The Negro problem in the South

Sidney T. Matthews Jr

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THE NEGRO PROBLEM IN THE SOUTH

By

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INTRODUCTION

Among the chief problems which have vexed the country for the last century and threaten to give yet more trouble in the future, is what is usually termed "The Negro Question". To the South, it has been for nearly seventy years the chief public question, overshadowing all others, and withdrawing her from due participation in the direction and benefit of the National Government. It has kept alive sectional feeling, has inflamed partisanship, distorted party policies, barred complete reconciliation, cost hundreds of millions of dollars, and hundreds if not thousands of lives, and stands ever ready, like Banquo's ghost, to burst forth even at the feast.

The increasing interest in the race question and antagonisms among the races can be understood only by taking into account the historical causes that are responsible for the present situation. The dominant fact of the last four centuries is the expansion of European civilization. By reason of his wonderful genius for discovery, exploration, and invention the European has practically the whole world. This, in my opinion, constitutes the problem: Mankind has practically achieved physical unity but has made no corresponding advance toward moral and spiritual unity.
On the contrary, the races of mankind are in danger of drifting farther apart. New causes of antagonism have emerged. The ultimate political problem, therefore, is how these various races may live together in peace and harmony.

It is my purpose, therefore, in the succeeding pages to present the real negro problem in the South, to state the disturbing conditions now existing here, and to analyze at some length the plans that have been suggested for the solution of the problem.
THE URBAN MOVEMENT

The past half century has seen an acceleration of the urban migration of the entire population. The negro has been in that population stream. At times and places his movement cityward has been affected by special influences, but where influences have been similar his movement has been similar.

The Emancipation Proclamation not only abolished the ownership of the slave, but it also released him from the soil. With this breaking down of the economic system based upon slavery, many of the landless freedmen fell victims to the wanderlust which has usually affected the masses in times of sudden social upheaval. Thousands of negroes flocked to the Union Army posts, located in towns and cities. The Ku-Klux terrorism and the mistaken notion of federal paternalistic care added their power to the other forces which operated during and immediately after the war, to thrust the negroes into the towns. In fourteen Southern cities between 1860 and 1870 the white population increased 16.7 per cent and the negro 90.7 per cent.

But with the removal of exceptional influences the negro immigration was reduced. Figures for white and negro population in principal Southern cities are
obtainable from 1870 to 1930 as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Increase in White Population</th>
<th>Increase in Negro Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870 to 1880</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880 to 1890</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890 to 1900</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900 to 1910</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910 to 1920</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920 to 1930</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just how far the increase of whites and negroes in Southern cities has been proportionately affected by the drift to Northern cities from Southern territory cannot be ascertained as the numbers of Southern whites who migrate north are unknown. Surmises may be made from the per cent increase of negroes in eight Northern cities, which was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1870 to 1880</th>
<th>36.4%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880 to 1890</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890 to 1900</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900 to 1910</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910 to 1920</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920 to 1930</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The increase of the urban population both white and negro was greater than the rural increase between 1920 and 1930 for the Southern States. In 242 Southern towns and cities which had at least 2500 inhabitants in 1920 the negroes increased, 1920 to 1930, nearly one-third faster than negroes in the rural districts.

The causes, besides the breaking down of the slave regime, that have operated to draw the negro to urban centers have been those fundamental economic, social
and individual causes which affected the general population. Chief among these has been the growth of industrial and commercial activities in urban centers. Railroad building, total tonnage and gross earnings show the development of commerce.

All the facts available show that the negro shares the influence of these developments. That he is a factor in the labor of the South is evident. In a number of Southern cities the white and negro increases in selected gainful occupations were as follows: between 1920 and 1930:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male Whites</th>
<th>Male Negroes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic and personal service</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade and transportation</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing and mechanical pursuits</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The divorce of the negro from the soil after emancipation, and the growth of the industrial and commercial centers are causes which are supplemented by the effect of higher wages paid weekly or monthly in the city on the economic motives of workers; by the trend of legislation, especially labor laws, which favor the city and which in practical effect in some parts of the South, make harder the uninviting lot of the land tenant, by improved educational and amusement facilities and by the contact with the moving crowds; while the paved and lighted streets, the greater comforts of the houses and other conveniences
which the rustic imagines he can easily get and the dazzling glare of the unknown great world are viewed in decided contrast to the hard, humdrum conditions and poor accommodations on plantation and farm.

The available facts and figures bear out the conclusion that along with the white population the negroes, under the influence of causes likely to operate for an indefinite period, will continue to migrate to the towns and cities, and that they will come in comparatively large numbers to stay.

Already the Negro urban population has grown to considerable proportions. In 1860 it is estimated that about 4.2% of all the negroes in the United States were urban dwellers (places of 4,000 or more). By 1890 it had risen to 19.8% (places of 2,500 or more); in 1900 it was 22.7%; in 1910, 27.4%, or more than one-fourth of the total negro population, in 1920 it was 33.2% and in 1930 it was 36.8%.

HOUSING CONDITIONS

In the matter of the housing conditions under which the negro must live, reliable investigations have shown that in several cities the "red-light" districts of white people are either in the midst of, or border closely upon negro neighborhoods. Also respectable negroes often find it impossible to free themselves from disreputable and vicious neighbors of their own race, because the
localities in which both may live are limited. And in addition to this, negroes often pay higher rentals for accommodations similar to those of white tenants, and, frequently, improved houses are secured only when white people who occupied them have moved on to something better. In Southern cities, many of the abler classes of negroes have escaped the environment of the vicious element by creating decent neighborhoods through home ownership and by eternal vigilance, excluding gambling places and other degrading agencies. For the poorer and less thrifty element, in a number of towns and cities, loose building regulations allow greedy landlords to profit by "gun-barrel" shanties and cottages, by "arks," of which the typical pigeon-house would be a construction model, and by small houses crowded upon the same lot, often facing from street, side street and the alley, with lack of sewerage and with other sanitary neglect which an inspector of one Southern city described as "a crying disgrace to any civilized people."

Yet in the face of these handicaps, thousands of homes that would do credit to any people on earth are springing up in these cities. In the absence or with the indifference of sanitary authorities intelligent negroes are not only struggling to free themselves from disease-breeding surroundings, but they are teaching the unintelligent throng.
In spite of spontaneous schemes of real estate owners and agents to keep them out of desirable neighborhoods, in spite of the deliberate designs of city segregation ordinances such as have been passed in several cities and attempted in others, in spite of intimidation, the abler negroes in some cities are buying homes and creating decent neighborhoods in which to live. The large proportion however are rent payers and not owners, and hence need intelligent leadership and influential support in their efforts for improved housing and neighborhood conditions.

**ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

Three facts should be placed in the foreground in looking at the economic conditions of the segregated negro in the city. First, the masses of those who have migrated to town are unprepared to meet the exacting requirements of organized industry, and the keen competition of more efficient laborers. Second, organized facilities for training these inefficient, groping seekers for something better are next to nothing in practically all of the cities to which they are flocking. They, therefore, drift hit or miss into any occupations which are held out to their unskilled hands and untutored brains. Natural aptitude enables many to "pick up" some skill and these succeed in gaining a stable place. But the
thousands work from day to day with that weak tenure and frequent change of place from which all unskilled, unorganized laborers suffer under modern industry and trade.

The third fact of prime importance is the prejudice of the white industrial world, which the negro must enter to earn his food, shelter, raiment. This prejudice, when displayed by employers, is partly due to the inefficiency indicated above and the failure to discriminate between the efficient individual and this untrained throng. When exhibited by fellow wage-earners, it is partly due to fear of probable successful competitors and to the belief that the Negro has "his place" fixed by a previous condition of servitude. But in the cases of many employers and employees, as shown in numbers of instances carefully investigated, the opposition to the negro in industrial pursuits is due to a whimsical dislike of any workman who is not white and especially of one who is black!

