

Address by Daniel Ullmann, LL.D., before the Soldier's and Sailor's Union of the State of New York, on the organization of colored troops and the regeneration of the South, delivered at Albany, February 5, 1868.

ADDRESS BY DANIEL ULLMANN, L. L. D., BEFORE THE SOLDIER'S AND SAILOR'S UNION OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, ON THE Organization of Colored Troops and the Regeneration of the South, DELIVERED AT ALBANY, FEBRUARY 5, 1868.

WASHINGTON: PRINTED AT THE GREAT REPUBLIC OFFICE.

1868.

ADDRESS BY DANIEL ULLMANN, L. L. D., BEFORE THE SOLDIER'S AND SAILOR'S UNION OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, ON THE Organization of Colored Troops and the Regeneration of the South, DELIVERED AT ALBANY, FEBRUARY 5, 1868.

Comrades, Ladies and Gentlemen: In the summer of 1862, during the operations of the "Army of Virginia," in the Piedmont region, having been prostrated by typhoid fever, as the choice of evils, I was left behind, by the surgeons, to the tender mercies of the Rebels, and was, of course, quickly taken prisoner. Favored with a strong constitution, I survived both the fever and Libby prison. On being paroled, still exceedingly feeble, I returned from Richmond to Washington, on the 10th of October, 1862. I considered it my duty to call immediately on the President. I was received by Mr. Lincoln in his usually kind manner, and at his request, gave to him an account of my sickness and improvement. I found him more serious and depressed than I recollect to have seen him at any other time. It will be remembered that he had issued on the 22d of the previous September, eighteen days before, his proclamation giving notice to the Insurrectionary States, that, at the expiration of one hundred days, on the 1st of January, 1863, he would proclaim "all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof should then be in rebellion, then and thenceforward and forever free." Mr. Lincoln appeared to be especially anxious to ascertain what the effect of this proclamation was upon the minds of the people of that portion of rebel Virginia, which I had seen. I stated to him my opinions as far as I had been able to form any from my limited means of observation;—which were that the chief effect had been to intensify their exasperated feelings, and that many had declared to me that, if a *carte-blanche* were presented, on which to write terms of peace, the condition precedent of all negotiations would be "absolute separation forever."

Perceiving that the mind of the President was pre-occupied, I soon took my leave, and returned to the Hotel. About seven o'clock of the evening of the same day, I was roused by a knock at my door, and a voice saying, "a message from the President." Of course, I immediately repaired to the "White House," and found Mr. Lincoln waiting for me. He said that he had sent for me, because he had not been satisfied with our interview in the morning,—that he was so much engrossed at that time with other matters that he had not appreciated what I had said, and desired me to enter more into detail as to what I had heard and observed of the effect of his proclamation. I did so. He catechised me closely. My statements appeared to impress him deeply. After I had finished, I took the liberty of saying, "Mr. President, from what I have heard in Washington to-day, there seem to be doubts as to the issuing of the proclamation of Freedom on the first of January. Subtile and powerful combinations are organizing, I understand, to influence your action in the premises. You and I know, from long experience, that, on no other question in America, have men been more swerved from the path of truth and justice by shrewd and cunningly devised intrigues. I hope this is unfounded, for, in my judgment, a failure, now, to issue that Proclamation would be disastrous—far worse than the loss of a great battle. I pray you, having entered upon this 2 policy to pursue it to the bitter end. Beside, sir, should you be the favored instrument of giving freedom to the oppressed slaves of this nation, permit me to say, there will be two men whose names will, in all future ages mark the 19th century, Alexander of Russia, and Abraham of America." He took my hand, and assured me, that, unless the Rebellion should collapse, the Proclamation would be issued. I then said: "Now, Mr. President, let me go further. The Proclamation, as an indication of policy, will be of estimable value to the nation, and will impart vigor to the conduct of the war;—stamping, as it will, a moral character upon the contest, the absence of which has been, at home and abroad, a source of weakness. Yet, in itself, it will accomplish very little, unless it be followed up by corresponding action." "Exactly!" he exclaimed, "I have always told our friends, that a simple proclamation of emancipation must be inoperative." "Such is my decided opinion," I said. "But not so, if, as I have before urged upon you. You arm the Blacks, and enlist them into the armies of the United States." The President interrupted me. "That cannot be done," he said, "It would drive many of our friends from us. The people are not prepared for it." My answer was, "I am by no means sure of that, Mr. President;—besides, events, now-a-days, follow each other in such quick succession, and public opinion changes with such astounding rapidity, that, in these great exigencies, it appears to me, the path of duty is sometimes to lead as well as to follow. Now, Mr. President, pardon a man, just out of a Rebel prison for being strenuous on this point. I have thought much respecting it. As I laid sick in Libby, I resolved that, if my life were spared, and I ever had the opportunity, I would, again, to the utmost of my ability, press this course upon you. So, you see, sir, that I have come prepared." He listened to me with that sympathetic expression, which was one of his marked characteristics, and allowed me in a conversation which consumed sometime, to urge these points: That to arm the Blacks was,

1. The most direct way to crush the Rebellion.
2. The surest path to the extinction of slavery.
3. The most feasible mode of bringing home to the slaves that he really intended to free them.
4. That John Quincy Adams had in his admirable arguments on the admission of Texas, shown that it was clearly within the war-power; and that it was a mode of greatly reducing the expenses of the war; especially as now it was difficult to raise troops, except by a draft, or by offering ruinous bounties. That I felt sure that thus, without the expenditure of a dollar in bounties, we could enlist from 200,000 to 400,000 faithful and loyal soldiers.
5. The mode designated by Providence to redeem, regenerate and elevate a race.

He suddenly broke in upon me with, "Ullmann," would you be willing to command Black soldiers?" My answer was, "Mr. President, that is a home question. I do not know that I would, of choice, but I am a soldier, it is my duty to obey, and I confess that I would glory in aiding to strike what, I am sure, will be the most effective moral blow of the war. Besides, I never will advise a movement which I would refuse to undertake myself." "Well! well!" said he, "it cannot be done now. It cannot be done until after I issue the Proclamation." He then dismissed me for the night with kind words, which impressed me deeply at the time, and, since the "deep damnation of his taking off," have ever welled up from the depths of my heart in gushing tribute to his memory.

Immediately after the issuing of the Proclamation of Freedom, on the 1st of January, 1863, the President directed the Secretary of War, Mr. Stanton, to order me to raise and organize Regiments of colored troops in the Department of the Gulf. My duty was to initiate and supervise the recruiting and officering Regiments, of which the privates and non-commissioned officers should be Blacks—freemen or freedmen,—and to command them. This order, now in my possession, bears date 13th January, 1863, and is the first order issued by this Government, during the Rebellion, regularly avowing and authorizing the enlisting of Blacks, as soldiers in the armies of the United States. I was directed, in the first instance, to raise four Regiments of Infantry, and a Battalion of six companies of mounted Scouts; and, to provide them with officers, was authorized to select from the whole army, a sufficient number of picked veterans, officers and privates. For this purpose, I established my Headquarters in the city of New York, and was furnished, at my request, by the loyal Governors of several loyal States with lists of soldiers and officers, who had distinguished themselves in the field—"the bravest of the brave." Unfortunately, I could receive no aid from the chair of the Chief Magistrate of our own State of New York,—its incumbent being of rather questionable loyalty. I was, therefore, obliged to rely exclusively on my own judgment, so far as this noble State was concerned,

and, I apprehend, did not go far astray, in selecting nearly all the officers of one Regiment from gentlemen who had served in the 7th Regiment of the National Guard,—so long the pride of our Metropolis and State.

