

The Negro Question

**Attitude of the
Progressive Party
Toward the
Colored Race**

**Colonel Roosevelt's Reply to a
Query at the Progressive National
Convention; His Letter to Julian
Harris, of Atlanta.**

Colonel Roosevelt's Statement

At the National Progressive Convention, Coliseum,
Chicago, August 6, 1912

I heard over there, did I not, some query about the negro question? (A Voice: "Yes.") All right; any respectful request for information will always have an answer from me (applause), and I have never done anything I was afraid to be questioned about, and I shall not begin in the Progressive party. (Laughter.)

Now, there has been distributed here a letter of mine to Mr. Julian Harris, written three or four days ago. In that letter I set forth my views and the reasons back of my views, in detail, and I think with clearness that will prevent any misapprehension, but I can give you by example just what I mean by the policy that I am advocating.

I think the American people is a mighty good people to lead and a mighty poor people to drive. See what I mean? I think that we can get best results from our fellow Americans in other sections of the country by treating them as we expect them to treat us, and by ourselves living up in our homes to the principles that we profess. In Republican national conventions hitherto there has been a large representation of colored men—all from non-Republican States; the virtue of the Republicans of the Republican States taking only the form of trying to make the Democratic States be good. See what I mean? The colored delegates all came from the States that never cast a Republican electoral vote, that never elected a colored man to office, where largely owing to the action persisted in for forty-five years by the Republican party the colored man has as a matter of fact gradually lost all his political rights; so that the old policy of attempting to impose on the Southern States from without, a certain rule of conduct toward the negro has in fact broken down. And, friends, I regret to say that every man who has ever been to a national convention knows the character of the great majority of the colored delegates from the South, from those old, rotten borough States, was such as to reflect discredit upon the Republican party

and upon the race itself. (Applause.) I am giving you the explanation as minutely as I know how.

Now, as soon as the Progressive party was formed I at once set about, as many other men in different States did, securing from the Northern States themselves an ample recognition of the colored man in these States, so that as a matter of fact there is in this convention a representation from the Republican States of colored men such as there never has been before anything like in any convention in the country. (Applause.) And more than that, a representation of colored men who, in point of character, intelligence and good citizenship, stand on an exact equality with any of the whites among whom they sit. (Applause.)

Colored Delegates from Northern States

Just now before I began my speech (when you may remember that there was a good deal doing) the two colored delegates from West Virginia came up to shake hands with me. I do not know their names; one is the State Librarian of West Virginia; one is a colored business man in West Virginia, who had never taken any great interest in politics before. Never before has West Virginia sent two colored delegates to a national convention, and the colored delegates it sent are in character and standing the peers of the white delegates from that State.

Now, from New York, we sent colored delegates; from Rhode Island they sent them. Do you think Rhode Island or West Virginia or New York would have sent them if they had been told they had to? They would not have. No. You had to let the movement come from within. (Applause.)

Now, from Maryland (A Voice: "From Pennsylvania") and from Pennsylvania you have colored delegates. Now, from Maryland and West Virginia there have come to this convention colored delegates sent because they represent an element of colored men who have won the esteem and respect of their white neighbors, so that all the honest and decent men can join in sending delegates of both colors. And they send them here honestly; they send them here of their own free will.

That is what the Progressives have finally succeeded in doing in the North. We have done it by simply encouraging the best men

in the North to act squarely by the colored men as they would by the white men. We have not done it by trying to dragoon the white man into that action. The other system of trying to force in the far Southern States conditions that we cannot make exist there has failed. I propose to take toward the Southern States the exact attitude that we have taken to West Virginia and Maryland. (Applause.) And I believe that adopting that action we shall naturally and spontaneously see from those Southern States a repetition of the conditions in West Virginia and Maryland, so that in future Progressive National Conventions you will see colored delegates come from the South Atlantic and Gulf States precisely as they come now from West Virginia and from Maryland. (Applause.)

The Effect in the South

Now, I ask you to look carefully at the letter—you have copies of it—which I wrote to Mr. Julian Harris. I have just received from him an answer. Mr. Harris is a Georgian, the son of Uncle Remus Harris, a delegate in this convention, and in this, in speaking of my action Mr. Harris shows that his mind and my mind have met in the matter; that he and those for whom he speaks look at it just as I would hope that they would look at it. He writes as follows, after speaking of the new conditions this produces:

“Under these conditons it will become for the first time possible that the negro who shows the quality which entitles him to respect and countenance will, with the cordial good will of his white neighbors, do his part in healthy political work for the common good.” (Applause.)

