

of Panama; retained it for nearly two years; then was reconquered by New Granada.

Thirteen years later, in 1855, the Panamense regained their freedom, but not their independence. They were allowed to draft their own constitution, choose their own officers and their own legislature, and when some years later Panama joined the new Confederation called the United States of Colombia, it still maintained its title State of Panama. The Panamense were not satisfied even with this measure of local autonomy, as was shown by the organization of independent though very short-lived governments in 1868 and 1885. Neither were the Colombian politicians satisfied to leave them in possession even of such freedom as they had. Eight years ago, under the lead of Rafael Nuñez, a supposedly liberal President, the Colombians decided to put an end to confederation. They promulgated a constitution by which the hitherto federated States were reduced to the departments of a centralized Republic, and, in the case of Panama, always the most refractory of the States, to a territorial dependency. In place of the popularly elected President there was a Governor appointed from Bogota. A concordat was established under which all the Colombian schools, colleges, libraries, hospitals, and other public institutions, including those of Panama, were turned over to the priests. As if this were not enough, political aggression was further accentuated in 1900, when Vice-President Marroquin kidnapped President San Clemente, and took the office by a *coup d'état*. To adopt the language of Rafael Nuñez, the Colombian President has "been generally more of an autocrat or a military dictator than a civil magistrate responsible to the people." Truly, says I. N. Ford in his "Tropical America," of all the travesties of popular government which have been witnessed in Spanish America, the political play enacted in Bogota and Cartagena is the most grotesque. Whenever Panama could escape from the domination of its stronger neighbor, it has done so. Whenever it could not, it has been taxed for its stronger neigh-

bor's benefit. To sympathize with Colombia against Panama is to sympathize with Russia against Poland, with Turkey against Greece, with Austria against Venice, with the despoiler against the despoiled.

The oppression by Colombia of Panama does not of itself justify the course of the United States. It is not every wrong-doing that we have a right to correct. The justice of our action must be determined by our obligations to Panama and to the civilized world. But sympathy for Colombia is singularly wasted.



## Professor Bassett on the Race Problem

Professor John Spencer Bassett, of Trinity College, Durham, North Carolina, has tendered his resignation of his professorship. The Trustees have not at this writing acted on his resignation. It is to be hoped that they will not accept it. For in his resignation is involved the question whether professors in Southern colleges have that right of free speech which is accorded to professors in colleges and universities in all other Anglo-Saxon communities. The fact that reputable papers in the South have demanded his resignation goes far to justify those who declare that the South is still half a century behind the age. For they are acting to-day on the principle on which New Englanders acted in the early part of the nineteenth century. There was then a certain standard of orthodoxy in theology. If a teacher departed from this standard, he was pronounced unfit to teach in orthodox schools or colleges, although his department might be wholly non-theological. Professor Bassett has departed from the position that the negro must be made to know and keep his place, which has heretofore been the orthodox position in the South on the race problem; and his resignation is demanded, although his chair has nothing to do with sociology.

The real ground of complaint against Professor Bassett is not his statement that Booker T. Washington is "the great-

est man, save Lee, born in the South in a hundred years." That was not a very wise statement to make. Superlatives are never wise. Greatest in what respect? Greatest athlete? or poet? or novelist? or orator? or statesman? No man is, or well can be, "take him all in all, the greatest man." But only an extraordinarily hysterical person would demand the resignation of a college professor because he had made a mistaken estimate of one man. In this particular case the estimate was in a paragraph against the "baseless optimism" which generalizes respecting the whole negro race from one man:

A man whose mind runs away into baseless optimism is apt to point to Booker T. Washington as a product of the negro race. Now, Washington is a great and good man, a Christian statesman, and, take him all in all, the greatest man, save General Lee, born in the South in a hundred years; but he is not a typical negro. He does not even represent the better class of negroes. He is an exceptional man; and, endowed as he is, it is probable that he would have remained uneducated but for the philanthropic intervention of white men. The race, even the best of them, are so far behind him that we cannot in reason look for his reproduction in the present generation.

This is not the obnoxious feature in Professor Bassett's article. The single sentence respecting Mr. Washington has been picked out by not over-scrupulous journalists as a convenient club. The objection is to the whole tone of the article. It begins by declaring that "in the last five years there has been a notable increase in the general opposition to the negro," both in South and North, but "in the South it has manifested itself more strenuously than in the North." It is seen in the restrictions on the negro vote, the Jim Crow cars, the resort to lynching, the disposition of the Southerners "to take fire at the hint of a 'negro outrage.'" The causes for this increasing antipathy to the negro are "inherent race antipathy, the progress of the negro himself, and the fact that the negro problem is, and has been for a long time, a political matter." The "antipathy is not mutual." The negro "is quite willing to have equality. The race feeling is the contempt of the white man for the negro." "Both his

