

A Resemblance and a Contrast

Between the American Negro and the Children of Israel in
Egypt, or the Duty of the Negro to Contend Earnestly
for his Rights Guaranteed under the Constitution.

THIS DISCOURSE WAS DELIVERED IN THE
Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church.

BY THE PASTOR

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IN CONNECTION WITH THE ENCAMPMENT OF THE GRAND ARMY OF
THE REPUBLIC, IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON.

EXODUS 1:9,10.

"And He said unto His people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land."

In this record, there is a contrast suggested between our people in this country, and the children of Israel in Egypt; and also a resemblance to which I desire, for the moments that I shall occupy, to call attention.

(1) The children of Israel went down into Egypt of their own accord. Ten of the sons of Jacob, first went down to buy corn, owing to a very severe famine that was raging in their own country, and in all the surrounding countries. This journey was again repeated some time afterwards, at which time, they were joined by Benjamin,—the man in charge of affairs having made that a condition of their seeing his face. It was during this second visit, that Joseph was made

known to his brethren, through whom an earnest invitation was sent to his father, Jacob, and all the members of the family to come and stay in the land, with the promise that all of their wants would be supplied. It was in response to this invitation that the family packed up everything which they had and went down into Egypt. They went down from choice: it was a voluntary thing on their part. They were not forced against their will.

The opposite of this was true in the case of the coming of our forefathers to this country. It was not a voluntary act on their part. They were seized by slave hunters and against their will forced from the land of their birth. Left to themselves they never would have sought these shores.

(2) The children of Israel were few in number when they went down into Egypt. There were only about seventy odd souls in all. During their sojourn, however, they greatly multiplied: so much so that at the time of the Exodus, 1491, B. C., according to the census that was taken under the divine direction, there were 603,550 men over twenty years of age who were able to go to war. No mention is made of the male members of the population under twenty, nor of the old men, who were unfit for active military service; nor of the women and female children. The whole number must have been between two and three millions. Assuming that Jacob went down in the year 1706, B. C., and that the Exodus was in 1491, this increase came about in a little over two centuries.

The same fact is noticeable in reference to our people in this country. The first installment came in 1619, and the importation of slaves was prohibited in 1808. According to the census for 1790, we numbered then 752,208. Fifty years afterwards, the number had increased to 2,873,648. In 1890, the number had gone up to 7,470,040, while the last census shows our present number to be 8,840,789. This is a very remarkable showing, when we remember the large mortality of the race, and the fact that the increase has been purely a natural one, without any accessions through immigration. It shows that we are a very prolific race, and that there is no danger of our dying out.

(3) The Egyptians were alarmed at the rapid increase of the children of Israel, and sought in one way or another to diminish their number, or to arrest their increase. The first method was to work them to death, to kill them off by hard labor, and by cruel treatment. This method failed, however; instead of decreasing they went on steadily increasing, becoming more and more numerous. Then another method was resorted to,—the midwives were directed to strangle the male children to death at birth. This also failed. And a third and last method was devised: a decree was issued compelling parents to expose their own children to death. Under this decree, Moses, the great law-giver, would have perished had he not been providentially rescued by Pharaoh's daughter, from an untimely death.

The rapid increase of our people in this country has also been a source of disquiet, if not of positive alarm, to the white element of the population. In 1889, when the census showed an increase of over 22 per cent., you will remember, what an excitement it created, and what absurd predictions were made as to the

possibility of the country being overrun by Negroes. In 1890, when the percentage was cut down owing to inaccuracies in the census of 1890, what a sense of relief was felt by the whites. The rapid increase of the colored population of this country is no more welcomed or relished by the white American than the rapid increase of the Jewish population was by the Egyptians. There has been no concerted action on the part of the whites to cut down our numbers, as was done in Egypt; the process of destruction, however, has gone on all the same. In the Southern section of our country, especially, the hand of violence has been laid upon our people, and hundreds and thousands of them have, in this way, been sent to untimely graves. The convict lease system has also had its influence in diminishing our numbers. Whether this was its intention originally or not, I am not prepared to say, but the fact is, it has had that effect. Through the Convict Camps, the exodus from this world to the next has been amazingly frequent. The avarice, the cupidity of the white man, as illustrated in the grinding conditions imposed upon the colored farmer, under the crop lease system, has also done much to increase the hardships of life for us and to shorten our days.

