

The Negro American citizen in the new American life. By Rev. A. D. Mayo.

THE NEGRO AMERICAN CITIZEN IN THE NEW AMERICAN LIFE.

BY REV. A. D. MAYO, A. M.

During the past ten years of a Ministry of Education among the Southern people in all the Southern States, I have been often challenged to formulate my opinion concerning the present condition and future outcome of the Negro. My invariable answer is: I have come to this portion of the country as an out-and-out advocate of the universal education of the heart, the head, and the hand possible for all orders and conditions of the American people. I believe the Christian religion, as it lay in the mind and shone forth in the speech and life of the great Teacher and Saviour of man, includes this idea of education. All the progress this world has seen out of old pagan conditions of race, caste, society, and government, has been the work of this mighty regenerating influence. I hold it the deadliest treason and revolt against the Christian civilization, a backing down into paganism, or a worse lapse into the Slough of Despond of absolute atheism and secularism, to impeach the power of this divine agency to cure all our American ills.

I began my present Ministry of Education ten years ago, in the Southern States, in full faith in this gospel of the reconstruction of the whole republic from "the remainder of wrath" that still vexes its progress and looms like a black despair over its least advanced portion. And, although I cannot pretend to have converted or convinced anybody, I have seen with what an uplifting of the soul the better sort of the Southern people welcome any man who, in honesty of purpose, love of country and of all his countrymen, endeavors to get down to the bottom facts of the situation, with a just appreciation of the position of all true men, and with an invincible hope and a holy obstinacy in standing by the bright side of God's providence in American affairs. The fact that one man can go through all these States, among all classes, everywhere testifying to the grandeur of the full American idea, and urging the people to live up to the vision of the Fathers, with all but universal acceptance, so that the discords in this ministry have hardly been enough to emphasize the harmonies, is to me an assurance that the same line of work, assumed by a greater man, and finally adopted by the influential classes of our people, will shape the highway out of the present complications.

My only recipe for the solution of all these problems that still divide the country is the putting on of that judicial and resolute Christian attitude of mind that insists on looking at all the facts of the case, setting them in their proper relations, all the time searching for the elements of progress which are the vital centres. It seems to me that a great portion of the misunderstanding and

conflict, at present, is the result of a practical inability in the masses of the people to rise to this position and the mischievous pertinacity of too many leaders of public opinion everywhere, in keeping the national mind engrossed with the temporary and unessential facts of the case. With no disposition to misrepresent or misunderstand anybody, I respond to your call to tell my experience as an observer of the Southern situation, especially as it concerns the Negro citizen in the sixteen Southern States of the Union, as I have seen him during a virtual residence in these States for ten years past.

It would seem that thoughtful Christian people might at least endeavor to realize the simple gospel rule of "doing as they would be done by" in the judgment of each other, in an affair so momentous, where mistakes are fraught with such mournful possibilities as in this great discussion. It is easy to see how much of the difficulty comes from this inability to "put one's self in the place" of his opponent.

Would it not be possible for a larger number of our foremost Southern leaders, in Church, State, and society, to try to appreciate the motives and temper of the loyal people of the North in the great act of conferring full American citizenship on the Negro, after his emancipation, twenty-five years ago? I do not defend any injustice, tyranny, reckless experimenting with government itself, that followed that act. No thoughtful man defends such things to-day. But I do hold that no true conception of this matter can be had by any man who honestly believes that this exaltation of the Negro to full American citizenship was either an act of sectional revenge, a narrow and ferocious partisan policy or the reckless experiment of an excited sentimentalism. If ever a people, in a great national emergency, acted under a solemn sense of responsibility to God, humanity, patriotism, and republican institutions, I believe the conviction of the loyal Northern people, that shaped the acts of reconstruction, is entitled to this judgment, and will so abide in history. It was the most memorable testimony of a national government, just rescued from desperate peril, solemnized by the death of its venerated leader, to its faith in popular institutions, recorded in the annals of mankind.

But it must be acknowledged that the very nobility of the act that conferred the highest earthly distinction of full American citizenship on a nation of newly emancipated slaves, of an alien race, involved the penalty of great injustice to its object. It was inevitable that the nation, having committed itself to this daring experiment, would watch its success from an ideal point of observation. So, for the past twenty years, one misfortune of the Negro citizen has been that the portion of the country that won his freedom and lifted him to this proud eminence could do no otherwise than judge him out of its own lofty expectation, piecing out its almost complete ignorance of any similar 3 people or situation by repeated drafts on a boundless hope, an almost childlike trust, and a deep religious faith, proven by the cheerful giving of fifty millions of dollars and the sacrifice of

the service of noble men and women of priceless value, in the effort to realize the great expectation of the nation.

