

What Might Be Done for Colombia

It seems to be settled that the canal treaty with the republic of Panama will be ratified, more than the sixty votes needed for the purpose being obtainable in the Senate. The willingness exhibited by many Democratic Senators to recognize accomplished facts and to accept the treaty has, naturally, caused the Republican majority to adopt a conciliatory attitude, and to consider seriously such amendments of the treaty as may be offered from the Democratic side. It is understood that the aim of one contemplated amendment is to enlarge and strengthen the control over the canal zone which is already conceded by the terms of the convention to the United States. Would it not accord even better with the position assumed by Democratic leaders with reference to the Panama affair if another amendment should be proposed which should have in view the offer of a certain amount of compensation to Colombia for the loss of her principal asset? We incline to regard with a good deal of favor a suggestion on the subject made by the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*. Why, it asks, should not our Federal government pay for the canal franchise a somewhat larger price than the ten million dollars promised by the treaty to the Panama Republic, on condition that the excess over the sum named should be transferred to Colombia, which, in return, would give to the seceding commonwealth a quit-claim to the isthmus? The *Public Ledger* argues that, if it be true that the canal will prove of inestimable value to the United States and to civilization, it might be expedient, by paying a few more millions of dollars—say, for example, by increasing the lump sum from ten million to twenty million dollars—to extinguish whatever claim Colombia possesses, or that she may think she possesses, in the forum of equity. In the opinion of our Philadelphia contemporary, it would be better policy to renew our old ties of friendship with the Colombian republic at the cost of a few additional millions than to spend an equivalent or larger sum on fleets and armies in the prosecution of an inglorious war against a power so feeble. Let us look a little closely at this proposal.

There is a section of the Colombian population—the most liberally educated and high-minded section—for which, at this conjuncture, we cannot but feel a good deal of sympathy. It has been the victim of events which, for about eighteen years, have exposed its country to usurpation, civil war, anarchy, and bankruptcy, and which have culminated in the forfeiture of the American isthmus, that has long and justly been regarded as its most precious possession. The Liberals, who for many years preceding 1886 strove to give Colombia an adequate and invigorating system of public education, to establish a régime of law and order, and to develop their country's agricultural and mineral resources, have made a gallant but fruitless fight in the interest of civilization since in the year named the usurper Núñez abrogated the organic law then existing, and substituted by his personal fiat the present reactionary constitution, which neither the department of Panama nor any other part of Colombia was morally bound to obey. The moneys successively extracted from the French company for extensions of the canal franchise granted to M. de Lesseps have been used to frustrate the efforts of the Liberals for the regeneration of their country. It is not the Liberals, but their unscrupulous opponents, the Reactionists, installed in power at Bogotá since 1885-6, who are responsible for the foolish attempts to blackmail the United States, if not, also, to rob the French company of its franchise, attempts the inevitable outcome of which was to provoke the department of Panama to secede from the rest of Colombia, and to proclaim its independence. It is hard that Colombian Liberals, who have borne so many wrongs in the past, should now have to witness also the dismemberment of their native land. For their sake, for the sake of the innocent, it may be well for us to ask whether something cannot yet be done to uphold the dignity and honor of their country by the offer of a reasonable compensation for the grievous loss brought upon her by corrupt politicians at Bogotá. Although to the usurping government headed by President Marroquin, or to the greedy Senators, who, for motives they dared not avow, rejected an equitable treaty, we may be under no obligation, either in international law or in the forum of morals, it by no means follows that the plea of Colombian Liberals, powerless and hopeless though they are, for a show of generosity on our part which should leave to their country at least a remnant of prestige, ought to go entirely unheeded.

