The Negro in America

The Influence of His Presence Upon the Material, Social, Moral and Political Development of the Nation, and the Identity of His Interests with the Interests of Other Americans.

BY

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THE INFLUENCE OF HIS PRESENCE UPON THE MATERIAL, SOCIAL, MORAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATION, AND THE IDENTITY OF HIS INTERESTS WITH THE INTERESTS OF OTHER AMERICANS.

ERE I a Sculptor, and wished by chisel and mallet to produce an image, statue or form that would correctly represent the Negro in America, from his introduction to the present time, I would not represent him as a mighty chief with staff in hand, surrounded by thousands of obedient followers, ready upon the slightest provocation to invade the dominions of some defenceless tribe, and with torch and spear visit ruin, desolation and even annihilation upon the helpless, as some are wont to represent him; nor would I represent him as a Chained Lion, held back by some mighty Sampson or tall Goliath from devouring helpless women and innocent maidens; nor would I carve him as a Lamb, crouching at the feet of his slaughterer, inactive, innocent and as helpless as the bronze in which he is carved. As a Painter I would draw him neither black or white, either as to his color or his characters. I would not select my specimen from the Bushman or the Hottentot of South Africa, nor indeed, would I draw from the noblest specimens of the most civilized and advanced race to be found in the world. I would not draw out the best nor the worst traits of human character, but I would leave both dimly visible, indicating the same susceptibilities and possibilities attributable to our common humanity. I would not tax my imagination in quest of specimens illustrative of extreme conditions. We need not the sculptor’s chisel nor the painter’s brush to impress upon the honest mind, the depths to which our common humanity may and has fallen. I would, therefore, select as my model

"A Human Being,"

and that human being an infant of the male sex, wrapped in the swaddling bands of its infantile state, uniting in itself all the colors found among men, and possessing all the characteristics of our poor fallen humanity. And I would represent him as innocently and harmlessly reposing at the outer gates of a great city, whose inhabitants are struggling for freedom, ease, wealth and power; and who to obtain the former, are extending far into the deserts their conquests, and building mighty their walls, while to secure the gratification of their utmost ambition for ease, wealth and power, they seize everything
that promises the slightest contribution to the accomplishment of their purpose. The Chief of this great city is also a man, and in quest of ease, wealth and power, he seizes the infant, (or the many colored manett, if you please) carries him into the city, and introduces him as a factor in the promotion of the ends sought by the inhabitants thereof.

Now my audience, as you look upon the infant at the outer gates of the great city, think of Africa and the African; and as you look upon that city and see its chief seizing that infant and carrying him into the city and introducing him as a factor in the promotion of their own purpose, think of the colonies, and the introduction of the African as a slave; thus we have the Negro in America.

It is not my intention to discuss in this address the legality or illegality, the righteousness or unrighteousness of this action towards my harmless infant. My object in presenting the Negro in this way would be First:—To bring more vividly before you his innocence and helplessness when introduced into this country. And Second:—To leave room for his growth or development, which has long since become the marvel of his existence.

We have in the case before us, humanity versus humanity. The Negro is in no sense an exception to our common humanity, and therefore I decline to speak of him as such. Here in my opinion rises much of the difficulty confronting us in the treatment of what is called "The Negro Question;" the failure to recognize him as a human being, or the attempt to consider him as separate and distinct from other human beings. Even the Negro himself does not at all times steer clear of this mistake. In the treatment of this subject I shall try to avoid this blunder. Hence when I speak of the Negro in America, I would not be understood as speaking of some foreign species, but of a human being; in the same sense in which others are human beings, a man bound by the same laws, subject to the same influence, dependent upon the same conditions, capable of the same virtues, and liable to the same vices. All this I claim for that ship load of human freight, landed at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619. Whatever relation he was made to sustain to others, either at his introduction into the colonies, or at any time subsequent thereto, it was a relation to his brother man. Was he made a slave? Then he was a slave to his brother. The Negro is in America, a slave to his fellowman, who makes him an article of traffic.

What influence has the presence of this man, (a slave to his brother) exerted upon the material, social, moral and political development of the nation?

When we look at the material condition of the new world when the Negro was introduced into it, and the immediate object of his introduction, we see that as an experiment he was a perfect success. By him the wilderness was transformed into a garden, his brawny arm felled the trees, cleared the forests, leveled the hills, elevated the val-
leys, opened up the streams, bridged the rivers, cultivated the soil and built the boats for the transportation of the products of the field.