Again, is it more than plain justice that the leading mind of the loyal North, that saved the Union to nationality and freedom in 1865, should endeavor to represent to itself the actual point of view of the Southern people concerning this act of reconstruction, then, and, to a great extent, in the present time? I know that the most painful lesson of history is the difficulty of such comprehension of an aristocratic form of society by a people for a century trained in the school of a proud and successful democracy. Not one educated man in a thousand in the United States can put himself in the place of one of the great Tory leaders or scholars of Great Britain, or listen with anything but impatience to the account that any European government or the Catholic Church can give of itself. How much more difficult for the average New England or Western citizen to understand the attitude of mind with which an old Southern planter or a modern Southern politician must contemplate this sudden and portentous upheaving of five millions of freedmen to the complete endowment of American citizenship at the close of the great war.

For, surely, at first sight, no body of five millions of people could be imagined less qualified by its past to justify such expectations than the Negro freedmen. Three hundred years ago the Negro was a pagan savage, inhabiting a continent still dark with the shadow of an unrecorded past. A hundred years ago the ancestors perhaps of a majority of the seven millions of Negroes now in the United States were in the same condition. Of no people on the face of the earth is so little known to-day as of the African ancestors of the American Negro. Of various tribes, nationalities, and characteristics, perhaps with an ancestry as varied as the present inhabitants of the European nationalities, these people were cast into a state of slavery which confounded all previous conditions, and only recognized the native ability of each man or woman in "the survival of the fittest," in the struggle for existence on the plantation and in the household.

Once more: it has never been realized by the loyal North, what is evident to every intelligent Southern man, what a prodigious change had been wrought in this people during its years of bondage, and how, without the schooling of this era, the subsequent elevation of the emancipated slave to full American citizenship would have been an impossibility. During this brief period of tutelage, briefest of all compared with any European race, the Negro was sheltered from the three furies of the prayer book,—sword, pestilence, and famine,—was brought into contact with the upper strata of the most powerful of civilized peoples, in a republic, amid the trials, sacrifices, and educating influences of a new country, in the opening years of "the grand and awful time" in which our lot is cast. In that condition, he learned the three great elements of civilization more speedily than they were ever learned before. He learned to work. He acquired the language and adopted the

religion of the most progressive of peoples. Gifted with a marvellous aptitude for such schooling, he 4 was found, in 1865, further "out of the woods" of barbarism than any other people at the end of a thousand years. The American Indian, in his proud isolation, repelled all these beneficent changes; and to-day the entire philanthropy, religion, and statesmanship of the republic are wrestling with the problem of saving him from the fate of the buffalo.

I find only in the broad-minded and most charitable leaders of our Northern affairs any real understanding of the inevitable habit of mind which the average Southern citizen brings to the contemplation of the actual condition or possibilities of the Negro American citizen. With a personal attachment to the Negro greater than is possible for the people of the North; with habits of forbearance and patient waiting on the infirmities, vices, and shortcomings of this people, which to the North are unaccountable and well-nigh impossible of imitation; with the general willingness to co-operate, as far as the comfort and the personal prosperity of its old slaves are concerned,— is it strange that this act of statesmanship should appear to him as the wildest and most reckless experiment in the annals of national life? Even the most intelligent and conservative parent finds it difficult to believe his beloved child is competent to the duties of manhood or womanhood, and only with a pang does he see the dear boy or girl launch out on the stormy ocean of life. What, then, would be the inevitable feeling of the dominant Southern class, to whom the Negro had only been known as a savage slowly evolving into the humbler strata of civilization, as a dependent chattel, when, at the end of a frightful war, it found itself in a state of civil subjugation to its old bondmen? No subject race ever reveals its highest aspirations and aptitudes to its master race; and it is not remarkable that only the most observing and broad-minded of the Southern people, even yet, heartily believe in the capacity of the Negro for civil, social, or industrial co-operation with any of the European peoples.

Now, say what we will, this obstinate inability and sometimes unwillingness to put one's self in the place of the opposition has been the most hopeless feature of the case, the real "chasm" between the leading mind of the North and the South. So to-day, while even partisan politics seems to pause in uncertainty on the steep edge of a dark abyss, when noble and humane people all over the country seem to be falling into despondency, when an ominous twilight, threatening a storm, is peopled by all the birds of ill omen, and "the hearts of men are shaken with fear," I am glad that we have been summoned here to look things squarely in the face, to bring a varied experience to bear on a new and more careful consideration of the whole matter, and by the guidance of a Christian insight endeavor to see the hopeful elements of the situation. We do not need to rehearse our separate knowledge of the shadow side of the new South. The shadows, we have always with us, everywhere. But, if we can locate the centre of the new "Sunny South," we may go home with

the conviction that, while the shadows in human affairs are always on the move, the sun shines on forever, and is bound to bring in God's final day of light.

