

VIEWS AND REVIEWS

By
 George S. Schuyler

One of my friends I esteem most highly is Judge Charles E. Toney, Municipal Court, City of New York. I like him because he looks, acts and has the carriage of a judge, in addition to being without inferiority complex. Most Negroes in high office display much of the spirit of the rabbit, but Judge Toney has not changed a bit from the quiet manliness displayed before his election.

Judge Toney recently was maligned by one Cornelius Hughes, a blustering ignoramus, serving as a deputy clerk in his court. Hughes has been disconnected from his job and has sunk into oblivion, but one of his statements made around Harlem and even at his trial was that Toney had suffered more reversals on appeal than any of the 47 Municipal Court judges in the metropolis.

Now comes the N. Y. World-Telegram investigating the Municipal Courts of the city and reports Justice Toney as having the sixth LEAST reversals among 47 judges, with a percentage of 25.7. The judge (white) with the most reversals had 62.5 per cent; the one with the least had 19.2 per cent. This is not conclusive evidence of a judge's ability, but it looks pretty good to me.

An inquiring reporter for the N. Y. Daily News asked five white persons selected at random: "Have you any objections to seeing colored players on the big league baseball teams?" Four out of five said "No." The fans are far more liberal than the baseball moguls. They would pack ball parks to see crack Negro players in the big big leagues. Team owners, facing the problem of waning interest, are beginning to realize that fact, but their race prejudice is still strong. I have always contended that race discrimination is kept alive chiefly by the upper class.

Down in Waterproof, La., while visiting the levee jobs there, I overheard a white man conversing with a Negro. The topic of discussion was the depression. The white man concluded, philosophically, after dilating on the devastation wrought by the slump, "Well, we're all in the same boat now!" Millions of whites in the South think the same way but don't express it publicly for fear of criticism, ostracism and economic reprisal. Some day they'll say openly what the harassed Nordic said in Waterproof, La.

The other day I was talking to L. F. Coles. We were discussing Frederick Douglass, his much-criticized Caucasian second wife and William Pickens' recent article telling how she was responsible for the old home at Anacostia being preserved as a shrine of liberty for the Negro race.

Much to my surprise, I learned from Coles that Richard Allen, the distinguished Philadelphian, who founded the African Methodist Episcopal Church, was also married to a white lady who used her money and influence to get his young church on its feet. Incidentally, Richard Allen didn't found a specifically Negro church, but one in which all might worship, regardless of color, without segregation or discrimination.

In November, 1931, I had occasion to take "Judge" William C. Houston, G. O. P. jobholder and Commissioner of Education of the Colored Elks, to task in this column for going around whooping the praises of the notorious Jim Watson of Indiana, one of the Parker-voting Senators seeking re-election, but now supinely relegated to lame duckery.

The following fortnight the "Judge" (who is now trembling for his government job, what with the hungry Democrats in the offing) met with some of his cronies in Washington, D. C., and replied to my criticism by calling attention to whom I had married.

Now I see that the "Judge" has betrayed the Negroes again by arranging for a Jim-crow performance of "The Green Pastures" for Washington Negroes. Finley Wilson, the wily "Little Napoleon," has denied any connection with the segregated performance, which leaves the "Judge" holding the sack all alone with the whole town baying for his hide.

The spectacle naturally causes me much pain. I know the "Judge" meant well by arranging this Jim-crow performance "For Negroes Only" and was merely trying to do what he considered to be his duty as Commissioner of Education of Elks. Of course, I believe the "Judge" when he explains that he misapprehended and misunderstood the policy of the National Theater. Never having been permitted inside it, how could he know? And then you don't expect a man who ballyhooed for Parker-voting Jim Watson to be very bright.

It was to be suspected, I supposed, that some prominent Negro Democrats would hasten to get in the good graces of the incoming Administration by serving on a Jim-crow inaugural committee. Prof. G. David Houston of Howard University, classmate of Franklin D., is heading up the Jim-crow committee, consisting of several prominent Negroes, mostly Republicans. He insists that there will be no segregation, but is feverishly making arrangements for a Darktown inaugural Ball where numerous black Democrats and their camp followers may shuffle, guzzle and stomp without creating a "problem" for "de good white folksee" who may throw out a few remnants of patronage after the white job seekers have gorged their fill. Tickets are also allegedly being reserved "in certain sections" of the grandstands.

This shows that the Negro race is making progress. In the old days the race betrayers were often illiterate ruffians; now they are Harvard graduates and professors of English in our large universities. Let us hope they are granted rewards commensurate with their betrayal of the people on whose backs they park.

Prof. Gordon B. Hancock of Virginia Union University states the obvious or spouts sheer ignorance so frequently that I have long since ceased reading his stuff. However, my attention has been called to a recent column of his in which he devotes space to ridiculing the so-called "New Negro." According to Hancock, the New Negro "quailed before the challenge of the hour" and "at a time when we need somebody to cry out and spurn not, the New Negro has skulked away to his tents." The Gloomy Dean thinks the New Negro could not stand the gaff and skulked away. "George Schuyler," says Hancock, "proposed to organize these New Negroes into a band of co-operatives . . . We hoped that they would actually come through with something constructive for these trying times."

George Schuyler can speak right up for himself without any funds from philanthropists or the support of existing organizations: 35 of these New Negroes launched the Y. N. C. L. in December, 1930. As a result of our propaganda, there are ACTIVE groups in New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbia, S. C., and Mobile, most of them with buying clubs. It took New Negroes to make this start, and I think it's a pretty good one. Some of our councils have failed to click. At one time we had 16, and some are still in existence. We distributed with our limited funds over 25,000 pieces of furniture, held two national conferences and are about to stage a third. What group of Old Negroes ever sponsored anything so economically sound for group progress? Even if we had failed to organize a single group it would have been no indictment of either the New Negro or consumers' co-operation.

I can think of a lot of New Negroes who have not quailed nor skulked in their tents. There is A. Philip Randolph, L. F. Coles, Benj. J. Davis, Jr., Walter White, Roy Wilkins, George W. Lee, Carl Murphy, Langston Hughes, Cyril Briggs, Richard Moore, Wm. N. Jones, W. A. Domingo, Eugene Gordon, Frank Crosswath, Countee Cullen, Abram L. Harris, Elmer A. Carter and hundreds of New Negro women.

Each in his or her own way is on the firing line hewing out new paths and making fine new contributions, whether in the field of labor, religion, literature, education, music, politics or the professions. Not to be aware of this is to be singularly blind and stupid. The spirit of the New Negro who came out of the World War to hold back the mobs in Washington, Chicago, Longview, St. Louis and Tulsa and usher in the first Coon Age is more alive today than ever. And even The Pitts-

burgh Courier must be among the New Negro class or George Schuyler might not be heard, nor a good Dean, for that matter.