

Dawn of Tomorrow

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Editorial

"HOW THE SOUTH REGARDS THE NEGRO"

The above is the title of a series of articles appearing in the Dearborn Independent under the signature of Townsend Boyer. In a sub-heading following the title comes the sentence "We shall speak with no malice in our hearts. We aim merely to be frank." After reading this sentence we prepared ourselves to read an article by a Southern aristocrat who had freed himself of sectional and racial bias. But alas! the further we went along with Mr. Boyer the more we were convinced that he saw the race problem from the angle that 85 per cent. of his Southern brethren see it from. Further on he says: "But a mutual confession of faults and telling of grievances necessarily calls for a mutual endurance of pricks."

And again: "We wish to plead guilty of many things." But we failed to see where he has recorded any faults of the South in its attitude toward the Negro. Once he was on the verge of admitting that the South was guilty of enslaving the poor African after stealing him from his native home, but suddenly he faces about and tells in such glowing terms of so many blessings which came to the Negroes as the result of slavery that "we the jury find the South not guilty. We further find that the Negro is debtor to the institution of slavery."

We are willing to forgive Mr. Boyer for many of the mistakes he has made and we will also admit that certain parts of his articles have in them many straight forward facts. But we can never forgive him for misrepresentation of facts. For instance, he says: "The Negro is still pitying himself for his former enslavement; he offers it for the reason of his shortcomings, it is his plea for special indulgence at the hands of other men. In song and story he is keeping the wound festered and throbbing, it is the motif of all his artistic endeavour, the red flag of his propaganda." Such statements are entirely contrary to facts. The Negro both in spirit and in action, has shown a great desire and a capacity to forget the evils of slavery. If it were not for Jim Crow laws, segregation laws, lynch laws and a thousand other discriminatory measures, the Negro would have forgotten, in a

great measure, the harrows of slavery.

"Ne Negroes' sufferings were principally over a hoe, a cain knife and a cotton sack; the white master suffered over a corpse strewn battlefield, a burned home, a wrecked fortune and a crushed spirit." We wonder if Mr. Boyer ever heard any of those heart rendering songs which Negroes sang when parents were separated when the children were torn from their mothers' breasts? This reverencing of family ties had not sprung up in America but it was characteristic of their African ancestors. What then of their suffering when they were stolen from Africa? What of the corpse strewn highways through the African forests where more millions of souls perished en route than those who reached America? What of the countless thousands of Negroes who gave their lives for the cause of freedom during the civil war? Negroes did more than, as Boyer says, "Sit on the fence and look on while the North and the South fought a four years' war that the toga of citizenship might be spread on the Negro's shoulders."

But the climax of his biased spirit and his utter injustice to the Negro is shown in the following paragraph: "Why did the African, who stayed at home, fail so signally of holding and developing the continent which had been his since the days of the Pharaohs, even loosing, through the cupidity of his own chieftains, the sovereignty of the Congo Free State which the other nations of Europe had agreed to leave as the Negro's piece of the African pie? Why has the Negro in Haiti, with a very good foundation of the French regime to start with, made in nearly a hundred years of freedom such a poor showing of self-government and development? If the Negro as a race is an awakening people, why did the slaves in Dutch Guiana who rebelled into freedom slip back one hundred years into the jungle life of their ancestors instead of making their contact with the white masters a stepping stone upwards? Why the Haiti of today, with its backwardness, its voodooism its crimes that necessitate outside interference?"

Let us remind Mr. Boyer of his own words and perhaps that will explain "why the Africans who stayed at home failed to hold and to develop their continent." He says: "the 17th and 18th centuries were hard harsh times it was the time of almost unceasing warfare and a pushing out into little known lands and seas, with empire the stake and life the forfeit." This "pushing out" lead the white man into Africa to conquer the lesser organized native and his territory, to destroy what progress and civilization he found there. As to the Congo Free State, what "Nordic" will speak of it but with bowed head in shame and disgrace? From the very beginning it was but an arbitrary arrangement on the part of the white races, vying for supremacy, as to how Africa should be divided between themselves. An English investigator reports on the "Sovereignty of the Congo Free State," telling his government that it was but veiled slavery an exploitation of the natives and of the rubber and ivory, that the rights of property and of the natives were never settled. We also know

that the "Free State" was taken over by King Leopold of Belgium in 1908, fourteen years after he made his first proposal to do so. What chance had the natives to "have and to hold?"

Why did the Negroes of Dutch Guiana slip back into slavery after rebelling into freedom? These are the facts. The slave inhabitants of St. Croix rose in an insurrection in 1848, after which Denmark declared them free. However, actual slavery existed in Dutch Guiana till after 1863 and even then slavery was only replaced by compulsory labor for a period of ten years leaving the final emancipation to come in 1873.

Concerning Haiti's making such a poor showing of self-government that she required outside interference, we should like to ask Boyer if he does not know the real reason why his government interfered in the affairs of Haiti. Did he ever hear of The Mole St. Nicholas and how for many years the United States government tried to secure this strategic point as a coaling station? First through diplomatic negotiations, then through coercion, again through trickery, and failing through all these methods she found it necessary to use the big stick method. And thus she found it necessary to interfere in the affairs of the government of Haiti. If we add to this cause certain Haitian laws which forbade American syndicates from owning big rich plantations we can easily see how important it was for his government to interfere with the government of its weaker neighbor.

We can forgive and overlook ignorance for the most learned among us are not too intelligent. We can excuse the individual who is biased for to be biased is to be human; but when one deliberately misrepresents facts to malign a race of struggling people, we look upon him as a scoundrel and an incarnate devil.

HAMILTON

Last Sunday members of the Peerless Concert Co. were visitors at the evening service.

Mrs. Burke and daughter, Miss Keziah, also Mr. Laurie Burke of Canfield were visitors in town Sunday.

The concert given under the auspices of the Junior choir was a decided success, a tidy sum being realized.

Mrs. Hazel Berry is visiting in Lima, Ohio, the guest of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Barnes.

The death of Mrs. Martha Ann Pierman occurred in this city on Tuesday, May 11. Mrs. Pierman was one of Hamilton's oldest and most highly respected citizens. She leaves to mourn her loss two sisters, Mrs. Young of this city, Mrs. Knoll of Buffalo, and one brother, Mr. John Jackson of this city.

Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Lee and son, Master Harry of Canfield, were in the city on Sunday.

Last Sunday evening the pulpit at St. Paul's was filled by Mr. Arthur Burke of Canfield, at present a student of the Toronto Bible College. The splendid discourse coupled with his sincere earnestness proved a source of inspiration to all.

Misses Vera and Dorothy Morey of Brantford are in the city over the week-end, the house guests of Miss ruby Morton.

Mr. Victor Lewis of Buffalo spent the week-end with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Lewis, Clyde St.

Mr. and Mrs. George Stickland and two children also, Mrs. Stickland of Guelph, Ont., were in the city over the holiday.

Miss Madeline Barnes spent the holiday in Toronto.

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