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A Comparative Study

—OF THE—

NEGRO PROBLEM

—BY—

Mr. Charles C. Cook.

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE NEGRO PROBLEM[\[1\]](#)

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LIVING as we do in the midst of a people, which, if not of unmixed English blood, is at least English in institutions, language and laws, where can we better read our destiny than in the pages of English history? "In our own hearts," some will at once answer. But no, the thread of our fate is, to-day, more in the hands of the American people than in our own.

The three nations, which have in modern times, most startled the world by their progress, are England, the United States, and Japan. In the early years of the seventeenth century, a part of the English people, impatient of the restrictions of their time, founded upon this continent a new and more rapidly progressive civilization than that which they left behind them in their old homes. But this was no beginning, only an acceleration of the movement, which had already placed England among the foremost powers of the earth. To study the conditions attending upon the entrance of the American people upon their path of progress, we must follow the pilgrims back to and into their English homes. What, then, does the history of the American people teach us? A simple lesson, still more impressively told by the history of Japan: that time may become an insignificant element in the making of a powerful nation. What it took England ten centuries to accomplish, the United States has done in two hundred, and Japan in thirty years. What mighty leavening agency has been employed, what secret learned from nature's workshop, that these almost incredible results, should have been so quickly, yet beyond question so well, won? The answer may be given in two words: England was chiefly hand-made, the United States, and above all Japan, have been made by machinery. Richly endowed with human genius, as with natural resources, only time enough was needed to transplant modern political institutions, and economic and industrial machinery, and to train natives in their use, to enable Japan to raise herself, in one generation, high in the scale of progressive nations.

Thirty years ago, Japan stood hesitatingly upon the threshold of her hermit's cell, and considered whether she should go out and join the throng of bustling Europeans. America, England and Holland had beaten furiously at her doors, demanding her answer. At this fateful moment, the daimio Okubu thus addressed the Mikado—"Since the middle Ages our Emperor has lived behind a screen and has never trodden the earth. Nothing of what went on outside his screen ever penetrated his sacred ear; the imperial residence was profoundly secluded, and, naturally, unlike the outer world. Not more than a few court nobles were allowed to approach the throne, a practice most opposed to the principles of Heaven. This vicious practice has been common in all ages. But now, let pompous etiquette be done away with, and simplicity become our first object. Kioto is in an-out-of-the way position, and is unfit to be the seat of government! Let His Majesty take up his abode temporarily at Ozaka, removing his capital hither, and thus cure one of the hundred abuses which we inherit from past ages."

"The young Mikado, Mutsuhito, came in person to the meetings of the council of state, and before the daimios and court nobles, promised on oath that a deliberative assembly should be formed; all measures be decided by public opinion; the uncivilized customs of former times should be broken through; and the impartiality and justice displayed in the workings of nature, be adopted as a basis of action; and that intellect and learning should be sought for throughout the world, in order to establish the foundations of empire." "These words," says the translator, "seem an echo of the prophetic question of the Hebrew seer: Can a nation be born at once."

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In 1868 the quickly accomplished revolution occurred, which overthrew a feudal aristocracy which had endured for nearly seven hundred years. At its close, the Mikado emerged from the sacred seclusion, in which he had been purposely kept, to take the reins of government and lead the half unwilling nation into the ways of the western world. In a few years, Japan had fitted herself out with a constitution, a bureau staff, an army and navy, post office, railroad and telegraph facilities, customs houses, a mint, docks, lighthouses, mills and factories, public schools, colleges and schools of special instruction, newspapers, publishing houses and a new literature written by Japanese students of European life and history; Ambassadors and consuls were admitted to Japan and sent to the other nations; scholars sought the western schools and returned to put into practice western ideas; European ships established commercial relations with the islands; and Christian missionaries hurried into this promising new field. Japan, in thirty years had passed from obscurity to fame, and no longer doomed to be the prey of other nations, she had a voice in that great council, which decides the destinies of mankind. By a not unnatural coincidence, she has been attracted to that other island power, Great Britain, and it is to England that her debt is greatest; for in political and economic progress, England is the model of the world.

