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NEGRO SPIRITUALS

When the famous Jubilee Singers made their tours in the seventies their tunes caught on as successfully as the hymns of Moody and Sankey. They were sung and whistled everywhere; then, like Moody and Sankey, their vogue petered out and for a long time there was scanty attention paid to the music of the colored race. In the last decade, however, there has been a remarkable revival of interest in this field and from the midst of the most classic programs of song recitals there appear the titles of Negro melodies. Part of this is probably due to the fact that a trans-Atlantic genius hit upon a title that had no suggestion of hymnology about it. He called the hymns "Negro Spirituals" (a title that the Negro certainly had never applied to them) and it caught on at once. It contained that suggestion of "uplift" so dear to the American mind, and also that suggestion of spirituality which flatters the complaisance of the average Englishman.

That the Negro Spirituals have a distinct individual interest is quite true but there is just a danger that written admiration for them may go to too great extremes. There is sometimes the suggestion that they contain deeper things than the ordinary man can understand. This is absurd. The very beauty of the Negro hymn lies in its utter simplicity, its childlike character. The picture of the Negro slave as a high-souled member of a noble race singing the songs of Zion in a strange land may be poetic and appealing but it is simply not true. The Negro is not a complex figure and to understand him is to find the key to his music. His music and his self are both open books. The Spirituals, to give them their best known name, are examples of imitative art, they are not of the nature of folk song, they rely for their chief effect on vocal harmony and they are naive and spontaneous and therefore, highly interesting.

Let no one disclaim the Spirituals but let no one on the other hand make absurd claims for them. They are human documents of great value for him who wishes to study the Negro characteristics. They voice the soul of a people who came through great tribulation and are still struggling towards the promised land.

Loses Keen Race For Bench

CLEVELAND, Nov. — Although he polled a total vote of 40,030 votes, Attorney Alexander H. Martin of this city lost his fight to a white opponent for a two year term as municipal court judge by 800 votes. The opinion of political observers here is that Martin would have been elected but for the disqualification of over a thousand Negro voters for alleged errors in the registration list. In wards where Negro voters were numerous hundreds were turned away from voting booths by election officials who claimed they were not properly registered.

Exactly what contest will be made of the election on these grounds was in doubt last week. Attorney Martin could not be reached. However, City Councilman Leroy N. Bundy was introduced a resolution asking that a committee be appointed to investigate the alleged discrepancies in the election books. This motion was supported by Councilman Lawrence O. Payne and Herman Finkle, white Republican.

While defeated himself, Attorney Martin had the satisfaction in the last election of seeing his wife re-elected for a second time on the city school board.

Colored Farmers Are Hard Hit

RALEIGH, N.C. — A possible reduction of the tenant farm population in the Eastern part of this State of between 10 to 25 per cent because of depressing agricultural conditions threatens to leave a number of Negro farmers in this area homeless and a still larger number without land to till during the next season. Reports received here from county farm agents at the request of Dean I. O. Schaub of North Carolina State College indicate that farming conditions are especially bad in this section of the State and that landowners will not be able to carry many tenant farmers through the next season.

One of the most pressing needs of many of these families, is for clothing and medicine. The lack of money has made these necessities impossible to secure; and relief agencies will be put to great strain to furnish the necessary aid.

Restore Ancient African City

NEW YORK, Nov. — Cyrene, the Athens of Libya, black kingdom of ancient days and the ancestral home of Imen, the Cyrenian who carried the cross of Christ, will rear its head once more after 1400 years of sleep under the dust of centuries. Now a part of the African colony of Italy, this once famous city, with a population of over 100,000 is being excavated and restored by Professor Luigi Pernier, noted archeologist of Royal University at Florence, Italy.

In discussing the history of the ancient center of African culture recently, Professor Pernier said that the excavation of the city promised a greater contribution to the knowledge of the pre-Christian era than any excavation in recent times.

At one time this city, which numbered among its honored inhabitants philosophers, artists, men of letters, leaders in war and business of all races and all climes, was the center of all trade between Greece, Egypt and Carthage. In addition its medical school was world famous and the city held a proud place in the intellectual life of the world.

Through the centuries the city passed through the hands of Greeks, Romans and Moslems. Now after 1500 years it is to be restored and promised to be as interesting a place as now historic Athens or Rome.

Assure Negroes Jobs

WASHINGTON, Nov. — Mr. E. F. Carter, vice-president of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, which employs thousands of Negro workers in many of its branches, in a letter to Mr. Davis, gave definite understanding that his company would keep as many of its employees as possible and that there would be no discrimination on the ground of race.

Mr. Carter's statement followed the statement of Mr. George Sloan, president of the Cotton-Textile Institute last week, who gave similar assurance that Negro labor would receive impartial treatment from his company. Dr. Davis expressed confidence this week that the employers of the largest of Negro labor would all adopt this fair minded policy during the present economic crisis.

CONFESSION FREES YOUTH

"Positively Identified" as Robber by
Oil Station Attendant, But Real
Bandit is Trapped.

OMAHA, Nebr., Nov. — Virgil Sherman, 19 years old, never committed a crime, still he was on the brink of being sent to prison for a long term. Only the confession of Lloyd Irving, 17-year old white boy saved him.

Sherman was positively identified by the white attendant of a filling station here as the youth who held up the place of business several weeks ago. He was put through severe grillings by police and though he steadfastly pleaded innocent, the crime was virtually placed on him. He was awaiting a court hearing which undoubtedly would have sent him to the penitentiary for a long term.

It so happened that Irving was captured as he and Cyrus Watson held up the night clerk at the Elks club. He was taken to the police station, where, after questioning by police he confessed the robbery for which the colored boy was held.

District Judge Wright sentenced Irving to ten years in prison while Sherman was allowed to go free after spending several unpleasant weeks in jail.

MARYLAND IMPROVES NEGRO HOSPITAL FACILITIES VASTLY

Baltimore, Md. — The first Nurses' home, white or colored to be erected at the cost of the State is now ready for occupancy at the Sronsville State hospital for Negroes in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. Dr. George H. Preston, State Commissioner of Mental Hygiene said here last Thursday. At the same time Doctor Preston reported that the State appropriation of \$250,000 for Maryland's first hospital for feeble minded Negro children will be available in August of 1932.

WILBERFORCE, O., Nov. — Wilberforce's championship-bound team departed Wednesday for Charleston, W. Va. for its all important engagement with the powerful W. Va. State Yellow Jackets. A band and body of rooters followed the Green and Yellow warriors to the scene of the battle that will give them outstanding claims to be the national colored football title if they are victorious.