

"Coming and Overthrow of the Negro in Congress"

THE REJECTION OF THE CULTURED MENARD BY A REPUBLICAN CONGRESS AND REVELL'S ADMISSION TO THE SENATE

IN LAST week's article attention was centered upon the story of reconstruction following the surrender of the confederate army and the enfranchisement of the Negro. Negro suffrage was first established in the District of Columbia. Subsequently all the residents of the District, white and black, were disfranchised to eliminate the vote of the illiterate Negro. That is why residents of the District are voteless today. This act also furnished an excuse for the present unjust disfranchisement laws in the Southern states.

Today's article tells the story of Menard's attempt to enter Congress and his rejection and of Revell's admission to the Senate. This is the way Colonel McClure puts it:

IT WAS not until the 7th of December, 1868, that the first Negro applied for admission into Congress. There was a vacancy in the Second district of Louisiana, and at the general election of November 3, 1868, J. Willis Menard, a resident of New Orleans, was certified by Governor Warmouth as elected to fill the vacancy. The House was largely Republican, but the idea of admitting a Negro into Congress threw many of the Republican members into a hysterical condition. They could not frankly oppose him because he was a Negro, and they made a microscopic examination of the regularity of his credentials. He was allowed to be heard in defense of his own case, as is common in such cases, and thus became the first of his race whose voice was heard on the floor of the House of Representatives; but his certificate was rejected by an overwhelming majority, and the Republican leaders breathed more freely because they had for at least a season escaped the fellowship of a black man in the councils of the nation. Menard was one of the most accomplished of his race, a college graduate and had rendered very creditable service to the government, but three years after the close of the war that had been fought for the freedom and finally for the enfranchisement of the black man a Republican Congress was unwilling to accept even one of the most creditable of his race to membership.

In less than two years the Negro again knocked for admission into Congress, and this time he stood at the door of the Senate. In January, 1870, Hiram R. Revells, a full-blooded Negro and a man of much more than common ability, was elected to the Senate to fill an unexpired term by the Mississippi legislature. It was accepted as the irony of fate that this Negro leader should be chosen to fill the vacancy in the United States Senate that had been created by the resignation of Jefferson Davis at the beginning of the war. Mr. Revells was a Methodist minister, and highly respected as one of the most prominent and useful of the Colored leaders of the South. On the 25th of January, five days after his election, he appeared in Washington and the Republican leaders of the first legislative tribunal of the nation were in consternation at the threatened advent of the Negro in the Senate. The Senate was overwhelmingly Republican, but many of the party leaders made exhaustive study to find some reasonable excuse for refusing the seat to Revells. It was not until a month after he had given his credentials to Senator Wilson of Massachusetts, that Wilson felt safe in presenting them to the body and moving that Revells be sworn as a Senator. An animated debate followed, occupying three days, in which Republican Senators invented many excuses for rejecting the credentials with the Negro behind them; but on the 25th day of February Charles Sumner delivered one of the ablest speeches of his life in defense of the rights of the Negro, resulting in the admission of Revells by a decided majority. Thus on the 25th of February, 1870, the first Negro entered our national legislature when Hiram R. Revells was qualified as United States Senator, and during the term of little more than a year he enjoyed the solitude that was broken by very few of his fellow Senators in social intercourse, even on the floor of the Senate.

I met Senator Revells when he was a member of the Senate, and was very much interested in him as the first representative of his race in our National Congress. He was a man of rather imposing presence, severely unassuming, and unusually intelligent. He was sincerely devoted to the elevation and improvement of his race on the highest lines of advancement, and he probably did more than any one of his race in his day in smoothing the thorny pathway for his people in the South. A notable illustration of the general public sentiment in the North on the subject of the Negro as a national legislator was given in Philadelphia soon after Revell's admission

to the Senate. He suddenly rose to national fame as the first black man to become a national lawmaker, and he delivered lectures in many sections of the country, which were largely attended. Among other invitations he received and accepted was one to lecture in Philadelphia in the Academy of Music, but when application was made for the use of the Academy the managers of that institution were thrown into hysterics at the suggestion of bringing a Negro on its platform, and Revells was refused the right to speak there. Of course, it was not announced that the Academy was refused because Revells was a Negro, but it was none the less the truth. The Black Swan was allowed to warble her sweet notes on the same platform and her coming did not mean political fellowship, but the advent of the Negro Senator was a living object lesson of equal rights for the black man, which could not at that day be accepted even in loyal Philadelphia.

