

PATRONIZE MERCHANTS WHO ADV. IN THE PEOPLE'S PAPER.



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PAYS THE RACE A HIGH TRIBUTE

Washington, D. C., December 22.—In an article written for her husband's weekly newspaper, Mrs. Belle Case LaFollette, wife of United States Senator Robert M. La Follette, has the following to say on "Colored Folk of Washington."

"In these days of research and statistics one fears to venture an opinion not based on exact knowledge. Recently a fine type of New England woman, who remembers the war as part of her girlhood experience, was asking me about the colored people of Washington. When I had given her my impressions she urged me to put them in writing. The theme interests me and is one upon which my mind often dwells, and yet I can only speak of it from my own personal viewpoint. The race question was very much more in evidence then than now. The status of the Negro was still a political issue. Often the rights and wrongs of black folks became the subject of heated discussion in Congress.

"There were two or three colored representatives from the Black Belt of the South. The Blair Bill providing national aid to education, was debated almost together as affecting our obligations to the colored race. At that time the citizens of Washington were also very quick to take sides on the race question. There were always those to denounce and those to defend the darkies, those who said niggers, and those said Negroes, with equal emphasis. It is significant that today nearly every one says colored quite unconsciously. At that time whatever their viewpoint on the Negro problem, white folks assumed it was up to the superior race to solve it. Not even their strongest champions considered the possibility of black settling it for themselves. Quite naturally the Negroes took little thought of their obligation. Only a generation from slavery, they were but beginning to adjust themselves to new conditions.

"There were among them many of the old type whose habits, manners, traditions, and examples were wholesome. They were the strongest influence for good upon the new generation, who were, for the most part, inexperienced, little educated, and undisciplined;

whose greatest longing, whose first ambition was to be like white folk. They did not realize that, abolishing slavery had not removed the barrier of race and color; nor had they awakened to the possibilities of separate race development. They were often foolishly imitative sometimes offensively assuming. I remember their crowded Sunday-afternoon dress promenades on Connecticut avenue, though innocent enough, were the subject of much humorous comment. There is nothing of that kind now.

"With all their faults, I loved the colored folk then, as I do now. The elemental quality in their nature appeals to me. They had then, as now, low voices, ease of manner, and ingratiating kindness. Those years in Washington were inseparably associated with Maria the faithful nurse, her mother, a typical mammy, John, the waiter at the boarding house, with his wide, good-natured smile; Margaret the cook, with her marvelous wisdom and judgement.

"Returning to Washington after an absence of twenty years, we find a great change. The colored people no longer appear to weigh on the conscience or the consciousness of their white brethren. Very little thought seems to be given to the race question, either public or personally.

"Colored folk are presumed to settle their own problems and carry their own burden. And it seems to me it can be fairly said to their credit, they have not shirked, nor flinched, nor failed. They constitute one-third of the population of Washington. They perform nearly all of the manual labor of the city. They are wage-earners. They receive and spend a great deal of money. It is interesting to note the effect of their purchasing power on the trade. Quite lately I was in one of the best shoe stores in Washington, where a young colored woman was being waited on very courteously. A friend who accompanied me remarked that there were always colored people buying shoes in that store. This led me to observe that when the customer came to the desk to pay the bill, the clerk told her he would make a memorandum of the number of the shoes she had just purchased, so she could get them again if they please.

ed her evidently taking pains to hold her trade.

"In Washington there is much complaint of the service of the colored people, and very little said in appreciation of it. When I hear employers finding nothing but fault, I wonder what Washington would do without the colored help. When women condemn the whole race—as women are wont to do—because of their hard experiences with servants, I think how much more fortunate households are here where there is always some help available, than in many parts of the country where there is none at all to be had. While the colored help does often lack reliability much of it is very good. Married women stay in service, and this lends a stable element that is unusual.

"Our offhand average judgment of the Negroes is apt to be thoughtlessly uncharitable. No allowance is made for their handicap, their disadvantages in opportunity and environment. There may be a class that warrants the charge of shiftlessness, but against that it should be remembered that there is a class of very wealthy and prosperous Negroes. More significant than either of these extremes is the very notable tendency of the working people to save and to buy homes.

"If you observe the children out at play as you pass the colored school, you cannot but be impressed with the neatness and taste of their dress, and their bright and attractive faces. In these times of high cost of living, you wonder how it is done. I happen to know how one mother gets up early every morning, gives her children a good breakfast, and gets each one ready for school, before beginning her day of service.

"Colored children are interesting, and often beautiful. Education and refinement are changing the expression and features of the Negro. They have naturally good physique, good poise, and good manners. As I observe them on the street, in the cars, and in our homes, I wonder if, considering all the circumstances, there is a class of people more deserving of a word of appreciation than the colored folk of Washington.

"As a generalization, I would say that they consciously or intuitively recognize the color barrier; that they accept their place at the foot of the economic ladder; that they are availing themselves of the opportunity to develop as a separate race. They have their own standards to emulate, and naturally follow the line of least resistance. As they learn from experience the shortest road to advancement and achievement they care less to imitate white people, or to be allied with them socially.

"As children suddenly coming to maturity are sobered by the re-

sponsibility of life, so the colored folk have lost some of that quality that Mr. G. Stanley Hall the philosopher, calls "euphoria,"—the joy of living. It seems to me that almost every thoughtful black face carries its shadows of sorrow, but it is hardly ever too deep for a bright smile to break through. The long ages of hot sunlight darkened their skin, but it seems to have implanted deep into their nature an inner warmth and glow—a magnetism and hold upon the elemental life as different from ours as arctic ice from the Gulf Streams."