About the middle of the fifth century, the Roman armies, after a military occupation of Britain which lasted for four hundred years, were recalled to Rome. That imperial city, fattened upon oriental plunder, and intoxicated by hundreds of military triumphs, was now falling amidst the ruins of her temples and theatres, before the onslaughts of barbarian hordes. Meanwhile the same drama, though upon a smaller scale, was being enacted in the deserted province. The Romanized Britons, their vitals eaten out by the corrosive civilization which they had adopted, were slaughtered like sheep on their borders, by the uncivilized tribes, until in desperation, they invited North German pirate chiefs to Britain to protect them. To protect them! What bitter irony! By the end of the next century, bones and ashes were about all there was left to protect, and England was peopled afresh by the devastating hosts of her protectors.

While in their native forests four centuries earlier, these Germans had won the admiration of Tacitus by the simplicity of their manners and the integrity of their lives. Lovers of freedom, they were loyal followers of their leaders in battle: accustomed by the severity of their winters to the greatest hardships, and hardened by lives of war into cruelty, they were

tender, almost reverential in their attitude toward women. "They had no use for laws," said Tacitus "their good customs sufficed."

During the century following their arrival in England, they glutted the savage in them, with the sight of bleeding corpses and burning homes; nor did they escape demoralization; for they turned their arms against each other and fought for three hundred years for tribal supremacy, only to fall before a Danish, and later, a Norman conqueror. In 871, 422 years after the landing of Hengest, and 274 years after the coming of Augustine the missionary, Alfred, the greatest of the Saxon kings, ascended the throne. The intellectual condition of England at that time, may be described in his own words, "When I began to reign I cannot remember one south of Thames who could explain the service-book in English,"—which is as much as to say that there was not one fairly educated man in the richest and most progressive part of the island. For more than three hundred years, the history of England is an almost continuous record of anarchy and rapine.

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Such conditions favor the strong, and, like the body of soldiers which, while advancing over the smooth road, keeps its line unbroken, but when obliged to cross a muddy, ploughed field, breaks up into a straggling file, the commonwealth of ancient Germany, with its wonderful equality and community, had so changed its form under pressure of the conditions attending the conquest of the Britons, that monarchy and slavery, and the accumulation by individuals of wealth and power, had, even before the Norman invasion, become permanent features of the society. All had possessed some share of power and wealth in the early time, and it followed that the acquisition of them was little esteemed; but now these gifts, when the Normans usurped them, grew to splendor in the eyes of those from whose presence they were being ever farther and farther withdrawn. The race for money and power had begun, and though the gaps between the contestants widened, all pressed onwards: England had entered upon her progressive stage. Now, after eight hundred years, while the rich harvest is being reaped, let us look back at the sowers, in the time of its sowing.

England was, before the rise of Japan, the only island power, and to her consequent isolation may be traced many important differences between her development and that of the continental powers. Prominent among these was an early consciousness of national existence, which gave some purpose to three centuries of otherwise meaningless bloodshed.

As the insulation of England was the most striking among the favorable circumstances, so love of independence became the distinguishing feature of the English character, belonging alike to the Saxon of the time of Tacitus and the Englishman of to-day. The effect of this instinct has been to invigorate all of the members of the society; and to it is due the succession of glorious victories won by the English yeomanry over the French army at Crecy, Poitiers and Agincourt; the ranks of the English army being so far superior, individually, to the ranks of the French, that superiority in the numbers of the French was unavailing.

But, on the other hand, it was the same spirit which caused the Saxon freeman to stay away from the tribal assembly for several days, in order to show that he acknowledged no duty to obey: and this spirit, again which spent the English by more than three hundred years of domestic wars and left them helpless before sixty thousand Norman and French invaders.

