

white associates. The tax rate under this miscalled Negro regime was less than under its predecessors; this is Negro domination in Wilmington. This is a fair sample of that Southern scarecrow—conjured by these masters of the black art everywhere. . . .

The Good Samaritan did not leave his own eldest son robbed and bleeding at his own threshold, while he went way off down the road between Jerusalem and Jericho to hunt for a man that had fallen among thieves. Nor can America afford to go eight thousand miles from home to set up a republican government in the Philippines while the blood of citizens whose ancestors came here before the Mayflower, is crying out to God against her from the gutters of Wilmington.

D. The Spread of Segregation

1. The Supreme Court Declares That Separate Is Equal (1896)

In the closing years of the nineteenth century, most southern states passed Jim Crow laws mandating segregated public facilities for whites and blacks. Louisiana passed a statute in 1890 that provided for "equal but separate accommodations for the white and colored races" on railroads in the state, and prohibited persons from occupying a railcar or waiting room other than those reserved for their race. Black Louisianans brought suit against this law, as a way of challenging the spreading practice of segregation. Interestingly, the plaintiffs had some support from the railroads, which objected to the added costs entailed by providing separate cars. By a seven-to-one majority, however, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Louisiana statute in the case of Plessy v. Ferguson, thus helping to cement the system of segregation into place until it was dismantled by the civil rights movement in the post-World War II period. (The lone dissenter was Justice John Harlan, a former slaveowner.) In the following excerpt from the majority's opinion, what are the principal rationales offered for the Court's conclusions? In what ways did the opinion ultimately prove vulnerable? (It was reversed in the case of Brown v. Board of Education in 1954, which held that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.)

By the Fourteenth Amendment, all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are made citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside; and the States are forbidden from making or enforcing any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States, or shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law, or deny to any person within their jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

The proper construction of this amendment was first called to the attention of this court in the *Slaughter-house cases* [1873], which involved, however, not a question of race, but one of exclusive privileges. The case did not call for any expression

of opinion as to the exact rights it was intended to secure to the colored race, but it was said generally that its main purpose was to establish the citizenship of the negro; to give definitions of citizenship of the United States and of the States, and to protect from the hostile legislation of the States the privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States, as distinguished from those of citizens of the States.

The object of the amendment was undoubtedly to enforce the absolute equality of the two races before the law, but in the nature of things it could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based upon color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political equality, or a commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either. Laws permitting, and even requiring, their separation in places where they are liable to be brought into contact do not necessarily imply the inferiority of either race to the other, and have been generally, if not universally, recognized as within the competency of the state legislatures in the exercise of their police power. The most common instance of this is connected with the establishment of separate schools for white and colored children, which has been held to be a valid exercise of the legislative power even by courts of States where the political rights of the colored race have been longest and most earnestly enforced. . . .

So far, then, as a conflict with the Fourteenth Amendment is occurred, the case reduces itself to the question whether the statute of Louisiana is a reasonable regulation, and with respect to this there must necessarily be a large discretion on the part of the legislature. In determining the question of reasonableness it is at liberty to act with reference to the established usages, customs and traditions of the people, and with a view to the promotion of their comfort, and the preservation of the public peace and good order. Gauged by this standard, we cannot say that a law which authorizes or even requires the separation of the two races in public conveyances is unreasonable, or more obnoxious to the Fourteenth Amendment than the acts of Congress requiring separate schools for colored children in the District of Columbia, the constitutionality of which does not seem to have been questioned, or the corresponding acts of state legislatures.