3

It is instructive, as well as amusing, to look back, now, at the condition of the public mind at that period. My Headquarters had scarcely been established in New York and the nature of my duties began to be whispered around, when threatening anonymous letters began to pour in upon me, and I was waited upon by several kind friends to remonstrate with me, as to my course. One friend in particular, a worthy gentleman of high position and influence, was earnest in his entreaties that I should desist. He said I would ruin my reputation forever; that the public was exasperated at the idea of enlisting negro troops; that I was in danger of being mobbed at any time, and that, in such an event, I could hardly hope for aid from the police. The gentleman was answered that I was obeying orders, and as to being mobbed, I was surrounded by veterans who were familiar with the whistling of rebel bullets. The riots of the succeeding July showed that these were no idle fears on the part of this gentleman. Within one year, while at Port Hudson, on the Mississippi, I received a letter from this same friend, in which he said, “you will be astonished, when I inform you that I was one of fifty gentlemen, who, yesterday, marched, as an escort, at the head of a Regiment of negro soldiers, from Union Square, down Broadway to the foot of Canal street.”

I transferred the *Cadre* of my command to the designated field of duty in the Department of the Gulf. I had with me more than two hundred officers, a large majority from the Army of the Potomac, who had seen nearly two years service in the field, and many of whom bore the scars of honorable wounds—some were officers of the Regular Army—one was a son of the Vice President—one an European Prince—several, nephews of Kossuth—others, officers who had served with distinction in the armies of Europe, and all, with few exceptions, educated gentlemen.

It is hardly worth while, this evening, to particularize the obstacles, which were needlessly interposed to prevent the success of this movement. At some future day, I may undertake the unwelcome, but, perhaps, necessary task. The materials are abundant, and in my possession. Suffice it to say that there was scarcely a bureau in Washington, New York or New Orleans, that did not in its early stages, throw some impediment in its way; generally covertly, sometimes openly. It more than once required the stern, peremptory order of the Secretary of War, to bring some of them up to the full performance of their duty. But the chief opposition came from a quarter, as unnecessary as it was unexpected;—namely, the deep-seated and extraordinary prejudice, which existed in the minds of a large majority of the white officers of every grade in Louisiana. It is a striking fact that while the officers sneered at us, the rank and file were our warm friends. Officers of the Ullmann Brigade will ever have occasion to remember, with bitter feelings, the contemptuous treatment they received,

at the siege of Port Hudson, from General and other officers, who heaped indignities upon "*Nigger Officers*," as they were wont courteously to style us. There was an abundance of "fine writing," respecting the policy, by Generals high in rank, for transmission to Headquarters, at Washington. It is not, however, the first instance, in the history of human affairs, where "brave words" were not accompanied by "brave deeds." But it was all in vain; they were gnawing on a file; in spite of treacherous friends and open foes; the movement was a magnificent success, and the great object, for which I strove was obtained, that of striking a fatal blow at slavery through the hands of its own victims.

Among the minor scenes of the drama, it was pleasing to see how rapidly the foulest mouthed revilers became enthusiastic and patriotic admirers and laudators; how jaundiced eyes were cleared to see Colored Troops only in rainbow tints, when Commissions in the Field, Staff and Line began to flutter in the air, thickly as autumn leaves. Not a few Colonels, and some Generals, of Colored Troops, were once their intensely disgusted haters. Such, alas! is ever the history of some classes of humanity; when the assertion of a great principle is weak, especially when it takes the form of action, none but men of earnest conviction are willing to meet the opprobrium of its support, but when, by their determined energy, it battles its way to power, no one can count the number of those who were "always its friends."

Let me say, in this connection, that whatever may have been the conduct of others, the Secretary of War, Mr. Stanton, from the initiation to the close of this movement, proved himself to be its active and constant friend. He sustained me at every step, and showed himself to be an executive officer of surpassing patriotism and transcendent ability. I am safe in averring that, such were the obstacles thrown in its way, that had it not been for his rare talent and indomitable determination, the whole movement of arming and organizing Colored Troops would have been a failure.

Early after our arrival at the field of operations, my subordinates reported to me that there were active and extended influences at work among the Blacks, to alarm them and prevent their recruiting, and that the proverbial Southern skill in intrigue was especially, 4 and not unsuccessfully, at work at Headquarters, and elsewhere, to thwart the movement. I had foreseen this, and believing that it would become necessary for me to use decided language, understanding well with whom I had to deal, and remembering also that the President had, on previous occasions, disavowed the orders, on the subject of slavery, of Generals Fremont and Hunter, to prevent being placed in a like category, I read to Mr. Lincoln, before leaving Washington, the substantial portions of an order I proposed to issue. It received his unequivocal approval. I now issued it. The following are extracts from it:—

“II. The General Commanding brings to the particular notice of the officers of this command, that they are engaged, by the orders of the Government, in a special, peculiar and difficult service. They have been selected as possessing qualities which, it is supposed, eminently qualify them for this duty, namely: accurate knowledge of the drill, long experience in the field, patience, diligence, and patriotism. They will find the constant exercise of all these qualities necessary.

You are brought into contact with a race, who, having lived in an abnormal condition all the days of their lives, are now suddenly elevated into being soldiers of the United States fighting against their oppressors, as well for their own liberties as for the integrity of the Republic. They are to be moulded by you into drilled and well disciplined troops. You cannot display too much wisdom in your conduct, both as regards yourselves and them. *Let the law of kindness be your guide.* Thus acting, you will soon obtain their confidence; you will then find them docile, impressionable, fully imbued with the spirit of subordination (one of the highest attributes of a soldier) possessed of a deep appreciation of kindly treatment and of keen perceptions, which enables them quickly to discover any flaw in the conduct of their superiors.

You have the materials, crude though they now may be, but perfectly malleable, to make the best of soldiers. It remains with you to say whether such shall be the result. Perform your duty conscientiously, and our beloved and once happy country will not only have a body of soldiers, who will enthusiastically aid her in fighting her battles, but she will also have the proud satisfaction of knowing that she has, at last, taken a practical step towards the elevation of a hitherto degraded and oppressed race.

III. The General Commanding learns that the malignant enemies of the Union and the people of the United States, are busily engaged in endeavoring to persuade the colored population of the South, that if they recruit as soldiers in the armies of the Republic, they will, at the close of the war, be returned to slavery by the Government.

It is to be expected, in this unholy war between truth and falsehood—humanity and oppression—justice and injustice—freedom and slavery—regulated liberty and unrestrained despotism, that the atrocious instigators of this foul and unnatural rebellion, together with their secret aiders and sympathizers, who have the oath of allegiance on their lips and treason in their hearts, should, to sustain themselves, resort to every device which the arch enemy of mankind suggests to their willing minds.

This is one of those devices.

Let not the colored men of the South be deceived by any thing that may be said by those who are at once their, and the Union's foes.

The General Commanding, therefore directs his officers of all grades, to assure every colored man whom they recruit, that if he shall, by virtue of the authority delegated to the General, be regularly enlisted into the service of the United States, and shall bear himself as a true and faithful soldier until the end of the term of his enlistment, he has the sacred honor of the United States pledged, that the whole power of this Government, moral and physical, shall be exerted to secure to him and to his posterity for ever, the inestimable blessings of freedom.

It is not in the power of the General Government, under the Constitution, to remand a single human being, once freed, to slavery, "otherwise than in punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted."

Beside, this war, in its consequences, has reached a point beyond the power of man. The first gun that was fired at Fort Sumter sounded the death-knell of slavery. They who fired it were the greatest practical abolitionists this nation has produced. The decree went forth from that hour that slavery should quickly cease to exist on this North American continent.

Come, then, colored men of the South, enlist in the armies of the United States. Your brethren at Port Hudson have shown to the world that they can and will fight, and have displayed as dauntless courage as ever illuminated a battle-field. Emulate their noble example, and fight under the glorious banner of the Republic, which will be to you, in the great FUTURE, as it has been in the PAST to millions of the white race, the symbol of every temporal blessing.

