

RACE QUESTION CONSIDERED.

The Industrial Training of the Negro--Booker T. Washington's Plan a Good One.

To the Editor of The American:

IN the discussion of the race question, many of our negro leaders do not view matters as they really are. They argue from the standpoint as to how the condition of affairs should and ought to be; and not as they actually exist. They do not consider that we must be controlled by the inexorable condition of the times, and that we fail of the best results only because the time is not yet come, for the fulfillment of the prophecies, and because we fail to grasp present opportunities. There is today much conflict of opinion and policy, yet there should be a healthy co-operation in work and service for the amelioration of the condition of men. A neglect on the part of both races, to fully rely on God's promises, and to see his hand in history and in the development of human affairs, and a persistent selfishness to work out matters, is causing the judgment of the nineteenth century to become warped by malice, prejudice, party and sectional interests; and conceit and selfishness have bred contempt, and all these together, have made the very air around us ulm and confusing. They are peculiarly hurtful elements, and prevent us from seeing clearly and justly.

The negro question is gaining the attention of the whole world. Among the 575 topics viewed in the bibliography in the report of 1893 and 1894 on the negro question, the most striking ones were: "What has education done for the negro? What will the negro do for himself? What is to be done with the negro?" While God beholds liberty, equality and fraternity to be the common lot of all, and though we see clearly that God hath made of one blood all races and nations, the impatient, demanding leaders of the negro race must learn that the philosophy of the Bible, and history teach that these have not been secure to any race or nation till time and devotion to God developed them through manly efforts toward moral and Christian worth. These rights have never been thrust upon an individual, race or nation. The Anglo-Saxons have caused a history to be written, which has been of a world-wide interest, ever since they landed on the Isle of Thanet, 449 A. D. Alfred the Great planted the tree of civilization, and introduced Christianity in England. He was forced to leave this tree to the influence of time, just as it was ready to burst into a plant. Many great men have occupied themselves with the care of this great tree, and each in his way has advanced its growth. William the Conqueror with his own hands bent the tender branches to his will, and today its leaves rustle at the gentle breezes of Christianity. Its wide spreading branches are swayed to and fro by the forceful winds of civilization. Yet time must cause this great tree of reach its full growth. While, too, negro leaders are demanding so much, in the present, for the race they must know that the Anglo-Saxons have been 1,450 years reaching the point of civilization they now enjoy, while the negro has been only 23 years developing from a heathen to a Christian, and only thirty-four years emerging from slavery to freedom. True the negro has been only a short while accomplishing much. He has been favored to have been brought so rapidly under the influence of the gospel. It took the Anglo-Saxons thirty years to win Kent alone; sixty years to complete the conquest of South Britain, and nearly 200 years to subdue the whole island and to plant thereon the Christian banner. The Anglo-Saxons possessed indomitable will and bravery. But what is most essential to remember is, that life and property were not secure to them by State legislation, but by the loyal union of their fellow-citizens. The Saxon guilds or fraternal associations are unmatchd in history, as the evidence of self-reliance, self-restraint, mutual trust, and orderly love of law among the people, the result of a Christianizing and civilizing influence. These ennobling qualities have yet to become thoroughly engrafted in the minds and character of the negroes. While a few now possess them, the masses are so destitute of them, the race itself has not yet full recognition, as men of sterling worth and qualities, and the few who are showing them forth are by degrees demanding the respect of individuals. The race is still a slave to prejudice, malice and revenge, and a target for the hurtful darts of the same. The Saxons who quarreled and fought in the Old World are a unit in the New World. They were divided in purpose and interest; prejudices, jealousies and wars were the ruling elements among the Caucasians in their pagan life, but Christianity has blended the nations into one. Christianity will not finish its mission till all races and nations are