

CHAPTER XII.

A COLORED POLITICIAN.

O, that estates, degrees and offices
Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honor
Were purchased by the merit of the weaver!
.How many then should cover that stand bare!
How many be commanded that command!

—MERCHANT OF VENICE.

regarding it as a fanciful creation of the mind, yet he felt that he must look it up and be very sure that a dollar could not be gained from it, before he marked it in his mind as valueless. He meditated on the subject constantly, but with the shrewdness characteristic of his nature, carefully concealed his thoughts from every one. He had no idea where he should begin to unravel this great mystery of family connections lost within the fog-banks of life in London, but he intended to try.

Langley's nature was the natural product of such an institution as slavery. Natural instinct for good had been perverted by a mixture of "cracker" blood of the lowest type on his father's side with whatever God-saving quality that might have been loaned the Negro by pitying nature. This blood, while it gave him the pleasant features of the Caucasian race, vitiated his moral nature and left it stranded high and dry on the shore of blind ignorance, and there he seemed content to dwell, supinely self-satisfied with the narrow boundary of the horizon of his mental vision.

He remembered little of his parentage, but what had most impressed him was that somewhere in the dim past a woman, presumably his mother, had boasted that through her he was a direct descendant of the North Carolina

Pollocks. So he clung to the name, and called himself John Pollock Langley. Neither the Smiths nor he connected his name in any way with the Montfort story; it was a mere coincidence.

If taken in his first state, fresh from the woods and streams of his nativity, the Negro be subjected to the saving influences of the Christian home where freedom and happiness, education and morality abound, the Anglo-Saxon would lose the main arguments which he uses against the black brother; rather would he bow humbly in recognition of the ebony-hued miniature of God. Subject the Anglo-Saxon to the whip and scourge, grind the iron heel of oppression in his face until all resemblance to the human family is lost in the degradation of the brute, take from wives and mothers the sacredness and protection of home in the time before birth, when moral and intellectual development are most dependent upon pre-natal influences for the advancement of generations to come; join to all this the uncontrollable bestial passions of humanity, and what have you? classic features and a godlike mind? No! rather the lineaments of hideous despair, fearful and hopeless as the angel forms that fell from heaven to the black gulf of impenetrable hell.

Up from the South there came one morning early in March the report of another lynching. The skies were heavy with gray, storm-laden clouds, not darker nor more threatening than the dire and bloody news the daylight ushered in. For a month or two peace had seemingly reigned in southern latitudes, but it was the slumbering of passion, not its subsidence. At table, in the cars, at the office, in the workshop, men read with sick hearts the description of another illegal act of distorted justice, wherein the sufferings of the poor wretches were depicted only too truthfully for the peace of the community:

Jim Jones, a burly black Negro accused of the crime of rape against the person of a beautiful white woman, was taken from his home by a number of our leading citizens, and after being identified by his victim, was carried into the woods, where, before an immense concourse of people, he was bound to a tree, pieces of his flesh were stripped from his body, his eyes were gouged out, his ears cut off, his nose split open, and his legs broken at the knees. After this the young woman stepped forward and poured oil upon the wretch, and the wood being piled about him, she applied the torch to light the fire which was to consume the black monster. Leaving some of the party to watch the funeral pile, a posse went into the city and brought to the scene of vengeance Sam Smith, Bill Sykes and Manuel Jackson, who were accused of hiding the guilty wretch from the justice of the populace. These three men were hanged to the nearest trees in full sight of the burning wretch, who made the day hideous with his

cries of agony. We think the Negroes of this section have been taught a salutary lesson.—*Torchlight*.

The American Colored League was made up of leading colored men all over New England. These men were in communication with the colored people in every section of the country, for there is no community of colored people so remote that a branch of the great National League of American Colored Men cannot be found within easy reach of all. To the Boston branch of this society the people of all sections of the country look for aid and comfort, not because of any acknowledged superiority of its members, but solely on account of the advantages which they are supposed to enjoy under the beneficent rulings of the grand old Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We do not claim for Massachusetts, in her policy toward the Negroes within her gates, freedom from prejudice or error. There is prejudice enough, heaven knows, prejudice which is fed every day by fresh arrivals from the South and by intermarriage between Southern women and the sons of Massachusetts. But Massachusetts is noted for being willing to see fair play: she hears the complaints of the Negro, and listens with attention to the accusations of the Southern whites, weighs the one against the other, and, naturally enough, the scales tip in favor

of the white brother. From one class the Negro suffers in the state and is contemptuously flouted; from another he receives the hearty word of encouragement, backed by the all-powerful dollar which goes to feed such universities as Hampton, Tuskegee, and the like.

News of the latest horrible event had just reached the officers of the American Colored League. A call had been issued through the church and press for a public indignation meeting at the church on X Street, and John, as one of the executive committee of the League, was turning over in his mind ways and means of making it a success. With pencil in hand and paper before him he sat thinking. Outside, the sound of the typewriter clicking away for dear life came to his ears, mingled with the whistle of the office boy as he shuffled in and out, attending to his morning chores. John hired a white office boy and a white stenographer, not because he would not have liked to patronize his own people, but because he thought that it would be pleasanter for his patrons to meet their own race when business compelled them to visit him, and because he wished everyone to realize that *he*, at least, had no prejudice in his heart toward anyone. This was what he told the committee from the League

when they waited on him and asked him to give the office work to two worthy representatives of their race, and pointed out to him that it was his duty so to do as a leading man of influence among them. Some of the committee were unkind enough to say that they believed that Langley was as prejudiced toward black people as any Anglo-Saxon; but as he denied it most emphatically, there was nothing more to be said about the matter, though many colored men voted him a "sneak" in private, and had a watchful eye on all his movements.