NOTES INDICATING NEGRO BUSINESS PROGRESS

Supplied By The National Negro Business League

Samuel J. Davis has opened a first-class grocery store at 24 Broad Street, New Rochelle, New York.

Jackson, Mississippi has the distinction of having all its letter carriers colored men. Muskogee once had the same fame.

Negro churches are supporting 200 home missionaries, and 100 missionary stations, and contributing \$50,000 annually for foreign mission work.

Another undertaking firm has now set up for business in Jacksonville, Florida, under the name of J. E. Hawkins & Company. They advertise themselves as being well equipped for up-to-date service.

Burkes & Arbuckle Company is the name of a new Negro Music Publishing Company in Boston, Massachusetts. The firm is not only the only one of the kind in Boston but has as far as is known is the only one of the sort in New England.

A new skyscraper, a six story Odd Fellows building, to cost \$135,000, is the work of a Negro contractor, Mr. R. E. Pharrow, of Atlanta, Georgia. This is only one of a great many buildings he has erected, among which is Sale Hall of Atlanta Baptist College, and the First Congregational Church, of Atlanta.

Sam Powell, of Paw Creek, N. C., sold in the Charlotte market early in December 13 bales of cotton for which he received \$1,086. He disposed of 400 bushels of cotton seed of \$600. Eight bales sold at 18 cents a pound and five bales sold at 17 cents a pound. He averaged a bale to the acre. Mr. Powell is in every way an up-to-date farmer. He subscribes for and reads several papers, both daily and farm journals. He raises each year his own food supplies and sells enough to pay his expenses.

RACE NEWS

GATHERED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

The Scullin-Gallagher Steel Foundry, of St. Louis, Missouri, one of the largest steel plants in the world, employs several thousand colored men in its shops. Negroes are to be found working in all but three of its departments and lack of experience and training is the sole reason. The wages paid Negroes run from \$1.75 to \$6.00 per day. Not a few Negroes have learned the trade in this foundry and are now foremen of their departments.

Dearfield, Colorado, is the scene of a Negro colony in the West. It is located west of the Missouri River and North of the Mason and Dixon Line, 70 miles northeast of Denver. Twenty-six colored families are settled on government land. Most of them have already been here long enough to own the soil they till. They have 6,000 acres under their control. In 1911 they had but two habitable houses. Now they have fourteen. In the same year there were but 200 acres fenced; now there are 3,000. In 1911 they had 150 acres broken and in cultivation, this year 500 acres are under cultivation. The land is especially adapted to the cultivation of beets. The settlement is crying for tradesmen. They are especially in need of blacksmiths, cobblers and saddle makers.

The right of 5000 Cherokee freedmen to participate in the distribution of lands and funds belonging to the Cherokee Indian nation was sustained, December 20, by Judge Anderson, of the District of Columbia Supreme Court. The court sustained the government's demurrer to a suit of the Keetoowah Society to restrain the Secretary of the Interior from permitting the freedmen to participate in the property. The suit was dismissed. The freedmen claim that their share in the property runs anywhere from \$5,000,000 to \$50,000,000. The Keetoowah Society is composed of full blood Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma. The freedmen are the descendants of slaves of the Cherokees and of mixed Negro blood. The court, in dismissing the suit, held that the freedmen were clearly entitled to equal rights with the native Cherokees.

Mr. Jesse Washington, a wholesale and retail grocer of Marlin, Texas, is an example of the up-to-date Negro business man. Mr. Washington was formally a school

teacher, but happening one day to read an article of Dr. Booker T. Washington's advising the Negro to branch out, he quit the school room and embarked in business. He now operates a wholesale and retail grocery store at Marlin. He carries regularly a \$10,000 stock. When he began business in Marlin there was only one Negro business in the town and this was failing because the proprietor was unable to buy so as to successfully compete with the white businesses of the town. He has been able to buy goods in large enough quantities to successfully meet competition. He has also been able to sell to the colored businesses so that they can also meet competition. This has been helpful in building up colored businesses in Marlin. There are now thirteen prosperous Negro businesses in this small town. Mr. Washington is assisted in his businesses by two of his sons, one of whom is a graduate of the Bryan & Stratton Business College of Chicago, and the other has just graduated from an embalming school in that city. Mr. Washington's success in Marlin is an indication of what can be done in almost any small town in the South and is an inspiration to young colored men to engage in business.

Washington, Dec. 24—The proposal to eliminate the Negro as an American soldier is slated for consideration when the conference of the ranking officers of the army is held here Jan. 8. Some officers favoring the plan are prepared to urge it on the ground that in the Philippines the natives are said to resent the appearance among them of the black troopers, and that there are signs of dissatisfaction in Hawaii, owing to the fact that the Twenty-fifth Infantry, a Negro organization has been ordered to the islands to form a permanent garrison. Friends of the Negro soldiers are preparing to make a strenuous fight in their behalf, pointing to their splendid record in time of war in Cuba and in the Philippines. "I have served eleven years with Negro troops and eleven years with white troops. I have found the Negroes the better behaved, the more amenable to discipline and more inclined to be interested in their work as soldiers," said Major E. B. Gose. He commands two battalions of the Twenty-fifth Infantry, colored, at Fort George Wright. He did not favor the elimination of Colored troops from the army.