

whites have not only the habit of command, but also nearly all the property, the intelligence, and the force of character which exist in the country. He reminds his Southern hosts that the balance even of numbers is inclining more and more in their favour; and that the probability of Northern intervention on behalf of the excluded negro voter has become, since the failure of the Federal Elections Bill of 1890, extremely slight, while the other conditions of 1867 can never recur. On this point, however, the Southern man is immovable. To him it is a simple question of self-preservation. "We like the negro," said a leader among them to me some years ago; "we know he must stay; we desire to treat him well. But if he votes, we must outvote him."

The results are in every way unfortunate. The negroes, naturally docile and disposed to follow the lead of their white employer or neighbour, feel themselves suspected, and live in a terror of being stripped of the civic rights which they are not suffered to exercise, like the terror which for a time possessed them of being thrown back into slavery. So far as they vote at all they mostly cling together, and vote solid, intimidating or boycotting any one of their number who is supposed to be a "bolter." The whites, accustomed to justify their use of force or fraud by the plea of necessity, have become callous to electoral malpractices. The level of purity and honesty in political methods, once comparatively high, has declined; and the average Southern conscience is now little more sensitive than is that of professional politicians in Northern cities. Nor is the mischief confined to elections. The existence of this alarm has, by making the negro question the capital question in national as well as State politics, warped the natural growth of political opinion and political parties upon all those other current questions which engage the mind of the people, and has to that extent retarded their reabsorption into the general political life of the Republic.

Sensible Southern men feel the evils of the present state of things, and seek anxiously for an escape from them. Out of the many remedies that have been proposed, three deserve to be specially noticed.

The first is (as proposed in the bill of 1890) to give protection to the coloured voter by the action of Federal officers backed by Federal troops. This could, of course, be done

under the Constitution at Federal elections only, and would not cover the equally important State and local elections. It would, moreover (as the discussions of 1890 showed), provoke great exasperation at the South, and might lead to breaches of the peace, from which the negroes would be the chief sufferers. The whole South would resist it, and no small part of the Northern people would dislike it.

A second remedy is to repeal the Fifteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution, and leave each State free to exclude negroes from the suffrage. This plan, although sometimes put forward by men of ability, is even more impracticable than the preceding one. A majority of three-fourths of the States could not be secured for the repeal of a provision which the Northern people value as sealing one of the main results of the Civil War. Nor would the Southern States themselves, with their Democratic allies at the North, favour a change which would, in disfranchising their negroes, largely reduce (under the Fourteenth Amendment) their present vote at Presidential and Congressional elections. To repeal the Fourteenth Amendment and allow a State to be represented in proportion not to its voters but to its population, is, of course, out of the question. It may, therefore, be assumed that no serious attempt will be made to set up colour as a legal ground of discrimination.

The third suggested scheme is to limit the suffrage by some educational or even some pecuniary qualification — although American sentiment dislikes a property qualification — which will, in fact, exclude many or most of the negroes, not as negroes, but because they are ignorant or poor. Such a scheme was proposed by Gen. Wade Hampton in South Carolina as far back as 1867, but has never yet been tried except in Mississippi, where the Constitution of 1890¹ provides that a person applying to be registered as a voter "shall be able to read any section of the Constitution, or be able to understand the same when read to him, or to give a reasonable interpretation thereof."

The advantages of such a method are obvious, and have suggested its adoption in a British colony where the presence of a large coloured population has raised a problem not dis-

¹ There was one negro member in the Convention that enacted this Constitution, which was never (be it noted) submitted to the popular vote. See Vol. I., p. 433 and p. 485.

similar to that we have been examining.¹ Recognizing the need of knowledge and intelligence for the due exercise of political power, it excludes a large mass of confessedly incompetent persons, while leaving the door open for those negroes whose instructed capacity brings them up to the level of the bulk of the whites, and who, in some places, may be now from one-fourth to one-third of the whole negro population. Thus it may operate, not only as an improvement in the electoral body, but as an incentive to educational progress.