The pivotal question on which this vast problem turns is, Has the Negro, in his American experience, demonstrated a capacity for self-developing American citizenship? I leave out of the estimate, at 5 present, the exceptional people of the race, and look for the answer to the average Negro, as I see him in the Southern States. For I suppose nobody believes that full American citizenship is possible, as the permanent condition of any people destitute of this capacity for self-dependent manhood and womanhood. The child race must be cared for by a paternal organization of society, and that element of paternalism is just what every good American citizen declares he will not have in his government. In lieu of that, an extemporized or permanent social public opinion, or an unwritten law, will take its place and do its work.

If the Negro, as so many Southern people believe, is only a perpetual child, capable of a great deal that is useful and interesting, but destitute of the capacity for "the one thing needful" that lifts the subject of paternal up to the citizen of a republican government, then the thing to do is to leave him to the care of his superiors in the South, who certainly know this side of him far better than the people of the North, and, whatever mistakes on the side of occasional severity may be made, will, in the end, do the best for his permanent estate. In fact, nothing seems more evident, to me than the practical inability of the national government to essentially change the status of its seven millions of Negro citizens, except through national aid to education. There is no power at Washington that can hold up, for a series of generations, any people in the permanent state of illiteracy in which the majority of the Southern Negroes are at present found. This illiteracy is simply a mixture of ignorance, superstition, shiftlessness, vulgarity, and vice. The general and State governments, aided all the while by private benevolence and missionary zeal, can surround these people with an environment of valuable opportunities. Indeed, in many respects, they are now environed with such helps and encouragements as no race, of European lineage, has enjoyed at a similar stage of its history. But the test question is, Has the Negro, on the whole, during his entire life of three hundred years on American soil, indicated his power to appreciate and use such opportunities for full American citizenship as are now vouchsafed to him by a gracious Providence?

To my mind he had vindicated his capacity for indefinite improvement in this direction even before he received the precious boon of citizenship of the American republic. Remarkable as his progress, in some ways, has been during the past twenty-five years of freedom, I would be content to refer to his two centuries of slavery for proof of a remarkable aptitude for civilization. The best evidence for such capacity is a certain unconscious tact, a habit of getting on in a tolerable way under unfavorable circumstances, the turning his sunny and adaptive side to a hard bondage, the eager adaptation to

and taking on of all helps to a better state of living. Contemplate, for a moment, this people, landing from an African slave-ship on our shores. Contrast the status of the American Negro, with all his imperfections, in 1865, when he appeared, the last comer that has stepped over the threshold of the higher civilization and begun the upward career. How can that amazing progress in practical ability, in adaptation to the habits and manners of civilized life, reception of a Christian faith, be accounted for on the theory of perpetual childishness, 6 as a race characteristic? Did any people, under a similar strain, realizing, as the Negro did, the awful issues of the mighty Civil War amid which his closing years of servitude were involved, ever bear itself with such personal fidelity to present duty, with such remarkable wisdom and tact, with such complete reliance on Providence for the result?

Bishop Haygood says the religion of the Negro accounts for his beating during these tremendous years, when the home life of the South was virtually in his hands. That a race, less than two centuries out of the jungle of African paganism, was found so imbued with the central element of Christianity, is evidence that it is not the perpetual child of humanity. Grant the failure of the Negro, during the fearful years that followed the war, to govern States rocking in the throes of a defeated rebellion, exasperated to the death by all the passions that wreck the souls of men and communities. Still, what a display of ability of many sorts, the practical faculty of getting a living, often the higher faculty that has thrown up thousands of shrewd, successful people, there was! Radical that he is, the Negro has shown himself the most politic of peoples in his endurance of what could not be overcome, and his tactful, even crafty, appropriation of all opportunities. He has pushed in at every open door, listened at the white man's table, hung about church and the stump, taken in the great public day, looked on when he did not vote at the election. He has been all eyes and ears, and every pore of his skin has been open to the incoming of his only possible education. Deprived of books and the ordinary apparatus of instruction, he has used all the more eagerly the agencies of God's supreme University, human life,—used them so much better than several millions of “the superior race” that, in proportion to his opportunity, he has made more out of the Southern American life than any other Southern people.