(4) The Egyptians were afraid that the children of Israel would get up and leave the land: and this, they didn't want them to do. They wanted them to remain, not because they loved them, or because of any special interest which they felt in them as such; but from purely selfish considerations. They were valuable as laborers. From the narrative we learn that they worked in the fields, made bricks and built treasure cities for Pharaoh. It was a great thing to have at their disposal, a population of this kind, who could be pressed into service whenever they were needed. In those oriental monarchies, when great public works, like the building of the Pyramids, were carried on by the State, and when it required an enormous number of workmen, it was of the utmost importance to the State to have constantly at hand the means of supplying this want. And this they found in the rapidly increasing Jewish population, and accordingly, were not disposed to tolerate for a moment, the idea of their departure. How strongly they felt on this matter, is evident from the reply which Pharaoh made to the demand of Moses, "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Let My people go that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." And Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should hearken unto His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, and moreover I will not let Israel go." The same is also evident from the fact, that it was not until the land had been visited by ten great plagues, ending with the death of the first-born, that they were willing to let them go.

When the children of Israel first went down into Egypt it was with no intention of remaining there permanently. It was intended to be only a temporary sojourn, during the continuance of the famine, which drove them there. Nor was it in accordance with the divine plan that they should remain permanently, as is evident from the record, in forty-six of Genesis. "And God spake unto Israel in the vision of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here am I." And he said, "I am God, the God of thy fathers: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will surely bring thee up again." And you will also remember what

God said to Abraham, in response to the question, "Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it," that is, the land of Canaan.. "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterwards they shall come out with great substance."

Now in both of these respects, things seem to be somewhat different with us in this country. If we may judge from the representations in the newspapers and magazines, which are made from time to time, it would appear that the white Americans would be very glad to have our people arise, and get out of the land. We hear a great deal about schemes for deporting the Negro, and in certain sections of the South, and even in certain parts of Illinois, the attempt has been made to forcibly drive him out. While I do not apprehend that there will ever be any general movement to get rid of us, to forcibly deport us from the country, nevertheless, I do not believe that there would be any regrets or tears shed on the part of the whites, if such a thing should occur. I think the great majority would be glad to get rid of us. With the Negro out of the country, what a love feast there would be between the North and the South: how they would rush into each others arms, and fondly embrace each other, and rejoice over the fact that at last the great barrier which has stood between them for so many years had been removed. With the Negro out of the country, what a bright prospect there would be of building up a respectable White Republican Party in the South; so we are told by some Republican fools, who lose sight of the fact that the glory of the Republican Party does not depend upon its getting rid of the Negro, but on the contrary, whatever of glory there is attached to it has come from its connection with the Negro. Why is it called the grand old party? What is it that has given it its pre-eminence; that has rendered it immortal; that has covered it with imperishable glory? Is it not the noble stand which it took for human rights; the magnificent fight which it made against slavery and rebellion, out of which came the great amendments to the Constitution, the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth? It was the enactment of these great amendments that has given it its chief claim to distinction, and that will ever constitute its crowning glory. Yes, even the Republican party, I believe, would be glad to see us go. In two Southern States already, two Republican conventions have declined to receive or admit colored delegates. If some Moses should rise up to-day, as of old, and say to this nation, as was said to Pharaoh, „Let my people go," it would not be necessary to send any plagues in order to have the demand enforced. I believe from every part of the land—North, South, East and West, there would be but one voice, and that would be, Let them go.

