



The
Awakening
of
Hezekiah
Jones...



A Story Dealing with Some of the Problems
Affecting the Political Rewards Due the Negro

By JOHN EDWARD BRUCE
"BRUCE GRIT"

PHIL H. BROWN, Publisher
HOPKINSVILLE, KY.

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PREFACE

The simple announcement of the purpose of Mr. John E. Bruce (Bruce-Grit) to write a story dealing with some of the problems affecting the political rewards due and obtainable by the Negro wherever he is a conscious factor, should be sufficient to arrest public attention in anticipation of a clever story; for there is no non de plume more widely known, nor one possessing greater ability than he to entertain and instruct. First, he is a master of the art of graphic expression; he excels as a delineator of character, his style is unique and inimitable. His many years of service as newspaper correspondent and as editor, covering more than thirty years, have given him contact, observation, and experience. With these has come wisdom, giving clarity to his vision, sanity to his judgments, moral courage to his expressions. The story which he gives is in accord with twentieth century conditions and not along the lines of reconstruction dreams.

Mr. Bruce was born in Maryland, near the National Capital, at a time that enabled him to see very much of the great men who made Civil War and Reconstruction history. His facilities for education, owing to the humble circumstances of his parentage, were scant; but by dint of industry, his ambition and his will he availed himself of these to such an extent that from this school of adversity, in which he was environed, he graduated, so to speak, summa cum laude.

On of his employments as a youth in the seventies was with a well-known Washington correspondent of a New York daily. He saw and heard many things in those days in which he was not supposed to have any interest. These fired his soul, they excited his ambition, they were greater teachers than the school room routine of these days.

The men who employed him were attracted to his unusual abilities which they recognized and encouraged. Thus were laid the stepping stones on which he trod with a self-reliance that caused him to write to newspapers, then to publish one in collaboration with men with the advantage of the

schools who recognized his merit. Finally he became an author. A few years ago he published "Biographies of Eminent Negro Men and Women of Europe and North America," a volume of more than 100 pages. Several pamphlets on burning questions are to his credit, such as "The Blood Red Record," "The Nation, the Law, the Citizen" and "Defence of the Negro Soldier." From pamphleteer and biographer he shies his castor in the field of fiction. A glance at the advanced sheets of "The Awakening of Hezekiah Jones" shows that from different view-points he has predicated the finish that awaits the would-be politician who looks to reward based largely on numbers and racial backing, to find the true secret of success in the game of practical politics.

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Washington, D. C.,
Sept. 30, 1915.

THE AWAKENING

OF

HEZEKIAH JONES

By JOHN EDWARD BRUCE
"BRUCE GRIT"

CHAPTER I.

“And be these juggling fiends no more believed
That palter with us in a double sense,
That keep the word of promise to our ears,
And break it to our hopes.” —Macbeth.

Hezekiah Jones was a man of color, who made some pretensions to being a politician. The little town in an Eastern State, to which he had migrated from the South, shortly after the war, contained a population of between thirty and thirty-five thousand inhabitants, of which number at the time of which we write, two thousand, five hundred were Negroes, some of whom, possibly one-third, were natives of Virginia, Maryland and Kentucky. They were men and women of the better type of the laboring class, who were attracted to the town by the high wages paid laborers, mechanics and domestic servants—high compared with the starvation wages paid skilled and unskilled labor in the States from which they came.

Here Mr. Hezekiah Jones had lived some eighteen or nineteen years, where he was well and favorably known to the people of all classes, of both races, and especially was he popular with the white political leaders, who knew what a tre-

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mendous influence he exerted among the people of his race. They flattered, cajoled and patronized him, as is the won't of the crafty and cunning political leader; called him "Hez" familiarly, invited him into their conferences and caucuses and treated him as one of them.

It is said that just before the constrictor consumes its prey it covers it with saliva to make the process of deglutition easier.

Now, Hezekiah once had the "distinguished honor," as he called it, of dining one evening at the home of the chairman of the city Republican committee, where three members of the committee were also guests. It was six weeks of election and the mathematicians of the local organization had been working on some of the problems in mathematics that interested them greatly. They had been figuring on the majority of their candidate for local office in the coming election, and the chief statistician had overlooked the Negro vote in his calculations, hence the dinner with "Hez" as a specially invited guest.

It was a great affair. After the seance the chairman and his guests repaired to the broad veranda of his magnificent country residence, where they smoked expensive perfectos, sipped choice brands of wine, talked some practical politics and finally elected their candidate by an overwhelming majority. The chairman, who was a wise politician, was also a fisher of men. This little affair was always alluded to by Mr. Jones, in a matter-of-fact way, and with the evident purpose of leaving on the minds of those with whom he talked about it, the impression that eating canvas-back duck and drinking champagne with city chairman, and smoking cigars costing fifty cents a piece was a very ordinary matter, which in truth it was. Since the chairman was only a man, like the rest of us, but unlike rest or most of us, he had succeeded in rising rather rapidly in the world, and in possessing himself of a comfortable bank account, so fat that he could eat can-

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vass-back duck every day if he wanted to without feeling the strain.

After this famous social tete-a-tete, Hezekiah swelled up like a South Carolina cushion-fish, and always seemed to have more dignity than dollars, but he was not, be it said to his credit, overbearing in his manner. Still he gave one the impression by his manner that he "warn't no ordinary person." He always refered to the city chairman as "my frien' Cy."

When among his own people he had the faculty of making them feel a little prouder of him because of the social eminence he had suddenly attained, and because as many of his associates said he "warn't stuck up ner selfish." They saw in the influence which he was building up among leading white politicians of the city and county, immense potentialities, which would some day blossom into lucrative jobs for the faithful who stood by their leader and sneezed whenever he took snuff. They were loyal.

He was honest and faithful to their interests. They were as true to him as the needle to the pole. They were an honest-minded, simple-hearted folk, who had a sincere respect for him and abiding confidence in his honesty and good faith—most unusual traits in Negroes banded together politically and fraternally, where usually every fifth man is a candidate for leader. But Hezekiah had no rivals for leadership. He was "monarch of all he surveyed" politically in that town.

It may be that Hezekiah owed his good fortune in being recognized and accepted by the mass of his followers as a sort of "uncrowned king" to the fact that he was several persimmons above them in learning. He had a working knowledge of the "three R's," hence he was private secretary to scores of them, whose business affairs they entrusted to his hands, and which he looked after conscientiously. He wrote their letters, kept their accounts straight and never betrayed the confidence they reposed in him. The older men called him "ouah boy, Hez" and the younger set always addressed him

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deferentially as "Mr. Jones." He had for twelve or thirteen years been employed as confidential messenger at the Charter Oak Bank at a comfortable salary, with a yearly gratuity of anywhere from \$75 to \$100, according to the volume of business done. But when Bryan first ran for President in 1896, there was a decided falling off in his annual pickings. He only got \$25 that year at Christmas. Better than nothing, thought Hezekiah, still it was significant as showing the trend of popular thought on the subject of the Bryan financial theories.

His own salary, he mused, if Mr. Bryan wins, may be reduced one-half, and future yearly tips one-fourth, or perhaps, nothing at all. Perhaps, too, the cut this year is a gentle hint from the directors of the bank to me to get unusually busy among the brethren and hold them in line, and also to show them what the fear of the Bryan theories had done for me.

Hezekiah was equal to the occasion, and at a convenient season there was a mass meeting of colored citizens which was addressed by many noted speakers of both races, among them Hezekiah himself, who grew eloquent in his denunciation of the cheap money theories of "the boy orator of the Platte," which he characterized as "wild-cat financial theories." The white speakers pointed out, with their usual force and succinctness of statement, the dangers of Bryanism and the sophistry upon which it rested. The result was that the meeting was a howling success, and every black voter pledged himself unreservedly to vote against Bryan at the forthcoming election.

The chairman of the city committee, who was also a director of the Charter Oak Bank, was not present at this meeting. He was having a meeting at the club rooms, to which he had invited a number of local leaders. It was really a caucus to consider candidates for the City Council, Justices of the Peace, Mayor, Register of Deeds, etc., etc., and there were representatives or proxies from every ward and district in the city.

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It was quite past ten o'clock when they began to assemble and well on to one in the morning before they dispersed for their homes. When all had gathered, the chairman stated the object of the call to be to select candidates for the various city offices, and that the Spring elections were near at hand, and it was highly important that "we get together" and select a ticket that will be acceptable to the voters.

"The present administration," he said, "cannot succeed itself for the good and sufficient reason that it has not redeemed the pledge it gave to the people two years ago, to give them lower taxes, cheaper gas, and better rapid transit facilities. Instead of carrying out its pre-election pledges to reduce taxation, it had increased the tax rate and piled up an enormous debt and now we will have to issue bonds in order to save our credit and our good name."

He invited a full and free discussion as to the availability and fitness of a number of gentlemen, who would later be named as candidates for the various offices to be filled, among them Dr. Hedges, of the Fifth Ward; General Thornton of the Fourth Ward, and Dr. Muriel G. Combs, of the Seventh Ward, all excellent gentlemen and he believed good vote-getters. Dr. Hedges is a representative of the old citizen element, very wealthy and popular with the masses. General Thornton is an old G. A. R. man, fairly well off and would poll a large soldier vote. Mr. Combs is our former Congressman, a business man of high standing, who would bring to any office the ripe experience in public affairs gained by two terms in Congress, and would give the city, if elected, a business administration.

"I submit, gentlemen, these names, to which the committee will add later some others for your earnest consideration and action. It seems possible that we can here tonight select the candidates and arrange a ticket that will sweep the city by storm, eight weeks hence."

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CHAPTER II.

The chairman took his seat, and Citizen Detweiller, a German gentleman with a bushy beard and a florid complexion, arose and asked the privilege of speaking. "Every gentleman here," said the chairman, recognizing the speaker, "is an equal. This is a meeting of Republicans and all Republicans have a voice here and a right to participate in choosing the men who are to be representatives in our city government. Proceed, Mr. Detweiller."

Mr. Detweiller bowed his thanks, and proceeded as follows: "Meister Cheerman, I dank you vor der preevilege dat you geef me to spik. I am dirty years in dis gountry und I am von American citizen and I haf always wote der Republican teekit. I have lif in dees town for nineteen years alretty und I haf woted vor efery Republican candidate vor office from Maier to tog ketcher. I notis dat der organization haf nefer put in nominashuns vor any office (aldo der are several tousand Yarmans und woters in dees city and country) a single Yarman vor any offis. Vor why iss dot, Meister Cheerman. Ton't der barty count der Yarman woters unt are dey not useful wotes, unt ton't dey hellup vor to make majorities? Den vy iss der Yarman left oudt auf der nominashuning? I would like to add to der list auf prosbective candidates vor der offis of Maier mine freund Heinrich Wulff, der prewer, who I am sure can carry all uf der Yarman woters. I tank you, Meister Cheerman."

The chairman was about to rise to reply to the speaker when another gentleman arose to claim the privilege of speaking. The chair deferred to him, but gave notice that he would later answer the first speaker's questions as to why no German had heretofore been placed in nomination for city and county offices.