The very different period of peace and prosperity, which followed upon Norman tyranny, taught the English to distinguish between a just and an exaggerated sense of the freedom to which each individual was entitled, and in Burke's attitude towards the French revolution, we have the residuum of the struggle between Saxon independence and Norman discipline.

The church of England also expresses the English spirit of liberty. It stands not for dissent, but for national self-control; it is an independent, not a protestant church. To realize this, we must remember, that the desire for separation from the church of Rome showed itself in the eleventh century; and from then on continuously, until Henry VIII slit the thin thread which bound England to Rome, the cause of ecclesiastical and of civil liberty advanced side by side.

It is a noteworthy characteristic of the Saxon, as described by implication in the Germania of Tacitus, that, while he barely tolerated a king, he cheerfully obeyed a captain, or war leader. When, therefore, Angles and Saxons entered upon a period of conquest in England, which lasted a hundred and fifty years, it became quite easy for the captain, imperceptibly, and, to a certain extent involuntarily, to add to his proper office that of law giver and administrator. In this way, especially after the exchange of Saxon for Norman administrators, the still rebellious Saxon freeman became hopelessly entangled in a network of machinery, local and national, which kept him for many years an obedient, unresisting subject.

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So, being deprived for centuries of any considerable weight in the English counsels, the commoner turned his attention to the increasing of his material well-being. In this he was favored by the stern enforcement, by the Norman kings, of law and order, and an enduring peace; for, though English soldiers have often fought on the continent, it may be said with almost literal truth that not since the Norman Conquest has English soil felt the footsteps of a foreign foe. For this blessing, England is indebted to her insular position, which has also pointed so unmistakably to her destiny as a sea-faring power, carrying the world's trade in her merchant ships and scattering colonies over every continent.

Summing up then, the conditions favoring English progress at its beginning: we have a people, instinct with the love of freedom and power, subjected to law by desire for victory in war, and kept obedient by bewilderment of machinery. Forced to reconcile themselves to Norman usurpation of all power in church and state, they devote themselves to the acquisition of wealth, and, because of their insular position and small territory, end in commercial supremacy and colonial expansion.

The English people are, through their American descendants, our teachers in everything, and their lessons we eagerly and unquestioningly learn and practice. But we ought now, fairly and candidly to consider how far we may realize with our dispositions and our circumstances, the greatness which England has achieved. Could we colonize Cuba, our enviroing conditions would be favorable to political and economic development. Cuba is an island, fertile and, for commerce, almost ideal in its situation. Or, can we not, remaining here, share in the management of this splendid country, exercising the powers and fulfilling the duties of government in those states where we are in the majority, and influencing the government of other states where our numbers are not so great? If either career is open to us, the study and imitation of the English model will abundantly repay us. But do we believe that it is so? No, we cannot hope that either path will be ours. The white races have to-day the power and the determination to rule the world.

But, as if the first obstacle was not great enough, I must add another which is even greater: we have not the disposition to follow England had we the opportunity to do so.

The modern state is the product of centuries of war. Its architectural model is the mediaeval castle. From that school of discipline we have been excluded for more than two hundred years. That we have not quite forgotten our early lessons, our fidelity to our leaders in battle and devotion to our cause, have put beyond question. It has been more than once shown that there are men among us who can charge up a hill in the face of a withering fire; but who among us is capable of jumping into the air, and falling with both knees upon a fellow-student in a college foot-ball game; or of using against a savage tribe, as England proposed to do, the mutilating dum dum bullet, forbidden by the rules of civilized warfare, but too expensive to throw away? Yet this is the spirit of the conqueror, careful, patient, exact, merciless, cool. One-third of a victory to-day belongs, it is said, to the treasury office, one-third to the war office, and only the remaining third, to the general and soldiers in the field.

Since both opportunity and disposition, therefore, are wanting, which would enable us to enter upon a political career, we must be content to live here, a voiceless figure at the council-board of the American nation. And yet, a mere element in the population ("Negroes and Indians untaxed") we will never consent to be.