On the eve of the day when the great assembly of Confederate veterans at Richmond solemnly buried their old cause in the unveiling of the statue of their great military commander, I sat on a platform, before a crowded congregation of Negro citizens, in the city of Washington, gathered at the commencement exercises of Wayland Seminary. Eighteen young men and women, all from Virginia, received the diploma; and ten of them appeared in the usual way. As I looked over that audience of well-dressed, well-mannered, appreciative people, and listened to the speeches of those young folk, so marked by sobriety of style, soundness of thought, practical views of life, lofty consecration of purpose, and comprehensive patriotism; as I read their class motto, “Not to be ministered unto,

but to minister," and remembered that, only two hundred and seventy years ago, the first cargo of African pagan savages was landed on the shore of the Old Dominion, and all this was the outcome of that,—I wondered where were the eyes of men that they did not behold the revelation of Divine Providence in this little less than the miraculous evolution of the new citizenship of a State destined yet to praise and magnify the ways of God in American affairs, Say that this only demonstrates his "power of imitation." But what is this mysterious faculty of "imitation," that everybody says the Negro has to the last 7 degree, but another name for a capacity for civilization? Nine-tenths of our human education is imitating what a superior person does, from the child repeating its mother's words to the saint "putting on the Lord Jesus Christ."

It may be granted that, in one respect, slavery was a help to this progress. It protected the Negro from his lower self, on the side of vagrancy; and that is "the terrible temptation" of every people in its rudimentary years. He was protected against vagrancy, laziness, drunkenness, and several temptations of a semi-tropical clime which are too much for thousands of his betters. But here has been a sore obstacle to his success in his new estate of freedom. A great wrong that has been done him during these years has been the neglect to enforce order, decency, and industry, along with the observance of the common moralities of every-day life, by the people among whom he has lived. What would be the condition of New England to-day, had her people tolerated, in the multitudes of foreign-born peasants who have landed on her shores, the vagrancy, laziness, shiftlessness, dependence on common charity, with the perpetual violation of the minor morals, which confront the observer, from every part of the civilized world, in his travels throughout the Southern States? Here was the place for the Anglo-Saxon to assert his superiority, by insisting on the common observance of the common order, decencies, and moralities of life, in and out of the household, by the freedman. For lack of this, the vagrant class has been left virtually at large, like a plague of frogs and lice over all the land, choking up the towns and villages, making good housekeeping, for the Southern woman, the most trying human lot, and surrounding childhood, of every condition and class, with such temptations as no people can permanently resist.

If the well-disposed class, the majority, could have been aided by the law of the land and public opinion to move on unhindered by this intolerable impediment, the last twenty-five years would have told a far different tale. Of course, the white people of the South do not realize this. Slavery was a police that made vagrancy impossible, and the lower slave element was securely locked up under the Argus eyes of the old-time system of labor. I am not here to defend any denial of the suffrage, or social or industrial disability, inflicted on the Negro citizen; but I give it as my deliberate conviction that all these things have not been so harmful to the Negro as this strange neglect of the Anglo-Saxon South to enforce the recognized policy of all civilized lands on its vagrant colored and white class, at the very time when this race specially needed the primary lessons of sobriety,

obedience to law, every-day morality, and of that hard work without which "no man shall eat." Yet, spite of this drawback (and only an observer from a differently regulated community can appreciate what a drawback), the better-disposed class of the Negroes has signally vindicated its capacity for civilization within the limitations of personal and race impediments, and in the use it has made of its opportunities.

I observe, also, in the average Negro, an amiability, a patience and forbearance, a capacity for affectionate devotion, sacrifice, and unselfishness, that separate him decisively from the savage and the savage side of civilized life. What an element of civil, social, and industrial lubrication this may become, has already become, in our grating, pitiless, ferocious Anglo-Saxon greed of power, gain, and all kinds of superiority, any man can realize who sees the working of it in a thousand ways. I can understand why the Southerner feels a certain loneliness amid the splendors and well-ordered regulations of our higher Northern life. He misses the atmosphere of kindness, broad good-humor, real belief in human nature, that the Negro always diffuses around himself. I feel it the moment I touch a Northern city on my return from every annual visit to the South; and I thank God that the Negro "man and brother," especially the woman and sister, were sent by heaven to teach our proud, restless, too often inhuman civilization some of the amenities that outlive the inhumanities and finally bring in the kingdom of God.

Another quality the Negro displays, of great promise in the future, though so often turned to his disadvantage in the present,—a love of approbation, self-possession, and an ability to "put his best foot foremost" and show for all he is worth, the perpetual assertion that he is going to be somebody some time. "Why did you sell that corn you promised to me?" said a white parson to his Negro "brother in the ministry." "Well, boss, I got a bigger price for it." "But was that honest?" "No, it warn't that." "Why did you do it?" "Because, boss, I warn't the man I took myself to be."

It is well to "take yourself to be" a man of parts and character, even at the peril of disappointment. And that persistent pushing to the front, crowding in at every open door, "claiming the earth," which now makes the life of the most sensible and considerate white citizen of the South often a weariness, sometimes a despair, in his dealing with the Negro, is the prophecy of an aspiration for better things and a loftiness of manhood and womanhood of vital importance.