Usually John had no difficulty in fixing his attention on the humdrum routine of the office, but today his thoughts wandered. Sappho Clark had touched a vein in his nature which was a revelation to himself. Sensuality was prominent in the phrenological development of his head, although no one of his associates would have called him a libertine. Nevertheless, there it lurked ready to assert itself when conditions were ripe to call it into action. Sappho represented the necessary conditions. Her beauty intoxicated him; her friendlessness did not appeal to his manliness, because, as we have intimated, *that* was an unknown quality in the makeup of this man. Her coldness urged him on; and Jealousy, the argus-eyed attendant of Love, and its counterfeit—Infatuation—

warned him that Will's love was returned, and made him impatient to force upon her an acceptance of his own devotion, at whatever cost. He did not contemplate marriage, because he intended to marry Dora for mercenary reasons. But to his mind that was no obstacle to the consummation and lifelong duration of an illicit love. He had detected in Sappho's personality a coldness more in accordance with the disposition of women of the North than with that of one born beneath the smiling skies of the languorous Southland. Where, with such a face and complexion, had she imbibed a moral character so strong and self-reliant as her conduct had shown her to possess? Not by inheritance, if he read the signs aright. Then, he argued, if she had *acquired* that stately, cold, dispassionate bearing by force of habit only, the time would surely come when unexpectedly the true nature would reassert itself. Ah, he could wait! Meantime he could watch for opportunities to coax the unwilling bird within the net.

"Gentleman to see you, sir," announced the office boy, laying a card on the table before him. Langley glanced at the card and then said: "Show the gentleman in, and remember I'm 'engaged' to anyone who calls while he is here." As the boy left the room he thought

to himself: "I wonder what brings the Hon. Herbert Clapp here today. Something uncommon, I warrant."

Langley arose to receive his visitor with an easy grace which was a distinguishing point in his personality. Men would tell you privately — keen, far-sighted politicians — that they believed Langley to be "tricky," but that he had such a pleasant way with him that you would give in to him when you knew, within your own mind, that he would "do" you out of a case in court or a hundred dollars with the suavity of a Lord Chesterfield; or, as one politician expressed it: "He has such a d—— oily way with him that a man forgets to 'fire' him until it is too late." He received his guest with *empressement*, bade him good-morning in a cordial voice, seated him in the easiest chair which the cozy office contained, and, before his hat had fairly reached a resting-place, had produced a box of fine cigars, and made him comfortable.

"Deuced pleasant office you have here, Langley," remarked the visitor as he lit a fragrant Havana and proceeded to enjoy himself man-fashion.

"Oh, it isn't bad," replied Langley, "though if my practice allowed it I would be glad to take more commodious quarters." John had helped himself to a cigar, and was now contemplating

the ceiling through rings of curling smoke. Apparently he watched a belated fly trail its body slowly over the white space, but really his mind was alert and watchful to find a clue as to the nature of the business which had caused this man to call upon him. Mr. Clapp had visited him twice before since he had been in business, and each time his call had brought substantial profit, in a political way, to his little bank account.

"Horrible thing, this latest case of lynching," Mr. Clapp remarked after an interval of silent enjoyment.

"Yes," replied John, "pretty bad. Isn't it most time for the Administration to take it up? You can't expect us to stand this sort of thing always, and not strike back."

"What'd you gain by doing that?" questioned Mr. Clapp.

"I'll tell you," replied John, looking earnestly at his visitor, "there are thirty-five thousand of us in this state alone. We can be organized, if the work is done by the right ones and in the right way. We can help start a new party, if nothing more."

"That won't do any good, John, we can down you. Colored people won't stick together; and then where'd you be?"

"We'd stick all right if once we got started," returned John doggedly.

"No you wouldn't; you're so confoundedly jealous of honors. Each one of you wants all there is for himself, and you never know when to get off, individually. We white men know this, and it is easy to upset your plans."

"I know that there is a great deal of truth in what you say, but that won't always be the case with us; we are growing away from it more and more every day; and with the missionary work that the League is doing, we expect to fight you one of these days, and knock the party clear over the ropes."

"You'll never do it!" declared Mr. Clapp.

"Time will tell. You don't expect to succeed in keeping us out of employment, shoved in a corner to starve and to be burnt alive, without getting square sometime, do you? There would be some satisfaction in throwing you fellows out and putting others in, if a new party is the outcome of the issue, and seeing some of you, who have your pockets filled with the salaries which the Government has heaped upon you, shoved out of a job and your vast schemes for growing richer, at the expense of the lives of just such poor unfortunates as the Negroes you are allowing the South to burn in order to keep in power, blown to the devil. We can at least do that much."

"I didn't expect such talk from you, Langley,"

said Mr. Clapp; his lips tightening in a tense line about the mouth.

"I suppose not. I've always been pliable, like the rest of the race. Things are changing."

"The dollar will fetch you every time, John."

"Not this time, anyhow," was the dogged reply.

"Pshaw! You people are standing in your own light."

"Yes, I think we are. Been doing the same old thing for the last thirty-five years."

"What do you mean?" demanded Mr. Clapp, growing white with suppressed passion. "Is that a reflection?"

"Don't lose your temper, Colonel; the man who gets mad always gets the worst of it," replied John blandly. "I want to ask you a question: Did you ever hear of such a thing as a man being robbed and murdered in the house of his friends?" He looked Mr. Clapp squarely in the eye. The latter shifted uneasily in his seat.

"That's what's been done to my people."

"Well, you can't complain; you've had all you're worth."

"Had all we're worth! Yes, you give us a bootblack stand in the corridor of the State House, and think we are placated."

"You can't expect anything more until you

have earned it. Besides, you're incompetent to fill any higher position. I have had a number of your best men tried in clerical positions, and you always fail to compete favorably with an ordinary white clerk. You can't ask the people to pay for ignorant incompetents."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed John, as he lay back in his chair and winked at the Colonel, "that's a good one! What do you think I've been doing since I've been in the law business in this city? Why, the greenest ward-heeler knows that neither a white nor black man is competent to fill an office if the heads of the department where he is employed wish to get rid of him. The civil service is a good thing, but even that can't save a man from becoming incompetent when his resignation is desired by any one in authority. That's no argument at all. And as for our earning our rights — we didn't earn them at Wagner and Fort Fisher and at Fort Pillow; we haven't held the casting vote, and floated you from poverty into afflu-

All sections must be satisfied, and if you love your country as you should, you will be willing to sacrifice a little for the good of the whole. It won't hurt you; you can't miss luxuries and positions that you have never been used to!" The Colonel was shouting at the top of his lungs. John sat calmly waiting for the storm to subside.

"Then what I have heard so often is true, that the South is in the saddle."