When de Toqueville wrote upon Democracy in America, he made the Negro problem a part of the history of civilization, and it has continued to increase in importance, as in difficulty, down to the present day. But that it should be other than a problem for the whites had not been thought of. How strange this seems to us, whose whole attention is concentrated upon it from morning till night, from childhood to the grave! We stand before it like Sisyphus before the great rock which he rolled so laboriously and so vainly up that Tartarean hill.

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A few years ago, I had occasion to seek the advice of a distinguished member of the Board of Trustees of Howard University upon a school matter. After hearing a part of the tale of trouble, he said solemnly, "It is very unfortunate, but still true that your people are not united, you don't act together." Now, as it happened, it was otherwise in this instance, and I hastened to say that all of the colored teachers were on one side and the white teachers on the other. "Now that will never do," he replied quickly. "You must never allow a color line to be drawn." He spoke with such evident feeling that I realized that his last word was said. We cannot exaggerate the importance of this fundamental dilemma. If we hope to win in any contest, we must unite, but the unwise thing we can do, is to unite and win.

During the past forty years a great many people in western countries have been deeply impressed by Darwin's view of the animal and vegetable worlds as the theatre of a struggle for existence in which the fittest have survived; and have applied this doctrine unrestrictedly to the life of man. A deep tinge of Darwinism seems to have spread itself over our own discussions, and two schools are rising in our midst, one advocating an active, the other a passive part in the struggle.

In pursuance of the former policy, we are told to organize, and if need be, to arm, in defense of our political and social rights; in the pulpit, in the press and before the courts of law to defend ourselves; and above all, to get money, for this is the key to the whole situation. But nothing could be more unwise than willingly to match our strength with that of the American people. It is vain to hope for a fair fight, man against man. The whites will not fail to make use of every advantage which they possess. The struggle will always be one between an armed white man and an unarmed Negro; between a man on one hand, and a man and a giant on the other, a giant made of store-houses, arsenals and navies, railroads, organization, science and confidence. It is equally idle to *demand* an impartial administration of the law. The English common law is but a stepmother of justice; her own child is prosperity. The Saxon came to England a pirate. He grew to be a merchant, often returning, however, to his old trade. After turning merchant, he turned lawyer, and the law administered in our courts of justice is but his replication in his own case. But it is vainest of all to suppose that we can *buy* our way into the respect and liking of the American people.

Somebody has been saying to us; Just let us own blocks of southern railroad stock and who will bid us ride on a Jim Crow car? Who could it have been, who offered us this advice? We should at least crown him king of jesters and prince of wits. Is there anything in the English or American past, to justify us in believing that they will part more willingly with wealth than with power? Are we not shortsightedly preparing for calamities far more destructive, and more enduring than the political murders of the last thirty years? The black miners at Virden could tell us something about the pursuit of wealth; and the Jews about its social and political value after it has been acquired.

But the worst result *to-day* of this kind of advice is that it is so quickly taken up by rash and evil-minded men, who shout it from the platform in its coarsest and most misleading form. After them follows the newspaper vulture seizing upon what is worst in the speaker's address to scatter it in large headlines through thousands of homes.

More numerous than these who bid us strike for our rights are the counsellors of a pacific policy. Their aim is the same, survival, but our part in the struggle must be, they say, a humble, or at least, an inconspicuous one. We should stoop to conquer, one tells us; while another, phrasing technically the same thought, says, we must march along the path of least resistance.

That the second thought is only the first in another dress scarcely needs the proof which a few words will give. In order to determine in advance, which of many paths will offer the least resistance, we must know the nature of the body moving, and of the field through which the body moves; and also the changes which both the body and the field undergo during the passage; the problem being a somewhat different one at any moment from what it was at the preceding moment. Still, the variations would be comparatively few were not the body, our own chaotic mass, and the field, which is, in this case, the American people, such changeable factors. As it is, the determination of the path of least resistance for our eight millions is a task which a college of scientists could not hope to accomplish.

