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## *Judge Albion W. Tourgee.*

Relating to some of his very creditable acts, as a citizen, during a busy life. Acts in efforts to remove cruelties and injustice towards a long oppressed people who are now greatly wronged, because of their color, notwithstanding they have become citizens of the nation.

On the 21st of May last, that grand man, Judge Albion W. Tourgee, a true follower of Jesus of Nazareth, departed this life at Bordeaux, France, where he represented this government. His death resulted from an old wound received during the Civil war.

At the close of that unfortunate war, he became a resident of the south, one of those most cruelly maligned northern men, called carpet-baggers. While residing there he received the appointment of United States District Judge. During his residence in the South, covering a period of fifteen years, he studied with great care, in a broad and generous interest, that, very grave and unfortunate race question, which came to that people as one of the results of the Civil war, doing so on the basis of equal and exact justice to the black as well as the white race, endeavoring to apply thereto the teaching of Jesus, that all men are brothers, and to do unto others as you would like to be done by. This he did for the purpose of aiding in bringing about a judicious and equitable arrangement of the new condition, results of the Civil war, which came to two peoples, whose destinies had been cast together by the selfish and unjust acts of the ancestors of that white race. He labored long and faithfully in efforts to aid in the accomplishment of the end desired, and to remove that cruel, unjust and unchristian prejudice toward those people—having in their veins any of the blood of the stolen and enslaved Africans—so prevalent, almost universal, among the people of the Northern states. A prejudice very markedly indicated in the year 1832, when, the church people, claiming to be Christians, of Boston, the hub of the nation, would not permit William Lloyd Garrison and associates to hold an anti-slave meeting in any church building, school house, or other building controlled by them, and about the same time, the entire power of church and State of Connecticut, with the help of the mob, was brought to bear, to prevent Prudence Crandell, a Quaker woman, from keeping school for Negro girls. Which prejudice continued with this people down to the Civil war and the emancipation of the slave people. And during the past forty years since those times, has been so firmly held by the great majority of the people of the Northern states, who hold the controlling power of the nation, because of numerical strength, no public protest nor condemnation has been made—no call on the government to prevent the many inhuman, uncivilized acts of barbarous savage cruelty and injustice being committed and permitted by the former slave-holders and their descendants. Such actions by people of the Northern states would have so encouraged and been so helpful to the minority in the Southern states, who were opposed to the barbaric injustice in practice. A support which would have, it is probable, enabled them to prevent such uncivilized unchristian acts towards Negro citizens.

This much needed work, for the removal of that cruel, unjust and unchristian prejudice was pursued with constancy and great persistancy, by that true man, Judge Tourgee, during a period of twenty-five years, with comparatively very little assistance. Some few noble souls lent a helping hand, but the great majority in the Northern states, claiming to be citizens of the most civilized and Christian nation of the world, stood by quietly looking on, with a cold indifference, permitting and apparently acquiescing in the barbaric savagery and injustice towards a helpless and long oppressed people who had, as a result of the Civil war, become citizens of the nation, entitled to all the rights, privileges and protection enjoyed by other citizens.

During that period of twenty-five years in which Judge Tourgee labored so faithfully to induce the people to do unto and for the Negro brothers, who had become citizens of the nation by the acts of others, as we would like to be done

by, there were committed in the Southern states of this nation, some of the most inhuman acts of cruelty and injustice—acts that would have been shamefully discreditable to any uncivilized people on the face of the globe—as below stated, which acts should have aided the judge in his noble efforts for that oppressed Negro people, but did not, were quietly accepted and acquiesced in by this people quite generally, and by the national government.

In South Carolina a Negro asked a white man for the small sum due him for work—this was considered a great insult, and the white man drew his revolver to shoot the insulting Negro—quite a common and legitimate occurrence in that “white man’s” country. In this case the Negro happened to be armed, had the courage and shot first, killing the white man, and immediately fled, knowing full well the punishment to come if caught. The self constituted posse formed soon after, armed with Winchesters and proceeded to the home of the Negro, where they found and bound his father and mother, who could not or would not tell where the fugitive was in hiding. The posse gentlemen regulators, killed the father and brutally flogged the old mother. Then proceeded on the hunt for the fugitive, demanding of each and every Negro, met on the way, where the man was in hiding, and when they could not or would not tell were promptly killed, until the number counted nine. Thus killing, brutally murdering in cold blood, ten innocent Negro citizens for the life of one white man killed by another Negro, IN SELF DEFENCE.

In the same state, four best citizens, two of them church members, flogged to death with buggy traces, a Negro man who had been charged with stealing a bible and, his old mother who could not or would not tell on her son. The four men were tried in one county for the murder of the man. The verdict of the jury was NOT GUILTY. They were again tried in another county for the murder of the old mother—the jury returned a similar verdict, not guilty. A prominent newspaper of that vicinity stated editorially that the evidence was full and ample, as to the guilt of the four men, but, notwithstanding, the same verdict would be had in every county in the state.

At Palmetto, Georgia, some buildings were burned—it was not known how the fire occurred, but, following the common practice of the South, it was charged on the Negroes, probably for the purpose of getting rid of several who were prominent and influential among their people and had been striving to lead them up to full manhood and take part in affairs—one of the greatest crimes committed by a Negro in that white man’s country. Nine Negroes were arrested, chained together and imprisoned in a warehouse until the self-constituted posse could assemble. The posse 250 strong, soon came, fully armed. They marched into the warehouse where the arrested Negroes were imprisoned—each one of them declaring his innocence of the crime charged and begging for mercy. But there is no mercy in that “white man’s” country, when a Negro is only charged with a crime. At the command of the leader, that self-constituted band of regulators, fired on the nine Negroes who were pleading for mercy, all of whom fell to the floor pierced by many bullets. Immediately a number of the regulators went among them, pistol in hand, and shot dead several who seemed to be alive. So doing, without a doubt, for the purpose of making sure that the prominent and influential had been put out of the way.