The general result of this inefficiency, of this lack of facilities and guidance for occupational training which would overcome the defect, and of this dwarfing prejudice is far-reaching. The result is a serious limitation of the occupational field for negroes, thus robbing them of better income and depriving the community of a large supply of valuable potential labor.
HEALTH AND MORALS

Crowded into segregated districts; living in poor houses for the most part for which they pay high rentals; often untaught and without teachers in the requirements of town life; walled in by inefficiency, lack of training; usually restricted from well-paid occupations by the prejudice of fellow-employees and frequently by the prejudice of employers; with a small income and the resulting low standard of living, the wonder is not that negroes have a uniformly high death-rate than whites in the cities and towns, but that the mortality is as small as it is and shows signs of decrease. Forced by municipal indifferences or design in many cities to live in districts contaminated by houses and persons of ill-fame; unable often to drive from their residential districts gambling "joints" and dens of vice; feeling the pressure of the less moral elements of both races, and feeling that weight of police and courts which the poor and the oppressed undoubtedly experience, the marvel is not that the criminal records outrun other elements of our urban population, but that impartial observers both North and South testify to the large law-abiding Negro citizenship, and to the thousands of pure individuals, Christian homes and communities.

In speaking of the negro death-rate in Southern cities, Frederick L. Hoffman, who cannot be charged with favorable bias, said recently, "without exception, the death-
rates are materially in excess of the corresponding
death rates of the white population, but there has
also been in this case a persistent decline in the
general death rate from 3.6 per 1,000 in 1886 to 1.7
in 1930.

Infant mortality, tuberculosis and pneumonia
are chief causes of the excessive birth-rate. Negroes
in cities have an excessive number of female breadwinners
and a large proportion of these are married women. The
neglect of the child, while the mother is "working out"
during the long hours of domestic service, and ignorance
of child nurture are the ingredients of the soothing-
syrup which lulls thousands of small children into the
sleep of death. Undernourishment due to low pay, bad
housing, poor sanitation, ignorant fear of "night air"
and lack of understanding of the danger of infection
make negroes the prey of diseases now clearly proven
preventable. With an aroused public conscience for
sanitation and adequate leadership in education on mat-
ters of health these conditions are gradually removable.

The problem of venereal diseases is extremely
important nor is it one which may be lightly disregarded.
That the danger is not underestimated is apparent from the
statement that "There is among negroes a constant excess
of venereal disease among unsuccessful applicants" for the
United States Army. Coming from such a reliable source as
the volume on Health and Physique of the Negro American
(No. 11, Atlanta University Publications, p. 68), this statement deserves serious consideration. From the medical point of view its prevalence among enlisted men points to the syphilization of the race as one of the prices it must pay for entering upon the heritage of civilization; from the sociological it is an omen of grave import to the race and the nation-at-large. The remedy lies in such measures as are being taken to combat these diseases among the white race: instruction in sexual matters to the youth, as advocated by the American Federation of Sex Hygiene; an awakened public conscience, and a pride of race which holds of paramount importance the physical interests of the generations that are yet unborn. Fortunately there are already signs of progress. In several of the Southern colored colleges regular and systematic lectures are given by the college physicians on this vital subject, and the students are shown the perils of extra-conjugal sexual relations.

The mental and moral conditions of a people cannot be shown by case counting. Tables of criminal statistics are quite as much a commentary on the culture conditions of the whole community as upon the accused negro. The best study of crime down to 1933 revealed there was a general tendency toward a decrease among negroes. Available testimony for Southern cities from the days of Freedman's Bureau superintendence down to the present time is decidedly in favor of the negro, even under an archaic
penal system. Personal observation for fifteen years during residence in and repeated visits to a score of the larger Southern cities and a number of the smaller ones, leaves me with a firm conviction of decided advancement. The intelligence and character demanded of ministers, teachers, doctors, lawyers and other professional classes, the drawing of social lines based upon individual worth, the improved type of amusement and recreation frequently in evidence and similar manifestations are a part of the barometer which clearly shows progress.

MISCELLANEOUS CONDITIONS

To make the urban situation among negroes full and clear, a number of conditions which exist in some cities but are absent in others should be included in the list. In many cities the sequel of segregation means less effective police patrol and inadequate fire protection; in others it means unpaved streets, the absence of proper sewerage and lack of other sanitary supervision and requirements.

The provision which people have for their play life of their children and themselves is nearly as important as the conditions of labor. Facilities for amusement and recreation, then, are of great importance to the negro. Wholesome amusement for all the people is just beginning to receive attention. But the negro is in danger of being
left out of account in the movement. Playgrounds in negro neighborhoods are so rare as to excite curiosity, and organized play is just being heard of in the negro world. There is hardly a city in the South where unhindered access to theatre and moving picture shows exists. In a few Southern cities "negro parks" of fair attractiveness are being provided because exclusion from public parks used by whites has been the custom. Here and there enterprising negroes are starting playhouses for their own people.

In the provision for education, the opportunity of the city negro is much greater than that of his rural brother. Yet while one rejoices over this fact, candor compels consideration of the relative educational chances of the black boy and the white one. Although a large need of praise is due Southern communities for the great advance which has been made in public opinion and financial support for negro education, the fact remains that those who have seen the public school systems at close range know that they are poor compared with white schools in the same places.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR SOLUTION**

The recital of the foregoing facts and conclusions would be of little consequence unless it led somewhere. The summary of the discussion presents a clear case of a large nation-wide negro migration to towns and cities, such as is taking place among the entire people; a segregation with-
in the city of negroes into distinct neighborhoods with a decreasing contact with the larger community and the impulses; accompanying housing, economic, health, moral, educational and other conditions which are more critical and are receiving less attention than similar problems among the white people. With such a problem before us, what should be done?

1. There should be an organized effort to acquaint the negro in the country with the desirability of his remaining where he is unless by education and training he is prepared to meet the exactions of adjustments to city life. The roseate picture of city existence should be corrected. Simultaneously with the agricultural and other improvements of country life calculated to make its economic and social conditions more attractive should go an effort to minimize the activities of labor agents, employment agency sharks and the other influences that lure the rustics from home.

2. Recognizing that already more than two score cities and towns have large negro populations in the first stages of adjustment, organized effort should be made to help the negro to learn to live in town.

3. The cooperative movement of the white and colored citizens of each locality should work out a program for the neighborhood, housing, economic, educational, religious and other improvement of the negro.

4. Such a movement would sooner or later become conscious of the character of the problem and the towns and cities should unite for the exchange of plans, methods and experience, for general cooperation and for developing needed enthusiasm.

5. The negro must have more and better trained leadership in these local situations. Slowly but surely we are listening to the lesson of group psychology and common sense and are beginning to use the most direct way of influenc-
ing the customs and habits of a people by giving them teachers and exemplars of their own kind. The negro is to be lifted to the full stature of American ways of thinking and of doing things. And it should never be forgotten that the negro himself has valuable contributions to make to American life.

6. The final suggestion is that the white people of each locality can best foster mutual confidence and cooperation of negroes by according them impartial community justice. This means "a square deal" in industry, in education and in other parts of the common life. It means equality of opportunity.