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The problem becomes very easy however, if we make two assumptions: the first, that the colored people of this country are immeasurably meek, patient and long-suffering; and the second, that the white people are determined, right or wrong, to rule and have. These premises being granted, it *seems* at least to follow, that the path of least resistance for the colored people is one of submission. But there is a difficulty, which at once confronts us: the unvarying meekness of the Negro is denied by the very circumstance which brought out this solution,—the race conflicts. This unquestionable fact, that "race riots" do crop out in all parts of the South; and the equally incontrovertible fact that men of character and influence encourage a spirit of stubborn clinging to rights deemed inalienable, must be held to justify us in raising the question: which path *is* the Negro pursuing, that of submission, or that of resistance. It avails us nothing to insist that the former is the way of life, the latter, of extinction; the way of least resistance is, by no means, always, the way of life. The drunkard follows the path of least resistance, when he lifts the cup for the twelfth time to his lips; the moth follows the path of least resistance when it flies into the candle flame. The path of least resistance is the path, which, whether chosen by ourselves or forced upon us; whether it lead to life, or to death; we have followed and are about to follow.

We come back then to the real thought, which is so clouded by that technical expression. The cry goes up: A black man cannot stand up in the South! Let him kneel down then, is the answer. It is our duty to deal with this thought in its nakedness, and each of us answer for himself, this question: Shall I kneel down?

The issue brings our moral courage to the supreme test. The moral coward is he who sacrifices what he believes to be the higher from fear, who sacrifices his inner self to save his skin. If we hold our political rights dear above all else, if we think our manhood involved, let us be ready to give up wealth, comfort, and even life itself in their defense; let us, if attacked at this last point defend our privileges, and, if defeated turn our faces to the wall and die.

But at such a crisis in our lives let us make no avoidable mistake; let us not say that our self-respect is in peril, when we mean our pride. To strike back, even in self-defence, is to turn our backs to the path which Christ pointed out to us. To fight against almost insuperable odds, as we must, can be justified only by a cause which we cannot without degradation surrender, and can in no other way maintain. If we give up our political rights for love of peace, and because our gentler nature does not goad us on to return blow for blow, we forfeit none of our self-respect; but if we give up this privilege for love of Christ, that His law of love may become the law of the nations of the earth, we have His promise of a glorious reward.

But, after all, why should we consider which path we should follow, that of resistance, or that of submission, before we know where we are going? What is that survival, which we must fight for; what is this conquest, which gilds ignoble stooping?

In North Germany, where the climate is too severe for grain or grass to flourish, there was nursed a race, which hunted in the forests, and fished along the rocky coasts. In the fifth century, these men learned that there were more beautiful parts of the earth. In less than fifteen hundred years they have swept the Celts from England, the Indians from North America, the Maoris from Australia. Will they continue their devastating progress over the

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earth, never resting until they have extinguished every other race? It may be so, but long before they have dispersed the other inhabitants of the globe, they must themselves have become scattered, divided, opposed. Already, the English language is unintelligible in Germany, though Englishman and German are offshoots from the same stock, the German of the North can hardly understand the German of the South; Dutch and English vessels have fought desperately at sea, in the past, and to-day, Dutch and English are face to face in South Africa; England and America have fought two wars; the Northern and Southern states of this country have fought one. As far back as we can go the same condition reveals itself; Greece humiliates her sister Persia, and falls before her more powerful sister, Rome: the barbarians who sack Rome in the fifth century and the Romans themselves are of the same Aryan stock: so are the English and Russians, who seem about to grapple in a deadly struggle to-day. To assign a limit to this process of selection seems as impossible in the future, as in the past. Yet it may well be doubted whether, amidst the host of the fallen, there were not many who were worthier than those who have survived.

