

Northern statesmen as the alternative to continuance of military government. Without the suffrage, the negro might have been left defenceless and neglected, unimproved and unimproving. In the words of another distinguished Southern, the late Mr. Justice Lamar, "In the unaccustomed relation into which the white and coloured people of the South were suddenly forced, there would have been a natural tendency on the part of the former masters, still in the possession of the land and intelligence of the country and of its legislative power, to use an almost absolute authority, and to develop the new freedman according to their own idea of what was good for him. This would have resulted in a race distinction, and with such incidents of the old system as would have discontented the negro and dissatisfied the general sentiment of the country. If slavery was to be abolished, there could be nothing short of complete abolition, free from any of the affinities of slavery; and this would not have been effected so long as there existed any inequality before the law. The ballot was therefore a protection of the negro against any such condition, and enabled him to force his interests upon the consideration of the South."¹

The American view that "the suffrage is the sword and shield of our law, the best armament that liberty offers to the citizen," does not at once commend itself to a European, who conceives that every government is bound to protect the unenfranchised equally with the enfranchised citizen. But it must be remembered that in the United States this duty is less vigilantly performed than in England or Germany, and that there were special difficulties attending its performance under a Federal system, which leaves the duty, save where Federal legislation is involved, to the authorities of the several States.

It has been usual to charge those who led Congress with another and less noble motive for granting electoral rights to the negroes, viz.: the wish to secure their votes for the Republican party. Motives are always mixed; and doubtless this consideration had its weight. Yet it was not a purely selfish consideration. As it was by the Republican party that the war had been waged and the negro set free, the Republican leaders were entitled to assume that his protection could be

¹ *North American Review* for March, 1879.

secured only by their continued ascendancy. That ascendancy was not wisely used. But the circumstances were so novel and perplexing, that perhaps no statesmanship less sagacious than President Lincoln's could have handled them with success.

With the disappearance of the carpet-bag and negro governments, the third era in the political history of the South since the war began. The first had been that of exclusively white suffrage; the second, that of predominantly negro suffrage. In the third, universal suffrage and complete legal equality were soon perceived to mean in practice the full supremacy of the whites. To dislodge the coloured man from his rights was impossible, for they were secured by the Federal Constitution which prevails against all State action. The idea of disturbing them was scarcely entertained. Even at the election of 1872 the Southern Democrats no more expected to repeal the Fifteenth Amendment than the English Tories expected at the election of 1874 to repeal the Irish Church Disestablishment Act of 1869. But the more they despaired of getting rid of the amendment, the more resolved were the Southern people to prevent it from taking any effect which could endanger their supremacy. They did not hate the negro, certainly not half so much as they hated his white leaders by whom they had been robbed. "We have got," they said, "to save civilization," and if civilization could be saved only by suppressing the coloured vote, they were ready to suppress it. This was the easier, because while most of the carpet-baggers had fled, nearly all the respectable whites of the South, including those who had been Whigs before the war and who had opposed secession, were now united in the new Democratic, or rather anti-negro party. A further evidence of the power of the motives which have swayed them may be found in the fact that nearly every Northern man who has of late years gone South for commercial purposes, has before long ranged himself with this anti-negro party, whatever his previous "affiliations" may have been.

The modes of suppression have not been the same in all districts and at all times. At first there was a good deal of what is called "bulldozing," i.e. rough treatment and terrorism, applied to frighten the coloured men from coming to or voting at the polls. Afterwards, the methods were less harsh. Registrations were so managed as to exclude negro voters, arrange-

ments for polling were contrived in such wise as to lead the voter to the wrong place so that his vote might be refused; and, if the necessity arose, the Republican candidates were counted out, or the election returns tampered with. "I would stuff a ballot-box," said a prominent man, "in order to have a good, honest government;" and he said it in good faith, and with no sense of incongruity. Sometimes the local negro preachers were warned or paid to keep their flocks away. More humorous devices were not disdained, as when free tickets to a travelling circus were distributed among the negroes, and the circus paid to hold its exhibition at a place and hour which prevented them from coming to vote. South Carolina enacted an ingenious law which provides that there shall be eight ballot-boxes for as many posts to be filled at the election, that a vote shall not be counted unless placed in the proper box, and that the presiding officer shall not be bound to tell the voter which is the proper box in which each vote ought to be deposited. The illiterate negroes so often vote in the wrong box, the boxes being frequently shifted to disconcert instructions given beforehand, that a large part of their votes are lost, while the illiterate white is apt to receive the benevolent and not forbidden help of the presiding officer.