THE CHANGING ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE NEGRO

The position of negro workers in the economic history of the country has been determined largely by the special circumstances responsible for their presence here. Their labor was required, initially, as a simple multiplication of hands, for the arduous routine of developing a new country. These special circumstances demanded a fixed occupational as well as social status, which was in time profoundly disturbed by their emancipation and reestablishment as legal citizens, nominally on an equal footing with the descendants of the early settlers themselves. The question of the economic status of negroes as an independent element of the population, thus, is of comparatively recent concern. It is doubtful, however, if this special status is more than a relationship. For, apart from the persistent influence to the very present, of the institution of slavery, the class of labor has been a vital, even
if un-selfconscious part of the history of tobacco, cotton and care, of the agricultural and industrial life of the South; and no inconsiderable part of the whole development of the nation's resources. Its heavy shadow has been cast over the white laboring class in the South, against the foreign hordes of immigration, and against the industrial course of women workers.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

There was a time when 87% of the negro population was concentrated in four states: Virginia, Maryland, and the two Carolinas. Tobacco, one of the first important American staples was developed by Negro labor. Its nurture demanded the patient care of many hands. To be profitable it had to be developed on a large scale. Plantations flourished. The lack of efficient transportation necessitated the development of mechanics and artisans on the plantations, and a new value was found for slave labor, for skilled slaves became profitable to hire or sell, and more slaves were imported and bred. The poor white labor was effectively held down even after the beginning of the development of cities. With the invention of the cotton gin and the rapid rise in the importance of cotton, this population was distributed southward along the rich delta sections, where the fertile soil and the broad flat stretches facilitated the development of cotton plantations. Negro workers were
thus established in agriculture, and through their performance of skilled jobs, in the most important handicrafts. At one period practically all of the cotton raised in the south passed through the hands of negroes and the South controlled the world's supply. Besides, negro slaves were coopers, blacksmiths, carpenters, wheelwrights, masons, mechanics, steamboat pilots, shoemakers. A negro artisan made the shoes in which President Monroe was inaugurated, another laid the intricately patterned tiling in the Monticello home of Thomas Jefferson. The institution created a tradition of "Negro jobs" which survived for many years after Emancipation. This tradition, despite its somewhat questionable coloring, was for many years a protection for negro labor from the free competition with white labor which they later felt so acutely.

Once the term "black belt" referred to the black rich soil of the Delta. It is known now for its black population, for the emancipation of the slaves left a heavy concentration here which increased for many years afterward. These workers were essential to the plantation system, and the plantation system, even after the emancipation of the slaves, was regarded as essential to the world control of cotton held by the South. The adaptability of negroes to the system gave them numerical advantage in these richer sections. In
the competition of independent white and negro farmers, with the plantation owners, independent farmers were at a disadvantage, because they were unable to buy the land. The endless succession of cotton crops and the wasteful handling of soil gradually contributed to the exhaustion of this soil. It is not at all improbable that the increased difficulty of earning a livelihood from the soil, through the methods employed, was one of the factors responsible for the enormous and mounting negro death rate. Certainly it is accountable for the extraordinary proportion of negro women and children at work as late as 1910.

Although it was not clearly noted at first, there may now be discerned some relation between this soil depletion and two observable movements which were taking place long before the World War: one to the city, the other to new lands south and west. Between 1890 and 1920 the increase in the negro urban population was 2,078,331, and four-fifths of this increase had occurred in the South. In 1930, 32.3% of the migration of negroes from Southern States had been to the area west of the Mississippi. The center of the negro population moved southward and westward, steadily for 130 years, some 478 miles. The white population was moving in as large numbers as the negroes, but not in the same proportions. The rush to cities could not be expected to bring relief, for those depend directly in too many ways upon the country.
CHANGING LABOR CONDITIONS

Just prior to the northward migration of negroes which became pronounced in 1918, the situation of negroes had changed materially. The white laboring class in the South had overcome much of its traditional attitude toward negro jobs; it was developing a working class consciousness, and gradually pushing negroes from practically all lines except domestic service. Competition in agriculture had become severe in the new territories. The negro movement to cities had glutted the market holding down wages and increasing the fear of white labor.

NEGROES AND THE NEW INDUSTRY

Most people who speak of the new South are thinking of the industrial development of the textiles. From Danville, Virginia, to Montgomery, Alabama, along the Southern Railroad is an almost continuous line of cotton mills, most of them comparatively new. With one or two unimportant exceptions, the labor in these mills is white. Many students of the industry think that it is very fortunate for negroes that they have been generally excluded from this work. This does not mean, however, that the coming of the mills has not made jobs for negroes. Gaston County, North Carolina, claims the largest concentration of cotton mills of any similar area. It is interesting to note that
during recent years the Negro population of the country has increased. This means that though not at looms and spindles, negroes in large numbers are finding employment around the mills. The positions open to them are on the whole, perhaps, more desirable than those held by the white "mill hands".

The other great manufacturing development is in what the late Mr. Milton, of Chattanooga, called "The Ruhr of America", or, roughly speaking the Tennessee Valley from Cumberland Gap to Birmingham. The source of many manufacturing projects found in this area is iron and steel. Into this and its corollary, coal, negroes have gone in large numbers. More important than the numbers however, is the fact that they have developed considerable skill and are doing much of the better-paid work. The Tennessee Coal and Iron Company is the largest employer of negro labor in this section. Their appreciation of their negro workers is seen in the extensive housing, welfare and educational work which is carried on for the improvement of these workers.

NEGRO BUSINESS

Business is another means by which negroes have improved their economic status. The term "negro business" has come into general use. It might be generally defined
as business conducted by negroes and patronized by negroes. The census of 1930 indicates the distribution of principal negro businesses as shown in a succeeding table.

The majority of these are small concerns. Many of them are shortlived and yet the annual volume of negro business concerns is given by the Negro Year Book as $500,000,000.

In point of numbers, banks and insurance and real estate concerns operated by negroes are not numerous, but their significance is great, both because of the amount of money they have accumulated and because of the service they have rendered their people. There are about sixty insurance companies, with assets of $6,500,000, an annual income of $9,000,000, and insurance in force to the amount of $100,000,000. In 1930 there were seventy-four Negro banks with resources of $20,000,000.

DISTRIBUTION OF PRINCIPAL NEGRO BUSINESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business</th>
<th>No. of Establishments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel keepers and managers</td>
<td>1,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant and lunch room</td>
<td>7,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbers</td>
<td>2,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdressers and manicurists and toilet goods</td>
<td>3,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoemakers (not in factories)</td>
<td>2,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retailers</td>
<td>23,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankers, brokers and money lenders</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertakers</td>
<td>1,558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatrical proprietors</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailoring</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundry proprietors</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>40,686</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In spite of the many failures in Negro business concerns, the showing in business development is creditable. Sixty years ago negroes were without business experience. They could not connect themselves with established business concerns and get experience. They had to learn by the trial and error method. Credit had to be established and frequently they had to compete with established and well-financed white concerns.

The interest in business is increasing among Negroes. Some of the best trained younger men are seeking business careers. The National Negro Business League is becoming increasingly concrete and intelligent in its effort to overcome the obstacles which Negro business men must meet. These efforts are in three directions:

(1) A nation-wide survey with the most competent advice from government and other business experts for the purpose of improving the methods and practices of negro business concerns:

(2) The organization of a finance corporation through which to make available for Negro business men the funds of Negro insurance companies and banks in such a manner as to adequately protect the funds but also to provide readier and more reasonable credits which is one of the greatest needs of negro business.

(3) Negro business concerns as a whole have not been able to develop any considerable clientele outside of the race group. This, the League seeks to remedy. As negro earning power increases and group consciousness develops, there will be increasing possibili-
ties for the development of negro business enterprises among their own people. The largest success cannot however, come to these concerns until they are able to appeal to the general public. In various parts of the country there are a number of concerns already doing this, so that hope of expansion in this direction is not without foundation. Such a development, however, will require a skill not yet developed in any large degree among negro business men.