His muscle transformed the huts of the wilderness into palaces, while his own crude cabin formed a reliable garrison for the protection of his unconscious beneficiary; so that for nearly two centuries and a half, his impress was stamped upon every advance in the material development of that portion of the country where his muscle was employed.

As a slave therefore, he was a success; submissive, patient, industrious, faithful, kind, confiding, trustful, true, obedient and brave. These traits were all necessary to the development of the material greatness of the Embryotic Republic.

I do no violence to truth therefore when I say, the Negro was an important factor in the material development of the Nation. The results of his toil were dumped into the lap of his unlawful owner, and by him into the lap of the Nation. Thus the Nation traded in the result of the Negro's toil and suffering, and grew rich out of the Negro's poverty. But this does not end the influence of his presence upon the material development of the Nation.

The Negro was ever ready with ax, spade and plough, with the crowbar, sledge hammer and grubbing hoe, it is true. But he was no less ready with shot gun and musket when danger threatened the safety of those who robbed him of the privilege of living by the sweat of his brow. There never was a time when the Negro would not willingly leave the plough, and take up the musket in the defense of his oppressor. Indeed he presents a record of enslaved soldiery, unequalled in the annals of time. These facts of history should neither be overlooked or undervalued, for a proper knowledge of them, might and ought to give us a better knowledge of the Negro's relation to our boasted greatness.

Did he do his part well? Then let every one who enjoys the splendid results of his faithful toil, join in the hearty unstinted "Well Done."

But the material development of the Nation was no more influenced by the presence and fidelity of the Negro than its social development. This truth may not be so easily demonstrated as the one we have just been considering. The truth is not always easy of demonstration; yet truth is always truth.

How could the presence of the Negro influence the social development of the nation?

First:—It gave rise to the relation of Master and Slave. This was a remarkable transformation; the brother suddenly becomes his brother's master, and in this way new conditions grew up out of the new relation, which influenced for weal or woe the entire social system.

Where free and slave-labor exists there must of necessity exist a variety of classes and rank that would not otherwise exist.
tions, restrictions, prejudices and preferences, requisitions and prohibitions would all find their origin in this relation.

Social relations (commonly so called) are largely influenced by the institutions between which our interests are divided. Indeed interest, or imagined interests, form the lines, boundaries and limitations of what we call "social life." But we must always keep in mind the fact, that there is a divinely established and fixed social law among men, and that by this law all legitimate lines and boundaries among men are fixed. This law cannot be set aside to the extent of rendering it inaffectual. It may be ignored, violated and rebelled against as any other law may, but it stands forever the same. And as the perversion of law is often mistaken for the law itself, so the thing often called by the people social law, is found on examination to be nothing more than the perversion of social law properly so called. Now when I speak of influencing social conditions, or social development, I have reference to social life in its legitimate sense, and not to that system of social life that has grown out of the perversions of the law by those who have gone before us, or those who presume to dictate the social rights and social wrongs of others, while they themselves are above law. I insist that the All-wise Creator, the great Law Giver, has laid down the laws by which the relation of man to man, and the rights, duties and responsibilities growing out of that relation are to be defined and regulated; and by these laws, God is the father of all men, and consequently all men are brethren; that they are all under moral responsibility to this Universal Creator and Judge. Therefore we have no such thing as white or black humanity, but humanity, simply one common humanity, deriving its existence and support from one common source; accountable throughout its entirety to one Universal Judge, and dependent more or less upon the condition, relation and action of all its parts for its weal or woe.

Now what influence had the presence of the Negro as a slave upon the social life, growth and development of the American Nation? A very small object thrown or dropped into a body of water gives rise to a series of waves or wavelets, which extend outward, wave chasing wave until the whole body is more or less disturbed. So the introduction of a new condition or a new class into human society, however insignificant that condition or class may seem at first, will not only influence, but often revolutionize the whole social system. Such is the historic truth regarding the introduction of Slavery into America. Classification proceeded upon new lines; a false aristocracy founded upon property in man, sprung up, so that those who did not own slaves belonged of necessity to a class separate from those who did, and were looked upon as inferior to them. These therefore formed a class of themselves, thus giving us two classes which in turn were subdivided until we find every phase of society, having their line of distinction in the presence and ownership of slaves.
Courtship and marriage were conducted largely with reference to the same condition, so that the question "how many slaves does his or her father own?" was a very common and a very necessary question. Hence this awful wrong of human slavery, threw its dark form across every phase of social life, blighting the pulpit and the pew, perverting the Gospel and the Law, and transferring God's oldest institution (marriage) from its Heaven appointed foundation, to the hell-born consideration of Ownership in Man.