At Liberty, Amite County, Mississippi, a Negro school teacher, a college graduate and a “self-respecting man” wrote a letter to the chairman of the school board in relation to his pay. The letter was considered insulting, and the self-constituted posse immediately rose up, as it were, out of the ground, fully armed, composed of many of the best citizens of the county, and marched to the school-house, to punish the insulting Negro teacher, who had been informed his life was to be taken. As he sat at his desk engaged in writing a letter to his brother, informing him of the expected punishment and the probable result, he heard the tramp of that body of enraged white men, composed of some of the best citizens of the county, and 200 strong, coming to take his young life. As these regulators marched into the school-house, that truly noble man, one of a long oppressed and now greatly wronged people, rose from his seat, drew his revolver and shot dead the leader of that band of hyenas, clothed in the garb of civilized life. Then the Negro teacher, a noble specimen of his race, was riddled with bullets and his body dumped into mother earth, simply because the All Wise Father had created him and his ancestors with black skin, for purposes of his own, and because he was a man of large ability, deeply interested in leading his people to become full men and women and to take part in affairs as all citizens should do.

In western Kentucky, two young girls of the “superior race” were brutally murdered and otherwise wronged. It was not known who committed the terrible crimes, but, as is generally the case in that white man’s country, it was

charged on some Negro who was unknown. A Negro man, a stranger, passed through the town and crossed over the river into the state of Missouri. A number of the self constituted posse followed him over and charged the stranger Negro with murdering the girls. He was arrested and immediately turned over to the members of the Kentucky posse. Had he been a white man, it would have been necessary for the governor of Kentucky to have made application to the governor of Missouri for his surrender. The stranger Negro was taken to the other side, and to the place where the girls were murdered, and then charged with the crimes. He denied the charge, stating he was forty miles away when the crimes were committed, and that he could prove it, if they would give him three days time. Assembled thousands were present to see a "nigger" lynched, and must not be disappointed. The posse proposed to burn him alive at the stake, but the father of the murdered girls objected and asked for a simple hanging, which was granted and the stranger Negro's life was taken by the citizens of that vicinity without the shadow of evidence pointing to him as guilty of the crimes. Three days afterward it became known he was forty miles away when the crimes were committed, that he was a respectable man residing at Springfield, Illinois, with a family, a wife and several children, and a member of a church. Did the governor of the state of Illinois demand of the governor of Kentucky the punishment of the leaders of that mob of lawless and brutal men? If he did, no mention was made of it in the papers of that time. Did the people of the state, including the church members, call on the governor to make such demand? Most certainly not. The murdered citizen was only a "nigger," his suffering widow and children only "niggers," and that cruel prejudice against the black man held sway.

But, that justice loving man, that true follower of Jesus, Albion W. Tourgee, believing all men are brothers, and the rights of all citizens should be maintained regardless of race, color or previous condition—made an effort throughout the Northern states to procure by subscription, money sufficient to prosecute in the United States Court, and compel the county where the Negro citizen was lynched to pay to the wife and children of that unfortunate and greatly wronged citizen of Illinois and of the nation, proper pecuniary compensation. A prominent and capable lawyer agreed to take the case without charge, except an amount sufficient to pay his expenses. After considerable effort and time, the justice loving and Christian people of the Northern states, subscribed for that humane effort, a real duty, the ENORMOUS SUM OF SIXTY-FIVE DOLLARS. Not in the least surprising. That unfortunate widow and her children were only "niggers" who have, in this land of liberty, this home of the brave, of which we boast so much, very few rights the white man need respect, or does respect.

These several barbaric, savage cruelties and injustice towards citizens of the nation, who with their ancestors had been so cruelly oppressed, during slavery, by people of the nation, are only samples, of large numbers of very similar cruel and unjust acts towards that people, citizens, having in their veins the blood of the stolen and enslaved Africans, which occurred during the twenty-five years that noble justice loving man, a true follower of Jesus, was laboring to prevent such barbaric acts in this nation claiming to be civilized and Christian; laboring to remove that cruel prejudice towards Negroes so prevalent in the Northern states, and to induce the intelligent and influential to organize in behalf of that suffering and greatly wronged Negro people of the South; to publicly protest and condemn all such barbaric acts and injustice and to call on the national government to protect CITIZENS OF THE NATION, when states failed to do so; to give the same and equal protection to any and all citizens within the bounds of the nation, that it does on the high sea and in foreign lands.

That true man, Albion W. Tourgee, not only failed to induce this people to remove, to prevent such uncivilized, inhuman and disgraceful acts towards a helpless and long suffering people, but, also became as a Negro, because of his untiring efforts in their behalf and, notwithstanding his great ability as a writer, his high character generally as a man—the managers of prominent magazines declined his services to write for them, fearing his great prominence in behalf of justice to the Negroes would be detrimental to their publications, in the loss of subscribers. A further indication of the continuation and present existence of that cruel, unjust and unchristian prejudice towards the brother, whom the All Wise Father created with black skin for purposes of his own.

That justice loving man has finished his labors, crossed over to the beyond, where his efforts for right and justice to the oppressed will be recognized.

Baraboo, Wis., May 30, 1905.

CHAS. H. WILLIAMS.

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