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By



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THE STATUS OF AMERICAN NEGRO CITIZENSHIP.

Mr. President, Members of the Negro Historical Society of Philadelphia, Ladies and Gentlemen: Perhaps few other subjects of recent times have been productive of such varied discussion as the status of the American Negro in the social, economic and political relations of our government. In order that we may intelligently discuss his status it is necessary that we comprehend the full meaning of American citizenship in contradistinction to that enjoyed by people of other countries. To do this, it becomes our purpose to first ascertain the several forms of government and discuss the status of citizenship relative thereto.

There are three principal forms of government existing among civilized peoples. Monarchical, Democratic and Republican. There may be modifications of one or more of these forms or a modification of any one of them. Broadly speaking these forms are either Monarchical or Democratic in character or a fusion of the two. A Monarchical form of government is one wherein supreme autocratic power is vested in the ruler. A limited or constitutional Monarchical form is a government in which the sovereign is restrained by a constitution and established laws. A Democratic form of government is one in which the ruling power is exercised directly by the people. While Republican is a delegation of that power by the whole body of the people to their several representatives for proper exercise. Under a genuine Republican form of government there are no distinctions of birth or otherwise, and citizenship attains its highest degree of perfection. While under the unlimited Monarchical form, the status of citizenship in the participation of the government is well nigh hopeless.

In China, where the government is an unlimited Monarchy of the most despotic kind, six centuries of struggle on the part of the people for popular rights have now brought the masses to that point where they can look forward to share in the government. For this reason, at this very moment, China is passing through the throes of a great civil war, to determine whether representative government shall have a new birth in that kingdom.

India, with her millions of subjects, until 1858, when she became a protectorate of Great Britain, was not only an unlimited Monarchy, but was also influenced, even dominated, by a religious system recognizing distinctions of caste that made hopeless the condition of the masses. Not only was it impossible for the subjects to look forward to, or attain the cherished hope of equality, which is the cardinal principle of true democracy, but according to their creed they could not, within a million rebirths, pass from the lower to the higher caste forming the social order of that country.

In Russia, where the government is of the most unyielding autocratic kind, the people, after years of repeated insurrections, assassinations and exilements, have succeeded in accomplishing the abolition of serfdom throughout the Empire. They have finally won a partial victory for representative government in exacting from the throne a limited parliament in keeping with the promised recognition of their political status. Notwithstanding these centuries of persistent effort on the part of the people for economic, social and political betterment, the condition of the masses in Russia today is far worse than that of the American Negro before or since the Civil War. Though the Russian peasant was freed in 1861, his rights and privileges as a freeman are still curtailed.

Ownership of land is so bound up in entails that it is impossible for him to purchase. His educational opportunities are also denied. A movement was made to open schools for the former serfs after the abolition of slavery, but was stopped by the government. The complete failure of Russia to compete in arms with Japan in her recent war was attributed to lack of patriotism on the part of the people due largely to the failure of Nicholas to keep faith with them in his repeated promises of granting them constitutional reforms.

The superior social, economic and political advantages enjoyed by the German masses over those of India, China and Russia, are due largely to the geographical location of the German Empire—being surrounded and influenced by the progressive nations, England and France. The change of the German Government from that of an unlimited to a limited Monarchy was accomplished only after centuries of struggle on the part of the people. While the German subject of today is among the most cultured and highly proficient in mechanical art, he is still denied a fair representation in the affairs of his government. Although the lower House or Reichstag is representative, this body can neither originate nor propose any law affecting the realm; its only function being to assent to or concur in the deliberations of the upper body. The disappointment and dissatisfaction occasioned by this empty form of representation granted by the Emperor has in the past decade contributed more than any other cause towards the spread of the Socialistic propaganda which is threatening the very existence of the Empire itself.

