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The American Negro Evolving a New Physical Type

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FOR decades the negro has been with us, accepted as a menial, regarded as a captive savage not long out of slavery; indeed, as not far removed from the animal, doing the lowly work for the rest of us, taken as a matter of course when doing it. The negro, it has been felt, was all right in his place, and his place was not questioned by many nor even by the few until very recent times. He waited on his white masters at table, he polished their shoes or grew their corn or picked their cotton—he was the genial, obsequious Pullman porter, or the benevolently regarded Uncle Tom type of old man, with his ever-ready, "Yas suh, massa!"

Recently, however, another view of the negro has developed. With a kind of naïve astonishment, the discovery was made that this slave had produced music of fine feeling and vitality. Not only that, the words he had made to this music were of a poetic quality of no mean sort. We began to hear of his asserting his independence, of his moving North in droves from the South, where he was held in oppression; of his organizing banks and life insurance companies, of his attempting art theatres, of his writing novels and poetry, of his building a Harlem in New York City. And then the discovery was made that we had with us the new negro.

What is this new negro? That is, what may he be aside from the things he has done? What is his ancestry, and to what extent can we call him negro at all? It is amazing when we think that, with all the admitted seriousness of the negro problem before us, there has been absolutely no attempt to discover what has been happening to the negro physically and racially in all the years he has been in this country. We know, of course, that there has been a vast amount of white blood poured into the

negro population during slavery times, but we have never tried to investigate how this might have affected the physical structure of the resulting generations, theorize though we may have about intellectual effect. We do not, as a matter of fact, even know the tribes of Africa from which the African ancestors of our negro population came; whether they came from the people we call "true negroes" or from the mixed peoples who live to the north of these tribes in Africa.

To be sure, we have advanced all manner of theories on this subject, and it is with them, quite unsubstantiated in the main by factual data, that we have tried to consider the problem of the negro in this country. For example, you have often heard that the negro was "breeding out" through the infusion of white blood, and that, given enough time, the negro problem will thus disappear. But there has been no attempt made to substantiate this statement and to see whether or not this was actually true. Again, you may have heard that the negro, being a cross between two racial groups, is so mixed that nothing can be done with him, and that since mixture always lowers the stamina of a people there is not much use, therefore, bothering about him.

In the light, then, of the many theories about the negro that we have heard advanced, it is interesting to try and see what has been happening to the negro since his ancestors were brought to this country from Africa, whether direct or by way of the West Indies. And about the only way to see is actually to study the present-day negro population to the extent that we can get at it. If we take definite physical measurements, as must be done where anthropological studies of race differences, the effects of race crossings and the like are undertaken, on as large a

group of male negroes as an investigator can reach, we may find some surprising results. Because, going as one is, into *terra incognita*, one does not know what to expect. Naturally, one has an idea. One expects to find the negro in America an extremely heterogeneous group, which, because of the large amount of negro-white crossing, shows little stability in physical characteristics, and which represents a combination of the extremely diverse traits which characterize the whites on the one hand and the pure African negroes on the other.

NEGRO ANCESTRY

Such an attempt at getting at the problem of how the negro has developed physically in this country has been made, and the results are of interest because of the extent to which they go counter to just what would be expected. Of course, these results are tentative and cannot be considered conclusive by any stretch of the imagination. But let us see how one goes about getting them before we discuss them. In the first place, it is essential to know the ancestral stock of the negroes who have been measured. The only way in which these data can be obtained, since there are no accurate birth records kept in the majority of the States from which the negroes have come, is to take genealogies from the individuals who have been studied. Here we encounter a grave objection, for is it not axiomatic that the genealogy of the negro is without value, that the negro does not know his ancestry? Let us allow this point to rest for the moment, since I believe that it is not a tenable one, and I think I can demonstrate why. We proceed, then, to measure those traits which are of significance in the problem that we are studying—nose width, and lip thickness, and others of the type which mark off the negro from the white. If we are going to study what has happened to the American negro, and we know that he is a cross between these two types, it is essential to see how these "key" traits have been translated in the process of mixture.

What do we find has happened to the negro? A heterogeneous type as was expected, combining the traits of the ances-

tral populations, which are European and African? Not at all. What we have is—the new negro actually before us in physical form. He is a homogeneous lot. He is not a cross only between negro and white, but between these two and an appreciable amount of American Indian added for good measure, and he stands, on the average, apparently midway between his ancestral populations, not having departed toward either, but, in the process of forming his own type, having merged equally the features he derived from the one and from the other.

