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THE COLORED METROPOLIS.

Sixty-Five Thousand Negroes in Washington—The Color Line in Society.

There are sixty-five thousand colored people in Washington. In no city in the United States, not even New Orleans, is there a larger colored population. Many of them have settled here since the civil war ended. A better opportunity can nowhere be found for studying the effect of freedom and the legislation subsequent to it than here, says a Washington letter. The colored people here enjoy all the social and political rights that law can give them, without protest and without annoyance. The public conveyances are open to them, and the theaters, the jury box, the spoils of party power, are theirs. Many of these men are wealthy, and the aggregate wealth of the colored property owners in the district amounts to millions of dollars. Hundreds own comfortable homes, and some handsome residences; their churches are many, including three or four buildings that are ornamental to the city. As a class they are industrious, find plenty to do, and are beginning to show capacity for thrift and saving.

But the color line is rigidly drawn in what is known as society. Wealth, learning, official place, give no colored figure the right or privilege of entering the best or commonest white society on terms of equality or endurance. In this respect the colored race lives as separate and exclusive a life as in the days of slavery, and, as a drop of African blood was held to make a man a negro, so now it taints him and makes an incurable barrier against social recognition. The most striking illustration of the tendency of the race to imitate the white people is seen in their own rules, classes and customs. First of all, we find in this large colored community social lines as rigidly drawn as they are between themselves and the white society of the West end. There are three recognized social classes among the colored people. Neither acknowledges the other, and it is the ambition of those in the lower to be received in the higher circles, just as among the whites.

The upper crust, so to speak, consists of men of wealth, learning and high political place. These people exchange calls with all the ceremony of the whites, some of them driving in their own carriages, leaving cards with scrupulous attention to etiquette. They dine with each other, and are waited upon by colored servants with whom they will permit no other relations than those of master and servant. Probably the leading family in the highest colored society here is that of Ex-Senator Bruce, who is now the register of the treasury. Bruce is a light complexioned, intelligent looking man. He is said to be worth \$100,000. He lives in a handsome house that he owns on M street. It is richly furnished. A superb piano stands in the reception room, and a choice collection of books lines the walls of the library. Mrs. Bruce is a handsome woman, with not a suggestion of her race in her face, and whose manners are regarded as the consummation of ease, grace, and courtesy. She dresses as richly and handsomely as any woman in the city. In official circles Mr. Bruce is always received with courtesy, and as a political equal, but there the line is drawn. Mr. Bruce entertains his friends handsomely, and his wife pays and receives calls from those of her select set with unvarying regard for prevailing etiquette. Another member of this social circle is John T. Cook, the collector of taxes for the district. He lives in excellent style and entertains handsomely. Prof. J. M. Gregory, professor of Latin at the Howard university, and John M. Leonard, the minister to Haiti, with their families, are recognized members of the best colored society, while Dr. Charles B. Purvis' society and that of his wife are eagerly sought.

Dr. Purvis is a very busy man, being the surgeon in charge of the Freedman's hospital, and the professor of materia medica in the Howard medical school. Early all of his scholars are white. Dr. A. Augustus and his wife are also received in the highest circle of colored society, while Dr. Augustus as a physician commands the respect of his white brethren in the profession. Mr. Henry Smith, for many years the librarian of the house of representatives, entertains a great deal, and his wife calls in her own carriage. R. T. Greener, a member of the district bar and a graduate of Howard, and his wife, who is an accomplished musician, are much in society. The Rev. Dr. Alex. Crummel, rector of the leading colored church of the Episcopal denomination in the district, and is highly respected by the white clergy of his denomination. Of course Fred Douglas ranks as the leading colored man in the district, but he goes but little into society. He lives on his fine estate on the eastern branch of the Potomac. Douglas is worth about \$200,000. While his wealth and ability make him easily the foremost man of his race, he is not popular. He is regarded as guilty of the same sins toward the colored men of which he accuses the whites, namely, refusal to recognize them or have personal relations with them.

Mr. M. M. Holland, who is an officer in the postoffice department, is said to be the best classical scholar in the district, and his attainments bring him the highest social recognition of his people. Wormley, of Wormley's hotel, is a leader of the best set on account of his wealth, reputed to be \$150,000, and his relations with prominent white men. Smith Wormley, one of his sons, is a large owner of real estate here, and another son has an excellent practice as a physician.