Forty years ago, Hallam, after reviewing the Middle Ages, was forced to say: "We cannot from any past experience, indulge the pleasing vision of a constant and parallel relation between the moral and intellectual energies, the virtues and civilization of mankind." And to-day, it is an almost accepted view, that the least difference between the savage and the civilized man is the difference in morality. It follows that morality has played no conspicuous part in the process of selection; that the extermination of others does little or nothing to improve the character of those who survived; and finally, since Japan has put on European civilization as easily as a Japanese can put on a suit of English clothes, that civilization is a varnish, spread over the material beneath. That this is the real belief of nearly every one of us, and has always been so, our judgment of the conduct of individuals proves. Do we go about the streets giving prizes to octogenarians, or put down to wickedness the early death of a child? Why then, should we otherwise regard long life in a whole people? Do we applaud the superior strength or cunning of Cain, or pretend that the discovery of gun-powder strengthened the arm of the *good*? No, neither loyalty, nor victory is the true test;—it is by their fruits that God will know them.

Let us, then, throw away this narrow, self-justifying doctrine of the survival of the fittest, and follow instead the noble counsel of Milton:—

Nor love thy life, nor hate, but what thou liv'st, live well.
How long or short permit to heaven.

Let us find our model less in the conquering Saxon and more in the dying Saviour. Christ died that we may live; and for the same purpose all created life has passed away. Let us so live that when the last man goes from the earth, he will, no matter what his race or color, owe a part of the good there is in him, of the hope there is for him, to our influence. Our life cannot be too brief for this influence to be exerted; and when God shall look over his flocks to praise the worthy, it is the witness of His Son that his first loving welcome will be for the least and lowliest.

But we have so little faith to-day, that I hardly doubt that there is chiming in the ears of many in this audience the refrain:—"This is all sentiment and doesn't help us to deal with hard facts." We ought, however, to hesitate, I think, before consigning this view to the babies' limbs. It may be after all that the Sermon on the Mount was not pure eccentricity, nor Christ a Don Quixote. Of the two counsels, 'Get religion,' and 'Get money,' there is yet something to be said in support of the former. Carlyle fairly exculpates the nobility of Scotland for their cold treatment of the poet, Burns. "Had they not," he asks, "their game to preserve; their borough interests to strengthen, dinners to eat and give?... Let us pity and forgive them. The game they preserved and shot, the dinners they ate and gave, the borough interests they strengthened, the little Babylons they severally builded by the glory of their might are all melted, or melting back into the primeval chaos, as man's merely selfish endeavors are bound to do."

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And after all, who are the poor? Let history answer! Is thrift taxed, which seems able to bear, or prodigality, which spares nothing? Do we tax clear-headed temperance, or the wretched drunkard, whose starving wife and babes, by reason of the penny of internal revenue, lose one more crust of bread? Upon whose shoulders falls the lash of scorn and punishment? Upon those of the able man, who never tries to do his best, or upon the ill-born, ill-bred creature's only, whose best is so little above society's arbitrary passing mark, that to slip at all is to fall below it? I have often thought that in the words, "The poor always ye have with you," is contained, far from a curse, the greatest pledge of the world's salvation; for except that hunger, cold, sorrow and disease walk among us, the bond of sympathy which binds us to our fellow-man slackens, and the heart grows dead and cold.

One night during the long period of hardship which the missionaries experienced in the conversion of England, a snow-storm drove Cuthbert's boat on the coast of Fife. "The snow closes the road along the shore, mourned his comrades, the storm bars our way over sea." "There is still the pathway of heaven that lies open," said Cuthbert. It is even so with us. Can we regret it? Surely the problem is greatly simplified. While our minds are fixed upon survival, no path is clear, and we weary ourselves walking along roads which either lead nowhere at all, or bring us back to our starting point. But, with only right living in view, there is no mistaking the way; for there has always been a straight road ahead of us, which

we could follow if we would. It is hard to keep plodding along the narrow path, when fields of wealth and power stretch away on either side, but, happily for us, these are about all fenced in, even the great Sahara desert is fenced in. We cannot be tyrants if we would, nor can we despoil our fellows for they are as poor as we. Our road is made smooth before us. God has not led us into temptation. We ought then to come nearer than other peoples to a Christian life, to that better community, where one half of the world is not happy while the other half is miserable.