Along with this is the eagerness for knowledge, that is still a characteristic even of the ignorant classes, though less apparent now than in the years following the war. Spite of the neglect of the proper conditions and the means of gaining this precious boon for the children, the average Negro, in humble estate, believes in the school with a vigor that in the lower European classes is not developed, more than in the corresponding class among the Southern whites. Discontent with a low

estate is the movement power of American civilization, and no class in America is less content with its own infirmities than the better sort, the majority of the freedmen.

Another valuable characteristic is the good taste, love of beauty, native capacity for ornamental art, which always appear in the Negro, when suitably encouraged. The handwriting in the colored schools is often remarkable, the drawing uniformly respectable, the taste in dress, the arrangement of flowers and ornaments, above the average of any corresponding class in the country. In the Negro, the new South has its most valuable deposit of "raw material" for the best operative and mechanical class for that clime and country. Already he is domesticated in all these mechanical and operative industries, with the exception of the cotton mills, where the labor is still monopolized by the poorer white class, greatly to its own advantage. Here is a great work being done by the numerous mission schools, of the higher sort, supported by the Christian people of the North, in the organization of industrial education. In this important branch of schooling, the superior class of Negro youth has, so far, enjoyed greater opportunities than the corresponding class of white youth. And, although the graduates of these schools will not be day laborers or servants, yet, as teachers, housekeepers, and general leaders of their people, they will exert a prodigious influence in the years to come. The introduction of a simple and practical annex for industrial education, for both sexes, in the school system of the South, especially for the Negro children, would be a movement of incalculable value to the whole people of that region, so much in need of intelligent and skilled labor in the uprising of its new industrial life.

All these qualities tell in the steady progress of large numbers of these people toward a more comfortable, wholesome, and respectable way of living. This is evident especially to a regular visitor, not involved in the wear and tear of seven millions of freedmen getting on their citizen legs, as are our Southern white brothers and sisters. I see, everywhere, every year, a larger number of well-looking, well-dressed, well-churched, housed, well-mannered colored people. One reason why our Southern friends are not so impressed with this upward movement is that, as soon as a colored family gets above the humble or vagrant class, it somehow disappears from the ordinary view. One inevitable result of the social boycott that shuts down on every Negro family that attains respectability is that its white neighbors are put out of connection with this class, and left to the tender mercies of the class beneath, where their patience is worn out, and, too often, the impression taken for the whole race. The estimate of the increasing wealth of the Negroes is often disputed; but, at the most reasonable figure, it is a significant testimony to the growth of practical enterprise and steady improvement in the upper strata of the whole body.

While the acknowledged vices of the race are still a terrible weight on the lower and a constant temptation and humiliation to the better class, it is not certain that any of them, save those "failings

that lean to virtue's side," are especially "race defects." A distinguished physician of Alabama has shown that the illegitimate births among the Negro population of the black belt of that State are in the exact per cent. of the Kingdom of Bavaria. Certainly, the vices of the lower class of the south of Europe people, that are now swarming the shores of the Gulf States, are not less common, and far more dangerous, than those of the Negro. Human nature, in its lower estate, especially when shot out from its barbarism into the devil-side of civilization, is fearfully deficient in its appreciation of the ten commandments. But I believe no people of the humbler sort are making more progress in overcoming the weakness of the appetites and getting in sight of the Christian moralities than the better sort of the Negroes. In the church, the home, and the school, I see the growth of a self-respecting manhood and womanhood that in due time will tell.

Though differing from many whose opinions and experience I respect, I do not regard the temporary isolation of the Negro in the 10 Southern church, school, and society, so much an evil as a providential aid in gaining the self-respect and habit of self-help absolutely essential to good citizenship. Spite of the hard side of slavery, the Negro has not had his fair share of the rough training that brings out the final results and the determination that tell in history. A habit of dependence, even to the extent of servility, in the lower orders, is still one of his most dangerous temptations. He has also been greatly tried by being, for a generation, the romantic figure of American life,—the especial object of philanthropic interest in Church, State, and society, everywhere outside the sixteen Southern States. It is well that he should be relieved for a while from these temptations. In company with the white boy, the Negro boy, on the same school bench, would all the time be tempted to fall into his old position of an annex to the white man, and, in the Church, would be under a strain that would sorely tax his manhood. Where he is, he grows up with a wholesome confidence in himself. His own best people are teaching him, with no hindrance, the law of responsible manhood and womanhood. The result is that, when he emerges into active life, if he has well appropriated his training, he is in a position to treat with a similar class of white people on terms that insure mutual respect.