There is a recent precedent for such an act of generosity on the part of the United States. When, in the autumn of 1898, our commissioners met those of Spain in Paris, to arrange a treaty of peace, we were virtually masters of the Philippines. We had annihilated the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay, and Spain would have been unable to send a single regiment to strengthen the feeble force which she possessed in the archipelago. We had but to stretch forth a hand to take the islands. We resolved, nevertheless, to offer despoiled and humiliated Spain some compensation for a territory which, practically, was the prize of war. We, accordingly, tendered, and she accepted, the sum of twenty million dollars for the renunciation of her nominal claim to the Philippines. Of all the features of the Treaty of Paris, it is this one that is viewed

with most satisfaction by fair-minded and magnanimous Americans, and it should, undoubtedly, be credited with the willingness of Spaniards to resume, with unexpected promptitude, friendly relations with the United States. We were neither legally nor morally bound to pay one penny for the Philippines, but it was well for all concerned that Spain's commissioners went not away, with hands quite empty, from the sad conference, at which were surrendered the last remnants of the empire which Columbus gave to the Castilian monarchy.

What we did for Spain we might do for Colombia. Nay, in proportion as Colombia is by far the weaker power, the act would be more graceful and more gracious. But, it may be asked, should we agree to pay a lump sum of twenty million dollars, instead of ten million dollars, for the canal franchise, on condition that half of the amount should go to Colombia, what assurance have we, or can we have, that Colombian Liberals will ever profit to the extent of a penny by our generosity? The only precaution that now occurs to us by which we might avert or postpone the confiscation of the consolatory sum awarded to Colombia by the corrupt politicians now in power at Bogotá, or the application of it to the extermination of Colombian Liberals, would be a proviso that Colombia's share of the purchase-money should be paid in ten or twenty annual instalments. A payment of \$500,000 a year in gold for twenty years would be an acquisition of importance to Colombia, and it is extremely probable that, before the expiration of the term, the Liberals would recover power.

The effect on other Latin-American republics of such an act of generosity as the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* has proposed, and as we also are inclined to recommend, would be far-reaching and profound. It would prove to the satisfaction of our sister commonwealths in the New World that we are sincere in protesting that our quick recognition of the republic of Panama was prompted by no selfish motive, but was, in truth, dictated by a regard for the interests of the civilized world. Those commonwealths, and Colombia herself, no less than Europe and the United States, are certain, eventually, to profit by the opening of an interoceanic waterway.

Some Fresh Suggestions about the New Negro Crime

On January 10 Dr. Felix Adler discussed the negro question at Carnegie Hall in New York city. He sensibly said that the North, while it cannot evade its share of responsibility for the difficulties presented, ought not to assume any airs of superiority over the South, but, on the contrary, should recognize that the South, by long experience, is peculiarly qualified to solve, or at least attempt a solution of, the problem. We have no doubt that Dr. Adler and the many thousands of Northerners who concur in his views will read with interest an article on the cause and prevention of the lynching of negroes, contributed to the January number of the *North American Review*. Before and since the civil war, the author of the article, Mr. Thomas Nelson Page, a native of Virginia, has been an eye-witness and a student of the relations between the whites and the blacks. He lends the weight of his name to the assertion, supported by innumerable authorities, that the assault of white women by colored men may fairly be described as the "new" negro crime. In conjunction with many other careful students of Southern history, he avers that during the whole period of slavery the crime did not exist. Even during the civil war, when all able-bodied white men were away in the army, the negroes were loyal guardians of the white women and children. On isolated plantations and in lonely neighborhoods, white women at that period were as secure as in the streets of Boston or New York. Neither were many examples of the crime here contemplated observed for a good many years after emancipation. The particular crime to which we refer did not become frequent at the South until the old paternal relation which had survived even the strain of reconstruction passed away with the departure of the old generation of negroes from the stage. There was no extensive outbreak of the new negro crime until the teaching that accompanied the attempt to impose carpet-bag government had borne its fruit in the new generation of negroes. The substance of the teaching was that the negro was the equal of the white, that the white was his enemy, and that the black must assert his equality. The growth of the idea was gradual in the negro's mind, but, when it became widely and deeply rooted, its effect was shown in many ravishings of white women by negroes, sometimes in the presence of the victim's family. Mr. Page points out that conditions in the South render the commission of the crime peculiarly easy. The white population is thin, the forests are extensive, the officers of the law are distant and difficult to reach. Above all, the negro population, as a whole, seems inclined to condone the fact of mere assault. Touching this point, the author testifies that the average negro does not believe in the chastity of women. Such a belief could not be evolved from his acquaintance with the female members of his race. He cannot accept the credibility of an assault being com-

mitted against the will of the victim. Such a state of facts is beyond his comprehension. On the other hand, his sexual desire, which always was a controlling force with him has become, since the new teaching of political and social equality, a desire for the white woman. This assertion is confirmed by William Hannibal Thomas, himself a colored man, in the interesting work entitled *The American Negro*.