Notwithstanding these impediments, the negro long maintained the struggle, valuing the vote as the symbol of his freedom, and fearing to be re-enslaved if the Republican party should be defeated. Leaders and organizers were found in the Federal office-holders, of course all Republicans, a numerous class,—Mr. Nordhoff, a careful and judicious observer, says there were in 1875 three thousand in Georgia alone,—and a class whose members virtually held their offices on condition of doing their political work; being liable to be removed if they failed in their duty, as the Turks remove a Vali who sends up too little money to Stamboul. After 1884, however, when the presidency of the United States passed to a Democrat, some of these office-holders were replaced by Democrats and the rest became less zealous. It was, moreover, already by that time clear that the whites, being again in the saddle, meant to stay there, and the efforts of the Republican organizers grew feebler as they lost hope. Their friends at the North were exasperated, not without reason, for the gift of suffrage to the negroes had resulted in securing to the

South a larger representation in Congress and in presidential elections than it enjoyed before the war, or would have enjoyed had the negroes been left unenfranchised. They argued, and truly, that where the law gives a right, the law ought to secure the exercise thereof; and when the Southern men replied that the negroes were ignorant, they rejoined that all over the country there were myriads of ignorant voters, mostly recent immigrants, whom no one thought of excluding. Accordingly in 1890, having a majority in both Houses of Congress and a President of their own party, the Republican leaders introduced a bill subjecting the control of Federal elections to officers to be appointed by the President, in the hope of thus calling out a full negro vote, five sixths of which would doubtless have gone to their party. The measure appeared to dispassionate observers quite constitutional, and the mischief it was designed to remedy was palpable. It excited, however, great irritation at the South, uniting in opposition to it nearly all whites of every class, while no corresponding enthusiasm on its behalf was evoked at the North. It passed the House, but was dropped in the Senate under the threat of an obstructive resistance by the (then Democratic) minority. Secure, however, as the dominance of the whites seems now to be against either Northern legislation or negro revolt, the Southern people are still uneasy and sensitive on the subject, and have been held together in a serried party phalanx by this one colour question, to the injury of their political life, which is thus prevented from freely developing on the lines of the other questions that from time to time arise. So keen is their recollection of the carpet-bag days, so intense the alarm at any possibility of their return, that internal dissensions, such as those which the growth of the Farmers' Alliance party has lately evoked, are seldom permitted to give Republican candidates a chance of a seat in Congress or of any considerable State office.

These remarks apply to the true South, and neither to the mountain regions, where, owing to the absence of the negro element, there is, save in the wider valleys, still a strong Republican party, nor to the Border States, Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri, in which the coloured voters are not numerous enough to excite alarm. When it is desired

to eliminate their influence on elections, a common plan is to bribe them. In Louisville one is told that quite a small payment secures abstention. To induce them to vote for a Democrat is, to their credit be it said, much more costly.

This horror of negro supremacy is the only point in which the South cherishes its old feelings. Hostility to the Northern people has almost disappeared. No sooner was Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House known over the country, than the notion of persisting in efforts for secession and the hope of maintaining slavery expired. With that remarkable power of accepting an accomplished fact which in America is compatible with an obstinate resistance up to the moment when the fact becomes accomplished, the South felt that a new era had arrived, to which they must forthwith adapt themselves. They were not ashamed of the war. They were and remain proud of it, as one may see by the provisions very recently made by some States for celebrating the birthday of General Robert E. Lee or of Ex-President Jefferson Davis. Just because they felt that they had fought well, they submitted with little resentment, and it has become a proverb among them that the two classes which still cherish bitterness are the two classes that did not fight, — the women and the clergy. Even when fresh hostility was aroused by the reconstructive action of Congress in 1866 and 1867, and the abuses of carpet-bag rule, no one dreamt of renewing the old struggle. Not, however, till the whites regained control between 1870 and 1876, did the industrial regeneration of the country fairly begin. Two discoveries coincided with that epoch which have had an immense effect in advancing material prosperity, and changing the current of men's thoughts. The first was the exploration of the mineral wealth of the highland core of the country. In the western parts of Virginia and North Carolina, in the eastern parts of Tennessee, the northern parts of Georgia and Alabama, both coal and iron, not to speak of other minerals, have been found in enormous quantities, and often in such close juxtaposition that the production of pig iron and steel can be carried on with exceptional cheapness. Thus, Northern capital has been drawn into the country: Southern men have had a new field for enterprise, and have themselves begun to accumulate capital: prosperous industries have been created,