We consider the underlying fallacy of the plaintiff's argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it. The argument necessarily assumes that if, as has been more than once the case, and is not unlikely to be so again, the colored race should become the dominant power in the state legislature, and should enact a law in precisely similar terms, it would thereby relegate the white race to an inferior position. We imagine that the white race, at least, would not acquiesce in this assumption. The argument also assumes that social prejudices may be overcome by legislation, and that equal rights cannot be secured to the negro except by an enforced commingling of the two races. We cannot accept this proposition. If the two races are to meet upon terms of social equality, it must be the result of natural affinities, a mutual appreciation of each other's merits and a voluntary consent of individuals. As was said by the Court of Appeals of New York in *People v. Gallagher*, "this end can neither be accomplished nor promoted by laws which conflict with the general sentiment of the community upon whom they are designed to operate. When the government, therefore, has se-

improvement and progress, it has accomplished the end for which it was organized and performed all of the functions respecting social advantages with which it is endowed." Legislation is powerless to eradicate racial instincts or to abolish distinctions based upon physical differences, and the attempt to do so can only result in accentuating the difficulties of the present situation. If the civil and political rights of both races be equal one cannot be inferior to the other civilly or politically. If one race be inferior to the other socially, the Constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane. . . .

2. A Justice of the Peace Denies Justice (1939)

The Jim Crow system that emerged in the South at the end of the nineteenth century denied black southerners the right to vote. For more than half a century, various tactics were employed to ensure that blacks could not exercise political power at the ballot box. In the selection that follows, a justice of the peace in North Carolina describes how he foiled black attempts to register to vote. What were his principal methods? How does he justify his actions?

. . . In 1900 I was a Red Shirt;* that was what they called us, though we didn't actually wear red shirts as they did in some sections. But the legislature had fixed it so we could disfranchise the nigger, and we aimed to tote our part in gettin' it done. Judge Farmer organized the county; they was about thirty-five of us around here that called ourselves Red Shirts. Up to 1900 the niggers had rushed in to register whether or no, and with control of the vote they had put in nigger officeholders all over the county. They wa'n't but one white family in the county that could get a office under the nigger rule of the time, and that was Dr. Hughes's. Dr. Hughes was so good to all the pore folks, goin' when they sent for him and not chargin' 'em a cent, that they'd give him anything he asked for. When the registration book was opened in 1900, the Red Shirts was ordered to get their rifles and shotguns and protect the registration from the niggers. When the word come to me, I remember I was in the field plowin'. I got my gun and hurried out to where the rest of the Red Shirts was assembled with shotguns.

Word come that the federal authorities was comin' to protect the nigger vote; if they had, it would o' meant war. We wa'n't totin' shotguns just for show. Well, the upshot was not a nigger come nigh the registration book that day, from sunrise to sunset. Nigger rule was over!

Two years after, when I first took hold o' registerin' voters, a right smart o' niggers come to register at first, claimin' they could meet the requirements. Some wrote the Constitution, I reckon, as good as a lot o' white men, but I'd find somethin' unsatisfactory, maybe an *i* not dotted or a *t* not crossed, enough for me to disqualify 'em. The law said "satisfactory to the registrar." A few could get by the grandfather

²From *Such As Us: Southern Voices of the Thirties* edited by Tom E. Terrill and Jerrold Hirsch. Copyright © 1978 by the University of North Carolina Press. Used by permission of the publisher.

*A vigilante group that intimidated blacks.

clause,* for they was some free niggers before the Civil War, but they couldn't get by an undotted *i* or a uncrossed *t*. They wa'n't no Republicans in the South before the Civil War; the free niggers always voted like their old masters told 'em to—and 'twa'n't Republican! That's what the war was fought over, politics; they didn't care so much about freein' the slaves as they did the Republican party. . . .

Politics is the rottenest thing in the world. I ought to know, for I've been in it thirty years and over. Not meanin' to brag, I can say I've been honest and my hands is clean. I wouldn't twist a principle for no man. That's how come I got the influence I have in the county. The candidates come to me for advice and want me to get out and work for 'em, because they know I know practically everybody in the county—they ain't a man over forty I don't know—and can't nobody bring nothin' against my integrity. Not meanin' to brag now, my life counts much as my word; folks'll listen to a honest man. My methods ain't like some; I don't get out in the final heat of the campaign and hurrah and shout. By that time my work's all done. It's durin' the off season like this, when nobody's thinkin' politics much, that I do my workin', in a quiet homely way. I get votes pledged to my candidate—a man that won't stand by his pledge ain't worth his salt—and when the campaign gets hot I stay out'n the fight, knowin' the precincts is already lined up for my man. . . .