The obstacles to the adoption of the plan have, however, been serious. One is that in disfranchising their negroes for want of education, most Southern States would have also to disfranchise no trifling part of their white population, that, namely, which is below any educational standard high enough to exclude the mass of negroes. The percentage of illiterates to the whole population over ten years of age is in the South-eastern States 14.5 and in the South-western 15.² To expect these voters (about 1,412,000) to disfranchise themselves for the sake of excluding negroes is to expect too much. The other is that every limitation of the suffrage diminishes *pro tanto* (Amendment XIV.) a State's representation in Federal elections, thereby weakening its influence in Federal affairs and mortifying its self-esteem. The State of Mississippi, while courageously facing the latter of these difficulties, so far as the coloured people are concerned, has sought to evade the former by the ingenious loophole under which the registering officials may admit whites who, though illiterate, are able to give a "reasonable interpretation" of any section of the Constitution. Such whites have, one is told, been able to satisfy the officials far more generally than have the negroes. And if this particular section happens to be put to them, their common sense will find its interpretation obvious.

Of the three plans suggested, that which would reduce the negro vote by the imposition of an educational test will appear to the dispassionate observer the safest and the fair-

¹ In Cape Colony the Franchise and Ballot Act of 1892 raises the (previously very low) property qualification for the suffrage, and provides (§ 6) that no person shall be registered as an elector "unless he is able to sign his name and write his address and occupation." These provisions disqualify the great bulk of the native coloured people, few of whom have, as may be supposed, any interest in politics.

² Abstract of the census of 1890. Table 14.

est. It casts no slur upon the negro race as a race, and does not wear the aspect of a retrogression from the generosity with which the suffrage was bestowed. It conforms to a principle reasonable in itself, and already adopted by some Northern States. If applied as it ought to be, honestly to both races alike, it would in most Southern States exclude enough negroes to dispel apprehensions of any revolt against white government; and it would remove the occasion or excuse for that habit of tampering with elections which is not merely a scandal, but a grave danger to the political life of the South. There is, however,—although some such plan has been discussed in Louisiana,—no great present prospect that action on these lines will be taken in other States. The South is listless and slow to change. Parts of it are distracted by the feud between the old Democrats and the Farmers' Alliance or Populist party. The problem does not strike the average citizen as urgent; nor is it urgent, in the sense that some solution must be found before a given date. The habit of breaking or evading the law unhappily perpetuates itself by accustoming people to think it venial. The most probable forecast is that the present system will continue for some time to come, the negroes growing less and less interested in their right of suffrage, and the whites by degrees losing the apprehensions that now fill their minds, until at last a new generation arises that remembers not the days of Reconstruction. Some question may then appear which so divides the whites that both parties will see their advantage in capturing the negro vote.¹ Each party will try to win it over, and each will get a share of it. It may then, having lost its present solidarity, be absorbed into the vote of the white parties, whatever they then are; and though it will still be comparatively uninstructed and perhaps largely venal, the forcible or fraudulent suppression of the last twenty years, with the evils thence arising, will have passed away.

Even graver than the political difficulties which have been described is the social problem raised by the coexistence on the same soil, under the same free government, of two races so widely differing that they do not intermingle. Social disparity or social oppression cuts deeper than any political severance;

¹ Occasionally even now an effort is made to attract the negro vote. I have seen it stated that the "Populists" recently tried to do so in Georgia.

and time, so far from curing the mischief, seems during the last thirty or forty years to have aggravated it. Politics leave untouched large parts of the field of human life, even in the United States; and the political inferiority of the coloured race, since it is the result of their retarded intellectual development, seems in accord with nature. Social inferiority, which is felt at every moment, and which jars on the sense of human brotherhood, is a more serious matter.

This problem is, moreover, a new one in history, for the relations of the ruling and subject races of Europe and Asia supply no parallel to it. Whoever examines the records of the past, will find that the continued juxtaposition of two races has always been followed either by the disappearance of the weaker, or by the intermixture of the two. Where race antagonisms still remain, as in parts of Eastern Europe, and on a far larger scale in Asia, one may expect a similar solution to be ultimately reached. In Transylvania, for instance, Saxons, Magyars, and Roumans stand apart from one another, the two latter mutually suspicious and politically hostile. So further east one finds strong religious antagonisms (not without serious attendant evils), such as those of Sunnis, Shiahs, and Christians in Western Asia, or of Hindus and Mussulmans in India, antagonisms, however, which only partially coincide with race differences, and have thrown the latter quite into the shade. In all such cases, however, though one race or religion may be for the moment dominant, there is no necessary or permanent distinction between them; and there is, if the religious difficulty can be overcome, a possibility of intermarriage. Other cases may be suggested where a fusion is improbable, as between the British and the natives in India, or the colonists and the natives in New Zealand. But the European rulers of India are a mere handful in comparison with the natives, nor do they settle in India so as to form a part of its permanent population; while as to New Zealand, the Maoris, a diminishing body, live apart on their own lands, and form a community likely, while it survives, to continue distinct. In Western South America the Spanish settlers have, to some extent, mingled their blood with that of the native Indians, and may ultimately become as much blent with the latter as has befallen in Mexico. The peculiar feature of the race problem as it presents itself in the United States