I am struck with this feature of Southern society,—the constant "working together for good" of the better class, especially of the men of both races in all communities. The outrage of a drunken rabble upon a Negro settlement is published to all the world; while the constant intercourse of the respectable classes of men of the two races, that prevents a thousand such outbreaks and makes Southern life, on the whole, orderly, like the progress of the seasons and the hours, goes on in silence. It is not necessary to project the social question into the heart of communities in this state of transition. The very zealous brethren of the press and the political fold, who are digging this "last ditch" of social caste, away out in the wilderness, half a century ahead of any present emergency, may be assured that nobody in the United States will ever be obliged to associate with people

disagreeable to him, and that, as Thomas Jefferson suggested, "if we educate the children of to-day, our descendants will be wiser than we, and many things that seem impossible to us may be easily accomplished by them." At present, the office of colored teacher and preacher is the noblest opportunity for general usefulness granted to an educated, righteous, and able young man or woman in any land. That teacher or preacher becomes the man or woman of all spiritual work to a constituency singularly appreciative; if instructed in industrial craft, all the more valuable. I am amazed at the assertion of some eminent people that the superior education of the Negro youth has been a failure. If the destiny of the Negro is only that of a child-peasant forever, this is true; but, if his range of possibility is what we believe, no such result of even a modified form of the secondary and higher education, with industrial accompaniments, has ever been seen in Christendom, as is evident to any man who regards this side of the life of this people with open eyes.

All that I have said bears on a fundamental truth concerning the uplifting of the American Negro citizen. The Northern white man, especially if a philanthropist, regards the Negro as an annex to the Northern, the Southern white man regards him as an annex to the Southern white citizen: but the Negro is anything but an annex to anybody. He is an original element, providentially injected into American civilization,—the only man who did not come to us of his own will. It may turn out, for that reason, that he is to be the "little child that shall lead them," and finally compel a reconciliation of all the distracting elements of our national life. Every race that has any outcome finally demonstrates its capacity by throwing up a superior class by which it is led, stimulated, and gradually lifted to its own highest achievement of civilization. Tried by this test, the Negro is not behind.

I have spoken so far of the average man and woman of the race. But that observer must be strangely blinded who does not see the evidence of the formation of a genuine aristocracy of intelligence, character, industry, and superior living among these millions. I do not refer to that unfortunate class who assert a superficial superiority by separation from their people and an uneasy longing to be recognized by their white superiors. I mean the growing class that is trying, under a solemn sense of gratitude to God, love to the brother, and consecrated patriotism, to lift up its own race. Among the seven millions of this people in the United States, there must be several hundred thousand of this sort. They are found everywhere, all the way from Massachusetts to Texas. They already form a distinct society; and the most American of all our great newspapers, the Cincinnati *Commercial Gazette*, has already recognized the fact by the prominent "Colored Society Column" in its Sunday morning issue. This class is becoming a distinct power, and its influence on the classes below is one of the most important elements of the race problem. It is already on good terms with the corresponding class of white people, though differing in politics and often grieved by what it regards public, social, and industrial injustice.

One significant fact in this connection is that now the Negro is the most determined Southerner. The young Southern white man, relieved from the attractions of the old aristocratic position of slaveholder, like all American young men of parts, is on the lookout for the main chance. The South is less and less to him a name to charm with. His own State no longer seems to him a "nation" which claims his uttermost devotion. A million of these young men, it is said, have left the South for the North and North-west since the war. Whole regions of these older States are as steadily drained of this important population as the older portions of the North-east. The Southern young woman will follow as soon as her call is heard. At present she is the "main-stay" of the rural South, the good angel of its coming civilization, getting more education and having more to do with the upper story of Southern life than her average male companion who stays at home. But the Negro loves the sacred soil, the old home, the climate, and its surroundings. In due time he will become the dominant occupant of large portions of the lowland South. He has no more idea of going to Africa than the Southern Jew of going into business in Jerusalem. He will move about as he becomes more intelligent and understands his own interests; but he is the Southerner of to-day, and all persuasion or threats that would dislodge him are vain. As the political issues of the past fade into the distance, he will more and more act in all public affairs with the leading race, with whom his companionship and interest belong. He must be educated where he is; and, as the years go on, he will rise to the call of his own superior class and find his own place,—a great and beneficent place in our wonderful American family.

Education is the lever that will raise this great mass of humanity to the high plane of full American citizenship. I believe it would be a great blessing to the whole South, could the suffrage, educational, labor, and vagrant laws of Massachusetts be incorporated into the legislation of every Southern State. Protection to the child, suppression of vagrancy, enforcement of industry, an educational test of suffrage, better churching, improvement in the home, reading of good books, all the influences that are so potent in any respectable Northern community, will in good time achieve the success of every class and race of the American people. For the Negro, two-thirds of this education must be, for a generation, outside the school-room, in the broad university of the new Southern American life. If we only knew it, this is one of the richest educational opportunities God has ever vouchsafed to any people.

