

The New Emancipation

(Continued from last week.)

By James G. Cotter.

Consequently, the election contest was declared off, Hayes, the Republican was declared president, and the liberties of the Negro people were thus exchanged and bartered away for a mess of pottage.

The Color Line.

The White South had won her most precious concession, the control of the Negro and the right to deal with him as she may see fit. If the Negro had enjoyed the fruits of freedom for a brief spell, by the new deal his power was reduced to a nonentity, and upon his neck there has ever rested the iron heel of oppression, segregation, disfranchisement and racial proscription the like of which has never before been seen in the history of the civilized world. He has been deprived of his constitutional right to vote in the face of the fifteenth amendment to the constitution which permits him the right. But, his vote is being counted in the election of Southern congressmen as if cast, and for fifty years he has been robbed of the ballot and the South has been in control of the nation ever since the famous, or rather infamous, Hayes-Tilden compromise of the Seventies.

The White South has maintained its color line for the exclusive benefit of the white men of the South and white supremacy. The white men down there reserve the right to maintain this color line by day and forget about it at night. I do not need to tell you that as a result of this the complexion of my race is not unlike that of Joseph's coat—a race of many colors. But, if the Negro man undertakes to exercise his personal right to associate and intermarry with white women of the South the newspapers next morning would contain glowing accounts of a lynching of a Negro who attempted social equality. We have therefore, in this country today two forms of social servitude, namely, that of the Negro man and that of the white woman. And, to add insult to injury, the Southern States prevent the intermarriage of the races by thus leaving the Negro woman with no legal redress in a case where her body has been defiled, her life ruined and her child bastardized. In no other civilized country in the world

does such a system of repression and social degradation prevail among civilized men.

But, the South supposed that no race could survive such treatment and make progress in the struggle upward. It was believed that under these various forms of oppression the Negro would travel the route of the American Indian; but, when it was realized that in spite of his handicaps he still moves forward, they imposed upon him additional tests of citizenship for the purpose of staying his onward march; they imposed many limitations upon his progress—political, civil, moral and industrial; but he has met all these tests by accumulating more than a billion dollars worth of property, has reduced his illiteracy 70 per cent in the short space of fifty years and he has produced some of the greatest leaders of thought and action that this country has ever seen. But, the more education he acquires, the more wealth he obtains, the more he attempts to advance upwards, the more he is oppressed, segregated, lynched, disfranchised and burned at the stake; and now, his feet bleeding against the flinty rocks in the pathway of his progress, he is standing with his back to the wall and crying out in the language of the soldier of the cross, "Where do we go from here?"

Present Attitude of the Government Toward Negro.

Justinian, the great Roman lawyer has laid down the fundamental principle, "That whenever a government demands allegiance to its flag it should give protection under its flag". Let us turn on the searchlight of truth! What are the facts? Eighty five per cent of the white masses of this country belong to the working class. Ninety five per cent of the Negro masses belong to the same class. Some day these classes will get together and business will begin to pick up. The industrial classes produce the wealth of the nation; and a few men, less than one half of one per cent control all the power and wealth of the nation. They also control the possession and distribution of commodities and the prices of the same.

It has been said upon good authority that the prices you and I now pay for the necessities of life have been fixed many months in advance. Somehow, this crowd knows ahead of time about how much of certain articles will be upon the market at a given time. For example, it is said that the sugar trust now has in its possession or under its control some three million tons of sugar, some of which is in Cuba, and none of which is in the market. This creates a scarcity of the article and a consequent increase in the price to the consumer.

The coal operators, they say, control an unlimited supply of coal; but they are keeping it in the ground—the miners who dig this coal are allowed to work only 200 days during the year, and the present high prices

of coal are maintained. In the recent strike of the coal miners, the government stepped in and ordered the striking miners back to work and the people to use less coal.

Inconsistencies in the Exercise of Power.

The 14th amendment to the constitution of the U. S. among other things, "That no state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge

the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States". And, yet the State Legislatures keep Jim Crow laws upon the statute books of the South and the nation winks at it. The 18th amendment to the Constitution prohibits the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors in any State or Territory in the United States. It provides punishment for its violation. The government has the right under this amendment to punish offenders without regard to the local laws of the State within which the offense was committed, and many persons are punished day by day.

But we have no record, however, of the punishment of any person who has violated the 15th amendment to the constitution or the 14th. Is a property right of higher consequence than a human right? Is prohibition of more importance to the people of this country than the protection of human life and the preservation of human liberty? If congress can prohibit the sales of liquor on a rail road train in the State of Mississippi and punish the offender, why may it not also prohibit the Jim Crowism of Negro men and women upon this same rail road train in the State of Mississippi? If it has taken control of the rail roads and has passed laws which protect the property and morals of citizens in interstate commerce, why has it not passed legislation for the protection of privileges and immunities of American citizens of the black race traveling as passengers in interstate commerce? "O consistency thou art a jewel!"

But on some occasions and in some cases Congress finds that it has the power to protect human life against mob violence. For example, when the Mayor of Omaha was almost killed by a mob of whites they sent troops to Omaha under command of General Leonard A. Wood, our next president, with orders to put down mob violence and restore order; and within a short time after these troops had arrived in Omaha those cowards had begun to realize that General Wood meant business they scattered to the four winds of the earth and order was at once restored. On the other hand just a few weeks before that when the newspapers of a certain city in Mississippi published an open invitation to all the whites of Mississippi to be present on the occasion of the lynching of a Negro, it is said that the whole town turned

out, schools dismissed, children were given a holiday, places of business were closed up and they all turned out to witness the ruthless killing of a Negro who had never had a chance for his life or an opportunity to be tried by the courts. They dug a hole in the ground and buried their victim up to his neck. A large cage was then placed over his head and a vicious bull-dog was turned loose in the cage—the most brutal exhibition of beastly savagery since the days of Nero. When the department of justice was called upon to take action in the matter of punishing those guilty of this crime it was explained that in cases of that kind the government had no jurisdiction. There may be those who maintain that the Omaha case is dissimilar to the Mississippi case. But I say that if the government possesses the power to deal with mob violence in the State of Nebraska where the violence was directed against a white man it has the same power and the jurisdiction to put down mob violence and disorder in the State of Mississippi when the victim of the violence is a Negro. But, some day when the "New Emancipation" has become an established fact, whenever and wherever the forces of color prejudice attempt to crucify justice upon the bloody cross of mob violence, the people affected by these outrages will take a stand upon the new Hindenburg Line and every man of them will take a solemn oath under God Almighty and shout, "It Shall Not Be".

(To be continued.)

MYSTIFIES POLICE BY ESCAPING FROM PATROL.

Beaumont, Texas, Jan. 15.—Mose Campbell, colored, won for himself the appellation of "Slippery Mose," but he failed to make good Sunday night when Police Officer Mora found him. He was taken to the jail. But how he won the nickname for himself is the interesting story. About two weeks ago he was arrested as "dangerous and suspicious." As the officers were taking him to the Black Maria, which had been called for him, Mose slipped from their grasp. A well directed shot brought him down. He was wounded in the leg. He was locked in the automobile patrol wagon. When at the jail and the door was unlocked there was no Mose inside. It was the most puzzling case on record. Mose explained it last night. As he was en route the jail he raised a plank from the bottom of the car and slipped through, but pulled down the plank carefully before he dropped to the ground.

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