THE ECONOMIC FUTURE OF THE NEGRO

The dominant note of the present economic situation of negroes is change. This change is not due merely to the increasing development of negroes, but to the fluctuating industrial fortunes of the country to which their status is intricately related. Attempts to conceive the future as an independent and self-sufficient economy, such as are manifest in one philosophy of Negro business, are misleading. For Negro business, like the Negro population, is a quite dependent part of the larger economic structure. The negro businesses which succeed are those in which competition is negligible, or they are businesses which are developed to compensate for special inadequacies and have a limited expansion.

No vast and sweeping changes in the relationship of negro labor to the whole need be expected soon under the present conditions, although there is gradual improvement in the character of this labor supply as a result of increased literacy, better health and the intro-
duction to the tempo and processes of modern industry and city life. There is the opportunity, however, for negro labor to increase its value and desirability by the conscious development of a superior technique in special lines.

THE EFFECT OF NRA ON THE NEGRO

It is hard to get exact information, but on the principle that the presence of considerable smoke may be taken to indicate the existence of a fire it seems reasonably likely that negro workers are suffering from the extension of NRA codes to the industries of the South. Many negro leaders have claimed that as these codes have come into effect Southern employers have found it convenient to discharge colored workers and fill their places with white. Julian Harris, the fearless editor of the Atlanta Constitution and son of Joel Chandler Harris, supplies the New York Times with a copy of a sheet recently placed in the pay envelope of all negro employees of one large Southern firm, in which this threat is openly made: "If the false friends of the colored people do not stop their propaganda about paying the same wages to colored and white employes this company will be forced to move the factory to a section where the minimum wage will produce the greatest production. Stop your friends from talking you out of your job." Mr. Harris comments that this company, which displays the blue eagle, pays negro workers from 6 to 13c an hour for eight hours daily and a five-day week. Dr.
Will H. Alexander, the director of the commission on interracial cooperation has come out in defense of the refusal of colored labor to accept a minimum wage below that set under the NRA, for white workers. He holds, rightly, that to regularize any such proposal would be to tempt employers to fill up their plants with negroes, thus throwing whites out of work. That would undoubtedly lead to a new racial crisis. Either way - keeping the minimum wage the same for both races, and thus tending to increase negro unemployment, or lowering the minimum for negroes, and thus breeding race trouble - the negro looks like the victim. Is he to prove the real "forgotten man" of Mr. Roosevelt's program?

The negro suffers, not so much from the enactment of law, as from its immediate administration. The codes under the NRA are first of all suggested by capitalists and labor organizations. Sometimes ingenious discriminations may be hidden in a code which to its face seems fair enough. In the codes presented by the textile industries, "cleaners" were exempted from the minimum wage provision. On closer scrutiny, it was found that generally negroes recruited the ranks of the cleaners, the only capacity in which they were employed. In the steel and mining codes an attempt was made to differentiate between wage levels in the north and south, ostensibly on
the ground that living requirements are cheaper in one section than in the other; but there is grave suspicion this difference is due to the fact that negroes are more largely employed in the southern field. Many employers, chiefly in the south, openly advocated paying the negro a lower wage than the code demands or supplanting him with white workmen. Here the hands of the government are tied. Reliance must needs be placed in appeal to the sense of justice.

It is argued in some quarters that the negro can get along on a lower wage because his living requirements are less. Secretary of Labor Perkins has exposed the fallacy of this policy. The negro assumes a lower scale of living because he has to. The circle is vicious and ironical. The negro is allotted a lower wage which necessitates a lower scale of living; and the lower living level is taken to justify a lower wage. He is mocked every way he turns. He finds himself in the predicament of the lovely Lavinia in Titus Andronicus who is chided by the brutal Teutons for not calling for sweet water with which to wash her delicate hands after her tormenters had cut off her hands and hacked out her tongue.

The negro has become the unintended victim in that the codes do not cover agricultural and domestic service in which pursuits fully three-fifths of the race are engaged.
Here again reliance must be had in appeal to the conscience and humanity of the employers to give their black employees a fair share of the prosperity which has come to them through the general recovery program. The blue eagle, emblematic of the NRA, can never typify the American spirit or the purpose of President Roosevelt until every black plume is plucked from his feathers.

THE RURAL NEGRO IN THE SOUTH

Of the 9,000,000 negroes, or nearly that number in the South, about 7,000,000 are in the rural districts. They are on the farms, the plantations, and in the small town. It is worthwhile to consider these numbers. Here is a population, that is three times as large as that of Denmark. It includes eighty percent of the whole negro population in the South, the great bulk of negro population in American, in fact. Of this seven million it is safe to say that 2,200,000 persons are actually working either as hired hands, tenant farmers, croppers, or renters and independent owners, upon the land. This number includes women and children, for, on the farm and the plantation, the unit of labor is not the individual but the family, and in the South today negro women still do a large part of the work in the fields.

Now, despite all that has been said about the efficiency or inefficiency of negro farm labor, and putting aside all theories and all purely academic notions
about the matter, people who live in the cotton growing states know that a very large part of the business in those states is based on the negro and the mule. In some other parts of the world where land is scarce and labor is plenty, business in the agricultural districts is based on land; but in the South, where, when the planter wants to borrow money he finds his credit at the bank is usually determined by the number of reliable negro tenants he can control, business is based on labor. In other words, the value of the land and of all that goes with it and depends upon it, is determined very largely, more largely, perhaps, than is true of any other part of the country, by the character and quantity of the labor supply.

This, then, defines the problem of the rural negro in his relation to the South. The two million and more negroes who are employed in agriculture in the Southern States have in their hands, either as renters or as owners 40 per cent of the tillable land. Something like 100,000,000 of the 150,000,000 acres of improved land is cultivated by negro labor, and of every eleven bales of cotton produced in the South, seven are raised by negroes.

The negro is here and he is likely to remain. First, because after something like three hundred years he has adapted himself to the country and the people; because experience has taught him, that on the whole, the vast
majority of negroes are more at home and better off in the agricultural regions of the south than they are likely to be in any other part of the world; and finally because the southern white man does not want him to go away. You may say what you please about segregation of the races, but when there is work to be done about the plantation, when it comes time to plant and pick the cotton the white man does not want the negro so far away that he cannot reach him by the sound of his voice.

At the present time negroes in the rural districts represent, in some respects, the best portion of the negro race. They are for the most part a vigorous, wholesome, simple-minded people. They, as yet, are almost untouched by the vices of city life and still maintain, on the whole, their confidence in the good-will of the white people by whom they are surrounded.

These seven million people represent, therefore, tremendous possibilities for good and for evil, to themselves and to the community in which they live. From an economic view alone, this large actual and potential labor force represents a vast store of undeveloped wealth. Just in proportion as the negro becomes an efficient farmer and a dependable laborer, just to that extent will the whole country move forward and prosperity be multiplied.

How is it possible to make the negro farmer more efficient and the negro laborer more dependable? I can
perhaps best tell how to succeed with negro labor by using some illustrations that have come under my observation which show how not to succeed.

Some years ago, when I was in South Carolina, a planter asked me to visit his plantation. I found he had a large number of colored tenants, but I was surprised at the small acreage assigned to each family. In one case I remember there was one family that numbered three or four strong, sturdy hands, which was allowed to rent only about ten acres of land. When I asked the owner of the plantation why he did not let this family have more land he replied that the soil was so productive that, if he allowed them to rent more, they would soon be making such a profit that they would be able to buy land of their own and he would lose them as renters. This is one way to make the negro inefficient as a laborer.

If negro labor is to become more efficient, every effort should be made to encourage rather than to discourage the negro in his ambition to go forward, to buy land and plant himself permanently on the soil. In the long run the planter will not suffer from the existence in his neighborhood of negro farmers who offer an example of thrift and industry to their neighbors. For example, Macon county was the only one of the Black Belt counties of Alabama, which showed an increase of negro population in the decade
from 1900 to 1910. The reason was that a special effort had been made in that country to improve the public schools and this brought into the county a large number of progressive farmers who were anxious to own homes in the neighborhood of a good school. It not only did that, but it greatly increased the demand for tenant farms and so brought to the land what it needed, namely labor, efficient and dependable labor.