What a call is this opportunity for missionary service, in its broadest and loftiest aspect, to the whole American people. Every theory of despair on the race problem proceeds from a pagan or atheistic estimate of human nature and destiny, and leads down to despotism or anarchy. Without the blessed gospel of Christ, our American race problem would be too awful to contemplate. Thank God, it did not come to us in an age of pagan darkness, of mediæval violence, in a land crowded with people, in a civilization cursed by the bitter results of a long and stormy past. It came to us

in an opening age of light, when all the celestial forces are at an upward slant, when the Church is getting itself together to work for man while God takes care of the creeds, in a country so large and bountiful that hundreds of millions would not crowd it, and "every man may sit under his own vine and fig-tree, with no one to molest and make afraid."

As I am borne through the vast spaces of our marvellous Southern land, and stand in amazement before its revelation of resources, hitherto unknown, I ask myself;— Is this only to become the theatre of a greater greed of gain, "a hazard of new fortunes," its only outcome a semi-tropical materialism, an inevitable temptation to a dismal era of "booms" and "syndicates" and "trusts," with a new insanity for the almighty dollar, so powerless to satisfy the deeper need of the humblest human heart? May it not, rather, be God's summons to such an awakening of our overworked and materialized American people as will compel them, in sheer self-defence, to give mind and heart and hand to that lifting up of the lowly, and that preaching the gospel of self-help to the poor, which is the end of Christian charity? I took for the day when the divided churches of our three great Protestant denominations will be brought together by the growing sense of this "home mission" claim, and the whole Church and the adjacent realm of the world be polarized in one supreme effort to solve this old caste puzzle of the nations and ages, by showing that the simple gospel of Christ means peace on earth and good will to all men.

But now comes the final question, on which not so much the destiny of the Negro citizen as the very existence of Southern American civilization depends. Will the Anglo-Saxon Southern people, at present nine-tenths of the entire white population, in due time appreciate this opportunity, and join hands with all good men and women, at home and abroad, in this, the grandest crusade of all the ages?

I have no doubt that the race problem will finally be solved, in the South, largely through the agency of the Southern Anglo-Saxon people,—not over their heads, but with their thorough co-operation. I see already, amid superficial indications to the contrary, the converging lines of this tendency, and, below hostile theories, the inevitable drift of the common life of all these great commonwealths towards the American type of society.

I see the positive indication of this great convergence of opinion, especially in what may be called the Educational Public of the South. By this, I mean that portion of the Southern people, of all classes and both races, which within the past twenty-five years, amid difficulties and complications almost unconquerable elsewhere, has quietly and persistently laid the foundations of the American system of universal education in every State, county, city, and neighborhood in these sixteen commonwealths.

The common school is so much the habit and unquestioned postulate of republican government everywhere in the North that we have never done half justice to the people of the sixteen Southern States for this, by all odds, the most significant movement of the past generation this side the water. That a people, in 1860 the most aristocratic in organization of its society upon earth, who fought through a bloody war and only fell in "the last ditch" of the absolute ruin of their old social order, should have risen up from this awful overthrow, cleared the ground of rubbish, and, with scarcely any aid that they could use, of their own will have planted on the soil the one institution that is the eternal foe of everything save republican government and democratic society, is the wonder of the age, and the complete vindication of the essential Americanism of the Southern people. It would be well for our cynical scholars and self-confident politicians, who dilate on the imperfections of this system of education, to remember what Massachusetts was, fifty years ago, when Horace Mann drew his sword, what Pennsylvania was, thirty years ago, when Wickersham took command, what even to-day some portions of the older Atlantic States are declared by the testimony of their own educational authorities to be. Doubtless there has been exaggeration of the achievement of the South in popular education, partly through ignorance, more in the way of home advertisement, most in the interest of the defeat of the Blair Bill. But, with all this drawback, the Southern people have taken "the first step that costs," and established the free school, for all classes and both races, unsectarian, but practically one of the most potent moral and religious forces of this section, growing all the time, already beyond the peril of destruction or serious damage from its numerous enemies; and it "has come to 14 stay." True, the educational public has not half converted the average Southern politician, for whom, as General Grant said, "there is too much reading and writing now." It has not yet entirely swung the Southern clergy and the Church over to its hearty support, as against the old-time Protestant parochial and private system of instruction. It is still a social outsider in some regions; and, through vast spaces of the rural South, it is so poor that it seems to have hindered more than helped the better-off classes who shoulder its expenses. But it has for the first time gone down into the basement story of the Southern household, bearing that common schooling to the lower orders and the "plain people," which means modern civilization and progressive Christianity, involving the full committal to the new American order of affairs. It is a wonder that the leading classes of the North—the press, the political organizations, the industrial leaders, even the philanthropists—are still so imperfectly informed concerning this, by all odds, the most vital and significant end of Southern life. The splendid mission work of our Northern churches, which, indirectly, has so greatly aided the growth of the schools for the Negroes by training their teachers, has sometimes obscured the magnitude of the home work. But this, with the remarkable rally of the whole secondary and higher education, is a demonstration that the South has no intention of remaining permanently in any second place in the great educational movement of the time. Imperfect as the common school is, the Negro has been the greatest gainer therefrom;