Ten years after Revell's retirement from the Senate I visited the capital of Mississippi and there met the late Senator George, who was then Senator-elect, with the governor of the State and a number of other prominent officials. I was equally surprised and gratified to hear from them that ex-Senator Revells was doing a great work in Mississippi as president of a college for Colored students, and that he was very highly respected. His work was so well appreciated that the State of Jefferson Davis, who was then living, contributed annually and liberally to maintain the institution. Revells continued that work until his death, and he lived to see Blanche K. Bruce, of his own race, represent his State in the Senate, with half a dozen more Negro Representatives in the House. Bruce entered the Senate in 1875, served a full term, and afterward made Register of the Treasury. He had a more rosy pathway than his predecessor in the Senate, as the Negro was no longer shunned as a pest in the councils of the nation. Since Bruce's retirement in 1881 the Colored race has been without representation in the Senate.

With the appearance of Revells in the Senate came two Negro Representatives—Joseph R. Rainey, of South Carolina, who was admitted without question, and Jefferson F. Long, of Georgia, who filled an unexpired term of little more than a month, and who was the only Negro ever chosen to either branch of Congress in that State. From the time of the appearance of Rainey in the Forty-first Congress the Negro has served in one or both branches until the close of the last Congress, with the single exception of the Fiftieth Congress, when it happened that the Colored race was without representation.

(Next week: "South Carolina's Brilliant Galaxy." Watch for it.)

"AUNT DINAH" GOING FAR AWAY

"Aunt Dinah" is going away. This news will sadden the day for many an Omaha epicure. But she's going.

Two years ago "Aunt Dinah" came from Atlanta, Gawga, to delight the palates of Omaha folk with fried chicken such as only a Georgia mammy knows how to cook. The Fontenelle hotel opened a special kitchen for her, and fame which had preceded her was enhanced again. To those who really understood what fried chicken should be like, her name became a thing to be spoken with tender regard. To those who did not know how chicken should be fried there were opened vistas of Elysium theretofore undreamed of. "Aunt Dinah" came, and coned, and conquered.

She stayed a year at the Fontenelle. Then the Blackstone got her as pastry cook—for her skill was proven in a various way. And there she spent another year. Now she's going. Going back east somewhere—she won't tell just yet. But Omaha's remembrance of her is expressed in one brief sentence:

"She sure could cook!"—World-Herald.

OVERSEAS COLORED TROOPS COMING HOME

Sections of the 367th, 369th, 370th and 372nd Regiments Assigned by War Department for Early Convey to America.

Special to The Monitor:

Washington, D. C., Jan. 20.—Announcement is made through the office of Emmett J. Scott, Special Assistant to the Secretary of War, that the War Department has assigned for early convey from France to America the following units of Colored troops, or sections thereof, as herein described:

Three Hundred and Sixty-seventh Infantry ("The Buffaloes," part of 92nd Division), headquarters and first battalion, 40 officers and 1,296 men, headquarters company, supply company and Third Battalion, 49 officers and 1,315 men.

Three Hundred and Sixty-ninth Infantry (formerly 16th New York Regiment), headquarters supply company, 2nd Battalion and Sanitary Detachment, 56 officers and 1,202 men.

Three Hundred and Seventieth Infantry (including the former 8th Illinois Regiment), headquarters, 2nd and 3rd Battalions, Medical Detachment, 68 officers and 1,555 men.

Three Hundred and Seventy-second Infantry (including the District of Columbia National Guard, etc.), 65 officers and 1,855 men.

Three Hundred and Seventy-second Infantry, Medical Detachment and Second Battalion complete, 22 officers and 683 men.

This will be welcome intelligence to the relatives and friends of these gallant warriors for freedom and democracy throughout the land. In many of the larger centers of Colored population elaborate arrangements are already underway to give them a warm reception upon their arrival home. These Colored soldiers have given an admirable account of themselves on some of the most notable battle-fields in France, and richly merit the plaudits they are to receive at the hands of a grateful and well served republic.

OMAHA COLORED BUSINESS FIRMS

Our classified directory of Omaha Colored Business Firms, which is begun in this issue, will not only be a splendid advertising feature for the firms themselves, but will be a revelation to people at home and abroad of the number and variety of business ventures in which our people are engaged. We hope to have in time every business and professional firm in Omaha in this directory. It will make you open your eyes. The only way these firms can grow will be through your patronage. These firms must also, on their part, do all that in them lies to give its patrons efficient service.

N. W. C. A. HOME

The N. W. C. A. will hereafter hold their middle meeting at the members' homes and the monthly meeting at the Old Folks' Home. The first middle meeting was held with Mrs. J. H. Smith with a good attendance. Eighteen blocks for a quilt was made. Mrs. John Perry was made president of the middle meeting and Mrs. H. R. Roberts secretary. All members are requested to be present at meeting to be held January 29.

