

States, who had borne the heat and burthen of this rebellion. If disorganization and a division of the spoils among the victors, including the control of the States themselves, was the recognized policy of the Government, surely we had no right to prefer the negro as the sole recipient of these princely bounties. There was no claim of justice or humanity which entitled him to precedence over our own race. In proclaiming freedom everywhere—in severing the chains which bound him—in opening to him the avenues of improvement and education, to fit him for a higher destiny, and the full benefit and protection of our laws, both as to person and property, we discharged our whole duty to the negro. We made him free, in all else but sharing with him the government of the country.

The distinctive characteristics and admitted antagonism of the two races, cannot be lost sight of in the settlement of these grave issues. In discussing the claim of universal negro suffrage, we must understand, in the very outset, the effect of the measure in its full bearing upon the Southern and Border States. It matters not, in some of the States, whether the negro is invested with the right to vote or not. The exercise of suffrage causes no disturbance of existing relations. If we admit his right to vote, we cannot justly exclude him from our representative halls—from the government of our States and Cities—and every other privilege known to our laws. The right to vote assumes the exercise of the power, thus conferred, for the exclusive benefit of his own race. The effect, then, of universal negro suffrage, is the virtual transfer of the Southern States and Southern territory, and it may be some of the Border States, to the ultimate possession and control of the negro; it is the substitution of the African for the Anglo-Saxon race, in a large section of our national domain.

With the Southern and Middle States, perhaps our own, this issue of negro suffrage is a subject of the gravest import. Massachusetts, with her nine or ten thousand negroes, in an aggregate population of twelve hundred thousand souls—Maine, with her six hundred in an aggregate of more than thirteen hundred thousand—Vermont, seven hundred in an aggregate of more than three hundred thousand—New Hampshire, five hundred in an aggregate of more than five hundred thousand, and other Free States standing in the same numerical relation, would hardly claim to approach this issue from a common stand-point, even with our own State. The loyal men of the South, admitted to be ever so limited in number, stand in no relation which would justify, even if the power existed under the Constitution, the forcible surrender of their country into the hands of the African race.