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THE RACE PROBLEM IN THE UNITED STATES

GREAT country presents great problems to the consideration of its publicists. Vast resources and an energetic population have advanced the American commonwealth to a position in the very forefront of nations, and secured for it a degree of advancement in the arts of peace at which all the world has marvelled. But the country has not reached her pinnacle of greatness without having been confronted by many difficulties of the severest nature; nor are there to-day wanting conditions the contemplation of which saddens the heart of every patriotic American. By no means the least disquieting of these is the race problem, the "damnosa hereditas" of old settlement and colonial days. American statesmen are called upon to harmonize two races seemingly incompatible, one indubitably the moral, intellectual and physical inferior of the other; the incompatibility being rendered apparently unsusceptible of lapsing into oblivion by an indelible difference of color. The Negro race, which constitutes more than ten per cent. of the entire population of the United States and in many of the Southern States is in an absolute majority, whatever its capabilities for the future may be, has stood and still stands for moral obliquity, intellectual inferiority and physical lassitude. While optimists and humanitarians may regard the institution of slavery as it existed in the United States prior to the Civil War as "but another illustration of the manner in which Divine Providence sometimes uses men and human institutions to consummate a purpose," in this case the elevation of a race from barbarism to civilization, the practical statesman perceives that Negro slavery has bequeathed grave social, economic and political problems which cry for peremptory solution.

It is said sometimes, frequently when a general election is at hand, that Canada has a race problem. She has no such thing. French and Anglo-Saxon elements of her population present no such divergencies and incompatibilities as do the Caucasian and African races in the United States. Canada is to be congratulated upon the fact that she has no race problem. But in the United States the situation must be faced. There is here a race problem, and the aim of every loyal American should be neither to ignore the act nor to intensify the exasperation of one race against the other, but to endeavor to do what he may towards effecting a solution of the problem.

That the contempt of the white man for the Negro is not abating is shown by the prevalence of lynch law in many States of the Union. The episodes connected with lynching prove at once the low stage of civilization which many Negroes have reached, and the dissatisfaction which the average white man feels with their presence in the country on a basis of economic and political equality. Many eminent and worthy citizens justify lynching as a greater barrier against crime by Negroes than a slow and technical legal system can possibly afford. Others denounce it as a disgrace to the country, and as but an irritant of racial hatred. President Roosevelt and Gov-

ernor Durbin, in magnificent pleas for the supremacy of law, advocate a revision of the law of criminal procedure with the object of securing swifter punishment for the wrongdoer, and thereby rendering mob violence unnecessary. Justice Brewer would effect this end by abolishing appeals in criminal trials. The efforts of these distinguished men to remove a stain upon the otherwise fair name of the country, are praiseworthy. I apprehend, however, that the *causa causans* of lynching is not to be found in a cumbrous system of criminal procedure. Lynchings are but ebullitions of racial hatred, and to remove them we must attack the race problem at its very centre.

I am not sufficiently optimistic to believe that the presence of the African race in America is a subject for felicitation—to the Caucasian race. To use an Americanism, expressive if not beautiful, I believe that the bringing of the Negro to America was a "bad business." The contempt which one race feels for another in every respect its inferior will never completely vanish in this country. Scientists, by exact physiological calculation, have demonstrated that such inferiority does and will ever exist. And as surely as it is permanent, so surely are racial hatred and prejudice permanent. Nevertheless, I am as firmly convinced that there are means whereby the situation can be greatly relieved and its evils considerably mitigated.

The desire of the white man to avoid association with the Negro is due not only to the former's incontestable superiority over the latter, but also to prejudice against a race morally, intellectually and economically undeveloped. If the morals of the Negro can be elevated to a higher standard, if whatever intellectual capacity he possesses can be developed, if he can be made a skilled and industrious craftsman and a useful citizen, then I firmly believe the race problem will be, though never entirely removed, yet immeasurably alleviated.

This is the very idea which lies at the foundation of the work of that distinguished and respected Negro, Booker T. Washington. It seems high incomprehensible that a Negro, himself slave-born, should have done more than any other American to point out the true method of attacking the race problem. He laughed to scorn the suggestion that it would be best for all concerned that the ten million Negro inhabitants of the Southern States should be deported in toto and forever to some African territory, wherein they might spread the civilization which the white man has given them. The latest proposition of this kind appeared in the shape of a bill introduced in Congress in December last by a Southern representative, providing for the settling of the Negroes in the newly acquired possessions of the United States in the Pacific. The proposition was accompanied by the suggestion that Booker Washington be appointed governor of the prospective Negro colony. The bill received the slight attention and consideration which its impracticability and injustice merited. "No," says Mr. Wash-