What must be the effect of such a condition upon the social life of those with whom it is brought in contact? Follow this thought and we will see that the most delicate social relations were influenced by this presence. A man's social standing depended largely upon the number of slaves he or his family owned. This fact influenced industrial conditions, so that to be placed under the necessity of performing manual labor was not only looked upon as a misfortune, but as a sufficient cause for one's exclusion from social contact with those who could have such work done by the slave; and hence work became dishonorable.

This idea finally reached an extent that made it unaristocratic for a mother to have the care of her own children. Now in proportion as this idea obtained, the desire for slaves increased, and as in all other cases of acquiring possessions in proportion as the desire to own slaves increased, the means of obtaining them were likely to become more questionable. And this fact was never demonstrated to a more alarming extent in any case than in the case in hand. Not until the judgment will it be generally known what ungodly means of multiplying slave property was resorted to. But this brings me to the consideration of the

Influence of This Presence Upon the Moral Development of the Nation.

It must not be thought for a moment that the influences of this institution were limited to the immediate section in which it existed; on the contrary, they were felt more or less throughout the nation, not to say throughout the world. And therefore I speak of its influence upon the Nation, rather than upon that part of the country in which it more largely obtained. I have already approached very near to the moral phase of this subject in my allusion to the slave multiplying methods adopted. But that the moral development of the Nation has been effected by this institution is easy of demonstration; not only by the untold public evils that have come upon it, but by the unpublished and in many cases unknown private evils practiced in high life by those who set themselves up as the guides in manners and morals. Many I am sure are unprepared to believe the whole truth on this point; but it is a known fact that slavery was made an excuse for debasng the matrimonial relation, and a covering for the blackest type of immoral conduct against the marriage vow. The master assumed the
authority to make and break marriages for the slaves at will, while he lived in criminal relation with his slave women without impairing his social or religious standing in the least. Yea, more: he not only lived in criminal relation with his slave, but awful as it may sound, he in turn lived in criminal relation with his own children by his slave mistress, and sold them as he would a horse, or a cow when he became tired of them. Follow this awful truth to its legitimate result, and tell me if you can, “what was the effect of slavery upon the moral development of this Nation?” And tell me, “how many generations it will require to rid those guilty of such unmentionable relations of the moral law of the foul stain?” And how many thousand years before a just court can admit the testimony of such persons in cases where the morality of the people thus prostituted and debauched is at stake? For centuries the grossest crimes forbidden by the moral code, were practiced openly by the controlling class; and for centuries these same people were received in the best society in all parts of the country without question. The law had no power to prevent it for want of a sufficiently strong public sentiment against it. The pulpit was not only silent regarding it, but rather acquiesced in it by defending the system of which such conduct was one of the legitimate results. Shame on a people who with such a history, would hold up the Negro, the victims of their debauchery, as the examples of immorality, and especially since it is not yet in satisfactory evidence, that either the ex-slaveholder has reformed, or that the ex-slave has passed beyond the damning effects of his former control. And yet the American people are willing to take the testimony of these people on the morality of the Negro. For centuries these people furnished the law-makers, the theologians, the congressmen and senators, and the professional men of a large section of this otherwise great country. What would be the political conditions naturally growing out of this state of things? This brings us to

“*The Influence of the Negro Upon the Political Development of the Nation.*”

We have seen that the presence of the slave effected every phase of our national life so far noticed, either for weal or woe, and while our material development may have been, and I think was greatly aided, the social and moral effects were of an opposite character. And we know that good, healthy, political conditions do not grow out of bad social and immoral conditions. Hence we find that to perpetuate this condition of things, bad laws were enacted, good laws were violated, and whole states have gone down in history as nullifiers; and as a result strife, secession, rebellion, war, bloodshed and death mar the pages of our Nation’s history, where glory and honor would otherwise have shed the brightest lustre. And whatever others may say about the causes or object of the awful war in connection with which the institution of Negro slavery went down, one fact is plain, and that is:—that all the questions leading up to the bloody struggle grew
immediately or remotely out of this institution; and therefore there was no one element entering more largely into the causes of this awful struggle. And hence for many years it was the presence of the Negro as a slave that affected more than any other one thing, the material, civil and political condition of the American Nation.