Although the government of Great Britain today is that of a limited constitutional Monarchy, wherein the administrative powers of the King are even less than those of our own President, yet, the successive degrees of changes from despotism were the result of hundreds of years of bitter struggle by the masses. To understand what these struggles were and what the people really accomplished would be to know the stirring events in their national life dating back, at least, to the Norman Conquest of 1066. This conquest effected a complete eradication of the national life then existing by the introduction of a system of social caste and land tenure which exists largely to this very day. The King, in order to repay his chiefs for military services rendered, granted them immense tracts of land which he had taken from the conquered Britons. In doing this he made possible the growth of a landed aristocracy, which has excluded the masses for all time from ownership of the soil. From such began the present tremendous Imperial System of Great Britain, which, through its ramifications, resembles that of ancient Rome under the Caesars, a small class of great families dominating first their own order and through it England. And controlling social England rule Parliament. Through this Parliament they govern allied kingdoms, principalities and empires. For more than five hundred years a constant struggle went on in the Anglo-Saxon race between the idea of absolute kingship and that of popular participation in political power. Starting by demanding and securing the head of King John for his failure to observe the limitations of his prerogatives, it effected in rapid succession radical changes in the established order of accession by electing not only a Protector, but by placing on the throne foreign princes to rule over them. They secured their Magna Charta—the birthright of human liberties—only after England had been shaken from center to circumference with the direful calamities of internal revolution. After the terrible French Revolution had spent its fury and despotism the world over was trembling with fear, the English masses, availing themselves of this opportunity, demanded and secured from the crown genuine and lasting constitutional reforms. They secured reforms not only in the enfranchisement of the people throughout the kingdom, but, a granting of real

representative government. This concession of popular representation has existed only since 1832. Until then, the trading, manufacturing and laboring classes exercised no voice whatever in the political affairs of the nation. The enfranchisement of the British masses and their participation in the electorate have not won for them their full and complete status in the government, for while they elect the members of the House of Commons, this body does not share with the upper body of Lords in deliberations of the nation or of the prerogatives of the King. And the question which is agitating most the British minds today is how to maintain the ascendancy of the House of Lords over the House of Commons without an increase in the number of peers for the upper branch. What the masses throughout christendom have thus far accomplished towards representative government, leads us to hope that the time is not far distant when the general popular unrest will have crystallized into an irresistible universal demand for human rights. Whether the securing of those rights is possible under the several forms of government already discussed, is best judged by the centuries of struggle which leave the respective masses, politically speaking, a little better off than where they started. Whatever progress has been made either in a political, social or economic way, the results obtained have been in proportion to the political recognition demanded. If the government has been one of absolute despotism, the progress of the people has been slow; while on the other hand, if the government has tended towards the highest degree of a constitutional and limited monarchial kind, the effect of same has been reflected through all phases of the life of the people.

It seems then, in the final analysis, that in order to secure the greatest blessings to a people, that government under which they live must be of such a character as to insure them the fullest participation therein. No government seems to afford this right save that of a Democratic or Republican form which our own country typifies in the highest degree. And it is this inherent right of sovereignty in the individual American freeman that distinguishes his status of citizenship from that of any other country.

It was the good fortune and wisdom of the American statesmen, after profiting by the failures of the several monarchial forms of government, to be the first in history to conceive and formulate a scheme of government representative of true democracy wherein the source of power was to be vested in the common people. The fundamental and basic principle upon which the superstructure of this government rests is the equality of all men. The foremost thought which prompted the men who framed the Constitution of the United States was to begin at once to make the people their own rulers by giving them "a more perfect form of government, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for a common defence, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty" to themselves and their posterity. Every citizen, rich or poor, was to be the political equal of another.

This leads us to ask what constitutes a citizen and what is meant by citizenship in this democratic form of government? Webster defines a citizen as "any person born or naturalized, who is entitled to full protection in the exercise and enjoyment of the so-called private rights." Citizenship is defined as "the state of being vested with the rights and privileges of a citizen." According to the foregoing definitions, one clearly sees how after centuries of struggle on the part of the masses of the countries discussed, they have not yet reached that point in governmental participation which secures to them that status of citizenship which is a right of every American freeman. And they

never will reach that point unless the masses arise in their might, as in the French Revolution, and destroy both branch and root of all Monarchical forms of government and substitute therefor a Republican form.

Having shown how the American citizen, because of his Republican form of government, enjoys superior political, social and economic advantages impossible of attainment under any other form of government, it now becomes the aim of this paper to discuss at length the American Negro and to show his status as a citizen in the body politic. Out of the wilderness of darkest Africa, without civilization and without christianity, the Negro was brought to this country, and for two hundred and fifty years toiled under the limitations of slavery. Under white tutelage he became the most obedient, patient and useful servant ever known. During this period he owned nothing, as his labor and time were not his own, but while such enslavement divested him of whatever individuality and freedom he originally possessed it nevertheless trained him in the ways of civilization and gave to him a religion. Even though this enslavement instilled within him many true and lofty principles of individual conduct, it unfitted him politically for the grave responsibilities of citizenship which the subsequent stirring events of the latter part of the last century brought him.

