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SUNSHINE AND MOONSHINE

By Governor Taylor

EVOLUTION

Darwin, in his celebrated works on the Evolution Theory, maintains that man, together with all the lower animals, sprang originally from a common progenitor, a *mud-fish*, whence, under the operation of the laws of variation, natural selection and heredity, they diverged, and through endless gradations developed into genera and species as we see them to-day. He bases his argument in part on the structural homologics existing between man and all vertebrates down to fishes on the physiological fact that the human lungs consist of a modified form of swim-bladder, whose prototype must have once floated our finny forefathers; and particularly on the further fact that man in the embryonic state bears on the neck, at a certain stage of development, the gill-clefts of a fish; I hardly think we can accept these remote and fishy arguments with a confidence and enthusiasm equal to that of old Uncle Pomp, the colored layman, who, on hearing his pastor tell in his sermon how Jonah swallowed the whale, spoke up in meeting and said: "Brudder Johnsing, I doan doubt dat statement in de leas' kaze dem ole time folks wus death on fish!"

Again, this distinguished scientist maintains that man, in his generic origin, is immediately descended from an ape-like creature, closely allied to the chimpanzee, the orang-outang and the gorilla, and supports his belief on the ground of anatomical analogies and general resemblance. Now, it seems to me if the highest forms of living organisms, together with the highest intelligence, have been evolved from the lowest forms, they must have existed in some state in the lowest from the beginning of life. Turn the eyes of your imagination backward, then, and look through the mists of countless eons, back to the Devonian age and behold King Solomon and Plato and George Washington wallowing in the mire and slime of some pre-Adamic bog. Imagine the divine bard of

THE CHARGE OF THE BLACK SIX HUNDRED

A TEST OF BLOOD

By Thornwell Jacobs

ON board the *General Hunter* the officers of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts were seated at breakfast on the morning of the eighteenth of July, 1863. Captain Simkins, manly and strong, was sipping his coffee, his finely-chiseled features making his comrades think of how the Grecian gods used to come and war with men. There, too, was Colonel Shaw, his light hair falling almost down to his shoulders, a man afraid of nothing save a lie.

"Gentlemen," said he, turning his eyes upon the men assembled around the table, "I am ashamed to mention it, but for several days I have had a strange presentiment. I feel that I shall not be with you after to-night."

"Tut, tut, colonel!" replied Captain Russell, "don't speak so. Our guns have almost ruined the little fort and success is only a matter of a few hours now. Hark to '*Ironsides*' guns."

"Why, we have ten thousand men," broke in Captain Brooks, "and our black regiment will have the chance of their lives to distinguish themselves. Think of the glory and honor it means to them!"

"I hope so, captain," replied Colonel Shaw. "As you said to me yesterday, nothing but the welfare of the Union makes me willing to lead these men against their former masters. The world is watching us," he added, his spirits rising. "We will give the colored troops a chance to show what is in them."

"Amen, colonel," said Captain Brooks. "I am no admirer of the abolitionists, but I am an emancipationist. I believe the South should free her own slaves. It is the causelessness of the rebellion that makes it culpable, and these black men will help us to bring home the lesson."

"And I shall sleep in Wagner to-night," interrupted Captain Russell.

"Ah, Russell," replied the colonel, his presentiment returning, "I fear you speak too truly. Perhaps more than you will sleep in Wagner to-night."

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All day long the great shells from the new "*Ironsides*" and the monitors had been ricochetting upon the waters and bursting over Fort Wagner. All day long the sharpshooters, armed with the new Whitworth rifles, whose telescopic sights made it possible to kill at fifteen hundred yards, had pressed their bruised faces against the gun-stocks and drawn the bead of death with their black-ringed eyes. All day long in the darkened chambers of the casements the men in the fort had stood by the guns till the flesh was weary with labor and the eyes were sickened with blood. Not a man in the fort but knew that it was to be the fiercest charge of the war. The focusing of land artillery and the naval armament of eight great ironclads presaged the sure destruction of the little handful of men inside the besieged fort. For weeks it had been the same thing—the

howling of the guns, the hideous screaming of the shells, the death-dealing whizz of the minie-balls. For weeks General Strong had been directing the great assault, eager to quiet the Abolition press in Massachusetts, which was insistent that Fort Wagner, in the very cradle of secession, should be humbled.