International complications it is true have from time to time arisen, but it was the introduction and fostering of Negro slavery in this country that has effected to a greater extent, and cost the nation more life and treasury than any other contention, and hence more bitter contention, boundless animosity and ungodly strife have grown out of this presence than any other one phase of our national life.

Nullification, insurrection, riot, rebellion, national disintegration are all the brood of the ungodly system having its origin and life in the introduction of and traffic in the African as a slave in this country. These statements are not intended as a charge against any particular class of citizens or any section of our country, but rather a description of a condition that has effected to a greater or lesser degree all classes, and from the baneful influence of which no section of our great country has escaped. And it is because we are still in the midst of conditions that exist as the consequence of that system, and because of the consequent deformities, imperfections and inequalities that still like banquo's ghost haunt us as a nation in all our civil, social, moral, political and religious endeavors, and that must be faced, treated and eradicated, that we are moved to speak of them at all.

And strange as it may appear at first sight, notwithstanding the fact that all classes, ages and conditions entering into the make up of our community at large are effected directly or indirectly by the lingering influences of the conditions of which we have been speaking. Many people are utterly ignorant of the facts,—the cold historic facts of the case. They are not familiar with the system as it really existed, and which they condemn in quite unstinted terms. Many of us seem unmindful of the fact that the real inwardness of American slavery was never written, and that in consequence of this fact there must be great want of knowledge as to the true character of such an institution thirty or forty years after its death. Institutions are in certain respects like individuals; they may live and die, and their teachings and example may cleave to the living long after they are gone. Yea the unborn generations of the future walk unconsciously according to the teachings, notions and examples of those who lived before them. We may hear of the more prominent or more active characters who lived before us, but after all we can know but little of their real life, nor do we always find it an easy task to study the events associated with their names; so with the institutions of the past; we read of them but know very little about them in fact. Especially is this true of an institution, the concealment of the real inwardness of which would be suggested, not only by fear of exposure,
but by a sense of common decency itself, but whether we know of them as we should or not their influence will be the same. The conditions of today are the natural results of previous teaching, previous practices and of previous systems. The scholarship of today is the product of the schools of yesterday; the harvest of today is the result of the sowing of yesterday. “One soweth and another reapeth.” And, “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap,” either in his person or in his posterity. So we are reaping today the harvest of yesterday’s sowing. Evil results follow evil practices; good results follow good. Now I hold that it is our duty to counteract as far as possible the evil results of past mistakes. To do this we should, like the physician, study the cause of present conditions. I have dared to lift the curtain from the face of the past, even though that past be dark and revolting in its every aspect. That we may get hold of the roots of the awful contagion, which throws its threatening shadow across the path of posterity, blunting its powers of perception, stupifying its moral sense, easing or weakening its consciousness of right, paralyzing its efforts, excusing its wrongs, palliating its failures, and finally defeating its noblest endeavors; so that the present instead of standing as a unit for rectifying the wrongs of the past, and presenting as far as may be, the evil influence of wrong teaching, and worse practices, stands as an apology for the past.

Hence there seems to be a growing disposition to forget the facts that make up our past history; and this disposition is found among the blacks no less than among the whites. To all such I would say, that the mere forgetting of sins committed will never place us beyond the awful consequences of sin. Whatever we may say, our country’s history is divided into two great periods:—the “antebellum” and the “post bellum,” and you can’t deal very fairly with the latter without treating the former, and so here we stand; more than thirty years removed from the awful death scenes amidst which American Slavery went down. The Red Sea of blood rolls between us and that tragic hour, reminding us of the darkness of that terrible night, while time graciously throws the veil of space over the view, thus giving us the better opportunity to study, understand and destroy the infectious contagion bequeathed to us by the dethroned monster.

Now we have a population of over seventy million; at least ten million of these belong to the race that was the immediate victim of this “sum of all villainies.” This leaves us a population of about sixty million of the other races. It is said that there are about three hundred infants given to the population by the ex-slave race per day. If the other races increased at the same rate they would give us eighteen hundred per day; add the three hundred and we would have an increase of twenty-one hundred per day. This gives us an increase of seven hundred and sixty-six thousand and five hundred
in one year, three million, eight hundred and thirty-two thousand
and five hundred in five years, or seven million, six hundred and
sixty-five thousand in ten years. These will come into the world
to take up the conditions bequeathed to them by those who preced-
ed them. If these conditions are favorable, and the systems and in-
stitutions are healthy and just, these arriving millions will be greet-
ed and aided by those influences necessary to noble achievement;
but if the contrary be the case, then the opposite must be the result.