"Eh?" said the Colonel, subsiding limply into his chair and wiping his heated face on his handkerchief. "Well, I might as well own it, to you; I know it will go no farther. It is so in great measure, Langley. That is the reason we want your people to go slow. This is a great country. Each man is for the good of his own section. Can't blame 'em, can you?" "No; and neither can you blame *us* for trying to get the best we can for the good of our race. You'll find we mean to do it."

"You mean to do it — yes, but the white man rules in this country every time, John, because he's born for the business, and it's just as well for you to keep the few friends you've got, and not drive them away because you're sore over your disappointments. You know nothing about business, you've no capital, no money, and we've got you every time."

"Threats do not frighten me, Colonel; nearly nineteen hundred years ago Christ sat at supper with his friends, and one of them, with a kiss still warm on his lips, betrayed him to crucifixion. What have we to expect from our friends?"

"Now, look here, Langley, don't say hard things, and don't get mad. I will admit every word that you say. It is all true, d—— it!" he exclaimed as he arose to his feet and began walking up and down the floor with rapid strides.

"I imagine I should feel even worse than you do if I were one of your race, but you see things are as they are, and why not make the best of a bad matter? Your people can't help themselves. If you rose in the South and appealed to arms you would soon be exterminated; for of course the South is our brother, and in an uprising of that sort, the National arms would necessarily be directed against the 'rioters,' as they would be termed. Individually, I might feel the justice of your cause; others might feel with me; but expediency would make me fight against you. And that brings me to my errand here today. It is the duty of every one of us to wait for justice, and not to countenance excitement and bloodshed. I assure you upon my honor as a man, that if the colored people are only patient for a while

longer, this thing will be settled amicably. We have great plans for pacifying the South, and if we have the help of every good citizen we shall sooner be able to bring about a season of peace and prosperity, not only to the colored people, but to the whole country."

"Talk's cheap. I've heard that old gag so many times that it's grown stale."

"But we intend to do the square thing this time."

"It ain't in you to do the square thing by us. It is as natural for you to cheat us and maltreat us as it is for boys to pull out the wings and legs of flies. You say now you've got no power to stop lynching. If you haven't the power before election, where will you get it after the votes are in? No, sir; it's votes you want, and after you get them, and all the subsidies, corporations, and trusts are riding easily on the front seat of the coach for another year, you won't know us; and robbing and killing the black man can go right on."

"You talk like a fool, John Langley. You're jeopardizing the best chance you ever had since Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation."

"That's all right. Promises are like pie-crust, made to be broken. You may be the best we can do, and the best is d—— poor. Colonel,

you just make up your mind to one thing: we're coming high this time. It's going to cost you something; yes, sir, right smart."

"I tell you, Langley, we have a hard fight to give your people even the little that they do get. It's your duty to listen to reason in this matter. What do you want, anyhow?"

"We want our men given something beside boot-blacking in the employment of the state. We want our girls given a chance as clerks; that's what we want. Anything unreasonable in that?"

"No; that isn't unreasonable, but d—— it all, man, other employees would 'kick,'"

"Let 'em 'kick.' Turn 'em out and get others; the civil service lists are always full." John faced the angry man with grim determination on every feature. He thought to himself: "The Colonel wants something done, and he might as well know that it's going to take a good thing to get me on his side."

"All right! I see what's the matter with you; you want to fight!" exclaimed the angry Colonel. "All right! be pig-headed; don't listen to reason; plunge the country into a race war in spite of all we've done for you, especially for your leaders; and when your race is exterminated, put the blame where it belongs. I wash my hands of the whole business!"

"Oh," replied John, with a conciliatory air, "I don't want to see bloodshed any more than you do, and I am just as ready to accept amicable terms for my race as you are to offer them. I only want to convince you that we can do something if conditions are right."

"You're all right, John, my boy," returned Clapp, as he slapped Langley on the back, apparently very ready to grasp the olive-branch of peace; "you stick to the party and the party'll stick to you. We don't want to quarrel, do we?"

"No, that won't pay," said John.

Each man now resumed the seat which he had vacated under the excitement of the moment, helped himself to another cigar, and again contemplated the ceiling through rings of smoke. John noticed that the fly had made the circuit of the ceiling, and was moving toward him from the opposite side of the room. After a moment's silence the Colonel said:

"Your folks are going to have a meeting about this last atrocious affair, aren't they?"

"Yes; I was just looking over the list of

speakers as you came in."

"I suppose they're pretty mad?"

"Yes; pretty hot."

"By the way, Langley, your name is up for the place of City Solicitor, to fill the vacancy

made by the death of Calvin. I suppose you'll accept it if you pull it off?"

This was the first that John had heard about any such place being offered to him, but he took it as a matter of course, and his eyes sparkled as he replied: "That would suit me to a T."

"That settles it, then; it's a go. Now I tell you what you do," he continued between the puffs of fragrant smoke; "you hold that meeting down among your people to a calm level. Don't let your fire-eaters like Judge Watson raise the devil of a row, and throw dirt on the party. You keep that end down and I'll work the papers."

"Just so," replied John.
"How's the city election going down your way, anyhow?" asked the Colonel, after a few more explicit directions to Langley concerning the work he would have him do.

"Pretty fair. Some of the voters want to take their own heads, but they can be managed." "Well, here's an order on the committee for money waiting to be used in your district in an emergency. Draw when you need it." Then he arose from his chair to take his leave.

"Mighty good cigars you keep, John."

"Help yourself, Colonel, help yourself."

The Hon. Herbert Clapp graciously took a

half-dozen and stored them away in a spacious coat pocket. After a few more commonplace remarks Langley accompanied his visitor to the door, they shook hands, and the interview was ended.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE AMERICAN COLORED LEAGUE.

SHALL tongues be mute when deeds are wrought
Which well might shame extremest hell?
Shall Ply's bosom cease to swell?
Shall Honor bleed? — shall Truth succumb?

No; — by each spot of haunted ground
Where Freedom weeps her children's fall, —
By Plymouth's rock and Bunker's mound,
By Griswold's stained and shattered wall,

By Warren's ghost, by Langdon's shade,
By all the memories of our dead!

— Whittier.