The next speaker said his name was Patrick O'Hara, and that he wasn't Frinch but Oirish and was rather proud of it. He was an American by adoption and from choice, but he

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would always by Oirish because he was born in Cork and couldn't help it. He continued and said, "Oi hev listhened, Mither Cheerman, wid a grate dale av inthrust to th' spaches made here this avenin', an' especially th' Cheerman's spache. An' Oi must say, gintlemin, thet Oi, too, loike my German frind over thayre, wuz a little sooproised not to say asthonished fer to hear th' Cheerman mintion awl them names f'r th' mare's job, an' not wan av thim bein' Orish, aven in schmell. Now, Sor an' Gintilmin, yez hev seven tousan Oirish votes in thish town an' county, yez hev got two thousand an' three hundred an' fifty German votes in thish town an' county, an' arl together thet makes fourteen tousan wan hundred an' sthills gintilmin nayther av these races has had a lukin in the pasht nor on th' ticket which yez arr about to naim heer to-nite. But, Mither Cheerman an' gintilmin, yez will arl av yez ixpict ivry wan af thim fer to vote yure ticket whin nominayted. But will they? Now, sorr, while Oim on me fate, Oi wish, sor, to submit for the considerashun av this confrince ez a candydate fer ma're th' name av a foine old Oirish gintilmin, a warum frind av moine, an' as good Repooblican as iver voted th' ticket an' a blame soight better. He was a sojer in the Civil Warr, an' he fit as bravely as eny man thet ever shouldered a muskit. He is a foine type of an' Oirish-American an' he'll foight now at th' drohp av th' hat aven if he has fer to dhrop th' hat himself. Oi hev th' honor, Sorr, to prisint th' naim af Mister Pathrick Daniel O'Connell, wan av our lading contractors. Oi tank yez, Mister Cheerman an' gintilmin, fer this oppertunity yez hev given me fer to spake fer th' Oirish."

Having thus freed his mind Mr. O'Hara resumed his seat relighted his perfecto and seemingly enjoyed its fragrance. The chairman at this juncture was visibly nervous, and was fearful that representatives from Hungary and Italy and a few other countries would follow the lead of Messrs. Detweiler and O'Hara, and so calling a member of the conference to

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take the chair, he took the floor for the situation was becoming more and more acute and a crisis was imminent. He saw the urgent necessity of making a speech which would in his judgment harmonize the discordant elements whose representatives had spoken with more point and force than eloquence. The situation was not a pleasant one to contemplate.

“Mr. Chairman,” said he with compelling unction, “I regret the necessity which makes it incumbent upon me to explain to this conference of intelligent and progressive American gentlemen-citizens-voters, why the Republican organization of this state has not in past years nominated men for higher office who were of German, Irish or other alien blood. The Republican party, I am glad to be able to say, makes no distinction of race in the selection of the men it calls upon to serve it, and to lead it to victory. It knows no German, or Irish, or Italian, or other racial varieties. And in choosing its leaders to fight its battles it only wants to know—first, that they are good Americans, and, second, that they are loyal Republicans. These are the supreme tests, gentlemen. The German or the Irish or men of any other race who cast their lot with us in America are American citizens, and the moment they take the oath of allegiance to the Constitution and the flag they are no longer German, Irish or Italian, but sovereign American citizens (applause long continued) possessing all the rights, privileges and immunities which that citizenship confers.

“I hope, gentlemen, that we will hear no more of this talk about nationalities in this or in any future conference of Republicans of this city and county. If no German, or Irishman, or Italian, heretofore has been nominated it was because they have based their claims to such recognition upon the ground of their nationality. This is neither Germany, Ireland nor Italy, but the United States of America, free and independent, where every man is a king and every woman a queen.

“Speaking for myself, candidly and freely, I will say

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that if this conference in its wisdom should name either of the gentlemen who have spoken here tonight—Mr. Detweiller, one of our oldest and most respected citizens, a man whose character is above reproach, whose life is an open book and whose record as a business man and a private citizen is as clean as a hound's tooth; or even our young and brilliant and witty friend, Mr. O'Hara, whom I have known for many years as an earnest, industrious and intelligent young gentleman with a brilliant future before him, I would take off my coat unloose my purse strings and work as hard for the election of either or both of them, and harder than I would for some who might be named who are to the manor born.

“I have a strain of German and Irish blood in my veins, for my grandfather was German and my grandmother was Irish. But my German and Irish blood must ever be subordinate to my American blood. We are all one people, one nation with one common destiny and hope for the triumph of American genius and ideals in the struggle for the mastery among the governments of the world.” Uproarious applause followed this outburst of impassioned eloquence and the chair resumed the gavel and awaited the further pleasure of the conference.

Messrs. Detweiller and O'Hara, who were in truth only ordinary men of mediocre ability, were overwhelmed by the diplomatic and crafty speech of the chairman. His flattery and sophistry and his cleverness as a literary cabinet-maker made them really forget that they were naturalized Americans and they fell into the trap which he had cunningly set for them.

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CHAPTER III.

The conference was unanimously of the opinion that Dr. Hedges would be the logical nominee of the party to head the ticket. He was not only popular, but he was a liberal spender, and, if nominated, he would make a generous contribution to the campaign fund, which would assist other nominees on the ticket to win.

Accordingly, the conference was polled to ascertain how each member of it stood on this important question, and how he felt. Of the thirty-five or thirty-six gentlemen present, all except one voted in favor of endorsing to the organization for its acceptance as the choice of the Republican leaders as its candidate for Mayor, Dr. W. H. Hedges. Having thus ascertained the sentiment of the conference, the meeting, a few minutes thereafter adjourned, and the chairman requested all of the members of the executive committee to remain after adjournment.

The other confreeres passed out, and the executive committee was called to order and proceeded to the transaction of business, i. e., to make up a slate for the primaries, twenty days hence.

The work was soon over; three or four local leaders were selected for aldermanic honors, among them our friends Detweiller and O'Hara; a candidate for coroner, two justices of the peace and other necessary local officers made up the ticket to be ratified and endorsed at a regular meeting of the organization, and in turn to be voted for at the forthcoming primaries. This over the meeting resolved intself into an informal gathering; cigars were passed around and liquid refreshments flowed copiously until the wee sma' hours. Messrs. Detweiller, O'Hara and the chairman of the committee were as chummy as lovers, and at a private table where Scotch and Pilsener, and Perfectos were plentiful, they figured out the Irish and German vote to a mathematical nicety, and when the city chairman said good night to his hyphenated citizen-

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chums, he, like the Count of Monte Cristo, after he began to pay scores, said: "One!" and swallowed a Scotch highball that the waiter had prepared for him.

Then he put on his Fedora, lighted a Perfecto and was driven to his home in the suburbs.

The next evening at the Commercial Club, Colonel J. M. Saxe, an old-line Republican, who had fought gallantly in the Civil War with a regiment of Negro soldiers about whose bravery and courage he always spoke in fulsome phrase, said to the city chairman, with whom he was sitting on a big settee:

"Don't you think we ought to do something handsome for Hezekiah? I attended the mass meeting, which he called here a few nights ago, and I was never more pleased and surprised than I was to see so much enthusiasm displayed by these black people, and so many of them present. The hall, a fairly large one, was packed almost to suffocation, and Hezekiah, who wields a powerful influence over his people, was in his glory. He made a capital speech, and it was cheered vociferously. It was really good to be among such a whole-hearted group of optimists as these black people are. They take their politics as seriously as they do their religion. I am convinced from what I saw and heard at Hezekiah's meeting that the party in the city and county has no more earnest nor loyal supporters than these black men. We certainly ought to recognize their leader. This would be a tactical stroke and the effect of it would be to fasten these people to us with hooks of steel."

"I agree with you, John," replied the chairman, "that we ought to do something to hold these people with us, but I doubt the wisdom of recognizing them outright in a political way. Hez, as you well say, does wield a powerful influence over these darkies, and we certainly should take care of him. However, I don't want to begin the practice of appointing Negroes to political jobs, or of encouraging them to run for office, and for this reason: The moment we white people let down the bars, our city would in a few years become African-

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ized. Negroes from other States would pour into it and in time overwhelm us at the polls, and then, where would we be? Have you ever looked at it in that light, John?"

"Well, no," replied John; "I never have. I see the force of your argument and I am at one with you in the view that it would neither be practical nor wise to give the Negro important political positions if we expect to continue to give direction to political thought and policies of the party in this State, but some day we have got to reckon with this black contingent. We have as they say down south, got to tote square with them, or lose their votes and our own influence as a political organization."

"Now," said the city chairman, "I propose to recognize Hezekiah's work in a different way. Certainly it is worth eighty dollars per month to the white Republicans of this town to keep Hezekiah in his present job and give him an assistant (allowing him to name the man). This will give him all the time he needs to circulate among his people and do missionary work during the campaign. If, of course, he was a white man, exerting the same influence and controlling the same number of votes, we might reward him with the nomination of superintendent of streets, which carries a salary of \$2,000 per year; but you see he is a Negro, John, and white men, as you and I know, will not stand for a Negro in these rural towns in an elective office carrying patronage. We have got to look out for defections in our own ranks, by not doing anything to drive away from us white voters. Hez is a good fellow and I like him. He is a useful boy, clever, faithful and remarkably intelligent for a Negro, and he is true. But as I have said, he is a Negro and his color is against him.

"The few thousand votes he controls in the city and county are assets which any white political leader would be proud to possess. It is really wonderful, John, the hold this darky has upon his people."

"Oh, I have noticed that for some years," said Colonel

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Saxe. "There is something about these black leaders that I cannot understand, and that is how they are able to get such a grip on the masses of their people. Most of these black fellows that I have known as boy and man seemed to have possessed a secret power which gave them the mastery over the rank and file of their people. When I was in the army and stationed with my regiment in Virginia I had an opportunity of studying these leaders (and the old-time Negroes were men, most of them, at least), who were deeply religious and truly in earnest.

"I went once to a meeting of blacks in a Baptist church in the city of Richmond, after the surrender of that city to our forces, and I will never forget it to my dying day. It was a sort of thanksgiving service gotten up by these black people to commemorate their deliverance from bondage. The chief spirit of the movement was a little old black man with a benignant countenance, a deep, sonorous voice and a keen, piercing eye, that seemed to look through you. The church was one of the largest, if not the largest, in the city, and the identical church in which a monster meeting was held by the white people in February, 1865, when Jefferson Davis and other Southerners denounced Lincoln and expressed confidence that the South would compel the Yankees to petition for peace.

"As I had nothing else to do, I thought I would go and listen to the speeches and the singing—two gifts with which the Negro has been signally blessed. I reached the church about 7:30 and found a large and enthusiastic crowd of well dressed Negro men and women, with a considerable sprinkling of white persons of both sexes, gathered there. I took a seat near the door. (I was in uniform and did not want to appear conspicuous.) Soon one of the church officers, who knew my name, espied me, and insisted on taking me up front, where I could see and hear better. I didn't want to go, but he said I must; so I went up and was given a fine seat in the amen corner, from which I could see and hear everything that went on.

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“It was well I went up front, for at 8:30 every available seat in the church was filled, and in the wide aisles men, women and children occupied benches, chairs and camp stools, while against the walls, on three sides of the church, people were standing two deep. Promptly at 8:30 I heard in a splendid baritone voice that thrilled me, Tom Moore’s hymn. ‘The Song of Miriam’:

‘Sound the loud timbrel o’er Egypt’s dark sea!
Jehovah has triumphed! His people are free!’

The great audience took up the melody and sang as I have never heard any people sing that song since. There was a swing to the music that transfixed me, and I was heartily sorry when its last notes died away. It seems to me that I hear those Negroes singing that hymn now.”

“The Negroes,” said the city chairman, “are natural musicians. Some of the finest singers that I have ever listened to in my life have been Negroes. When I was in Germany four or five years ago, I heard a great Negro tenor sing, who could make his fortune in America, with a good manager, if he only had a white face, but he was a genuine black and as handsome in face and as perfect in physical development as any man I ever saw. I have never heard such a voice as that Negro possessed.

