up. In every possible way it was impressed and advertised that the white was superior and the Negro an inferior race. This inferiority must be publicly acknowledged and submitted to. Titles of courtesy were denied colored men and women. Certain signs of servility and usages amounting to public and personal insult were insisted upon. The most educated and deserving black man was compelled in many public places to occupy a place beneath the lowest and least deserving of the whites. Public institutions, like parks and libraries, either denied all accommodations to the blacks or gave them inferior facilities.

A distinguished white Southerner said in 1885:

"Is the freedman a free man? No. We have considered his position in a land whence nothing can, and no man has a shadow of a right to drive him, and where he is being multiplied as only oppression can multiply a people. We have carefully analyzed his relations to the finer and prouder race, with which he shares the ownership and citizenship of a region large enough for ten times the number of people. Without accepting one word of his testimony, we have shown that the laws made for his protection against the habits of suspicion and oppression in his late master are being constantly set aside, not for their defects, but for such merit as they possess. We have shown that the very natural source of these oppressions is the surviving sentiments of an extinct and now universally execrated institution; sentiments which no intelligent or moral people should harbor a moment after the admission that slavery was a moral mistake. We have shown the outrageousness of these tyrannies in some of their workings, and how distinctly they antagonize every State and national interest involved in the elevation of the colored race. Is it not well to have done so? For, I say again, the question has reached a moment of special

importance. The South stands on her honor before the clean equities of the issue. It is no longer whether constitutional amendments, but whether the eternal principles of justice, are violated." ³⁸

With this went widespread and determined exploitation of black labor, and, of course, above all, taxation without representation. Taxation fell crushingly upon the poor, so that the proportion of taxes which the black laborer paid, according to income, was much larger than that borne by the rich whites or even the laboring whites. The Negro had no voice concerning this taxation, whether in the state, county, city, town, or district administration. He had little redress in the courts. The judges of the upper courts were usually selected from the better class of men whose fairness could be depended on so far as public opinion and their own sympathy with white exploiters would admit; but the police courts and magistrates' courts were in the hands of a wretched set of white Negro-hating politicians, and nine-tenths of the Negro court cases ended here and filled the chain-gangs with Negroes.

It was the policy of the state to keep the Negro laborer poor, to confine him as far as possible to menial occupations, to make him a surplus labor reservoir and to force him into peonage and unpaid toil.

In a report by the Hon. Charles W. Russell, Assistant Attorney General, to the Attorney General, in 1908, appears this language:

"I have no doubt from my investigations and experiences that the chief support of peonage is the peculiar system of State laws prevailing in the South, intended evidently to compel services on the part of the working man. From the usual condition of the great mass of laboring men where these laws are enforced, to peonage is but a step at most. In fact, it is difficult to draw a distinction between the condition of a man who remains in service against his will, because the State has passed a certain law under which he can be arrested and returned to work, and the condition of a man on a nearby farm who is actually made to stay at work by arrest and actual threats of force under the same law." ³⁹

The editor of the Macon, Georgia, *Telegraph* said recently:

"Since at least 1865, we have been holding back the Negro to keep him from getting beyond the white man. Our idea has been that the Negro should be kept poor. But by keeping him poor, we have thrown him into competition with ourselves and have kept ourselves poor.

"Of course, Governor Talmadge has the popular attitude. It is to hold the Negro down in order to make him work—to keep him poor. And Southerners are willing to keep themselves and their kind and section down and poor in order to keep the Negro that way." ⁴⁰

To make this policy effective it was necessary to keep the Negro

ignorant and disorganized. Here, however, there were some difficulties. The Negroes had higher schools, supported largely by Northern philanthropy. They were turning out small but increasing numbers of educated men. There were, therefore, larger and larger numbers of trained teachers available for the public schools.

The North was not disposed at this time to defend universal suffrage or even democracy. But it did still believe in intelligence, so that the Negro public schools had to be kept open, and at the same time, the private schools which were furnishing teachers and leaders were depending not on state aid but on Northern philanthropy. This meant that a large and influential section of the North had direct contact and knowledge of the educated Negro. For a long time they defended the Negro college and normal school from all assaults. Indeed, it was not until the '90's that organized property in the North, uniting with Southern propaganda for Negro industrial education, made an assault upon the Negro college that almost overthrew it. But that is another story.

