

Dawn of Tomorrow

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J. F. JENKINS—Editor
95 Glenwood Ave., London
Phone Fairmont 357-W
F. O. Stewart, Business Manager
219 Augusta Ave., Toronto
Phone Trinity 0213
E. C. Jenkins, Advertising Manager.
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Editorial

THE NEGRO'S HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Perhaps there is nothing so little known of the Negro race as its historic background although, from the earliest knowledge of the history of mankind we find that the contribution which black people made to civilization is something for which we, and even the whole world, should be proud.

The prevailing idea that black people are inherently inferior to the white race came as a direct attempt to justify the institution of slavery in the U.S. The slave trade was justified on the grounds that the natives were heathens, but as a result of slavery would become Christians. The slaves did become Christians and of course other grounds had to be found on which to justify the continuance of slavery. The next argument advanced was that in view of the fact that the blacks were in physiognomy different from white people, they were by nature different creatures and therefore inferior to white people. Here we have the beginning of the doctrine of the inferiority of colored people. But later, following closely upon the heels of this theory, when the bowels of Egypt and Africa began to give up their secrets, when the mute testimony of the spade in the land of Greece, Rome, Asia and Arabia began to show irrefutable evidence of Negroid culture, when cities were excavated in Africa in which there were found many signs of a fine civilization, then the scientific world stood in wonderment and surprise.

When Africa began to unfold her well-kept secrets the world of scholars and thinkers turned to the classics, the Greek and Latin poets, to the myths of India and Arabia with the hope that some little light might be shed on the meaning of these new discoveries. And may it be said to their credit that some of these scholars went in search of truth and not for the purpose of upholding racial tradition or to glorify any particular race. Among those who were interested was Dr. Shleiman, who went to Greece and Rome and after a most painstaking and careful investigation, flashed this message back to his anxious, waiting colleagues: "It looks to me like the civilization of an African race." Dr. Broughton wrote: "The Helens or Greeks were the Ayrians first to be brought in contact with the sunburnt Hamites who were as strongly Ne-

TO GOLDEN FIELDS AND GARDENS STRANGELY FAIR

We were not born on barren wastes to vaguely wander,
And ne'er should be content to idly loiter there:
Nor should we feast our eyes on scenes of swamps and marshes,
Where golden fields and fruitful garden plots are ne'er.
We should not dwell on highest mountain tops forever,
To live uncharmed by all the grandeur far below;
'Tis well we sometimes journey down into the valleys,
Where ferns and flowerets rare by crystal streamlets grow.

The marshes and the swales are with their germs infested!
The stagnant waters give their poisons to the air!
Why should we breathe, by choice, an atmosphere polluted,
And seemingly for brooding ills but little care!
Why should we miss the beauties of the calling uplands,
Where zephyrs fan the brow, and healthful breezes blow?
Why should we, for the bogs, or deserts, bleak and barren,
Forever fail to find where fragrant roses grow?

As, 'tis for us to shun the marshes, ever freighted
With countless fever-germs, exacting deadly toll,
'Tis not by bitter thoughts, and daily deeds ignoble,
That we shall find the paths to Glory for the soul;
But wooing ways shall lead us to the mossy valleys,
So beautiful that we delight to loiter there;
And waiting, for all seeking souls, are sun-kist uplands,
Where there are golden fields and gardens strangely fair.

For sons of men it is an act extremely foolish
To choose their fleeting lives on barren wastes to spend;
And, for the years that are in bogs and marshes wasted,
No magic talisman shall e'er make full amend.
So give to us the spreading fields upon the uplands,
Where fruits of soul mature, though sturdy breezes blow;
And let our yielded hearts, by grace be daily cultured
Where, by the valley ferns, the fondling brooklets flow.
London, Ont., July 1st, 1930. —MACK

groid as the Afro-American." Sir Arthur Evans, then president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science wrote: "Whether you like it or not the Greeks whom we discern in the new dawn are not the pale skinned northerners but were essentially a brown complexioned race." Prof. Sergi of Rome University said: "Until recent years the Greeks and Romans were regarded as Ayrians but the Ayrians were savages and could not have produced the Greco-Latin civilization. The primitive population of these two countries with their civilization evidently originated in Africa." Dr. Hayford, the noted historian suggested that Ethiopia was once mistress of the world and that much-talked of Egypt was but a province of Ethiopia, that Egypt's much talked of Pharaohs were, in the beginning, but simply governors sent out by the mother country, Ethiopia. Chaldurn, the ancient Arab historian says: "In the earliest traditions of all the more civilized races of antiquity the name of this distant black people is found and their gods and their heroes are ever referred to as swarthy or black." He tells of the City of Ghana, situated on the banks of the Niger. He refers to it as the meeting place for caravans from all parts of the world. It was the resort of the rich, the pious, the learned of all nations. The greatest of all the Sudan States was Songhay, whose area was equaled to that of the U.S. It existed from A.D. 750 to the year 1591. The marked evidence of the high state of civilization which existed is the amount of learning which they possessed. The University of Sankore was an active seat of learning. It ranked with the best colleges of Spain and Egypt.

Ethiopia's fame was well known to writers of the Bible and it is refer-

red to in that sacred book some 49 times. In the book of Isaiah we read of "the land of the rustling wings beyond the river Ethiopia, that sendeth ambassadors by the sea."

We are proud to point out these few facts of the historic background of our race lest we and the world forget. We are glad to tell them to our children since in their public and high school career these facts have been wilfully and purposely withheld from them. We trust that this knowledge may serve as an inspiration to our adults, that we may be inspired to carry on from where our fathers left off: that it may teach our children that there is no reason why they should despise the race from which they sprang. In the distant past black men and women dared in ambition, to reach the skies where they lighted their candles from the altar fire of heaven, then they held them aloft to give light unto the whole world.

LONDON NOTES

The Misses Peggie and Lola Hackett, children of Mr. and Mrs. Willis Hackett are home with their parents after residing in Toronto for the past two years.

Miss Ann Smith of Windsor is in the city pursuing a summer course in art. Miss Smith is well known in scholastic centres, having recently completed a course with honor at the Normal School.

Mrs. Etta Jordan of Detroit, is visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Harris of Trafalgar Street.

The Misses Washington of Hill St. are visiting friends and relatives in Brantford.

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