By their enlarging souls, which burst
The bands and fetters round them set,
By the free Pilgrim spirit nursed
Within our inmost bosoms, yet,
By all above, around, below,
Be ours the indignant answer, — No!

WHEN Judge Watson, the president of the League, reached his office on that eventful March morning, he found his desk deluged with telegrams from all over the country. From the South the cry was: "Can nothing be done?" "Where is Massachusetts? Has our old friend been turned against us at last?" "For God's sake help us!" "How long, O

Lord, how long!" "Let the voice of the League be heard from every city, town and village in the Union. Speak, and let our voices be heard!"

Such were the messages that compelled the hoary-haired veteran of a hundred anti-slavery meetings to crush back the sobs which arose in his throat as he, too, reiterated the cry of an afflicted people: "How long, O Lord, how long!" That day the executive committee of the League met and asked themselves what could be done. "Nothing," was the final decision after debating the question, "but to *agitate*." This plan they proceeded to put into execution. Notices were sent all over New England of a gigantic public meeting to be held at the church on X Street, on the Tuesday evening following. The press, with one or two exceptions, sided either openly or secretly against the Negroes, North and South. "Ah, ah!" they cried, "see how the Negro abuses the great privileges which we have bestowed upon him." In view of this fact, the League decided that a conservative white man should be asked to address the meeting, along with men imbued with the old abolition spirit, and in this way each side could have a chance to represent the subject as seen from its point of view. "Let us, once and for all, look at the

question dispassionately; if the fault be ours, let us acknowledge it like men, and seek to amend it; if it belongs to others, may God help them to do right."

The excitement among the colored people was intense: prayers were held in all the churches the Sunday preceding. Telegrams were received from the branches of the League all over the state that delegates would represent them. The meeting would be a great expression of public opinion.

Dr. Arthur Lewis was head of a large educational institution in the South devoted to the welfare of the Negroes. Every year he visited the city, and assisted by a quartette of singers, who were also members of the school, collected large sums of money from the best class of philanthropic citizens, who gave to the Negro not only because they believed he was wronged, but also because they believed that in great measure his elevation would remove the stigma under which the Southern white labored. For the loyal white man there would be no greater joy in life than to see his poetic dream of superiority to all other governments realized in the "land of the free and the home of the brave." He knows that this can never be while the Negro question keeps up the line of demarcation which marks the division of the North

from the South. True and loyal son of his country, he would sacrifice any race, any principle, to bring about this much-desired consummation; so he contributes his money to build up manufacturing interests at the South to his own material disadvantage in the North: to develop uncultivated land there, and to educate the Negro with the hope that in the general advance the latter question may be buried from public notice, if not obliterated. Delusive hope that grasps at shadows!

That momentous Tuesday evening rolled quickly round. The committee asked that the meeting should open at half-past seven, on account of the time needed by the speakers, and long before the hour appointed the large edifice was filled to overflowing. And what a crowd! They came from towns remote, from the farm, from domestic service in the homes of wealth and from among the lowly ones who earn a scanty living with scrubbing-brush and pail. Doctor, lawyer, politician, mechanic — every class sent its representative there to help protest against the wrongs of down-trodden manhood.

The platform was heavily draped in American flags supplemented by wide bands of mourning. Pictures of the anti-slavery apostles peered out at the audience from the folds of

the national colors. Speakers and representative citizens were seated upon the platform, and visiting delegates occupied seats in close proximity. The choir had volunteered its services, and, after a prayer by the pastor, rendered Mrs. Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic" in masterly style. In listening to the martial strains the pulse of the vast concourse of people was strained with excitement and expectation. The stillness was intense as the gray-haired president of the League and chairman of the meeting arose in his seat and passing to the desk, rapped for order.

"Fellow-citizens and men and women of my race: The occasion for this meeting is one of great solemnity. Forty years ago, when as a young man I sat at the feet of Sumner, Phillips, Garrison, Pillsbury, Charles Lenox Remond, Nell, Robert Morris, Fred Douglass and all the mighty host of anti-slavery fathers, we thought that with the abolition of slavery the black man's destiny would be accomplished, and fixed beyond a peradventure. Today a condition of affairs confronts us that they never foresaw: the systematic destruction of the Negro by every device which the fury of enlightened malevolence can invent. In whatever direction we turn, the clouds hang dark and threatening. This new birth of the black race is a mighty

agony. God help us in our struggle for liberty and manhood! *Agitation and eternal vigilance in the formation of public opinion* were the weapons which broke the power of the slaveholder and gave us emancipation. I recommend these methods to you today, knowing their value in the past.

"Up then and act! Thy courage waketh!

Combat intrigue, injustice, tyranny,
And in thine efforts God will be with thee."

He then called upon the Hon. Herbert Clapp, as a representative of the party and of the sentiment of the best white people of the country, to address the meeting.

The political contingent gave him a hearty welcome as he moved with stately tread to the front of the platform. He said:

"The topic to be discussed is a very serious one, and I feel deeply how incompetent I am to deal with it, how incompetent most of us are to attempt the solution of the question before us. As a white man looking upon the South as my brother, and desiring to see the welfare of that section secured along with the rights of the brother in black, I feel the responsibility which rests upon me tonight to be fair and just, impartial to both sides in what I may say. I ask you tonight as rational people to

look at this question from both points of view; to be calm and logical; to be willing, as just men of intelligence and judgment, to see and acknowledge wrong wherever you find it among your own people, and to be willing to consult as to the best method of procedure to rectify mistakes which if corrected may lead to an amicable adjustment of all difficulties in the South. As a friend of both sides, I ask you to do this.

"I am not here to apologize for the South; she has her ills and her sins. What section has not? Let us thank God that sectionalism is dead.