Truth, Justice and God are on our side They will Prevail. "

Under that order, the colored freedmen of Louisiana flocked in crowds to the standard 5 of the United States, and recruiting as soldiers in the ranks of our armies, served faithfully to the close of the war. It is respectfully submitted whether, having thus performed their part of the contract, they are not entitled to demand before God and the world of mankind, the strict fulfillment, in its letter and spirit, by an honorable and Christian nation, of this solemn pledge, thus distinctly made at a trying crisis in our history. Let the streets of New Orleans, on the 30th of July last, and the thousand cases of slaughter and murder of men who once with us wore the blue uniform of the Union, testify whether this pledge has been redeemed by the American people.

It is in the performance of an imperative duty, that I ask permission to refer, in this public manner, with pride and gratification, to the career of the gentlemen, selected by me, to be associated with

me, in this novel and peculiar field of duty. With a few exceptions, they all met my expectations. To judge them, now, with discrimination, we must regard them from the *stand-point* of 1863. Nearly all of these officers were selected from different and, in some cases, widely separated commands, in the army, where, having participated in numerous battles and conflicts, they enjoyed honorable records. They were selected by me as men, who were willing and competent to take the initiatory steps in the organization of colored troops—a policy manifestly destined to struggle into existence against vehement and bitter opposition, both from the friends and foes of our Government. In apportioning their grade of merit, then, we must remember that there are periods when dates are full of deep meaning, and none were ever more significant than when, during the dark days of 1863, to accept an appointment in a colored regiment was, in facing a whirlwind of prejudice, to invite the desertion of friends and the implacable hatred of enemies. The former, they met with sorrow, the latter with derision. If captured by the foe, they well knew they would not be considered or treated as prisoners of war. Jefferson Davis and the Confederate Congress had enacted that “a white person commanding negroes or mulattoes in arms” should be “deemed as inciting servile insurrection,” and should, “if captured, *be put to death.*” We well knew these were not unmeaning words. Such was our conclusion, and this knowledge, on the part of some of these officers was made practical by the bitter experience of lying in chains, for months, at Camp Ford, Tyler, Texas, because it was suspected they were connected with Black Regiments. Disregarding all these personal considerations, they, voluntarily, engaged in the work set before them, with a high patriotism rarely equalled, and a conscientious determination in the discharge of duty never excelled. Compelled primarily to teach the colored soldier the very rudiments of a well-regulated every-day life, prior to that almost incessant drill and discipline, which, it is well known, require the most patient and zealous perseverance on the part of officers, to accomplish even a medium proficiency. With but few men, at first, in any regiment, able to read or write,—steadily, earnestly and faithfully, these officers labored until the whole command was led up, step by step, to a degree of discipline, which has, time and again, drawn special commendation from educated officers of the highest grade, knowledge and experience.

It is not seen how the Government could have paid a higher compliment to the first four Regiments of Colored Troops, thus raised and organized by me, than this.—Whereas at the cessation of hostilities, nearly all other volunteer Regiments, white and colored, many of whose terms of service would not have expired for months, were mustered out, these four were all retained until long after their full terms expired, and some are yet continued in the service—one, the 81st, is on duty now at New Orleans.

These Regiments are respectively designated, the 78th U. S. Colored Infantry, (originally 1st U. S. Volunteers,) commanded by that gallant and accomplished soldier, Colonel, subsequently, Brigadier-

General, Samuel B. Jones, of the city of New York; 80th U. S. Colored Infantry, (originally 3d U. S. V.), Colonel, subsequently, Brevet Major-General, Cyrus Hamlin, then by Brevet Brigadier-General Mudgett, both of Maine; 81st U. S. C. I. (originally 4th U. S. V.), Colonel John Appleton, of Maine, and then by Colonel Charles B. Gaskell of New York, and 82d U. S. C. I. (originally 5th U. S. V.), Colonel L. L. Zulasky, of Hungary.

I shall, doubtless, be expected to answer the question, so often put, "What sort of soldiers do Blacks make?"

In the first place, I do not think it at all necessary to institute any comparison between them and white troops. If obliged to express an opinion, I must unhesitatingly say, I have seen some white regiments superior to any colored I ever saw.

The common error, in judging Blacks, is to look at them as a unit, as a whole, as being all alike—the inferior specimens are selected as samples of all—how would the white races stand such a test? This error leads to a multitude of other errors. The facts are that they differ from each other, and, perhaps, are separable into classes, even more distinctly than any of the races of the Caucasian group. That 6 was a pithy answer on this point, given in the British Association for the Advancement of Science, by Mr. William Craft, an educated African gentleman, to the learned essay of an "*Anthropologist*," who proved to his own satisfaction, the utter inferiority and incapacity for improvement of all negro races:—"Since I have been travelling in England," said Mr Craft, "I have perceived that there are differences and inequalities, even here, and have particularly noted that *all Englishmen are not Shakspeares*."

Now, I have commanded colored Regiments, as good troops as need be, and I have commanded some, indifferent, and some very inferior. In their abnormal state, they require good officers more than other soldiers. I have seen colored Regiments—weak, disorganized, inefficient—which stripped of their miserable officers, and placed in the bands of men, who both knew their duty and discharged it, were raised speedily to a high degree of discipline and effectiveness. The privates of the Colored Troops were pretty uniformly reported to me to be sober, docile, subordinate, obedient, attentive, and, as soldiers, enthusiastic. As sentinels, and on general picket duty, they have no superiors. On a march, it was generally necessary to check them. Their powers of endurance, none will question. As to their fighting qualities, it is surprising that doubts were so extensively entertained, when we have the well-known record of the testimony as to their bravery and good conduct, of so experienced a judge of what constitutes a soldier as Andrew Jackson. We know what they did at Bunker Hill and other battles, both of the Revolution and of the war of 1812. Their conduct at Magenta and Solferino has passed into history. Let me say, that I have rarely seen so fine a specimen of a soldier, as the hero, Captain Cailloux, who, having, it is said, received his education,

civil and military, in Paris, sealed his devotion to his race, and to the Union, by falling at Port Hudson, fighting bravely in one of those memorable charges made by the colored regiments on the 27th of May, 1863. The self-denying good temper of these troops, their knowledge of localities, their prompt obedience, their soldier-like power of endurance, and, above all, their firm, unflinching, never-varying friendship, were invaluable. There never was a scintilla of evidence that there was any foundation for the stupendous deception attempted, with unblushing effrontery, to be palmed off on mankind, that the slaves were contented with their condition. On the contrary, we found that a knowledge of the causes and character of the war was not only almost universal among them, but was also remarkably clear and accurate, and they never failed to hail our advent with enthusiastic delight, styling us their "deliverers."

I desire here to give in my willing and emphatic testimony, as to the extraordinary fact—and numerous officers, whose opportunities for observation and investigation have not been surpassed, have requested me to quote them as having had a like experience—that through all the vicissitudes of my varied and manifold experience, I have never met one colored man, in or out of the Army, who, within my personal knowledge, was unfriendly to the Union cause. Where, I ask, is that terrible, bloody, servile insurrection, so often thundered in our ears, to affright the land from its propriety? We may now expect that the country will ring with shouts of "a war of races!" "Supremacy of Black races!"—cries to be classed with the thousand pictures drawn, in former days, to horrify us with the imminent danger of a servile insurrection. Manifestoes, pamphlets, speeches, editorials will flood the land, proving that the "nigger," now that he is free, will "relapse" *relapse* into barbarism. Murders, outrages, atrocities of every name and kind, will fill the columns of certain classes of newspapers to show how disastrous freedom is to the poor African; and that terrible bug-bear, Amalgamation, will again loom up in all its disgusting deformity, to again alarm and frighten us from our propriety. As to that, it is only to be said, that close observers, whom I have sedulously consulted, unite with me in the opinion, that, in a state of freedom, there is far less danger from such a source than in that of slavery. In the seething caldron of Southern social life, for two hundred years under a system of slavery, there was danger, that the whole blood of the region would, in process of time, be commingled, beyond the analytical power of any chemist to resolve it into its original elements.

