

The Case of the Negro

Booker T. Washington

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ALL attempts to settle the question of the Negro in the South by his removal from this country have so far failed, and I think that they are likely to fail. The next census will probably show that we have nearly ten million black people in the United States, about eight millions of whom are in the Southern states. In fact, we have almost a nation within a nation. The Negro population in the United States lacks but two millions of being as large as the whole population of Mexico, and is nearly twice as large as that of Canada. Our black people equal in number the combined populations of Switzerland, Greece, Honduras, Nicaragua, Cuba, Uruguay [sic], Santo Domingo, Paraguay, and Costa Rica. When we consider, in connection with these facts, that the race has doubled itself since its freedom, and is still increasing, it hardly seems possible for any one to take seriously any scheme of emigration from America as a method of solution. At most, even if the government were to provide the means, but a few hundred thousand could be transported each year. The yearly increase in population would more than likely overbalance the number transported. Even if it did not, the time required to get rid of the Negro by this method would perhaps be fifty or seventy-five years.

Some have advised that the Negro leave the South, and take up his residence in the Northern states. I question whether this would make him any better off than he is in the South, when all things are considered. It has been my privilege to study the condition of our people in nearly every part of America; and I say without hesitation that, with some exceptional cases, the Negro is at his best in the Southern states. While he enjoys certain privileges in the North that he does not have in the South, when it comes to the matter of securing property, enjoying business advantages and employment, the South presents a far better opportunity than the North. Few colored men from the South are as yet able to stand up against the severe and increasing competition that exists in the North, to say nothing of the unfriendly influence of labor organizations, which in some way prevents black men in the North, as a rule, from securing occupation in the line of skilled labor.

Another point of great danger for the colored man who goes North is the matter of morals, owing to the numerous temptations by which he finds himself surrounded. More ways offer in which he can spend money than in the South, but fewer avenues of employment for earning money are open to him. The fact that at the North the Negro is almost confined to one line of occupation often tends to discourage and demoralize the strongest who go from the South, and makes them an easy prey for temptation. A few years ago, I made an examination into the condition of a settlement of Negroes who left the South and went into Kansas about twenty years since, when there was a good deal of excitement in the South concerning emigration from the West, and found it much below the standard of that of similar communities in the South. The only conclusion which any one can reach, from this and like instances, is that the Negroes are to remain in the Southern states. As a race they do not want to leave the South, and the Southern white people do not want them to leave. We must therefore find some basis of settlement that will be constitutional, just, manly; that will be fair to both races in the South and to the whole country. This cannot be done in a day, a year, or any short period of time. We can, however, with the present light, decide upon a reasonably safe method of solving the problem, and turn our strength and effort in that direction. In doing this, I would not have the Negro deprived of any privilege guaranteed to him by the Constitution of the United States. It is not best for the Negro that he relinquish any of his constitutional rights; it is not best for the Southern white man that he should, as I shall attempt to show in this article.

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In order that we may concentrate our forces upon a wise object, without loss of time or effort, I want to suggest what seems to me and many others the wisest policy to be pursued. I have reached these conclusions not only by reason of my own observations and experience, but after eighteen years of direct contact with leading and influential colored and white men in most parts of our country. But I wish first to mention some elements of danger in the present situation, which all who desire the permanent welfare of both races in the South should carefully take into account.

First. There is danger that a certain class of impatient extremists among the Negroes in the North, who have little knowledge of the actual conditions in the South, may do the entire race injury by attempting to advise their brethren in the South to resort to armed resistance or the use of the torch, in order to secure justice. All intelligent and well-considered discussion of any important question, or condemnation of any wrong, whether in the North or the South, from the public platform and through the press, is to be commended and encouraged; but ill-considered and incendiary utterances from black men in the North will tend to add to the burdens of our people in the South rather than to relieve them. We must not fall into the temptation of believing that we can raise ourselves by abusing some one else.

Second. Another danger in the South which should be guarded against is that the whole white South, including the wise, conservative, law-abiding element, may find itself represented before the bar of public opinion by the mob or lawless element, which gives expression to its feelings and tendency in a manner that advertises the South throughout the world; while too often those who have no sympathy with such disregard of law are either silent, or fail to speak in a sufficiently emphatic manner to offset in any large degree the unfortunate reputation which the lawless have made for many portions of the South.