"Now, then, let us try to appreciate the relations of the Negro at the South. All history shows that two races, approaching in any degree equality in numbers, cannot live together unless intermarriage takes place or the one is dependent and in some sense subject to the other. Miscegenation by law will never take place in the South. No matter how much we people of the North may differ with our brothers of the South, this point will always remain fixed. Miscegenation, then, being out of the question, nothing remains for the Negro but to be dominated by the white man there. I hold that the Negro in American civilization is a problem of a vast deal more import than

we are inclined to believe. The problem is national, not sectional. The sin of slavery was the sin of the nation, and that sin stands before us today full of menace, full of peril to the whole people. The Southern brother claims, and with some justice I think you will allow, that under the influence of scalawags and carpet-baggers, mostly composed of unprincipled Northern white men, the Negro has opposed, politically, everything that he thinks the white man wants. Upon this subject Prof. H. M. Brown, a Negro and member of the faculty of Hampton Institute, says: 'The greatest enemy to the Negro and the greatest obstacle to his progress is the politician, and the Negro politician is the worst of all.'

"You cannot deny that the well-behaved Negro has the respect of the community in which he lives at the South. Witness the death of a highly respected Negro in Georgia a short time ago. He never dabbled in politics, and his death was deplored by white and black alike. In thirty years forty per cent of the illiteracy at the South among the colored people has disappeared, due no doubt to environment and emulation of the whites. All kinds of employment, trades, professions, etc., are open to the Negro at the South, and you know that counts for a great deal. Here at the North the

pressure is so great from the white laborer that we are forced, to some extent, to bar against the colored brother. I am ashamed to say it; but let us state the case truthfully, if at all.

"To come to the case in hand, I wish it to be distinctly understood that I am absolutely opposed to mob law. But there is an un-written law, not peculiar to any section, which demands the quickest execution, in the quickest way, of the fiend who robs a virtuous woman of her honor to gratify his hellish diabolism.

Human nature is the same throughout the civilized world. If in return for all the benefits conferred upon the Negro at the South, which I have enumerated previously, they give us the heinous crime of rape, what shall we say? Where find excuses for such ingratitude?

Surely as men we must have sympathy for the pure and virtuous woman who carries with her a living shame, in a living death, in a life all too long for its miseries, if it lasts but for a day."

As he finished and returned to his seat, a sigh like a broken moan seemed to come from the very heart of the multitude, but not a movement broke the stillness. The Hon. Herbert Clapp felt that his part of the exercises was a failure. After a pause, the chairman introduced Doctor Lewis as a leading

representative of the race whom they would, doubtless, be glad to hear express his views upon the momentous question under consideration. He was received with liberal applause, and said:

"I agree with our friend the Hon. Herbert Clapp in about all that he has said in relation to the grievous matter before us. I think that he has stated the case as impartially as it is possible so to do. The moment there is a lynching in the South, it is made the pretext for many press comments and public meetings among ourselves, and a general agitation of the question in the wrong way. The result is that you people at the North get a wrong idea of the matter. The published accounts of your meetings here do us at the South, who are working along the best lines that we know of for the elevation of the race, an injury, and often retard us greatly in the accomplishment of our designs. Take the Black Belt, and within its circumference you will find the densest ignorance, as well as bright intelligence of no ordinary quality. Among those people you will find the vicious ones who would rather drink, carouse, and fight than do a day's work to keep themselves from the penitentiary. Such men can be bought, bribed, worked upon for the furtherance of any plan

or scheme that may suggest itself to the wily brain of the unscrupulous politician. These men are dangerous to the peace of the community, and it is such men who commit the deeds of violence with which the country is horrified at short intervals. If we cannot reach these men individually, we hope to reach their children. Thus we have planned that with the aid of our universities we shall at length root out evil and ignorance, and in the future give our race a clean, pure citizenship. As our friend has stated—politics is the bane of the Negro's existence. Those of us who eschew that subject, let matters of government take care of themselves, while we look out for our own individual or collective advancement, find no difficulty in living at the South in peace and harmony with our neighbors. If we are patient, docile, harmless, we may expect to see that prosperity for which we long, in the years to come, if not for ourselves then for our children. I am an optimist in regard to the future. I have great hopes of the better class of Southern people themselves.

"Let us remember that the South was more conquered than persuaded. The Confederates did not surrender their convictions with their swords. Immediately after the war Henry W. Grady would have been looked upon as a mon-

strosity. It was a severe blow to the South when the slave gained his liberty. As the South gains wealth and resources I think that the problem will grow less difficult. It is the idea of the Negro holding political preferment that is so hard for the North and South to swallow. But if we give them time and do not hurry them, they will grow gradually accustomed to the new era. Convince the South that we do not want social equality, neither do we wish to rule. We want nothing but our God-given rights as men.

"I believe in the humanizing influence of the dollar judiciously expended for educational advantages, 'holding it better and wiser to tend the weeds in the garden than to water the exotic in the window.' We should strive to obtain the education of the industrial school, seeking there our level, content to abide there, leaving to the white man the superiority of brain and intellect which hundreds of years have developed."

He ceased speaking and sat down amid murmurs of applause, mingled with disapprobation. Some among the audience began to grow restless. Was this what they came to hear—an apology, almost an eulogy upon the course pursued by the South toward the Negro? Other speakers—white and colored—followed; then

the chairman introduced our friend John Langley. He came to the front of the platform with his usual graceful bearing. He was well known among the people, especially the younger contingent, and was received with liberal applause. "My friends," he said, "I shall not detain you with any lengthy remarks upon the situation, because there are speakers to follow me. I am glad of the opportunity to say what I think about lynch law: It is a terrible thing to contemplate. The crime which provokes it is still more terrible, to my thinking. I utter no eulogy upon the position of the South toward the Negro, neither do I harbor undue resentment for the grievous wrongs which I feel they have, in some measure, heaped upon us. I am willing to leave the punishment of criminals, the suppression of mob violence, with the national government, being convinced that in good time the government so trusted will acquit itself with equity toward my race. You have listened to the speeches made by our friend, the Hon. Herbert Clapp, and our brother, Dr. Arthur Lewis, upon whose word we can implicitly rely, because he works, lives, and moves among the very happenings of which we know nothing save by reading. It is discretion to act coolly, calmly and deliberately; to look at all sides of a question before we

jump at conclusions. I can see nothing to be gained, if, as we have been advised, we took up arms in defense of our rights of citizenship. Extermination would speedily follow. Let us not invite destruction. But we have opportunities of advancement. Let us seize them. Let us await the issue of events with patience, trusting in the fealty of our party leaders, putting faith in their sagacity to push our claims and redress whatever grievances we may have, at a seasonable time. We thoroughly understand the attitude of the whites. Let us not offend the class upon whom we depend for employment and assistance in times of emergencies. By so doing, if we cannot have amity we can have peace."

