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WHEN NEGRO SLAVES WERE REAL PROPER

by
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In my article, *The Slave in Canada* published in *The Journal of Negro History* for July, 1920, I pointed out that an Imperial Statute of 1732, i.e., 5 George II, cap. 7, enacted "that from and after 29th, September, 1732, Negroes and other Hereditaments and Real Estates situate or being within the (British) Plantations in America" should be liable to be sold under execution. This Statute recognised the condition of Negroes to be identical with land, and consequently Real Estate. This was not wholly unlike the status of the former English Serfs *adscripti glebae* though recent researches have established conclusively that in addition to the Serfs *adscripti glebae* or otherwise, i.e., villeins regardent or villeins in gross, there were actual slaves in England, the personal property of the master, just as was his horse or cow—pure slavery as distinguished from villenage.

This Act of 1732 passed at Westminster was not the first legislation, and moreover, it was repealed in 1797, 37 George III, cap. 118. The earliest legislation I find dealing expressly with the status of slaves was in Virginia, when in 1705, an Act was passed, further explained and amended in 1727, in so many words declaring slaves to be real estate. This legislation continued in full force for nearly half a century; but in 1748-9, the Legislature of the Colony decided to repeal the existing Statutes in that regard.

While some of the English North American Colonies were relieved of transmitting their legislation to the Mother Country for the approval of the King, that is, in fact, the approval of the Home Administration, Virginia was not in that condition. Accordingly this Act with sixty-six others were sent across the Atlantic to the centre of the Empire for consideration by the Imperial Authorities. This particular act was accompanied by a representation by Sir William Gooch, the Lieutenant-Governor of the province, that "the policy and intention of the two laws, repealed by this Act were to enable the planter to annex Negroes to land, to keep estates

CANADIAN LEAGUE OFFICERS INSTALLED

The installation of the officers of the Canadian League for the Advancement of Colored People was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. Cromwell, William St. Mr. Wm. Berry was returned to office as president, Mrs. J. F. Jenkins returned as Recording Secretary; Miss Helen Fountain nominated cor. Sec.; Mrs. Thomson returned as treasurer.

After the banquet was served by the Committee, Miss M. Jackson, Mr. Cromwell, Mrs. F. Harris, Mrs. Wilson and Mrs. F. Drake, Mr. W. Myers acted as Master of Ceremonies.

in families, to increase the trade of Great Britain, to raise the credit of the colony and to strengthen it in point of defence." He added that these two repealed laws had "well answered the purpose for which they were enacted"; and, urging that it "would be greatly for the service of the colony that they should be continued in force", he asked that the repealing act should be disapproved. This act came under consideration along with other sixty-six acts, by the Board of Trade and Plantations, on August 6th, 1753, and the Board passed the whole legislation on to the Privy Council, the Board concurred with the Lieutenant-Governor in the advisability of disallowing the Act, and so represented to the Council. The Council did not act immediately upon the representations so made, but on August 9th referred them to a Committee; the Committee reported, October 16th, recommending the allowance of fifty-seven of the Acts, and the disallowance of ten, amongst them this repealing Act; and October 31st the recommendations were carried into effect, considering that no sufficient cause had been shown for the repeal.

It may be added that another act was disallowed at the same time, an act for the distribution of Intestate Estates, because it was thought that it had been passed "in consequence of the last-mentioned act, which declares slaves to be personal estate."

This interesting story will be found detailed in an official publication by His Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1911, Acts of the Privy Council, Colonial Series, Vol. IV, pp 131, 138, 9.

CERTAINTIES IN CHRIST AND RELIG'N

The age in which we live may truly be called the questioning age; an age of mental, economic and social unrest and disquietness. At no period in the past was the mind of man more active, more earnest, more critical in its habit, more analytic in its character and more determined in purpose—it is more critical than creative, more speculative than practical.

When we think of the tendencies of modern thought, the unsettled character of many of its conclusions—especially its charge against religion and theology—its claims and demands of those who are accepted as leaders, it is indeed not surprising that many should regard it with distrust and possible alarm; while other regard it as the outcome of the agonies of thought and depression through which the human mind has travelled. There are still men whose fidelity to truth cannot be questioned, who rejoice in the cleaning out of the accretions that have deformed the faith and hidden the beauties of that Christianity, which was, we believe, revealed by the Creator of the human mind.

It certainly is not a bad sign to find the thought of the age so much taken up with religion.

Christianity has stood the test of scientific investigation, the result of this discovery has not meant rejection, but greater religious progress.

The training of the human mind, the torch of human intelligence has but illumined her path; and gives greater confidence to her believers.

Christ, the head of the church—the once crucified and risen Saviour, the Redeemer of all that believe on His Name—and the intercessor for the saints, is more real in the mind and life of the nation than ever before.

Christianity presents itself with its phenomena to the mind for acceptance. It challenges observation. It presents its facts and asks that they be tested by the ordinary laws of evidence. It commends itself to human thought as a matter that may be brought within the range of our knowledge. The doctrine of certainty is repeatedly presented in the Scriptures.

It is difficult to conceive of a word expressive of absolute truth and trustworthiness, and intense faith, founded on truth, which the writers of the

"GREEN PASTURES"

(By R. E. Knowles)

In converse a good many years ago, with one of the most eminent and successful publishers in New York, he said to me: "The genuine religious interest a novel contains, the larger will be its sale—and the longer."

This tribute—not in terms of sale but in terms of popular and enduring appreciation—might surely be also paid to the masterpiece of other forms of art. For instance, in the realm of music, one thinks of the Messiah, or St. Matthew's Passion. In the world of pictures of the Crucifixion, or the Last Supper. And, barring Shakespeare's alone, the two masterpieces of English poetry would probably be conceded as *Paradise Lost* and *In Memoriam*.

This reflection on my part is born of "The Green Pastures," that epoch-making play at present attracting crowded throngs to its theatre of action, as it will attract them to the end. It is a significant fact that, with the exception of one other alone this religious drama holds the all-time record for length of life in New York City. Perhaps, although not artistically in order it may here be interpolated that, on the stage as well as in music and painting, a religious play holds the unchallenged record of the centuries.—I refer, of course, to the age-old Passion Play of Oberammergau.

In conversation with Mr. Harrison, on the stage "De Lawd," he answered my inquiry as to the probable secret of the remarkable reception this play has received—presented by colored folks and acclaimed by white—with this explanation; that, in these days of broken cisterns, cistern that hold no water, the human heart thirsts for any draught that revives the consciousness of the divine and helps

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New Testament have not employed.

Christ as the Life, the Truth and the Way—carries a true sense of authority to the mind and heart, such as command attention and homage. His words are true saying of God, on which the world might lean and rest.

He is the restorer of the Breaches, the closer we live to Him and the Principles of His Doctrine the sooner the chaos of religion and economic depression will vanish.

T. H. J.

Pastor of Beth Emmanuel Church