The underlying and fundamental principle upon which our government rests is the equality of man. The Constitution adopted in pursuance thereto precipitated a heated discussion relative to the condition and status which the American Negro should assume. The framers, unable to harmonize the two degrees of economic life—that of a slave and that of a freeman, in keeping with this principle of equality, then agreed, as a compromise, that the importation of African slaves into this country should cease after 1807. Notwithstanding that slavery lasted fully a half century thereafter, it was clearly apparent that two degrees of rights, one for a freeman and the other for a slave, were not in keeping with either the spirit or the letter of our democratic form of government and the Constitution. The perpetuation of this form of government made it imperative that slavery should be overthrown. This peculiar, indefensible and undefinable status of the Negro slave rendered the Constitution incomplete in itself and inconsistent before the world as vouchsafing the equality of mankind. Because of this imperfection in the organic law there arose immediately those who would remedy this defect by ending slavery; and others who would destroy the very existence of the government and Constitution by the perpetuation of slavery. Around these two opposing sides flocked all the forces and counterforces in American life, and for a quarter of a century all political actions were influenced and shaped by this inevitable, impending and gigantic struggle which was finally to give to the nation a new birth of human liberties.

Those of us who have read history and are familiar with the events preceding and leading up to our great Civil War, know that while slavery was the primary cause of that war, the motives prompting the generous support for human rights of the great statesmen of that age were not purely philanthropic. It is true that men like Garrison, Lovejoy, Phillips, Sumner and Brown were moved by earnest religious and sentimental feelings, in the dedication of their lives and fortunes to the Negro's cause. Other statesmen like Dana, Stephen A. Douglas and even our own Lincoln opposed the institution of slavery, not so much for the sake of freedom itself as to make possible a more perfect union of states, which slavery prevented. To quote the words of Lincoln, in effect, he says: "My paramount object in this war is to neither destroy nor save slavery, but to save the Union. If I could save the Union by freeing some of the slaves, I would do it. If I could save the Union by leaving slavery as it exists, I would do that. If I could save the Union by freeing all the slaves, I would

do even that. My whole aim and object is the preservation of the Union. Notwithstanding the varying degrees of sentiment in the country towards slavery—ranging from that of the great altruism of Brown to that of the expediency kind of Lincoln—the fact was, the country was soon plunged into the throes of a great Civil War wherein slavery was completely lost sight of in the great struggle to maintain the very existence of the Republic. Out of this great conflict, which cost the nation millions of men and billions of money, the Negro emerged a free man. And for the first time in the history of the world, a people secured their freedom with little cost to themselves and at great expense to their benefactors.

Freedom was not all that was necessary to insure the Negro equal rights and full protection of the law. Nor had his freedom restored the Constitution to its original intendment of perfect equality. For the slave, though free, was still denied his rights of an untrammelled participator in the affairs of the government. And this quasi political status, wherein the freedom had neither the protection of a slave nor the guarantee of a citizen, left him a prey to the new order of affairs growing out of the war. To meet the requirements incident to this changed order, it taxed the ripest statesmanship of that time to formulate a plan of political reconstruction of the recent slave to effect his full and complete status in the government. Considering human nature and human history together with the exciting times incident to the war, the readjustment of the political relations was considerate. The passage of the thirteenth fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution in keeping with the change was the greatest feat of constructive statesmanship of modern times. In these three great amendments, the Negro received not only his freedom but his rights of citizenship co-extensive with that of other citizens. The thirteenth amendment prohibits slavery or involuntary servitude within the jurisdiction of the United States except as punishment for crime. The fourteenth confers the right of citizenship upon all persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, and makes them also citizens of the States wherein they reside. "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." The fifteenth amendment confirms and strengthens the fourteenth in that it prohibits the States or the United States to deny or abridge the rights of any citizen to vote on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude. These three great war amendments, the thirteenth, abolishing slavery; the fourteenth, extending the rights of citizenship to all people, white or black, born or naturalized within the United States; and the fifteenth which prohibits the United States or any State from denying or abridging these rights of citizenship on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude, make the status of American Negro citizenship equal and co-extensive with that enjoyed by any other American citizen. If the status of citizenship in this country is superior by comparison to that of any other throughout the world, and the Negro's status is equal to and co-extensive with that of the white man, how much more superior is the Negro in his enjoyment of political rights than are the masses elsewhere. If it took centuries upon centuries for the people of the more favored governments just discussed to attain their limited degree of rights, how fortunate has been the Negro's lot in having attained with the least struggle on his part all the blessings possible in our democratic form of government. Theoretically speaking, the garb of citizenship in which the Negro is clothed was cut by the same pattern as that of

the white man, and his failure to fill in to the full measurement of this garment is due to the limitations over which he himself has the control.

