

that it carried with the public, because neither was made on any such basis of inquiry as it was given to the public to suppose.

That Mr. Taft was actuated by a desire to dispose of an ugly business, and that he thought he was acting with entire justice in it, we are fully persuaded. But he did either too much or too little. He had before him charges affecting the conduct of a department of the government in matters of great complexity; and either of two courses was open to him. He might have refused serious standing to the charges, and asserted his entire confidence in Ballinger by dismissing them, on the general merits of the situation, as not worthy of detailed consideration. Or he might have ordered a full and thorough-going consideration of them by trained officers of the Department of Justice, and, after considering and reviewing their findings, have passed final judgment. Unfortunately he sought to combine the facility of the former process with the finality of the latter. The result has been the deplorable and mortifying mess in which he and the Attorney-General have been floundering.

DISCUSSING THE NEGRO PROBLEM.

The second annual National Negro Conference for the discussion of the negro problem, which met in New York last week, set itself high and worthy aims—to do for this race what the Lake Mohonk Conference has done for the Indian. Southerners as well as Northerners have spoken this year, as last, and colored men and women as well as white. All shades of opinion have found utterance, that out of the multitude of counsel some progress might be made in bringing the actual facts before the country and in demanding redress for undoubted grievances. This year the discussions were concerned with disfranchisement—how disfranchisement affects the negro in the courts, in the schools, at the ballot-box, and in his other relations to the communities in which he dwells. Eventually, it is hoped that out of this Conference will grow a bureau or scientific committee for investigations; a legal aid department for the race; a publicity department to lay before the country the actual facts as to the astounding progress of the negro in less than fifty years, and the law-

abiding character of the colored people as a whole. Meanwhile, however, the Conference, in its resolutions of last year, demands of Congress and the Executive:

(1.) That the Constitution be strictly enforced and the civil rights guaranteed under the Fourteenth Amendment be secured impartially to all.

(2.) That there be equal educational opportunities for all and in all the States, and that public-school expenditure be the same for the negro and white child.

(3.) That in accordance with the Fifteenth Amendment the right of the negro to the ballot on the same terms as other citizens be recognized in every part of the country.

As to the wisdom of this course there is naturally a marked difference of opinion. One of our contemporaries has already described the Conference as "an unwise movement"; in other quarters the argument is made that any discussion of the debated points, particularly the political discriminations against the race, is "unwise," especially at this time, when so many high-minded Southerners are resolutely standing up for the negro's right to lift himself out of the slough of ignorance and ineffectiveness. From the argument that this is a close season for discussing the wrongs of ten millions of Americans, the *Nation* has repeatedly expressed its dissent. For the argument of expediency and compromise it has no sympathy. It has yet to learn that a demand that the Constitution of the United States be no longer nullified can be out of place or out of time. There is never an hour in this great democracy when it is not right and proper to plead for justice, for equality before the law and at the ballot-box, for the keeping of the national faith.

There need be no fear that frank, or even radical, utterances will retard seriously any movement in the South for the benefit of the negro. The truth has never hurt anybody who walks in the path of righteousness; it has never yet held back any unselfish humanitarian undertaking. Erroneous individual opinion, the mistaken zeal of the enthusiast—these may cause dissent and friction, may arouse bitter controversies. But agitation is precisely what is needed. The sound, sober thought of this democracy invariably distinguishes the chaff from the grain. It was a witty woman of the uncompromising band of ante-bellum Abolitionists, Maria Weston Chapman, we believe, who remarked that

the Lord made use of tools in that cause which she herself would not touch with a forty-foot pole. Yet all of them, radical and conservative together, rendered a great service to their country. The real question is, after all, the *spirit* in which the matter is approached.

That this great negro problem, with all its complexities, its amazing contradictions, its delicate ramifications, is sadly in need of scientific approach, is all too evident. To the Northerner, the Southerner denies all right to pass upon the subject, because he has not lived South. But the very man who takes this position may himself know the negro problem only from the point of view of a narrow Alabama village and be quite ignorant of its varying phases in Mississippi, or Louisiana, or Virginia, or Texas, and he usually is grossly ignorant of the legal status of the black man all over the South. For the Northerner it is an easy retort that those who are face to face with a momentous social difficulty are often too close to it to have any perspective, or to be able to view it as a whole. And a trained observer like Prof. Albert Bushnell Hart of Harvard, who spoke to the Conference last Saturday evening, or Ray Stannard Baker, who read a paper last Thursday, may often acquire more knowledge of the issues in a year in the South than a resident of Montgomery in a life-time. All of this simply emphasizes the desirability of facts, facts, and facts; it is a question not to be decided by prejudice on either side. Any agency which will effect this ought to be acclaimed and welcomed, particularly if it be considered that, barring some work done under Prof. W. E. B. Du Bois's direction for Atlanta University and the United States Census, no scientific inquiry into the problem has gone on anywhere. There are persons of consequence who demand a national bureau in Washington for the study of the social and economic status of the child. If this is needed, surely a bureau for studying the negro race is even more in order.