Third. No race or people ever got upon its feet without severe and constant struggle, often in the face of the greatest discouragement. While passing through the present trying period of its history, there is danger that a large and valuable element of the Negro race may become discouraged in the effort to better its condition. Every possible influence should be exerted to prevent this.

Fourth. There is a possibility that harm may be done to the South and to the Negro by exaggerated newspaper articles which are written near the scene or in the midst of specially aggravating occurrences. Often these reports are written by newspaper men, who give the impression that there is a race conflict throughout the South, and that all Southern white people are opposed to the Negro's progress; overlooking the fact that though in some sections there is trouble, in most parts of the South, if matters are not yet in all respects as we would have them, there is nevertheless a very large measure of peace, good will, and mutual helpfulness. In the same relation, much can be done to retard the progress of the Negro by a certain class of Southern white people, who in the midst of excitement speak or write in a manner that gives the impression that all Negroes are lawless, untrustworthy, and shiftless. For example, a Southern writer said, not long ago, in a communication to the *New York Independent*: "Even in small towns the husband cannot venture to leave his wife alone for an hour at night. At no time, in no place, is the white woman safe from the insults and assaults of these creatures." These statements, I presume, represented the feelings and the conditions that existed, at the time of the writing, in one community or county in the South; but thousands of Southern white men and women would be ready to testify that this is not the condition throughout the South, nor throughout any Southern state.

Fifth. Owing to the lack of school opportunities for the Negro in the rural districts of the South, there is danger that ignorance and idleness may increase to the extent of giving the Negro race a reputation for crime, and that immorality may eat its way into the fibre of the race so as to retard its progress for many years. In judging the Negro we must not be too harsh. We must remember that it has been only within the last thirty-four years that the black father and mother have had the responsibility, and consequently the experience, of training their own children. That perfection has not been reached in one generation, with the obstacles that the parents have been compelled to overcome, is not to be wondered at.

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Sixth. Finally, I would mention my fear that some of the white people of the South may be led to feel that the way to settle the race problem is to repress the aspirations of the Negro by legislation of a kind that confers certain legal or political privileges upon an ignorant and poor white man, and withholds the same privileges from a black man in a similar condition. Such legislation injures and retards the progress of both races. It is an injustice to the poor white man, because it takes from him incentive to secure education and property as prerequisites for voting. He feels that because he is a white man, regardless of his possessions, a way will be found for him to vote. I would label all such measures "laws to keep the poor white man in ignorance and poverty."

The Talladega News Reporter, a Democratic newspaper of Alabama, recently said: "But it is a weak cry when the white man asks odds on intelligence over the Negro. When nature has already so handicapped the African in the race for knowledge, the cry of the boasted Anglo-Saxon for still further odds seems babyish. What wonder that the world looks on in surprise, if not disgust? It cannot help but say, If our contention be true that the Negro is an inferior race, then the odds ought to be on the other side, if any are to be given. And why not? No; the thing to do the only thing that will stand the test of time is to do right, exactly right, let come what will. And that right thing, as it seems to us, is to place a fair educational qualification before every citizen, one that is self-testing, and not dependent on the wishes of weak men, letting all who pass the test stand in the proud ranks of American voters, whose votes shall be counted as cast, and whose sovereign will shall be maintained as law by all the powers that be. Nothing short of this will do. Every exemption, on whatsoever ground, is an outrage that can only rob some legitimate voter of his rights."

Such laws have been made, in Mississippi, for example, with the "understanding" clause, hold out a temptation for the election officer to perjure and degrade himself by too often deciding that the ignorant white man does understand the Constitution when it is read to him, and that the ignorant black man does not. By such a law, the state not only commits a wrong against its black citizens; it injures the morals of its white citizens by conferring such a power upon any white man who may happen to be a judge of elections.

