

such a result. The reason given by our debasers, when attempting to justify themselves in regarding us socially so grossly inferior is, that it always has been their policy to do so, and hence it will always be. This remark refers to the fact that they regarded us thus during slavery as a ground upon which they justified slavery, and as they have experienced no change of mind they will continue thus to regard us. Your committee arrived at this conclusion : that if our former owners deny our social equality, they cannot be expected to be swift in respecting our legal equality or equality before the law ; for it is the social regard one has for another as a member of society, which impels him to protect and accord unto such a one his legal rights. Hence, if there be a class who socially regard us less favorably than they do other races, to an extent that they are prejudiced, such a class certainly are indifferent as to whether we obtain our legal rights or not. Accordingly, social disregard may well imply absolute indifference as to another's legal rights, but never that *mutual* regard which is supposed to possess citizens of a common country. It is a true rule that the degree to which any right is enjoyed as a citizen, is measured by the willingness of the whole body of citizens to protect such a right ; if there is lack of regard there is, therefore, lack of the will to protect. We find, therefore, that this social disregard is the sole cause of all the infringements upon our rights as a race, as we shall specify :

MISCEGENATION LAW.

Prominent among the enactments in furtherance of this social disregard, is a law of this State punishing as felons all persons who intermarry when one is a descendant of the Negro race and the other is not. The same series of laws impose an insignificant fine only for the same persons to live together in unlawful wedlock, or have carnal intercourse with each other without being married. In most cases, say ninety-nine cases in one hundred, parties of the two races thus unlawfully cohabiting are not even reported, or if reported not punished. And, sad to remark, in many cases officers of the law are disqualified to try such cases ; in many others, those who would in good faith testify against offenders of this class, would do so at the risk of their lives. The result of this series of crimes, tolerated and encouraged by our Criminal Code, which makes pretensions to preserving public morals, common decency and chastity, is to increase immorality in the lower classes of both races to an alarming extent. The law should never imply that a thing otherwise lawful is a felony, and that a thing of the same nature unlawful in itself is less than a felony. Colored females, victims of this well-laid plan, called a law to protect public morals, and common decency and chastity, are severely censured, and our whole race indiscriminately described as a race without morals. A careful consideration of the operation of the law convinces all fair-minded persons, that the law was intended to gratify the basest passions of certain classes of men who do not seek such gratification by means of lawful wedlock. We are pained to an-