for, through it and all that goes along therewith, he is laying up a steady increase of self-respect, intelligence, and practical power, which will astonish many good people who still go on repeating the parrot cry that education has only demoralized the younger Negro generation for the industrial side of life. But it is not what the common schools have done, but what the Southern people has failed to do to re-enforce them, that still holds thousands of Negro youth in the bonds of a vagrancy, shiftlessness, and debasement that deserve all things that can be said against them. The cure for this is more and better education, re-enforced by the policy of every civilized land in the suppression of the devil-side of society, that will ruin the greatest country under the sun.

But, below and beyond this open and evident work of education, I see more clearly, every year, that the logic of the new Southern life is all on the side of the final elevation of the Negro to the essential rights and opportunities of American citizenship; and, beyond, to the generous co-operation with the nation in aiding him to make his own best use of that supreme opportunity. We at the North are constantly misled by the press, which is a very poor representative of this most important element of Southern life. We hear the superficial talk and read of the disorder that is the inevitable accompaniment of States in the transition from a great civil war to their final adjustment to the national life. An eminent educator of the South writes me: "Ask a hundred men at the street corner what they think about the education of the Negro, and seventy-five of them will demur, and some of them will swear. The next day every man of them will vote for the higher school tax that gives the Negro a better school-house and the permanent establishment of his education." Our Southern friends are no more logical than other portions of the country, and 15 the superficial life of all countries is constantly adjusting itself to the logic of its undertow. I can see, in more ways than I could explain, even to a Northern community, that these people are "in the swim" whose tide can only drift them off into regions of life which seem almost impossible to them to-day.

The test of this drift is that, spite of all obstacles and embarrassments, there is, in every respectable Southern community, no real hindrance to an intelligent, moral, industrious, and prudent Negro family getting all out of American life that anybody expects, save that social and, in some localities, political recognition, that are the last achievements of long periods of social evolution in national affairs. In all essential respects, the Negro citizen is better off in the South than in any Northern State. The outward opportunities for full association with the white population in the North are, after all, of little value in comparison with the substantial opportunity for becoming the great laboring agricultural class and of capturing the field of mechanical and operative labor. It will be his own fault if he permits the insolent naturalized foreign element that now dominates our Northern industrial centres to elbow him off into a peasantry or a menial and subordinate laboring population.

As I look at the way in which these seven millions of people are gaining all the vital opportunities of life among the twelve millions of their Anglo-Saxon neighbors, I am amazed at the way they seem to go on, only half-conscious of what the rest of the world is saying about them, "working out their own salvation" by the power that is in them, in the only way by which an American people can finally succeed. The only fit symbol of this mighty movement is the Mississippi River after it has become "the inland sea" of the Southland. States and their peoples, Congress and the nation, scientists and cranks, debate and experiment on the way to put the "Father of Waters" in harness, to tie up this awful creature that holds the fate of ten millions of people in its every-day whim. But all discourse, legislation, and experiment, at last run against the question;—What will the Mississippi River do with us next week? So, while the Southern people and the nation are wrestling with what they choose to call the "race problem," this inland, Southern human ocean, searching and spreading and pushing into every nook and corner of the low-land, is going on its way; and every deliverance of the scientist, the socialist, and the statesman, brings up against some new and unexpected thing that the Negro has really done. "How are you getting on with your neighbors down here?" said I to a deputation of fine-looking colored men, who stepped out of a carriage and presented me with a well-written address of welcome to the city of Vicksburg. "Well, we used to have trouble; but we have finally concluded the white man has come to stay, and we adjust ourselves to that fact." The white man has indeed come to stay all over the United States of America; but he will stay, not always as the white man proposes, but as God Almighty disposes. And, wherever he abides, he will finally be compelled, by the logic of American events, to stay in peace and justice, in freedom and order, in Christian co-operation with all the great elements of republican society, shaped from all the peoples that a beneficent Providence has called to abide together in this, God's morning land.