E. Cleveland and the Tariff

1. Cleveland Pleads for Tariff Reduction (1885)

The financial embarrassments of Cleveland's first administration, oddly enough, stemmed from too much money in the Treasury. The great bulk of federal revenue then came from tariff duties, which the consumer repaid as a hidden tax in the increased price of the import. The only feasible way to reduce the unnecessarily large inflow to the Treasury was to reduce the tariff, and such a reduction was bound to arouse the high-protectionists, mostly Republicans but some Democrats as well. Cleveland, never one to shrink from disagreeable duty, courageously recommended such a remedy in his first annual message to Congress. Is he really hostile to protection? Why does he single out a certain class of items for reduction?

The fact that our revenues are in excess of the actual needs of an economical administration of the government justifies a reduction in the amount exacted from the people for its support. Our government is but the means established by the will of a free people, by which certain principles are applied which they have adopted for their benefit and protection. And it is never better administered, and its true spirit is never better observed, than when the people's taxation for its support is scrupulously

*If a man's father or grandfather could have voted on January 1, 1867, he did not have to meet other voting requirements.

¹J. D. Richardson, ed., *Messages and Papers of the Presidents* (New York: Bureau of National Literature, 1897), vol. 8, p. 341.

Race Divides the South

1. A Southern Senator Defends Jim Crow (1900)

Following Rutherford B. Hayes's election, the last federal troops were withdrawn from the South, and Reconstruction effectively ended. The white South proceeded rapidly to roll back the political, economic, and social gains that the freedmen had achieved with federal help in the Reconstruction era. In the following speech, a notorious racist, South Carolina senator "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman, unabashedly defends the disfranchisement of African Americans and mocks the philanthropic educational work of northern whites in the South. On what premises about Africans and African Americans does his defense rest? What is his attitude toward the institution of slavery itself?

The slaves of the South were a superior set of men and women to freedmen of today, and . . . the poison in their minds—the race hatred of the whites—is the result of the teachings of Northern fanatics. Ravishing a woman, white or black, was never known to occur in the South till after the Reconstruction era. So much for that phase of the subject. . . .

As white men we are not sorry . . . for anything we have done. . . . We took the government away from [the carpetbag Negro government] in 1876. We did take it. If no other Senator has come here previous to this time who would acknowledge it, more is the pity. We have had no fraud in our elections in South Carolina since 1884. There has been no organized Republican party in the State.

We did not disfranchise the Negroes until 1895. Then we had a constitutional convention convened which took the matter up calmly, deliberately, and avowedly with the purpose of disfranchising as many of them as we could under the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. We adopted the educational qualification as the only means left to us, and the Negro is as contented and as prosperous and as well protected in South Carolina to-day as in any State of the Union south of the Potomac. He is not meddling with politics, for he found that the more he meddled with them the worse off he got. As to his "rights"—I will not discuss them now. We of the South have never recognized the right of the Negro to govern white men, and we never will. We have never believed him to be equal to the white man, and we will not submit to his gratifying his lust on our wives and daughters without lynching him. I would to God the last one of them was in Africa, and that none of them had ever been brought to our shores. . . .

Some people have been ready to believe and to contend that the Negro is a white man with a black skin. All history disproves that. Go to Africa. What do you find there? From one hundred and fifty million to two hundred million savages.

I happened in my boyhood, when I was about 12 years old, to see some real Africans fresh from their native jungles. The last cargo of slaves imported into this country were brought here in 1858 on the yacht *Wanderer*, landed on an island below Savannah, and sneaked by the United States marshal up the Savannah River and landed a little distance below Augusta, and my family bought some thirty of them.