Such laws are hurtful, again, because they keep alive in the heart of the black man the feeling that the white man means to oppress him. The only safe way out is to set a high standard as a test of citizenship, and require blacks and whites alike to come up to it. When this is done, both will have a higher respect for the election laws, and for those who make them. I do not believe that, with his centuries of advantage over the Negro in the opportunity to acquire property and education as prerequisites for voting, the average white man in the South desires that any special law be passed to give him further advantage over one who has had but a little more than thirty years in which to prepare himself for citizenship. In this relation, another point of danger is that the Negro has been made to feel that it is his duty continually to oppose the Southern white man in politics, even in matters where no principle is involved; and that he is only loyal to his own race and acting in a manly way in thus opposing the white man. Such a policy has proved very hurtful to both races. Where it is a matter of principle, where a question of right or wrong is involved, I would advise the Negro to stand by principle at all hazards. A Southern white man has no respect for or confidence in a Negro who acts merely for policy's sake; but there are many cases, and the number is growing, where the Negro has nothing to gain, and much to lose, by opposing the Southern white man in matters that relate to government.

Under the foregoing six heads I believe I have stated some of the main points which, all high-minded white men and black men, North and South, will agree, need our most earnest and thoughtful consideration, if we would hasten, and not hinder, the progress of our country.

Now as to the policy that should be pursued. On this subject I claim to possess no superior wisdom or unusual insight. I may be wrong; I may be in some degree right.

In the future we want to impress upon the Negro, more than we have done in the past, the importance of identifying himself more closely with the interests of the South; of making himself part of the South, and at home in it. Heretofore, for reasons which were natural, and for which no one is especially to blame, the colored people

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have been too much like a foreign nation residing in the midst of another nation. If William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, or George L. Stearns were alive to-day, I feel sure that he would advise the Negroes to identify their interests as closely as possible with those of their white neighbors, always understanding that no question of right and wrong is involved. In no other way, it seems to me, can we get a foundation for peace and progress. He who advises against this policy will advise the Negro to do that which no people in history, who have succeeded, have done. The white man, North or South, who advises the Negro against it advises him to do that which he himself has not done. The bed rock upon which every individual rests his chances for success in life is the friendship, the confidence, the respect, of his next-door neighbor in the little community in which he lives. The problem of the Negro in the South turns on whether he can make himself of such indispensable service to his neighbor and the community that no one can fill his place better in the body politic. There is at present no other safe course for the black man to pursue. If the Negro in the South has a friend in his white neighbor, and a still larger number of friends in his own community, he has a protection and a guarantee of his rights that will be more potent and more lasting than any our Federal Congress or any outside power can confer.

The London Times, in a recent editorial discussing affairs in the Transvaal, where Englishmen have been denied certain privileges by the Boers, says:

"England is too sagacious not to prefer a gradual reform from within, even should it be the most sweeping redress of grievances imposed from without. Our object is to obtain fair play, and to do it is to enable them to help themselves."

This policy, I think, is equally safe when applied to conditions in the South. The foreigner who comes to America identifies himself as soon as possible, in business, education, and politics, with the community in which he settles. We have a conspicuous example of this in the case of the Jews, who in the South, as well as in other parts of our country, have not always been justly treated; but the Jews have so woven themselves into the business and patriotic interests of the communities in which they live, have made themselves so valuable as citizens, that they have won a place in the South which they could have obtained in no other way. The Negro in Cuba has practically settled the race question there, because he has made himself a part of Cuba in thought and action.

What I have tried to indicate cannot be accomplished by any sudden revolution of methods, but it does seem that the tendency should be more and more in this direction. Let me emphasize this by a practical example. The North sends thousands of dollars into the South every year for the education of the Negro. The teachers in most of the Southern schools supported by the North are Northern men and women of the highest Christian culture and most unselfish devotion. The Negro owes them a debt of gratitude which can never be paid. The various missionary societies in the North have done a work which to a large degree has proved the salvation of the South, and the results of it will appear more in future generations than in this. We have now reached the point, in the South, where, I believe, great good could be accomplished in changing the attitude of the white people toward the Negro, and of the Negro toward the whites, if a few Southern white teachers, of high character, would take an active interest in the work of our higher schools. Can this be done? Yes. The medical school connected with Shaw University at Raleigh, North Carolina, has from the first had as instructors and professors almost exclusively Southern white doctors who reside in Raleigh, and they have given the highest satisfaction. This gives the people of Raleigh the feeling that the school is theirs, and not something located in, but not a part of, the South. In Augusta, Georgia, the Payne Institute, one of the best colleges for our people, is officered and taught almost wholly by Southern white men and women. The Presbyterian Theological School at Tuscaloosa, Alabama, has only Southern white men as instructors. Some time ago, at the Calhoun School in Alabama, one of the leading white men in the county was given an important position; since then the feeling of the white people in the county has greatly changed toward the school.