The work on which these conclusions are based was carried on in those districts where the new negro is to be found. Working on public school children and adult males in Harlem, New York City, and at Howard University, Washington, D. C., I have been able to measure over 2,000 individuals who have come from all over the country, and not only from all over this country, but some from the West Indies as well. You may say that there has been a process of selection, which has brought these people North from where they were born, that has given them the urge to go to the university. I should not deny it, but I should merely point out that one cannot be too sure that this is the case. If you compare the averages for the series of these men measured by me with that which was measured in the army during the war—when a very large number of negroes from all over the country were measured (over 6,000)—you will find that there is no appreciable difference between those army averages and those which I obtained.

This seems to show that the sample I have measured is a representative one. Of course, you may query regarding the large infusion of negroes from the West Indies into our population in the past few years. But I do not believe that this affects our results greatly—the vast majority of the Howard University students I measured were born in this country—nor is it likely that it would affect the findings in any case, since there is no evidence to show that the racial composition of either the African or European ancestry of the West Indian negroes is very different from that of those of this country. At any rate, it

is a point which remains to be investigated, since it has not been studied thus far. And it is one which need only be mentioned in passing, since the adult sample on which I have worked is so comparatively free from the West Indian element. Let us, therefore, with this aside, see what we get.

If we take the average of the adult male group which I measured, and compare it for any physical trait such as lip thickness, or head form, or stature, or almost any other trait in which the African negro differs from the white European (the American Indian averages are usually quite near the white ones) you will find that the American negro averages are about half-way between those for the other two. Take nostril width for example—certainly a "key" trait as far as negro-white differences are concerned. For the series I measured, the average is 40.96 millimeters. American whites average 35.0, half-blood Sioux Indians 37.6; but African Ashanti have noses that are 42.5 millimeters wide on the average, and the Kajji of West Africa average 45.51. Our American negroes are about half-way between the ancestral populations.

COMPARISONS IN STATURE

Again, let us take stature, another trait. Let us see whether the group measured by me is the same as regards stature, in comparison with the European, Indian and African populations to which it is most probably related as it was with regard to nose width. On the average, these negroes are 171.1 centimeters tall. Englishmen average 174.4, old white Americans recently measured by Dr. Hrdlicka 174.3, Iroquois Indians 172.7, Creek Indians 173.5, Scotsmen 172.1. How about the Africans? The Kanuri-Bornu of West Africa (and all these tribes mentioned are West African ones) average 171.0 centimeters, the Kajji 168.3, the Ekoi 166.9, the Ashanti 164.2, the Yoruba 163.0. Here again we see that the American negro lies between the Africans, on the one hand, and the Europeans and American Indians on the other. Of course, these lists of populations are skeletal, and there are many more traits which might be cited, but they

are sufficient to show what is meant when I say that the American negro—at least, such of the new negro as I have measured—averages in trait after trait midway between the figures for the peoples from which they have come.

There is another point to be considered. It was claimed that not only has the American negro blended the ancestral traits, but that he is homogeneous. Now, what is meant by this? It is not a term which is often used in the discussion of physical likenesses and differences, because our anthropologists have been so busy chasing the will-o'-the-wisp of race that they have not had time to study what has happened to actual existing populations. But it really involves what may be termed the variability of a population. If, let us say, in a given measurement, such as the height of the ear, one population ranges from 50 to 70 millimeters between the extremes and another from 40 to 80 millimeters, one would not hesitate to state the more variable to be the second of these two on this particular trait. Now, in a consideration of human populations, one trait does not have a great deal of importance, but when we find a consistent result in trait after trait (and some thirty traits have been measured on each individual in this study), then we feel that there is something of significance present.

Most students of the subject have held that low variability is an earnest of pure race. To be sure, when you find a race of people that is pure (and that really means, inbred) you will get a low variability, for all the individuals come from the same ancestry. But again, a result that is amazing when we consider the vast amount of mixture represented in these American negroes, it is found that here, too, we have this same low variability that is supposed to be an earnest of pure race. Yet obviously, there is nothing like purity of race represented in the American negro. Our common knowledge of history tells us so; the large number of the very light "negroes" we see on the streets or meet in our daily existence tell us so and the genealogies tell us so. And still, if we again compare the variability of our series measured in New York and Washington with that of pure white populations, European as well

as American, and with pure African negro populations, we find a result that is reasonably enough consistent to allow us to conclude that there has been developed a homogeneous type.