Now, friends, I hold that the white man and the colored man who endeavor to make the colored man discontented with what we are doing are the worst foes of the colored race. I hold we are standing against the brutality of the Democrats and hypocrisy of the Republicans. (Applause.) We are in the first place beginning, where all charity must begin, at home. We are beginning by trying to take the steps to do justice to the colored man in our own States. We are setting the standard in border Southern States like West Virginia and Maryland, and setting a standard to which we can have a reasonable hope that our brethren of the South when we no

longer attempt to drive them, when it is a matter of honorable obligation with them as with us, to which we have a reasonable right to hope that they will themselves come up and to which my correspondent, a delegate in this convention from Georgia, himself says that he believes that they will come up.

Now, friends, the easy thing for me to have done in this matter if I had been interested only in my own political advancement, was to have repeated the dreadful blunders made for so many years by the Republican party; to have uttered insincere platitudes about the black man, and kept him out of the Northern delegations, and brought him in from the South as a cheap method of paying any obligations to him. That might have helped me. It would have helped me with those people who accept fine phrases as a substitute for honest actions. It might have helped me, but it would have driven still further down the black man of the South. It would have kept the white men of the South solidified in an angry, vindictive, defensive alliance against any party that did justice to the negro, and it would have sown the seeds at the outset in this Progressive party, seeds of dissolution which we saw blossom into a perfect flower in the Republican convention in this city six weeks ago.

Now, I have taken the action which, as far as I am able to judge my own soul, I believe with all my heart is the only action that offered any chance of hope to the black man in the South, to the white man in the South, and which offers a better chance to the black man in the North, which has already given to the black man in the North a better chance than he ever had before. And if I had advocated the following of any other action I should have been in the position of insincerely advocating for purposes of temporary political advantage a course of action which has been followed for forty-five years in the Republican party, which has during that period hurt the negro in the South, hurt the white man in the South, and finally has brought to disaster—and to crushing disaster and death—the great Republican party itself. (Applause.)

Now, friends, I think I can say that I have at any rate met perfectly fearlessly and conscientiously the question you have put to me. (Applause.)

Colonel Roosevelt's Letter to Julian Harris

SAGAMORE HILL, August 1, 1912.

Mr. Julian Harris, Uncle Remus Magazine, Atlanta, Ga.

MY DEAR MR. HARRIS: In pursuance of our conversation I write you this letter. There is a peculiar fitness in writing it to the son of the man whose work made all Americans his debtors. Your father possessed genius; and moreover he possessed that gentleness of soul, that broad and tender sympathy with his fellows, for the lack of which genius cannot atone. His life and his work tended to bring his fellow countrymen, North and South, into ever closer relations of good will and understanding; and surely it should be needless to say that the author of "Uncle Remus" and of "Free Joe and the Rest of the World" felt a deep and most kindly interest in the welfare of the negro.

Many letters dealing with the subject of which you spoke to me have been sent to me within the last few days. These letters, from equally worthy citizens, take diametrically opposite positions. Those written by men living in the North usually ask me to insist that we get from the South colored delegates to the National Progressive convention. Those written by citizens of the South ask that I declare that the new party shall be a white man's party. I am not able to agree to either proposal.

"All Men Up," Not "Some Men Down"

In this country we cannot permanently succeed except upon the basis of treating each man on his worth as a man. We can fulfill our high mission among the nations of the earth, we can do lasting good to ourselves and to all mankind, only if we so act that the humblest among us, so long as he behaves in straight and decent fashion, has guaranteed to him under the law his right to life, to liberty, to protection from injustice, his right to enjoy the fruits of his own honest labor and his right to the pursuit of happiness in his own way, so long as he does not trespass on the rights of others. Our only safe motto is "All men up" and not "Some men down." For us to oppress any class of our fellow citizens is not only wrong to others but hurtful to ourselves; for in the long run such action is no more detrimental to the oppressed than to those who think that they temporarily benefit by the oppression. Surely no man can quarrel with these principles. Exactly as they

should be applied among white men without regard to their differences of creed, or birthplace, or social station, without regard to whether they are rich men or poor men, men who work with their hands or men who work with their brains, so they should be applied among all men without regard to the color of their skins.

