

I WRITE AS I SEE

By
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A NEGRO RENAISSANCE?

BACK in 1925, Alain Locke, who in my opinion is our outstanding prophet and one of America's truly great minds,



Fauset

typed the up and coming Negro youth with the name "New Negro."

He ascribed many notable and fine qualities to his "New Negro",

and predicted a great deal

more. Looking into the future he saw the day when the Negro would be as much the rage of Broadway and Park Avenue as once he had been the despair of the entire nation.

Locke's ideas were exploited. Both Negro and white attempted to cash in on the interest which was being aroused in the "New Negro". People discovered Harlem. "Nigger Heavens" grew up in every metropolitan center. Negroes became wiser, perhaps a bit noisier, often poorer, and so far as the large northern centers are concerned, ever so much more numerous.

DEPRESSION HURTS

Came the depression, and it seemed to many that the Negro was doomed.

What despair! What misgivings! We simply were destined for ignominy, poverty and failure, said many of our middle class Negroes. They were just about the most hopeless lot you would want to find.

Many's the time I have heard Alain Locke laughed to scorn for his announced faith in the New Negro. Rare indeed was the Negro, especially the educated Negro, who had any faith in his people, by and large. But Locke never sold his people short. While others scoffed and sneered, he went about over the land, searching for the vindication of his promise, and renewing his earlier faith.

Now look at the picture.

NEGRO GENIUS EVERYWHERE

Marian Anderson reigns without a peer in America or in the world. It is truly remarkable.

Dorothy Maynor adds to the other's true significance, and gives the lie to the skeptical majority who would have said she is an exception.

Richard Wright with his very first novel has established himself as high in his field as Marian Anderson and Dorothy Maynor have done in theirs. Should he never write another word, his place is secure. But I shall not be surprised if he becomes a Nobel Prize winner before he lays down his pen.

At Dartmouth College recently, five individual world's records were broken in a meet which featured most of the present crop of great runners. Every one of these records was broken by a Negro!

Names like Paul Robeson, Joe Louis, Henry Armstrong, Et'el Waters, etc., are becoming household favorites all over the land. And we are only beginning.

I am so proud to be a Negro!

GIFT OF THE MASSES

What is the most significant thing about all this, I think, is that nearly everything being done by Negroes is coming from men and women who belong to the masses. Many of them have not had a great deal of education. Almost all of them are children of parents who washed clothes, scrubbed floors, and ran elevators.

I don't want to be critical of colored groups who do honor to Negroes like Dorothy Maynor; but I think it is only fair to say that the best tribute to be paid to these great young people, in

my opinion, is one in which the great working Negro public can participate. Swank evening clothes look very fine. But the spirit of Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass and Nat Turner, which filters through so many of the lives of the parents of our present day Negro greats, is finer still, and much to be cherished. The working parents had faith in their children long before we ever dreamed of acclaiming them. Call in the masses! Give back to them what they now so freely are giving to the American public.

But I didn't intend this article to be a lecture. I simply wanted to say with Alain Locke, "The New Negro is about to call the turn!"