CHAPTER XIV.

LUKE SAWYER SPEAKS TO THE LEAGUE.

My ear is pained,
My soul is sick with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is filled.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart;
It does not feel for man: the natural bond
Of brotherhood is severed as the flax
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not colored like his own; and, having power
To enforce the wrong *for such a worthy cause,*
Dooms and devotes him as a lawful prey.

—COWPER.

SCARCELY had the speaker taken his seat amid suppressed murmurs of discontent, when a tall, gaunt man of very black complexion arose in his seat among the delegates, and in a sonorous bass voice uttered the solemn protest of Patrick Henry, so famous in history: "Gentlemen may cry 'Peace! peace!' but there is no peace!"

In an instant confusion reigned. Women fluttered their handkerchiefs, and above waves of applause and cheers could be heard. cries of "Hear, hear!" "Platform! platform!" The chairman rapped for order, and when he could make himself heard, asked the delegate to come

to the platform; another speaker was waiting, but the audience would be glad to hear anything he might have to say. As he passed up the aisle and mounted the steps of the rostrum, the people saw a man of majestic frame, rugged physique and immense muscular development. His face was kindly, but withal bore the marks of superior intelligence, shrewdness and great strength of character. He might have been a Cromwell, a Robespierre, a Lincoln. Men of his physiological development — when white — mould humanity, and leave their own characteristics engraved upon the pages of the history of their times.

"Friends," said he, when he stood before them, "I come from Williamstown, in the western part of this state, to be a delegate at this meeting. Here are my credentials to show that I am in good standing in the League where I belong. (He handed his papers to the chairman.) I want to impress that fact upon the minds of this assembly, because I am going to tell you some awful facts before I get through." He paused, and with his handkerchief wiped the tears and perspiration from his face. "Friends, I am thirty years old and look fifty. I want to tell you why this is so. I want to tell you what brought me *here*. I want to tell the gentlemen who have spoken here tonight

that conservatism, lack of brotherly affiliation, lack of energy for the right and the power of the almighty dollar which deadens men's hearts to the sufferings of their brothers, and makes them feel that if only *they* can rise to the top of the ladder may God help the hindmost man, are the forces which are ruining the Negro in this country. It is killing him off by thousands, destroying his self-respect, and degrading him to the level of the brute. *These are the contending forces that are dooming this race to despair!*

"My name is Lycurgus Sawyer; Luke they call me for short. When I was about ten years old my father kept a large store in a little town in the state of Louisiana. I had two brothers and a sister. My mother was a fine woman, somewhat better educated than my father. Through her influence he went into this business of trading, and soon had the largest business and as much money as any man in the county. Father didn't care to meddle with politics, for, with the natural shrewdness of many of us, he saw that that might be made an excuse for his destruction. When I was about ten years old, then, a white man in the village, seeing the headway my father was making in accumulating property, opened a store on the same street. Father said nothing, but his customers still



BROKE OPEN THE DOORS, SEIZED MY FATHER, AND HUNG HIM TO THE NEAREST TREE.

continued to trade with him, and it seemed that the other man would be compelled to give up. About this time father received threatening letters ordering him to move, and saying that in case he did not do as ordered he would lose his life. Mother was frightened, and advised father to get out of the place, but he, anxious to save some part of his hard earnings, waited to sell his stock and houses before seeking a home elsewhere. One night a posse of men came to our house and began smoking us out. You don't know anything about that up here, do you? Well, you'll get there if things keep on as they're going. My father had arms. He raised the window of his sleeping-room and fired into the mob of cowardly hounds. Though enraged, they broke open the doors back and front, seized my father and hung him to the nearest tree, whipped my mother and sister, and otherwise abused them so that they died next day. My brothers were twins, still so small that they were but babes. The mob took them by the heels and dashed their brains out against the walls of the house! Then they burned the house. I saw all this, and frenzied with horror, half-dead with fright, crept into the woods to die. I was found there by a colored planter named Beaubean, who lived in the next township. He pitied me and took me home.

That, gentlemen, was my first experience of lynching. Do you think it is possible to preach 'peace' to a man like me?"

The house was filled with the cries and groans of the audience. Sobs shook the women, while the men drank in the words of the speaker with darkening brows and hands which involuntarily clinched themselves in sympathy with his words.

"But that is not the only story I can tell. Here's another. I will tell it to you, and you can digest it at your leisure.

"Monsieur Beaubean was an educated man, descended from a very wealthy family. His father had been his owner. When the father died he left to his son, born of a black mother, an equal share of the estate along with his legitimate heirs. They made no objections, so he got it.

"Monsieur Beaubean had married a quadroon woman of great beauty — Lousiany abounds in handsome women of color; they had two children, a boy and a girl. She was three years old when I went to live with them. I remained in the family twelve years. I learned many things there; along with the trade of blacksmithing I learned to esteem myself as a man. "I cannot describe to you the beauty and loveliness of that child. As a boy I worshipped

her, and as a man I loved her; not with the hope of ever having a return of the feeling she had aroused in me, but as a faithful dog that would lay down his life for those who sheltered and care for him, so I felt to Beaubean's family, and especially to that child. When Mabelle, as we called her, was old enough, she was sent to the Colored Sisters' School in the city of New Orleans. It was my pleasant duty to drive her into the city each day and go for her at night.

"Monsieur Beaubean had a half-brother — a white man — who was very wealthy and stood very high in politics. In fact, he was in the State Senate. He was very warm in his expressions of friendship for the family, and especially so in his assumption of relationship. I noticed that he seemed extremely fond of Mabelle. One day, after she had passed her fourteenth birthday, she had a holiday from school, and went with some schoolfellows to visit a companion who lived in the city. They returned at night without her, saying that she went into a store with Monsieur Beaubean's brother, and they had not seen her since.

