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# The 14th Amendment: A Confession of Faith

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I am not a "New Negro."

This is not merely because my hair is gray and unbobbed; but, to say the truth, I think the New Negro racket has been a bit overdone. I confess I am a trifle weary of it.

Second: I do not want my son or my daughter to marry a white person on the other side of an imaginary line that belts this planet known as the "Color Line." This is not because of any prejudice against race or color on my part. I know that there are individuals on the other side of that amazing line just as good as I am, just as true-hearted, just as noble, just as generous, just as fine. Some of these I have met,—really met, not as one rubs elbows with the hio polloi at a drawing room crush or a yamping, gwap-ing carrousel; but where soul actually reaches out and touches soul in the solitude "a deux," confident that there is no beguiling camouflage, no treacherous quicksands to tempt and destroy the unwary. Yes; friends true and tried I have known and know; but I do not want to marry them nor that any my kith and kin should do so.

Neither on the other hand do I feel it incumbent on me to sheath myself and all my kin with porcupine quills of cruelty and hatred in order to prevent what I do not want and what no one can possibly force me to accept. When, therefore, I see the Army, Navy and Air forces of my grand and glorious country all mobilized and concentrated, getting bolts and bars in place to make a few hoboes keep off the grass, I fall to wondering what it's all about. There seems to be a panic of anticipated bombardment or of an overwhelming invasion and I want to say "There, there—don't take on so. Nobody's going to

marry you! Nobody's axed you Sir, have they? Why this unaccountable distress?"

Third—and I expect in saying this to have to dodge all the God save the mark!) but Third: While guiltless of an inferiority complex, I am not greatly distressed over the fact that I live in a "colored" neighborhood, so long as adequate police protection and those material comforts and services for which I pay taxes are fairly and justly provided. To be quite candid again, "I do not choose" to live among savages, whatever their complexion, and I answer the question "Who is my neighbor?" in language quite different from throwing stones to smash his windows and raising a small riot merely because another's accident of color scheme does not happen to coincide with my own.

Thus much by way of preface.

Not that I imagine for a moment that my personal attitude has any interest for the general public or that it will command a following even from the man across the street. But there are around 12 millions of me, born into American citizenship, loving our country with an overflowing, sentimental, nay even, if you will, a pathetic affection, wishing and, according to our lights, working for the best things for this, our native land, just as truly and as sincerely as the elect of God, who blush self-consciously whenever We, the People are mentioned and who say (not always in undertones) WE are IT!

The first Lady of the Land has no better right to sacrifice and die for our fatherland (hers and mine) than have I. The part of my ancestors that did not come over in the Mayflower in 1620, arrived, I am sure, a year earlier in that fateful Dutch Trader that put in at Jamestown in 1619. If there be any higher percentage among the "Hundred Percenters" it must be for the aborigines, and I believe that the third source of my individual stream comes clean even from the vanishing Red Man, which ought, according to my arithmetic, reckon my points up to one hundred thirty three and one-third per cent to the manor born and "inheritor of the glebe": genuine F.F.A.'s (First Families of America,) incontest-

able, undeniable, and unalienable. True blue American, if there be any honor in that, I claim it.

While however, some may be interested in checking up, testing, measuring and comparing these three strains in the curl of my hair, or the breadth of my nostrils, or the color of my epidermis, myself, as a thinking, feeling, willing entity, am not the least bit conscious of thinking, feeling or willing through and by the pigment cells in that epidermis. If different, I don't know it. I am absolutely sure that I am not an alien and could not, even if I wanted to, expatriate myself. With clear-eyed vision of its human imperfection and short comings I sing "America" and mean

every word of it because I know it is my duty and my privilege to strive as mightily as the mightiest to help truth to overcome error, justice to prevail over corruption, and that Righteousness, which alone exalteth a nation shall triumph over all the hosts of evil.

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#### A CORRECTION

A printer's point made me say last week that we paid Mr. Darrow two dollars for his advice that "the Negro should learn to give tips." What I wrote and meant to print was two hundred dollars—a rather respectable tip, all things considered.

Anna J. Cooper.