and a large working-class population, both white and coloured, has grown up in many places, while the making of new railways has not only given employment to the poorer classes, but has stimulated manufacture and commerce in other directions. The second discovery was that of the possibility of extracting oil from the seeds of the cotton plant, which had formerly been thrown away, or given to hogs to feed on. The production of this oil has swelled to great proportions, making the cultivation of cotton far more profitable, and has become a potent factor in the extension of cotton cultivation and the general prosperity of the country. Most of the crop now raised, which averages eight millions of bales, and in 1894 was expected to exceed ten millions (being more than double that which was raised, almost wholly by slave labour, before the war), is now raised by white farmers; while the mills which spin and weave it into marketable goods are daily increasing and building up fresh industrial communities. The methods of agriculture have been improved; and new kinds of cultivation introduced: the raising of fruit, for instance, and especially of oranges, has become in certain districts a lucrative industry. Nor has the creation of winter health resorts in the beautiful mountain land of North Carolina, and further south in South Carolina and Florida, been wholly without importance, for the Northern people who flock thither learn to know the South, and themselves diffuse new ideas among the backward population of those districts. Thus from various causes there has come to be a sense of stir and movement and occupation with practical questions, and what may be called a commercialization of society, which has, in some places, transformed Southern life. Manual labour is no longer deemed derogatory by the poor whites, nor commerce by the sons of the old planting aristocracy. Farmers no doubt complain, as they do everywhere in the United States; yet it is a good sign that the average size of farms has been, in the South-eastern States, decreasing, the number of farmers and also the number of owners increasing, while the number of tenants who pay their rent in money instead of in kind almost doubled between 1880 and 1890. As capital, which used to be chiefly invested in slaves, has increased and become more generally diffused, it is more and more placed in permanent im-

provements, and especially in city buildings. Cities indeed have largely grown and are still growing, especially of course in the mining regions; and in the cities a new middle class has sprung up, formed partly by the elevation of the poorer class and partly by the depression of the old planting class, which has made the contrast between the social equality of Northern and the aristocratic tone of Southern society far less marked than it was before the war.

While slavery lasted the South was, except of course as regarded the children of planters and of the few merchants, an illiterate country. Even in 1870 the South-eastern States had only 30 per cent of their population of school age enrolled as school attendants, and the South central and western States only 34 per cent. The Reconstruction constitutions of 1867-70 contained valuable provisions for the establishment of schools; and the rise of a new generation, which appreciates the worth of education and sees how the North has profited by it, has induced a wholesome activity. In 1890, the percentages of children enrolled to school age population had risen to 59 and 62 in the South-east and South-west respectively.¹ It is no doubt true that the sum expended on schools is very unequal in the various States, — Arkansas, for instance, spends twice as much as North Carolina, though her State debt is twice as great, and her wealth, *per capita* of children, about the same; true, also, that the expenditure is much less than in the North or West, — Iowa, for instance, spends five times as much as Arkansas, with only twice as much wealth; — true, further, that the number of days of attendance by each pupil in the year is much smaller in the Southern States (62.2 in the South-eastern States, 56.2 in the South central and western, as compared with 109 in the North-eastern States). Still the progress is great, when one considers the comparative poverty of the Southern States, and the predominantly rural character of their very sparse population.

¹ Report of the Commissioner of Education for 1890-91. The census returns of 1890 give 1,333,395 white pupils enrolled out of a total white population of 5,592,149 in the South-eastern States, and in the South central and western States, 1,876,172 white pupils to a total white population of 7,487,576. The proportion of coloured pupils to population is of course smaller. See the figures given in next chapter.