The Constitution having conferred upon the Negro and secured for him the rights and privileges guaranteed to any other citizen, his complete and full enjoyment of the same will be determined, not by the outward and external agencies of further constitutional enactments, but by his own regeneration out of the helplessness in which he still finds himself. In other words, the Negro must prove his right to share in the enjoyment of this civilization and show to the world what he is capable of doing. The question now is, whether the Negro is fulfilling the expectations of his friends in measuring up to that full status of manhood obtained for him under the Constitution, or whether he is disappointing them in his retrogression towards that state of moral and intellectual inferiority to which slavery consigned him. It is true apparently, he has not maintained that full participation in the electorate throughout the Southern States he enjoyed immediately after his enfranchisement. Nor is he sharing positions of governmental trust or emolument which came to him during that decade. His failure to maintain his political status in that section of the country is due to the abnormal condition or economic, social and political affairs occasioned by the great Civil War. That war supplanted civil authority with military authority, and made impotent the domination of the whites because of the disabilities placed upon them for their refusal to subscribe to the iron oath demanded by the Federal government for a restoration of their political rights. This political state of affairs, which gave to the recently enfranchised Negro the ascendancy during that period of Reconstruction, although justifiable under the condition of treason and disloyalty to constituted authority existing at that time, was yet such, by substituting ignorance for intelligence, incompetency for competency, as to disorganize the whole social and political structure of the South and make inevitable the reaction which the Negro is undergoing today.

The Negro's failure to maintain his political status when based upon abnormal conditions is no argument in justification of the charge made by his enemies that he is not making progress towards the consummation of that economic, social and political betterment which is necessary in this Republic to an enjoyment of his rights. Notwithstanding this political reaction in the exercise of his franchise in those States that have sought to curtail his participation in the ballot in violation of the spirit and letter of the Federal Constitution, the Negro is still making some progress in States like North Carolina and Virginia in meeting these requirements of unjust discriminations. In North Carolina where the Constitutional amendment of 1898 disfranchised fully one hundred thousand out of the one hundred and twenty thousand Negro voters in that State, the last Presidential election showed that out of a polled Republican vote of one hundred and seventeen thousand, the Negro had contributed at least eighty thousand of that number, thus showing that he is surmounting these obstacles and qualifying under restricted conditions at the rate of sixty thousand a decade. In Mississippi, where the same Constitutional amendments have been enacted, the results obtained have been somewhat different. Instead of having the effect of stimulating the Negro's desire for citizenship as in North Carolina, it has counteracted on the whites in their own indifference as shown by the same election. For out of a white population of eight hundred thousand, less than fifty thousand citizens qualified and voted in that elec-

tion. The result of this stagnation in the political life of Mississippi accounts for her being represented in highest legislative body of the land by a demagogue of the Vardaman stripe, and in South Carolina by a Tillman and a Bleas. Contrast this degree of statesmanship with that when the South was won't to send such men as Clay and Calhoun as representatives typical in brain, character and thought of the active political life of their day and generation. This illustrates the principle that the Negro's interest through all his history has been so bound up and interwoven with the forces and counterforces of American life that whatever affects him, either for good or for evil, affects and influences to the most minute and remote degree all the phases of that life.