Hence the great question to be considered is:—"what shall be the
character of the heritage bequeathed to posterity?" This is not a
question for black men, nor for white men, but for all whose off-
spring is to meet these conditions. Therefore the interests of all the
races and classes whose children are to be subjected to these in-
fluences are identical.

The immortal Lincoln said, "the nation could not exist part free,
and part slave;" and so we may with the same degree of truth say,
"the nation cannot be strong, healthy and happy, while injustice, im-
morality, ignorance and wrong in any class, are looked upon as a
mere matter of course. Whatever is important to one is important
to all; all the agencies, institutions, systems and laws must have for
their object the elevation of all, and not the elevation of any particu-
lar class or race, to the exclusion of any other. This is the only
doctrine with which the doctrines and traditions of the past can be
successfully combated; and only such institutions as are founded up-
on and fostered in the interest of the maintenance, spread and
establishment of this doctrine, can be successful in the development
of an intelligent, honest, reliable, safe citizenship. A citizenship that
has for its chief corner stone, "the fatherhood of God, and the
brotherhood of man;" a citizenship that has for the very object of
its existence, "the promotion of the greatest good to the greatest
number." The policy of such a community will be fair play to all
its members. Give us this, and the interests of all are secure; give
us the opposite, and no interest however sacred is safe. This being
true, we see the utter impossibility of establishing a strong national
character, while any considerable number of our citizens are igno-
rant, immoral and disloyal to the conditions of life, liberty and
happiness. Now how shall we encourage and promote these con-
ditions?

This is the question upon which the prophets split. When we re-
member the number of able men and women who have theorized on
this question, each one claiming to have found the only true answer,
and yet differing each from the other, it will not be wondered at
should one so humble as I venture to advance an opinion. I shall
therefore proceed to state in brief some of the things necessary to
the settlement of this important question. And first:—if we would
meet and discharge the duties and responsibilities growing out of
present conditions, we must face the facts; we must know what are the real conditions; we must not flatter ourselves or allow ourselves to be flattered, but must face the worst if we would be equal to the demands of the hour. There seems to be a growing disposition to close the eyes to the facts; some think we are doing well enough, and make the discouragements thrown in the way an excuse for not doing better; this in my opinion retards rather than helps the cause.

Secondly:—we must not only know and face the facts, but we must acknowledge them; there has been a good deal of dodging and evading the actual facts everywhere present; this statement applies to both races and to the nation. Many of my race have acted on the proposition submitted by the tempter to Christ in the wilderness, “all these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and adore me”; but it is our duty to do as an old friend of mine used to say, “I shoots at de barn if I misses de plantation.” We have struck out on lines of expediency instead of standing up and meeting the issue squarely. I am quite sure that expediency will never win in any case involving right and wrong; “no compromise” must be our motto. But in the third place:—we must acknowledge and respect the mutual rights and interests of all concerned, and the relation we sustain in common to the situation as it actually exists. And I have no hesitancy in saying, there can be but little improvement in existing conditions until we have reached this point. All who profess to contribute to the improvement of existing conditions must dismiss the idea of charity from this whole matter. Too many people have allowed themselves to be flattered with the idea that any act upon their part looking to the improvement of the unfortunate condition confronting us, as an act of benevolence or charity offered to the supposed under class. This is a delusion, and therefore these people are victims of a delusion than which there are but few if any, more dangerous. Many liberal people have fallen at this point. The recognition of distinction on account of color by both white and black is too common, not to say too universal; and the fact that neither side is willing to plead guilty to or confess this truth, renders it the more difficult of treatment. Prominent men of both races have endeavored to find the grounds of existing prejudices outside of color. Many of them think they have succeeded. Some tell us that it’s the ignorance of the black man, and that the remedy is to be found in his education. Others tell us that it’s his poverty and that the remedy is to be found in getting wealth. Others still tell us that it’s his political affiliations and that the remedy is to be found in his becoming a political nondescript; others still sum it all up and say it is not color but condition. This may all sound well enough to a listening audience, and it may even read well in a newspaper, but ladies and gentlemen, we stand in the midst of facts and conditions that admit of no such reasoning.

