

THE NEW SOUTH.

Editor The Freeman

Having just returned home from a six weeks sojourn in the southland, seeing and studying the Negro from many practical view points I am more encouraged as regards the future development and prosperity of the race than ever before. There are evident signs of progress in every phase of Negro life South of Mason and Dixie's line. In every town, city and county Negroes are at work, accumulating and economizing material substances. They are educating and developing those traits of character which make stable and great. Negro business enterprises, commercial and industrial activities are becoming more and more important factors in the growth and development of southern communities. Twenty years hence, with this continued push and energy along these moral, educational and industrial lines the Negroes of the South are bound to weave themselves into the very warp and woof of the nation's development of that section. They will become such important factors that a kindred interest will govern and control the members of both races along all lines. I have seen Negro bankers, merchants, real estate brokers,

large farmers, street car magnates, shippers, insurance operators and professionals which rank in their communities with the leading whites. That this class of people have the respect and sympathy of the better class of white people of the South is true. The old one room cabin is being displaced by frame structures with larger and additional rooms.

In one of the progressive towns of Florida the largest drygood merchant is a black man; the largest shoe and leather establishment in the state is owned and controlled by a colored man. Fraternal organizations are doing much along various lines to correlate the Negroes, hold them in tact and instill confidence.

Too much unwise discussion is indulged in respecting Negro disfranchisement in the South, while unjust laws obtain and many civil rights are extorted from them. The Negro is still a political factor in the southland and will become more so as the years go by. He really enjoys more political emoluments and office preferment in the South than he does in the North. He is a wise politician and enjoys more of political fruits. Would that some of our northern political fads would study politics and become wiser. The southern Negro is opposed to reduction of southern representation and wisely so. He views with regret the unfavorable Negro plank in the last Republican National Platform and wants the Negro question eliminated from our national body politics. While he is generally a Republican he believes in the independent action of the Negroes politically where they can vote and have their votes counted. He rather admires and respects the intelligent race loving Negroes of the North who contend for just recognition and who have the manly courage to repudiate white Republicans who attempt to cajole and use the Negro voters for their own personal advantage. Our Negro leaders of the South are not alarmed at the Anathemas of the Vardaman-Tillman coterie nor are they disturbed over the agitation of foreign emigrants invading their territory to displace them as laborers. They firmly believe the southland to be their legitimate heritage and are bent on contributing their best endeavors for its development. Thus are they building permanent homes, establishing schools and churches, buying lands and building civic

structures lasting and potent. In fact we northern Negroes can look with pride upon the valor and industrial thrift of our southern brethren with anticipations of a future fraught with safety for the American Negro. Barriers are breaking away, southern prejudices are melting like wax before the fire, a new South is producing a new Negro, American citizens whose future activities will add to the crowning glory of our American twentieth century civilization.

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