The material progress which the Negro has made within the last half century along educational, religious and economic lines is without parallel in the history of the world. Freed without a dollar, without the responsibilities of life and in ignorance he was thrown empty-handed into the midst of a civilization that, in many respects is representative of man's highest achievement. That he did not retrograde but was able to readjust himself to the conditions of life which he found, is one of the unexplainable marvels of his racial adaptability. What he has accomplished in education has been phenomenal. Beginning only fifty years ago entirely ignorant, he has wiped out fully sixty per cent. of his illiteracy. And if we are to take the latest United States census report for our guidance, he has reduced in the past decade from twelve to fifteen per cent. of his illiteracy in the States of Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Texas and Tennessee, while the white population of those same States has been able to reduce its illiteracy only three to five per cent. This has been accomplished by the Negro notwithstanding the unjust discrimination practiced by the educational authorities of those States in their allotment to the Negro less than his proportionate share of the school funds. This discrimination against the Negro school in favor of the white school has had the tendency not only to reduce the scholastic term for Negro children, but to give them an inferior and poorer grade of teachers in comparison with those granted the whites. Such difficulties have stimulated the desire of the Negro to obtain an education, for he has in the schools throughout this country upwards of two million children who are being trained and taught by twenty-five thousand teachers and professors of his own race. As gratifying as has been his educational achievements since emancipation in comparison with the Southern whites, his advance seems extraordinary when judged by what it took the people of Russia, Spain, Portugal and the several South and Central American countries centuries to accomplish. It is claimed that the per cent. of illiteracy among the American Negroes today is far less than in any of the above-named countries. The Negro therefore, having reduced his illiteracy fully two-thirds in the first half century of his freedom, is still reducing it at the rate of twelve per cent. each decade. This requires only a very simple process of mathematical calculation to show that before another half century illiteracy will be to him a thing of the past. This very rapid progress on his part in comparison with what the Southern whites are doing in their reduction of only three and a half per cent. a decade from their own illiteracy of twelve per cent., leads us to believe that the impediments placed in the Negro's pathway are due to this unequal showing made in the Negro's favor. His four hundred musicians and teachers of music; his two thousand physicians and surgeons; his one thousand lawyers, and his three hundred dentists bear testimony to what he is accomplishing in the higher educational and professional life. He is also playing well his part in the theatrical world in his contribution to the list of authors of popular songs and plays. He has given to the world a Will Marion Cook,

who has composed three light operas together with a number of popular songs; a Cole and a Johnson who have written more than a hundred popular and successful songs; an Ernest Hogan, who made the transition from the old Negro minstrel to the more modern Negro comedian; a Williams and Walker, who, through their talent, placed the comedian on an elevated plane; a Paul Lawrence Dunbar, the greatest representative poet of the race. Of him William Dean Howells says, that he, more than any other Negro had gained for the race a permanent place in English literature; a Charles W. Chestnut, who is ranked as one of the best novelists of today; a Henry O. Tanner, who is regarded by many as one of the great contemporary artists. His first picture, "Daniel In The Lion's Den," received honorable mention in the Paris Salon. The "Raising of Lazarus" was awarded a gold medal at the Salon and immediately purchased by the French Government for the Luxembourg Gallery, where it now hangs. His "Annunciation" was exhibited in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and purchased for the famous Willstach collection in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia. His great painting "Nicodemus" was purchased by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, where it now hangs. "Christ and The Disciples at Emmaus" is owned also by the French Government and hangs in the Luxembourg Gallery. In 1899 he finished "Judas," which was exhibited at the Carnegie Institute, in Pittsburgh, and purchased for its collection. In recognition of these many contributions Pittsburgh voted him one of her twenty "immortals." A Ieroy Locke, who through his attainments in scholarship, settles for all times the capacity of the Negro's brain to receive, assimilate and retain the highest degrees of knowledge possible. His very high rating made through the several grades of the Philadelphia High School enabled him to secure a free scholarship to Harvard College, where he further demonstrated his ability by finishing a four-year course in three years and graduating with honors unequalled since the days of Lowell. He further secured a free scholarship to Oxford, England, from a competitive examination wherein representative graduates from Pennsylvania's best institutions contended.

What the Negro has done and is doing educationally he is doing in his religious activities. Fully five million of his race in this country are either church communicants or under the influence of the Christian religion. His religious life and character are being moulded and fashioned by thirty-five thousand of his own ministers, representing every phase of polity in the Christian church. The inestimable benefit derived from this consecrated religious and moral effort is evidenced in the Negro's patience and obedience to long sufferings, in his subordination of the woes and injustice of this life to the perfect bliss of the life hereafter. "In laying up treasures for that kingdom not built with hands but eternal in the skies," 'tis true, he neglected some of the very essentials of this life, but on the whole, his full and complete resignation to the life to come has detracted his mind from the sins that beset him and made the ills of this life endurable. So important a part does his religious training play in his general uplift that a tenth of his wealth is represented in church properties and other charitable holdings representing a valuation of sixty million dollars. More than a million and a half of his children are reached through the influence of Sunday School work, wherein upwards of two hundred thousand teachers and officers give instruction. It is thought by many that the Negro's presence in this country would be intolerable under the present difficult racial feelings were it not for the restraining influences of the Christian religion in its teaching of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