The regiment from Dunvegan, the little town that Ervin McArthur loved, succeeded in reaching the fort in the face of the terrific fire. As they entered to receive a welcome of subdued words and deep, earnest glances that bespoke courage without hope, a shell fell in the midst of six men who had been ordered out on fatigue. Five fell dead. The sixth picked up his sandbag and stepped courageously to the breach. Captain Tait Pearson gripped harder the hand of Ervin McArthur, which he had just taken in warm welcome. "Second relief!"

He gave the order in a steady voice, though the fallen men had been his playmates and McArthur's since early boyhood in the shadows of the Attacoa. Six more men filled the gap. The dead were carried into the bomb-proof, where the surgeon examined them. From the gloomy corners the wounded rose in their cots to learn of the happening. Their grimy faces, eager and haggard, peered through the thick, hazy atmosphere. The chaplain started "Jesus, lover of my soul," and the feeble voices chimed in, but none could pass "Cover my defenseless head," so they broke down there and prayed silently.

All day a very fire of hell rained on the devoted fort. The new "*Ironsides*," proud of being the most formidable ship afloat, led her sister ironclads bravely up, as though they would destroy the land of the men whose invention they were. Gunboat and land batteries joined their forces. In eight hours, which seemed eight ages to both sides, nine thousand shells were hurled upon the little fort, and yet so perfectly had the genius of Lee and Cheves planned the earthworks, only eight men were killed. As the darkness came on there fell a hush. From sea and land the batteries failed of cursing and a quiet reigned, whose profundity bespoke the intensity of the coming storm. After the last echo of the Federal cannon stole off into the distance Captain Pearson and Ervin McArthur mounted the bastion and talked long of Dunvegan, their native town, where the sweetest girls in the Piedmont were dreaming of their soldier lads and every mother thought the cooing of the wood-dove was the booming of cannon in the distance.

A cannon suddenly roared defiance behind them. Instantly the fort, which had sunk to rest, became alive with action. Quick orders were given in hoarse voices. Tait Pearson leaped down to his command. A long line of blue, hastening along the beach in front, showed that the enemy was upon them.

The Fifty-fourth had disembarked and marched through the woods from Pawnee landing. The regiments that were encamped along the line of march greeted them as they passed in double quick with cries of "Well done, men!" and subdued hurrahs of welcome. "Your guns saved the Tenth Connecticut," cried one man, and another called, "A thousand homes in New England will know the story, boys." The black men walked straighter and their eyes glistened with pride.

"We'll be men yet," said one to Fred Douglass' son.

"We *are* men, now," was the confident reply.

They marched six miles and halted to rest. Someone standing near the colors began the song, "When This Cruel War Is Over," and voice after voice took up the refrain, singing softly and melodiously. General Strong rode up and addressed Colonel Shaw. "You may lead the charge tonight," he said, and he saw what he expected—a glad light in the colonel's face. "Your regiment," he continued, looking on the earnest black faces around him, "is in every respect the equal of the others. It is time the question whether or not the negroes can fight as well as the white men was decided. Yours is the best negro regiment in the service and we are to attack tonight the strongest single earthwork

ever known in the history of warfare. The world will watch you to-night, and generals will prove their theories by to-night's fight for a century to come. You may have the honor of leading a charge that will make a part of the world's history. Will you take it?"

For answer Colonel Shaw turned to his men. "Men," he said, "you have heard what General Strong says. You have had no food since morning and if you lead this charge to-night you will not have time now to eat. Will you lead it?"

As the deep murmur of the ocean the reply rolled back: "Yes, sir, colonel, we will—we will!" The tired expression had left their faces and eager enthusiasm and impatience showed in their gleaming eyes.

General Strong addressed the men. "Boys," he said, "I, too, am a Massachusetts man. I am sorry you have to go into the fight tired and hungry, but the men in the fort are tired and hungry, too. There are but three hundred behind those walls and they have been fighting all day. Remember, you are fighting for the honor of your race, a race whose future depends upon you! And remember you are fighting for the honor of the grand old State of Massachusetts!" Pointing to the color-bearer he asked: "If this man falls who will lift the flag and carry it on?"

