

Negroes of New York

By  
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Rev. Thomas Dixon, Jr. <sup>a</sup> Race Hatred Inc.

At the turn of the century with the spectacle of Negroes beginning to find at long last their place in America's industrial and political scene as individualists, there arose from the dregs of intellectual morass the first of the articulate purveyors of race hatred. It was quite typical that this salesman would be a recognized member of the South's reactionary landlord class, <sup>a</sup> descendant of Confederate officers, and a relative of the Ku Klux Klan's leadership. As if this were insufficient background, the "gentlemen" had secured his reputation as a clergyman in the wealthiest of the Baptist churches. Truly an excellent spokesman for his vicious masters.

Thomas Dixon, Jr., was born in Cleveland County, North Carolina, on January 11, 1864. His father, the Baptist minister for the community, performed his paternal duties sufficiently well to eventually have his son pass through the portals of Wake Forest College in North Carolina at the age of nineteen. The student Thomas was then sent to Johns Hopkins to study history and politics. As bright young men with good family connections, he was entered in the political arena and emerged as a member of North Carolina's legislature at the age of twenty even before his suffrage qualifications could be exercised. Voting a straight pro-South policy according to the leaders must have left him plenty of time for his

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efforts, for he began law studies at Greensboro Law School and was admitted to the bar ~~in~~ in 1886. Such industriousness won him the hand of one of the fair flowers etc. Religion proving more lucrative than law or politics, Mr. Dixon secured unto himself the profitable parish within the city of Raleigh, North Carolina. One year later Mr. Dixon sought the more fertile plains of Boston's upper income group. The next year Mr. Dixon was ready for the big town and descended upon New York. in 1889.

The Rev. Mr. Dixon with financial security thus established began thus to concentrate upon the problem closest to his sectional heart -- the Negro problem. His discourses and writings soon produced a large enough following for him to purchase in the language of one <sup>Virginia</sup> newspaper "a truly magnificent estate" of 500 acres near Divondale, Virginia. At long last, the Rev. Dixon could now really claim kinship in the ranks of the plantation clans, for he satisfied all other requirements of family background through one uncle who was the Ku Klux Klan leader in the State Legislature and had once been a Colonel in the Confederacy.

With such leisure at Rev. Dixon's command, it was quite natural that the urge to write creatively should fall upon him. Thus was produced the first of a series of books on the Negro question titled "The Leopard's Spots" for the Negro could never change his skin. <sup>As</sup> /If this were not enough investigating, Mr. Dixon ~~was~~ immediately presented his honest appraisal of the Negro in the South and why the KKK had been such a glorious institution in American history. This he titled, "The Clansman", the second of the series on the Negro question. The topic being such an exceptional one, its dramatization in play form was <sup>an</sup> inevitable conclusion for the author.

The protests which had been raised originally by liberal whites, and by almost every colored organization to the books were redoubled. The Negro question and race hatred as a general controversial issue thus awakened

found that staid conservative publication, The Saturday Evening Post, falling over itself in its haste to secure the opinion of Mr. Thomas Dixon, Jr. Thus on August 19, 1905 there appeared Dixon's views on what the Negro was, and the best solution for getting rid of him because, if permitted to remain, the sensitive Anglo-Saxon Southerners would find economic competition unbearable.

In answer to critics,

~~Briefly~~ Rev. Dixon's views were summed up in a pamphlet issued by the American News Co. which contained his writings in the Sat. Eve. Post plus some additional matter added therein and several short articles on the history of the Klan.

Briefly his views expressed were:

1) At the rate of the present population increase among the Negroes, by the end of the century their number would approximate some 60 millions.

2) This problem "must be squarely met and fought to a finish."

3) For..."the Negro race is a poor, worthless parasite, whose criminal and animal instincts threaten society." And further, contrary to Mr. Booker T. Washington's thesis, "...no scheme of education or religion can solve the race problem (because) ...no amount of education of any kind, industrial, classical or religious, can make a Negro a white man or bridge the chasm of the centuries which separate him from the white man in the evolution of human civilization."

