

Dawn of Tomorrow

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Editorial

Contentment

To be content in body, mind and soul is one of the greatest blessings which we poor mortals can possess. It comes as a result of a sound, healthy body; a body free from ailments and disease, which in turn is the result of clean, wholesome living. It comes from having found our place in the world, and from knowing that we are giving to the world the best that is in us to give; from a knowledge of the fact that we have developed to the fullest extent the best there is within us. Contentment comes as a result of having done well our portion of the world's work. Contentment of soul comes as a result of pure motives, right thinking, unselfish devotion to high ideals, faithfulness and loyalty to some religion and from looking upon all men equally as our brethren. Such a state is the common heritage of all.

But there is another kind of content which is both false and misleading. There is the kind which comes as the result of inertia, as the result of a lack of energy to push forward and struggle for the best things in life. It is expressed in that oft-repeated saying, "let well enough alone."

I fear too many colored Canadians are affected with such contentment. In attempting to make economic and industrial conditions better for our boys and girls you will find many of our colored citizens who will exclaim, "What's the use of establishing colored businesses? We can be served in white business places." They are content to help build big business enterprises for other races in which their sons and daughters can never expect to find employment. There is also the "self-sufficient" and contented "business man" who can hardly be styled "mediocre," who, when asked to co-operate in race building, will point you to the GREAT success he has achieved single-handed, "Let the race do as I did," is as much co-operation as can be gotten from him.

A little education is sometimes a dangerous thing. A little success is sometimes detrimental. A little liberty is sometimes disastrous. Some of us colored Canadians have run away with the idea that because we are accorded full justice in the courts of

law, because we enjoy many privileges denied our race in the republic south of us—that because of these equalities, our economic and industrial condition is a thing not to be concerned over. They are content in their own ignorance. They fail to see that as the years go by the sphere of our industrial opportunities becomes more narrow. They fail to see that Canada is only in the making and that the attitude which this country will in the future assume toward us depends very largely upon the attitude which we assume towards ourselves. If we are willing to see without a protest opportunities which are rightfully ours, passed on to others, no one will protest for us, no one else will offer any serious objection. The problem is our problem and we must play the major part in solving it.

Reminiscences of Pres. J. W. Montgomery

Dear Mr. Editor.—When I say how much I regret that one of our people should have been charged with and found guilty of the terrible crime of which William McCathern was found guilty at Chatham recently, I know I am expressing the view of every one of our law abiding citizens in what follows here. I am not attempting to condone the prisoner's offence, but I cannot refrain from writing you, Mr. Editor, with the object of awakening our people to a knowledge of the conditions in the districts surrounding Chatham and to remind our people of the wonderful liberty which we enjoy, and have enjoyed for many years, in this fair country of Canada, under the British flag. To say that we regret the McCathern incident is putting it mildly indeed, and we must awaken our people, and remind them of the liberties they will continue to enjoy if they keep and respect the laws of this country.

Many of our members will recall with pride the fairness with which our people have always been treated by the courts of this province. I refer to the organization of the Kent County Civil Rights League in the year 1891. This is in striking contrast to what took place at the time (February 1893) of the famous Freeman murder trials when it was impossible to get legal counsel in Chatham to take this brief. Negroes not only held mass meetings under the leadership of the late Rev. J. C. Richards, but pledged solid support to see that these men received British justice. These men were duly tried, found guilty, and served terms of imprisonment in the Kingston penitentiary. This takes me back many years and I am reminded of an unfortunate set of circumstances which surrounded the Freeman boys, and particularly in the case of McCathern—whom the court said was mentally deficient, and without education. This is very sad indeed in view of the long, hard and successful battle that was waged between the colored and white citizens of Chatham over the separate schools for colored children during the years 1892-1893, and perhaps it would not be out of place to recall a few dates and facts.

