

Dawn of Tomorrow

Published weekly in the interests of and for the Advancement of the colored people of Canada.

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Subscription Rates

One year	\$2.00
Six months	1.25
Three months	.75
Single Copy	.05

Entered in the post office at London, Ont., as second class matter.
The Dawn of Tomorrow Publishing Co
London, Ont.

Editorial

"TRAVELLING JIM CROW"

We are pleased to reprint the following article by George S. Schuyler, condensed from the American Mercury of August 30th. The article tells in a most striking manner of some of the inconveniences, insults and injustices which colored travelers must meet in the United States. Many Canadians, not knowing the situation, have asked "why should colored people not want to ride together, sit together and eat together?" Why? Do you ask WHY? Read the following.

"It is a trying state to be simultaneously a Negro and a traveler. Indeed, the troubles of Job seem trivial in comparison. No matter in what part of the country he may reside the Aframerican knows very well that the hotel and resort advertisements he reads in the newspapers and magazines are not for such as he. When he assumes that 99 out of every 100 hotels are closed to folk of his ancestry he is not far wrong. Where he is given accommodation it is often done so grudgingly and with such obvious ill-will that it is exceedingly difficult for him to enjoy his stay.

"It is all very well to say that the Negro traveler should go to one of 'his own places,' but Aframerican hostilities are not always at hand and when available they are frequently tenth-rate owing to the small number of well-to-do Negro travelers upon whom they can regularly depend. In spite of the general belief that colored folk are all alike the fact remains that there are all classes of people in Negro America, from tramps to millionaires, and a hotel quite satisfactory to stevedores would hardly be to the taste of a school teacher, a physician or an artist.

"Hence, most Negro travelers of culture and prominence try to get a place to sleep with people they know and if they are acquainted with no one in a town, they must perforce stop at any so-called hotel to which an obliging chauffeur takes them. Many times I have been taken to the worst imaginable places by taxicab chauffeurs whom it was necessary to trust. Once I was awakened by loud curses and crashes, to find that the chauffeur had carried me to a bawdy-house that was being raided by the police.

However, the Negro traveler's troubles do not begin when he seeks lodging for the night; they begin when he purchases a railroad ticket.

If he happens to be somewhere outside the South he can get Pullman accommodation without difficulty. In sleeping-cars he will be assigned to the end berths, but this he does not mind. The real fun starts in the South.

"Negro convicts accompanied by officers and Negro domestics accompanying their employers are tolerated in Pullman berths, but black ministers, editors and bankers have to wade through miles of red tape to get them. I know a colored woman who frequently goes from New York to New Orleans and always puts on an apron when she gets below the Rope and Faggot line. It is a badge of servility which acts as a protection, since it definitely places her in the servant class. Of course the most rabid Negro-phobe has no objection to riding in a Pullman car or diner with a Negro if that Negro is in a menial capacity. That such a seemingly absurd precaution is frequently wise was well-demonstrated three or four years ago when a Negro woman was dragged out of a Pullman car in Northern Florida by officers of the law and fined \$500 for the crime of riding through that Commonwealth in comfort.

"In traveling through the South I have frequently been inconvenienced because of inability to obtain Pullman accommodations. It was not the discomfort that I minded (I've hiked and hoboed too much for that) but the missing of appointments. Some trains usually the best ones to get you to your destination in time to transact your business, are all-Pullman. On many occasions I have had to spend needless and aggravating hours in a Jim crow coach when I should have been at my destination hours before.

"Sometimes conductors have a devil of a time trying to determine to what race a passenger belongs. There are so many 'Negroes' as white as Dan Moody or Greta Garbo and so many 'Caucasians' of allegedly India or Spanish ancestry who can easily pass for Negroes, that anthropologists might be puzzled. Is a conductor to take a chance on offering grievous insult to a suspiciously dark passenger in the white coach? Shall he assume that a certain white person reclining in the Jim crow coach is really Caucasian, there through some horrible mistake, and invite him into the white coach? Here are questions that might stagger even civilized minds.

Of course a foreign Negro can often get all kinds of service refused to a black citizen and tax-payer. Due to this peculiar Caucasian reasoning, Negroes who can speak a foreign language suddenly become Haitians, Brazilians, Egyptians, Moors or Colombians for travel purposes. I know a mulatto girl who would starve to death in France if she had to order her own meals, yet she successfully passed as a citizen of the Third Republic from Chicago to New Orleans and was treated accordingly. She declared that Paris was her home but she neglected to say that it was Paris Texas.

"What is particularly annoying to the Negro traveler is the lack of uniformity in Jim crow customs. For instance, when he descends from a train at a station in the South, he has no way of knowing whether the 'white' taxicabs will accept him as

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