

Dawn of Tomorrow

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J. F. JENKINS—Editor

95 Glenwood Ave., London

Phone 6783 W

F. O. Stewart, Business Manager,

424 Gray St., Phone 2822 M

E. C. Jenkins, Advertising Manager.

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Editorial

OUR SOCIAL HERITAGE

We often pride our race, our blood, our color and hair, our nation and country too highly. There is nothing inherently great in any of these. Southern races, backward races, have proven themselves capable of producing just as much genius as other races. Children of the most primitive races have been taken, early in life, into new and more congenial environments and they have proven themselves equal in ability and in intellect to the brightest minds which our civilization has produced. And again, we find among our own civilization some of the dullest intellects, some of the most morally depraved people that exist on any part of the globe. Volumes could be written to prove that we, as a nation, have nothing for which to lord ourselves over other nations and other people, save OUR SOCIAL HERITAGE.

Above all else that our foreparents have left us, our social inheritance counts for most. There has been handed down to us an accumulation of experiences and knowledge of millions of years, years in which some were spent blindly and perhaps aimlessly, yet instinctively groping upwards and towards the light. There were ages in which men knew no science, as such, yet they struggled to gain the mastery of the elements, of nature and of themselves. And now for a long period of time there has been an age of purposive, intelligent struggle (assisted by science) on the part of our ancestors, to find a way to live peaceably and happy, to assist his kinsmen to work with nature and to control nature. Each generation has the advantage over the preceding one. To-day this circle has so broadened that greater socialized man thinks and acts, not so much in terms of self, or family, or race, or nation. Rather he considers himself a citizen of the world and he therefore dreams dreams and thinks thoughts and performs deeds by which all the world shall be benefitted.

What then is our greatest duty to our kinsmen, to the whole race? It is that we shall pass on this social heritage to our posterity fuller, richer and sweeter. Our greatest duty is our reason for having been born into the world is that we shall make this world a better place in which to live, that we should make it more beautiful and just a little nearer to perfection, to the "millennium". If the social

heritage which was left us has not been made richer and fuller, if the world has not been made a better world by our having lived here, then lives have been miserable failures. This is a better test of success than the amount of money we have accumulated. It is also a better test than the noise we have made. This was the meaning of ALL of Christ's teaching and this is the meaning of life.

* * * * *

Two comedians in a local vaudeville made a hit with a song, the burden of which was that none of us knows what life is all about. The funny men aptly used various incidents common to the lives of all of us, ending with the refrain, to the effect that the actors in that stupendous drama we know as life were in complete ignorance of the significance of their roles.

The audience laughed. Possibly some thought of the profound truth in the song. None of us do know what life really means. We are born, but we know not why. We grow up, marry, have children, make fools of ourselves in various ways, work, weep, laugh, try to pose as possessors of great wisdom, and finally die, still not knowing what it is all about. Such is the aspect of life, from what man can learn by actual experience. To find its real significance, he must turn to God. He knows, and will reveal all in His good time.

—ANON

Writes On "Intelligent Negroes"

N.A.A.C.P. Press Service

L. M. Hussey, writing in the February number of the American Mercury, under the title, "Aframerican, North and South," describes the position of the intelligent colored man in America which he declares is difficult both in the South and in the North. In the South the intelligent colored man, who declines to ingratiate himself by servility to white people is forced more and more into a lonely existence and often becomes embittered through lack of companionship. Mr. Hussey declares of those who are not able to leave the South, for one reason or another: "They are isolated men, they are snared men, and on the confession I have had, they are more often than not embittered men. Given the opportunity they are likely to become, not exemplars of patience, but exemplars of belligerency. This, then, is the first portrait I have essayed to paint in the present inquiry. This is the condition of the black intellectual stays perforce in the South—and this is his bearing upon the South's racial problem."

Mr. Hussey's second portrait concerns the intelligent Negro who comes North. This class finds almost an "excessive amiability" on the part of the white people, Mr. Hussey declares. Negro poets, artists and musicians, fall victims to "white sentimentalists." "That is to say, they become victims when, no longer simply profiting by the sentimentality of Northern sympathizers, they begin to sentimentalize themselves. Into this error all the Negro intellectuals fall occasionally, particularly of late." But the entire race does not fall into this error, Mr. Hussey declares: "Misled by white sentimentalists, some of the current blacks uncritical-

THE NEGRO SINGER

(by James D. Carrothers, Negro Poet)
O'er all my song the image of a face
Lieth, like shadows on the wild
sweet flowers.

The dream, the ecstasy that
prompts my powers;

The golden lyre's delight brings
little grace

To bless the singer of a lowly race.
Long hath this mocked me: aye in
marvelous hours,

When Hara's garden gleamed, or
Cynthia's bowers,

Or Hope's red pylons, in their far,
hushed place!

But I shall dig me deeper to the gold,
Fetch water, dripping, over desert
miles,

From clear Nyanza and mysterious
Niles

Of love; and sing, nor one kind
act withhold.

So shall men know me, and remember
long,

Nor my dark face dishonor any song.

Mencken Reviews

"The New Negro"

In the February number of the American Mercury is a review of "The New Negro," by H. L. Mencken, in which he inquires pointedly if any group of white Southerners can be imagined making such a contribution as the essays, poems and stories included within the covers of that book.

"As one who knows the South better than most," declares Mr. Mencken, "and has had contact with most of its intellectuals, real and Confederate, I must say frankly that I can imagine no such thing. Here, indeed the Negro challenges the white Southerner on a common ground, and beats him hands down. I call to mind some of the leading sub-Potomac master-minds of the orthodox faculty: Henderson of North Carolina, Gonzales of South Carolina, old Williams of Mississippi, the editors of the Atlanta Journal, the Richmond News-Leader, the Jackson Daily News, the Nashville Banner—and I range them beside Locke, James Weldon Johnson, Walter F. White, Rudolph Fisher, Kelly Miller and half a dozen other contributors to the present volume. The contrast is pathetic. The Africans are men of sense learning and good bearing; the Caucasians are simply romantic wind-jammers, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

* * * * *

John, it is bad form to court a girl on a park bench. Why don't you court the young lady in her home?"

No chance. There are eight daughters in her family.

ly mistake the child for the man. But the Negro race, as a whole, is in no grave danger of over-sentimentalizing its attainments. No other race is so persistently or so sharply cynical. By virtue of this saving cynicism the intelligent black who has escaped the rigors of Southern isolation, having come North, accepts the excessive plaudits of white men with a concealed grin. . . . In the South he is ignored, he is isolated, he is driven to sour introspection. In the North he is over-praised, and, granted talent, he makes swifter progress than the white man of like talent."

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