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A remarkable and enlightening speech was made on the 6th of last month by Richard McIlwaine, delegate from Prince Edward county to the Virginia constitutional convention. The speech related to Negro suffrage and was delivered at a conference or caucus of the Democratic members of the convention. It is remarkable because, being the speech of a Southern Democrat to a caucus of Democratic delegates to the constitutional convention of a Southern state, it nevertheless frankly discloses the disingenuousness of the pretense that political corruption at the South is due to Negro suffrage; and it is enlightening because it presents impressive proof that this pretense is false. Mr. McIlwaine asserted that he is "no theorist," an assertion which he made perfectly clear. He regards the suffrage not as a right but as a privilege, and demonstrates himself to be altogether as irreligious as the distinguished editor of the Outlook with reference to the matter of inherent civil rights. It is as "a man of practical affairs, who has had large dealings with his fellow men, and who looks with a keen eye at conditions as they actually exist," that he advises his Democratic colleagues in the Virginia constitutional convention. This should give peculiar force to his utterances; for your practical man, unclogged with moral theories, is the man whose advice the spirit of the times seems to demand.

Mr. McIlwaine's speech declares that in Virginia there is "a large purchasable element, especially in the white sections," and that "the black

belt has no monopoly of wickedness—political, social or civic—but it prevails more or less throughout" the borders of Virginia. "It is not the Negro vote which works the harm," he says, "for the Negroes are generally Republicans"—that is, they vote not corruptly but for what, however mistakenly, they regard as a political principle—"but it is the depraved and incompetent men of our own race." Going into details to prove his point, Mr. McIlwaine compares the Ninth congressional district of Virginia, a white district, with the Fourth, which he describes as "a typical Negro district." In the course of this comparison he shows, among other things all pointing to the same conclusion, that in the Ninth or white district there are—

more than nine times as many white as Negro voters; 4.6 white voters who can read and write for 1 who cannot; 2.1 Negro voters who can read and write for one who cannot; 4.2 voters of both races who can read and write for 1 who cannot; 1 felony for the year 1900 for every 105 voters; and an average of 74 cents criminal expenses for every voter;

whereas in the Fourth, or black district, there are—

about 1.6 fewer white than Negro voters; 10.8 white voters who can read and write for 1 who cannot; 1.6 Negro voters who can read and write for 1 who cannot; 2.7 voters of both races who can read and write for 1 who cannot; 1 felony case in 1900 for every 268 voters; and an average of 42 cents criminal expenses for every voter.

From this comparison Mr. McIlwaine draws these conclusions:

The Ninth district has greatly the advantage of the Fourth in the number of white voters; the proportion of white voters who cannot read and write in the Ninth district is more than twice as great as in the Fourth; the proportion of Negro voters who can read and write in the Ninth district is 33 per cent. larger than in the Fourth; the number of both races who can read and write is 50

per cent. greater in the Ninth than in the Fourth, in proportion to voting population; there were  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times more felonies in proportion to voting population in 1900 in the Ninth district than in the Fourth; criminal expenses were nearly twice as large per voter in the Ninth than in the Fourth.

The specific object of Mr. McIlwaine in making this disclosure was to turn his party from its purpose in the convention, that purpose, as he candidly expressed it, being "to disfranchise every Negro, and, at all hazards, to enfranchise every white man in the Commonwealth." He denounced this purpose as something which "cannot be done without fraud," and which, even if the inhibition of the Federal constitution did not prevail, "ought not, under existing conditions, to be attempted." The proposition which he himself advanced was that the convention should abandon its fraudulent purpose and "consider what are the qualifications for suffrage which ought to be laid down for all classes" of Virginians—"in the east and the west, in the mountains and by the sea, for whites and blacks alike." His voting test, a financial one, does indeed recall Franklin's skit about the voter and his mule; but the pecuniary qualification that he proposes is small, and his test, as compared with the race test, would be a gratifying sign of civic progress in the South.

New Madrid, Mo., is the scene of the latest exhibition of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon to the Negro. A party of young white men threw snow balls at a Negro, a member of a traveling minstrel troupe playing in New Madrid, and the Negro retorted with epithets. What the epithets were is not reported, but any epithets