is, that the negroes are in many districts one-third or even one-half of the population, are forced to live in the closest local contiguity with the whites, and are for the purposes of industry indispensable to the latter, yet are so sharply cut off from the whites by colour and all that colour means, that not merely a mingling of blood, but any social approximation, is regarded with horror, and perpetual severance is deemed a law of nature.

From such a position what issue? One hears little said in America of any possible issue, partly because the nation is tired of the whole subject, which has, in one form or another, distracted it for more than seventy years, partly because every plan that has been suggested is open to patent objections. Several, however, may deserve to be mentioned.

Even long before the war, and often since, it has been proposed that the negroes should be retransported to Africa. The petty and stagnant Republic of Liberia owes its origin to the idea that it might furnish a home for Afro-American freedmen, and a centre whence they might be dispersed in larger and larger numbers through their ancient home. But after seventy-three years the population of Liberia of American origin is only some 18,000, the million of other inhabitants being aborigines, and the unpaid interest on a national debt of £100,000 amounts to £133,000.

There are two fatal objections to the plan of exporting the Southern negroes to Africa. One is that they will not go; the other that the whites cannot afford to let them go. There is nothing to attract them in the prospect of being uprooted from their homes in a country where the comforts of civilization are attainable by industry, and thrown upon a new shore, already occupied by savages of whose very languages, except in the few spots where English is spoken, they are ignorant.¹ The Southern whites, so far from encouraging, would resist their departure; for it would mean the loss of the labour by which more than half the crops of the South are raised, and great part of her mining and iron-working industries carried on. Much of the country, as too hot for European labour, would remain untilled and useless were the negro

¹ A variation of this suggestion has been that while the pure blacks should be exported to Africa, the (usually more advanced) mulattoes and quadroons might go to reclaim the Antilles. See *An Appeal to Pharaoh*; New York, 1890.

to disappear; for of the introduction of coolie labour from India there can be no talk in a nation which has so strictly forbidden the entrance of Chinese. The negro, in short, is essential to the material prosperity of the South, and his departure would mean ruin to it. Even now, the Atlantic States do what they can to prevent their coloured labourers from leaving them to go west.¹

Apart from these obstacles, the transference of more than seven millions of people from one continent to another is hardly within the horizon of the possible. Their annual increase will soon approach 200,000, quite as large a number as could be, in a single year, conveyed to and provided for in Africa. How many emigrant ships, and at what cost, would be needed even for this, not to speak of the far larger expenses needed to keep them from starving till they had begun to scatter themselves through the interior of Africa! To proceed by transporting these 200,000 a year, would be to try to empty a running stream by a ladle. The notion of such a solution has been abandoned by nearly all sensible men in America, though here and there a belated voice repeats it.

Far easier is the alternative plan of setting apart for the coloured people certain districts of the country, such as for instance the southern part of the Atlantic coast region and the lowlands of the Gulf, and moving them into these districts from the rest of the country, as Oliver Cromwell drove the wild Irish into Connaught. But neither does this solution find any favour in America. No State would consent to see even a part of its territory cut off and allotted to the negroes, to be by them administered in their own way. The rest of the country would hardly admit a purely black State to be represented in Congress and to vote in Presidential elections on equal terms. And in many parts of the South, which are better suited for whites than for negroes, and in which, therefore, the white population is now much larger, the leading industries would suffer severely from the removal of negro labour. Northern Alabama, for instance, is in point of climate a region well fitted for whites. But the iron works there employ great numbers of negroes who are found most efficient, and whose

¹ North Carolina has, I believe, a statute which punishes with a fine of \$1000 any one entering the State for the purpose of endeavouring to draw the negroes to States further west.

place might not be easily filled. Virginia is, in the main, a white State. But not only the growing of tobacco, but also its preparation for the market, is a negro industry; and it would be no simple matter to find white work-people to do it equally well and cheaply. This scheme, therefore, may also be dismissed as outside the range of practical politics.