We must admit the stern fact that at present the Negro, through no choice of his own, is living in the midst of another race, which is far ahead of him in education, property, and experience; and further, that the Negro's present condition makes him dependent upon the white people for most of the things necessary to sustain life, as

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well as, in a large measure, for his education. In all history, those who have possessed the property and intelligence have exercised the greatest control in government, regardless of color, race, or geographical location. This being the case, how can the black man in the South improve his estate? And does the Southern white man want him to improve it? The latter part of this question I shall attempt to answer later in this article.

The Negro in the South has it within his power, if he properly utilizes the forces at hand, as far ahead of him in education, property, and experience; and further, that the Negro's present condition makes him dependent upon the white people for most of the things necessary to sustain life, as well as, in a large measure, for his education. In all history, those who have possessed the property and intelligence have exercised the greatest control in government, regardless of color, race, or geographical location. This being the case, how can the black man in the South improve his estate? And does the Southern white man want him to improve it? The latter part of this question I shall attempt to answer later in this article.

The Negro in the South has it within his power, if he properly utilizes the forces at hand, to make of himself such a valuable factor in the life of the South that for the most part he need not seek privileges, but they will be conferred upon him. To bring this about, the Negro must begin at the bottom and lay a sure foundation, and not be lured by any temptation into trying to rise on a false footing. While the Negro is laying this foundation, he will need help and sympathy and justice from the law. Progress by any other method will be but temporary and superficial, and the end of it will be worse than the beginning. American slavery was a great curse to both races, and I should be the last to apologize for it; but in the providence of God I believe that slavery laid the foundation for the solution of the problem that is now before us in the South. Under slavery, the Negro was taught every trade, every industry, that furnishes the means of earning a living. Now if on this foundation, laid in a rather crude way, it is true, but a foundation nevertheless, we can gradually grow and improve, the future for us is bright. Let me be more specific. Agriculture is or has been the basic industry of nearly every race or nation that has succeeded. The Negro got a knowledge of this under slavery: hence in a large measure he is in possession of this industry in the South to-day. Taking the whole South, I should say that eighty per cent of the Negroes live by agriculture in some form, though it is often a very primitive and crude form. The Negro can buy land in the South, as a rule, wherever the white man can buy it, and at very low prices. Now, since the bulk of our people already have a foundation in agriculture, are at their best when living in the country engaged in agricultural pursuits, plainly, the best thing, the logical thing, is to turn the larger part of our strength in a direction that will put the Negroes among the most skilled agricultural people in the world. The man who has learned to do something better than any one else, has learned to do a common thing in an uncommon manner, has power and influence which no adverse surroundings can take from him. It is better to show a man how to make a place for himself than to put him in one that some one else has made for him. The Negro who can make himself so conspicuous as a successful farmer, a large taxpayer, a wise helper of his fellow men, as to be placed in a position of trust and honor by natural selection, whether the position be political or not, is a hundredfold more secure in that position than one placed there by mere outside force or pressure. I know a Negro, Hon. Isaiah T. Montgomery, in Mississippi, who is mayor of a town; it is true that the town is composed almost wholly of Negroes. Mr. Montgomery is mayor of this town because his genius, thrift, and foresight have created it; and he is held and supported in his office by a charter granted by the state of Mississippi, and by the vote and public sentiment of the community in which he lives.

