

Mayor Dunne has offered it better conditions than will ever come its way again if it lets this opportunity slip by. The alderman who should propose or vote for a term franchise now would thereby place himself at the bar of public opinion in Chicago as a confessed grafter. In some business circles he might be applauded for it, but in no circles would the illicit character of his relation to the subject be doubted.

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CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS AND THE AMERICAN NEGRO.

In telling in the *Century* for May of a visit to the Soudan, Mr. Charles Francis Adams announces an opinion regarding the American Negro which has excited especial attention because it is in the nature of a recantation. Mr. Adams had been classed as a humanitarian, believing in the equality of human rights regardless of race, and he admits a considerable indulgence in this brotherly theory in the past; but since his visit to Omdurman he has yielded to ethnological "science," and sneers at such philanthropical theories as rot—"all 'rot.'"

Naturally enough, Mr. Adams's recantation is exploited with much satisfaction in every quarter, North as well as South, where the "scientific" theory of the "white man's burden" prevails. Consequently the American Negro is again forced to his defense on the question of equal rights before the law in the land of his nativity,—and this time by an unexpected prosecutor.

It is no light thing under any circumstances to bring even an individual to the bar of judgment on a question involving so much of all that goes to make human life human. But when a whole race is indiscriminately attacked on the issue of equal legal rights, and the circumstances are as they are in this country and the source of attack is such as this, it is too little to say that the attack should not have been lightly made. Unless Mr. Adams justifies his conclusion that the American Negro is inherently inferior and dependent, a subject for indefinite paternalism instead of a brother man and fellow citizen entitled to equal legal rights, he is guilty, in view of the baffling circumstances against which so many American Negroes are at this time bravely, patiently and successfully struggling, of an act of unpardonable cruelty.

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In considering the basis of truth for Mr. Adams's recantation, the thoughtful reader will wonder that Mr. Adams should have gone to Om-

durman for his reasons for degrading American Negroes like Mr. Washington, Prof. Du Bois, Prof. Miller, Dr. Hall, and thousands upon thousands of others who differ from these only in being less distinguished in reputation. There is some force in what Southern newspapers say in welcoming this recantation, that Mr. Adams need not have postponed revising his views until he went to Omdurman, for he could have found his ethnological material in the Southern States of his own country. It has at least this much of force, that if the American Negro is in truth inherently unfit for equal rights before the law, the proof of it could have been found nearer home than Omdurman, and longer ago by a man of Mr. Adams's opportunities. Indeed, one might reasonably suppose that the human attributes of the American Negro could be studied to much better advantage among the millions of that race in this country than in the streets of Omdurman, or even in the whole expanse of Africa. Mr. Adams's "scientific" method would, it would seem, take him to a Russian village to make comprehensive and conclusive ethnological studies of the Jewish bankers of Wall street.

But he explains that the humanitarian scales fell from his eyes at Omdurman because it was there that in visiting "the black man in his own house," the place of the highest point of development of any African race, he found no evidence whatever of any inherent power of development. The Negro "in his own house" has never invented anything, says Mr. Adams; and from this negation he infers that the development of Negroes in a white man's environment is not from inherent power but from association with white men. Consequently he concludes that the Negro is racially and therefore permanently inferior to the white man, and that "contact with the white man is necessary to keep him from retrogression." It is upon this conclusion that his recantation rests. We ought to have dealt with the American Negro, he now confesses, "not as a political equal," but as "a ward and dependent, firmly but in a spirit of kindness and absolute justice." Recognizing the impossibility of such a policy, however, both at the time of emancipation and ever since, even now, Mr. Adams does not propose it as a policy; but he does adopt it as a theory, and he goes so far as cautiously to suggest the possibility of its being "slowly and tentatively approximated" in practice.

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Observe how utterly flimsy is Mr. Adams's reason for his proposed degradation of millions of

his own countrymen. The natives of the country of their origin never invented anything!

And pray what did Mr. Adams himself ever invent? He could reply, of course, that he is not considering individuals but a race. But races are composed of individuals, and it is individuals indiscriminately that he proposes to degrade. If invention be the test of inherent power of development in a race, it is the test in individuals. If non-inventive races will deteriorate out of contact with an inventive race, then non-inventive individuals will deteriorate out of contact with inventive individuals. If Negroes are inferior because they don't invent, then Mr. Adams is inferior because he doesn't invent.

Right here is the nub of the whole question as Mr. Adams presents it. Advanced forms of invention do not spring from inherent race powers as Mr. Adams infers. They result from the utilization of accumulated knowledge by individuals who acquire that knowledge from predecessors or associates. This is not a matter of race power. All men of all races are inherently inventive. The inventive faculty is what distinguishes man from the animal. And notwithstanding that Mr. Adams says the Negroes of Africa do not invent, they do invent. In the direction and up to the limit of their desires and their accumulated knowledge they are as inventive as other races. Mr. Adams himself concedes enough for this inference, for he acknowledges their powers of elementary invention—language equal to their uses, and weapons adequate to cope with their accustomed enemies.

