

Dawn of Tomorrow

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Editorial

OUR DEBT TO

PAST GENERATIONS

The present generation of mankind is the greatest in accomplishments that has ever inhabited the earth. But we are so, not because of our virtues alone, but because we stand upon the shoulders of countless generations before us, upon the shoulders of a mighty past. Every generation behind us has lifted the one which succeeded it into view, and so the present generation, "the heir of all ages," is the richest in practical, religious, mechanical and inventive achievements; it has a greater horizon and a more extended border because it is upborn by all that has gone before it, because all prior generations have poured into its lap the wonders and the accumulated knowledge of the past. Should each generation have to accumulate all of its own knowledge by practical experience alone, the present age would be no further advanced than were our ancestors of a million years ago.

Somewhere in his writings Carlyle has said, "Civilization is only a thin covering underneath which the savage nature of man burns with an infernal fire."

This is so true that it becomes a truism. The thin veil which separates civilization from savagery is clearly shown in the "mob psychology" of the Southern part of the United States. Let a Negro be apprehended who is accused of a serious crime against a white man or woman and the whole countryside turns out to burn and then distort the lifeless body of the accused. The women, the South's aristocratic ladies, and their children will stand and look and revel and even applaud. The mob reverts back to savagery of a nature worse than any savagery which has ever been recorded.

And still this thin covering, this thin veil which separates our civilization from centuries of savagery has been the work of ages. And for this veil we owe much to all mankind who has gone before us.

That we have inherited some evils from the past as well as much good is only too obvious. Wars, jealousies, caste, prejudice, hatred, distrust, bigotry and envy are all inherited from the past. But it is our duty, with broader visions, with

greater knowledge and enlightenment, it is our duty to eliminate these evils from this generation. For we have had the experience that the past had not. We have had blessings past ages never dreamed of. Each age should be the accomplishment of and something more than the age preceeding it. The race of men should continue its limitless dvance. The toiler of today is unsatisfied with the attainments and possessions which fulfilled the hopes of kings and monarchs of yesterday. His spiritual longing should therefore keep apace.

Nothing is more rational than the tribute we pay to the lives of the truly great men and women of the past. They represent the spiritual upstriving of their generation. They are the embodiment of the ideal to which their age is aiming, which is always an improvement upon the ideals of the past. Queen Victoria, whose birth we are soon to celebrate, will ever be loved and her memory will ever be sacred because of her "humanity to man," because she thoroughly represented, through her life and through her reign, the ideals of British Justice and fair play in dealing with all peoples of the earth.

Abraham Lincoln will live throughout the ages because of his great love and respect for all men and because he taught all men to love and to respect one another, and the United States will be better known in the ages to come because it was fortunate enough to have nurtured such a great spirit as Lincoln.

Frederick Douglass will ever be remembered because he poured out his soul to loosen the shackles of an oppressed race, to teach his fellow citizens that the slavery of the past and the then present slavery was all wrong and against the will of God.

The immortal John Brown's soul still 'goes marching on' because he lay down his life for his sheep, although the sheep were black slave men, women and children.

In the present issue the Dawn has begun a book and literature department which offers to the public an opportunity to get acquainted with and even to secure any book which has been written concerning colored people whether written by the race or other people and also all worth while literature concerning the race. There is a great demand for such literature in the United States, not only amongst Negro people but amongst white people as well. The reading public is beginning to realize that these books constitute a sure means to racial progress in that they are both the intellectual achievements of the American Negro and a true picture of what he represents to the entire North American continent. Again, all peoples are beginning to learn that to understand each other, the one must understand the other's view-point. As an example of the great interest now being taken in Negro literature, Scribner's is now running, in serial form one of the most interesting tales to be found anywhere. It is an African sav-

age's own story by Bata Kindai Ibn Lo Bagola.

In this issue and every issue following there will be given titles, reviews and prices of several books relating to the Negro and it is to be hoped that the public and especially the colored people, will avail themselves of the opportunity to secure some of these valuable books for no race can be proud of itself without the knowledge of the many great and good things that the race has done and is still doing.

Letters to the Editor

Merlin, Ont., R.R. 5,

Dear Mr. Editor:

Your correspondent in Glasgow, Scotland has certainly touched a live wire among the group he represents. He attacks the 5 books of Moses and blames their teaching for the present status of the colored man throughout the whole Christian world.

I have been of the opinion for a good many years now that these ancient writings contain some things that are hard for an unskilled Bible student to see and understand; things which would give him reason to sit up and ask the strongest exponents of the universal love of Jesus Christ some very pointed questions.

At the same time we are forced to admit that to take away these five books from the scriptures would cause the whole fabric of religion to fall flat. There would be no possible chance for it to stand, since the founder and followers of the new scriptures put their stamp of approval on the essence and stability of the old.

I am far from seeking controversy with your Glasgow correspondent and my only reason for answering his letter is this: Any man who claims Christianity at all should be prepared to give reasons for his belief in the same. Second, young converts who go to scriptural writings are apt to be perplexed and dismayed and fall into the slough of despondency over some of the things your correspondent has said. I do not claim to be a highly educated man, however, there are some questions I should like to ask him:

First: If these cattle thieves, Moses and Joseph, the latter one of the finest characters in Biblical history—did these men exceed their rights under the Divine command? If they flagrantly violated the law in regards to alien people with whom they came in contact, is there not abundance of evidence that they paid the supreme penalty for their misdeeds?

Thirdly: If they paid this supreme penalty, is that offence any affair of ours to-day?

Fourthly, if, as the Christians claim, the earth and the fullness thereof, including those cattle, as well as walled in towns and fortified cities, belong to an unseen Deity who brought about their existence, again is it any of our business into whose hand He placed the stewardship of His possessions?

We are fortunate indeed for these writings ever to have become either a political, scientific or racial football.

F. SHADD

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