Further;—if there be of record, on the pages of authentic history, even of the most cultivated nations, an account of a people, who under all the multiplied aggravations and enormities of Fort Pillow, of Memphis, of New Orleans, and of a thousand other instances, have excelled them in patient endurance, in Christian hope and undeviating friendship to those whom they regard as their deliverers, then, it has escaped my search.

As to the capacity of this people for improvement, I desire first to render thanks to the American Christian Association, and to other active patriots, through whose enlightened and kind offices, I was furnished with a number of Teachers, and then to state that, within six months after the commencement of my organization, it was officially reported to me that five hundred soldiers, scarcely one of whom previously knew a letter of the alphabet, 7 had learned to read and write "quite well," and that two to three thousand were advancing indifferently well. It must not be forgotten that the men were *adults*. In the presence of later developments this may appear to be inconsiderable. It must be recollected, however, that this was the pioneer movement, and that these results were achieved, amidst daily camps and drill duties, and in the face of an active and daring enemy. The most marvelous transformation that I have ever seen in real life, almost excelling the metamorphoses described by Ovid, was that of a poor ignorant plantation Black Man, stripped of his rags, and then clothed in the blue uniform of freedom, and subjected for six months to the drill and discipline of a soldier.

The general conclusion, then, is that sufficient has passed under my personal observation to satisfy me that the same discipline under like civil and political institutions, which elevated the Gurths and the Wambas of the days of Richard, the Lion-Hearted of England, into the Anglo-Saxon gentlemen of the nineteenth century, would, in process of time, produce its like legitimate effect in raising in the scale of being equally poor, despised and oppressed African of America. This age has no psychological phenomena more striking than the eager craving for education exhibited by the colored people of the South.

In closing my answer to the question, "what sort of soldiers do Blacks make?" I desire to read the official communication, I hold in my hand, from Brevet Major General Thomas W. Sherman, Commanding the Southern Division of Louisiana, himself one of the finest tacticians and strictest disciplinarians of the Regular Army:—

"Head'r's Southern Div. of La. New Orleans, La., June 11, 1865.

Lieut. Col. Chas. B. Gaskell, Comm'g 81st U. S. Col'd Inf.

"I am directed by Brevet Major General Sherman, Commanding, to say to you that he takes pleasure in stating that the condition of your Regiment is superior to any Volunteer Regiment he ever inspected, and in many important points it is equal to that of the best instructed Regular Troops.

"These important points are as follows:—General cleanliness, and care of arms and clothing; a life and spirit on the part of Field and Company Officers in their personal movements, and in the

conveyance of their orders and commands, thus inspiring the rank and file with a high degree of interest in their duties, and gaining their respect and confidence.

“The manoeuvres, with but few exceptions were made in that prompt, well-connected and shoulder to shoulder manner, that must have been pleasing to every soldier present.

“The General congratulates the Lieutenant Colonel Commanding upon the success in the training of his Regiment, and hopes that it may be retained in service as an exemplar around which may rally a large number of this description of troops.

I am, sir, very resp'ly, your obedient servant, (Signed,) WICKHAM HOFFMAN, Maj. and Ass. Adj't Gen.

A true copy.

(Signed,) Geo. P. Fernald, 1st Lt. and Adj't 81st U. S. C. I.”

Major General Sheridan has repeatedly expressed himself, respecting these Regiments, in terms even more favorable. What then becomes of the speculations of the “Anthropologists,” that the colored races have not faculties capable of improvement? Let them meet and answer this one fact;—large bodies of ignorant plantation negroes were in the opinion of officers as competent to judge as any in the service of the United States, transformed by our teaching and discipline, in a period by no means long, into troops, capable of military evolutions, bearing no unfavorable comparison with the best soldiers of the world.

We are now to consider the present condition of the South. I propose to speak of it from the standpoint of my own personal experience; derived first, from my being a native of a late slave State, Wllmington Delaware; Second, from having travelled extensively through the South in years past, and lastly from having had a command for two years at the South-West.

I. The Insurrectionary States need *regeneration* more than reconstruction.

The Southern evil is deeper than mere legislation. Constitutions and Laws rarely reach social forces. The reverse is the logical sequence. Naturally they should flow from social institutions. Mankind cannot be legislated into virtue. The difficulty at the South is eminently *social*, springing from a source, described in words of solemn import, uttered thirty-four years ago, by Southern Christians, in a document, issued in 1833, by the Presbyterian Synod of South Carolina and Georgia; I read an extract:—

“We make our appeal to universal experience. We are chained to a putrid carcase, (Slavery.) It sickens and destroys us. We have a millstone about the necks of our society to sink us deep into the sea of Vice. Our children are corrupting from their infancy, nor can we prevent it. Nor is the influence confined to mere childhood. If that were all it would be tremendous. But it follows us into youth, manhood and old age. In all our intercourse with them (the Slaves) we are undergoing a process of intellectual and moral deterioration, and it requires almost superhuman efforts, to maintain a high standing either for intelligence or piety.”

Surely these are words of weight, reaching into the far future. This is the key to unlock the Southern problem. Thence came the mental and moral induration, which rendered men capable of the fiendish cruelties of Andersonville, Belle Isle, Saulsbury, Fort Pillow, and, since what, with grim humor, has been called the end of the war, the scourging, outraging and murdering of women, the beating, shooting, drowning and roasting of men, in one single State, Texas, amounting in nine months to more than seven hundred flagrant murders; culminating in the riots of Memphis and New Orleans.

I am free to say that, in former days, I was one of those who listened with rather an incredulous ear, to the tales of Southern violence and cruelty, but personal observation has taught me that the imagination must be vivid, indeed, which can depict scenes equal to the frightful reality. Here, however, justice requires that it should be stated that in this, as in many other particulars, the several sections of the South differ much from each other. Indeed it is so far from being a unit in character as is erroneously supposed, that all generalizations will frequently fail in their special application.

Southern morals, manners and ideas, must pass away before a real regeneration can be achieved. This must be a work of time—of long time—based upon natural and socialistic forces, controlled by civil and political institutions. The terrible experience of Europe shows us that social changes are slow. Social regeneration on that continent required eleven long centuries of slow development to lift Society out of the slough of the middle ages; nor has it yet been, by any means, entirely accomplished. So, here, we shall find that many a wise scheme will come to nought,—many a carefully elaborated plan utterly fail, before these radical causes shall be removed; until they shall be, no matter what Constitutions you may establish, it is vain to expect that the Southern problem will be fully solved. Read the history of the first abortive attempt to reconstruct in Louisiana;—a lesson full of instruction.

Its leading principle, if principle it had, was to conciliate rebels, by catering to their tastes. A scheme of serfdom was devised, which, under the supervision of pliable provosts martial, rendered the

condition of the “freedmen” worse in many respects, than the slavery from which we professed to imancipate them. Disloyal men sympathised with that scheme, though I much doubt their boast that they devised and dictated it. At a time, 1864, when all we held of Louisiana were New Orleans; a few small towns, forts, military posts and a debateable fringe, half a mile in width, on each side of the Mississippi, and of a few other rivers and bayous; an election was held for a Constitutional Convention, and subsequently for State officers;—the polls being established in New Orleans, and in the forts and military posts. An individual was selected for Governor, whose chief, if not only notoriety, was derived from the well known fact, that he had in the midst of the rebellion, made in New Orleans, a flaming speech in presenting a rebel fiag to a rebel military organization. These were the leading features of a plan of reconstruction, which, were its history not filled with tragical incidents, disgracing humanity, we could only regard as a miserable farce. The tragical-farcical drama, commencing with Hahn, had, with an artistic regard to the anities, a fitting close in Wells, and the atrocious riot in New Orleans, on the 30th July, 1866.