Excite their desires in any direction, and open the doors to the reservoir of accumulated knowledge, and the Negro will invent in that direction; deaden the desire in the white man and close the reservoir to him, and he too will invent only in the most elementary way. If the desires of the African Negro do not awaken to the civilization of the white man, the reason is plain enough without resorting to Mr. Adams's assumption that the Negroes are inherently inferior. We have only to ask how the white man's civilization has come to them, and in our answer we have the reason.

That shrinking from innovations, especially those from foreign sources, is a trait of human nature and not of any particular race nature, we have abundant evidence. Add to this universal repugnance to innovation, the repugnant methods by which the desires and the knowledge of the white man have been thrust at the black man "in ~~the~~ Africa, and we get an ample

explanation of the African Negro's repulsion to the white man's civilization.

But conditions with the American Negro are wholly different. The circumstances are present here to excite in him those desires for knowledge and its uses that stimulate inherent powers of invention and make them effective. And such is the result. The American Negro's ambition to excel in the civilized arts and sciences, his thirst for the knowledge necessary to excellence, his industry and patience and aptitude in acquiring it, and his skill in using it, are pronounced traits of his character.

Mr. Adams has observed that this is true of Negro children, and he revives the old notion that it is true of Negroes only in childhood. Quoting another writer without criticism he implies that at the end of childhood, the mental expansion of the American Negro ceases. But this notion is not true. Over and over again it has been disproved; and of all men Mr. Adams is one of the last to be fairly excused for not knowing it. Suppose, however, that it had not been disproved, or suppose it were observable in a number of cases so vast as to make the others seem like exceptions. Yet the true explanation would be much more obtrusive in open minds than the inferiority explanation which Mr. Adams adopts. If the Negro child who excels the white child of similar age does not expand in mind as his body grows, we need go no farther for a sufficient explanation than to the fact that at the age at which the white child begins to excel the Negro, the Negro has begun to learn that the door of opportunity which opens freely to white men is slammed in the face of black men. In these circumstances it is not merely Negro nature to give up in despair, it is human nature. Only the exceptional men of any race persist; and to this exceptional class the American Negro is contributing his quota.

What the American Negro needs in order to prevent his retrogression from the white man's civilization is not contact with the white man necessarily, but opportunity to acquire and utilize the accumulated knowledge of the white man's civilization. And that is precisely what the white man also needs. In this sense, and only in this sense, is the American Negro dependent upon the white race, a dependency which is shared with him by the American white man. Every individual, white or black, is as dependent as every other upon those who have gone before in the same civilization for accumulated knowledge, and upon one another for its acquisition and co-opera-

tive utilization. Discourage the acquisition of knowledge by red-haired persons, and close to them the door of opportunity for its utilization, and you would soon find bright-minded boys with red hair falling behind duller-minded boys with hair of another color. Close the doors of opportunity to any considerable proportion of the white race, and in a few generations you would have a thriftless, sodden and non-inventive class of whites, who would seem to any man of the "scientific" spirit for which Mr. Adams has dropped his humanitarianism, like a species without inherent powers of development.

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This recantation by Mr. Adams proceeds upon the theory of differences in human blood. It is a curious thing that your sticklers for the "scientific" method in ethnology are always so prone to neglect the very first demand that genuine science makes upon theorists whose hypotheses rest upon differences in racial blood, which is that they shall first prove the difference..

It has been written that all races were created of one blood, and this statement has withstood the assaults of scientific investigation. Though human blood has been scientifically distinguished from the blood of beasts, the blood of races is one blood, so far as science knows. Send the blood of a Negro and the blood of a white man to the ablest specialist and he cannot tell you which is the white man's and which the Negro's. It might make no difference if he could. The blood might be different and the men alike, or the men alike and the blood different. But those ethnological "scientists" who would measure legal differences in the rights of man by differences in racial blood, should first show that the racial differences in blood actually exist.

The truth about the blood-difference theory is that a sociological metaphor has been made to do duty for a physiological fact. We used to hear of "blue blood," and in such uses as to imply that individuals of the patrician class actually have a different hued blood from individuals of the plebeian class, and of course a superior blood. This sort of distinction is now generally understood in its application to persons of the same race as a mere metaphor; but as an excuse for justifying race distinctions it has come to be quite "scientific." Yet as with different classes of the same race, so with different races, the blood allusion is legitimate only as a metaphor.

Somewhat as individual life is maintained by the blood of the human body, so the life of a civilization is maintained by the blood of that civil-

ization. But the blood of a civilization, of a nation, or of a race, courses through no individual veins and arteries. It is not composed of physical corpuscles. Perhaps the thing that best answers to the metaphorical allusion is language; for it is by means of language that customs, institutions, habits of thought, standards of taste and of ethics, together with all the other characteristics of a civilization, are preserved, developed, and segregated from those of other civilizations. The wider the geographical area of a language, the wider the geographical extent of the civilization which that language vivifies. The easier the transition of human thought from that language to others, the better the assimilation of the civilizations they respectively represent. The more difficult this transition, the greater the tendency to divergence, whether the divergence be on different lines of progress or in the opposite directions of progression and retrogression.