There remains the suggestion that the method by which race antagonisms have been so often removed in the past in the Old World, and to some extent (as, for instance, in Mexico) in the New World also, may eventually be applied in the United States; that is to say, that the two races may be blent by intermarriage into one. To many Europeans, and to a very few survivors of the Abolitionist party in the North, this solution appears possible and even natural. To all Southern sentiment it is shocking. I have never met a Southern man, whether born there or an incomer from the North, who would even discuss the possibility of such a general commixture of whites and blacks as Brazil has begun to show. In no Southern State can such a marriage be legally contracted; and what is more remarkable, in every Southern State such unions are excessively rare. The percentage of children born from a white and a coloured parent (reckoning mulattoes and quadroons as coloured) is not, and hardly can be, ascertained, but it must be extremely small; much less than one per cent of the total number of births. Even at the North, where the aversion to negro blood is now less strong, "miscegenation," as they call it, is deemed such a disgrace to the white who contracts it that one scarcely hears of its occurrence. Enlightened Southern men, who have themselves no dislike to the black race, justify this horror of intermarriage by arguing that no benefit which might thereby accrue to the negroes could balance the evil which would befall the rest of the community. The interests of the nation and of humanity itself would, in their view, suffer by such a permanent debasement of the Anglo-American race as would follow. Our English blood is suffering enough already, they say, from the intrusion of inferior stock from Continental Europe; and we should be brought down to the level of Mexico or Brazil were we to have an infusion from Africa added. This is the argument to which reason appeals. That enormous majority which does not reason is swayed by a feeling so strong and universal that there seems no chance of its abating within any assignable

time. Revolutions in sentiment are, no doubt, conceivable, but they are more rare than revolutions in politics.

We arrive, therefore, at three conclusions.

I. The negro will stay in North America.

II. He will stay locally intermixed with the white population.

III. He will stay socially distinct, as an alien element, unabsorbed and unabsorbable.

His position may, however, change from what it is now. Two changes in particular seem probable.

He will more and more draw southwards into the lower and hotter regions along the coasts of the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico. Whether in the more northerly States, such as Maryland and Missouri, he will decrease, may be doubtful. But it is certainly in those southerly regions that his chief future increase may be expected. In other words, he will be a relatively smaller, and probably much smaller, element than at present in the whole population north of latitude 36°, and a relatively larger one south of latitude 33°, and east of longitude 94° W.

This change will have both its good and its evil side. It may involve less frequent occasions for collision between the two races, and may dispose the negroes, where they are comparatively few, to acquiesce less reluctantly in white predominance. But it will afford scantier opportunities for the gradual elevation of the race in the districts where they are most numerous. Contact with the whites is the chief condition for the progress of the negro. Where he is isolated, or where he greatly outnumbered the whites, his advance will be retarded, although nothing has yet occurred to justify the fear that he will, even along the Gulf coast, or in the sea islands of Carolina, sink to the level of the Haytian.

This first change will be the result of physical causes. The second change will be due to intellectual and social influences. The negroes will doubtless, taking them over the whole country, though more rapidly in some regions than in others, advance in education, intelligence, and wealth, as well as in habits of thrift and application. Their progress since the war enables one to predict this with confidence. Such progress may seem an unmixed good. Yet it can hardly fail to be accompanied by a growing discontent with the social dis-

bilities imposed upon them. It will give them greater capacity for organization, possibly greater tenacity and courage, than they now possess; and these very things may, by alarming the whites, tend to widen the chasm between the races. Whether the coloured people will be much better able to give effect to the resentment they feel, may be doubted, so great is the disparity in strength. But they may be more embittered, and this embitterment, reacting upon white sentiment, may retard the working of those healing influences which the progress of civilization generally brings in its train. Already one hears the younger whites of the South talk of the growing "uppishness" and impertinence of the negro, as things to be resented and punished.

