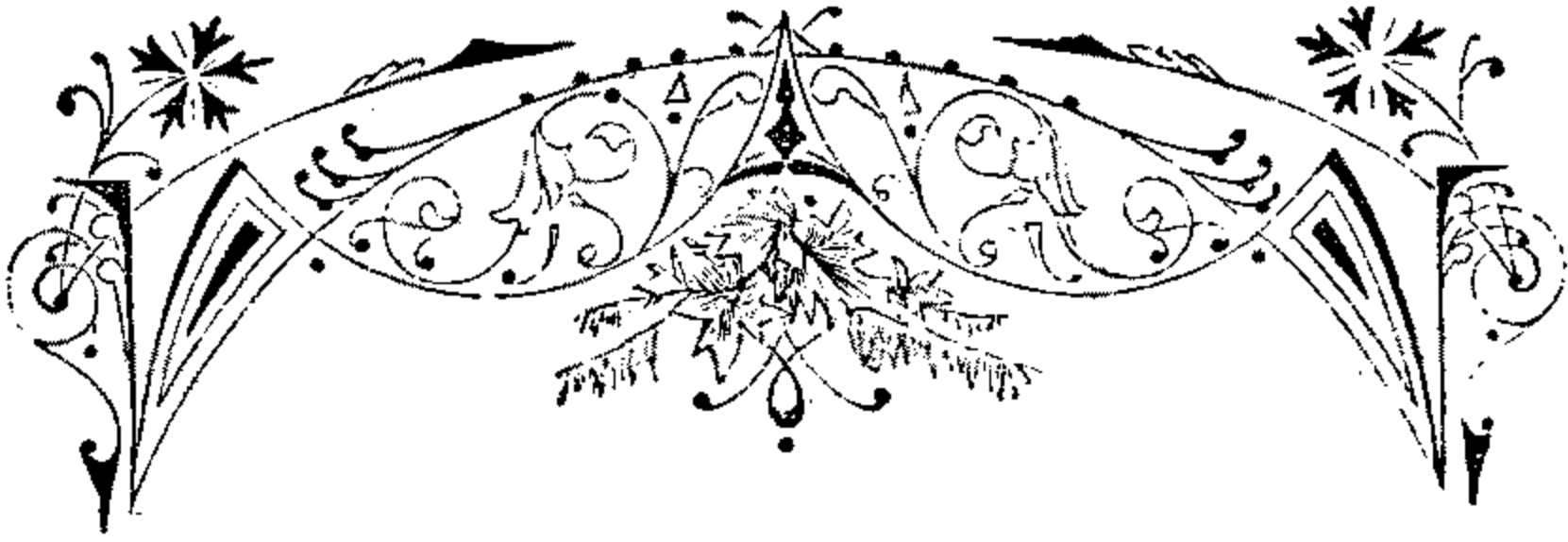


# *a community called ...*

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## “OUR BROTHER IN BLACK.”

BY J. C. W. COXE, D.D.

**M**Y theme recognizes two great facts of profound meaning: 1. The unity of the human race; 2. The diversity of the race. The latter is obvious and universally recognized; the former is usually ignored or denied. Yet both are among God's arguments, and neither indifference nor denial can invalidate a fact. That "God has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth," is not merely an affirmation of Scripture; the record is confirmed by all lines of human research. The testimony of language goes to confirm the biblical account. The science of comparative religion bears

similar testimony. All really weighty evidence supports the earliest witness, and traces the genealogy of all nations to one source; they are all the sons of "Adam, who was the son of God."

"Am I my brother's keeper?" Certainly; if for no other and higher reason—for self-protection. "No man liveth unto himself." A community of interest binds the race as closely as a community of blood. My brother's poverty burdens my wealth; his ignorance threatens my intelligence; his limitations bar my advance toward my highest good. I serve myself when I serve another. No life is self-centered; each one best and only truly serves when, centered on God as a Father, the radius sweeps the circle of human brotherhood, with all of its possibilities and needs.

#### WHAT OF OUR BROTHER IN BLACK?

Much every way of interest to us.

1. He is an American. He is

———"native here

And to the manner born."

To call him an African is to use a misnomer. Not one in a thousand of these children of the sun ever saw the “dark continent.” They were cradled in America; they were rocked by Columbia. And more, not one half of them are of unmixed African blood. The shading runs from “softest salmon to blackest black,” but the preponderance is above the line of mid-color. Miscegenation may be political heresy, but it is physiological fact.

2. He is a citizen. He has the right to vote. He has the right to pay taxes. He has the right to bear arms. He has the right to hold office. His name is recorded by the census taker. His ballot is counted in nearly

EVERY STATE IN THE UNION.

He has found his way into public life. He has occupied responsible positions—in not a few cases to his infinite credit. He has been State legislator, governor, representative in Congress, United States senator. He is to-day marshal of the District of Columbia.

He is register of the United States Treasury. He is a vital factor in our national life.

