

mental development requisite for an American citizen? Let us see. A quarter of a century ago of all civilized people, he was necessarily the most ignorant example of which one can conceive. Not one negro in a thousand knew the letters of the alphabet. To-day twenty-five per cent. of them can read and write. In the states in which they equal the whites in population, they furnish but one third of the paupers. They have a larger proportion of people than the whites, who are actually enrolled as members of Christian churches; and these churches are self supporting. Three men of color hold the honorable position of U. S. Representative. There are fifty thousand still living, who wore the blue and fought for the freedom of their race. Are not these significant facts? Do they show, in this people, a lack of enterprise? Remember that this government when it freed the slave, made no provision for his education, but left it in the hands of the very men to whom he had been in bondage: men, who had previously punished him whenever he attempted to obtain knowledge; and that his only opportunities have been largely through institutions of charity. Do we not see even in his impeded progress, glowing prophecies which foretell his usefulness as a citizen of the Republic?

As a result of our social and political education, the color caste is regarded by us as inherent and natural in the human mind. Socially, the life of the colored man is passed in an atmosphere of aggravating insults. In railway cars, steamboats, hotels and theatres, he is treated as though he were a vile creature tainted with leprosy; even the filthiest and most ignorant aliens are looked upon by us with more consideration than are the cleanest and most respectable negroes. Industrially, he is restricted to the least profitable and most menial occupations; the doors of our workshops are closed to him; and saddest of all, is the social attitude toward him of that institution which is the ideal home of human equality, the Christian Church.

The letter of our constitution has been respected, but its spirit in his case, sadly perverted. Let me state it to you in the language of one who is universally lamented as a typical man of the "New South:" The late Henry W. Grady: "Ignorance, he says, may struggle up to enlightenment; out of corruption may come the incorruptible; but the supremacy of the white race in the South must be maintained forever, simply because it is the white race and the superior race." I ask in the name of humanity, in the face of our constitution, what could be more exasperating or blood stirring to a true American citizen, than these words so adverse to the spirit of our institutions?

Bills have been introduced into state legislatures whose purport has been to lower his social standing, and attempts have been made to have Congress appropriate money to carry the race to Africa. Can we hope for the security of our institutions, or for any guarantee of domestic peace, so long as the question of oppressing an unfortunate people is coolly discussed as a living issue in the great councils of our nation?

I might speak of wrongs done him which are purely political; but, are these not enough? Can we not realize the true character of the problem? Is it not largely a question of sentiment, and a question of right? Yes, it is a problem of breaking down this race prejudice which has smouldered for centuries to the disgrace of Christianity. It is of all the problems of civilization the simplest, and yet the most difficult, because its only remedy is justice.

The attitude of the negro himself toward this question has hitherto been one of silence, but we cannot long regard him a silent factor. In the past we could say "What shall we do with the negro," but henceforward we must say, "What shall we do for the negro." The memorial sent to congress by the recent colored convention at Chicago, shows with what little concern they regarded the Morgan Bill. Dust may fly, but the earth will stand; they will not emigrate.