“Of course, you know, Colonel,” the city chairman continued, “that I have never questioned the capacity of the Negro for sustained effort in any direction. I believe that they are just as capable, and in some instances more so, than many of us whites, but they are a minority race and have no fair opportunity for the exercise of their native and acquired abilities beyond a certain point, socially there is a Rubicon they cannot cross, and there’s a reason. I fear we white men are not quite civilized as yet, and that our religion is a hollow mockery and a sham, so far as the Negro is concerned, we have eliminated him from the equation. We accept him as a man after a form, but we reject him as a brother, and our

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prejudices against him are born of conditions, upon which you and I know rests the safety and security of the Anglo-Saxon civilization. Self preservation demands that we shall rule. There can be no middle ground. The moment we permit sentiment to outweigh our judgment as to what is best for us racially and nationally, we will cease to be the governing and dominant race.

“The destiny of the black race is not coordinate with that of the white race. The two races cannot cohere socially and preserve their racial identity. One or the other must rule. Colonel,” said the chairman with vigor, “there are other aspects to which I need not advert. I think you understand me.”

“Oh, yes,” said Colonel Saxe, “perfectly, and yet I am tempted to believe that if we continue to use our giant strength to keep these people down, or any people entitled to our care and protection, we, or our children, or our children’s children will some day pay the penalty with compound interest. Neither Europe nor America can afford to oppress weaker peoples, for the law of compensation is irrevocable, and like the laws of the Medes and the Persians, is ‘without shadow or variableness of turning.’”

“Exactly so, John,” said the chairman. “I believe in the law of compensation, for what goes up most come down. That is the irony of fate, but in the present circumstances I think a majority of the Caucasian race is willing to let the future settle its own problems.”

“Well,” said Colonel Saxe, “it is going to be a bloody and a terrible reckoning, and I am quite in agreement with Thomas Jefferson, who said: ‘I tremble for my country when I remember that God is just.’”

“Jefferson, like Tocqueville,” answered the chairman, meditatively, “was a prophet—a seer. I often think of that saying of Jefferson’s, which you have just quoted, and I tremble a little myself when I think of how we have treated the

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Indian, and how we are now treating the Negro.”

“There is good reason,” said Colonel Saxe, “why we all should tremble. I declare it is awful to think of our injustices to these faithful, lovable and loyal black people, but let me finish my story.”

“Excuse me, John,” said the chairman, “for interrupting it. I hope that you have not lost the thread.”

“Oh, no,” he replied, “not at all. When a thing has once been photographed on your memory it remains with you for all time. I told you about the singing of those Negroes and its electrical effect upon me. Well, there was another scene equally as impressive, following this part of these interesting exercises. I think I also mentioned a little old black man.

“Yes, you did.”

“Well, after that great hymn of Moore’s this little old man, who had not been in auditorium while the audience was assembling, walked upon the platform from a little room off on the side of the pulpit, and, advancing to the old-fashioned pulpit on which rested a huge Bible, he stood there for two or three seconds engaged in prayer. The moment he closed his eyes every voice was hushed and every head was bowed. Between his pauses one could almost hear a pin drop. Then, in a clear, well modulated voice, he spoke to the Master, this short but meaningful prayer:

“O, thou infinite! We come tonight with grateful hearts to offer unto Thee our thanks for thy loving kindness and tender mercies shown toward us in days past, and for delivering these, thy people, from the yoke of bondage as Thou didst promise our fathers to do. Bless, O, God, those who have wronged us and give us the spirit of charity and forgiveness and the patience to wait on Thee for the fulfillment of all thy promises to those who trust in Thy Word. Amen!”

“There was no vindictiveness in that prayer. It was a kindly, charitable, forgiving utterance from the representative of a race which had every reason in the world to show its

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resentment and its bitterness of feeling toward our race. But this Negro prayed as the Scriptures command us all to do for those who have despitely used us. Now, my friend, how are we going to keep down people like these who show such supreme faith and confidence in God, and exercise such wonderful patience in waiting on Him? It cannot be done, I tell you! These black people are a spiritual people, and I believe in my heart that they are nearer the Almighty than any other race on earth.

“Then, too, this little, old, black man talked to these people before him like a father to his children. He spoke to them of their newly won freedom, what it had cost the nation in blood and treasure to acquire it and that their liberation from bondage was merely one of the incidents of the struggle, which had ended in the overthrow of the slave power. He told them that it was God’s way of solving the problem, which for thirty years men had striven to solve in their own way, and now that freedom had come to black men, he warned them to guard it jealously and by its proper exercise, to strive to deserve the approval and continued friendship, not only of those who had been instrumental in bringing it about, but those who had fought and bled that they might be retained in slavery.

“The result, he explained to them, was inevitable, for it had been ordained from the beginning that this people should be free. Man proposes and God disposes. The liberation of the black man from bondage was not born of philanthropy, nor of a love of justice, but of political necessity. In freeing the black man, the white man had also freed himself, and he could not accomplish the one without the other.

“Thus he talked upwards of thirty minutes, and his familiarity with the conditions that brought on the war and of the history of the compromises attempted to bring it to an end was most remarkable. His very first sentence struck me so forcibly that I resorted to my limited knowledge of short-

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hand and took down as best I could, his remarkable address. He clearly understood and boldly declared that emancipation was neither a philanthropic nor an humanitarian act, but a war necessity, born of no love for his race, but of the unconquerable desire of best white men of both section to preserve the union as it was, but without slavery. He told his hearers not to put too much confidence in the assertions of white men, now that they were free, that they were the equals of the white men. 'Equality,' he said, raising his voice slightly, 'is not obtained by gift, but by struggle. You must now begin to make yourselves worthy of your new position in the body politic. You must educate yourselves and your children and build up character for yourselves and for those who are to come after you.'

"When the little old man sat down, one of the deacons, who was as black as the speaker, but a finer specimen physically than he, began to sing a hymn, the words of which, as I jotted them down, were as follows:

'Come saints and sinners, hear me tell
The wonders of Immanuel,
Who snatched me from a burning hell
And placed my soul with God to dwell,
And this is heavenly union.'

"John, I thought when I heard those Negroes sing Moore's hymn, 'Miriam,' I had heard some singing, but I pledge you my word that the singing of this Negro melody was as far beyond it in volume and melody as grand opera is beyond a popular song. The man lined out this grand old hymn, singing the first two lines himself, and the great throng of Negroes in the audience, every one of whom seemed to know it, took it up, and sang it with a fervor and earnestness that I never dreamed it was possible to put into music. John, I'd give fifty dollars gladly if it were possible to hear that hymn sung again as I heard it then.

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“Well, when they had finished singing, the little, old black man stood up again and, raising his hand to command silence, said: ‘I want all of you to come up to the table at the close of the service and give something, if no more than a penny, toward a fund for building a school house for our children, the men and women of tomorrow. I want everybody here to give something.’

“Then, while the choir sang, everybody, men, women and children, passed up one aisle and down another to their seats, or on out of the church into the street. I do not think there was a single person who did not give something. The man at the table announced when the last person had passed up that the amount thus far given was \$375.90. A little girl came up afterwards and gave ten cents more, raising the evening’s contribution to \$376.”

“The little, old man came down from the platform and holding up the baskets containing the money, offered a brief prayer of thanks and afterwards pronounced the benediction. And then the meeting was over.

“I came away with the feeling that these people—these black people ARE a peculiar people in a larger sense than we understand that word, and I could not help repeating the words of Amos IX,—7, ‘Are you not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O, children of Israel,’ etc. They are a wonderful people, and they are the happiest and most optimistic race in America today. White men treated as they have been and are, would become Anarchists. They, on the contrary, pray for us and trust in God.

“We cannot, I tell you, permanently keep such a race down. It is bound to rise in spite of us. All of our injustice to it will be cumulative evidence against us on the day of reckoning when that day comes (and I hope I may not live to see it.) No wonder the prophet said, ‘And the fathers have eaten sour grapes and set the children’s teeth on edge.’ I understand the full import of those words better now than

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ever for I think and believe that I see the end from the beginning. Our strength as a nation is our greatest weakness and when we use that strength to oppress and suppress any race, reaching out for larger freedom we do ourselves and that race an irreparable injury which can only be remedied by the law of compensation."

It was now nearly two a. m., and these two old cronies were as fresh and chipper as though it was just 7:30. The Colonel ordered a whiskey and soda for himself and suggested to the city chairman that one would do him no harm. The chairman was agreeable and they drank in silence and parted for the night, or, rather, morning.



CHAPTER IV.

The city chairman ruminated over the story that Col. John Saxe had told him during the evening and once or twice during the ride to his home in the suburbs he said to himself, "We white men cannot allow the Negroes to have equal opportunity. Negroes were born to be ruled, white men to rule." But the chairman had not read his history aright.

Just before leaving the club, he said to Mr. Sanderson, another member of the club: "Theodore, I want to see you in my office at 11:30 to-morrow on a very important matter, if that hour will suit your convenience."

"Very well, John, I will come. The hour will be quite agreeable, and I will be prompt, as I have another appointment for 12:50."

"O, we can dispose of the matter I want to talk over with you in twenty minutes," said the city chairman.

"Good night, Theodore; I will look for you." And as he passed out to enter his car he met in the vestibule two other friends. "Why, hello, Charley; hello, Fred," he called to them. "Ain't going without saying 'goodnight,' are you?"

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he asked laughing. They protested they had not seen him.

“Of course we cannot say ‘good night’ now, ‘Cy,’ ” said the one addressed as Charley, “but we’ll come around tonight and say that. We can now bid you only a pleasant ‘good morning.’ ”

“Drop into the office some time this afternoon,” said “Cy,” “I want to have a chat with you fellows.”

“All right, Cy,” they replied almost in unison. “We’ll be around about two, not later than two-thirty. S’long, old man.” And they jumped into a taxi and were whirled to their bachelor apartments.

“Cy” entered his big car and headed for home, breaking all speed regulations for it was early morning and most of the cops were asleep.

Mr. Sanderson kept his appointment with the city chairman and when they got together there were serious matters discussed in the thirty minutes the conference lasted. In some way or other it seems the speeches of Detweiler and O’Hara at the private conference got out. (Some such things do leak out), and the echo of them had reached Hezekiah Jones through one of his trusted lieutenants—a waiter at a club house where the speeches were being discussed by a group of members over their coffee and cigars. Some of the conferres had gone directly from this conference to their club where they talked over the happenings of the conference in a confidential way as men are sometimes wont to do.

While Mr. Sanderson and the city chairman were engaged in talking in the latter’s office the telephone rang. Taking down the receiver the chairman asked who it was and what he wanted.

“Is this Col. Gibbons” was asked.

“I am Col. Gibbons. Who are you?”

“O, hello, ‘Cy!’ ” came back the answer. “I am Paul Brainard.”

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"I didn't recognize your voice. How are you, Paul, and what can I do for you?"

"O, nothing, 'Cy.' I've just heard a rumor on the street which gives me some concern and I want to talk to you about it. How long are you going to be in your office?"

"I will be here until four-thirty."

"All right. I will be there at two sharp."

"Anything serious?" asked Col. Gibbons, city chairman.

"Well, that depends upon the point of view, 'Cy,'" answered Paul.

"I'll wait for you here, Paul. Good-bye," said the city chairman, hanging up the receiver and resuming his chat with Mr. Sanderson.

The gist of their conversation was that the speeches of Detweiler and O'Hara and their subsequent selection for places on the ticket was going to create a rumpus in the party and alienate the large Negro vote unless something was done for them.

"If these speeches are repeated and the Negroes learn what resulted from them—how those men actually forced the conference to name them—they'll resent it at the polls and defeat our ticket," said Mr. Sanderson.

"This interminable race question is a nuisance. I wish there wasn't a Negro in America," said Mr. Gibbons. "I wonder if Paul Brainard's rumor is in relation to this matter. I shouldn't be surprised if some garrulous fool has had himself interviewed and given us away. Well, Paul will be here at two o'clock and I shall learn if we really had a Judas in our recent conference," mused Col. Gibbons, city chairman.