From direct investigation I find that many valuable colored laborers leave the farm for the reason that they seldom see or handle cash. The negro laborer likes to put his hands on real money as often as possible. In the city, while he is not so well off in the long run, as I have said, he is usually paid off in cash every Saturday night. In the country he seldom gets cash oftener than once a month, or once a year. Not a few of the best colored laborers leave the farms because of the poor houses furnished by the owners. The condition of some of the one-room cabins is miserable almost beyond description. In the towns and cities, while he may have a harder time in other respects, the colored man can usually find a reasonably comfortable house with two or three rooms.

No matter how ignorant a colored man may be himself, he almost always wants his children to have education. A very large number of colored laborers leave the farm because they cannot get an education for their children. In a large section of the farming district of the South, Negro
schools run only from two to five months in the year. In many cases children have to walk miles to reach these schools. The school-houses are, in many cases, wretched little hovels, with no light or warmth or comfort of any kind. The teacher receives perhaps not more than $40.00 or $50.00 a month and as every school superintendent knows, poor pay means a poor teacher.

In saying this, I do not overlook the fact that conditions are changing for the better in all parts of the South. White people are manifesting more interest each year in the training of colored people, and what is equally important, colored people are beginning to learn to use their education in sensible ways; they are learning that it is no disgrace for an educated person to work on the farm. They are learning that education which does not somehow touch life is not education at all. More and more we are all learning that the school is not simply a place where boys and girls learn to read and cipher; but a place where they learn to live. We are all learning that education which does not somehow or other improve the farm and the home, which does not make a return to the community in some form or other has no justification for its existence.

That is why the movement for the improvement of rural life which has taken such a hold upon the South in recent years has gone hand in hand with the movement for better schools. More and more we are beginning to learn that progress in agriculture is dependent in the last
analysis on the progress of the man behind the plow. The rural negro is just now beginning to share in this improvement; he is just now beginning to feel the influence of the upward impulse in the life of the rural South.

THE NEGRO'S POLITICAL STATUS IN THE SOUTH

HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM

While, from the beginning of the nation's history, the negro question greatly exercised politicians and influenced legislation in a very marked way, it had very little practical bearing on the actual political status of the negro in this country until after the Civil War. Prior to that time most of the States were a unit in denying the ballot even to free negroes, but with the emancipation of negroes their political status became a burning question in the nation, and many and varied were the proposals made to meet the situation.

THE THIRTEENTH AMENDMENT

The first step taken by the federal government was the adoption of the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution which formally abolished slavery. This was followed by the first civil rights bill, which was passed
by Congress April 9, 1866. It set forth".... that all persons born in the United States and not subject to a foreign power, excluding Indians not taxed, are hereby declared to be citizens of the United States, and such citizens of every race and color, without regard to any previous condition of slavery, .... shall have the same right in every state and territory in the United States ..... to full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings, in the security of persons and property, as is enjoyed by white persons."

LEGISLATION BY THE SOUTHERN PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENTS

In the meantime the provisional governments in the former Confederate States, established by order of President Johnson, began immediately to pass legislation designed to meet the situation brought on by the emancipation of the slaves. While these States, through their legislatures, formally acquiesced in the abolition of slavery, they proceeded to pass such harsh measures with reference to the movements and activities of the former slaves that many people were convinced that the aim was to make null and void any real freedom for freedmen.

1. Restrictions of Activity -- Restrictions were placed upon the type of occupation the freedmen could pursue. Labor contracts were made which bound the laborer to work from sunrise to sunset. The laborer's Sunday hours were severely restricted. Laborers were not permitted to
leave home on Sundays, if they were needed for the premises or animals. If they went away on Sundays they must be back by sunset. Visitors were not allowed to see the servants on the master's premises without his express permission, nor could the servant leave the premises without the master's consent.

2. Apprenticeship regulations -- Worse than these harsh regulations were the severe apprenticeship laws enacted by several of the states, particularly by South Carolina and Mississippi. These made possible the binding of a child over two years of age by either of the parents to any "respectable" person until the child, if a male, reached the age of twenty-one years; if a female, eighteen years. The profits of this apprenticeship during these years were to go to the master for his own use. In Mississippi, in the event the apprentice left the employ of the master before the legal age, the latter was permitted to "pursue him and bring him before a justice of the peace, who could remand him to the service of his master."

THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT

It was such measures as these which led many friends of freedom and of the freedmen to believe that slavery was in a fair way to be restored, and that vigorous legislation on the part of the federal government was necessary to safeguard the rights of the freedmen. This
conviction resulted in the passage of the fourteenth amendment to the constitution. The amendment gave citizenship to Negroes as a constitutional right and denied to the states the power to abridge the privilege or immunities of any citizen of the United States. It was ratified July 28, 1868. The federal government insisted that each of the seceding states must ratify the amendment before being readmitted to the Union. This they refused to do.

THE FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT

The final step taken by the Federal Government with reference to the negro's participation in government was the adoption of the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution. This amendment specifically denied the right of the States or Federal Government to interfere with the exercise of the franchise by Negroes. It made the negro the political equal of any other citizen and equally responsible, theoretically at least, with all others for the carrying on of the national life. Negroes were active participants in the "reconstruction governments" which held sway in the South from 1868 to 1876, some of them even holding office. This was possible because of the political disability under which most Southern white voters labored because of their having been in "armed rebellion against the government of the United States" and the refusal of the South to ratify the fourteenth amendment to the constitution.
And what, it may be asked, is the political status of the negro in this country at present? By the rights given him in the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments the negro is a full-fledged citizen of the United States, entitled to all the rights of any other American citizen, and no state has the right to abridge or make void these rights. As to the wisdom of the passage of these amendments at the time they were adopted there is room for difference of opinion. But now that the amendments are a part of the Federal Constitution, it becomes the duty of each State to see that both the letter and the spirit of the law are observed.

In practice

But, granted that the negro is entitled to all the rights of any other American citizen, in how far is he allowed at present to exercise these rights, especially that of suffrage. In the South, where the bulk of the Negro population is still to be found, the negro vote is practically negligible.

1. Legal restrictions. Beginning with the year 1890 the Southern States began to adopt constitutional amendments that had for their aim the restriction if not the complete elimination of the negro vote. Mississippi was the first of these states to take this action. Its amendment excluded from the suffrage persons who had not paid the poll
tax or who were not able to read and understand any section of the Constitution and give an interpretation of it which would satisfy the registration officers. Other states followed with tax, property, and educational tests, and various other measures, all designed to keep as many negroes as possible from voting and to allow as many whites as possible to vote. One of the most reprehensible of these measures was the well-known "grandfather clause". This clause made it possible for persons who could not satisfy the educational and property tests but whose ancestors were voters prior to 1866 to vote. This of course made practically all the whites in the South eligible for suffrage whether they were illiterate or not and disfranchised practically all the negroes. This law was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States, June 21, 1915, but the other measures have very effectively served their purpose.

3. Intimidation - In addition to these legal measures designed to keep negroes from voting the method of intimidation had openly and with public approval been used. In the words of Doctor Weatherford, "Negroes have not voted it was not healthy for them to vote"

A new trend observable - As a result of these repressive measures the negro vote in the South is practically negligible. In recent years, however, increasing numbers of negroes are allowed to register and vote. Occasionally their vote has been a decisive factor in the
election, particularly where the floating of municipal bonds is an issue, the law making it necessary to have the approval of a majority (or more) of the taxpayers. While most Southern leaders either publicly approve of the policy of not allowing negroes any participation in the government or silently acquiesce in it, a few are seeing the folly of such a policy and are advocating giving the negroes, in larger numbers, the ballot.

