



**Smithsonian Institution**

*National Museum of African American History and Culture*

## **The Crisis, Vol. 6, No. 4**

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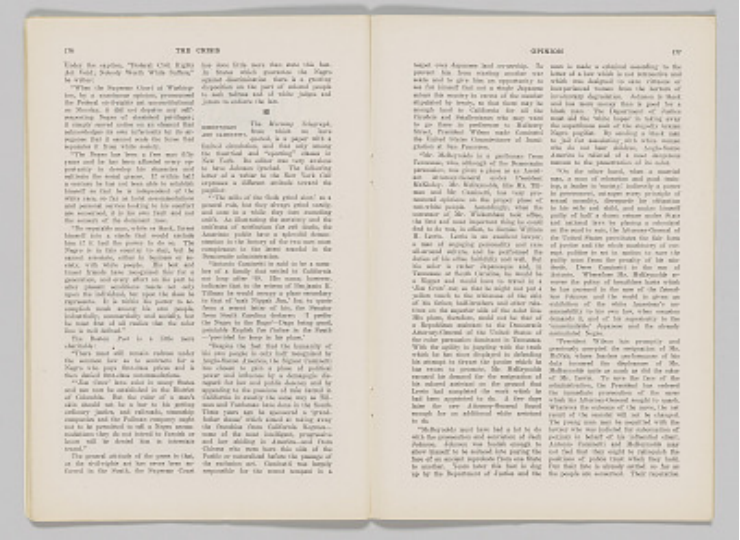
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Under the caption, "Federal Civil Rights Act Void; Nobody Worth While Suffers," he writes:  
"When the Supreme Court at Washington, by a unanimous opinion, pronounced the Federal civil-rights act unconstitutional, on Monday, it did not deprive an self-respecting Negro of cherished privileges; it simply served notice on an element that acknowledges its own inferiority by its arrogance that it cannot scale the fence that separates it from white society.  
"The Negro has been a free man fifty years and he has been afforded every opportunity to develop his character and cultivate the social graces. If within half a century he has not been able to establish himself so that he is independent of the white race, so far as hotel accommodations and personal service looking to his comfort are concerned, it is his own fault and not the concern of the dominant race.  
"No reputable man, white or black, forces himself into a circle that would exclude him if it had the power to do so. The Negro is in this country to stay, but he cannot associate, either in business or society, with white people. His best and truest friends have recognized this for a generation, and every effort on his part to alter present conditions reacts not only upon the individual, but upon the class he represents. It is within his power to accomplish much among his own people, industrially, commercially and socially, but he must first of all realize that the color line is well defined."

The Boston Post is a little more charitable:  
"There must still remain redress under the common law as to contracts for a Negro who pays first-class prices and is then denied first-class accommodations.  
"Jim Crow" laws exist in many States and can now be established in the District of Columbia. But the color of a man's skin should not be a bar to his getting ordinary justice, and railroads, steamship companies and the Pullman company ought not to be permitted to sell a Negro accommodations they do not intend to furnish or know will be denied him in interstate travel."  
The general attitude of the press is that, as the civil-rights act has never been enforced in the South, the Supreme Court has done little more than state this fact. In States which guarantee the Negro against discrimination there is a growing disposition on the part of colored people to seek redress and of white judges and jurors to enforce the law.

MCREYNOLDS AND CAMINETTI

The Morning Telegraph from which we have quoted, is a paper with a limited circulation, and that only among the theatrical and "sporting" classes in New York. Its editor was very anxious to have Johnson lynched. The following letter of a writer to the New York Call expresses a different attitude toward the pugilist:  
"'The mills of the Gods grind slow,' as a general rule, but they always grind surely, and once in a while they turn exceeding swift. As illustrating the certainty and the swiftness of retribution for evil deeds, the American public have a splendid demonstration in the history of the two men most conspicuous in the latest scandal in the Democratic administration.  
"Antonio Caminetti is said to be a member of a family that settled in California not long after '49. His name, however, indicates that in the esteem of Benjamin R. Tillman he would occupy a place secondary to that of 'mah Niggah Jim,' for, to quote from a recent letter of his, the Senator from South Carolina declares: 'I prefer the Negro to the Dago'-Dago being good, printable English for Italian in the South-'provided he keep in his place.'  
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"Despite the fact that the humanity of his own people is only half recognized by Anglo-Saxon America, the Signor Caminetti has chosen to gain a place of political power and influence by a demagogic disregard for law and public decency and by appealing to the passions of race hatred in California in exactly the same way as Tillman and Vardaman have done in the South. Three years ago he sponsored a 'grand-father clause' which aimed at taking away the franchise from California Negroes-some of the most intelligent, progressive and law abiding in America-and from Chinese who were born this side of the Pacific or naturalized before the passage of the exclusion act. Caminetti was largely responsible for the recent tempest in a