"You have nothing further to say to me, Colonel?" asked Mr. Sanderson.

"No, I don't think of anything else just now, Mr. Sanderson. If there are any developments I will call you up at your house."

"Then I'll bid you good day, Colonel."

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“Good day, Mr. Sanderson,” replied the Colonel as the latter gracefully withdrew.

The Democratic paper which was published in the town and put on the street for sale a little after two o'clock each day except Sunday was out a little before one o'clock on this particular day with an extra. The newsboys were crying it vigorously on the streets and from the noise they were making one would have supposed that an atrocious murder had been committed, or that half of the town had been destroyed by fire. The paper was called “The Evening Critic.”

This day's issue was principally scare-head lines in big black-face type on the front page with an editorial double leaded in 10-point type. The news item on the first page purported to give the details of the conference called by Col. Gibbons, and it was in truth a most faithful record, with, of course, some extraneous embellishments—reportorial license—of what really took place there. Stress was laid upon the fact that representatives of the German and Irish races had called the hand of the Boss and forced the selection of a member of each of these races for a place on the ticket.

But, there was not a single representative of the Negro race invited to the conference and no Negro named for any place on the ticket, not even for janitor. With Democratic naivete it asked, Where was Hezekiah Jones, the Negro Republican wheel horse, and what will he think or say when he discovers how the white leaders of the G. O. P. have completely ignored him and his faithful black allies?” etc., etc.

The editorial was of the same general tenor with the usual unsolicited advice to the Negro to divide their votes between the two great parties, to stop following the Republican Ignus Fatnus. It played up the hypocrisy of the local leaders, exposed the hollowness of their alleged friendship for

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the Negro, praised Detweiler and O'Hara for their courage in demanding and securing merited recognition for their class and said Hezekiah Jones ought to have been among the conferees and asked him how it happened that so good and useful and influential a Republican as he had not been invited to this important party conference, etc., etc., ad nauseam.

Colonel Gibbons called a newsboy and bought a paper. Going back into his office he sat down in a comfortable rocker and read both the news item and the editorial. His face flushed and his eyes snapped with anger as he read the indictment by the Democratic organ. As he sat there musing and trying to figure out how the secret got out, his messenger announced Mr. Paul Brainard.

"Oh, come right in, Paul," he said as that gentleman appeared at the door of his private office. "Sit down, old man."

Brainard found a roomy arm-chair, and sat down. He opened his cigar case filled with fragrant Havanas and offered one to Colonel Gibbons, which he accepted and lighted. Brainard lighted one himself.

"Have you seen to-day's Critic?" he asked Brainard, shoving the paper which he held in his hand toward him.

"Yes," said Brainard, "I bought a copy on my way down here. It is about this matter that I telephoned you today and I am wondering if you had given it out."

"Why you certainly do not imagine that I would do such a thing as that, Paul," retorted the Colonel hotly.

"No," said Brainard, "I do not, to be frank with you. Yet, I was inclined to think that if you did not give it out directly, you may have authorized some member of the committee to make a statement, and that he had overstepped the bounds and said too much."

"That is a reasonable and proper inference, but I have not authorized any one to mention anything that occurred at the conference. I supposed that all who were there and took

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part in it were men of honor and therefore incapable of divulging to outsiders what was said and done, Brainard.”

“Why, who could it have been that gave out this story, Colonel?” asked Brainard.

“I haven’t the slightest idea,” he replied. “But it is no use to grieve after the milk that is spilled. The damage is done and we must make the best of it. We have now got to move heaven and earth to keep those darkies in line. Between us, Paul, I blame that Dutchman, Detweiller, and that Irishman, O’Hara, for getting us into this mess. They raised the race issue, and race issues in politics are always to be avoided if possible. If they cannot be they must be met and handled tactfully and diplomatically—just as we handle the cranks, and the faddists and the reformers who are constantly demanding something out of the ordinary—reaching out for the impossible and asking for new legislation for this, that and the other. Give them all the legislation and the law they ask, but be sure to see to it that they are unconstitutional, and we can always get their votes.

“If these darkies get it into their wooly heads that they ought to have a representative on the ticket because the Germans and the Irish have each a representative, we will have to placate them in some way. Now that the nominations are made and have been ratified what method would you suggest as a way out, Brainard?”

“Have you seen Hezekiah since the conference, Cy?”

“No, I have not.”

“Have you heard from him or that he knows anything about this matter, and what has been done?”

“No.”

“Then suppose we send for him and have a heart-to-heart talk with him about this matter? What do you say?”

“Decidedly, yes. I think the play a good one,” answered Colonel Gibbons.

“If,” said Brainard, “Hezekiah has found out what we’re

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up to, and is disposed to make trouble by swinging his vote to the Harris crowd it will put all of us in bad, for with the darky vote left out of the equation we shall not be able to elect our candidate for mayor. Dr. Hedges and the other local candidates won't have a look in. I say if Hez has found out what we are up to we will have to, for self-preservation, try to induce him to take an appointive office with a salary of say, \$1,500 or \$2,000, in which we can put a white man as a deputy to keep an eye on him and keep him straight."

"I think that some such arrangement would satisfy Hezekiah and his followers. It would of course be a new departure for the party in this State and the darkies would imagine that the millenium is approaching."

"But we may not have to go so far, Cy," said Brainard. "We will hold this as our trump card and play it strong if Hezekiah is disposed to be ugly."

"Capital, capital!" said Col. Gibbons, pouring out four fingers of the juice that made the Saints keep the faith. "I'll telephone Hez at once and have him meet us here in conference and we can make the dicker this afternoon, and if successful, as I know it will be, it will make the cold chills run down the back of that little Democratic editor who is trying to divide our darkies."

CHAPTER V.

Hezekiah was accordingly 'phoned at the bank and was requested to come at once to Gibbon's office to a conference. He answered that he would come at once. And he did. In fifteen or twenty minutes from the time that he got the 'phone message Hezekiah was seated with Col. Gibbons and Brainard in the latter's private office.

After the salutations and exchanges of a few common places about the weather, about the political outlook, the health of Mrs. Jones, about which the Colonel appeared to be extremely solicitous, Brainard made a bluff of reaching for his

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hat and coat and rising as if about to go, which the Colonel, observing, checked by saying, "You need not go, Brainard. We are all friends, and I am sure Hez won't object to your staying. Besides, we shall want you to act as judge in the matter about which Hez and I are going to talk after we have all had some refreshments and a fresh cigar.

Well, you old rascal," said the Colonel, filling his own glass and passing the decanter to Hezekiah, who courteously transferred it to Brainard, "how have you been I haven't seen much of you lately."

"Oh, I keep pretty busy these days, Colonel, I don't have much time to get around or to loaf. We are pretty busy at the bank now, as you know."

"Yes," answered the Colonel, "we are all busy—busier than we will be two years hence if Bryan is elected. By-the-way, Hez, I was very sorry I couldn't get around to your mass meeting. Several of my friends were there and they tell me it was a rattling good meeting, and that you had a splendid audience and that you made one of the best speeches of the evening. You colored folks have the gift of oratory."

Hezekiah was tickled at this compliment, but he did not give any outward sign of the pleasure it gave him. He told the Colonel that he, too, was sorry that he had not been present as he was sure that he would have enjoyed it as much as the other white friends who came; that he did not believe that Bryan would get a single vote of the crowd that was there.

"Yes, I heard all of the particulars. One of my friends, Major Bostwick, told me that your characterization of Mr. Bryan as the 'long-haired faddist and dreamer' was vociferously applauded."

Hez chuckled and said, "Well, Colonel, that's what he is, ain't he?"

"I don't know but what you are right, Hez" said the Colonel guardedly.

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Brainard's face was a study. It seemed to question the right of a black man to say such a thing about a white man even though he is a Democrat. What effect, thought he, would the application of the Bryan financial policies to the government have on the whole Negro race? What had the Negroes to lose? How much capital had they invested in stocks and bonds and commercial enterprises to be affected by this threatened change in the financial scheme of the government. A cynical smile overcast Brainard's face as he sat gazing at the Negro leader and sipping his whiskey.

Then with mock seriousness he said, "Mr. Jones, I have heard several of my friends speak of your splendid speech the other night and I have several times felt like kicking myself because I did not go to it. Your speech, I am told, was one of the two or three practical speeches delivered there."

This also tickled Hez's vanity immensely and in reply to Brainard, whom he had been reading—African fashion—he said: "Mr. Brainard, I am glad to learn that the little talk I made was so well received and I hope it will do good" (and as if reading the thought, then passing in the mind of his flatterer) he continued: "What I said about Mr. Bryan and his policies (perhaps nostrums is a better word) was said in behalf of your race, not mine. Particularly, the thought was not original with me, but one can not put quotation marks in a spoken address. It is generally asserted by business men opposed to Mr. Bryan's views on the money question that if they could be put into practice, it would reduce values one half, cheapen our money and cheapen labor as well. The men who have large capital invested in stocks and other securities would feel keenly any sudden radical change in the present monetary system, and we who have to make our bread and butter by working for you, would feel more keenly the cut in our wages; hence we are as much opposed to the scheme of the long-haired faddist as you are, and for the same selfish reason."

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“Bravo! Hez,” cried the Colonel. “You reason like Cato.”

“It is difficult,” says Schiller, “to understand men, but still harder to know them thoroughly.” After having passed through the ordeal of flattery heaped upon him by the super-serviceable Brainard and of hearing himself praised in fulsome phrase by the crafty and artful Col. Gibbons, and listening to his Uriah Heep explanation and apology for his remissness in forwarding to him the invitation to the conference, Hezekiah had to listen once more to the Brainard outgivings, not more sincere than those he had previously emitted. Hezekiah had just assured the Colonel that he accepted in the spirit in which it was made his explanation and apology, and that so far as he was concerned the incident was closed. Here Brainard, with the ineptness of his peculiar type vouchsafed the unsolicited opinion that Hezekiah’s attitude in the circumstance was “magnificent and manly,” whereat he subsided, after slyly winking at his accomplished accomplice in duplicity, and double-dealing, who with mock seriousness resumed the thread of conversation with Hezekiah and explained with much particularity of detail the circumstances which had brought about the nomination of Detweiler and O’Hara.

He told Hezekiah, with tears in his voice, how he had regretted that the race issue had been injected into the campaign, and said that since it had been raised how earnestly he had wished he had been present at the conference to see that his race might have been represented on the ticket nominated, or rather selected, by the conference for submission and approval by the party managers. The Colonel said all this so unctuously and with such evident sincerity that Hezekiah almost believed it. He was actually on the point of swallowing it—bait, hook and sinker—but, as he looked over in the direction where the Colonel sat twirling a paper cutter, he observed him telegraphing with his soulful eyes to Brain-

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ard. It was only the work of a second, but, Hezekiah saw and understood it all, and he refused to swallow the bait, although it was sugar-coated, so he made this characteristic reply to the Colonel, the significance of which he did not grasp, "I see you, Colonel, and I understand you perfectly."

On the West Coast of Africa they have a proverb that runs like this: "He who knows a matter can confuse a liar."

"So," said the Colonel, continuing, "I have sent for you, Hezekiah, to talk over with you the question of some recognition by the party for yourself or for some member or members of your race. We cannot now place a colored man on the ticket, tho' I would be delighted, personally, to show my interest in your people, by doing so. You see, the nominations have now all been made and ratified, but, we can give the colored people one place, perhaps several; or we can compromise and give them one good appointive office in one of our city departments, and two or three janitorships. There is the office of City Weigher, which carries a salary of \$1,500, and that of Superintendent of Streets, which is under the Mayor and pays \$1,200, but I do not imagine that any of your followers are qualified to hold one of these places, so that we would have to even up things by giving you a number of small places that your men could fill, such as messengers, laborers and teamsters and street cleaners."

