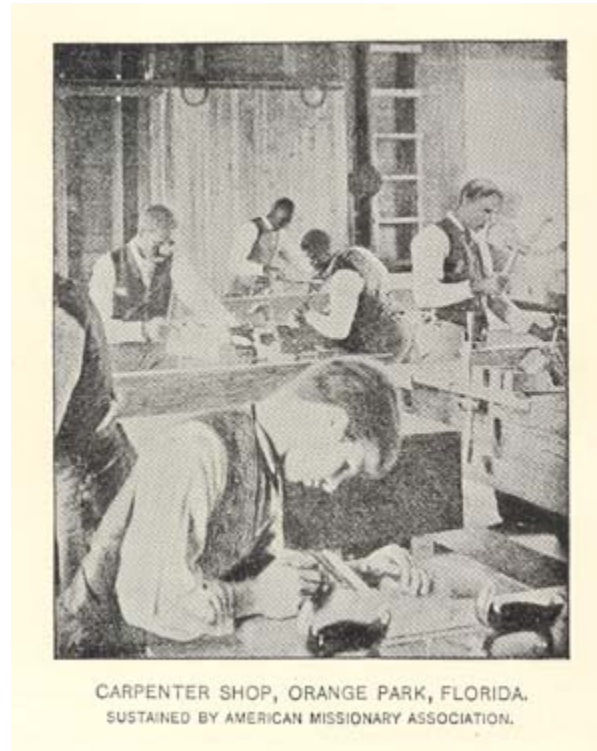


CHAPTER VII.

THE BEGINNING OF BETTER DAYS, AND OF PROGRESS.



CARPENTER SHOP, ORANGE PARK, FLORIDA.
SUSTAINED BY AMERICAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION.

Failing to keep the Negro in the bondage of slavery, the slave party of the South might have known, had they not been blinded and rendered incapable of knowing by cruelty and inhumanity, that this reign of terror and this Ku Klux Klan could not continue, and that, sooner or later, coloured men must at least be free to labour for whomsoever would employ them, and to work out their own salvation as best they might. Gradually, their opposition notwithstanding, the enactments of the reign of terror period were repealed, and the Negro found himself at liberty to listen to a coloured preacher, have his own school, build his own church, deposit money in a bank, own land, and be elected to state office; that is, he was free to have and do these things; but, having no resources, he found it more difficult to use to his advantage these new privileges than a bird finds the building of her nest.

At first, immediately after the war, he gave himself to pleasure as he understood it. For nearly two hundred and fifty years he had laboured in ignorance and sorrow, and had known scarcely anything of enjoyment, probably nothing other than that afforded by his own musical faculty and undying happiness of spirit; now he was free he would take a holiday, and see what pleasure meant. It was to thousands of the race the pleasure of death, for which calamity no one could be blamed, neither the white man nor the Negro. His nature was, and is, the very essence of fun and frolic, and, owing entirely to ignorance of what

religion really required of him, he would join in singing and prayer of the noisiest character, talk excitedly of the Saviour and heaven, and immediately after worship steal a fat chicken and have a good supper, or fall into some other deplorable and damaging sin. In this hour of wild delight he made for the large cities, and paid the penalty. A plantation Negro could live in the country and be healthy, but cities were death to him; and, during the first years of liberty large numbers of coloured men died prematurely. By this abandonment to pleasure, and by its untoward results, the friends who for years had fought his battle were alarmed; but in a short time he settled down to steady labour and to the working out of his own salvation.

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The Freedmen's Bureau, which was instituted by Abraham Lincoln's government, was appointed to supervise and manage all abandoned lands, and control all freed men and refugees from rebel states; through the Secretary of War to issue provisions, fuel and clothing to destitute freedmen and refugees; and, by the commissioner, under the direction of the president, to grant the use of abandoned tracts of land to loyal freedmen and refugees. This Bureau was established in the opportune moment, and was of the utmost use to the four millions of freed Negroes; indeed without it both they and the country would have suffered in many ways.

