

Correspondence

FROM A SOUTHERN WOMAN

CARTERSVILLE, GA., October 13, 1903.

To the Editor of Harper's Weekly:

SIR,—Permit a Southern woman, who lived before the civil war and, of course, during and after the close of the civil war, to thank you for your editorial on the "New Negro Crime Considered," in the issue of October 3.

It is the clearest exposition of the situation that I remember to have seen within the present decade. It was undoubtedly the teachings given to the negro race during the reconstruction period which has wrought the mischief, and made lynching a supposed remedy for the crime of assault perpetrated on white women by colored men.

You were eminently correct in saying it was a crime practically unknown in the South before the war. During the war, when nearly all the able-bodied white men were at the front, it was practically unknown in a section encircled by the Federal army, and the cordon was drawn closer all the time. The negroes understood that they were free, if they could pass through the lines. They knew the white women were almost defenceless in tens of thousands of unprotected places save for the negroes who were domiciled in plantation homes. I lived in a refugee home, with little children, surrounded by negroes, for a year and a half, and many times there was not a white person, save my little family, within call if I had been molested.

I am here to pay tribute to the good behavior of the negroes in that crucial period of the South's history. I am a Southerner by birth, by instinct, by education, and environment, but I am ready at any time to add my mite to a fund to erect a suitable monument for the faithful servants of that period. You struck the keynote of the situation in your admirable editorial. The legislation of the reconstruction period is responsible for many evils connected with the two races within the last thirty years. It has been baneful in its effects upon young negro men and upon the homes of negro women as well.

I attribute the good conduct and harmony between the blacks and whites during the war to the intimate association of black women with white women and their children. The black race is sensational, easily moved upon for good as well as evil; and so long as they were domesticated with the mistress and her children there was affection as well as docility and obedience. All this was changed when the Northern teachers and missionaries flocked down South after the war. There were honorable exceptions, for which God be praised! but the class of people who came here to bolster up the courage (so called) of the blacks in their first experience of emancipated life is largely responsible for the horrors of the crime of rape and the lynching habit all over the Union. They sowed tares, and the crop has been damaged beyond measure.

A "solid North" made a "solid South." Beyond question, the South has been injured, financially and materially, by close adherence to many rash tenets and wild vagaries in national politics; but the dense cloud and dark shadow which the race problem cast upon their homes and their future made the wisest, the best, and the most conservative among us prefer the evils we had, rather than risk those we knew not of in changing front towards a party policy or a political sentiment which had in times past inaugurated and forced upon the Southern whites the loathsome idea of amalgamation with an inferior race, and their former slaves.

The system of public-school education in the South has been liberal beyond compare towards the negro race when we remember the devastation and poverty which prevailed in Southern homes after the war; but there is an infirmity in the system which is worthy of your attention in further discussion of the negro question. The education of the negro race has been committed to negro teachers who have themselves been brought up under the influences which you deprecate in your far-sighted editorial of October 3. I am reminded of Bunyan's story of the people trying to put out a fire while somebody fed the flame from the rear with a tiny stream of oil.

We have been educating the negro race by an immense outlay of tax money here in Georgia, while the teachers have been cramming the minds of their pupils with the ideas brought down from the period of reconstruction legislation—during which period they received their own education in books and other things. We have about three thousand negro teachers in the common schools of Georgia, and perhaps a majority were educated in institutions built up by Northern philanthropists and conducted by persons who were thoroughly imbued with Thaddeus Stevens's ideas on the negro question. Like begets like. They could only teach what they believed themselves. While they are wise in their day and generation, in keeping many things quiet, yet this very secrecy creates morbidity and grows with what it feeds upon. It became necessary to have separate coaches for the white and black races—to keep down friction and avoid violence. These cars are designated as "Jim Crow cars," and they are beneficial for the purposes here named. But the restriction is bitterly resented. Some negro preachers invoke the power of Almighty God to rebuke this "Jim Crow car" infamy, which these blind leaders of the blind denounce as a gross outrage upon the negro race, born of the white man's tyrannical nature.

Such are the conditions in the Middle South to-day. Whether the situation can be improved, so long as the negro is awarded the civil privileges of the white, is a question. There are three alternatives if the races cannot live together in peace, namely, colonization, transportation, and extermination. God forbid that the last shall be the only one left after due trial of all other experiments. Again thanking you for your wise, thoughtful, and truthful editorial of October 3.

I am, sir,

MRS. W. H. FELTON.