There were, nevertheless, numberless ways in which Negro schools could be and were decreased in efficiency; in the first place, the public school funds were distributed with open and unashamed discrimination. Anywhere from twice to ten times as much was spent on the white child as on the Negro child, and even then the poor white child did not receive an adequate education. In the Black Belt, particularly, large amounts of funds were drawn by the county officers because of black population and distributed among the whites to the extent of sending some to college. The Negro schools were given few buildings and little equipment. No effort was made to compel Negro children to go to school. On the contrary, in the country they were deliberately kept out of school by the requirements of contract labor which embraced the labor of wife and children as well as of the laborer himself. The course of study was limited. The school term was made and kept short and in many cases there was the deliberate effort, as expressed by one leading Southerner, Hoke Smith, when two Negro teachers applied for a school, to "take the less competent." The supervising officers paid little or no attention to Negro schools, and the education of the Negro for many years after the overthrow of Reconstruction proceeded in spite of their school system, not because of it.

An attempt was made through advocacy of so-called industrial education to divert the Negro schools from training in knowledge to training in crafts and industry. But here the white laborers, North and South, objected and practically no effective industrial training was ever given in the Southern public schools, except training for cooking and menial service.

Sickness, disease and death have been the widespread physical results of caste. The sick have had wretched care. Public hospitals supported by public funds turn Negroes away or segregate and neglect them in cellars and annexes. White physicians often despise their Negro clientele and colored physicians crowd into the larger towns and cities to escape the insult and insecurity to which the colored professional man is exposed in the country and smaller towns.

Above all, crime was used in the South as a source of income for the state. An English traveler wrote in 1871:

"I confess I am more and more suspicious about the criminal justice of these Southern states. In Georgia there is no regular penitentiary at all, but an organized system of letting out the prisoners for profit. Some people here have got up a company for the purpose of hiring convicts. They pay \$25,000 a year besides all expenses of food and keep, so that their money is clear profit to the state. The lessees work the prisoners both on estates and in mines, and apparently maintain severe discipline in their own way, and make a good thing of it. Colonel P—, who is not very mealy-mouthed, admits that he left the concern because he could not stand the inhumanity of it. Another partner in the concern talked with great glee of the money he had made out of the convicts. This does seem simply a return to another form of slavery."

In no part of the modern world has there been so open and conscious a traffic in crime for deliberate social degradation and private profit as in the South since slavery. The Negro is not anti-social. He is no natural criminal. Crime of the vicious type, outside endeavor to achieve freedom or in revenge for cruelty, was rare in the slave South. Since 1876 Negroes have been arrested on the slightest provocation and given long sentences or fines which they were compelled to work out. The resulting peonage of criminals extended into every Southern state and led to the most revolting situations.

A Southern white woman writes:

"In some states where convict labor is sold to the highest bidder the cruel treatment of the helpless human chattel in the hands of guards is such as no tongue can tell nor pen picture. Prison inspectors find convicts herded together, irrespective of age; confined at night in shackles; housed sometimes, as has been found, in old box cars; packed almost as closely as sardines in a box. During the day all are worked under armed guards, who stand ready to shoot down any who may attempt to escape from this hell upon earth—the modern American bastille. Should one escape, the bloodhounds, trained for the purpose, are put upon his track, and the chances are that he will be brought back, severely flogged and put in double shackles, or worse."

“Of all the degrading positions, to our mind, that of the whipping boss in the Georgia penitentiary system is the worst. . . .

“He stands over his pinioned victim and applies the lash on the naked, quivering flesh of a fellowman. Plies it hard enough to lacerate the flesh and send the blood coursing down the bruised back and sides from the gaping and whip-cord cuts; and just think of the mercilessness, the inhumanity, the bestiality of the sentiment that can drive the lash deeper and deeper through the cuts and gashes on the body of a human being, white or black . . . just as a cool, calculating business for a very niggardly stipend.”⁴¹ Hundreds of Southern fortunes have been amassed by this enslavement of criminals.