"Colonel," asked Hezekiah, "how much patronage is your organization willing to accord the Negro voters. You know our vote is the balance of power in this city and county."

"Yes, I am aware of that. The Negro vote is a very potent force in this city and county, and I am sure that the organization is disposed, or will be, to treat your people fairly in the distribution of city and county patronage if we are successful at the polls. And if you will leave this matter to me, Hez, you may rely on it that their interest will be fairly protected."

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“Of course,” said Hez, “I cannot answer off-hand just what we will do about this matter. You know we have our organization, just as you have yours, and we have some bright young men in it—college graduates, boys who have been to the public schools, and young men who will compare favorably in mental ability with the average young white man—who feel that, advantage for advantage, they are just as capable as they. Only about two years ago a young man came up here from the South and took a position as steward of the Arragona Club. He had been a teacher in a Southern College, and would very probably be there now if his own wishes were consulted, but he made a speech on Emancipation Day the year before he came here which aroused the indignation of the white people, although what he said was the truth, and they would not allow him to remain in the school nor in the town where the school is. He was instructor in mathematics in this school and I have been told by those who know of him that he is a man of superior education. He has come here where, he believes, he can be a free man, even if he has to do menial work.

“Now, I reckon,” said Hez naively—“indeed, I am sure,” he went on, fixing his gaze on the Colonel and Brainard, who were all attention, “I reckon this man could hold down either one of those positions you mentioned a few minutes ago, or even a bigger one.”

CHAPTER VI.

“Umph!” said the Colonel, reddening perceptibly, while Brainard frowned as though undergoing some severe mental strain in an effort to solve an insoluble problem foreign to the subject under discussion.

Clearing his throat and lighting a fresh cigar he tipped back in his chair and sent a volume of smoke under Hez’s nose which caused him to remark: “That’s a pretty good cigar, Mr. Brainard.”

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Whereupon, Brainard drew forth his cigar case and passed it over to Hez, saying, "Help yourself."

"Now, Mr. Jones," said Brainard after Hez had lighted his Havana, "don't you think it would be a wiser policy for the organization to recognize fifteen or eighteen colored men by giving them small places paying them from \$35 to \$50 per month than to give one colored man a job at a salary of \$1,500 to \$2,000? Wouldn't your race be better satisfied with those appointments than they would be with a single appointment carrying a large salary, and wouldn't the appointment of a colored man to a big job be likely to excite enmities and jealousies in the rank and file and thus promote discord and dissatisfaction among your people?"

Brainard having put his question sat back with a smile of triumph on his face in the comfortable wicker arm chair with one leg thrown over an arm and awaited the answer.

"Well, Mr. Brainard," said Hez, "you have asked me several questions and I will try to answer them. As to the wisdom of giving small positions to my race as rewards for party service, I may say that that depends on the point of view. I see no reason, since you and the Colonel concede that the Negro is the balance of power in the city and county, why he should not be the preferred creditor after he has delivered the goods, and, as you both know, he has done this at every election here in the past dozen or more years. He is fairly entitled to an equal share of the large as well as the smaller places—not because he is a black man and a Republican, but because he is a MAN and a Republican voter and competent to fill the positions he seeks. I should say that it would be a fair proposition to offer the Negro voters one of these larger places and his pro rata share of the small ones. Such action on the part of the organization, Mr. Brainard, would heighten the respect of the Negro for the Republican party and go a long way toward convincing the great mass of them that its professions of interest and friendship for the Negro as ex-

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pressed by our party platforms are after all more than platitudes coined to catch our votes and lull us to sleep after we have won victories for it in close States and put the party on the map where all the world can see it.

“I think this covers all your questions, sir. All of them are of the same nature, though differently phrased.”

The Colonel and Brainard looked a trifle obfuscated. They had not expected such a critical and analytical answer to their trick questions. Clearly it wasn't what they wanted or expected. It was not encouraging nor satisfying. If Hez should insist on the appointment of one of his followers to one of the higher salaried places it would create a very ticklish situation.

“Well, Hez,” said the Colonel, “we wanted you to say what you think and you have said it forcibly and well, but I do not believe you will adhere to all that you have so well and properly said after you have had time to reflect upon it. You, of course, understand as well as we whites, that the time isn't ripe for placing colored men in these higher offices in the North. It is an experiment which has not yet been tried, at least, in this part of the North.

“Then,” said Hez, “that is a greater reason why it should be tried. Northern men have encouraged us in the Southern States to aspire for public office. They have told us that if we get education and character we would be eligible to any position which whites of equal ability, or less, are given by appointment, or the votes of the people. I believe our Southern professor knows as much about the routine of office work as any white men the organization will name, and for this reason I think he should be given a chance to show what is in him. Of course I merely speak for myself. I cannot say what our organization will decide upon after I report to it the result of our conference today, but I always vote with the majority, Colonel as you know.”

“Yes, yes, I understand, Hez,” he answered, sorrowfully.

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“Well, we can go no further, then, until we hear from your organization.”

“Exactly so; I am only its servant. I cannot speak for it in these more important matters without its expressed authority. And now, gentlemen,” said Hez, bowing first to the Colonel, next to Brainard, “I must be leaving. I have remained much longer than I had anticipated, but that is what a chap gets for mixing in exceptionally good company,” he said with a meaningful little laugh which concealed more than it revealed. “I have enjoyed every moment of my visit, Colonel. I have been greatly benefited by what I have heard and learned from both you experienced politicians. Our organization will have a meeting on Monday night, Colonel, and on Tuesday morning at 10 o’clock you will know exactly what course we have decided to follow. Good afternoon, Colonel, and to you, Mr. Brainard.” He stepped toward the door, opened it and disappeared.

“I say, Colonel,” said Brainard, two minutes after Hez’s departure, “that’s a pretty shrewd darkey—that fellow.”

“I guess you are not far wrong,” said the Colonel wearily, pouring out four fingers of old Scotch.

“I felt sure that he would bite at the bait you threw out with the minor offices attached, but he avoided it as cleverly and as skillfully as a seasoned politician. Why, down where I came from (Brainard was a South Carolinian) a darkey politician would have jumped at that proposition, and his club would have passed a set of resolutions thanking you for offering it.”

“But he avoided it, Brainard,” said the chairman reflectively, “and that brings the organization nearer to the psychological hiatus when it must declare itself either for or against the advancement of the Negro to elective and appointive offices of importance.

“I have thought much about this phase of the question, Brainard, and I have tried my d—dest to discourage the com-

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ing of any more Negroes into this State. Of course, they make good servants, and we need their labor. They are tractable and loyal as domestics and are easily satisfied and managed, but when they get book-learning in their heads they become unmanageable and are uppish and sometimes overbearing."

"These literary darkies ought all of them to be colonized on some of the unoccupied land of the United States. They are a menace to our servant class," said Brainard, thinking possibly of Vesey's insurrection in his beloved State many years ago when the servant class under his (Vesey's) direction made a bold attempt to free their class from bondage, only to be betrayed by a traitor—Des Verney.

"These darkies with a smattering of education," went on the city chairman, "these college graduates, put foolish notions into the heads of their more ignorant brethren and they begin to have visions of social and political equality and designs on big offices. Now, if we begin to encourage them to hope for the realization of their dreams, Brainard, and if they insist on getting their pound of flesh, the defection from the party will be astounding. We will practically have no party at all.

"I admit that their votes under our present system give us big and safe majorities and that we can always count on the solid darkey vote. Loyalty is its one redeeming virtue. The darkies never scratch the ticket. I have often wished that our white voters were as conscientious. If they were, we would not be so dependent in close elections on this darky vote which has so often saved us from defeat in State and nation. We owe these people some gratitude for their fidelity and devotion, and I for one am willing to express it not only in words, but in deeds. But I am unwilling to change the system under which the party in this State has existed for so many years, and let down the bars to permit a darkey to run for an elective office."

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“That is the very reason,” said Brainard, “that we white men in South Carolina disfranchised the niggers. You know what Kipling says:

‘For East is East, and West is West,
And never the twain shall meet.’

Well, we of the South have slightly paraphrased it thus—‘For white is white, and black is black,’ etc. We found the Southern nigger making dangerous inroads politically, educationally and industrially, and we were not slow to see that if left to his own devices in our beloved Southland he would soon be a dominant factor politically and industrially, which would mean the breaking down of all barriers of color and caste with the white man at the tail end of the procession.

CHAPTER VII.

“From a moral point of view it was not the proper thing for us to have done. Still we checked the nigger by depriving him of his vote and getting rid of some of their dangerous leaders as an example to the timid and fearful among them. One of our Southern rhyesters summed up the matter in this wise:

‘A naught’s a naught,
A figger’s a figger,
All for the white man
And nothing for the nigger.’”

Whereas, both of them laughed immoderately at the brutal wit of this Southern poet-laureate of the mob.

“But,” said the city chairman, “we cannot inaugurate such a method of elimination here in the North, for we have gone too far with our sentimentality on the Negro question. We have made these people feel that everything in the realm of political possibilities from the presidency down to village dog-catcher, may be theirs, and the pathetic thing about it is that they believe us.”

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“I can sympathize as a white man with the white man of the South, and I do not condemn too severely the methods which they have employed to save their civilization from alien hands and to safeguard the traditions of our proud race. Brainard, we are facing a tremendous problem in America. This Negro question is of greater significance than the wise statesmen who are in a measure responsible for its existence in its present delicate and aggravated form ever dreamed it would be. But, we have got to face it.”

“Yes,” answered Brainard, “it has got us in a fix. We are really in a muss. If we begin, as it now seems we must, to recognize the claims of the darkies to political preferment other than that which we have always, in a small way, granted them (and their claims are perfectly just and reasonable) where will it end? These people do not seem to realize that while what they demand is lawful, it is not expedient, and will be retroactive if carried to the point at which their badly advised leaders aim.”

“I think I’ll go and hunt up Hez tonight,” said Brainard, rising and placing his hand on the city chairman’s shoulder, “and have a heart-to-heart talk with him and try to make him see where his race in this county will be placed industrially if his organization insists on getting one of the big places; and that such a demand will array every white employer of Negro labor against his race and produce a decided slump in the Negro labor market.”

That night Brainard took a cab and called at Hezekiah’s house. His wife answered the ring of the door bell and when he had announced his name and told her the nature of his errand she informed him that her husband had taken the 7:15 Local for H——.

“Do you know when he will return?” he asked somewhat anxiously.

“He will return late on Saturday night and leave very early on Sunday morning for S——, or he may go directly

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from H—— to S——, in which event he will telegraph me," said Mrs. Jones.

"Too bad I missed him," said Brainard sorrowfully. "Good night, Mrs. Jones."

"Good night, sir. Sorry you have been disappointed."

"So am I," said he as he entered the cab after directing the cabman to drive him to 82 Phillips Street, the town house of the city chairman, Col. Gibbons.

Arriving there in about twenty-five minutes, he paid the cabman, ran up the steps rapidly and rang the bell. Henry, the uniformed butler, opened the door and admitted him.

"Hello, Henry," he said. "Is the Colonel in?"

"Yes, sir," replied the suave Negro. "He is entertaining some gentlemen in the smoking room."

"Tell him I am here, Henry."

Henry announced him and returned with the message, "The Colonel says 'come right up,' Mr. Brainard."

Brainard, who had now divested himself of his coat and gloves, followed Henry to the smoking-room on the third floor back which the Colonel called his "den." The walls of the room were hung with mementoes of the chase, signed photographs of his personal friends, a steel engraving of Lincoln, curiously fashioned pipes, a musket used by one of his Revolutionary ancestors, a collection of swords, sabres, daggers, and, over the mantel, the head of a deer which the Colonel had shot on one of his hunting trips in Maine. A score of autograph letters from presidents, senators and foreign dignitaries completed the novel and interesting collection and attested the popularity of the distinguished city chairman.