These are the principles to which I think our countrymen should adhere, the objects which I think they should have steadily in mind. There is need not merely of all our high purpose but of all our wisdom and patience in striving to realize them. Above all it is essential that we should not act in such a way as to make believe that we are achieving these objects and yet by our actions indefinitely postpone the time when it will become even measurably possible to achieve them. For this reason I cannot adopt either of the two diametrically opposite suggestions made to me in the letters of which I have spoken.

I believe that the Progressive movement should be made from the beginning one in the interest of every honest, industrious, law abiding colored man, just as it is in the interest of every honest, industrious, law abiding white man. I further believe that the surest way to render the movement impotent to help either the white man or the colored man in those regions of the South where the colored man is most numerous would be to try to repeat the course that has been followed by the Republican party in these districts so many years or to endeavor in the State in question to build up a Progressive party by the same methods which in those States have resulted in making the Republican party worse than impotent.

Old Parties Lived on Race Hatred

Henry Ward Beecher once said that the worst enemy of the colored man was the man who stirred up enmity between the white and colored men who have to live as neighbors. In the South the Democratic machine has sought to keep itself paramount by encouraging the hatred of the white man for the black; the Republican machine has sought to perpetuate itself by stirring up the black man against the white, and surely the time has come when we should understand the mischief in both courses and should abandon both.

We have made the Progressive issue a moral, not a racial issue. I believe that wherever the racial issue is permitted to become dominant in our politics it always works harm to both races, but immeasurably most harm to the weaker race. I believe that in this movement only damage will come if we either abandon our ideals on the one hand, or on the other fail resolutely to look facts in the face, however unpleasant these facts may be. Therefore I feel that

we have to adapt our actions to the actual conditions and actual needs and feelings of each community; not abandoning our principles, but not in one community endeavoring to realize them in ways which will simply cause disaster in that community, although they may work well in another community. Our object must be the same everywhere, but the methods by which we strive to attain it must be adapted to the needs of the several States, or it will never be attained at all.

Northern Negroes Not Excluded

In many of the States of the Union where there is a considerable colored population we are able in every fact and at the present moment to bring the best colored men into the movement on the same terms as the white men. In Rhode Island and Maryland, in New York and Indiana, in Ohio and Illinois, in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, to speak only of States of which I have personal knowledge, this is now being done, and from some or all of these States colored delegates will be sent to the National Progressive Convention at Chicago. Let me point out that the Progressive party is already, at its very birth, endeavoring in these States, in its own home, to act with fuller recognition of the rights of the colored man than ever the Republican party did. Until I was President the white Republicans of the North, although they had loudly insisted that the colored man should have office, with even greater firmness insisted that he should have office only in the South, or at any rate not in the North. When, for instance, I tried to appoint a colored man to office in Ohio I was wholly unable to get the necessary assent from the white Republican leaders of Ohio and had to appoint the man in Washington; and in appointing a colored man to a high position in New York I was obliged to do it by main force and against the wish of the entire party organization. In the Republican national convention the colored members have been almost exclusively from the south, and the great majority of them have been men of such character that their political activities were merely a source of harm, and of very grave harm, to their own race. We, on the contrary, are hoping to see in the National Progressive Convention colored delegates from the very places where we expect to develop our greatest strength, and we hope to see these men of such character that their activities shall be of benefit not only to the people at large but especially to their own race. So much for the course we are able to follow in these States; and the citizens of these States can best help the negro race by doing justice to these negroes who are their own neighbors. In many Northern States

there have been lynchings and race riots with sad and revolting accompaniments; in many of these States there has been failure to punish such outrageous conduct, and what is even more important, failure to deal in advance wisely and firmly with the evil conditions among both black men and white which had caused the outrages.

Southern Methods Evil

There are other States, including the majority of the Southern States, where the conditions are wholly different. Much is to be said for the men who forty-five years ago, with motives which were for the most part and among most of their number of a lofty and disinterested type, attempted a course of action in those States which in actual practice has lamentably failed to justify itself; and I make no attempt at this time to strive to apportion the blame for the failure. It is unwise to revive bitterness by dwelling on the errors and shortcomings of the past. Let us profit by them, but reproach no man because of them. We are now starting a new movement for the betterment of our people, a movement for social and industrial justice which shall be nation-wide, a movement which is to strive to accomplish actual results and not to accept high sounding phrases as a substitute for deeds. Therefore we are not to be pardoned if at the outset, with the knowledge gained by forty-five years' experience of failure, we repeat the course that has led to such failure, and abandon the effort to make the movement for social and industrial justice really nation-wide.