NEGRO SUFFRAGE

Nowhere in the South today is the negro cut off legally, as a negro from the ballot. Legally, today, any negro who can meet the comparatively slight requirements as to education, or property, or both, can cast his ballot on the basis of equality with the white man. I have emphasized the word legally, for I know that practical difficulties confront the negro voter in many parts of the South. In the enforcement of the law, the legislative ideal is still pegged out beyond the actual performance.

Now, then, if we are interested in the problem of democracy, we have two courses open to us. We may think the laws are unjust to the negro, and incidentally to the poor white man as well. If we do we have a perfect right to agitate for a change, and we can do much to disclose, without heat, the actual facts regarding the complicated and vexatious legislative situation in the South, as regards the suffrage. Every change in the legislation upon this subject should, indeed, be zealously watched that the principle of political equality between the races be not legally curtailed. The doctrine laid down in
the fifteenth amendment must, at any hazard, be maintained.

But personally, and I am here voicing a profound conviction, I think our emphasis at present should be laid upon the practical rather than upon the legal aspect of the problem. I think we should take advantage of the widely prevalent feeling in the South that the question of suffrage has been settled, legally, for some time to come; of the desire on the part of many Southern people, both white and colored to turn aside from the discussion of the political status of the negro. In short, let us turn our attention to the practical task of finding out why it is that the laws we already have are not enforced, and how best to secure an honest vote for every negro and equally for every white man (and there are thousands of him) who is able to meet the requirements, but who for one reason or another does not or cannot exercise his rights.

Taking up this side of the question we shall discover two entirely distinct difficulties.

First, we shall find many negroes; and indeed hundreds of thousands of white men as well, who might vote, but who through ignorance, or the inability or unwillingness to pay poll taxes, or from mere lack of interest disfranchise themselves.

The second difficulty is peculiar to the negro. It consists in open or concealed intimidation on the part of the white men who control the election machinery. In many places in the South today no negro, no matter how well qualified, would dare to present himself for registration. When he does he is often rejected for some trivial or illegal reason.

Thus we have to meet a vast amount of apathy and ignorance and poverty on the one hand, and the threat of intimidation on the other.
First of all, for it is the chief injustice as between the white colored men with which we have to deal - an injustice which the law already makes punishable - how shall we meet the matter of intimidation? As I have said already the door of the suffrage is everywhere legally open to the negro, but a certain sort of Southerner bars the passageway. He stands there and, law or no law, keeps out many negroes who might vote, and he represents in most parts of the South the prevailing public opinion.

Shall we meet this situation by force? What force is available? Shall the North go down and fight the South? But the North today has no feeling but friendship for the South. More than that, and I say it with all seriousness, because it represents what I have heard wherever I have gone in the North to make inquiries regarding the negro problem, the North, wrongly or rightly, is today more than half convinced that the South is right in imposing some measure of limitation upon the franchise. There is now, in short, no disposition anywhere in the North to interfere in the internal affairs of the South - not even with the force of public opinion.

What other force, then, is to be invoked? Shall the negro revolt? Shall he migrate? The very asking of these questions suggests the inevitable reply. We might as well, here and now dismiss the idea of force, expressed or implied. There are times of last resort which call for force; but this plainly is not such a time.

Accepting the laws as they are, then, there are two methods of procedure, neither sensational nor exciting. The underlying causes of the trouble in the country are plainly ignorance and prejudice with their antidotes: education and association.
Every effort should be made to extend free education both among negroes and white people. A great extension of education is now going forward in the South. The negro is not by any means getting his full share (indeed he is getting shamefully less than his share), but as certainly as sunshine makes things grow, education in the South will produce tolerance. That there is already such a growing tolerance no one who has talked with the leading white men of the South can doubt. The old fire-eating, negro-baiting leaders of the Tillman - Vardaman type are passing away; a far better and broader group is coming into power.

From an able Southern white man, a resident of New Orleans, I received only recently a letter containing these words:

"I believe we have reached the bottom, and a sort of quiescent period. I think it most likely that from now on there will be a gradual increase in the negro vote. And I honestly believe that the less said about it, the surer the increase will be."

Education and by education I mean education of all sorts, industrial, professional, classical, in accordance with each man's talents, will not only produce breadth and tolerance, but it will help to cure the apathy which now keeps so many thousands of both white men and negroes from the polls: for it will show them that it is necessary for every man to exercise all the political rights within his reach. For if he
fails voluntarily to take advantage of the rights he already has, how shall he acquire more rights?

As ignorance must be met by education, so prejudice must be met with its antidote, which is association. Democracy does not consist in mere voting, but in association, the spirit of common effort, of which the ballot is a visible expression. When we come to know one another we soon find that the points of likeness are much more numerous than the points of difference. And this human association for the common good, which is democracy, is difficult to bring about anywhere, whether among different classes of white people, or between white people and negroes.

After the Atlanta riot Ray Stannard Baker attended a number of conferences between leading white men and leading colored men. It is true, these meetings bore evidence of awkwardness and embarrassment, for they were among the first of that sort to take place in the South, but they were none the less valuable. A white man told Mr. Baker after one of these meetings: "I did not know there were any such sensible negroes in the South." And a negro told him that it was the first time in his life that he had ever heard a white man reason in a friendly manner with a negro concerning their common difficulties.

More and more these associations of white and colored men of certain points at contact must and will come about. Already, in connection with various educational and
the way has been opened to a wider mutual understanding. And it is common enough now, where it was unheard of a few years ago, for both white and negroes to speak from the same platform in the South. I have attended a number of such meetings. Thus slowly, awkwardly at first— for two centuries of prejudice are not easily overcome — the white man and negro are coming to know each other, not as master and servant, but as co-workers. These things can not be forced.

One reason why the white man and the negro have not got together more rapidly in the South than they have, is because they have tried always to meet at the sorest points. When sensible people, who must live together whether or no, find that there are points at which they can not agree, it is the part of wisdom to avoid those points, and to meet upon other and common interests. Upon no other terms, indeed, can a democracy exist, for in no imaginable future state will individuals cease to disagree with one another upon something less than half of all the problems of life.

"Here we all live together in a great country," say the apostles of this view, "let us all get together and develop it. Let the negro do his best to educate himself, to own his own land, and to buy and sell with the white people in the fairest possible way."

Now, buying and selling, land ownership and common material pursuits may not be the highest points of contact between man and man, but they are real points, and they help to give men an idea of the worth of their fellows, white and black.
How many times in the South I have heard a white man speak in high admiration for some negro farmer who had been successful, or of some negro blacksmith who was a worthy citizen, or some negro doctor who was a leader of his race.

Out of crude points of contact will grow an even finer and finer spirit of association and of common and friendly knowledge. And that will lead inevitably to an extension upon the soundest possible basis of negro franchise. I know cases where white men have urged intelligent negroes to cast their ballots, and have stood sponsor for them out of genuine respect. Today, negroes who vote in the South are as a class, men of substance and intelligence, fully equal to the tasks of citizenship.

Thus I have confidence not only in the sense of the white man in the South but in the innate capability of the negro - and that once these two really come to know each other, not as workers for a common country, the question of suffrage will gradually solve itself in the interest of true democracy.

