

My dear Sir: It is with the greatest grief that I see
a colored man advocating an educational
qualification for voters. Have not your race learned
that the great peril to free government is not to be look-
ed for from ignorance but from educated injustice?
The ~~wings~~ ^{evils} of history do not ~~come~~ ^{spring} from the weak and
ignorant but from the strong and wise. Cure illiteracy
by all means but do not be so cowardly as to
strike one of your race because another people has
kept him in enforced ignorance for centuries. Give
him the weapon and let him strike at least for lib-
erty. You say he may make a mistake. Remember
that ~~the most costly, extravagant and economically~~
~~oppressive of our state governments~~ the best way to
cure an evil is to have it felt as such. An educational
qualification is just as unjust and even more crimi-
nally than a property qualification.

Of course, there is no reason why a colored man
should look at this matter in a correct light than a
white man only it seems to me that they ought not to be
swallowing the old fallacies on which injustice has so
long rested. Can you not see that all forms of oppression
rest finally upon the silly plea of privilege or superiority
and that the only safe basis of liberty is manhood and
equality.

Why do you rule, O King? By divine right.
Why do you oppress, O noble? By virtue of noble blood.
Why should a rich man vote and not a
poor one? Because it will enlarge the rich if a
poor should vote.
Why should the wise vote and not the ignorant?

Because the rich and wise ~~and~~ know how to
rule the poor and ignorant and have a right
to do so?

Why should the white man rule the black
man? Because he is superior to him and
more intelligent.

The right to rule, by this reasoning, depends
always on the ability to kill and the
willingness to wrong.

My dear Sir, will your people never
see that the measure of progress with
your race is not the apt ~~sterner~~ discor-
dation of the fallacies by which they have
been so long oppressed, but by the
bold utterance and clear conception
that the liberty for which John Brown of-
fered himself up, for which Lincoln and
the host of martyrs died, was not liberty
to wrong and oppress ~~but~~ but liberty to insure
good and the duty to maintain the rights of
the weak against the strong.

I am sorry to say it but it seems to me as if a colored man advocating such principles, one must feel as Joseph's brethren did after they had sold their brother into Egypt.

Remember, I pray you remember, that what we call civilization is the most unrelenting and terrible force ever known. It takes without hesitation what even a race of people will permit to be taken. It is a robber that flies a flag of truce when approaching and binds and fetters those who yield. There is the only law to which it yields anything. What it terms justice is only another name for apprehension. Resistance to oppression — unrelenting resistance and all unnecessary assertion of

are the only hope of your future.

If the Negro once falls out of sight as a troublesome, aggressive, dangerous element of the body politic, he will be, not indeed re-enslaved but peacefully subordinated to hopeless inferiority.

I have feared this for a decade and have fought for you in many volumes — not because it was of any advantage to me to do so, but simply because I love liberty, and hate injustice and fear the future of our American civilization. Somehow, as time goes on, I am almost sure I have fought so hard and hoped so much for the Negro. A good deal that I have seen and heard of him of late — and I do my studying at first hand — inclines me to fear that he would rather be flattered by being called a "good nigger" than respected as a free man.

Yours very truly
The W. W. Brown

"Oh, yes sir: "

The woman instinctively dropped a little courtesy. The doctor saw it and smiled.

and turned to arrange the bed clothes,

"There is nothing more. Good night."

He went away shaking his head.

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013

An Insubstantial Dancer

Chapter VII.

"Well?" said the young lady as soon as the reporter had gone looking anxiously up into the lawyer's eyes.

"I hope I have your entire confidence, Miss Collins?" said the lawyer biting his under lip as was his habit when in doubt.

"I have so often heard Uncle Prime speak of you that I could not do otherwise than trust you."

