

THRUSTS AND LUNGES

BY GEORGE S. SCHUYLER

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If one did not know that Dean Kelly Miller was professor, it would be revealed in his frantic efforts to prescribe some cure-all for the ailments of the Aframerican in his weakly idiosyncrasies. Last week I had occasion to touch on some of his juvenile comments, but space did not permit of a lengthy analysis and criticism. Readers of Kelly Miller's column (if there are any!) will recall that he was especially grieved because Negroes were leaving the farm and coming to the city. He sees all sorts of dire calamities befalling the dark brother if he doesn't stick to the farm; this despite the fact that it is well known by informed people that, due to the present economic system of society, the more food there is produced the worse it is for the farmer, and vice versa. This is also true in the cities and manufacturing centers, where a plethora of commodities on the market means unemployment, starvation and death. The unemployment, bankruptcies, foreclosures, etc., that followed the late war were due to the enormous overproduction of raw material, food and commodities. The price of cotton fell so low that thousands of acres of cotton were burned throughout the South in an attempt to lower the supply and thus increase the demand and price. It was during this period that thousands of Negroes in the country sections of the South suffered and died from pellagra. It was this condition of affairs that led to much of the migration to the cities where the restrictions upon European immigration had opened up thousands of jobs to the sons of Ham. The Dumb-Bell Dean thinks that the Negroes as well as the whites just leave "without rhyme or reason!" While I have never been impressed with the intellectual endowments of the masses of either race, I have never been guilty of insulting them in this manner. Anyone above the mental grade of a Sunday school teacher knows that people never go from a better to a worse place economically speaking. Europeans immigrated and still immigrate to the United States because it is a better place to make a living than their home countries, and Negroes are leaving the farms along with the whites, and going to the

cities because the city is a better place than the farm, at least now adays. Statistics show that one of the congested downtown sections of New York City is the healthiest in the country; that schools are better in every way; that there are more modern comforts in the homes. In addition there are finer churches, good libraries, up-to-date cabarets, dance halls and jazz palaces, to say nothing of amusement parks galore. In nearly every large city of importance the slums are disappearing and as the population gains in civic pride they demand and obtain cleaner streets.

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The trouble with Prof. Miller is similar to that of the man who couldn't see the city for the houses. The dean cannot understand the modern social and economic trend because he has spent all his life prescribing for and lamenting about the Negro problem. This is precisely the difference between the old Negro and the new Negro. The old Negro was and is inhibited from viewing the Negro except subjectively as a separate problem to be worked out separately, in accordance with biblical texts and the declining democratic dogma which blossomed forth over one hundred and fifty years ago. The new Negro, however, views the problem facing the so-called Negroes objectively in the light of modern sociology, economics and behavior psychology, and as part of a great world problem. Some of the new Negroes have even become intelligent enough to realize that there is no solution to the so-called Negro problem this side of the grave; that it is just part of the great social problem that has never been solved and doubtless never will be. Since ignorance of social psychology is fairly general among Brother Miller's kind, it is not strange to find them still chasing rainbows.

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"The city industries are organized," says the dean in his frantic efforts to prove that the Negro should stay on the farm, while "the agricultural activities are not. The Negro stands best chance in unorganized callings and pursuits!" This

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will unquestionably delight the big capitalists. But where did the dean get the idea that the agricultural activities were not organized (he is probably referring to the farmers and not the system of distribution). If there is one there must be at least a thousand or more farmers' organizations in the United States. How does Kelly Miller suppose men like Ladd, Frazier, Capper and Magnus Johnson got into the Senate, to say nothing of many more farmers' representatives in the House of Representatives? Did the dean ever hear of the Non-Partisan League, the Farmer-Labor Party, the numerous Dairymen's leagues and Grange societies? In Galveston, Savannah, Atlanta, Charleston, S. C., Norfolk, Newport News, Birmingham, Baltimore, Richmond, Philadelphia and New York, to say nothing of other towns, the Negroes in the building trades, transport industries, needle trades and mines are most organized? It would not be stretching the truth to say that on the Atlantic seaboard the Negro is dominant in the longshoring industry; and all of them are organized. There are about 5,000 Negroes organized in the needle trades in New York City and most of the Laundry Workers are organized. Now if "the Negro stands the best chance in unorganized callings and pursuits," as the learned professor says, why is it that so many of them are in labor organizations, mixed or unmixed? And why are some of the aristocratic labor unions bent on trying to keep the Negroes out, if the Negro is better off in unorganized callings and pursuits? The truth of the matter is that the common ordinary Negro worker is more intelligent than Kelly Miller, for, wherever possible, he is getting into unions or organizing unions of his own, where and when he is discriminated against. He realizes, despite the fact that he isn't a graduate of Howard University, that in unity there is strength and the modern slogan of capitalist and proletarian alike, is co-operation, not competition.

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Kelly says the \$60,000,000 worth of property owned by Negroes in Harlem "would not equal the value of a single skyscraper." I don't just know what Miller is trying to prove by that. The total value of property owned in Washington, D. C., may not equal the cost of the Panama Canal, but what does it prove? Still this statement of the dean is on the same level of accuracy as the rest of his writings. Glancing over the real estate sections of the New York newspapers for information on the cost of skyscrapers I found the following:

Jewelry Center, 48th street, 18 stories	\$3,000,000
Loft Bldg., 39th street, 16 stories	\$300,000
Apartment House, Jersey City, 16 stories	\$1,000,000

Furthermore, the average tall business building in New York City costs under five million dollars. Even the capitol of the United States cost only fifteen millions. Syracuse, New York, has about the same number of people as there are Negroes in Harlem and the assessed valuation of property there is just a little over a hundred millions. This is no brief for our rising bourgeoisie, but credit should be given the Negroes of Manhattan for the wealth they have acquired. Sixty millions of dollars is no bagatelle, even if Kelly Miller does say so.

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Here are some more of Miller's imbecilities: "The Negro has not as a race acquired the discipline necessary to city life." Is that so? Of course, Kelly should have used "Aframerican" instead of "Negro," because it is well known that in Africa nearly all the Negroes live in towns with the possible exception of the few wandering tribes and forest folk. Hence our brothers across the water must certainly have acquired the discipline of urban environment. True, the cities are not as large as New York, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, but even in these cities I am willing to compare the health, police records, cleanliness, etc., of the Negro inhabitants with that of sections occupied by whites of similar economic and social status. Too, one doesn't have to live in a city to be disciplined. Even Kelly Miller should know that. To me this whole argument of Miller's sounds like it emanated from some cracker instead of an Aframerican. The Negro is physically and mentally capable of living in any environment the white man or yellow man is capable of living in. I have seen them living happily in Papama, the South Seas, Canada, the Philippines and Alaska, in both urban and rural communities. The Negro is also subject to the same social, economic and psychological laws the white and yellow men are subject to. The human response to a given stimulus is about the same for all peoples. If the white man is leaving the city for the farm, there must be a good reason for it. The same trend is visible in Europe, India, China and Japan—wherever machine industry has gained a foothold. This same machine industry is mechanizing agriculture to such an extent that less than less people are required to produce the food necessary for the sustenance of the urban population. In fact, millions of dollars' worth of food is thrown away or destroyed each year

in order to keep prices at a profitable level. But probably Miller doesn't know that!