Therefore I had a chance to see just what kind of people these were, and to compare the African as he is to-day in Africa with the African who, after two centuries of slavery, was brought side by side to be judged. The difference was as "Hyperion to a satyr." Those poor wretches, half starved as they had been on their voyage across the Atlantic, shut down and battened under the hatches and fed a little rice, several hundred of them, were the most miserable lot of human beings—the nearest to the missing link with the monkey—I have ever put my eyes on. . . .

Then if God in His providence ordained slavery and had these people transported over here for the purpose of civilizing enough of them to form a nucleus and to become missionaries back to their native heath, that is a question. . . . But the thing I want to call your attention to is that slavery was not an unmitigated evil for the Negro, because whatever of progress the colored race has shown itself capable of achieving has come from slavery; and whether among those four million there were not more good men and women than could be found among the nine million now is to my mind a question. I would not like to assert it; but I am strongly of that belief from the facts I know in regard to the demoralization that has come to those people down there by having liberty thrust upon them in the way it was, and then having the ballot and the burdens of government, and being subjected to the strain of being tempted and misled and duped and used as tools by designing white men who went there among them. . . .

All of the millions that are being sent there by Northern philanthropy has been but to create an antagonism between the poorer classes of our citizens and these people upon whose level they are in the labor market. There has been no contribution to elevate the white people in the South, to aid and assist the Anglo-Saxon Americans, the men who are descended from the people who fought with Marion and Sumter.* They are followed to struggle in poverty and in ignorance, and to do everything they can to get along, and they see Northern people pouring in thousands and thousands to help build up an African domination.

2. A Spokesman for the "New South" Describes Race Relations in the 1880s (1889)

Henry W. Grady, editor of the Atlanta Constitution, championed the cause of the "new South"—a South that would emulate its northern neighbors by industrializing and modernizing its economy. Grady and other new South advocates knew that they needed the goodwill, the markets, and the capital of the North if they were to succeed. Overshadowing northern attitudes toward the region was the question of race relations in the decades after slavery's end. In the following speech delivered in Boston in 1889, how does Grady describe the condition of the recently emancipated African Americans? Why did the North generally prove willing to believe him and to acquiesce in the discriminatory arrangements that were directed against blacks?

*Francis Marion and Thomas Sumter were American military heroes in the South during the American War of Independence.

I thank God as heartily as you do that human slavery is gone forever from the American soil.

But the freedman remains. With him a problem without precedent or parallel. Note its appalling conditions. Two utterly dissimilar races on the same soil; with equal political and civil rights, almost equal in numbers but terribly unequal in intelligence and responsibility; each pledged against fusion, one for a century in servitude to the other and freed at last by a desolating war; the experiment sought by neither, but approached by both with doubt—these are the conditions. Under these, adverse at every point, we are required to carry these two races in peace and honor to the end. Never, sir, has such a task been given to mortal stewardship. Never before in this republic has the white race divided on the rights of an alien race. The red man was cut down as a weed because he hindered the way of the American citizen. The yellow man was shut out of this republic because he is an alien and inferior. The red man was owner of the land, the yellow man highly civilized and assimilable—but they hindered both sections and are gone!

But the black man, affecting but one section, is clothed with every privilege of government and pinned to the soil, and my people commanded to make good at any hazard and at any cost, his full and equal heirship of American privilege and prosperity. . . . It matters not that no two races, however similar, have lived anywhere, at any time, on the same soil with equal rights in peace. In spite of these things we are commanded to make good this change of American policy which has not perhaps changed American prejudice; to make certain here what has elsewhere been impossible between whites and blacks; and to reverse, under the very worst conditions, the universal verdict of racial history. And driven, sir, to this superhuman task with an impatience that brooks no delay, a rigor that accepts no excuse, and a suspicion that discourages frankness and sincerity. . . .

