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Tempering the Law in Dixie

(Continued from Page 6)

bribery propositions from both sides. When a negro becomes involved in civil igntion with a reputable white man, the white has every advantage, no matter how scrupulously fair the judge and jury may be, no matter what allowances they make for ignorance. This is simply the advantage that foresight will always the advantage that foresight will always have over negligence. It is a time-worn maxim that "the law is for the vigilant, not for the sleeping." If the suit be upon open account, the white man has kept books, and swears in court to their correctness; against this oath, fortified by figures, the negro may interpose his uncertain memory. The white man, almost axiomatically, makes a better and clearer witness than the negro. He has a logical witness than the negro. He has a logical mind, and states his facts methodically to the jury, while the negro tells an elaborate story that rambles over the face of crea-

A PROPOS of which, this story of a negro who tried to tell the truth: A certain Distinguished American is fond regrowho tried to tell the truth: A certain Distinguished American is fond of hunting—in Africa and elsewhere. Upon a festive occasion, he invaded the Louisiana canebrake to shoot some hitherto unshot bear. One Alec was his personal guide, and Alee is a good negro. A few months thereafter, this writer went fishing with Alec who sat in one end of the boat detailing the short and simple annals of the camp. This camp had been the great and glorious event of Alec's life. Do not lose the point of this story; Alec was talking to his friend, trying to tell the exact truth. "You see boss, de whole entire 'sponsibility was right on me. Ef de Cunnel had so much as stumped his toe, here'd come a great big regiment o' soldiers all de way from Washington. Dem soldiers would ha' lined me up befront 'em, looked me square in de face, and de cap'n'd ax, right solemn: "Alec, how twuz?"

"One day de Cunnel gits a telegraph from de King o' Scotland, sayin' he done kilt a big bar, and wantin' to know how Cunnel was gittin' along—thankee suh.

"Dat telegraph kinder pestered de Cunnel. 'Alec,' he say, 'I like to know what dat feller means telegraphin' me all dat long string o' stuff down here to dis cane-brake. Don't he know I ain't got

dat long string o' stuff down here to dis cane-brake. Don't he know I ain't got no time to be foolin' with po' white trash, an' me busy as I is tryin' to kill a .bar?''

a bar?''

''Such was Alee's version of something that actually took place. Subsequently, this writer, in talking with that same Distinguished American, repeated Alec's story. The Colonel frowned: "You know I never told Alec anything like that."

'I think you must have told him something; or something happened. Alec was telling me the truth as he saw it."

Later on, the Colonel remembered, and laughed aloud: "Oh, yes! There came a telegram from Mr. Cortelyou who was hunting in the Rockies; he had just killed a grizzly, and wanted to know what luck I was having."

'All right, that's half of Alec's story."

'Mr. Reid (late Minister to the Court

story."
"Mr. Reid (late Minister to the Court of St. James) wrote me a letter in which he mentioned that King Edward had gone shooting on his Scotch preserves."

"Good! That's the other half."
These two commonplace items had filtered through Alec's mind and had come out glorified. Yet, he told nothing but the truth as he saw it.

There was once a governor who got a letter from a negro in jail awaiting exe-

cution:
"Dear Govner:
I am in a mos' p'tickler fix. Dey's gwine
to haing me dis comin' Friday, an' here 'tis
Wensdy already..."

Of course, when a negro gets in a most
particular fix he'll try anything to squirm
out... likewise a white man. Milo Sad
dler squirmed mightily when he was on
trial for killing old man Jerry with a
shotgun. When the sheriff captured
Milo, be still had the gun, one barrel of
which had been recently discharged. On
trial, Milo called his brother as a witness trial, Milo called his brother as a witness





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