

absolute defiance of the spirit of the law of the Thirteenth Amendment.

This is perfectly well known. The United States Government once, quite by mistake, ran afoul of it. It was trying to stop the peonage of Italians when its over-zealous prosecuting officer ran across this slavery of Negroes; but after a few desultory prosecutions Mr. Taft succeeded in hushing this up.

To understand the situation look at your map of Georgia. Worth, Lee and Early Counties are all in the black belt. These three counties have 18,000 white people and 31,000 colored people. Most of the white people are in the small towns; most of the colored people are in the country. The business of the white people is to make the colored people raise cotton. We quote a southern white man, C. D. Rivers, of Somerville, Va.: "The *Times* only the other day carried an account of an overseer in southwest Georgia, named Villipigue, who, with his wife, were the only whites living among a great Negro population on a big plantation. This overseer was killed because he had thrashed a Negro boy for some impudent reply made to the overseer. A mob of whites gathered and armed and a reign of terror was precipitated among the Negroes for miles around. Their secret society halls were burned, a church was burned, cabins were burned and several Negroes shot. Villipigue, the overseer, would not have whipped this boy had he been white. Perhaps had the boy been white his words would not have been considered impudent at all. Again, had Villipigue not been an overseer, charged with making the Negroes produce cotton, there would have been no reason for the altercation, and none would have happened. But sir, these overseers, throughout this vast black belt of cotton plantations are expected to do with the Negroes, to get results from them in the

form of cotton produced at the least possible cost, which cannot be got from whites or blacks, except by unrelenting harshness. These overseers are in the position of a lion tamer in a den of lions. To hold their positions and to get the cotton made, they are obliged to use measures which are unknown to the law. Villipigue violated the law when he whipped the Negro boy. Of course, there was no redress for the Negro boy, for who thinks a jury controlled and in sympathy with the black belt plantation interests could dare to punish an overseer for whipping a Negro for impudence? To punish overseers for whipping saucy Negroes would amount to turning over the black belt cotton plantations to the Negroes, who would make much less cotton if released from the rule of the overseer. Yes, but it is expecting too much of any sort of human nature to expect that Negroes to whom redress at law is impossible will not avenge themselves for the whipping of their own members, especially their boys.

"And as much as possible to prevent the Negroes from taking revenge it is absolutely necessary that they should always be kept in mind of swift and terrible penalties which wait not for the slow movements of the law but stand ever ready to strike them. The authority which the overseers and owners of these plantations are obliged to exert over the Negro workers cannot be sustained by the law. There must be extra-legal means always in reach and this extra-legal means is the mob, always ready to inflict capital punishment upon Negroes violating that code which arises upon the relations of blacks and whites in the black belt. Consider the immense territory over which these conditions prevail and the immense white population affected by them, and the power and the influence of the interests which are protected by lynch law, and you

may see how difficult it is to suppress lynch law."

"The power and the influence of the interests which are protected by lynch law!" There you have the whole modern government of the black belt with the South in its naked nastiness. Small wonder that the President of the United States is "protesting" against the Armenian atrocities of the Turks. We trust that A. Rustem Bey will answer that protest.



FROM A FRIEND

IN enclosing a check for one hundred dollars for the work of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Helen Keller, the wonderful blind girl, herself born in Alabama, writes us as follows:

"It has been my intention to write to you every day since I received your letter—an appeal which smote me to the depths of my soul. In fact, I have started several letters while traveling from place to place, but was interrupted so frequently that I lost the thread of thought between lectures. We are speaking every night, and changing trains constantly. These conditions are not favorable for correspondence.

"I am indeed whole-heartedly with you and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. I warmly endorse your efforts to bring before the country the facts about the unfair treatment of the colored people in some parts of the United States. What a comment upon our social justice is the need of an association like yours! It should bring the blush of shame to the face of every true American to know that ten millions of his countrymen are denied the equal protection of the laws. Truly no nation can live and not challenge such discrimination and violence against innocent members of society as your letter describes. Nay, let me say it, this great repub-

lic of ours is a mockery when citizens in any section are denied the rights which the Constitution guarantees them, when they are openly evicted, terrorized and lynched by prejudiced mobs, and their persecutors and murderers are allowed to walk abroad unpunished. The United States stands shamed before the world whilst ten millions of the people remain victims of a most blind, stupid, inhuman prejudice. How dare we call ourselves Christians? The outrages against the colored people are a denial of Christ. The central fire of His teaching is equality. His gospel proclaims in unequivocal words that the souls of all men are alike before God. Yet there are persons calling themselves Christians who profit from the economic degradation of their colored fellow-countrymen.

"Ashamed in my very soul I behold in my own beloved southland the tears of those who are oppressed, those who must bring up their sons and daughters in bondage, to be servants because others have their fields and vineyards, and on the side of the oppressor is power. I feel with those suffering, toiling millions. I am thwarted with them. Every attempt to keep them down and crush their spirit is a betrayal of my faith that good is stronger than evil, and light stronger than darkness. I declare this faith every day to large audiences, and in my heart I pray that God may open the eyes of the blind and bring them by a way they know not to understanding and righteousness. My spirit groans with all the deaf and blind of the world. I feel their chains chafing my limbs. I am disenfranchised with every wage-slave. I am overthrown, hurt, oppressed, beaten to the earth by the strong, ruthless ones who have taken away their inheritance. The wrongs the poor endure ring fiercely in my soul, and I shall never rest until they