We give to the world this year a crop of 7,500,000 bales of cotton, worth \$45 million, and its cash equivalent in grain, grasses, and fruit. This enormous crop could not have come from the hands of sullen and discontented labor. It comes from peaceful fields, in which laughter and gossip rise above the hum of industry and contentment runs with the singing plow.

It is claimed that this ignorant labor is defrauded of its just hire. I present the tax books of Georgia, which show that the Negro, twenty-five years ago a slave, has in Georgia alone \$10 million of assessed property, worth twice that much. Does not that record honor him and vindicate his neighbors? What people, penniless, illiterate, has done so well? For every Afro-American agitator, stirring the strife in which alone he prospers, I can show you a thousand Negroes, happy in their cabin homes, tilling their own land by day, and at night taking from the lips of their children the helpful message their state sends them from the schoolhouse door.

And the schoolhouse itself bears testimony. In Georgia we added last year \$250,000 to the school fund, making a total of more than \$1 million—and this in the face of prejudice not yet conquered—of the fact that the whites are assessed for \$368 million, the blacks for \$10 million, and yet 49 percent of their beneficiaries are black children—and in the doubt of many wise men if education helps, or can help, our problem. Charleston, with her taxable values cut half in two since 1860, pays more in proportion for public schools than Boston. . . .

Go into our fields and see whites and blacks working side by side, on our buildings in the same squad, in our shops at the same forge. Often the blacks crowd the whites from work, or lower wages by greater need or simpler habits, and yet are permitted because we want to bar them from no avenue in which their feet are fitted to tread. They could not there be elected orators of the white universities, as they have been here, but they do enter there a hundred useful trades that are closed against them here. We hold it better and wiser to tend the weeds in the garden than to water the exotic in the window.

In the South, there are Negro lawyers, teachers, editors, dentists, doctors, preachers, multiplying with the increasing ability of their race to support them. In villages and towns they have their military companies equipped from the armories of the state, their churches and societies built and supported largely by their neighbors. What is the testimony of the courts? In penal legislation we have steadily reduced felonies to misdemeanors, and have led the world in mitigating punishment for crime that we might save, as far as possible, this dependent race from its own weakness. . . . In the North, one Negro in every 466 is in jail; in the South only one in 1,865. . . . If prejudice wrongs him in Southern courts, the record shows it to be deeper in Northern courts. . . .

Now, Mr. President, can it be seriously maintained that we are terrorizing the people from whose willing hands come every year \$1 billion of farm crops? Or have robbed a people, who twenty-five years from unrewarded slavery have amassed in one state \$20 million of property?

Or that we intend to oppress the people we are arming every day? Or deceive them when we are educating them to the utmost limit of our ability? Or outlaw them when we work side by side with them? Or reenslave them under legal forms when for their benefit we have imprudently narrowed the limit of felonies and mitigated the severity of law? . . .

When will the black cast a free ballot? When ignorance anywhere is not dominated by the will of the intelligent; when the laborer anywhere casts a vote unhindered by his boss; when the vote of the poor anywhere is not influenced by the power of the rich; when the strong and the steadfast do not everywhere control the suffrage of the weak and shiftless—then and not till then will the ballot of the Negro be free. . . .

Here is this vast ignorant and purchasable vote—clannish, credulous, impulsive, and passionate—tempting every art of the demagogue, but insensible to the appeal of the statesman. . . . It must remain a faction, strong enough in every community to control on the slightest division of the whites. Under that division it becomes the prey of the cunning and unscrupulous of both parties. . . .

It is against such campaigns as this—the folly and the bitterness and the danger of which every Southern community has drunk deeply—that the white people of the South are banded together. Just as you in Massachusetts would be banded if 300,000 black men—not one in a hundred able to read his ballot—banded in a race instinct, holding against you the memory of a century of slavery, taught by your late conquerors to distrust and oppose you, had already travestied legislation from your statehouse, and in every species of folly or villainy had wasted your substance and exhausted your credit. . . .

