



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

The Crisis, Vol. 6, No. 2

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OPINION

[[image - drawing of two men discussing papers]]

ORIENTALS

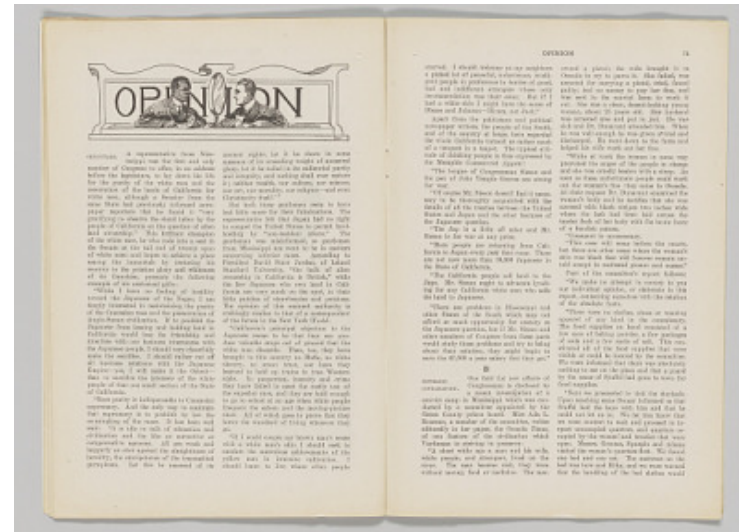
A representative from Mississippi was the first and only member of Congress to offer, in an address before the legislature, to lay down his life for the purity of the white race, and the reservation of the lands of California for white men, although a Senator from the same State had previously informed newspaper reporters that he found it "very gratifying to observe the stand taken by the people of California on the question of alien land ownership" This brilliant champion of the white race, he who rode into a seat in the Senate at the tail end of twenty span of white oxen and hopes to achieve a place among the immortals by restoring his country to the pristine glory and whiteness of its franchise, presents the following example of his oratorical gifts:

"While I have no feeling of hostility toward the Japanese of the Negro, I am deeply interested in maintaining the purity of the Caucasian race and the preservation of the Anglo-Saxon civilization. If to prohibit the Japanese from leasing and holding land in California would lose the friendship and interfere with our business intercourse with the Japanese people, I should very cheerfully make the sacrifice. I should rather cut off all business relations with the Japanese Empire - yes, I will make it the Orient - than to sacrifice the interest of the white people of that one small section of the State of California.

"Race purity is indispensable to Caucasian supremacy. And the only way to maintain that supremacy is to prohibit by law the co-mingling of the races. It has been will said: 'It is idle to talk of education and civilization and the like as corrective or compensative agencies. All are weak and beggarly as over against the almightiness of heredity, the omnipotence of the transmitted germplasm. Let this be amerced of its ancient rights, let it be shorn in some measure of its exceeding weight of ancestral glory, let it be soiled in its millennial purity and integrity, and nothing shall ever restore it; neither wealth, nor culture, nor science, nor art, nor morality, nor religion-and even Christianity itself."

But both these gentlemen seem to have had little cause for their fulminations. The representative felt that Japan had no right to compel the United States to permit landholding by "non-resident aliens." The gentleman was misinformed, as gentlemen from Mississippi are wont to be in matters concerning inferior races. According to President David Starr Jordan, of Leland Stanford University, "the bulk of alien ownership in California is British," while the few Japanese who own land in California are very much on the spot, in their little patches of strawberries and potatoes. The opinion of this eminent authority is strikingly similar to that of a correspondent of the forum in the New York World:

"California's principal objection to the Japanese seems to be that they can produce valuable crops out of ground that the white man discards. Then, too, they have brought to this country no Mafia, no white slavery, no arson trust, nor have they learned to hold up trains in true Western style. In pauperism, insanity and crime they have failed to meet the costly test of the superior race, and they are bold enough to go to school at an age when white people frequent the saloon and the moving-picture show. All of which goes to prove that they lower the standard of living



wherever they go.

"If I could couple my brown man's sense with a white man's skin I could seek to emulate the marvelous achievements of the yellow man in intensive cultivation. I should learn to live where other people

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starved. I should welcome as my neighbors a picked lot of peaceful, industrious, intelligent people in preference to hordes of good, bad and indifferent strangers whose only recommendation was their color. But if I had a white skin I might have the sense of Blease and Johnson-Hiram, not Jack."

Apart from the politicians and political newspaper writers, the people of the South, and of the country at large, have regarded the whole California turmoil as rather much of a tempest in a teapot. The typical attitude of thinking people is thus expressed by the Memphis Commercial Appeal:

"The tongue of Congressman Sisson and the pen of John Temple Graves are strong for war.

"Of course Mr. Sisson doesn't find it necessary to be thoroughly acquainted with the details of all the treaties between the United States and Japan and the other features of the Japanese question.

"The Jap is a little off color and Mr. Sisson is for war at any price.

"More people are returning from California to Japan every year than come. There are not now more than 30,000 Japanese in the State of California.

"The California people sell land to the Japs. Mr. Sisson ought to advocate lynching for any California white man who sells his land to Japanese.

"There are problems in Mississippi and other States in the South which may not afford as much opportunity for oratory as the Japanese question, but if Mr. Sisson and other members of Congress from these parts would study those problems and try to bring about their solution, they might begin to earn the \$7,500 a year salary that they get."

SUPERIOR CIVILIZATION.

One field for new efforts of Congressmen is disclosed by a recent investigation of a convict camp in Mississippi in which was conducted by a committee appointed by the Green County prison board. Miss Ada L. Roussan, a member of the committee, writes editorially in her paper, the Osceola Times, of one feature of the civilization which Vardaman is striving to preserve:

"A short while ago a man and his wife, white people, and strangers, lived

on the river. The man became sick, they were without money, food or medicine. The man owned a pistol; the wife brought it to Osceola to try to pawn it. She failed, was arrested for carrying a pistol, tried, found guilty, and had no money to pay her fine, and was sent to the convict farm to work it out. She was a clean, decent-looking young woman, about 25 years old. Her husband was arrested also and put in jail. He was sick and Dr. Dunavant attended him. When he was well enough he was given a trial and discharged. He went down to the farm and helped his wife work out her fine.

"While at work the woman in some way provoked the anger of the people in charge and she was cruelly beaten with a strap. As soon as these unfortunate people could work out the woman's fine they came to Osceola. At their request Dr. Dunavant examined the woman's body and he testifies that she was covered with black stripes two inches wide where the lashes had been laid across the tender flesh of her body with the brute force of a fiendish nature.

"Comment is unnecessary.

"This case will come before the courts, but there are other cases where the woman's skin was black that will forever remain untold except in muttered groans and curses."

Part of the committee's report follows: "We make no attempt to convey to you our individual opinion, or elaborate in this report, contenting ourselves with the relation of the absolute facts.

"there were no clothes, shoes or wearing apparel of any kind in the commissary. The food supplies on hand consisted of a few cans of baking powder, a few packages of soda and a few sacks of salt. this constituted all of the food supplies that were visible or could be located by the committee. We were informed that there was absolutely nothing to eat on the place and that a guard by the name of Stuffel and gone to town for food supplies.

"Next we proceeded to visit the stockade. Upon reaching same Bomar informed us that Stuffel had the keys with him and that he could not let us in. We let him know that we were content to wait and proceed to inspect unoccupied quarters, and quarters occupied by the women and trusties that were open. Messrs. Grooms, Spurgin and Adams visited the women's quarter first. We found one bed and one cot. The mattress on the bed was torn and filthy, and we were warned that the handling of the bed clothes would

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