It is obvious, however, that the negro had the same animal instincts under the slavery régime that he exhibits now. Neither is it deniable that the punishment which follows the crime is no more certain, terrible, and swift to-day than it would have been in slavery times. To what, then, must be attributed the alarming increase of the horrible brutality? By Mr. Page the emergence of the new negro crime is attributed to two things—first, as we have seen, to racial antagonism and to the talk of social equality that inflames the negro, unregulated and undisciplined; but, secondly and mainly, to the absence of a strong restraining opinion among the negroes of any class, however enlightened and law-abiding. It is manifestly important to note what a specially qualified observer like Mr. Thomas Nelson Page has to say upon the latter point. He tells us that a close examination of the examples of rape and lynching, and of the ensuing public discussion thereon, has led him to the painful conviction that most of the leaders of the negro race have rarely, by act or word, evinced a right appreciation of the crime of ravishing and murdering women. Their denunciation has been levelled almost exclusively at the crime of lynching. Underlying most of their protests against that supercession of the law is the suggestion that the victim of the mob is a martyr. Mr. Page avers that, so far as his own observation has gone, the records of negro meetings will show, for one righteous outcry against the violation of women, much furious reprobation of the attacks of mobs upon the criminals. As to any serious and determined effort to stamp out the atrocious crime that is blackening the whole colored race to-day, and arousing against them the deadly and, possibly, undying enmity of their white neighbors, he has been able to find scarcely a trace of such a thing, except in the utterances of a few individuals like Booker Washington, who always speaks for the right, of Hannibal Thomas, and of Bishop Turner. A crusade against the lynching of negroes has been preached as far as England, but no crusade has yet been heard of against the ravishing and tearing to pieces of white women and children. In a word, so far as Mr. Page's observation goes—and whose is wider—the sympathy of negro orators and preachers, and of the whole negro race, is generally exhibited for the object of mob violence, and not for his victim.

Mr. Page does not touch upon the fact—we believe it to be a fact—that, since colored men were practically excluded from the exercise of the franchise in Mississippi, there has been no instance of the new negro crime in that State. Evidently he does not believe that the crime can be exterminated by statute or by any exterior pressure, but thinks that it can only be gradually eliminated by the inward regeneration of the colored race itself. He holds that, until the negroes shall create amongst themselves a sound public opinion—such as existed before the civil war—which, instead of fostering and condoning, shall reprobate and sternly repress, the crime of assaulting white women and white children, the new negro crime will never be extirpated; and that, until this crime is stopped, the crime of lynching will never be suppressed. Never will lynching be done away with while the sympathy of the whites is with the lynchers; no more will the ravishing of white women be done away with while the sympathy of negroes, more or less veiled, is with the ravisher. When the negroes, as a race, shall stop applying all their energies to harboring and shielding negro criminals, no matter what their crime may be, so long as it is against the whites; when the negroes as a race shall distinguish, sharply and sternly, between the law-abiding negro and the colored law-breaker—a long and effective step toward the extinction of the fundamental cause of lynching will have been taken. It is Mr. Page's belief that the arrest and prompt handing over to the law of negroes by negroes for assaults on white women would do more to break up ravishing and to restore amicable relations between the two races than all the harangues of all the politicians, all the resolutions of all the conventions, and, we presume that he means us to add, all the discriminating laws of all the Southern legislatures. Should the negroes, he says, sturdily and faithfully set themselves to prevent the raping of white women by members of their race, the crime would be stamped out. Should the whites, on their part, set themselves against lynching, that defiance of the law would cease. The remedy, then, he thinks, is plain. Let the negroes, he says, take charge of the crime of ravishing, and put it firmly away from them; let the whites take charge of the crime of lynching, and renounce it with equal firmness.