And not merely because of the negro. As the Conference pointed out last year, his wrongs bear most heavily upon those whites nearest to him in the social and economic scale. His disfranchisement has been followed by the disfranchisement of thousands upon thousands of whites, so that less than half the white men of voting age in Ala-

bama passed upon the recent prohibition amendment to the Constitution of the State. Grievous as is the lot of the oppressed, that of the oppressor is the worse in the long run—so often is he compelled to commend to his own lips the poisoned chalice. Hence we have no hesitation in saying that the National Negro Conference's title is misleading; it ought to be known also as an undertaking on behalf of the millions of Poor Whites of the South. Disfranchised, often degraded, lacking in many communities the enterprise of the negro, pitifully ignorant, they are often the easy prey of demagogues whose whole stock in trade is the menace of the negro. But upon the welfare and efficiency of the negro depend the economic prosperity and progress of the entire South.

GROWTH IN SOUTH AMERICA.

The year 1910 is the centennial of national independence for the greater part of Spanish America. The richest and most powerful of Spain's former colonies in South America was also the first to unfurl the banner of revolt. On May 25, 1810, the provinces on the La Plata, under stress of French invasion in the mother country and English invasion at home, organized a junta of their own. That event is to be celebrated by an entire week of national holiday-making, opening on the twenty-second of this month and followed, in the beginning of June, by the opening of an international exposition at Buenos Ayres. Officially and predominantly, the exposition will be the International Exhibition of Railways and Land Transport; but annexed to it will be international exhibitions of agriculture, arts, and hygiene, and a national exhibition of industry. The recent growth of Argentina has been such as to disprove many facile generalizations about the decadence of the Latin race. Given equally favorable conditions of climate and natural resources, the Latin peoples who make up the population of Argentina have demonstrated their ability to keep pace with the self-complacent Anglo-Saxon. If the people of Argentina have given way of late to the intoxication of their own achievements, excuse for their exuberance is not wanting.

Argentina and Canada are the two "booming" pioneer nations of the American continent. A short statistical par-

allel between the two will establish the point just made regarding the rate of Latin-American progress. In 1901 Canada had a population of 5,371,000; today, reckoning on the basis of the same percentage of increase as obtained between 1891 and 1901, the Canadian population must be between six and a quarter and six and a half millions. Argentina in 1895 had a population of 3,955,000. On the first of January, 1910, the officially estimated population was 6,805,000. The two nations, therefore, are, in numerical strength, almost equal. Both are fed by huge streams of immigration, but though Canada within the last two or three years has been drawing the heavier numbers, Argentina still has a higher proportion of foreign-born among her population. Of Canada's 5,370,000 in the year 1901, just 700,000 were born abroad. Of Argentina's 6,800,000 in the present year, one and three-quarter millions were foreign-born. Of these the Italians numbered 844,000, Spaniards 424,000, French 105,000, English 26,300, Austrians 24,700, Germans 23,700. In point of numbers, the non-Latin element is proportionately not much more important in Argentina than the Latin element is in the United States.

With fairly equal populations, how do Argentina and Canada compare in economic growth? Only a few general figures can be cited. In the five years between 1902 and 1907 the mileage of Canadian railways increased from 18,868 to 22,452; in the five years from 1905 to 1910 the mileage of the Argentine railways increased from 13,000 to 17,000. In the latter year the invested capital was estimated at \$900,000,000. Federal revenue in Canada within the years 1902-06 rose from \$58,000,000 to \$80,000,000, or about 38 per cent. Federal revenue in Argentina during the years 1903-07 rose from \$75,000,000 to \$107,000,000, or about 43 per cent. In 1900 the total of imports and exports for Canada and Argentina were, respectively, \$320,000,000 and \$259,000,000; in 1905, the figures were \$453,000,000 and \$509,000,000; Argentina had made an increase of 96 per cent. in five years and taken the lead. In 1908, the figures were: Canada, \$604,000,000, and Argentina, \$638,000,000. The record of the last decade shows, therefore, the South American republic moving forward in population, transportation, and foreign trade at a faster rate

than the nation we have fallen into the habit of looking upon as the infant phenomenon among English-speaking peoples.

But there is one important factor that must be taken into account. It may be true that numerically the non-Latin element in Argentina is of about the same importance as the Latin element in our own country. In their respective influence on the national life, however, there can be no comparison. British and German capital and British and German industrial and commercial leadership have played a most important part in the economic development of Argentina. And to that very important extent the remarkable growth of that republic is not as exclusively a product of Latin energy as the ethnic make-up of the population might tend to indicate. There is tacit recognition of this fact in the very circumstance that the centennial of Argentine independence is to be commemorated primarily by an International Railway Exhibition. Why a railway exhibition? Because it is in Argentine railways more than in any other form of national enterprise that foreign capital, and, in particular, English and German capital, is closely interested. European railway investments in Argentina run into the hundreds of millions, and the fifty thousand Britons and Germans in Argentina are there as the representatives of so much invested wealth.

Yet with all allowance for the English and Teuton influence, Argentina remains a Latin country. She is as much so in the spirit of her civilization as in the character of her people. Argentina takes pride in speaking of herself as the most promising of the young-born of the Latin race on this side of the Atlantic, destined to demonstrate the vitality and capacities of that race as our own country has done for the North European stocks, and destined to work out the spirit of the Latin civilization under the favorable auspices of a new world. Argentina looks to France and Italy for her literature, her art, her music, and receives their great men with high distinction. Buenos Ayres models herself closely upon Paris, and in more than one way succeeds. Take her all in all, Argentina presents quite a different picture from the Spanish-American republic of current tradition.