3. He is numerous. According to the census of 1880 he is nearly one seventh of the population of the United States. Under the unit rule he numbers seven million—nearly twice the population of the nation at the formation of our government. He has nearly doubled his numbers since Lincoln

#### PROCLAIMED THE DOOM

of American slavery. He has increased thirty-four per cent. within a decade. He now, on a fair ballot, holds the balance of power in five States. At the current rate of increase within fifty years he will be the dominant factor in one third of the States, and before the middle of the next century will outnumber the present population of the Union.

4. He is needy. This is no fault of his. The curse of two centuries of slavery was upon him. He has known but two decades of freedom. Wrongs are more easily

perpetrated than righted. A day cannot undo the damage of a generation. In 1863 the nation gave the freedman his manhood; it gave him nothing else. He had no home; he had no land; he had no money; he had no learning. He was a child in experience; he was a Lazarus in resources. The nation

WHICH HE ENRICHED

by two centuries of toil, and which he aided to save from disaster in the dark days of rebellion, has never requited his labor. It paid him \$7 a month for carrying a musket, when it paid \$13 to a white man for the same service. Before two hundred thousand white rebels are paid from the Union treasury for the loss of slaves, four million black Unionists have a right to file a lien on every acre of land south of Mason and Dixon's line. They made the South all that it was and is; they have never received a tithe of their just dues. What wonder that our brother is needy to-day?

5. He is promising. His needs have proved

an incentive. Bondage cursed his body, his mind, his soul. Liberty has brought blessedness to each. Self-respect has been engendered; ambition awakened; industry promoted; frugality stimulated; every social and moral virtue has thrived under the sun of a new hope. The freedman is not a tramp. Rarely is he a beggar. Even more rarely is he a criminal. He is inoffensive in his nature; domestic in his habits; religious in his instincts. The nation

PUT THE BALLOT IN HIS HAND

—a perilous experiment; he reached at once for the spelling-book, that he might read his ballot, and vote understandingly. In schools established by private and churchly benevolence in the South twenty thousand colored students are found, eager to learn, quick of apprehension, retentive of memory, indomitable in perseverance; and in the public schools there are eight hundred thousand, in every respect the peers of youth of lighter shade. They are outstripping their rivals.

By the increase of population illiterate voters have increased in the late slave States within a decade more than two hundred thousand ; but

**TWO THIRDS OF THESE ILLITERATES ARE WHITES.**

The increase of illiteracy among the colored people was eleven per cent. ; among the whites it was eighty-eight per cent. ; *eight times as large a proportionate increase* among those who have always been the dominant race on this continent. The increase of voters comes mainly from the boys who have attained their majority—entirely so among the blacks ; and in view of this the facts recited are startlingly significant. Their true meaning is this : the brother in black is acquiring the requisite intelligence for citizenship eight times as rapidly as is his brother of lighter hue, and at this rate will become the dominant race at the South within the present century, by virtue of brains as well as ballots. The hunger of this race for learning is something inexpressibly pathetic, yet full of hope. Do you remember the picture in “Uncle Tom’s



8 "OUR BROTHER IN BLACK."

Cabin," of golden-haired Eva teaching the old man to read and write?

UNCLE TOM IS IN COLLEGE TO-DAY;

he may be in Congress to-morrow. The darkness of his ignorance is fading in the light of advancing intelligence, as the hue of his skin has been bleached by the strains of Saxon blood which mingled in his veins. Twenty years ago but an insignificant fraction of the colored race in the South could read; to-day thirty-five per cent. of the whole number read readily and intelligently.

6. He is prosperous. He who contributed so largely to the prosperity of the country when in bondage has contributed more largely as a freeman. In ante-war times the cotton product of the slave States was about three million bales; it is now, with free labor, seven million bales. This fact refutes the aspersion of those who talk of the indolence of the Negro. He who made this prosperity shares it. He has been wronged by government; cheated by white knaves; de-

frauded of his wages; deprived of hard-earned property under forms of law ; been made

A FOOT-BALL OF CIRCUMSTANCES

to an extent paralleled by no other save the red race; yet, in spite of all his inexperience, his ignorance, the avarice of his former master, and the want of legal protection to person and property, he has prospered. In Louisiana he owns \$15,000,000 of property ; in Georgia, \$10,000,000; in the entire South not less than \$100,000,000. This may seem little for seven millions of people—but \$14 each—but it is a beginning which has in it measureless possibilities. It proves self-respect; it proves industry and frugality; it proves a rare degree of heroism on the part of a hitherto servile race, that in spite of all disadvantages,

IT LEADS THE SOUTH IN THE INCREASE OF WEALTH.

