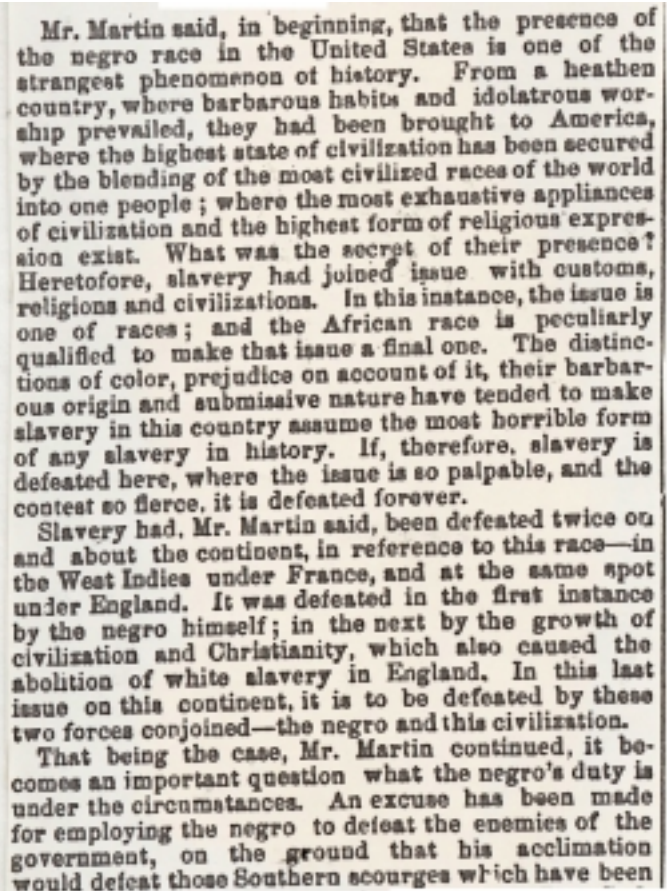


Mr. Martin said, in beginning, that the presence of the negro race in the United States is one of the strangest phenomenon of history. From a heathen country, where barbarous habits and idolatrous worship prevailed, they had been brought to America, where the highest state of civilization has been secured by the blending of the most civilized races of the world into one people; where the most exhaustive appliances of civilization and the highest form of religious expression exist. What was the secret of their presence? Heretofore, slavery had joined issue with customs, religions and civilizations. In this instance, the issue is one of races; and the African race is peculiarly qualified to make that issue a final one. The distinctions of color, prejudice on account of it, their barbarous origin and submissive nature have tended to make slavery in this country assume the most horrible form of any slavery in history. If, therefore, slavery is defeated here, where the issue is so palpable, and the contest so fierce, it is defeated forever.

Slavery had, Mr. Martin said, been defeated twice on and about the continent, in reference to this race—in the West Indies under France, and at the same spot by the negro himself; in the next by the growth of civilization and Christianity, which also caused the abolition of white slavery in England. In this last issue on this continent, it is to be defeated by these two forces conjoined—the negro and this civilization.

That being the case, Mr. Martin continued, it becomes an important question what the negro's duty is under the circumstances. An excuse has been made for employing the negro to defeat the enemies of the government, on the ground that his acclimation would defeat those Southern scourges which have been



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destructive to the white man in the South. But God, as if in rebuke of this excuse, has driven all epidemics from that climate during this war. Another excuse was that in consequence of the physical powers of the negro, he would make the best ditch-digger. But as soon as he was employed, Providence, through the Administration, removed the great ditch-digger of the century, our military Yorick; and now the demand for the negro's services is rising into that pure atmosphere of justice which allows him to fight for his own country, and in defence of his own government, because he is a man, and because it is the desire of the just and true to make him a citizen.

The contest, said the speaker, must be a difficult one. Prejudice, the growth of centuries, proscription, the fossilized power of the slaveholders, cannot be removed but by great bravery in the field, great sacrifices at home, long suffering among the soldiers, unquestionable loyalty among the colored citizens, unfaltering devotion under all circumstances and in every situation.

Concerning the contest in England, Mr. Martin said that the struggle for the abolition of slavery in the West Indies was carried on through a free press that poured the light of truth, the force of justice, and the influence of Christianity into every home. The platform and the hustings of England were firm enough and well guarded enough to secure a standing for honest conviction and independent expression. the legislative halls of England fairly groaned under the revelations of woe connected with the system of slavery in the West Indies. Facts were weighed, figures examined, arguments listened to, warnings regarded, and

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the champion of the negro respected. The churches of England flung wide their doors, and admitted the advocate of impartial freedom. The priest joined with the reformer, the Christian with the political economist, the philanthropist with the honest operative of England.

But in America the press was dumb, or sold to slavery, with but few exceptions. No unscrupulous lie was too glaring for its use; no injustice too palpable for its perpetration. The platform was deluged with stones and rotten eggs; the speaker silenced by the yells of the mob. The legislative halls resounded with the blows upon the head of the most honest, pure and incorruptible friend of the negro; and the Church threw its powerful influence against the reform and the victim in whose behalf he pleaded.

Thus, said Mr. Martin, we see the labor in England, as compared with the struggle in America, was as a pastime among wrestlers on a Roman fete day, and the Titanic struggle of a race of moral heroes upon whom the proscription and prejudice of slavery were heaped, as a crushing globe of iniquity.

Nor will the results be less striking in their difference. In England the victory was secured by a very active minority, leaving the majority, especially the upper classes, as much in favor of slavery as before. For to-day the sympathy of England in favor of the rebels rests upon the same basis as the purpose of the rebels in seeking to overthrow the government—the belief in an inferior order of society, the recognition of the interest of a superior order to govern.

When this contest is over, Mr. Martin added, we (the colored race) shall have gained nothing if we do not

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