In his economic life through the several phases of his industrial activities, he is more than meeting the high expectation of his devout friends. In his many occupations, ranging from the most menial to that of the highest professional

class, over four million of his race are engaged. In all of these with the exception of three or four his proportionate gain in the past decade has been greater than his relative increase in population, thus disproving the malicious charge that he is lazy and is being displaced as a factor in the economic life of this nation. His acquisition in both personal and real property has been astonishing. He owns or operates eighty thousand farms containing upwards of fifty million acres or sixty-five thousand square miles, an area larger than the State of Georgia or the combined New England States. The total valuation of property on these farms including buildings, implements and live stock amounts to over six hundred million dollars. The gross value of all products from these farms is four hundred million dollars annually. It is therefore safe to say the American Negro is the owner of real and personal property to the extent of eight hundred million dollars. An analysis of the Federal census just completed discloses the fact that with all his getting the Negro is getting land at a remarkable and astonishing rate. President Branson(of the Georgia White State Normal, in one of his very able contributions to a Southern Farm Journal, makes a very significant statement relative to the comparative ownership of land in that State by the two races. He sounds a note of warning to the whites that the Negro is taking greater advantages of this economic day of grace and is acquiring at an astonishing rate the ownership of the soil in that Commonwealth. He points out that fully 50 per cent. of Southern white farmers are of the non-owning tenant class; that only in three Southern States have they increased in ownership of land in proportion to their relative increase in population. While the Negro's showing has been the reverse. The Negro has maintained in every Southern State except Florida, Texas and Louisiana a greater increase of land ownership than his increase in population. Surprising as is this disclosure, more startling is that part of President Branson's admission that although the whites have increased their ownership of farms in the State of Georgia by only seven per cent. in the past decade, the Negro has increased his by fully thirty-eight per cent. in the same time. His acquisition of the soil in Georgia during the past ten years has not only been five and a half times faster proportionately than the whites, but he has accumulated in that State in that short period almost two-fifths of all his realty since the war. The census gave to the South a greater increase in land valuation than any other section of this country—an increase for the past decade of over one hundred per cent. In view of this it is needless to say that the Negro is not only sharing in the economic advancement of the South, but he must ultimately become a potent factor in all that appertains to her civic regeneration.

Not only has the Negro been successful in the accumulation of real estate but in nearly every avenue of life we find some of them engaged. In almost every town and city in this country we find at least one or more making rapid progress in the business world. In 1900 Booker Washington effected the organization of the Negro Business League and through this League we have learned much of the Negro business man. It was learned that the Negro has forty-seven banks scattered from Virginia to Oklahoma, all doing a successful business. The Negro can boast of a stock broker in New York who has a Wall Street office and a respectable clientage. At Mound Bayou, Mississippi, there is an exclusive Negro town with its Mayor, Council and police officers all of the Negro race—thus foreshadowing the probable success of the Negro under his own leadership.

We therefore see what the Negro is doing for himself through educational, religious and economic forces working within, to measure up to that high standard of citizenship guaranteed him by the Constitution. The rapid progress he

has made in the past three hundred years, from barbarism and paganism to the possession of the highest degree of political and civic rights in the gift of a free people, is unparalleled in history. As rapid as has been his progress in the past, made possible by our democratic form of government, the future holds before him a progress which will sink that of the past into insignificance. This country because of its free institutions has become a haven to oppressed people the world over. From all quarters of the globe they come yearly to our shores a million strong. This infusion of new blood and the digesting and assimilation of new ideas, together with the wonderful natural resources of this country have made it the richest and greatest on earth. The lightning changes attending this marvelous progress of economic development through racial admixture contributed largely to the shattering of those social traditions so productive of caste prejudice elsewhere. To these influences more than anything else, is due the fact that the American people are free from the conventionalities which obtain throughout the world in limiting the hopes and aspirations of the individual to the class in which he happens to be born. The greatest positions of trust in this country have been won by those born in poverty, and while the Negro has not shared to the extent of his white fellow citizen in these enjoyments he has, nevertheless, reached posts of honor and trust, here, unattained elsewhere. He has been honored with seats in the upper and lower houses of our Congress and today is one of the highest legal officers in the Federal Government. He is patiently biding his time and through the several forces operating both within and without he will yet reach the point in his social, moral and economic worth to demand and receive the full share of the legacies of constitutional liberty bequeathed by the fathers. The stars in their course may fight against him, but his triumph is inevitable.