Another influence also will tend to change the status of the negro as a voter. That is the pending break up of the political solidarity of the South. All the signs point to a political realignment upon new issues in this country, both South and North. Old party names may even pass away. And that breakup, with the attendant struggle for votes, is certain to bring into politics thousands of negroes and white men now disenfranchised. The result of a political division
on live issues has been shown in many local contests in the South, as in the fight against the saloons, when every qualified negro voter, and every negro who could qualify, was eagerly pushed forward by one side or the other. With such a division on new issues the negro will tend to exercise more and more political power, dividing not on the color line, but in the principles at stake. Still another influence which is helping to solve the problem is the wider diffusion of negroes throughout the country. The proportion of negroes to whites in most of the Southern States is decreasing, thereby relieving the fear of negro domination, whereas negroes are increasing largely in Northern communities where they take their place in politics not as an indigestible mass, but divide along party lines even more readily than some of the Foreign—American groups in our population. A study of the negro vote in November, 1912 would show that many negroes broke their historic allegiance with the Republican party and voted for Roosevelt, while some even cast their votes for Wilson; and in local elections the division is still more marked.

Thus in spite of the difficulties which now confront the negro, I cannot help looking upon the situation with a spirit of optimism. I think sometimes we are tempted to set a higher value upon the ritual of a belief than upon the spirit which underlies it. The ballot is not democracy; it is merely the symbol or ritual of democracy, and it may be full of passionate social significance, or it may be a mere empty and dangerous formalism. What we should look to, then, primarily, is not the shadow,
but the substance of democracy in this country. Nor must we look for results too swiftly; our progress toward democracy is slow of growth and needs to be cultivated with patience and watered with faith.

THE SOCIAL STATUS OF THE NEGRO

In some ways the most difficult problem created by the negro's presence in this country is that of his social position. While the federal government has definitely fixed the political status of the negro, it has not performed nor can it perform any such kind of office in the matter of his social status.

If we are to make any progress in an appreciation of the questions involved in this discussion, it would seem to be the part of wisdom to study them from several angles. What is the actual present social position of the negro in the South? How far is the present attitude toward him influenced by his "previous condition of servitude?" What is meant by social equality? How far, if at all, is there any sentiment for intermarriage?

THE SOUTHERN VIEWPOINT

In the South the ideal is to keep the two races as far apart as possible, so that they have almost no contacts except in the capacity of master and servant. This ideal of separateness obtains in practically all of the relationships of the two races. They live for the most part
in separate sections of the city, have separate accommodations on railroads and steamboats, in schools, street cars, restaurants and hotels (where there is any provision for negroes), at their work, in prisons and even in cemeteries. These segregation regulations are all on the statute books. While the law often says that the arrangements for the two races are to be "separate and equal" in actual practice it is the first of these terms that receive the primary emphasis. What has been said thus far with reference to the Southern conception of the social rights of the negro refers to those privileges usually termed "public rights". It is hardly necessary to say that in those intimate and personal relationships of social intercourse separation is also the vogue in the South. Indeed, these relationships are also regarded as a legitimate realm for legal enactments, so that laws governing personal social intercourse are to be found on the statute books.

**REASONS FOR THE COLOR LINE**

The student of the subject naturally inquires, Why this rigid drawing of the social line against negroes? Various reasons have been given.

**Instinctive antipathy.** One of those most commonly expressed is that there exists a widespread racial antipathy to the negro founded on color, which is really instinctive and which forbids free social intercourse be-
tween whites and negroes. Such a statement will not sound very convincing to those who have watched small children of many races, both in their play with each other and in their attitude toward older people of a different race, and noted their lack of any racial antipathy. Nor will it have much weight with those rare and charming spirits in all races whose affections have leaped across racial boundaries and embraced fellowships with those of other races as intimate as any they have known within their own. The true explanation of the negro's limited social status in this country probably will be found in his "previous condition of servitude."

_The Stigma of Slavery._ Here one finds a fruitful field for study. When negro slaves were first brought to this country they occupied about the same status as the white indentured servants. Phillis Wheatley, a slave girl, earned the distinction in certain social circles of Boston of being the city's poet laureate. "She was received by General Washington, Commander-in-Chief of the Continental armies and other notables. But as the negro sank definitely and permanently into chattel slavery he came to be thought of on a level with the brute, and all the concepts formed of him during most of the slavery period were formed from that level."
The Problem of Social Equality

But here another shadow looms large and threatens to make difficult further advance in the matter of good will between the two races. It is the bugaboo of social equality.

The term is used in the Southern States to apply to any association between the two races except where one is clearly the master, and the other unquestionably the servant. In the use even of public utilities, such as the schools or public conveyances if there are not very clearly drawn lines of separation between the two races, it is claimed that social equality is being practiced. Of course, all social intercourse is tabooed on the basis of equality.

What is to be said as to the desirability of social equality? Southern leaders and writers are a unit in the view that the traditional interpretation of the South must be maintained. However, the forward-looking programs of the Southern Interracial Commission, of voluntary student forums, and of other such organizations are making possible such a modification of the traditional viewpoint that, more and more, groups of the two races are able to confer together about problems of mutual interest. In the North commissions such as the Chicago Commission on Race Relations are recommending that "race contacts in cultured and cooperative efforts be encouraged," since they "tend strongly to mutual understanding and the promotion of good race relations." Viewed in the light of its own peculiar interpre-
tation, however, neither North nor South, barring some few exceptions, believes in the practice of social equality between the two races.

And what it may be asked is the attitude of the negroes on this subject? Here too one finds variety of opinion, but this is due in the main to the vagueness of the term and the confusion which attends its use. In the South, however, negroes accept the Southern interpretation, contending only for equality of educational and economic opportunity and for equal accommodations in the use of public utilities. In the South in particular there is not any appreciable number of negroes who want to force themselves into those purely intimate and personal relationships where they are not invited.

THE PROBLEM OF INTERMARRIAGE

At present, both in the North and in the South, there is a strong and persistent objection to intermarriage between whites and negroes. Twenty-nine states have laws that make such marriages illegal. In all the other states the force of public opinion against the practice is so strong that it serves as a sufficient deterrent.

Popular opinion touching this matter is more rigid than the statutes. Wherever there is reason to believe that there is the slightest trace of negro blood in the veins of the person in question, marriage with such a person is frowned upon severely by the community, and the person who dares to run in the face of public sentiment does so at the risk of greatly impaired social prestige. As a result of this adamantive attitude on the part of American public opinion, whether set forth by legal enactment or the force of public sentiment, marriages between whites and
negroes in this country are practically negligible.

On the surface, therefore, it would appear that there is no cause for anxiety about intermarriage. The present handling of the matter seems effectual to prevent any appreciable number of such marriages and probably will continue to be equally effective for a long time to come.

But just here another shadow looms. Despite the fact that marriages between the races are almost negligible, intermixture of the races is going on a rapid rate. In 1850, according to the U. S. census, the mulattoes in the United States numbered 405,751, or 11.2% of the total negro population; in 1890 the number had increased to 1,132,060, or 15.2% of the population; in 1910 mulattoes totaled 2,050,686, or 20.9% of the negro population; in 1920 the census authorities reported a mulatto population of 1,660,554, or 15.9% of the total negro population. In some authoritative quarters these 1920 figures have been questioned because of the great disparity between them and the 1910 figures. The conviction grows that the figures for 1920 were considerably too low, for the mulatto population of this country is now nearly 3,000,000. This makes the mulattoes number almost one third of the total negro population. This large increase in the number of mulattoes is accounted for by the increased infiltration of white blood through the whole negro race through the intermarriage of mulattoes with mulattoes.

The fact that the mulatto proportion of the United States increased 11% between 1890 and 1910, and probably in about the same proportion between 1910 and 1930, has been the cause for considerable alarm among
many students of the question. Dr. W. A. Plecker, in a paper read before the American Public Health Association and widely commented upon by the press of the country, raised the question whether Americans would not ultimately all be mulattoes. He urged that all States pass rigid laws against intermarriage and exercise more vigilance in preventing persons having negro blood from marrying into the white race and thus carrying into that race an infiltration of negro blood. This mingling he regarded as more dangerous "than an increase in the death rate from preventable diseases."