For forty-five years the Republican party has striven to build up in the Southern States in question a party based on the theory that the pyramid will unsupported stand permanently on its apex instead of on its base. For forty-five years the Republican party has endeavored in these States to build up a party in which the negro should be dominant, a party consisting almost exclusively of negroes. Those who took the lead in this experiment were actuated by high motives, and no one should now blame them because of what with the knowledge they then had and under the then existing circumstances they strove to do. But in actual practice the result has been lamentable from every standpoint. It has been productive of evil to the colored men themselves; it has been productive only of evil to the white men of the South; and it has worked the gravest injury to and finally the disruption and destruction of the great Republican party itself. In the States in question where the negro predominates in numbers and in the sections of other States in which he predominates in numbers the Republican party has in actual fact become practically non-existent in so far as votes at the

polls are concerned. The number of votes cast in these States and districts for the Republican ticket on election day has become negligible. It has long been recognized that these States will never give a Republican electoral vote; that these States or districts will never send a Republican or a colored man to Congress. The number of colored men in them who hold any elective office of the slightest importance is negligible. In these States and districts the Republican party, in actual practice, and disregarding individual exceptions, exists only to serve the purposes of a small group of politicians, for the most part white, but including some colored men, who have not the slightest interest in elections and whose political activities are confined to securing offices by sending to national conventions delegations which are controlled by the promise of office or by means even more questionable. Once in four years they send to the national convention delegates who represent absolutely nothing in the way of voting strength, and in consideration of the votes of the delegates thus delivered they endeavor to secure their local offices from any national Republican Administration.

Hold Up the White Man's Hands

The progress that has been made among the negroes of the South during these forty-five years has not been made as a result of political effort of the kind I have mentioned. It has been made as the result of effort along industrial and educational lines. Again allowing for the inevitable exception, it remains true, as one of the wisest leaders of the colored race has himself said, that the only white man who, in the long run, can effectively help the colored man is that colored man's neighbor. There are innumerable whites in the South sincerely desirous of doing justice to the colored man, of helping him upward on his difficult path, of securing him just treatment before the law; white men who set their faces sternly against lynch law and mob violence, who attack all such abuses and peonage, who fight to keep the school funds equitably divided between white and colored schools, who endeavor to help the colored man to become a self-respecting and useful member of the community. The white men who live elsewhere can best help the colored man in the South by upholding the hands of these white men of the South who are thus endeavoring to benefit and to act honestly by the colored man with whom they dwell in community neighborhood, and with whose children their children will continue to dwell in community neighborhood. Actual experience for nearly half a century has shown that it is futile to endeavor to substitute for such action by the white man to his colored neighbor action by outside

white men, action which painful experience has shown to be impotent to help the colored man, but which does irritate the white man, whom nevertheless it cannot control. We are not facing theories, we are facing actual facts, and it is well for us to remember Emerson's statement that in the long run the most unpleasant truth is a safer traveling companion than the pleasantest falsehood.

South Blamed for Republican Split

The action of the Republican machine in the South, then, in endeavoring to keep alive a party based only on negro votes, where, with few exceptions the white leaders are in it only to gain reward for themselves by trafficking in negro votes, has been bad for the white men of the South, whom it has kept solidified in an unhealthy and unnatural political bond, to their great detriment and to the detriment of the whole Union; and it has also been bad for the colored men of the South. The effect on the Republican party has long been disastrous and has finally proved fatal. There has in the past been much venality in Republican national conventions in which there was an active contest for the nomination for President, and this venality has been almost exclusively among the rotten-borough delegates, and for the most part among the negro delegates, from these Southern States in which there was no real Republican party. Finally, in the convention at Chicago last June the breakup of the Republican party was forced by these rotten-borough delegates from the South. In the primary States of the North the colored men in most places voted substantially as their white neighbors voted. But in the Southern States, where there was no real Republican party, and where colored men, or whites, selected purely by colored men, were sent to the convention representing nothing but their own greed for money or office the majority was overwhelmingly anti-Progressive. Seven-eighths of the colored men from these rotten-borough districts upheld by their votes the fraudulent actions of the men who in that convention defied and betrayed the will of the mass of the plain people of the party. In spite of the handpicked delegates chosen by the bosses in certain Northern States, in spite of the scores of delegates deliberately stolen from the rank and file of the party by the corrupt political machine which dominated the National Committee and the convention itself, there would yet have been no hope of reversing in the national convention the action demanded by the overwhelming majority of the Republicans who had a chance to speak for themselves in their primaries had it not been for the 250 votes or thereabouts sent from the States in which there is no Republican party.

