

Has A "New Negro" Arrived

Lest that school of writers who has seen the actual arrival of a "New Negro" become too confident of its convictions, and lest the literati get too far from actualities in the fashion of this phenomenon described as the "New Negro", Dr. W. S. Turner of Shaw University, in the March number of Social Forces, asks "Has The Negro Arrived?" and under this caption gives a discussion which will provoke penetrating thought in the minds of those who too readily assume that our group has arrived. Dr. Turner concludes with the thought that while there is much said about the Negro as a new creature, "he is only changing with the changing order as he learns the art of social adjustment." Doubtless the most striking idea conveyed in Dr. Turner's analysis is the fact that though the Negro is acquiring new types of behavior and improving his social vision the transition from the old order to the new has not been sufficiently pronounced on a scale of wide enough proportions to warrant the conclusion that there has been anything like a social revolution.

Says Dr. Turner, "An understanding of the social forces determining Negro life leads one to conclude that a great deal more of the old order, the old Negro and the old viewpoint remain than the writers of the new declaration of independence seem to realize." The writer finds that in the South the conditions that molded the life of the old Negro, "the economic and social conflict evolved from slavery," in a large measure still exist. More than 35 per cent of the Negroes above 21 years of age in Georgia; 38 per cent in Alabama and 43 per cent in Louisiana are illiterate, while from 80 to 90 per cent of the Negro farmers of some parts of the South still are tenants and croppers. Dr. Turner points out. He also sees that the Uncle Toms, the subservient type of Negro, "has not been swept so suddenly from the stage of action as some of the exponents of the new order assume." Even in Harlem, the greatest Negro city in the world, Dr. Turner declares, "the backwoods culture of the South and the sugar cane plantations of the West Indies persists." The mass of illiterate adults of the South, the enslaved tenants and croppers added to the poverty stricken masses in the cities North and South, "the millions of menials coming inevitably in the transition from chattel slavery to economic independence, at best can only be slightly touched by the thought currents of the modern world," asserts the Shaw University dean.

Dr. Turner does not believe that the new Negro can in any large measure become a social reality as long as these conditions obtain. What he says on this subject actually places the much heralded New Negro in an almost insignificantly small group in comparison with the race entity, and takes much from the glamor of the acclaim that our group has arrived.