"School age" is taken in the United States as covering the years from 5 to 18 inclusive.

Any one seeking to disparage the South need not want for points to dwell upon. He might remark that illiteracy is far more common than in the North or West; that there is little reading even among those who can read, — one need only walk through the streets of a Southern city and look into the few bookstores to be convinced of this, — and far less of that kind of culture which is represented by lecture courses or by literary and scientific journals and societies. He would observe that hotels, railway stations, refreshment-rooms, indeed all the material appliances of travelling comfort in which the North shines, are on a far lower level, and that the scattered population so neglects its roads that they are often impassable. Life, he might say, is comparatively rough, except in a few of the older cities, such as Richmond and Charleston; it has in many regions the character of border life in a half-settled country. And above all, he might dilate upon the frequency of homicide, and the small value that seems to be set upon human life, if one may judge from the imperfect and lenient action of the courts, which, to be sure, is often supplemented by private vengeance. Yet to the enumeration of these and other faults born of slavery and the spirit which slavery fostered, it would be rightly answered that the true way to judge the former slave States, is to compare them as they are now with what they were when the war ended. Everywhere there is progress; in some regions such progress, that one may fairly call the South a new country. The population is indeed unchanged, for few settlers come from the North, and no part of the United States has within the present century received so small a share of European immigration.¹ Slavery was a fatal deterrent while it lasted, and of late years the climate, the presence of the negro, and the notion that work was more abundant elsewhere, have continued to deflect in a more northerly direction the stream that flows from Europe. But the old race, which is, except in Texas (where there is a small Mexican and a larger German element) and in Louisiana, a pure English and Scotch-Irish race, full of natural strength, has been stimulated and invigorated by the changed conditions of its life. It sees in the mineral and agricultural resources of its territory a prospect

¹ In North Carolina the foreign born are only .2 of the population, in Mississippi only .6.

of wealth and population rivalling those of the Middle and Western States. It has recovered its fair share of influence in the national government. It has no regrets over slavery, for it recognizes the barbarizing influence that slavery exerted. Neither does it cherish any dreams of separation. It has now a pride in the Union as well as in its State, and is in some ways more fresh and sanguine than the North, because less cloyed by luxury than the rich are there, and less discouraged by the spread of social unrest than the thoughtful have been there. But for one difficulty, the South might well be thought to be the most promising part of the Union, that part whose advance is likely to be swiftest, and whose prosperity will be not the least secure.

This difficulty, however, is a serious one. It lies in the presence of seven millions of negroes.

CHAPTER XCIII

PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE NEGRO

THE total coloured population of the United States was in 1890 7,470,040, a number greater than that of the English people in the reign of Queen Anne, and one which might anywhere but in North America be deemed to form a considerable nation. Of this total, seven millions (in round numbers) were in the old Slave States, and it is of these only that the present chapter will speak.¹ To understand their distribution in these States, the reader will do well to recall what was said in the last preceding chapter regarding the physical features of the South, for it is by those features that the growth of the coloured population in the various regions of the country has been determined. Though man is of all animals, except perhaps the dog, that which shows the greatest capacity for supporting all climates from Borneo to Greenland, it remains true that certain races of men thrive and multiply only in certain climates. As the races of Northern Europe have been hitherto unable to maintain themselves in the torrid zone, so the African race, being of tropical origin, dwindles away wherever it has to encounter cold winters. In what used to be called the Border States — Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri — the coloured element increases but slowly, or tends slightly to decrease.² In West Virginia, East Kentucky, East Tennessee, and Western North Carolina, the negro is practically unknown in the highest and coolest spots, and in the other parts of that elevated country has scarcely been able to hold his own. It is in the low warm regions that lie near the Gulf Stream and the Gulf of Mexico, and especially in the sea-islands of South Carolina and on the banks of the lower Mississippi that he finds the conditions which are at once most

¹ The total white population of these States was in 1890 13,079,725 and the coloured 6,741,941.

² Kentucky shows a small decrease from 1880 to 1890. There is also an absolute decrease of coloured population in seven other States, — Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Michigan, Nevada, California, Idaho, — and in Arizona.