Ghost Party, Not a Real One

For forty-five years everything has been sacrificed to the effort to build up in these States a Republican party which should be predominantly and overwhelmingly negro, and now those for whom the effort has been made turned and betrayed that party itself. It would be not merely foolish but criminal to disregard the teachings of such a lesson. The disruption and destruction of the Republican party, and the fact that it has been rendered absolutely impotent as an instrument for anything but mischief in the country at large, has been brought about in large part by the effort to pretend that in the Southern States a sham is a fact; by the insistence upon treating the ghost party in the Southern States as a real party, by refusing to face the truth, which is that under existing conditions there is not and cannot be in the Southern States a party based primarily upon the negro vote and under negro leadership or the leadership of white men who derive their power solely from negroes. With these forty-five years of failure of this policy in the South before our eyes, and with the catastrophe thereby caused to a great national party not yet six weeks distant from us, it would be criminal for the Progressives to repeat the course of action responsible for such disaster, such failure, such catastrophe. The loss of instant representation by Southern colored delegates is due to the fact that the sentiment of the Southern negro collectively has been prostituted by dishonest professional politicians, both white and black; and the machinery does not yet exist (and can never be created as long as present political conditions are continued) which can secure what a future of real justice will undoubtedly develop, namely, the right of political expression by the negro who shows that he possesses the intelligence, integrity and self respect which justify such right of political expression in his white neighbor.

"Best" White Men Must Lead

We face certain actual facts, sad and unpleasant facts, but facts which must be faced if we are to dwell in a world of realities and not of sham, and if we are to try to make things better by deeds and not merely to delude ourselves by empty words. It would be much worse than useless to try to build up the Progressive party in these Southern States, where there is no real Republican party, by appealing to the negroes or to the men who in the past have derived their sole standing from leading and manipulating the negroes. As a matter of fact and not of theory, all that could possibly result from such action would be to create another impotent little corrupt faction of would-be officeholders, of delegates whose expenses to conventions had to be paid, and whose votes sometimes had to be bought.

No real good could come from such action to any man, black or white; the negro would be hurt and not helped throughout the Union; the white man would be hurt in the South; the Progressive party would be damaged irreparably at the beginning. I earnestly believe that by appealing to the best white men in the South, the men of justice and of vision as well as of strength and leadership, and by frankly putting the movement in their hands from the outset, we shall create a situation by which the colored men of the South will ultimately get justice, as it is not possible for them to get justice if we are to continue and perpetuate the present conditions. The men to whom we appeal are the men who have stood for securing the colored man his rights before the law, and they can do for him what neither the Northern white men nor the colored men themselves can do. Our only wise course from the standpoint of the colored man himself is to follow the course that we are following toward him in the North and to follow the course we are following toward him in the South. Very truly yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

The Progressives and the Colored Man

Editorial by Theodore Roosevelt

The Outlook emphasizes its hearty agreement with the principles which Mr. Roosevelt defines in the following article, and which he enunciated in his letter to Mr. Julian Harris and in his speech at the Chicago Progressive Convention. These will not suit the extremists on either side. On the one hand, it is said that the Negro, whatever his character, must be kept out of all participation in political activity, contented to be without any voice in the government under which he lives, and must trust to others to protect him in his personal and property rights. On the other hand, it is desired that the Negro be thrust forward into political activity regardless of the effect on him or on his neighbors. We might quote actual utterances from both classes of extremists here; it is not necessary. A very satisfactory justification of the position taken by Mr. Roosevelt is furnished by the fact that it is at the same time attacked by Negro politicians of the South because he has not stood by them, and by representatives of the Negrophobe element who revolt against this position on the ground that he has not stood by them. He has, in fact, taken the ground of reason and justice—the ground that in a representative government no man is to be accepted as a representative unless he does in fact represent the community from which he comes; and no representative is to be rejected if he does in fact represent such community. It is perfectly notorious that the Negro delegates who have claimed to represent the extreme South in Republican conventions have not truly represented the community; in the Progressive Convention every Negro delegate accepted did represent the community and came with the good will of his white neighbors. The fact that after Mr. Roosevelt's speech the delegates from East and West, South and North, Negroes and whites, radicals and conservatives, accepted his principles without a dissenting voice indicates that he stands upon a recognized ground of common sense and common justice.—
THE EDITORS.