In some such metaphorical use of the distinction all will doubtless agree that the blood of some nations and races is inferior to that of others. But this means no more essentially than that the manners, customs, moral standards and habits of thought of some national or race groups are inferior to the manners, customs, moral standards and habits of thought of others. It does not mean that the individual citizens of the inferior nations or the individual members of the inferior race groups are inherently incapable of participating in the advantages and contributing to the maintenance and promotion of the civilization of the superior nations or groups. Such participation and co-operation are entirely possible.

At any rate the burden rests upon those who dispute it, to make out their case with better proof than Mr. Adams advances as the reason for his retraction of a life long belief in the fundamental humanities. To prove inherent incapacity in civilized individuals whose ancestors belonged to groups having inferior customs, it is not enough to prove that these groups are primitive. It must be proved that those individuals are incompetent.

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In giving publicity to his carelessly conceived retrogression in thought and spirit with reference to a large body of his fellow men who are also his fellow countrymen, Mr. Adams has done a cruel wrong that he may not live long enough to repair. He has added the prestige of his family name, the power of his personal influence, and the force that always goes with recantation, to the obstacles which scores upon scores of thousands of Ameri-

can Negroes are struggling to overcome and which narrow-minded white men meanly put in their way.

That he should have added thus to the unnatural difficulties with which the American Negro has to contend, would have been above criticism had his reasons possessed genuinely scientific or logical value. The truth as one sees it should be told, when it is of great importance, even though the telling of it adds burdens to the burdened. But Mr. Adams gives no reasons that have not been worn threadbare in the service of the advocates of human slavery. His reasons have been discredited, moreover, in the progress of human freedom at every advance in the recognition of equality of human rights.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

SEATTLE.

Seattle, Wash., May 1.—Our mayor, Judge Moore, is "making good" in so able and so intelligent a way as to astonish his friends as well as completely to confound his enemies. Furthermore, his right conduct seems to spring from instinct—the gentlemanly instincts of a Southerner. It was the same when he was on the bench. The sordid things which politicians often stoop to, seem foreign to him. Do I make myself clear? It all seems to me more a matter of taste than of deep principle; but morality is three-fourths taste, somebody has said.

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First of all, he has quietly but determinedly kept out the slot machines, both money- and merchandise-paying. The cigar dealers raised a terrible outcry; they couldn't live! Very well, if a cigar store must be a gambling house in order to live, it would better die. Shaking dice is allowed, and some criticism has been made of the Mayor by the pro-slot machine people on this account; but he is not stampeded. The dear "law and order" people now want the saloons closed on Sunday, and the theaters. If this really comes to anything we shall try to have a counter movement on the theater question in the interest of wholesome Sunday amusement. A league of Christian Endeavorers, etc., are quite enthusiastic over the closing idea—all Republicans who never within my recollection have favored any such puritanism during the terms of Republican mayors.

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The Seattle Electric Company's free passes to city officials have received a complete airing, and the names of all beneficiaries have been published. Besides the elected city officials and deputies the list includes the members of boards which serve without pay—park, library, etc. Our charter provides that city officials accepting passes forfeit their offices, and furthermore that all their salary from the

time the pass was issued may be recovered by the city. The State constitution also provides that officials shall not receive passes nor railways give them. Our corporation counsel, Scott Colborne (Republican), in an absurd opinion declared the passes for officials which are provided for in the company's franchise to be compensation for the franchise; but Mayor Moore declined to entertain the idea that the Electric Company's franchise superseded the city charter and the State constitution, and the town smiled.

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Municipal ownership has received an impetus we did not anticipate. In regrading and paving certain streets on which there are no traction lines, hills are being taken down, and the question of franchise is being pushed by the Seattle Electric Company. Both parties having declared for the submission of the question of municipal ownership, the Mayor thinks the city should build lines on these streets pending an election, but the Corporation Counsel says it cannot be done without a vote. The Mayor wanted to borrow from the general fund, and finally asks the Counsel if the city may pave with brick but not with steel. As the matter is "framing up" it looks as if municipal ownership might be submitted to vote within six months. Eight of the fifteen councilmen have signified their willingness to submit it.

Mr. George Cotterell, a civil engineer, who has done more for our city's right development than any other single individual, has drafted a system of railways which would reach portions of the city not now served and at the same time be readily extensible into a competing line.

The power of recall plays a substantial part in all this municipal ownership agitation.

ADELA M. PARKER.

NEWS NARRATIVE

To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Wednesday, May 9.

President Roosevelt and the Standard Oil Trust.

President Roosevelt transmitted to Congress on the 3d, the report of James R. Garfield as commissioner of the Bureau of Corporations in the Department of Commerce and Labor, on the subject of transportation and freight rates in connection with the oil industry.

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In his message the President describes the report as one of—

capital importance in view of the effort now being made to secure such enlargement of the powers of the Inter-