Let us help the Negro by every means possible to acquire such an education in farming, dairying, stock-raising, horticulture, etc., as will place him near the top in these industries, and the race problem will in a large part be settled, or at least stripped of many of its most perplexing elements. This policy would also tend to keep the Negro in the country and smaller towns, where he succeeds best, and stop the influx into the large cities, where he does not succeed so well. The race, like the individual, which produces something of superior worth that has a common human interest, wins a permanent place, and is bound to be recognized.

At a county fair in the South, not long ago, I saw a Negro awarded the first prize, by a jury of white men, over white competitors, for the production of the best specimen of Indian corn. Every white man at the fair seemed to be proud of the achievement of the Negro, because it was apparent that he had done something that would add to the wealth and comfort of the people of both races in that county. At the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, in Alabama, we have a department devoted to training men along the lines of agriculture that I have named; but

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what we are doing is small when compared with what should be done in Tuskegee, and at other educational centres. In a material sense the South is still an undeveloped country. While in some other affairs race prejudice is strongly marked, in the matter of business, of commercial and industrial development, there are few obstacles in the Negro's way. A Negro who produces or has for sale something that the community wants finds customers among white people as well as black. Upon equal security, a Negro can borrow money at the bank as readily as a white man can. A bank in Birmingham, Alabama, which has existed ten years, is officered and controlled wholly by Negroes. This bank has white borrowers and white depositors. A graduate of the Tuskegee Institute keeps a well-appointed grocery store in Tuskegee, and he tells me that he sells about as many goods to one race as to the other. What I have said of the opening that awaits the Negro in the business of agriculture is almost equally true of mechanics, manufacturing, and all the domestic arts. The field is before him and right about him. Will he seize upon it? Will he "cast down his bucket where he is?" Will his friends, North and South, encourage him and prepare him to occupy it? Every city in the South, for example, would give support to a first-class architect or housebuilder or contractor of our race. The architect or contractor would not only receive support, but through his example numbers of young colored men would learn such trades as carpentry, brickmasonry, plastering, painting, etc., and the race would be put into a position to hold on to many of the industries which it is now in danger of losing, because in too many cases brain, skill, and dignity are not imparted to the common occupations. Any individual or race that does not fit itself to occupy in the best manner the field or service that is right about it will sooner or later be asked to move on and let another take it.

But I may be asked, Would you confine the Negro to agriculture, mechanics, the domestic arts, etc.? Not at all; but just now and for a number of years the stress should be laid along the lines that I have mentioned. We shall need and must have many teachers and ministers, some doctors and lawyers and statesmen, but these professional men will have a constituency or a foundation from which to draw support just in proportion as the race prospers along the economic lines that I have pointed out. During the first fifty or one hundred years of the life of any people, are not the economic occupations always given the greater attention? This is not only the historic, but, I think, the common-sense view. If this generation will lay the material foundation, it will be the quickest and surest way for enabling later generations to succeed in the cultivation of the fine arts, and to surround themselves with some of the luxuries of life, if desired. What the race most needs now, in my opinion, is a whole army of men and women well-trained to lead, and at the same time devote themselves to agriculture, mechanics, domestic employment, and business. As to the mental training that these educated leaders should be equipped with, I should say, give them all the mental training and culture that the circumstances of individuals will allow, — the more the better. No race can permanently succeed until its mind is awakened and strengthened by the ripest thought. But I would constantly have it kept in the minds of those who are educated in books that a large proportion of those who are educated should be so trained in hand that they can bring this mental strength and knowledge to bear upon the physical conditions in the South, which I have tried to emphasize.

Frederick Douglass, of sainted memory, once, in addressing his race, used these words:

"We are to prove that we can better our own condition. One way to do this is to accumulate new gospel. You have been accustomed to hear that money is the root of all evil, etc.; on please, will purchase for us the only condition by which any people can rise to the dignit there can be no leisure, without leisure there can be no thought, without thought there can be no progress."

The Negro should be taught that material development is not an end, but merely a means to an end. As professor W. E. B. Du Bois puts it, the idea should not be simply to make men carpenters, but to make carpenters men. The Negro has a highly religious temperament; but what he needs more and more is to be convinced of the importance of weaving his religion and morality into the practical affairs of daily life. Equally does he need to be taught to put so much intelligence into his labor that he will see dignity and beauty in the occupation, and love it for its own sake. The Negro needs to be taught to apply more of the religion that manifests itself in his happiness in prayer meeting to the performance of his daily task. The man who owns a home, and is in the possession of the elements by which he is sure of a daily living, has a great aid to a moral and religious life. What bearing will all this have upon the Negro's place in the South, as a citizen and in the enjoyment of the privileges which our

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government confers?

