

Dawn of Tomorrow

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J. F. JENKINS—Editor
95 Glenwood Ave., London
Phone 6783 W

ROBERT P. EDWARDS—Ass't Editor
53 Greenwood Ave. Toronto
PAUL LEWIS
263 Clarence St., London.

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Editorial

ENCOURAGEMENT

We have received some discouraging letters from friends assuring us of our failure and the uselessness of our efforts. We have accepted them in good faith for we have no reason to doubt the author's good intentions. But we shall be glad at this juncture to receive some messages of encouragement. To be sure, we were sent a substantial and unsolicited donation which we proudly acknowledged through our news columns. We were grateful because we are not wealthy; the biggest asset we had to begin with was our firm belief in the righteousness of our cause.

But neither is the giving or the receiving of money the only kind, or the best kind of encouragement. What we need is your co-operation, a kind word commending our efforts, friendly criticism, assistance in distributing our paper and in enlarging its circulation. Do you not know that merely a word of encouragement has often changed defeat into victory? Can you not remember when you were striving hard to accomplish some difficult task and you were at the point of despair, when some gentle hand patted you on the shoulder, and a soothing voice encouraged you to go on. Do you not recall what magic effect it had upon you and how you were spurred on to victory?

We, to, are human. We need your encouragement.

THEY SHALL NOT PASS

It was at Verdun that those magnificent French soldiers met the almost super-human onslaught of the German horde with the determination that "they shall not pass." When the besieged city had been relieved and the German army driven back we felt then that the allies had won the war. For who could win against that indomitable spirit, that unyielding determination which was exhibited in the defence of Verdun?

"They shall not pass." Again the soul of France has been placed into the crucible and again we hear her answer: "they shall not pass." This time, however, it is not in clash of arms, but rather a clash of ideals; whether France will yield to the lure of the mighty dollar and mistreat, insult and discriminate against a part of her most loyal citizens or whether she shall preserve her splendid moral patrimony which looks with the same eyes upon all of her citizens, white, yellow, brown or black. Although she may have lost a few American dollars, she has also steered clear of American color prejudice and France has saved her soul.

When colored men were refused admission to restaurants, cafes and dance halls in order to cater to the whims and prejudices of American tourists, these business places were closed and the offenders otherwise punished. When it was repeated on other occasions premier Poincaré ap-

pealed to the American government to notify its tourists in France, that French colored people enjoy the same rights as other citizens in every respect and will be protected by the same law against discrimination. America would do well to heed France's advice. America would do well to accept this lesson of Christian principle, and to emulate this spirit of brotherhood.

After all, France has simply restated a message which is as old as the ages, and yet a message which fascinates all humanity. This simple message is that God made of one flesh and one blood, all nations to dwell here upon this earth in peace, in equality and in liberty.

THE PASSING TRADITION AND AFRICAN CIVILIZATION

By N. WORK MONROE

in the Journal of Negro History

A close examination shows that what we know about the Negro both of the present and the past vitally affects our opinions concerning him. Men's beliefs concerning things are to a large extent determined by where they live and what has been handed down to them. We believe in a hell of roaring flames where in the fiercest of heat the souls of the wicked are subject to eternal burnings. This idea of hell was evolved in the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula where heat is one of the greatest forces of nature with which man has to contend. Among the native tribes of Northern Siberia dwelling in the regions of perpetual ice and snow, hell is a place filled with great chunks of ice upon which the souls of the wicked are placed and there subjected to eternal freezings. This idea of hell was evolved in the regions where man is in continual battle with the cold.

The beliefs of the Negroes concerning themselves have to a large extent been made for them. The reader no doubt will be interested to know that the prevailing notions concerning the inferiority of the Negro grew up to a large extent as the concomitant to Negro slavery in this country. The bringing of the first Negroes from Africa as slaves was justified on the grounds that they were heathen. It was not right, it was argued, for Christians to enslave Christians, but they could enslave heathen, who as a result would have an opportunity to become Christians. These Negro slaves did actually become Christians and as a result the colonists were forced to find other grounds to justify their continuation of the system. The next argument was that they were different from white people. Here we have a large part of the beginnings of the doctrine of the inferiority of the Negro.

When, about 1830, anti-slavery agitation arose in the United States, a new set of arguments were brought forward to justify slavery. First in importance were those taken from the Bible. Science also was called upon and brought forward a large number of facts to demonstrate that by nature the Negro was especially fitted to be a slave. It happened that about this time anthropology was being developed. Racial differences were some of the things which especially interested scientists in this field. The races were defined according to certain physical characteristics. These, it was asserted, determined the superiority or inferiority of races. The true Negro race, said the early anthropologists, had characteristics which especially indicated its inferiority. Through our geographies, histories and encyclopedias we have become familiar with representations of this so-called true Negro, whose chief characteristics were a black skin, woolly hair, protuberant lips and a receding forehead. Caricaturists seized upon these characteristics and popularized them in cartoons, in songs

and in other ways. Thus it happened that the Negro, through the descriptions that he got of himself, has come largely to believe in his inherent inferiority and that to attain superiority he must become like the white man in color, in achievements and, in fact, along all lines.

In recent years it has been asked, "Why cannot the Negro attain superiority along lines of his own," that is instead of simply patterning after what the white man has done, why cannot the Negro through music, art, history and science, make his own special contributions to the progress of the world? This question has arisen because in the fields of science and history there have been brought forward a number of facts which prove this possibility. First of all, the leading scientists in the field of anthropology are telling us that while there are differences of races, there are no characteristics which per se indicate that one race is inferior or superior to another. The existing differences are differences in kind not in value. On the other hand, whatever superiority one race has attained over another has been largely due to environment.

(To be continued)



MISS ETHEL SHREVE, teacher of shorthand and typewriting in the Wilberforce Institute, Chatham, Ont. She is a graduate of the Chatham Business College.

OLDEST RESIDENT DIES.

(By the Associated Negro Press)

Charlotte, N.C., July—"Aunt Minerva" Wilson is dead. She was 115 years of age and was the oldest resident of Charlotte. She lived to see thirteen children pass on into the "Great Unknown" and new more about the early history of this city than any other citizen. Charlotte will be lonely now that "Aunt Minerva" has gone from our midst. She was much beloved by all classes of our citizens.

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