WHEN M'KINLEY DOTH SPEAK

Will the Aggrieved Afro-Americans Forgive Sins of the Past Because of Mere words.

What is to Follow the Presidents Public Condemnation of Lynching—if Talk Brings Absolution. Cleveland's Manly Sentiments Should Redeem the Democracy. Government Warmly Arraigned for Failure to Protect Its Own Citizens. The Negro Putting on His Armor. Plain Speech from a Brilliant Western Attorney.

St. Paul, Minn., Special—All e agreed that the present administration and chief executive of the nation have failed signally to discharge its duty toward the Negro citizens, and many loud, deep, profound, and we trust, earnest, have been the protests entered by our people throughout the land against such failure, while all the time supporters and apologists for the President and the administration have been urging what to them seemed was sufficient excuse for this failure.

With practical unanmity it is also agreed that the silence steadily maintained by the President in the face of all the outrages committed upon the Negro citizen of our nation is an outrage, or at least all agree that he should have at least spoken and expressed what must be the highest conscientious sentiment of the country condemning such attrocities.

The colored people of Massachusetts very pointedly call the President to task for his silence in their open letter to him, calling attention to the heinousness of the many lynchings in Georgia and the Carolinas. It asked "Did you break this shameful silence, of shameful months with so much as a whisper of a whisper against the deep damnation of such defiance of all law, human and divine, such revulsions of men into beasts, and relapses of communities into barbarism in the various centers of the republic, and amid the temple of American liberty itself?"

[Page 9, Open letter President McKinley by C. P. of M.]

Again comes the pecial counsellors for the administration and the President, and urge, explain, and excuse again, and insist with seeming full soul earnestness, that "the President's heart is in the right place, and he will yet prove himself worthy of the trust and show himself the friend, nay, more, our own stalwart champion, and with much eclat and confidence, it is urged we have but to turn to the President's inaugural address, and there we will find where Mr McKinley stands. Read it, they say, and thou wilt drink of the stream of pure water, that will refresh thee and restore thy buoyancy and make again strong thy faith, even as strong as ours be, notwithstanding that we have a monthly draught of political pap that makes and keeps our faith strengthened. Read again his words at his inauguration, and tell me how canst thou doubt, even in the least."

The President will speak again we are told. Yes he will, and how thankful we are that the days are so few when he will speak, when throughout our loved land, we will read other words of his. Words spoken in manly manner with splendid diction, formed into sentences that will tempt many to commit them to memory, and treasure them as we treasure words that we heard in the long ago, like the treasured words our mother spoke when she held us on her knees; but what then when he has spoken? Will we for the simple speaking, forgive all; forget all.

The writer recalls the former speaking of McKinley, and was told of a man who upon going into his house out of the cold, mush depressed with the many cares of other people's troubles, when his wife sprang upon a chair, and demanded three hearty cheers for President McKinley. "Cheers for what?" he asked, "Listen, here, here, here!" she said, as she read from a newspaper she held in her hands, 'With hands uplifted to heaven and in a clear, full meaning voice and expression the President said, 'the constituted authorities must be cheerfully and vigorously upheld. Lynchings must not be tolerated in a great and civilized country like the United States; courts, not mobs, must execute the penalties of the law, the preservation of public order, the right of discussion, the integrity of courts, and the orderly administration of justice must continue forever the rock of safety upon which government securely rests.'"

"Ah well, we had better not rejoice too much just yet" said the man of cares. "Let us wait and see just how much the Preiident will do to enforce his declaration, how far he will go to bring about that which he insists must be."

The man of cares is waiting yet and so are all of us. Now then, can we expect else but to wait on again after he has spoken this second time.