Colonel Shaw's "I will," echoed by Captain Brooks, was drowned by the deep "I will!" that issued as one volume of sound from throats panting with eagerness for the fray.

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Far out on the sea the fog was gathering. The distant thunder that had shaken the island at intervals all day sounded like a brother shouting to the heavy cannon. Far away towards the west and the blue hills of the Eseeolas the vapory clouds, pierced by the dying sunlight, floated like feathery masses of gold dust. In silence the men marched forward. The bond of patriotic desire drew officers and men close together in spirit, and all believed alike that the great moment of deliverance had arrived for the negro as a race.

"Move in quick time," were the colonel's orders, "till within a hundred yards of the fort. Then double quick and charge. Don't fire on the way up, but bayonet them at their guns. We will take the fort or die there! Forward!"

They marched forward until the gunners in the fort saw the long line of blue-coats and the shot began to fall around the flags. The bearers knew at once that it was the colors that were the object of the fire, especially the white State colors. They began to roll them up, but Captain Brooks saw this action and commanded them left unfurled.

"'Spec the cap' fergits whut kind of balls them is," whispered a man who had been an old slave, to his neighbor.

"They know we're coming," answered the neighbor, a mulatto.

Within five hundred yards of the fort the fearful tornado of iron burst upon them. Shell exploded in the ranks; shot mowed them down; canister, shrapnel and musket balls tore limb from limb and bone from ligament. Like the mad current of an iron river the flames rolled down from Fort Wagner and drove them back, while the batteries on James' Island and from the ever watchful Sumter joined in the rain of death upon the advancing columns. They were literally shot to pieces, yet at first their white leader carried them on. Men with arms shot off crawled over mounds of slain to try with one arm to strike down their enemies. Some hobbled along on one leg and a bleeding stub that they might be among those to mount the ramparts. It was a battle of demoniac desperation. In all the war there was nothing so typical, so full of meaning to the sociologist or the historian. A little garrison, a pitiful handful of men, entrenched within the most impregnable earthwork ever erected, assaulted by a new race, just appearing in history, under the most propitious auspices and watched by the whole world. It was an old race fighting for continued mastery, a new race battling for a new freedom.

And in the front of the battle could be seen the slim figure of Colonel Shaw

making for the ramparts. Followed by Captain Brooks he bounded down and through the ditch, knee-deep in water. Up, on, to the bastion, over dead men, slipping at every step in their blood, he at last reached the ramparts. With the eye of a victor he looked below him at the hopeless but unflinching little knot of defenders and behind him at his sable followers.

Then he saw what generals of a new race often see. Startled by the galling fire, benumbed with terror at the awful slaughter, his regiment had turned back. Even above the roar of battle he could hear their maniacal cries of fright. As though all hell were behind them, they fled before the vivid flames of death, hundreds falling to be trodden by hundreds. He saw Brooks in frenzied entreaty trying to turn them. He could see the reserves coming up behind, but the sight of his own men in full retreat gave the death-wound to his gallant heart. Standing alone on the ramparts, no command but a world of pathos in his voice, he cried:

"Forward, Fifty-fourth!"

As he spoke he fell—and a good man and a brave soldier perished.

Hour after hour of that hideous night the long battle wore on, till at length the guns ceased for lack of human flesh to destroy. The last blue-coated company had been driven back to the sandhills and the groans of the wounded drowned out the washings of the surf on the shore. Four thousand men had been hurled upon the stubborn little fort, and when their broken lines were reformed scarce six hundred answered to the roll call. The negro soldiers, erstwhile so easily keyed to a pitch of heroism which neither their natures nor their experience could help them to sustain, huddled and cowered shudderingly in dismal groups.

The dawn of the holy Sabbath morning revealed the blood-stained field in all its hideousness. Sand and blood and brains of men were scattered over mounds of dead, and from beneath the ghastly pile pale faces looked pleadingly up and cried for water. At the foot of the bastion, not far from the body of Captain Russell, who had said he would sleep in Wagner that night, lay the youthful colonel, his light hair red with gore. By his side lay the flag he had planted but to fall. They buried him there in a trench with the men who had followed him.