

The self-imposed mission of Miss Ida Wells, the eloquent young colored woman who went from one of the Southern States to England some months since, to try to arouse public sentiment there against the lynchings of negroes in the South, seems to give promise of better results than most of us would have anticipated. The American people are peculiarly sensitive to foreign opinion, especially to English opinion. While, as was to be expected, many of the Southern papers and some of the Northern are denouncing as unpardonable impertinence the strong expressions of British journals, and the remonstrances of the British society which has been formed under influential leadership, it is pleasing to note that not a few influential Americans take quite a different view. They realize and frankly admit that the disgrace is in the existence of the thing itself, not in the expostulations of shocked Christians on the other side of the ocean. But whether they take the shape of angry retort, or of humiliated admission and regret, the articles which are appearing in papers of all kinds in all parts of the Union, are having the effect of turning the attention of the people to this foul blot upon their national character and history as hardly anything else could do. This cannot fail to do good. It will tend to strengthen the better sentiment of North and South—and it must in justice be remembered that there is a better sentiment even in the South—thus helping to create that state of public opinion which alone can work an effectual cure.

One serious difficulty in connection with a crusade of the kind above referred to, for the overthrow of a great iniquity, is in separating fact from fiction. Miss Wells, who was the editor of a newspaper in the South until her life was in jeopardy in consequence of the wrath aroused by her outspoken denunciations of the outrages on men of her own race, and she was obliged to flee, speaks mainly of that which she professes to know, and her allegations have not, so far as we are aware, been seriously impugned. Not so, however, with some of the sensational reports sent abroad by the press correspondents. For instance, the *London Spectator*, of June 16th, had an article denouncing in very strong words, as well it might, a reported brutal lynching and skinning of a negro, said to have been perpetrated in the State of Georgia. In the same paper, under date of July 28th, is a letter from a Mr. W. McKay, of Macon, Ga. Mr. McKay says that on reading the article he immediately sent a copy of it to the (then) Governor of the State, Mr. W. J. Northern, a gentleman whose acquaintance some of our readers may have made during his visit to this city as a delegate to the Baptist Young People's Convention, in July. Governor Northern immediately set on foot thorough investigations, both official and unofficial, and received reports from both sources which proved that the report

"was a pure fiction," "that no such crime was ever committed in the county" (Pierce), "that no part of the horrible details had any basis of fact; that the whole of the report was absolutely untrue." One cannot but wonder whether the detailed account in the papers, a few days since, of the shooting of six negroes who were in the hands of the constables on suspicion of having committed acts of incendiarism, belongs to the same category. Even if so, it is well to remind those who complain that these reports are not British fictions, but are sent out by American correspondents.

In any case it is impossible to doubt that there is enough, and a thousand times more than enough of truth in the general reports of abuses and mob murders of negroes in the South to justify all the moral indignation that can be brought to bear by other nations for its suppression. Nor are the poor negroes alone the victims of this savage racial or caste hatred. White sympathizers who are working for negro education and elevation, are not only exposed to social and even religious ostracism from members of their own denominations in the South, but in some cases are obliged to pursue their philanthropic work at the risk of their lives. There is now in Ontario a Baptist minister of good character and standing, who has for some time been teaching in a Negro college in Texas. He, a few months since, was seized at a railway station by a mob of unmasked white men, some of them well-known citizens of the town, dragged to a secluded spot and, after having his life repeatedly threatened with revolvers thrust in his face, was stripped, beaten unmercifully, and left, bruised and bleeding, to drag himself as best he could to the next town. His immediate offences were having taken refuge in the house of a respectable negro, when no other was available, during a violent storm, and having entered the negro waiting-room at the railway station to warm himself, after having vainly sought to have a fire kindled in the white men's room. Though the perpetrators were clearly identified, and one or two of them openly boasted of his share in the dastardly deed, conviction and redress were vainly sought in the town in which the outrage was committed. The case will probably be brought to the notice of the Canadian and British Governments. This incident strikingly illustrates the state of feeling yet prevailing in many parts of the South. Much is being done through the agencies set in operation by various societies in the North, for the education of the negroes, and with very encouraging results, so far as those who are reached by these agencies are concerned. But those thus reached are at most but a few thousands or tens of thousands of the millions who are still living, as we were a few weeks since assured by a gentleman who is director of the educational work being done for them by

one of the largest societies engaged in this good work, in a state of degradation and barbarism almost inconceivable. These educational agencies reach only the centres of population. This gentleman, who has travelled over the whole South, visiting the plantations where the great mass of the freedmen still live, describes the condition of the masses as absolutely worse than it was before the war. One-roomed cabins are in many places the rule. This means that six, or eight, or ten negroes, big and little, old and young, of both sexes, are huddled together by day and by night in a single room, without any attempt at partitions, or other means of observing the decencies of life. From this single fact, we may get a conception of what the negro problem of the Republic really is. Well may the sympathies of Christendom be enlisted on behalf of the oppressed and degraded race.

CHARACTER-TRAINING IN THE SCHOOLS.

As the wonderful nineteenth century draws to its close much is very naturally said of the marvellous progress that has been made since its commencement. It is, however, worthy of note that least is, perhaps, said in respect to what almost everyone will readily admit is the most valuable and vital of all kinds of progress, improvement in human character. Is the average character of men and women, in the countries in which the progress of which we are so proud has been most marked, distinctly higher than it was at the beginning of the century? The question is, of course, one which it is difficult, if not impossible, to answer with any degree of assurance. Very much depends upon the standard of measurement, and almost every individual has a standard of his own. Nor is there any uniform and reliable means of ascertaining and tabulating the facts, even were an universal standard agreed on. Still further, were these difficulties overcome with respect to the men and women of to-day, there would be great difficulty in obtaining reliable facts, and forming just estimates, in regard to the period with which the comparison is to be made. We view the past through a mist, which has the effect in some minds of dimming and distorting the features of those upon whom we look through the distance, in others, of crowning them with a halo of almost superhuman virtue, according to the temperament and mental habit of the observer. Probably the tendency on the part of most of those advanced in years is to the latter extreme. As in the days of Horace, they love to praise the times of their boyhood and to disparage the men as well as the things of the present. Probably Professor Virchow is somewhat influenced by this tendency when he says, as he is reported to have recently done, "What seems to us elders to be wanting is not in science but in the character of men, which