That sense of haughty superiority which other nations note in the English has in their Indian dominions done much to destroy the happy effects of the enormous social and economic improvements which the rule of Britain has effected. A young indigo planter, or a lieutenant only just released from school at home, will treat with wanton insolence or contumely natives of the highest caste, perhaps of dignified social position and ancient lineage; and though Government punishes these offences in the rare cases when they are brought to its knowledge, the sentiment of Anglo-Indian society scarcely condemns them. Thus the very classes whom rank and education might have been expected to render loyal to British authority are alienated. When similar tendencies appear in the Anglo-American of the South, the Englishman, who knows how not a few of his own countrymen behave to the ancient and cultivated races of the East whom they have conquered, feels that he is not entitled to sit in judgment.

I do not suggest that there is any present political danger to the Republic, or even to any particular Southern State, from the phenomena here described. But the evil of these things is to be measured not merely by any such menace to political stability as they may involve, but also by the diminution of happiness which they cause, by the passions hurtful to moral progress they perpetuate, by the spirit of lawlessness they evoke, by the contempt for the rights of man as man which they engender. In a world already so full of strife and sorrow it is grievous to see added to the other fountains of bitterness a scorn of the strong for the weak, and a dread

by the weak of the strong, grounded on no antagonism of interests, for each needs the other, but solely on a difference in race and colour.

Be these evils what they may — and serious as they seem to an observer from without, they are in most parts of the South not keenly felt—legislation and administration can do comparatively little to remove them. It is, indeed, to be wished that lynching should be sternly repressed, — some of the Southern State governors are doing what they can for that purpose, — and that the State statutes or local regulations enforcing separation of blacks from whites in travelling or in places of public resort should be repealed. But the real change to which the friends of the South and of the negro look forward is a change in the feelings of the white people, and especially of the ruder and less educated part of them. The political troubles I have described will probably pass away under altered political conditions — one can already see how this may happen within the next fifty years. For the social difficulty, rooted deep in the characters of the two races, none but moral remedies have any promise of potency, and the working of moral remedies, sure as we believe it to be, is always slow. Neither will compulsive measures quicken that working. In the United States, above all other countries, one must place one's hopes on the *vis medicatrix naturee*, and trust that the forces which make not only for equality, but also for peace and good-will among men, will in due time reduce these evils, as they have reduced many others. There is no ground for despondency to any one who remembers how hopeless the extinction of slavery seemed sixty or even forty years ago, and who marks the progress which the negroes have made since their sudden liberation. Still less is there reason for impatience, for questions like this have in some countries of the Old World required ages for their solution. The problem which confronts the South is one of the great secular problems of the world, presented here under a form of peculiar difficulty. And as the present differences between the African and the European are the product of thousands of years, during which one race was advancing in the temperate, and the other remaining stationary in the torrid zone, so centuries may pass before their relations as neighbours and fellow-citizens have been duly adjusted.

CHAPTER XCIV

FOREIGN POLICY AND TERRITORIAL EXTENSION

So far I have had to say nothing, and now I need say but little, of a subject which would have been constantly obtruding itself had we been dealing with any country in Europe. To every country in Europe foreign relations are a matter of primary importance. The six Great Powers of that continent are all in more or less danger from one another, obliged to protect themselves by armies, fleets, and alliances. Great Britain, seeking no extension of territory and comparatively safe from attack at home, has many colonies and one vast dependency to protect, and is drawn by them, far more than by her European position, into the tangled web of Old World diplomacy. To all these Powers, and not less to the minor ones, the friendly or hostile attitude of the others is matter of vital consequence. Not only, therefore, must immense sums be spent on warlike preparations, but a great establishment of officials must be maintained and no small part of the attention of the Administration and the legislature be given to the conduct of the international relations of the State. These relations, moreover, constantly affect the internal politics of the country; they sometimes cause the triumph or the defeat of a party; they influence financial policy; they make or mar the careers of statesmen.

In the United States, nothing of the kind. Since the Mexican war of 1845, external relations have very rarely, and then only to a slight extent, affected internal political strife. They do not lie within the sphere of party platforms or party action. They do not occupy the public mind. We have hitherto found no occasion to refer to them save in describing the functions of the Senate; and I mention them now as the traveller did the snakes in Iceland, only to note their absence, and to indicate some of the results ascribable thereto.