

fought as often as any and amid more galling humiliation than all others to preserve it. It is truly his country; he knows no other; and consequently the government has always received his fealty.

All this has been unqualifiedly true until very recently, in fact until the violent hysteria created and developed by the hate-doctors of the war began to envelop the subject of the Negro's loyalty. The national government, spurred on by a vigilant and vigorous red-heresy hunting Department of Justice, then began to grow a bit suspicious of this supinely loyal individual. It had not the remotest notion apparently that its own mortifying and discriminatory treatment of black soldiers might be the near-at-hand source of its suspicion. Instead, it dispatched blandly innocuous emissaries to France to dole out doses of oporific pap to supposedly "uppish" black men in trenches. Certain Negro periodicals were hailed before the all-powerful censor, promptly diagnosed as "red" or near-red, and were barred from the mails or reprimanded accordingly. At the same time, that pet phrase which is always so blatantly and brutally heralded abroad in times of superheated one-hundred percentism appeared everywhere, namely, "This is a white man's country". And, curiously and inconsistently enough, the loyalty of the American Negro now received widespread public praise. It was suddenly discovered that he had never produced an anarchist, presidential assassin, traitor or bolshevist. In every war he had unflinchingly done his duty, from Boston to Carrizal. In the present war he had responded unflinchingly, doing his bit in munition plant, shipyard, Liberty Loan and other drives, in labor battalions, in the trenches, etc., etc., to make the world safe for democracy. Paid government speakers spilled this fulsome stuff all over the country, while the Negro abroad was being told to return home as a Negro should, quietly, take and keep a Negro's place when he got there, and remember that this is still a white man's country. Down in Dixie he had to endure still another time, from the lips of possible lynchers, the nauseating recital of devoted "mammies" and faithful old black retainers as sole protectors of lone white females during the Civil War.

But if the government was somewhat suspicious, the Republican party slept. And it still sleeps. No intimation that its

hitherto steadfast ally might conceivably have a grievance threatening the peace of relations between them seems to penetrate its pachydermatous body. The G. O. P., so far as the American Negro is concerned, lives in the seventies, and is serenely confident that it holds his vote in its hand, not by force mind you, but as a gladly voluntary offering.

The benevolent old elephant is in for a rude jolt. For the Negro knows, and those fortunate whites who associate with him on the level of ordinary human intercourse must have heard, that there is today on his part a widely extended and growing determination to forget party completely and to remember both the man who favors him and the man who does not favor him. And he does not mean personal favors either. For while he recognizes that the party may give Bill a job here mopping corridors, and Tom one there polishing cuspidors, that Dr. B. A. Blank may receive the Liberian Ministry and Hon. A. B. See the headship of some functionless second-hand bureau, yet he also recognizes that the condition of the American Negro as a mass remains unimproved, unheeded, uncared for. He recognizes further that these same things can and do happen under a Democratic regime. Consequently, so far as he is concerned, party distinctions vanish.

And so he plans to give some intelligent direction to his political loyalty. This purpose bodes ill for the Republican Party. Mountainous grievances which the party, implicitly or explicitly, promised to redress remain. The Dyer Bill has been chloroformed. Segregation everywhere grows apace. Disfranchisement flaunts itself nakedly unashamed, yet no reduction of Congressional representation proportionate with dead votes is made. Jim Crow stalks boldly even in Washington itself. Peonage is unsuppressed. Hundreds of minor wrongs go absolutely unnoticed. Yet the administration is Republican!

Now precisely in the fact that the Negro is definitely concluding to abandon party lines lies the danger that his loyalty to the American Government may succumb. For no longer willing or able fairly to blame the party for his wrongs, his censure shifts to the American people. Moreover, depressing comparisons of the country's contradictory conduct in practically similar situations encourage his growing alienation. He

is roasted alive and tortured in East St. Louis, *Illinois*; little is done, while well-meaning uplifters send social workers not to Christianize the aggressors, but to civilize their victims. At Herrin, *Illinois*, his pale brother is done to death, the president publicly puts pressure on the State, "blot-erasing" committees whirl through every county defending the honor of their commonwealth, and an aroused public opinion rapidly sets the legal machinery in motion. Again, United States marines continue to overawe Black Haiti, the turbulent, while they are withdrawn from Santo Domingo, the turbulent. Furthermore, diverse intolerable sufferings for which no party, or rather all parties, should be held responsible are heaped upon him. Gruesome riots break out in cities here and there, and having no assurance that the agents of the government, the police, will not join the rioters against him, he is saved, not by government, but by himself. Violent race-hating mobs lynch him, burn him, emasculate him, whip him, deport him, imprison and enslave him. The American people remain all but completely indifferent, while everywhere arise proscriptions, everywhere close avenues of employment, everywhere narrows his opportunity to enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Encircled everywhere, with no outlet freely offered, the alternatives are perish or break out. And that is how the Negro is beginning to think. The race that can now proudly assert that it has never produced an anarchist may be painfully surprised some day with a finished article in that line when its wrongs already can bring a youth madly to his feet, tears streaming down his cheeks, his voice choking as he says: "Put a bomb under the ——— and blow it to hell; that'll make 'em notice." The group that rejoices in the fact that it has never included a political

assassin may yet be profoundly abased to own one when even now a deeply embarrassed guest refused service at a hotel can be counselled to "take an ax and smash some of that damned plate glass. They'll jail you, but they'll take notice". And the most pathetically loyal people God has ever created may yet bring forth what men call a traitor when they begin to believe that it is rather fear of personal consequences than adherence to convictions that has so often led them uncomplaining to the slaughter for a nation from which they have suffered and do suffer apparently unending wrongs.

Hence, as the American Negro reviews his desperate predicament in this country, he is now subjecting his own attitude to the powers that be to the severest scrutiny. In so far as that predicament is chargeable to the Republican Party, he is gradually but surely resolving to withdraw his support. And in so far as that predicament is chargeable to the American people, regardless of party, he is gradually but surely being led along a line of harshly condemnatory thought which portends serious impairment, if not absolute nullification, of his attachment to the American nation.

For loyalty, to abide, must have its basis in self-interest, whether that be expressed as class, race, national, or broadly human interest. This is the secret of the Negro's constancy to the Republican Party and of his impending rupture with it. But no man expects or is expected to be loyal to that which is inimical to the interests of himself or his fellows. For example, who would expect Armenians to be loyal to the Turks? That the time may never come when men everywhere will not expect the American Negro to be loyal to America should be the prayer and the work of every person who professes to love this country.

MAYBE

B. B. CHURCH



VAINLY you wonder why sun, moon and star,—

Pageant illuminate,—

Never disclose what their destinies are;

Seldom reveal what their distances bar.

Mysteries fascinate.

Then, maybe you err when you try to unfold
All that my heart would speak—

Better the faith of the knight of old,
Ending his quest with a cup of gold—
Love is the boon I seek.