The negro's present social status is anomalous and in many respects unjust. On the one hand, there are certain social rights which justly belong to every citizen and, if necessary, should be guaranteed by legal enactment. On the other hand there are matters of a purely personal and private nature and which no external agency, however, august and revered its authority, can pretend to control. Added to these abstract principles are the practical problems created by certain long-cherished conceptions and traditions in the relations of the two races. All these considerations raise for those interested in the problem almost unsuperable difficulties in arriving at a modus vivendi that will be acceptable to both races. Yet, despite the difficulties, the two races must and can together find practical ways of applying the principles of justice and of freedom if democracy is to prove its right to the faith of humanity.
LYNCHINGS IN THE SOUTH

The problem of organized lawlessness taking the form of mob violence, appears to have resolved itself within the last five years into a test problem of great significance for good citizenship. This has been recognized in the recent Presidential message to Congress.

In the 30-year period from 1889 to 1918, inclusive, 3,224 persons were lynched. Of this number 2,522 were Negroes. The remaining number, 702, was principally white persons, with an appreciable proportion of people of Mexican blood. An inconsiderable fraction was furnished by Indians and Chinese. The largest number lynched in any one year, counting both races, was 226 in 1892. The largest number for Negroes was also in 1892, 155 persons being lynched in that year.

In the 10-year period since 1918, up to November 30, 1928, 361 negroes have been lynched as compared with 38 whites. While the number of negroes lynched in 1919 - 77 - was the largest since 1908, the data show a marked decline in total number since that date. The greatest single decrease occurred between 1922 and 1923. The former year dated 56 lynchings of negroes, while 1923 yielded only 26. Since 1923 lynchings have exceeded 20 in number only once - 1926 with 28 - and have dropped as low as 16, in 1924. The year 1928 returned the smallest number of lynchings in history of this crime.

THE ALLEGED CAUSES FOR WHICH 3,224 PERSONS WERE LYNCHED

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<tr>
<th>1889</th>
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<th>1918</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Victims</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>Negro Victims</td>
<td>2,522</td>
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Total lynched
Murder .............................................. White Victims 319  Negro Victims 900
Rape ................................................ 46  477
Attacks ........................................... 13  237
Crimes: person ................................. 62  253
Crimes: property ............................... 121  210
Miscellaneous crime ......................... 135  303
No crime ......................................... 6  142

Of the 361 Negroes lynched since 1918, 116 or 32.1 per cent, were accused of murder; 114, or 31.3 per cent, were lynched for alleged attacks or attempted attacks upon white women. This compares with a total of 38.8 per cent of the lynchings in the period 1889-1918 for alleged murder, and 28.3 per cent in the same period for alleged rape or assault.

On July 26, 1918, President Wilson said with reference to lynching: "It cannot live where the community does not sanction it."

Little more needs to be said. Practically all analyses of the lynching problem locate its crux in the effect of community complaisance. The responsibility and the potential influence in abating this evil rests with the individual citizen, according to practically all commentators on the matter.

From various pronouncements on lynching and mob violence, the following tendencies have been gleaned as representing a consensus as to the immediate contributing causes of mob violence:

(a) Negligence of peace officers, amounting in some instances to actual connivance.

(b) The influence of the press in stimulating race prejudice and mob action.

(c) The absence of local organizations of public-spirited citizens which might present checks to the mob spirit.

(d) Delays in executing judgments and legal technicalities which enable criminals to escape justice. Such a condition would necessarily result in lack of public confidence in the regularly constituted instruments of justice.
THE PROBLEM RE-STATED

It is astounding how many "solutions" and suggestions toward solution of the race problem in the South are offered, without any attempt to state what the problem is. Often what is in the mind of these who speak of the race problem is virtually how to keep the negro down or "in his place," - whatever that may mean. Again, in another quarter, it is sometimes said, that there is no "race problem," only a human problem - a proposition which is either a truism or not true at all. In the sense in which it is true, it is remarkably unilluminating. Of course it is a human problem - a problem concerning human beings, to be solved by human beings. But if the meaning be that the human problem is everywhere the same, the proposition is not at all true. The human problem, I suppose is how we are to get along peaceably with one another on the earth.

But this essentially human problem, I suppose is how we are to get along peaceably with one another in different parts of the earth; and here in the South today it may be stated as follows: two alien races must get along peaceably together under one government, and that - a government of the people.

As regards the negro the problem is: How to carry through the wilderness, that always lies between Egypt and the Promised Land, the present generation, which has not enjoyed the advantages of training under slavery, nor yet been sub-
jected to such discipline as would train them to adapt themselves to their new situation, with all its responsibilities; in a word to induce the negro to use his liberty so as to become really free, and mistake liberty for license, much less - crime!

As regards the whites, the problem is, to adapt ourselves to the changes and changing situation. The upper-class whites must make a sociological extension of their old-time kindly private feeling toward the negro, being willing not only to hand him cheerfully a quarter now and then, and be kind to him as he serves them in various capacities, but also to give him "a square deal" in life with a chance to make the most of himself.

For the lower class of whites, between whom and the negro the relations are strained, and who are more or less in industrial competition with the negro, the problem is specifically how to find work for both, and how to keep peace between them. Politically speaking, the problem is how two such diverse races can live under a republican form of government, which denies to a State the privilege of disenfranchising a man on account of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude," and at the same time maintain Anglo-Saxon supremacy without any violation either of the Constitution of the United States or of the Ten Commandments.

In addition to all this, it, should be pointed out that many other problems common to the human race in a state of civilization and progress are with us, complicated by race
feeling, such as the relation of labor and capital, strikes, union and non-union labor, etc. Thus far the NRA Program has been a positive evil as far as the negro is concerned and lends force to the belief that he is the real "forgotten man in President Roosevelt's square deal."

The races moreover are rapidly drifting apart, and the problem is to conserve as well as possible the good feeling there is, and to build up, on the basis of our present relations, mutual respect and good-will. As regards crime our problem is not only its prevention, by a proper training of the young, but by the avoidance of making matters worse through retaliation.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Recognizing that the negro is a permanent and increasingly important factor in the development of our national life, I consider the solution of the problem of race relations as the most delicate and difficult single task for American democracy. I believe that no enduring basis of goodwill between the white and colored peoples in this country can be developed except in the fundamental principles of justice, cooperation and race integrity. The obligations of this generation to posterity demand that we exert our utmost endeavor to preserve the purity of our democratic ideals expressed in the American Constitution, as well as the purity of blood of both races. Justice to the negro must include the following:
First, that the negro should be liberated from the blighting fear of injustice and mob violence. To this end it is imperatively urgent that lynching be prevented.

1. By the enlistment of negroes themselves in preventing crimes that provoke mob violence.

2. By prompt trial and speedy execution of persons who are guilty of heinous crimes.

3. By legislation that will make it unnecessary for a woman who has been assaulted to appear in court and testify publicly.

4. By legislation that will give the Governor authority to dismiss a sheriff for failure to protect a prisoner in his charge.

Secondly, that the citizenship rights of the negro should be safeguarded particularly

1. By securing proper traveling accommodations

2. By providing better housing conditions and by preventing extortionate rents.

3. By providing adequate educational and recreation facilities.

Third, that closer cooperation between white and colored citizens be promoted (without encouraging any violation of racial integrity):

1. By organizing local committees, both white and colored in as many communities as possible for the consideration of inter-racial problems.

2. By the employment of negro physicians, nurses, and policemen as far as practicable in work for sanitation, public health, and law enforcement among their own people.

3. By enlisting all agencies possible in fostering justice, good-will, and kindliness in all individual dealings of members of one race with another.
4. By the appointment of a standing commission by the Governor of each State for the purpose of making a careful study of the causes underlying race friction, with the view of recommending proper means for their removal.