In 1870, Mayor O. O. Howard, Commissioner of the Bureau, five years after his appointment, presented his first report, which to this day retains the interest that attached to it when issued. In five years 4,239 schools were established, 9,307 teachers employed, 247,333 pupils instructed; also 74 high and normal schools, which had 8,147 students; also 61 industrial schools, with 1,750 students. Of these schools the emancipated slaves themselves sustained 1,324, owned 592 school buildings, and raised two hundred thousand dollars of the total sum which was expended during the term of five years. It was a magnificent report the commissioner presented, which reflected upon the Negro most creditably.

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If anything could have proved to Southern slave-owners that the man they had bought and sold as a thing was capable of attaining and enjoying intellectual, as well as physical, life, the splendid energy and magnificent results of those five years, which were put forth and accomplished by men and women from whose limbs shackles had only just been struck, would have convinced them, and the whole subsequent history of Negro life in the South would have been different. Had they recognized their defeat good-naturedly, made proper terms with their former slaves, helped the Federal government to grapple with the problem of emancipation, assisted heartily all school building and educational efforts, and accorded without contest and bloodshed the freed people to civic rights, this report would end here with tables of statistics, showing the growth and development of the Negro race. But they were not convinced; the majority of them retained, and yet retain, their old opinions, and despised the black man.

In the South there are two parties to-day; one resolved to help the Negro, the other to oppress him; which are continuations of the parties of thirty years ago. Says one party: "We may take this stand: The Negroes are ignorant, are mendacious, are lazy, are dishonest, are licentious, and are therefore utterly unworthy of social and political

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equality. Granted, and granted to the fullest extent; but the more degraded, the world will say, the greater obligation resting upon us to rescue them from their blighted and brutalized condition. . . . They are with us to remain and they are citizens, and the world will make it its business to see that they are not arbitrarily kept in their present condition. We can no more defend our attitude toward the Negro, than

could the Algerian Corsairs defend their attitude to the Christian world." "How shall these alien races dwell in safety side by side, each free and unhampered in the enjoyment of life and liberty and in the pursuit of its happiness? They are the descendants of one father and the redeemed children of one God, the citizens of one nation, neighbours with common interests, and yet are separated by the results of centuries of development, by inherited traditions, by the spirit of caste and by the recollection of wrongs done and suffered. How shall the rights of all be duly guarded? How shall the lower race be lifted up to higher stages of human development? I answer, by the personal endeavours of individuals of the higher race. How and where shall we begin? I answer, by building firm and stable the conviction that the Negro is a man and a citizen; that the conditions of our life are all changed; that old things are passed away, and that the new things which are come to

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us demand, with an authority which may not be gainsaid, the effort of mind and heart and hand for the uplifting of the Negro." This is the Christian party, which stands for progress in its truest sense. They know that ignorance in any man, be he black or white, is dangerous, and that it is charged with peril to public life when it abides in millions of men; and, remembering the injunctions of the Saviour, they seek to help the untaught of every colour in their effort to gain knowledge. In the dead years they regretted the lawlessness of their beloved South, and do so to-day, and would, were it in their power, change the hearts of all those citizens who oppose them and persecute the Negro. It has been a hard, sorrowful time for this Christian party during the last fifty years; but they possess the promise of God, and will yet make it impossible for any outrage to be committed, such as made the past infamous and disgrace the present. In the spirit of the Saviour they protest against violence, declare the brotherhood of man, and preach salvation, and will surely have success.

The other party says: "The white men of the South and the Negroes learned to live together in peace while the Negro was in slavery. They can continue to live together so long as the latter is content to remain in subjection, so long as he recognizes the white as the master race. Under

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no other conditions is he fit to live in a civilized country. . . . His proper place is that of the white man's servant in a white man's country. The white man and the Negro cannot live together in peace under existing conditions. The white man must rule, the Negro must submit. This is a white man's country, a white man's government, a white man's civilization." "A little education is all the Negro needs. The excess has proved his ruin. Let him learn the rudiments, to read and to write and to cipher, and be made to mix that knowledge with some useful labour. Too much education and too little work are the prime cause of the growing antipathy. With the whites there are some reasons for a higher education, for the professions and the trades are open to them, but all these are closed to the Negro." "An attempt to develop the Negro skull into that of the Caucasian is just as idle, not to say absurd and wicked, as would be the educating of apes, with a view of developing their skull with those of human beings. All attempts to force upon them the education and civilization of the white man are not only unphilosophic but absurd and detrimental. In a zoological sense they belong to the genus homo, but the mode of their creation concludes them only in the highest order of animals, and subjects them to the dominion of the Adamite." This is the anti-Negro, anti-Christian, party, which