To state in detail just what place the black man will occupy in the South as a citizen, when he has developed in the direction named, is beyond the wisdom of any one. Much will depend upon the sense of justice which can be kept alive in the breast of the American people; almost as much will depend upon the good sense of the Negro himself. That question, I confess, does not give me the most concern just now. The important and pressing question is, Will the Negro, with his own help and that of his friends, take advantage of the opportunities that surround him? When he has done this, I believe, speaking of his future in general terms, that he will be treated with justice, be given the protection of the law and the recognition which his usefulness and ability warrant. If, fifty years ago, one had predicted that the Negro would receive the recognition and honor which individuals have already received, he would have been laughed at as an idle dreamer. Time, patience, and constant achievement are great factors in the rise of a race.

I do not believe that the world ever takes a race seriously, in its desire to share in the government of a nation, until a large number of individual members of that race have demonstrated beyond question their ability to control and develop their own business enterprises. Once a number of Negroes rise to the point where they own and operate the most successful farms, are among the largest taxpayers in their county, are moral and intelligent, I do not believe that in many portions of the South such men need long be denied the right of saying by their votes how they prefer their property to be taxed, and who are to make and administer the laws.

I was walking the street of a certain town in the South lately in company with the most prominent Negro there. While we were together, the mayor of the town sought out the black man, and said, "Next week we are going to vote on the question of issuing bonds to secure water-works; you must be sure to vote on the day of election." The mayor did not suggest whether he should vote yes or no; but he knew that the very fact of this Negro's owning nearly a block of the most valuable property in the town was a guarantee that he would cast a safe, wise vote on this important proposition. The white man knew that because of this Negro's property interests he would cast his vote in the way he thought would benefit every white and black citizen in the town, and not be controlled by influences a thousand miles away. But a short time ago I read letters from nearly every prominent white man in Birmingham, Alabama, asking that the Rev. W. R. Pettiford, a Negro, be appointed to a certain important federal office. What is the explanation of this? For nine years Mr. Pettiford has been the president of the Negro bank in Birmingham, to which I have alluded. During these nine years, the white citizens have had the opportunity of seeing that Mr. Pettiford can manage successfully a private business, and that he has proved himself a conservative, thoughtful citizen, and they are willing to trust him in a public office. Such individual examples will have to be multiplied, till they become more nearly the rule than the exception they now are. While we are multiplying these examples, the Negro must keep a strong and courageous heart. He cannot improve his condition by any short-cut course or by artificial methods. Above all, he must not be deluded into believing that his condition can be permanently bettered by a mere battledoor [sic] and shuttlecock of words, or by any process of mere mental gymnastics or oratory. What is desired along with a logical defense of his cause are deeds, results, — continued results, in the direction of building himself up, so as to leave no doubt in the mind of any one of his ability to succeed.

An important question often asked is, Does the white man in the South want the Negro to improve his present condition? I say yes. From the Montgomery (Alabama) Daily Advertiser I clip the following in reference to the closing of a colored school in a town in Alabama: —

"EUFALA, May 25, 1899. The closing exercises of the city colored public school were held a and were witnessed by a large gathering, including many whites. The recitations by the pup also an interesting feature. Rev. R. T. Pollard delivered the address, which was quite an presented by Professor T. L. McCoy, white, of the Sanford Street School. The success of th Professor S. M. Murphy, the principal, who enjoys a deserved good reputation as a capable

I quote this report, not because it is the exception, but because such marks of interest in the education of the Negro on the part of the Southern white people may be seen almost every day in the local papers. Why should white people, by their presence, words, and actions, encourage the black man to get education, if they do not

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desire him to improve his condition?