Of the little guidance which is needed, a part we may get from others, a part from ourselves. From the English, *before* their entrance upon their progressive stage, we may learn the importance of two bonds, that of the family, and that of the neighborhood. National, state, even municipal organization is denied us. The village is the highest unit of population in which we may hope to develop our political instincts. The village gave birth to literature, manners and customs; as indeed it did to all institutions, political and social; for, let us not forget, that for centuries, the western European peoples, so powerful to-day, had, except in time of war, no other life than that of villagers. Deeper yet in our nature the family has its source. To it we owe our earliest expressions of chivalry, care and protection; of obedience, loyalty, devotion, faith.

The basis upon which the historic monogamous family rests is reverence for parents and respect for women: the basis upon which the village community rests is the common ownership of land;—and it is in just those great countries of Europe, where common ownership of land longest prevailed, namely, in Russia and Germany, that great cities are fewest and the inequality of wealth, least. In such village communities we would be strong enough to resist single handed aggression, yet too weak to warrant persecution; rich enough to escape the degradation of unending toil, though not rich enough to arouse in our oppressors the spirit of avarice. He who seeks to maintain himself in his social privileges and political rights must have in reserve abundant means of subsistence, and beyond this, rugged manhood. If he is going to defend himself in the possession of anything which another covets, he must be prepared to fight down the whole decline from civilization to savagery.

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Not only would the village community furnish us with centres of resistance to oppression, but what is of greater importance, with custom, and tradition, that understanding among men and between generations which is stronger than law. It is the peculiar weakness of our efforts at organization, that they proceed from the minds and wills of a few individuals, and not from any popular demand, and until our many society constitutions, in part at least, codify existing customs, it is like making ropes of sands to expect our organizations to endure, or our articles to bind.

In the cities, where so many of us now live, the village community is no longer available, and the replacing of it is one of the serious tasks before us. Men who will help to solve this and other like problems are desperately needed. Without armies and without government as we are, leaders, whether statesmen diplomats, politicians or orators, we can well dispense with; without national life of any sort, national organizations to control our political, social, religious, literary or scientific affairs may easily be spared. But quiet, earnest, trained workers, who will help to improve our family life, and bring into communion even small groups of families, are destined to be the pioneers of our civilization.

To confer any lasting benefit upon our people, however, patient deliberation and foresight are needed. I appeal to our unselfish men and women no longer to limit their discussions to the events which this month or year brings forth. The present is always a bad time for consideration. What hunter can *aim* his gun at a bird which rises from beneath his feet? Will he not rather fire at a bird which is coming or going? We are gathered here tonight as amateur historians and prophets, to review the past and lay plans for the future. But let me quickly relieve myself of the charge of encouraging rash projects or empty theories. I am proposing no vast schemes; I believe it useless to do so. We move through life, with our backs toward, to the engine, and see all that we see after it has passed. The reason, the imagination, with their creative powers, picture for themselves the world that lies before, but so swift and so unremitting is our progress, that the new revelations constantly pouring in alter the premises before a conclusion can be reached. Only the most gifted geniuses can draw in the vaguest outline a picture of the future which the flight of time will prove to be true. For the most part, our spiders' webs of theory are remorselessly cut down by the scythe of time. It is good to investigate sociological problems, and devise means for guiding our course safely through perils, but in our moments of pride, we would do wisely to reflect, that it is as though we were playing at chess with God as our adversary. All efforts to improve our state are bountiful, which are made after prayer, but other plans than those conceived in a spirit of humility and obedience to God's law are, when we are mindful of His jealousy, at once foolish and terrible.

CHARLES C. COOK.

Footnote:

[1] A study of the conditions attending upon the entrance of England and of Japan upon their progressive stage, as a part of the problem of determining the point of equilibrium between the white and colored people of America.

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