

claims at this hour, or will command in the annals of the future, a prouder record. Not content to yield up her sons a sacrifice upon the altar of the country, she took in advance a step towards the extinction of that fatal cause of contention which culminated in the recent conflict of arms. The first note of freedom went forth from these Halls, proclaiming that within the limits of this old Commonwealth, at least, human bondage should no longer exist. Since then other States have wheeled into line, until it has become morally certain that, if in after years rebellion should ever again lift its hideous front upon American soil, it will find no rallying centre upon the question of slavery. With the extinction of this great evil, and the brilliant vista of prosperity which that act opens before us, are presented unfulfilled duties and obligations to the emancipated people within our borders which we cannot, which we dare not overlook, if we would—the prompt consideration of which is demanded by every principle of humanity, advancing civilization, and an enlightened public opinion. I allude not here to the question of SUFFRAGE. However correct the affirmative theory, it is evident that the time for legislation upon this subject has not arrived in this country yet—and certainly not in this State. The problem must be left to work out its own solution. But independent of this are obligations to the colored people of which we must acquit ourselves, at once, and which are the logical sequences of emancipation.

Not only should they enjoy ample protection in person and property, but also in the courts of justice, where the common rights of manhood have been and are shamefully ignored. *The testimony of the negro should be placed upon the same platform with that of the white man, to be judged of by the same modes of weighing the value of evidence.* This is demanded, both for the general ends of justice and the special protection of those common individual rights which, under our laws, the black man has not shared.

At the same time that he may properly appreciate the new relations to which he has advanced, the colored man should unquestionably possess the benefits of *education*. Already much has been accomplished by benevolent private associations towards improving the minds and elevating the morals of this unfortunate class of our population. The State should, for its own credit's sake, take measures at once to provide for this common want of humanity. There is nothing to be apprehended from the education of any part of the community. On the contrary, the enlightenment of the least portion, however insignificant, proportionably improves the whole; and *vice versa*.

No apology is necessary, I am sure, for treating more in detail than is customary the absorbing questions of the hour.