The girl was hardly more than eighteen, slight and fair. The eyes that ^{met the lawyer's gaze} looked so steadily into his were wide-open gray ones, framed with heavy brows, and the wide lids fringed with long dark lashes. Her hair which was of a neutral brown, tint was abundant ^{and} worn in a simple coil at the back of the head whose perfect outlines were thus clearly displayed. A simple dress of dark blue cloth, a hint of white at wrist and neck, with a gold pin having a flat medallion head, shot dagger-wise across the throat, were the only things about her costume that attracted his attention as he scanned face and figure as if he had never seen her before.

"Will you sit down and tell me what you know about yourself, Miss Collins?"

The lawyer extended his hand as if to offer a pledge of sincerity. The girl laid her left hand upon it. She ~~seemed to do it without thought, using the left hand because it was nearest.~~ A woman ^{rarely} ~~never~~ ^{seldom} uses the hand-clasp as a pledge. She gives her hand in token of assent, surrender, confidence, but ^{rarely} ~~never~~ as a pledge of purpose. When ^{custom} ~~habit~~ impels her to do so it seems mannish and unnatural. In this case the gesture was ^{an} instinctive expression of confidence and was so construed. ^{He led her to a sofa and they sat down. ~~she had a little~~}

"I do not ask from mere curiosity" he ^{said after a moment} continued, not apologetically but as if to make it easier for her to begin.

sciously he withdrew his hand from hers.

"Were there any other children?"

"I--I think so--I think my father was a harsh man."

"To whom?"

"Everybody, except me. ^{He must have been gentle with me} ~~He used to carry me about with him.~~"

^{or I would not have such a tender feeling for}
"When did you leave this place?" ^{July -- I am hardly over}
~~it now.~~

"I don't know. Something dreadful happened--something I ought to have remembered--but I don't--and that is the end of everything --everything!" she repeated spreading out her hands before her as if to show how dense a wall had been built up between her and her childhood's memories.

"And what do you next recall? Where were you after that?"

"Here--in Washington."

"Where? Can you describe the place?"

"Oh perfectly. I think ^{we} must have lived there until I was nearly ten years old."

"Whom do you mean by 'we'?"

"Pac--uncle Pac ^{and me}."

"Was there no one else?"

"Never", said the girl ^{firmly} looking up. "I do not remember that any body came to visit us either. Oh, we were very happy. The house was small but very comfortable--within I mean--outside it was very much neglected. It was a little house over towards Meridian Hill--a little house hardly more than a hut, but a big lot, overgrown with weeds and briars. There was a little path that led up by the side of the house, and on the back part of the lot Uncle Pac had a fine kitchen garden. It was only the front that was neglected. He seemed to want it to look as if nobody lived there. I remember there was a big pokeberry bush that grew almost as high as the eaves, just at the

I need to look through it at the Monument and consider why it ⁵ raised the higher corner of the lot, ^{then there were} and raspberries and mulleins--weeds of all sorts which made the yard a thicket from one stone wall to another."

"I see", said the lawyer thoughtfully. "And you remained there how long?"

"Until I was ten years old."

"And then?"

"I was sent to the 'Sisters.'"

"In Montreal, I think I have heard?"

The girl nodded absently.

"You had attended school before?"

"Yes: the public school ^{here}."

"Do you know why you were sent away?"

"I can only guess. One of the teachers came to inquire about me. She wanted to know, she said, what an old nigger like Uncle Pac was doing with a ^{little} white girl like me."

"What did he tell her?"

"That I was his old master's child--his old master who was dead--that he was taking care of ^{me}."

"She went away satisfied, I suppose?"

"She went away and in a few days he took me to Montreal where he told the same story. I never believed it." said the girl looking up quietly into her companion's face."

"Why not?"

"Uncle Pac laughed ~~immoderately~~ after the teacher ^{went away} left and said she was mighty smart but not smart enough for him."

"You do not think you are his old master's child, then?"

"I don't know", casting down her glance, ^{I believe} "my mother was a colored woman."

"What makes you think so?"

"I cannot tell."