As Brainard entered the room, which was blue with smoke, the Colonel greeted him with, "Why, hello, Brainard; come in, sit down and have a cigar."

Brainard responded promptly to all these requests and

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shaking hands with the Colonel he saw through the fog of cigar smoke many gentlemen whom he personally knew and greeted them cordially. He was then introduced to the few whom he had not hitherto had the privilege of meeting socially.

After this formality was over he said, addressing no one in particular, "This looks like a meeting of the City Committee."

"No, not exactly that, Brainard," said Major Dewees. "It's just a little conference and we are glad you came in."

"Yes," said Col. Gibbons, "we are very glad you have come, Brainard, for when Henry announced your name we were discussing how we could placate these pestiferous darkeys in our midst."

"Oh, I see," said Brainard. "Well, I have been on a little mission myself, but my plans miscarried. I've been hunting Hezekiah. Went to his house where I learned that he is out of town."

(Several of the confreres exchanged glances and shook their heads.)

Continuing, Brainard said: "I wanted to have a heart-to-heart talk with Hezekiah and tell him a few things and I was sorry I missed him. I think he is away in the county putting the local darkey leaders wise to the fact that we have consulted him about patronage for his race; and that he will urge his followers to stand out for one of the big jobs with the power of selection and appointment."

"I haven't any doubt, for he is a most clever darkey, and he has the vision of an experienced and far-seeing statesman."

Henry, the butler, happened to be in the vicinity of the smoking room while Brainard was speaking and overheard this much and some more and remembered it.

"Oh," said Major Dewees, "we could not think of giving a Negro one of those high-salaried positions. Our citizens of all parties would rise up in revolt against us if we did such

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a thing. It is preposterous to think of it. Now, I am a friend of the Negro and I want to see his race do well, but I am unalterably opposed to members of his race holding white men's jobs. You were saying, Colonel," said he, addressing Col. Gibbons, "when Brainard came in that you had made a proposition to Hezekiah. What was it?"

"I propose," said the Colonel, "to apportion fifteen or twenty minor places to members of Hezekiah's organization, such as porters, messengers, watchmen and street-cleaners; and I told him that I thought that this arrangement would be better and more satisfactory to the rank and file of the Negroes than the placing of one of their race in some big job which might excite enmities and jealousies among them and possibly disrupt his organization. I also said to him that there would be two places at the Negroes' disposal neither of which I thought could be filled by a colored man, as in my judgment none of his race in the city is mentally qualified to hold either of them.

"Imagine my surprise, gentlemen, when he replied to me and swept away all my objections by saying that his people were, as the statistics show, the balance of power in this city and county, and should be treated in the same way that the other elements of the party are treated in the disposition of the patronage in reward for party service. More than fifteen hundred of them are property owners and pay taxes for the support of the government. The remainder rent their homes and indirectly are also tax-payers; that there is a member of his organization—a Yale graduate, recently an instructor of his race in a Southern college for Negroes, but now a steward in one of our clubs, who, he was certain, could fill acceptably either of these offices."

"Well," said Mr. Thornton, who had been an attentive listener, "the situation is a rather ticklish one and we must handle it diplomatically. The colored man is right in his demand for better representation in the matter of patronage, for

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we cannot go around the fact that it is the colored vote that gives us the majorities. If they divide their votes or scratch the ticket, or even refuse to vote, it would greatly embarrass us in the coming, and perhaps future, elections, if we do not do something to counteract their vote.

“It seems to me that we ought as a measure of safety for the future of the party, gentlemen, let down the bars and let the colored man in to one of these larger places, provided, of course, there is one of his race sufficiently qualified to fill it.”

CHAPTER VIII.

“Oh! no, no, no,” exclaimed several voices at once.

“That will never do, Mr. Thornton,” said Major Dewees, deferentially. “I must confess to a feeling of surprise at your wanting to place the darkies on a plane of equality with our race by giving them positions where they will perforce be brought into social contract with our wives and daughters who may have occasion to visit their offices.”

Mr. Thornton smiled and asked Major Dewees, who was one of the owners of a big department store, if he sold goods to Negro customers.

“Why, of course,” was the answer. “It is a business enterprise and caters to the general public regardless of race or color.”

“So is a public office,” said Mr. Thornton, “a business enterprise in which all the people are interested. A colored woman could with equal reason (which is really no reason at all, but pure, unadulterated race prejudice) object to paying her taxes to a white tax collector, or his clerk, on the ground that to do so would be forcing social equality upon her. Every shopkeeper and other business man in this city has some business relations with our colored citizens, and I do not believe that because of these relations they feel as you do about this matter, Major Dewees,” said Mr. Thornton testily.

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The Major subsided, and Brainard ventured to say: "Of course, it is hard for these people, Mr. Thornton (he wanted to say darkies, but he realized that he was addressing not only a gentleman of education and culture, but of wealth also), "to understand that acquiescence by us whites in their preposterous demands would greatly embarrass us. It would bring these Negro officials into social contact with white men and women and such relations would not be conducive to the establishment of good feeling between the races."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Brainard," answered Mr. Thornton, "but, really, I do not follow you. I am unable to grasp your meaning or to understand what you are driving at. Speaking for myself and for my family I may say that neither I nor any member of it fears the bugaboo of social equality; neither are we afraid nor ashamed to treat the Negro justly. That is all he asks or expects from his white brother and it is as little as any of us can do to treat him that way. I am afraid that those who most strenuously object to social equality with the Negro have had most to do with the production of our large and growing population of mulattoes, quadroons and octoroons. Its presence in this country is sufficient proof that the objection to Negro social equality was not always as strong and bitter as it now seems to be."

Brainard reddened to his ears at this thrust. Continuing, Mr. Thornton said: "If we as Republicans do not mean to treat our black friends squarely, why do we continue to accept their friendly aid—their votes. We admit that their vote is a valuable asset and ever since they have had the ballot we have used them to keep white men in office and grudgingly awarded them the most menial places within our gift.

"I say this isn't fair, gentlemen. It isn't honest, and I sincerely hope that our friend Hezekiah has acquired some practical political wisdom and will use it to his own and his people's advantage."

There was a buzz in the room when Mr. Thornton took

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his seat. Brainard's face was still red, and he chewed vigorously the end of his cigar and tried to appear calm, but his face belied his feelings for he was genuinely mad.

Presently Mr. Thornton left the meeting to go to another at which he was to respond to the toast, "The Republican Party." He apologized to his host and guests for having to leave so abruptly. His host, of course, understood his reasons for going and thanked him for lending his presence at this conference, an honor which he said he would long remember.

Then Mr. Thornton took leave of this company of two-by-four politicians.

After he had left the room Major Dewees, who had recovered from the solar plexus blow he had received from him, irrigated his burning esophagus with four fingers of Scotch, and began to dry it again by lighting a fresh Perfecto. Tilting himself back in his big arm chair he put this question to Colonel Gibbons:

"Colonel, how much is Thornton worth?"

"I really cannot say definitely, Major, but he is easily worth \$800,000 or probably \$1,000,000. He owns valuable coal lands in West Virginia, and oil lands in Oklahoma, and I think he has a big block of New York Central stock. Certainly, he has no cause to worry for Dame Fortune has been kind to him."

"I should say so," said Major Dewees. "He's a remarkable man, is Thornton. I don't agree with him on the nigger question. He's too liberal in his views. This Negro problem of ours is the biggest thing we have ever tackled, gentlemen," addressing his colleagues, at the same time relieving the decanter of three or four ounces more of old Scotch to lighten its weight. "Yes, gentlemen," said the Major, "it's a big proposition, and must be handled carefully and cautiously, for if we ever make a false step we shall lose our grip and the Negro will get on top and push us down and out. I believe

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in keeping all we've got, and in getting all we can, but I want to see the Negro treated fairly.

“Of course I have always, as I have said, been his friend, but I am a greater friend of my own race. Blood is thicker than water. I do not believe that it will be a good thing to give any Negro an important office. I think it would be the most dangerous thing the party in this State could do. I think the wiser plan would be to give them the smaller places and I would agree to give one or two of them clerkships, if any are found capable, in some one of our public departments. This would satisfy them a great deal more than would the appointment of some member of their race to a big office.”

Henry, the butler, entered the room as the Major ceased speaking bearing a tray of sandwiches and he looked like the proverbial heathen Chinese. He sat down the tray and left the room returning in a few minutes with a dozen bottles of cold Milwaukee beer. At the direction of his employer he served each gentleman who wished to satisfy his hunger and quench his thirst by partaking of this refreshment, after which he left the room.

Brainard broke the silence which reigned for the space of sixty seconds, with: “I do not know,” said Brainard, prefacing his solution, “how our people would feel about the appointment of a Negro to a representative position, but I think they would resent our action in some future election by turning the government of the city and county over to the Democrats and relegating all of us to the limbo of private life. And we could not blame them if they did this for the ideas which have been advanced by some gentlemen in this gathering are preposterous and out of harmony with the best traditions of our race.”

Mr. Brainard's line of argument soon won over the majority of his hearers, for it was in the nature of an appeal to their race pride and they liked to feel the touch of superiority;

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and that their race was born to the purple and destined to rule, especially all races not colored like their own. But, evidently, they were not all of them students of history, otherwise they would not have been so unanimous in their opinions as to its supremacy as voiced by the cunning and crafty Brainard. Had they refreshed their memories a little by reverting to the history of their race they would have read this little scrap of history which is a faithful account as recorded by Oscar Ameringer in his "Little History for Big Children," which is more than a little history because it is very much.

He says, speaking of the early settlers of America, the forbears of the present inhabitants of this country: "Another class of involuntary immigrants were the criminals and prostitutes sent over by the English authorities. But these people either died on the passage over or soon after landing, for I have never heard of a single man whose ancestors were condemned to emigrate. Whenever a ship load of emigrants was landed the buyers of white slaves flocked to the harbor to pick out bargains. Sometimes, not all could be disposed of in the seaport so the remainder were turned over to agents who chained them together and peddled them from one town to another."

If these exclusive and discriminating gentlemen, legislating to exclude the Negro from practical participation in party politics, had been as familiar with the story of the early settlement of Louisiana, as told in Monon Lescaut as they, perhaps, were with the history of reconstruction in the South, they would, doubtless, not have been so chesty and so insistent in their efforts to exclude the Negro, after using his vote, to get the power they were now attempting to exercise in an underhand way.

Brainard repeated himself, saying again: "I have the solution of this problem, gentlemen, and it is this: that every employer of Negro labor in this city and county be circularized and asked to get rid of their Negro servants and to replace

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them with white servants. This will eliminate the Negro as a political factor, and bring their leaders to such terms as we, not they, propose. We can here draft a confidential circular letter outlining the dangers which threaten us—the menace of Negro domination—typewrite it for the printer. If Hez and his Yale graduate insist on their pound of flesh when their organization returns its answer to the Colonel here on Tuesday, if the darkies are obstreperous, the Colonel can show Hez this letter and there will probably be a called meeting of the black brethren on Wednesday night to reconsider their action, assuming that they have acted along the lines which Hez's talk with the Colonel and myself lead us to believe they have done.

“I don't believe we will have to print a single copy of the letter other than the typewritten copy. The Negro is easily bluffed and when Hez is made to see that hundreds of his race will lose their situations in private families and in clubs and stores throughout the city and county, he will not be willing, if he is as wise as I think he is, to make the sacrifice for one Yale graduate. He will gladly compromise by accepting the Colonel's proposal to take care of fifteen or twenty members of his organization in the smaller positions.”