3. An African American Minister Answers Henry Grady (1890)

The Reverend Joshua A. Brockett, pastor of St. Paul's African Methodist Episcopal Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was deeply offended by Grady's description of life in the South and made this reply in January 1890. To which of Grady's arguments is his response most vigorous? Why do those particular issues bother him? What are his most telling rebuttals?

Henry W. Grady, of Atlanta, Ga., delivered an address before the Boston Merchants' Association at their annual banquet, on Thursday evening, December 13, 1889. . . . In that address, beneath the glamor of eloquence, the old rebel spirit, and the old South is seen throughout. In every expression of every line in which the Negro is mentioned the old spirit of Negro hatred is manifest. . . .

The gentleman asks the question when will the black cast a free ballot? His reply is, when ignorance anywhere is not dominated by the will of the intelligent; when the laborer casts his vote unhindered by his boss; when the strong and steadfast do not everywhere control the suffrage of the weak and shiftless. Then and not till then will the Negro be free. He also says that the Negro vote can never again control in the South. He asks of the North, "Can we solve this question?" and answers, "God knows."

Consistency, thou art a jewel! It is declared that the Negro is peaceful and industrious on the one hand, weak and shiftless on the other. If he is peaceful surely the South has small need to fear an uprising. Politics, then, is the only source whence danger can come to the whites. If the black vote is never to control again, why should Mr. Grady state that the condition of the people is fraught with danger from the presence of a shiftless people? Whence the need of that wail for sympathy, if, as Mr. Grady says, the colored man must down, and the white partisan might as well understand it? If the colored man is never to rise, why waste so much eloquence upon a useless subject? The problem is already solved.

Mr. Grady asserts that nearly one-half of the school fund is used to educate the Negro. If the South is leagued together to maintain itself against this beleaguering black host, why educate it?

Has Mr. Grady to learn that education and power are inseparable? I will give Mr. Grady fair warning if they continue to give one-half or thereabouts to the school fund to educate a black man, then he will rise against the greatest odds that the South can oppose; not God alone, but even I know when the black man will be free.

Mr. Grady says that the Negro has not a basis upon which to rest his political conviction, and that of 300,000 voters, not 1 in 100 can read his ballot. That is a splendid compliment to the educational system which costs the South so dear. Either the South is amazingly stupid to pay so dearly for such meager results, or the Negro is incapable of learning, or the money is not paid.

Mr. Grady states that the Negro, by every species of villainy and folly, has wasted his substance and exhausted his credit. By the side of that statement I will

³Philadelphia Christian Recorder, January 16, 1890.

place another of Mr. Grady's statements, namely, that from the Negroes' willing hands comes \$1 billion of farm crops. If the latter statement is true, then the character of the Negro in the former statement has been falsified. Does Mr. Grady desire to make a strong case against this villainous race at the expense of the truth? And if the former statement is true, that the Negro is villainously wasteful, the \$1 billion crops are but a creation of fancy, and the Northern sons with their modest patrimony would do well to remain standing in their doors, or turn their gaze in any direction but southward.

Again, with childlike innocence, Mr. Grady asks, can it be seriously maintained that we are terrorizing the people from whose willing hands comes every year \$1 billion in crops? Or that we have robbed a people who, twenty-five years from unrewarded slavery, have amassed in one state \$20 million worth of property?

In Georgia, Mr. Grady's own state, the Negro's real wealth accumulated since the war, is \$20 million. Its population of Negroes is 725,132. Twenty millions of dollars divided among that number will give to each person \$27.58. Upon the same basis of calculation the total wealth of the Negro in the 15 Southern states, including the District of Columbia, is \$146,189,834. The colored population of these states is 5,305,149. It seems an enormous sum. In those 15 states the Negro has, by the exceedingly friendly aid of their best friends, amassed a fortune of \$1 a year.

Should they not, because of this rapid accumulation of wealth, balance their little account, clutch to the mule, jog down the furrow, and let the world wag on?