The children of Israel wanted to go, while the Egyptians didn't want them to go; the reverse of that, I believe, is true in our case in this land. The white Americans would be glad to have us go, but there is no desire or disposition on our part to go. So far as I have been able to ascertain the sentiments of our people, it is our purpose to remain here. We have never known any other home, and don't expect, as a people, ever to know any other. Here and there an in-

dividual may go, but the masses of our people will remain where we are. Things are not exactly as we would like to have them; no, they are very far from being so, or from what we hope some time they will be, but bad as they are, we are nevertheless disposed to remain where we are. Besides, it would be cowardly to run away. Wherever we go we will have to struggle. Life is real, life is earnest everywhere. And since we are in the struggle here, we had just as well fight it out here as anywhere else. And that is what we are going to do. We are not going to retreat a single inch. We are not going to expatriate ourselves, out of deference to a Negro-hating public sentiment.

It was the *divine plan* that Israel's stay in Egypt should be only temporary; God's purpose was ultimately to lead them back to the land of Canaan, from which they had come. And it has been intimated, from certain quarters, that that is to be true of us; that God has providentially permitted us to be brought to this land, in order that we might be trained for future usefulness in the land of our forefathers. This is the view that has been taken by some white men, and also by some colored men. It may be so; but I confess, so far, I have not been able to discover any evidences of such a purpose. In the case of the Jews, the record showed what the purposes of God were in regard to that people; but we have no such revelation touching ourselves. God spoke to Abraham, and God spoke to Jacob, and showed them what was to be; but where are the Abrahams and Jacobs among us to whom he has spoken? There are those who are ready to speculate, but speculation amounts to nothing. What the divine purposes are touching this race no one knows. And therefore in the absence of any definite and positive information, we will assume, that this purpose is that we remain just where we are. Until we have very clear evidence to the contrary, we are not likely to take any steps to go elsewhere.

(5) The Egyptians were afraid that the children of Israel, in case of war with a foreign power, would join their enemies and fight against them. And well might they have feared. In the first place, the whole world at that time was in a state of war. It was might that made right. Wars of conquests were constantly going on. One nation or state felt perfectly justified in making war against another, if it was deemed to its interest to do so. As a matter of fact there was always liability of an invasion from some foreign power. This was a possibility, which Egypt, as well as every other country, had to take into consideration, and to provide against. At any moment the enemy might be seen approaching; at any moment their safety might be imperilled.

In the (2) place, with this possibility staring them in the face, their treatment of the Jews, in case of an invasion, would very naturally have led them to feel, that the sympathy of the Jews would be with the invaders instead of with them. The reason assigned in the narrative however for this fear is, lest through such an alliance with a foreign power, they succeed in getting out of the land. This shows conclusively that the Jews evidently wanted to get out of the land; and had possibly intimated that. The Egyptians didn't want them to go; and yet, strange to say, instead of setting themselves to work to make it so pleasant and

agreeable for them that they would not want to go, the very opposite policy is pursued,—the policy of oppression, of injustice, of violence. Instead of seeking to win them by acts of kindness, they inaugurated a reign of terror; sought to intimidate them, to crush out of them every spark of manhood, to reduce them to the level of dumb, driven cattle. What a strange thing human nature is; how short-sighted, how blind, how utterly stupid men often are, and men from whom we might naturally, expect better things. If the Jews were to remain in Egypt, as the Egyptians desired to have them do, wasn't it a great deal better to have their love than their hatred, their friendship than their enmity? And even if they were going out, was it not better to have their good will than their ill will? For it was just possible, that some time in the future, they might need the help even of the descendants of Jacob, little and insignificant as they were at that time in their estimation. It was the day of small things with them; but there was no telling what the future might bring forth. As a matter of fact, we know that they did become a great and powerful nation.