"Can you imagine what a night was passed by that family? No, you cannot, unless you have been through the same experience. The father went in one direction and I in another. All

night long we searched the city streets; nothing could be heard of her. Finally we went to police headquarters and secured the services of a detective. After *three weeks* of incessant searching we found her a prisoner in a house of the vilest character in the lowest portion of the city of New Orleans — a poor, ruined, half-crazed creature in whom it was almost impossible to trace a resemblance to the beautiful pet of our household. These arms bore her forth from that vile den and restored her to a broken-hearted parent. I think that I must have gone mad. If I had had the man there then that committed the crime (he raised one gaunt arm above his head, and standing in that attitude seemed the embodiment of vengeance) I would have taken him by the throat and shaken him (he hissed the words through clinched teeth), shaken him as a dog would a rat until he was *dead! DEAD! DEAD!* We took her home, but I believe that her father was a madman from the time he placed his eyes upon her until he was murdered. And who do you think had done this foul crime? Why, the father's *half-brother, uncle* of the victim!

"Crazed with grief, Monsieur Beaubean faced his brother and accused him of his crime. 'Well,' said he, 'whatever damage I have done I am willing to pay for. But your child is no

better than her mother or her grandmother. What does a woman of mixed blood, or any Negress, for that matter, know of virtue? It is my belief that they were a direct creation by God to be the pleasant companions of men of my race. Now, I am willing to give you a thousand dollars and call it square.' He handed Monsieur Beaubean a roll of bills as he spoke. Beaubean seized them and hurled them into the villain's face with these words: 'I leave you to carry my case into the Federal courts and appeal for justice.' Unhappy man! That night his house was mobbed. The crowd surrounded the building after firing it, and as an inmate would show his head at a window in the struggle to escape from the burning building, someone would pick him off. So it went all that night. I seized Mabelle and wrapped her in a blanket. Watching my chance I stole from the house after the fire was well under way, and miraculously reached a place of safety. I took Mabelle to the colored convent at New Orleans, and left her there in the care of the sisters. *There she died when her child was born!*"

As the speaker stood silently contemplating his weeping, grief-convulsed audience, a woman was borne from the auditorium in a fainting condition. John Langley from his seat on the

platform leaned over and asked an usher who the lady was. "Miss Sappho Clark," was his reply.

Amid universal silence, the silence which comes from feeling too deep for outward expression, the speaker concluded: "A tax too heavy placed on tea and things like that, made the American Colonies go to war with Great Britain to get their liberty. I ask you what you think the American Colonies would have done if they had suffered as we have suffered and are still suffering?"

"Mr. Chairman, gentlemen call for peace, and I reply: 'Peace if possible; justice at any rate.' Where is there peace for men like me? When the grave has closed over me and my memories, I shall have peace.

"Under such conditions as I have described, contentment, amity—call it by what name you will—is impossible; justice alone remains to us."

CHAPTER XV.

WILL SMITH'S DEFENSE OF HIS RACE.

THANK God for the token!

Thank God that one man as a free

Man has spoken!

—WHITTIER.

SOMEONE at this moment began to sing that grand old hymn, ever new and consoling:

"Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is nigh."

When quiet once more reigned, amid intense silence the chairman arose and introduced Mr. William Smith as the last speaker of the evening. Tremendous applause greeted him, for he was known to be an able and eloquent debater.

"Friends," he said, "I shall not attempt a lengthy and discursive argument; I shall simply try to answer some of the arguments which have been advanced by other speakers. I have no doubt that they have spoken their honest convictions. Now let us look at the other side of the question.

"We know that the Negro question is the most important issue in the affairs of the

American Republic today. We are told that there are but two ways of solving the vexed question of the equality of the two races: miscegenation by law, which can *never* take place, or complete domination by the white race — meaning by that *comparative servitude*.

"Miscegenation, either *lawful* or *unlawful*, we *do not want*. The Negro dwells less on such a social cataclysm than any other race among us. Social equality does not exist; no man is forced to receive another within the environments of intimate social life. 'Social position is not to be gained by pushing.' That much for miscegenation. The question now stands: Which race shall dominate within certain parallels of latitude south of Mason and Dixon's line? The Negro, if given his full political rights, would carry the balance of power every time. This power the South has sworn that he shall never exercise. All sorts of arguments are brought forward to prove the inferiority of intellect, hopeless depravity, and God knows what not, to uphold the white man in his wanton cruelty toward the American Ishmael.

"We are told that we can receive education only along certain elementary lines, and in the next breath we are taunted with not producing a genius in science or art. A Southern white

man will tell you that of all politicians the Negro is the vilest, ignoring the fact that for corrupt politics no race ever can or ever will excel the venality of a certain class of whites. Let us, for the sake of illustration, glance at the position of the Irish element in politics. They come to this country poor, unlettered, despised. Fifty years ago Pat was as little welcome at the North as the Negro at the South. What has changed the status of his citizenship? *Politics*. The Irishman dominates politics at the North, and there is no gift within the power of the government that does not feel his influence. I remember a story I heard once of an Irishman just landed at Castle Garden. A friend met him, and as they walked up the street said to him: 'Well, Pat, you are just in time to vote for the city government election.' 'Begorra,' replied Pat, 'an' is it a guv'mint they have here? Sure, thin, I'll vote agin it.'

"The Irish vote, then, is massed at certain strategic points in the North, and its power is feared and respected. The result has been a rapid and dazzling advance all along the avenues of education and wealth in this country for that incisive race. To the Negro alone politics shall bring no fruit.

"To the defense of slavery in the past, and

the inhuman treatment of the Negro in the present, the South has consecrated her best energies. Literature, politics, theology, history have been ransacked and perverted to prove the hopeless inferiority of the Negro and the design of God that he should serve by right of color and physique. She has convinced no one but herself. Bitterer than double-distilled gall was the Federal success which brought Negro emancipation, domination and supremacy.

"Disfranchisement is what is wanted by the South. Disfranchise the Negro and the South will be content. He, as the weaker race, can soon be crowded out.

"Many solutions of the question of Negro domination have been advanced; among them the deportation of the Negro to Africa has been most warmly advocated by public men all over the country. They argue that in this way the prophecy of the Bible will soonest be fulfilled; that 'Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hand and princes shall come out of Egypt.'