progress and his regression under the régime of freedom have brought down on him the hostility of the whites." The regression is exaggerated. "The notion that the ante-bellum negro was a benign old man or a gracious old 'mammy,' a guardian of the family children, and a dignified expression in ebony of the family honor," is a "false notion." "The typical ante-bellum negro was the field hand." For a picture of him we are to go, not to Mr. Thomas Nelson Page's "castles in Virginia," which are also "castles in the air," but to the instructive pages of Olmsted or of Fanny Kemble's Journal. "Nine-tenths of the negroes now in America are descendants from this part of the old slave population." But "the progress of the negro has brought him opposition as well as his regression." "As long as he was merely a laborer, it was not hard to draw the line which divided him from other people. It was at that time not hard for him to be content with inferior hotels, or with accommodations in the kitchens of better hotels. In these days he is becoming too intelligent and too refined to be content with these things. He demands a better place." This antagonizes the fundamental notion of "most white Americans." "To make him [the negro] know his 'place,' and to make him keep his 'place,' sum up the philosophy of many people in reference to this intricate and perplexing problem." But "the 'place' of every man in our American life is such a one as his virtues and his capacities may enable him to take. Not even a black skin and a flat nose can justify caste in this country." A still more serious cause of the race antipathy is the fact that the negro question "has gone into politics." "It has been seized upon by party leaders as a means of winning votes." "It is now good party tactics to keep the negro question before the people. Booker T. Washington's dinner at the White House was seized on for this purpose." "This political agitation is awakening a demon in the South. There is to-day more hatred of whites for blacks and of blacks for whites than ever before. Each race seems to be caught in a torrent of passion, which, I fear, is

leading the country to an end which I dare not name." There is but one solution. "In spite of our race feeling, of which the writer has his share, they will win equality at some time. We cannot remove them, we cannot kill them, we cannot prevent them from advancing in civilization. . . . Some day the white man will beat the negro out of his cowardice, and then 'red shirts' will exist no more. Some day the negro will be a great industrial factor in the community; some day he will be united under strong leaders of his own. In that time his struggle will not be so unequal as now. In that time, let us hope, he will have brave and Christian leaders." "As long as the one race contends for the absolute inferiority of the other, the struggle will go on with increasing intensity. But if some day the spirit of conciliation shall come into the hearts of the superior race, the struggle will become less strenuous. The duty of brave and wise men is to seek to infuse the spirit of conciliation into these white leaders of white men."

We do not wonder that this article has aroused a storm of passionate invective. John B. Gough used to tell the story of a man coming home furious with passion. Some one, he said, had called him a liar. "Never mind, John," said his wife, soothingly, "he can't prove it." "Ah! but," replied the infuriated husband, "he did prove it." What has angered men in the South who aspire to be leaders but who do not deserve to be is that, in the main, this article is true. It is true that nine-tenths of the negroes in America are descended from the old half-barbaric and almost wholly heathen field hands. It is true that their progress has aroused hostility against them on the part of the poor white population. It is true that unprincipled politicians are endeavoring to set race against race and section against section, as indifferent respecting the effects on the Republic of America as Catiline was respecting the effects of his agitations on Rome, so long as by keeping the South solid they can keep themselves in place and power. It is true that they can delay but cannot prevent the education and progress of the negro race; the

stars in their courses fight against all such endeavor to thwart the progress of God's children toward a higher and better life. It is true that "in spite of our race feeling, the negro will win equality at some time," if by equality we mean equality of opportunity, equality of chance to be all and do all that he is or can become capable of being and doing. And it is true that the solution and the only solution of the race problem is in the endeavor of brave and wise men to infuse into the hearts of the superior race that spirit of chivalry which will lead it to use its superiority to help, not hinder, the highest and best development of the inferior race. Professor Bassett has shown himself both wise and brave as a leader of men. It remains to be seen whether the Trustees of Trinity College have the bravery to support him, and in supporting him support the right of free speech in Southern educational institutions.



## Letters to a Minister

### The Function of the Ministry

Is there any longer any need for a church and a ministry? This question may not be put to you personally, but it will be put by men to themselves and to one another in your parish, and it is well that you should consider it. There will be some men who will come to the conclusion of Strauss that religion is a weakness, not a strength, that it belongs to the primitive condition of mankind, not to its developed condition, that it is to be ranked with superstition, that ignorance is the mother of devotion. These men will look—and there are some such in every community—with contempt upon the forms of religion, because they look with contempt upon religion itself. There will be others who regard religion less as a weakness of men than as an idle imagination and emotion. All that concerns the Infinite and Eternal, they believe, lies beyond the horizon of knowledge; and, as such, they discard it, saying, with Professor Huxley, that all talk about God is like sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. There will be more who will say to themselves, and if you could get