I have no doubt that the association of color with one condition in
the past, has led up or contributed largely to the intensity of the prejudice by which we are confronted on all sides; and therefore it may not be an easy matter to show that previous condition and its natural consequences do not contribute to the inexcusable prejudice, that disgraces so called Christian civilization. But I cannot accept any of the pleadings offered above, and for this I may offer a few reasons. First:—Within the last thirty-five years conditions have changed; radical changes have taken place in the black man’s condition. Changed from the condition of a slave to that of a man, and a citizen; from a condition in which he did not own himself, his wife, nor his children; to a property holder and tax-payer. Now it is generally held that when you remove the cause of an evil, the effect will soon follow; well in this case the cause is removed but the effect is still with us. My second objection to the pleadings offered is:—that they proceed upon a false assumption; they seem to imply what is not true; they deal with the black man alone. When we are told that the black man’s ignorance is the aggravating cause of the white man’s prejudice, it is equivalent to telling us that the white man as a whole is intelligent or educated, and that the prejudice is to some extent excusable, and this conclusion is not sustained by the facts. The plea of poverty amounts to the same thing, and leads to the same conclusion. I cannot accept any argument that means that the black man’s condition justifies the white man’s prejudice. The colored masses are as intelligent as the white masses, and there is as much wealth among the blacks in proportion as there is among the whites. Count up the wealth of the ten million blacks and compare it with the wealth of the sixty and more million of whites, and see how it stands, compare numbers, opportunities and time. If it is a question of education it must apply to both races; if the black man must be educated up to manhood, the white man must be educated up to the recognition of manhood wherever he finds it. He must be taught that manhood is not determined by the color of the skin; he must learn his obligation to manhood, and he must develop the ability to acknowledge, and respect the relations and rights of man. A knowledge of what constitutes manhood, is a very good definition of education, for those who claim to be educated. But a third reason why I cannot accept the pleading offered is:—that there is a good deal of prejudice to be found among the colored people themselves, along the lines of color, and this is divided into two parts.

The first is: the prejudice among themselves. It is remarkable how much foolish color prejudice there is among colored people.

The second is: the prejudice that exists among the colored people against the whites. It is hardly necessary, I presume, to discuss this statement; its truth is too well known. But if this be doubted, I will state that I have known of three colored churches to reject pas-
tors, because it was found that they had white wives. And we all
know what a feeling swept over the race when Frederick Douglass
married a white woman. I could give many evidences of this fact;
but I do not allude to it for the purpose of expressing my sentiment
regarding it, but to show, first, that whatever influence previous con-
ditions may have exerted in producing existing prejudices, color
seems to be the aggravating cause of to-day’s prejudice. Second,
that both sides of this question must be met, or rather that both
white and black must be educated up to the recognition of the rights
of man without regard to the color of the skin. And third, to show
that we have no one-sided contest on our hands, it is not a question
of what the white man will do for the black man, nor of what the
black man will accept at the white man’s hands. But the great ques-
tion to be met is, “what will the white and the black together do to
thwart the evil influences of the wrong systems of the past, and to
promote such conditions for posterity, as will avert the awful conse-
quences that must inevitably follow the continuance of racial
estrangement and radical antagonisms?” And this question comes
home to the black and white American with equal force. And
therefore so far as the settlement of this question is concerned, the
interests of white and black Americans are identical. This state-
ment is strictly true. Look at it from whatever point of view you
may. It is true because all suffer the evil consequences of past con-
ditions; it is true because the well being of the community at large
will be measured largely by the well being of all its parts; it is true
because our children must share equally the conditions they inherit
from us; it is true because no class is safe that teaches either by
precepts or practice, that injustice to any other class is right; it is
ture because right is mightier than might; it is true because the
nation as a whole will be strong only in proportion as all its parts
are strong. When all classes can feel that they have a common
cause.

The black American has never betrayed a trust imposed on him.
Why then should the white American hesitate to trust him? I plead
for the unity of action and purpose because of the identity of interests.
We are brethren, of a common origin, subject to common ills and mis-
fortunes, and dependent upon each other. We are brethren, with one
God, one country and one flag. We have shared our country’s mis-
fortunes and defeats; we have stood side by side in her battles; we
have been buried side by side in the same ditch. Let us stand up to-
gether and promote her peace and property, and as brethren, let us
reap and enjoy the happy results of our time tested fidelity.

We cannot live without each other, and we should not if we could.