

"THE NEW NEGRO"

A Genuine Negro Melodrama Successfully Produced at the Academy of Music, June 23, in the Interest of the Philadelphia Division of U. N. I. A.

By R. S. SIMSON

Several years ago Harriet Beecher Stowe gave to us the true Slavonic side of dark life and the grubbage of pageantry. Today, fifty odd years later, the shackles of bondage have fallen and the new Negro, with what is left of the Indian, have both risen promiscuously among the great multitude of white. To this end, that we might view the Negro and the Indian of modern times and see them as they are, A. Lincoln Harris has given us a remarkable play and one which will cause thousands and graduates and literary students of younger age which the colleges have turned out to blush with shame at the empty pitchers which they so slothfully failed to fill at the fountain of life's usefulness. The plot is so skillfully drawn that it places Mr. Harris' work favorably with the brain of a white playwright, whose life of study, practice and experience had given him an advantage. The briefest possible substance of the story is that Marcus Garvey's son, of New York, had fallen in love with Naena, an Indian maid. This Indian girl and her brother were known by a white man before they were taken by the Indians after separation by fire from their mother whom they did not remember. Mr. Garvey objects to his son's marriage to an Indian, as he had planned for his son to take up his life's work after he had passed away. And right here we will say some of the most beautiful dramatic work is introduced showing the work of Mar-

with shame at the empty pitchers which they so slothfully failed to fill at the fountain of life's usefulness. The plot is so skillfully drawn that it places Mr. Harris' work favorably with the brain of a white playwright, whose life of study, practice and experience had given him an advantage. The briefest possible substance of the story is that Marcus Garvey's son, of New York, had fallen in love with Naena, an Indian maid. This Indian girl and her brother were known by a white man before they were taken by the Indians after separation by fire from their mother whom they did not remember. Mr. Garvey objects to his son's marriage to an Indian, as he had planned for his son to take up his life's work after he had passed away. And right here we will say some of the most beautiful dramatic work is introduced showing the work of Marcus Garvey and his followers that we ever witnessed on a stage. The mother naturally plans to aid her son to happiness and a marriage license is secured, but the father appears on the scene just in time to prevent the marriage. At this juncture the white man discovers that he knew the two Indians in their childhood and breaks the news that they are not Indians, but Negroes. One writer in a Philadelphia paper says "the new Negro intended to lionize the Garvey element of the race and make the new Negro appear as something superior to all other races of the world." That is not true. The author has clearly pictured the difference between the old and the new Negro. The old Uncle Tom type is shown in a servant of the Hon. Marcus Garvey, while the new Negro stands up man to man in the son of Marcus Garvey and demands an equal break with other races. The new Negro not only tickles the fancy of the masses, but gives to the intelligent classes the thing long wished for, namely, something to give inspiration, to digest and be proud of. It carries in its portrayal a deeper and grander meaning and force than any drama as yet produced and written by a member of the Negro race. Miss Emelyne J. Tindley as leading lady displayed dramatic instinct which merited considerable applause. She took the house by storm with her beautiful solo. Mrs. Viola Carter as Henrietta Vinton Davis, president of the U. N. E. A. Club, was dignified and

Henrietta Victor Davis, president of the U. N. I. A. Club, was surprised and gave her very interesting story with a variety of expressions which only come from years of application and study. Mrs. Ella Pleasant as Mrs. Garvey was delightful not only to listen to, but also to look upon. She infused into the character all the aristocracy of wealth and position and as the mother was sweetly forgiving and patient. Mrs. Maud V. C. Potter looked quite pretty and sang her role with artistic instinct. The other female characters were Effie Willis, Lillian Myer, Sarah Dorsey, Susie Lowary. These young ladies gave fine interpretations of their parts. R. Jasper as Marcus Garvey filled the dramatic requirements of his work. Mr. J. Thomas Butler as the son of Mr. Garvey and the hero of the play did some of his best work. He was everything that could be expected of an artist of his ability. The most complete character in the play was the comedy role, an ignorant man servant of Mr. Garvey's. The part was taken by Allie Hughes, who is a real comedian. The author certainly wrote some real witty lines. In all the scenes his comedy stood out. Elbert Tindley as Rev. Eason was pleasing and exact. The other male characters were Edgar Moon, W. Horner, Walter S. Hanna and Frank Johnson, who all gave good account of themselves.

Mr. Harris should be encouraged in his great work, not only by members of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, but by every member of the race, for the beautiful life of Waena and the noble character of Marcus Garvey should be anchored in the heart of every boy and girl of the race throughout the nation. "The New Negro" is a drama full of beautiful thoughts and inspiration.