Look now for a moment at those billion-dollar yearly crops accumulating for 27 years, giving us the almost inconceivable sum of \$27 billion, which, divided between a number of whites equal to that of blacks, each one would from this \$27 billion, receive \$5,089.39. Thus the blacks receive for their willing toil through 27 years \$27.58, while the whites receive \$5,089.39. These are both sides of the Grady picture of Negro wealth which was intended to deceive the North. Gaze upon it. . . .

4. Booker T. Washington Portrays the Plight of Black Tenant Farmers (1889)

In the late nineteenth century, most southern blacks remained unskilled agricultural workers—especially in the cotton fields—just as they had been under slavery. Many became tenant farmers, renting plots of land from big landholders and paying their rent by the delivery of some share of their crops. Financing for the tenant farmers was often provided by local merchants, who were also often their landlords. Frequently criticized as shiftless and lacking in ambition, tenant farmers (white as well as black) were among the poorest and sorriest southerners in the post-Civil War years. Here noted black leader Booker T. Washington describes their plight, and especially the role of the merchant in perpetuating it. What are the most objectionable features of the system Washington depicts?

⁴Booker T. Washington to George W. Cable, October 8, 1889, as reprinted in *Journal of Negro History* 17 (April 1948). Reprinted by permission of The Associated Publishers, Inc.

5. A Southern Black Woman Reflects on the Jim Crow System (1902)

Political disfranchisement and economic impoverishment were not the only penalties endured by southern blacks after Reconstruction ended. Blacks felt the stigma of discrimination and restriction in all aspects of social life. How did "Jim Crow" affect the life of this southern black woman? How—or why—did she put up with the conditions she describes?

... I am a colored woman, wife and mother. I have lived all my life in the South, and have often thought what a peculiar fact it is that the more ignorant the Southern whites are of us the more vehement they are in their denunciation of us. They boast that they have little intercourse with us, never see us in our homes, churches or places of amusement, but still they know us thoroughly.

They also admit that they know us in no capacity except as servants, yet they say we are at our best in that single capacity. What philosophers they are! The Southerners say we Negroes are a happy, laughing set of people, with no thought of tomorrow. How mistaken they are! The educated, thinking Negro is just the opposite. There is a feeling of unrest, insecurity, almost panic among the best class of Negroes in the South. In our homes, in our churches, wherever two or three are gathered together, there is a discussion of what is best to do. Must we remain in the South or go elsewhere? Where can we go to feel that security which other people feel? Is it best to go in great numbers or only in several families? These and many other things are discussed over and over. . . .

I know of houses occupied by poor Negroes in which a respectable farmer would not keep his cattle. It is impossible for them to rent elsewhere. All Southern real estate agents have "white property" and "colored property." In one of the largest Southern cities there is a colored minister, a graduate of Harvard, whose wife is an educated, Christian woman, who lived for weeks in a tumble-down rookery because he could neither rent nor buy in a respectable locality.

Many colored women who wash, iron, scrub, cook or sew all the week to help pay the rent for these miserable hovels and help fill the many small mouths, would deny themselves some of the necessaries of life if they could take their little children and teething babies on the cars to the parks of a Sunday afternoon and sit under trees, enjoy the cool breezes and breathe God's pure air for only two or three hours; but this is denied them. Some of the parks have signs, "No Negroes allowed on these grounds except as servants." Pitiful, pitiful customs and laws that make war on women and babes! There is no wonder that we die; the wonder is that we persist in living.

Fourteen years ago I had just married. My husband had saved sufficient money to buy a small home. On account of our limited means we went to the suburbs, on unpaved streets, to look for a home, only asking for a high, healthy locality. Some real estate agents were "sorry, but had nothing to suit," some had "just the thing," but we discovered on investigation that they had "just the thing" for an unhealthy pigsty. Others had no "colored property." One agent said that he had what we

⁵"The Negro Problem: How It Appears to a Southern Colored Woman," *The Independent* 54 (September 18, 1902).