No greater mistake was made in the conduct of the war, than the relieving of General Butler from the Command of the Department of the Gulf; its consequences are felt at this hour. His stern rule and incomparable administrative ability were rapidly producing their natural effects; and those portions of Louisiana, then under our control, were better fitted on the day of his recall, to commence the work of reconstruction, than they have been at any subsequent day. The report of his departure acted upon the rebels, and upon their foreign sympathizers, much as the raising of the safety valve of a steam-engine; they bounded with exultant elasticity, and displayed their delirious joy in many strange antics. Nor were their rejoicings misplaced,—the policy of slurring loyalty and conciliating rebels was immediately adopted, or rather followed up, and it will now require a long period of rule under even the rare combination of talent—military and civil, of a genius, so extraordinary as that of General Sheridan,—to repair the blunders and crimes of the past, and to bring the State back to the point where General Butler left her.

II. *The influential class at the South,—the men who brought about the rebellion, never will be loyal.* So far as they are concerned, (with many noble exceptions) loyalty can be hoped for only from future generations. It was unwise to imagine that the simple surrender of the armies of Lee and Johnston could transform malignant Rebels into loyal and peace-loving citizens. The violation of their paroles by the prisoners of Vicksburg and Port Hudson 9 showed how lightly oaths and pledges of honor pressed on the Southern conscience. The wildest dream of the day is that, in which many good people indulge,—that social wickedness, the bitter fruit of ages, can be eradicated by the exhibition of a little magnanimity.

Adults rarely change their opinions;—their prejudices, scarcely ever. With the mass, opinions are but prejudices. No accumulation of proof, and no cogency of reasoning will ever convince hundreds of thousands of the Insurrectionists, that their theory of the Government is illogical and false;—far less, that they have committed crimes, the atrocity of which will cause humanity to shudder to “the last syllable of recorded time.” The legal judgment of Southern lawyers, with some grand exceptions, Chief-Justice Marshall, for instance, has had a wry slant, on the question of State sovereignty and State rights, ever since the publication in the early part of this century, of the Lectures and Notes of St. George Tucker on the Commentaries of Justice Blackstone;—strengthened and confirmed by the subsequent pilgrimage of Martin Van Buren in search of “the lost rights of the States. We are forced by a painful necessity to believe that the physiological condition of vast masses of the South, resulting from the influences, described by the synod of South Carolina and Georgia, renders them incapable of distinguishing clearly between right and wrong. If Aristotle, Bacon and Pascal were summoned again to earth, and should unite in framing an argument, which Mill should revise and correct, proving that the doctrine of secession, under the Constitution of the United States, is a false and fatal delusion, and that the “Lost Cause” is a supremely wicked cause, it would make no more impression on their minds than a pistol-shot on an iron-clad Monitor. Listen, if you have patience, and can shut your eyes to their colossal impudence, to the dismal talk of such men as Henry A. Wise, Herschel V. Johnson and Alexander H. Stephens, printing about “holding on” to that Constitution, which they compassed sea and land to destroy;—declaring before the civilized world, of the Government which they strove to establish in its stead, that “its foundations rest, and its corner-stone is laid in the great truth that *slavery is the natural and moral condition of the negro.*” A magnificent Empire truly! which, in the 19th century, regardless of the glorious achievements of the Caucasian races in art, science, literature and philosophy, deliberately sought to erect its superstructure on the degradation of the African. Committing the unparalleled blunder and crime of assuming that an insurrection to perpetuate slavery and fortify the power of an insolent Oligarchy, was a revolution in behalf of freedom, and of the rights of man; this class, now, neither know how to submit, or how to change. They are not unlike the *ancienne noblesse* of France. Without a tith of the refinement, courtesy or real chivalry of that remarkable Aristocracy, the Slavocracy remind us constantly of their perfect unconsciousness of the rights of others, their insensibility to the sufferings of those beneath them, their intense conceit of personal superiority and obtuseness to the lessons of experience. Similar causes produced similar results,—punishment struck each like a whirl-wind. Unfortunately, the influence of this Oligarchy was always greatly in excess of its numbers. The wild lust of power permeated their whole existence, political manoeuvring was the study of their lives, and the young Southerner was taught that the one indispensable element of life is political success. This always justified the means. Thus, by playing off the political parties of the North against each other, they controlled the Government for two generations, and, even now,

notwithstanding their overwhelming reverses, they, are at this hour plotting, as of old; and filled with hope, they believe that by resuming their long tried tactics, and renewing their old alliance with the pseudo Democracy of the North, which, in fact, has never been broken, they will yet achieve a separation, or better, mount again to the political supremacy of the nation. Let that Democracy once gain a triumph, North, and a screech of defiance will ring through all the borders of the South. Strange as it is, thousands of these men have not relinquished the idea of re-establishing slavery. Surely in that they never will succeed directly, but the man lives not, who can divine what schemes the Slavocracy and the false Democracy combined should they return to power, may not devise and attempt to execute. Among them will be, first, the re-establishing of slavery, in fact, if not in name, or failing in that, making compensation to the former owners for the loss of their slaves:—Second, the repudiation of the National debt, or the assumption of the Confederate.

This is no time, then, for romantic dreams. Stern, practical sense is required. There must be a larger statesmanship, than that which regards the exemption of certain individuals from punishment as the end to be attained. Remember that the Rebellion was a stupendous crime, inaugurated and conducted by not mistaken or misguided men, but by felons, who knowingly and fiendishly committed the most horrible offences that the human mind can conceive,—perjury, robbery, treason, slaughtering, starving, hanging their 10 victims,—violating every rule of civilized warfare; and, that the object of all this was inexpressibly vile, selfishly and corruptly to perpetuate a system of human slavery, abhorrent to morals, abhorrent to humanity, abhorrent to God. Yet, in behalf of these men the appeal is made that they shall again walk into our National Councils—their hands reeking with the blood of our fathers, brothers and sons, and with the aid of a degenerate Northern democracy, insolently, as heretofore, control and govern this people.

The romantic dream that, by means of some subtle, indefinable or magical influence, by a declaration of universal amnesty and universal suffrage, communities now sullen, full of hate, bold, defiant, aggressive, eager, and waiting only for opportunities to display the terrible consequence of their social state, will suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, be transformed into a peace-loving and law-abiding people,—is simply an idle, and, if acted upon, will prove to be a fatal delusion. The inevitable effect of an universal amnesty will be to elevate to power in their respective States the Rebels, who brought about the insurrection, and thus to postpone indefinitely the regeneration of Southern society. Men, whose theory and practice of Government are so essentially vicious, never can become safe depositories of political power in a Republic. Permanent progress must be the result of natural progress,—not of sudden, adventitious, or forced measures. Socialistic forces lie at the basis of all the relations of society, civil, political and religious.

On the application of these truths to the regeneration of the South, there has been much drawing back, not only by sentimental philanthropists, but by those from whom better things were expected. Much eloquence has been expended on the beauty and excellence of magnanimity;—forgetting that lenity to individuals is sometimes the keenest cruelty to the mass, and that much of what passes in the world for magnanimity is simply fear:—As from the sublime to the ridiculous, so, from magnanimity to fear the step is but one. The modern definition of “magnanimity” is to treat your enemies as friends, and your friends as enemies.

The American people have suffered greatly from the lenity which, through the influence of the illustrious Clay, was shown in 1833 to the Nullifiers of South Carolina. The rebellion has proved how great was the error. Had President Jackson been permitted to execute his intention of indulging in a little “judicious hanging,” it is questionable whether the people of the South could have been dragooned into the insurrection of 1861. The celebrated letter on the subject of secession, which Mr. Clay addressed to me in the Autumn of 1851, was, I know, inspired by the fact that that great statesman and patriot had somewhat modified his opinion as to the wisdom of the course pursued in 1833. The rebellion was precipitated upon an unwilling people by a system of terrorism, and by the persistent inculcation of the idea that the pultrounery of the North would acquiesce in secession, without war. But the war did come, and the North did fight, and, as in its early indications, it was manifest that the causes being the growth of ages, the contest would not be short; so now, notwithstanding, the formal abolition of slavery, these causes yet permeating, enveloping and controlling Southern society, the *state* of war is not over. The rebellion is as rampant as ever, excepting that it has not now the physical ability to display its organized wickedness.