The Payne Institute, an excellent college, to which I have already referred, is supported almost wholly by the Southern white Methodist church. The Southern white Presbyterians support a theological school for Negroes at Tuscaloosa. For a number of years the Southern white Baptists have contributed toward Negro education. Other denominations have done the same. If these people do not want the Negro educated to a higher standard, there is no reason why they should pretend they do.

Though some of the lynchings in the South have indicated a barbarous feeling toward Negroes, Southern white men here and there, as well as newspapers, have spoken out strongly against lynching. I quote from the address of the Rev. Mr. Vance, of Nashville, Tennessee, delivered before the National Sunday School Union, in Atlanta, not long since, as an example: —

"And yet, as I stand here to-night, a Southerner speaking for my section and addressing an awful blot upon the fair fame of the South, at the bare mention of which the heart turns sick, I want to lift my voice to-night in loud and long and indignant protest against the awful horror which has reached the climax of its madness and infamy in a deed as black and brutal and barbarous a crime.

"I have a right to speak on the subject, and I propose to be heard. The time has come for an angered and resolute manhood against the shame and peril of the lynch demon. These people are victims as his flesh crackles in the flames do not represent the South. I have not a syllable meant to avenge. But it is high time we were learning that lawlessness is no remedy for crime. The people of my section are able to cope with crime, however treacherous and defiant, through the masterful sway of a righteous and exalted public sentiment that shall class lynch law

It is a notable and encouraging fact that no Negro educated in any of our larger institutions of learning in the South has been charged with any of the recent crimes connected with assaults upon women.

If we go on making progress in the directions that I have tried to indicate, more and more the South will be drawn to one course. As I have already said, it is not to the best interests of the white race of the South that the Negro be deprived of any privilege guaranteed him by the Constitution of the United States. This would put upon the South a burden under which no government could stand and prosper. Every article in our Federal Constitution was placed there with a view of stimulating and encouraging the highest type of citizenship. To continue to tax the Negro without giving him the right to vote, as fast as he qualifies himself in education and property for voting, would insure the alienation of the affections of the Negro from the state in which he lives, and would be the reversal of the fundamental principles of government for which our states have stood. In other ways than this the injury would be as great to the white man as to the Negro. Taxation without the hope of becoming voters would take away from one third of the citizens of the Gulf states their interest in government, and a stimulus to become taxpayers or to secure education, and thus be able and willing to bear their share of the cost of education and government, which now rests so heavily upon the white taxpayers of the South. The more the Negro is stimulated and encouraged, the sooner will he be able to bear a larger share of the burdens of the South. We have recently had before us an example, in the case of Spain, of a government that left a large portion of its citizens in ignorance, and neglected their highest interests.

As I have said elsewhere: "There is no escape, through law of man or God, from the inevitable."

'The laws of changeless justice bind
Oppressor with oppressed;
And close as sin and suffering joined
We march to fate abreast.'

Nearly sixteen millions of hands will aid you in pulling the load upwards, or they will pull the load downwards against you. We shall constitute one third and more of the ignorance and crime of the South, or one

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third of its intelligence and progress; we shall contribute one third to the business and industrial prosperity of the South, or we shall prove a veritable body of death, stagnating, depressing, retarding every effort to advance the body politic.

My own feeling is that the South will gradually reach the point where it will see the wisdom and the justice of enacting an educational or property qualification, or both, for voting, that shall be made to apply honestly to both races. The industrial development of the Negro in connection with education and Christian character will help to hasten this end. When this is done, we shall have a foundation, in my opinion, upon which to build a government that is honest, and that will be in a high degree satisfactory to both races.

I do not suffer myself to take too optimistic a view of the conditions in the South. The problem is a large and serious one, and will require the patient help, sympathy, and advice of our most patriotic citizens, North and South, for years to come. But I believe that if the principles which I have tried to indicate are followed, a solution of the question will come. So long as the Negro is permitted to get education, acquire property, and secure employment, and is treated with respect in the business world, as is now true in the greater part of the South, I shall have the greatest faith in his working out his own destiny in our Southern states. The education and preparation for citizenship of nearly eight millions of people is a tremendous task, and every lover of humanity should count it a privilege to help in the solution of a problem for which our whole country is responsible.

Booker T. Washington.