Is Mr. Page's suggestion Utopian? He is by no means prepared to assert its practicability. He submits, however, that the method of dealing with the new negro crime which he advocates is worth trying, and that from foreign countries a little evidence may be gathered in favor of its feasibility. Is it not possible, he asks, that, in every American community which contains a large colored

element, negroes might be appointed officers of the law for the express purpose of controlling law-breakers of their own race? Attention is directed to the fact that in the Mediterranean and in the East the English manage such matters pretty well under similar, if not equally complicated and delicate, conditions. On the island of Malta, for example, where the population is composed of different nationalities, between whom a good deal of jealousy exists, there are several divisions of police, to each of which is assigned the charge of one of the three elements of which the insular population is composed. In Hong-kong, also, where the situation presents an even more complicated problem, there are several kinds of police—English, Chinese, and Hindoo. The first alone have comprehensive powers; the two other classes of officers are authorized to arrest members of the races to which they respectively belong. Mr. Page suggests that, similarly, negro officials might be clothed with powers sufficiently large to enable them to keep order among their own people, while for the efficient exercise of such powers they would be held accountable. It seems that the recent vagrant laws of Georgia represent an effort in this direction.

To what conclusion are we driven if Mr. Page's suggestion be pronounced impracticable; if, in other words, it be impossible to entrust the suppression of the new negro crime to colored men themselves? We should, then, as Mr. Page admits, be driven to the conviction that the ravishings of white women by negroes and the resultant murders of black criminals by mobs, have their roots so deep in racial instincts that nothing can eradicate them, except a desperate resort to the supreme arbitrament of force.

Women Voters in Australia

AUSTRALIA has just turned a new page in the political history of the world, adding another to the many daring innovations conceived and carried out beneath the Southern Cross. At the federal elections, which were held a few weeks ago, nearly a million women voted, for the first time since the formation of the commonwealth. Their votes were cast in the broad arena of general politics, not confined to some one limited sphere, such as the schools, or some department of local or municipal sanitation.

The women of Australia, following the now stereotyped methods of modern democratic politics, drew up a platform, and, to some extent, voted as a separate party; that is to say, they attempted to throw all the weight of their sex on the side of certain well-defined principles and ideas, for it does not appear that they chose and supported separate party candidates. They had a platform, but no slate. Their first principle, very naturally, was that the sexes should be equal before the law, and that all government offices should be equally open to men and women. We shall comment on this proposal shortly.

The second article in the woman's platform called for the total suppression of the opium traffic, a reminder that so many Australian towns have their Chinese opium and fan-tan dens, centres of degeneracy and demoralization for the curious persons of white race, who begin to smoke opium in a spirit of mere idleness and novelty-seeking, and presently find themselves slaves for life. There is also a demand for the restriction of the alcohol trade, but, as we have so many prohibition States where women do not vote, this cannot be called specially characteristic, or the revelation of a new force in political life.

Thirdly, there is an assertion of the principle of arbitration, rather, it would seem, in the domain of economics, and the struggle between capital and labor, than in the larger world of international law. We are further told by the rather brief cable summaries that there is also a demand for the reorganization of the army and navy, but we have not enough detail to make this quite intelligible; perhaps it is a question of separate colonial forces or of certain ships to be owned and manned exclusively by colonials. This, however, is not very important for our purpose, which is rather to seek certain general principles, taking this Australian election, with its million women voters, as our text.

The matter of real and enduring interest is the question of the true relation of the sexes, of men and women, in the region of law and law-making, and, as a corollary, in the larger region of intellectual and moral life. We may clear the ground by pointing out that women have hitherto had practically no part in politics, simply because, in the earlier and ruder epochs, politics was only organized force, systematized fighting, having its origin in the desire to hold certain territories as cattle-pastures: the ownership of cattle being everywhere the motive of territorial sway. As women were not warriors, and, moreover, were likely to suffer misery and degradation if taken captive, the force of circumstances kept them out of politics, in the days when politics meant only organized force. The European states, with their ruling classes and their immense standing armies, are a survival of the union of politics and force, and there is little vitality in the woman-suffrage movement, for instance, in Germany or Italy.

England laboriously worked out, for all mankind, the theory of