George W. Cable protested in 1883 and wrote: “If anything may be inferred from the mortal results of the Lease System in other States, the year’s death-rate of the convict camps of Louisiana must exceed that of any pestilence that ever fell upon Europe in the Middle Ages. And as far as popular rumor goes, it confirms this assumption on every hand. Every mention of these camps is followed by the execrations of a scandalized community whose ear is every now and then shocked afresh with some new whisper of their frightful barbarities. It is not for the present writer to assert that every other community where the leasing of convicts prevails is moved to indignation by the same sense of outrage and disgrace; yet it certainly would be but a charitable assumption to believe that the day is not remote when in every such region, the sentiment of the people will write, over the gates of the convict stockades and over the doors of the lessees’ sumptuous homes, one word: *Aceldama*—the field of blood.”⁴²

The normal amount of crime which an ignorant working population would have evolved has been tremendously increased. Young criminals and vagrants were deliberately multiplied and this in turn made an excuse for mob law and lynching. Colored women were looked upon as the legitimate prey of white men and protection for them even against colored men was seldom furnished.

While all instruments of group control—police, courts, government appropriations and the like—were in the hands of whites, no power was left in Negro hands. If a white man is assaulted by a white man or a Negro the police are at hand. If a Negro is assaulted by a white man, the police are more apt to arrest the victim than the aggressor; if he is assaulted by a Negro, he is in most cases without redress or protection, and the group-will of the colored man has no power to express itself.

Inter-racial sex jealousy and accompanying sadism has been made the wide foundation of mobs and lynching. With thousands of white

fathers of colored children, there is scarcely a case on record where such a father has been held legally responsible.

Such evils led to widespread violence in the South, to murder and mobs. Probably in no country in the civilized world did human life become so cheap. This condition prevails among both white and black and characterizes the South even to our day. A spirit of lawlessness became widespread. White people paid no attention to their own laws. White men became a law unto themselves, and black men, so far as their aggressions were confined to their own people, need not fear intervention of white police. Practically all men went armed and the South reached the extraordinary distinction of being the only modern civilized country where human beings were publicly burned alive. Southern papers specialized on Negro crime with ridicule and coarse caricature. The police court where hearts bled was a matter of hilarious newspaper laughter while a note of decency and success among Negroes was buried on a back page or ignored entirely.

The political success of the doctrine of racial separation, which overthrew Reconstruction by uniting the planter and the poor white, was far exceeded by its astonishing economic results. The theory of laboring class unity rests upon the assumption that laborers, despite internal jealousies, will unite because of their opposition to exploitation by the capitalists. According to this, even after a part of the poor white laboring class became identified with the planters, and eventually displaced them, their interests would be diametrically opposed to those of the mass of white labor, and of course to those of the black laborers. This would throw white and black labor into one class, and precipitate a united fight for higher wage and better working conditions.

Most persons do not realize how far this failed to work in the South, and it failed to work because the theory of race was supplemented by a carefully planned and slowly evolved method, which drove such a wedge between the white and black workers that there probably are not today in the world two groups of workers with practically identical interests who hate and fear each other so deeply and persistently and who are kept so far apart that neither sees anything of common interest.

It must be remembered that the white group of laborers, while they received a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage. They were given public deference and titles of courtesy because they were white. They were admitted freely with all classes of white people to public functions, public parks, and the best schools. The police were drawn from their ranks, and the courts, dependent upon their votes, treated them with such leniency as to encourage lawlessness. Their vote selected public officials, and while

this had small effect upon the economic situation, it had great effect upon their personal treatment and the deference shown them. White schoolhouses were the best in the community, and conspicuously placed, and they cost anywhere from twice to ten times as much per capita as the colored schools. The newspapers specialized on news that flattered the poor whites and almost utterly ignored the Negro except in crime and ridicule.