Because of their exclusiveness, wealth learning and prominence, this circle is not looked upon with any favor by the majority of the colored people here. The usual remark, which may perhaps be attributed to envy or to disappointed ambition, is that this exclusive set is not good enough for white society, and too good for their own race. Fortunately, there are enough of them to make a sufficiently large circle for the social life they desire.

There is another and a much larger society here that may be designated as of the second rank. While holding no social relations with the set just mentioned, they are equally exclusive as regards those whom they hold beneath them in the government clerks and of people in comfortable circumstances. There are a good many colored men in government employ as clerks. These form the basis of the society of the second rank. Many of them own comfortable homes, and one of the finest streets in the city is occupied by them. This is sixteenth street, between the Scott statue and the white house. It is a splendid avenue, broad, well-paved, and in the heart of the most fashionable part of the city. Nearly all of these colored residents own their houses, and refuse to sell. The property is very valuable, and must ultimately

pass out of their possession. These people are very fond of social life, but they do not find it entertaining, but rather in sociable, balls, picnics, and especially in their churches. They are well dressed, seem to prosper, and are happy. For the great bulk of the colored population—the servants, laborers, and the poor—they have sympathy, but no more social relations with them than a white family would. These latter in the main are thriftless, living from hand to mouth; happy if they do nothing, happy if they get a job. Their social instincts are gratified by the organization and maintenance of societies of all sorts, benevolent, patriotic, social, and economic. There are nearly one hundred of these organizations, supported almost entirely by the laboring colored people.

THE DEACON'S TURKEY.

Deacon Turner had been a "professor" for upward of thirty years, and his walk and conversation had corresponded with his profession; but the store he set by that turkey, some of the stricter sort shook their heads and said, was altogether greater than it was meet for one of his calling to set by, by any means.

But there was a great excuse for the worthy man, for it must have been a very spiritually-minded person whose mouth would not have watered at the sight of such a fowl as the deacon was fattening for the coming thanksgiving. That turkey, by our candid belief, stood full four feet before, and at what figure he turned the scales is not set down in the records of corpulent statistics, and we prefer not to shock the reader's credulity by hazarding an opinion. Not old enough to be tough, but in the full perfection of completed adolescence; plump in contour, without the grossness or obesity of declining years; gifted with every gallinaceous grace, he was a biped to be proud of.

Now, whilst juicy visions were fitting before the minds of expectant guests, and more than one mature maiden was longingly gazing at a wing at his wishbone, the deacon's turkey being a stumbling block to temptation in the way of Sam Whipple and Dick Spangler—a pair of light-minded youths who could see a great deal of fun in a very poor joke.

"What capital sport it would be to steal that turkey Thanksgiving eve," suggested Sam, with a wink at Dick.

"And get Tom Grill, the colored cook, to roast him, and then call in a lot of the boys and have a glorious time," added the latter.

"Then, as we're both among the youngsters invited to the deacon's dinner, won't it be jolly to hear his lamentations over the missing fowl. They'll beat out of sight all the sighs ever heaved for the fish-pots of Egypt," chuckled Sam.

"He, he, he," giggled Dick.

"Haw, haw, haw," guffawed Sam.

"Let's do it," said the one.

"Agreed," said the other.

After laying their heads together half an hour a plan was matured and the two separated in great glee.

The deacon's turkey roosted in the woodhouse, which had a shutter opening on an adjacent alley and fastened by a hook and staple inside.

On a visit which Sam Whipple made to the premises Wednesday afternoon, under pretext of borrowing the deacon's saw-buck, he managed slyly to undo the hook, thus leaving the way clear for the night's operation.

At a safe hour after dark the conspirators started on their errand, first casting lots to decide who should enter the woodhouse and bring off the prize, and who should keep watch—the former task falling to Sam and the latter to Dick.

"You stand here," said Sam, as they neared the mouth of the alley.

Dick took his station, and Sam, advancing stealthily soon reached the shutter, which he had no difficulty in opening. Then, climbing in, he was not long in finding the object of his search.

"Put! put!" squawked the turkey, and flop, flop went his wings as Sam grasped his legs and pulled him down from his perch.

After a sharp scuffle Sam was triumphant, and held his gobblerish fast under one arm and securely gagged him with the other hand.

