

SEED OF A NATION.

Pharaoh speaks:

'So your name is Aaron,
and you should be Moses,
my grand aunt's Jew protege,
I remember.

"It is monstrous,
preposterous, out of the question.
I wonder at my own forbearance
that calmly gives hearing
to your crazy appeal for your people.

"Why, sirrahs,
I should do them poor kindness
to set them adrift at this juncture,
untrained and dependent,
not fit for self-government,
prey for the first sturdy tribesmen
they met on the way to your Canaan,
your far-away, dim land of promise—
a priest and a shepard to guide them.
Madness!

"No, no. I have care for my task folk.
I have marked out a policy for them,
and in course of, say, three generations,
—they can't even make decent brick now—
trained in habits of industry
and taught to be capable workmen,
I can't say of course what might happen.

"But now they are idle, rebellious,
I hardly can handle them.
And what would you do with such people
without the restraints I have need of?

"See that Numidian,
Sleek and contented?
Oh, I have good care for my people
and I know a good servant
and how to reward him.
He's a eunuch, in charge of my household.
Go preach content to your people
and give them good counsel
if you really would do them a service.

"I have spoken.
I might not again be so patient."

Well, the Hebrews set out for their Canaan
and Pharaoh proved not a bad prophet
altogether.

They murmured,
they provoked God to anger,
they vexed the meekness of Moses,
they rebelled every step of the way,
they sighed for the flesh pots of Egypt.

Not one of those pilgrims
who set out from Egypt—
Moses included—
ever reached Canaan.

Wandering, wandering,
toiling and fighting,
winning a battle
but gaining no foothold,
tediously marching
but getting no nearer,
adrift in the desert—
it was full forty years
of travels and quarrels
before the advance guard crossed Jordan.

And then,
were they fit for self-government?
Hardly.

Dissension,
backsliding, captivity,
—because of their sin and idolatry—
slow, painful progress
that seemed to go backward—
it was not forty years but a thousand
they puddled around in the morass
of worse than Egyptian bondage.

And finally came to this climax—
that they slew the Holy One
who should have redeemed Israel.

Fit for self-government?
Evidently not.

But Pharaoh
—who perished at Red Sea crossing—
saw not his world's fulfillment.
And I mind me,

The Book
hasn't a word
of approval for Pharaoh.
—John Stone Pardee, in the Argus, of Red
Wing, Minn., for Jan. 19.

Altogether the most significant fact
in the art world of Boston is the strag-
gling procession of poor Italians who
trudge from the north end of Copley
square every Sunday afternoon to de-
light themselves in the lovely galleries
and corridors of the museum of fine
arts. The significance of that proces-
sion is its rebuke to us Yankees. In
Europe there obtains a sort of fine
democracy in art; in America things
artistic belong to a class. Those ear-
ringed, kerchiefed aliens point out a
serious American defect when they
show to how lowly a level the taste
for the beautiful may find its way,
and when they show by contrast our
very feeble achievement in the demo-
cratization of art.—Boston Tran-
script.

Once upon a time there lived a very
patriotic People, who put in most of
their time worrying about their Coun-
try.

"Is our navy commensurate with our
territorial importance?" they asked
themselves, and, the doubt being con-
firmed, built many ships.

But one day they made a very dis-
agreeable discovery.

"Our territorial expansion is not
commensurate with our navy," they ex-
claimed, and, facing the situation can-
didly, grabbed more land.

This shows that up-to-date Patriot-
ism is, even in its subjective aspect, no
Pudding.—Life.

Experience has effected a great
change in Senator Platt. When he is
thrown down by a president he calmly
brushes the dust off his clothes and
claims he slipped.—Detroit Free Press.

Briggs—It won't be long now before
the United States will have to act as
peacemaker for those South American
republics.

Griggs—Well, we shall never own
them unless we make a beginning
some time.—Life.

"What we want," said the First Pa-
triot, "is honest elections."

"I should say so," agreed the Second
Patriot. "Why, Heeler promised me
\$50 for my influence in my ward, and

now he says he never agreed to give me
more than \$10."—Baltimore Sun.

BOOK NOTICES.

"The Marrow of Tradition," though a
title that gives no clew in advance, is the
deeply significant name of a book by
Charles W. Chesnutt (Boston and New
York; Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) which for
more than one reason deserves and is like-
ly to win a permanent place in American
literature. One of the distinguishing
things about it is the fact that its author
is a Negro, a member of the Ohio bar, prac-
ticing in Cleveland. But more than that,
it is a Negro's story of the new South,
absorbingly interesting as to characters
and plot, for which the relations of the
Negro race to the hostile white race fur-
nish the motive, and the Negro outlook
the point of view. Through the author of
this book the Negro race becomes articu-
late in literature. We have had speeches
by Negroes and for Negroes, but it is the
orator and not his race that has spoken.
We have had poetry by Negroes and of
Negroes, but for white men, in which only
the superficial peculiarities of the Negro,
mirthful and sad, have found expression.
Mr. Chesnutt has the distinction of first
enabling his race to disclose itself. In
this story of contemporaneous life at the
South, the Negro does not say what he is,
or thinks, or hopes for, but shows it all
by his conduct in the unfolding of the
narrative. And he turns out to be just
a man, as all races do when they deliver
their message. Of the literary qualities
of the book let the professional critics
speak. For the ordinary reader it is
enough to know that it not only does not
offend against ordinary standards of lit-
erary taste, but upon the whole is of su-
perior quality, and that as a narrative it com-
mands attention in the first chapter and
retains it to the sensational climax at the
end. The characters are alive, the whites
as well as the blacks; the environment is
true in outline and color; the principal in-
cidents are as a rule historical, while the
minor and fictitious ones are in no re-
spect distorted; and throughout the story
the reader finds himself unconsciously
looking out upon the world through the
eye of the Negro race. Yet the white race
is treated with entire fairness. This is
one of the most remarkable features of the
book. Not only are the weaknesses and
wickednesses of the Negro freely dis-
played, but the lovable side of even intense
Negro haters is placed in the best light.
No reader will lay down the story with any
feeling of resentment toward the dominant
race at the South. On the contrary, he
will carry away truer and more agreeable
impressions of the Southern gentleman
than most Northern men possess and quite
as much consideration for the white ruf-
fians of the South as they deserve. No
white writer has ever been so judicially
fair to the Negro as this Negro writer is
to the white man. But he must have a

CHINESE
EXCLUSION

The editorial article of THE PUBLIC
entitled,

"The Chinese Exclusion Act,"

has been put in pamphlet form. For
price, etc., see list of PUBLIC LEAF-
LETS on next page.

narrow mind and strong prejudices whom Mr. Chesnutt's book does not stir with a sense of righteous wrath at race hatred and injustice of all kinds.

PERIODICALS.

—"Sound Currency," the quarterly finance publication of the New York Reform club, contains in the issue for December an historical resume, by L. Carroll Root, of the commercial asset banking of New England for the two decades preceding the civil war, together with the paper of George R. De Saussure, on branch banking, which won the third prize in the Reform Club's competitive essays on financial questions.

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