On the other hand, in the same way, the Negro was subject to public insult; was afraid of mobs; was liable to the jibes of children and the unreasoning fears of white women; and was compelled almost continuously to submit to various badges of inferiority. The result of this was that the wages of both classes could be kept low, the whites fearing to be supplanted by Negro labor, the Negroes always being threatened by the substitution of white labor.

Mob violence and lynching were the inevitable result of the attitude of these two classes and for a time were a sort of permissible Roman holiday for the entertainment of vicious whites. One can see for these reasons why labor organizers and labor agitators made such small headway in the South. They were, for the most part, appealing to laborers who would rather have low wages upon which they could eke out an existence than see colored labor with a decent wage. White labor saw in every advance of Negroes a threat to their racial prerogatives, so that in many districts Negroes were afraid to build decent homes or dress well, or own carriages, bicycles or automobiles, because of possible retaliation on the part of the whites.

Thus every problem of labor advance in the South was skillfully turned by demagogues into a matter of inter-racial jealousy. Perhaps the most conspicuous proof of this was the Atlanta riot in 1906, which followed Hoke Smith's vicious attempt to become United States Senator on a platform which first attacked corporations and then was suddenly twisted into scandalous traducing of the Negro race.

To this day no casual and unsophisticated reader of the white Southern press could possibly gather that the American Negro masses were anything but degraded, ignorant, inefficient examples of an incurably inferior race.

The result of all this had to be unfortunate for the Negro. He was a caged human being, driven into a curious mental provincialism. An inferiority complex dominated him. He did not believe himself a man like other men. He could not teach his children self-respect. The Negro as a group gradually lost his manners, his courtesy, his light-hearted kindness. Large numbers sank into apathy and fatalism! There was no chance for the black man; there was no use in striving; ambition was not for Negroes.

The effect of caste on the moral integrity of the Negro race in America has thus been widely disastrous; servility and fawning, gross flattery of white folk and lying to appease and cajole them; failure to achieve dignity and self-respect and moral self-assertion, personal cowardliness and submission to insult and aggression; exaggerated and despicable humility; lack of faith of Negroes in themselves and in other Negroes and in all colored folk; inordinate admiration for the stigmata of success among white folk: wealth and arrogance, cunning dishonesty and assumptions of superiority; the exaltation of laziness and indifference as just as successful as the industry and striving which invites taxation and oppression; dull apathy and cynicism; faith in no future and the habit of moving and wandering in search of justice; a religion of prayer and submission to replace determination and effort.

These are not universal results or else the Negro long since would have dwindled and died in crime and disease. But they are so widespread as to bring inner conflict as baffling as the problems of interracial relations, and they hold back the moral grit and organized effort which are the only hope of survival.

On this and in spite of this comes an extraordinary record of accomplishment, a record so contradictory of what one might easily expect that many people and even the Negroes themselves are deceived by it. The real question is not so much what the Negro has done in spite of caste, as what he might have accomplished with reasonable encouragement. He has cut down his illiteracy more than two-thirds in fifty years, but with decent schools it ought to have been cut down 99 per cent. He has accumulated land and property, but has not been able to hold one-tenth of that which he has rightly earned. He has achieved success in many lines, as an inventor, scientist, scholar and writer. But most of his ability has been choked in chain-gangs and by open deliberate discrimination and conspiracies of silence. He has made a place for himself in literature and art, but the great deeps of his artistic gifts have never yet been plumbed. And yet, for all that he has accomplished, not only the nation but the South itself claims credit and actually points to it as proof of the wisdom or at least the innocuousness of organized suppression!

It is but human experience to find that the complete suppression of a race is impossible. Despite inner discouragement and submission to the oppression of others there persisted the mighty spirit, the emotional rebound that kept a vast number struggling for its rights, for self-expression, and for social uplift. Such men, in many cases, became targets for the white race. They were denounced as trouble makers.

They were denied opportunity. They were driven from their homes. They were lynched.

It is doubtful if there is another group of twelve million people in the midst of a modern cultured land who are so widely inhibited and mentally confined as the American Negro. Within the colored race the philosophy of salvation has by the pressure of caste been curiously twisted and distorted. Shall they use the torch and dynamite? Shall they go North, or fight it out in the South? Shall they segregate themselves even more than they are now, in states, towns, cities or sections? Shall they leave the country? Are they Americans or foreigners? Shall they stand and sing "My Country 'Tis of Thee"? Shall they marry and rear children and save and buy homes, or deliberately commit race suicide?