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stands for oppression and retrogression. Dominion, supremacy and authority for the white man are their watch-words. The Negro is not fit to live in civilized society; he must submit to the white man; God has ordained it that he labour under the white man's rule; "a little education is all the Negro needs." Can the

reader realize that these awful statements are being made to-day? It is almost nineteen hundred years since Jesus Christ lived among men, and revealed the fatherhood of God and taught the brotherhood of men, and in all the years servants of His have preached His gospel; yet here are men in the South of the United States who refuse even to be human in conduct, who persecute and lynch to death a brother-man. To-day, let this be remembered, they will not allow a coloured man to enter their churches, nor permit him to ride in the same railroad car with them, and in some States of the South a white man and a coloured woman can not marry. Hotels are closed against coloured men of every station in life; proprietors dare not admit them. Even at the last republican convention, held at St. Louis, which nominated Mr. McKinley for the presidency, at which many coloured men attended as delegates, there was serious trouble about lodging them. In fact they had no lodging for a time, and at last special provision had to be made for them. Of this disgraceful episode one

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paper remarked, "foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but coloured delegates have not a lodging." It is difficult to write calmly of such a state of society, and would be impossible if the Christian party did not exist. It is the old sin of the past, inherited by a generation of men not wise enough to see its wickedness. But their opposition is doomed to fail even as their fathers' effort to retain slavery failed; their unholy determination not to admit the Negro into civilization notwithstanding, the beginning of better days is here and progress is being made. Right must prevail; God's will shall be done; righteousness will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea; this anti-Christian party is doomed to final defeat.

Yes; better days have begun and progress is being made, which the following statistics abundantly prove. They are the statistics of 1890, which we give as those of 1896, that any exaggeration may be discounted. In the matter of wealth the Negro has made great progress, and not a little in the professions and literature. Let the figures tell the tale. First, his wealth in business and property.

In New York	\$17,400,756
Louisiana	18,100,528
South Carolina	12,500,000
Pennsylvania	15,300,648

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Texas	18,010,545
Mississippi	13,400,213
Georgia	10,415,330
North Carolina	11,010,652
Alabama	9,200,125
Florida	7,900,040
Massachusetts	9,004,122

and in the other states proportionately. It is computed that two hundred and sixty-three million dollars worth of property is held to-day in the United States by the Negro race. How dare the anti-Christian party say that all Negroes are lazy? Lazy people do not accumulate wealth. Many Negroes are no doubt lazy, but in the way it is put it is a falsehood told to answer a base purpose. But it is true that this race which to-day possesses so much property owned not one cent thirty years ago. Then, Negro men and women toiled for the white man, for which they received food, not much clothing, and no education. The world cannot but admit that great energy must have been exercised for so much to be accomplished in so short a time.

We find the Negro has invented many things of utility, and give the names of a few of them as proof of mental development.

A Corn-stalk Harvester, Wm. Murray, Virginia.

A Locomotive Smoke-stack, L. Bell, Washington.

A Fire Extinguisher, T. J. Martin, Michigan.

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A Cotton Cultivator, E. H. Sutton, N. Carolina.

A Joiner's Clamp, D. A. Fisher, Jr., Washington.

A Rotary Engine, B. H. Taylor, Mississippi.

Apparatus for Transmission of Messages by Electricity, G. T. Woods, Ohio, and scores of other inventions. Mr. Woods' invention was assigned to the American Bell Telephone Company, Boston. The anti-Negro party say he must learn the rudiments of education, to read, cipher, and write, and then do manual labour. It is true that the majority of all races of men must do manual labour, and find good therein, also the will of God; but it is a denial of divine providence to say the Negro can not enter higher fields of human effort. His inventions prove him intelligent, as his accumulated property establishes his industry.