"FIGHTING INSTINCTS" AGAIN

NEW YORK, October 28, 1903.

To the Editor of Harper's Weekly:

SIR,—Have you not capitulated rather too easily to your correspondent, Mr. Alfred A. Benesch, when he accuses you of falsely attributing "fighting instincts" to the Semites?

Were not the Assyrians who "came down like the wolf on the fold" Semites, speaking a pure Semitic language?

Were not Joshua's warriors, who smote the Hivite, the Hittite, the Perizite, and the Jebusite, Semitic, as also the hosts who fought against the Philistines of Gaza, Gath, Ashdod, and Askalon?

Were not the Arabs, whose fighting changed the whole history of western Asia, north Africa, India, and gave so many dynasties to mediæval Spain, as also the sturdy opponents of the Crusaders, Semites of the purest stock?

I am, sir,

CHARLES JOHNSTON,
Bengal Civil Service (retired).

[The question concerned the "Semitic Instincts" of Disraeli. He dreamt of empire, to be sure, but to our mind his "instincts" were rather those of a dreamer than of a fighting-man.—EDITOR.]

THE MISSOURI SUPREME COURT AND THE "BOODLE" CASES

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI,
JEFFERSON CITY, MO., October 10, 1903.

To the Editor of Harper's Weekly:

SIR,—Among your Comments in the WEEKLY of October 10, 1903, appears this statement: "Through the efforts of Circuit-Attorney Folk of St. Louis nineteen boodlers have been convicted of bribery, some of them of perjury also, but none of them is in prison. The verdict, says the *Globe-Democrat*, is stayed in every case, in a State Supreme Court, composed of six Democrats and one Republican. The Democratic managers of Missouri do not approve Mr. Folk; their sympathies seem to be with the convicts." The intimation, of course, is that the sympathies of the six Democratic judges are "with the convicts."

Such a statement does a great injustice to a court that is as honorable as any in the land, and tends to break down the confidence of the people in their courts. The facts are that the cases of only two of the "nineteen boodlers" are in the Supreme Court at this time, and no others have been there since last May. Of the two now there, one reached the court only a few days ago; the other, which was tried in a rural county, came just before the court adjourned for its summer vacation on July 3. On the motion of the Attorney-General it was advanced by the court the next day after its arrival, so that it might be heard at the next term, which begins on October 13.

The appeals of three others of the "nineteen boodlers" have reached the Supreme Court. One of them—the one against Mysenburg—was argued at the October term a year ago, and decided on December 16, being reversed and remanded on the ground of a faulty indictment—the court unanimously holding that it did not charge any crime known to the law. The other two cases were on the January call of this year, were heard at that call, and decided on May 16. The indictment charged the defendants with perjury, and the judgments were reversed, and the accused remanded for a new trial, for error in instructions, but principally on the ground that in a perjury case an accused could not be convicted on the uncorroborated testimony of one witness. They were charged with having sworn falsely before the grand jury in denying that they knew that a corruption fund of \$75,000 had been put in the hands of a fellow Assemblyman by a street-railway company to be divided among a "combine" of nineteen Assemblymen when a certain bill granting a franchise to the company was signed by the Mayor. One witness swore that they had stated to him prior to their appearance before the grand jury that this sum of money had been put up for that purpose, and the court held that they could not be convicted on the testimony of that one witness alone unless he was in some way corroborated.

The appeal of no other of these "nineteen boodlers" has ever reached the Supreme Court, and consequently the statement of the *Globe-Democrat* that "the verdict, in every case, has been stayed in the State Supreme Court," is absolutely untrue.

The Supreme Court has no way to compel appeals to be sent to it; it cannot expedite the transmission of appeals. Not until a complete transcript of the entire case as made up at the trial is filed in the Supreme Court can it even take notice that there ever was such a case. The transcripts of fourteen of these cases have never been filed in that court, and of those which have been filed only two remain undisposed of, and one of them arrived within the last week, and the other was advanced as soon as it reached the court. The Supreme Court, therefore, is in no way to blame for whatever delay has attended the appeals in these cases, if indeed there has been any.

I am, sir,

PERRY S. RADER,
Court Reporter.

[The intimation as to the Democratic judges to which Mr. Rader takes exception is rather that of the *Globe-Democrat* than that of the WEEKLY. We are glad to see it discredited, and would be glad to print an equally convincing refutation of our own impression that the Democratic managers in Missouri are not in sympathy with Mr. Folk.—EDITOR.]