In the fall of 1891 the Kent County Civil Rights League was organized in Chatham with about 600 members. A First of August celebration was held and a large sum of money raised mainly for the purpose of taking legal

action to procure the opening of public schools to our people. On the 8th of December, 1892, a petition, signed by the following members of the league: J. C. Richards, president; R. W. S. Johnson, J. C. Wilmore, J. W. Montgomery, W. J. Davis, Nelson Robinson, Littleton Johnson, Perry Chase, C. M. Cooper and J. W. Taylor, was presented to the public school board setting forth the injustice and disadvantages we were laboring under, and demanding that all public schools be opened to us. The petition was presented by J. C. Richards, J. C. Wilmore, R. W. S. Johnson and J. W. Montgomery. Mr. R. W. S. Johnson briefly, but effectively, laid before the Board our grievances: First, that there were 400 children of school age among our people, but only 51 in average attendance because of improper clothing and great distances they were compelled to travel through heavy rains and deep snow. Mr. Johnson, warming up to his subject, said, "Gentlemen, we don't want to go to law, because we are all citizens of Chatham, and wish to live amicably together, but I may as well inform you now that we have got the money to go to law if necessary. I hope, gentlemen, you will treat this matter in the right way. Place yourselves in the same position as these poor children."

The board adjourned without action. During the interval that elapsed Mrs. Clark Hansboro and Mrs. Charles Griffin took their children to the nearest school and they were refused admission by the principal. A committee of the school board endorsed the action of the principal, saying they thought it in the best interests of the applicants. The League committee was meeting frequently in connection with these and other matters, and they engaged the late C. J. O'Neil, as solicitor, to take the matter up with a view of litigation. On the 7th and 15th of March, 1893, and the 4th April of the same year, he wrote to the Board that unless the schools were opened to our people at once we would without further notice make application to the High Court of Ontario for a mandamus to enforce their rights. April 5th, 1893, was a red letter day in Chatham. On this day all public schools opened their doors to colored children, and this day should be set apart as a day of thanksgiving in your churches with the names of those who fought and won this great victory. Colored people in Chatham must never forget the name of J. C. Richards. We did not always agree with him, but no colored man during the past fifty years has contributed so much of his time and energies for the betterment of the condition of his people.

I must mention here the name of that unselfish scholar, Dr. A. S. Shadd, who, when told he would lose his position as teacher, said, "that shall not be a barrier to any people's progress," and when others were told that they, too, would likely lose their positions, said, "We are willing to go, but not until this question is settled." I am setting forth the facts in order that justice may be done to those who bore the burden in the heat of the day and that the little children and some grown-ups also may know the truth and the whole truth.

Old Chatham Boy,

J. W. MONTGOMRY,

(President C. L. A. C. P.)

CONFIDENCE

All the way seemed dark before me,
And I knew not where to go,
Till I heard a sweet voice saying,
"Put your hand in Mine; I know."

With that blessed sweet assurance,
Doubt or darkness, weal or woe
Seemed as nothing; what could matter?
"Put your hand in mine. I know."

Only from my Heavenly Father
Could such sweet words ever flow,
And to each and all they're spoken;
"Put your hand in Mine. I know."

And is this my Heavenly Father?
Is it He that loves me so?
Yes, it is my Father's voice says
"Put your hand in mine. I know."
S. E. G. ALLEN.

CARD OF THANKS

Rev. H. F. and Mrs. Logan, of St. Catharines had the pleasure of entertaining to luncheon Mr. Ben Bolden and choir of Niagara Falls, N. Y., on April 24th, after their very delightful rendition of the cantata, "First Easter," and wish to thank all who assisted and were present.

Colored Youth Wins Oratorical Contest

Pacific Coast News Bureau.

Los Angeles, Cal., Apr. 29—Bernard Jefferson, one of the small number of colored students in the Manual Art High School of Los Angeles was selected last week as the school's representative in the group finals to be held on May 6th in the Fourth National Oratorical Contest on the constitution. Young Jefferson, who placed fourth last year, spent many hours in preparation. Commencing work on his oration last September, he has consistently stayed with it until victory crowned his efforts.

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