In literature he has done more than enough to claim a place among men devoted to letters. We do not say that the literary Negro can be ranked with men of the most brilliant attainments, neither do we think it; but when we find the schools of Ohio using a Greek Grammar for beginners, written by W. S. Scarborough, a coloured man, of Wilberforce, Ohio, we can and do say that the natural incapacity theory is destroyed. Since 1865 over one hundred books have been written by Negroes, not a few of which may be found in American Public Libraries. Even London received Phillis Wheatley,

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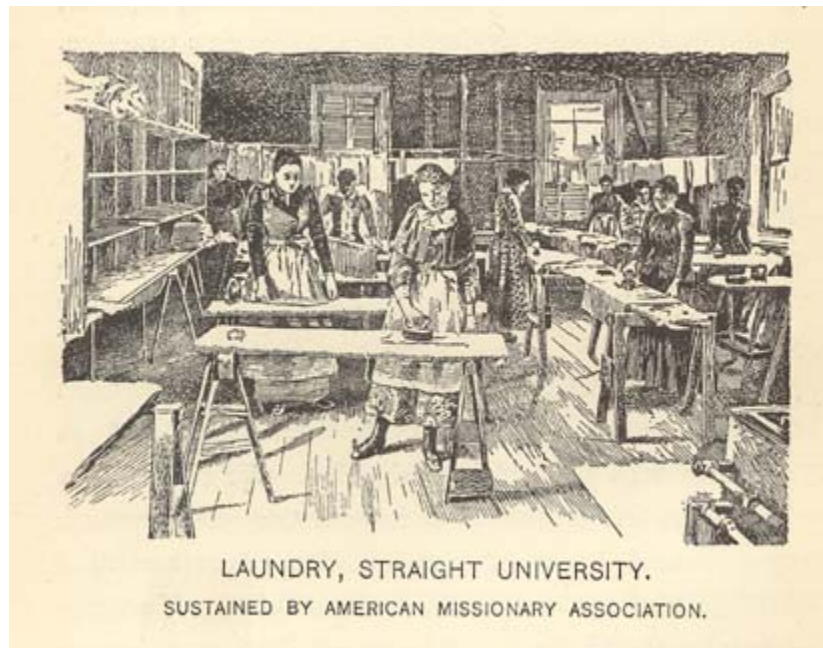
a young black girl, of Boston, and was astonished by her sweet poetry, in or about 1792. This Phillis Wheatley, whose history is most interesting of whom we shall take notice in another chapter, was an imported slave, and she was deeply beloved by her master, John Wheatley, and by his wife. So pure and simple and refined were the poems she wrote, that many white men doubted their authorship; but her master and certain ministers of Boston proved that she *was* the author. The mental incapacity theory is doomed, and the men who preach it are certain of confusion. If the Negro were little better than an ape, as many have asserted, he would not write Greek Grammars, articles for Harper's, The Atlantic Monthly, The North American Review, and other papers and journals, neither would Negro girls compose sweet and charming poetry. The possibilities of a race of men are never gauged by the work and conditions of its *lowest* members, but by those of its *highest* members, which is a just method, and all we ask is that it be applied to the Negro race. The result will be satisfactory.

In the public schools of the United States 23,866 Negro teachers are employed, and there are 1,460,000 pupils receiving education in the free schools. In the medical profession not less than five hundred properly graduated Negro doctors are at work, most of whom are successful. In the pulpit thousands

of coloured preachers work successfully, many of whom have received two or three year's education, and some have graduated in the ordinary manner from theological institutions. In the realm of law about three hundred Negroes have, if not distinguished themselves, succeeded in winning a place, and do enjoy, varying in degree, extensive practice. One is a circuit court commissioner, several are judges, many are clerks of courts, and a few are city attorneys. The value of church property owned by Negroes is not less than \$22,000,000, and church members number about 2,600,000. This is progress, we say, for which the Negro's friends ought to be thankful.