It will be answered, there was nothing the President could have done. He has no authority to interfere in matters that are the concern of the state, such as the protection of life, and the preservation of "the peace of the people," and so, since he can be charged with no act of omission, except that he was silent, we are not justified in turning against him, and in turning against him, turn against our best friends. Wrong! Suppose we grant it true, though I do not, that Mr. McKinley's attorney general was, and is, right in saying that "the case of Hose has no federal aspect." Is this true of the Baker case? Will any of the eminent gentlemen of the counsel for the defenee urge that there was no power in the President to have acted in the Baker case, and furnish federal protection to him. If there be and was such power, then the President is chargeable with a failing and neglect to perform a duty by law imposed upon him, and such failure and neglect is nothing short of a crime. That was a single case we are told, and being the first, he is not chargeable to any great extent Wrong again! Verily, the Scriptures do teach, "He that is guilty of the least, is guilty of the whole." Remembering this will we let bygones be bygones, simply because he speaks?

The President will speak, and the President will recommend, but why will he. He has been forced—yes against his will, forced to speak. He sees now as he never saw before that the Negro has begun to move in his own interest. The Negro has discovered by profoundly conferring together first in Washington in December, 1893, and again in Chicago in August last, discovered the power he has within himself to right his wrong. He has heard how Prof. Booker T. Washington has asked "Is it not worth our while to consider the question of a division of our vote." He has heard His Grace, Bishop Alexander Walters say, and how his words were repeated throughout the land "The time has come when we must divide our vote." He has become recollective and remembers now Benjamin Harrison was bolted and defeated, because he was false to the trust the Negro reposed in him. And because he will recommend that appropriate legislation be passed by the forth coming Congress making lynching a crime, shall we give him full absolution without attaching any penance? Shame, shame upon us if we do!

Our own Edward E. Brown of Boston has taken the initiative, Congressman White—noble representative of a loyal and noble people, stands ready to present the measure. This Mr. McKinley should have done. All things are now made ready for Congressional action. He who speaks now but becomes one of a great and mighty chorus. 'Tis he who leads when others halt, when there are none ady ollow, that is due great praise. He who joins in when all have started, but takes the place of an humble follower.

Must we now pen up all our indignation, silence every voice in protest, withdraw every demand, cancel every claim, and be content because Mr. McKinley speaks, or mus he still answer for the wrongs chargeable to him? In a word shall we support him for reelection?

Four months ago you would not have gotten up a torch light procession of Negro youngsters to "whoop 'em up for McKinley." Ah, then Negroes were thoroughly aroused. They were saying, "Had we but have known him in November 1896 as we do now, he would not have had ou vote." How much better will he be after December the 4th than he now is?

"Divide!" says His Grace Bishop Walters. "No, divide never," is choed back by press, pulpit and pen. Divide and you go to your worst enemies, they say. Are our friends to be judged alone by what they say? Then let me ask you hear again these words, and by the same judgment you judge Mr. McKinley and his party, judge the party to which belong the the man who uttered this:

"In the administration of a government pledged to do equal and exact justice to all men, there should be no pretext for anxiety touching the protection of the freedmen in their rights or their security in the enjoyment of their privileges under the constitution and its amendments. All discussion as to their fitness for the place accorded to them as American citizens is idle and unprofitable, except as it suggests the necessity for their improvement. The fact they are citizens entitles them to all the rights due to that relation and charges them with all its duties, obligations and responsibilities."—First innaugural address of Grover Cleveland. Messages and papers of the Presidents vol. 8, page 302

"Braver words" said our dear old man, Frederick Douglass, "have never been said." Douglass spoke a truth then. It is none the less a truth now; so again I urge if the republican party and Mr. McKinley is to receive absolution for speaking brave words, the democratic party is entitled to the same kind of sauce.

Verily of a truth, I venture to say, if we will now become fully reconciled to the administration and give it our support, to the end that we have four more years of McKinley and the policy and things for which he stands and represents, we will and truly deserve the position we will then find ourselves in—cast overboard by the republican party without a friend to throw us a "life line." Let us then manly face the position, truthfully, and on our consciences answer: What when he speaks? Will we then be fully satisfied?

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