Ordinarily such questions within a group settle themselves by laboratory experiment. It is shown that violence does not pay, that quiet persistent effort wins; bitterness and pessimism prove a handicap. And yet in the case of the Negro it is almost impossible to obtain such definite laboratory results. Failure cannot be attributed to individual neglect, and success does not necessarily follow individual effort. It is impossible to disentangle the results of caste and the results of work and striving. Ordinarily a group experiments—tries now this, now that, measures results and eliminates bad advice and unwise action by achieving success. But here success is so curtailed and frustrated that guiding wisdom fails. Why should we save? What good does it do to be upstanding, with self-respect? Who gains by thrift, or rises by education?

Such mental frustration cannot indefinitely continue. Some day it may burst in fire and blood. Who will be to blame? And where the greater cost? Black folk, after all, have little to lose, but Civilization has all.

This the American black man knows: his fight here is a fight to the finish. Either he dies or wins. If he wins it will be by no subterfuge or evasion of amalgamation. He will enter modern civilization here in America as a black man on terms of perfect and unlimited equality with any white man, or he will enter not at all. Either extermination root and branch, or absolute equality. There can be no compromise. This is the last great battle of the West.

Evil results of the revolution of 1876 have not been confined to Negroes. The reaction on the whites was just as significant. The white people of the South are essentially a fine kindly breed, the same sort of human beings that one finds the world over. Perhaps their early and fatal mistake was when they refused long before the Civil War to allow in the South differences of opinion. They would not let honest white Southerners continue to talk against slavery. They drove out the non-

conformist; they would not listen to the radical. The result was that there has been built up in the South an intolerance fatal to human culture. Men act as they do in the South, they murder, they lynch, they insult, because they listen to but one side of a question. They seldom know by real human contact Negroes who are men. They read books that laud the South and the "Lost Cause," but they are childish and furious when criticized, and interpret all criticism as personal attack.

The result is that the South in the main is ranged against liberalism. No liberal movement in the United States or in the world has been able to make advance among Southerners. They are militaristic and will have nothing to do with a peace movement. Young Southerners eagerly crowd West Point and Annapolis. The South is not interested in freedom for dark India. It has no sympathy with the oppressed of Africa or of Asia. It is for the most part against unions and the labor movement, because there can be no real labor movement in the South; their laboring class is cut in two and the white laborers must be ranged upon the side of their own exploiters by persistent propaganda and police force. Labor can gain in the South no class-consciousness. Strikes cannot be effective because the white striker can be threatened with the colored "scab" and the colored striker can be clapped in jail.

The result of the disfranchisement of the Negro on the political life of the South has been pitiful. Southerners argued that if the Negro was disfranchised, normal political life would be possible for the South. They did not realize that a living working class can never lose its political power and that all they did in 1876 was to transfer that political power from the hands of labor to the hands of capital, where it has been concentrated ever since. Moreover, after that transfer the forms of republican government became a continuing farce.

As Chamberlain said: "Every present citizen of South Carolina knows, and those who are truthful and frank will confess that the ballot debauched in 1876 remains debauched; the violence taught them remains now, if not in the same, in other forms; the defiance of law learned then in what was called a good cause survives in the horrid orgies of degradation and of lynchings."⁴³

There can be no doubt that the revolution of 1876 established fraud and oligarchy in the South and the remains of that régime are still with us. Local government in the South to this day is handicapped and frustrated by caste and by the use of the color line to divide the electorate and dominate the Negro. As late as 1931, the *Atlanta Constitution* said of the Georgia legislature: "Never in its history has Georgia been inflicted with so incompetent a legislature as the one just adjourned."

