

iron-work or needle-work with their hands than our schools teach, but there has been no education of the brain, and so no inspiration of true culture. Prof. William H. Ferris reminds us, that in his book on "Modern English Literature," Edmund Gosse speaks of Carlyle much as Mr. Morris speaks of Douglas, as if he were a mere tempestuous voice, and brought no cure to the evils he proclaimed. Granted that he built no factory, that he drafted no suffrage law and founded no school, yet he put iron into the blood and hearts that gave men strength for nobler lives. And this was the work of Frederick Douglas. The Negroes of America looked to him as their example of courage and their prophecy of attainment. He taught them what they could make of themselves, rather than what they could make for themselves.

From The Literary Digest, May 21, 1904:

Mr. William H. Ferris, writing in the African Methodist Episcopal *Church Review* (April), criticizes the general attitude toward the negro's religion. "The negro's religion is not taken seriously," he states, "and yet, despite the superstitions, the incongruities, and inconsistencies, there is a deep vein of serious religion in the negro's nature." While not as practical and hard-headed as the Anglo-Saxons, the negroes are "as imaginative, versatile, plastic, and imitative a race as the Greeks." He reminds us, again, that the negro race "is the greatest race of natural talkers that ever appeared upon the stage of history," and that in the cotton and corn-fields of the South, in the sugar and rice plantations, and in the turpentine camps, "there are untutored negro preachers from whose lips issues forth eloquence that, tho rude, is noble." To the charge that the negro is over-prone to emotional excitement in his religious observances, Mr. Ferris answers:

"The only difference between the negro camp-meetings and the camp-meetings of the poor whites is that you can hear the whites singing and shouting two miles away, while you can hear the colored singing and shouting three miles away. The rites at the Delphic Oracle, the bacchanalian festivals in Greece and Rome, and the miracles at Lourdes exhibit as much excitement and intoxication and frenzy as do those recent converts who go crazy and let themselves go when they picture themselves wearing white robes and golden slippers, and treading upon a sea of glass, surrounded by jasper and sapphire walls."

The genetic method of explaining things by the principle of growth through development has been lost sight of, complains Mr. Ferris, in studying the negro's religion:

"His religion is not, as commonly supposed, a phenomenon that is separate and apart from the historical development of the

human race. In his religion, as in the white man's religion, we see but stages in the evolution of human thought. The colored man is gradually shuffling off his superstitions and absorbing from his environment materials for further growth.

"The presentation of a religion whose heaven and hell gave his imagination room to play, the presentation of a God and Savior who awakened his religious aspiration and satisfied the cravings of his spirit, the songs of Christendom that appealed to his sense of music, the depression of slavery that caused him to lean upon an unseen friend for comfort, was what caused the transported African to embrace Christianity.

"The depression of slavery caused him to rest his hopes of happiness in heaven. His utter helplessness caused him to lean upon an unseen friend for comfort. And the aspiration and longing and sorrow and cravings of the negro burst into expression through the jubilee songs and plantation melodies. The emancipation hope may be likened to the Jewish hope of the coming of a Messiah. And the relation between sexual and religious excitement is illustrated in the emotional excitement of the negro in the ecstasies of the religious fervor.

"The consequent effect of the change in the negro's soul life that was produced by his emancipation upon his religion must be noted. The influence of the American Missionary Association, the Freedman's Aid and Southern Education Society, Wilberforce University, the Presbyterian and Episcopalian churches in giving the negro an educated ministry, raised the ethical standard of his religion. The general diffusion of intelligence among the masses broadened their faith. But the irreligious tendencies in the new negro must be noted. The sportive and epicurean tendencies of the young negro is the reflex manifestation of the irreligion of the present day. . . .

"There was often a divorce between religion and ethics in the antebellum days, and even now the negro has not sufficiently shaken off the influences of slavery, which disrupted family ties, and has not completely assimilated the civilization and religion of a race that differs in history and tradition from his own. But the day is breaking; the negro will never completely lose his rich emotional endowment, but his rich emotional life will be a life directed by intelligence and controlled by the will."

Senator Joseph Benson Foraker, the brilliant and heroic defender of the Black Battalion, wrote Mr. Ferris on January 7, 1913: "I think it is of the greatest importance that there be written at this time a careful and just history of the Negro race, showing particularly its development and general progress in the United States since emancipation. I believe, from the way you write and what I see of the character of your work in the clippings you have sent, that you are able to do this."