That is not the only reason that we conclude that the new negro is a homogeneous group. It will be remembered that work was done in this study with an unselected group of negro school children in Harlem. As is natural, there were measured numerous sets of brothers and sisters among these. Now, if we have family groups, we can, by a reasonably delicate statistical manipulation, tell the extent to which these families may be expected to be like one another. But if they are quite alike, we have homogeneity, and if they are quite different we have heterogeneity. That is, we set out to find whether the family lines of our population are alike or dissimilar when compared to the extent to which those of other populations are alike or not alike. What do we actually find? That the variability of the family lines of this American negro population is as low as that of the families of Tennessee mountaineers. On the other hand, there is much greater variation within the families, which points to what we are now beginning to suspect as true, namely, that there has been a great deal of crossing in the American negro population, but that this has been gradually diminishing, with the result of increasing homogeneity.

MISLEADING CENSUS FIGURES

There is a point, however, of the reliability of the genealogical statements given by these new negroes.

What was obtained from the genealogical information given is vastly different from what has been accepted before as the racial background of the negro. For instance, the census of 1920 tells us that 15 per cent. of the American negroes are "mulatto," or mixed, and that the rest are pure negro. It is understood that the census figures are based on the oral statements of many different persons, and that no questions as to actual ancestry were asked. But my figures, on the other hand, show that only 20 per cent. of the men from whom I obtained information are

without mixture, and the other 80 per cent. are mixed. It cannot be denied that here we have the effect of selection, and I am willing that my figure of 20 per cent. unmixed be raised materially when applied to the negro population of the country as a whole. I say this because of the fact that my material was gathered where it was.

There is little question in my mind that there is a strong selection within the negro community favoring those persons who look least negroid—who are the lightest in skin color, for example. This would operate to make a larger percentage of mixed individuals go to college, or perhaps to migrate to New York. This came out strikingly when comparative studies of the pigmentation of various groups was made, when I found that the Howard students were lighter than the New York school children, while these are lighter than negro pauper cadavera. So, as I say, my figure of 20 per cent. unmixed negroes may well be too low. But I am convinced that it is far nearer the truth than are the figures given by the census. In any case, I am speaking here of the new negro, primarily the type with which I have worked.

Another point which the genealogies brought out, one which is almost always overlooked, is that 33 per cent.—one-third—of the men whom I measured claimed partial American Indian ancestry. There are several ways of checking these statements. With regard to the Indian ancestry, I tabulated the places of birth of the men who claimed to be descended from the Indian in part, and I found that by far the greatest number of them came from those States where, historically, we know there were large Indian populations. As for the amounts of negro-white mixture, the men were placed in four classes, ranging from pure negro to more white than negro ancestry, and then the average of the traits for the four classes were tabulated. The results are most striking. In every case, practically, and certainly for every important "key" trait, the group which claimed to be unmixed negro is to all intents and purposes identical with the African averages; the class that claimed to be more negro than white a bit more

like the white, and so on, until the class which said it had more white than negro ancestry is not far from the averages for the European populations in the various traits.

To be specific, let us take three traits which are definite differences between whites and negroes. The negro lip is thicker than the white, the nostril is broader, and the height sitting is shorter (which means that the legs of the negro are longer). If we tabulate the averages for each of the genealogical classes, remembering that each individual was placed in his class entirely on the basis of his own genealogical statement, we find the following:

CLASS.	LIP	NOSE	SITTING
	THICKNESS.	WIDTH.	HEIGHT.
	(Milli- meters.)	(Milli- meters.)	(Centi- meters.)
Unmixed negro.....	23.9	43.4	87.3
More negro than white..	22.5	41.35	88.1
About the same amount of white and negro...	21.98	39.96	88.35
More white than negro..	18.8	37.5	89.1

Thus it seems that the validity of the genealogies is reasonably well established, to put it very conservatively, and that to say that our conclusion as to the amount of mixture represented in this population of the New Negroes is invalid because it is based on ancestral data given by the men themselves is to make a statement which must at least bear the burden of proof.

LESS WHITE-NEGRO CROSSING.