It is just possible that the absurd and ruinous policy pursued by the Egyptians was due also to a sense of race superiority, and the assumption that if they were in any way civil, if they treated the Jews with the common courtesies that one human being owes to another, it might create within them a desire for social equality. It is possible that the fear of being overrun by an inferior race, may also have fired their imagination blinding their vision, and blunting their moral sensibilities. Whatever the reason may have been, the fact remains that the policy inaugurated by them was an utterly heartless and brutal one; and this policy they continued to pursue until it was reversed by the divine interposition, until God's righteous indignation was excited, and the angel of death was sent forth and smote the first-born throughout the land, and overthrew the tyrants in the Red Sea. It is only a matter of time when all such oppressors the world over, will meet a similar fate. God is not dead,—nor is he an indifferent onlooker at what is going on in this world. One day He will make requisition for blood; He will call the oppressors to account. Justice may sleep, but it never dies. The individual, race, or nation which does wrong, which sets at defiance God's great law, especially God's great law of love, of brotherhood, will be sure, sooner or later, to pay the penalty. We reap as we sow. With what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again.

The absurdity of pursuing such a policy is evident from the disastrous consequences which followed. The voice of lamentation that was heard throughout the land of Egypt, the pall of death that hung over every home, and the appalling catastrophe at the Red Sea, which was the culmination of a series of terrible judgments, all came out of it. It was a policy which brought upon them only wretchedness and misery; from which they did not derive a single advantage, or reap a single benefit.

The policy pursued by them, not only did not benefit them, but did not in the least interfere with the divine purposes concerning the Jews. In spite of their policy of oppression, of injustice, of bitter hatred, God let the children of Israel out all the same, and safely conducted them to the Promised Land. The race

that puts its trust in God, and is willing to be led by God, is safe. The heathen may rage and the people imagine a vain thing, but they will be powerless to stay its progress. They may worry and vex it for a while but they will not be able to do it any permanent injury, or seriously to interfere with its development, with its onward and upward march. The race that puts its trust in God has always, under all circumstances, more for it than against it. There is never therefore any reason for fear, or for becoming discouraged as long as it maintains its grip upon the Almighty, as long as its attitude is one of simple child-like trust and dependence.

This is not the point, however, that I had in view in referring to this aspect of the subject, which we are considering under this fifth general head. We were speaking under this head of the fear entertained by the Egyptians of the children of Israel joining their enemies, in case of an invason, and fighting against them. And what I want to say, in this connection is, that there is no just ground for any such fear in regard to our people in this country. Whatever else may be said of the black man, the charge of disloyalty cannot be truthfully made against him. From the very beginning he has been loyal to the flag, and has always been willing to lay down his life in its defense. In the war of the Revolution; in the war of 1812; in the Mexican war; in the great Civil war; and in the war with Spain, he stood side by side with other citizens of the Republic facing the enemy; and in all of our national cemeteries may be found evidences of his patriotism and valor. It is only necessary to mention Milliken's Bend, Port Hudson, Fort Wagner, Olustee, during the great Civil war, and San Juan Hill, during the Spanish war, as evidences of his valor and patriotism. Joseph T. Wilson, who was himself a gallant soldier in the 54th Massachusetts, has written a book, entitled, "The Black Phalanx," in which he traces the history of the Negro soldiers of the United States, from the earliest period through the great war of the Rebellion. It is a glorious record, and one that puts the patriotism of the Negro beyond all question. Whenever the call of danger has been sounded he has always been ready to respond, to bare his bosom to the bullets of the enemy.

