

THE CRIMINAL NEGRO.

III. SOME OF HIS CHARACTERISTICS.

1. *Social Life.*

SOCIAL life is important in any consideration of crime, for it is through this channel that criminal impulses often find expression. The social life of the negro is comparatively crude and simple. I need scarcely say that he is excluded from all social relations with the whites. The line is more closely drawn now than in slavery days. Now it is seldom that whites are present at a negro marriage, burial, or feast; then it was the rule. Upon some of the old plantations, where the semblance of slavery is strongly marked, there is some intermingling, but it is with regret rather than pleasure. The negro has not yet attained the position where he is regarded as a man rather than as a negro. Indeed, this feeling is so strong among the older Southern whites that the negro is still required to come to the back door and stand uncovered in the kitchen. While the whites feel it is their duty to educate the negroes, yet in sympathies and interests they are far removed. It is impossible that a race so recently in serfdom should hold any other position. Economically, morally, and mentally they have been handicapped.

Probably no other generation of Anglo-Saxons could have done more, for it must be remembered they were impoverished and had lost much that was dear to them—and this through the race which they were asked to elevate and protect. No body of men in the history of the world has ever had such a situation to face. There were no precedents, and criticism should be sparingly given if they are but slowly perceiving and responding to its need.

Those advancing the theory of social equality in the South mean quite differently from those in the North. It is not

mingling at the white's social functions, or invading his home, but such economic, financial, cultural, and educational conditions as will enable him to maintain similar grades in his own race and to have literature and recreations of equal standards. This requires the interest and coöperation of the whites, which are at present denied. The free intermingling of the two races is impossible, at least for many generations, because of a deeply-rooted social and racial prejudice. It is useless to deny this, for New York and Ohio in the North have recently verified this statement. This will not prevent the negro from reaching and maintaining similar grades within his own race; and when these are established the negro will not demand, as indeed he does not in the South, social equality with the whites. He will find within his own race what he needs and desires.

The social life of the negro centers about the church, for he has few organizations and clubs. Even labor organizations are but slowly finding a place in his life. This lack of organization is detrimental to the negro. The whites are the negroes' best friends, for the black race has not yet ingrained in it integrity and loyalty. This is shown in many ways. Negroes prefer white men on juries, because they accord fairer treatment. There are many negroes sent to prison because of malice. If a negro is undesirable in his neighborhood, and does not remove when requested, his neighbors combine and cause his arrest—and their testimony imprisons him. In the data regarding *fear*, it is seen that not a few fear their own race more than anything else. The negro has been trained to be loyal to the whites; this virtue still takes precedence. There can be little racial progress without racial integrity, loyalty, and pride. The social life of the negro church is broad, but it is lacking in the fundamental principles that should make it a governing agency. Most of the excursions, picnics, parties, entertainments, cake-walks, and festivals have their relation to the church. The negroes' leisure permits of much social intercourse, and this often leads to an expenditure of money for finery and unnecessaries that keeps the race impoverished.