

## The Negro Problem

however, be to small purpose if we did not ask what can be done to develop the innate good and correct the bad in a race so puissant and numerous? This mass is not inert; it has great reactionary force, modifying and influencing all about it. The Negro's excellences have entered into American character and life already; so have his weaknesses. He has brought cheer, love, emotion and religion in saving measure to the land. He has given it wealth by his brawn and liberty by his blood. His self-respect, even in abasement, has kept him struggling upward; his confidence in his own future has infected his friends and kept him from nursing despondency or planning anarchy. But he has laid, and does lay, burdens upon the land, too: his ignorance, his low average of morality, his low standards of home, his lack of enterprise, his lack of self-reliance—these must be cured.

Evidently, he is to be "solved" by educational processes. Everyone of his inborn traits must be respected and developed to proper propor-

## Characteristics

tion. Excesses and excrescences must not be carelessly dealt with, for they mark the fertility of a soil that raises rank weeds because no gardener has tilled it. His religion must become "ethics touched with feeling"—not a paroxysm, but a principle. His imagination must be given a rudder to guide its sails; and the first fruits of its proper exercise, as seen in a Dunbar, a Chesnutt, a Coleridge-Taylor and a Tanner, must be pedestaled along the Appian Way over which others are to march. His affection must be met with larger love; his patience rewarded with privilege; his courage called to defend the rights of others rather than redress his own wrongs. Thus shall he supplement from within the best efforts of good men without.

To cure the evils entailed upon him by an unhappy past, he must be educated to work with skill, with self-direction, in combination and unremittingly. Industrial education with constant application, is the slogan of his rise from racial pauperism to productive manliness. Not that exceptional minds should not have

## The Negro Problem

exceptional opportunities (and they already exist) ; but that the great majority of awkward and unskilled ones, who must work somehow, somewhere, all the time, shall have their opportunities for training in industrial schools near them and with courses consonant with the lives they are to lead. Let the ninety and nine who must work, either with trained or fumbling hands, have a chance. Train the Negro to accept and carry responsibility by putting it upon him. Train him, more than any schools are now doing, in morals—to speak the truth, to keep a promise, to touch only his own property, to trust the trustworthy among his own race, to risk something in business, to strike out in new lines of endeavor, to buy houses and make homes, to regard beauty as well as utility, to save rather than display. In short, let us subordinate mere knowledge to the work of invigorating the will, energizing productive effort and clarifying moral vision. Let us make safe men rather than vociferous mountebanks ; let us put deftness in daily labor above sleight-

## Characteristics

of-hand tricks, and common sense, well trained, above classical smatterings, which awe the multitude but butter no parsnips.

If we do this, America will have enriched her blood, ennobled her record and shown the world how to deal with its Dark Races without reproach.