“Capital, capital, Brainard!” they all said in chorus. “You write the letter, Paul. Mark it confidential and mail it to me and I will pull the wool over this colored gentleman's eyes as I did in the matter of the invitation to the conference at the club some weeks ago. You remember that little trick, Paul.”

“Do I? It was as much as I could do to keep from laughing outright while you were smoothing down the African gentleman.”

Henry, the butler, who was dozing (?) near the door, had heard this entire discussion. The door bell rang and presently he returned to the Colonel's den with a silver platter in which lay the card of Mr. Robert May, a man about town.

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Henry knocked on the door, was told to come in, entered and handed Mr. May's card to the Colonel. "Show the gentleman up, Henry."

Mr. Mays was shown up at once. Being well known to all the gentlemen present, he was cordially greeted and was soon a participant in the informal discussion, the gist of which was given him, and he fell in quite naturally with the majority view.

"I hear," said he, "that Hez has been up to H—— and S—— seeing the boys. Hez has gotten to be quite an active and prominent politician, Colonel," said Mr. May addressing Colonel Gibbons. "He is a pretty shrewd and resourceful Negro. My waiter was saying this morning that if the Republicans win in this election the colored man will be given more recognition than he has ever had before. Have you gentlemen been making pledges to the colored brethren?"

"No, not pledges," said the Colonel, "only propositions. We have proposed to Hez, their leader, to give them a few of the smaller positions if we win, as a reward for their support. They may want more, but it will be a long felt want. That is all," said the Colonel.

Here the Colonel pressed a button and Henry, the butler, entered the room. "Henry," he said, "we have talked ourselves hungry and our throats are all parched. You may fetch in some refreshments for these gentlemen—small salads, sandwiches and some beer. The Major drinks Port wine. Bring a couple of bottles of that old Port from the cellar, a fresh box of cigars and two bottles of V. O. P."

"Very well, sir," answered Henry.

In less than half an hour he returned with his tray well laden with such refreshments as are productive of brilliant wit and repartee. The friends of V. O. P. brightened up as old John Barleycorn entered the room on the arm of Henry. Jokes were made at his expense and many compliments paid

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him by gentlemen who afterward put themselves on the outside of his liquid body. The feast was as generous in quantity as it was excellent in quality and so eager were all the gentlemen there foregathered to do full justice to it that all reference to politics was eliminated from the conversation and each in turn endeavored to excel the other in praising their host and the excellence of the toothsome viands set before them. Nothing unlimbers a man's jaws so quickly, especially if he be hungry and thirsty, as a well prepared chicken salad, a refreshing glass of beer or a well-made cocktail.

The company at a late hour broke up and Major Dewees was quite considerably broken up for his short fat legs would not behave. He had been dallying in private conference with V. O. P. whose age he had disputed, and V. O. P. had gotten on his nerves and settled in his legs. So, Henry had to escort him to his cab and even close the door of it for him for the Major was all in. The fresh air, however, would soon restore him to his naturals and his pride would do the rest. The Colonel's other guests shortly after left for their homes perfectly understanding each other, and resolved to, at all hazards, crush even at the sacrifice of defeating their party, the movement which they were convinced was taking shape to force a Negro into an office in which they did not want a Negro placed. As Puck sapiently observes, "What fools these mortals be."

CHAPTER IX.

On Monday night Hezekiah's organization held a special meeting, notice of which had been sent out before he left town, on the Saturday previous, and foregathered with the local brethren were representatives from the towns that Hezekiah had visited—bright and intelligent young men they were, too. No white people were admitted and no reporters. "It was purely a business meeting and could hold no inter-

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est for the general public," was what Hez told several white persons who applied for admittance.

At eight o'clock sharp every man who had been invited was present, and at 8:15 Hez rapped for order and opened the meeting. Deacon Adoniram Harris, of the Baptist church, offered prayer. He invoked divine guidance over the deliberations of the gathering and plead for the exercise of the greatest wisdom and common sense in the utterance and action "of our brethren tonight."

Hezekiah then arose and stated "that as this is a call meeting, he would ask the secretary to read the call. This was headed that no business other than that stated in the call will be transacted." He then gave a brief but clear and succinct outline of his interview with Col. Gibbons and Mr. Brainard, and cited the former's intimation of the intention of the regular organization to recognize members of the organization in the event of the success of the party in the forthcoming election. He said his own idea about the matter was that to give fifteen or twenty members of the organization positions paying from \$600 to \$720 per year would be more satisfactory than giving the race one big job carrying a large salary; that the chairman had expressed a doubt as to whether "we had a man competent to fill one of these higher positions," and that he had dispelled this doubt as he thought by naming several members of the organization if called on to meet it.

"He asked by opinion as to this and I frankly told him that since it is conceded by the party leader that our vote elects, we ought to be treated in the matter of patronage with the same consideration which is shown other elements of the party; that we ought to have one big office and our fair quota of minor positions under the city and county government; that we had one man in our organization, who I believed to be fully capable of filling any city or county office which might be offered him; that he is a Yale graduate and perfectly fam-

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iliar with office routine. I could see, gentlemen," said Hez, with a twinkle in his eye, "that this was not pleasant news to the city chairman, who is a very fine man, and who, I have reason to think, is a friend of mine. From the expression on his face (and I am a pretty good reader of faces) I could see that he had regretted mentioning the larger offices. He and Mr. Brainard wanted me to commit myself on this subject, but I told him that I was merely your servant and that I could enter into no agreements or understandings without your express authority; that I would bring this matter before you tonight and report to him at 10 o'clock Tuesday the report of your action.

"Now, it is for you, brethren, to act, and I hope you will do so with sound judgment and with prudence. We are all of us Republicans here, and we are all poor men; all citizens, so-called, who are robbed of the right to representation even when we earn it in a fair and open fight. We are tolerated at the polls because our votes make majorities for white men who want the offices we cannot get. Our handicap to this larger recognition in these committees is our black faces. Neither Democrats nor Republicans want to see Negroes in elective or appointive offices that carry large salaries. In these smaller cities where white men of all parties and creeds are at one socially such an innovation as the elevation of a Negro to a conspicuous position would not be conducive to the political well-being of the Negro.

"I would like to say in closing, that while I personally would prefer to see one of our men elevated to a high office, that I think it would be neither politic nor wise on our part to insist at this time for such recognition. Our organization is still young and it is not yet strong enough to make such a demand. We are not as strong as we hope to be two years hence when a president is to be elected. I think we should approach the consideration of this question with care and act upon it with deliberate and sound judgment and practical

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common sense. If we can secure twenty or more appointments it will mean that twenty Negro families will be provided with breadwinners. If we make no demand for one of the higher places at this time we may be able to secure more of the minor ones for our deserving voters and one or two clerkships for some of our men who have had superior advantages of education.

“Think well before you decide what your answer is going to be. I am for the greatest good to the greatest number, and I shall second my vote with the majority for I believe most of you feel as I do on this question,” said Hezekiah taking his seat.

Up rose Mr. Fleming, the Yale graduate, whom he at once recognized. “Mr. Chairman,” said he, “I have listened with interest to your sensible advice in this matter and I most cheerfully endorse your sentiments and the practical views to which you have given utterance as to the course which you believe we should follow. I am heartily in favor of accepting the proposition made to our leader, brethren, that this organization agree to the placing of a number of its members in minor places under the city and county government if our ticket wins, and I agree to this proposition for these reasons:

“First, as a race, we are losing out economically, industrially and politically. Second, the great influx of foreigners to these shores is crowding our people in the large cities out of domestic employment, lowering wages and increasing the hours. Third, numerically, we haven’t the numbers, intellectually and commercially. We haven’t the men to successfully meet and combat the conditions which hedge us about, but we can afford to bid our time, to be ‘as wise as serpents and harmless as doves.’ Fourth, it will show wisdom on our part to meet the regular organization half way and to consider and act upon any reasonable proposals it offers us. Fifth, we cannot afford to sacrifice the happiness and the future of twenty or thirty families for the benefit of one or two men who may

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be ambitious to break ice and pose as the first Negro to hold an elective or appointive office in this city.

“The interests and welfare of the many is of more vital importance than that of the few. Being consumers and not producers we could not successfully enforce a demand for such recognition as has been suggested. Should we do so, the reaction would be disastrous to many innocent working people of our race. The acceptance of this proposition will open the way for more of our laboring people for such work as they know best how to do, and, thus, enable them to educate their children and fit them for the larger opportunities which it is now suggested that we shall seek for some of our members.

“I think you all see the drift of my talk, brethren, and I hope you will act upon the advice given by our chairman, and, as he suggests, with good judgment and discretion.”

When Mr. Fleming finished Mr. Henry Jackson, one of the visiting delegates from H——s, a graduate of the high school of that place, obtained the floor and spoke as follows: “We are met here to-night under circumstances most peculiar to discuss a phase of the problem of race which accentuates the depth and breadth of racial antipathy. On paper and in campaign speeches, in party platforms and in private converse with the white party managers we are classed, labeled and accepted as American citizens. But, the moment we lay claim to the ‘rights, privileges and immunities’ which that title carries we are brought face to face with the fact that we are Negroes, and, therefore, are DIFFERENT.

“I have been talking with one of our brethren here and he has informed me that the white leaders in this city are very much exercised over the probable action of our meeting here tonight; that he has heard dark rumors to the effect that if we insist on having a representative of our race appointed to a higher office than that named originally as the political heritage of the black man reprisals will be made on the race by

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white employers of Negro labor throughout the city and county and that hundreds of our men and women will be thrown out of employment and will be replaced by Slavs and Poles and other cheap foreign labor now crowding into the state and county.

“As I see this question, we must meet it manfully and tactfully. I am in full agreement with the view of our chairman and our distinguished friend, Prof. Fleming, as to the course we should follow, and I do hope that we will all come to see the wisdom of agreeing to the proposition made to our chairman and of endorsing the recommendations of those who have spoken here tonight on the subject. I am unqualifiedly in favor of any honorable proposition which will bring the greatest good to the greatest number. I am tired of seeing our race made a stepping-stone for demagogues, white or black, to get into office who forget to remember us after they have used us. I want to see the plain people recognized because they deserve to be, and, therefore, I shall vote for the measure.”

These three addresses had the desired effect on the assemblage, and no other speech was made.

Moses Hopkins Wheeler, a waiter at the Democratic Club, submitted the following: “In view of the fact that Mr. Hezekiah Jones, our President, has been approached by the chairman of the Republican committee with a view to ascertaining the wishes of the colored Republican organization of this city and county with regard to the patronage to be given colored voters for party services in the approaching election,

“Resolved, that it is the sense of this meeting that Mr. Jones, our chairman, be and he is hereby authorized to secure for this organization, through the proper representatives of the regular organization, their guarantee in writing of a fair proportion of the patronage for members of our race in city and county offices; and, that we place no restriction upon him as to terms other than that they shall be honorable and in keeping with our self respect; and be it further,

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“Resolved, that the sum of \$250 be, and is hereby appropriated as our contribution to the campaign fund.”

The resolution was quickly adopted and the secretary was directed to draft a letter embodying the gist of the resolution and the treasurer was ordered to draw a check for \$250. These were duly turned over to Hezekiah to be presented to his “fr’en’ Cy”—Col. Gibbons the next morning at 10 o’clock sharp.

The meeting then resolved itself into an informal gathering and light refreshments were served. The conversation carried on between these men, many of whom occupied positions in private families, stores and clubs, disclosed the fact that the white leaders throughout the city and county were really very much afraid that the Negroes were scheming to make embarrassing demands upon the organization which would threaten the success of the ticket.