This is all the more remarkable when we remember what his treatment has been in this country. Buffeted, spit upon, his most sacred rights trampled upon, without redress, discriminated against in hotels, restaurants, in common carriers, deprived of his political rights, shot down by lawless ruffians, every possible indignity heaped upon him, while the State and Nation look on, the one justifying the outrages, or at least doing nothing to prevent them, and the other protesting its inability to protect its own citizens from violence and injustice. Such treatment is not calculated to inspire one's patriotism, to kindle one's love for a government that permits such injustice and oppression to go on without, at least, the attempt to check them. And yet in spite of these monstrous wrongs that have gone on and are still going on, unrestrained by State or Federal authority, the record of the Negro for patriotism will compare with any other class of citizens. He has been just as constant, just as unswerving in his devotion to the Republic as the most favored class. Oppressed, down-trodden, discriminated against, denied even the common civilities of life, and yet, in the hour of danger, always ready

to stretch forth his strong black arm in defense of the Nation. How to explain this, I do not know, nor is it necessary. It is with the fact alone that I am concerned. There it is, and it is true of no other element of the population. There is no other class of citizens, which, if treated as we have been and are still being treated, would evince any such patriotism, would show any such willingness to lay down their lives at the nation's call, as we have. The fear of the Egyptians cannot therefore be the fear of the white citizens of this country. The Negro has never shown any disposition to fight against the Republic, or to allay himself with a foreign foe. His sympathies have always been with the stars and stripes.

In our city we are now having what is known as the annual encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic. This army is an organization made up of the surviving veterans of the great Civil War. It is called, The Grand Army. Mr. Gladstone used to be called The Grand Old Man, because he summed up in himself many great qualities. He was a matchless orator, a profound thinker, a great scholar, a man of encyclopedic information. The Republican Party is sometimes called The Grand Old Party, and the name is not inappropriately applied to it. There are many things connected with its history that justify that title. It has done some grand things, and it has had associated with it some of the bravest, truest, noblest, and brainiest men that this country has produced,—men, who were not afraid to do right; who felt, as Lowell has expressed it:

“Though we break our fathers’ promise,
we have nobler duties first;
The traitor to Humanity is the traitor
most accursed;
Man is more than Constitutions; better
rot beneath the sod,
Than be true to Church and State while
we are doubly false to God.”

A party with such men, as it had in its years ago, may well be called, “The Grand Old Party.” I take the term, grand, to apply to the old party—the party as it used to be, not to the party as it is to-day, with its petty little programme of a White Republican Party in the South; the elimination of Negro office-holders in the South, out of deference to white southern sentiment; white supremacy in the Philippines and Porto Rico; and the undue prominence that is given to material things; while it is indifferent to the rights of its citizens of color—caring more for dollars and cents, for material prosperity, than for righteousness, for simple, even-handed justice, which alone exalts a nation. It used to be the Grand Old Party. It is no longer such. There isn't a single thing about it, either in what it is at present doing, or in its purposes with reference to the future, to which the term “grand” can be truthfully applied. It has lost its fine sense of righteousness. It no longer gives evidence of those higher instincts, those nobler sentiments, that make nations and parties truly great. It grovels in the dust. Its aims and purposes are of the earth earthy. It is in the interest of commerce and trade and material development that it is bending its energies, and taxing its resources—

forgetful of the fact, that it is true of a nation as of an individual, that its real true life does not consist in the abundance of the good things which it possesseth. Lowell, in his Ode on France, after describing the overthrow of the French tyrant during the great revolution, gives utterance to these significant words:

“What though
The yellow blood of trade meanwhile
 should pour
 Along its arteries a shrunken flow,
And the idle canvas droop around the
 shore?
These do not make a state,
 nor keep it great;
I think God made
The earth for man, not trade;
And where each humblest human crea-
 ture
Can stand, no more suspicious or afraid
Erect and kingly in his right of nature,
To heaven and earth knit with harmo-
 nious ties,—
Where I behold the exaltation
Of manhood glowing in those eyes
 That had been dark for ages,
 Or only lit with bestial loves and
 rages,
There I behold a Nation;
 The France which lies
Between the Pyrenees and the Rhine
 Is the least part of France;
I see her rather in the *soul* whose shine
Burns through the craftsman’s grimy
 countenance,
In the energy divine
 Of toil’s enfranchised glance.”

Unfortunately neither Republicans nor Democrats in this country seem to recognize the great fact enunciated in these lines, but it is true nevertheless; and no party is entitled to the designation, “Grand,” which does not accept it, and act in the light of it.