George W. Cable said in 1885: "The vote, after all, was a secondary point, and the robbery and bribery on one side, and whipping and killing on the other were but huge accidents of the situation. The two main questions were really these: on the freedman's side, how to establish republican state government under the same recognition of his rights that the rest of Christendom accorded him; and on the former master's side, how to get back to the old semblance of republican state government, and—allowing that the freedman was de facto a voter—still to maintain a purely arbitrary superiority of all whites over all blacks, and a purely arbitrary equality of all blacks among themselves as an alien, menial and dangerous class.

"Exceptionally here and there someone in the master caste did throw off the old and accept the new ideas, and, if he would allow it, was instantly claimed as a leader by the newly liberated thousands around him. But just as promptly the old master race branded him also an alien reprobate, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, if he had not already done so, he soon began to confirm by his actions the brand of his cheek."

The paradox of this whole muddle is that what the South started to do in 1876 was never accomplished and never will be. The Negro cannot be disfranchised. He votes in every policy and the only result of disfranchisement is to bind the white South hand and foot and deliver it to its own worst self. Stevens and Sumner stand eternally vindicated.

Particularly has the South suffered spiritually by the effort to use propaganda and enforce belief. This always results in deliberate lying. Not that all white Southerners deliberately lie about the Negro, but to an astonishing degree the honest South allows known lies to stand uncontradicted.

The wide distortion of facts which became prevalent in the white South during and after Reconstruction as a measure of self-defense has never been wholly crushed since. For years Southerners denied that there was any fraud and cheating in elections. Henry Grady stood in Boston and told New England that the Negro was as free to vote in the South as the white laborer was in the North. Booker T. Washington repeatedly testified as to the good will and essential honesty of purpose of Southerners and put the whole burden of responsibility for advance upon the Negro himself. "The Southern white man is the Negro's best friend," scream all the Southern papers, even today. And this in the face of the open record of five thousand lynchings, jails bursting with black prisoners incarcerated on trivial and trumped-up charges, and caste staring from every train and street car.

This whole phantasmagoria has been built on the most miserable

of human fictions: that in addition to the manifest differences between men there is a deep, awful and ineradicable cleft which condemns most men to eternal degradation. It is a cheap inheritance of the world's infancy, unworthy of grown folk. My rise does not involve your fall. No superior has interest in inferiority. Humanity is one and its vast variety is its glory and not its condemnation. If all men make the best of themselves, if all men have the chance to meet and know each other, the result is the love born of knowledge and not the hate based on ignorance.

The result of this upon the higher life in the South is extraordinary. Fundamentalism rules in religion because men hesitate openly to reason about the Golden Rule. Literature, art and music are curiously dominated by the Negro. The only literature the South has had for years is based largely upon the Negro. Southern music is Negro music. Yet Negroes themselves are seldom recognized as interpreters of art, and white artists must work under severe social limitations and at second hand; they thus lack necessary sincerity, depth and frankness.

Democracy in the South and in the United States is hampered by the Southern attitude. The Southerner, by winning the victory which the Fourteenth Amendment tried to deny, uses the Negro population as a basis of his political representation and allows few Negroes to vote; so that the white Southerner marches to the polls with many times as much voting power in his hand as the voter in the North.

The South does and must vote for reaction. There can be, therefore, neither in the South nor in the nation a successful third party movement. This was proven in the case of Theodore Roosevelt and LaFollette. A solid bloc of reaction in the South can always be depended upon to unite with Northern conservatism to elect a president.

One can only say to all this that whatever the South gained through its victory in the revolution of 1876 has been paid for at a price which literally staggers humanity. Imperialism, the exploitation of colored labor throughout the world, thrives upon the approval of the United States, and the United States gives that approval because of the South. World war waits on and supports imperial aggression and international jealousy. This was too great a price to pay for anything which the South gained.

The chief obstacle in this rich realm of the United States, endowed with every natural resource and with the abilities of a hundred different peoples—the chief and only obstacle to the coming of that kingdom of economic equality which is the only logical end of work is the determination of the white world to keep the black world poor and themselves rich. A clear vision of a world without inordinate

individual wealth, of capital without profit and of income based on work alone, is the path out, not only for America but for all men. Across this path stands the South with flaming sword.