It is then, unwise, unstatesmanlike and unchristian to resort to any measures, because of a miscalled lenity, or of temporary expediency. All measures should be initiated, discussed and executed on the basis of a great and permanent future. Posterity will hold this generation to a strict account for the mode in which it avails itself of the victory obtained by the sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of precious lives and the expenditure of billions of treasure.

Under these circumstances, the first duty of the nation, if it intends to discharge its high and solemn obligations, by giving complete and thorough protection to the whole body of the loyal men—white and black—of the South, is to sweep out of existence the illegal and unconstitutional despotisms, claiming to be State Governments. Permit these governments to remain, and withdraw your troops, and the loyal men of the South are left to the tender mercy of the rebels—the Quantrells, the Lees, the Wirz, the Cobbs, the Fosters, the Tombs, the Pikes, the Winders, the Wises and the Morgans—and there are not a thousand Union men South whose lives are worth a year's purchase.

The binding force of all obligations depends much upon the circumstances surrounding their creation. No sublimer struggle between moral right and moral wrong ever dignified and exalted mankind than the war of the rebellion. How great then is the weight of its resulting obligations! No higher responsibility ever rested upon a nation than that which the American people had assumed, to protect, to the utmost of their ability, these loyal men in the full enjoyment of all their rights as freemen and citizens. This is the first and great trust—the betrayal of which, through indifference, cowardice or “magnanimity” will justly sink us into the lowest depth of infamy.

11

Having extinguished these despotisms, then, the problem to solve is, What is best for the loyal men of the present and coming generations? The wicked men who made such wild use of their political power as to destroy their own inheritance, and who strove to overwhelm in irremediable ruin the fabric on which rested the welfare of millions, are worthy of consideration, only so far as humanity dictates. The only rights they possess are the rights of the conquered, which are simply the rights of humanity. While, therefore, Vengeance should be left to that Divine Ruler who has declared that it is His, they should be deprived, hereafter, of the power of doing evil. There are two modes of producing this result; first, their enforced absence from the United States for a time covering the period of reconstruction. This would be thorough and effectual, and as they forfeited their necks, they should render thanks for so easy an escape. Previous to the collapse, they expected, with good cause, a worse fate. But the course of events and of public sentiment indicates that this is now impracticable. In default of this, then, second, they should be disfranchised for a term of years. This would not be a measure of revenge, or even of punishment, but simply of protection and security. Give to them every just protection for their lives, their liberties and their property, but let them no longer have the power of endangering the lives, liberties and property of others. Of course it will always be wise and generous to relieve individuals by pardon, whenever their repentance and good conduct will justify it.

The practical point, then, is this: disregarding as unworthy the attention of a Christian people, that worse than vain theory, that the measure of crime is in the inverse ratio of the number of those engaged in its commission, the Insurrectionary States shall be placed exclusively in the hands of the genuine loyal men, white and black, of their several communities, and, until the Governments, which they shall organize, in strict conformity with the Laws and Constitution of the United States, shall have respectively obtained consistency, firmness and ability to sustain themselves, they shall be supported by the military power of the United States Less than this will be a violation of national honor and justice.

Let us see upon whom we can rely. Assuming the population of the former Slave States at twelve millions, this may be an approximate classification:

1. Unionists, white, who always stood firm 2,000,00
 2. do black, do 3,500,000
 3. do who by persuasion or pressure became rebels 2,000,000
 4. Secessionists now loyal 2,000,000
 5. Rebels, malignant and implacable 2,500,000
- 12,000,000

This last class comprises the men of whom I have chiefly spoken this evening. They are the men who, with perjury on their lips and in their hearts, in pursuance of a conspiracy which was thirty years maturing, contemptuously and defiantly in 1860–1 walked out of the halls of Congress, and who, perpetrating the atrocities of Andersonville, and a thousand other deeds of infamy, now burn school-houses, shoot “niggers” and Unionists at sight, and get up riots in Memphis and New Orleans. The wholesome discipline of years of disfranchisement will break the power of their malignant influence.

Class No. 1, the men who never bowed the knee to Baal, must be our chief reliance. Among them, scattered all over the South, are men of high culture, and of as high-toned principle as any the world contains. The reason is manifest. Men, who in the midst of the whirlwind which swept over the Rebel States, could yet hold on to their integrity, must necessarily be of a superior mould. The prevalent opinion that the rebels monopolized all the intelligence and culture of the insurrectionary States, is only one of the many blunders which have characterized this complication of blunders. This is disproved by the simple mention of the name of my lamented friend, James Louis Petigru, of Charleston, than whom this nation never produced a grander old man.

In class No. 3 may be found many, which, if they can be assured of protection, will readily unite in re-framing their commonwealths on just principles. Then, again, class No. 4 contains not a few persons, who, honorable at heart, were, notwithstanding, unwisely drawn into secessionism by educational prejudices and false doctrines insidiously sown, and who now, recognizing the folly of the rebellion, “accept the situation.” Of this class General Longstreet is a notable example.

We come now to class No. 2, the colored Unionists who always stood firm. There they are, three and a half millions of human beings, American citizens, born on this soil—full of hopes and fears, their destinies inextricably interwoven with that of this nation—what is to be done with them? The answer is written, as with sun-beams, on every page of our history: *Yield to them all the rights of citizens, and educate them.* “Horrible!” exclaim hundreds; “give to the ignorant negro the inestimable privilege of voting!” Why not? It is not a privilege to be granted, but a right to be 12 recognized and enforced. Suffrage is a right which, on analysis, is resolved into two-elements. First, it is a natural, personal right, because Governments derive “their just powers from the *consent* of the governed;” and second, because the act of voting is an act of governing others; this natural right may be qualified or limited whenever its individual exercise interferes with the general well-being. Such limitations, however, can only be justified when the reasons are of overruling necessity. Thus burglars, rebels, highwaymen, and other felons are denied, because their acts indicate hostility to the existence of all governments; lunatics, because of a deficiency of mind; minors, because of not having arrived at what is termed the age of discretion; and aliens, because a period of probation is judged to be necessary to learn the principles of the Government. The object of all Government should be to carry out for their benefit the collective will of all whom it affects. The theory of representative democracy, which is a Republic, is that it is a government of the whole people; “It is a government *of* the people, *by* the people, *for* for the people;” and, therefore, the arbitrary exclusion of any class from suffrage, except when great reasons of State demand it, as in the case of the unrepentant Rebels, is a violation of its fundamental principle; which wrong works other wrongs, and will lead to an infinitude of evil, until theory and action become concurrent.

“But,” continued the objector, “these are degraded, ignorant beings.” Aye, but who made them so, and who, therefore, should suffer the penalty? The answer may be found in that sublime utterance of the Martyr-President, which will ring through all the ages like the words of a prophet of old: “Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may soon pass away. Yet, if God will that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil, shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid with another drawn by the sword; as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, ‘The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.’”

As in the physical, so in the moral world, partial views indicate confusion, but as science in the former, so history in the latter, proves that in the comprehensive cycles of events, exact and equal compensation is one of the controlling laws by which God holds together both the physical and moral universe. Had the war of the rebellion closed during the first two years after its inception, no mortal vision could now foresee when the social system of the South would have been relieved from the nightmare of slavery. This nation has passed through several historical cycles; it is now entering

upon one, whose exalted privilege it will be to make practical to ourselves and to all mankind, the logical consequences of the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence.