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teapot over Japanese land ownership. To prevent him from starting another war scare and to give him an opportunity to see for himself that not a single Japanese enters this country in excess of the number stipulated by treaty, so that there may be enough land in California for all the Cirofics and Sciallentos who may want to go there in preference to Mulberry Street, President Wilson made Caminetti the United States Commissioner of Immigration at San Francisco.

"Mr. McReynolds is a gentleman from Tennessee, who, although of Democratic persuasion, was given a place as an Assistant Attorney-General under President McKinley. Mr. McReynolds, like Mr. Tillman and Mr. Caminetti, has very pronounced opinions on the proper place of non-white people. Accordingly, when the successor of Mr. Wickersham took office, the first and most important thing he could find to do was, in effect, to dismiss William H. Lewis. Lewis is an excellent lawyer, a man of engaging personality and rare all-around culture, and he performed the duties of his office faithfully and well. But his color is rather Japanesque and, in Tennessee or South Carolina, he would be a Nigger and would have to travel in a 'Jim Crow' car, so that he might not put a yellow touch to the whiteness of the skin of his father, half-brothers and other relatives on the superior side of the color line. His place, therefore, could not be that of a Republican assistant to the Democratic Attorney-General of the United States of the color persuasion dominant in Tennessee. With the agility in juggling with the truth which he has since displayed in defending his attempt to thwart the justice which he has sworn to promote, Mr. McReynolds excused his demand for the resignation of his colored assistant on the ground that Lewis had completed the work which he had been appointed to do. A few days later the new Attorney-General found enough for an additional white assistant to do.

"McReynolds must have had a lot to do with the prosecution and conviction of Jack Johnson. Johnson was foolish enough to allow himself to be seduced into paying the fare of an ancient reprobate from one State to another. Years later this fact is dug up by the Department of Justice and the man is made a criminal according to the letter of a law which is not retroactive and which was designed to save virtuous or inexperienced women from the horrors of involuntary degradation. Johnson is black and has more money than is good for a black man. The Department of Justice must aid the 'white hopes' in taking away the superfluous cash of the stupidly brazen Negro pugilist. By sending a black man to jail for associating with white women who do not bear children, Anglo-Saxon America is relieved of a most dangerous menace to the preservation of its color.

"On the other hand, when a married man, a man of education and good training, a leader in 'society,' indirectly a power in government, outrages every principle of sexual morality, disregards his obligation to his wife and child, and makes himself guilty of half a dozen crimes under State

and national laws by placing a schoolgirl on the road to ruin, the Attorney-General of the United States prostitutes the fair form of justice and the whole machinery of corrupt politics is set in motion to save the guilty man from the penalty of his misdeeds. Drew Caminetti is the son of Antonio. Wherefore Mr. McReynolds reverses the policy of breathless haste which he has pursued in the case of the friendless Johnson and the world is given an exhibition of the white American's unamenability to his own law, when occasion demands it, and of his superiority to the 'unassimilable' Japanese and the already assimilated Negro. "President Wilson has promptly and graciously accepted the resignation of Mr. McNab, whose fearless performance of his duty incurred the displeasure of Mr. McReynolds quite as much as did the color of Mr. Lewis. To save the face of the administration, the President has ordered the immediate prosecution of the cases which his Attorney-General sought to quash. Whatever the outcome of the move, the net result of the scandal will not be changed. The young man may be acquitted with the lawyer who was indicted for subordination of perjury in behalf of his influential client. Antonio Caminetti and McReynolds may not feel that they ought to relinquish the positions of public trust which they hold. But their fate is already settled so far as the people are concerned. Their reputation

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