The recent Progressive National Convention differed strikingly, in many ways, from all previous conventions of both the Republican and the Democratic parties, and in no way more markedly than in its action toward the colored man. For many years the attitude of the Democratic party towards the colored man has been one of brutality, and the attitude of the Republican party towards him one of hypocrisy. One party has brutally denied him, not only his rights, but all hope of ever being treated aright; the other has hypocritically pretended to be zealous for his rights, but has acted only in ways that did him harm and not good. The Progressives, on the contrary, have at the very outset of their party career acted towards him with good faith and also with entire frankness and sincerity, keeping true to their ideals and yet also looking facts in the face, performing for him in the present more than either of the old parties has ever performed, acting so that there

will be an increased measure of performance in the future, and yet promising nothing that cannot be performed.

The reasons for the action which we took were set forth in my letter to Mr. Julian Harris, son of Joel Chandler Harris and a delegate in the Convention from Georgia; and also in my speech to the Convention, in answer to a question asked me from the galleries. The action of the Convention proved the good faith with which we spoke.

In National Republican Conventions there have usually been a number of Negro delegates from the South—largely men of bad character, almost openly venal—and practically none from the North. In the Democratic Conventions there have been none from the South, and rarely one from anywhere. In the Progressive National Convention there were numerous colored delegates from the North—from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois—and also from the best of States in the South that used to be called “border” States—Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas. From all these States taken together, in all of which there already existed a real and strong Progressive party, there were several times as many colored delegates as had ever been in a Republican National Convention. All these delegates were men of character and standing, who stood on a level with their white fellow-delegates in point of ability and integrity. From the South Atlantic and Gulf States there were no colored delegates, and from two of them no white delegates. In these States the Progressive party had to be formed out of absolutely new material.

The Progressive Convention, therefore, on this point differed from the Democratic Conventions in the fact that there were many colored delegates instead of none. It differed from the Republican Conventions in the fact that these colored delegates came from the States where there were strong white Progressive parties, whereas in the Republican Conventions the colored men came from States where there was no white Republican party. The Progressives did justice to their own colored neighbors who dwelt among them, whereas the Republicans had always exercised a cheap virtue by admitting colored delegates from the States where they themselves did not dwell. Incidentally, I wish to emphasize the fact that absolutely no good of any kind resulted to the colored man from being allowed to appear as a farcical “delegate” from States wherein he possessed no shred of real political power.

I instance the Progressive National Convention, in the first place because in this regard it is an instance of performance instead of mere promise; and in the next place because it shows just the attitude we Progressives are taking towards the difficult question of actually getting fair play between the two races, instead of merely indulging in fine talk about it.

We feel with all our hearts that in a democracy like ours, and, above all, in such a genuinely democratic movement as ours, we cannot permanently succeed except on the basis of treating each man on his worth as a man. The humblest among us, no matter what his creed, his birthplace, or the color of his skin, so long as he behaves in straight and decent fashion, must have guaranteed to him under the law his right to life and liberty, to protection from injustice, to the enjoyment of the fruits of his own labor, and to do his share in the work of self-government on the same terms with others of like fitness. Our movement is in the interest of every honest, industrious, law-abiding colored man, just as it is in the interest of every honest, industrious,

law-abiding white man. To this cause, embodying this as one of our chief tenets, we have dedicated ourselves, with whatever of high purpose, of wisdom, patience, and resolute courage we possess.

Now, as regards the colored man, the only way to realize these principles is to promote good will and the spirit of fair dealing between him and the white man who is his neighbor. The white man in other countries can do very little to help the colored man in this country; and so, within our own limits, the white man in one section can do but little for the colored man in another section compared to what can be done by that colored man's own white neighbor, if this white neighbor will only himself undertake the task. For nearly half a century the Republican party has proceeded on the theory that the colored man in the South, in order to secure him his political rights, should be encouraged to antagonize the white man in the South; for nearly half a century the Democratic party has encouraged the white man of the South to trample on the colored man. The Republican policy has utterly and miserably failed in its object; it has not only done no good to the colored man, but has harmed him, has also harmed the white man of the South, and through the votes of the colored man of the South in the National Convention has finally destroyed the Republican party itself. The Democratic party has succeeded in its policy, but at the cost of the utmost damage not only to the colored man, but also to those in whose interest the policy was supposed to be carried on—the white men of the South themselves. One of the greatest services that can be performed for the white men of the South is to emancipate them from their slavery to the Democratic party. As regards the colored man, I need hardly point out that the Democratic party is, as it always has been, his consistent foe; and no man who supports the Democratic party and its candidates in this contest can honestly say that he is the friend of the colored man, or entitled to be listened to when he pretends to be such.