Of course, it would be humanly impossible for any such régime to be completely successful anywhere without protest and reaction from within. Alms-giving to Negroes in the South has always been almost universal. Even petty pilfering has been winked at. Beyond this, and of far greater social significance, have been the personal friendships between blacks and whites with aid and advice, even at great pecuniary and spiritual costs. Large-hearted Southern white men and women have in unnumbered cases quietly and without advertisement done enormous work to make life bearable and success possible for thousands of Negroes.

Most of the benevolence of this sort, however, has been of a personal and individual matter. In only a minority of cases have such Southern white people been willing to stand on principle and demand for all Negroes rights as men and treatment according to desert. When in some cases such opinion and clear advocacy has been made and has consequently evoked the usual social punishment, it is singular and almost peculiar to the South how seldom Southern whites have had the courage to stand up and suffer for righteousness' sake against the mass terror of public opinion.

In the South the iconoclast, the martyr, not only on the Negro question, but on other moral matters, have been conspicuously absent; and where they have arisen, they have soon either subsided into silence or retreated to the more tolerant atmosphere of the North, leaving the South all the poorer and all the more easily hammered into conformity with the mob.

If white and black in the South were free and intelligent there would be friendship and some intermarriage and there ought to be; but none would marry where he did not wish to, and there could be no greater intermingling in the future than in the shameful past, unless this union of races proved successful and attractive.

The revolution of 1876 was, in fine, a victory for which the South has every right to hang its head. After enslaving the Negro for two and one-half centuries, it turned on his emancipation to beat a beaten man, to trade in slaves, and to kill the defenseless; to break the spirit of the black man and humiliate him into hopelessness; to establish a new dictatorship of property in the South through the color line. It was a triumph of men who in their effort to replace equality with caste and to build inordinate wealth on a foundation of abject poverty have succeeded in killing democracy, art and religion.

And yet, despite this, and despite the long step backward toward slavery that black folk have been pushed, they have made withal a brave and fine fight; a fight against ridicule and monstrous caricature, against every refinement of cruelty and gross insult, against starvation, disease and murder in every form. It has left in their soul its scars, its deep scars; but when all is said, through it all has gone a thread of brave and splendid friendship from those few and rare men and women of white skins, North and South, who have dared to know and help and love black folk.

The unending tragedy of Reconstruction is the utter inability of the American mind to grasp its real significance, its national and worldwide implications. It was vain for Sumner and Stevens to hammer in the ears of the people that this problem involved the very foundations of American democracy, both political and economic. We are still too blind and infatuated to conceive of the emancipation of the laboring class in half the nation as a revolution comparable to the upheavals in France in the past, and in Russia, Spain, India and China today. We were worried when the beginnings of this experiment cost Eighteen Millions of Dollars, and quite aghast when a debt of Two Hundred and Twenty-Five Millions was involved, including waste and theft. We apparently expected that this social upheaval was going to be accomplished with peace, honesty and efficiency, and that the planters were going quietly to surrender the right to live on the labor of black folk, after two hundred and fifty years of habitual exploitation. And it seems to America a proof of inherent race inferiority that four million slaves did not completely emancipate themselves in eighty years, in the midst of nine million bitter enemies, and indifferent public opinion of the whole nation. If the Reconstruction of the Southern states, from slavery to free labor, and from aristocracy to industrial democracy, had been conceived as a major national program of America, whose accomplishment at any price was well worth the effort, we should be living today in a different world.

The attempt to make black men American citizens was in a certain sense all a failure, but a splendid failure. It did not fail where it was expected to fail. It was Athanasius contra mundum, with back to the wall, outnumbered ten to one, with all the wealth and all the opportunity, and all the world against him. And only in his hands and heart the consciousness of a great and just cause; fighting the battle of all the oppressed and despised humanity of every race and color, against the massed hirelings of Religion, Science, Education, Law, and brute force.

For he has a pall, this wretched man,
 Such as few men can claim;
 Deep down below a prison-yard,
 Naked, for greater shame,
 He lies, with fetters on each foot,
 Wrapt in a sheet of flame! . . .

OSCAR WILDE

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