

THE OLD AND THE NEW

SO MANY THINGS of vital interest have transpired in the past year, affecting directly and indirectly the people throughout the world, that historians will place 1919 in a category all by itself. The greatest boon to mankind it brought was the close of the titanic war, which stopped the wholesale murder of millions of human beings, the wrecking of whole countries. It brought us a plan, and a willingness by the big powers to adopt it, to bring about universal peace forever. While all the covenants of the League of Nations have not been agreed to, the differences in opinion are being rapidly adjusted and the start has been made at least.

AS TO OUR OWN GROUP, despite the fact that lynching mobs have been more active and dastardly than in previous years; "Jim Crow" laws still in force on southern railroads, with the government in charge; race clashes have occurred in several northern cities; movements put on foot to segregate us in residential sections; that we are denied the ballot and adequate school facilities in sections of the country, and that our dark skins give—so the white American thinks—him license to insult our women and browbeat our men, we have forged steadily ahead.

MUCH IS SAID of the "new Negro": we haven't such a critter, just the same old tinted individual roused into self-consciousness, awakened to his own possibilities, with stiffened backbone, with new ambitions, new desires, new hopes for the future. An individual that has proven that somewhere on this earth men and women are judged by their worth and not by their complexion. Our soldier boys found these places, it aroused them from their lethargy, and they returned home with a spirit so contagious the other ninety and nine got it. The yesterdays with us are passed; we are looking forward to the tomorrows.

MORE AVENUES of employment have been opened to us in the past two years than in the preceding fifty years. We have convinced the North that we are an asset, not a liability, as the South tried to make them believe. We demonstrated our 100 per cent Americanism on the battlefields. We have never given our government cause to believe we were antagonistic. The labor unions have invited us into their camp. We have prospered financially, and now we are entering the new year with the full determination of securing by lawful means every right and privilege the constitution of these United States guarantees other citizens. The thinking white people for divers reasons are wont to style us "the new Negro." The word new implies that there has been no past, but we have had a past and they have figured largely in it. We may be able to forgive but not forget. And so "new" is a misnomer; the better word is "awakened." 1919 has given us much for which we are thankful; we are expecting more of 1920.