To his critics, Dixon thus addresses them "... Can you change the color of the Negro's skin, the kink of his hair, the bulge of his lip or the beat of his heart with a spelling book or a machine?"

4) Thus establishing that Negroes are Negroes because of physical characteristics and ~~that~~ therefore even their internal organs ~~must~~ must be black and beat black (whatever that means?) causing them to act black. (Note: I must stop at this point lest I, too, drop to Dixon's level. If you want to you can keep on carrying the premise to its conclusion - M.R.)

Proceeding from this point, Dixon explains that the Negro is a really great problem to the white man (his burden ..M.R.) for the Negro was a savage when brought to America's shores, has always been a savage and seemingly will always remain one. <sup>Thus,</sup> ~~Because~~ "the contributions to human African progress made by the ~~Negro~~ people during the past four thousand years amount to absolutely nothing". To strengthen his statement, Dixon then states; "The Negro has held the Continent of Africa since the dawn of <sup>he</sup> history, crunching acres of diamonds beneath his feet. Yet/never picked one up from the dust until a white man showed to him its light. His land swarmed with powerful and docile animals, yet he never built a harness, cart or sled. A hunter by necessity, he never made an ax, spear or arrowhead worth preserving beyond the moment of its use. In a land of stone and timber, he never carved a block, sawed a foot of lumber, or built a house save of broken sticks and mud, and for four thousand years he gazed upon the sea yet never dreamed a sail."

~~After settling the savagry status of the Negro, Dixon questions Booker T. Washington's~~ ~~statement of that Frederick Douglass~~ was the greatest Negro that ever lived. ~~And~~ Regarding Douglass, Dixon states the following: "Frederick Douglas of sainted memory --- and what did Saint Frederick do? Spent a life in bombastic vituperation of the men whose genius created the American Republic, wore himself out finally drawing his salary as a Federal office-holder, and at last achieved the climax of sainthood by marrying a white woman!"

5) Having established ~~this~~ that there never will be a decent colored person according to Dixon's standard's of human beings, he says:

"This creature, with a racial record of four thousand years of incapacity, half-child, half-animal, the sport of impulse, whim and conceit, pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw, a being who, left to his will, roams at night and sleeps in the day, whose native tongue has framed no word of love, whose passions once aroused are as the tiger's --" (a preacher's

oratorical license ! -MR).

6) Considering all of these factors thus far introduced by Mr. Dixon, it is therefore wrong for ~~the American traditions~~ to proclaim the law of equality for the American people regardless of race, creed, or color. Mr. Dixon then continues to ask this of his critics: "when he (the Negro) is educated and ceases to fill his useful sphere as servant and peasant," what should be done with him?

7) Thus if nothing is done to solve the Negro problem in America, the Negro will become a competitor with the white man in the South. If this happens, the Southern white "will do exactly what his white neighbor in the North does when the Negro threatens his bread ---Kill Him!"

8) Faced with this prospect, the Negro must, therefore, seek to lose himself in the white race. On the other hand if the whites are unwilling "to surrender ~~it~~ <sup>they</sup> birtright and sacrifice the purity of the Anglo-Saxon race", ~~it~~ must seek to colonize the Negro people somewhere in Africa thus establishing a colony republic of the U.S.

9) If this is not done, says Dixon, "the lowest type of negro, maddened by these wild doctrines (i.e. social equality) - MR)..(will begin) to grip the throat of the white girl with his black claws."

Upon concluding with this argument, the Rev. Thomas Dixon, Jr., is completely satisfied. From this point on there remains but to foster his viewpoint through his play ---"The Clansmen".

That he succeeded in arousing the <sup>Southern</sup> ruling class lynch spirit to a new pitch was seen by the startling rise in the total number of lynchings recorded within two years after the production of his play.

Source: The Clansmen, by Thomas Dixon, Jr., 1905, American News Co., N.Y.

NBF p.v. 3 ( 42 nd St. Library)

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