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The United States experienced a revolutionary time from the 1840s to 60s. During this time, Murrin et al assert, "that two of the main issues which remained prominent were slavery and women rights" (236). This paper highlights the abolitionist views on race and change since the civil war to the year 1900 and how they affected the American view on race.

Alcott as an author turned nurse serving in the civil war shows some mixed views on race in the extracts from one of her works at the hospital sketches. Alcott in her writing extracts in hospital sketches points out that despite the revolution, racial and sexist beliefs remained prevalent. The abolitionists of whom Alcott's family was one were opposed to slavery. Alcott expresses the dilemma encountered by her.

At the onset of the civil war, Alcott looks for employment as a nurse. This is in breaking free from the traditional role defined by the sexist attitude at that time. Her family in the dialogue suggests to her a number of options. A suggestion by Tom to "go to nurse the soldiers" (Alcott Ch.

1) finally gets Alcott's upbeat. There is an air of disillusion with a tone of racism even as Alcott considers this option where she resigns with the view that "the Periwinkles are a hopeful race" (Alcott Ch. 1). The desire to offer her nursing results in an interview and a readiness to go to Washington at short notice. The response to Alcott's application comes and it "brought a disappointment along with its good will and friendliness" (Alcott Ch. 1) informing her that her application in the Armory hospital was unsuccessful, but she has to fill "a much less desirable one at Hurly-burly house" (Alcott Ch.

1). As the narrative builds up, Alcott portrays mixed views on the issue of race. Slavery as a product of racism was a major issue in the civil war, with the opponents of slavery as abolitionists. However, the tone in Alcott's writing, including words like colored, Irishman, Englishman still indicates Alcott had mixed views on race. As an abolitionist, Alcott conflicts her view when she addresses some of her patients as " Irishman" (Alcott Ch.

3, par. 12). The mixed views by Alcott concerning race also show up when she goes to the Senate chamber where she " found the speaker's chair occupied by a colored gentleman" (Alcott Ch. 5, par. 14). At the nursing facility in Georgetown, Alcott while working becomes vocal about the deplorable conditions at the treatment facility. She is also aware of a part of the African American labor force at the facility that unfortunately has no option but to work under the deplorable conditions for long periods, which in itself is a form of slavery (Alcott Ch.

5). Americans' view on race from the time of the civil war to 1900 was most conspicuous during the ' time of the reconstruction' (Lecture notes-Reconstruction 1a). When the union forces finally won in the civil war, slavery as a product of race was unilaterally abolished. The southerners who were agriculturalist and heavily depended on slaves to work on their large farms suddenly found that there was no labor, since they could not retain slaves. So abstract was the idea of free labor that began in the north that when the federal government moved in during reconstruction after the war, the white southerners mooted racial based clandestine movements such as the Ku Klux Klan (Lecture notes-Reconstruction 6), which carried out violent attacks on black southerners. The free blacks in these southern states had

racial reactions against them and were not able to compete favorably for honorable jobs, eventually settling for menial ones with low wages that always tied them to a dependency arrangement with their masters or employers. The American civil war was partly about the re-definition of the American constitution in line with every federal state's policies. The eastern and northern states adopted certain inclinations that separated them from the southerners and westerners.

This re-definition also affected the labor market even as the executive arm of the union of federal states shifted towards the abolition of slavery as a product of race. Free labor became a political ideology for the northerners who now looked at the southerners who depended on slave labor as misplaced. However, this ideology was carried on more as a political gain stay because there still existed racism in the northern states or well still the African American or colored to even up to 1900 and beyond. The notion of free labor from a northerner's perspective was therefore, more of a party ideology, the same one that saw the names of famous abolitionists like Lincoln assume presidential office. Seemingly, the American view on race dramatically changed during this period of the civil war. It, nevertheless, assumed a different form after the civil war up to the year 1900 and beyond with aspects of racism remaining pronounced in attitudes.

Today race remains a very sensitive issue in the American society being driven on one part by antagonist views and the protagonist ones on the other side.

Works cited

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