It is not of the Republican party that I started to speak, however, but of the Grand Army of the Republic. The term, “Grand,” as applied to this army is a fitting tribute to the great services which it has rendered to the Republic. It was this army, the remnant of which is in our city to-day, that saved the life of the Republic; that put down rebellion; and that gave efficacy to Lincoln’s great Proclamation of Emancipation. Had he not had back of him this Army, his

proclamation would have been unavailing. An army that has to its credit these great achievements may well be called, Grand. It is the Grand Army of the Republic. There have been other armies of the Republic,—the army of the Revolution, the army of 1812, the army of the war with Mexico, and of the Spanish American war, but *the* Army of the Republic, both as to numbers and as to the importance of its achievements, is the Army that put down the great Rebellion, and with it the accursed system of slavery, which was like a millstone about the neck of both races. All honor to these brave men. Too much cannot be said in praise of their valor and patriotism. As the years go by; as their numbers decrease, as one by one they go to join their comrades on the other side, the more and more should we honor those who still remain among us. I am glad of this annual encampment; glad of the parade connected with it; glad to look into the faces, and to have others look into the faces of the brave men who stood by their guns, and stood watch over the nation, when Rebellion sought to dissolve the Union and to rivet more firmly the fetters upon four millions of bondmen. And, I am especially glad to know that in these parades of the veterans who saved the Nation, are to be found not only white men, but black men as well. I hope that these representatives of our race will always attend these annual gatherings, even though it may entail some sacrifice on their part to do so. It is a splendid object lesson to the whole nation; and it is a fitting rebuke to those recreant white Americans who say, "This is a white man's country." If it is a white man's country, what are these black heroes doing in these annual parades? If it is a white man's country, why is it that in all of our national cemeteries are the graves of Negroes? Why is it that in every war since the beginning of the Republic, on sea and land, the blood of the Negro has spurted in its behalf? Why is it that on the pension roll of the nation to-day are widows and orphans and battle-scarred heroes of this race? If this is a white man's country, why are Negroes ever called upon to take up arms in its defense? I am glad of these annual encampments, I say, and glad of the share which we have in them. Let every Negro veteran who can, always make it a point to be present at these gatherings, and always get into the ranks and march with the procession, in order that the multitudes who gather from all parts of the country may look on and take knowledge of the fact that the Negro is a man, and that he can do a man's part, and that he may be relied upon to do his part as a citizen of the Republic. It is a grand object lesson, I say, to the nation, to see these colored men in line under such circumstances. And so far, as we are concerned, we should never by our absence, permit that lesson to be lost.

In thinking of this Grand Army of the Republic I am painfully reminded of the fact, that though the War of the Rebellion is over, and has been over for more than thirty-five years; and though the great amendments to the Constitution have been enacted, making us freemen, and citizens, and giving us the right of the ballot, we have not yet been put in possession of these rights. We are still discriminated against, and treated as if we had no rights which white men were bound to respect. And I have called attention to this condition of things, in this

connection, to remind us of the fact, that, though the Civil War is over, the battle for our rights in this country is not yet over. The great amendments are a part of the law of the land, but the same treasonable and Negro-hating spirit that sought to perpetuate our bondage, and to keep us in a state of hopeless inferiority, is still endeavoring to accomplish its purpose by seeking to nullify them. There is a spirit abroad in this land, which is determined that we shall never be accorded the rights of American citizens. And that spirit you have got to meet, and I have got to meet, and we have all got to meet. And it is from these old battle-scarred survivors of the Civil War, that we may learn how to meet it—with courage, with invincible determination; with the earnest purpose never to surrender. Be assured that these wrongs, from which we are suffering, will never be righted if we sit idly by and take no interest in the matter. If we are indifferent even those who might be disposed to assist us will also become indifferent. We must show the proper appreciation, the proper interest ourselves. We must agitate, and agitate, and agitate, and go on agitating. By and by, our very importunity will make itself felt. The people, in the midst of whom we are living, if not from a sense of justice, of right, of fair play, will on the principle of the unjust judge, who cared neither for God nor man, but who said, "I will right the widow's wrong, lest by her continual coming she weary me," be constrained to right our wrongs.