one in purpose and interest, in bringing about the common brotherhood of man. The negro has been so flattered and praised on account of his rapid rise till he is filled with too much conceit to admit that the new negro is not all that he should be, and tries to charge all of his hindrances to prejudice on the part of the Caucasian race. He must remove the beam from his own eye, before he proceeds to extract the mote from his brother's eye. We feel and know that too much prejudice does exist toward him, yet, too, he is not clear of prejudice. He is yet too ignorant of the principles of right and often his persecutions are self-imposed and inviting. It is his right to defend, but he should not provoke. That the Caucasian provokes the negro is too often sadly true, but not always so, for the negro himself does provoke when he should not. The Saxon neglect to try to ameliorate the negroes' present condition, made so by his former enslavement, should not be. He should pity him instead of blame him; and while he spends millions in foreign missionary work, it would be well to give much aid in helping to Christianize the American negroes. If all of the Caucasians will feel as Rev. John Hanner, Jr., of the M. E. Church, South, when he wrote me while in correspondence with him to lecture to the pupils of the Tennessee State Normal and Industrial School, more sympathy will be given the negro. He said that he felt that the white race owed a duty to the negro race, and that he was willing to do what he could to ameliorate his present condition. While much sympathy and aid has been given the negro, too much cannot yet be given him. In a great measure the South has aided him as well as the North. The North has been careful of his spiritual and intellectual growth while the South has been careful to give him work and comforts necessary to his existence. As God has moved upon the hearts of men the negro has been cared for, but as selfishness and a desire for the mastery and the accumulation of wealth have taken the place of sympathy and brotherly feeling, the negro has been mistreated. Surely God is not pleased with the present condition of affairs. Public sentiment is against the negro, and he must now appeal to God to be for him, while the world is against him. Yet the forces of wrong must have their time and turn in human affairs, but ere the final day all will come right if the negro lives right. The very inconsistent idea that the Caucasian can't stand the negro to sit near him in public when the negro has nursed him, and come in close contact with him in various ways, will be done away with. The very idea that he can kiss a black dog, caress and fondle a horse of ebony hue, and that everything black is liked by him except the black skin that covers the kindest and most sympathetic heart and loving soul that God created, though inconsistent, will some day be done away with, yet not now is the time to demand anything more than Christianity will unfold to him. He must be willing to labor and wait. He must live much upon his knees. He must not feel that the professional calling is the only high calling. The history of the Anglo-Saxon race is one of violence and spoliation as well, and wherever they have come in contact with an inferior race, invariably that inferior race has been put, conquered or exterminated, or as some put it, "have gone to the wall." The negro through the direful and baneful influence of slavery, has been through God, brought into the life and blood of the Caucasian, and the two races are so related in blood that it will prove to be a sad state of affairs to continue dividing in purpose and interest. They would wreak vengeance upon both races to the detriment of both. But a race with such a history as the Caucasian will prove to be a formidable foe, and will never concede full and equal rights to an acknowledged inferior race till that inferior race grows out of a persistent selfishness into an entire dependence upon the all powerful God. When the negro can be made to see that God permitted him to be enslaved in order to have him to be brought more readily and rapidly under the influence of the gospel, he will eradicate malice, prejudice and revenge from his mind; and when the Caucasian rightly and religiously considers all things as he should he will be more tolerant with the negro and further lend his aid in Christianizing and civilizing him, and not wreak vengeance by mobbing and lynching him, and will through the due process and force of the law reclaim him to God. He forgets that the negro's present actions are in a great measure the result of his tutorage by the Caucasian during slavery. His neglect to Christianize him, God's hand in history must be observed by both races, before they will dwell together as they should.