A few centuries ago the coloured man was a Pagan, knew nothing of righteousness, and in America was pushed into slavery. He came out a free man, left behind him forever the chains which once bound his wrists, and had a place accorded him in the national life of the States. He came out a free man, but was ignorant, had many gross faults, yet knew somewhat of God and of Jesus Christ. A higher life than his had touched him, which he did not understand, yet cherished it. It did not touch him in vain; in his heart forthwith sprang up a great yearning for knowledge. The day on which the first school for freedmen was opened in September, 1861, under the auspices of

the American Missionary Society, at Hampton, Virginia, three hundred and fifty scholars were enrolled, and in the evening of the same day three hundred more were added. The numbers continued to increase until the enrollment of the day school was 1,200, and the night sessions gathered 800 more,



LAUNDRY, STRAIGHT UNIVERSITY.
SUSTAINED BY AMERICAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION.

making a total for this single school of 2,000 pupils daily. Many of them were adults, who came after the fatigue of a hard day's labour, that they might gather the rudiments of knowledge. That was in 1861, and

to-day there are 1,460 coloured children in public schools. At Tougaloo University, also at Tuskegee and Hampton Normal, industrial training

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is a great feature of the course of education. Boys are instructed in agriculture, horticulture, harness-making, cabinet-making, wood-carving, printing, typesetting, bookbinding, shoemaking, and other trades, and girls in housekeeping, cooking, laundrywork, dressmaking, millinery, nursing and hygiene, all which reminds one of the saying of a Southern educator: "The Negro is coming to have what the white man wants, and this is sure to secure to him his safety and his rights." From that day in 1861 until now a great struggle upward has been made, and in presence of so many evidences of success it is safe to say that better days are with us in which progress is being surely made.

Writing in the name of the American Missionary Association on "The Progress of the Negro," Rev. Geo. W. Moore, of Tennessee, field missionary, says:--

"Thirty years have wrought mighty changes for the South, but the greatest wonder is the progress of the Negro. The freedom of the Negro gave him a new era, and opened doors of opportunity for his material intellectual and spiritual advancement. The distance between the slave and the freeman is world-wide. His freedom has improved his condition and increased the wealth and prosperity of the South. Thirty years is a short period in the life of a race, and yet it is sufficient to note its progress.

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The free Negro has been of greater advantage to the South, and has done more for its development than at any time during his slave life. This is so patent that we are safe in asserting that the prosperity of the South is largely dependent upon the elevation of the Negro. He comprises one-third of its population and is a large factor in its development and progress.

His material property enriches it to the degree of the increase. His skill as a laborer is to her advantage, for he is the laborer of the South. His education decreases the illiteracy and increases the intelligence of the South. His religious and moral advancement lifts from the South a weight of superstition and vice. The recognition of his manhood rights develops his selfhood and makes him a better man and a more loyal citizen. Elevate him and you lift up the South, degrade him and you pull down our fair land. The Negro has made rapid progress in spite of his limitations. He has come up from the depths of slavery, poverty, ignorance, superstition and degradation to a freedman, taxpayer, wage-earner, a degree of intelligence and a more enlightened view of Christianity and morality, and to be a citizen of a great country. The pen of Lincoln and the sword of Grant helped to make this possible, but the work of Christian education and an enlightened Christianity, which came to us by

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Northern philanthropy, through the schools and churches of the American Missionary Association and kindred organizations, have done more for our uplifting and advancement than any other influence. The work of educating and uplifting the Negro is the brightest page in Southern history. This is indeed the silver lining of our dark cloud. The heroic men and noble women of this grander Army of the Republic, commissioned by the American Missionary Association, proclaimed liberty to the mind and soul as well as freedom to the body of the Negro. Some of them have served for nearly a quarter of a century in the work of the education, Christianization and uplifting of the Negro.

Before referring more fully to the educational advancement of the Negro let us briefly consider his material progress. Coming out of slavery with nothing and meeting with difficulties which have confronted him at every step of the way, his material progress has been remarkable. It is estimated that the Negro pays taxes on over two hundred and seventy-five million dollars' worth of property, besides personal property, churches, schools, etc.

They are entering into the real estate and insurance business. I could give numerous examples of colored men who are successfully conducting dye and steam cleaning works, drug stores, undertaking establishments, mercantile business and all kinds of

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work. The following is a partial list of employment of Negroes in Nashville, Tenn.: teachers, ministers, lawyers, physicians, dentists, merchants, all kinds of mechanics, owners of livery stables, undertakers, contractors, firemen, mail carriers, coachmen and teamsters owning their own teams, laborers of all kinds, etc.