But this makes little impression on Mr. Objector, and he reiterates, through the various forms of rhetoric, "they are ignorant." Well then, sir, you claim to be a democrat, be consistent;—if ignorance be good cause for withholding a right, it is equally good cause for withdrawing it. Will you, because of ignorance, withdraw the right of suffrage from the tens and hundreds of thousands, North and South, who now exercise it? "O no," you exclaim. Wherein is the difference? One is as just as the other, and if you were consistent in your arrogation of democracy, you would not evade the logic of your position. But we also say, *no:—Do equal justice to all; withhold no rights, withdraw no rights;—place all on an equal footing.* As to ignorance, my observation tells me that the relative intelligence of the Blacks is not less than that of the "Sandhillers," the "Clay-eaters," the "We-uns and you-uns," and the "Poor-white-trash" of the insurrectionary States. It is quite certain that no body of Black voters could ever make a wilder, vainer, or more wicked use of the ballot, than did the members of the several secession conventions of 1860–61, who respectively voted to take eleven States out of the United States.

But, not only should suffrage be extended to this class, because it is a personal, natural right, but, also, because it is a high, overruling, absolute, necessity, for our and their security. Independently of all other considerations, they must have the right of suffrage that they may defend themselves in their rights. Statistics show that if the question of freedom or slavery, Union or Disunion were *now* submitted to the White vote alone of the South, slavery would be re-established and the Union dissolved, Unless you resort to the colored vote, the United States cannot "guarantee to every State in this Union a republican form of government," except by the bayonet. This nation is compelled by a moral-law, which it cannot long resist, to throw around these people the protection of the right of suffrage. Otherwise, military governments, a system abnormal in a republic, contrary to our traditions and repugnant to our sentiments, will necessarily be continued indefinitely. It is true that there are portions of the South, the State of Mississippi, for instance, where there never has been a government half so civilized as the present military rule. The bowie-knife and the revolver have always governed more in Mississippi than courts of justice. Is any man so stolid as to suppose that the 180,000 colored men whom we have educated and disciplined as soldiers, together with the hundreds of thousands they have, as missionaries, since educated, will remain contented in the future, if this nation shall so offend against justice as to deny to them and to their race the rights to which they are entitled?

The worst curse that can be inflicted on the South, is to excite the hopes of the slaveocracy that, by any sceme of political intrigue, by any device of treachery, by any alliance with the sham democracy

of the North, they can escape the inevitable consequences of their social system:—uncompromising justice meted out to them by the hand of the Creator. The sooner they and we—the sooner the whole people understand and realize that this great question of slavery, is to be finally fought out over the question of reconstruction and over that other question of greater magnitude, regeneration, of which, indeed, reconstruction is a mere corollary, namely, that human slavery, under all the multiform disguises and insidious shapes of serfdom, peonage, vassalage, apprenticeship, vagrancy, black-codes, system of cotters, contracts for a year, shall be utterly eliminated from the land—the sooner the end will be reached. No party, no people, least of all the American people—can afford, in the 19th century, to deny to the American born African, the right of suffrage, or any of the rights of man. The march of this age is not retrograde to medieval darkness, but forward, onward, upward, to a day brighter and more glorious for all the children of men than any that has heretofore dawned on the nations.

While then equal suffrage is a necessity, which the American people cannot avoid, even if they so desired, there is a cognate duty of equal, if not greater binding force:—Indeed, the highest duty of a government, such as this, based on intelligence and virtue, and without which, republican institutions are a mockery, is to strive by every means, which the Supreme Intelligence has given us, to render education universal. A real regeneration of the South must begin with the education of all classes. The first obstacle to overcome, there, is the wide-spread unconsciousness of its necessity. All the world knows that the policy of the slave States has been, for not less than two generations, to discourage by every device, and generally by positive enactments, the education not only of the Blacks, but also of the “poor whites.” One million of persons, all told, constituting the most selfish aristocracy that ever cursed mankind, strove to continue in hopeless ignorance 11,000,000 of laborers, thus making them all practically slaves. Their theory was that all labor should be subservient to capital, that is, that all employers should be Lords and all employees, vassals, serfs, or slaves. This whole system must be supplanted by making universal the machinery of civilization, social, civil, political and religious. Nor should the efforts of the General Government be confined to any section. If there are two subjects, which, interesting the whole mass of the people, are, above all others, pre-eminently *National*, and which, in a representative democracy, should be inwrought into the whole structure of its Government, they are equal suffrage and universal education. Every child born into the world has a moral right to have its faculties educated to the highest decree, of which they are capable, and I can conceive of no higher, nobler function, devolving upon a government, than to make that right practical and universal. But, say hypocrites, “this is common-place.” Is it, therefore, not true? The great agents of nature around us are “common-place,”—are they, therefore, not valuable? This beautiful earth, on which we “live and move and have our being,”—this surrounding atmosphere, whose air is our breath,—those great waters which make habitable the globe,—yon genial, sun, which makes all fruitful,—are they not all “common-

place!" Would that education—education of all the faculties, physical, mental and moral, of all human beings, not only in this, but in all lands, were as common-place and so as universal!

Unless the Constitution of a free people provides for the universal education of that people, it contains the seeds of its own destruction. No wider field exists for the beneficent powers of Government than the universal education of all who are within the sphere of its action. The interests at stake, of the whole nation are too vast and universal to be left entirely to private effort and to the undivided action of the several States:—Some of the States have not only neglected but by penal enactments have forbidden the education of portions of their inhabitants. While, therefore, it may well be, that the National Government should not enter directly into the execution of plans for educating the people, yet it should have the power to compel the State Governments to discharge their duty.

It is respectfully suggested that the following amendment is necessary, in order that all disputed points on these subjects may be set at rest forever, and that the Constitution of the United States may be brought into symmetrical accord with the Declaration of Independence:

The Congress shall provide by law that in the States, education shall be universal, and suffrage equal and uniform.

14

Having accomplished this, let Congress pass a law that no citizen arriving at the age of twenty-one years, on and after the fourth day of July, 1872, shall be entitled to vote, unless he can write his name and read the Constitution of the United States.

Incorporate that amendment into your Constitution and pass laws in accordance with its mandates, and while you withhold no right and withdraw no right, you will establish a system, which, in the great future, will be all pervading and comprehensive in its beneficent influence.

III. Before proceeding to speak of the final topic of this address, I desire to say a few words respecting a general error, regarding the ability of the white man to labor in the region lying between the Potomac and the Gulf, and the Atlantic and the Mississippi.

I have had under my command at the southwest, in sections considered to be as unhealthy as any of that vast region, exposed to the same climate, eating like rations, under like discipline and performing like labor, and under the same rules and orders, white troops from Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Louisiana and Texas, together with colored troops from Missouri, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas; all subjected to like conditions.

The surgeons of the command were required to report specifically and frequently, as to all the influences affecting the sanitary condition of all the troops. There were marked differences as to the power of endurance, both among the white and colored troops, but by no means so great between the white and colored as between those of each class. The colored soldiers from Missouri were physically not equal to the others, and those from Mississippi and Texas had less endurance than those from Louisiana, while many white regiments were more hardy than any colored, except the Louisiana, and one white regiment, owing to exceptional causes was quickly reduced nearly half by fevers. The conclusion arrived at after a careful comparison of facts, was that individual habits and previous personal conditions determine more than immediate local influences. It depends upon individual conduct—not whether the man is white or colored. With intelligent regard to the laws of hygiene the white man can labor at the South as well as the colored. Both are at times and in some places, much exposed, but the relative danger is not due to local influences. An intelligent traveler and writer, whose opportunities of observation have been great, Mr. Olmsted, is very emphatic in his declaration that “the climate is no preventive of labor by the white race in the South.”

IV. The history of Rome, especially during the last days of the Republic; that of France prior to the revolution of 1789; and that of England, up to and including our own times, show that great landed estates, great plantations, and some species of slavery or serfdom, in form or in spirit, are inseparable.

The investigations of historians have established that “the large Roman plantations, tilled by slave labor, were the ruin of Italy.” The owners of small farms, the small freeholders, then, as now, could not exist surrounded by vast estates, cultivated by slave labor. Italy, as described by Bancroft, closely resembled the former slave States of America. Nearly all the lands of Italy were owned by great proprietors and cultivated by slaves, and as at the South, the mansions of the wealthy were seen, at long intervals, standing in solitary grandeur. The failure of Licinius, Emelianus, and those far seeing statesmen and patriots, the Gracchi, to arrest and remedy these evils, was the cause of the overthrow of the Roman Republic. Small freeholders were absorbed in the great estates, and free labor was crushed out by unpaid labor.

