

The West India Negro

Though using the above title the writer has no intention of boring his readers with a full and detailed description, but rather to give a short account of the most striking features. This account may perhaps prove instructive when contrasted with the condition of the negro of the Southern States.

In the first place, the West Indian negro is a landed proprietor on a varying scale, he may own half an acre or five hundred. On this plot of ground he builds his house. A few poles planted in the ground with a roof of thatch, and perhaps no floor, the sides are generally walled in and in some cases plastered over. The absence of a floor is caused by the existence of a tax on floored houses higher than on one with no floor. This kind of building is almost ideal for coolness, and the negro has no fear of freezing in his bed. His wants are of the simplest, for he grows all his own vegetables and eats the minimum amount of wheat. The land is exceedingly fertile, too fertile to make the negro anything but lazy and indolent, and in the majority of cases, unless under the greatest pressure, he will not work for more than four days in the week; the rest of the time he looks after his own belongings in a lazy sort of way or goes on a spree.

The work he does is chiefly working on banana plantations or in the cane fields; on the whole, agricultural labor, for which the general wage is one shilling (25c.) per day. When one considers the wages paid in this country for work of a similar class, it must seem that the negro is oppressed; such, however, is far from being the case. This amount is amply sufficient for his needs; for clothing he uses the lightest of cottons and, as has been said, he grows practically all his own foodstuffs.

As a citizen the negro may be taken as law-abiding and very seldom given to acts of violence—the causes for lynching so frequent in the Southern States are altogether absent, and under British rule the negro is as good as any white where his life is at stake. The conduct of the American negro is no doubt due to the way in which he is treated, for in the West Indies the proportion of negroes in the population is, if anything, greater than in the States. The chief fault of the negro is his incurable passion for stealing, not chickens, but standing crops, bananas, etc. Things like these he never steals but, as he puts it, he "takes them." "Big Massa" make them grow for general use—a maxim which never applies when anything of his goes astray. It may be well to add that his note is as good as his white neighbor's, but this is given on the basis of an assessment.

The most striking features of his character is his wonderful capacity for telling lies, a failing common to all men. The negro is always most willing to oblige a stranger; ask him how far ahead is such and such a place, he will tell you "not too far," but a definite answer he will never give, whether it be one mile or five. He has a strange sense of humor, and is exceedingly musical and religious. His religion is of the time-honored kind, a big

Bible and a deep sighing in the spirit. The music that draws him may be classed as of the "braying" kind—a military band more than anything else; and his songs are of somewhat the same kind as his American cousin's. The Salvation Army has a wonderful attraction for the West Indian negro, the custom of "testifying" and the instruments of music used suit him exactly. The morals of the negro are of the lowest.

The above remarks apply to the negro on the whole, but it must be understood that there are some negroes, as lawyers, doctors, etc., who can hold their place with any man.



Chess Club

The Central Y.M.C.A. has invited the members of the University Chess Club to be present at a social evening on Saturday, March 4th.

Chas. E. H. Freeman,
Sec'y pro tem.



The Passing Hour

During the past year a very vivid example was given of the inadequacy of the accommodation in the Library for study. In the summer it was announced in the city papers that plans had been prepared with great care and with elaborate detail for the enlargement of the building. So far as we have heard these plans are still wasting their elaborateness on paper and will probably continue to do so for some time, judging by past examples of speed, in the line of improvements. In the meantime the number of students in attendance increases, to meet which no effort has been made. When, at this period of the year, there is often congestion in the Library, what must we look forward to in the spring? The natural conclusion is that we shall then have to crowd into the Library if we can; otherwise we must stay out.

There is, however, one means of lessening the crowded condition of the Library and that is by throwing open the Seminaries to the fourth year students. The conservatism and red tape which locks these rooms is well known to the majority of students. In a few words, there are a number of books in each Seminary which are supposed to be of special value in the prosecution of special work in that course; these Seminaries are locked, the "open Sesame" being two dollars (deposit of course;) at the end of the year if the depositor and his co-depositors have proved themselves sufficiently civilized as to refrain from stealing any of the books, they are paid back. In short, we students may be honest downstairs in the Library and not steal any of the books on the reference shelves, but when we get up in the Seminaries our honesty can only be vouched for by depositing two dollars. Our own opinion is that if we were given a trial we would prove ourselves quite as honest in the Seminaries as elsewhere; it would surely not ruin the University to give us a trial for a period and it would relieve the pressure in the Library for the present year more effectively than any changes possible just now.

We wish here to draw the attention of some members of the Arts Faculty to a matter of great importance to undergraduates. Nothing