But we are still a poor people and must greatly improve our condition materially. In order that the Negro may have better homes and improve his condition materially he should receive better wages for his labor. He is the laborer of the South on the farm, in the workshop, domestic life, and is branching out into professional life. He is the most patient and untiring worker in the South.

What is to be done to better the Negro's condition as a wage earner? He cannot strike for higher wages with safety. The Negro can refuse to work for low wages, but he has no redress or means of appeal for higher wages only as the master-class may choose to increase his pay.

The most hopeful sign of the progress of the South is the education of the Negro. What a field of endeavor among the eight millions of our people. It is estimated that twenty-five thousand Negro teachers are teaching over a million and a half of our children in the public schools of the South. About fifteen thousand of these are trained teachers,

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most of whom have been trained in the schools of the American Missionary Association. Over four million colored people have learned to read since the war. The schools of the American Missionary Association are training teachers and leaders for our people in the South. Our schools are well located and classified to meet the wants of the people; some are in our large centers of population like Nashville, New Orleans and Charleston, and others are in country places like McIntosh, Ga., and Cotton Valley, Ala. At Fisk we have a college, normal department and departments of music, theology and industrial training. At Talladega and Tougaloo in the Black Belt of Alabama and Mississippi we have large farms and workshops in addition to the college and normal training; useful industries are taught in all of our Association schools

The religious progress of the Negro has not been as rapid and as great as his material and educational progress. He brought with him from slavery an inheritance of superstition that has been hard to overcome; then, too, the masses of the people have had ignorant and, in many cases, corrupt men as ministers. And yet there has been progress in his religious life, work and worship. This progress has been largely due to the stimulating effect of our Congregational churches in the South, and of the students who have gone out from our American

Missionary Association schools. This progress may be seen in the improved character of their churches and meeting-houses, better men of intelligence and piety as preachers, and improved methods of work. The great need of the colored people is evangelization, ingathering and uplifting. This we are doing in their behalf. We recognize the fact that we have duties to perform as well as rights to maintain; that we are to seize our opportunities rather than emphasize our grievances; yet the real progress of the Negro cannot be measured without considering his advancement in manhood and selfhood. Is his manhood respected, does he receive his rights before the law, is caste prejudice waning? What is his status as a man and a citizen? These are vital questions which affect his destiny.

Put a premium on character, right living and justice. Make it possible for me to say to my son: 'My boy, you are an American; love your country, honor her laws, fight her battles and preserve her free institutions. Be noble and true and good and have a character void of offense, and good people of every race and of every clime will love and respect you and give you every right to which your worth entitles you.' I would rather inspire my son with such sentiments than that he should hold the highest position in the land. It is our hope that some day we can truthfully set such a goal before every boy

and girl of every race in our broad land; that the white boys and girls of Florida and the black boys and girls of South Carolina may alike have an opportunity to rise."

Such testimony from one whose life is devoted to the work of Christianity in "*Darkest America*," as he calls it, can scarcely be over-estimated, it is so valuable; but the reader must not think that persecution is ended. The anti-Negro party is very much alive and fiercely active, They do *not* respect the Negro's manhood; refuse to accord him equal rights before the law; *cherish* caste prejudice; *will not recognize* the progress which has been made. In the Black Belt of the South, back on the plantations, conditions of life for thousands of Negroes are little better than they were thirty years ago, perhaps for many they are worse, and in hundreds of Southern cities the coloured man--not to mention coloured women, who are subjected to every kind of insult--is under the utmost obligation to "keep his place" or take the consequences. Occasionally he forgets to keep what is called his place, and forthwith suffers for it; and sometimes mad crowds seize him for no offence, neither real nor imagined, and ill-treat him, and often hang perfectly innocent men and riddle their bodies with shot. However, better days are with the Negro, and will continue with him. It is a pleasure to find so much of good

among so much that is bad, and though lynchings yet are done, the story of which will be told in another chapter, and though the anti-Negro party oppose every step forward and upward, the Negro's star of progress has risen, never more to set.

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/stanford/stanford.html>

P. Thomas Stanford, *The Tragedy of the Negro in America: A Condensed History of the Enslavement, Sufferings, Emancipation, Present Condition and Progress of the Negro Race in the United States of America*, "The Beginning of Better Days, and of Progress," 109-130. (1897)