In the struggle which we are making in this country for the recognition of our rights as men and citizens, there is another thing which I want to say, There is little or nothing to be expected from those members of our race, whether in politics or out of it, who value their little petty personal interests above the interests of their race; whose first and last and only thought is, What is there in the struggle for me, what can I get out of it? And who, when they have gotten their little out of it, are perfectly willing to sacrifice the race, to turn it over to the tender mercies of its enemies; to stand by and see it despoiled of its rights without one word of protest. It is not from such men that anything is to be expected. It is rather from the men who are willing to make sacrifices, and to suffer, if need be, for principle; who cannot be satisfied, and cannot permit themselves to be silent in the presence of wrong, in order to ingratiate themselves into the favor of the dominant race, or that they might hold on to some petty office or position. If we are to succeed; if we are to make the proper kind of a fight in this country for our rights, we have got to develop a class of men who cannot be won over by a few offices, or by being patted on the shoulder; men, who, like John the Baptist, are willing to be clothed in camel's hair, and to subsist on locusts and wild honey, —to wear the coarsest clothing, and be content with the plainest food, in order that they might be free to follow the dictates of their own conscience; that they might be unhampered in the fight which they are making for their rights, and for the rights of their race. The men whose policy is to look out for self first, and to concern themselves about the race only so far as professing interest in it may be a help to them in working out their selfish ends and purposes, are men that are unworthy of our confidence. The men that we should honor, and that we may safely follow, are those who are willing to lose themselves, to subordinate their

selfish interests in order that the race may find itself, may come into the full enjoyment of all of its rights. That was the spirit exhibited by Garrison, though he was battling for the rights, not of white men, but of black men.

“In a small chamber, friendless and un-
seen,
Toiled o’er his types one poor, un-
learned young man;
The place was dark, unfurnished, and
mean;
Yet there the freedom of a race began.
Help came but slowly; surely no man
yet
Put lever to the heavy world with less.”

What a picture is that! We can see it all! The dingy little room, dark, unfurnished, and mean; and, we can understand how difficult it must have been for him to keep soul and body together; and yet he was willing to endure all, to suffer all, for the sake of the cause to which he had dedicated his life. *That* was a *white man* suffering for black men! What ought not black men to be willing to suffer, to endure, for themselves? If we are to succeed, I say, in the struggle through which we are passing, we have got to develop within the race itself more of the spirit which Garrison possessed,—the willingness to be found, if necessary, in a small chamber, dark, unfurnished and mean, and to be friendless, in the struggle which we are making for the new emancipation from the fetters of caste prejudice, and from the injustice and oppression to which we are at present subjected. We are still dragging the chain; and we will go on dragging it until the race itself wakes up and sets itself earnestly to work to break it. We are not sufficiently in earnest; we are too easily lulled to sleep; we are too easily satisfied; we are not sufficiently impressed with the gravity of the situation—with the true inwardness of the motive which is leading our enemies on, enemies within the race as well as without it, in the assaults which they are making upon our rights. Edwin Markham, in a little poem, entitled, “Thoughts for Independence Day,” asks the question:

What need we, then, to guard and keep us
whole?

What do we need to prop the State?”

And the answer which he makes among others is:

“We need the Cromwell fire to make us feel
The public honor or the public trust
To be a thing as sacred and august
As some white altar where the angels kneel.”

And that is what *we* need, “The Cromwell fire,” to make us feel that the rights guaranteed to us under the Constitution, are

"as sacred and august
As some white altar where the angels kneel."

If we felt that way, we would not lightly surrender these rights, as too many are disposed to do.

