

THE RACE PROBLEM.

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Equality is a fundamental principle of democracy. Government of and by the people pre-supposes equal responsibilities, equal privileges. Democracy teaches that these mutual responsibilities and privileges are not dependent upon legal enactment, but that they inhere in the very nature of man. The consciousness of equal right to secure wealth and honor, to attain knowledge and fame, to voice his convictions concerning the common-weal, elevates man, and gives him substantial grounds for supporting the government which secures him in these inherent rights. The attainment of this equality has been the effort of American statesmanship from the beginning. It penned that sublime declaration, "All men are created equal. All American history has been a struggle to realize this ideal of equality.

On the 22nd of December, 1620, after a boisterous passage of some sixty days, the *Mayflower* anchored off the bleak coast of Massachusetts. On Plymouth Rock, 'mid winter's chilling blast, the Pilgrim fathers first set foot. These were they who came to a new world for liberty of conscience, liberty of action, and to lay broad and deep the foundations of freedom. Contemporaneous with this event, there sailed up the river to Jamestown another vessel, different in character and purpose. On the beach there landed, not the rejoicing company as at Plymouth, hearts swelling with praise and gratitude, but twenty shackled negro slaves. In an unknown country among an unknown people, in bondage they were doomed to pass their existence.

From Plymouth dates liberty in America; from Jamestown, slavery. As, amid sterling manhood, loyal hearts, heroic devotion to duty, liberty flourished, so, among Jamestown's settlers, slavery took root. The civilization of Plymouth, based upon equality, embodied freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, a government of and for the many; that of Jamestown, based on inequality, embodied serfdom of intellect, slavery of man, a government of and for the few. While the character of the Pilgrim fathers determined the northern ideal, this ideal had a reflex action on the people, fixing and strengthening their convictions upon freedom. Likewise, as the principle of the Jamestown settlers was such as to tolerate a system of slavery, so slavery had a reflex action on the Southern character, perpetuating aristocracy.

The Union of 1787 was a compromise of these two radically different civilizations: the freedom of the North joined to the slavery of the South; the union of free states and slave. But these two civilizations, hostile in every principle, commenced the conflict for the mastery of the nation. The first fifty years records an almost uninterrupted victory for slavery. But the idea of freedom, planted so deeply at Plymouth, could not be defeated. Intensified by English despotism and Southern dictation, it asserted itself as never before. Placing in the Missouri compromise its first solemn protest against slavery, growing stronger through the stormy days of Texas, speaking in the logic of Sumner, the eloquence of Phillips, this idea of freedom seized the Northern heart, threw off the yoke of Southern rule, and in the election of Lincoln, struck the first real blow for freedom. Gathering renewed courage with victory, growing more intense with defeat, it became the inspiration of every patriotic soldier, calling him forth to deeds of valor and heroic self-denial. This that led the charge at Gettysburg, stormed the heights at Lookout, directed the hand of Lincoln and swept to Appomattox invincible.

Written by pen a century before, the freedom and equality of man were now written by force of arms. But the conflict was not ended. War could assert the principle of freedom; it could not apply it. It could change the legal relations between master and slave, but could not bring true freedom to the negro nor change the character of the Southern heart. The old civilization of the South could not be changed in a day. The same contempt for the negro existed as before. The same spirit that made it a crime to teach a slave was seen afterwards in the opposition to all measures looking to the elevation of the black race to an equality with the white. Under these conditions there could be but one result: the continued rule of the minority, the continued suppression of the negro—a suppression of manhood before which mere physical bondage fades into insignificance. Daily, laws are defied, and rights dear to every American heart trampled under foot. Daily is heard the wail of negroes, groping 'mid

darkness, and praying for the sunlight of true freedom. Given just enough education to realize the darkness that enshrouds them, just a touch of Christianity to show the blackness of superstition, just a spark of manhood to feel their degradation. Such is the result of our freedom by arms, the equality secured by our laws. The same arrogance that ruled the negro for a century in accord with law now rules him in defiance of law, denying him political and civil rights, consigning his spirit to an unfilled thirst for knowledge. If this be the lasting condition of the negro, better never his freedom, better ever the old bondage of the body than the awakening to a bondage of spirit and given no means of freedom. Better never the civil war, with all its horrors, than the realization of such equality. Vain the sacrifice of a million lives, vain those broken hearts and broken homes, criminal the deeds of war and death, unless sanctified by the political equality of the negro.

The attainment of this equality, the settlement of this conflict of races, is the problem of the hour: a problem without precedent or parallel, a problem of appalling conditions, and one to which we must address ourselves now, ere race prejudice rouses us with drum beat and bugle call.

Freedom and equality can be attained only through the operation of natural forces. Race prejudice must be destroyed, and the South reconstructed upon principles of equality, intelligence and industrial prosperity. Intelligence and equality are the basis of republican government; industrial prosperity is the incentive to that individual effort which creates property, and interests the individual in the government which secures to him the fruits of his labor.

There can never be political equality between an ignorant race and an intelligent race. Intelligence will not submit to the rule of ignorance; ignorance cannot maintain itself in competition with intelligence. The ignorant negro, clannish, credulous, impulsive, tempts every art of the demagogue. Holding false ideas of loyalty to party, he cannot be merged into both great parties, for he lacks political conviction. He thus remains a factor strong enough to rule if the white vote divides the slightest. The negro must have that education which alone can fit him for the duties of citizenship, which alone can place him on an equality with the whites; and, while holding in grateful remembrance the party which freed him; yet ally himself with the party of his conviction on living issues. Ignorant and vicious, he stands a menace to our free institutions; educated, elevated, he becomes a resistless force for the nation.

The development of industrial pursuits is to be another factor in solving the problem. A diversity of industries, corresponding to a diversity of talents and material conditions, furnishes employment congenial to every class. Thus every individual becomes a producer, and interested in the stability of government. To the south lies a country—the fairest and richest on earth: a perfect climate, a fertile soil, mountains with exhaustive treasures of iron and coal, forests vast and primeval, rivers running idle to the sea. Of the three essentials to all industry, the South has easy control: in cotton, a fixed monopoly; in iron, a proved supremacy; in lumber, the reserve supply of the Republic. Capital and labor are the essentials for the development of industrial prosperity. The unequalled resources of the South, promising large dividends, invite northern capital and enterprise. The labor of the negro, adapted to the climate, fitted by years of training, is to play as important a part in the development of the country as the capital and push of the North. Capital can be utilized to best advantage by the negro, adapted as he is to Southern conditions. Thirty years ago the wealth and power of the South were centered in the slave; slave labor and agriculture were the controlling elements. Today agriculture is one of many industries. Steam and electricity are superseding the ponderous water-wheel, and already the Birminghams and Selmas of the South are rivalling the Pittsburghs and Holyokes of the North. For slave labor there is the labor of freedom. Where resources are so great, where occupations are diversified, where labor is free, will spring up a system of industry that will dazzle the world. The wealth and power of the old South is to fade into insignificance when compared to that of the new. The Southern people are beginning to realize that the aid of the negro is indispensable to their future prosperity. Knit together by indissoluble bonds, the northern capitalist, the Southern land owner, and the black laborer are realizing their mutual dependence. Every onward step in industrial prosperity brings them nearer the goal of equality and harmony.

The operation of these forces in the South will introduce