"The late Henry Grady told us 'that in the wise and humane administration, in the lifting the slave to heights of which he had not dreamed in his savage home, and giving him a happiness he has not yet found in freedom — our fathers (Southern men) left their sons a saving and excellent heritage (slavery).' An-

other man, also a Southerner, has told us: 'In education and industrial progress this race has accomplished more than it could have achieved in centuries in different environment, without the aid of the whites. The Negro has needed the example as well as the aid of the white man. In sections where the colored population is massed and removed from contact with the whites, the Negro has retrograded. Segregate the colored population and you take away the object-lesson.' Here, then, is the testimony of two intellectual white men as to the dependence of the Negro upon his proximity to the whites for a continuance of what advancement he has made since the abolition of slavery. Is such a race as this fit at the present time to carry enlightenment into a savage and barbarous country? Can the blind lead the blind? Would not the Negro gradually fall into the same habits of ignorance and savagery from which the white slave-trader so humanely rescued him when he transported him into the blissful lap of American slavery? The Negro cannot be deported.

"It is being argued that the Negro is receiving education beyond his needs or his capacity. In short, that a Negro highly educated is a Negro spoiled. I agree with the gentleman on the other side that education alone will not

produce a good citizen. But, of those who would curtail his endeavors to reach the highest that may be opened to him, I would ask: Of what use has education been to you in the upbuilding of the social and political structure which you designate the United States of America? What are the uses of education anyhow?

"To those who know the constitution of the brain as the organ of the moral and intellectual powers of man, education is of the highest importance in the formation of the character of the individual, the race, the government, the social life of any community under heaven. The objects presented to the mind by education stimulate in the same manner that the physical elements of nature do the nerves and muscles — they afford the faculties scope for action. Education is knowledge of nature in all its departments. The moment the mind discovers its own constitution and discerns the importance of the natural laws, the great advantage of moral and intellectual cultivation as a means of invigorating the brain and mental faculties, and of directing the conduct in obedience to the laws of God and man, is apparent. It is important that the Negro should not be hampered in his search after knowledge if we would eliminate from his nature any tendency

toward vice that he may be thought to possess, and *which has been largely increased by what he has imbibed from the example and the close, immoral association which often existed between the master and the slave.* From my own observation I should say that in this country today the science of man's whole nature — animal, moral and intellectual — was never more required to guide him than at present, when he seems to wield a giant's power, and in the application of it to display the selfish ignorance of an overgrown child.

"We come now to the crime of rape, with which the Negro is accused. For the sake of argument, we will allow that in one case out of a hundred the Negro is guilty of the crime with which he is charged; in the other ninety-nine cases the white man gratifies his lust, either of passion or vengeance. None of us will ever forget the tales told us tonight by Luke Sawyer; the wanton passions he revealed and which it has taken centuries of white civilization to develop, disclosing a dire hell to which the common crime of the untutored Negro is as white as alabaster. And it is from such men as these that the appeal comes for protection for woman's virtue! Do such examples as these render the Negro gentle and pacific? No; he sees himself traveling for

years the barren Sahara of poverty, imprisonment, broken hopes and violated home ties; the ignorant, half-savage, irresponsible human animal who forms the rank and file of a race so recently emancipated from servitude, sees only revenge before his short-sighted vision.

" Rape is the outgrowth of a fiendish animus of the whites toward the blacks and of the blacks toward the whites. The Southern white is unable to view the feared domination of the blacks with the dispassionate reasoning of the unprejudiced mind. He exaggerates the nearness of that possibility, which is not desired by the blacks, and, like the physician sick of a mortal disease, is unable to prescribe for himself, and cannot realize that the simple remedy, gently applied, will lift him from his couch of pain. Lynch law prevails as the only sure cure for the ills of the South.

" Lynchings are justifiable on two grounds," says a thoughtful writer: "First, if they are consonant with the moral dignity and well-being of the people; and secondly, if they stop, and are the only sure means of stopping, the crime they avenge." Lynching does not stop crime; it is but a subterfuge for killing men. It is a good excuse, to use a rough expression, to 'go a-gunning for niggers.'

" Lynching was instituted to crush the man-

hood of the enfranchised black. Rape is the crime which appeals most strongly to the heart of the home life. Merciful God! Irony of ironies! *The men who created the mulatto race, who recruit its ranks year after year by the very means which they invoked by lynch law to suppress, bewailing the sorrows of violated womanhood!* "No; it is not rape. If the Negro votes, he is shot; if he marries a white woman, he is shot; if he accumulates property, he is shot or lynched—he is a pariah whom the National Government cannot defend. But if he defends himself and his home, then is heard the tread of marching feet as the Federal troops move southward to quell a 'race riot.'

" The South declares that she is no worse than the North, and that the North would do the same under like provocation. Perhaps so, if the offender were a Negro. Take the case of Christie Warden and Frank Almy, which occurred in New Hampshire only a few years ago. Where could a more atrocious crime be perpetrated? The refinement of intellectual pursuits, the elegancies of social intercourse, were the attributes which went to make up the personnel of the most brutal murderer that ever disgraced the history of crime. Centuries of culture and civilization were combined in his make-up. The community where the girl lived

and was respected and beloved did not lynch the brute. The white heat of passion led men to lay aside all pursuits for days in order to hunt the criminal from his hiding-place. New Hampshire justice gave him counsel and every means to defend himself from the penalty of his horrid crime. *That was in the North!*

"Human nature is the same in everything. The characteristic traits of the master will be found in his dog. Black, devilish, brutal as they may picture the Negro to be, he but reflects the nature of his environments. *He is the Hyde who torments the Dr. Jekyll of the white man's refined civilization!*

"My friends, it is going to take time to straighten out this problem; it will only be done by the formation of public opinion. Brute force will not accomplish anything. We must agitate. As the anti-slavery apostles went everywhere, preaching the word fifty years before emancipation, *so must we do to-day*. Appeal for the justice of our cause to every civilized nation under the heavens. Lift ourselves upward and forward in this great march of life until 'Ethiopia shall indeed stretch forth her hand, and princes shall come out of Egypt.'

When he had finished there was not a dry eye in that vast audience. Every heart followed the words of the pastor as with broken utter-

ance he invoked the divine blessing upon the meeting just ended. Slowly they dispersed to their homes, filled with thoughts that burn but cannot be spoken.

The papers said next day that a very interesting meeting occurred the night before at the church on X Street.