At this Grand Army Encampment, when the issues of the great Civil War are brought vividly before us, it is a good time to look into each other's faces; to give each other the pass-word; and to pledge ourselves anew to stand by our colors. Mr. Webster, in his eulogy on Adams and Jefferson, represents John Adams as saying, on the question of independence, "Sink, or swim; live, or die; survive, or perish, I give my hand and heart to this vote." And in the same spirit let us say to-day, "Sink, or swim; live, or die, survive, or perish," we pledge our hands and hearts to each other, *never* to give up the struggle. Stanley is represented, while in Africa, as saying, "Nothing except the Bible gave me such comfort and inspiration as these lines from Browning:

"What on earth had I to do
With the slothful with the mawkish, the un-
manly?
Being—who?
One who never turned his back, but marched
breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreaemed, though right were worsted, wrong
would triumph,
Held, we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."

And that is what we must do, "March breast forward;" that is the kind of men that we must *be*;—the kind of men that we must seek more and more to develop among us,—men of courage, of faith, of steady purpose, of uncompromising fidelity to principle. Douglass was a man of that type. A majestic figure! A leader, who never turned his back; and who never compromised his race; a leader, who was always true; and who, down to the very last, stood empanoplied in its defense. It is the Douglass-type of leaders that we want—leaders who respect themselves, and to whom the interests of their race are above price. Long may the memory of this illustrious man linger with us, to stimulate our ambition; to arouse our slumbering energies; and to put within us the earnest purpose to continue the fight for equal civil and political rights in this land which we have helped to develop and to save.

"At the battle of Copenhagen, 1801, Nelson was vice-admiral, and led the attack against the Danish fleet. By accident one-fourth of the fleet were unable to participate, and the battle was very destructive. Admiral Parker, a conservative and aged officer, seeing how little progress was made after three hours conflict, signalled the fleet to discontinue the engagement. That signal was No. 39.

Nelson continued to walk the deck, without appearing to notice the signal. 'Shall I repeat it?' said the lieutenant. No; acknowledge it. He turned to the Captain: 'You know, Forley, I have only one eye. I can't see it,' putting his glass to his blind eye. 'Nail my signal for close action to the mast,' cried Nelson." *That was his* order to continue the fight. And the fight was continued, and the battle was won. And so, when signals come to us, as they have come and are coming, from within the race, as well as from without it, bidding us give up the struggle; telling us to cease to agitate, to protest, to stand up for our rights; telling us not to trouble ourselves; that it doesn't do any good; that we had better let things go, which means, go the way our enemies want them to go; that all this agitation tends only to make things worse, to engender hard feelings;—to all such signals let us, like the intrepid Nelson, turn our blind eye towards them; let us not see them; and go right on fighting the battles of the race. If we are true to ourselves and to God the victory will be ours. It may be slow in coming, but come it will. Nothing is to be gained by withdrawing from the contest. Our duty is to remain firm; to plant ourselves squarely and uncompromisingly upon the rights guaranteed to us under the constitution, and to hold our ground. No backward step, should be our motto.

"To-day is the day of battle,
The brunt is hard to bear;
Stand back, all ye who falter,
Make room for those who dare."

Thank God there have always been among us men of this stamp; men who have realized the necessity of fighting, and who have been willing to go forward, regardless of personal consequences—brave men, true men, unselfish men.

Let us hope that the number of those who falter, who are disposed to stand back, to meekly surrender their rights, may be steadily on the decrease; and that the number of those who dare, who are resolved to go forward, to stand firmly for the right, may go on steadily increasing, until there shall not be left one lukewarm, indifferent, half-hearted, non-selfrespecting member of the race; until all shall be aroused, and shall be equally interested in a cause that ought to be dearer to us than life itself.

Let us be men; and let us stand up for our rights as men, and as American citizens.

"Be strong!
It matters not how deep entrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day, how long.
Faint not, Fight on! To-morrow comes the song."