For several centuries modern Europe may be said to have been arrayed into two great hostile camps—on the one side the feudal lords, with their intolerable exactions and oppressions, on the other the vassals, serfs or slaves, striving with fire and the battleaxe to hew their way to liberty and civilization. Hence flowed desolation, impoverishment, and bloody, terrible, and pitiless wars. The abolition of serfdom and vassalage in France was the result of centuries, yet, perhaps, in no other country of Europe was the peasant the victim of greater oppression—culminating in the sweeping changes and the dreadful expiation of 1789. The condition of the peasant at that period was simply that of a

slave. While the first revolution of France did not introduce the system of dividing the great landed estates of the nobles, yet from that period it became the settled policy of the nation, and writers agree that the provision of the Civil Code, which compels an equal division of land at the death of the owner, while it renders serfdom impracticable, and has raised the peasant to comparative comfort and independence; has also greatly increased the productive power of the empire.*

* "It was but a month since that I was in France, where a different state of things existed. In every part of it which I visited, I was told that the peasantry were never in such comfortable circumstances as now. 'We are not obliged to deny ourselves anything,' said one of them, living in the neighborhood of Paris, to a friend of mine. I heard the same account in La Vendee, where I passed several days. I was told the same thing in Brittan and in Normandy, and I see that Dr. Forne's book gives a like representation of the agricultural class in what was the ancient province of Champagne. One reason of this prosperity is doubtless the opening of a free trade with England, which has given France a market for the products of its soil, and enhanced their price; another reason is that the soil from which these products are obtained belongs to him who cultivates it with his hands. The peasant of France is a *freeholder*; the land is minutely divided among an immense class of owners. It may ere long, perhaps, in consequence of the policy of the French laws, become too minutely partitioned, but it has not reached that point yet, and the soil is tilled all the more carefully and thriftily, because both the soil and its fruits are the property of the tiller.

William Cullen Bryant.

July 8, 1867."

15

Turn to another scene—cross the British Channel, and how striking the contrast!

Mr. Ernest Jones says that in the three Kingdoms there are seventy-one millions of acres, and thirty thousand landlords. The Duke of Cleveland can ride twenty-three miles through his own estate; the Duke of Devonshire has ninety-six thousand acres in the county of Derby alone; the Duke of Richmond possesses three hundred and forty thousand acres; and, it is said, that, while the Duke of Buccleuch can travel seventy miles on his own land direct to the English frontier, the Marquis of Breadalbane can ride one hundred miles in a straight line through his property from his own door.

So much for the great Barons; how is it with the peasant—British writers being the authority? They describe his lot as that of the most hopeless of men, his stolid ignorance as utterly deplorable. The *Saturday Review*, published in the Metropolis of the Empire, speaking of "British vassals," says: "If foreigners write about them, we are moved to a languid shame and sadness by thinking how true

the picture, and what wretched, uncared for, untaught *brutes* the people are who raise the crops on which we live. This is the poor man which modern *feudalism* produces." The London Review says: "At this time there is no country, no matter how embarrassed or how poor, in which there is so much pressing and painful poverty, so much vice, ignorance and misery as in England. We have failed with our lower classes to such an extent, that in the country we find some of them working like cattle, fed and housed worse than cattle."

Let us return to continental Europe, and visit Prussia, now confessedly the chief of the Five Great Powers: Whence comes her greatness? Largely from the reforms introduced by Baron Von Stein, who, judging by results, may be considered to be the ablest of European statesmen in this century. In 1807 the feudal tenure of land existed with all its rigor in Prussia. The peasantry were serfs forced to render to their superior, both agricultural and menial services. The keen and searching eye of Stein saw that this system not only debased the peasant, condemning him to utter ignorance, but, but by crippling the productive strength of the realm, reduced it to poverty and weakness. He, therefore, inaugurated a series of edicts, the objects of which, among others, were by a gradual process, to extinguish feudal services, including all property in man, or in human labor, and to transform the feudal tenants of land into *freeholders*. Hutton estimates that in consequence of these edicts, and the measures necessarily flowing from them, that up to and including the year 1865, "83,288 peasants had become freeholders, "and nearly a million properties had been "relieved from more than thirty millions of "distinct feudal services." But Stein did not stop here, he saw that more was necessary, he, therefore, made the liability to military service universal, and civil education practically universal, pervading, as it does, by means of the philosophical system of Pestalozzi, every order of society, and every grade of intellect. Thus Prussia, which, at the peace of Tilsit, in 1807, was reduced to the lowest ebb,—her boundaries contracted, and her population not exceeding 4,600,000 people, has in 1866-7, risen to the highest pitch of grandeur and strength, and her rural population, once the most ignorant of Europe, now celebrated, throughout the civilized world, for their education, industry and general intelligence. Prussia is as much indebted to Stein for her crowning victory at Koniggratz as to Bismarck or Moltke.

Shall we learn nothing from these examples, thus by me hastily and imperfectly sketched? Lords and vassals are correlative terms. Where there are no lords, there can be no vassals. Lords and vassals can not co-exist without land. The small freeholder cannot live surrounded by large owners. Where the policy of a country is to congregate masses of laborers on great landed estates, it matters little by what term you designate them,—in effect they will be slaves, serfs or vassals. Such is the condition of large sections of England at this hour. Such was the condition of the South, such will be its condition in the future, unless, in addition to the formal abolition of slavery, all the logical consequences of that act of supreme wisdom and justice are met, acknowledged and enforced.

Let us then follow in the path marked out by the illustrious Stein. If we wish in the future to save generations from the effects of this monopoly of land, trenching deeply, as we have seen, into the economy of human life, the welfare of nations and the permanence of States, involving in fact, that other kindred question, the proper relation of capital and labor,—the just distribution of the fruits of industry,—then, the huge plantations of the South must be divided. If we wish to create an intelligent, free and industrious yeomanry, the necessity of the South—then those vast and fertile fields comprising some of the fairest portions of the earth, must be subdivided and pass into the ownership of men who will till them with their own hands. How shall this be done? By confiscation?

It may be, as many think, that the time for confiscating the estates, or even for the punishment of the chief Rebels, has passed. Perhaps it has. Both should have followed the war as the thunderbolt the lightning. This nation may yet rue the day that it repeated the error of 1833, and did not at once, adopt a decided and firm policy. The state of unrest into which we have been plunged by the treachery of some and the weakness of others, has aggravated and cumulated the evils flowing from the war, to a degree which no mathematician can estimate. If the estates of the leading Rebels had been confiscated, it would have offered an unequalled opportunity to inaugurate in the South a system of small freeholds, by selling the lands in small parcels, at low rates, to the soldiers of the war on condition of actual settlement and residence. It would seem, however, that the soldiers of the Rebellion must, as did those of the Revolution and the war of 1812, look for their reward to the next generation.

The practical decision of the questions discussed this evening is above and beyond the welfare of the present inhabitants of the South,—it far transcends them and us;—it relates to the future condition of the unnumbered millions, who, rising to a higher, purer, grander individual and national life than has hitherto blessed mankind, will make this great continent, if we do our duty, the abode of civilization and Christianity.

The essential characteristic of the most exalted grade of civilization is where there is a harmonious unity in the entire aggregate of the actions of a nation. No phenomena in the universe, mental or physical can stand alone,—all are connected and independent. The misery or happiness of one portion of society must affect all other portions, and is in return affected by them. In the emphatic language of Herbert Spencer “no one can be perfectly “free till all are free; no one can be perfectly “moral till all are moral; no one can be perfectly “happy till all are happy.”

“ The Great Republic ” print.