Anyone wishing to buy an equity in a beautiful home, now is your chance; 8 rooms, strictly modern, terms reasonable. Call W. 2941.

Save that we may share Save food

METHODS OF DEMOCRACY. The extent to which the United States Food Administrator has relied on the voluntary support of the American people is shown by a statement made by the United States Food Administrator speaking before the Senate Agricultural Committee less than three months after this country entered the war. That he was justified in his implicit confidence in the strength of democracy has been clearly reflected by the measure of support we have lent the Allies. "If democracy is worth anything," Mr. Hoover declared, "we can do these things by co-operation, by stimulation, by self-sacrifice, by the patriotic mobilization of the brains of this country. If it cannot be done in this manner it is better that we accept German domination and confess to failure of our political ideals, acquiesce in the superiority of the German conception and send for the Germans to instruct us in its use."

Patrioteering

By BOOTH TARKINGTON Of The Vigilantes

"When the German-Americans, as we call them, found that our country was in the war, they erased the hyphen. The hyphen is gone forever. . . . In our country there are only American citizens." I quote the above from a recent article issued by the "Vigilantes," and I believe the facts to be virtually as stated. But if they were not, and if the hyphen did actually here and there remain alive, would not the most sensible policy treat it as dead, and at least assume it to be dead, wherever it showed no virulent signs of life? In other words, men cannot be goaded into loyalty; they only accumulate a sense of injury under the goad. And it was never more important than at this present time that we should avoid injustice to any citizen. Suspicion, rumor and coincidence of circumstance should influence neither our judgments nor our actions; much less should we vent our passion against Germany upon the person of him whom we called the German-American.

I speak from the standpoint of one who bitterly opposed the German-American position on the war prior to the American entrance, April, 1917. But the sympathy of the German-American with the German cause prior to that date, if rightly comprehended, does not imply a sympathy continuing beyond that date, though to many minds this is either an impossible paradox or a symptom of credulity imposed upon by almost barefaced hypocrisy. It is neither the German-American, beholding a war between Germany and the allies sided with Germany. He had not been alienated from Germany, as the rest of us had been alienated (by the Revolutionary War) from England (he saw merely a contest between foreign powers and sided with that from which he sprang. But when his own country came to actual war with Germany the German-American found himself to be an American. Nevertheless, it is hard for him to show his patriotism when we say to him: "Now you dirty German-American, drop your tricks and speak up! Repeat these words in a loud shout, 'I am an American and I love the flag,' and if you don't shout loud enough we'll kick you, and maybe we'll kick you anyhow!" Such instruction does not seem quite statesmanlike, or over-Christianlike, either.

Germans to Germans.

Margaret Deland, lately returned from France, says that over there, not long ago, a company of German prisoners, just captured, were being sent back from the front, when they encountered an American regiment largely from Wisconsin, moving up to the trenches. Many of the Wisconsin troops were of German origin; some among them, indeed, could hardly speak English, and the prisoners were astonished to be greeted noisily and carrolously in their own tongue. They were even more astonished at the nature of the comments which these strange Germans from America made upon them. In fact, the episode was unnamable. Oaths in the German tongue were frequent and intensive. The German-speaking men of the Wisconsin regiment cursed the captured German soldiers with an inhosptable frankness very shocking to the prisoners, who had been passed in silence by other American regiments, and had received cigarettes from a battalion of English. Words like "dumm kopf" and "schweinhund" were employed, with prophetic expletives and the general sense of what the Wisconsin men said to their German cousins was as follows: "You dash blanked jackasses and dots, we and our father left your old faterland and went four thousand miles to live in a better place. Now we have to come all the way back, four thousand miles again yet, to slaughter you, because you haven't got any more sense than to believe and obey that old pig dog of a kaiser! We'll send you kaiser and princes to sheol, where they can't do any more harm; and as for you, dunderheads, you ought to be hanged for making us all this trouble of coming over here to teach you some sense with our bayonets!"

May Work Out Own Salvation.

The citizens once called German-Americans will work out their own salvation if we do not make it too hard for them. What man can show enthusiasm for anything, when he is threatened with punishment if he is not enthusiastic? Loyalty is a feeling; it is not a spoken word. You cannot possibly produce a beautiful feeling in any man by threatening him or prosecuting him. Let us not threaten at all, and let us prosecute only when we have evidence. Is it certain evidence that a man is loyal if he has a son in the American army? No. There were rebels in '63 who had sons in the Northern armies. Is it certain evidence that a man is disloyal if he have a son in the German army? No. There were loyal Union men in '64 who had sons fighting for the South. So it may be now. There are American citizens who have relatives in the German army and other relatives in the American army. Here and there is an American citizen who has one son in the American army and another son in the German army.

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