The negro is now simply playing his part on the historical stage. Phyllis Wheatley observed God's hand in slavery, when she wrote her poem, which has become of world-wide fame. Gen. Washington saw in the eighteenth century through Phyllis Wheatley the future prospect of the negro, when he said that negro slave girl displays the capabilities of the race. God will bring the race all right, though he may do so through pestilences, diseases, calamities, paupes and wars. The negro must patiently work, pray and wait. Our do-

nouncing leaders, who are so demanding, boastful, and self-conceited have done us much harm. To demand at this critical period is but to bind tighter the fetters that hamper our progress. The negroes' best leaders are those who are daily sacrificing time, talent, means and energy for the uplifting of the masses, and not working solely for self interest and self aggrandizement, and are not defrauding and deceiving the poor and ignorant of the race under a pretense that they are laboring for the good of the race, in order to have personal gains. While some argue that we must demand in tones loud and long; that the trades unions shall cease to draw the color line and that fitness and character shall be the only passports to their fellowship, and that we can render the negro invaluable service by such demands; the negro must first himself cease to draw the color line, and not to seek every opportunity to pass for white, denying affinity to the race that God permitted him to be identified with. Queen Esther under a death penalty owned her nation, and worked for and suffered with the race. If we had the money and talent that rightly belongs to the negro race counted for the race, the numbers and wealth would be greater, for so many white negroes have left the negro race and are identifying themselves with the white race. When the negro ceases to try to organize "blue vein societies, and accepts into his own social circles only the pure and moral and ceases to ostracize on account of money, houses, lands and fine dress, and recognizes true moral and Christian worth and not birth, then will he be recognized as he desires. He must be willing to suffer with and for the race a while longer. He is too poor to draw a line of difference between the intellectual professional class and the working element. Though the race does pay a tax of \$261,000,000 with a population of 10,000,000 negroes that is only an average of 8 cents, and what is that compared to the billions of the Caucasians' dollars? In 1892 up to Sept. 30 the national bank deposits were \$2,792,520, 177 besides the vast wealth in real estate, etc., of the Caucasian. Is not the very condition of affairs against the negro, and what more can he do than resort to manual labor along with that of the professions? And, too, the negro has paid many a dollar on taxable property that he does not now own. His love of fine dress and show has caused his property to be taken from him through building and loan associations and mortgages. He has not yet learned the lessons of economy. With the armies, navy, the highway of travel, money, influence, government and power in the Caucasians' hands, what can the negro do but to work to get his rights? He cannot practically demand them. The constant and obnoxious demands of the persistent, insolent and impertinent impede the race's progress. Their dislike to manual labor keeps the race a poor one. Negro conventions for the purpose of discussing race prejudices, and taking no steps toward living right lives to overcome these prejudices, do not accomplish much good. The bitter and denunciatory speeches do not better the condition of affairs. Convening for the purpose of helping the race in church, school and business concerns will work out for him a better condition of affairs in the State. When the negroes stop calling conventions under the pretense to enhance race interest (but instead prove to be schemes to gain for a few leaders political and Government positions), and combine in race interest it will be better. They should demand the leaders to be morally pure and unite in the protection of the virtue of their sons and daughters. A law greatly in advance of public sentiment cannot be enforced. The administration of the law depends largely upon public sentiment. If public sentiment says that the negro is the worst citizen, then he will be the most ruthlessly and mercilessly dealt with till public sentiment against him is changed. And though there are those who act worse than the negro, but because public sentiment is against him, and though erroneous ideas, unsound opinions and false views prevail and form public sentiment he must do much in order to change public sentiment.