The noise of the struggle had aroused the deacon's dog, who growled and barked fiercely; but Sam kept quiet, and soon all was still.

"Is that you, Dick?" he whispered, as he heard steps approaching softly outside.

"Yes," was the answer in the same tone.

"Here, take him," said Sam, passing out the turkey, which the other received. Then climbing out himself, which took a little time, for he moved cautiously, he looked about for Dick, but neither he nor the turkey was in sight. He walked up and down the alley, but the search was in vain.

"Well, I call that a sharp trick," muttered Sam. "After taking all the risk, too. But maybe he'll turn up all right in the morning. He had better, I tell him!"

So saying, Sam walked sulkily home. Next morning, bright and early, he started in search of Dick, whom he met shortly afterward, apparently on a similar hunt for him.

"Where's that turkey?" was Sam's first question.

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ner. Last night I heard the dog bark, and going down the alley back of the wood-house found the shutter open. Somebody inside whispered: 'Is that you, Dick?' 'Yes,' I answered, for you know my name is Richard. 'Here, take him,' said the other, handing out the turkey, which I quietly bore away.'

The mystery between Sam and Dick was thus cleared up, but happily not, as we have thus seen, till they had sufficiently punished one another. From a twinkle in the deacon's eye they more than half suspected that he knew all. At any rate, neither Sam nor Dick ever ventured again to visit the deacon's pratty daughter, Edith Turner, who, some six months after, married another and, let us hope, a better man.

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RAILWAY INDEMNITY LANDS.

Senator Van Wyck Calls for Information—A Sharp Debate.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20.—Mr. Van Wyck, of Nebraska, and Mr. Ingalls, of Kansas, took part in a rather spirited debate in the senate to-day over a resolution introduced by the former yesterday and called up by him after the morning hour to-day. Mr. Van Wyck's resolution called upon the secretary of the interior to inform the senate how much land has been certified or patented for the benefit of railroad companies since 1875, as indemnity for lands sold or otherwise disposed of by the United States, prior to the dates of the respective grants, and in aid of what roads such patents or certified lists have been issued or are intended to be issued. The preamble to the resolution set forth that in December, 1875, the United States supreme court, in a decision in the case of the Leavenworth, Lawrence & Galveston railroad company against the United States, construed the indemnity clause in the grant made by congress in aid of that road, and held that under such or patent indemnity lands are allowed in lieu only of lands originally included in the grant, but which are afterward sold or disposed of by the United States between the date of the grant and the date when the granted lands become identified by the definite location of the line of the road. It was also asserted that in June, 1880, Attorney-General Devens, to whom the question had been referred by Secretary Schurz, gave an opinion that under a grant similar to that involved in the case of the Leavenworth, Lawrence & Galveston road, indemnity lands are allowed in lieu of lands disposed of by the United States either before or after the date of the grant, that the attorney-general advised Secretary Schurz to return to the practice prevailing before the supreme court decision and award indemnity lands in accordance with his opinion, and that Secretary Schurz accepted this opinion and directed the commissioner of the general land office to be governed thereby, instead of by the ruling of the supreme court. Mr. Van Wyck's resolution also called for information as to whether this order is still in force in the interior department.

As soon as the resolution was read Mr. Ingalls, who is always alert when any matter affecting railroads in any way is brought up, secured recognition by Mr. Hoar, who was in the chair. He had no objection, Mr. Ingalls said to the senate having the information called for, but he hoped the senators would not commit themselves to a serious error by adopting the allegations of the preamble. These allegations were untrue, and in support of this assertion the Kansas senator had read by the clerk the syllabus of the supreme court decision referred to. Mr. Ingalls made a long speech, in which he reiterated the declaration that the preamble was not veracious. Mr. Van Wyck, in reply, read portions of the decision itself, and emphatically asserted that every word of the preamble was strictly true. He made a long argument on the effect of the decision, and then made the senators laugh repeatedly as he related with sharp sarcasm how the attorney-general and the secretary of the interior in 1880 had presumed to override the opinion of the supreme court of the United States, and had gone back to the custom prevailing in the general land office before the decision was given. He was unwilling, he said, in conclusion, to have the preamble to his resolution stricken out, but to gratify the senator from Kansas he would consent to qualify its assertions by inserting the words "alleged." This proved satisfactory to Mr. Ingalls, and the modified preamble and resolution were adopted.

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