Hezekiah also learned some things about his friends “Cy” and Brainard which did not strengthen his confidence in their professions of friendship for the colored man. He learned that the “invitation” to him to attend the recent conference was a “frame-up,” and that there really had been no intention to invite him to that gathering where the German and the Irishman raised the race issue and finally forced their nomination; that it was the crafty Brainard who suggested to the Colonel the trick of writing the “special invitation” to the conference and that the Colonel willingly and gladly accepted and put it into operation. Henry also gave him a pretty accurate account of what was said at the last conference in the Colonel’s city house. The information moved Hezekiah to say:

“Well, I didn’t think that of Col. Gibbons, but I’m glad to know what sort of a man he really is. I guess he is no different from the majority of men in his day who play one man against the other and promise them the earth for a few votes. I always was suspicious of that man, Brainard. He is

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a Southerner and he protested too much, but I never dreamed that the Colonel would play me false. When I mentioned to him that we had a Yale graduate who could fill any position within the gift of the party organization, I was figuring to secure just such a bargain as we have voted on tonight. I knew that what I said to him would alarm the leaders and that rather than appoint a Negro superintendent of streets or to any other position of prominence they would compromise by offering us all the smaller places we had the men to fill. I knew what I was about that time," and he chuckled immoderately.

In a little while the meeting broke up and Hezekiah and Henry walked home together as they lived near each other. What they talked about is as Rudyard Kipling says: "Another story."

CHAPTER X.

At ten o'clock on Tuesday morning Mr. Hezekiah Jones entered the office of Col. Gibbons in Wadleigh street and found that gentleman and his Fidus Achates, Brainard, and several others of the committee waiting for him in the inner private offices.

"Good morning, Colonel," said Hez cheerfully. "Good morning, gentlemen," addressing the Colonel's visitors.

The Colonel arose and shook his hand warmly. "Good morning, Hez." He always addressed him as "Hez"—this is the privilege of the high born. "I see you are a man of your word," he said. "You're on time to the second."

"What's the use of being a man if you haven't honor enough to stand by your word?" answered Hez.

"That's right, Hez. Honor, truth and punctuality are valuable assets to a business man—to any man who is a man. Sit down, old man; have a cigar and tell us about your meeting last night."

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Hez took the chair offered him, lighted his cigar and said in a leisurely sort of way: "Well, Colonel and gentlemen, we had a largely attended and very interesting meeting last night. There were present men from all the smaller towns near by. Of course it was a business meeting and we could not admit outsiders nor reporters as the proceedings would not have interested them."

"I see," said the Colonel.

"I laid your proposition before the meeting and invited discussion. There was a strong sentiment in favor of demanding a representative position for a member of our race under the city or county government," said Hez smiling and looking directly at Brainard, who flushed, stood up for a second or so and then sat down again, "but I made a brief talk and was followed by two other members, who spoke as I did against that idea. The trend of our talk was that your proposition to recognize us by giving us a number of minor places was a wise and practical one and that we ought to accept it. The matter was finally put to a vote and was un-animously adopted, and so I was deputized to report to you our action and directed to secure from you your proposition in writing duly witnessed by members of your organization to be submitted to a meeting we have set for Thursday night."

"Bully for you, Hez!" exclaimed several of the committee. "Bravo," said Brainard.

"Thanks, gentlemen," said Hez. "By-the-way, Colonel, I am also directed to hand you this," passing the resolution and the check for the two hundred and fifty dollars to the city chairman.

"The Colonel took the letter and read it aloud. The check for \$250 interested and pleased him. It was something the colored political organization had never done before, and it argued that they were learning practical politics with avidity. Heretofore, they had solicited funds from the committee; now

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they were contributors to the party's war chest and their reasonable demands would have to be recognized and granted when humanly possible.

The check made a great impression on Brainard and he revised somewhat his impression of the "darkey." These "darkies" were an enigma he could not solve.

"Gentlemen," said Hezekiah, when the hubbub caused by the gift of the check had subsided, "we Negroes are Republicans and we are too loyal to the traditions and principles of our party to take any advantage of the party leaders because we happen to have the opportunity to do so. We realize that this is an important election and that it is going to be a close one. We have the votes, as you well know, to throw it the other way. Two hundred and twenty-five votes will beat the Republican candidate for mayor, and you, Colonel, know how many votes I can muster, so we need not discuss that point. I merely wish you gentlemen to understand that the Negro voters in this election are not disposed to play you false, but we want a guarantee of a square deal if we win and we want a guarantee in writing that you will not play us false when the election is over.

"We do not wish to embarrass you by making what you regard as unreasonable demands for patronage for our race though by every right we are justified in making such demand by reason of our voting strength. You have all had proof of its efficiency and potency in past elections and you know insulting speech at the Clef Club on the night before election that it was our vote that defeated the last Republican candidate for mayor of this city after he had tacitly refused to make concessions to the Negro voters. You remember his in which he alluded to the Negroes as the people whose highest ambition is to vote the Republican ticket and 'get their pay for so doing in advance?' He said this jocularly, but we took it seriously, and enough of us voted against him to defeat him."

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The committee exchanged looks while Brainard coughed slightly and lighted another cigar.

"Hez," said the Colonel, "we are all glad that your people have decided to act sensibly on the suggestion I made you the other day in the matter of patronage and I am willing and ready to reduce to writing what I then said to you. I will go a little further, and promise you two or three minor clerkships for some of your bright young men, and you can submit this amended proposition to your meeting on Thursday. So far as I am concerned the colored boys shall have the preference in all the city work such as laborers, messengers and porters, and I believe these gentlemen will back me up in this statement."

"We will, Colonel" they said almost in unison.

"There is no reason," said Brainard, "why these loyal colored Republicans should not have the pick of the jobs to be appointed and we will insist that they get their full share of them," he said with a finality which disclosed the secret joy he felt at the turn affairs had taken.

"Drop in in the course of an hour, Hez," said the Colonel, "and I will have the guarantee you want ready for you and signed by all the leading members of the committee."

"Very well, Colonel," said Hez. "I will call here about four p. m. Now I must go up to the bank and do a little work to earn my salary. Good afternoon, gentlemen," he said with a sly twinkle in his eye, as he bowed himself out.

CHAPTER XI.

As Hez wended his way to the bank he chuckled several times and said to himself: "I have gotten the thin edge of the wedge almost under the city committee, and have paved the way for many of the faithful to good jobs. 'First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn,' " he muttered.

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He had learned a lesson which he never forgot, a lesson which too many black men rarely learn or will not learn, viz: that as between a black man and a white man in a struggle for points in the political game "blood is thicker than water"; that familiarity, free dinners, rich wines, and expensive cigars, front-porch tete-a-tetes and all the usual tricks of cunning of white politicians are simply employed as means to an end, and to befog the black brother; that, when the end has been served the black man is still a black man. He enjoys no privileges, holds no exalted positions except by the sufferance of the white man, or from motives of political expediency or necessity. Hezekiah had this advantage over the city chairman and his fellow conspirators—he knew what they knew and what they were attempting to do; knew their every move and their hopes and aims, while they were ignorant of the fact that he was in possession of this knowledge which discovered to him their rank hypocrisy, deceit, double-dealing and treachery. He knew that the concessions they were willing to make were born of political expediency and the fear of a revolt among the Negro voters which might result in the defeat of the ticket.

It was too near election and there was too much at stake for the party to issue a defi to its black supporters and so with bad grace and in the desperation of despair the Colonel and his colleagues took counsel together and decided to yield to any reasonable demand made by Hezekiah for his supporters, who, be it said to their eternal credit, were as steadfast and loyal to him as are the Tammany legions to their big Boss. And they let it be known everywhere that they intended to stand by Hezekiah in this fight no matter what happened and they said this so earnestly and seriously that the little two-by-four white politicians all over the city and county realized that the Negroes for once in their political lives were playing the game like themselves, and were terribly in earnest about it. Hezekiah was their leader, not only in name, but in **very fact.**

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When Hezekiah returned to Colonel Gibbons' office he found the chairman in a state of mental perturbation and in the act of framing the letter promised which to contain the pledged words of the party organization to the Negro voters on the matter of patronage.

"Glad to see you back, Hezekiah," said the chairman.

"Yes," spoke up several members of the committee who had been discussing the matter since Hezekiah left and trying to figure out just what would be considered a fair "shake down" for the colored brethren.

"Before we close the letter, Hez," said the Colonel, "we had better decide among us just what the organization will agree to do and what your organization will abide by if agreeable."

"Now, what do you want us to do?" asked Brainard.

Without paying the least attention to this impertinent question, Hezekiah turned to Major Dewees and said: "I hear you have leased your house in Carpenter street, Major. It is a fine house and I hope you have secured a tenant who will take as good care of the property as Mr. Morris did."

"Yes, I hope so, Hezekiah. I was sorry to lose Mr. Morris for he was excellent pay and took as much interest in the property as if it was his own. He and his wife are going to settle down in Italy. Since they lost their boy they have not seemed quite satisfied to remain in America."

"They are very fine people," said Hez, "and it is too bad they are going to leave the country. It seems as though all the best white people in America or either dead or gone to live in Europe. The Morrisses were particularly good to our colored people here and were liberal with their money. They are educating two of our boys and one girl in a Southern college."

"Is that so?" queried Brainard, determined to be noticed.

But before he could receive an answer, if any were in-

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tended, the Colonel attempted to put to Hezekiah a series of questions as to his wishes in respect to the character of the recognition he wanted.

Hezekiah drew from his pocket a paper which he handed to Colonel Gibbons, remarking as he did so: "I think, Colonel, that this is a reasonable demand."

The Colonel read aloud its contents which were as follows:

"Two Clerks in Water department, Messengers and laborers in City Hall, Clerk in City Court, Deputy Superintendent of Street Cleaning, ten laborers in Street Cleaning Department, two messengers in Board of Public Works, two watchmen at City Park, Four laborers in Dock Department (26).

"This isn't a bad beginning," said the Colonel, smiling.

"No," said Hez, "it isn't. If the party comes back I'll hand you another list for there are a number of places I have found which colored men can fill and ought to have. Now if you and your associates are prepared to guarantee these places in writing we stand prepared to deliver the solid Negro vote for the entire ticket. I need not tell you, for you know it, that the Negroes of this city never scratch a ticket that I endorse. They have confidence in my judgment in these matters and where I give the word **they act.**"

Every man in the room looked at Hez when he said this, because his manner was impressive and the words were uttered with earnestness and vigor. "If you want to win and want us to help you win this battle, give us a square deal after the victory has been won."

"That is a fair proposition, gentlemen," said Major Saxe. "Mr. Jones has not asked too much of us and I think it will conserve our interests to grant the requests he has made."

"It is not a request, Major," spoke up Hezekiah bravely, "but a respectful demand for what is our due as political integers, a demand based upon the percentages of the Republican vote in this city and county for the past dozen years.

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We ask no favor, but we do **demand our rights.**”

The committee looked at each other. Brainard nodded to Col. Gibbons and the latter, taking up again Hezekiah's memoranda and placing it before him on his desk, incorporated its entire contents in his letter to be submitted to Hez's organization.

Signing it as chairman he read it aloud for the benefit of his colleagues who endorsed and signed it as the sentiment of the regular organization. The Colonel folded and placed it in an official envelop which he addressed to “Mr. Hezekiah Jones, President Negro Republican Club,” blotted it and passed it over to Hezekiah.

Then everybody took an ounce or two of Scotch and a fresh cigar, and shook hands all round.

Hezekiah Jones had not been the only one to experience an awakening, for the white brethren had also been aroused and awakened to the fact that the Negro is rapidly arriving and is on his way to political independence of thought and action. The awakening of Hezekiah Jones, it is hoped, will teach a lesson to black men everywhere who seem to have lost faith in the self-redeeming power of the race and in the honesty and integrity of those whom they have chosen to be their leaders. The moral is: **Follow your leader**, give him your confidence and your loyal support.

THE END.

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