

Mrs. F. E. W. HARPER then addressed the audience. She said it was interesting to mark the rise and progress of any reform which had for its object the welfare and happiness of mankind, and proceeded to sketch, briefly, but in an interesting manner, the efforts for the suppression of the African slave trade, and then for the abolition of slavery itself, which have resulted in the utter extinction of the infamous system among the nations of Europe, and all, or nearly all, their colonies in America, and in this country, to a very large extent, with the prospect of its entire annihilation at no distant day. This is the Lord's doings, said Mrs. H., and marvellous in our eyes. The Bible told of a man who built his house upon the sand, and when the floods descended, and the winds came, it fell, and great was the fall thereof. But the slaveholders, rebels against justice and humanity, built not only upon the sand, but over the crater of God's wrath—over the magazine of Divine retribution; and to-day the colored people stood, as a race, newly anointed with freedom. Looking beyond the life of the individual to the life of the race, she was not hopeless of the future of the negro. She found at the South three classes: The scum of society, the dregs of society, and the colored man. By the scum of society she meant such men as Jefferson Davis, Hunter, Beauregard, and the other leaders of the rebellion. Where were they to-day? Scattered by the whirlwind of the living God. Some were looking out through prison bars, some were exiles, and some were in the surest and safest place for all rebels,—the grave. By the dregs of society, she meant the poor white of the South, who saw his brother stricken down, and consented to the wrong.

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The paramount idea of President Johnson, if she understood him right, was to elevate this mass of poor whites. She thought he was right in this; but she would tell him that between the poor white men and the poor black men of the South, there was a community of interest. If legislation degraded the labor of the black man, the white man also would be degraded. God had linked the two races together, and when the South pressed the slave beneath the burden of his chains, she placed a weight upon her bosom which crippled her moral power and paralyzed her spiritual energies.

Mrs. Harper said, that what she asked of the American people was, that if they could not get indemnity for the past, they should have security for the future. How was that security for the future to be obtained? By disfranchising the colored man,—by putting him at the feet of every whitewashed rebel who called himself loyal? Was it not madness and folly for a nation to sacrifice its interest to its prejudices? She was not able to argue the question of suffrage with Mr. Wright, but she believed it was generally conceded that men had the right of self-defence, and the ballot was the means of self-defence to the negro against the malice of his oppressors.

The lesson of this hour was simply, that justice is the right of every race. The humblest and meanest child of the living God was linked to the throne of the Eternal Father with such strong but invisible ties, that if they were rudely jarred upon earth, they would tremble around the Throne. (Loud applause.)

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