Unlike the Democratic party, the Progressive party stands for justice and fair dealing towards the colored man; and, unlike the Republican party, it proposes to secure him justice and fair dealing in the only practicable way, by encouraging in every part of the country good feeling between the white men and the colored men who are neighbors, and by appealing in every part of the country to the white men who are the colored man's neighbors, and who alone can help him, to give him such help, not because they are forced by outsiders to do so, but as a matter of honorable obligation freely recognized on their own part. The plans already tried by the Republican and Democratic parties have failed utterly and hopelessly. No other plan than the one we propose offers the remotest chance of benefiting either the white man or the colored man of the South. Therefore it is merely the part of wisdom to try our plan, which is to try for the gradual re-enfranchisement of the worthy colored man of the South by frankly giving the leadership of our movement to the wisest and justest white men of the South.

Now, the first essential is to show that we are honest in our proposals. The Republican party became deeply tainted with hypocrisy because it practically confined its manifestations of friendship for the Negro to loud protestations and to acts on behalf of the Negro who lived somewhere else. We have begun and must go on by showing our good faith in our treatment of the Negro at home.

This we have already done; in the States where the Progressive party is already flourishing we have given him a share in its councils such as the

Republican party never dreamed of doing. This is true not only as regards the numbers, but as regards the character of the colored men who have sat in our conventions. We realize that it behooves us to look to the conditions of life among our colored as well as among our white fellow-citizens of the North; there have been plenty of lynchings and race riots in the North; and we intend to make serious and conscientious effort to do away with the conditions which have brought about these race riots and lynchings.

In the South we propose to proceed just as we are proceeding in the North, by appealing to what is best in the best men in the country, the most upright and honest and far-sighted citizens. The average American objects to being driven, but he is susceptible to any appeal made frankly to his sense of honor and justice. We no more propose to try, or pretend to try, to dragoon the people of Georgia or Louisiana than the people of New York or Illinois. We feel that when the movement is allowed to come from within, the men of the right type from the South Atlantic and Gulf States will act as their brethren elsewhere act; and then the colored man who is a good citizen will have the same chance in one place as in another. The Progressives of West Virginia, Maryland, Tennessee, Kentucky, have set a standard to which we have the reasonable hope that the States touching them on the south will attain when there is no longer any attempt made to drive them, when the matter is left to their own awakened consciences, and when the men who live elsewhere, under easier conditions, themselves do their duty by the Negro, showing neither brutality and lack of consideration nor foolish sentimentality and the attempt to treat shams as facts.

Our hope is that under the lead of practical, competent, highminded white men, we shall in the end everywhere see—and nowhere save under such lead will we ever see—the right of free political expression secured to the Negro who shows that he possesses the intelligence, integrity, and self-respect which justify such right of political expression in his white neighbor. That this is a reasonable hope is shown by Mr. Harris in his letter answering mine. He says: “The white man in the South is desirous of genuinely helping the Negro. The progress of the Negro industrially and agriculturally in the South has been under the supervision and with the co-operation of his white neighbor. That this progress has been amazing only a glance at the proper Government reports is necessary to prove. The patriotic, sensible white men of the South desire to see the Negro built up in character and stimulated to a sense of personal responsibility.

“Under these conditions (created by the action of the Progressive party) it will become for the first time possible that the Negro who shows the qualities that entitle him to respect and confidence will, with the cordial good will of his white neighbors, do his part in healthy political work for the common good.”

Both of the old parties have utterly failed even to attempt to look this question squarely in the face, and to try to solve it in a spirit of justice combined with common sense. Indeed, no party for half a century so much as made the effort, until the Progressives in Chicago took the action they did. No other plan than that we propose offers even the remotest chance of success. That ours, if honestly carried out, will work a measurable betterment in conditions in both North and South seems to me certain. Such being the case, it should surely be tried.