Thus, our conclusions, after all this measuring and computing, seem to show that we have, in actual physical fact, a New Negro. And how did he come to be? Certainly, if the genealogies are examined, there is a very small number of individuals who claim a White parent. But there is an appreciable number of White grandparents, and, if the record went further back, as it does in only a comparatively small number of genealogies, there would probably be even more White great-grandparents. It seems to point out that there is a lessening of the amount of crossing between the two races, a factor which would be essential to the establishment of the type which has been observed as a result of this study.

Here again, the objection might be raised that we are dealing with a selected group, that the crossing between Negroes and Whites goes on in the lower social strata of each group, and that therefore any conclusions drawn from material such as this are invalid.

A test would perhaps be to see how many White fathers there would be to a group of illegitimate Negro children. It so happens that this material, difficult as it is to obtain, is at hand. A study has been made by Dr. Ruth Reed of unmarried Negro mothers in the Harlem district, and here, too, an amazing result has been obtained. For only about two per cent. (to be exact, seven out of five hundred cases) of the fathers of the children of these Negro unmarried mothers are White men. Though these cases were studied in Harlem, I have been assured by those in a position to speak with authority on the matter that a similar percentage of crossing with Whites would obtain were the data gathered in the South. I myself have observed that there is a pressure within the Negro community against associating with Whites which parallels that in the White group with regard to Negroes. And so I believe—for one cannot hold on the basis of the material at hand more than an opinion on the subject—that there is relatively little crossing going on between Whites and Negroes, and that it is this mechanism which has allowed of the consolidation of type which all our results seem to have shown to be in the process of being accomplished.

It is not strange, then, that we have the phenomenon of the New Negro. Along with the consolidation of physical type which has been going on, there has also been a consolidation of the American culture within this group, which now begins to express itself in the idiom of this country. I do not mean that there is to be observed any new "race," mystically endowed with peculiar qualities, which is in the process of formation, nor that there is to be coupled with this physical type any peculiar cultural ability. The Negro, after all, is the product of what he learns and the experiences to which he is exposed, plus a certain personal some-

thing which is inborn, just as are all the rest of us. And I draw no conclusions as to what may be the cultural and intellectual result of the physical mixture which he represents.

On the face of the results which have been obtained from this study—which, it must be confessed, barely scratches the surface of the field—it seems that from now on we shall have to think of the American Negro not as an African type in which there has been mixed a small amount

of white blood, a mixture which is still continuing and that will continue long enough finally to achieve the absorption of the Negro into the dominant white population. We must think rather in terms of this New Negro, with his relatively homogeneous form and relatively stabilized type, who has solved the business of living in this American culture, and who, with his start fairly won, will press on in the American community as a full-fledged member of it.

Negro Labor's Quarrel With White Workingmen

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MOST treatises on the history and philosophy of the American labor movement have taken little of the painstaking inquiry necessary to establish the significance of negro workers to trade unionism. Many authors who make this omission do so because of adherence to the popular assumption that since the vast proportion of negro labor has been devoted to agriculture in the South, its relationship to the trade union movement, which has been largely in the industrial North, has been practically nil. The migrations of negroes from the South to the North have upset this sort of reasoning. They have shown that this reservoir of Southern black labor, even if composed chiefly of agricultural, domestic and unskilled workers, could be tapped by the captains of industry as occasion should warrant, and that upon the occurrence of stresses in a one-crop agriculture system, the labor which was devoted almost wholly to the production of its staple crop, cotton, and which was unorganized, would shift to the Southern and Northern cities to take its place among the older white industrial wage earners.

Since 1900 the negro's importance in mechanical and manufacturing enterprise

has steadily increased. Between 1910 and 1920 the number of negroes, 10 years and over, gainfully employed in agriculture decreased 24 per cent.; the number in domestic and personal service decreased 5.1 per cent, while in the extraction of minerals the number increased 20.6 per cent., and the manufacturing and mechanical occupations showed an increase of 125 per cent.

Concomitant with this growing importance of negroes as industrial wage earners, the question of unionization has become paramount. The perception of need for organization is reflected by the embittered criticism of W. E. B. DuBois, Director of Publicity, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, against the temporizing policy of the American Federation of Labor; by the National Urban League's recently proffered assistance to the federation in constructing a definite program for the inclusion of negroes in the various trade unions; by the attempt of negro union members to foster within the federation a more thorough organization of negroes; by the present attempt of the negro sleeping and dining car employes to build a gigantic national organization in these occupations, and by the propaganda