Booker T. Washington sees as far for the negro race as Napoleon did for his people when he endeavored to inspire his soldiers to bravery by pointing to the pyramids and saying: "Forty centuries are looking down upon you." The weal or woe of the coming negro depends upon whether he shall view matters as they now are, or be misled by false views and ambitions, by neglecting the present duties and while hoping for a brighter future. Booker T. Washington is wise when he says: "Let us first take the things at hand and the others will take care of themselves." Those who denounce Booker T. Washington's plans for the future of the race do not see as far ahead as he does and neglect to realize the present status of the negro. Their favorable condition causes them to live above the masses, so they will not stoop to view matters as they are. Some of our leaders who are supported by the masses will not even stoop to benefit the masses. While some argue that the industrial training is not the only solution of the negro race problem, and that the industrial training of the negro has been in progress ever since the landing of the first cargo of slaves in 1620, they fail to see that though the negroes as slaves did become skilled laborers in their day and time, and many of them yet so, that the new negro is more skillful with the pen than with any tool, but yet can't find as ready employment with the pen as with the tool. The new negro must work or steal. And if he steals all will feel the result of his crime. We know that the negro is capable of mental and spiritual development--that has been fully demonstrated--but the actual condition calls for manual training as well. The new negro has tried to imitate the aristocratic Southerners in his dislike to mental or manual labor, but he has not the means to carry out his desires as has the aristocrat Southerner. The negro cannot live entirely by his wits. His own race is too poor to support him in this attempt and the Caucasian will not. There is not a negro teacher or preacher for the whites in all the South, and a very few in the North. Because a few who have made a success in the literary field and are living above the masses is no reason that all or many should overcrowd the professions. Those who give industrial training do not essay to choose the place and living for these trained, but leave it to their own manly efforts to make their way through life. To one prepared in the hand, head and heart, time and circumstances will develop his field of labor. The City Board of Education of Nashville will do a laudable work for our boys and girls should they carry out their proposed plans of connecting with the public school system the industrial departments. Both races should concur with the plans and purposes and lend whatever aid they can. The very establishing of such schools will dignify labor. The theoretical teaching of duties to be performed while man works for man, will enhance the common welfare of man in a practical performance of these duties. European Governments are laying great stress on industrial arts. German trade schools are devoting half of their time to it, and if the new negroes do not learn to labor skillfully and artfully on the foreign shores will be standing skilled artisans and laborers willing and fitted to fill their places. Then what will they do in their daily struggle for bread? St. Louis, with her Polytechnic Institute, established through the bequest of \$100,000 made by Henry Ames to encourage polytechnic and technological instruction is being fostered by the City Board of Education. In Bridgewater and Salem, Mass., and Toledo, O., the girls take and study and exercise in mechanic arts and do carpentry work as well as do the boys. Along with the new system of callisthenics, that of Delearte, and the greater exercise of industrial training and the intellectual development of our boys and girls, the twentieth century will find stalwart men and useful women prepared to meet the varied changes that await them. The establishing of industrial schools throughout Tennessee will be a "revival of the fittest," especially for the negro, owing to his condition. Still that he is to learn the performance of manual arts to the neglect of his intellectual development is not the idea, but to cause him to be a better educated man by putting into practice his theoretical knowledge. The boy who drew the picture of a pump when asked to tell what a pump was had a true notion of the practicable.

Slavery is no more. We should bury it. The old negro's enslavement and past achievements should not now concern us as much as his freedom and present condition. It would be just as wise for the Anglo-Saxons to denounce George III. on every Fourth of July anniversary of American Independence as to always be reminding the new negro of slavery and its evils. That will only encourage malice and revenge. It is said that the monarchists, when Charles II. was restored, dug up the bones of Cromwell and hung them on Tyburn Hill. It was not statesmanship that did this, but malicious revenge and passion. True wisdom would have kept his bones in the grave. Both races must keep the passion of revenge down, as a vital and hurtful element in society. They should bury their malicious passions in the grave of forgetfulness where they will never resurrect. Slavery as well as prejudice is entitied to its grave. Let both races see the hand of God in history as they work together, and as employer or employee let each one be cognizant of the duties he owes the other and work in common for the common brotherhood of man. The perplexing question will then be solved, and the twentieth century will find the Anglo-Saxon and the new negro doing the right with no malice, prejudice and revenge for past events, and will behold liberty, equality and fraternity to be the common inheritance of all the races of earth. Then will the 'wheels' of industry rapidly turn, and as men meet in the busy mart of life all will be peace, prosperity and happiness.

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