During the decade from 1870 to 1880 there was a decrease of valuation of taxable prop-

erty in every Southern State save North Carolina, Georgia, and Texas. That decrease for the decade amounted to upward of \$200,000,000 (\$202,868,844.) The increase of valuation in the three States named was a little over \$200,000,000 (\$208,606,146); so that the remaining States decreased in valuation over \$400,000,000 (\$411,474,990.) In other words, of the two races at the South, the one, with all the advantages of centuries of culture and prestige, has allowed its property to depreciate in value in a decade to the extent of over \$200,000,000, and in two decades — from 1860 — to the extent of over \$2,000,000,000 (\$2,493,047,366;) the other, commencing with unfurnished head and empty hands, has added \$100,000,000 to the nation's wealth. For every two dollars which the improvident white has squandered his ebony brother has saved one dollar. Who shall say that the sable son has not prospered? All this the more urgently enforces our duty. That our brother in black is so bravely bearing his own burdens is the strongest plea for

our aid. He has fought a gallant fight; he deserves re-enforcement. And this he must have. This nation yet owes to the freedman three things:

1. Security to person and property. This is the inalienable right of every citizen. This our brother has been denied, to the shame of both local and general government. He has been the victim of the most shameful outrages, with rarely a hand or voice lifted in his defense. His wages have been withheld; his property wrested from him by force or fraud; his life imperiled for the crime of citizenship; and many an unmarked grave witnesses to his martyrdom for opinion's sake. With Madame Roland he may well say: “O, liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!”

2. Unrestricted exercise of the rights of citizenship. Of these the royal one

IS THAT OF FRANCHISE.

It is too late to question the wisdom of giving the ballot to the black man. He has it;

he has it by the sovereign authority of the United States. Having it, he is entitled to its free use. The ballot means, not race nor color, but manhood. The rights of manhood must be vindicated in every State and county and precinct and hamlet, if this nation is to live. A full and free ballot, without terrorism or compulsion, and an honest count of every freeman's will, is the only hope for the perpetuity of the Republic.

3. More ample educational facilities. These are to-day utterly inadequate to his need. That he has improved so rapidly with his scanty opportunities is amazing. A quarter of a century ago it was in many States a crime to teach him to read. Twenty years ago not a Southern State had a public-school system. To-day several have but an inchoate system

#### BURDENED WITH DISABILITIES

to the colored race. In Kentucky the races are permitted the advantage of public schools only in proportion to the taxes paid by each

respectively. That unrighteous law practically shuts the school-house door to nearly one half the population ten months in the year. The spirit of ante-bellum opposition to Negro education remains through large portions of the South. The national aid to the freedmen ceased years ago. Private benevolence through various organized agencies has poured \$1,000,000 annually into the South for educational purposes; but large as this sum is, it is but a rivulet to a Sahara. And this will not long continue.

#### ENTHUSIASM FOR THE FREEDMAN

is rapidly abating. A broader basis must be laid, and a more enduring superstructure must be built. The wealth of the nation must conquer the ignorance of the nation. There are over four million illiterate adults in the United States (1880); of these *three fourths* are in the former slave States, where is found only one third of our population. That illiteracy is increasing, and more rapidly than is the intelligence of the nation. The increase

of the latter in a decade was but three per cent.; of the former fully five per cent. These storm centers of ignorance are full of peril to the Republic.

#### TWO ARGUMENTS

enforce the plea for more ample provision for universal education.

1. The prosperity of the nation. The Hon. Dexter A. Hawkins has made a careful analysis of ample statistics collected by the Bureau of Education, with the following results in brief :

(1). A free common school education adds fifty per cent. to the productive power of the laborer, considered merely as a machine.

(2). An average academical education adds one hundred per cent.

(3). The average collegiate education adds from two hundred to three hundred per cent.

Estimate the productive value of a common laborer at a minimum of \$100, and the common school education of the four million illiterates will add \$2,000,000 annually to the

wealth of the nation; *a sum twice as large as the annual expenditure for public education in the whole country.* Will universal compulsory education pay?

2. The safety of the nation. Illiteracy votes, and an illiterate vote

COUNTS AS MUCH

as the most intelligent one; but beyond its numerical value it is full of peril. It can be cajoled; it can be terrorized; it can be suppressed. Three fourths of the illiteracy of the nation is in the South. The vote of the Southern States in 1880 was a little over four million (four million one hundred and fifty-four thousand one hundred and twenty-five); of these nearly one third (one million three hundred and fifty-four thousand nine hundred and seventy-four) could not read their ballots. In five States not one half could read their ballots. In four others the illiterates exceeded half the number of votes cast in 1880. But for the illiterate vote there would never have been a solid South in any election.



Where that vote could not be controlled it has been suppressed; and one fourth of the voting population of the Union has elected seventy-four per cent. of a President, and needed but one fifth of the electoral vote of the North to rule the nation.

Sumner said that by giving the Negro the ballot we had "chained him to the chariot wheel of our national progress." That is true in a sense not meant by the great commoner of Massachusetts. As a slave, the black man represented but two fifths of a northern voter; as a freeman, he is an equal. The nation gave him a ballot to wound the enemy; *it must make that ballot intelligent for its own safety.*

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