

Searchlight Says

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Unheeded Warning

Only a fortnight ago, we called attention in this column, under the caption of "The Flasco of Dr. McKenzie," to the real cause of the downfall of Fisk's erstwhile president: The President of Howard University could not have read that article, or else he thought that we were unpractised in sooth-saying.

With the suddenness of a flash of lightning, a strike of tremendous magnitude broke forth at Howard University. The students complained, demanded, and struck. Needless to say, they won their cause, and now both tutor and tutored are on speaking terms again.

We are not going into the merits of that contest. Only judges and philosophers determine the right and wrong of cases. We merely look for lessons taught and pass them on to our readers.

Strange enough the R. O. T. C. organization which played such a conspicuous role in this trouble, has for its objective the teaching of young men how to fight. The young Negro is proving to be an apt pupil, for he is really learning how to fight and how to fight effectively.

Campaign Orderly And Intelligent

If there can come any joys out of a brawl, two are certainly derivable from this recent clash between students and faculty. First, these Howard students waged an orderly campaign. They did not create excitement, damage property, or injure persons. There was never any real need of the police, though the blue-coats paid the campus a visit, only to return for the lack of business.

The striking students used their heads, voices, and posters. Their unprecedented behavior under such circumstances won the respect of the local press, disinterested spectators, and the police department. The only group of important people whom they did not please was the faculty.

Their most effective weapon was their voice. Spontaneous orators convinced their fellow students that their cause was just. Though these Howard boys have an annual custom of dropping the debate to Atlanta University, they manifested forensic abilities, during the strike, that would have made the Halls of Congress take notice.

During one of these oratorical programs, a captain of the police entered and craved an opportunity to be heard. He was asked to give the gist of his speech. He declined and was, consequently, denied a place on the program. Now wouldn't this make a grand chapter in a new "Up From Slavery"?

Solidarity Was Outstanding Feature

The second joy, if such it may be termed, was derived from the solidarity of these young folk, the future leaders of the Negro race. One professor, the tale goes, became so enamored of the solid phalanx of students that he gave a lecture on "sticking together." This solidarity is most remarkable, for there are many social divisions at Howard, due to the unchecked activities of the fraternities and sororities.

Solidarity is fundamental to race progress. The "new Negro" is learning that the race must hang together or hang separately. "In union there is strength," is just beginning to mean something to him.

There can be no intense consciousness of racial greatness, of racial freedom, or of racial manhood until there is racial solidarity. Fortunately, the impressionable colored student is grasping this fundamental lesson. There was racial exultation in his outbursts at Fisk and Howard. In both institutions, presided over by members of another race, the cry was to dethrone oppression.

Democracy Of Interests Exemplified

When these striking students once became imbued with the idea that they were being oppressed, it did not take long for them to throw aside their social differences. Rival fraternities and sororities, male and female students, junior and senior colleges—all formed a big orderly group and fought for their principle.

There must have been some fifty or sixty students who oppressed a desire to attend classes. When, however, the police department patrolled the campus and mishandled some of the female students, even these fifty or sixty left their classes to express their indignation.

This act clearly indicates a new trait. Once the Negro could feel only the blow that fell on him. Now he catches, through racial sympathy, the blow that strikes any member of his group. The presence of such kindred feeling is the very essence of racial solidarity.

Strike Was Great Misfortune

In many respects, however, the Howard strike was the greatest misfortune that has ever befallen the university. It was broadcast throughout the land. The white press is always ready to give the front page to any news that may prove injurious to the Negro race.

Howard University is going to lose a large number of students as a result of the strike. They will not return another year. Parents and guardians have been worried. To parents at a distance, a strike usually connotes frightful scenes, with banging ambulances and patrol-wagons speeding through traffic. Every parent clearly visualizes these scenes, invariably identifying his loved one in the dangerous ward of the neighboring hospital. There is no comfort for such a parent.

It is a safe bet that this strike will be carried to the floors of congress, in the fall, when the appropriations are discussed. Many of the students are from the States. They have already sent their grievances home. The administration of Howard is sure to be questioned on the issues raised by these constituents.

Gov. Appropriation Endangered

Once it was a rare occurrence for Howard to lose her appropriations in the House of Representatives. Now it is almost an assured fact that a point of order will be raised yearly, and the fate of the appropriations will

depend upon the feeling of the Senate.

Most likely an attempt will be made to prove the Howard students ungrateful and unpatriotic. The assumption is that the federal appropriations provide for the tuition of students. For this reason, Howard uses the expression, "incidental fee." Once, therefore, the notion prevails that the students are neither grateful nor patriotic, the federal coffers will be locked.

Any congressional attack upon the students is going to force the administration of Howard to defend the student body against the charge of ingratitude and disloyalty. This defense will have to show that the students did not have the remotest intention of deserting the R. O. T. C., but merely fought conditions incidental thereto.

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